

CAN'T WIN ME BACK

Chapter 2321



After lunch, Alyssa and Sean headed straight for Mildred's home.

This area was a well-known slum in Solana City. The poverty, neglect, and chaos were even more desolate under a blanket of snow.

Mildred's family lived in a rundown house with dirty bricks on the rooftop, giving the impression that the entire structure might collapse with the slightest gust of wind.

"This is terrible. How could this be?" Sean shook his head, feeling indignant.

"The victim's family lives in such dire conditions, and their lives have been shattered. Meanwhile, Justin continues to live as a high-and-mighty, well-respected scion, completely unpunished for his crime. Where is the justice?"

With a gloomy look in her eyes, Alyssa sighed. "How can an ordinary citizen fight against a powerful tycoon? This is only one case that you know of. There are countless other dehumanizing and immoral incidents in this world that remain hidden. Many people may never learn about them."

As Alyssa and Sean conversed, they soon found themselves at the door to Mildred's home.

"Who are you both looking for?" An old woman walked over with a walking stick. Noticing how well-dressed Alyssa and Sean were, she couldn't help but feel curious.

"Hello, ma'am. We are looking for Mildred Hayes's mother. Her last name is Rollins. Do you know her?" Alyssa gave the old woman a friendly smile.

The old woman's expression shifted to alarm. "Why are you looking for her?"

Sean stepped forward and smiled kindly. "Ma'am, we just want to speak with Ms. Hayes's mother to gather some information about her daughter. We're here to help, so don't be nervous. We're not bad people."

"My advice to you both is to let it go!" The old woman shook her head helplessly. "Mildred's mother might actually get aggressive if you mention Mildred. Besides, she's already lost her mind. Even if you ask her something, she may not be able to provide coherent answers."

Alyssa and Sean exclaimed in shock, "She's gone insane?"

Esther had been quite coherent when she shouted accusations at Newton in the cemetery the other day, despite being agitated.

The old woman clarified, "She is only of unsound mind at times. When she's sane, she wouldn't say a thing. When she's not, she'd wave a cleaver and yell at the walls."

Alyssa probed, "What does she yell about?"

"Something about the Becketts... But she mumbles, so I can't really catch everything she says."

Alyssa and Sean shot each other a look.

After surveying their surroundings, Alyssa said indignantly, "Has no one ever come to help this family over the years? Hasn't anyone visited to improve their living conditions?"

"There were, but Mildred's mother chased them all away. Eventually, they stopped coming. I truly feel sorry for this family. I heard that their daughter worked as a helper for a prominent family to support her own, and then she just died unexpectedly. Mildred's mother didn't even get to see her one last time. It's a tragedy."

After saying that, the old woman shook her head and staggered away.

"Ms. Alyssa, look over there!"

Alyssa looked in the direction where Sean was pointing at. She froze.

Ben and a bodyguard were walking toward them.

Upon spotting Alyssa, Ben appeared startled. "M-Ms. Alyssa?"

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The atmosphere in the car felt inexplicably heavy.

"Mr. Gorham, are you here today to help Ms. Rollins out, or are you here to shut her up?" The stern look in Alyssa's eyes was terrifying.

She was well aware that Ben was extremely loyal to Newton. He would even lay down his life for him. This level of loyalty also meant that he might engage in extreme and unrestrained behavior.

"Ms. Alyssa, there are certain matters that you shouldn't be interfering with."

The muscles in Ben's jaws tensed up. In a low-pitched voice, he added,

"Some of these matters could have a butterfly effect."

"I know that this is a matter involving

the Beckett family. I do not wish to overstep either." Alyssa narrowed her eyes

Her gaze became assertive and fiery. "However, there is a risk factor with

Justin as his mental condition isn't stable. On top of that, he's extremely adept at pretending.

"He has now returned to Beckett Group and is trying to oppress Jasper by using his identity as someone who has saved Jasper's life. It's also highly likely that he will become a threat to Jasper's position as the heir to Beckett Group in the future." Ben denied it immediately. "It was unintentional on Mr. Justin's part at the time! I watched him grow up. He has now become an extremely outstanding person!"

"Is that so? Do you genuinely believe that he killed someone unintentionally?"

Alyssa lifted the corners of her lips into an intimidating smirk. "A 14-year-old boy dared to take a life. Now that he's a grown man with wealth, power, and cunning, what else would he fear?"

"My request is simple. I just want him to behave himself. For Grandpa Newton's sake, I will not go against him. But, if he dares to do anything to Jasper, don't blame me for being ruthless. I'm sorry, but I won't hold back for anyone when it comes to that."

Ben's eyes widened, and a chill swept through him.© 2024

Chapter 2322



Ben often heard Newton refer to Alyssa as a heroine, but he never truly believed it. Today, he finally witnessed it with his own eyes. She embodied the strength expected of Winston's daughter. Her commanding presence and intimidating demeanor would have many men humble themselves before her.

"Ms. Alyssa, w-what are you trying to do?" Ben stammered, his voice trembling.

With a stern look in her eyes, Alyssa answered, "Mr. Gorham, besides Grandpa Newton, I believe that you're the only one who knows about Justin's murder. Am I right? I want to know how Mildred actually died. How did you and Grandpa Newton dispose of her body?" Ben clenched his teeth, remaining silent.

"Even if you refuse to speak, my family and I can find out. It's only a matter of time." Alyssa forced a slight smile. "Once I discover the truth, I can't guarantee what the consequences will be."

"Ms. Alyssa, this is a serious matter! This incident involves Mr. Newton and threatens the entire Beckett family's reputation. If word gets out, the corporation could be in grave danger. "Mr. Newton's health has been declining. If anything were to happen to Beckett Group, he wouldn't be able to take it!" Ben was on the brink of tears.

With a fiery gaze, Alyssa said, "Grandpa Newton trusts me and dotes on me. To me, he is as important as my father. I know my limits, and I'll ensure that Grandpa Newton remains unharmed." After a brief hesitation, Ben shut his eyes tightly. Finally, he spoke. "It was a stabbing."

"How many times? Once? Twice?"

"More than ten... I can't remember the exact count but there were stab wounds all over her neck, chest, and lower abdomen. I just remember that the carpet was soaked in her blood." A wave of fury surged within Alyssa. She inhaled sharply.

Just by looking at Justin's appearance and gentlemanly demeanor, no one could associate him with such ruthless and psychotic behavior.

"Mr. Justin is Mr. Newton's oldest grandson, so he was important to him too. Mr. Newton had no choice but to do all he could to keep this incident a secret."

Ben leaned back weakly. "I cleaned up the crime scene and burned the bloody carpet. We staged it to look like she committed suicide by jumping off a building.

"Then, through connections, we had a death certificate issued before sending her body to a crematorium for immediate cremation."

The subsequent events were already made known.

Alyssa's eyes with rage.

Justin couldn't be forgiven for what

he did, but what about Newton? He

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covered up for his grandson and erased the traces of a life so thoughtlessly. Alyssa felt uncertain about how she would face that kind, elderly man in the future.

Ben added, "Ms, Alyssa, please don't worry. Mr. Newton will do all he can to secure Mr. Jasper's position in the Beckett family. Even if Mr. Justin recovers completely, he will never inherit Beckett Group. Mr. Newton will leave all of his shares and assets to Mr. Jasper only

"Grandpa Newton has seen through Justin's nature early on. He was wary and kept his distance while

e focusing on raising Jasper. His love for Jasper was not only genuine, it was also a way to protect his youngest grandson from Justin's

potential betrayal."

Alyssa's heart felt heavy. She let out a deep sigh. "Mr. Gorham, I can't forgive or condone what you and Grandpa Newton did. But I do appreciate you

sharing this with me." With that, she opened the door and stepped out of the car, weighed down by worry.

"Ms. Alyssa!" Sean hurried toward her. "Mr. Cyrus is inside! It seems he's here on a work assignment." Please check at
Alyssa's eyes widened slightly. Afraid that she would get in the way of Cyrus's mission, she approached cautiously.

At that moment, Cyrus and a few plainclothes officers were escorting three suspects into police cars.

Cyrus was equally surprised to see Alyssa there. "Lyse, what are you doing here?"

Alyssa went up to Cyrus. "I came to attend to some personal matters." Out of curiosity, she asked, "Cyrus, you're arresting..."

Cyrus kicked one of the car's tires in frustration. Through gritted teeth, he replied, "Drug dealers."

Upon hearing that, Sean stepped forward and shielded Alyssa behind him.

"Hey, why are you being so on edge? I'm right here. If anyone dares to hurt my younger sister, I will freaking take him down!" Cyrus declared, his arrogance bordering on intimidating.

The moment Alyssa heard that those suspects were drug dealers, she couldn't help but be reminded of Jasper. That made her chest tighten.

Cyrus sighed in frustration, his brows knitted tightly. "There's a new type of drug circulating in the underground world of Solana City. It's vaguely reminiscent of the previous one." Alyssa asked, "What is it?"

Cyrus held up a bag of blue pills as he spoke. "It's called Crystal Ice."





Alyssa knitted her brows together tightly as she took that bag of pills from Cyrus and examined it.

"This stuff is extremely addictive. Not only will its user become addicted just after a one-time consumption, but it also has few adverse reactions for its users. It can cause its users to become greatly excited; they wouldn't feel tired even if they stay up for a few nights." Cyrus glared at the criminals in the car with a fierce glare. He burst out in anger, "Damn it! After so much effort getting rid of that drug completely last year, we now have this Crystal Ice? It's freaking never-ending!"

Alyssa asked, "Cyrus, was this Crystal Ice first distributed from Solana City? Is it available in other cities?"

"We haven't heard of it being available in other places as of now. It only appeared within Solana City this month. We're investigating the source of this drug. But we've only managed to arrest a few underlings to date. We haven't had any breakthroughs yet." Alyssa pondered for a moment. Then she lowered her voice and said, "Cyrus, could you give me a pill? I'd like to use it for something."

Cyrus was staggered. So, she quickly added, "Don't worry. I won't harm others, much less myself. I was just thinking of taking it back to get its components tested."

"The Forensics Department in the force has tested it. This is a drug. There's no doubt about that."

"I have another use for it. Please make an exception, Cyrus."

Cyrus pressed his lips together. In the end, he tipped one blue pill onto Sean's palm while his colleagues weren't looking.

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After bumping into Alyssa, Ben's original plan was disrupted. So, he could only leave silently after Cyrus left.

Through the dirtied glass window, Alyssa and Sean could see Mildred's mother, Esther, kneeling on the bed. Looking unkempt, she was facing a wall while raising a cleaver and cursing at it.

That deranged and unreasonable behavior of hers was heart-wrenching to watch.

"Ms. Alyssa, are we still going to enter?" Sean looked at Alyssa with a worried look in his eyes.

Alyssa shook her head. With a dim gaze, she answered, "Let's not bother her for now."

"Didn't you want to hear her side of the story?"

"She's not in the right mental state. Whatever she says cannot be presented as evidence in court. Let's take some time to come up with another approach for now."

Alyssa turned around and said, "Sean, get some people to protect Ms. Rollins secretly. Then, support her life financially through some subtle means."

"Got it, Ms. Alyssa."

Then, in a concerned voice, Sean continued, "Will Ms. Rollins accuse Justin? Will she go all out and expose the darkness within the Beckett family?"

"It doesn't matter whether she does all that. We just have to keep here

safe." Alyssa welled up. "It has nothing to do with schemes of anybody's interests. It's just a little kind gesture of mine."

Just then, her phone buzzed. As she glanced at the screen, a deep sadness welled up inside her. It was a calendar reminder-Jasper's birthday was in a week.

Though she'd never forgotten his birthday, Alyssa always set a reminder, just in case. Now, however... What meaning did it hold? Even if she wanted to celebrate, would he even welcome it?

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In the blink of an eye, it was a day before Jasper's birthday. This year, he would turn 33.

Newton originally planned to throw an extravagant celebration for Jasper. Given the Beckett Group's shaky state and Justin's sudden return, it felt like a timely gesture.

Even though Justin hadn't interfered with the corporation's businesses, his health condition had improved, and he was adept at making Javier happy.

If this went on, he might just become an essential part of the corporation.

Newton's goal was to support

Jasper in every way possible while he was still present, ensuring Jasper's secure position as the

corporation's future leader. Henet

hoped Jasper would take the

opportunity to build his reputation in front of others.

But, regrettably, Jasper wasn't inclined to simply go along with it.

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No matter how Newton tried to convince him, he wasn't excited about having a birthday party at all. In the end, all he agreed to was to have a dinner party at Berenike Hotel in the name of the Beckett family.

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That night, the banquet hall was bustling with attendees from the elite circles.

Quite a number of wealthy scionesses heard that Jasper would show up tonight. Despite hearing that he was already attached, they dressed gorgeously and came over excitedly to look at him. Even though they couldn't have him, there was nothing wrong with admiring his looks, was there?

Nonetheless, outsiders were unaware that this beautifully-matched couple, Jasper and Alyssa, had already broken up.

"Jasper, there are many scionesses from reputable families here tonight. They have all come out of their admiration for you."

Javier and Jasper stood by a railing on the second floor as they looked down upon the glamorous banquet hall.

With a smile on his face, Javier patted Jasper's shoulder. "Let me know if anyone catches your fancy. I can help bring you together, no matter which family she's from."

Chapter 2324



The look in Jasper's eyes was deep. He replied in a cold and emotionless voice, "Thanks for your kind thoughts, but there's no need for that."

Javier frowned. He tightened his grip on Jasper's shoulders. "Jasper, if you truly want to inherit Beckett Group, a marriage alliance is a responsibility you must shoulder! The doctor said you lack emotion right now. In that case, all women should be equal in your eyes. Including Alyssa."

"I'm doing very well right now. I don't need a woman." Jasper frowned. "Even though I have broken up with Ms. Alyssa, you shouldn't put her on the same plane as other women. After all, she was once very important to me."

Very important-these two words tugged at his ice-cold heartstrings.

"Jasper, are you staying that you haven't moved on from that woman from the Taylor family?" Javier's voice had a clear tone of displeasure.

Icily, Jasper answered, "Dad, this is a personal matter of mine. I have the right not to answer you."

"Jasper, I have been through life more than you have. Listen to my advice. When choosing a life partner, you have to choose a virtuous woman. Plus, she has to love you more than you love her."

Javier gazed at the stunningly dressed women downstairs. He continued, "Even though Alyssa has an outstanding family background, she has been spoiled by Winston so much that she has grown to become unrestrained, ignorant, nosy, and a troublemaker.

"She often puts herself in danger despite being unable to protect herself. She's a ticking time bomb. Not only does she seem bent on dragging you down, but who knows if she'll endanger our family one day? You don't have nine lives for her to ruin!

"Look at those women downstairs. They are not that far off from Alyssa in terms of their looks and family background. Most importantly, they love, admire, and cherish you like treasure. They can't bear to see you suffer. Moreover, they will be able to bear children for our family!"

Jasper smirked coldly. "So, this was the reason you married my mother?"

Javier was at a loss for words.

"Dad, it's true that I had a brain injury, but I did not lose my memories. I haven't forgotten the kind of woman Alyssa is."

Jasper turned around nonchalantly. Standing up straight, he continued, "I was once married, and I had a girlfriend.

I am completely uninterested in marriage and dating. I'm sorry, but I'm unable to meet your demands."

Javier clenched his teeth as he exhaled sharply.

Jasper had just taken a few steps when Javier suddenly called out. "Jasper!"

Without turning back, Jasper said, 'Just save it if you're still going to talk about having a marriage alliance."

Javier shook his head helplessly. "I wanted you to receive Justin at the parking lot."

Jasper stopped in his tracks.

"Justin isn't in the best of health, and this is his first time showing himself publicly since returning to the country. I'm afraid that he wouldn't be used to it. You can look after him while you accompany him."

With Sean's company, Alyssa arrived at Berenike Hotel on time.

Right now, the situation between her and Jasper was awkward. So, it wouldn't be suitable for her to attend an event organized by the Becketts in the first place as it would bother both parties.

But Newton called her again and again to extend his sincerest invitation. She didn't have it in her to disrespect Newton, so she summoned up the courage to come.

Her Spirit of Ecstasy Rolls-Royce was parked in the underground parking lot. Sean turned to her from the passenger seat. "Ms. Alyssa, I'll walk you over."

"It's alright. I'm just dropping by to see Grandpa Newton for a bit. I won't stay for long. Just wait for me here." Upon saying that, Alyssa opened the door and exited the car. Then, she strutted straight toward the hotel. Just as she stepped into the hallway, a bunch of reporters rushed toward her and surrounded her from all sides. "Ms. Alyssa! I heard that you and Mr. Beckett have broken up. Is that true?"

Alyssa's heart dropped. In an instant, her face turned pale.

"Did you break up with him, or did he break up with you?"

"You're both a publicly-recognized model couple and a match made in heaven. What was the reason for your breakup? Was there a third party?"

"A few years ago, you and Mr. Beckett divorced because of Ms. Gardner. Did he cheat on you again this time?" At first, Alyssa didn't want to say anything. But she couldn't squeeze her way out of the crowd surrounding her. On top of that, she didn't wish to play dumb after she heard those groundless speculations.

So, with a steady gaze in her eyes, she said, "Mr. Beckett and I had an amicable breakup. There has never been any third party that came between us at any time. We are still on good terms. Everyone, please do not make groundless speculations."

One of the reporters suddenly questioned loudly, "Did you both break up because of Ms. Gillis?"

Chapter 2325



The reporter pressed on, "Recently, Ms. Gillis and Mr. Beckett have been frequently spotted together in public. Rumor has it she's his new lover! You and Mr. Beckett just broke up, and now he's with someone else. Were they involved before?"

Alyssa silently clenched her fingers into fists. Suddenly, a chill overcame her like a cold-blooded snake slithering up from her calf.

She forced herself to maintain her composure. With a sharp gaze, she stared at the reporter who threw those questions out.

Intimidated by that stare, that reporter shrunk back into the crowd.

"I will say this one last time. Mr. Beckett and I had an amicable breakup. It had nothing to do with anyone else. Jasper and I have been together for many years.

"Even though we have broken up, I will continue to defend his reputation as a friend. I am not going to allow anyone to slander or damage his reputation. Having been together for so many years, no one knows how good of a person he is better than I do...

As Alyssa spoke, her eyes turned red. She choked back on her tears as she broke into a bright smile. "So, from now on, I will sue all those who spread rumors about Mr. Beckett!"

The reporters shot looks at one another.

The one who spoke up thoughtlessly earlier started trembling.

Alyssa took a few deep breaths. She marched forward, wanting to leave this place as quickly as possible.

However, too many people were surrounding her, making it difficult for her to walk forward. She even felt like the air around her was wearing thin.

Right at this moment, a deep and husky voice sounded through the crowd. "Everyone, please excuse me."

When the crowd turned toward the speaker, they were all floored.

Alyssa looked in the direction of the voice too. Instinctively, she widened her eyes.

Under the radiant light, Justin was on his feet, looking elegant and gentle in his suit. He parted the crowd and walked straight toward Alyssa. Please check at

Jasper happened to rush to the scene just then. He saw that Justin had gotten out of his wheelchair and looked absolutely healthy as he walked stately toward Alyssa.

The people around them gazed at the extremely matching pair with awe.

Upon noticing that, Jasper's eyes reddened. An inexplicable feeling surged within his chest, filling him with agitation, uneasiness, and an urge...

He stumbled. He quickly put his shaking hands against the wall to help himself find his balance.

"That is such a handsome man. He's got such confidence! Who is he?"

"He has shown up once. He's Mr. Jasper's half-brother, the oldest son in the Beckett family!"

"Oh! No wonder... He looks somewhat like Mr. Jasper!"

"Because of his physical health, he had to recuperate overseas throughout the year. If not for that, why would Beckett Group's management rights end up in the hands of the second scion?"

"Wealthy and reputable families like theirs are very particular about seniority in the family. If not for any extenuating circumstances, they will mostly choose the oldest scion to be their heir."

"He isn't doing well physically? He looks as sharp as ever, though."

"Oh? Yeah... How mysterious."

Wide-eyed, Alyssa watched as Justin walked before her with a bright smile on his face. Yet, knowing the truth- that this seemingly composed man had a dark, murderous past-caused a pang of fear in her chest. She bit her lip and took a small step back.




Justin studied that pale expression on her face. Without saying a word, the look in his eyes dimmed.

Although he and Jasper were brothers, their personalities were vastly different.

Jasper was extremely intelligent yet emotionally undeveloped. He would never have understood women if not for meeting Alyssa.

Justin, on the other hand, was the complete opposite. He was born with astonishing observation skills and a heightened sense of sensitivity.

Justin, on the other hand, was astoundingly perceptive and deeply empathetic. His keen senses allowed him to read emotions and intentions easily, even through the smallest gestures. Looking at Alyssa, he saw the fear that lingered within her toward him.



Alyssa wasn't the first to gaze at Justin with that look. He had long learned to categorize those stares as expressions of reverence. Yet, for reasons he couldn't quite explain, he disliked seeing it in her eyes.

"Justin, what brings you here?" Alyssa calmed herself down and avoided that deep gaze of his.

"I heard from Grandpa that you would be coming over tonight, so I was waiting for you here," Justin answered with a gentle smile. His eyes were filled with tender affection.

Everyone in the crowd was shocked.

What did that mean? Was that an implicit confession of love?

Did Justin have feelings for Alyssa too?

But she used to be his younger brother's partner. Did he truly not care about it, mind it, or be irked by it?

At that moment, the reporters who caught a whiff of the amorous tension became excited again. They flooded toward the pair.

The look in Justin's eyes deepened as he raised his arm and put it around Alyssa's shoulders in one swift and natural move. Then, he tugged her toward him.

Although he looked like a gentle person, his current posture was absolutely assertive. It even gave off a hint of his dominance in disallowing anyone else to get involved.

Alyssa trembled slightly. Being in Justin's arms made her feel uncomfortable in every way.

She wanted to free herself from his arms, but the crowd that was surrounding them kept her bound. She had no choice but to continue walking with Justin's arm around her.

Out of the blue, her chest tightened. She lifted her eyes, only to see Jasper's grim and lonely figure standing a few steps away. He was staring in her direction expressionlessly.

As their eyes met, she couldn't help but tear up as a ball of emotions rose within her.

Despite being only a few steps away, it felt like they were miles and miles apart.

Jasper!

Alyssa parted her quivering lips, almost yelling his name.

If he walked toward her, even if all he took was one step, she would disregard everything and run to him. Nevertheless, in the next moment...

She couldn't believe Jasper turned away coldly and left decisively as if he hadn't seen anything.

Alyssa felt so disappointed that she felt chills in her body, and tears filled her reddened eyes.

"You saw him?" Justin turned to her and asked right by her ear, his low and soft voice could only be heard by the two of them.

"What are you trying to say?" Alyssa questioned in a trembling voice.

"Ms. Alyssa, I have told myself time and time again that if Jasper regretted it and wanted you to return to his side, I would step back without a second

thought. I would let the both of you be together and give both of you my blessings."

Justin looked down at the woman in his arms. As the look in his eyes deepened, he added, "But by the looks of the current situation, it looks like I worried about it too much."

Alyssa gritted her teeth together to withstand the pain. She closed her eyes tightly.

Meanwhile, Jasper walked in a hallway alone, holding onto the wall for support. His heart felt like a house about to be robbed of everything.

In the name of being righteous, his older brother had been removing all that which was in his heart little by little. By the time he realized it, his heart was in a mess and was almost at the point of emptiness.

Chapter 2327



When Justin and Alyssa stepped into the banquet hall together, another uproar swept through the hall. Everyone focused their astonished gazes on the pair.

"I'm not dreaming, am I? The one accompanying Alyssa isn't Mr. Jasper, but another man?"

"That man has such a confident air about him. His looks and bearing are comparable to Mr. Jasper's!"

"Ms. Alyssa has so many brothers in the Taylor family. Could it be one of her brothers whom we have never seen?"

"Justin!"

Javier was pumped up in an instant. Beaming, he strutted to the front of Justin and Alyssa.

Justin?

The room fell silent as the crowd exchanged confused glances.

"Hey, Dad." Justin smiled, his eyes looking clear and bright.

Alyssa was a daughter from a wealthy aristocratic family. Although she and Javier used to be on bad terms, she still attended the Beckett family's event.

She politely greeted Javier. "Mr. Javier, my father is resting up at home and is unable to make it. So, he got me to come especially to send his regards."

Alyssa spoke courteously and broad-mindedly.

With a tall and elegant man standing right next to her, they looked like a good-looking pair with visuals like a painting.

"I appreciate Mr. Winston's thoughts. I am doing very well."

Javier did not have that frigid gaze that he usually had toward Alyssa. Instead, he gave her a kind smile, one that an elder would give when they looked at a younger person.

Those who didn't know them might even think he and the Taylors were on really good terms.

"I heard that Mr. Winston has been recuperating overseas, but I haven't been able to free my hands to visit him. But I'll be sure to reach out to him soon. If he's free, I'll certainly visit him."

At this moment, Jasper happened to arrive with Newton. He pushed Newton's wheelchair as they entered the banquet hall together.

The words Javier spoke didn't escape their ears.

Alyssa responded with a slight smile and said nothing else.

She was an intelligent woman. At one glance, she saw through Javier's sly intentions.

When she dated Jasper, word spread among outsiders that the Taylors and the Becketts were not on good terms. Even though the couple were deeply in love and had talked about marriage more than once, Javier had never stepped into the Heightsnew Villa. He had never even called Winston.

Right now, in Justin's presence, he displayed such an unreservedly friendly side. With such differential treatment toward both his sons, it was inevitable that the public would start drawing all kinds of conclusions.

"Jasper and Alyssa... Have they broken up?"

"Is that so? That'd be great. We'd have a chance now!"

"Oh my word... They broke up? I don't believe in love anymore!"

"You're just a hopeless romantic. Love is something that is not worth believing in in the first place."

"By the looks of it, Alyssa has gotten herself involved with Mr. Justin? Has Mr. Javier given his approval? She's such a slut, toying with the older sibling after she's done with the younger one."

"Both brothers got involved with the same woman. She's quite crafty, isn't she?"

Justin took the people's casual remarks to heart.

He turned his proud yet handsome face slightly. With a smile that reached his eyes, he glanced over briefly at the people who spoke.

The two gossipers shut up immediately while their eyes darted everywhere to try and alleviate their panic. Justin looked away coldly.

Even though that glance was emotionless, it sent chills down their spine and made them go numb.

This situation made Newton fly into a rage. His face flushed with anger as he turned to Jasper. He jabbed him with his elbow. "Go! Hurry up and go to Alyssa's side. Hurry up!"

Jasper gazed deeply at Alyssa and Justin from behind. They looked like such a matching pair.

Jasper's muscular arms tensed up slowly. Yet, he remained standing at the same spot.

"You jerk! Your wife is going to be taken away. Why are you still standing here like an idiot?" Newton blurted.

Fury bubbled up inside him, and he was about to spring to his feet and give Jasper a harsh lesson. "Before, just hearing Alyssa talk to other men would send you into a rage.

"Your father is about to match Alyssa with your older brother. How could you stand here being so unmoved? What is wrong with you? Fucking hell. Even dogs would pee to mark their territories. You're fucking worse than a dog!"

An immense pain shot through Jasper's head. He held himself to the point where he started heaving.

Then, he turned around and exited the banquet hall.





Jasper stumbled into the hotel's back garden and stopped by the pond. He panted hard, feeling as if he were drowning. Even so, he could not return to his usual composure.

As he shook all over, he bent down and grabbed a handful of snow. The bone-piercing cold spread through his body, but he still couldn't suppress the throbbing pain in his temples.

His eyes became bloodshot. He stuffed that handful of snow into his mouth and swallowed all of it.

He couldn't suppress it. He couldn't suppress it at all.

The pills. He needed those pills!

"Mr. Jasper? What are you doing here?" Sheryl's surprised voice came from behind Jasper.

He held his breath, his fingers tightening around the snow in his grasp, veins bulging as he clenched his fists. Slowly, he straightened his back and turned to face her.

"I came out for some fresh air," he answered in an extremely hoarse voice.

Sheryl narrowed her eyes and studied him. "Mr. Jasper, you look awful. Are you feeling unwell?"

"I'm fine." A drop of sweat trickled down Jasper's face.

"Mr. Jasper, you must let me know promptly if you have run out of those medications."

Sheryl stared at his back with a grim look in her eyes. She took another step closer. "The medication has to be taken on time according to the proper dosage. Otherwise, how long will it take for your headaches to be gone? Eventually-

Jasper closed his reddened eyes and cut her off without warning. "I'm much better now. I don't need it for now."

A sinister look flashed across Sheryl's eyes. Right after that, she put on a gentle smile and gently patted Jasper on his shoulder.

Jasper knitted his brows together tightly and turned around.

As he locked eyes with Sheryl, she tilted her head up, her eyes gleaming with a playful light. She stood so close that the mist from her breath lightly touched his chin.

Coincidentally, Alyssa witnessed this flirtatious scene with her own eyes. Her heart wrenched. Frantically, she avoided them by hiding behind a faux rock. Yet, she couldn't help but peek at that romantic pair in the snow through the gap in the rocks.

She was surprised to see Sheryl smiling sweetly at Jasper, just like a young woman would at her first love. After that, she retrieved a delicate-looking gift box from the pocket of her white coat and handed it to Jasper. "Mr. Jasper, it's your birthday tomorrow. Here's a small gift for you. Happy birthday to you in advance." Jasper lowered his eyes and responded in a frigid voice, "I don't celebrate my birthdays."

"We're friends, and it's just something inexpensive. Why don't you just accept it?"

Sheryl blinked. She looked at him with an innocent and sad gaze. "I've bought the gift. There's no way that you can return it to me. Just throw it away if you don't want it. Don't return it to me."

As she said that, she arrogantly stuffed the gift box into Jasper's arms.

There was a quiver in Jasper's eyes. He was surprised to see that Sheryl's actions reminded him somewhat of Alyssa's.

When they were still together, Alyssa would throw tantrums and lose her temper at him all the time. Yet, no matter how ridiculous she was in kicking up a fuss, he would accommodate her, pamper her, and dote on her.

He figured that he must have loved her very much in the past.

Nonetheless, why did he suddenly become unable to love her? Why couldn't he feel that heart-racing, deep affection he had for her and her only?

"Thank you."

Jasper accepted Sheryl's gift and opened the box in front of her. Inside was a delicately designed tie bar. Alyssa's eyes turned red as she watched the interaction between them from afar.




As she drew a deep breath, it seemed like she'd taken in all the coldness the world could offer. The chill wrapped around her heart, which began to ache as if it were fracturing. She felt as though her heart might shatter any moment.

She was also about to shatter as a person.

"Mr. Jasper, do you like it?" Sheryl twirled her hair by her ear and tapped her toes on the ground. She had a gentle and flirty look in her eyes. It had been a while since she had long hair, but her old habits would still show inadvertently.

In addition to feeling sad, Alyssa's heart skipped a beat while she looked fixedly at Sheryl.

Something about Sheryl's actions had stirred an intense feeling within her. She hardly knew Sheryl—they were strangers. Yet, strangely, she kept feeling as though they'd crossed paths in the past.



Alyssa balled her hands into fists as she pressed them against the faux rock. All her focus was now directed onto Sheryl instead of Jasper.

At this moment, Sheryl picked up the tie bar from its box. While Jasper was distracted, she clipped it onto his tie.

Jasper was taken aback. He quickly stepped back, but Sheryl was quicker, and the tie bar was clipped on.

"Mr. Jasper, it suits you really well.

Sheryl's eyes were captivating, and her voice was sultry. If she were speaking with any other man, they would be easily captivated by her. "It looks like I made the right choice."

Jasper's eyes dimmed. Yet, out of courtesy and because Sheryl worked for Justin, he did not react in any way that would put her in a difficult spot.

Alyssa's eyes reflected a deep sorrow as she watched them, her gaze carrying the silent desolation of a snowstorm beginning to overtake her heart. Even so, she forced herself to stay rational.

She pulled out her cell phone, wanting to record Sheryl's every move. However, her vision was blocked, and all she could see was darkness.

A hand with slender fingers gently covered her eyes. Then, she heard Justin's husky and gentle voice say, "Don't watch them anymore."

Alyssa's chest tightened. She spun around in a panic. Her pupils constricted as she stared at Justin's face.

Just as she was almost about to lean back against the faux rock behind her, Justin wrapped his arms around her and put his palms against the rock. The back of his hand prevented her shoulders from brushing up against the hard rock.

He was attentive, gentlemanly, and caring.

No matter how one looked at it, he was the perfect gentleman. Yet, he sent chills throughout Alyssa's entire being. "Have you been standing here for a long time? Your face has turned red from the cold."

With depth in his eyes, Justin pulled open his coat to cover Alyssa's thin frame, shielding her from the cold. "Let's go back. You're going to catch a cold."

Alyssa's back stiffened up. She avoided his deep gaze and said, "I don't feel cold."

The cold barely registered with her, as her heart had grown almost entirely numb.

Justin leaned forward a little and uttered in a deep voice, "You're sad."

Alyssa stubbornly denied it, even though her eyes were red. "I'm not."

"I'm talented in identifying what others feel." In a gentle voice, Justin added, "But only if that's someone I truly care about."

*Justin, if you truly care about me as you say, you wouldn't put me in this position," Alyssa said, meeting his gaze with a mocking smirk. "I have no intention of becoming a woman tangled up with her ex's older brother."

Justin had never seen her smile like that. She was like a thorny red rose and a coneflower standing fearlessly in a storm.

'Don't listen to those chatter. They are just envious of you," he said in a raspy voice.

Alyssa's smile was dazzling. "Oh, they're envious that I can toy with the older brother after finishing with the younger? That I might just bring down all the men in the Beckett family at once?"

"Are you afraid of me?" Justin asked out of the blue.

Alyssa's heart raced even though she appeared calm. "We bear no grudges against one another. Why would I be afraid of you?"

"All's good as long as you're not afraid of me." Justin let out a long sigh of relief. Then, he removed his coat and wrapped it tightly around Alyssa.

Alyssa widened her eyes. She wanted to take his coat off, but his grip on the lapel kept her constrained.

'Ms. Alyssa, I'm not physically fit. I do not have any power in Beckett Group, nor do I possess business acumen. At the same time, Grandpa is not fond of me.

"I admit that I am lacking in many ways compared to Jasper. But there's one thing you can trust me on-no matter when and what happens, I will not break your heart."

His dark eyes looked so tender, sincere, and profound.

Nevertheless, to Alyssa, it felt like his eyes would become an abyss of eternal damnation once she took a wrong step.

Justin's public appearance with Alyssa at the Beckett family's party stirred up endless speculation. They even became a trending topic.

Not only that, news about Jasper and Alyssa's breakup spread like wildfire.

Feeling down, Jasper left the venue before the party even ended.

After getting into the car, he ripped off the tie bar that Sheryl gave to him. With a repulsed look in his eyes, he flung it carelessly at Xavier, who was driving.

"That's for you."Co

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Xavier was confused. He caught the tie bar in his hands and asked, "What's this, Mr. Beckett?"

Jasper closed his eyes to rest. He tugged at his tie knot but still felt suffocated.

"It was from Sheryl," he answered.

Xavier let out a cry. "This filthy thing is from that wild woman? I don't want it!"

With a disgusted look on his face, Xavier hurled the tie bar aside. "I'm already seeing someone. I don't want my girlfriend to misunderstand me."

"Girlfriend?"

"Yeah, Mr. Beckett. Maggie is my girlfriend."

With his eyes closed, Jasper frowned. "She's become of age?"

Xavier didn't know how he should react. "She's already in university, Mr. Beckett. Am I that much of an animal in your eyes?"

Suddenly, the memory of himself and Alyssa rescuing Maggie flashed through Jasper's mind.

Just then, Xavier exclaimed in surprise, "Mr. Beckett, look!"

Jasper opened his eyes slowly, and his heart jolted. Standing alone before his car was Alyssa, framed against the piercing headlights, snow swirling around her. The wind tossed her dark hair, and she looked almost fragile as if the wind might carry her away.

Without hesitation, Jasper stepped out of the car and approached her. owns all content.

"Hi, Mr. Beckett." Alyssa smiled slightly at him.

Looking at her face, which had turned red from the cold, he could tell that she had been wandering outdoors for a very long time.

He opened his mouth to speak but could not make a sound. All he could taste was a slight bitterness at the back of his throat. He remembered that she was someone who got cold quite easily.

Once the temperature dropped, she loved to snuggle in his arms and use his hands as her source of heat; his hands kept her warm regardless of the time of day.

Alyssa didn't hope to hear any words of concern from him. Even so, she didn't mind it. She softly asked, "Mr. Beckett, do you have time for a chat?"

Jasper pursed his lips. 'Let's chat in my car.'

"Sure. Thank you." Alyssa was very courteous to him. Even her way of speech sounded a little distant.

Her mature and sensible demeanor annoyed Jasper.

Xavier, being quick-witted, made space for this pair of ex-lovers to spend time together by getting out of the car to wait for them.

"It's your birthday tomorrow," Alyssa spoke up first to break the awkward atmosphere.

"Yeah." Jasper looked askance at her. He gulped silently.

He was just about to say that he didn't need any gifts when Alyssa surprised him with her next statement.

"Do you remember what you promised me?"

Jasper looked startled. He answered in a low, deep voice, "Of course."

"It's time for you to keep your promise."

"Then, it's time for you to fulfill that promise." She clenched her hands, her gaze intense. "I want you to go on a hike with me tomorrow at 3:00 p.m."

Jasper was surprised. He narrowed his eyes and asked, 'A hike? Where?'

"At Crater Mountain, Do you remember where that is?"

Alyssa laughed softly and choked, "Many years ago, you once saved a woman from a storm

at that place. That was the beginning of your story with her."

Jasper's heart skipped a beat. He balled his hands into fists. He hadn't lost his memories. Of course he remembered.

What I want you to promise me is to go hiking with me tomorrow."

"Is that all?"

Alyssa clicked her tongue. "If not, what did you think I'd ask you to do? To give yourself to me?"

Alyssa crossed her arms before her chest and tilted her chin proudly as if the high and noble Alyssa Taylor from the past had returned.

"Don't be so verbose. Are you going to promise me or not?"

"I promise," Jasper answered without any hesitation.

"Great. Pinky promise."

Without waiting for Jasper to react, Alyssa grabbed his warm hand. She extended that disabled pinky finger on her left hand. Strenuously and clumsily, she locked her pinky finger with his.

At that moment, Jasper's pupils constricted. He could feel that quiver in her pinky as a jolt of electricity shot through his heart.