

Once Cast 168

Chapter 168 Drawing Boundaries.

Zera stood in front of Tyrone, her palms damp from how tightly she'd been gripping her hands.

No matter how much money is on that card, it's nothing to him.

Once I marry him and officially become Mrs. Winter, part of the powerful Winters, their wealth will naturally be mine too.

I can't afford to lose

focus over something so small.

With that thought in mind, she steadied herself and spoke with resolve.

"Tyrone, ever since your mom came to see me, I've already moved out of the apartment you bought for me. I've done everything I can to stay away from both of you, as you've probably noticed.

"The apartment upstairs was a gift from Mrs. Winter to Orson when they first met. She even asked me to let her be his godmother. I didn't agree at first, but what was I supposed to do when she started pressuring me?"

Tyrone stayed silent, so Zera paused for a moment before continuing.

"Now, both your family and Mrs. Winter recognize Orson as your son. Since Aella truly wants to be his godmother, it'll make things clear whenever people ask in the future."

Zera kept her tone calm and steady, not giving Tyrone the chance to interrupt.

“But if it really bothers you, I’ll give Mrs. Winter the property deed back tomorrow. I’ll just rent the place myself.

“Tyrone, I might not have much money, but I have my pride. You don’t need to keep testing me. If I really wanted something from you, I wouldn’t have waited six whole years before coming back.”

Her voice carried confidence, and the cold look in Tyrone’s eyes started to soften a little.

Seeing him relax, Zera added, “Tyrone, I’ve realized Mrs. Winter’s actually a good person. We get along well, and I really value that friendship. I’d rather stay friends with her than live my whole life depending on your money and never being able to lift my head.

“I already lost a lifetime of happiness because Edwin tried to protect me for your sake. You protected me too, even if it meant risking your marriage and accepting Orson. Even though our problems are settled now, no matter what happens later, I’d rather ask Aella for help than come to you again. You should go home.”

Zera pushed every bit of responsibility onto Aella.

Not only did she refuse to take Tyrone’s bank card, but she also drew a clear line between them.

After hearing that, Tyrone had nothing left to say.

He looked at the mother and son resting in the hospital bed and finally said, “The kid’s asleep. You should rest too.”

Tyrone left the hospital feeling heavy.

Zera has always been soft and unsure of

herself. She’d never had the guts to pull off anything like this.

Aella, on the other hand, has been clever and daring ever since she was little.

There's almost nothing she wouldn't

try.

Late that night, Aella was curled up in bed, quietly reviewing the files she'd copied from Tyrone's computer.

When she heard the door open, she quickly turned off her phone and pretended to be asleep.

Tyrone walked into the room.

His eyes lingered on her face, filled with mixed emotions.

He stood beside the bed, just staring at her for a long while.

Aella lay on her side, keeping her eyes closed until she heard the water running in the bathroom. Only then did she open them.

Their marriage agreement was now invalid, and the "evidence" Tyrone once used to control her

was gone.

She'd even asked Sayer to hack Tyrone's computer and wipe everything clean.

Tyrone had also promised not to threaten her anymore.

But she still didn't feel safe.

Tyrone wasn't someone who softened easily.

And lately, something about him had felt off.

The calm and logical man she once knew was getting harder to reason with—he had become short-tempered and unpredictable.

Angering him now would only cause her trouble.

It was safer to stay cautious.

The next morning, Aella got up on time. She washed up, got dressed, and got ready to leave.

When she saw Tyrone walking toward her holding a small gift, she lowered her eyes and acted like she didn't notice.

He handed it to her. "A little something to celebrate your promotion."

Aella set down her bag and smiled politely. "Thank you."

When she put the gift on the cabinet without opening it, Tyrone's expression darkened slightly.

"You're not even going to open it?" he asked.

Aella smiled faintly. "I don't have to. If it's from you, I'll like it."

That casual, distant smile made Tyrone's mood shift instantly. His face turned cold.

Aella finished getting ready and was about to leave.

She leaned in, about to give him a goodbye kiss—but stopped halfway, remembering the marriage agreement was gone.

So she pulled back and turned away without hesitation.

Tyrone froze, his gaze locked on her retreating figure, his thoughts tangled and heavy.

The agreement had just been canceled, and now she clearly had no intention of pretending anymore.

By noon, at Westside Hospital.

Aella went to the cafeteria with her coworkers, and from a distance, she saw Zera walking toward her.