

Once Cast 169

Chapter 169 Tense Lunch

After telling her coworkers to go ahead without her, Aella stopped walking.

Zera came over and held out the property deed.

“Mrs. Winter, I’m giving the apartment back to you. Let’s find a time to finish the paperwork,” Zera said.

Aella didn’t take it. “Ms. Caldwell, let me give you some advice. You need to stay realistic.”

Zera’s eyes flickered for a moment before she quickly shoved the deed into Aella’s hand.

“Mrs. Winter, moving around with a kid isn’t easy. I’ll stay in that apartment for now and send you rent every month,” she said firmly.

This time, Aella didn’t refuse. She took the deed and said, “Ms. Caldwell, you were fine accepting a house Tyrone bought, but not one from me? It seems, deep down, you still don’t trust me.”

Zera straightened up and replied, “Mrs. Winter, I’m not like you. You and Tyrone don’t have real feelings—you just think about what benefits you. But Tyrone and I love each other. Our child is proof, and love like that can’t be measured with money.”

Her voice softened as she continued, “I know coming back with Orson hurt you, but love can’t be forced. You and Tyrone are still husband and wife. Your assets are shared. From now on, I won’t spend another dime that belongs to you.”

Aella looked at her, not sure how to feel.

When it came to strategy, Aella couldn’t compete.

As for raw ability, Zera was just another face in the crowd. Trying to climb up to Mrs. Winter's spot was a tough road.

Even if her love for Tyrone was real, making herself suffer just to look noble wasn't smart.

Aella turned the deed over in her hands and said, "If you're not in a rush, let me buy you lunch."

Zera smiled, obviously pleased.

But just as they were about to head out, a black Bentley rolled up to the hospital entrance.

Aella and Zera both froze when they saw Tyrone get out of the car and walk toward them. They exchanged a quick look.

Aella's stomach tightened.

Tyrone should be at work at this hour. Why is he suddenly here?

Zera looked nervous the moment she saw him.

Before he could speak, she quickly explained, "Tyrone, I just came to return the apartment deed to Mrs. Winter."

Tyrone's eyes fell on the paper in Aella's hand, and he gave a small nod.

Then he walked up to Aella. "You two done talking?"

Aella glanced at Zera. "I was about to treat Ms. Caldwell to lunch."

Tyrone's tone turned sharp. "I need to talk to you."

Aella lowered her gaze, hiding whatever she was feeling.

Sayer had promised her Tyrone wouldn't find out anything.

If Tyrone was showing up in the middle of the day, it probably wasn't about that.

She gave Zera a small look, hinting that she should play along.

Zera hesitated but finally spoke up. "Tyrone, can't I even have lunch with Mrs. Winter?"

Tyrone's gaze flicked between the two of them.

His expression was cold, but he didn't argue.

Aella quickly added, "We already agreed. Since you're here, come join us."

The three of them ended up going to a restaurant together.

Tyrone pulled out a chair for Aella and sat beside her, leaving Zera across from them.

Aella picked up the menu to order when a few women walked over to their table.

They smiled politely at Tyrone, and Aella realized they were employees from the Winter Group.

"Hello, Mrs. Winter," one of them said brightly, smiling at Zera.

The other two quickly followed, greeting her the same way.

Zera froze, unsure what to do.

Tyrone's face darkened. "You've got the wrong person," he said flatly. "She's not my wife."

Aella calmly set the menu down and stood. "Mr. Winter, Mrs. Winter, I'm going to the restroom."

Before Tyrone could stop her, she turned and walked off.

Her words made it sound like Zera really was Mrs. Winter.

The employees laughed. "Mr. Winter is always so serious at work. Didn't think he'd joke around like that."

"Mr. Winter, Mrs. Winter, enjoy your meal. We'll get going."

Once they left, Zera quietly exhaled.

But when she looked at Tyrone again, his face was still dark with anger.

"Tyrone, don't take it the wrong way," she said quickly. "It must be from the day Mrs. Winter had me deliver medicine to your office. People must've gotten the wrong idea."

He didn't respond and just stared ahead in silence.

Zera checked her phone and saw a message from Aella saying she'd already left.

She tried carefully, "Tyrone, Mrs. Winter had something to-"

Before she could finish, Tyrone stood up and walked away.

Zera sat there alone, watching him leave. She bit her lip hard, thinking bitterly to herself, Tyrone, I've sacrificed so much for you. You'll never get rid of me.