

## Once Cast 129

### Chapter 129 Out of the Study

Aella asked, “Where are the stuffed animals I brought home last night?”

Tyrone answered, “Those toys were full of germs. I threw them out for your own good.”

Her chest burned hot. “Who gave you the right to toss my things without asking me?”

His face stayed cold. “This is my house. I hold the right to decide what stays and what goes.”

Aella’s voice broke off.

His words cut deep. They reminded her of her place.

In this house, she was nothing but a mask to guard his pride. He could move her. He could discard her. If he treated her that way, then her belongings were worth even less.

When he saw her silence, he moved closer. His voice sank low, careful, deliberate.

“As your husband, it’s my job to protect you. I’ll say this once more. Sayer isn’t stable. You must stay away from him.”

His warning had hardly left his lips when her phone lit up and rang.

She shot him a cold look. Her voice turned icy. “Mr. Locke may be unstable, but he’s still my patient—and my job depends on him.”

She spun away and took the call.

Tyrone stood stiff, every muscle locked, while her voice drifted through the air. She was setting up a meeting with Sayer. His face grew darker by the second.

Not long after, Aella slung her bag over her shoulder and walked toward the door.

His voice lashed at her back. "Did you forget something?"

She tipped forward on her toes and brushed his lips with a kiss, her eyes stripped of emotion.

His face clouded, and his tone turned sharp. "Aella, you didn't treat my wound last night."

She slapped her forehead.

She had forgotten. His back injury had slipped from her mind.

She dropped her bag and dragged him into the bedroom.

She pulled the medical kit open and worked the buttons of his white shirt loose with steady hands.

Her focus locked on the wound. She cleaned it and dressed it with care. Tyrone sat on the bed's edge, silent, his face dark as stone.

When she finished, she slid his shirt back on, leaving it unbuttoned, and left with her bag in hand.

Tyrone looked down. The shirt hung loose, every button undone.

His eyes moved to the medical kit left open on the stand. His jaw tightened as he packed every item back inside with slow, deliberate hands.

Then his phone buzzed. He snatched it up, irritation flaring in his chest.

It was his father, calling him to bring Aella back to the family estate for lunch.

Tyrone ended the call and walked into the closet without a word.

By noon, he stood at the estate's door. Alone.

Virginia's brows rose. "Tyrone, where's Aella? Why didn't she come with you?"

His tone stayed even, his lie smooth. "She had an emergency case. She couldn't come."

Ralph gave a rare nod of approval. "That girl has skill. I saw the press conference footage. She held the crowd like it was nothing. She carries herself like she was born into a strong family."

The old man's eyes shifted to his son. "Tyrone, remember this. In people and in matters, you must know what comes first."

Tyrone's reply was a shallow nod. His face betrayed nothing.

Edwin's voice was stern. "Next week is the Leadverse Group banquet. Last time Mrs. Townsend invited Aella, and she didn't show. This time, she comes with you."

By two, Tyrone left the estate. He stopped at the tutoring center and picked up Zera's child.

By evening, he came back home. The house was still empty.

From the first day he met her, she had always been there waiting.

No matter how late. No matter where.

He grabbed a bottle of whiskey and went to Brad's room upstairs.

Brad leaned back on the couch, glass in hand. He smirked and lifted it.

"Relax. You already have her in your grip. She's not going anywhere."

Tyrone's voice was heavy. "She's my wife. She came home past midnight. I worried about her."

Brad barked a laugh.

"Strange. When she thought you were broken over Zera and her kid, I didn't see you worry about her then."

The jab sliced through him.

Zera and her son. That wound was his guilt. He had failed Aella.

Now he fought to keep her close. He wanted to make it right.

But she pushed him away. She refused to believe him.

When Tyrone stayed silent, Brad leaned forward. "Don't think that head injury gives you a free pass to do whatever you want."

Tyrone slid a glass of whiskey toward him and gave a sharp look.

Then his phone rang on the table.

He cut it off without checking.

A message popped up. Zera.

Tyrone read it and typed back a reply.

Brad's voice turned serious.

"Zera's depressed, isn't she? You ignore her calls, and if she breaks down, won't she stir up trouble? Doesn't that scare you?"

Tyrone's brows pressed together.

"Brad, don't talk about her that way. Orson lost his backpack. She called to ask about that."

Brad sneered. "What's her kid losing a backpack got to do with you?"

Tyrone rubbed at his temple. His voice dragged, his patience thin. "Zera had back-to-back livestreams today. I helped her by picking Orson up."