

Trading My Ex for His Uncle (Nyla)

#Chapter 721

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If it were really going to come to blows, knowing Brody's personality, he would probably just stand there and let Leon hit him, then call the police afterward.

Once the police were involved, there was no way Leon could stay on this project.

Seeing the concern in Nyla's eyes, Ruby quickly reassured her, "No, I stopped him just in time. He's calmed down now."

Hearing that, Nyla finally let out a sigh of relief. "I'm glad you stopped him."

After everything that happened last time, Leon had become much more composed, but Nyla still worried he might act impulsively because of her.

"What's up with that photo anyway? I believe you, but anyone else who sees it could easily get the wrong idea," Ruby asked.

After all, the photo clearly showed Damon holding Nyla's hand.

Just as Nyla was about to respond, her phone suddenly rang.

Seeing it was Damon, she wasn't surprised-he must've heard about the photo, too.

"I'm going to take this call real quick," she said, moving away.

She walked over to the railing and answered. "Mr. Sumner, I'm guessing you're calling about the photo."

Damon's steady voice came through. "Yes. I'll take care of it. You don't need to worry."

"What are you planning to do?" Nyla asked.

Even though Damon had only grabbed her hand to stop her from getting him medicine, it was hard to explain it away. "Just leave it to me," Damon replied.

Since he didn't seem willing to elaborate, Nyla didn't press further.

After hanging up, she put her phone away and walked back to Ruby. "Don't worry about it. Mr. Sumner said he'll handle it."

After thinking for a moment, she explained further, "About the photo-I ran into Mr. Sumner last night after work. He was having stomach pain, so I planned to buy some medicine for him. He tried to stop me and accidentally grabbed my hand, but I pulled away. I didn't realize someone had taken a picture."

"Oh, see," Ruby replied.

Having known Nyla for several years, Ruby had become her biggest fan. She believed everything Nyla said, knowing she wouldn't lie.

The two walked into the lab together, seemingly unaware of the eyes following them.

Nyla walked straight to her workstation.

Brody smirked, his tone mocking. "Some people pretend to be all proper, but it turns out they've got skills-

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going as far as snagging Mr. Sumner."

Ruby glared at him in disgust. "Brody, if you don't need your mouth, why don't you donate it to someone who does!"

Leon sneered from the side. "With that nasty mouth of his, even if he gave it away for free, no one would want it. They'd probably find it bad luck!"

The two teamed up, and Brody boiled with anger.

Despite that, he quickly recovered and laughed. "Leon, are you one of her admirers too? Otherwise, why would you be so quick to defend her when she hasn't even said anything?" Leon's fists clenched as he stared coldly at Brody. "Say that again."

Just as Brody was about to respond, Tina's voice suddenly echoed, louder than usual. "Hey, check the company group chat! Mr. Sumner just posted something."

Damon: [This morning, a photo of

me holding hands with our lab

researcher, Ms. Nyla Kinsey, was circulated within the company. It has led to a lot of false comments and unwarranted ridicule directed at Ms. Kinsey. As the CEO, I feel it's my responsibility to clarify the situation.]

Damon: [The photo is real, but the truth is that I was pursuing Ms. Kinsey and trying to hold onto her. She was rejecting me at the time, and it was not a case of us holding hands, as some rumors suggest. I apologize to Ms. Kinsey for the impact this has caused.]

Damon: [Also, the workplace is for

work. I expect all employees to focus their energy on their jobs instead of spreading

unsubstantiated rumors or gossip. I hope this matter ends here. Anyone caught spreading rumors or making derogatory remarks about Ms. Kinsey will face immediate dismissal!]

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The company group chat fell silent. No one dared to speak up.

However, in the smaller private groups without any supervisors, things had already exploded.

[Did I read that right? Mr. Sumner said he's pursuing Nyla Kinsey?]

[I can't believe it either, but that's exactly what it says in his statement.]

[Wow, I'm so jealous...]

Some of the old-timers at Prospectus Technology couldn't help but chime in with the gossip.

[Actually, Mr. Sumner went public with her a few years ago, but then she fell into the sea, and everyone thought she had died. No one expected her to reappear five years later.]

[Is this Nyla Kinsey the same person as Nyla Jayston from before? I was shocked when I first saw her. They look practically identical. Could it be that she got plastic surgery to look like Nyla Jayston to seduce Mr. Sumner?] [Who knows? We're just here to watch the drama unfold.]

[Alright, enough gossiping. If this gets out, Mr. Sumner will definitely follow through on his threat to fire anyone talking behind the scenes.]

There was a moment of silence in the lab as Tina looked at Nyla with envy. "Nyla, I never expected Mr. Sumner to be pursuing you."

Brody scoffed. "See? Some people just know how to play their cards right, managing to get Mr. Sumner to

Before he could finish, he noticed Ruby pointing her phone's camera at him.

"Ruby, what are you doing?!" he snapped.

Ruby smiled. "Go on, keep talking. I'm recording this to send to the group later. Let's see if you'll be the first one to get fired for running your mouth."

Brody's gaze darkened instantly, glaring at her like a snake ready to strike.

Ruby wasn't afraid. She had had enough of Brody's attitude for a while now.

She provoked, "What? You thinking of hitting me? A grown man who just loves to bully others. No wonder you're in your 30s and still single-probably no woman wants a guy like you."

"You!" Brody clenched his fists, his whole body tensing as if he were ready to attack at any moment.

The atmosphere suddenly became tense.

Nyla stepped in, pulling Ruby behind her. "Brody, you've been stirring up trouble for no reason lately. I've told Ruby and Leon to put up with it, but if you keep pushing your luck, I'll make sure you're out of this

project."

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Brody glared back. "Are you threatening me?"

"Take it however you want," Nyla shot back.

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Just as the tension reached its peak, Sullivan's voice came from the doorway. "What's going on here?"

Why's the lab atmosphere so heavy

So in the morning?"

Nyla turned to look at him, her expression cool. "Nothing, Sullivan, Since you're here, let's discuss the upcoming work arrangements."

Noticing her cold attitude, Sullivan didn't get angry.

He nodded and replied, "Alright."

As he and Nyla walked to the office,

he exchanged a look with Brody, warning evident in his eyes. If

a at

idiot dared to mess up his plans, he wouldn't let him off easily.

After discussing the work arrangements, Sullivan left.

Nyla took out her phone, hesitated for a moment, and sent Damon a message asking why he did what he did.

After waiting for a while without receiving a response, she put her phone away and returned to work. Around noon, Damon suddenly appeared outside the lab.

At that time, Nyla was monitoring a chemical reaction in one of the lab's instruments.

It wasn't until Ruby nudged her that she noticed Damon standing outside, his gaze fixed on her, clearly there to see her.

She handed her notebook to Ruby, instructing, "Take over recording for now. I'll be back in a bit." Today's Bonus Offer

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GET IT NOW

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Nyla walked out of the lab and asked Damon, "Why are you here?"

"You asked me why I did it. I came to give you an answer," Damon replied.

Upon seeing the seriousness in his eyes, Nyla's heart skipped a beat for some reason. She instinctively looked away.

"You could have just texted me back. You didn't need to come all the way here," she said.

"But I wanted to see you," Damon said.

She frowned and replied, "Mr. Sumner, you're-"

"Crossing a line" was what she wanted to say.

Before she could finish, Damon interrupted her, "If I told the truth, no one would believe it. By saying I'm pursuing you, the focus shifts to me, and people won't gossip about you anymore. Besides, I do intend to pursue you again."

Nyla's mind replayed the things Damon had said to her that night while driving her and Mason home, and she couldn't find the words to respond.

She had indeed been thinking about his words over the past few days but hadn't made up her mind about what to do.

After a moment of contemplation, she finally spoke. "Mr. Sumner, there's no need for you to pursue me. We're not in our 20s anymore. I've been thinking about what you said that night. Once I figure things out, I'll let you know. Until then, let's just stay as we are." Damon's gaze deepened. "Alright, I understand. I won't bother you again until you've made your decision

"If there's nothing else, I'll head back to work," Nyla answered.

Returning to the lab, she took the notebook from Ruby and told her, "Go ahead and have lunch. Come back and take over after you're done."

"Okay," Ruby replied.

She was curious about what Damon had wanted to discuss with Nyla, but she didn't ask since it was private.

After Ruby left, the lab was quiet again, with only the sounds of the instruments humming softly.

Nyla looked down, trying to steady her emotions.

When she had seen the statement Damon posted in the group chat earlier that morning, she felt a bit touched. However, her feelings were all over the place, and she wasn't sure what to do. en FindNovel

She hesitated to give them another chance, afraid they would end up repeating the same mistakes.

Maybe staying as they were was best-things were calm, and she didn't have any unrealistic hopes. It was better to take her time and think things through. Regardless of her decision, she would speak to Damon directly.

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When Nyla returned home that

evening, she found Mason sitting on the carpet. He was staring at a half- built Lego set in his hands, looking in thought.

She set her bag down, changed her shoes, and sat beside him. "Buddy, what's wrong? Did something happen at school?"

Mason snapped out of it and shook his head. "No, Mommy, I'm fine."

It was obvious from his expression that he was feeling down, but he insisted he was okay.

Not wanting to push him, Nyla patted his head. "Alright. But if anything's bothering you or if you want to talk, you know you can always tell me." "Okay," Mason answered.

Nyla didn't say anything more and got up to head into the kitchen, quietly asking the nanny if anything had happened at school that day.

While flipping the stir-fried potatoes

in the pan, the nanny shook her head. "Nothing in particular... When t
picked him up, though, he didn't seem his usual self. He was quiet the whole way home. I asked, but he didn't say anything."

"I understand. Please keep an eye on him for me over the next few days. If anything seems off, let me know right away," Nyla requested.

The nanny nodded. "Of course, Ms. Kinsey."

At dinner, Nyla placed Mason's favorite ribs in front of him, but he only ate one or two pieces before losing interest.

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After finishing his dinner, Mason set down his cutlery. "Mommy, I'm done eating."

"You're eating so little today. Usually, this whole plate of ribs wouldn't be enough for you alone. Is your stomach bothering you?" Nyla asked. "No, I'm really full," Mason replied.

"Okay, go play for a while then," Nyla told him.

After dinner, Nyla played with Mason for a bit before taking him for his bath and getting him ready for bed.

Once he was in his pajamas and tucked under the covers, Nyla prepared to read him a bedtime story as usual.

However, he suddenly looked up at her and asked, "Mommy, is Uncle Oliver not visiting me anymore?"

Nyla paused for a moment before asking, "Why would you ask that?"

"Before, Uncle Oliver would call me every day, but he hasn't called for several days now. And he hasn't come to our house either," Mason answered.

Although Mason was young, he was sensitive and perceptive enough to notice that something had changed between Nyla and Oliver.

After a few seconds of silence, Nyla told him, "Buddy, things between Uncle Oliver and me are complicated. I can't really explain it to you right now, but I promise that Uncle Oliver really likes you. He has his own life too, and he can't always focus on us." 'Mason's eyes dimmed, and he lowered his head. "I understand."

Seeing his downcast expression, Nyla felt a pang of sadness.

"If you ever miss him, you can call him, you know," she said softly.

Mason didn't respond. Instead, he looked up at her and asked, "Will you and my dad be together?"

"Do you want me to be with him?" Nyla asked.

"I don't know, but I want to be with Daddy," Mason replied.

Seeing the hope in his eyes, Nyla pressed her lips together and tucked the blanket around him. "Sleep now.

After coaxing Mason to sleep, Nyla left his room. She didn't return to her bedroom but instead sat down on the sofa and called Damon.

"Nyla, why are you calling me so late?" Damon asked.

Taking a deep breath, Nyla spoke slowly. "Tonight, Buddy asked me if I would be with you and then said he wants to be with you. Did you teach him to say that?"

"Yes," Damon admitted without hesitation.

"This is between us. Can you not involve the child?" Nyla snapped.

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Sensing the anger in her voice, Damon spoke softly. "Nyla, this isn't just between us. It involves Buddy too. It's about us as a family." "We are not a family," Nyla stated.

Damon sighed. "I admit I used a bit

of a trick to get you back, but my intention is to bring you and Buddy back. +can protect you both now, and won't let anything happen to you again.

"Nyla, I love Buddy just as much as you do. I want to give him a complete family so he can grow up happy. Even if you don't want to be with me, you should think about him, right?" Damon tried.

"You did this on purpose. You know how much I care about Buddy," Nyla shot back.

"Mm, you can punish me however you want, as long as you're willing to come back," Damon replied.

Feeling both angry and helpless,

Nyla thought she could have lashed out at Damon if he had still been as stubborn as before. Now that he was so soft and understanding, it felt more like punching a pillow. No matter how much she wanted to be mad, she simply couldn't

After a moment of silence, she spoke calmly. "L

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"Okay, where should we meet?" Damon asked.

"I'll meet you at your office after work," Nyla replied.

After hanging up, Nyla took a deep breath and returned to her room to shower and rest.

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The next evening, after finishing her work at the lab, Nyla headed straight to the top floor to find Damon.

Spencer had been instructed to expect her, so when he saw her, he immediately approached. "Ms. Kinsey, Mr. Sumner is waiting for you in his office. I'll take you there."

"Thank you," Nyla replied.

Spencer led her to the office and quickly left.

Damon put down the file he was holding and looked up at her. "Have a seat. I'll sign off on this document, and then I'll be with you."

Nyla sat down on the sofa.

A few minutes later, Damon walked over and sat across from her. "What did you want to discuss?"

Pressing her lips together, Nyla said, "I've thought it over carefully. Buddy is at a sensitive age right now, and he needs a complete family. So, I agree with what you proposed before. I'm willing to pretend to be a loving couple with you for Buddy's sake, but I have a few conditions."

Damon frowned. "Pretend? What do you mean?"

He wanted to genuinely reconcile with her and make things right for her and Mason, not just play a role.

Nyla looked directly at him and replied calmly, "I don't intend to start over with you. I hope you understand that."

If Damon hadn't used Mason to pressure her, she might have softened and given their relationship another chance.

Now, if she agreed because of Mason, Damon would just keep using the same tactics to force her into compromising again and again in the future. That wasn't the kind of love she wanted,

A flicker of disappointment crossed Damon's eyes. He had assumed that Nyla wanting to talk meant she was willing to give him another chance, but he now realized it was just wishful thinking. Despite that, if she was willing to come back into his life, he would have plenty of opportunities to win her

over.

With that thought in mind, he nodded. "I understand. What are your conditions?"

Nyla listed them: "One, we'll only act like a couple in front of Buddy. Outside of that, we won't interfere in each other's private lives.

"Two, when Buddy turns 18, we'll tell him the truth and go our separate ways.

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"Three, if either of us starts a new relationship, we must inform the other in advance so we can find a way to minimize the impact on Buddy."

Damon listened silently until Nyla

finished, then looked at her. "I can

agree to all three of your conditions

but

but you and Buddy need to move back in." FindNovel

Nyla nodded. "Okay."

Before coming to see Damon, Nyla had already considered the possibility of either Damon moving in or them returning to his villa. After all, if they were going to act like a couple for Mason's sake, they couldn't live apart.

"The weekend is coming up. I'll have people help you pack, and we'll move you in then," Damon said.

Nyla frowned. Although it felt a bit rushed, she still nodded. "Okay."

Damon stood up. "Since we've talked everything out, I need to get back to work. You should head home."

"Okay, Mr. Sumner, I—" Nyla began to say.

He interrupted her. "Don't call me 'Mr. Sumner' anymore. Just call me by my name."

Nyla conceded, "Okay, Damon. Buddy's been a little down these past few days. If you have time, join us for dinner tomorrow night."

"I have a business event tomorrow. How about the night after?" Damon suggested.

"That works. I'll see you then," Nyla said.

After Nyla left, Damon didn't return

to

his desk. Instead, he took out a bottle of red wine from the cabinet. He poured himself a glass and walked to the window.

As he gazed down at the busy streets below, his expression was deep and contemplative.

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Rebecca, losing patience, arranged to meet Sullivan.

"When are you finally going to take action? If you don't have the guts to do it, I can find someone else!" she demanded.

A hint of disdain flickered in Sullivan's eyes as he observed her agitation, though he maintained a gentle smile.

"Rebecca, don't worry. Setting up an accident takes time. If I rush it and someone finds evidence, forcing me to confess, everything will be ruined," he coaxed.

Rebecca's gaze was mocking as she snapped, "Sullivan, don't give me excuses. Just tell me when I can expect news of Nyla's death!"

"I promise it won't take longer than a month," Sullivan replied.

"A month? Do you take me for a fool?!" Rebecca cried.

"Rebecca, a month is really the fastest I can manage. Besides, you also need time to transfer Nathaniel's money, don't you?" Sullivan countered.

Rebecca gritted her teeth. "Fine. I'll give you one last month. If Nyla is still alive by then, I'll tell Damon everything you did while at Prospectus Technology. You know the consequences!"

During his years as the team leader of Prospectus Technology's Drug Research Team 2, Sullivan had embezzled a significant amount of research funds-close to 1,000,000 dollars.

If Damon found out that there was such a major leech in his company, Sullivan would face a long prison sentence.

Sullivan lowered his gaze, a vicious glint flashing in his eyes. If Rebecca wasn't going to let him off the hook, there'd be no need to keep her around once he got the money.

"Alright, I promise you. In a month, Nyla will be as good as dead," he said.

Back at home, Nyla shared her plan to move back into Damon's villa with Mason.

Mason's eyes lit up at first but soon turned downcast. "Mommy, are you only moving back because of me? If that's the case, I'd rather not go back..."

Nyla knelt to his level, her gaze softening. "Buddy, why would you think that? I'm moving back because I want to give your dad another chance. Plus, don't you want us to be a family?" Mason lowered his eyes, saying nothing. He did want his family to be together, but he also wanted his mother to be happy.

"Mommy, will you be happy if you go back to Daddy?" he asked.

Nyla nodded. "Of course I will. Otherwise, why would I try to get back together with him?"

"Really?" Mason asked, skepticism evident in his voice

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"Of course. I've never lied to you, have I?" Nyla reassured him.

Mason stared at her for a moment before finally nodding. "Okay."

Seeing the smile return to his face, Nyla felt a sense of relief wash over her. As long as Mason was happy, that was all that mattered. After dinner, Nyla tucked Mason into bed.

Just as she was about to read in the living room, her phone rang.

It was an unknown number, so she declined the call. The caller didn't try again, but soon she received a

text message.

[Why did you throw away the roses I sent you? Is it because you don't like them?]

Nyla's eyes widened in shock. She immediately called back, but the line was disconnected. Her fingers tightened around her phone, her face turning pale.

The person who had sent her roses hadn't shown up in a while, and she had almost forgotten about it. She never expected them to reappear.

After thinking it over, she called Caroline. "Caroline, I need you to trace a phone number for me."

She sent the unknown number to

Caroline, Her anxiety was evident making it hard to focus on reading. Standing on the balcony, she

pondered who the sender might be.

Today's Bonus Offer

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Gabriel's name flashed through Nyla's mind again, but she quickly dismissed it. After all, he was married now with a child and seemed to have a happy life.

He wouldn't do something like this... or would he?

Half an hour later, Caroline finally called back.

"Nyla, I couldn't find any information on that number. It must have been deliberately hidden. Why are you investigating it?" she asked.

Nyla hadn't expected that even Caroline, who was skilled in computer hacking and had previously tracked down online trolls to their home addresses, couldn't find anything. This only confirmed that the person behind this had malicious intent. "It's nothing. Thank you for helping. I'll treat you to dinner when I'm back in Capitarnia," Nyla replied.

Realizing that Nyla didn't want to elaborate, Caroline didn't press further. "I couldn't even find the owner's name. I didn't help at all-no need to treat me. By the way, how's everything going in Saintornia? Is the project progressing smoothly?" After chatting about work for a bit, they ended the call.

As Nyla debated whether to ask Damon for help, another text came through.

[Nyla, are you so curious about who I am? I've always been watching you from a place you can't see. It's cold at night. Don't stay on the balcony too long. Go get some rest.]

The message sent a chill down Nyla's spine as if she had plunged into an ice bath.

This creep not only knew she was trying to track them but also knew she was currently on her balcony.

Panic surged as she frantically scanned her surroundings for any sign of someone watching, but everything seemed normal.

Her phone vibrated again.

[Nyla, stop looking. I'll appear when it's time.]

Nyla's hands shook as she gripped her phone tightly. She rushed back inside, shutting the balcony door and drawing the curtains, her fingers trembling as she typed.

Nyla: [Who are you?! If you keep this up, I'll call the police!]

Her message seemed to vanish into a void. There was no response.

Wyla tried calling the number again, but it was still switched off.

Trying to calm herself down, she quickly contacted Damon and told him everything that had happened.

Damon arrived within half an hour, clearly having come straight from work, still in his suit.

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After reading the texts on her phone,

he said coldly, "You can't stay here any longer. You and Buddy are

moving tonight. I'll have so

pack your things tomorrow. Don't worry. I'll take care of this-I won't let anything happen to you."

Still shaken by the texts, Nyla nodded. "Okay..."

She wrapped Mason in a blanket as he slept, gathered some essentials, and left with Damon.

It was only when they arrived at Damon's villa that Nyla felt some of the tension lift.

Lydia saw Damon carrying Mason into the living room, with Nyla following behind. She seemed surprised but quickly approached them.

"Mr. Sumner, I've already prepared the rooms for both Mr. Mason and Ms. Kinsey," she reported. Damon responded with a hum, then carried Mason upstairs, tucking him in before leaving the room.

As he closed Mason's door, he saw Nyla standing a few steps away, still looking a little dazed.

He walked over and spoke in a low, reassuring voice. "Don't worry. I've already gotten people investigating this. We'll catch the person soon." Nyla nodded, her expression still tense. "Thank you."

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"Nyla, don't feel like it's a bother. It's what I should do, and I'm really glad you called me tonight," Damon replied.

At the very least, he sensed that Nyla needed him.

A flicker of emotion crossed Nyla's face before she lowered her head and said, "I'm a bit tired, so I'll head to my room now. You should get some rest too." "Alright," Damon answered.

Without another glance at him, Nyla pushed open the door to her room. Once it was shut behind her, she exhaled softly, finally feeling a bit relieved.

She placed a hand over her chest, feeling her heartbeat quicken, and couldn't help but smile wryly. Then, she grabbed her clothes and went to the bathroom for a shower.

As Nyla disappeared behind the door, Damon's expression turned cold. He quickly walked downstairs and headed straight for his study.

Spencer acted swiftly, taking less than an hour to identify the mysterious caller.

"Mr. Sumner, the person is Howard Rowley, 29 years old. He works as a security guard at Ms. Kinsey's apartment complex. He doesn't have many friends and usually keeps to

himself," he reported. Damon's voice was icy. "Based on the messages he sent, he's known Nyla for five years. There's no way he's just a random security guard."

"Should we keep investigating?" Spencer asked.

"Yes, keep digging. Have someone monitor this guard and find out who he associates with. Also, look into Gabriel," Damon instructed.

If there was anyone in Nyla's circle who could be this obsessive, Gabriel was the first person Damon thought of.

Spencer replied, "But Mr. Sumner, Mr. Hackett already has a family. It's unlikely that he-

"I need evidence, not speculation," Damon interrupted, ending the call.

He set down his phone, his expression dark.

When Mason woke up the next morning, he found himself in a room at Damon's villa.

Surprised, he jumped out of bed and ran out the door without even putting on his slippers.

As soon as he opened the door, he ran straight into Nyla, who was standing outside.

Nyla couldn't help but smile as she picked him up. "Why aren't you wearing slippers? The floor is cold." "Mommy, why are we here?" Mason asked.

"Your dad missed you, so he brought us over while you were sleeping last night," Nyla replied.

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Excitement flashed in Mason's eyes. "Where's Daddy?"

"He's downstairs having breakfast. I came up to wake you. Let's wash up, then we'll go down," Nyla said. "Okay," Mason chirped.

After slippers on Mason and

helping him wash up and change Nyla took him downstairs. He was still just a child, with every emotion written plainly on his face.

Nyla could see that his steps were lighter and quicker than usual.

Blood ties were a powerful thing. Despite barely spending time with Damon, Mason seemed to like him so much.

As soon as they reached the living room, Mason let go of Nyla's hand and sped up his pace, running to Damon. "Good morning, Daddy!"

Damon looked at him, his gaze softening. "Good morning, Buddy. What would you like for breakfast today?"

"I want a breakfast wrap!" Mason exclaimed.

"Alright, I'll ask Lydia to make one for you," Damon replied.

Nyla walked a few steps behind Mason, pulling out a chair next to him and sitting down. She greeted Damon; "Good morning." Damon's gaze softened even more as he looked at her. "Good morning."

After breakfast, the driver took Mason to school, and Nyla finally had time to ask Damon about the 'mysterious number. "Did you find out who was messaging me?"

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"Yeah, it's a security guard from your apartment complex. But I think there's more to it," Damon replied.

A security guard?

Nyla frowned, trying to recall any interactions, but she couldn't remember ever talking to the security guards at her complex. Besides, a guard wouldn't say things like "Welcome back" to her.

Noticing her frown, Damon said calmly, "Don't worry about it. I'll handle it. For now, I'll have the driver take Buddy to and from school, and you can commute with me. That

way, I can ensure your safety." Thinking about the messages from last night, Nyla felt that chill creep up her spine again. She nodded. "Okay, I'll listen to you."

After finishing breakfast, the driver took them to the office. On the way, Damon asked if they needed to keep their relationship a secret.

Nyla thought for a moment and replied, "No need. It's not something we can hide for long anyway, so let's just go with the flow."

A spark lit up in Damon's eyes as he answered, "Alright."

When the car stopped in the basement, they both got out. It was close to work hours, and they encountered several employees of Prospectus Technology along the way.

Seeing Nyla and Damon arrive together, everyone couldn't help but stare, though no one dared to speak. They all kept their heads down, pretending they hadn't seen anything. If Damon hadn't ordered employees not to discuss his and Nyla's relationship, the company would have been buzzing with gossip by now.

An eerie silence filled the elevator lobby, despite there being over 20 people present. No one said a word.

Damon glanced at Nyla and, seeing her calm expression, felt slightly relieved.

"Come to my office at noon. We'll have lunch together," he said.

Nyla looked a bit surprised. She wanted to decline, but after thinking it over, she nodded. "Okay, but I'm not sure when my experiment will end, so I might be a little late." "It's fine. I have an important meeting today too. I'll wait for you," Damon replied.

The elevator arrived soon after.

When Damon and Nyla stepped inside, they noticed that no one else joined them.

Damon frowned and asked, "Are you not taking the elevator?"

The female employee closest to them quickly waved her hand. "No, thank you, Mr. Sumner. It's still early, so we'll wait for the next one."

Damon didn't say anything more and pressed the button for the elevator doors to close,

Nyla thought for a moment before speaking. "When you told everyone in the Prospectus Technology company group chat that anyone caught discussing our relationship

the

would be fired, I think it neve

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employees. That's why no one said a word while we were waiting for the elevator, and no one wanted to ride with us."

"Isn't that exactly what I want? I don't want you to become the subject of gossip," Damon replied.

Seeing how forceful he was, Nyla felt a bit helpless. "You can't stop everyone from talking."

Damon raised an eyebrow. "I never planned to silence everyone, just the majority."

Nyla was about to respond, but the elevator had already reached her floor. She said, "I'll head to work now."

"Alright. Call me if you need anything," Damon said.

"Okay," Nyla answered.

Even though Damon had forbidden any discussions about their relationship, news of them arriving at work together spread through the company within hours. Unlike before, no one dared to make snide remarks in front of Nyla.

Even Brody started to keep a low profile. After all, if anyone recorded him mocking Nyla and sent it to Damon, he'd be in serious trouble.

Near noon, Nyla called Ruby into her

office. "Ruby, what's going on with you today? Why are you making so many mistakes in the lab? You're usually much more careful"

'In the past, Ruby had always been thorough and meticulous when working on experiments, rarely making mistakes.

Today, she had made several errors

and seemed distracted, almost

adding the wrong reagent earlier,

which could have caused the
experimental setup to explode.

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Ruby shook her head, lowering it in guilt. "Nyla, I'm sorry. I didn't sleep well last night... I promise I won't make any mistakes this afternoon."

Seeing Ruby's exhaustion and the dark circles under her eyes, Nyla realized she truly hadn't rested well, so she didn't scold her further. "Alright, go get some lunch and take a good rest."

"Okay, thank you. I'll finish organizing the documents and then head out," Ruby replied.

Nyla didn't say anything more and left the office, heading to the top floor to find Damon.

Not long after Nyla left, Ruby's phone started ringing. Seeing the number flashing on the screen, her face went pale, and she didn't pick up.

The calls kept coming like an ominous reminder.

She grabbed her phone, intending to block the number, but hesitated at the last moment.

Very soon, her phone rang again. She took a deep breath and answered, "I sent you all the money I had last night. I don't have any left!"

"Ruby, your brother has been taken by the debt collectors. They said if we don't repay by midnight, they'll cut off one of his hands. Only you can help him. Can you really just watch him die?" Margaret Tinnin, Ruby's mother, said, her voice sharp and cutting. It was like a knife to Ruby's heart, leaving her wounded and bleeding.

Her parents had always favored her brother. They had wanted her to drop out after middle school to work and earn money for his tuition. If it hadn't been for her grandmother's strong opposition, she wouldn't have had the chance to attend high school, let alone university. Ruby had paid for all her university expenses herself by working part-time jobs, with no help from her family. At her lowest, she had only a few dollars left-a single loaf of bread had to last her for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Despite it all, she never felt bitter because she knew her life would have been far more miserable if she had dropped out.

When she wasn't working, she studied hard, aiming for scholarships as her way out of the family's oppressive favoritism.

Eventually, she earned a place in a graduate program, and only then did her parents see value in her education. A master's degree meant prestige in their village, and it also made her a prime candidate for marriage, as they saw it.

Whenever Ruby went home to visit her grandmother, her parents would arrange blind dates for her or ask how much she would earn in the future. They hoped she would send all her wages home.

When she resisted their
matchmaking, they once went so far
as to tie her up and send her to a
man's room. If she hadn't fought
back with all her strength, she would
have been assaulted.

To placate them, she had promised to send half her salary home once she started working, and only then did they ease up on her.

Now, they had tricked her into giving them all her savings again. Some parents they were!

"I've lived frugally to save 30,000 dollars over the past few years, and you took it all to pay his gambling debt. You lied, saying it was for Grandma's medical bills. If she hadn't called me when she had the chance, would you have ever told me the truth?" Ruby demanded.

"What else could I do? He's my son, the future of our family. Do you want me to just watch him get beaten to death? Ruby, you can't be this heartless!" Margaret cried.

Ruby let out a cold laugh. "I'm heartless? He chose to gamble. If he gets his hand cut off, that's his fault. Stop calling me!"

With that, she hung up.

Setting down her phone, she was about to continue organizing the documents when she noticed

someone at the door. She quickly turned her head.

Her expression changed when she saw it was Sullivan.

"Sullivan, how long have you been standing there?" she asked.