

## Unbreakable 2221

### Chapter 2221

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That request was immediately denied. Despite Nicoles insistence, Mr. Castillo stood firm, committed to preserving his staffs privacy in line with agency protocols.

Then, noticing a poster soliciting volunteer participation, Nicole spotted an opening. Mr. Castillo, might I volunteer here? she proposed.

Mr. Castillo regarded her skeptically.

Believe me. I wont interfere or cause any issues. You can check my references with Mr. Bates, Nicole stated sincerely.

Mr. Castillo still hesitated. This situation is making me uneasy, he confessed.

Im being transparent with you, Mr. Castillo. I simply wish to engage with the staff and understand the reasons behind their departures. Im not willing to let any opportunity slip by, Nicole stated openly.

Her forthrightness appeared to sway Mr. Castillo, and he contemplated that allowing her to conduct her inquiries might prove beneficial.

Should she uncover nothing suspicious, it would further affirm his trust in the agencys integrity.

Mr. Castillo explained, To apply for a volunteer position, youll need to talk to our recruitment officer and undergo an interview with her. I will not interfere for the sake of you.

Nicole expressed her gratitude, Thank you, Mr. Castillo.

She then sought out the recruitment officer. Although navigating the procedure was somewhat intricate, Nicole successfully completed the volunteer interview.

She committed herself to volunteer two days each week, consistently being the first to arrive and the last to leave.

Nicole proved to be diligent and quickly gained favor at the agency.

While there, she actively sought out information and inquired about employees who had considered resigning over the past six months.

She expanded her investigation, careful not to overlook any detail.

Knowing Jarrods careful nature, she surmised that if he were involved in any wrongdoing, it would be meticulously orchestrated.

Pretty soon, she discovered that in the last six months, only four employees had planned to

leave, with one already having resigned.

Nicole examined the remaining three who were still with the agency but found nothing suspicious on the surface.

Still, she continued her investigation. During her days off, she surveilled the home of the employee who had resigned, curious if he maintained any connections with current agency staff.

After a week of observation, she noticed an anomaly. He was still engaging with a female employee from the agency. They met for dinner at a restaurant, and after their meal, they lingered until the establishment closed.

Nicole's suspicions deepened, and she peered into the restaurant. It was dark. The restaurant had shut down for the evening. Where could the two have disappeared to?

She moved around to the back entrance of the restaurant to look for any signs.

Behind the building, enveloped in darkness, Nicole noticed a few rooms above the restaurant glowing with red and purple lights, flickering in a way that suggested something unsavory.

The scene struck her as odd, the lights bearing the hallmarks of those typically seen in red-light districts.

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Nicole captured the scene with her phone's camera and then resumed her surveillance from the front.

She had invested over ten thousand dollars in a nondescript, used car, perfect for blending in as she sat inside, positioned to monitor the restaurant's front entrance, her dash cam set to record all activity.

True to her suspicions, around one in the morning, the female colleague from the testing facility stealthily slipped out of an alley next to the restaurant. Her vehicle was parked nearby. She walked to it and quickly drove away.

Roughly thirty minutes later, the man who had resigned appeared from behind the restaurant.

As he approached his car, about to enter, a sudden beam of light caught him. Startled by the unexpected company, he quickly became agitated, raising his hands to shield his face.

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Nicole got out of her car and made her way to the man, calling out his name loudly, Derek Ellsworth.

Derek was startled. Since he had resigned already, he didn't know Nicole and was surprised she knew his name. Who are you?

Nicole walked closer to Derek and said, Who I am is irrelevant. I'm interested in knowing something that might be related to you. Did you tamper with the blood samples at the agency on the thirteenth of this month?

Dereks face was a mask of shock. His lips trembled as he retorted, What nonsense are you speaking? Ive already resigned. How could I have the means to tamper with anything at the agency?

Nicole had anticipated his denial, but his reaction told her that he was hiding something. She coolly stated, You may have resigned, but isnt Leighton Sugden still working there?

Dereks face crumpled, but he quickly composed himself and snapped, What are you blabbering about? How is Leighton connected to me?

Derek was unaware that Nicole had been trailing him for a while and had discovered his unusual relationship with Leighton.

Watch your words, and shut your mouth. If you spew any more nonsense, Ill tear it apart! Derek threatened Nicole sinisterly.

It was late at night, and they were alone on the street. Derek assumed Nicole would be terrified, so he tried to intimidate her.

However, Nicole remained unruffled. If he dared to harm her, it would only be a reason to get him investigated.

You and Leighton left this restaurant one after the other just a few moments back. This place offers those kinds of rooms, doesnt it? If I call the police now, do you think they will take you in for questioning?

Derek panicked for a moment and stuttered, You Youve been following me?

Of course, if I didnt know about your activities, I wouldnt have come looking for you. Oh, and

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by the way, Leighton is a married woman. How do you think her husband would react if he found out about the two of you? Nicole chose her words smartly, giving the impression that she knew a lot when in reality, she was only in possession of a little information.

ALL Nicole had were tidbits she had picked up from casual conversations with the cleaning lady at the agency. She didnt even know what Leightons husband did or where he worked. But she couldnt reveal her cards. She had to pretend like she knew everything to unnerve Derek.

As expected, Derek was unable to withstand the pressure and asked in an agitated voice, What do you want?

I want to know if you and Leighton conspired together on the thirteenth to switch the blood samples. Nicoles question was direct and to the point.

It wasnt difficult to reach this conclusion. It was clear from Dereks demeanor that he had a hand in the incident. Since he had already resigned, he could only have utilized Leightons presence in the agency to accomplish it.

Jarro didnt employ idiots. It was easier to target Derek than to try to go through Leighton.

Nicole had learned from the cleaning lady at the agency that Leighton came from an affluent background and had two children, so Leighton was less likely to take a risk. But it would be

different if Derek asked her to do it. Since Leightons mind was clouded with love, Derek could easily persuade her with his sweet words.

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How do you know Derek began asking. But he instantly realized something wasnt right and abruptly changed his tone, exclaiming, Stop spouting nonsense!

Perhaps he was still on a high from meeting his lover. Besides, it was late into the night, and his mind wasnt as alert as during the day. He nearly revealed something, which could have been a huge mistake.

Do you think everything you say is correct? Stop speaking rubbish. Be careful walking about at night. You might get such a fright that you drop dead! Derek threatened malevolently and got into his car to get out of here.

Nicole tapped on his car window, intent on asking him more questions when suddenly, he started the car and sped off.

Nicole didnt bother going after him. Although it was late, she was still in a residential area, and she wasnt afraid of him. However, chasing him might provoke him to react desperately.

Her first thought was to call Rhett, but it was very late. So, she texted Rhett to update him about the situation instead.

Surprisingly, Rhett was still up and replied, Ill investigate this man.

Nicole got back into her car. Her next plan of action was to stake out Leightons house and use Leighton as a breakthrough point. What she currently knew wasnt enough to prove that something was amiss with Jarrods forensic results. She needed some solid evidence, like a confession.

However, Nicole knew it would be tough. Jarrods men were always cautious. They probably bribed and threatened people to secure their loyalty. It was difficult to make someone confess the truth when they had been bought.

So, Nicole felt it was wiser to collect more proof. The private meetings between Derek and Leighton were suspicious in themselves. If she could build on this evidence, even if she didnt have enough to turn the tables completely, it could capture the medias attention and pressure the agency into retesting Jarrod.

With this in mind, Nicole started her car and had just rounded the corner when she spotted a sedan hurtling directly toward her.

The vehicles high beams blinded Nicole, and she squinted to look past the glare. In just one second, the car was in front of hers, speeding wildly.

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Alarm bells went off in Nicoles mind. This car seemed to be gunning for her.

Making a split-second decision, Nicole jerked the steering wheel hard, tilting her car to one side and narrowly avoiding a collision.

She could finally see clearly. It was a silver sedan. In fact, it was the same one Derek had raced off in earlier in a state of panic.

He had now returned to the scene.

A horrifying possibility crossed Nicoles mind. She quickly shifted gears to get away, but because the car was in such poor condition, it stalled after just a few inches.

Her car sat alone in the middle of the night on the secluded street.

Nicole heard the screeching sound of Dereks car accelerating, and a dazzling beam of white Light Lit up the darkness behind her.

Nicole peeked in the rearview mirror, only to be blinded by the intense light.

It was obvious that since Derek hadnt managed to crash into her with his speeding car, he had turned around to finish the job.

The engines roar and the glaring light drove home the point that Derek was determined to ram into Nicoles car and wreck it completely.

Nicole couldnt figure out why Derek, who had just fled in a cold sweat, would suddenly take such a drastic and dangerous step. Where did he get the courage?

Nicole didnt have time to dwell on these questions. She frantically shifted gears again, pressing down hard on the accelerator.

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But her car remained stubborn and unresponsive, and she made several attempts to start it. Meanwhile, Dereks car was almost upon her.

Finally, the engine roared to life. Nicole gripped the steering wheel tightly, veering to one side to avoid Dereks imminent collision.

In terms of speed, her old manual car didnt hold a candle to Dereks vehicle. For now, her only choice was to evade him and run.

Even as she swerved, Dereks silver sedan slammed hard into the left rear of her car, causing a loud boom.

The impact forced her trunk open, but Nicole was too busy to worry about that. She floored the accelerator, speeding away in the opposite direction of the silver sedan. This maneuver bought her some time as Derek turned around to chase her.

Just as Nicole anticipated, the silver sedan had also suffered damage from the crash and stalled several feet away from her.

However, Derek managed to quickly restart the car.

Just then, Dereks phone screen lit up with an unknown number. When he picked up the call, Alecs voice came through. Have you taken care of it?

Dereks reply came through heavy breaths, his nose bleeding uncontrollably from the impact. Not yet successful, he managed to say.

You cant handle one sickly woman? Alecs voice was laden with impatience.

Her driving isnt bad, actually better than mine. Its the first time Ive ever hit anyone. I just couldnt manage it well.

Do it quickly, Alec commanded, detached and cold.

Shivering, Derek pleaded, Can I quit? Find someone else, please. I can leave tonight and promise never to return. Isnt that enough?

Derek no longer wanted to be involved in this. He yearned only to escape quietly. Switching materials was one thing, but committing murder was something he couldnt fathom.

Initially, Derek had accepted money from Alec, agreeing to have Leighton move the blood samples with the understanding that he would flee the country once the job was finished.

Yet, Derek and Leighton had been involved before, and he had planned one last rendezvous

before his departure, which delayed him. He intended to slip away the next day by routes that would leave no trace.

Yet, when the situation escalated when Nicole confronted him, Derek called Alec in a panic, not anticipating that Alec would demand outright murder against Nicole.

However, Nicole was a living person. Derek couldnt bring himself to kill her.

You can quit, sure, Alec responded dismissively.

Dereks relief washed over him. Thank you! Youre such a good man. Ill keep my mouth shut, I promise

But give me back the money I had paid you, and I wont pay the rest, Alec replied coldly.

Dereks heart skipped a beat. But thats not how it works.

He protested, Ive completed the job. How can you not pay? We had an agreement. If you renege, I might not stay quiet!

Then go ahead and speak now. If that woman doesnt die today, shell expose everything regardless. Shes onto you. Its more than just money at stake. Brace yourself for the worst, Alec snapped back.

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Derek remained quiet. Alec implied that failing to handle Nicole meant full exposure, with consequences far worse than losing money.

He might even face prison.

How could Derek accept that? He was just beginning to relish a life of wealth. He couldn't abandon the money now.

Derek had initially promised Leighton he'd take her with him after it all was settled, yet he never really intended to follow through.

Money in hand, the need to seek beautiful companions seemed unnecessary.

Derek had long grown tired of Leighton and craved new adventures.

Therefore, for the money's sake, he resolved that Nicole must die.

After all, it was a fortune he could never amass through ordinary work.

Yet, Derek hadn't foreseen the complexities. Nicole was tougher to deal with than he had anticipated. However, the money was too tempting for him to resist.

Derek hardened his resolve and declared assertively, "I'll definitely kill her. Just make sure you send the rest of the money."

Alec assured, "Money is never an issue for me. Just make sure you do the job right. Any slip-up, and the life you're currently enjoying will vanish."

"Absolutely. I'll get it done," Derek promised with a nod.

Determination gleamed in his eyes at that moment. He was convinced he could accomplish his task.

Nicole hadn't driven far when Derek's silver sedan was nearly upon her again.

Gripping the steering wheel tightly, Nicole floored the accelerator, yet she couldn't elude Derek.

Derek's pursuing car appeared desperate to catch Nicole, clearly intent on a deadly confrontation.

It dawned on Nicole that Derek was out to kill her. She didn't see this coming. Based on her investigation, despite Derek's reputation among colleagues for cutting corners for personal gain, he was not known for serious wrongdoing, nor did he seem to have the courage for it.

She reasoned that even though her actions might have threatened his interests, the idea of him resorting to murder seemed too extreme.

This relentless pursuit likely stemmed from someone else's commands.

Could it be that Jarrod could no longer hold himself back and had decided to act drastically against her?

Suddenly, Nicole's phone rang. It was Raegan on the Line.

Nicole tried to ignore the call, but in her agitated state, she ended up answering.

Raegans anxious voice pierced through. Nicole, why didnt you tell me that bastard Jarrod is fighting against you over the custody of Austin?

Earlier this day, Raegan had visited Rhett on a personal matter and accidentally discovered documents related to Jarrods lawsuit. Rhett didnt stop her in time.

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A single glance was all it took for Raegan to realize Jarrod was plotting to take Nicoles child legally.

Raegan had refrained from confronting Rhett, knowing Nicole had likely requested she not be informed, to spare her additional stress.

Raegan had never imagined Jarrod would brazenly attempt to take Nicoles child. Now that Nicole was in such a dire state, could he really strip her of any remaining hope?

Raegan erupted. That scoundrel, Ill find him and give him a piece of my mind!

Wrapped up in her rage, Raegan failed to grasp the urgency of Nicoles predicament.

Attempting to stay composed, Nicole responded, Im okay, Raegan. Dont go after him. It wont help. He wont listen to you. Please, dont get worked up over this.

But I need to confront him, or Ill burst! Its been ages since Ive encountered someone so vile! Raegan insisted, resolved to face Jarrod.

Nicole felt a measure of comfort from her friends fervor, thankful that Mitchel had shielded Raegan so effectively.

As the headlights of the pursuing car flashed in her rearview mirror, Nicole grew tense and quickly said, Raegan, I cant talk right now. I have an urgent matter to handle. Lets talk tomorrow

Just as Nicole reached to hang up the phone, a loud crash echoed!

Dereks silver sedan collided with Nicoles car again, tearing the bumper clean off her car.

Nicole let out a scream, a noise that traveled straight to Raegan through the phone.

Whats happening, Nicole? Where are you? Are you in danger?

Raegans voice trembled with panic.

As Nicoles forehead collided with the steering wheel and blood started to trickle down, she

became dazed. She thought about the possibility of dying today and realized she couldnt depart without uttering a few final words.



Struggling to breathe, Nicole said, Raegan, please tell Austin Tell him I love him. My love for him never ceased

Despite Nicoles severe animosity against Jarrod, her affection for their son, Austin, had always prevailed. He was the core of her existence, an essential part of her life.

Raegan, increasingly anxious, responded, Nicole, dont frighten me. Whats happening? Where are you? Im on my way to find you!

Unsure if there was enough time, Nicole pressed her hand against her bleeding forehead. Blood was seeping between her fingers, yet she attempted to start the car.

Raegan, and one more thing. Could you relay a message to Roscoe for me? Nicole said, bracing herself against the pain.

Please, take your time. Theres no rush. Just share with me Where are you currently? Im going to find you! Raegan implored anxiously, attempting to soothe Nicoles distress.

Tell Roscoe as long as hes alright, Im happy. Even if he later reclaims the memory about me, please tell him not to harbor guilt

These were the sentiments Nicole wished to express to Roscoe. She understood him deeply. Should his memories resurface one day, he would loathe himself for his past deeds. For now, in his state of amnesia, everything Roscoe undertook was innocent.

Unaware of his past, Roscoe was spared the weight of responsibility and could simply adhere to Miguels instructions without encountering any obstacles.

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Nicole yearned to reclaim Austin and would inevitably confront the unstable Jarrod. If Roscoe remained uninvolved, her task would be significantly simpler. She was fearful that Roscoe would hold himself accountable for all that happened

Just as Derek poised to collide with Nicoles car once more, Nicoles car finally ignited, causing her phone to dropped to the floor, abruptly terminating the call.

Nicole wasted no time, pressing forcefully on the accelerator and fleeing the scene. Her escape today would furnish Rhett with ample evidence, courtesy of Dereks reckless actions, to petition for a reassessment of Jarrods test.

Meanwhile, Raegan frantically dialed Mitchels number.

After two rings, Mitchel answered.

Darling, you must assist Nicoles in danger. Someones out to harm her. It must be Jarrod It simply must be him! Raegan exclaimed, her words spilling forth in her distressed state.

Raegan harbored a firm belief that Jarrod was somehow implicated, that he was the villain orchestrating this perilous situation for Nicole.

Keep composed, inhale deeply, and recount the events precisely.

Mitchel presently found himself at a distant branch office, engrossed in overtime alongside his executives on a project.

Sensing the urgency in Raegans tone, Mitchel motioned to halt the meeting and withdrew to a secluded area for conversation. Whats the current situation with Nicole?

Raegan, her voice nearly catching in her throat, responded, Im not entirely sure. Shes being pursued. She mentioned she was looking into Jarrod, but she didnt disclose the details.

Nicole refrained from providing further details to prevent alarming Raegan and inadvertently alerting Jarrod, which could potentially jeopardize Raegans safety.

Despite Raegan being in a significantly safer situation under Mitchels protection, Nicole was adamant about not letting her own troubles affect her friend. Furthermore, Raegan had the responsibility of caring for three children.

Upon hearing the limited information, Mitchel offered reassurance, Darling, remain calm. Im taking action. Ill have Matteo utilize the backend to pinpoint Nicoles location and dispatch a security team to retrieve her.

Alright. Please hurry, Raegan urged, fully aware of the urgency of the situation. The sooner Nicole was located, the sooner shed be out of harms way.

With a composed demeanor, Mitchel assured her, Dont worry. Ill locate her and update you promptly.

After ending the call, Mitchel contacted Matteo, instructing him to track Nicoles phone.

Shortly after, the satellite pinpointed Nicoles phone, which had come to a standstill at a specific location.

Seized by a foreboding sensation, Mitchel promptly directed Matteo to dispatch an elite security team to the coordinates and alerted the local authorities, reporting Nicole as missing and potentially endangered.

Once he had initiated the necessary measures, Mitchel found himself unable to concentrate on the meeting any longer. Aware of Nicoles significance to Raegan and the potential distress Raegan would experience if anything befell Nicole, particularly during her postpartum period, he couldnt shake off the concern. He decided to adjourn the meeting and awaited updates from Matteo.

Thirty minutes later, Matteo contacted Mitchel with the news. Mr. Dixon, we located two damaged sedans at the scene, but they were both unoccupied. There were no signs of individuals nearby. Nicoles phone was discovered in one of the vehicles, while the other bore no personal effects and sported a counterfeit license plate, complicating immediate identification of the owner.

Frowning in concern, Mitchel instructed, Continue the search and expand the scope of the investigation.

Understood, Matteo acknowledged.

Following the conversation, Mitchel contemplated the circumstances.

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Deep down, he harbored doubts about Jarrod resorting to such extreme measures as harming Nicole. He knew Nicole and Jarrod's relationship was intricate. Jarrod's sentiments toward Nicole oscillated between affection and animosity, albeit with affection prevailing.

Nevertheless, Mitchel couldn't fathom Jarrod sanctioning any harm against Nicole. There had to be a misunderstanding, yet with his absence from the country, the most expeditious means of locating Nicole seemed to be reaching out to Jarrod directly.

With resolve, Mitchel dialed Jarrod's number without hesitation.

After several rings, Jarrod finally answered.

Having recently returned from a trip, Jarrod was enjoying a late-night meal with Vicki.

The rapport between Mitchel and Jarrod had grown distant over time due to conflicting perspectives, and were it not for Luis' interventions to their childhood uphold camaraderie, they might have drifted apart completely.

Anticipating nothing urgent from Mitchel, Jarrod casually greeted him in Vicki's presence, Hello, Mitchel.

Where are you? Mitchel inquired tersely.

Just landed, grabbing a bite to eat, Jarrod responded.

Upon hearing Jarrod's response, Mitchel's conviction regarding Jarrod's non-involvement in Nicole's disappearance solidified. However, he couldn't shake the suspicion that someone close to Jarrod might be implicated, given that few individuals were aware of Nicole's return to Ardlens. Apart from Jarrod and his associates, Nicole had few adversaries.

Nicole is in trouble, Mitchel asserted.

Jarrod's expression grew tense. What happened?

Raegan called her and heard someone pursuing her. Subsequently, when they traced her phone signal, it vanished. We located the car she had been using, but she's nowhere to be found, Mitchel elaborated.

After processing the information, Jarrod remained silent for a few moments before responding, I'll take care of it.

Mitchel understood the implication. Rescue would come to Nicole's way.

Jarrod likely had suspicions regarding who might be behind it.

Mitchel felt compelled to offer a word of caution, Jarrod, don't make decisions you'll later regret. It was counsel from a friend who had witnessed Jarrod's ruthless approach in business, a method Mitchel did not condone.

Their growing apart stemmed from Mitchels preference for achieving success through methods that didnt completely dismantle smaller enterprises to maximize his gains.

In contrast, Jarrod operated like a shark in his domain, employing ruthless tactics to secure his victories. His methods were widely disapproved of in the financial sphere, resulting in numerous bridges burned, and there were plenty who would welcome his downfall.

Hence, Mitchel couldnt help but feel that Jarrods endeavor to take Austins custody was ill-advised. Jarrod had amassed a significant number of adversaries, and if they were to learn of his connection to Austin, it could place Austin in jeopardy.

With a heavy sigh, Mitchel proceeded to call Raegan to provide her with an update.

Raegan anxiously awaited Mitchels call and answered his call almost immediately.

Mitchel, whats the situation? Raegans voice quivered with fear, dreading the possibility of Nicole encountering something dreadful.

Ive instructed Matteo to dispatch our most capable team to search and have also notified the authorities, but shes not at the location where she went missing. Were continuing the search, Mitchel admitted, opting for full transparency, knowing Raegans determined nature made concealing the truth futile.

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Mitchel feared Raegan might take matters into her own hands if she didnt hear any updates regarding Nicole soon, adding to his concern.

Raegan burst into tears, her voice trembling with concern. Nicole, could she Could she be in danger?

Dont worry. Ive informed Jarrod. Im confident well locate her soon, Mitchel reassured her.

What? Raegan exclaimed in disbelief. You informed Jarrod? He must be the murderer! Who else in Ardlens would have a motive to harm Nicole? When her fathers company went under, she borrowed money to settle the employees. No one but Jarrod would hold a grudge against her. It must be him orchestrating this!

Its not him, Mitchel responded calmly. Raegan, trust me. Nicole is the mother of his child. He wouldnt hurt her, and right now, he might be the only one who can find her.

Every passing minute heightened the danger. Mitchel chose not to share this with Raegan. He didnt want to exacerbate her anxiety.

Do you truly believe Jarrod would view Austin as simply his child?

Raegan questioned skeptically.

Jarrod had consistently demonstrated a willingness to sacrifice anything for his own gain, and given his history of extreme actions, Raegan doubted he would spare Nicole just because Nicole was Austins mother.

Raegan, trust me. I wouldn't make this assertion lightly. He wouldn't harm Austin or allow anyone to harm Nicole, Mitchel remarked.

There were numerous pieces of advice Mitchel could offer to Jarrod, but he recognized the limitations in directly intervening since Austin was Jarrod's child, and it wasn't his position to interfere.

However, Jarrod's recent inquiry about cardiologists for Austin's sake indicated he wasn't as indifferent as he appeared.

In fact, Jarrod and Mitchel's lack of interaction for an extended period stemmed from the close relationship between Nicole and Raegan.

Plus, their prolonged absence from each other's lives wasn't solely due to ideological disparities but also stemmed from Mitchel's dedication to his spouse and the care of his young children.

Sometimes, adults didn't need to vocalize everything. Maintaining a respectful distance could be the most dignified approach.

Mitchel believed Jarrod understood this unspoken understanding, which explained their lack of

contact until now. Yet, Jarrod's inquiry for Austin's well-being suggested he still held his child in high regard.

Mitchel felt Raegan's fretfulness proved unnecessary.

I've already arranged to fly back tonight. Matteo and his team are searching. Please, refrain from going out. Stay home and await updates. Wait for my return, alright? Mitchel directed.

At that moment, Raegan felt helpless. While she had indeed contemplated venturing out to search for Nicole herself, she understood her abilities couldn't match those of Matteo's professional team. Venturing out might not only contribute to disorder but also divert resources if she encounters trouble. Thus, she resolved to follow Mitchel's counsel and await news at home.

Your project is at a critical juncture. Won't your return affect it?

Raegan inquired, concern evident in her voice.

It's alright. I've delegated the necessary tasks. At present, your situation takes precedence, Mitchel assured, prioritizing Raegan's peace of mind over his professional obligations.

Raegan felt a surge of warmth and said sweetly, Then travel safely, and try to rest on the flight.

Raegan understood that Mitchel must be exhausted from the effects of jet lag and the intense workload he had endured in recent days. She harbored deep concern for him, yet she recognized that her best form of support was to offer understanding and encouragement.

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I understand. Once this project concludes, I plan to take an extended vacation to spend quality time with you and our children.

Since their marriage, Mitchel rarely traveled unless necessary. Their children were still young, and despite having ample support from nannies, Annis, and Luciana, he never felt completely at ease about leaving them.

Moreover, mothers in the postpartum period could be susceptible to psychological challenges, prompting Mitchel to reduce his workload to remain by Raegans side as much as possible.

However, this project held critical importance for the companys expansion into the international market. Nations overseas had consistently employed diverse technologies to restrict Ambrosia, compelling Mitchel to support his homelands endeavors by diligently pursuing expanded foreign markets, thereby bolstering his nations influence.

His aspiration was for his nations energy sector to become indispensable to other lands. As a result, he had bestowed significant importance upon this project and embarked on numerous journeys overseas.

However, these trips were fleeting, sometimes only 12 hours on foreign soil before returning, driven by his longing for his children and concern for Raegans well-being back home.

Truly, it was a pivotal period, and after concluding the call, Mitchel capitalized on every available moment to prolong the discussion until it was time to depart for the airport.

While the project held significance, Raegans emotional welfare held equal importance to him. On their wedding day, he had vowed never to abandon her to confront fear and sorrow alone

Jarro abruptly sprang to his feet to leave, scarcely grazing his meal.

Vicki, brimming with dissatisfaction, believed she caught a mention of Nicoles name during Jarrods earlier phone conversation with Mitchel, escalating her mild unease into profound anxiety.

Jarro! Vicki rose suddenly, clutching his arm.

Jarro remained motionless, regarding her as though awaiting her words.

Their bond had progressively distanced. Despite their engagement, they resembled colleagues from disparate departments who exchanged mere nods upon meeting.

A womans intuition could be nuanced, and Vicki sensed that Jarrod appeared to be evading her. He was either away on business trips or toiling through the night, scarcely finding any time to share with her.

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Even their dinner tonight had occurred only because Vicki mentioned her visit to his family shrine, prompting Jarrod to reluctantly agree to join her for supper. Yet, he hadnt even tasted the soup she had labored over for hours.

Vickis lips quivered as she stated, Ive spent six hours simmering this soup, and you havent even taken a sip.

Vicki yearned to inquire if Jarrod was planning to meet Nicole, but she refrained from voicing this question. Uttering too much could become bothersome, and as she maintained her silence anything

related to Nicole, she felt she retained her position as Jarrods fiance, still eligible to become his spouse. If matters were to become unsettled, it wouldnt bode well for her.

Jarrods response was devoid of emotion. I have an urgent matter to attend to. Ill have it next time.

He pulled his arm away, his demeanor slightly impatient with Vickis grasp.

Vicki wisely released him, maintaining a smile as she remarked, Then tend to what you must.

Remember to eat, and Ill prepare soup for you once more.

Dayton glanced at her, her countenance seemingly exuding joy, and furrowed his brow slightly but remained silent.

Seemingly oblivious to Jarrods discomfort, Vicki affectionately retrieved his coat and drped it over his shoulders.

Observing him make his way to the door, Vicki called out once more, Jarrod

Jarrod halted, casting a lingering glance back at Vicki.