

Divorce 971

Chapter 971 Sneaky

Carol returned quickly, and the coffee was still piping hot.

She glanced at me and asked, "Do you want a cup, Chlo?"

I chuckled. "It's alright, let him have it. He deserves it."

Carol cast a sneaky glance at Grayson.

Turning back to him, I continued, "With this information, his move to Foswood is nothing but trouble. As soon as he takes action, he'll be caught. It's just a matter of time."

Grayson handed me a few more papers. "This is the information you wanted about—"

Before Grayson could finish, Lauren's voice came from the door. "Why are you just standing here? Come inside! What's with the sneaky behavior?"

All three of us in the office turned our heads to the door, and we saw Lauren pushing the door open, looking displeased.

Standing next to her was none other than Adelaide.

My gaze fixated on Adelaide's face, silent but coldly observing. Adelaide looked embarrassed with an awkward smile.

She glanced at me, explaining hesitantly, "I-I wanted to ask Ms. Chloe if she needed me to do anything, but when I walked over, I heard voices. I felt torn if I should go in or not, so..." Lauren was relentless as she scolded Adelaide, "Is this how secretaries behave? Did you act like this in your previous company? Tanum does not allow such things to happen."

I hadn't spoken the whole time, but my gaze turned colder, steadily fixed on Adelaide's face.

Adelaide looked toward me with some anxiety, "I-I was not sure whether to come in or not."

I asked Carol casually, "Carol, didn't you assign her some tasks?"

Carol quickly replied, "I've already assigned her tasks. I told her to

check the reports from the

marketing department, whickel.net

you

urgently needed."

I turned my gaze back to Adelaide. "I've already told you, report to Carol if there's anything. And about those reports, have you finished them?"

Adelaide gulped. "Not yet. I'll get to it right away."

Upon saying that, she tried to leave.

"Wait..." I spoke solemnly, "In the future, report only to Carol. Don't bypass the hierarchy system when you need to discuss something with me will ask Carol to inform you if I need to talk to you."

Although my tone was calm, the meaning was clear.

Then, without much emotion, I added, "You can go now."

Adelaide maintained her smiling facade and nodded. "I'll get back to work now."

She turned and left. Watching her retreating figure, I fell into contemplation.

Lauren, displeased, said, "She improvised quite well, but I saw her eavesdropping outside. Luckily, I arrived in time."

I glanced at Carol solemnly, advising her, "Please pay more attention to her."

Carol nodded and left the room.

Grayson frowned. "Is she new here? How unruly."

I pondered for a moment. "It's not a big issues Carol came in with coffee for the second time, and we had already stopped the discussion. Caret had been in and out, so she shouldn't have been there long."

Lauren spoke seriously to me, "Chlo, you should be careful about people you don't know much about. After all, she did come from some background." Grayson asked, "Background? What background?"

Chapter 972 Beatrice's Family

I responded, "Someone brought her in. By the way, can you look into Nicholas's case? Why did it end up unresolved? What exactly happened?" "Nicholas McClain?" Grayson asked back.

Before I could answer, Lauren chimed in, "Yes, that Nicholas. He used to be Arthur's secretary's driver. Later, he got into trouble and even got into a massive car accident. "This guy went to prison for a while, and later it all fizzled out. We don't even know when he was released from prison. Check how he got out and what he's up to now." Lauren said exactly what I had in mind.

"Sure thing, no problem," Grayson replied.

After discussing this, I lowered my head to look at the documents in my hands, only to discover that this was the real information about Beatrice.

Surprised, I asked Grayson, "Did you really manage to find information on Beatrice so quickly? Your speed is impressive."

I have to admit that I truly admire my subordinate. Atlas sent me an efficient assistant.

Grayson cryptically said, "Let's talk about the big twist in your classmate's situation. Your classmate might not actually be suffering from a mental illness and was possibly set up." Lauren also sat down, eager to hear more. She looked at Grayson with anticipation.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing, and gasped.

"What do you mean? Are you saying that Beatrice might not actually have a mental illness?"

Lauren was also getting excited.

Grayson nodded solemnly. "It seems that way, although it's just our speculation. Based on the information we've gathered so far, Beatrice might not be sick at all."

Lauren urged him, "Go on, tell us!"

I couldn't believe my ears and looked at Grayson. He walked over, pulled out the chair in front of me, and sat down.

"Based on the information we found, the Chandler family has a prominent position in Gerby. They have a company that produces cables, which is doing quite well, with many orders for export. They also have a dairy business."

I nodded, knowing as much. Beatrice was indeed very privileged back then.

"Beatrice's father, Byron Chandler,

entered the business world quite

early. But we need to start with Beatrice's mother, Helen Keller. She's the heiress of the Keller family's dairy business in Gerby and has an excellent family background. She and Byron were high school classmates."

Grayson's narrative was detailed, and Lauren and I were fixed on him, afraid to miss any details.

"As fate would have it, they also had

a classmate named Jocelyn Marrow. Jocelyn was Helen's close friend. The two of them were in middle school together, and later; both managed to get into Gerby

High School. There, they ran into Byron and became classmates again.

"Jocelyn is quite beautiful, even more so than Beatrice's mother. Byron, although not very handsome, was tall. He didn't come from a wealthy family, but he had good grades and was always second place in school. He was the school's

heartthrob."

"Of course, Jocelyn and Helen both secretly liked Byron. Helen came from a renowned family. Although she was not as beautiful, she was generous and kind.

I guessed what was coming when I heard this.

I interjected, "It seems that Beatrice is really like her mother! Beatrice was very outgoing and generous. Everyone in our school liked her."

Grayson snapped his fingers and nodded, saying, "Exactly! Helen was reportedly the same back when she was in high school. She was kind, generous, and outgoing. But now it seems that this was not a good attitude."

Grayson continued, "Jocelyn saw the potential in her, befriended Helen, and stuck to her like a shadow."

Lauren had already guessed what was going on and sighed. "That's tragic."

Chapter 973 Unreasonable

Grayson nodded at Lauren.

"When we investigated, their classmates revealed that Byron's family had some issues. Helen, without any hesitation, helped Byron out of the predicament. That's how Byron and Helen began their romance." Lauren shook her head in resignation. "If this were a soap opera, Helen would be the target."

"You're right. Their relationship planted the evil seed within Jocelyn. Just as they started dating, Jocelyn started to alienate Helen."

"Later, unable to resist the allure of Helen's fashionable lifestyle, Jocelyn reconciled with her. Helen isn't stingy and would give Jocelyn everything. I mean, look at her. Her family runs Keller's Dairy. Everyone grew up with their milk."

"Byron knew how to play his cards right," Lauren said.

"But he set a trap for the next generation," I commented.

Grayson nodded. "Byron, who also liked Jocelyn, chose Helen. However, things didn't go as smoothly as Byron hoped. Their relationship faced strong opposition from Helen's family. As Byron and Helen's classmates can confirm, these details are verifiable."

"Ha! It seems that the opposition was not wrong at all. One wrong step and everything goes downhill," I remarked.

Grayson continued, "Hold off on the criticism for now and listen to the rest. Helen refused to listen to her family. Since she was the only daughter of the Keller family, she even declared that she would sacrifice the entire family just to stay with Byron."

Lauren scoffed, "If she hadn't cared about the Keller family, there wouldn't have been a tragedy. Byron would definitely not continue the relationship."

"Helen struggled against her family for three years. Only after becoming pregnant with Beatrice did the Keller family reluctantly give in. Helen finally married Byron as she wished. However, the Keller family did not allow Byron to participate in the management of Keller's Dairy.

"That's it. People like Byron are bound to be petty and vengeful. He must've been upset since he chose Beatrice for her family background," Lauren said.

Grayson continued, "Byron is a

smart person. He kept his emotions

hidden and showed no interest in

Keller's Dairy. He went to run the

cable factory's business, working

silently for five or six years.

"How dedicated!" I sighed.

Grayson disdainfully chuckled. "Listen to this. After running the business, Beatrice was born. Jocelyn's daughter, Hazelyn Chandler, was also born, just two years apart!"

When Grayson reached this point, he looked disgusted. "These are all accounts from their classmates. Everyone was indignant about it."

"Helen had no idea?" I asked.

"It wasn't until after Helen's death, and Jocelyn shamelessly entered the Chandler family that everyone woke up from their delusions. Hazelyn's original name was Hazel Marrow. Think about it!"

"I can't believe this! That's some serious betrayal. Helen couldn't even trust her best friend!" Lauren exclaimed. "Byron is really something!"

I was furious and felt sorry for Beatrice. How could she have such a father?

Then I asked, "So, did Helen ever find out about Jocelyn's child? How did Jocelyn explain her situation then? Given how close they were, Helen could not possibly be unaware of how Jocelyn's child was born. She never doubted anything?"

I bombarded Grayson with a series of questions because it felt so unreasonable.

Chapter 974 Furious

Grayson shook his head with frustration. "Well, they say Helen wasn't the brightest. Jocelyn had been married to someone who had moved to Gerby. That guy took off with all her assets shortly after tying the knot. Rumor has it that Jocelyn was devastated. She became a huge joke.

"Helen was kind enough to comfort Jocelyn and even gave her a generous allowance to help her get back on her feet. These are all stories from their classmates. Some of them suspected it was all a setup, and Helen ended up suffering the consequences."

I was surprised. "That was such a calculated move."

"It serves Helen right for being so naive and lacking common sense!" Lauren exclaimed in frustration.

Anyone hearing this story could see through it. I couldn't help but wonder how Beatrice felt when she learned about all this.

As her good friend, I felt a twinge of guilt.

I had been too selfish then, focusing entirely on starting a business and neglecting the upheaval in the Chandler family. What kind of friend was I?

Ironically, I encountered a man with a similar story to Helen's.

I shuddered at the thought of what might have happened if I had not discovered what Matthew was up to at the time.

In a way, Helen and I shared similar fates. The difference was that I had Atlas, who had been waiting for me for over a decade.

For Helen, this might have cost her her daughter's life.

As these thoughts crossed my mind, I felt increasingly restless. I had to help Beatrice.

Grayson told me, "According to the information we've gathered, Byron and Jocelyn had quite a comfortable life outside. Surprising, isn't it?" Grayson added, "Nothing can stay hidden forever."

I slammed the table. Grayson noticed my reaction and hastily said, "Chlo, you're getting worked up. Don't worry, there's more. Let me continue the story."

He grinned at me with a mischievous charm.

"We also discovered that the cable factory Byron acquired had quite a backstory," Grayson continued.

I asked, "What is it?"

"In his sixth year working there, the original factory manager suddenly died in a car accident, leaving behind two children, both quite young. The widow, who didn't understand Cable manufacturing, struggled to sustain the factory."

"So, Byron seized the opportunity," Lauren interjected.

Grayson nodded. "Byron negotiated with the widow, offering her money to support the two children. He sweet-talked the widow into agreeing, expressing his gratitude for allowing him to take over the factory." "He's quite the opportunist." I sighed.

"He is," Lauren agreed.

"Professional appraisers were

brought in at the time. After discussions with the widow, they decided on a price of 150 thousand.

Byron bought the cable factory which had an annual output exceeding millions, in one fell

swoop."

"Why did these idiots let Byron get away with it?" Lauren complained.

"He's just too shrewd!" I shook my head.

"He even generously gave an

additional 50 thousand to make it a

for

round figure. He claimed it was for the two children, saying they were

el?

still young and struggling. The, widow almost knelt in gratitude. Byron gained a reputation for his

kindness!" Grayson sneered.

"Byron is inhumane! I guess he hired those people who decided on the price." Lauren snapped.

"Kindness? He has no conscience," Grayson snorted. "He extorted that 200 thousand from Helen. That was Helen's private fund. Yet he continued to have a life outside."

"He's just an empty shell wearing the mask of benevolence. He's playing with manipulative tactics!" I couldn't bear to listen anymore. "How could such a good person like Beatrice have a father like him?"

"He became this way because of Helen, who allowed him to act recklessly and play with everything at his fingertips."

Lauren couldn't control her emotions. She was furious at the injustice.

Grayson looked at us as if he hadn't slept all night. He animatedly asked, "Are you still listening? If not, I'm going to sleep."

Chapter 975 Silently Concerned

We both immediately exclaimed in unison, "Of course, we're listening!" Grayson said, "Quick! Have Carol bring me another cup of coffee."

I promptly rang the bell, summoning Carol to pour three cups of coffee for us.

Carol quickly turned around to fetch the coffee for us.

She hesitated and looked at Grayson. She couldn't hold back and asked casually, "Have you had breakfast? Are you just drinking coffee?" Grayson looked helpless. "When do I have time for breakfast? I need to report this. After the briefing, I'll grab a bite and sleep."

Carol walked out. I knew she must be preparing something for him.

Grayson took a big sip and continued, "Unexpectedly, life is full of twists and turns. One day, Keller's Dairy suddenly encountered trouble."

"What?" I exclaimed.

Lauren also seemed frozen, forgetting to sip her coffee. Grayson shrugged.

"Milk poisoning. It led to two deaths! It caused a sensation in Gerby then, and Helen's father was also arrested. Her mother, in a fit of anger, had a sudden stroke. What do you think Helen could do in such a situation?"

My heart sank. This wasn't good.

As expected, Grayson continued, "Byron took over Keller's Dairy at the critical moment and eventually emerged at the top."

I didn't want to hear anymore. I had a hunch that all of this was related to Beatrice's father.

Grayson, however, continued, "When Helen's mother had a stroke, Jocelyn helped take care of the old lady. Not long after, the old lady passed away."

Lauren put down her coffee cup and said what I wanted to say, "Grayson, you should re-investigate. This can't all be just a coincidence. Is it milk poisoning that leads to the deaths? They've been in the business for so many years. How is that believable?"

"Congratulations, Lauren, I think the same way. That's why I've already arranged for someone to investigate!" Grayson looked at both of us.

"I'm amazing, right?" He mischievously asked.

Just then, Carol came in carrying a lunchbox.

Lauren and I exchanged glances, pretending we hadn't seen anything.

Grayson looked at Carol teasingly. "Carol, you're making progress. I'm starving. I had to fill my stomach with coffee."

He wore a pitiful look and glanced at Carol with a hint of tenderness in his eyes.

Carol sneakily glanced at me, pretended to be shocked, and asked hushedly, "Why aren't you eating yet?! Stop talking. Don't drink too much coffee. It's not good for your stomach." After saying that, she hurriedly went out to pour a cup of hot water and then blushed as she left.

Lauren timely commented, "Grayson, Carol is a good girl. Don't act clueless."

Grayson grinned. "She just got me food, and look at how nosy you two are."

But I didn't want to listen anymore and asked him, "Are we being nosy? You little scoundrel. You're so heartless!"

"That's unscrupulous, Ms. Chloe!" He exclaimed.

"It's two different things. Don't interrupt me," I scolded him.

"The story isn't over yet. Do you want to hear more?" He asked playfully.

I disdainfully said, "Go on."

Seeing that he had successfully changed the subject, Grayson quickly continued.

"Beatrice should have had a premonition." Grayson suddenly added.

"Why would you say that?" I asked anxiously.

"It's strange Beatrice and Hazel, oh, I mean Hazelyn, grew up together but Beatrice was never very friendly to Hazel It's said that Beatrice never played with Hazel." Grayson Cooked at me while chewing his food.

I glanced at his plate, and I had to admit that it looked delicious. It looked like a carefully selected order.

"It seems that the situation in the

Chandler family is indeed complicated. What happened that led Beatrice to end up in a mental hospital? I'm eager to know what happened when she returned to

Gerby," I anxiously asked Grayson.

"If you remember, Beatrice hadn't graduated yet when she returned home," Grayson said. "At least that's what it seems."

I pondered.

Indeed, she hadn't graduated yet when she left in such a hurry.

Then, I slammed the table. "Yes, you're right! She left in a hurry. It was our senior year. At that time, we were all looking for internships.. was busy thinking about starting a business with Matthew and didn't have time to worry about her."

Chapter 976 Something Fishy

As soon as we got to that point, I remembered what happened back then.

"When she left, she came to say goodbye to me in a rush, mentioning an urgent matter in her hometown. I remember asking her, 'What's the matter? Why the rush?' but she didn't give me a clear answer and left in a hurry."

Thinking about it now, I regretted being so careless. But even if I had known something back then, what could I have done?

I continued, "Then everyone went to their internships, and Beatrice never returned. We only had occasional phone calls. At that time, I was busy with starting a business, dealing with Matthew, and the daily hustle of the building materials business. I didn't have time to contact her."

As I spoke, the bitterness in my heart intensified. If I had known she was in trouble, I would have helped her, even if I wasn't that important back then.

"I didn't think anything would go wrong since she was back in her hometown with her parents, so I neglected her. I didn't know about her father. She even did her thesis in a hurry. We only met once during the graduation photoshoot, exchanged a few words, and she disappeared.

"I thought about having a celebratory party together since we graduated, but she was already gone. I called her urgently, asking where she was. She said she was already on the bus. I had to ask her when she would return to Foswood for a proper gathering. After all, we had just graduated, and she had left in such a rush.

"She said she wasn't sure, and she would come see me after dealing with her family. But she never showed up. When I paused the business due to my pregnancy and tried to contact her, her phone was already out of service."

I vividly recalled that time.

Grayson snapped his fingers. "That's it! The timeline matches up. She returned to her hometown because her mother suddenly fell ill. She was reportedly in a coma, and Beatrice had to take care of her." He finished his meal, grabbed a tissue, and said, "Oh, that was delicious."

Then he continued, "At that time, she had a boyfriend, a high school classmate. He had graduated from college and returned to Gerby. Apparently, they had a good relationship, but... But now, he's Hazelyn's husband."

"What?" I felt utterly powerless. This was heart-wrenching.

"My goodness! Looks like both mother and daughter are professionals," Lauren cursed. "There must be something to this."

I slapped the table and said to Grayson, "Enough. This is definitely related to Hazelyn. Start investigating Hazelyn now!"

Grayson looked at me. "Beatrice is in a mental hospital in a county in Gerby."

I said, "Right now, I just want to know if Beatrice really does have a mental problem. That's what all our classmates have been wondering."

Lauren had a different opinion, saying, "Considering all that's happened, Beatrice might have been driven crazy by anger."

When Lauren saw my puzzled

expression, she started listing her reasons, counting on her fingers.

"First, her mother's illness seems et

suspicious. I bet Jocelyn did it. Otherwise, how could she have changed Hazel Marrow to Hazelyn Chandler? Something's fishy here.

"Second, if it weren't for Jocelyn, how could Byron take over someone else's factory and then take over Keller's Dairy? I'm telling you, we need to investigate this thoroughly. There might be a connection

between them and what happened to the Keller family."

Lauren looked at Grayson and asked, "Didn't you find out what illness her mother had when you were investigating this? Why did she suddenly get sick?"

"Ah! That's right. You're a smart one, Lauren. That's the important part. Since the Keller's Dairy incident, the Chandle family has tightly sealed all information. We can't dig anything out, and we couldn't find the reason. No one else would have a chance either."

"Looks like we need to investigate everything about Byron. We should look into everything he did after he came into contact with Helen. They were trying to eliminate the Keller family, including Beatrice." I couldn't calm my heart. I was determined to dig into this matter.

Chapter 977 Don't Rattle the Snake

Grayson looked at us, leaning back in his chair. "Even the Keller's Dairy poisoning incident remains a mystery. We investigated everything, but couldn't find a clue. I think there's something fishy here. The official conclusion at that time was that improper production processes led to issues in dairy products, and Helen's father ended up taking the blame."

"He was in prison until shortly before Helen fell ill, then he died in jail. After that, Helen got sick, had a cerebral hemorrhage, and remained unconscious until she passed away two years later. And in just a short time, Beatrice was admitted to the mental hospital.

"Everyone's statements aligned. Helen's father died in prison, and her grief was overwhelming, leading to a sudden cerebral hemorrhage. Similarly, Beatrice was deeply affected and went insane." Grayson spread his hands helplessly.

Lauren chimed in, "This doesn't add up. There must be a reason for all this. It can't be just a coincidence, right? If it really is related to Jocelyn, who did Helen marry? This is scary."

I followed his train of thought and felt a chilling shudder.

The three of us fell silent, and finally, I murmured, "I need to go to Gerby to see Beatrice. I can't just leave her in a mental hospital. If she really is mentally ill, I can bring her back to a psychiatric hospital here in Foswood. The Chandler family won't treat her well in Gerby."

Grayson shook his head helplessly. "It's probably not as simple as you think. The Chandler family won't allow anyone to see Beatrice. When our people were investigating this, they tried to verify Beatrice's condition, but it was impossible.

"Fortunately, I was prepared. The person I sent to investigate pretended to be a journalist. Otherwise, we might have alerted them. But the Chandler family might have caught on regardless. After all, your classmate, Theo, has been there to ask about her. Honestly, I'm worried that the Chandler family might have moved Beatrice."

I started feeling anxious. "Are you saying the Chandler family might have actually moved Beatrice somewhere else?"

Grayson nodded. "It's possible. The less traces they leave, the more suspicious it is."

"Something's off here," Lauren muttered.

I slumped in the chair, feeling powerless. "But we can't just sit here and do nothing. If something happens to Beatrice..."

I couldn't bring myself to think about it.

"There's no use being anxious now. It's been many years. We need to plan for the long term." Lauren patted my shoulder.

"Just wait. My people are

investigating the Kellers, including the cable factory director's accident. If we find any clues related to those two cases, we can connect them to Helen, Beatrice, and a series of

events," Grayson assured me. "So

you need to be patient."

I sighed, feeling the weight of recent events. "Too much has been happening lately, but I still need to make a trip."

Grayson looked at me and said,

"Finish handling that first, and deal with Beatrice later. It's a good time to take a breather. We can't make the Chandler family suspicious. If they really have moved Beatrice, we won't be able to do anything. When we get the clues, we can plan an attack."

I nodded in agreement. "Looks like that's the only way."

He stood up. "Alright. I'm going back to get some sleep! You've fed me well, now I'm exhausted."

I nodded again. "Go back and get some rest. If you hear anything, tell me immediately."

Grayson rubbed his face. He was clearly tired. "Alright. Bourdamun should be fine. You don't need to worry."

"I'm not worried about that. It's perfect. Fred will be here in a few days."

"I'll go, then. Let me know when you're free to catch up."

Lauren looked at me. "If you need anything, you can tell me. Ivanna is fine now, so I shouldn't stay idle."

"I have some important things to deal with at the moment. We can't delay the investigation into Dominic and Fred's plans. Mr. David from the Pierce family has been urging me to meet him with Atlas," I explained to Lauren.

"Mr. David?" Lauren seemed surprised.

"Yes, he heard about my marriage to Atlas and suddenly called him," I replied.

"When are you going?" Lauren asked.

Chapter 978 Loosen Up

Honestly, I wasn't sure.

"The original plan was to go after Matthew's case was over, but everything got mixed up. His case is done, but we still have to deal with the aftermath," I said with some concern.

"Do you really want to continue dealing with what comes after?" Lauren sounded impatient.

"No. You're right. I can't just keep being his crutch," I quickly reassured Lauren. "Don't worry. It's just Liora."

"Haha! You spared her this time. She probably feels like she's on top of the world now," Lauren said disdainfully.

"Let her enjoy her moment," I replied nonchalantly. I understood what Atlas was doing about this since I had talked to him and learned his plans.

"My father is waiting for some news too. Once there's an update on the Bermuda Alliance, there will be no delay. I'm afraid Navi might do something. If my father becomes useless to them, neither side will spare him. Unveiling the truth about the Pierce family will become impossible then... We can't take any of this lightly."

"I think you should loosen up a bit," Lauren suggested.

"How?" I looked at Lauren and smiled. "How can I relax with all this to handle?"

After she said that, I suddenly felt a heavy sense of oppression, and I wanted to release it.

I'll admit, I was too tightly wound.

Lauren understood.

"That's why I came back to see you. Didn't you tell me you lifted a burden from your heart today? You've fulfilled your promise, and he can walk his own path from now on. He can make his own choices." I knew Lauren was talking about Matthew.

But I could willingly let Matthew go. I was only dealing with the Murphy family because Ava was a Murphy.

I didn't want to wait until she grew up and be unable to answer her questions.

I looked at Lauren, lifted the corner of my lips, and said, "Looks like I really need to relax. How about we go have some fun for once?"

Lauren saw that I was tempted and

smiled happily. "Why are we still

sitting here? Ryan's back, and you don't need to guard the office. Let's go! We'll go shopping to relieve

some stress."

I looked at her accusingly. "You just said you couldn't stay idle. Is this your way of doing that?"

Lauren chuckled. "Hey, Chlo, it's lunch break now, isn't it? Is there a problem with us going shopping during lunch?"

Her reasoning left me speechless. It seemed that when people wanted to find reasons for themselves, it was absolutely impossible to refute them. You could justify anything. en.swhovels.net

I looked at her disdainfully and said, "When did you become so smart?"

"Well? Matthew is finally free. Isn't

that something worth celebrating? I don't think it's appropriate to celebrate in some other way, but we can go shopping and buy a few clothes. Okay?"

Lauren had already made up her mind to drag me along, so whatever she said sounded reasonable.

I helplessly stood up, picked up my bag, and walked out of the office with Lauren.

Besides, the morning had not been idle at all. I hadn't even had a proper breakfast because of the trial, and now my stomach was growling.

I was feeling hungry since I had just watched Grayson eat.

Following behind Lauren, I said, "Let's eat. We can go shopping after that. I'll be too exhausted otherwise."

She looked at me and asked, "What do you want to eat?"

Suddenly, I remembered the taco shop she had taken me to. I hadn't been there in a long time. It was just a little further out.

I looked at Lauren with a grin. "I want Alejandra's Taco!"

"Well, what are we waiting for? Let's go!" Lauren said, walking into the elevator.

Just as we were about to exit the elevator, I saw Michelle sitting on the sofa in the lobby. I quickly pulled Lauren back into the elevator.

Chapter 979 Alejandro's Taco

I stepped back and pressed the elevator button for the basement.

Lauren turned to look at me and asked, "What's wrong?"

I quickly shrugged and said, "I saw a classmate I'd rather not meet."

In response, Lauren immediately said, "Michelle?"

I widened my eyes, looking at her with a smile. "You're a mind reader. Yes, it's her. She's in the lobby, probably waiting for me."

"Oh, thank goodness you noticed in time. If she had stuck to you, it would have delayed us quite a bit," Lauren said.

"I wouldn't have cared if she'd delayed us, but she's been bothering me for a long time, and it's definitely not over anything good. My classmates can't stand her," I said, taking out my car keys from my bag. "Let's take my car! Thankfully, there's a back exit we can use. Otherwise, I'd have to deal with her every day."

We found my car and got in, heading straight to the taco shop.

Business here was always good. We had arrived early and it wasn't lunchtime yet, but there were no empty seats.

Alejandra recognized Lauren and came out to welcome us in. "What are you two doing standing outside? Come with me. Wait in my room."

Alejandra led us upstairs, revealing a small corner on the third floor, her own private lounge.

Opening the door, she said, "You two can eat here. It's a little small, but you can turn on the air conditioning. It's hot outside with the sun, and it's quiet here. Take your time."

Lauren quickly expressed her gratitude with a hug, and Alejandra went downstairs.

I teased Lauren, "Impressive. You've really won Alejandra over. Looks like you've eaten quite a few of Alejandra's Tacos."

Lauren grinned proudly. "You're mistaken. I haven't been here much, especially not recently."

"Why does Alejandra remember you then?" I was curious.

"Alejandra remembers me because I helped her once. That old lady's memory is really something," Lauren said nonchalantly. "What happened?" I was intrigued.

"It was the second or third time I was here. The landlord came to collect the rent, or rather, to drive Alejandra away. The landlord's relative saw that Alejandra's

business was making money a.net

got a bit jealous. They provoked the tabit

landlord into wanting to take over and run the place themselves," Lauren explained.

"Why are there people like that everywhere? Green-eyed monsters!" I expressed my frustration.

"The first time came here, I spoke

with Alejandra because her food was delicious and there weren't many customers that day. She

mentioned that the landlord had net

been wanting to sell the store, and she had no idea when that would happen," Lauren said.

"Looks like she had some trouble. It would be better if she had her own property," I commented.

"It's a common problem for

businesses who rent. This location

isn't really good for business at all of it weren' for Alejandra's excellent cooking and the fame she's earned, who would come all the way here to eat? You've seen it yourself. This place is very remote!"

I nodded without comment.

The first time Lauren brought me to this restaurant, I wondered how we had ended up so far away just to eat.

But Alejandra's Tacos were incredibly delicious.

Once you tried them, you'd want to come back.

"And then what happened?"

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Lauren continued, "That landlord saw Alejandra's business thriving and wanted to drive her away by raising the rent. Both parties didn't want to back down. Alejandra certainly didn't want to pay such a high price for rent, and the landlord wanted to force her out."

"That's downright unethical," I complained.

"Alejandra already had a steady stream of customers. If she moved, it would be a considerable loss. Alejandra was furious. When she rented the place, she paid two years worth of rent in advance. It would all be in vain if she left after building a loyal customer base.

"But the landlord didn't care about any of that. He doubled the rent and even threatened to take the place back if they couldn't reach an agreement quickly, claiming he couldn't delay his own leasing process. "Alejandra was infuriated and argued with them. When she first rented the place, the rent was already higher than usual. The landlord took advantage of the situation for personal gain," Lauren expressed disdain.

"And what happened next?" I couldn't wait to know how Lauren had stepped in to help.

"He said too much and ended up saying, 'Buy it from me if you can. I'll sell it to you cheap. It's worth 50 thousand dollars, but I'll give it to you for 40 thousand. Is that generous enough? How dare you say I'm not being fair? Buy it from me if you can afford it! Then no one will bother you about rent anymore. How about that?'

"When I heard that, I realized the place was worth 40 thousand dollars, and he had deliberately put it that way to provoke her," Lauren said, still angered by the memory.

"If Alejandra agreed to buy it for 40 thousand dollars, he would get rid of what he considered a hot potato, and if not, she would have to pay the rent. If she couldn't afford it, she would have to leave," Lauren explained while gesturing helplessly.

"A classic case of taking advantage of someone in trouble," I remarked.

"He was heartless. I was infuriated. It was obvious he was bullying poor Alejandra! I asked him, 'Do you mean what you say?'"

"Did he actually agree to sell it?" I was surprised.

"He had nothing to lose, so of course he agreed. I immediately asked Alejandra if she wanted to buy this place."

Lauren chuckled. "Actually, I did something reckless."

I inquired, "What was it?"

Lauren looked at me and said, "Think about it. If Alejandra could afford to buy, why would she still be renting? Business might be booming, but 40 thousand dollars in two years is still quite a stretch. She has to support her family while running the shop too."

"I saw Alejandra in distress and I knew she couldn't come up with the money. At that moment, I kind of regretted getting involved," Lauren confessed, looking at me with a smile.

I laughed and said, "But that's just what you're like."

"The landlord sneered at me and

said, 'If you're meddling, at least know who you're dealing with. Does she have 40 thousand dollars?' In response, I took out my card from

my

my bag, slapped it on the d

and

asked him, 'I asked if you meant what you said. She doesn't have 40 thousand dollars, but I do? Are you selling or not?'"

Lauren scoffed as she talked about it. "Do you think I was intimidating? I thought I was. Anyway, the money wasn't a loss."

I smiled brightly at her. "You really are a sweetheart."

Lauren smiled and continued, "When

the landlord saw the card, he hesitated for a long time. He hadn't been able to sell the place for many years. There was supposed to be redevelopment in this location, but there were no actual signs of progress. But he was dumbfounded that someone was willing to pay immediately!"

"But this place will eventually be redeveloped. Look around. It's surrounded by old neighborhoods. Now that it's developing, it's expanding outward. This will

become the city center soon.net

later. It's just a matter of time." I

or

reassured Lauren, saying. Once our company has enough money, we'll start development!"

Lauren smiled. "That's what you say."

I laughed heartily, "Well, it's free to brag."

"And then? Did you really buy it?" I asked.

"The landlord struggled to say anything. Some customers even cheered for Alejandra, so he reluctantly agreed. I took him to the bank, withdrew 40 thousand dollars, and handed it to him. Once we completed the paperwork, this lot became mine," Lauren said confidently.

I looked at her, astonished, "Are you saying this place is yours now?"