

Once Cast 291

Chapter 291 The Reason He Apologizes

Everything had finally come to an end.

Now, Tyrone was set on making things right with Aella.

He wanted her back home. He wanted to marry her again.

He pulled out the crystal pendant Aella had made.

That day, she told him she'd dreamed of their child. She'd even drawn a picture and used AI to make a baby photo.

She'd sealed that photo inside the crystal glass and given it to him.

Tyrone knew she'd never really let go of that child. He kept the pendant close to torture himself -to remember, to regret, to hurt.

Holding it tightly to his chest, he dialed Aella's number.

That evening, she showed up at the Reid Estate. It was the place she'd lived for years.

She stepped out of her car, walked through the familiar gate, and into the living room.

In just a few steps, a rush of old memories filled her mind.

She saw Tyrone standing by the tall window, deep in thought, and stopped walking.

He wore black pants and a white shirt, looking like he'd been there waiting for a long time.

When he heard her enter, he turned around.

The big living room felt quiet—one stood by the window, the other in the middle. They just looked at each other in silence.

Aella didn't move while Tyrone slowly walked over to her.

He stopped right in front of her, looked into her eyes, and placed a key in her hand.

"This is the house you grew up in," he said softly. "I bought it back for you last month."

Aella stared down at the key, quiet for a long moment.

Then, she slipped it back into his pocket. "If I wanted it, I could buy it myself."

She wanted to end everything where it all began.

That was why she'd agreed to meet Tyrone here—to settle things once and for all.

Their eyes met. Tyrone frowned, his voice low and heavy.

"Aella, I already had Zera sent to prison. She can't bother us anymore. Please, don't shut me out again."

He reached for her hand, but Aella stepped back, avoiding him.

Her face stayed calm as she met his hurt gaze.

“Tyrone, you still don’t understand. What’s broken between us has nothing to do with Zera or anyone else.”

Tyrone interrupted, “If it weren’t for her, we wouldn’t have ended up like this.”

A bitter smile tugged at Aella’s lips.

If Zera hadn’t shown up, things might’ve stayed the same.

Tyrone was still the flawless husband and successful man everyone admired.

She would still be stuck in her daydreams about him, living her whole life around him. He’d still only show her love in bed, just like he used to.

Aella stopped for a moment, then said, “Tyrone, no one made you help Zera and her kid. Everything you did for them was your own decision.

“You lied to me because of her, protected her even when it hurt me, pushed me aside to care for her, kept her close, and even threatened me ... All of it was your choice. Nobody forced you to do

any of it!”

Tyrone’s face showed nothing but pain.

When he finally spoke, his voice was low and rough.

“I know I messed up.

“But Aella, there was never anything between me and Zera. I never touched her, and I never once planned to leave you for her.”

He took a step closer, meeting her gaze. “We’ve known each other for more than 20 years. Can’t you give me another chance?”

Aella didn’t move.

She stared back at him and said firmly, “Emotional cheating is still cheating. And because we’ve shared those 20 years that no one else could ever replace, I’m even less willing to forgive you!”

Tyrone felt a sharp ache in his chest.

His eyes filled with tears as he stumbled back, unable to speak.

Aella looked around the familiar living room and said, “If I hadn’t asked for a divorce—if I’d just accepted Zera and her child, stayed quiet, and kept living with you—would you ever have come back to me?”

Before he could reply, she went on, “If you hadn’t found out what Zera did, would you really have thrown them out?”

“Tyrone, the reason you’re saying sorry and admitting you were wrong isn’t because you finally understand what you did. It’s because I refused to give in—because you couldn’t keep both me and Zera anymore. You thought about your image, your interests, your comfortable marriage ... and that’s why you chose to come back.”

Chapter 292 Neighbor

Aella hadn’t even when Tyrone suddenly shouted, “I still have feelings for you!”

She let out a small laugh.

She looked at Tyrone seriously. “If you’d said anything else, maybe I’d believe you. But having feelings for me? I don’t believe it.”

Her cold stare followed him as he stumbled backward, unsteady on his feet. "When I was one, I was here. On my birthday, I picked you to play with."

She paused before adding, "And 26 years later, I'm still here telling you—we're done!"

Their eyes met for a brief moment before Aella turned away, swift and resolute.

The

way she walked away hit Tyrone hard—every nerve in his body burned.

He lost control, pulled her back, and wrapped his arms around her.

When he spoke again, his voice trembled.

"Aella, please ... just say you're angry, that you can't forgive me yet. You still love me, don't you?"

Aella stopped resisting. Her tone was soft but distant. "Tyrone, did you forget what you

"You told me my love or hate didn't matter to you."

Then, she walked out of the Reid Estate.

said?

The words she left behind wrapped around Tyrone's heart like vines, squeezing tighter and tighter.

He stood there, glancing around the living room. Every memory with the Reids flashed through his mind.

He'd never known that kind of warmth in his home.

Moonlight spilled through the wide windows, glinting in his tear-filled eyes.

He knew everything that happened between them was his fault.

They'd grown up together. She was his wife.

No matter what it took, he would make her come back to him willingly.

The next morning, at the Reid Residence.

Aella was eating breakfast with her family when Sayer showed up in loungewear and slippers, knocking before walking right in.

She put down her utensils and gave him a look. "Mr. Locke, what brings you here?"

Sayer pointed toward the house next door. "I moved in beside you. We're neighbors again. Excited?"

Aella was speechless.

No wonder she'd seen him so late that night on Zera's birthday—he was next door.

Rich people really did whatever they wanted.

Miriam quickly grabbed him some utensils. "Mr. Locke, since your family isn't around, staying next door works great. If you don't want to cook, just eat here."

Clyde pulled out a chair. "Mom is right. The more the merrier. Come sit down, Sixer."

Sayer sat comfortably and joined their breakfast, chatting and laughing like part of the family.

Clyde said to Miriam, "Mom, my SAT is in just over a week. When Aella took hers, you wore a cocktail dress to send her off. It's my turn, so you gotta wear one again."

Miriam chuckled and shook her head. "When Aella took her SAT, I was still young. Now I'm way older. It just wouldn't look good."

Clyde grinned. "Then Dad can wear it instead."

Warren nearly dropped his fork in shock.

Aella almost burst out laughing. "Let's not do that to Dad. Mr. Locke is tall, handsome, and has great style. If we need someone, let him wear it."

Sayer glared at her, sandwich in one hand and milk in the other.

Clyde wiped his mouth. "Okay, how about this—Mom wears red the first day, Sixer wears green the second, and you wear yellow the third."

Aella nodded seriously. "Good idea. Mom, grab a few fancy dresses with high slits and let Mr. Locke choose his favorite."

Sayer started to think it was a terrible day to join their breakfast.

He tugged on Aella's sleeve. "Aella, can I just drive instead?"

She shook her head with a grin. "Come on, show some ride—or—die spirit for your friends. I believe in you."

Sayer had no words.

Aella patted his shoulder with a smile, then went to get ready for work.

By nine, she was at Daniel's office in the hospital.

When he saw her, Daniel finally looked relieved. "Seeing you like this, I can finally relax."

She smiled relaxedly. "I told you before—I've already moved on."

He sighed. "Zera looks harmless, but she's actually pretty vicious."

At the mention of Zera, Aella pursed her lips.

Zera ended up in prison because of Tyrone. That was karma.

Daniel said, "Mr. Winter is a powerful guy in business. But when it came to Zera, he completely lost it. Leaving you for her? Not worth it at all."

Aella replied evenly, "Tyrone wasn't dumb or crazy. He always knew exactly what he was doing."

Daniel looked confused, so she added calmly, "It's because I loved him too much. That's what made him fearless and so sure of himself."

Chapter 293 He's Back

Tyrone was convinced Aella loved him too much to ever walk away. He believed no matter how badly he messed up, she'd always forgive him.

She said, "Right now, I just want to focus on work. The only thing that matters to me is money."

It wasn't until after her marriage fell apart that she understood. Love wasn't something she needed to survive. She could stand on her own just fine.

Daniel gave her a nod of approval. "Take a few days off. Then start getting ready for the September science segment."

It was the first time he'd seen a woman so determined to let go of her past.

Aella left his office and went back to seeing patients.

Around eleven, Mason came in with Henry for a follow-up. After the session, Henry clung to her, refusing to go.

Worried his son would distract her, Mason said, "Dr. Reid, if you're not busy for lunch, I'll take Henry to the restaurant and wait for you."

Aella actually had something she wanted to discuss with him, so she readily agreed.

After work, she met them at the restaurant. While waiting for the food, Mason stepped outside to take a call.

Aella lifted Henry onto her lap.

"Henry, you're my godson now. From now on, just call me Aella, okay?"

Before, she hadn't corrected him for calling her "Mom" because his autism made it hard for him to talk or connect with others. To help with his therapy, she'd gotten close to him.

But now that he was doing better, it was time to fix that habit.

If Mason ever remarried, his new wife might take it the wrong way, and Henry would have a hard time adjusting.

Henry grinned up at her. "But I want you to be my mom."

Aella gently pinched his cheeks. "You'll have a mom someday, Henry. And she'll love you even more than I do."

He frowned, thinking it over.

Mason came back just in time to hear her explaining.

He sat down and said, "Henry, do what your godmom says. She'll still care for you the same."

Henry clung to Aella's arm, pouting. "If I call you Aella, can I still go to visit your family on weekends?"

Aella hooked her pinky with his. "Of course you can."

Mason watched the two of them pinky swear and smiled. "Dr. Reid, my son can be a bit clingy. Hope you don't mind."

Aella found both of them easy to like.

She patted her chest. "Mr. Fulford, if you ever need help, I'm here."

Mason set his utensils down with a small smile. "You keep calling me Mr. Fulford. If someone overheard, they'd think we barely know each other."

Aella froze for a second, feeling a little awkward.

She hadn't known Mason for very long, but she already trusted him, and she really got along with Henry.

Still, it was kind of weird. Henry called her by name, yet she still called his father "Mr. Fulford". It sounded too formal.

But Mason wasn't like the others. He was calm, proper, and serious.

She could mess around with Sayer and call him Sixer, or tease Victor by switching between his name and Mr. Vic.

But with Mason, that just didn't feel right.

Aella thought for a while, not knowing what to say.

Mason threw the question her way, then elegantly focused on slicing his steak in silence.

The atmosphere got weirdly awkward.

Finally, she spoke up, "Then ... should I call you by your first name?"

Mason looked up and chuckled softly. "Relax, I was joking. Don't take it so seriously."

Aella's fingers tightened around her glass.

He always talked in that half-serious, half-playful way that made her unsure how to respond.

So, she decided to match his tone. "You're right, Mr. Fulford. I'll think it over."

She reminded herself that people like him were good to stay on friendly terms with.

If things got too awkward, maybe she could just gather Victor, Sayer, and the rest, making them all her sworn brothers.

Older ones could be her big brothers, younger ones her little brothers. They could all support her.

Mason suddenly asked, "You're not planning to make me your sworn brother, are you?"

"Pfft-" Aella almost spit out her water.

Mason quickly stood, handed her a napkin, and said, "Kidding again, Dr. Reid. Don't take it seriously."

She grabbed the napkin and coughed, face burning red.

Other than Tyrone, she'd never embarrassed herself like that in front of a man before.

She felt mortified.

Mason calmly sat back, smoothly changing the topic. "By the way, I heard Mr. Vic came back yesterday. If you're free this weekend, we could get everyone together—maybe play a few rounds of poker."

Chapter 294

When Aella heard Mason mention playing poker, she perked up instantly.

But then, she realized something wasn't right.

Victor had just gotten back from overseas, so why hadn't he called her for his usual check-up at Webster Manor?

That afternoon, she phoned him. He told her not to come yet and quickly hung up.

She had a bad feeling in her gut and decided to head to Webster Manor herself to see what was going on.

Up in the study, Victor sat in his wheelchair wearing dark loungewear, looking pale and tired. "Didn't I tell you not to come here yet?"

Aella set her medical kit down. "If I didn't come, you'd probably curse me out. You said you'd call me once you were back so I could check on you, but it's already been a week."

Victor calmly rolled his rosary between his fingers. "Thanks for worrying about me, but let's hold off on the treatment for now. You should go home."

A faint smell of blood drifted through the study, and Aella caught it right away.

She didn't dare ask more and just quietly left.

Her instincts told her something was definitely wrong with Victor.

At the doorway, he said to Norman, "Take Dr. Reid home."

Ten minutes later, near her car, Norman said, "Ms. Reid, I'll follow behind you."

Aella frowned. "Did something happen to your boss?"

He lowered his gaze without saying a word.

That silence told her everything.

She pushed again, “What exactly happened to him? Can you tell me?”

Norman looked around, leaned closer, and whispered, “Ms. Reid, you know how Mr. Vic is. He always keeps his word. Please don’t press me. I’m just here to send you home. That’s all I know.”

Aella stared at him for a moment before taking out her phone. “Here, add me. If something comes up, call me right away. If he gets mad, just say I made you do it.”

They exchanged numbers, and she left, feeling uneasy.

If her instincts were right, Victor was injured.

He was refusing treatment because he didn’t want her to see how bad it was.

What kind of wound would he even try to hide from her?

Her mind ran wild with scary possibilities.

Still, Victor had always stood by her. If he needed help, she couldn’t just ignore it.

While she was driving home, Raine called and asked her to drop by the Regal Club.

As soon as Aella reached the bottom of the stairs, she spotted Tyrone coming down with several people around him.

He was tall, sharp-looking in his tailored suit, and carried that cold, commanding air that stood out in the crowd.

Their eyes finally met. Aella took a step back, letting him pass.

Tyrone dismissed the others and came straight toward her.

“What are you doing here so late?” he asked in a low voice.

Aella glanced at him, stayed silent, and walked right past him.

Tyrone turned to look at her cold, distant figure. It felt as if a rope had tightened around his heart, stealing his breath away.

She had seen him, yet didn't even want to speak to him.

A few minutes later, Noel rushed up. “Mr. Winter, don't worry. Ms. Reid is with Ms. Winter, and Mr. Keller is there too.”

Hearing that she was with Brad and Raine, Tyrone finally relaxed and left.

Late at night, Tyrone came home alone.

The house was silent and dark—no one waiting, no lights on for him anymore.

He flipped on every switch, flooding the place with light, and walked out to the balcony.

The forecast said it might rain, so he brought in the succulents Aella had planted.

After closing the sliding door, he noticed a pillow had fallen off the couch.

After they got married, Aella spent so many nights curled up on the couch with that same pillow, watching TV while waiting for him to come home.

Whenever Tyrone walked through the door, she'd toss the pillow aside and rush over to him.

She'd ask if he'd eaten yet, how much he drank, if he was tired...

Now, she didn't even want to say a word to him.

Tyrone's breathing got heavier. He bent down, picked up the pillow, and put it back on the couch.

He'd had too much to drink tonight and thought a shower might clear his head.

He stumbled into the bathroom and stood under the cold water for more than ten minutes, but it didn't help at all.

Wearing only a white bathrobe, he leaned on the sink.

Aella's toothbrush cup was still there, her towel looking almost untouched.

Tyrone picked up the black hair tie she'd left behind and squeezed it hard.

He held onto the edge of the sink with both hands, staring at his reflection. His mind was full of thoughts about Aella.

"Tyrone, I bought these toothbrush cups online! You should use yours too."

She had bought them as a matching pair, but he never wanted to use his.

She'd looked so let down, yet she still leaned against him, trying to get him to agree,

When he turned her down again, she pouted, her eyes red, saying she was mad.

And he never reached out to comfort her.

Chapter 295 Wake Up

He didn't even know how much he'd had to drink.

Everything felt hazy. He couldn't tell if he was asleep, dreaming, or just stuck awake and miserable.

The next morning, Emma shook him awake on the couch.

Tyrone sat up, exhausted, rubbing his temples. "Emma, didn't I tell you—"

Before he could finish, Emma cut in quickly. "Mrs. Winter was worried you'd be alone, so she told me to come check on you."

Tyrone didn't reply. He just got up and walked straight to the bathroom.

Ten minutes later, he came out dressed and ready to go.

Emma stopped him. "Mr. Tyrone, breakfast is on the table. Mrs. Winter said you shouldn't leave without eating."

He hesitated for a second, then turned and headed to the dining room.

He sat alone, eyes falling on Aella's usual seat.

His hand tightened around the spoon until his knuckles went white. He forced himself to look

away.

The congee in front of him didn't tempt him at all.

He couldn't stop thinking about that one afternoon—how he'd come home early and found Aella cooking for him in the kitchen.

She'd been wearing cartoon pajamas, humming while she cooked, a little flustered but happy.

Then, she burned her hand, rinsed it under the tap, and kept cooking like nothing happened.

Sitting there now, Tyrone felt so weak he could barely hold the spoon.

It slipped, hit the table, then clattered to the floor, snapping him back to reality.

He looked down at the stain on his white shirt, sighed, and went to change.

In the walk-in closet, Tyrone opened a drawer to grab cufflinks. But then, he remembered their second anniversary. Aella had given him diamond ones.

He set everything down and started searching.

After ten minutes with no luck, he called Emma to help.

Standing by the door, Emma said helplessly, "Mr. Tyrone, ever since you got married, no one else has been in this room. Mrs. Aella always cleaned it up herself. I really don't know where those cufflinks are. Maybe you should call her?"

Tyrone hesitated but eventually dialed Aella's number.

The moment he heard her voice, his tone softened unconsciously.

“I remember you gave me cufflinks for our second anniversary. Do you remember which drawer you put them in?”

Aella’s voice came cold. “You’re mistaken. I never gave you anything.”

Before he could say another word, she hung up.

He staggered, holding onto the closet door for support.

“She’s just mad,” he muttered. “The cufflinks have to be here.”

Emma watched Tyrone scramble through the drawers, not knowing how to help.

Just then, the doorbell rang, and she rushed to answer it.

When she saw Raine, she quickly said, “Ms. Winter, please persuade Mr. Tyrone.”

After a brief explanation, Raine followed her into the closet.

The room was a complete mess—jewelry and trinkets scattered everywhere. She stepped in, trying to stop Tyrone.

“Tyrone, stop. The cufflinks Aella gave you ... they’re gone.”

Tyrone froze, his hand still resting on the drawer.

He stared at Raine, uncertainty flickering in his eyes.

“What do you mean, gone?” he asked, voice tight.

Raine looked at his worn face and bloodshot eyes, her chest tightening. She looked away for a moment but spoke honestly.

“Aella burned all the gifts you gave her in the villa’s yard. Then, she went to a secondhand shop and sold every single gift she ever bought for you.”

He stumbled backward and only stopped when he slammed into the door with a loud crash.

“No... no way. Aella loves me too much. She wouldn’t do something so cruel.”

Then, Tyrone snapped, flinging open drawers and doors and searching desperately.

Raine watched helplessly, knowing she couldn’t stop him.

Her eyes stung as she said, “Tyrone, it’s true. She sold everything. There’s nothing left!”

“Impossible!” he yelled.

Raine tried again, softer this time. “Tyrone, calm down. Those gifts are gone. Just like Aella. You’re never getting them back.”

He completely fell apart.

She was only a girl, too small to hold him back, and could only watch him keep tearing the room apart.

She tried to get through to him. “Tyrone, do you remember how hurt Aella was when you never wore the diamond cufflinks she picked out for you?”

“You didn’t appreciate her when she was here. Now it’s too late to regret it. Wake up!”

“Shut up!” he snapped, voice sharp, eyes rimmed with red. “Aella is just being stubborn. She’s mad at me, but she’ll come back!”

Chapter 296 Is He in Danger?

Raine watched Tyrone lose his cool, feeling bad for him but totally powerless.

“Grandpa called you yesterday,” she said. “You didn’t answer. He wants you to go back tonight.”

Before leaving, she reminded Emma to keep an eye on Tyrone.

By ten, Tyrone showed up at the office.

Noel knocked, then stepped in. The tension in the room felt heavy.

Tyrone slumped in his chair, dressed in a dark suit, looking completely worn out.

He leaned back, eyes shut, lost in thought.

Noel carefully set the files on the desk, trying not to make a sound.

Standing respectfully with his hands folded, he forced himself to say, “Mr. Winter, our people confirmed it. Mr. Vic is hurt.”

Tyrone slowly opened his eyes and straightened up.

Noel went on, "His enemy is R.M. Mercantile from Ressoavia. Looks like they're planning something nasty."

Tyrone's eyes narrowed, unreadable as ever.

His face stayed sharp and handsome, but the cold energy around him was intense.

Around noon, in the hospital parking lot.

Aella answered Tyrone's call and came out to meet him. "What do you want from me?"

He opened the car door, eyes dim. "Get in. We need to talk."

She stayed where she was. "Just tell me here."

They stared at each other. Tyrone frowned. "Are you getting in yourself, or do I have to carry you?"

Instead of moving, Aella stepped back.

He walked over, about to grab her, but she finally got in.

He followed, closing the windows and the divider.

Facing her, he was serious. "From now on, stop treating Mr. Vic. Don't go to Webster Manor."

Aella couldn't help asking, "Is Mr. Vic in danger?"

She knew Tyrone wouldn't show up at this hour for no reason.

Tyrone didn't answer directly. "Aella, I agreed to the divorce. You can hate me, ignore me, and punish me however you want. But you need to listen to me on this."

Aella shot back, "Mr. Winter, who do you think you are? Why should I listen?"

They locked eyes, and Tyrone's face darkened.

He stayed silent for a long moment before speaking.

"Even divorced, even if you can't forgive me, we've known each other since we were kids—over 20 years. You know I'd never hurt you."

Aella's tone was icy, dripping with sarcasm.

"I trusted you because we were childhood friends for decades. Even knowing you loved someone else, I married you without hesitation. I thought even if you didn't love me, at least you wouldn't hurt me. But what happened in the end?"

Their gaze stayed fixed. Tyrone tried to speak, but no words came out.

The atmosphere was thick with tension.

Aella broke eye contact and opened the door.

Tyrone grabbed her wrist,

She turned back.

"I'm sorry. This is all my fault," he said.

Seeing her impatience, he shifted the subject, leaning closer. His voice dropped.

“Without you, I can’t sleep. The meds you gave me are gone.”

Aella stayed firm. “If you want meds, go register.”

She reached for the door again.

Tyrone snapped and pulled her into his arms.

She struggled, but he wouldn’t let go, burying his face in her neck. “If I don’t register, are you really just going to leave me?”

Aella pressed her hands against his chest, struggling to break away. “We’re over. Your life or death has nothing to do with me anymore.”

In the cramped backseat, they fought over each other.

Suddenly, Tyrone froze, staring at the smooth curve of her neck. “Why aren’t you wearing the necklace I gave you?”

Aella pulled free and straightened her clothes. “That’s my business. It has nothing to do with you.”

He held back but reminded her, “Before the divorce, you promised to always wear it.”

She snorted. “We made a lot of promises.”

She tried to leave, but Tyrone grabbed her wrist again.

The standoff continued.

His voice was firm. "You can fight me all you want, but you have to wear that necklace!"

Aella shrugged him off, not caring. "It's just a necklace. I tossed it. Why make it a big deal?"

He grabbed her by the back of her neck, pulling her closer.

Chapter 297

Tyrone stared at Aella, his eyes locked on her. "Where did you throw it? Take me there now."

She snapped, temper flaring. "Down the drain! Good luck finding it!"

They glared at each other, neither backing down.

Her look basically said, "What are you gonna do about it?"

Tyrone's chest heaved, his anger barely in check.

A long silence stretched on. Finally, he spoke, low and threatening.

"Aella, I'll give you one more chance. Take me to get that necklace right now, or I'm taking you home."

Aella noticed the warning in his eyes. Something about Tyrone felt off today.

All this drama over a necklace? Really?

She cleared her throat. "I left it at home."

Tyrone's mood was tense, and Aella didn't want to make it worse.

“Go get it now,” he demanded.

Aella blew up. “Are you nuts?!”

It was just a necklace. Even a diamond one wasn’t worth this kind of fuss. Why was he acting so crazy in broad daylight?

She reached for the car door, ready to bolt.

Tyrone yanked her into his arms, forcing her onto his lap.

He held her tightly, trapping her there, then told the driver, “Go to the Reid Residence.”

Aella freaked out when she realized he was taking her home just for a necklace.

She struggled in his arms. “I have work this afternoon! Let me go!”

He held her tighter, pressing his face into her chest. “Keep moving, and you’ll regret it.”

Tyrone was acting strangely, but Aella refused to be bullied. “We’re divorced! If you touch me, I’ll call the police and say you raped me. You’ll go to prison!”

He wanted her badly, but he wasn’t reckless enough to force her.

Aella struggled the whole ride, but Tyrone’s grip was unbreakable.

When the car finally stopped at the Reid Residence, he let her

go.

She stepped out, drained, still baffled by his behavior.

He made all this drama just over a necklace.

When Tyrone stepped out, Sayer came out of the Reid Residence in loungewear.

Sayer glanced at his phone, then at Tyrone behind Aella. "Aella, why are you coming home at this hour? And you brought someone?"

Aella gave Tyrone a look, then told Sayer, "Just grabbing something."

Sayer shrugged. "Warren and Miriam went for a walk. They'll be back soon."

Tyrone noticed Sayer's casual way of addressing her parents and saw him wander into the yard next door. His expression darkened.

He held back his words and followed Aella inside.

She stopped him. "Don't come in. Wait out here."

Tyrone insisted, "I need to make sure it's the necklace I gave you."

Aella hesitated, but she didn't stop him.

She picked the necklace up from the bathroom sink and handed it over. "If it means that much to you, just take it back."

Tyrone examined it, his face unreadable, then stepped closer to her.

He loomed over her, eyes fixed on her face, and stubbornly looped the necklace back around her neck.

Aella shoved him. "You still don't know how to respect me."

Tyrone stared at her, his lips tight.

He didn't say anything and just tried to put the necklace on her again.

When Aella refused, he suddenly leaned in and kissed her.

The sudden kiss made her panic, and she shoved him away.

They tussled near the sink until Tyrone finally let go before it got too messy.

He was breathing hard, his chest rising and falling fast.

His eyes were a little red, and his voice was firm. "Aella, you've got two options. Either promise to wear this necklace and never take it off, or I'm taking you home right now."

Aella knew arguing wouldn't work.

She snapped, "Tyrone, we're divorced! You can't treat me like this!"

Tyrone didn't care. "You already think I'm a jerk. I've got a hundred ways to drag you home if I want!"

They stared at each other. Aella went quiet.

Seeing her stop resisting, Tyrone's expression softened.

He carefully placed the necklace around her neck and brushed her hair back.

He lifted her chin so she had to look at him.

"Promise me you'll always wear this," he said seriously. "Never take it off!"

Aella stayed silent, and he pulled her close.

Just then, Warren swung a broom and smacked Tyrone hard.

Chapter 298 That's How Couples Should Be

Tyrone met Aella's calm stare before finally letting go.

No wonder she hadn't reacted when he hugged her earlier. She'd seen her father come in with a broom.

She just watched him get hit, completely unfazed.

Tyrone turned to Warren and Miriam. "Good afternoon, Warren, Miriam."

Miriam didn't answer. She just pulled Aella out of the bathroom.

Warren wasn't having it. "Mr. Winter, don't call us that. We don't deserve this."

He tossed the broom aside. Tyrone kept his head down and followed Warren into the living room.

Aella knew her parents didn't want to make things hard for Tyrone, but they also didn't want to see him.

She told him, "Go wait in the car. I need a minute with my parents."

Tyrone glanced at them. Both turned away, but he still said goodbye before leaving.

As soon as he stepped out, Miriam grabbed Aella's hand, worried. "Aella, what's going on with you two? Are you ..."

Aella reassured them, "It's his business what he does. I just brought him back to grab something. Don't overthink it."

Miriam still looked uneasy. "Tyrone grew up right under our noses. He's stubborn and always has a plan. Zera has already been sentenced. I'm just scared he'll mess with you again."

Aella's voice was firm. "Don't worry. I remember everything he's done to me. No matter what he does, I'm not going back."

She paused, then added, "But you know Mrs. Winter and Raine have always been good to me. Tyrone and I share friends and connections. Even though they are divorced, it's hard not to run into each other.

"But you really don't have to worry. I know my

limits."

Her

parents finally let it go.

As Aella headed out, Miriam ran after her with an umbrella. "Looks like rain this afternoon.

Aella got in the car and noticed the red mark on Tyrone's white shirt. She quickly looked away.

Her father hadn't held back for a while—he'd hit hard.

But compared to everything Tyrone had put her through, that was nothing.

The car started moving.

Aella asked, "I'm wearing the necklace now. Can you tell me what happened to Mr. Locke?"

They locked eyes. Tyrone asked, "When did Sayer move in next door to you?"

Aella frowned, her tone sharp. "Tyrone, I asked first."

His gaze darkened as he looked at her.

He murmured, almost to himself, "My shoulder hurts."

They held each other's eyes for a moment.

Aella turned toward the window, staring outside.

She could feel Tyrone's intense stare burning into her, but she didn't flinch.

Back then, if he even coughed, she'd worry sick.

Now, nothing about him could make her feel anything.

They rode in silence.

When the car neared a supermarket by the hospital, Aella told the driver to stop.

“I’m going to grab a few things. I’ll walk back to the hospital,” she said to Tyrone,

Before he could respond, she opened the door and stepped out.

He rolled down the window, watching her cross the street, lost in thought.

“Mr. Winter, are we heading back to the office now?” the driver asked.

Tyrone snapped out of it, noticing the umbrella Aella had left behind.

He grabbed it and stepped out of the car.

Inside, Aella went down the tissue aisle and unexpectedly ran into an old classmate with her

boyfriend, shopping for sanitary pads.

Seeing their sweet interaction, she didn’t disturb them.

The girl asked, “Have you ever bought these for another girl before?”

He replied instantly, “No way, Babe. This is personal. I’d only ever get them for you!”

Aella quietly looked away, watching her classmate glow with happiness.

That was how couples were supposed to be.

Nearby, Tyrone watched Aella, gripping the umbrella without realizing it.

He felt frozen, unable to move a single step closer.

79

When two girls passed by, he stopped them, asking if they could give the umbrella to Aella.

He watched them hand it over and point in his direction. When Aella looked up, he ducked behind a shelf instinctively.

He remembered the time he had bought pads for Zera, and Aella had caught him.

He remembered the hurt in her eyes when she saw him.

Tyrone felt like his chest had been torn open. He hurt so badly he could barely stand.

Chapter 299 Crush You

Aella had been married to him for three years, and not once did he care whether her stomach hurt during her period.

He also never bought her those things.

Aella stepped out of the supermarket, glancing at the umbrella she held.

Her phone buzzed in her pocket—it was Beatrice calling. She answered as she walked toward the hospital.

Just then, Jenny got out of a car and headed straight for her. Aella kept walking.

Jenny stepped in her path, acting way better than usual. “Dr. Reid, I only reacted that way because Zera stirred things up. She tricked me. Why do you walk away when you see me?”

What’s that about?”

Aella stopped, but she didn’t hang up on Beatrice.

She called Jenny out, giving zero mercy. “You know full well Zera is Mr. Winter’s side chick, and you still hang around her. Honestly, you two are the same.”

Jenny’s expression shifted instantly. “What do you mean?”

Aella replied, “You’re friends with her because she’s Mr. Winter’s lover. You help her with money and favors, thinking she’ll marry him, become Mrs. Winter, and get into the elite circle. You’re basically using her for your own gain. Don’t act innocent and blame someone else.”

Jenny’s face twisted with anger.

She snapped back, voice sharp and aggressive.

“Aella, you’re just a bankrupt heiress! Without Tyrone, you’re nothing! What makes you think you’re so special?”

Jenny looked down on her. “I could crush someone like you. I’m even being nice by talking to you. Show some respect!”

Aella calmly turned her phone volume up all the way.

“Jenny, let’s be real. You’re just the Townsends’ illegitimate daughter. Since you don’t bring them any advantage, you should behave and stop causing trouble for the elders.”

Jenny sneered arrogantly. “Those old folks have one foot in the grave. Stop trying to scare me!”

Aella picked up her phone and said calmly, “Mrs. Townsend, your granddaughter is really bold. I wonder who gave her that confidence.”

Jenny hadn’t realized Aella was on the line with her grandmother.

Panicked, she lunged forward, shoving Aella and trying to snatch the phone.

Aella hadn’t expected that. She nearly stumbled, and her phone hit the ground, and the screen shattered.

She grabbed her broken phone, looked at Jenny, and slapped her across the face.

Jenny held her cheek, still in shock, unable to wrap her head around what had just happened. Aella warned, “Jenny, if you ever attack me again, it won’t just be a slap next time.”

She added, “And you owe me a new phone.”

Then, she kept walking toward the hospital.

Before, Aella had put up with Zera to keep Zera’s perfect-girl image.

She’d just been using Zera to speed up her divorce from Tyrone.

When Zera tried to provoke her, Aella mostly ignored it.

She only exposed her when she absolutely had to.

Jenny had been around Zera so long that she thought Aella was weak.

She glared at Aella's back, teeth clenched. "You think you can mess with me? Just wait!"

That night after work, Aella didn't get a new phone from Jenny, but she did get a ride from the Townsends.

The Townsends' butler greeted her politely. "Ms. Reid, Mrs. Townsend would like to see you."

Aella slid into the car without hesitation.

Over an hour later, she reached the Townsend Residence.

In the living room, the elders were there—and so was Tyrone.

Seeing him caught her off guard.

He got up and came over, scanning her from head to toe. "Did she hurt you?"

Aella kept her composure in front of everyone.

She gently pushed him away and shook her head. "I'm fine."

Jenny stood in the middle of the room, watching Tyrone fuss over Aella, disbelief written all over her face.

Everyone said Tyrone didn't care about Aella.

So why, even after the divorce, was he still so concerned?

Beatrice looked at Aella with nothing but warmth.

“Aella, I heard everything on the phone. As long as I’m around, no one will treat you badly.”

Matthew snapped at Jenny, “Go apologize to Dr. Reid now!”

She hadn’t expected it to blow up like that.

Trying to fix things, she stepped toward Aella and bowed her head. “I’m sorry, Dr. Reid. I was wrong today. I apologize.”

Aella shook her head. “I don’t accept your apology.”

Jenny had hated Aella for a long time. She was only saying sorry because she had to—not because she meant it.

Chapter 300

Jenny never thought Aella would snap like that in front of her grandmother and father, showing her no mercy at all.

“I already said I’m sorry! What else do

you want?”

Jenny tried to shove Aella, acting all cocky, but Tyrone stepped forward coldly. “Step back!”

Jenny froze, intimidated by his glare.

Beatrice was furious.

She pointed at her son and snapped, "As long as I'm alive, that disrespectful girl is never coming back into this family!"

Matthew jumped on board immediately. "Mom, you're right. I'll kick her out right now."

Jenny was stunned.

She yelled, refusing to back down, "Grandma! Dad! I'm part of this family! How can you kick me out over some outsider?"

Smack!

Matthew hit her hard. "Someone, get this clueless brat out of here!"

Aella just watched quietly as Jenny was dragged away, calm and unreadable.

The Townsends were a top family in Vleka.

With five sons, Matthew had to be tough to keep his spot as head of the family.

Even though they were one of the Eight Great Families, Matthew bowed a bit too much in front of Tyrone. "Mr. Winter, my daughter has always been out of control. You and Mrs. Winter—"

He paused, realizing he had called Aella wrongly, and quickly fixed it. "Mr. Winter, Dr. Reid, please be generous and let it slide this time."

Aella glanced at Tyrone.

Honestly, Jenny's stunt today didn't justify her getting kicked out.

Beatrice and Matthew were just careful around Tyrone.

Aella took the new phone the Townsends gave her as a replacement, thanked them politely,

refused their ride, and got up to leave.

Tyrone said goodbye to Beatrice, then stopped Matthew from sending them off.

At the gate, Tyrone held an umbrella over Aella. "It's raining, and cabs are hard to get. Let me drive you home."

She paused. "How did you know I fought with Jenny?"

They locked eyes. He looked down. "Mrs. Townsend called Mr. Townsend while I was there."

She didn't answer, so he tried to take her arm. "Come on, let me drive you."

Aella was about to push him away when a flashy sports car pulled up in front of them.

Sayer got out, and Tyrone's face darkened instantly.

Aella brushed past Tyrone and walked under Sayer's umbrella.

Sayer kept one arm on the umbrella and draped the other over her shoulders.

Tyrone instinctively stepped forward and shoved Sayer's arm off.

Sayer shot Tyrone a challenging look and put his arm back around Aella.

“Mr. Winter, you were all over your side chick before the divorce. I didn’t see you acting so proper back then.”

Tyrone’s face went even darker as he yanked Sayer’s arm off Aella again.

Aella noticed and hurried Sayer toward the car.

Sayer looped his arm through hers, bent down, and rested his head on her shoulder just to annoy Tyrone.

Tyrone held back, standing in front of her.

He gave Sayer a sharp look. “You want me to rip your head off?”

Sayer handed the umbrella to Aella. “Here, hold this.”

She had no choice but to take it.

Sayer pointed first at Tyrone, then at himself.

Next, he leaned down, wrapped his arms around her waist, and taunted, “I’m hugging her. What are you gonna do?”

Tyrone looked at Aella while she stared at Sayer.

Sayer kept provoking Tyrone, dragging out his words and repeating “baby” and “Aella” over and

over.

Aella saw Tyrone toss his umbrella aside and start charging.

“Idiot! You’re gonna push him over the edge. Let go!” she shouted at Sayer.

Before she could finish, she felt him release her waist.

Bang! The car door slammed. Before Aella could react, Tyrone shoved Sayer inside, got in himself, and locked it.

She stood there in the rain, umbrella in hand, staring at the bouncing black car. She was completely stunned.

“Tyrone!”

She threw the umbrella down and started pounding on the locked door.

Ever since Zera went to prison, Tyrone had been acting strange.

He used to stay calm no matter what, but now he loses his temper so easily.

What a headache.

If she’d known it would be like that, Aella never would’ve hypnotized Zera for him. She should’ve just let him and that killer live happily ever after.

“Damn, he’s crazy!”

Suddenly, Sayer tumbled out of the other car door.

Aella hurried around the back to help him up. "Let me see. Where'd you get hurt?"

Sayer pulled a small mirror from his pocket and started fixing his hair. "Aella, he completely ruined my sunscreen and foundation!"