

Chapter 175 Is Isabel Pregnant?

Before Xander could respond, Ivana's mind was already racing with wild speculation.

"Is she one of the Nelsons's enemies?" She asked, more to herself than to him. "We've spent years investigating that fire at the Nelsons residence. We've uncovered some hidden clues, and I'm certain it wasn't just a simple accident. That mansion was enormous, with a fire prevention system as solid as the Bennett residence. There's no way a single person couldn't have escaped."

She paused, frowning as the memories resurfaced. "And then there was Richard ... He had a severe cold and was sent to the hospital. But by the time we arrived to check on him, he was already gone.

"The hospital's security footage had been destroyed, but the small portion that got recovered showed Richard running, clearly terrified as if someone was chasing him.

"He was just a kid back then, about your age. We don't even know if he's dead or alive now."

Ivana's voice lowered, almost conspiratorial. "And if Isabel is connected to the Nelsons, could she be backed by those people who found a lead on Richard and want to eliminate him?"

As she spoke, Ivana felt more and more confident her theory was closer to the truth.

"You're overthinking it," Xander said, though he wasn't entirely dismissive. "Isabel is the daughter of the Zimmermans. Her background is clean. Besides, she's only 23 now. The fire happened when she was just a toddler, two or three years old. How could she possibly be involved?"

Despite his words, Xander couldn't help but harbor a few suspicions about Isabel and her ties to the Nelsons. Why did she want that small emerald guardian angel pendant so badly?

He could still recall her expression when she first held the pendant.

Though she hid it well, he still read out some clues. A flash of excitement, a hint of nostalgia, maybe even a trace of sadness. It was hard to define.

However, even if he had doubts, he didn't believe Isabel could be an enemy of the Nelsons.

Ivana conceded, nodding. "You're probably right. She was barely a toddler back then, and her background seems clean."

Still, she added with a touch of bitterness, "You should get that pendant back soon. I don't want to see something that once belonged to Leslie worn by a girl I hate."

Xander replied, "Don't worry about it. I have things to take care of. I'll call you later."

The call ended, and the matter seemed to reach a temporary close.

Not long after, Rachel rubbed her swollen face and whimpered, "Ivana, my cheeks hurt ... "

Ivana got up and went over to Rachel, her heart aching at the sight of the girl's bruised face, which was swelling like a pufferfish.

"Be a good girl, Rachel. Right now, Xan still needs Isabel to treat his insomnia. Once he's cured, I'll make sure she's gone. You're my real daughter-in-law."

"Thank you, Ivana ... " Rachel said, hugging Ivana as well-behaved as she was.

Ivana patted Rachel's head gently, her mind drifting back to two decades earlier, to a conversation she'd had with little Leslie.

Back then, she'd said to her, "Leslie, wouldn't it be nice if I could be your mother-in-law someday?"

Just like Rachel now, little Leslie had wrapped her arms around her warmly, saying in that soft, sweet voice, "Thank you, Ivana. I love you more than anyone."

Recalling that day, a wave of emotion crossed Ivana's face.

Bzzz, bzzzz! Isabel's phone buzzed on the table.

Just as she was about to head out, her phone screen lit up with a call from Beowulf.

"Boss, I found it!"

Isabel froze mid-step. All of her attention was on the call.

"So soon? Tell me, what happened with the fire at the Nelsons's residence?"

She waited tensely.

Only to hear ...

"It's not about the Nelsons. It's about Yvette Sullivan, the case you asked me to investigate a few days ago."

Isabel frowned slightly, a bit disappointed. It wasn't news on the Nelsons after all.

"Boss, your instincts were right. The people who abducted Yvette were hired by none other than Rachel."

Isabel's hands clenched. Her knuckles turned white.

"I knew it! But wait, just a couple of days ago, you said there wasn't a single lead. Where did this clue come from?" She asked suspiciously.

Beowulf explained, "It's thanks to Vesper. He used to run in those circles back in the day. Although he's retired now, he was once a legend, ruling over more than a dozen streets. He still has the connections to dig up info. And as luck would have it, the men involved were once part of his old network; otherwise, it would've been tough to trace."

Isabel finally understood. No wonder Beowulf had found nothing before, only to get a breakthrough now.

"Has Vesper returned to this country?"

"Not yet. He had his people handle it," Beowulf replied. Isabel's expression darkened as she thought of Yvette's close call. Her eyes flashed with a cold, murderous intent.

"Rachel!" She practically spat the name through gritted teeth.

"What's Rachel done now?" Samuel asked, having just come downstairs and caught the last part of Isabel's muttered fury.

"Nothing. I just need some air," Isabel said, striding toward the front door, phone in hand.

Samuel left bewildered as he watched her disappear out the door. Shaking his head, he plopped down on the couch and reached for the plate of oranges on the coffee table, only to find it empty.

His gaze shifted to the trash can, filled with nothing but orange peels.

"What the—? Did she eat all the oranges? Seriously?" He mumbled, a bit taken aback.

Then something struck him. Could she ... be pregnant? He'd heard that pregnancy cravings often leaned toward sour foods, especially if the mother was pregnant with a son.

This wasn't entirely baseless speculation. Over the past few days, he'd noticed Isabel eating way more oranges than usual.

As the thought took hold, Samuel's excitement grew. He immediately dialed Xander's number.

"Xander, be honest with me! Did Isabel get pregnant?" Samuel's voice crackled through the phone, his tone brimming with curiosity.

"What are you talking about?" Xander sounded bewildered.

"Oh, come on, don't play dumb! I've noticed the clues. Isabel's been devouring oranges lately. And last night, while eating that chicken sour cream, she said she's really into sour stuff these days. She was also keep talking about how sour and refreshing the pickled cucumber was. If she isn't pregnant, then what else could it be?" Samuel argued, his reasoning surprisingly thorough.

Hearing this, Xander put down his paperwork, his thoughts drifting into a haze.

Memories tugged at him, bringing him back to that stormy night. It was surreal, yet so vivid. It felt undeniably real every time he replayed it in his mind.

He could still remember her words and her willingness to give herself to him.

He didn't think this was something Isabel could say.

Both of them had found it hard to believe afterward. Isabel, in particular, was stunned at her actions, as though she'd somehow become a different person.

However, circumstances had been extreme; his fever was skyrocketing, and she'd feared for his life as he'd stubbornly stood under the rain, refusing to leave. Amid the turmoil, she'd found herself blurting out something so unlike herself.

That might be just a dream. Xander concluded as he often did, shrugging it off as nothing more than an illusion.

"Tell her to cut back on the cold stuff, though. Her stomach's sensitive," he said, snapping back to reality.

Samuel huffed, annoyed. "I'm not your messenger, you know. But, seriously, is she not pregnant?"

His face fell, disappointed. He'd been getting pretty excited at the idea of becoming an uncle.

"Someday, she will be," Xander replied, his tone carrying a hint of certainty.

Samuel rolled his eyes, muttering under his breath. After all this time, his brother still hadn't managed to get Isabel pregnant. Could it be that Xander just wasn't capable? And why didn't Isabel give him some "help" if that was the case?

Meanwhile, miles away, Isabel suddenly sneezed.

"Caught a cold?" Beowulf shot her a quick look.

Isabel rubbed her nose as she replied dryly, "Eyes on the road and stay focused on driving."

As they waited at a red light, Beowulf glanced over at her. "So, what's your plan for dealing with Rachel?"

Isabel's eyes flashed with an icy resolve. "The same way she treated Y've. I'll avenge her."

Beowulf's eyes lit up with intrigue. "You mean, you're going to ... "

"Mhmm."

Later that night, Rachel had just fallen asleep when Isabel slipped in through her window; her presence was silent and menacing.