

## Departure with a Belly Chapter 381

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*Chapter 381*

*As they made their way to the hotel, Victoria didn't say a word to Bane.*

*Bane arranged for them to stay at a hotel near the airport—though technically speaking, it was nearly a half-hour drive away from the airport.*

*Once Victoria and the children had been brought to the room, Bane said, "Get some rest. I'll come back tonight to—"*

*The door slammed in his face before he finished his sentence.*

*Bane fell silent for a few moments before he added, "Pick you up."*

*He didn't get a reply.*

*"Mr. Morison..."*

*Ethan witnessed the whole thing and called out hesitantly.*

*What was the point of doing all this?*

*Bane snapped out of his reverie and instructed, "Keep a close guard here. Don't let anyone suspicious enter the room."*

*Chapter 381 Confined to the Room*

*Ethan nodded.*

*"Don't worry, Mr. Morison. I won't let anyone suspicious go in. You haven't had any rest.*

*since last night. You should hurry up and get some sleep too.”*

*Bane had been awake for twenty hours so far. His eyes were starting to look a little bloodshot.*

*Although it remained to be seen whether he could fall asleep under such circumstances, it was still better if he lay down and closed his eyes for a spell.*

*“Mmhmm,” Bane hummed in response and left.*

*2/8*

*After closing the door, Victoria walked into the room. The table was filled with food that the hotel had just brought up to the room. The children had a slice of cake each and left the rest of the food untouched.*

*They spent most of the plane ride snacking on food and watching cartoons, so she figured they had to be fairly tired right now. True enough, they soon crashed on the couch and fell asleep.*

*Victoria tucked them under the blanket and sat down on the side. She took out the – phone.*

*1237 Thu 6 Jul Các*

*Chapter 381 Confined to the Room*

*3/8*

*Do you think I won't be able to contact my family just because you remove all traces of their contact information?*

*She had quite a few numbers memorized.*

*Alaric's number was particularly memorable to her. Since she didn't add him to her contacts list, his number would appear on the screen every time he called. That was why she knew his number by heart.*

*Victoria immediately punched Alaric's number and made the call.*

*However, the call cut off by itself.*

*She tried a couple more times and got the same result, so she had no choice but to try a different number. Her attempts included her father, Summer, Fiona, and even her father's secretary.*

*None of the calls went through.*

*Is it because I can't call anyone with this phone?*

*Victoria opened the contacts list and saw two listings. One belonged to Bane and the other to Ethan.*

*12:37 Thu, 6 Jul GS*

*Chapter 381 Confined to the Room*

*She skipped over Bane's name and clicked on Ethan.*

*This time, the call went through. Ethan picked up almost immediately.*

*He spoke very carefully as he was afraid of offending Victoria,*

*"Did you need something, Miss Selwyn?"*

*4/8*

*Nevertheless, no matter how careful he was, he couldn't assuage Victoria's rage. "Not at all," she sneered. "I was just testing to see whether there's something wrong with the phone. None of my calls went through."*

*Ethan seemed to have a guilty conscience as he kept quiet.*

*Victoria hung up in fury.*

*She glared at the phone for some time before attempting to take out the SIM card, but she was halfway through when she thought of something.*

*I couldn't call up the people I wanted to get in touch with, but it went through when I called Mr. Hudson. It means it'll probably go through if I call a stranger. That might be useful.*

*1237 Thu, 6 Jul*

*Chapter 381 Confined to the Room*

*She got up and pulled back the curtains. They were on the sixteenth floor.*

*Then, she opened the door and saw Ethan standing there with a panicked look on his face. There were two burly men standing guard by the door too.*

*All of her possible exits had been cut off.*

*"*

*Bane is confining me to this room! Victoria was infuriated. "I want to go out," she announced to Ethan.*

*Ethan looked conflicted.*

*“I’m afraid that’s not possible, Miss Selwyn. You must be tired from the plane ride. Mr. Morison has instructed me to see to it that you and the children get some rest, so it’s best if you don’t leave now.”*

*“Is it really so that I can rest after the long plane ride or is it because I’m being confined to the room?”*

*Ethan immediately refuted that. “You’re not being confined at all, Miss Selwyn. You barely got any rest so far. Mr. Morison just wants what’s best for you.”*

*“Either way, you’re not going to let me out of this room, correct?”*

*5/8*

*12:37 Thu, 6 Jul GS.*

*Chapter 381 Confined to the Room*

*Ethan kept quiet.*

*Victoria slammed the door in his face again.*

*6/8*

*When she walked back to the couch and saw the children sleeping soundly, she slowly calmed down.*

*There has got to be a way. I can’t just give up like that. I need to find a way to ask for help.*

*Victoria took out the phone, found the number for the hotel concierge, and made the call.*

*She heard the dial tone ringing in her ear...*

*To her excitement, the call went through.*

*This means that I'm only restricted from calling the people I want to call. I don't know how Bane did it, but this means that if I get a new SIM card, I can probably get in touch with someone, right?*

*Amid her thoughts, she heard the hotel concierge speaking in Entran and asking if she needed anything.*

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*Chapter 381 Confined to the Room*

*Victoria's heart jumped as she walked over to the balcony.*

*"Hi. I'd like to order a pizza."*

*7/8*

*She scanned the food on the table and confirmed there wasn't any pizza before placing her order.*

*"A pizza? All right. Please give us a moment and we'll have it brought up. Do you need anything else, miss?"*

*Just one item alone wasn't going to be enough of a cover. Victoria quickly listed out a few more food items that weren't on the table. She even included a few Corynthean dishes that were impossible to find abroad which successfully stumped the hotel concierge*

*“I’m so sorry, miss, but the food you asked for...”*

*“That’s what I want. If they’re not sold anywhere then find someone to make them.”*

*“Well...”*

*“Oh, right. I also want a SIM card. Bring it up with the food.”*

*Victoria hung up.*

### *Chapter 381 Confined to the Room*

*She figured that if her phone had been bugged, Bane and Ethan would soon find out what she said, and it meant that she couldn’t use this method. However, if they didn’t find out... She could use the phone to seek help.*

*8/8*

*After setting the phone down, Victoria returned to the couch and waited in silence. She felt like a death-row inmate awaiting her turn in the chair.*

*As long as I get that SIM card...*

*True enough, after a while, the phone rang. Ethan was calling.*

*Victoria’s spirits sank.*

*She answered the call with a defeated expression.*

*“Miss Selwyn, do you feel like eating Mawhen food right now? But, the hotel only provides-”*

*—*

*Victoria pursed her lips and cut him off by saying icily, “I’m already being confined to the*

*room, aren't I? What's your problem now? You're already keeping me locked up. Why can't you get me the food I want?"*

*1238 Thu*

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*Chapter 382 Receiving Her Request*

*Chapter 382*

*1/6*

*At the mention of her confinement, Ethan found himself struggling to find the right words to say once more. "I want to have it now, but you can just forget about it if you can't get the food that I want for me. I don't want to eat anymore, then," Victoria hissed in a fury before ending the call.*

*Is someone monitoring all the calls that I make and receive? In that case, there'd be no purpose in making any calls to ask for help, right? Victoria couldn't believe that Bane would do such a thing to her. I have to think of other ways. I'm sure I'll find something, she thought.*

*Upon getting off the call with Victoria, Bane found himself caught between a rock and a hard place. He eventually decided to go to Bane for some advice. Upon hearing Victoria's request, Bane pressed his lips together. "You can just do as she says," he replied.*

*"But the hotel-" Ethan started.*

*"There might not be any in the hotel, but can't you just get it elsewhere? You can find a shop with a local owner, you can drive over to get the food, or you can even hire a cook*

*Chapter 382 Receiving Her Request*

*for her if necessary," Bane uttered. Ethan was speechless after that.*

*"I'm the only one by her side now. Who else is going to fulfill her wishes if not me?"*

*2/6*

*In the end, Ethan had no choice but to go along with Bane's orders. Bane tapped his fingers against the table as he put on his glasses once more. He had been resting*

*earlier, but his gaze turned grim after his conversation with Ethan. Naturally, Bane didn't*

*mind fulfilling Victoria's wishes, especially since she was simply requesting food. He wanted to show her that he wasn't any less than Alaric.*

*Victoria couldn't bear to remain idle, so she stood up and carried her two kids into the bedroom. She tucked them into bed before she shut the door to separate them from the environment in the living room. Then, she picked her phone up and logged onto her WhatsApp. She hadn't thought of this earlier, but she then realized that she could use the application to search for Summer's phone number and perhaps attempt to contact her.*

*Bane probably didn't realize that I could do this when he created the account for me. I was panicking earlier, so I didn't think about it as well. Victoria was about to type a phone number in when the doorbell rang. She hastily kept the phone away before sitting stiffly in her seat. The only two people who would visit her were Bane and Ethan.*

*Chapter 382 Receiving Her Request*

*If they could put her under house arrest, she was sure that they had a room card of their own, so she didn't bother getting up to open the door for them.*

*It was just as she had expected—the door flung itself open after Victoria ignored the first two doorbells. Bane walked in with a waitress who was pushing a food trolley.*

*When Bane saw Victoria on the couch, he froze for a moment. He hadn't expected her to sit around in the living hall... A look of warmth returned to his expression as he*

walked over to Victoria. "Didn't you say that you wanted something to eat? This meal was prepared according to your food preferences," he uttered.

Victoria gazed up at the man with a scornful look in her eyes. "My food preferences, huh? Are you saying that you brought me everything that I asked for?"

3/6

"Yes. I instantly hired someone to cook it before bringing it over." When the containers of food were opened, Victoria could smell the familiar scent of dishes that she liked. She turned around to see that Bane had indeed prepared all of the food she requested. "What do you think?" Bane glanced at the other tray of food that hadn't been touched. "You didn't eat anything at all today. That's not good," he uttered with a hint of sorrow in his tone.

Victoria's expression darkened upon hearing his words. Well, whose fault is it? Would I have to be in this foreign country if it weren't for him? Would I have to starve? I'm hungry, but I don't have an appetite at all. The waitress beside Bane covered her mouth

Chapter 382 Receiving Her Request

4/6

and chuckled to herself when she saw how Bane was trying to please Victoria. Then, she pulled out the one thing that Victoria had requested for her to get. The waitress was about to walk over and pass it to Victoria when Victoria looked up and spotted the item in the waitress' hand. Her gaze shrank in fear as she let out a loud cry before the waitress could get any closer. "Get out of here!"

The waitress was shocked by Victoria's sudden outburst, and she stood frozen in her spot for a while. She didn't know what to do. Bane was the one who was the most taken aback in that situation. After all, Bane had known Victoria for years, and this was

*the first time he had seen her so mad.*

*“I’ll eat the food, but I don’t want to see you around.” Victoria glared at Bane as she spoke in a clear tone. Then, she reached her arm out to push Bane out of the room.*

*Bane felt a sharp ache in his chest when he heard her saying that she didn’t want to see*

*him. Before he could respond to her words, Victoria had already pushed him out of the door. Even though he felt rather glum, he was comforted by the idea that she would be able to eat in peace when he wasn’t around.*

*After Bane was pushed out of the room, he heard the door slamming shut behind him.*

*Ethan rushed forward to stop Bane from falling. “Are you alright, Mr. Morison?” he asked*

*anxiously.*

*“I’m fine,” Bane replied as he steadied himself. Then, he brushed Ethan’s hand off. Ethan*

#### *Chapter 382 Receiving Her Request*

*5/6*

*couldn’t help but sigh when he saw the state of Victoria and Bane’s relationship. “Do you regret it now, Mr. Morison? Miss Selwyn isn’t just on a hunger strike; she’s even throwing a tantrum and refusing to see you. If this goes on, I’m afraid that things will-”*

*Bane smiled upon hearing Ethan’s words. “As time goes on, she’ll begin to accept it.*

*She can’t throw a tantrum forever,” he stated. Ethan was speechless after that. Forget*

*1. it. I’m not going to comment on this anymore.*

*Victoria’s heart was pounding after she shut the door. Then, she turned around and walked over to the waitress before smiling at her. “Thank you for bringing what I requested,” she said. The waitress had expected Victoria to get mad at her after she lost her temper at Bane. She was surprised when Victoria flashed her a smile, and it*

took her a while to respond to Victoria. She scratched the back of her head bashfully. "It's fine. I'm just doing my job."

The waitress seemed to recall something for a moment before she reached over and handed the item that she had been holding in her hand. "This was the item you requested from the front desk, right?"

"Yeah." Victoria's eyes lit up as she took the item into her hands. "Thank you."

"You're welcome. Well... If that's all, then I'll leave you to your meal now. Have a great meal," the waitress said.

#### Chapter 382 Receiving Her Request

6/6

Victoria gazed at the waitress as she hesitated for a moment. Would it be odd if I told her not to tell Bane about this? Furthermore, she brought me the SIM card that I asked for. Does that mean that no one was eavesdropping? That would be great.

Victoria had intentionally complicated her food order just so that the front desk would be too confused to pay any attention to other matters. She figured that it was more likely that the front desk wouldn't bring up anything about the SIM card in that case.

This was a rather risky move, but it seemed like Victoria's gamble had paid off.

After contemplating for a moment, Victoria decided to keep the waitress around just to be safe. Upon deciding on this, Victoria voiced out in a firm tone, "I don't like eating on my own. Can you stay around with me for a bit?"

The waitress was shocked. She hadn't expected Victoria to come up with such a wild and random request. "I'm afraid I can't do that, miss. I have work to do," she replied. In the end, Victoria didn't have a choice but to tempt the waitress with some money—she was doing it to secure her chance of survival. "How about this? You can just stay with

*me for 20 minutes, and I'll give you this amount."*

*The waitress was stunned. "But miss, your boyfriend..."*

*Chapter 383*

*1/6*

*Victoria didn't bother to explain herself when she heard the waitress calling Bane her boyfriend. "We fought so I don't want to see him. Why don't you do me a favor and help me annoy him a little?" Victoria decided to play along with the idea of Bane being her boyfriend. She stepped forward and held onto the waitress' arm in hopes that the waitress would help her.*

*The female staff was soft-hearted, and she gave in after hearing Victoria's words. "Well,*

*I'll have to talk to my manager. If my manager agrees, then-"*

*"Okay. If your manager doesn't agree, hand me the phone, and I'll speak to her," Victoria*

*added. The other woman smiled before she pulled her phone out to make a call. "I'll head to the washroom, but you can tell me what your manager says later," Victoria added with a smile.*

*"Sure."*

*After heading into the washroom, Victoria hastily pulled her SIM card out to change it. She didn't have the needle that was necessary to remove the SIM card, but fortunately, she had put on a pair of earrings earlier that day. She had figured that the earrings would add a splash of color to her since she wasn't wearing any makeup. Her earrings also became a crucial tool right then.*

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*Chapter 383 Are You Threatening Me?*

*table.*

*3/6*

*Victoria still felt rather uneasy as she was eating. Her plans had been disrupted when she was in the washroom earlier, and she didn't want to stay too long in the washroom as she wanted to keep her guard up. There might not be any surveillance cameras in the washroom, but there might be some out here. If I send a text here... Well, to be safe*

*, I should just return to the washroom halfway through the meal, she thought.*

*However, Victoria had only managed to have one mouthful of food before the front door was thrown open. Bane walked in and scanned the room with his sharp eyes.*

*Soon enough, his gaze landed on the waitress who was sitting at the dining table. He was puzzled to see the waitress sitting opposite Victoria, so he walked over with a look of confusion in his eyes. "What's this, Victoria?"*

*Victoria hadn't managed to swallow her food, so she simply spat out her half-chewed food into a tissue before glaring at Bane. "Is there a problem with getting someone to have a meal with me?"*

*Upon hearing her words, Bane shot the waitress a glare before looking back at Victoria.*

*"Why didn't you ask me to eat with you if you simply wanted companionship? I would be*

*more than willing to accompany you."*

*Since the two of them were talking, the waitress felt like it was inappropriate for her to*

*12:39. Thu, 6 Jul 6 G*

*Chapter 383 Are You Threatening Me?*

*continue eating. She had no choice but to sit around and observe their conversation*

*4/6*

*awkwardly. They were using their native language to converse with one another, so the waitress couldn't understand what they were saying. She could only guess their emotions from the looks on their faces and the tones of their voice. The man had a rather helpless look on his face, but the woman had her arms crossed and didn't look interested in having a conversation with him. They're probably fighting, and the man is probably the one who is making the woman angry. Is he apologizing to her?*

*Moments later, Victoria let out a loud scoff. "Do you think I'd want you around just because you're willing to have a meal with me?" She looked up and shot the man with a fierce glare before speaking in an icy tone. "You know what you did, right? Do you think I can still keep my cool and have a meal with you after all of that? Well, if you don't send me back, I'll continue to find other people to have meals with me. I'd rather eat with a stranger than with you." Her words felt like a dagger that was being driven straight into Bane's heart.*

*Anyone who heard what Victoria said would have found her extremely offensive, but unfortunately, the waitress couldn't understand her words at all. After Victoria finished speaking, Bane was silent for a long while. However, he stood still in his spot without budging, almost as if he was too concerned about Victoria to just leave.*

*Victoria smirked. "Or do you have a problem with me eating with someone else as well?"*

139 Thu

Chapter 383 Are You Threatening Me?

5/6

*Fine, then." She placed her cutleries down and got to her feet. "You can take her and all*

*of this food away. Then, you can lock me up in a tiny room and make sure that I never meet anyone for the rest of my life. How does that sound?"*

*"Victoria." Bane sounded as helpless as ever. "You know that I don't want to do this to you. You may think that you're hurting yourself by refusing to eat, but you're really hurting me when you do this."*

*He took a few steps forward before picking up her cutleries and forcing them into her hand. "You just want someone to accompany you for a meal, so I have no reason to object to it. But... If she ever tries to help you out with something, I won't let her go so easily."*

*Victoria lifted her head after hearing his words. There was a look of disbelief in her eyes. "What do you mean by that?" she asked.*

*Bane's expression was still warm and gentle as always. "I mean what I say. You should know that I'd never lose my temper at you, Victoria. I won't lash out at you regardless of what you do." He sounded like he was making an emotional confession, but there was an underlying message that he was trying to convey. He wants to make sure that I'm only having a meal with this waitress without trying anything else. If this waitress helps me with anything, he won't attack me, but he'll harm the waitress. In other words, if I tried to do something, then I'd be indirectly harming this waitress. I can't believe he's*

*1239 Thu, 5 Ju*

*Chapter 383 Are You Threatening Me?*

*doing this to me.*

*Fury burned in Victoria's gaze. "Are you threatening me right now?"*

*6/6*

*Bane gently fixed the collar of her shirt. "How is this a threat, Victoria? I'm just letting*

*you know about this. After all, I can't allow bad guys to get close to you. I was the one who brought you here, so I'm responsible for your well-being. I can't allow someone else to harm you."*

*He was clearly threatening her, yet he made himself sound like he was being kind and loving. Victoria felt chills running down her spine as she listened to his words. Being near him made her feel like she was getting trapped in an icy cave.*

*"I hadn't expected you to be this sort of person." Victoria decided not to eat after that.*

*"Fine. Since you're so worried, then she can leave. I don't want to drag anyone down*

#### *Chapter 384*

*Bane stood still and fixed his gaze on the woman. "There's no need for that, Victoria.*

*The waitress can stay for a meal."*

*"It's fine. I don't have an appetite now." After finishing her words, Victoria walked over to the couch and lay down before shutting her eyes. She seemed like she didn't want to talk any longer.*

*The waitress had no idea what was going on, but she could tell that their conversation didn't turn out too well as the woman was ignoring the man. That's odd... The man was really gentle when he was talking to her. Why aren't things working out?*

*Since the woman didn't seem interested in her food anymore, the waitress got to her feet. "I won't bother you guys anymore, then." The waitress headed toward the door after that.*

*"Hold on." Bane stopped the waitress before he walked over to Victoria and gazed at her face. Her eyes were still shut tight. "I'm sorry. I was being overly cautious. I shouldn't have been so suspicious of you, and I was wrong to have done that. Why*

*don't you get up and have something to eat?"*

*However, regardless of what he said or how gentle he sounded, Victoria remained as*

*12:39*

*Chapter 384 Seeking Help*

*still as a dead body. She completely ignored him. "Victoria?" Victoria continued to lie still in her spot. "Should I carry you over to the dining table?"*

*2/7*

*Victoria opened her eyes abruptly, only to find Bane's gaze inches away from hers. She was shocked to find him so close to her, but she managed to calm herself down quickly. "Is that all you know how to do?" she hissed.*

*He curled his lips into a smile. "I don't have a lot of tactics, but I keep those that work," he replied. Victoria looked away for a moment before she sat upright. "I'd like to have some time on my own. Since you don't want anyone to come close to me, you can bring the waitress away now. I don't want you to bother her in the future."*

*"I'm not going to bother her. I just want her to stay for a meal with you. You haven't eaten in a long while," Bane stated.*

*"I'm not in the mood to eat." This particular conversation kept going around in circles, but Victoria was too stubborn to give in. She didn't even want to meet his gaze.*

*Eventually, Bane had no choice but to head off with the waitress. The waitress could tell that Bane was rather glum after he left the room, so she tried to comfort him. "You shouldn't be too sad, Sir. Your girlfriend isn't asking for too much—she probably just wants someone to have a meal with her. If you really want to make her happy, perhaps you can consider getting her some flowers and chocolates," the waitress suggested.*

*Chapter 304 Seeking Help*

*Bane forced a smile when he heard the waitress' suggestion. "Yeah. Thanks. I'll think about it." Bane's emotions were all over the place after the conversation he had with Victoria earlier, so he wasn't in the mood to speak to the waitress. The waitress could tell that he was rather gloomy, so she excused herself without saying much else.*

*3/7*

*Once both of them left, Victoria hurried into the washroom to make a call. If Bane asks the waitress about any of this, he'll probably take some time to question her. This is the only time I get to call for help. As for what happens later... Well, I shouldn't care too much about that now.*

*Victoria hesitated for two seconds before she dialed Alaric's phone. Beep... Beep... Victoria panicked after a while. Why isn't he picking up the call? There's a time difference, and it should be nighttime there since it's daytime here. Did Alaric silence his phone? If he did, then he probably won't hear my call. Victoria didn't want to wait for too long, so she eventually thought of calling Summer.*

*Summer picked up the call from the unknown number, and she was shocked when she heard the familiar voice of her best friend coming from the other end of the line.*

*"Victoria? Did you change your phone number? Also, why are you calling from a different region? Aren't you back in the country?" Summer was a true friend—she was quick to sense that something was wrong.*

*"I want you to remember everything that I say, and I don't want you to interrupt me as I*

*12:39*

*Thu, 6 t*

*Chapter 384 Seeking Help*

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speaking.” Victoria ignored Summer’s questions and spoke in a stern voice. Summer could immediately sense the severity of the situation as it was rare for Victoria to be so serious. “Okay,” Summer uttered with a solemn nod. At the same time, she tapped on her phone’s recording button just to ensure that she wouldn’t miss out on anything that Victoria said. She would also have a recording if she forgot anything.

“My location shows that I’m in Mauldin now, and I’m located in a high-end hotel that’s a twenty-minute drive away from the international airport. There are two 24-hour convenience stores outside the hotel, and I’m on the 16th floor. I don’t think I’ll be here for long. There are about two to three men keeping watch outside the doors, and I might be transferred elsewhere tonight, but I’ll try to find ways to keep myself here for a while more. If I fail to do so and end up getting brought elsewhere, I’ll find a chance to contact you again in the future.”

Summer froze after hearing Victoria. Did she get kidnapped? At that moment, Summer’s superior showed up in search of her. He turned around when he saw her on the phone, as he figured that he could talk to her later. “Hey, hey, hey,” Summer called out for the man to stay. Erik Ludson, whom Summer often referred to as ‘the devil’, walked over when he saw the anxious look on Summer’s face. “What is it?”

Summer turned on the loudspeaker of her phone before she spoke to Victoria. “Hey Victoria, I told the dev—I mean, I told Mr. Ludson to come over and listen to our call.

#### *Chapter 384 Seeking Help*

He’s smarter, so I’m sure he’ll be helpful.” Erik heard the words that had nearly slipped out of Summer’s mouth, and he figured that she was calling him the devil. If he were being honest, this wasn’t the first time he had heard Summer calling him the devil.

Previously, he even heard Summer complaining to her best friend about how she was

5/7

*single because he kept ordering her to do work. However, Erik hadn't expected Summer to accidentally expose herself today.*

8

*Erik had been about to confront her about the nickname he was given when Victoria began to repeat herself on the other end of the line. Upon hearing Victoria's words, Erik narrowed his eyes before speaking into the phone. "Are you able to send us your location? I'm sure you can do that on WhatsApp."*

*Even though Victoria had a new phone number now, she would have to register an account if she were to send any texts, and this would be too time-consuming.*

*"That would take too much time. I got the SIM card from a waitress, and I'm not sure when someone is going to find out about it," Victoria explained.*

*"Someone? Who's the someone?" Summer asked in a curious tone. Victoria pressed her*

*lips together without responding for a while. "How about this," Erik uttered in a patient tone. "You can put your headphones on or put us on loudspeaker," he started.*

*Summer widened her eyes in surprise after hearing Erik's words. "Are you mad, you*

*Chapter 384 Seeking Help*

*devil? Victoria was obviously kidnapped. How could you tell her to put us on loudspeaker at a time like this?" Summer hissed.*

*"She's not whispering, so I'm sure she's safe for now," Erik responded calmly. He pretended not to hear what Summer just called him.*

6/7

*"Oh, that's true. You should go along with what he said, then," Summer added. Victorial*

*didn't bring her earphones along, so she had no choice but to turn on her loudspeaker. "Now, I'm going to ask you some questions, and you'll just have to answer me as best as you can. At the same time, register a new account and send your location over if that's possible," Erik uttered.*

*"Sure." Victoria seemed to calm down a little, and she turned on the shower in the washroom before locking the door. Then, she stood in a corner that was further away from the door before she got to work.*

*Erik was evidently a capable and independent man who started a business of his own- he remained calm and rational despite the urgency of the situation.*

*Every question he asked Victoria turned out to be useful. He tracked her movements from the starting point all the way up until she lost consciousness, and he noted down all the routes she took after waking up. Then, he gave her some instructions for what to*

#### *Chapter 384 Seeking Help*

*do if she were to be caught by someone.*

#### *Chapter 385*

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*The entire process took about six minutes, and Victoria eventually managed to get her account set up. At that moment, someone knocked on the bathroom door*

*"Victoria." A familiar male voice sounded on the other end of the line, and Summer nearly let out a gasp when she recognized the owner of the voice.*

*Erik had to slap his large hand over her mouth.*

*Summer's eyes widened as she tried to push him away. However, Erik held onto her shoulder and whispered into her ear. "Don't talk," he hissed.*

*She frowned for a moment before she stopped resisting the man's action.*

Meanwhile, they heard Victoria's voice over the phone. "Didn't I tell you that I wanted some time alone? You tried to stick your nose into my business when I asked someone to have a meal with me. Are you trying to be a busybody when I'm showering now?" As Victoria spoke, she placed her phone on the shelf beside her before she took her clothes off and stood under the shower. There was a short moment of silence before the voice sounded from outside again. "Fine. You can shower first, then. I'll wait for you outside."

Chapter 385 Give Him a Chance

2/7

Victoria took a glance at the shelf before speaking. "I forgot to bring my clothes in. Can you go to my luggage and bring my clothes over for me?"

"Sure. I'll take them for you." Victoria turned the shower off as she heard the man's footsteps growing distant. Then, she turned the shower back on before she picked her phone up and turned the loudspeaker off. "I'm going to send my location over now, but I can't talk for much longer. I'll have to switch my SIM card back. I don't think I'll use this SIM card anymore," she told them.

"Okay." Erik's hand was still over Summer's mouth. "We'll find a way to get you out of there. You have to protect yourself. Try not to start any fights," he uttered flatly.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome."

Victoria hesitated for a while before she addressed Summer. "Please help me tell Alaric about this, Summer."

At the mention of Summer's name, Erik pulled his hand away from Summer's face.

"Why didn't you tell him on your own?" she asked.

*"I think he might have missed my call because of the time difference," Victoria replied.*

*Chapter 385 Give Him a Chance*

*"Okay. But how could your kidnapper be—"*

*3/7*

*She took a glance at the time, and she figured that Bane would be back soon. She had to clean things up after the call, so she interrupted Summer's question. "I have to go now. He's about to come back," Victoria said.*

*Summer couldn't bear to bid goodbye. "Fine. You have to take care of yourself and try your best not to trigger his temper. We'll get the police to find you," she reassured Victoria.*

*The police... Victoria bit her bottom lip as she thought about how good Bane had been. to her over the past five years. "Don't call the police. Just let Alaric know about this—I'm sure he'll know what to do." Victoria couldn't bear to be too cruel to Bane, and she figured that Alaric would try to save his kids even if he wasn't keen to save her.*

*"How are we going to find you if we don't contact the police?" Summer wanted to continue talking, but Erik reached for the phone. "You don't have time. You should get rid of the evidence for now, and we'll pass your message along." Erik ended the call right after that.*

*Summer couldn't help but lose her temper when she saw what Erik had done. "What are you doing, you devil? I wasn't done talking!"*

*12:39 Thu, 6 Jul GS ·*

*Chapter 395 Give Him a Chance*

*40*

*Erik shot her a side glare. "Don't you understand the situation she's in right now? What*

*more is there to say? You can talk to her when we find her,” he replied.*

*Summer nodded after hearing his words. “That’s right. You’re right. We should find her.”*

*Then, she pulled her phone out to book flight tickets.*

*He frowned at the sight of her actions. “What are you doing?”*

*“I’m booking flight tickets, of course. She sent me her location,” Summer replied.*

*“Are you going to go over on your own?” Erik asked.*

*“Of course. I have to go over there now. She’s in a precarious situation.” Summer seemed to realize something after she finished speaking, and she looked up to meet Erik’s gaze. “You’re not going to stop me, are you? Do you think this is going to affect my work? Well, let me tell you this—I always skipped my dates to show up for work whenever you called me. I didn’t mind that since I didn’t really care about those dates, but this is my best friend we’re talking about. If you don’t allow me to take a day off, I’m going to quit this job. Just you wait—I’ll draft my resignation letter once I’m done booking my flight.”*

*Erik eyed her speechlessly. Summer was about to pay for the flight when Erik finally intervened and held her back. “Whenever you get worked up, you should calm down  
Chapter 385 Give Him a Chance  
and use your brain a little.”*

*Summer felt annoyed hearing his words. “How am I supposed to calm down when I’m all worked up?”*

*He didn’t want to argue with her, so he got straight to his point. “Don’t buy the tickets. Just call the police,” he ordered.*

*5/7*

*The police? “No! Don’t do that!” Summer held onto the man’s hand, and Erik gave her a*

sideways glance. *"Didn't you hear what Victoria said? She told us not to call the police," Summer cried.*

*"But she got kidnapped, Summer. That's illegal," Erik announced.*

*"I know," Summer uttered before biting her bottom lip. "I know it's illegal, but Bane was also the man who took care of her for the past five years. I'm sure Bane has his reasons for doing this now. Perhaps there has been some sort of misunderstanding. I'm sure Victoria has her reasons for telling us not to call the police," Summer argued.*

*Erik simply eyed the woman silently. "We have to be compassionate, and we should give the man a chance, don't you think?" Summer added. He stared at her for a long while before he finally gave in. "That's true. You're right. We should be compassionate." He paused for a moment before he continued. "I'll go with you."*

1739 Thu. Ô

*Chapter 385 Give Him a Chance*

6/7

*She thought that she had heard him wrong the first time, but she stared at him with a look of disbelief when she finally processed his words. "W- What did you just say? You'll come with me?" she asked.*

*"Didn't you say that one should have compassion? Now that I know about this, and since you're one of my best workers in the company, I think I should offer some help this time. You have worked really hard for the company throughout the years, after all," Erik said.*

*Summer couldn't bring herself to trust him at first, but she figured that it would be helpful to have Erik around. Considering how successful his business is, he's probably a*

*really smart person. It would be good to have him around to help us out.*

*“Okay. I’ll pay for your ticket, then,” Summer offered.*

*“Wait.”*

*“What is it this time?” she asked.*

*“Didn’t your friend tell you to call someone else?” Erik asked.*

*Summer only recalled what Victoria said then. “Oh, yeah! She told me to tell Alaric about this, but I don’t have his contact number.” Summer turned to look at Erik. “How*

*Chapter 385 Give Him a Chance*

*am I supposed to find him, Mr. Ludson?”*

*77*

*He shot her a side-eye without saying much. Summer clasped her hands together.*

*“Please help me,” she pleaded. About ten minutes later, Summer successfully retrieved Alaric’s contact number with Erik’s help. She even managed to book their flight tickets.*

*However, for some reason, Summer couldn’t seem to get to Alaric even after she found his number.*

*“What is this? Why isn’t he picking up his phone?” Summer grumbled.*

*“There’s a time difference, so he might be sleeping now,” Erik replied calmly.*

*Summer felt anger boiling in her chest after hearing Erik’s words. “How could he rest at a time like this? Doesn’t he know that Victoria got kidnapped? Can’t he tell that this is an*

*emergency? What sort of man is he?”*

*When he saw how frustrated and anxious the woman was, he simply reached out and held her hands. “Calm down. Let’s pack up and head to the airport.”*

*She seemed to calm down after hearing his instructions and put her phone away. “Fine.*

*Let’s call him later,” she uttered.*

M

Chapter 386

*Summer still couldn't reach Alaric on the phone even right before she boarded the plane.*

1/8

*"Unbelievable. How could Victoria be interested in a man like him? And she even asked me to pass him a message. I would rather see her with Bane. At least Bane answers his phone."*

*Her emotions were complicated because she was in danger after lamenting about it. She only wanted to unleash a torrent of insults on Alaric and felt sorry for Victoria since the man hadn't been picking up her calls.*

*Erik, who had worked with her for many years, had never seen her in such a state. "Will you please calm down? There might be a reason why he is not answering his phone."*

*"Like what? All the calls went through, but no one picked up even once. He should at least answer one call even if he's busy. No matter what his excuse is, I'll definitely talk to Victoria about how unreliable he is when I see her."*

*Erik's thin lips moved as he wanted to say something. However, he eventually decided to keep quiet.*

Chapter 386 Unreliable

*Anything he said right now carried no weight. After all, it was Summer's close friend*

2/8

*who was in danger. No matter how empathetic he was, he couldn't truly understand her feelings.*

*Besides, he secretly agreed with what Summer had said. It's only natural for people to*

*feel disappointed when the person they asked for help from couldn't assist them in the slightest, especially at such a critical moment.*

*Before the plane took off, a flight attendant walked by to remind everyone to turn off their phones.*

*Summer, unwilling to give up, dialed Alaric's number again to no avail. Still, she remembered the task Victoria had entrusted her with and eventually wrote a message to send to him.*

*She turned off her phone after confirming that the message had been sent.*

*Erik glanced at her. "Still no answer?"*

*"Nope," Summer replied coldly. "I've already sent him a message. This flight will be long ,*

*so even if he's sleeping, he should wake up after we land."*

*Although she was upset with Alaric, Victoria did assign her this task after all. And since*  
*Chapter 386 Unreliable*

*she had agreed to it, she had to follow through.*

*Some time ago...*

*3/8*

*After hanging up the phone, Victoria quickly removed the SIM card from her phone and flushed it down the toilet. She then replaced it with her original SIM card. She had intended to log back into WhatsApp, but she decided against it after some thought.*

*There would be prompts if she logged back in, and it would be too perfect. It was better to leave it as it was.*

*After completing everything, Victoria placed her phone on the shelf and took a proper shower.*

*Her top priority now was to prolong her stay here and delay the others' rescue. How can*

*I drag it out without making Bane suspicious?*

*With that question in mind, she looked around and finally set her gaze on the bathtub nearby.*

*It took Bane some time to get the clothes for her. When he knocked on the door, the water in Victoria's bathtub was already halfway filled. She went in immediately and*

*12:40 Thu, 5 Jul*

*Chapter 396 Unreliable*

*answered him from the other side of the door. "I can't take it. I'm having a bath. Just hang it outside the door."*

*There was a moment of silence outside the door before a response rang out.*

*"Alright, I'll find a bag."*

*4/8*

*Bane walked away again, but he later hung the clothes he had prepared for Victoria outside the door. Before leaving, he added, "Victoria, don't make the bathwater too hot, and don't stay in too long. You're going to be all out of breath if you do that."*

*Listening to his words, Victoria sneered coldly. "Wouldn't you be happy if I suffocated? You can have some peace and quiet."*

*It went quiet at the door as Bane fell silent and left.*

*Victoria finally breathed a sigh of relief after he went away.*

*There were two possibilities now.*

*One was that Bane still didn't know about the SIM card. He probably thought that she was deliberately making things difficult for him until he agreed to send her back to the country.*

### *Chapter 396 Unreliable*

*The other possibility was that Bane already knew about the SIM card but hesitated to come in while she was in the bathroom. After all, even if he didn't buy her explanation about taking a bath, he wouldn't rashly push the door open from the outside.*

*Although Bane had pursued her for five years, he had never crossed any lines. He respected her in this regard.*

*5/8*

*So, how did two people who could always respect each other end up like this? Thinking about this, Victoria couldn't help but dunk her face in the water, allowing her mind to empty for a moment.*

*She had been under extreme tension the whole day. It was only until she contacted Summer that she truly felt at ease.*

*There might be a tough battle ahead.*

*Because she needed to buy time, Victoria continued to soak in the bath until the water turned cold. Still, she didn't get up.*

*There was still no sound outside, and she didn't know where Bane had gone after leaving. Did he go outside the room, or...*

*Her face instantly fell when a thought hit her.*

### *Chapter 386 Unreliable*

*She was so busy with her "operations" here that she had forgotten about the two children sound asleep in the room!*

*Victoria didn't stay any longer when she recalled that. She got up, wiped the water off her body with a towel, and then opened the door to retrieve the bag outside.*

*While getting dressed, she felt a bit awkward seeing the intimate clothing in the bag.*

*Then again, what's there to be embarrassed about at this point?*

*6/8*

*He had practically confined her, and she didn't know what would happen if things continued like this. Although he had always respected her before, he still did something Victoria would never have expected him to do.*

*Anything could happen from now on.*

*After putting on her clothes, Victoria opened the door and saw Bane standing not far from the bathroom.*

*He turned around and walked up to her when he heard the sound of the door opening.*

*"Why are you still here?" Victoria stared at him and asked, somewhat displeased.*

*"I was worried that you'd get light-headed after staying in the water for too long." As he*

*[ 74% 自*

*Chapter 386 Unreliable*

*spoke, he handed her a towel. "You should dry your hair. Don't wanna catch a cold."*

*Victoria only glanced at the towel in his hand and walked past him without a word.*

*Bane frowned slightly at her reaction and followed her.*

*Seeing that she was heading toward the room, he asked, "Why are you going there?"*

*"I'm tired. Can't I sleep?"*

*"Victoria, dry your hair."*

*However, Victoria opened the door and slammed it shut, blocking Bane outside.*

*The two children inside the room were still asleep. They hadn't been disturbed by the slam of the door.*

*Despite all the commotion she caused, the kids were sleeping soundly. Victoria felt a little angry after she walked over and looked at their peaceful sleeping faces.*

7/8

*Although the children usually had no problem sleeping, it was rare for them to sleep so deeply. They were only this way because Bane had given them something to make them sleep.*

12:40 Thu. Ô

*Chapter 386 Unreliable*

*How could he bear to do this? They are still so young! Is he not afraid of accidentally hurting them?*

2/8

*The more she thought about it, the angrier she became. However, there was nothing she could do now. She could only reach out and touch the children's cheeks while softly saying, "Don't worry, my darlings. I will bring both of you back to our home safely."*

*Chapter 387*

*Victoria lay down to rest after drying her hair.*

*was perhaps because the effects of the medicine in her hadn't completely worn off that she quickly fell asleep.*

*When she regained consciousness, she heard faint voices coming from outside.*

*"Mr. Morison, Miss Selwyn is still asleep?"*

*"Yes."*

*"But our car is ready. We need to leave now."*

*Bane glanced at the closed door and pursed his lips. "She's tired. Let her sleep a little longer."*

*"But Mr. Morison..." Ethan sounded hesitant.*

*Bane's voice turned cold in an instant. "Did you not understand what I said? Do I need*

*to repeat myself?”*

*Caught off-guard by his sudden outburst, Ethan didn't dare to speak and simply*

*1/9*

*12:10 Thu*

*Chapter 387 Indecisive*

*nodded.*

*“I understand.”*

*Ethan then retreated and exchanged a few words with the people outside before staying outside to keep watch.*

*He actually wanted to remind Bane that they had been in this place for too long, and Victoria had seen others in the meantime.*

*It wouldn't be easy to control those people since they were not Bane's men.*

*If things got out of hand, it wouldn't end well.*

*Ethan might have thought that Bane had gone mad. However, since what was done was done, as Bane's assistant, he could only accompany him to the end, even if it meant risking his life.*

*We'll just let Miss Selwyn sleep a little longer. She will probably wake up on her own in half an hour or so.*

*Victoria was shocked after listening to their conversation. She was grateful she overheard it.*

*2/9*

*12:40 Thu, 6 Jul A*

*Chapter 387 Indecisive*

*Or else, she would have to go with them if they discovered that she was awake.*

*With that thought in mind, Victoria closed her eyes and continued to pretend to sleep. She soon heard some slight noise at the room's door.*

*She immediately furrowed her delicate brows. Did Bane come in?*

*3/9*

*The light footsteps that resounded finally stopped by her bed; Bane was silently gazing at Victoria as she lay in bed.*

*Compared to when she was awake, Victoria appeared particularly peaceful while asleep. Her features, especially her eyes, were beautiful and filled with liveliness as if they contained all the vitality in the world.*

*He had liked her since his youth.*

*He especially liked her when she smiled. With her arched eyebrows and sparkling eyes, she resembled the bright moon hanging in the sky.*

*But now, that bright moon no longer smiled at him. When she saw him, her eyes held caution and wariness.*

*That one incident changed their relationship to being less than strangers.*

*12:40 Thu, 6 Jul*

*Chapter 387 Indecisive*

*If only...*

*4/9*

*If only she could continue to smile at him like she used to... How wonderful would that be?*

*Bane then lifted his hand and gently touched her cheek.*

*As Victoria was pretending to be sleeping, she had to remain still like a corpse.*

*However, the contact made her uncomfortable. She would have surely swatted his*

*hand away if she weren't pretending to sleep.*

*Fortunately, Bane's fingers didn't linger on her face for long as he soon retracted his hand.*

*F*

*After he left, Victoria breathed a sigh of relief and opened her eyes. She needed to drag*

*out the time as much as possible.*

*She stayed awake after that.*

*It was quiet outside at first, but as time passed, she could faintly hear the sound of footsteps.*

*The sound was so faint as if someone was deliberately being quiet about it.*

*Chapter 387 Indecisive*

*Eventually, she even heard the sound of the next room's door opening.*

*Did I hear that wrongly?*

*She had changed rooms to rest so she could blow-dry her hair earlier. The next room was where the two little ones slept.*

*What are they doing in the next room?*

*In an instant, Victoria sat up from the bed and got out to open the room door.*

*5/9*

*She immediately saw Ethan and another person, each holding a child, heading outside.*

*And when Victoria opened the door, they turned around at the same time and met each*

*other's gazes upon hearing the sound.*

*This scene nearly shattered Victoria's composure, and she rushed forward to interrogate them. "What are you doing to my children?"*

*Ethan also hadn't expected to encounter Victoria while doing this. He had waited for her for nearly two hours, and she had been asleep the whole time.*

*And so, he devised a plan to take the two children out of the room first. When Victoria woke up, she would have to obediently follow them for the sake of the children even if*

*Chapter 387 Indecisive*

*she didn't want to leave.*

*He never expected her to wake up at this moment.*

*"Miss Selwyn, this is a misunderstanding... Please let me explain."*

*6/9*

*"What kind of misunderstanding would lead you to secretly sneak in and take away my children?"*

*Victoria approached them and snatched one of the children away before stalking up to the other one. "Put my children back where they were!"*

*The person hesitantly glanced at Ethan then. Seeing Ethan nod, they reluctantly placed Nathan back on the bed in the room.*

*Victoria retreated with the child into the room and then chased that person out.*

*Ethan watched her and respectfully bowed. "Miss Selwyn, now that you are awake, let us leave."*

*"Leave? What do you mean 'leave'?"*

*"This place is only for us to temporarily rest. We are heading to the place where we will be staying in the future."*

*Chapter 387 Indecisive*

*Victoria's lips tightened when she heard those words.*

*"Mr. Hudson, you are not Bane. Just because he doesn't know what he's doing, do you*

*also not know what he's up to? Do you realize that some responsibilities are interconnected?"*

*It wasn't like Ethan couldn't understand the meaning behind her words.*

*7/9*

*He chuckled bitterly and sighed. "But Miss Selwyn, what can I do? I've been working with Mr. Morison all these years. It's a given that I follow his wishes. After all, it wouldn't make sense for me to run away now."*

*Victoria knew what he was thinking upon hearing that.*

*Although it was frustrating, Ethan had to ensure he took care of everything for Bane.*

*"Do you think that what you're doing is for his own good?" Victoria felt a pang of sorrow.*

*"If you truly have his best interests at heart, then what you should be doing at this moment is advising him against this, not aiding and abetting his wrongdoing."*

*"Miss Selwyn, do you think I haven't tried to reason it out with him? You've known Mr. Morison for so long. Aren't you supposed to understand him better than I do?"*

*Chapter 387 Indecisive*

*8/9*

*Victoria fell silent. After pursing her lips, she ordered him out of the room. "Since you're not willing to persuade him, then you may leave."*

*Ethan hesitated and glanced at her, but he finally left with his men.*

*As soon as they stepped out of the room, they ran into Bane and immediately briefed him on what had happened inside.*

*Bane frowned after hearing the news. He looked displeased as he stared at Ethan.*

*"When will you start being more reliable in handling things?"*

*"I apologize, Mr. Morison. There won't be a next time."*

*After a moment of contemplation, Ethan spoke again. "Mr. Morison, forgive me for speaking out of turn, but you must either turn back now or you take decisive action. We must be on our way. It will be detrimental to us if we delay any longer."*

*"I know. I will go in and try to persuade her."*

*"Mr. Morison, you've tried persuading her enough along the way, and you've lowered yourself for her the entire time. But has it been effective? Respectfully, either you send her back where we took her from, or we leave now."*

1240 Tu

### *Chapter 387 Indecisive*

*Although he had always thought Bane had made a crazy move, it seemed that Bane*  
9/9

*was still somewhat indecisive when it came to Victoria after they arrived in this foreign country.*

### *Chapter 388*

*After bringing the children back to the room, Victoria locked the door behind her.*

*She knew that she wouldn't be able to stay for much longer.*

*Considering what Ethan did just a while ago, it was likely that he had discovered the issue with the SIM cards. However, neither side had explicitly confronted each other about it.*

*The children had also woken up after the recent commotion.*

*As they rub their eyes and looked at her, they asked, "Mommy, what were you and Mr. Hudson talking about?"*

1/8

*Victoria gently stroked their heads. "You are awake. Are you hungry? How about we ask*

*Mr. Bane to help us look for ice cream from back home when he gets here?"*

*The children weren't thinking about having ice cream at first, but Victoria mentioning it instantly aroused their appetites.*

*"Sure!"*

*Not long after the answer, a knock could be heard on the door.*

*Chapter 388 Give Nicole Back to Me*

*"Victoria." Bane's voice resounded from outside the door, followed by the sound of the doorknob being twisted open as he entered.*

*"Mr. Bane!"*

*Since the children were thinking about food, Nicole, who was particularly eager, immediately opened her arms for a hug when she saw Bane.*

*Noticing this, Bane stepped forward and embraced her.*

*As soon as she was in his arms, she didn't wait to start whining adorably. "Mr. Bane, I want to eat ice cream."*

*"Ice cream? Now?"*

*Nicole nodded with a pleading expression. "Mhm. I need an ice cream."*

2/8

*"Then let's go downstairs. I'll buy you an ice cream when we are on our way to another*

*place to stay, okay?"*

*Victoria's face darkened. She hadn't expected Bane to play along with this.*

*If Nicole agreed...*

*4%*

*Chapter 388 Give Nicole Back to Me*

*3/8*

*At this moment, whether it was a coincidence or because Nathan could sense what his mother was thinking, the boy who was sitting beside them suddenly stood up and tugged at Bane's pants.*

*"Mr. Bane, can you buy it and bring it home for us to eat?"*

*Victoria was taken aback when she heard that. She hadn't even told Nathan anything about this. Is it just a coincidence?*

*Bane also unknowingly glanced at Victoria.*

*After a moment, he nodded and smiled. "Alright, then you stay here with your Mommy and wait. I will take Nicole out to buy some. You want to eat it first, right, Nicole?"*

*Nicole immediately nodded. "Okay, I'll go with Mr. Bane."*

*Victoria quietly glanced at Bane. It was one of the tricks that he always used. He would always catch people off-guard with this inconspicuous technique of his.*

*He is bringing Nicole with him, he said? Is he going to use Nicole against me if someone comes to me while they are out?*

*Victoria immediately frowned and refused. "Forget it. The weather is too cold for ice*

*Chapter 388 Give Nicole Back to Me*

*cream."*

*Bane paused for a moment and replied, "Alright, if we're not having ice cream, let's move to the next place."*

*4/8*

*Bane held Nicole in his arms, intending to take her away, but Victoria interjected, "We're not going with you."*

*Since there was no way to delay any longer, there was no need for her to keep up the pretense.*

*Before this, she didn't want to show the children how her relationship with Bane had soured, considering that Bane was someone they relied on.*

*However, she had come to terms with the fact that it would be impossible to keep the truth hidden if Bane took them away, and they started living in a new place.*

*There was no way she could hide it. The children were bound to find out someday.*

*As she spoke, both children looked at her.*

*"Mommy?"*

*Victoria looked at Bane, her expression stern, and she went straight to the point. "Just*

*12:41*

*Chapter 322 Give Nicole Back to Me*

*give up. It's still possible for you to turn back now. I'll keep my word from earlier. If you send us back to the country, I'll pretend like none of this has ever happened."*

*5/8*

*Bane stood there quietly. He seemed to be able to sense Victoria's determination in her confrontation.*

*He had a resigned look in his eyes as he lightly pressed his thin lips into a thin line.*

*"And what if I don't send you back?"*

*Victoria sarcastically smirked and replied, "If you don't, we're no longer friends, and..... you will disappoint the children."*

*Nathan was the more mature one of the two children. He only listened to Victoria's words and didn't ask further questions.*

*But Nicole, being her lively and curious self, was filled with confusion upon hearing her words.*

*"Mr. Bane, are you and Mommy fighting? Please don't fight. I'm scared..."*

*The young girl's soft voice was as soft as cotton candy, and it melted a small part of Bane's heart.*

*Chapter 388 Geve Nicole Back to Me*

*Just as Bane was about to comfort the girl, Victoria suddenly made a request. "Put Nicole down and let her come to me."*

*And at this moment, Bane still had his hand on the girl's back as he whispered,*

*“Victoria, do we really have to act like enemies?”*

*Victoria retorted, “Isn’t this what you wanted?” She then stepped forward to snatch Nicole from him.*

*However, the man took a step back. “I’m sorry, but you seem emotionally unstable right now. I can’t entrust Nicole to you.”*

*Victoria was baffled. I’m emotionally unstable? Isn’t he the one who is emotionally unstable?*

*She solemnly emphasized, “Nicole is my child. Do you understand what I’m saying?”*

*“Mommy...”*

*Although Nicole didn’t know what had happened between the two adults, she seemed to sense the seriousness of the situation and anxiously wanted to be with Victoria.*

*With that, she began to struggle out of Bane’s arms.*

*took a step back while still holding her in*

*1241 Thu, 8*

*Chapter 388 Give Nicole Back to Me*

*his arms. “Didn’t you say you wanted to eat ice cream just now? I’ll take you to buy*

*7/8*

*some, hmm? We will also get some for your Mommy and brother as well. That way, your*

*Mommy will calm down, alright?”*

*Seeing him move away, Victoria panicked and chased after him.*

*“Bane, give Nicole back to me!”*

*At the same time, Nicole’s cries of fear rang out.*

*Without a hint of emotion on his face, Bane strode out of the hotel with Nicole in his arms. As Victoria tried to catch up, Ethan and two men stationed at the door ran up and blocked her.*

*“Get the f\*ck out of my way!”*

*Because it involved her daughter, Victoria was no longer her gentle self. After she cursed at them, she even forcefully pushed Ethan.*

*Even so, Ethan and the other men firmly stood in front of her. Unable to resist three people with her own strength, she could only watch helplessly as Bane carried a sobbing Nicole away.*

*Chapter 388 Give Nicole Back to Me*

*Victoria was gasping for breath from exhaustion when everything quieted down. She even raised her hand and slapped Ethan.*

*8/8*

*Despite being hit, the executive secretary remained particularly silent as he visibly held back his emotions. “Miss Selwyn, the only thing I can assure you is that Mr. Morison will not harm Miss Nicole. Please don’t worry.”*

*Since they had completely fallen out, Victoria no longer cared to be polite to Ethan. “Let me through.”*

*“I apologize, Miss Selwyn, but there’s only one way you can pass through this door, and that’s by getting into the car and going to our next destination.”*

#### *Chapter 389*

*Everyone stood frozen at the doorway for a few minutes.*

*1/9*

*Ethan was actually worried that Victoria would resist again. After all, they would be the ones getting hurt if they continued to hold her back.*

*They could only restrain her but not harm her.*

*Fortunately, Victoria was not that kind of deranged woman. Otherwise, they would likely sustain many injuries if she were to scratch and hit them.*

*Ethan looked at Victoria and reluctantly persuaded her, “Miss Selwyn, life with Mr.*

*Morison isn’t going to be bad. You should have seen clearly that you are his world over the past five years. He won’t fall for anyone else and will treat you well for the rest of his*

*life.”*

*“So what? Do I have to choose him just because he treats me well? What about my freedom?”*

*“In any case, it would be best for you to seriously reconsider your choice now. I know Mr. Morison very well. He is not one to change his decision once he has set his mind to*

*1. it. You continuing to make a scene will only further provoke him.”*

#### *Chapter 389 A Step Too Late*

*After saying that, Ethan glanced at the two expressionless people beside him before leaning in close to Victoria and whispering, “Just go along with him for now.”*

*Upon hearing this, Victoria pursed her lips and looked at Ethan, who then gave her a*

*nod.*

*4*

*Victoria knew that Bane left with Nicole in his arms without looking back because she had acted impulsively just now.*

*Bane's demeanor at that moment was unlike anything before. Just as Ethan had mentioned, Bane seemed to have been provoked.*

*"Mommy..."*

*Feeling a tug on her hand, Victoria looked down to see her son standing next to her, looking up at her with a hint of uneasiness.*

*"Nathan, dear."*

*Victoria immediately picked him up and went back into the house. Seeing this, Ethan quickly closed the door behind them.*

*2/9*

*After returning to the quiet room, Nathan cautiously asked, "Mommy, did you fight with Mr. Bane?"*

*Chapter 399 A Step Too Late*

*Victoria shook her head.*

*"We didn't fight. It's...complicated. In any case, Mr. Bane is currently doing something very dangerous, and we need to stop him."*

*"Okay, Mommy." Nathan seemed to understand as he nodded. He soon remembered something before he added, "But Mommy, Mr. Bane took Nicky away."*

*3/9*

*At the mention of this, Victoria unknowingly furrowed her brows. Based on the current situation, Bane shouldn't harm Nicole for now.*

*The reason he took her away was to live together, so he wouldn't harm her or any of the*

*children.*

*But as he had said, he would redirect his anger on someone else.*

*"Mommy?"*

*Victoria snapped back to reality and gently patted Nathan's head.*

*"Sorry, I was lost in thought. Don't worry, Mr. Bane won't harm Nicole."*

*All they could do now was wait for someone to come to their rescue.*

*Chapter 389 A Step Too Late*

*Or maybe, wait for Bane to bring back Nicole.*

*But neither of those options came to pass.*

*Instead, Ethan pushed open the door and informed Victoria, "Miss Selwyn, the car is ready. Please head downstairs."*

*Victoria glanced at her phone. It had only been fifteen minutes since everything happened.*

*"Do we really have to leave?"*

*Ethan nodded.*

*"What if I say I want to stay and have a meal right now?"*

*4/9*

*Ethan bowed respectfully. "If you don't mind, I can arrange for food to be brought to the car, Miss Selwyn. You can have your meal on the way."*

*"And what if I don't want to eat in the car?"*

*"Then, you may consider having your meal after reaching the destination, Miss Selwyn."*

*Hearing this, she snickered. "It seems like I have no choice but to leave."*

### *Chapter 389 A Step Too Late*

*Ethan spoke softly, "Miss Selwyn, I managed to contact Mr. Morison just now. He has already bought ice cream for Miss Nicole and is heading to our destination. If we leave now, we will probably arrive about ten minutes later than them."*

*Victoria was indignant. Even though she had already sought help from the outside world, she still failed to slow things down.*

*Nicole was right by her side, but Victoria had lost her because of her carelessness.*

*Victoria couldn't help blaming herself. If only I hadn't agreed to buy her ice cream.*

*"Miss Selwyn."*

*Ethan was still waiting for her. Seeing her lost in her own thoughts without replying to him, he urged, "We should leave now. We won't be able to catch up if we delay any longer."*

*His words snapped her out of her daze.*

*"Got it." She solemnly nodded. "Let me pack up a few things."*

*"Understood. We will wait outside for you, but please take no more than five minutes."*

*band and went back to the room to pack*

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### *Chapter 399 A Step Too Late*

*6/7*

*their belongings. When something came to mind then, she took out a piece of clothing from the suitcase and hung it in the wardrobe while she stuffed some items into the adjacent drawer.*

*She only brought the suitcase and Nathan to the door when she was done organizing.*

*"Let's go. We're going to meet up with Nicole."*

*“Okay.”*

*As the door opened, Ethan immediately stepped forward to carry the suitcase. Since they were currently under house arrest, Victoria decided to let them handle all the luggage.*

*Before leaving, Victoria couldn't help but turn back to look at the hotel room door. Will they see what I left behind?*

*Someone should come to clean the room after we check out. I hope they will be here. before the cleaner comes.*

*As for where they would be going next, she had no way to escape her fate for now.*

*Although Ethan had been slapped by Victoria, he still treated her with the utmost*

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*respect. He carried her luggage, opened the car door for her, and even had food sent to the car*

*“Although you may not want to eat, you haven't had much to eat all day, Miss Selwyn. I prepared something for you. You may go ahead if you feel like eating on the way. If you don't want to, we can have the chef at our destination prepare something you like upon arrival.”*

*Victoria was indeed hungry after the tumultuous day.*

*Since she couldn't change the situation for now, she could only take care of her own well-being.*

*After the car drove ahead for a while, Victoria finally picked up the fork and started eating.*

*Ethan felt relieved when he saw this.*

*Unbeknownst to them, a group of people rushed into the hotel and investigated everything about Victoria ten minutes after they left.*

*However, the hotel room was already empty when they pushed open the door.*

*“Where are they?” Alaric demanded, his face glum.*

#### *Chapter 389 A Step Too Late*

*Terrance answered from beside him. “We might be a step too late.”*

*8/9*

*Hearing that, Alaric clenched his fists by the sides of his torso tightly and muttered two words through his gritted teeth. “Bane Morison!”*

*“Mr. Cadogan, we found this.”*

*One of the people conducting the search inside the room brought something over.*

*Terrance quickly took it and handed it to Alaric.*

*“Sir, it’s a beige coat and an earring.”*

*Alaric recognized them at a glance the moment he took the items. It was the coat Victoria often wore, and the earring was one she had worn before.*

*It was the earring she had on when they first met after she returned to the country.*

*That was why Alaric particularly remembered that earring.*

*“Are these Miss Selwyn’s belongings?” Terrance asked.*

#### *Chapter 390 A Step Too Late*

*Alaric’s face was so dark it could practically swallow light. “They are hers.”*

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*Chapter 390 Make Him Become Tired Of You*

*Chapter 390*

*177*

*The trip had been smooth in the beginning but soon became steep and winding toward the end. Victoria could stand it at first, but after ten minutes she became dizzy. Nathan leaned into her embrace, clearly feeling ill as well.*

*Even though she didn't feel well, she cared for Nathan and helped rub his temple while asking gently, "Do you feel better?"*

*However, Nathan felt too sick to reply, so she told the driver, "Can you slow down a little? My son feels sick."*

*Since they were in a rush, the car didn't slow down that much even though the road was mountainous. They had wasted too much time after all, and Ethan was worried about their plans after that. However, he then turned to see the boy curled up in Victoria's embrace while she looked pale as well though she tried to control it. He couldn't bear it and so told the driver to slow down.*

*When the car had slowed and become more stable, the situation improved slightly. She suppressed her feeling of nausea as she held Nathan in her arms, but then she began to*

*worry about Nicole who was away from them. The girl had to be feeling sick during the ride, plus she had cried as she left. Victoria was worried sick about her daughter. Is she still scared? Is she still crying fiercely? Would she start the hiccups?*

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*207*

*The more Victoria thought about it, the more vexed she felt. She eventually closed her*

*eyes, wishing only for the trip to end quickly.*

*It was some time before the car eventually stopped in front of a bungalow located in the mountains. The car door had just opened when she saw another car parked at the main entrance of the bungalow which was wide open. Countless bodyguards stood on both sides of the entrance, making the place look well-secured. However, that meant that it would be extremely difficult for her to escape.*

*“Miss Selwyn, we’re here.”*

*Victoria held Nathan as she alighted from the car and asked immediately, “Where’s Nicole?”*

*Ethan respectfully replied, “Miss Nicole is with Mr. Morison and so wouldn’t be ill-treated. She may be inside the bungalow already so let’s join them, Miss Selwyn.”*

*She really wanted to turn him down, but Nicole was inside the bungalow and Victoria wondered how badly she might have suffered during the journey. So, she had no choice*

*but to follow him into the bungalow. As she walked, she observed the environment around her. Tall gates surrounded the bungalow and the only exit was guarded by countless bodyguards.*

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*Chapter 390 Make Him Become Tired Of You*

*Ethan’s voice suddenly came from the front. “Miss Selwyn, if you truly don’t fancy Mr. Morison, my suggestion is to make him become tired of you before leaving. That’s the best approach.”*

*There was no one else around and he was leading the way.*

*Victoria became puzzled by that. “Become tired of me? And how do I do that?”*

*3/7*

*Ethan's footsteps paused before slowing down. "I've been at his side for many years. He's the type to desire something the more he's denied it. The reason he's locked you in here is because he has never won you over before."*

*She was speechless. What kind of dumb statement was that? Did she have to let Bane win her over just so she could safely leave him?*

*Victoria replied sternly at once, "Your suggestion is useless. I won't accept it."*

*He could guess what she had thought by her instant cold expression. "Miss Selwyn, don't misunderstand. When I said win you over, I didn't mean whatever you were thinking."*

*She looked down instinctively at Nathan. It felt weird to be discussing something like this in front of a child.*

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*Chapter 300 Make Him Become Tired Of You*

*"What I meant was to make him feel as if he has won you over, which means making him happy."*

*47*

*"What do you mean?" Ethan's words puzzled her even more.*

*"Do you know what Mr. Morison's family is like, Miss Selwyn?"*

*Victoria frowned since she had heard others talk about it. They all said how Bane's father had been a jerk who ignored his children and wife to indulge in alcohol and parties before ending up being embroiled in a romantic scandal with a young girl. Many criticized the man, but some defended him as well.*

*"Rich men are all the same. They already have fame and status and are just chasing something new outside of their family. They will go home when they are tired of it and*

*won't cause anything serious."*

*Bane had described all men as completely useless, but Victoria knew that not all men were like Bane's father. For example, her father had always remained single after her mother's death. Victoria wasn't the only reason he hadn't remarried; besides that, he still*

*loved her mother deeply. If he could maintain his dignity and morals when his beloved was no longer with him, why couldn't other men do the same? They merely didn't want to do so.*

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*She had wanted to comfort Bane, but he kept talking about Alaric and Claudia*

*57*

*whenever they saw each other. She didn't want to hear about them, so she eventually stopped consoling Bane. Sometime after that, she heard that his parents wanted to get divorced since his father's mistress had visited them while heavily pregnant in a bid to become his actual wife. It had caused a massive uproar back then.*

*The citizens of Gandra kept talking about the family, and Bane who had still been in school became the most obvious target for gossip. She had heard people discuss him in private during that period too.*

*"Wow, Bane looks so handsome "*

*"Tch. He's still a b'stard no matter how handsome he is. What's the use?"*

*"B\*stard? Whom did he betray? I've never heard of him dating anyone. Did you hear it from a secret source?"*

*"It's not him but his father. His father had a mistress who was rumored to be heavily pregnant, and she had gone to his home to cause a commotion."*

*“Damn. It must’ve been horrible being his father’s wife.”*

*“Yep The mistress was insisting on being his legal wife. His actual wife is older and not*

*Chapter 390 Make Him Become Tired Of You*

*677*

*as pretty as the girl nor as good at sweet-talking him. She might be replaced very soon.”*

*“So, what does this have to do with Bane?”*

*“Are you dumb? The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree. Since his father is such a b\*stard, he will behave the same way in the future. It’s best to stay away from men like him. The most important thing here is that if the mistress gives birth to a son, his family will be in a worse situation.”*

*“That makes sense when you put it like that. I never thought that Bane might turn into someone like his father.”*

*Victoria frowned after hearing that. Even though they had merely been discussing the topic, their words had enraged her and she couldn’t help dashing forward.*

*“Bane and his father are two separate entities. How can you compare them? They’re both individuals with different personalities and besides, who could see into the future? Jumping to conclusions and making assumptions about others isn’t nice.”*

*The girls had been shocked after seeing someone jump to Bane’s defense and wondered who it was, but their expressions turned mocking after seeing Victoria.*

*“Aren’t you the Selwyn girl who’s always with Bane? Your mother has run away yet you*

*Chapter 390 Make Him Become Tired Of You*

*somehow have the free time to poke your nose in our business.”*