

When Love Is a Lie (Whitney and Damian)

Chapter 51 Let's Break Up

Whitney immediately turned around, wanting to ask the nurse if William had actually added the new medication to Margaret's IV.

"I'm sorry, Whitney," Rachel said apologetically. "My friend's mother was in a serious car accident with severe brain trauma. I begged Uncle Damian to give her the medication instead."

Whitney's hands clenched into fists at her sides. Her eyes blazed with fury as she glared at Rachel as she shouted, "That medication was for my mom!"

"I know, but Madam Colin has been in a coma for 20 years. What difference will a few more days make? My friend's mother needed it urgently. Can't you just let her have it first?" Rachel spoke as if she were the reasonable one trying to explain things to someone who was difficult.

Every word pushed Whitney closer to her breaking point. For 20 years, she had desperately wished for Margaret to wake up, and now, this newfound hope had been cruelly snatched away.

She snapped, "Would you be so casual about it if you were the one lying in a hospital bed for 20 years?"

She was not being unreasonable-car accidents happened every day, and the victims could definitely rely on other medications. After all, this medication was specifically for vegetative patients with brain damage.

"Whitney, how could you speak to Rachel like that? We're going to be family." Damian frowned while Rachel put on a hurt expression.

When Damian was not looking, Rachel's lips curled into a slight smirk. Whitney caught that subtle expression, and her rage finally boiled over.

She stepped forward and was ready to slap Rachel. "Family? No thanks!"

But before she could, Damian caught her wrist. His expression grew cold, his usual warm smile absent. "Don't you understand priorities? If you've waited this long, what's a little longer? Is it worth getting violent over?" Whitney scoffed. "So, I'm just not important enough."

No matter how desperate she was, Rachel's needs would always come first. As the light in her beautiful eyes slowly dimmed away, Damian felt an unfamiliar discomfort in his chest.

"I've already arranged with Professor Morris to get the first batch of medication as soon as it's available," Damian said, releasing her hand.

"Yes, Whitney. There's still hope for Madam Colin. Please try to understand," Rachel chimed in.

Whitney shot Rachel an icy glare. Noticing it, Damian immediately barked at Rachel, "That's enough, Rachel!"

Rachel pressed her lips together, looking on the verge of tears. Meanwhile, Whitney turned and entered Margaret's ward, unable to stand their act any longer.

Damian moved to follow, but she had already slammed the door behind her. She leaned against it, fighting back tears. It was partly because she did not want Margaret to hear and partly because she

realized this man was not worth her

tears.

After composing herself, she went to Margaret's bedside and took her hand. "Mom, there's been a setback, but we only need to wait a few more days. I promise I won't let you wait too long."

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Whitney was ready to go home that evening, but her car would not start. The mechanic said it needed to be towed to the dealership for repairs, so she had no choice but to hail a cab.

Dark clouds had gathered, and it started to drizzle. With cabs suddenly in high demand, even the rideshare apps showed long wait times. Bad days just had a way of making everything worse.

Whitney decided to walk instead.

Being alone with her thoughts brought back memories-especially the painful ones. She had given so much of herself to Damian over the years, yet she got barely anything back.

His seeming gentleness and their lack of arguments were just a facade, covering up his secret relationship with Rachel. From the beginning, she had just been someone he used.

"Let's break up," Whitney typed the message to Damian and hit send. She was done with the tangled mess between them.

After sending the message, she

blocked him on every platform. She

walked for what felt like hours in the rain until her clothes were soaked through. Finally, she saw the entrance to Coaska Heights, A familiar figure with an umbrella was

hurrying toward her.

Chapter 52 Don't You Know How Dangerous This Is

"Do you enjoy walking in the rain?" Noel approached Whitney with a black umbrella, his expression stern.

Whitney pushed her wet hair from her face and forced a smile. "The rain helps clear my head. Noel, am I incredibly stupid?" She was not just referring to misunderstanding his kindness but also her persistent hope in Damian.

Noel shifted the umbrella to cover her better, exposing his shoulder to the rain. "Better late than never to realize it."

Whitney's lips trembled as her mood visibly dropped.

"Let's go inside," Noel said, turning around. When he realized that Whitney was not following, he looked back.

Whitney's figure swayed, her vision blurry as she felt herself losing control and collapsing forward. Thankfully, Noel reacted quickly, catching her as she fell. He was shocked to realize how hot she was.

"Whitney?" He shook her gently, but she had already passed out. Without hesitation, he lifted her and rushed to her apartment.

Then, Noel used her fingerprint to unlock the door and carried her straight to the bathroom, setting her in the tub and turning on the warm water.

"Soak for a while. I'll get you some clothes," he said, heading to her bedroom.

Noel was uncomfortable with the idea of rummaging through her room, and he was relieved to find her pajamas at the foot of her bed. After a moment's hesitation, he retrieved the necessary undergarments from her dresser drawer and tucked them between the pajamas, keeping his expression neutral.

"Change into these. I'll be outside," Noel stated, placing the clothes by the sink without looking at Whitney.

While waiting, he called his family doctor, who confirmed it was just a fever. Noel knew how to handle that as he was used to dealing with his own fevers during his time abroad.

He prepared hot water and looked for medicine before returning to check on Whitney. She was still in the tub with her eyes closed, mumbling incoherently.

As the water cooled, Noel steeled himself and began unbuttoning her blouse. Her words became clearer as he got closer.

"Why did you give my mom's medicine to Rachel without asking me... Damian, how could you... It's... so cold..."

Noel kept his composure as he quickly removed her wet clothes and lifted her out. After that, he dried her with a towel and dressed her.

Whitney was dazed with fever,

unaware of her surroundings as he moved her limbs to dress her. By the time he was done, Noel's forehead was covered in sweat, and his breathing was heavy.

He tried to keep his focus, but memories of their night together flickered through his mind. The source of his torment was now curled against him. Noel pushed her away slightly. "Whitney, open your eyes."

"It's so hot..." she murmured, wrapping her arms around his waist.

Noel sighed, not pulling away this time. Instead, he lifted her into bed. When he tried to get a thermometer, her delicate arms locked around his neck.

"Don't go.. she whispered, her long lashes trembling and her cheeks flushed with fever. Her slightly parted lips released hot breaths, and her loose pajamas revealed more than they should.

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"Don't you know how dangerous this is?" Noel muttered, carefully removing her arms and tucking them under the covers.

The thermometer showed 102.2°F.

It was too high, and she needed medication. Fortunately, she took the medicine easily and rested quietly in his arms like a small, sleepy kitten. en FindNovel

With no fever patches in sight, Noel soaked a towel in cold water and placed it on her forehead. He also left her arms and legs uncovered to help cool her down. After a while, Noel felt exhausted. He sank into a single armchair across from her bed, ready to keep watch in case she moved and knocked the towel off her forehead. Almost immediately, Whitney rolled over, and the towel slipped off. This happened several times as she tossed restlessly, clearly uncomfortable from the fever and wet cloth. Realizing he needed fever patches, Noel headed out to the pharmacy. As he returned to her door, he saw a figure standing there.

When Love Is a Lie (Whitney and Damian)

Noel stopped in his tracks as Damian stepped forward, deliberately blocking the doorway. He glanced at the plastic bag containing fever patches in Noel's hand.

"Whitney's being careless, letting you take care of her while she's sick. Thank you for your help," Damian said with a smile that did not seem genuine. He reached for the bag, but Noel's grip remained firm. "What's the meaning of this?" Damian's smile faded as he met Noel's cold gaze.

"Did you give Madam Colin's medicine to Rachel?" Noel asked.

"Whitney really tells you everything, doesn't she?" Damian smirked. "Someone might think you're her fiancé instead of me."

Noel's gaze grew colder. "Since you're so aware of your own role, you should understand what's appropriate. Don't play with fire unless you want to get burned."

The tension in the air was palpable as Damian's smirk turned icy. "I could say the same to you. Don't pursue what isn't yours and know your place. Whitney loves me. No matter what I do, she'll forgive me. Haven't you figured that out yet?" Noel's free hand clenched into a fist before relaxing. "Who she loves isn't my concern. I'm just warning you not to embarrass the Howard family, or the position of Howard Group's heir might not be yours to keep."

This statement sparked a new thought in Damian's mind. He could not help but wonder if Noel was eyeing the Howard Group himself. If so, perhaps his concern for Whitney was not personal but strategic.

The idea weighed heavily on Damian. He had never considered Noel a rival, assuming Beckham would not approve due to his political career.

However, Noel's words made him think twice. After all, someone who became chief designer at Seabourke Architectural Institute was not to be underestimated.

Damian's smile returned. "Thanks for the warning. As a Howard, I'd never do anything to embarrass the family."

He reached for the bag again, and this time, Noel let it go.

"I hope you mean that," Noel said flatly before returning to his apartment.

After Noel's door closed, Damian entered Whitney's apartment. Whitney was still asleep, feverish and unaware. He tossed the bag of fever patches aside, not in any hurry to use them on her. Instead, he stood over her, watching her pale face.

Damian crouched slightly and muttered, "If you had just listened and moved back in with me, I wouldn't have given the medicine to someone else."

His mind wandered to two nights ago. Rachel had come to the villa wearing only a slinky dress under her coat.

"Uncle Damian, I need a favor," she had purred while pressing against him. "My friend's mother was in an accident. Could you give her Professor Morris' medicine instead?" Damian looked at her, asking, "How do you know what medication he has?"

Rachel avoided his gaze. "I

overheard Whitney mentioning it to someone.... That it's really effective. for brain injuries." As she spoke, she pressed closer. "I want to help them they're so pitiful. It's just her and her mother now. If you agree, I'll make it worth your while tonight."

Rachel had kissed him then, guiding his hand to her chest. Yet, all Damian could think about was Whitney's hurt expression, so he pulled away.

"If your friend's mother's condition is critical, she can have the medicine first," he said.

Rachel was surprised by how easily he agreed as she knew her excuse would not hold up under scrutiny. Still, his reaction unsettled her. Damian had never turned her

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before, and her expression dropped.

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When Whitney woke the next morning, sunlight was streaming through her windows. She was confused to find herself in bed with medicine nearby. Hearing movement outside her room, she got up but immediately felt dizzy. As she swayed, someone rushed in to catch her while calling out, "Whitney, careful!" Whitney looked up, disappointment flashing across her face before she put on a cold look. "Were you the one who took care of me last night?"

When Love Is a Lie (Whitney and Damian)

Chapter 54

Chapter 54 They Were Just Using Each Other That Night

Whitney remembered meeting Nool at the entrance. Before she passed out, she had seen him lean forward to catch her, and later, she vaguely recalled him giving her medicine. Hence, it did not make sense for Damian to be in her home. Besides, she had blocked him on every platform, and there was no way he could find out she was sick.

"You had a high fever, but i timally broke this morning," Damian said as he set down a bowl of chicken noodle soup. He reached toward her forehead to check her temperature. Whitney turned away, her palle face expressionless as she avoided his gaze. "I don't need your care. Please leave."

re. If Noel hadn't called Even though he was exasperated, Damien remained gentle. "I loow you're angry about your mother, but don't take it out on your health. You blocked me

everywhere. I me, I wouldn't have known you were sick. You need someone to take care of you."

Whitney's head snapped up, her eyes wide with surprise "Noel called you?"

Yes, her memory had not faded her. Noel had brought her home and given her medicine. Then again, why would he call Damian, the last person she wanted to see?

"He had work to attend to and needed to maintain appropriate boundaries Noel says that as your fiancé, I'd be the most suitable person to care for you." Damian smiled, studying her reaction carefully,

her responsibility for her.

Damian's words sang Whitney's heart. She must have meant nothing to Noel if he was so eager to avoid any re

Whitney laughed bitterly at herself. She had told him to stay away, but now, she realized how little she actually meant to him. That night they shared had just been mutual convenience nothing more.

"already told you we're breaking up. It's not appropriate for you to be here," Whitney stated as she turned away from Damian. "Thank you for last night, but please leave."

Damian stepped closer. "Why are you being childish, threatening to break up over everything? I've already arranged with Professor Mortis to get the next batch of medicine as soon as it's available. Your mom will wake up before our wedding, in why are you being so difficult?"

Whitney stopped back, her face pale and cold. "When I mentioned breaking up. I meant it. There won't be a wedding "

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"You may say that, but I don't agree," Damian said patiently. "Stop this nonsense Let's wait for your mom to wake up. You wouldn't want any. more setbacks, would you?" Whitney's eyes widened in shock. Did he only give the medication to Rachel out of spite?

wude."

Damian picked up the soup and blew on a spoonful. "It makes me uneasy that you're refusing to see me back. I don't feel secure without you by my

Something about Damian's expression sent chills down Whitney's spine, She had a sinking feeling that Margaret's medicine was connected to her refusal to move back to the villa.

"If you won't move back, then I'll move here. You leave me no choice," Damian added, offering her the spoon.

"No way," Whitney uttered, turning away.

Damian's gentle expression vanished

as he held the spoon mid-air. "You used to be so sweet and obedient. I don't like this new version of you.

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Wanted you? Or should I ask,

who did you change for!"

"You're the one who changed. You're not the Damian used to know," she replied atly

Damian put the spoon back in the bed. "I'm still the same. If you don't want me to move in, I'll give you one more week. I really want us to be together when your mom wakes up."

She set the bowl down and continued, "it's still hot, so eat it when you're ready. I'll give you a couple of days off. Make sure you rest well

Whitney watched as he left, listening to the door close behind him. As she sank onto the edge of her bed, it felt as if all her strength had been drained.

He did not love her; he was only using his fears against her. He even threatened her with the person she cared about most

Was there really no escaping this marriage to Damian?

When Love Is a Lie (Whitney and Damian)

Chapter 55 You're Like Me

Two days later, Whitney waited for the elevator. When the doors opened, Noel stood there in workout clothes.

"Feeling better?" Noel asked as he saw her dressed in her work attire.

He noticed how much thinner she looked. Her illness had clearly taken a toll.

Whitney ignored him and walked past him into the elevator without a word. She pressed the button without sparing him a glance. She watched him with a blank face as the doors slid shut. Since she was such an annoyance to him, she would treat him like a stranger too.

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As Whitney was waiting for the elevator at her office, she noticed someone approaching.

"Whitney, thanks for giving up your mother's medicine for me."

The elevator was agonizingly slow, stopping at almost every floor. Whitney kept her eyes fixed on the descending numbers, ignoring Rachel.

Rachel wasn't bothered. She leaned in and asked with concern, "You look like you've lost weight. I hope you're not sick because Damian gave me the medicine instead. I only asked once, and he agreed so quickly. I know you waited very long for that medicine. I'll feel bad if you got sick because of that."

Her voice was so gentle anyone watching might believe she felt bad.

Whitney was tired of listening to her, so she took the stairs, only to pause and turn back.

Rachel still had a smug look when Whitney said sarcastically, "You're giving yourself too much credit. It makes you look like a fool."

Rachel's smile faltered. "What's that supposed to mean?"

Whitney smirked. "You think he did it for you? Guess you're just as clueless as I was."

Like her, Rachel didn't know Damian well enough.

For so long, Whitney had believed Damian didn't love her because Rachel held his heart. But now? She wasn't so sure. All she knew was that whoever held his heart, it wasn't her.

Seeing Rachel's confusion, Whitney walked away without another word. Rachel stood there, stunned, before snapping out of it.

She dismissed Whitney's words as

jealousy. After a

Damian was

always there when she needed him. Every year, on Whitney's birthday he chose to spend it by Rachel's side. If that didn't prove she was the one he truly cared about, what would?

"You're the fool!" Rachel muttered.

The elevator arrived, and a few of her colleagues greeted her.

Just as she was about to step into the elevator with her colleagues, Rachel's phone rang. She glanced at the screen and waved her coworkers on, slipping into a quiet corner before answering.

"Ms. Yanes, I owe you my thanks. Only you could've pulled it off-getting the medication and ensuring Margaret stays under. I can't tell you how much peace that brings me," Rebecca spoke with satisfaction from the other end.

Rebecca had overheard a

conversation between Westley and

Whitney the other day, and in

desperation, she reached out to

Rachel. There was no way she'd sit

back

let Margaret wake u

and

take away everything she had fought

for.

She recalled Rachel's words from the party and figured she might have a plan.

Sure enough, Westley mentioned two days later that Damian had given Rachel the medication for an urgent patient.

"Ms. Yanes, I promised I'll reward you. I'll pay you 50 grand."

Rachel looked around and sneered, "This is a one-time deal. Don't think you can count on me again. You might want to keep your money close, Mrs. Spencer, just in case you need it when you're out on the streets."

Fifty grand wouldn't even cover her cheapest bag. Did that hag think she was a charity case? The only reason Rachel had helped at all was for her own benefit.

As Rachel hung up, Rebecca muttered, "How dare she turn down 50 grand? Does she think she's that great? She'd be scrounging in the streets without the Howard family."

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Whitney climbed to the fourth floor,

catching the elevator just as it arrived to take her up to the

executive office. She turned on her computer, pulling up her half-written resignation letter. If Damian insisted on her moving back to the villa, he'd have to accept her resignation first.

Just as she was focused on the letter, Sophie called on the internal line, asking Whitney to bring a contract over for Damian's signature.

"The contract has to be with the partner by this morning, but Mr. Howard got called out unexpectedly. I'll text you the address. Hurry!"

Whitney grabbed the contract and checked the address. It was a luxury mall. When she arrived, she found Damian browsing in a high-end clothing boutique. "Forget the signature for now. Pick out an outfit first," he said.

When Love Is a Lie (Whitney and Damian)

Whitney handed the contract to Damian, who passed it straight to Billy. Then, he said, "I have an important dinner tonight. I want you to come with me."

Whitney rarely attended any of Damian's events before and was even less inclined now. She put on a straight face and said, "I'm still not feeling well, so I won't be able to make it." Damian simply smiled. "In that case, help me pick out a tie." He stepped closer and leaned in, murmuring, "It's been a while since you last chose one for me."

The warmth of his breath near her ear made her instinctively step back. "I'm not great at picking ties. Why don't you have Mr. Lawson help?" she replied curtly.

Billy immediately shook his head. "Oh no, Ms. Spencer. I wouldn't know the first thing about picking out ties. The ones you choose always suit Mr. Howard best."

Whitney refused to move while Damian watched her quietly. She could sense the curious glances and hear the whispers of the store staff. It would be better for her if she picked one and quickly left. "Alright," she said, giving in. "What suit will you be wearing, and where's the event?"

"The one that arrived last month, the one you said suited me. The event's at a gallery," Damian replied sultrily.

Whitney ignored him, turned to the display cases, and scanned the rows of ties. She quickly selected a black tie with a platinum clasp and handed it to him.

"It's formal enough for the event but suits the gallery setting."

Damian didn't take it. Instead, he smiled with amusement. "And you said you weren't good at picking ties?" He leaned closer again. "Help me put it on."

His expression, tone, and every action seemed designed to suggest something more. Whitney frowned. "You asked me to pick, and I did. If you want to try it on, you can do it yourself or ask the staff." Damian raised an eyebrow, lowering his voice. "I asked you to choose because you always find the perfect one. Putting it on is part of that. Unless you'd prefer to have an audience?" he said softly. Whitney noticed the store staff watching them with quiet interest.

Without another word, she raised her hands and fastened the tie around Damian's collar, his warm breath brushing against her cheek. She turned her head slightly, and through the glass, she caught a familiar figure outside.

Across the hall, Noel was leading a

group. He was dressed in a crisp dark suit, and his jawline appeared tense. Occasionally, he would glance at the blueprints held by one of his colleagues. en FindNovel

Noticing her pause, Damian looked down. "Something wrong?"

Whitney quickly looked away. "No, nothing."

Meanwhile, as Noel listened to his team's updates, he sensed someone looking his way.

He turned to see Whitney through the store window, standing close to Damian. She was adjusting his tie as he watched her intently.

"Mr. Howard?" one of his team members called, snapping him back.

Noel's expression hardened. "That's

all for now. There are too many issues in these blueprints.

Redesigning is even more complet

than a new build. Tell the contractors that they're off the project if they can't properly review

their work before sending it."

It wasn't a reprimand, but his tone was sharp enough that his team exchanged wary glances. Something was off with Noel. He'd been fine a moment ago.

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Just as she got off work, Whitney received a call from Yvette excitedly announcing that she had landed a major client and wanted to celebrate.

As soon as Whitney stepped out of Howard Group, she spotted Yvette leaning against a bright red sports car, twirling her keys around her finger.

"I even invited Helena. Tonight, we're not going home!"

But there was still no sign of Helena

after half an hour at the bar. Just then, both of their phones lit up with a notification. Whitney and Yvette picked them up simultaneously to see a message from Helena in their group chat.

"I just remembered I made plans with a young hottie. I'm not coming. And don't think I'm ditching you for him!"

Yvette sighed, "Only Helena could pull this. She doesn't let anything get to her, not even Gavin. How many guys does this make it? No way, we can't let her outdo us!"

Just as she finished her sentence, two men slipped into the seats beside them, one on either side.

Chapter 57 Do You Think You Can Get Away Easily

The sudden approach made Whitney uncomfortable, so she shifted away slightly. Yvette raised an eyebrow, amused.

"Oh, they're eager, aren't they?"

One of the men, dressed in a black shirt with an earring in one ear, was the first to say, "Drinking alone is no fun. Why don't we join you, girls?"

The man beside Whitney leaned in closer, grinning. "What games do you like to play? I'm up for anything. If I lose, you can decide my punishment." Hearing the guys call them "girls" gave Whitney the chills. Looking closer, she realized they were likely older than her.

"I don't play games," Whitney replied quickly, turning to Yvette. "Since Helena isn't coming, maybe we should head out too. We've got work tomorrow." Yvette already had a few drinks while they were waiting for Helena.

She said enthusiastically, "We're already here! And come on, it's just a few games. Don't worry I'll drink for you if you lose."

Since Yvette was reluctant to leave, Whitney couldn't just leave her alone. The guy with the earring snapped his fingers, and moments later, the bartender brought over two more drinks. "Well, if you're both up for it, why don't we take it up a notch?" He exchanged a glance with the man next to Whitney, and suddenly, each was holding a small packet.

Whitney's expression darkened. "What are you two trying to pull?"

"This is just something that'll make you feel good, sweetheart," the man beside her murmured, leaning in close.

Whitney immediately stood, grabbing Yvette's arm.

Both men got up just as fast, blocking their way. "You said you wanted to play. What's the hurry?" one of them taunted.

"We don't want to play. Move," Whitney replied, eyeing them warily.

Yvette realized something was off. She had met men like this before. It was one thing if they were merely flirting, but she dared not mess with people who did drugs.

"Look, fellas, it's not that we don't want to hang out. We just remembered we have something to take care of. Drinks are on us tonight."

The guy with the earring's expression grew cold as he sneered. He did not budge an inch. "Oh, you can go. Just drink these first." He pushed two spiked drinks toward them. Both exits were now blocked, with each man guarding a side of the table.

Whitney pulled out her phone. "If you don't move, I'll call the police."

"Call the cops?" The other man snatched her phone, his expression darkening. "Try it. See what happens."

Suddenly, the guy with the earring let out a pained yell. His arm had been twisted back at a painful angle, his face contorting with agony. At the same moment, the man beside Whitney was kicked hard, which forced him to his knees.

Under the dim lighting, a spotlight briefly illuminated the scene, allowing Whitney to see the newcomers. The tall figure was holding down the guy with an earring, making him kneel beside her. Noel's assistant, Dariel, held down the other man.

"Causing trouble here? Do you even know where you are?" Dariel said coldly, motioning to the bodyguard behind him. The bodyguard yanked the kneeling man to his feet. The man quickly surrendered, handing Whitney her phone back.

The other bodyguard sneered at the man with the earring. "Looking for a thrill? Great. Let's go have some real fun."

Dariel hoisted the guy with the earring and dragged him toward the exit.

"Be careful. Don't forget to call an ambulance and the police," Dariel reminded his team.

With the two men escorted out, Dariel approached Whitney while speaking respectfully, "Mr. Howard is upstairs. He asked me to bring you both up."

Given the scare they'd just had and Noel's intervention, Whitney figured going up to thank him was the least they could do.

She pushed open the door to the private room on the second floor and spotted Noel seated on a leather couch by the window. He was dressed casually in a gray sweater and leaning against the couch elegantly.

Noel only glanced at them briefly as they entered. Behind his silver-framed glasses, his dark eyes looked so sharp that it was hard to look directly at him.

No wonder Dariel and the others had shown up when they did; the room offered a clear view of everything happening downstairs.

"Thank you, Noel. I mean it," Whitney said first, breaking the silence.

Yvette chimed in, "Yes, Mr. Howard. If it hadn't been for you, I don't know how we would've gotten out of that mess tonight."

Noel stood with one hand in his pocket and walked over to them.

"Drug addicts, dangerous creeps, and powerful men. Do you think you can get away easily from people like them?" His voice was calm but carried an unmistakable edge.

Yvette swallowed hard and quickly explained, "We didn't approach them. They came to us, and we only discovered what they were like later."

Noel gave her a look that silenced her immediately. She didn't dare joke with him as she normally would.

"Thomas is on his way to take you home," he added, looking at Yvette before turning away.

Chapter 58 Getting Drunk and Leaving with Some Random Guy

"Noel, why'd you call him to pick me up? I'm perfectly capable of leaving on my own!" Yvette snapped as soon as she heard Thomas's name. "Thomas will kill me if I let you leave alone."

"I don't have anything to do with him. You don't need to report my whereabouts to him."

Just then, a slightly annoyed voice came from the doorway. "I'm your fiancé, Yvette. Of course, he needs to tell me your whereabouts."

Yvette clenched her teeth at the word "fiancé".

"Once my parents return, I'll go home and call off the engagement. Then we'll have nothing to do with each other."

"Until then, I'm still responsible for you. You're too reckless for your own good!" Thomas cut her off, grabbing her hand and giving Noel a nod before he practically dragged Yvette out of the room.

As they left, the room fell silent, with only the faint beat of music from below. Whitney looked down at her toes, avoiding Noel's gaze. Soon, a pair of polished black shoes came into view, stepping closer and closer until she could barely breathe under the weight of his presence.

"Thomas may think Yvette's reckless, but you're not much better. Are you trying to repeat what happened last time? Getting drunk and leaving with some random guy?" Noel's cold voice rang out above her.

Whitney recalled that night she got drunk at the bar and recklessly left with him. Her face turned red at the thought, and she clenched her clothes as she muttered softly, "It wasn't like that..."

"Stop coming to places like these if you're not smart enough to protect yourself!"

She got lucky that he was here for a meeting and saw what was happening downstairs. Otherwise, god knew what would've happened.

Whitney was confused by his frustrated tone. She couldn't understand why he was so upset.

Hearing the anger in his voice, Whitney was puzzled. Why was he so upset? Any consequences of her actions would affect Damian, not him. But then she remembered that any scandal involving her could impact the Howard family. After all, it was his family, and his father was the deputy mayor.

Whitney realized where his anger was coming from.

"I should've thought it through. I could've ruined the Howard family's reputation. won't happen again," she replied quietly.

Once her engagement with Damian ended, she would have nothing to do with the Howards.

Noel's expression darkened further, and he looked at her silently for a long moment.

"Let's go home."

Outside, a black G-Wagon was

waiting. Seeing Noel's grim expression, Whitney didn't dare mention taking a cab. Dariel drove

while she and Noel sat in the back in

an awkward silence.

Dariel left after he dropped them off.

They entered the elevator together, and Whitney suddenly recalled how she'd been annoyed with Noel that morning, but now, the roles were reversed. That day, Noel had called Damian to take care of her.

"When I was sick the other day, why did you call Damian? If you didn't have the time, you could've called Yvette or just taken me to the hospital." Whitney couldn't understand why he had to call Damian. Was he trying to make things worse for her?

Noel's gaze shifted to Whitney's

reflection in the elevator mirror. His

eyes were dark and unreadable

when he finally said, "There's no need to lie in front of me. I don't care about your relationship with Damian. I just did what I had to do."

Noel recalled her helping Damian fix his tie at the mall. He smiled scornfully and didn't bother explaining further.

The elevator doors opened on the 16th floor. Noel stepped out, unlocked his door, and shut it without sparing her a glance.

Whitney wanted to ask him what he meant by calling her a liar. What exactly had she done to make him say that?

Whitney marched up to Noel's door and knocked. "Noel, what do you mean by that?" she demanded, but there was no response. After a moment, she turned around, fuming, and returned to her apartment.

Later, she tried to relax by taking a bath, but her mind kept going over Noel's words.

Just as she was about to get out of the tub, a vivid image flashed through her mind. She remembered

lying in a bathtub while someone carefully removed her wet clothes. As the memory sharpened, she saw Noel's face, focused and intent, as he dried her off and held her close.

Whitney couldn't believe what was going on in her head. She strained to remember more, but everything else was hazy. Why couldn't she remember anything more if that scene was real? Her thoughts were interrupted by a message notification from Sophia.

"Whitney, what exactly is going on between you and Mr. Howard?"

When Love Is a Lie (Whitney and Damian)

Chapter 59 My Patience is Limited

Whitney was baffled by the question.

"Check the company group chat," Sophie messaged her again.

Whitney opened the company's group chat. It was initially created by the administration team for easy communication. This group now included assistants and secretaries from all departments.

Over time, work discussions had dwindled, and casual gossip had taken over, so Whitney had muted the notifications. Now, the group chat had over a hundred unread messages.

"She doesn't seem like the type."

"The more innocent they look, the wilder they are."

"But Mr. Howard has a fiancée, right? Can't believe she'd still go for him. Really shows you never know people!"

"Better keep it down. She's in the group. Don't want her making life harder for you!"

These were some of the last comments Whitney saw, timestamped about ten minutes earlier. She tapped on the unread message count and let the chat scroll back to the top, eventually reaching the start.

It was a photo from earlier that day, taken at the boutique while she was adjusting Damian's tie. The angle perfectly captured Damian looking at her intimately. She hadn't realized someone had been watching, let alone taking a photo and posting it in the company group chat.

Out of curiosity, she opened the trending topics but saw no mention of Damian or Howard Group, indicating that the photo was likely shared internally. If it had gone public, she would have found out much sooner.

...

The next day, Whitney was greeted by whispers and glares as she walked into the office.

Sophie came over and asked quietly, "Are you okay? Don't mind what they're saying. Everyone here lives for gossip."

Whitney had explained to Sophie last night that she wasn't Damian's mistress, that he had simply asked her to pick out a tie for an event. But she left out any deeper explanation of her relationship with Damian. "I'm fine," Whitney replied calmly.

"Good to hear." Sophie handed her a file. "This is for Mr. Smith in the architecture department. His assistant is out today. Could you take it over?" "Sure."

With the file in hand, Whitney headed to the architecture department. As she passed the break room, she heard some people talking about her. "Can you believe her nerve? After all that talk in the group chat yesterday, she just waltzes in here today like nothing happened."

"Well, she's got Mr. Howard to back her up. You think she cares what we think?"

A round of laughter followed, echoing out from the break room.

Then, someone else asked, "Rachel, aren't you Mr. Howard's fiancée? How can you tolerate that fox around him?"

Rachel sighed. "There's not much I

can do. My relationship with Mr. Howard is solid, but there are always women around him. If I tried to manage every one of them, it would

exhaust me."

"That's true. With his status and looks, what woman wouldn't throw herself at him? But remember, there's only one Mrs. Howard, and that's you, Rachel. He treats you differently."

By now, rumors had spread

throughout the office that Whitney

was Damian's mistress, a home-wrecker. With everyone talking any explanation from her would fall on deaf ears. She ignored it all since she was resigning soon.

After delivering the documents, Whitney returned to the executive office, where Damian was already in his office. She pulled her resignation letter from her desk drawer. Damian was on a call, but when he saw her at the door, he gestured for her to come in. Whitney approached his desk and waited.

"What do you need?" Damian asked, ending the call and walking over.

He seemed unaware of the rumors circulating about them. Not that anyone would dare tell him.

Whitney took a step back, aware that her colleagues were probably watching from outside.

"Mr. Howard, here's my resignation letter. I've also submitted the soft copy to the executive office," she said, handing him the letter. Damian smiled slightly as he glanced down at the letter. He didn't take it. Instead, he turned and sat back in his chair. "Why are you resigning?"

"I want to try out for a different job."

"Is this because I placed Rachel in the architecture department?"

"I'm an architecture graduate. I don't want to let my degree go to waste. I'd appreciate your approval, Mr. Howard." She placed the resignation letter on his desk, keeping her gaze low

Damian's eyes were cold as he looked at her in silence before finally speaking in a firm voice, "Whitney, my patience is limited."

When Love Is a Lie (Whitney and Damian)

Chapter 60 Apologizing

Whitney took a deep breath and argued back, "You have your limits, but what about me? Am I just supposed to put up with this forever?"

She couldn't possibly put up with his cheating, his blatant favoritism toward Rachel, and his endless threats.

Whitney fought to stay calm when she noticed the curious stares from outside.

"I've made up my mind. I'll wrap things up and hand over my remaining work in the next couple of days."

Damian's expression darkened. "I don't approve of this. Let's see which company dares to hire you."

She knew he wouldn't let her go that easily.

"Don't you want me to move back? Approve my resignation, and I'll do it." This was the last card up her sleeve.

"That's a separate issue."

"I won't move back if you don't agree."

Whitney stood firm on this condition no matter what he said.

Damian looked at her coldly. Her beautiful face was filled with determination.

After a moment, he let out a faint smile. "Fine, I approve. Finish the handover by the end of this week, and I'll pick you up next Monday."

As she left Damian's office, everyone quickly looked down. Whitney kept her composure, returning to her desk to organize files on her computer.

"Feeling down? Have something sweet." Sophie set a glass of juice on her desk and gave her a warm smile.

Since Whitney started at the company, Sophie had helped her with work whenever she could.

Whitney picked up a small potted succulent beside her computer. "Take this. Take good care of it for me."

"You're not keeping it?" Sophie asked in surprise.

Whitney smiled. "I'm resigning. Besides, I have a few more at home; this one's yours."

Sophie's eyes widened. Then, she seemed to understand and looked at Whitney with pity.

"Even if it's just rumors, Mr. Howard probably thinks this is the only way to prove himself. He's got a fiancée, after all. She must be difficult to deal with, so he's sacrificing you. Such a shame after everything you've put into this position." Whitney pressed her lips together and ultimately chose not to respond.

At lunchtime, Sophie insisted on taking Whitney out for a meal to mark her upcoming departure. They went to a nearby restaurant. As fate would have it, they ran into Rachel and a group from the architecture department.

Whitney could tell from just their voices that it was the same group gossiping about her in the break room that morning.

"Whitney, what a coincidence," Rachel greeted her with an innocent smile.

Whitney ignored her and focused on eating.

"Why are you acting so arrogant? You're a secretary who hooked up with the boss!" someone said in Rachel's defense.

"Are mistresses that bold these days? It's disgraceful. Rachel, you're too kind."

The group clearly felt emboldened with Rachel backing them up. They treated Whitney, a mere secretary, with complete disdain.

Sophie couldn't listen any longer.

She slammed the table and

snapped, "Mistress? Do you have any proof?" Then, she turned to Rachel and added, "Besides, are they implying you're Mr. Howard's fiancée? Funny, I don't remember hearing that."

"Sophie, even though you're the CEO's chief assistant, there's no way he tells you everything," one of them sneered. "I'd advise you not to get too close to the mistress, or people might start looking down on you too." These days, there was nothing that sparked more resentment than the mention of a mistress. But Whitney refused to carry that label. Even if she was leaving, she wouldn't let them smear her name on the way out. "Didn't

you have enough fun gossiping in the break room this morning?" Whitney stood, signaling for Sophie to let her handle it.

They hadn't expected Whitney to have overheard them, but one of them didn't even flinch. She crossed her arms and stared Whitney down.

"So what if we talked behind your back? It's nothing compared to you being a mistress."

Whitney scoffed. "All this from one photo? Care to stand by your words?"

The woman pulled Rachel over. "Rachel is Mr Howard's fiancée, so we're not just accusing you out of thin air. How shameless are you to think you can become the CEO's wife because you're his secretary? Apologize to Rachel now. Promise to stay away from Mr. Howard, and resign on your own."

Whitney almost laughed at the absurdity. She turned to Rachel. "You're the CEO's wife? You expect me to apologize?"

Rachel's eyes fell. She never expected that a photo of Damian and Whitney would suddenly surface in the company group chat.

At first, she felt jealous when she saw the way Damien looked at Whitney. But someone in the group started the rumor that Whitney was Damian's secret lover, and Rachel saw her chance to get revenge.

Many of her colleagues misunderstood her relationship with Damien. So, Rachel allowed the rumors to spread unchecked.

After all, Whitney would never reveal herself as Damian's fiancée to the whole company. There was nothing to worry about.

Rachel looked up and sneered, "Shouldn't the mistress apologize to the actual fiancée?"