

Divorce 831

Chapter 831 Getting Played

No one answered my question, and nobody seemed to know. This left me somewhat disappointed.

Yvette from our dormitory was the one who broke the silence, saying, "Since we left, she went back to her hometown. If you don't have her contact information, the rest of us won't have it either. We also lost contact with Judy from our dormitory. They probably aren't in Foswood."

A guy named Theo added, "I heard Beatrice has her own business, so she might have gone back to manage her own company."

Just then, the dishes started arriving. The waitstaff entered, beginning to serve dish after dish. The aroma of the food wafted through the private room.

To my surprise, Ivanna suddenly rushed out with her mouth covered.

I was puzzled and quickly followed her. In the restroom, she started vomiting again. There was something odd about this. It didn't seem like a stomach issue. "Ivanna, let me take you to the hospital for a checkup tomorrow," I said while patting her back. "Are you sure it's just a stomach problem?"

She looked at me with a hint of skepticism in her eyes, as if she had understood the underlying meaning of my words.

"How long has it been since your last period?" I asked.

Her face turned even paler. Looking at me, she murmured, "N-No way..."

"What's there to be surprised about?" I remarked, watching Ivanna.

She lowered her head, touching her abdomen.

My heart sank a bit, feeling uneasy. I didn't know whether Ivanna's being pregnant at this moment was a good thing or a bad thing.

Ivanna also seemed taken aback. She stayed silent and did not say a word.

I tried to console her, "Let's check tomorrow before jumping to conclusions. Don't think about it now."

After easing the tension, we returned to the private room. Michelle seized the opportunity to attack, "Ivanna, pregnant, huh?"

Ivanna immediately glanced at others, and quite a few people were looking our way.

I didn't mind if Michelle wanted to talk about me, but I felt displeased when she talked about Ivanna. Just as I was about to speak up, Ivanna stopped me.

Ivanna looked at Michelle and said,

"Yeah! What's so strange about it? If

I'm pregnant, I'll give birth to my child. Unlike some people who treat abortion with the same casualness as eating a meal, probably without knowing whose it is."

Everyone burst into laughter again. Ivanna had a carefree look, intentionally rubbing her stomach. "My baby's dad will own up to it. You don't have to worry, Michelle!"

The laughter continued, and everyone joined in teasing Ivanna, asking about her boyfriend and wanting her to introduce him to everyone.

Ivanna looked helpless. "He's not handsome and doesn't have a decent job. He doesn't like meeting people. Spare me. He's not presentable at all."

"Oh dear! Look at you, being modest again! Even an ugly son-in-law still needs to meet her in-laws! Not having a job isn't a big deal." Michelle laughed, apparently feeling quite satisfied.

At this point, I honestly found it hard to like this hostess.

The waitstaff served the dishes, and some people got up to look at the food. They loudly exclaimed, "Hey Michelle did you arrange today's dishes? The food is getting better. It looks like your taste is improving, huh? Why didn't you pick something cheap as usual?"

Everyone's gaze shifted to the dishes on the table, and many agreed that they were quite decent.

Michelle quickly stood up, her face filled with a mysterious smile. She invited everyone to raise their glasses for a toast.

I wasn't planning to drink, but Michelle said, "Ivanna, you're pregnant, right? Don't deny it. This opening toast is indispensable. Today's gathering is specifically arranged for you, Chlo. You should know what to do."

I just smiled, raising my glass. "No problem! It has been so many years since we last met, and today, I have to thank Michelle for this. She orchestrated this event, bringing everyone together again. So, for that I'll take this drink!"

After saying that, I took a sip of the

wine. Michelle quickly refilled my glass, saying, "One drink is not enough, Besides, you are our first entrepreneur running your own company. As you mentioned, did plan this for you. So, Chlo, will you foot the bill for today?"

Her words made a few people who were drinking almost spit their wine. Everyone looked directly at me, and they all understood. Michelle was playing me.

Chapter 832 Special Dishes

Everyone was looking at me, waiting for my response. A few genuinely concerned ones said, "Michelle, we finally met Chlo. How can you let her foot the bill? Let's stick to the old rule and go Dutch."

I was about to speak, but Michelle interrupted, "Forget it! Going Dutch? Chlo is no ordinary person now. She's the renowned Chloe Hartz in the Foswood construction industry. You're going to make her laugh. Go Dutch? What's on this table is nothing to her."

Ivanna looked at the smug Michelle and said, "This one needs a reality check."

I gestured for her to stay quiet. Michelle continued, "I understand Chlo very well. Even when she buys things for her child, it's all from luxury brands. Do you think she cares about the dishes for a bunch of old classmates? It would just be a joke."

She was trying to manipulate me, using moral pressure.

"Don't be petty! She'd be laughing at us if we went Dutch," she added, looking at me and asking, "Right, Chlo?"

Before I could answer, the door to the private room suddenly swung open, and the waiter pushed in a food cart.

Everyone looked over, and on the table were several huge plates filled with dishes that stunned everyone. All eyes turned to Michelle, and someone couldn't help but mutter, "This is a bit much!"

However, even Michelle seemed a bit unsettled. She looked at the waiter and said, "Wait... did you make a mistake? I-I didn't order this!"

I glanced at the gigantic plates, all filled with lobster. My heart skipped a beat, and looking at Michelle's pale face, she knew how expensive this dish was.

The waiter looked at Michelle and said, "There's no mistake. These are additional dishes ordered by Ms. Chloe Hartz from Acacia Hall on the second floor. One per person, according to the headcount. Aren't there exactly 26 of you? It's correct."

As soon as I heard the waiter, I understood. This had to be Atlas's doing, as we had discussed this when I arrived.

Michelle immediately looked at me, her finger trembling as she pointed at the lobsters, "Is this your order?"

I raised an eyebrow, "Yes! Is there a problem?"

Then, I quietly instructed the waiter, "Serve the dishes."

The waiter quickly and skillfully served the dishes, and everyone stared in shock at the gigantic lobsters on the plates.

Michelle's face was somewhat pale. It was as if she got slapped in the face.

Ivanna naturally understood the

situation and didn't hold back, saying. Don't be polite, everyone. Chlo was prepared for this. She didn't need to announce before she acted. That's crude!"

After saying that, she was the first to grab a lobster and put it in front of herself Trying to scam us with a few dishes? How embarrassing! Can't you come up with a classier move? Let's eat, don't be shy!"

At this point, even Michelle dared not make a sound. She quickly sat down and ate the food, trying to cover up her embarrassing behavior.

I found it quite amusing. All the

dishes she ordered could barely add

up to a plate of lobster. Regardless

of her attempt to trap me, this was the best she could do.

Everyone's faces were filled with pleasant smiles. Theo even said, "Chlo, I often travel to Beatrice's hometown for work. If I have time, I'll ask around for you."

"That would be great! Thank you!" I expressed my gratitude. "It's been so long since we last contacted each other."

"There's no need to be polite. Your lobster did the talking," Theo joked unabashedly.

The atmosphere was genuinely warm. The cups were refilled, and I had a few more drinks.

Ivanna nudged me, "Go to the restroom."

I nodded and got up with her to go to the restroom.

Before entering, we heard someone inside talking while washing their hands.

Chapter 833 A Leopard Doesn't Change Its Spots

A Leopard Doesn't Change Its Spots

I could tell who they were immediately from their voices.

One was from our dormitory, always trailing behind Michelle-Nana Howell. The other was Michelle herself.

Ivanna grabbed my arm and gestured for me to be quiet.

Nana asked Michelle, "So, what does Chloe do? How did she become so wealthy in just a few years?"

"Nonsense! Just because she can afford these doesn't mean the money is hers." Michelle's tone was dismissive. "As for what she does? I'd say she's a homewrecker."

Michelle continued with a scornful tone. "I did some discreet inquiries. Rumor has it that she attached herself to some wealthy guy right after her divorce a real tycoon."

"Really? That fast?" Nana's voice carried a gossipy excitement.

"Hmph! So what? It stirred up quite a fuss, and public opinion is not favorable. After all, she has a child and still trapped a young guy. She's just relying on her looks."

"She's like a cougar. There's nothing she can't do. Don't be fooled by her pretentious act. She's quite smart."

Michelle's words were bitter. A leopard cannot change its spots.

Ivanna was visibly angered. However, Michelle wasn't finished yet.

"Maybe she already had an affair with Matthew and made him a cuckold. People say he transferred all his assets when she divorced him, not giving her a penny. Do you think if she's innocent, this could happen? Matthew wouldn't do this if he weren't pushed to his limit. We both know how Matthew is."

"True, that explains her extravagance."

"Extravagant? Nonsense! She's just showing off. However, it's not something to be proud of. It's just a matter of luck. What's the big deal?"

Michelle's words were malicious, full of bitterness. "Men, all the same. After having their fun, they kick you away. I bet she'll still pretend to be innocent when the time comes."

"She seems to be close to Ivanna now. We didn't see them sticking together like this back in school," Nana said, her tone also dripping with disdain. "They're all the same! Birds of a feather flock together. They're just pretending to be rich. I can't stand people like them," Michelle said, lacking any mercy.

Ivanna walked straight into the bathroom. "Really? Then, who do you like? Whether you like someone or not is one thing, but pretending you don't want to be them? That's low. Isn't the lobster delicious? Didn't you enjoy it?" Ivanna stared at Michelle, asking casually but with a threatening tone.

"I saw you devouring it like a hungry wolf! I can't stand someone like you. At the very least, be grateful for it. Why is your mouth so foul? Did you eat crap?"

Ivanna's appearance in the restroom startled both of them. Nana's face turned white, and she stared at Michelle, then at me, stammering, "I... We weren't talking about you. We... We didn't think about you at all!"

I smiled at Michelle, not wanting to embarrass her. "Michelle, you're really working hard, gathering information from all sides. Don't take things out of context. Besides, this isn't the place to discuss such matters."

Having said that, I entered the restroom. When I came out after using it, Michelle and Nana had disappeared.

Back in the private room, they were all deep into another round of drinking games. Michelle dared not look at me, keeping a low profile.

After a few more rounds of toasts and dishes, they were already planning the next round. They insisted I join, but I quickly declined, saying, "No, I need to go back and check on my child. I'm looking forward to our next gathering."

Ivanna also hurriedly bid farewell to everyone. I knew that Atlas would settle the bill once the dishes were added. So, I didn't pay much attention to the payment process.

I forgot not everyone might forget. Michelle quickly called the waiter and asked, "How much is the bill for this table?"

"Hello! The total for your table is five thousand dollars," the waiter replied.

"Why is it so expensive? We didn't even drink that much!" Michelle was incredulous.

I calmly observed her now visibly changing face.

"Then... what about the additional dishes?" She looked at the leftovers on the table, hesitating.

"Forget it. We can't let Chloe pay for this. Let's stick to the usual. We'll go Dutch!" A guy stood up, ready to pull out his wallet.

"Wait a minute..." Michelle glanced at me, hesitated, and finally bit the bullet. "How can we split this bill? The additional dishes... Who's going to pay for that?"

Chapter 834 Who Will Pay?

Who Will Pay?

Her words created an awkward atmosphere. I just smiled faintly, watching Michelle's bewildered and nervous expression.

The total bill frightened her. If they were to split it equally, it would undoubtedly hurt her wallet, forcing her to speak up.

"Miss, here's the bill. You can check it." The waiter understood Michelle's hint and handed the bill to her.

As if afraid to touch it, Michelle muttered, "Don't give it to me. Let Ms. Chloe check it."

The waiter immediately turned and handed the bill to me. I calmly said, "It's fine. Has it been paid?"

"Yes, Ms. Chloe." the waiter said respectfully.

Michelle quickly caught on, visibly relieved. She looked at the waiter and asked, "It's settled? W-Who paid?"

"Mr. Atlas settled the bill," the waiter calmly repeated.

Ivanna looked at Michelle. "You're embarrassing. Do you think Chloe is like you? Would her face turn purple just because of a bill? You got one thing right. With Chloe here, you all don't have to go Dutch."

The waiter bowed and spoke to me in a low voice, "Mr. Atlas is here to pick you up. He's waiting outside."

"Okay," I said and stood up, looking at my classmates, who seemed concerned about me. "I'll leave first. We'll meet again soon."

Theo, hurriedly approached. "Chloe, don't worry about Beatrice. As long as I go to Beatrice's hometown again, I'll inquire carefully. I promise."

"Thank you so much! Leave me your phone number; if you have any information, give me a call." I provided my number after saying that. I noticed the others quickly jotting down my phone number.

Theo quickly said to me, "Why are you so courteous? We're classmates, after all. We should keep in touch. If we're talking about gratitude, we should thank you today for treating everyone to a meal."

"It's nothing. It's been so many years." I smiled politely and said, "I'll leave first."

I walked away with Ivanna.

"Atlas?"

A questioning voice came from behind us. I could tell it was Michelle.

Outside the private room, Ivanna frowned. "See that? I told you. People who plan these kinds of things have no life."

I looked at Ivanna and smiled. "Don't paint everyone with the same brush, okay? In any case, we did meet long-lost classmates. I'm really grateful to her."

"It's just you. This hostess is a real busybody. Do you know what her background is?" Ivanna looked at me seriously.

I walked down the stairs, glancing at Ivanna, asking, "What gossip have you gathered this time?"

Ivanna snorted. "Look at you! Do you think gossip needs to be gathered?"

I chuckled darkly and looked at Ivanna while walking. "You're right. This kind of occasion is the perfect breeding ground for gossip. So, spill!"

I didn't doubt Ivanna's statement at all. She was right. Gossip didn't need to be gathered, especially for someone like Ivanna working in the media. Her senses peaked.

Moreover, her personality was very likable, and she could easily build rapport among classmates. No doubt, they would willingly spill the beans.

"As soon as I got there, someone reported to me. Michelle, that shameless woman, is the gold digger."

Ivanna immediately started narrating the dark secrets she had collected. It seemed like she had been itching to share it.

"She's a full-time mistress!"

I nearly burst out laughing hearing Ivanna's words.

"Can you leave some decency in your words?" I teased her, "A full-time mistress?"

Ivanna shot me a sidelong glance, "Are you defending her? You're way too kind. Believe it or not, Michelle is indeed a full-time mistress. She relies on this to live like she's doing an honest job."

"Those who know her say that she worked for the first two years after graduation, then hooked up with a supervisor at their company. Unfortunately, she got caught by the guy's wife, causing a scandal at the company."

"She got fired. Since then, she hasn't had a proper job. Later on, she specialized in this field, acting like it's a legitimate profession."

Ivanna spilled the beans about Michelle's life, leaving me stunned.

Chapter 835 Pity Party

Pity Party

Ivanna's revelations about Michelle's recent "job" truly surprised me.

"Really?" I asked in astonishment. "Back in our school days, she was always obsessed with vanity, constantly getting guys to buy her food. That part still rings true."

"And now," Ivanna continued, "she's hooked up with a rural entrepreneur that owns a fish farm."

Hearing Ivanna's words made me laugh hard. "So, was the fish shop you mentioned earlier true?"

Ivanna looked disdainful and rolled her eyes. "Of course! Would I lie? Whenever they're together, she organizes these class reunions. But people have complaints. And Michelle isn't the only one. I've heard there are several others."

I shook my head with a wry smile, somewhat nostalgic, and said, "She's a real warrior."

Ivanna exclaimed in frustration. "Exactly! Fearless even of diseases. It seems she targeted you today by arranging this gathering. She probably noticed you're doing well. So, she wanted to freeload off your generosity. Ugh... what a piece of work."

As we walked out, I noticed a car's headlights in the not-so-distant parking lot suddenly come on, heading toward the entrance. I knew it had to be Atlas's car.

Ivanna glanced at me and said, "You go ahead. I'm heading home, too."

I looked at Ivanna with concern. "Are you sure you're okay on your own? How about I come with you, and tomorrow morning, we can go to the hospital together."

Ivanna motioned toward the approaching car and said, "Come on! He's here to pick you up. You better get going. Don't throw me a pity party."

I chuckled helplessly, adding, "Alright, you wait for me tomorrow morning, and we'll go for a checkup together. Drive carefully and head straight home. Don't go anywhere else!"

"Oh, come on, you sound like my mom." Ivanna waved dismissively. She walked away, heading to her own car.

We used her car when we came because Atlas had mentioned he had a prior engagement and would pick me up later.

Before I descended the steps, Michelle and the others had already followed. She stood next to me, looking down at the stairs.

"Chloe, why haven't you left yet?" she asked.

Just then, Atlas's car arrived at the bottom of the stairs. He opened the car door and stepped out.

Seeing him, Michelle exclaimed, "Chloe, is he... Is he Atlas?"

I didn't answer her. It seemed Michelle only knew him by name, not by face.

No wonder when she saw Atlas under Arkadia restaurant that day, she looked confused, deliberately probing about my background.

Atlas stood at the bottom of the stairs, looking up at me with a warm smile.

I could hear the suppressed gasps behind me.

Extending his hand, Atlas walked toward me. I quickly descended the stairs, and he reached for my hand, nodding politely to the people on the stairs. Then, holding my hand, he led me toward the car.

Like a true gentleman, he carefully settled me in the car. Afterward, he circled around the car, entered from the other side, and the car pulled away.

Chapter 836 The Dilemma

The Dilemma

I could imagine the state the people behind us were in.

In the car, Atlas glanced at the time and said to me, "Shall I take you to see Anya?"

"Really?" I instantly got excited and looked at him joyfully.

Atlas indulgently said, "I actually need to meet someone there too."

I playfully slapped his leg. "I thought you were taking me to see Anya. So you had business there too," I said, teasing him.

He reached for my chin, his handsome face approaching mine. "What? Any objections? I can choose not to go," he said indulgently.

I giggled happily, leaning into his embrace playfully. "No, I want to go! It's been so long since I've seen Anya. I want to check on that girl and see how she's doing."

Atlas lowered his head and kissed my lips greedily, then asked, "So, am I still doing this for myself?"

I dodged and giggled. "Well, technically, yes. There's clearly some business you need to attend to, but you insist on saying you're accompanying me to see her."

"Then I'll just accompany you to see Anya. Any objections now?" Atlas said affectionately, indulging my ribbing.

"Haha..." I laughed and pounced into his arms. "Can you stop teasing me? I ate so much today."

"Why are you so happy? Did you see someone you liked?" Atlas scrutinized me, pretending to be sour.

I side-eyed him, saying, "You were very extravagant. You ordered such a huge lobster for every single person."

I gestured, making a pointed remark.

He narrowed his eyes., "I was afraid you wouldn't have been able to eat any, so I just got everyone their own. "

His explanation left me speechless once again.

I suddenly remembered what Liora had asked me today, so I told him about it and asked, "Why do you think they all want to hand Ardora over to me?"

That question had been bothering me.

Atlas frowned and thought for a moment before saying, "It must be related to Matthew's case."

I looked at his handsome face, pondering, then asked, "Are you saying they think they can't win the case?"

"Yes, they're probably getting ready for something. Melvern must have sensed it early on, so he came here in advance to make it look like he's doing you a favor. Liora might be using this as a way to test you," Atlas explained.

I fell into silence and thought about what Liora and I had said. I was shocked, and something dawned on me. I looked at him in dismay and said, "Oh no, I might have tipped our hand! I mentioned to her that Melvern was transferring the shares to me just to show off."

My bewildered expression must have amused Atlas. He laughed in a charming and alluring way.

Anxious, I slapped him, saying, "Why are you laughing?"

He embraced me, pinched my nose, and said, "Just let it be. We do want to surprise her a little. People can't usually think straight when they're terrified. Do you understand?"

I stared at Atlas's captivating face, thinking about his words. I had to admit he was right.

"So, what's our next step? Should we take over Ardora?" I asked Atlas.

"That depends on Matthew," Atlas said wisely.

I didn't quite understand what he meant, so he explained, "We've prepared for his case in the early stages, and there's no doubt we'll win, right?"

I nodded.

"But here's the thing. Matthew has been severely weakened. That business in Muborough alone has dealt him a severe blow. Is it possible for him to come back from this?"

I shook my head. "Given his character, it's highly unlikely. I can ensure his freedom, but I can't lift him up again. We were both motivated the first time, but you can't get tripped up by the same stone twice. I have no reason to repeat that mistake."

My words were rational, reflecting my true thoughts.

"So, it depends on Matthew. We need to know what he's thinking. Do you get that?" Atlas asked me.

"Otherwise, we'll end up with a reputation for taking advantage of someone in a crisis. People will read ulterior motives into everything we did before. We can only take over if he voluntarily gives up. Whether we do take it or not doesn't matter much."

Atlas glanced at me and continued, "Because his mess comes with it too."

He weighed the pros and cons with me. "Think about it carefully. Make your decision, and I'll respect it."

To be honest, I knew what I wanted.

But something completely unexpected happened.

Chapter 837 Melanie's Daring Escape

Melanie's Daring Escape

We arrived at the warehouse and met Anya. She had become less reserved and could now say a few sentences in our language. This surprised me, but it just proved her intelligence and eagerness to learn.

I was sure we would be able to speak without a translator soon if she kept progressing at this pace.

The person Atlas wanted to meet was from Bermuda, and unfortunately, there was still no good news from there. Meanwhile, Loak had been insisting that he wanted to go back.

His reasoning was simple. He was familiar with that place and might be able to find someone quickly.

However, Atlas had consistently refused his request.

On our way back, I asked Atlas why he didn't want to let Loak return. He said it wasn't the right time, and Loak had been away for too long. He needed an opportune moment to return; otherwise, those people could be ruthless, and he feared for Loak's safety.

We returned to Pleca Park at a very late hour, and I received some shocking news.

Melanie had escaped from prison!

I held the phone tightly for a while before running to the study. Atlas had said he needed to handle an urgent document and hadn't returned to our room.

As he saw me rushing in, he asked concernedly, "What's wrong?"

"Melanie has escaped!" I said urgently, "Will this affect Matthew's trial?"

After all, Matthew's case was directly related to Melanie.

Atlas frowned and said, "The fact that she escaped during this time will definitely have an impact on this case. This seems to be premeditated."

I walked to his side, feeling worried. Atlas pulled me into his arms, then picked up the phone as he comforted me, "Don't worry. I'll find out what happened."

Then he thought for a moment and made a call to have someone investigate the details of Melanie's escape.

I called Adrian to get more information as well. He said he'd work on it and would call me back shortly.

Melanie was truly Matthew's nemesis. With the trial approaching, her escape might mean Matthew had to remain in custody, and things were becoming more uncertain.

At that moment, Atlas's phone rang. I focused and listened intently as he put the call on speaker.

"The inmate suddenly complained that she had severe abdominal pain tonight, and we suspected she had acute appendicitis. They couldn't perform the surgery on her in the prison hospital, so we sent her to Klmein Hospital.

"There was a traffic accident on the way to the hospital. A dump truck had overturned and was blocking the road. The vehicle transporting the inmate to the hospital happened to be behind them and got stuck too.

"A prison guard got out to inspect the situation. At that moment, the inmate said she was in severe pain and needed to use the restroom, so another guard accompanied her there. They were attacked, and the inmate escaped. We're making every effort to apprehend her right now."

The entire scenario sounded like a scene from a blockbuster, but I caught the crucial point. I muttered to myself, "Another dump truck?"

Atlas ended the call and called Dylan, instructing him to swiftly investigate Melanie's escape route and to keep a close eye on Keegan's movements.

"Melanie is heading toward a dead end." Atlas sighed.

I was speechless. This incident, which had involved an attack on the guards and an escape, had escalated significantly.

"Why are you monitoring Keegan?" I asked in confusion. "Do you think this has something to do with the Thompson family as well?"

"Yes, it's too much of a coincidence. Melanie escaped right as Matthew's trial was approaching. That suggests that the Thompson family is on alert, and Keegan may be making a move."

I had to admire Atlas's quick thinking.

"Maybe this is a breakthrough." Atlas mused to himself, then looked at me. "You go rest. I'm heading out for a while."

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"I need to deal with the aftermath. This incident will have many repercussions. I need to be prepared," Atlas explained. "You wait for Adrian's call. I'll be back soon."

I nodded, and he escorted me back to the room before going out. I didn't see his car leaving through the main gate from upstairs, so it was likely that he had taken the secret passage.

Chapter 838 Waiting for News

Waiting for News

I waited until it was late, but Adrian didn't call me back. Exhausted, I lay down on the sofa and drifted off to sleep.

When I woke up, it was already the next morning.

One arm was tightly wrapped around me. I had no idea when Atlas had come back, but he must have carried me to bed.

I didn't dare move when I saw him sleeping so peacefully. I just snuggled into his arms, thinking about Melanie.

I wondered if she had gone to look for her son. It looked like I couldn't wait for Matthew to make up his mind. I had to take the child back to the Reese family.

I was worried about Charlie's safety. After all, Johnson wasn't his legal guardian. If Melanie tried to take the child, Myra wouldn't be able to stop her. If that happened, Melanie might become extremely ruthless.

I had to take him home sooner or later. Sending him back earlier would save Johnson and his wife from trouble.

After all, if the child went back to the Reese family, Melanie wouldn't dare provoke them. She wouldn't dare mess with Arton, especially considering how Arton probably knew a lot about her.

If she took the child away, she might ruin him.

Atlas was right. We were all feeling the chain reactions from this incident. But what worried me most was whether Matthew's case could go to trial as scheduled.

It wasn't until a phone call woke Atlas up that I left his embrace. He squinted, answered the phone, then hugged me again, giving me a kiss. "You're awake?"

"Yeah. What time did you get back last night?" I asked, looking at his weary face.

"Around 2 or 3 in the morning. You want to sleep a little more?" He softly asked me while kissing me.

"I'm not sleeping anymore. There's a lot on my mind. I want to take Charlie back to the Reese family to help Johnson and his wife avoid trouble. Melanie's on the loose, and she's a danger to the child. If she takes him away, he'll suffer."

I turned to look at Atlas and asked, "Any news on Melanie?"

"It's the cops' job to catch her. She won't be able to run for long. But this is a big deal." Atlas got up and helped me up. We got dressed and went downstairs for breakfast.

I didn't expect to see Arnold at the table too.

He said he was planning to return to Monora today.

"You're going back already?" I looked at him in surprise. "I thought you could stay here a while longer."

"What is it? You can't bear to see me go? I'll stay a little longer then," Arnold said mischievously.

Atlas immediately turned cold, "Stop kidding yourself. Hurry up and go back, don't hang around here."

Arnold smiled playfully. "This is my sister's place. It's normal for her to spoil me like this."

Then he turned to me. "I'll go back to handle business over there. I'll be back here soon, and this time, I won't leave."

"Really?" I instantly felt happier.

Atlas frowned, glanced at me, and said, "What's so good about him coming back?"

"Of course, it'll be good. It's lively here with him. Don't you think he should have come back long ago? Grandma Rose is getting old, and he should take over the business. Otherwise, he'll never grow up."

Atlas was immediately amused. "You know he's just a lazy guy, right?"

Then he looked at Arnold and said, "Did you hear that? Why are you so lazy?"

"Pfft. As if you're the only one who can handle business," Arnold retorted disdainfully.

When Ava and Jenny came downstairs, he was instantly surrounded. They fussed at him to take them to kindergarten.

I quickly finished my meal and went to work with Atlas. I had to let him drive me to the company since my car hadn't been brought back yesterday.

As soon as I got out of the car in front of the company building, Michelle rushed over and called to me, "Chloe!"

Chapter 839 His Fate

His Fate

Michelle's sudden appearance startled me. Why was she here so early in the morning?

After calling me, she nodded and bowed toward Atlas's car obsequiously.

I closed the car door, looked at her, and asked, "What's the matter?"

"Oh... It's nothing important. I was just thinking, and I might have gone too far. Nana instigated it all, and I said the wrong things. You're the bigger person here, Chloe, so don't..." She trailed off, trying to apologize.

I glanced at her coldly, not wanting to engage, and said indifferently, "If you're sincere about your apology, then go back. I have things to do." After saying that, I walked toward the building.

She followed me closely. "Won't you invite me into your office to chat, Chloe? I haven't been to your company yet."

"I'm busy today. Sorry, I have no time to show you around." I refused decisively. Since she had come to apologize so early in the morning, she must have ulterior motives. I didn't have time to deal with her.

"Oh, come on, why are you being like this? I don't need you to take me anywhere. I just want to see what your company looks like. We're classmates. That makes us practically family." She clung to me like a parasite, unwilling to let go.

As we reached the entrance, we ran into Carol. Before I could say anything, my phone rang again. I checked, and it was Adrian.

I quickly handed the car keys to Carol. "Get my car and wait for me at the entrance. We're going to Adrian's office."

Carol immediately agreed. She took the keys and headed toward the underground garage. Meanwhile, I answered Adrian's call.

"Chloe. I didn't call you last night because it was late," Adrian said.

"No problem. I just arrived at the office. If you're free, I'll come to your law firm now for a discussion." I wanted to meet him in person to discuss the many unclear aspects of the situation.

"Sure, let's talk later." Then he hung up the phone.

Adrian had always been straightforward in both his words and actions.

Carol pulled up the car and stopped in front of me. Just as I was about to get in, Michelle grabbed my arm. "I don't have any plans today. Chloe. Let me follow you."

I looked at her coldly and didn't mince my words. "Do you think it's appropriate for you to come with me to meet the lawyer?"

Her mouth twitched awkwardly, and she stammered, "Uh... well, then, you go ahead. I'll go shopping. How about lunch together at noon? My treat."

"There's no need for that. I'm busy today. I don't have time," I replied, opening the car door and getting in.

I ignored Michelle while she stood there and watched me get in the car. She continued to stare after the car as we left.

As we drove away from the building, Carol asked, "Who was that woman?"

I replied nonchalantly, "She's a classmate from my college days. A troublesome friend. By the way, if she comes to the company looking for me again, just say I'm not in. Her name is Michelle. You can let the receptionist know too."

"Got it," Carol responded.

Adrian was waiting for me at the law firm. When we entered, he was on the phone dealing with matters related to the court.

After hanging up, he said, "We can't confirm if the trial can proceed as planned right now. We'll have to wait for a meeting to confirm this."

I shared all my concerns with Adrian. After careful consideration, he went through the entire sequence of events, explaining all the pros and cons.

This situation was complicated by the fact that Matthew and Melanie were married. If their marriage wasn't legitimate, Melanie's case in Muborough would be a different matter. Ironically, their marriage certificate had been issued after the child was born.

This was fate, and Matthew couldn't escape this calamity.

Atlas discussed the matter in detail with Adrian. Melanie's escape also meant that the case involving Keegan would be put on hold. We had solid evidence for the incident involving the clerk, but since the key person had escaped, the case would be postponed. There was no way to conclude the situation in Muborough now.

When Adrian said that, I immediately understood why Atlas had called Dylan and immediately arranged for tight surveillance on Keegan when he heard the news.

From what I understood, the Thompson family was not only trying to frame Matthew. They were also trying to buy time for Keegan.

Chapter 840 Taking a Leap into the Abyss

Taking a Leap into the Abyss

After leaving Adrian's office, I returned to the car. Carol asked, "Are we going back to the company?"

After contemplating, I shook my head and firmly said to Carol, "No, let's go to Myra's place."

Carol immediately started the car. As she drove, she asked, "When did Melanie escape? Why is that woman always up to something?"

I shook my head helplessly at Carol's complaint. "She's digging her own grave. It happened last night. Didn't you hear what Adrian said? Even the prison wardens couldn't understand what she was doing. If she goes back this time, she'll never get out again."

"She really is causing trouble for Matthew," Carol sighed. "But to be honest, Chloe, Matthew isn't worth pitying. You're doing him a favor. That family is just..."

Carol shook her head disdainfully.

I didn't respond at first. I gazed at the passing streets and sighed. "I honestly don't even know if what I'm doing is right."

Carol glanced at me while driving. "I understood what Adrian was saying. Melanie's escape means the Muborough case can't be concluded, and even if Matthew's case goes to trial and he wins, he'll still lose everything. He'll be in a difficult situation even if he gets Ardora back. How will he be able to recover with all that insurmountable debt?"

"He's been doing the wrong thing since the beginning. He's stepped into the abyss with this move now." I sighed.

Matthew had been very determined in the early days of our entrepreneurship.

"If he can't repay his loans, he'll have to use the company as collateral. But does his company even have any value now?" Carol remarked. "Besides the project in Muborough, everything else has been messed up by Liora. Even if he wins this lawsuit, he'll be leaving a trail of disaster behind him. I think things will be tough for him."

Carol's assessment was consistent with what Atlas had told me yesterday. I was well aware of how much of a mess this had become.

"I need to tell you this, Chloe. You shouldn't be too soft-hearted. Melanie is not a good person, but Matthew isn't a saint either," Carol said. "Now that you're with Mr. Atlas, his love for you is evident to the world. You shouldn't let him down."

I nodded. "Don't worry. I know what I'm doing."

"After you deal with Matthew this time, it would be best for you to leave him alone. Even if Mr. Atlas has no objections, you know what public opinion is like. They'll make up any old rumors."

I nodded to Carol and patted her arm. "Alright."

I knew that everyone around me cared for me like family and expressed genuine concern from their hearts.

When I arrived at Myra's place, I took out the things I had bought for the kids a few days ago from the trunk.

Myra opened the door and was pleasantly surprised. "How did you have time to come here today, Chloe?"

I looked inside and didn't see Charlie, so I asked Myra, "Where's Charlie?"

Myra whispered to me, "He's asleep. He just had a full meal and is sleeping soundly now."

I walked in with Carol and handed the things to Myra, who immediately said, "You don't need to bring anything like this next time. There's still formula left over from the last time you brought it here."

"Ava's uncle happened to go to Arkadia Plaza to get some things for her the day before yesterday, so I just tagged along and got all this," I said casually.

I sat on the sofa with Myra and said seriously, "I came here to tell you something. I want to take Charlie back to the Reese family."