

Trading My Ex for His Uncle (Nyla)

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Margaret glared at Ruby, resentment burning in her eyes. How could Ruby, working at such a good company, possibly be broke? She must have been planning to abandon Hansel!

Across from her sat Alex Douglas, a man in his 40s with one eye blind, a scarred face, and a menacing

demeanor.

"Are you sure if I bring her back, you'll pay me 3,000 dollars? Alex asked.

Margaret clenched her teeth. "Of course, Duncan agreed to give 40,000 dollars as a dowry. As soon as i get the money, I'll give you 3,000 dollars."

Alex sneered. "Giving me just 3,000 dollars out of 40,000 dollars? Seems a bit unfair, don't you think?

Margaret was surprised by his sudden change of tone, and her expression darkened. "Alex, don't try to raise the price. You know that money is for saving my son's life. Trying to take advantage of me now? That's just cruel!"

Alex looked at her mockingly. "You're willing to throw your daughter into the fire just to save your son. Who's more inhumane here?"

Margaret fumed. "Are you going to do it or not? If not, I'll find someone else!"

"Of course I'll do it. It's a freebie that just dropped in my lap," Alex replied.

"Then hurry up! I promised I'd be back tonight," Margaret snapped.

Without another word, Alex got up and left the food joint.

As Margaret watched his figure vanish into the crowd, she felt a surge of anticipation. As long as Alex brought Ruby back, they could save Hansel!

On her way back to the dorm from Prospectus Technology, Ruby needed to pass through a quiet alley.

Not long after entering, her anxiety intensified, and her pace quickened. Suddenly, she thought she heard footsteps behind her.

Although the other person was trying to match her speed, she still sensed it.

She whipped around, but the alley was empty under the streetlights, and her own breathing was the only sound breaking the silence. Taking a deep breath, she turned back and hurried forward.

Just a few more steps, and she

would be out of the alley. Although it wasn't in a bustling area, there were usually residents passing by

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However, as Ruby approached the alley's exit, a large hand suddenly reached out from behind her, covering her mouth.

"Mmph!" Fear washed over her like a tidal wave.

Her instinct was to struggle, but the hand bore a strange scent that caused her vision to blur and her

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strength to fade.

Just as Ruby felt herself slipping into unconsciousness, the grip suddenly loosened.

She fell to the ground but felt no pain, only a peculiar lightness.

""Ruby! Ruby! Wake up!" someone shouted.

Ruby felt herself being shaken and forced her eyes open, her vision slowly clearing.

Seeing Sullivan's worried face, she was stunned for a moment.

"Sullivan... did... you... save me?" Her voice trembled with fear, and her face was pale as a sheet.

"Yeah, are you okay? Do you need me to take you to the hospital?" Sullivan asked. Ruby shook her head. "No... No need. I have no money... I'll be fine after a moment..."

Sullivan frowned but didn't push the issue. Instead, he helped her out of the alley and into a nearby fast food place, asking the owner for a glass of water.

Handing her the glass of water, he asked seriously, "Do you want me to call the police?"

After taking a sip, Ruby finally began to feel a little better.

As she set the glass down, her

hands were still shaking. If it weren't

for Sullivan's timely arrival, who knew what might have happened?

"Did you see the guy's face?" she asked.

"No, he was wearing a mask. I was worried about you, so I didn't chase after him when he ran off," Sullivan replied.

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There were no surveillance cameras in that alley. Since they hadn't seen the person's face, calling the police would be pointless, but it was still better than doing nothing at all.

Ruby bit her lip, deciding she would rather take a longer route than walk through that alley again.

Noticing her pale face, Sullivan fell silent momentarily before saying, "But before he left, he said something."

"What did he say?" Ruby asked.

"He told me not to meddle, saying that even if I could intervene for a moment, I wouldn't be able to control things for long." Sullivan replied. "And when he left, I felt like his gaze toward you wasn't that of a stranger. You two may know each other." Ruby was appalled-she immediately thought of Hansel losing a lot of money gambling. If that person really did know her, her parents may have sent them...

"I understand, Sullivan. Thank you for today. It's getting late, so you should head home. I'll treat you to a meal another day," she said.

"No need. It was just a small favor. I noticed you didn't eat anything tonight. I ordered two dishes earlier. After you finish eating, I'll send you back," Sullivan replied.

Ruby instinctively curled her hands into fists, feeling embarrassed.

After giving all her savings to Margaret, the latter had tricked her out of most of the few hundred dollars she had left. Now, she had less than 100 dollars on her. If she spent that here, she would be starving for the next couple of weeks. "I've already paid for the meal. Don't worry about it," Sullivan offered kindly.

Ruby was taken aback, her face turning red.

She quickly said, "Sullivan, that's unnecessary. I'll transfer the money to you later."

Sullivan looked at her, a hint of helplessness in his expression. "There's no need to be so polite. Everyone goes through tough times, and I'm helping you willingly. I don't want anything in return, so you don't need to feel burdened about it." "No, Sullivan, I'm very grateful that you saved me today. I can't let you spend money on me. I insist on paying for the meal," Ruby insisted.

She took out her wallet and pulled 30 dollars from the few notes she had left, handing them to Sullivan.

ng the stubbornness in her gaze. Sullivan sighed and accepted the money. "I'll take the t but don't bring us treating me to a meal again."

Body shook her head. "That's a different matter."

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him. She needed to find an opportunity to repay this favor.

The two fell silent, and Ruby opened her phone.

After hesitating for a moment, she sent a message to Nyla, hoping to borrow some money and promising to pay it back after her salary came in next month.

Nyla's phone lit up in the living room

of Damon's villa, but she didn't

line

notice. She was making pasta in kitchen while Damon washed vegetables in the sink.

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As the water ran, the two exchanged a few words about work, creating a warm and harmonious atmosphere.

Once the pasta was nearly done, Nyla added the washed vegetables to the pan. The originally light green tables turned a vibrant green after just a brief stir.

Quickly, Nyla transferred the pasta and vegetables to plates with some sauce. She then sprinkled a bit of cheese on top. Two steaming plates of fragrant, delicious pasta were ready.

"I'll wash the pan. You go ahead and serve the pasta," Nyla said.

"I'll wash the pot. You serve the pasta," Damon countered.

As he spoke, he took the pan from her hands and turned on the tap to start washing.

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Nyla watched Damon's broad back, feeling warmth in the places where he had touched her. It was as if those spots were burning, sending heat through her body straight to her heart. A few seconds later, she snapped out of it and carried the pasta outside.

When Damon emerged after washing the pan, he saw Nyla sitting at the dining table, staring down, seemingly lost in thought. He walked over and sat down across from her. "Why aren't you eating?" he asked.

Nyla looked up. The moment their eyes met, she quickly looked away. "I'm waiting for you. Let's eat together."

With that, she picked up her cutlery and shoved some pasta into her mouth.

"Be careful, it's hot!" Damon reminded her, but it was too late.

The moment the scalding pasta touched Nyla's tongue, she frowned in pain.

Feeling a sharp sting, she quickly spat the pasta out.

In the next instant, a cool hand grasped her chin.

Damon said, "Open your mouth."

Nyla instinctively complied, a refreshing pine scent enveloping her, surrounding her completely.

Damon stood beside her chair, their bodies close together.

Nyla felt herself tense up subconsciously, her hands slowly tightening on the table. Her heartbeat quickened as if it might leap out of her chest at any moment.

Just when she thought her face was burning too, he suddenly released her chin.

"You've burned a blister on your tongue. I'll have someone bring over some oral gel," Damon said.

As he turned to leave, an inexplicable sense of loss welled up in Nyla.

Suppressing the sudden wave of emotions, she feigned calmness and said, "It's fine. It'll heal in a couple of days. I don't need any oral gel."

Damon glanced back at her with a frown. "You should use the oral gel so it heals quickly. You won't be able to eat pasta either. I'll have Lydia cook some soup for you."

"There's no need to go to so much trouble. I can cook it myself. It's getting late. Don't disturb Lydia," Nyla declined.

"Just sit still. I'll make it for you. You are all thumbs and might end up hurting yourself again," Damon nagged as he headed toward the kitchen.

Nyla quickly stepped in front of him, blocking his path. It's just my tongue that's hurt, My hands are fine. You should eat your pasta. It'll get soggy if you wait too long. I'll cook for myself." Seeing that Damon was about to argue, she added, "Don't forget, the last time you didn't eat properly, your

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stomach hurt from hunger. Do you really want to mess up your stomach again?"

Damon looked at her, his deep-set eyes searching hers. "Nyla, are you concerned about me?"

Nyla was taken aback, feeling oddly shy. She couldn't meet his gaze and looked away. "Who's concerned about you? I just don't want Buddy to worry about you."

"Just don't want Buddy to worry? Don't you have any concern for me?" Damon asked.

As he spoke, he leaned closer, fixing his intense gaze on her. He didn't want to miss any change in her expression.

The distance between them closed.

Nyla instinctively took a step back, trying to create some space.

Damon seemed to sense her intention and tightened his grip around her waist, not allowing her to retreat.

"Nyla, why won't you answer?" he asked,

Nyla bit her lip, feeling parched. "Let go of me first..."

She was enveloped in his pine scent,

feeling as though she were in a

tranquil pine forest, every breath filled with that cool and secure aroma.

"I'll let go of you once you answer me," Damon said.

Nyla pushed against his chest, her eyes filled with anger. "Damon, don't be unreasonable!"

Seeing that she was genuinely upset, Damon didn't dare tease her any further. If he really annoyed her, it

would be hard to coax her back.

Just then, footsteps approached.

Nyla quickly pushed Damon away and turned to walk briskly into the kitchen.

Lydia had just stepped into the living room when she spotted Nyla's back.

"Mr. Sumner, Mr. Mason is already asleep. Is there anything else you need me to do?" she asked.

"Nyla burned her tongue while eating just now. Please bring some oral gel for treating burns," Damon instructed.

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Lydia quickly nodded. "Okay, I'll go get it now."

By the time she returned with the oral gel, Nyla was coming out of the kitchen.

"Ms. Kinsey, Mr. Sumner said you burned your tongue while eating. You should apply this oral gel, and it should be better by morning," Lydia advised.

Nyla took the oral gel and replied, "Thank you, Lydia. It's getting late, so you should go rest."

Lydia glanced toward the kitchen. "Ms. Kinsey, are you planning to cook something? Do you want me to help?"

"No need. I'm just making some soup. I can handle it. You should go get some rest," Nyla answered.

Lydia nodded. "Alright, but if you need anything, just call me."

"Will do," Nyla replied.

Once Lydia left, the living room fell into a sudden quiet, with only Nyla and Damon present.

After what had just happened, she felt a bit awkward facing him.

Damon put down his cutlery and looked at her. "Come here."

Under the lights, he appeared calm, but an undeniable tension filled the air.

"What's wrong?" Nyla asked, remaining where she stood and watching him.

"I'll help you apply the oral gel," Damon said.

As soon as he said that, an image of him applying oral gel to her tongue flashed in her mind, making her bite her lip.

"No need. I can do it myself," Nyla refused.

Damon didn't reply but continued to look at her, his dark eyes intense.

Feeling the weight of his gaze, Nyla instinctively tightened her grip on the oral gel tube.

"Damon, really, it's fine. I can manage," she insisted.

In the next moment, he stood up and walked toward her. He moved slowly, but each step felt like it landed in her heart, making her heartbeat quicken. He stopped right in front of her, extending his hand. "Give me the oral gel."

"It's fine, I can-" Nyla began to decline.

Before she could finish, he grasped her wrist.

She froze for a moment, then instinctively tried to pull away, but he had already let go.

"Go sit on the sofa," Damon said.

Nyla glanced at the oral gel he now held, ready to protest, but he seemed to anticipate her next words. "If you refuse again, I'll carry you there myself." 1/2

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Under Damon's unwavering gaze, Nyla lowered her own and reluctantly agreed.

Once she sat on the edge of the sofa, she heard his deep voice from above. "Look up and open your mouth."

She followed his instructions, but as soon as she looked up, their eyes locked.

At that moment, her heart raced even faster.

Quickly, she averted her gaze, her hands subconsciously tightening at her sides as she fought to stay calm. Damon cupped her chin, his deep voice close to her ear. "Open your mouth."

Nyla slowly parted her lips, clutching the hem of her shirt in anxiety. She didn't know why she was so

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nervous-she had already decided to just be friends with Damon.

Yet, as he drew near, her heart fluttered uncontrollably. His handsome face was so close, and

the faint scent of pine surrounding

him made her thoughts spiral.

"Don't be nervous. It won't hurt," Damon coaxed.

While speaking, he dipped a cotton swab into the oral gel and gently applied it to the blister on her tongue.

Nyla had expected it to hurt, but instead, there was no pain at all. The oral gel had a refreshing minty scent that felt soothing.

As she looked up at Damon, her eyes were slightly reddened and held a hint of innocence that inspired a sense of protectiveness. Damon's gaze darkened, and his body tensed as he fought the urge to kiss her.

Once he finished applying the oral gel, he withdrew his hand and tossed the swab into the trash.

"All done. Just avoid irritating the blister tonight, and it should be fine by morning," he said.

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"Okay, I understand," Nyla replied.

She lowered her eyes, suddenly recalling that the soup was cooking in the kitchen. When she looked up to ask Damon if she could have some now, she found herself lost in his tender gaze instead. The living room fell silent.

She could almost hear her heart racing. After a few seconds of staring, she finally snapped back to reality and quickly averted her gaze.

Right away, Damon's deep voice broke the silence. "What is it?"

Nyla bit her lip and spoke softly. "I just wanted to ask if I can still have soup tonight?"

"You can, but try to avoid the areas that got burned," Damon answered.

"Got it. I'm fine now," Nyla said.

"Alright, I'll check again in the morning. If there's still swelling, we'll apply the oral gel again," Damon replied.

As soon as he finished speaking, Nyla recalled the earlier moment when he applied the oral gel for her, and her cheeks flushed.

She really didn't want to go through that again, so she said, "Just give me the oral gel. I can apply it in front of the mirror tomorrow."

"It's no trouble at all. I don't have anything planned for tomorrow anyway," Damon dismissed.

Nyla felt speechless-that wasn't what she meant!

Since he wouldn't give it to her, she had no choice.

"I'll go check on the soup..." she muttered.

Without waiting for his response, she hurried away, feeling as if she were escaping. Damon watched her retreating figure, his expression thoughtful and his gaze obscure.

When Nyla finished cooking the soup, Damon was already in the study, dealing with work.

She poured herself a bowl and set it aside to cool. Just as she picked up her phone, she noticed a message from Ruby and immediately called back.

The call connected quickly, and Ruby's somewhat hoarse voice came through. "Nyla..."

"Ruby, what's wrong? Did something happen? How much do you need?" Nyla asked.

Upon hearing Nyla's genuine concern, Ruby's eyes reddened as she struggled to hold back tears. "It's nothing. I just don't have enough money from this month's salary. If it's okay, I'd like to borrow 500 dollars. "Sure, I'll transfer it to you right away. If that's not enough, let me know," Nyla assured her.

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Thank you Nie Ruby cred

"Don't worry about it. It's just a small thing. If you ever need help, remember to reach out. You're here in Sartore for the project with me. I'll take care of you until you return to Capitamia," Nyla promised

"Alright. It's getting late now, Nyia, so I won't keep your Ruby replied.

After hanging up. We promptly transferred the money to Ruby. She wanted to ask what was going on but decided against it. If Ruby wanted to share, she would do so on her own.. Damon was on a call with Spencer in the study.

"Are you sure Howard has no connections with Gabriel?" Demon asked.

Yes, Mr. Sumner. I've checked Howard's contacts from the past year. He has no interactions with Mr. Hackett, nor with anyone around him or his company."Scencer reported. Damor's expression darkened. His instincts told him this matter was linked to Gabriel, and he trusted that feeling

Got it," he replied.

After a moment of silence on the other end, Spencer's cautious voice returned. 'So... should we continue the investigation?"

"File a report. We need to ensure Howard doesn't have any chance to appear in front of Nyla again. Also, keep an eye on Gabriel, Damon instructed.

"Understood. By the way, Mr. Pedro

Wilkie's birthday banquet is next week. Mr. Hackett will likely attend.

Are you planning to send a gift or go in person?" Spencer inquired

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Pedro was the grandfather of Gabriel's wife, Jane Wilde. Since Gabriel married Jane, he had taken over one of the Wilkie gaming companies.

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Over the past few years, the company had produced several well-received games that revitalized its reputation. It had become one of the more profitable subsidiaries of the Wilkie Group. Damon said coldly, "Prepare a gift. I'll go over in person."

After hanging up, he set his phone down, his gaze growing colder.

If Gabriel dared to do anything to Nyla again, he wouldn't let it slide, even with the Wilkies backing Gabriel!

After all, their little family of three had finally found a bit of peace, and he wouldn't allow anyone to disrupt that.

The next morning, as Nyla got up to wash up, she noticed that the blister from the burn on her tongue was already fading. It was only a bit red and swollen now, and in a couple of days, it should be completely healed. Once she finished washing up, she went downstairs to find Damon having breakfast. As he heard her coming, he looked up just in time to meet her gaze.

Nyla smiled awkwardly. "Good morning."

""Morning. How's your tongue feeling?" Damon asked.

Worried he might insist on applying medication himself, Nyla quickly replied, "It's fine now. There's no need for any oral gel."

Damon smirked. "Are you afraid I'll have to treat you?"

"No, I just wanted to let you know it's really fine. No need to trouble you," Nyla replied stubbornly.

"I thought you might be shy or something," Damon teased.

"How could I be? Definitely not!" Nyla hissed.

"Well, as long as that's the case," Damon hummed.

His dark eyes fixed on her as if he could see right through her thoughts.

Nyla lowered her gaze and sat down across from him.

Mason had already finished breakfast and left for school, so it was just the two of them at the table, making the atmosphere a bit quiet. After breakfast, Damon and Nyla headed to work together.

During the ride, neither of them spoke.

As they neared the company building, Damon put down the files in his hands and asked Nyla, "Do you have any plans next Friday?" ""No, why?" Nyla asked.

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"Could you accompany me to a party?" Damon Invited

Nyla frowned. "What kind of party?"

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She had never been interested in parties, feeling like everyone wore a mask and it all felt so unreal. Thankfully, she didn't have to deal with business and rarely attended these events. en

"It's Pedro Wilkie's birthda

party. I need a female companion, and since everyone knows we're back together, it wouldn't be appropriate to bring another woman," Damon explained. That reason was compelling enough for Nyla to agree. After all, she was the one who had suggested they pretend to be back together in the first place.

"Sure. What should I wear?" she asked.

Damon assured her, "You don't have to worry about that. I'll take care of it."

Nyla nodded, falling silent again.

Soon, the car pulled into Prospectus Technology's parking lot, and she got out alongside Damon.

After coming to work together for a few days, the Prospectus employees had started to get used to Seeing them together. Privately, however, they were still discussing how long Damon would remain interested in Nyla before moving on.

After all, one was an eligible bachelor, while the other was just a lowly drug research employee- completely mismatched in their eyes. While waiting for the elevator, several female employees glanced at Nyla. Some were jealous, some envious, and some curious. Fortunately, Nyla was already used to being the center of attention, so she didn't mind.

Damon looked at her, quietly saying, "I might have a meeting during lunch today and won't be able to join you. Just go straight to my office.

Spencer will bring you lunch

"No need. Since you're busy today, I'll eat in the cafeteria. It's been a few days since I had cafeteria food, and I'm actually craving it," Nyla replied.

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Damon raised an eyebrow. "You like cafeteria food?"

Nyla nodded. "Yeah, some of the dishes are really good and authentic."

"Then we should go together next time," Damon said,

Nyla agreed.

It was only after she had readily agreed that she suddenly realized what Damon meant. Did he want to go to the cafeteria with her? Did he think she hadn't been popular enough lately? Since they were already commuting to and from work together every day and she visited the CEO's office for lunch daily, going to the cafeteria together didn't seem like a big deal. Besides, with Damon's statement about their relationship sent to the company group chat, no one would dare gossip about them openly.

As Nyla pondered this, she realized she had grown accustomed to being with Damon. She didn't know when he had started to quietly seep into her life.

Thinking this, she bit her lip and fell silent.

Noticing Nyla's silence, Damon frowned, about to speak when the elevator arrived.

Once they stepped inside, several Prospectus employees followed them in. After a few days, the employees had stopped being afraid to ride in the same elevator with them. Previously, many people had missed their clock-in time because they were too intimidated to ride the elevator with Damon and Nyla, resulting in a lost month of full attendance bonus. That bonus at Prospectus Technology meant 300 dollars. Losing that kind of money had made their

hearts ache.

Damon hadn't found a chance to talk to Nyla, and the elevator soon reached her floor. She walked out with her head down.

As the elevator doors closed behind Nyla, she finally felt the heat of Damon's gaze fade and sighed in relief. She hurried toward the lab.

Once she entered the lab, Ruby greeted her.

Seeing the redness around Ruby's eyes, Nyla chose not to ask and pretended not to notice as she started her experiments.

The morning experiments were busy, and Nyla didn't even have time to drink anything, finishing just at 12: 30 p.m.

When she saw Ruby heading out for lunch, she called out, "I'll go with you."

Ruby looked surprised. "Nyla, you're not eating with Mr. Sumner today?"

Nyla nodded. "He has a meeting during lunch."

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"Oh." Ruby didn't ask anything else, and the two of them walked to the elevator in silence.

As they reached the elevator, Sullivan's voice came from behind. "Nyla, Ruby, what a coincidence! Are you guys heading to lunch too?"

Nyla turned around, her tone a bit cold as she replied, "Yeah."

"I was just about to go. Let's go together," Sullivan suggested.

Nyla frowned, realizing that Sullivan hadn't taken her warning to heart at all. It seemed she needed to find a good opportunity to talk to Ruby about him.

"Sullivan, it's just us two girls. It wouldn't be appropriate for you to tag along, would it?" Nyla hinted.

Sullivan smiled. "I didn't know you

were so traditional, Nyla. Isn't it

normal for male and female colleagues to eat together? Plus, I

have some data I'd like to discuss

with you over lunch."

"It's lunchtime now. If you want to discuss the data, please come find me during work hours," Nyla stated. Their conversation was laced with tension, and Ruby subconsciously clenched her fists, looking down in thought. "Since you don't want to discuss work matters, we can chat about other things while we eat," Sullivan said.

Nyla's expression darkened.

Just as she was about to speak, Ruby suddenly interjected, "Nyla, just remembered there's a piece of lab equipment I haven't cleaned yet. I think I'll skip lunch

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Nyla kept her eyes on the experiment, fully aware that all the instruments had been cleaned and checked.

However, since Ruby didn't want to interact much with Sullivan, she was happy to oblige. "Alright, just make sure you're more careful next time."

"Okay," Ruby replied as she left.

Sullivan watched her walk away with a squint. He hadn't expected Ruby to be so difficult to approach.

Soon, the elevator arrived.

Nyla stepped inside and noticed that Sullivan was still standing outside.

She raised an eyebrow and asked, "Sullivan, aren't you coming? Didn't you say you wanted to discuss some data with me?"

Sullivan's gaze hardened slightly. "Didn't you say to find you during work hours? Plus, if I eat alone with you, Mr. Sumner will definitely have something to say. I think I'll just order takeout." Nyla smiled, raising an eyebrow. "Alright then, see you later."

After lunch downstairs, Nyla packed up a chicken sandwich for Ruby.

When she returned to the office, she found Ruby sitting at her desk, staring off into space, lost in thought.

It was only when Nyla's footsteps sounded behind Ruby that she snapped back to reality and turned to

look.

Nyla placed the chicken sandwich on her desk and said, "Eat up."

"Thanks, Nyla. I'll transfer the money to you later," Ruby replied.

"Alright. By the way, what do

you think of Sullivan?" Nyla asked.

Ruby paused while unpackaging the chicken sandwich, her expression flat as she replied, "He's okay, I guess. We haven't had much contact, and I'm not interested in getting to know him better." Nyla hesitated for a moment but decided to be direct. I think he wants to pursue you."

"You must be mistaken. We've only met a few times. There's no way he would like me. Besides, he's not my type," Ruby answered.

Even though Sullivan had saved her once, she still felt he wasn't a good person. She was grateful but didn't want to have too much to do with him.

"Ruby, I've been mentoring you in the lab. I know how hard you've worked to get where you are. You deserve someone better," Nyla said.

Ruby looked up at her, nodding. "I know, and I'm not thinking about dating anyone right now."

Because of her upbringing, she felt lost in any close relationship and found it difficult to start a normal romantic relationship. She always kept her guard up, believing no one could truly love her. She also feared 1/2

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getting attached to someone else, worried about getting hurt.

A person with such heavy thoughts as hers probably wouldn't find love.

No matter if Sullivan was simply curious or had other motives, she wouldn't give him a chance.

"If you meet someone good, you should definitely give it a shot. I hope you find someone sincere and gentle who will love you," Nyla encouraged.

Her tone was gentle as she ruffled Ruby's hair.

Since Ruby was a few years

younger, Nyla had come to see her

as a younger sister over th

She wanted Ruby to be with

someone good, not someone.

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cunning who might manipulate her.

"Yeah," Ruby replied, taking small bites of her sandwich, finding it tasteless. With her personality, who would ever love her?

To her, love seemed less real than the chicken sandwich in front of her. It felt like an elusive thing. If even her parents didn't love her, how could

she trust anyone else's love?

Seeing that Ruby seemed to be absorbing her words, Nyla turned back to her own workstation.

After finishing her chicken sandwich, Ruby thought for a while and decided to text Sullivan, inviting him to dinner that evening.

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However, Ruby didn't plan to go alone and intended to invite Nyla along.

After she shared what had happened the previous night, Nyla's expression darkened.

"Why didn't you tell me last night? Did you call the police?" Nyla asked.

Ruby nodded. "Yes, I reported it, and the police are investigating now."

Nyla's gaze dimmed. If she had any hope left for her parents, it was now gone. Ruby genuinely intended to cut

ties with them.

If the police discovered that the person who tried to drug and abduct her was indeed acting on her parents' orders, she wouldn't let it slide easily. Seeing the determination and strength in Ruby's eyes made Nyla's heart ache.

She took Ruby's hand and said, "Alright, I'll go with you tonight. Sullivan saved your life, so it's only right to invite him to dinner."

"Thank you, Nyla," Ruby replied.

Nyla sighed and spoke seriously. "If anything like this happens again, you must tell me right away."

Ruby's eyes shimmered with gratitude. "Nyla, thank you!"

"Alright, enough with the pleasantries. Go take a break," Nyla said.

"Okay," Ruby answered.

After Ruby left, Nyla hesitated for a long time before sending Damon a message, hoping he could help Ruby find out who had tried to kidnap her. About ten minutes later, she finally received a response from him.

Damon: [Nyla, I expect compensation for helping others.]

Nyla bit her lip.

Nyla: [What kind of compensation do you want?]

Damon: [Let me think... How about you cook for me this weekend?]

Upon reading this, Nyla felt a wave of relief.

Thankfully, it wasn't too difficult a request. At the same time, she felt a little disappointed. Was she... secretly hoping for something?

She pushed those thoughts aside, took a deep breath, and replied: [Okay.]

Damon didn't reply after that, likely because he was busy

Nyla set her phone down and rested her head on her desk for a nap.

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The afternoon flew by, and it was time to leave work.

Sullivan came to find Ruby. "I drove. You can ride with me tonight, and I'll drop you off after dinner."

"Sullivan, I plan to invite Nyla to dinner as well. You don't mind, do you?" Ruby asked.

Sullivan frowned but soon smiled again. "Not at all. You can both ride with me."

Ruby turned to Nyla. "Nyla, what do you think? Should we go with Sullivan?"

Nyla smiled. "Sure, that would be great. Thanks, Sullivan "

"It's no trouble. It's my pleasure. Since your experiment is done, let's head out now," Sullivan said.

"Okay," Nyla and Ruby said.

As Sullivan turned around, his smile vanished, leaving his expression icy and unsettling.

Nyla sent a message to Damon, letting him know she would be having dinner with Ruby and wouldn't be going back with him.

Damon hadn't replied yet, probably still in a meeting.

Nyla put her phone in her bag and got in the car with Sullivan and Ruby.

Because of the evening rush hour,

the roads were a bit congested. the time they arrived at the

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restaurant, a it was nearly 7:00p.m.

After sitting down and ordering their food, Nyla received a message from Damon. He said he had social commitments that evening and asked for the restaurant's address, saying he would have his driver pick her up after dinner.

Nyla was typing a reply when Ruby tugged at her sleeve.

"Nyla, isn't that Mr. Sumner outside? Who's that woman with him? They seem pretty close," Ruby commented.

Nyla turned her head. What she saw through the window was a couple walking side by side. Her grip on her phone tightened instinctively.

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Damon wore a well-tailored dark suit, his tall figure exuding an air of authority,

Beside him stood a woman in an elegant cream-colored dress, her long hair cascading down her shoulders with soft curls at the ends. She appeared gentle and alluring, wearing a small smile, her eyes bright and lively. Damon had his head turned slightly to converse with the woman beside him, his gaze focused. She looked up at him, her expression warm.

There seemed to be a special understanding between them, making them appear very close.

Nyla stared blankly out the window at the couple, her heart feeling as if it were being tightly gripped. She struggled to calm herself, but her eyes couldn't seem to look away. Ruby watched Nyla with concern and quietly asked, "Are you okay, Nyla?"

Nyla snapped back to reality and forced a smile. "I'm fine."

What she didn't realize was just how strained that smile was.

She turned her gaze away, no longer looking at the couple outside, and began deleting the unfinished text message on her phone. She also deleted her chat with Damon. While she could erase the chat, the image from earlier kept resurfacing in her mind.

Nyla bit her lip, filled with confusion and unease. Who was that woman? Why was she so close to Damon?

In the past, she had seen Damon interact with other women. He had always been indifferent, never giving anyone a chance to misinterpret his intentions.

But this woman was different.

Countless questions swirled in her mind, yet none had answers.

Nyla tried to push her chaotic thoughts aside, forcing herself not to dwell on them.

Despite her efforts, Sullivan seemed to see through her inner turmoil.

He raised an eyebrow and said, "Nyla, you're dating Mr. Sumner, Why don't you just call him and ask what's going on?"

Nyla's hands clenched tightly as she forced another smile. "I trust him."

Sullivan sighed, assuming the demeanor of someone with experience. "You really don't understand men If you don't confront him about it now, he'll never admit anything later.

"He might even turn it around on you, saying you're being paranoid. If you don't ask him now, it'll put you at a disadvantage later on."

"Is that from your personal experience, Sullivan?" Nyla's tone dripped with sarcasm, and there was no hint of

a smile on her face.

Sullivan's expression stiffened, and he instinctively glanced at Ruby.

Seeing her looking at him too, he quickly replied, "You're misunderstanding me. I'm just offering some advice Chapter 750

from a man's perspective. Why are you dragging me int

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from a man's perspective. Why are you dragging me into this?"

"But you're a man too, aren't you? If you can give me this advice, does that mean you'd use this tactic against her when she sees you getting cozy with another woman?" Nyla pressed.

Sullivan frowned, struggling to suppress his anger, though his expression was clearly upset. "Nyla, I know you're upset about seeing Mr. Sumner with another woman, but it's not right to take it out on me." Nyla smiled. "I'm not angry. I was just considering the possibility. So why are you the one getting upset? Did I hit a nerve?"

Sullivan's fists clenched, fury simmering in his eyes.

The air grew tense, and Ruby sat uneasily, unsure of whom to comfort.

After a long silence, Sullivan suddenly laughed. "Nyla, we're here tonight for Ruby's dinner invitation, so let's not go back and forth. I don't want to make things awkward for her." Chapter 751