

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1401

Yvette asked, "What's your plan?"

Having gotten exactly what she wanted, Lyna smiled excitedly as she envisioned the pain on

Fabian's face after losing Hannah.

This stupid woman Yvette regards herself so highly, thinking she can make Fabian hers just

because she's a celebrity. Fine. Since Fabian plays his cards well, I'll let you live out his

games. What a tragedy that you won't have his love. Even if Hannah can't get him, neither

can you, Yvette!

Although Lyna had those thoughts, she kept the same expression on her face and said, "I'll

work with you to make Hannah leave Fabian, then you'll take her spot.

After that's done,

you'll give me one billion, and I won't ever appear in front of you and Fabian again. How's

that?"

"Okay. I'll work with you." Yvette nodded.

Meanwhile, Hannah, who was lying on the hospital bed, opened her eyes groggily. After

coming round, she felt that something was amiss but could not figure it out.

"Shh. We'll talk about it later. Let's go in first."

Suddenly, Hannah heard Fabian's voice and could not help but wonder if he was hiding

something from her.

Then, she closed her eyes and pretended to be unconscious.

After the doctor checked her condition, he walked out with a solemn look on his face.

Fabian followed him outside, but the door was left ajar, so Hannah could clearly hear what

they said in the corridor.

"How's she, doc?" Fabian sounded anxious.

The doctor sighed and replied in a serious tone, "The miscarriage has damaged her uterus,

so it may lead to infertility in the future. But I can't say for sure. As long as she takes care of

her body well after this, she might still have a chance to get pregnant."

At this, Hannah felt like her world was falling apart. Shaking her head, she could not believe what she had heard.

“How could it be? How could it be?”

Why is this happening to me? My happy life has only started, so how could it end just like this? Fabian’s the president of a company, and he’ll definitely want an heir.

Feeling sorry for Fabian, she started to blame herself for failing to protect her baby and herself.

She couldn’t be bothered to hear Fabian’s reply to the doctor’s words anymore. When Fabian came back in and saw her crying, surprise crept up his face, but he soon acted like nothing had happened.

“It’s okay, Hannah. We’re still young. We only lost the baby because it’s not the right time yet. We can have as many kids as you want in the future. After all, I can afford it anyway.”

His attempt to downplay it irked Hannah, but she knew that he would definitely send someone to look after her if she made her true feelings clear. If that was the case, she would not be able to leave him.

“Yeah, we’re still young.”

She nodded with a wry smile. So what if we’re young? I’m infertile, so I can only live alone for the rest of my life.

“I had someone make you some nutritious food. Have some,” Fabian told her as he opened the food container and sat down in front of her.

Nodding, Hannah pretended like everything was fine while Fabian fed her the food.

Although Hannah seemed emotionally stable, Fabian was distressed deep down. He would rather see her defy him than watch her act like this.

Fabian put off all company matters and paid no heed to Yvette and Lyna just so he could keep Hannah company.

It was not until late at night that Hannah shed tears again after seeing that Fabian had fallen asleep.

Early the next morning, Lyna called Heather. It was the first step of her plan with Yvette.

They knew that Heather would not let Hannah be with Fabian if she was aware that Hannah

would not be able to bear an heir for the Norton family.

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“Hello, Mrs. Norton.”

Lyna could not help but feel delighted at the thought of Hannah’s infertility. She had initially

planned to make Hannah miscarry and set her up again afterward. To her pleasant surprise,

Hannah actually became barren. She was so thrilled that she could not sleep for the entire night.

“Who is this?” Heather asked dubiously as she did not make out that the caller was Lyna.

“Mrs. Norton, it doesn’t matter who I am. I just want to let you know that the Norton family

are about to see the end of their bloodline,” Lyna replied in a casual tone. I wonder how

angry she will get upon learning the truth.

“What nonsense are you spouting? Are you a scammer? How dare you try to cheat me?”

After hearing Lyna’s words, Heather could not help but get infuriated, assuming that Lyna

was a scammer.

“Haha. Calm down, Mrs. Norton. You can just go to the hospital to find out if what I said is

true,” Lyna suggested.

At this, Hannah began to wonder if something had really happened to Hannah or

Fabian. Fabian’s my only son. If he’s...

Before she could say anything, Lyna went on, “To tell you the truth, your dear daughter-in-law is now infertile, but your dear son loves her. Hence, your family bloodline will end with your son.”

Having said that, Lyna could not help but sigh. "I feel sorry for you. After all, you should be enjoying your life at this age, but sadly, you won't be able to have a grandchild. How pitiful..."

Lyna's words made Heather tremble in anger, and her phone dropped to the floor with a loud thud. Standing rooted to the spot, she was unable to regain her composure even after a long while.

Hearing the noise from the other end of the line, Lyna could not help but smirk. It's time for me to enjoy the show. After Hannah goes to the hospital and confirms that Hannah is indeed barren, she'll surely think of a way to make her leave Fabian. "Get the car ready!" Heather instructed the butler after she came to her senses.

Given that it was a serious matter, she wanted to find out the truth personally. If it was, she had to have a talk with Hannah.

Meanwhile, Hannah was still in deep slumber because she only fell asleep after crying for a long time the night before.

After waking up in the morning, Fabian instructed someone to prepare breakfast for Hannah before he left.

Soon, Heather arrived at the hospital. Phoenix Group was the top company in the country, so she was greeted by the deputy director, who went up to her as soon as he saw her in the hospital, "Mrs. Norton, what brings you here?"

"How can I not come after something so serious has happened?" Heather asked rhetorically.

While on her way to the hospital, Heather had confirmed that Hannah was hospitalized, but she did not know the details. She was a little displeased that no one actually told her about the hospitalization of her daughter-in-law.

The deputy director noticed her displeasure, so he said awkwardly, "I think Mr. Norton just

doesn't want you to worry."

Heather glanced at him and stopped dwelling on it. Instead, she asked, "Anyway, how's Hannah now?"

The deputy director was in a tight spot as he did not know how to answer Heather's

question. What if Mr. Norton doesn't want his mother to know about the truth? But I'll be in trouble too if I don't come clean with her.

"What are you doing standing there in a daze? Answer me!" Heather prompted impatiently as the deputy director was still hesitating.

"Yes, Mrs. Norton." The deputy director swallowed hard and continued, "Ms. Hannah

Young's miscarriage has injured her..."

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"What?" Heather asked agitatedly. Miscarriage?

"Um, yes, Ms. Young had a miscarriage."

At this, Heather staggered backward with a dazed expression on her face and tears in her

eyes. My grandchild is gone just like that?

The maid accompanying her hurriedly stepped forward to support her for fear that she would pass out.

"Mrs. Norton, I'm sorry for your loss," the deputy director comforted her, feeling a little regretful for telling her the truth.

"So tell me honestly, has Hannah become infertile?" Heather asked sorrowfully after a long silence.

With a torn expression, the deputy director gave it some thought before he nodded firmly.

Heather could not help but gasp as her heart sank.

The grief she felt over the loss of her grandchild was greater than that of Fabian as she had always wanted an heir to the Norton family.

"Take me to Hannah's... ward," she said, her voice breaking and her eyes tearful.

Later, the door of Hannah's ward opened with a click, and Heather emerged. Having lost her

grandchild, she looked like she had grown a few years older and even appeared to have more crow's feet.

Hannah was still asleep, so she did not know that Heather had come. Her swollen eyes from all the crying stood out against her pale face. Heather noticed the frown on Hannah's sleeping face and knew how she must be feeling deep down.

At the same time, the deputy director had brought over a chair and placed it next to Hannah's bed. After Heather sat down, he left the ward with the maid. "Hannah," Heather called out in a soft voice.

After a while, she shook her head and lamented, "Poor girl..." Unable to hold back her tears anymore, she began weeping. "I know you've had a miscarriage because of Fabian."

In fact, Heather had already thought the matter through. She knew that the culprit who caused Hannah's miscarriage must have done it out of jealousy of Fabian's status.

"But..."

She stopped midsentence upon seeing that Hannah's fingers twitched. However, Hannah remained asleep, so Heather continued, "But what should I do? Tell me what I should do as Fabian's mother."

Heather had on a bitter expression. After Fabian's father was arrested, he became the only man in the family. She thought that she could enjoy the rest of her life after he got married, but unexpectedly, something unfortunate happened to their family.

"Hannah, you have to know that Fabian is the only man left in our family. He's also the one

who manages Phoenix Group and made it the top company in the country. Putting aside an heir, if I really let the Norton family bloodline end with Fabian, I'd be too ashamed to face Fabian's father and all the Nortons' ancestors after I die."

A strong sense of depression came over Heather. Hannah is a really great person. Not only is she beautiful, but she's also kind-hearted. She and Fabian are quite a match made in

heaven too. But now that she's barren, as the head of the Norton family, I can't possibly let her stay in the family.

"Hannah, I hope you won't blame me for being cruel. You'll understand when you're in my position one day. I'm someone's daughter-in-law too, so I know that this is unfair to you,"

Heather went on after wiping the tears off the corners of her eyes.

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"After you wake up, I'll have a talk with you and give you a sum of money that's enough for you to live a comfortable life abroad. I hope you won't ever come back here again. After all, you should know that Fabian is very loyal even though he may seem a little indifferent. I'm afraid that you'll affect him if you do. Please don't blame me for being selfish. I really don't

have a choice. If you really love Fabian, y-you should leave him."

After speaking, Heather rose to her feet and walked up to Hannah to brush away the messy hair on her forehead before leaving.

She did not know if Hannah could hear what she had said. In fact, she had only spoken because she felt sullen, bottling all her emotions up. Looking at Hannah, she could not help but feel sorry for her. That was why Heather told her those heartfelt words.

But of course, she would still tell her the same thing after Hannah woke up. In order to

ensure the continuation of the Norton family bloodline, she was determined to make

Hannah leave even if Fabian would fall into misery again.

"Fabian will get over it."

Sighing, Heather closed the door behind her.

After she left, Hannah opened her eyes, and tears immediately raced down her cheeks.

She had actually woken up when Heather called her name. Knowing that the latter must

have something to say to her, she pretended to be asleep.

At that moment, she flashed back to the sweet times she spent with Fabian; when she fell sick, Fabian fed her chicken soup; when she insisted on eating at the roadside stalls, he accompanied her despite his status and identity; when something happened to her, he was always the first to come to her rescue. As memories filled her mind, she felt increasingly agonized, and her body began to tremble uncontrollably. She did not even bother to wipe the tears off her face, allowing them to stream down her cheeks and land on the pillow. After some time, her pillow was soaked with tears. Taking a breath, she slowly got up. Her pale face indicated that she was not in good shape. Even her lips were drained of color and had cracked due to dehydration. Pushing back the blanket, she got out of bed and wore her shoes. After taking one last glance at the ward, she walked outside in a hospital gown. Earlier on, Fabian had sent Natasha over to the hospital, but the latter had been sitting outside the ward for fear of disturbing Hannah. "W-Why did you come out?" Seeing Hannah, who was looking pale and frail, Natasha hurriedly went up to support her. "Natasha." Even until that moment, Hannah still did not realize that Natasha was someone sent by Fabian to protect her and still treated her like her own sister. "Don't worry. I'm fine," Hannah said with a forced smile. Yet, her voice was as feeble as that of a dying person. "Hannah, you..." Natasha was heartbroken to see Hannah in such a state. Despite being an assassin, she was touched by how well the latter had treated her. Not giving Natasha any chance to speak, her pale lips parted as she instructed, "Natasha, send me home."

““Um, Mr. Norton said... Okay!”

Natasha felt her heart wrench in pain at the sight of Hannah’s ashen face. It was as if a needle was pricking her heart that steeled from years of being an assassin.

With Natasha’s help, Hannah soon left the hospital and got into a car. As she was wearing an inconspicuous hospital gown, no one noticed that the patient who left was actually the wife of Phoenix Group’s president.

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“Hannah...”

After they boarded the car, Natasha felt that something was amiss and wanted to ask

Hannah the reason she insisted on returning home.

Hannah placed her finger on Natasha’s lips. After taking a deep breath, she said, “You know

what? My husband loves me the most.”

The heartbroken Natasha replied, “I know, Hannah.”

Shaking her head, Hannah rebuked, “No! You don’t know the things he has done for me!”

Although Natasha couldn’t figure out the reason Hannah had brought up such an odd topic,

she kept her concerns to herself and listened to Hannah.

However, Hannah looked out the window and went dead silent halfway through their conversation.

Natasha wasn’t too bothered by Hannah’s behavior because she thought their relationship

had improved after Fabian rescued her.

Little did Natasha know, Hannah had found out that she might not be able to conceive for the rest of her life.

When the car pulled over in front of the villa, Hannah’s face puckered in pain. Her body

ached just because the car had shaken after it was brought to a halt.

With Natasha’s aid, she then alighted the car. She could finally return home; the house she

was supposed to live in with Fabian for the rest of their lives.

The moment she stepped into the foyer, tears streamed down her cheeks as she was overwhelmed by the familiar surroundings. Fabian had decorated the entire place based on her requests. It was her first time here after the renovation, and she was pleasantly surprised.

Hannah requested in a quivering voice, "Bring me to my room."
Natasha nodded and did as she was told.

The moment Hannah opened the door to her room, the emotions associated with the countless memories she had in the room came flooding out again. Hannah moved away from Natasha and took a step forward, asking, "Why don't you return to your room and let me take a short break?"

Natasha, who was right behind Hannah, hesitated when she heard Hannah's request. After giving it some thought, she nodded and said, "If you need anything, please let me know."

As Natasha's room was right next to Hannah's room, the latter would merely have to raise her volume to reach Natasha.

When Natasha reached the door, Hannah's muffled voice could be heard, requesting in a sincere manner, "Please keep my return between us for the time being. I'll tell him when the time comes."

After a brief pause, Natasha agreed and walked out of Hannah's room. Once she returned to her room, she wondered if she should report Hannah's condition to Fabian because she felt that there was something amiss about her. All things considered, she decided to drop him a text. Natasha: Mrs. Norton has returned home.

Once she sent the text, she heaved a sigh of relief. Afraid that something might happen to Hannah, she thought it would be better to keep Fabian informed. Meanwhile, after Natasha left, Hannah sat on the edge of her bed and took out a document that was kept in the drawer of the nightstand.

She guffawed as she held the divorce agreement that was prepared beforehand.

Never would she have thought the thing she prepared after they were married would one day be of use. Initially, she thought she could spend the rest of her life by his side, yet things had taken a turn for the worst.

“It’s going to be fine! Perhaps it’s just another bad joke from God!” Hannah tried to console herself, yet her eyes started brimming with tears once again.

Gritting her teeth, she looked in the mirror and warned herself, “Hannah, can you stop crying? It’s so annoying!”

She proceeded to place the divorce agreement on the coffee table in the living room. In

fact, she had signed the agreement about six months ago.

After she returned to her room, she opened her wardrobe and stuffed some clothes into her backpack.

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Caressing her backpack with a bright grin, she muttered to herself, “I guess I’ll have to trouble you for one last time.”

She had purchased that backpack of hers after joining the workforce. It had been through

all sorts of adventures with her as a journalist and witnessed the ups and downs of her relationship with Fabian.

When she turned around and saw the white wedding gown in the wardrobe, she felt a sense

of despair. Perhaps because she had not worn it anymore after their wedding, it seemed so lonely in the wardrobe.

Blinking her eyes, she retrieved the wedding gown and embraced it.

“You’re coming with me!”

The gown was a custom-made piece that Fabian had ordered for Hannah.

It was the only

wedding gown she had put on and also the only one she would ever wear.

After that, she brought the wedding gown and the backpack with her as she left the room.

Soon, the cab she hailed showed up.

Staring at Natasha's room, Hannah was worried that she would have a hard time searching for accommodation after her departure. Is she going to be fine? What about her language class?

As she thought about it, she headed toward Natasha's room.

Hannah had her eyes glued to the handle of the door. After much hesitation, she decided to lock it.

When Natasha heard the click, she jumped out of bed and sprinted over. Nonetheless, it was too late.

She tried to open the door, only to realize that she had been locked inside her room.

"Hannah, is that you? Why have you locked me up?" Natasha yelled anxiously.

Since she was an observant woman, no one could sneak into the house without alarming her. In other words, it was Hannah who did it.

With that being said, she had a hard time figuring out the reason behind Hannah's actions.

Meanwhile, Hannah heard Natasha's yells, yet she decided to ignore her.

"Hannah, hurry up and open the door! What's wrong? Why don't you tell me about it?"

Perhaps we can resolve it, right?"

As Natasha continued shouting, she searched high and low for a key in the room.

"Are you sure?"

Hannah was tempted for a few seconds, but she soon snapped out of her hesitation as she deemed Natasha's suggestion impossible. What can I possibly do to turn the tables when

there's nothing Fabian can do about it?

"Please take good care of yourself!" Hannah yelled before leaving with her backpack and the wedding gown.

"Hannah! Please open the door!"

Natasha screamed at the top of her lungs, yet she couldn't hear Hannah's voice anymore.

Her heart skipped a beat when she heard the sound of a car engine. Could it be...

As she thought about it, she catapulted in the direction of the window. Once she braced herself for the potential impact, she jumped out of the window. She could feel a racking sensation as she landed on her back and rolled forward. In spite of the pain, she forced herself to keep going. Gritting her teeth, she pulled herself together with all her might and yelled, "Hannah!"

Then she rushed in the direction of the entrance. Nonetheless, her effort was to no avail. By the time she walked out of the villa, she was greeted by the sight of the departing cab and the blazing trail left behind.

Natasha was in a state of bewilderment. Why? What's wrong with Hannah? Isn't she in love with Fabian?

Why did she leave without saying anything? Is this the way things work in Chanaea?

Immediately after she snapped out of her daze, she reached for her phone and called Fabian.

"Hello, Mr. Norton?"

"Yes? What do you need?"

Fabian, who was in the middle of perusing a pile of documents, had no idea about the sudden turn of events.

Startled, Natasha asked, "Have you not received my text?"

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"What is it?" Fabian asked, wondering if Hannah had regained consciousness.

"M-Mrs. Norton has regained consciousness—"

Putting his documents aside, he interrupted her, "Alright, I'll head over immediately."

Knowing that he was about to hang up the call and rush over to the hospital, she yelled,

"Wait! I'm not done yet!"

“What?”

Frustrated after losing the child, Fabian would have lost his cool if it weren't because of his exceptional self-restraint capability.

“Ms. Young left the hospital.”

“What? She's left the hospital? What kind of joke is this? Who the heck allowed her to be discharged? Send him my way immediately! If anything happens to Hannah, it will be the end of him!”

He couldn't keep his composure anymore because Hannah was supposed to have at least a week's bed rest, given her frail state.

But now that she had been discharged much earlier than that, her body might not be able to take it.

“She didn't acquire anyone's consent to be discharged, insisting on going home. After we were back, she locked me in my room and left on her own.”

Natasha knew that Fabian would be infuriated, yet she braced herself and told him the truth.

“Come again? Why the heck didn't you report something so important earlier? Are you sure you're a qualified bodyguard?” Fabian spouted harsh remarks at Natasha.

No one could possibly remain calm when their beloved spouse had miscarried because of someone else's malicious scheme. To make matters worse, Hannah had become barren. If something bad were to happen to her, Fabian would spend the rest of his life in guilt and sorrow.

“I...”

Natasha knew Fabian must have missed her text message because he was way too occupied. Moreover, she was the one at fault because she could have stopped Hannah from leaving the hospital by informing Fabian of her plan.

“Where are you? Where was Hannah heading to?”

Fabian had no time to reprimand Natasha. Instead, he needed to figure out Hannah's

current whereabouts to stop her from leaving.

Unfortunately, Natasha had no idea. She answered, "I'm currently in front of the villa, but I'm

clueless about her whereabouts."

Fabian hung up the call immediately and made another call to instruct his trusted aide. He

yelled into the phone, "I want the entire city to be sealed immediately!

Get in touch with

those from the police station and get them to set up barricades on all major highways!

Search for Hannah! If she's not found, all of you will be terminated!"

After ending the call, he headed out of his office and returned to the villa to gather all the

details from Natasha.

He was overwhelmed by regret because he should have stayed with Hannah instead of

returning to the company.

Nonetheless, he had no choice because Phoenix Group was in the midst of a crisis after Lyna

plotted against him.

Should he fail to solve the issues in time, things might spiral out of control. Worst of all, the

Norton family might not be one of the five prominent families anymore.

Moreover, he

needed to avenge Hannah too, so his trip back to his office was inevitable.

Meanwhile, Hannah, who was in the cab, looked out the window and started weeping as she

stared at the trees that were disappearing from sight.

When she saw her favorite pizza joint, she reached her quivering finger out and pointed at

it.

The moment she figured out that she had lost the ability to conceive, her mind went

completely blank.

Because of her deep love for Fabian, she couldn't bear to have him live a life without a

complete family.

She knew the proud man would not want to live a miserable life without a successor to

inherit the empire he had built.

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Unfortunately, she couldn't fulfill his wish because she had lost the ability to conceive.

Should she continue to stay by his side, he would have to live a life filled with regrets.

As she thought about it, torrents of grief streamed down her cheeks once again.

Passing by the streets, she could vividly recall her memories with Fabian.

Those sweet memories had morphed into heart-wrenching ones after she realized that she

couldn't spend the rest of her life with the man she loved.

Meanwhile, as Fabian rushed all the way back to the villa, a sense of dread overcame

him. Hannah, I'm coming now. Please don't do anything reckless!

When he showed up at the entrance, Natasha rushed over and greeted, "Mr. Norton..."

She recounted the entire timeline of the incident, including the things Hannah had said

because she felt that those were intended for Fabian.

Having listened to everything, he rushed into the villa immediately. He had a hard time

believing that Hannah had left him. Deep down, he felt as though she was still anticipating

his return to the villa.

Nonetheless, he had no choice but to accept the harsh reality because the goofy and lovely

woman, who was all smiles whenever he was around, was nowhere to be seen.

As if drained of all energy, he slumped onto the ground. At that moment, he was just like

any other man who had lost his most beloved woman.

I'm the reason she left. That silly woman doesn't want me to live with the regrets of not

having a complete family.

In his trance, he saw Hannah supporting herself with all her might, bidding farewell to him,

"Goodbye, Fabian. It's over."

Hannah, you're wrong! Not being able to have a child is nothing compared to losing you! I can't possibly live a life without you!

At that thought, his eyes started welling up, and only then did he realize that he was capable of feeling emotions too.

When he raised his head, he was surprised to see that the coffee table in the living room had been tidied up, and his goblet was nowhere to be seen. In its place was a stack of agreements.

The moment he walked over, his eyes widened in disbelief upon realizing that it was a signed divorce agreement.

Supporting himself while perusing the agreement, he was forced to accept the fact that Hannah had left for good.

"Hannah, you're such a foolish woman!"

The man's voice cracked as he sobbed.

After tearing the divorce agreement into pieces, he cast them into the dustbin and muttered to himself, "I will never get a divorce! You will always be Mrs. Norton!"

He was determined to locate Hannah and tell her how he felt about her. Then they would be able to put everything behind them and spend the rest of their lives together.

Seeing the state Fabian was in, Natasha started blaming herself. Even at that point, she still couldn't figure out the reason behind Hannah's departure because she wasn't even aware of her miscarriage.

In the midst of her helplessness, she received a call out of the blue. The call took everyone in the living room by surprise when it broke the dead silence.

Reaching for her phone, she was about to hang up the call but hesitated when she saw that it was a call from the company. Fabian had merely dispatched her to the company to keep Hannah safe, so it didn't make any sense for the senior editor to call her when she was never

assigned any other tasks. Could it be...

Once the thought crossed her mind, she frowned and decided to pick up the call.

"Hello, is this Ms. Roma?"

Reluctantly, she answered the question, "Yes."

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"Ms. Young has instructed me to transfer the ownership of her property to you. Can you

drop by the office to collect the keys if you're free?"

"Huh? Ms. Young? Are you talking about Hannah?" Natasha hurriedly asked, anxious to find

out about Hannah's whereabouts.

Similarly, Fabian's eyes flickered when he heard Natasha mentioning Hannah's name.

The person on the other end answered, "Yes!"

"Can you still get in touch with her?" Natasha queried.

"I'm afraid that's impossible because she contacted me about twenty minutes ago. When I

tried to revert back to her, she had switched off her phone."

Natasha was disappointed by the person's reply. With her eyebrows furrowed, she

answered, "Okay. Thanks."

When she saw Fabian looking at her inquisitively, she told him everything.

Natasha was shocked by the fact that Hannah had taken her into consideration and

arranged her accommodation even though she decided to leave.

Shaking his head while leaving, Fabian murmured to himself, "You have always been a kind-hearted woman."

"Hahaha! This is great! What wonderful news!"

When Lyna and Yvette heard that Hannah was gone, they let out a deep breath, relieved

that their efforts had finally come to fruition.

Lyna sneered, "You should have seen this coming for claiming the title of Mrs. Norton when

you're just a nobody!"

She held a grudge against Hannah because the latter saved Winson and took away the

things that were supposed to be hers. But worst of all, Hannah snatched her fiancé away.

Therefore, Lyna had only one goal in mind—to take Hannah out. Identically, Yvette resented Hannah for her misery. She was merely a step away from getting married to Fabian and becoming a top-notch celebrity, yet Hannah's appearance had turned her life upside down.

Yvette remarked sarcastically with a contemptuous look, "Ha! She deserved it for picking a fight with the wrong foes! If it weren't because of Fabian, she wouldn't have lived until today!"

"Fabian's the next one on the list!" Lyna announced with her eyes narrowed to a slit.

Yvette knew she wasn't as intelligent as Lyna. Thus, in an attempt to figure out their next

best course of action, she inquired, "What should we do?"

"If I'm not mistaken, he's going to send someone to come after us.

However, I haven't figure

out what he's up to. As long as we exercise caution and seize the opportunity to gain the

upper hand, he's going to submit himself to us eventually!" Lyna

analyzed the situation with

a serious expression.

It was evident that she was intimidated by Fabian after her countless failed attempts to get

the better of him. Each time, she ended up making a narrow escape, so she was determined

to be more cautious this time.

Lyna was running out of money, but she was certain that Leo wouldn't offer his aid for fear

of offending Fabian. After all, Fabian was an influential figure in the corporate world, and

Leo would never put the Blackwood family at stake for her sake.

"What do you mean?"

Yvette was on pins and needles when she heard Lyna's words. At that instant, she felt a

strong urge to flee the country with her savings. After all, she was an escaped prisoner.

Should she be captured, she would be doomed.

“What are you afraid of? You don’t think you’re the only one at stake here, do you? After causing Hannah’s miscarriage, do you think Fabian will show me any mercy?” Lyna asked rhetorically.

How the heck did she rise to stardom? I guess she must have spent countless nights in bed with different men!

Yvette was aware that Lyna’s rhetorical question was a double innuendo to reprimand her.

Hence, she rebuked with her face puckered in irritation, “How am I supposed to calm down?

Why can’t you explain everything clearly to me?”

Why the heck do I have such an unreliable ally? She’s such a bimbo!

Haven’t I made myself

clear? Why is she having such a hard time understanding what I said?

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Since Lyna desperately needed cash, she couldn’t afford to offend Yvette just yet. In fact, she

planned to acquire a fortune through her unreliable ally.

With that plan in mind, she had no choice but to keep her frustration to herself.

Her lips twitched as she continued, “To keep it short and simple, we need to get someone to

keep an eye on Fabian. No matter what he’s going to do, I’m pretty sure he will resort to

some dirty tricks. Once we get our hands on the evidence, we can force him into

submission!”

Yvette nodded in return, but almost immediately, she shook her head and queried, “Are you

sure there’s someone who dares to help us scheme against Fabian?”

“What kind of joke is that? Do you think he’s the president of the country? I’ll work out

something one way or another soon!”

A vicious smirk loomed over her face as she was certain she could easily coerce someone to

do her biddings. Nonetheless, she would have to bear some risks.

Yvette nodded in response since Lyna was her only hope to turn the tables around. Should

the worse become the worst, she would flee abroad. On the other hand, if they could

achieve their goals, her life would take a turn for the better.

“Any updates?” Fabian, who had reached the airport, asked his trusted aide.

He replied, “Mr. Norton, we reached the airport five minutes after the call, but Mrs. Norton was nowhere to be seen.”

As his trusted aide was aware of the affection Fabian had for Hannah, he was pretty mindful

of his words for fear of offending the quick-tempered man.

Fabian furrowed his brows in silence and decided to stay there to wait for Hannah’s arrival.

If she wants to travel abroad, this is the only accessible airport! As long as she’s here, I will

find her soon enough! I just need to ensure she doesn’t leave this airport.

However, contrary to his assumption, Hannah was traveling in a cab that seemed relatively

miniature on a narrow track.

Occasionally, she would see Fabian’s image in her mind, pleading in a gentle manner,

“Hannah, please come back to me.”

However, she shook her head and shrugged the man’s figure off her mind because she

couldn’t carry out her duty as his wife anymore and no longer deserved him.

“Fabian, if only all this is nothing but an awfully long nightmare...”

If that was the case, instead of curling up in the cab, she might get to return to him and

spend the rest of her life by his side.

After staring ahead for a long time, she finally felt better, breathing in the fresh air in the

outskirts. She shook her head and smiled, reminding herself to stop overthinking when

everything had come to an end.

When she left the hospital, she recalled her brother giving her the key to their mother’s old

house.

It was left behind by their mother when she passed on. According to Winson, their mother had insisted on passing the key to her because she felt indebted to her the most.

When Winson passed the key to Hannah, he said, "She has been blaming herself for not carrying out the duty of a mother and failing to find you. Therefore, she wants you to have this as a token of apology."

Hannah's mind was all over the place when she received the key. Nevertheless, she decided to hold on to the keepsake for her beloved brother. Although she was supposed to feel liberated after leaving, an inexplicable sorrow overcame her instead. At the thought of going back to the desolated house, conflicting emotions rose in her.

Staring at the sky, she whispered, "I guess everything is finally over..."

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1411

After starting on a high note, their relationship had been going well, yet it was brought to an abrupt end because of an accident.

Even though she was reluctant to acknowledge that she was barren, she couldn't deny that her body had suffered serious complications after her miscarriage.

He deserves a better woman.

She was quite satisfied with her new abode. Now that she was returning to her old home, she could finally gather her thoughts without anyone's interruption.

—Mom, I guess you must have regretted losing me back in the day. But it's fine because I'm finally home now, so you don't have to search for me anymore.||

Meanwhile, Fabian, who had been waiting for over an hour, grew anxious because Hannah was still nowhere to be seen. Beads of sweat started forming on his forehead. It means Hannah has no intention to go abroad! If that's the case, where could she be?

He felt lightheaded and started massaging his temples to calm himself down. Subsequent to

a long night, he spent the entire day working and started searching high and low after

receiving the bad news. Therefore, he hadn't had any meal since the previous night.

Fabian gritted his teeth and beckoned his trusted aide over, instructing in a cold tone, —Head

over to the highway immediately!||

—Sir, you need to take good care of yourself. The company has to deal with lots of ongoing

issues, and we need your guidance. Why don't you let the subordinates handle this matter

instead?||

Fabian's chauffeur had been working for his father for many years.

Perhaps he was the only

one who had the guts to bring up such advice.

—I'll keep that in mind, Louis,|| Fabian replied nonchalantly as he couldn't be bothered with

the company's situation at all.

He had only one goal in mind—to locate Hannah at all costs.

Heaving a sigh, Louis took note of Fabian's instructions and headed over to the highway

without further ado.

At the other end of the city, Hannah had returned to the house her mother left her. As she

opened the door to the desolated place, she couldn't help lamenting. It seemed as though

destiny had brought her back after all the years.

—Miss, where should I place this?||

Seeing her pale face, the driver got out of the cab and carried Hannah's wedding gown and

backpack for her.

—Just hand them over to me. Thank you so much,|| Hannah replied with a smile and took her

belongings from the driver.

—You're welcome. If there's nothing else you need, I'll get going. I saw two people at the

entrance of the village. Perhaps they need a ride back to the city.||

—Have a good day.||

Hannah showed the driver the way out. Staring at the distant cab, she murmured, —I guess

there are a lot of conscientious men, huh?||
Immediately after her return to the desolated place, she grew fond of it.
The furniture in the
house was all made of wood.
After another hour of searching, Fabian started panicking because he
still couldn't locate
Hannah. He had dropped by the two places she frequented the most, yet
she was nowhere
to be found.
He had also sent someone to pay her parents a visit, but they weren't
aware of anything at
all. Other than that, he also tried calling Helen, but she was oblivious to
Hannah's
disappearance too. As for the Blackwood family, he knew that it would
be pointless to ask
them.
When Fabian ran out of ideas, one of his trusted aides sprinted over to
his side and
informed him with a serious expression, —Mr. Norton, here's the
outcome of our
investigation. Yvette should be in one of these three particular locations.
Shall we...||
Suddenly, his trusted aide went dead silent upon noticing the sharp glint
in Fabian's eyes.
The latter emanated an intimidating presence as his face contorted in
irritation.
If it weren't because of Yvette and Lyna, Hannah wouldn't have
miscarried in the first place.
My innocent child wouldn't be dead before he even got to see the world!
And Hannah
wouldn't be missing as well!
Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1412
Burning with rage, Fabian could barely suppress his urge to take his
wrath out on the vicious
duo to avenge his loved ones.
Glaring at his trusted aide with his pair of bloodshot eyes, he
yelled, —Take them into
custody at once! I want to skin them alive and get them to beg for mercy
for the things they
have done!||

His trusted aide felt a chill running down his spine. Looks like Mr. Norton is truly enraged this time.

Previously, Fabian would take his foes out through legal means. He would collect the evidence of their wrongdoings and hand them over to the police. Never had he resorted to such brutal ways to punish his enemies.

After much consideration, his trusted aide replied, —Yes!||

When his trusted aide was about to carry out his instructions, Fabian yelled, —Wait!||

His trusted aide quickly turned to him.

—Gather everyone around and put the mission on hold for the time being! I'll let Yvette and

Lyna off the hook for now!||

Fabian narrowed his eyes into a line, and there was a hint of malice in that smirk of his.

Since they had turned his life upside down and sow discord between Hannah and him, he

would never let them off the hook. He called off the operation merely because he had

better ideas to torture them for the things they did.

Hannah took a seat on the chair and started panting heavily after tidying up the place. Her

late mother's photo was on top of the table in the living room.

—Mom...||

Staring at her late mother's photo, she announced, —I'm home, Mom... I should have long

made my way back to keep you company! If only I had been more decisive and severed ties

with him, I wouldn't end up this miserable.||

As she thought about the turn of events, she couldn't help letting out a sigh. After they were

married, she was the only one in Fabian's mind. They shared a mutual affection for one

another, yet things spiraled out of control when the best was about to come.

—Mom, have I made the right decision? Will Fabian be heartbroken like me? Is he going to

fall into a cycle of despair again?||

Overwhelmed by the tidal waves of emotions, Hannah felt as though there was a weight on her chest suffocating her.

—Since he made it through the last challenge, he’s going to be fine, right? After all, I was the one who helped him to move on from his past relationship. I’m sure he’s going to encounter another woman in his life who will help him to move on from our relationship.||

Halfway through her speech, Hannah chuckled and asked, —Mom, that woman would be so lucky to have Fabian to herself! I wonder if Lyna is going to show up and ruin their relationship again.||

As she thought about it, she burst into laughter.

—Hahaha! Lyna, I can’t believe you’re the mastermind behind our misfortunes all this time!

Initially, I had my doubts about Winson’s words and thought he was just picking on you because of his own grudges! It must have been tough for you to put on the facade for so long, huh?||

Hannah had always considered Lyna as her sister. But to her surprise, Lyna had merely been acting in front of Hannah in order to scheme against her.

She found Lyna’s semblance and her foolishness laughable. Because of her own naiveness, she gave others the chance to set her up. If she had figured out Lyna’s actual goals earlier, she wouldn’t have miscarried and then left Fabian.

Chuckling, Hannah remarked sarcastically, —Is this all part of my destiny?||

I guess Lyna was just one of the many obstacles God had imposed on our relationship to break us apart! It would have turned out the same way even without Lyna’s interference!

As she consoled herself, she started feeling better.

—Miss, the ones who were sent to keep an eye on Ms. Blackwood have been dismissed. What should we do next?|| a man in black reported the situation to Lyna.

—Huh?||

The confused Lyna had a hard time comprehending the rationale behind Fabian's

action. Why did he send them away? Does that mean he is going to take Yvette out soon?

Wait! If that's the case, shouldn't he send more men over instead of dismissing them? What

if Yvette runs away?

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1413

Is Fabian giving up? But how is that even possible? I'm sure he holds a grudge against us

after the things we have done! He will never forgive us!

Lyna was in a state of bewilderment because of Fabian's seemingly absurd decision. She

then instructed the man in black in a serious tone, —Continue keeping an eye on them and

report every single detail to me!||

—Yes!||

After the man left, Lyna shook her head as she contemplated the situation.

She knew she couldn't afford to let her guard down because it might be another trap to lure

her out

Hannah spent the next few days in the house left by her mother. When she was bored, she

would talk to her late mother's photo since she had no cell phone and television.

Occasionally, she would head out for a stroll in the courtyard. Staring at the fields of green

enabled her to gain a sense of serenity, especially when it was a day with great weather.

After moving into her late mother's room, she felt an inexplicable sense of familiarity with

the items in it. It was as though every one of them was embedded with her late mother's

soul, enabling her to feel her late mother's presence in the room.

Over the past few days, Hannah had gathered her thoughts and gotten used to the simple

lifestyle, which reminded her of how people lived during ancient times.

Nonetheless, she had yet to move on from her relationship with Fabian. She knew it would take a long time to get over the fond memories she had of him. Everything will fall into place sooner or later. While Hannah had started to let go of the past, things were tough on Fabian's end as he had not stopped searching for her. During the first two days after Hannah's disappearance, Fabian went into stealth mode. He disregarded everything, including company matters, and refused to answer his mother's calls. As he refused to waste his time sleeping, he would take a short nap in the car whenever he couldn't take it anymore. More often than not, he would be roused from his sleep by nightmares. Eventually, he fell into despair and started drinking to numb himself from the pain he felt in the hope of getting momentary salvation and relief. He blamed himself for Hannah's miscarriage and disappearance. If I had taken Lyna and Yvette into custody sooner, Hannah wouldn't have ended up like this. On top of that, he knew that Hannah had fallen victim to Lyna and Yvette because of him. Right then, he was in a pub with a dozen of shots on the bar. After gulping everything down, he could barely walk properly. He then started ridiculing himself, —You're such a wimp, Fabian! No! You're worse than a wimp because you can't even keep your woman safe! What makes you think you're able to lead the rest of the staff?|| —You're a wimp, a jerk...|| He swiped everything off the bar and yelled hysterically to vent his suppressed emotions. Suddenly, a man showed up at the entrance and announced in a courteous manner, —Mr. Norton, Yvette is here for an audience with you.|| When he heard the man, he turned around and enunciated his reply, —Send her my way

immediately!!

Once he dismissed the man, he started drinking again.

It was a day with great weather, which was a stark contrast to Fabian's mood. Yvette showed

up at the entrance of the bar in a white tulle dress that complimented her busty figure.

Yvette was the perfect example of a self-centered and imbecile fool who thought she was

the center of everyone's attention.

Just because Fabian had not taken any action against them, she thought he had given up on

Hannah and that it was her chance to return to him.

Whenever she recalled the days she spent in fear, Yvette would get upset. Her career was

brought to an abrupt halt when she was merely a step from being the best in showbiz. Thus,

she had no intention to give up just yet.

Perhaps because Yvette's social circle had relatively less drama or

because she was overly

naïve, she actually thought that Fabian had given up on getting his revenge.

Little did she know that he only temporarily let them off the hook

because he was occupied

with finding Hannah.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1414

Some women tended to let their imagination run wild, and Yvette happened to be one of

them. She actually assumed that Fabian had forgiven them.

The man instructed in a cold manner, —Follow me!!

It was evident that he was irked by her presence. After all, she was the reason his boss had

fallen into a vicious cycle of despair.

Yvette glared at the person and warned him, —Where are your manners?

As soon as I'm a

member of the Norton family, I'll fire you!!

After searching the entire city, Hannah was nowhere to be found, and

Fabian resorted to

drowning his sorrows with alcohol.

—Hannah, why did you make such a rash decision?!

As he called her name over and over again, he burst out laughing.

He would rather have Hannah by his side to keep him company and love him

wholeheartedly than have a child.

When Yvette showed up, she saw a drunkard who could barely pull himself together.

Giggling, she approached him and wrapped her arms around him. —Fabian, why are you

drinking so much? Don't you know that it's not good for your health?||

At first, Fabian thought Hannah had come back to him.

When he raised his head and noticed that it was Yvette, he yelled, —It's none of your

business! Where's Hannah? Where's the woman I love the most?||

What the heck? Stop getting in our way when you're not even around anymore,

Hannah! Yvette gritted her teeth, replying with a superficial smile, —I think Hannah left for

some reason. What do you see in her anyway?||

Fabian raised his volume as he spoke, —What does this have to do with you? Stop getting full

of yourself and poking your nose into my business!||

He was utterly disgusted by the woman in front of him.

Suppressing the urge to take things out on her, he wanted her to get out of his sight as

soon as possible.

However, Yvette stomped her feet and pursed her lips

coquettishly. —Fabian, why are you

ignoring me when I'm on par with Hannah in every aspect?||

—Stop comparing yourself with Hannah and get the hell out of my sight at once!||

Having said that, Fabian gave Yvette a shove. With that, she fell to the ground, tears

streaming down her face from the pain.

—I'm the woman you love the most and the perfect match for you! This will never change!||

Sneering, Fabian found her words hilarious because Hannah's background had never

concerned him. He deemed those who leveraged their marriage for their own benefit

wimps.

He staggered his way back to his chair and instructed after he took a seat, —Get out of my

sight at once! Stop pushing your luck and challenging my limits!||

Yvette gritted her teeth and took a deep breath to calm herself down.

Seconds after she regained her composure, she stated in a gentle

tone, —Fabian, Hannah

might have left you, but I'll always be here for you!||

—What brings you here today?||

Fabian was about to lose his cool because the woman who was the cause of his misery had

shown up before him.

—I heard that Hannah left, so I dropped by to see if you're okay.||

Fabian almost burst out laughing when she made it sound as though she was there because

she sincerely cared about him.

In actual fact, she was merely there to laugh at his misfortune. After all, she was the reason

behind his current pathetic state.

When Yvette caught a glimpse of Fabian's wrathful look, she knew she had gone overboard.

However, she had no choice but to help him up and carry on with her act.

The moment she inched over to him, he pushed her away and pointed in the direction of

the entrance.

—You really need to get out of my sight. Otherwise, get yourself prepared to face my wrath.||

He only decided against getting rid of the vicious duo because he had a better plan to deal

with them. Since one of them had her eyes on the Blackwood family's inheritance, he was

determined to stop her from getting it. Similarly, he would support the self-centered one

and allow her to rise to fame once again. Then, when she thought she was about to reach

the prime in her life, he would drag her down until she became a nobody.

Naturally, those were nothing more than a tentative plan because the drunkard fell asleep

on the bar again.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1415

It had been many days. Even so, he could not find Hannah, and the yearning in him grew to the point he could not sleep. When he shut his eyes, the image of Hannah would appear in the darkness and break his heart.

—Hannah, where did you go? I can't find you. How am I supposed to live the rest of my life without you?|| he mumbled as he lay on his arm.

—Are you going to fall into a slump without Hannah? What happened to the past you? Did he die?||

Right as Fabian was drowning himself in his own melancholy, a sharp voice exploded right by his ears.

Reluctantly raising his head, Fabian shot a glare at the owner of the voice. Who's so stupid to interrupt me at this time?

—How can you be like this, Fabian? If Hannah finds out about this, she'll never come back,|| the person drawled.

It was Jason. He was standing a distance away, staring at the drunk Hannah. His hands were clenched as if he was ready to punch Fabian anytime.

—Ha. She won't come back. She'll never come back.||

A self-deprecating laugh escaped Fabian before he returned to his sprawl.

Anger surged in Jason's heart when he saw Fabian's state. What happened to the ruthless, witty Fabian? Is he going to stay like this forever?

Striding toward him, Jason then held Fabian's head up and gazed at him solemnly. —Fabian, think. Where can Hannah go?||

Fabian shook his head and shoved the other man aside. How can I possibly know where Hannah has gone to? If I do, why would I still be here, drinking?

—Think about it. I've mulled over it. When Hannah left, she didn't take any of her mother's money, and none of the cards in your house are missing. Thus, Hannah only has several

thousand in cash,|| Jason pointed out.

—I know, but what's the point of you telling me these? Hannah's gone. She's gone. Do you understand that?||

Fabian was devastated. Jason had come looking for him two days ago, trying to cheer him up.

When he thought that Jason was still trying to cheer him up, Fabian could not help but roar in response. I can't even protect the woman I love, so what's the point of having power or money?

—Fabian, sober up!||

Jason was worried when he realized Fabian remained in the same state as he was days ago.

—I'm sober. You can take over our company. From now on, the Phoenix Group is yours,||

Fabian muttered.

Nothing mattered to him anymore; his career and company meant nothing to him now.

—Will you let me finish what I'm trying to say? Can you compose yourself?|| Jason yelled as he lifted Fabian and shook him.

—You're not a man if you continue to act this way! Hannah's missing, but do you think you can find her if you keep this up? Will you be able to take revenge for her? Don't you know

why she left? She left because she wants a better life for you! She wants the Norton family

to thrive. With how you are now, what's the point of Hannah leaving?||

Upon hearing Jason, Fabian widened his eyes and cried out, —Revenge. Yes, revenge.||

Noticing his change, Jason sighed in relief. When he realized Fabian was coming to his

senses, he continued, —Fabian, I think I know where Hannah is.||

—Where is she?|| Fabian hastily asked, looking more alert than previously.

—Think about it, Fabian. Hannah only has so much money with her. She can't do anything,

but she'll have to live somewhere, right? Where will she go?|| Jason questioned.

The moment Fabian thought about how Hannah was all alone without any money with her, an invisible hand crushed his heart. Even if you've left, you're still so stubborn; you won't spend my money.

Staring at Fabian, who was deep in his thoughts, Jason continued, —Do you remember the trip we had?||

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1416

Realization struck Fabian like a bolt from the blue, and he exclaimed, —Do you mean the

family home that Hannah's mother left for Hannah?||

Jason nodded. —That's right. That's where she'll be.||

Instantly, Fabian shouted to the outside. —Prep the car!||

Before the last word was out of his mouth, Fabian had darted out like a freed horse.

That family home had somehow escaped his mind. Like what Jason had said, Fabian was sure that Hannah must be there. That place was the likeliest place he would see Hannah again.

Like a candle in the dark, hope lit up in Fabian's chest.

—Wait for me, Hannah,|| Fabian gritted out.

Meanwhile, Hannah had no idea Fabian was already heading in her direction. In her family

home, she was still reading a book by the table. Just then, her arm knocked over the teacup on the table and shattered it.

Shaking her head, Hannah then slowly put down her book to start cleaning up the mess.

Hm?

While she was cleaning up the fragments, she spotted a piece of paper under the wooden

table. It looked like a book, yet it looked like a piece of newspaper.

Curiosity overwhelming her, Hannah reached out for it.

—Right here,|| Hannah mumbled to herself as she took out a yellowing book from under the table. The book looked almost ancient.

Hannah was perplexed. What is this? Why is it under the table? Clearly, someone is trying to hide it, but who's the one who tried to hide it? Numerous questions filled Hannah's mind, who then picked up the book and rushed toward the chair to start reading it. She did not even bother with the fragments of the teacup on the floor.

My daughter is born today. She's well and healthy. Looking at the way Leo was smiling while holding onto our daughter, I thought of a good name—Hannah. Hannah's heart skipped a beat as she read the words. This... This is Mom's diary?

The date on the page was her birthday, and the name, Leo, was definitely referring to Leo Blackwood.

Gulping, Hannah then continued reading.

Hannah has a slight fever today. I stayed by her side until she fell asleep. I hope she'll get well soon.

Today, my dear Hannah...

The stories in the pages were all ordinary incidents, but Hannah's mother had recorded them all down.

For a moment, the book in Hannah's hands felt heavy. She knew this was her mother's love for her.

—I had never thought that Mom was as nice as this.||

Right then, an image of a gentle woman emerged in Hannah's mind. There, she had long hair reaching down to her waist, and she was standing in the wind, strong and fearless.

Mom must have been a beautiful woman, Hannah thought. The ones with good hearts won't look ugly.

Hannah flipped through the pages. I went to the hospital today. The doctor told me that I'm

pregnant with a boy. Finally, I can bear a boy for Leo's family.

Hannah continued. Leo is drunk today. After he came home, I could smell a woman's

perfume on him. When I was taking off his clothes for him, I saw a lipstick mark on his shoulder. I know he must have found other women outside. He has been leaving the house early and coming home late recently.

Another page. Leo hasn't come back today again. It's been three days. He only called to say that he's working. I'm sure he's with that woman.

At this point, anger coiled in Hannah's stomach. Although Leo was her biological father, she had never seen him as her father. Hannah Young never had a father as ruthless as that man.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1417

—Leo, aren't you one impressive man? How can you have an affair when Mom's pregnant?

What kind of man are you? What kind of father are you?||

Hannah was boiling with rage. This was unfair to her mother. If she were her mother, she

would have left the family with the kid. No. Before I leave, I'll definitely teach him a lesson.

My child is adorable. He has brows like mine and a face shape like Leo's. He'll be a smart

boy when he grows up. Leo was thrilled, and he gave the boy a name—Winson.

Reading it, Hannah nodded. That entry was when Winson was born.

When Hannah continued reading, wrath exploded in her again. She gritted out, —Aren't you

one fine specimen, Leo? I'm so glad I didn't admit that you're my father. You're ruthless! My

mother has been with you through thick and thin. How can you do this to her?||

On the yellowing paper was, I'm not at home today. I brought Hannah out. Leo brought a

woman back. It's better if I don't see her. After this, I'll talk to Leo. I hope things will go back

to what it was before. I want to give Hannah and Winson a happy family.

How could Hannah not be furious after reading that? Realizing that her anger was getting

out of control, she tried her best to calm herself down.

It took Hannah a long time before she recomposed herself and continued reading the diary.

I had a chat with Leo, and I know what he wants. He doesn't want that woman to leave. For my kids, I can't leave too. I hope Leo will come back to his senses soon. How can that woman force me to sign the divorce agreement in front of Leo? My kids are still young. I can't possibly let them lose their father now. I ended up holding myself back.

However, to my disappointment, Leo said nothing about it. It seems like there's no love between us anymore.

When Hannah turned to the next page, she realized that the paper seemed different. It was crumpled, and it seemed like it had once been damped. There were little words on it, but tear stains covered almost the entire page.

Hannah had to lean closer to the paper to see the words on them. Hannah's gone. I lost my Hannah, and it's all thanks to that woman. I can't believe she lost my kid! I'm going to look for her... I can't let Hannah become an orphan. There's a tag on Hannah, which has her name and my phone number. I hope some kind-hearted soul will send her back!

By now, Hannah was gritting her teeth in fury. She could see how upset and guilty her mother felt back then just by looking at the tear stains and crumpled state of the paper.

Although her mother did not write much about it in her diary, Hannah knew well what the despair of losing a child felt like. Mom must have cried a lot that day. That woman is trying to hurt my Winson now. No way am I letting her get her way.

I can't believe Leo believed in that woman's words. He's forcing me to eat some kind of medicine. That's one thing, but why won't Leo let me take care of my own kid?

Recently, I've been wondering if there's something wrong with the medicine that woman

gave me. My chest tightens, and I can't sleep at night. Is she trying to do something to me?

Winson, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do it. I didn't mean to hurt you. Hannah frowned when she read that, but she then realized Winson must have hurt himself while doing something.

The next few entries were her mother's recordings of Winson's life. Whether she was taking care of Winson or her, her mother was meticulous and caring. Unable to help herself, Hannah thought, If only Mom's still alive.

Wait. This is written a week before Mom passed away. She doesn't seem depressed, but they told me Mom committed suicide from depression.

Now, Hannah was starting to doubt if her mother's death had not been as simple as what she had heard.

At the start, Hannah thought her mother developed depression because of Felicia and Leo.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1418

However, after reading her diary, she realized Felicia might have been the one to kill her mother. Even her mother's diary mentioned Felicia forcing her to take some medication. Could it be that...

Hannah inhaled sharply. The more she thought about it, the angrier she became.

Felicia and her drugs must have played a role in my mother's death. Yes. It's likely that happened, Hannah thought after putting the diary on the table.

A moment later, she mumbled to herself, —That must be it. No. I have to find out what happened. I can't let Mom die just like that. If Felicia has done something to her, I have to make sure she'll be punished for it.||

With her mind made up, Hannah then stood up and walked into her bedroom. After packing her suitcase, Hannah nodded to herself. She was ready to go to Baykeep to find out the truth behind her mother's death.

Hannah was a decisive individual. After packing her suitcase, she went to look at her mother's photo, planning to talk to her before leaving for Baykeep. Right as the last few words to her mother left her lips, she heard someone urgently knocking on the door. Confounded, Hannah wondered, I don't know any of my neighbors. Who's the one at the door? Shaking her head, Hannah then thought, Maybe someone wants to borrow something. With that thought in mind, she walked toward the door. As the house she was in was an old one, the door was a wooden door with no peephole. Right as Hannah opened the door, a man bolted into the house and hugged her tightly. At the same time, he shouted, —Hannah, it's you! I thought I wouldn't see you again.|| It was Fabian, who had come for Hannah. Hannah's mouth was hanging slack. For a moment, she thought she was hallucinating. Fabian? Fabian's here for me? He's really here. His embrace was still as warm as ever, and she had the urge to bury herself in his arms. Fabian loved Hannah, and Hannah loved him too. It took her a lot of courage to leave him back then, yet Fabian had found her again. Is this a message from God? But can I go back to Fabian? Can I really? The answer was no. Fabian was the only son of the Norton family, and Hannah could no longer bear children. She would only ruin him if she went back. With the kind of person Fabian was, he definitely would not abandon her. However, Hannah did not want to cling to Fabian selfishly. Fabian had to have an heir. At that, Hannah pushed him aside and coldly said, —Mr. Norton, please mind your actions. We have nothing to do with each other.|| —Hannah, we...|| Fabian muttered in disbelief as he gripped onto her arms.

Nevertheless, Hannah did not give him a chance to finish his sentence. She interrupted, —Mr.

Norton, please call me Ms. Young from now on. I'm afraid others would misunderstand if

you were to call me Hannah.||

—Do you hear what you're saying?||

It was something Fabian never thought would have happened after finding her.

Right then, Jason, who had come with Fabian, caught up. He chuckled before saying,

—Fabian, you have to give Hannah some time. After all, it was such a major incident. Now

that you know where she is, why do you have to be so anxious?||

Fabian nodded after hearing Jason's words. He then let go of Hannah before staring at her

in silence.

—Mr. Norton, if you have nothing else, then please leave. I'm about to leave too,|| Hannah

muttered, suppressing the way her heart was sinking.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1419

—Sorry to bother you,|| Fabian replied after a pause before he left with the others.

By the time Hannah came out, Fabian had already hailed a ride for her, as he understood

that she might be unwilling to travel in his car at this present time.

—To the Baykeep city center, please.||

Hannah ignored Fabian outright. She hopped into the cab herself and straightaway issued

directions for the driver.

Needless to say, Fabian followed close behind.

She could no longer contain herself and started to sob quietly in the backseat.

Why? Why must you let Fabian show up when I've made up my mind to leave? If you want

us to be together, why have you made me barren? Are you playing tricks on me?

Hannah was bemoaning inside. She was afraid that she would not be able to let go; afraid

that she would falter and return to Fabian's side.

However, she knew if she went back to Fabian unwell, it would surely leave him with a lifetime of regrets. That was why she chose to pretend that she did not know him, so that it might make him feel better.

An indeterminate amount of time passed before the cab Hannah was in steadily slowed to a halt. She then got off without delay. This time, she was returning to find out if Felicia had poisoned her mother. As she did not have an extensive network of contacts, she needed to come back to the company to seek some help. Of course, she would require accommodations for both Natasha and herself as well, which they would also be able to provide.

She wanted to find out the truth for herself so she might be able to see Felicia face the music. She would then return alone to the family home her mother left her where she would live out the rest of her life. That was the reason why she did not bring the wedding gown along with the rest of her own clothes. It would be easier for her to move around without the baggage.

Hannah had only just stepped into the office building when she bumped into her own senior editor, Bob. The man was clearly surprised to see her. —Is that really you, Hannah? Are you coming back? I thought you've walked out on us for good.|| As her superior, Bob naturally knew about Hannah's departure, but was not sure what led her to do so and what happened in the aftermath. He was nonetheless happy to see her as with the absence of his president reaper, his team would soon be propping up the company's food chain.

—I'm back, Mr. Dijon.||

Hannah was a little embarrassed as she had indeed been a little irresponsible, disappearing

without informing her superior. She was primarily concerned that Fabian might try to get to her through her boss, but fortunately, the man did not take things to heart.

—Good to have you back. Come on, let's head up.||

Bob enthusiastically explained that Fabian called to ask about her but made no mention of anything else. He thought Hannah had been taken away by Fabian and would not be returning.

As Hannah was now the wife of a president, there was not much he could have said about it.

He thought about calling to persuade her to stay on, but Hannah had gotten rid of her own phone a long time ago. As such, he likely would not be able to reach her anyway.

—We thought for a moment that you've quit, Ms. Young.||

—Mr. Dijon had me stand in for you these past few days, but there's too many things that I can't manage well. I'm just glad to have you back.||

Hannah merely nodded when her team members came up to Hannah to greet her with

broad smiles. She received some updates from Bob before she returned to her own office.

The first thing she did when she closed the door was flip open her notebook to find

Natasha's number. According to Bob, Natasha had left the company shortly after she did.

Hannah gave Natasha a call as soon as she had her contact, as the latter's departure had a lot to do with her.

The phone rang for quite some time before someone picked up. On the other end was

Natasha's accented Chanaeese. —Hello, who's this?||

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1420

Hannah was relieved that Natasha had not changed her cellphone number. —Hey Natasha, it's me.||

The excitement of the woman on the other end was apparent. —Hannah? Is that really you?

Where have you been? I was so worried about you. Did you know that Mr. Norton was

almost going crazy? Does he know that you've returned?||

Natasha was guilt-ridden about losing track of Hannah. More than a mere dereliction of

duty, the sense of loss was also personal. So how could she not be emotional at hearing

Hannah's voice?

Hannah could not help but sigh. She could totally imagine how devastated Fabian must

have been when she went missing.

—No worries, it's nothing. I just went away for awhile. How about yourself? Where are you

now? I heard that you've left the very next day after I was gone. Are you still in the country?||

Hannah tried very hard to mask her sense of contrite toward Fabian.

—Oh, you don't have to worry about me, Hannah. I quit and joined another company

because I thought you've left. But I'm still here though.||

Natasha intuitively knew how she ought to respond.

—I see.|| Hannah was a little disappointed, as she might have to put up at a hotel herself if

Natasha had returned the keys.

—Where are you staying now, Natasha? Don't tell me that you are holed up at a hotel? Which

company are you currently working at? If it isn't too far away, you could stay with me.||

—Wow, good guessing. To be honest, I was a little down when you left after everything that

happened cause you're my only friend in the country, so I decided on a change of scenery. It

doesn't matter cause I'm really here just to learn Chanaease anyway, but the place where I'm

working at now is a little small. Now that you're back, I think I'd like to come back too,

considering that I'm better suited for the work here,|| Natasha explained.

Her responsibility was to protect Hannah. Now that Hannah had returned, Natasha had

chosen her words carefully so that she could continue to stay by her side.

Hannah was completely in the dark about Natasha's true identity and treated her like a younger sister. She was naturally delighted to hear that Natasha was willing to come back.

—That's great. I'd love for you to rejoin us and will go inform Mr. Dijon in a bit.||

—Thank you so much, Hannah. I'll get myself sorted out over here and be right over.||

—It's no trouble. You're welcome.||

Hannah smiled when she replied, but meant every word she said. It could only be a good thing for the company to have a foreign intern from an elite school. Natasha and Hannah continued to chat for a while more before they ended the call. The former went on to call Fabian as she was not certain if he was in the know about this latest development.

—Hello? Mrs. Norton just called me, Mr. Norton. She's back with the company.||

Natasha wasted no time at all when the call got through.

—Yes, I'm aware of that. And how did you respond?||

Fabian reckoned that Hannah would definitely ring up Natasha when she returned. He

would feel much better to have Natasha working alongside Hannah.

Hannah was practically ignoring him now and would surely not return to the Norton

Residence at night. He therefore concluded that she must have had the company make

arrangements for a place to stay as well.

—I've asked to go back to work and Mrs. Norton had agreed. I'd be staying together with her as well.||

Fabian nodded assertively. —Halcyon Hotel, Room 505. Head on in when you arrive.||

Natasha understood him right away, as it was the same as last time. That was where she

should pick up her luggage from.

After she hung up, she made straight for the company—where Hannah was at, as ensuring

Hannah's safety was paramount.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1421

Meanwhile, news of Hannah's return to the company had begun to spread. Xavier appeared distant as he held the phone inside the Jackson Group president's office. —Alright, understood.||

As a president who had spies abound, he was privy to the situation surrounding the woman that he very much fancied. He saw this as a chance for him to make Hannah his wife, as it seemed impossible now for her and Fabian to reconcile. Reservations on the part of Heather had profoundly affected Hannah. Owing to Hannah's compassion, she would doubtlessly distance herself from Fabian, which would open up the opportunity for Xavier himself to woo Hannah. He did not mind that Hannah could not conceive, as he was mad about her and did not see her as a child bearing tool. Worse come to worst, they could always adopt. He believed that love was the key to marital bliss.

Besides, Xavier's situation was unlike Fabian's. The former still had a younger brother, so he did not have to worry as much about succession. Even if his own brother was not keen on taking over the reins, his nephew would have come of age and should be able to hold his own when the time came for Xavier to retire.

With his mind set on seeing Hannah, Xavier called up Bob to arrange to have her conduct an exclusive interview with himself.

—What? Say that again!||

Not everyone was happy to learn that Hannah was back. Fabian and Xavier, the ones who loved her, were obviously ecstatic, but not so much those who plotted against her.

—Hannah Young's back, and I've already called her company to ascertain this. Why would I kid around with stuff like that?||

The person sounded forthright enough over the phone.

—Alright, got it.||

Lyna exhaled as she hung up.

The clouded expression on her face had Yvette concerned. —What's wrong? Did something happen?||

Yvette stuck around with Lyna because she hoped to be able to receive Lyna's help. She understood that the way back to Fabian was something she would not be able to manage on her own.

—What's wrong? Hannah's back at work and... Fabian's hired someone to stay close to her

for her protection. We won't have any more chances to strike.||

Lyna had an ominous look on her face. Hannah's resurfacing was vexing for her.

—What? Hannah's back?||

Yvette staggered and nearly fell over, dazed by what she heard. How was she ever to get

back with Fabian if that were true? Was this some kind of sick joke?

However, she was not about to throw in the towel. —Why would she do that? Why would

Fabian still want her if she's incapable of conceiving? Moreover, would Heather agree to their marriage?||

—How am I to know all that? Wouldn't I want to know exactly what was she doing back here

in the first place? Is she that shameless, returning to Fabian's side knowing well that she's

incapable of giving him children? This is insane!||

Lyna was flustered at Hannah's return as it derailed all of her plans and left her without any contingencies lined up.

Yvette gnashed her teeth. —Why don't we hire someone to ...||

She then drew a finger across her own throat.

When Lyna saw that, she cursed silently and wondered if her counterpart was a damn

idiot. Sending an assassin after Hannah right now? Are you suicidal? Isn't it obvious enough

that Fabian would be extremely guarded against us at this very moment since he just got

Hannah back?

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1422

Fabian had sent someone to protect Hannah. Do you think you could find someone more skilled than the one he has hired?

—I won't try to stop you if you have a death wish.||

Lyna did not mince her words. If she had no further use for Yvette, she would not have bothered with her at all.

—Then, what should we do?||

The ticking off had its desired effect, as Yvette had realized how unrealistic this was.

—What shall we do? We wait for Fabian to make his move.||

Lyna exhaled as she was increasingly less assured of herself.

She had been at the losing end every time she crossed swords with Fabian thus far. There

was no way that man would let her off this time after she had caused Hannah to miscarry, so

she was even more anxious than Yvette was.

—What if Fabian doesn't?||

Yvette had a strong feeling that after this round, she might have lost Fabian for good.

—Impossible. I would bet everything that he would. He didn't before because he was grieving

after losing Hannah. Now that she's back, we can expect him to take action. Any father who

lost his child would tread on the path of vengeance. How could any less be expected of

Fabian Norton?||

Lyna was confident of her own analysis. She was in no doubt that Fabian would move

against them, so their anticipation of his timing would be crucial.

—Okay. I'll go tighten the security around us.||

Yvette appeared thoughtful as she nodded. She went along as she saw the logic behind

Lyna's words.

She was genuinely terrified of death. As much as she desired to marry into the Norton

family and gain unprecedented power and prestige, there would be no point to it if she

could not live to enjoy them.

Lyna almost suffered a stroke just listening to Yvette, and was barely able to resist giving two tight slaps to this dumb teammate of hers. She spoke while she suppressed the anger burning inside, —I think you'd be better off getting more people to document the evidence of his crimes. We'll need just a couple of skilled men for our own protection.||

Yvette acknowledged her before she headed out of the house. —Hmph. You can die for all I care but don't drag me into the grave with you. Do you really think a couple of men would be enough? Are you shitting me? Do you think Fabian's playing house with us?||

Yvette's dissatisfaction with Lyna was festering inside. Do you think I enjoy putting up with you? I would've exposed you long ago if I didn't need to depend on your schemes.

Hmph! When Fabian and I are married, the first thing I'd do is trip you over and have you spending the rest of your life behind bars. I won't be giving you any chances to ruin me because you already know too much.

By this time, Natasha had arrived. She made a beeline for Hannah's office and knocked upon the door.

—Please come in.||

Hannah was going through some files at her desk. Even though her team did much to help cover for her in her absence, the workload she had to handle upon her return was still considerable. She saw it as her responsibility to ensure that these were properly seen to.

—Hey, Hannah.||

Natasha hailed loudly at the woman who was busy editing the documents on hand.

Hannah's head jolted up. —Natasha!||

She was subsequently on her feet and headed for Natasha with arms extended.

—Are you okay?|| Natasha asked as she held Hannah's hands.

—Of course I am. Can't you see that I'm looking much better?||
Hannah was touched by Natasha's concern and twirled around just to prove her own point.

—Yeah, that's good to know. I was so worried when you disappeared on me.||

—Hehe. Alright, aren't I back already?||

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1423

Hannah laughed as she led Natasha toward her own desk. There was a significantly smaller

one next to it which looked a little miserable inside the office.

—This is the workspace that I've prepared for you. From now on, let's work in here together,||

Hannah said with a smile.

—You're so nice to me.||

Natasha was moved. The notion of leaving her life of assassinating others behind to learn

from Hannah and become a real assistant to her did cross her mind.

—Alright, enough of this. I've already spoken to Mr. Dijon on your behalf.

He's happy to hear

that you would be rejoining us and has also approved our leave. Come on, let's go pack

your things.||

Hannah dangled the bunch of keys that the company had given to her in front of Natasha

before she took her by the hand and led her outside.

With the arrangements Fabian made beforehand, they got Natasha's things sorted out with

relative ease. As neither of them had been to the living space the company had assigned,

they actually spent way more time trying to locate it.

They finally made it to the unit after no small amount of effort. It was not particularly

spacious, with just one room and living room, but adequate for Hannah and Natasha's

purposes.

It was only after they had their luggage put away in the closet that they were able to take a

breather.

Though not comparable to the villa Fabian owned, Hannah was quite satisfied with her

accommodations at present.

As for Natasha whose priority was to protect Hannah, she did not mind where she lived so

long as she could remain close to Hannah.

—It's a little cramped here. Would you mind if we share the same bed at night?|| Hannah

asked.

Natasha smiled and shook her head. —What are you saying, Hannah?

You've been taking

care of me for so long, so why would I mind?||

That was her honest sentiment. Unaware of Natasha's true identity,

Hannah had already

went well beyond her own obligations for one she knew only as an intern.

Hannah chuckled before she regarded the young woman. —That's good to hear.||

Natasha smiled broadly. Hannah was to her, the kindest soul she had ever met. Her charms

had profoundly affected this assassin's heart. Natasha held back more than once against the

smiling Hannah before she finally decided to ask, —I'm not sure if I should be probing,

Hannah, but there's something that I don't understand.||

Hannah regarded the tentative girl and guessed she might want to know the reason for her

own sudden departure.

She thought for awhile and decided that she should just be upfront about it. The truth had

been pent up inside her for some time and she had wanted someone to confide in. It then

became a question of who she might be able to speak to.

Helen? That girl was too impulsive and tempestuous. It would be hard to predict what she

might end up doing if she was told everything.

What about her colleagues? They might be good for other less weighty issues but she could

not possibly trust them with this.

But it was different with Natasha. She was an intern from Remdik, and through their

interactions, Hannah found the girl to be trustworthy. For some inexplicable reason, she felt an almost familial type of bond with her.

—Do you wish to ask why I've been absent for some time these last few days?|| Hannah asked calmly.

—Yes.||

Natasha nodded without hesitation. She could not understand why Hannah chose to leave without a word when she and Fabian both loved each other so much.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1424

She held Natasha's hands and they slowly sat down by the edge of the bed. —Alright then.

Today, I shall tell you my story.||

She planned to recount everything that happened, beginning with her meeting with Fabian.

—I was keeping tabs on Fabian, or should I say Mr. Norton, hoping to be able to secure an interview with him, but without luck...||

—Afterwards, we entered a legally binding marital agreement in secret. We didn't share any mutual feelings at that time.||

—It was only later on that I found myself slowly falling for him, despite understanding that Chanaea's a deeply class-conscious country, and our family backgrounds were worlds apart.

It seemed neither possible for me to marry into the Norton family, nor for Mr. Norton to take a mere reporter as his wife.||

—What surprised me was that somewhere along the way, little by little, Mr. Norton started to care more about me. Though he had never expressed it explicitly, I felt it intimately.

However, when I considered my own social standing, I had to distance myself...||

—Later on, I discovered that Mr. Norton really was in love with me. I was relieved, albeit a little worried, whether the love we had which transgresses Chanaea's traditions would be

able to stand the test of time. I had no answer for that. I was in a dark place, and afraid. I thought about avoiding him, as I dared not face him.||

—It was until I'd met with Mr. Norton's mother that I realized how much effort he had put into trying to convince her to accept me. At that point, I told myself that I couldn't give up on this relationship so easily. If even he could persuade his own mother, what reason have I got to concern myself with what anyone else thinks? So I'd decided there and then that I would confront any obstacle and always give the best of myself to him.||

—But Fate is cruel. She doesn't want everyone to be happy, or perhaps it was that I had been enjoying a run of good fortune that time that she decided that she needed to put our relationship to the test. We made it through, but there were three people who harbored ill intentions toward me, one of whom had hidden herself too well...||

Hannah paused at this point. She really did regard Lyna like her own sister, and never did she expect that it was all mere pretenses. Hannah was furious when she finally discovered it, but she could only laugh at her own naivety. But all that did not bother her anymore.

—Even that couldn't stop us. I thought our love was bulletproof, except it wasn't. Nobody else could destroy it, except me. I couldn't get myself over the hump.||

Hannah's expression was tinged with shame and sadness, but she had no tears as they had already run dry. Perhaps she had come to accept that this was what Fate had decided?

—Out of my own carelessness, I miscarried in that accident that happened not so far back. I killed my own child as a mother oblivious to her own pregnancy. In the aftermath, my body wasn't the same. It's likely that I would never be able to conceive again.||

Natasha held her breath when she heard that. What? Miscarriage? And inability to conceive for life?

Natasha may be a cold-blooded assassin, but she was also a woman. There was no way she could not be shocked by this, as maternal love was a woman's instinct. As she regarded Natasha's stunned expression, Hannah could not help but shake her own head. She was already past her own grief and regret because she knew there was nothing she could do to undo what had transpired.

—You know what happens when a family is childless, especially when you consider a man in Mr. Norton's position. How could he be left without an heir to succeed his vast family empire?||

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1425

—They need a successor. As a single son, the responsibility to continue the family bloodline falls upon him. I can't be so selfish as to get in his way. Wouldn't you agree?||

The last statement was meekly directed at Natasha as a question.

Hannah believed she did the right thing. She could have returned to Fabian, but what was she to do if she was not able to bear him children in future?

Natasha had the urge to rebut Hannah. As an observer, she strongly felt that none of this was of Hannah's making, so for things to end this way for her was totally unfair.

On second thoughts, Hannah's goodhearted nature dictated that she would rather suffer the greatest agony for herself than allow Fabian to have any regrets.

Natasha was certain she would not likely be able to persuade her, so after giving it some thought, she asked,

—Since you've your mind made up, Hannah, why have you come back?||

It was not as though Natasha did not want Hannah to return. Even though she was just

someone who was working for Fabian, she was also a human capable of emotions.

As much as she hoped for Hannah and Fabian to be able to reunite, it was not something

she had any say in. All she could do was find out the impetus for Hannah's return.

She knew that it must have taken a lot on Hannah's part to walk away, so there had to be a compelling reason why she turned back. This was something she could share with Fabian and indirectly aid Hannah in.

Knowing Hannah's character, she had to front this and keep Fabian's involvement a secret, as Hannah would likely refuse his help.

—Phew!||

Hannah exhaled, and her expression became solemn. —I came back because I have doubts about the cause behind my mother's death. I suspect that Felicia could have been responsible for my mother's death.||

—I want to investigate this. If it is as I thought, I want to see justice done, so that my mother would not have died without accountability.||

Natasha's eyes darkened and a cold glint emanated from her eyes. How could such a gentle person be made to endure so much? How unjust are the heavens! How blind are the gods!

Natasha had an impulse to go and confront the divines over this. There was nothing she wanted more than to hand over the people who had harmed Hannah and her mother to Fabian whom she believed would surely see to it that the culprits were duly punished for what they had done.

Hannah was stunned by the murderous aura in the air and could not believe that it could have come off this petite girl. The look in Natasha's eyes made her involuntarily shudder.

She cleared her throat before she continued. —Don't worry yourself with this, Natasha. I'll

handle this properly. Should I find out that my conjecture was true, I'll hand the murderer over to the police so that I may restore my mother's good name.||

Even if Hannah's face was not particularly expressive, Natasha could sense her helplessness.

What did Natasha do for a living? She was an assassin! So she was naturally sensitive about such things.

In spite of Hannah's seeming detachment, she was deeply uncertain inside as to whether going about the investigation could be as simple as she imagined it to be. Her heart already said no, as Felicia was not someone to be taken lightly.

Though the woman did not wield much power herself, being the wife of Leo Blackwood, the head of the Blackwood Group, sufficiently made her a formidable adversary.

It was obvious to Hannah that she had only herself to count on, and not much else to work with. With the state of her relationship with Fabian, she would not be looking to him for help.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1426

She was unsure if she could source the information alone. Even if she could, it would be quite difficult for her to bring Felicia to justice.

Felicia was Leo's wife. If anything were to happen, Leo would certainly not stand on ceremony. With his wealth and manpower, Felicia would escape the situation unscathed as long as he could whip up enough cash.

—Hannah, I understand everything. If you need any help, just tell me. I'm here for you,||

Natasha assured her after giving it some thought.

She decided to report what she heard to Fabian later.

Hannah nodded and replied with a smile, —Of course I will.||

But in actual fact, Hannah did not think Natasha could be of any help. After all, from her

point of view, the woman was a foreign student from Remdik who was not familiar with

Chanaea, so what kind of help could she possibly provide? However, it was nice to know

that Natasha was willing to offer her services.

—Alright, let's not talk about this. It's getting late. Let's go get something to eat,|| Hannah suggested after she managed to calm down.

—Okay, just give me a minute. I need to use the loo,|| Natasha said as she rose from her seat and headed to the toilet.

After she entered the toilet, she turned back to observe Hannah and realized that the woman had not left the room. She seemed to be packing something. Natasha closed the washroom door and turned on the faucet to prevent Hannah from overhearing her. After she had done all that, Natasha fished out her phone and called Fabian.

—Hello, Mr. Norton. I'm Natasha,|| Natasha declared her identity to Fabian.

—Huh? Why are you calling me at this time? Where's Hannah? Shouldn't you be with her?||

Fabian asked, equal parts surprised and worried.

If Hannah discovered Natasha's identity, it would only complicate things. He knew that, based on Hannah's character, the woman he loved would definitely order

Natasha to leave if she ever found out about her identity. If that happened, Natasha could no longer serve as Hannah's companion. In case of any imminent danger, no one would be able to protect Hannah.

Natasha was aware of Fabian's worries. She peered out the door before she proceeded to

explain to him quietly over the phone, —Mr. Norton, don't worry.

Hannah doesn't suspect

me. We are currently in the house which the company has assigned to her. We're going to

grab a bite later but before that Hannah has just revealed some information to me. I'm

calling from the washroom to report to you what I've just learned.||

—What is it?|| Fabian asked Natasha inquisitively.

He was quite familiar with the woman and trusted that she knew when to act and how. To

call him at a time like that, he supposed she must have something urgent to tell him.

—Mr. Norton, do you know how Hannah's birth mother died?||

There was a short pause, and then Natasha went on without waiting for Fabian to respond.

—Hannah found her mother's diary at her family home. It turns out that her mother did not suffer from severe depression, despite what others have claimed. So, Hannah suspects that someone must have drugged her mother. Hannah returned this time in order to get to the bottom of her mother's death.||

—Okay, I see. Thank you. Also, Natasha, if you have updates for me next time, don't call. Text me instead. Remember, you must not reveal your identity. If there's nothing else, I'm going to hang up the phone now.|| Fabian let out a long sigh after Natasha relayed the information to him.

—Yes, Mr. Norton.||

Natasha responded and hung up the phone too. She got up from the toilet seat. In order not to arouse suspicion from Hannah, she even flushed the toilet before stepping out of the washroom.

After the phone conversation ended, Fabian grimaced. His eyes turned cold, so much so that the air around him practically froze. He did not have to spare much thought to deduce that Hannah's suspect was none other than Felicia of the Blackwood family.

In the past, he spent very little effort to investigate the case, since Hannah considered it her family's private affair and, therefore, did not allow Fabian to intervene. Unexpectedly, that particular mystery turned out to be Fabian's —saving grace||. Otherwise, Hannah might not have returned.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1427

—Come to my office.||

Fabian pondered for a moment before picking up the phone on his desk and giving his order.

Soon, Fabian's trusted aide came as he was called. He stood before Fabian's desk in a respectful manner, awaiting instructions.

—I want you to make an announcement to the company. Tell them that I can let everything slide and pretend as though it had never happened, but they have to understand that I have tolerated as much as I could. If this occurs again, which I hope not, they have to take into consideration the consequences and whether or not they have what it takes to bear it.||

Fabian assigned the tasks to his aide. Some time ago, Lyna managed to find evidence of corruption committed by some of the top leaders of his company. That was how she won them over. Now the whole company was in a constant state of panic, for fear that they would be Fabian's next target.

Initially, Fabian intended to execute a remediation of the company's internal management, but then there was Hannah's situation to consider. How could he have the extra energy to deal with work when his mind was very much focused on Hannah? Therefore, Fabian had decided to pardon his employees and not hold them accountable.

—Yes, Mr. Norton.||

The aide nodded in response.

—Right. I also want you to take Hannah's companions to a concealed location. And find out who lives in the house opposite hers. You should know what to do,||

Fabian gave more orders as he toyed with the teacup on his desk. His patience seemed to be wearing thin.

—Alright. That's all for now. You may go.||

After his aide left, Fabian stopped what he was doing and sat up straight. He picked up the

phone and dialed another number. He called the agency specifically in charge of collecting

intelligence for the five prominent families.

There were at least one of Fabian's men working undercover in each of the five prominent

families, ready to relay confidential information at any time. This time, what Fabian wanted

to investigate was none other than the death of Hannah's birth mother.

—Hi, this is Fabian.||

Fabian spoke on the phone, remaining cool and collected.

—Agent 0027 at your service. How can I help you, Mr. Norton?||

Fabian had not accessed the intelligence network for quite some time.

He believed that the

vast network of intelligence could surely be of great help to Hannah.

—I would like to appoint you as the leader of a special unit. I'll need you to gather some of

your best people to investigate one case for me.||

After a pause, Fabian added, —It's about the death of my wife's mother, and the cause

behind it. I want to know everything that led up to it. You know what to do.||

Fabian felt a lot at ease after leaving it to the agents. He hung up the phone after giving his

instructions.

As Fabian sat by his desk, a worried look crossed his face. The only thing on his mind at that

moment was Hannah's refusal to return to his side. As for other things, he could set them

aside for now.

Hannah, at present, was unable to conceive. Because of that, he knew very well that his

mother would be unwilling to allow Hannah to stay in the Norton Residence.

Fabian took some time to consider his options, and promptly stood up when he came to a

decision. He would return to the main residence of the Norton family and speak to his

mother. He planned to convince her to accept Hannah. And if Heather refused, Hannah

would definitely not go back to the Norton Residence because she knew she was not welcomed there.

—Hey, drive slower,|| Xavier mentioned to his assistant, who was driving the luxurious sports car.

—Pardon, sir?||

The assistant was agog. What's the president up to? Has he spotted a girl he fancies? Wait, that's not right. Mr. Jackson likes Hannah, doesn't he? Ever since he started wooing her, he hasn't laid eyes on any other woman.

The assistant slowed down the car as he was told. Curious, he looked out the window too.

Through the tinted car window, he caught sight of two young women walking side by side.

One of them happened to be Hannah.

There we go. I knew Mr. Jackson wouldn't ask me to stop for no particular reason. He's actually spotted Hannah.

—Follow them,|| Xavier ordered his assistant again.

There was a pause.

Surprise fell on the assistant's face. Follow them? Mr. Jackson, you're joking, right? We're in a car. We'll be driving in the opposite direction if we follow them. I don't mind getting a ticket from the traffic police, but this is just too dangerous, don't you think so?

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1428

The assistant gave it some thought but eventually chose to obey Xavier. There's no other way around it. Mr. Jackson likes this girl.

For safety's sake, Xavier's assistant steered the car directly towards the single lane next to it.

Usually, cars were banned from going up there because when that happened, more likely than not they would take up the entire space, which could lead to traffic jams.

And so, in accordance with Xavier's command, the luxury sports car could be seen moving

along the narrow lane at a snail's pace.

At the same time, Hannah was clinging to Natasha as she looked up and down the streets

searching for any diners she might like to try out. Her eyes fell on a pizza joint, and she

stopped in her tracks. —Why don't we try out that place?|| she probed Natasha.

—Oh, sure. I can eat anything.||

Natasha nodded in agreement.

Hannah then dragged her into the shop.

Not giving it much thought, Xavier got down from the car and trailed behind them.

—Welcome. Table for two?|| the server greeted them politely.

—Um, yes, please,|| Hannah replied with a grin.

—No, make that three.||

Hannah frowned when she recognized the man's voice coming from behind them. Of

course, it had to be Xavier, who had trotted over in a haste to join them.

—If you ladies don't mind, let's dine together.||

Xavier looked to Hannah with a smile on his face.

At that moment, Hannah could not bear to refuse Xavier, who seemed so dashing and

courteous. She nodded reluctantly.

—Okay, table for three. This way, please.||

And so the server led the three of them to a table by the window.

—Mr. Jackson... is there anything you don't eat? Or anything in particular that you like?||

Hannah asked Xavier politely as they sat down to order their food, but she found the

question to be quite intrusive after inquiring. She quickly rephrased her question as she

handed him the menu. —Why don't you order first, Mr. Jackson?||

Xavier pushed the menu away as he waved at Hannah. He said, —No worries, I'm not picky. I

can eat anything.||

To be honest, Hannah was starting to feel at odds with Xavier and his impeccable manners.

She might not like the fact that Xavier was obviously pursuing her, but she would never slap

the smiler. She was beginning to feel weary.

—Okay then, I'll order for us,|| Hannah concluded.
She then ordered some food based on her own preferences, most of which were spicy, and did not order anything for Xavier. She had her intentions, and it was not that she wanted to embarrass him in public. She merely wanted Xavier to get it into his head that she had no interest in him, and it would do both of them some good if he could just stop pursuing her.

—Alright, I'll have these.||

Hannah finished the order and handed the menu back to the server. With Xavier around, the two ladies could not engage in conversation, and the atmosphere at the table turned awkward.

Eventually, Xavier broke the silence. —Ms. Young, how have you been recently?||

How have I been? Hannah considered everything that had recently occurred in her life. I'm separated from the one I love. As a woman, I've just found out I'm infertile. My mother committed suicide under the influence of drugs... Wait, wait. Hang on a moment. What is this, a series of unfortunate events?

The weight of her burdens made it difficult for her to breathe.

But would she tell Xavier all that? Of course not. Faced with Xavier's questions, Hannah gave a wry smile and simply replied, —I'm doing fine. Not too happy, but not too bad either.||

Xavier nodded at her reply. He knew deep down that Hannah was quite discouraged at the moment and spared little thought for himself. But would he give up just because of that?

Clearly not!

—Ms. Young, as your friend, I want you to know that you're always welcome to talk to me about your problems anytime you wish.||

—I thank you for the kind offer, Mr. Jackson. I'll definitely drop by for a visit when I see fit.||

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1429

Hannah responded with a smile. Of course, she was just being polite—she knew very well

what was happening between Xavier and herself. The man was actively pursuing her. Since

she would never accept him, why would she ask for his help?

In order to avoid that particular topic, Hannah asked Xavier in turn, —So, Mr. Jackson, what

brings you here?||

—Oh, I was just passing by when I happened to see you. I was thinking, since we're old

friends and all, maybe I could pop by and say hello. You don't mind that, do you, Ms.

Young?|| Xavier stated courteously.

Hannah, putting up a smile, replied, —Of course not, Mr. Jackson. You're my friend after all. I

certainly don't mind.||

Hannah was treating Xavier with utmost courtesy. If he were someone else, she would have

lost her patience a long while ago.

After all, Xavier politely having a conversation with Hannah was already an act that

transcended the status quo. He always treated Hannah with utmost sincerity. Despite the

fact that he was trying to woo her, Hannah had never accepted his advances.

Even so, he had never resorted to any desperate measures. This was the twenty-first century,

after all. If Xavier really wanted Hannah for himself, it would have been as easy as ABC.

Furthermore, Xavier was one of the major clients of Hannah's company.

It made sense for

Hannah to treat him with equal respect.

—I'm pleased to hear that.||

Xavier chuckled wryly. Since he misunderstood Natasha last time, it would be embarrassing

as well as impossible to hope that he would have more to say in front of Natasha.

Fortunately, the pizza joint was quite efficient when it came to serving food. Soon, the food

which Hannah ordered were brought to the table, the soup hot and its aroma mouth-watering.

While Hannah was carefully dealing with Xavier, Fabian had also returned to the main

residence of the Norton family. As soon as he stepped into the house, his mother's voice

rang out bitterly, —Oh, Fabian. You're actually back?||

—Of course, Mom. You wouldn't want me to wallow in my sadness, would you?|| Fabian

chuckled in response.

For someone like him who wielded great influence in the business circle, he acknowledged

his mother as a difficult —client||.

After all, Heather was the only elder left in the Norton family, and thus he would take her

opinion into consideration when it came to making decisions. He also understood that his

mother would only get older. If, by any chance, Heather could not agree with something

Fabian did and fell ill because of it, that would be bad.

—Oh, Fabian! I thought you'd forgotten about this family. I thought you intended to drown

your sorrows!|| Heather chided unceremoniously.

Frankly, as a mother, she was very worried about Fabian's emotional state, but she could not

do anything about it.

Well, of course I can't allow Fabian to bring Hannah home. That's out of the question.

Hannah cannot conceive. What will happen to the Norton family if I accept her as a

daughter-in-law? Won't that be the end of the Norton family bloodline? I'll not stand for it.

—Mom, how can you say that? I know you've been extremely worried about me. But I'm here

to assure you that no matter what happens, I know what I'm doing. I won't let you worry

about me, Mom.||

Fabian made an attempt at flattery. If he wanted to bring Hannah home, the first thing he

had to do was to get his mother to accept her. But, to do that, he would have to quell his mother's ire first.

—Hmph!||

Fabian's mother snorted, but the expression on her face had already betrayed her inner joy.

Her son had managed to overcome his depression. As his mother, how could she not be happy for him?

—It's alright. Let's put the past behind us and stop mulling over it. You're still young. You can still get a wife and I have hope yet of becoming a grandmother. Look at me. I'm getting old, son, and I don't have a single grandchild yet. My poker buddies, on the other hand... why, their grandchildren can already walk on two feet and talk. You're ruining my reputation,

Fabian.||

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1430

Heather passed off her response as a joke, but those were exactly what she was thinking.

She understood that Fabian had barely gotten over Hannah, and that it was impossible to

ask him to find someone to marry and have children so soon. Hence, Heather was prepared to face her son's rebuttal.

—Mom, let's talk about that some other time. I came home today because I have something else to discuss with you,|| Fabian told her in a calm and collected manner.

It was not that Fabian did not take the matter to heart. On the contrary, he was aware that if

he came off too strongly, his mother would definitely not agree to Hannah's return. Hence,

Fabian softened his approach, and opted to discuss with Heather in a much gentler manner.

—Oh, what is it? I knew you'd have something to tell me. Otherwise, for a man of your position to come home, it'd take a miracle,|| Heather grumbled.

Apparently, she had more than a few complaints against Fabian and his knack for not

coming home for long periods of time.

—Mom, before I tell you, you have to promise not to get mad,|| Fabian assured his mother cautiously.

—Oh, dear. Fabian, stop beating about the bush, out with it already! As your mother,

whatever it is, I'll support you all the way.||

Heather thought that as long as her son admitted his mistakes and agreed to turn his life

around, all was well.

Moreover, Heather had seen Fabian lose control of his emotions because of what happened

with Vivian. For a long time after that, he had not been himself. As his mother, seeing her

son in such a sorry state distressed her just as much.

—Okay then. Here goes nothing.||

Fabian smiled at the notion of finally being able to broach the subject.

He said, —Mom, to tell

you the truth, the reason I can get over my despair so quickly is, first and foremost, because

of one particular individual.||

Fabian's face turned grim, his expression a stern one.

—Who's that? Is it someone I know?|| Heather asked repeatedly.

She might not be one to nag and pester, but she wondered if the person whom Fabian

spoke of was related to what had just come to pass. Possibly not. Who is it, Fabian? Who's

this person who's so capable of enlightening you? Heather was curious to know.

—It's Hannah.||

Fabian bit at each syllable.

Heather could not help but sigh when she heard that name. What do you mean by that?

Hasn't Hannah left? Unless... she's back?

Heather had not known that Hannah had returned. She juggled the various possibilities that

her mind could conjure.

—In all seriousness, there's someone else I have to thank. I wouldn't be able to locate Hannah without his help. I'm talking about Jason, the son of the Goldstein family. Our families are very close. You know that, Mom. Anyway, Jason's the one who figured out where Hannah might be, and I wouldn't be able to find her if not for him.|| Fabian ignored his mother's surprise as he went on. Fabian had to admit that after everything that happened, he had a renewed respect for Jason. Even the young fellow knew of perseverance of a virtue, yet the president of the largest company in Chanaea gave in too quick. He felt bad just thinking about it. It was under Jason's great influence that Fabian made up his mind to pursue Hannah again, and to tell his mother everything as calmly as he could. As Fabian spoke, the surprise in Heather grew. Jason? Hendrick's godson? Heather wondered how the man had gotten involved in all this, but of course that was not the focus of the issue at hand. What she worried about was that Hannah's return this time round would spur Fabian to win her back. If for whatever reason Hannah had a change of heart, Heather could not promise Fabian would cope well. She knew her son best. If his temper were to rise, even the strength of ten oxen would not be enough to drown his misery. Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1431

—What do you want? Do you intend to bring Hannah back here? I'm telling you right now: that's impossible!|| Heather exclaimed emotionally. Hannah was a good woman through and through, but the problem was that she could not conceive. That issue was like a landmine buried deep within her. I'm the elder of the Norton family. How can I possibly allow the bloodline of the noble Norton family to end like this?

—Mom, can you please calm down and let me finish? Do you see yourself right now? What do you look like? A wealthy landlady in the feudal era? Or the dictatorial Empress Dowager of the Qing Dynasty?||

Fabian found it quite unacceptable. Mom, how can you expect me to give up the love of my life for the sake of carrying on the family lineage? Don't you think that's too much to ask for? Yes, Hannah cannot conceive. But we can still adopt, can't we? Are you saying that all those people out there with fertility problems should die alone?

—Hmph! Just like I thought. Children grow up and think they know everything. How dare you talk to me like that? I'm your mother! I'm telling you now, so what if I'm the dictator in this family? What are you going to do about that? Do you plan to abandon your mother in favor of a simple woman?||

Heather lectured him, giving in to her emotions again. She could tolerate anything, but this was the one thing that she could not accept. Why? This was a family problem. It was not merely her or Fabian's personal matter. She could not bring herself to joke about it.

—Mom, don't you think you're being unfair to Hannah? Think about it, why are people out there constantly conspiring against Hannah, framing her, and at one point even have her kidnapped? She was just a journalist from a media company. How could she have attracted such a high volume of resentment?||

Fabian remained patient as he explained his perspective to his agitated mother, as he always did. He hoped he could change his mother's traditional mindset.

—Of course I know that you're the cause of Hannah's sufferings, but what can we do about that? —Hannah cannot conceive. So what do you expect from me? —What am I supposed to

tell your father? —What do you expect me to tell the ancestors of the Norton family after I pass on?

—Now's not the time for you to be stubborn, Fabian. I'm telling you, I won't allow that woman to enter this house no matter what! If you insist on marrying her, then... over my

dead body!|| Heather exclaimed viciously as she put her foot down. Fabian understood where his mother was coming from, but he had to consider Hannah's situation. What happens to her then? Am I supposed to leave her suffering in silence? My darling has suffered the greatest pain to ever befall a woman. All because of me. Now she can't conceive. How can I give up on her like that? What does that make me?

—Mom, have you ever considered this? —Hannah and I really love each other. She is a kind and gentle girl. When we were dating, and I happened to buy her new clothes, she took care to remember the price of the item. After she received her salary, she would pay back the entire sum, down to the smallest unit. —Now, just because she cannot provide an heir, I have to let her go?

—What do you think I am? —A cold-blooded animal? —Even if I were a rock, I should have warmed up after being with her for such a long time, right?|| Fabian knew that his mother was a big softie on the inside despite her sharp tongue, so he appealed to her emotions on purpose.

Heather suddenly felt a hint of bitterness. Yes, Hannah's a nice girl. Fabian is really fortunate to have met a girl like her. But...

Heather was still unable to shake off the metaphorical shackles of the mundane world. She was confused and conflicted. Fabian's attempt at persuasion was not entirely wasted on her.

Fabian watched as his mother sank into silence, looking to be deep in thought. It dawned

on him that she was wavering, so he took the opportunity to convince her even more.

—Mom, please think carefully about what I said. You of all people should know what it feels

like to live under such a corrupted ideology. How can you not understand that such ideas

will only lead to the incarceration of society?||

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1432

Heather was actually a product of her time too. Fabian's father, Mark, came from a well-to-do family, while his mother, Heather, was one of four children in a household struggling to

make ends meet. Regardless, Mark married Heather in spite of societal pressure, didn't he?

Heather was also determined to change the public mindset through her own efforts, so she

became a diligent and thrifty housewife with the virtues of a good woman. In time, people

became more accepting of the couple.

Heather shuddered involuntarily at what Fabian had just said.

Yes... Fabian's right, isn't he? I was a victim too... So why am I repeating the cycle? Why am I

forcing it on him? How am I different from those before me? But... what about the Norton

bloodline? How can the Norton family go on without an heir?

Heather showed signs of hesitation, but was not entirely convinced yet.

The obsession over

the lack of an heir still lingered in her mind.

Fabian sensed his mother's struggles reflected on her face. He rose and approached her,

leaned forward ever so slowly, and spoke to her softly.

—Mom, I know you like Hannah. I understand everything that you've just told me. You should

know, with today's advanced technology, there may be a cure for Hannah's infertility. Besides,

we can always adopt a kid, can't we?||

Hearing Fabian's gentle words, Heather recovered from her daze and turned to him.

—Fabian, I know you've suffered too, but there's nothing I can do about it. I know what we're

doing is unfair to Hannah. I can let Hannah have all the assets the company can offer while still running on sufficient support, but I absolutely cannot allow her into the Norton family.||

—Mom, why can't you understand? Hannah didn't marry me for the money. If it's money she wants, she wouldn't have left in a hurry just because you told her to leave when she wasn't fully conscious.||

Fabian was not pleased to hear that his mother wanted to utilize their wealth to make Hannah leave him. He felt that bribing Hannah with money was an insult to her character.

After listening to Fabian's reasoning, Heather agreed that her son had a point. If Hannah was only interested in money, she would surely demand a large sum from Heather after waking up that day, and then she would leave.

Fabian's response rendered Heather speechless. They had come to her worst fears.

Hannah's such a kind girl. She doesn't expect any reward at all for being with Fabian. What else can I say about that?

Fabian spoke again, sulkily this time, —Mom, do you know how much pain Hannah's willing to endure for me? After finding out she had a miscarriage and could no longer conceive, she chose to leave. And yet I have to be the coward. I'm the cowardly husband who can't even bring her back.

—Me. Your son, Fabian. How great of a president can I be if I can't even protect the woman I love? How do I deserve to be the leader of a company when my wife is grieving and yet I choose to run away?

—I abandoned the woman who almost lost her life to save mine, for the sake of the so-called family lineage. How am I worthy of being called a responsible man?|| Fabian paused before continuing, —Think about it, Mom. What if Dad had chosen to leave

you because he couldn't handle societal pressure? How would you feel about that?||

By then, Fabian had gotten onto his knees. He kneeled firmly in front of his mother. —Mom,

whether you agree to it or not, I'll bring Hannah home this time. She can't give birth, but

that doesn't matter. We can adopt.||

Heather felt heartbroken to see her son kneel in front of her. At the same time, Fabian's

words prompted her to think hard about their conflict. Have I truly done something wrong?

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1433

—If Hannah and I... are the reason for the Norton family's extinction, then... I'm sorry I'm not

the filial son you wanted.||

Fabian would not weaken in his resolve. Regardless of Hannah's ability to bear children, he

would bring her home as promised. After all, Hannah was the woman he loved.

When Hannah left, Fabian was forced to admit how much she mattered to him.

Fabian's decision must have triggered his mother, for the older woman got angry in a flash.

She barely managed to draw a long, spiritless breath while repressing most of her other

emotions.

Heather lifted her hand high as she got ready to give her rebellious son a good slap, hoping

it would serve as a wake-up call. How can you say such a thing? You're the president of a

large company, for heaven's sake!

—I'm sorry, Mom. I don't wish to escape my responsibilities this time.

Take care of yourself.||

Fabian slowly lowered his head. Who would ever have thought that he, the company

president with so much at his command, would be kneeling on the ground in such a

miserable state?

Fabian sneered under his breath. So what if I'm the president? So what if I'm well-respected? All that was undoubtedly insignificant when it came to love. Fabian was determined to endure his mother's slap and put everything to an end. He needed to woo the love of his life once again, who was almost falling out of reach. He needed to bring Hannah back to the Norton Residence. Fabian kept those in his thoughts as he quietly waited for the inevitable. But in the end, Heather could not bear to do it. Instead, she sighed, —Ah, geez! There's nothing I can do now that my child's all grown up. You'll have to deal with this yourself. Don't forget, I'm getting old. I want to spend my days sipping tea and taking care of my health. I don't want to be bothered by unnecessary stuff.|| And so, Heather rose from her spot, stood up, walked past her son, and headed towards her room. Fabian watched his mother leave. It was a bittersweet ending; this was his mother's way of telling him that she approved of Hannah's return. She just did not want to say it. —Mom, I'll let you know that this is the right decision. Hannah's not an ordinary girl.|| Fabian rose too. He collapsed onto the sofa and sank into deep thought. Only he knew what was on his mind and how he came to a conclusion. On the other side of town, Hannah was having the time of her life enjoying pizza. Despite her current marital status being kept a secret, she was still able to savor the food with much relish, much less doing it in front of Xavier with whom she had no relation at all. Natasha, seemingly influenced by Hannah, cared little for maintaining a ladylike image. She rolled up her sleeves and dug into her pizza party. In contrast, Xavier's behavior was a lot more civilized. He dined like a gentleman. However,

compared with Hannah and Natasha, he seemed rather out of place. The meal ended quickly. After Hannah managed to grab the last slice of pizza and devour it, complete with a satisfying burp, she turned to Natasha, seeking her opinion. —So, what do you think? My recommendation has its merits, right? Do you like it?|| To be frank, the meal was scrumptious. But for a professional assassin like Natasha who was used to undergoing highly intensive training on an everyday basis, the portion of food she had just consumed was undoubtedly not enough for her. If she were only hanging out with Hannah, she might have told the woman what she truly felt. But Xavier was present, so she had to act accordingly. Natasha knew that Xavier was Fabian's rival and, up till then, the man was still relentlessly pursuing Hannah.

Furthermore, based on her observation of Hannah's attitude towards Xavier, Natasha could tell that Hannah did not like him at all. Hence, she decided to tell a little white lie to get Xavier off their case.

—Yes, indeed. I have to say, you have good taste, Hannah. This place is great. The shop's not very big, but the food speaks for itself,|| Natasha replied Hannah with a smile.

Her eyes fluttered to meet Xavier's gaze, and she added, —Hannah, I think it's about time we get going. Can we drop by the company? It just so happens that I have not reported to work yet.||

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1434

Hannah nodded in agreement. Ever since her return, Natasha had offered to help her move and, hence, had never gotten around to meet their senior editor. That certainly would not do, for it would leave a bad impression.

After some consideration, Hannah said, —Oh, that's a good idea. We can clean up your desk while we're at it, so that it's ready for you tomorrow.||

She rose from her seat, and then addressed both Natasha and Xavier, —Alright, we're leaving.||

Hannah led them to the shop entrance. Xavier, who was walking behind the two women, checked his wristwatch for the time. He frowned. Apparently, it was getting late. If he insisted on following Hannah, she would not be pleased. He supposed it would be better for him to excuse himself than to make her resent him.

At the entrance of the shop, Xavier had the sense to stop there and bade farewell to

Hannah. —Ms. Young, I enjoyed our dinner together. I do look forward to the next occasion,|| he said.

After they parted ways, Xavier got into his car and barked instructions at his assistant. —Get to Hannah's neighborhood now. I want you to purchase the house right opposite hers. No, scratch that. I'll do it myself.||

The assistant almost fell out of the driver's seat when he heard that. Excuse me? What are you playing at this time, Mr. Jackson?

Xavier's assistant considered the order, and then proceeded to ask his boss, —Mr. Jackson, don't we have a contract to sign?||

—Shut it, will you? Didn't you hear me? Can't you see what's at stake here? There's always time to make money later, but if I lose sight of the woman I love, I don't know when I'll get another chance!||

Xavier could not help but roll his eyes at his assistant as he lectured him. What a fool! This brat almost cost me the greatest happiness of my life!

—Y-Yes, Mr. Jackson!||

The assistant obeyed with a silly smile on his face. He then turned the steering wheel around and drove the car onto the road.

—Mr. Jackson, you really don't have to deal with such a minor issue yourself. Why don't you

leave it to me? In the meantime, you can head over to the other place and get the contract

signed,|| the assistant suggested boldly.

He and Xavier used to be classmates. He was just as capable as Xavier in getting things

done, if not more. So, he did not think Xavier had anything to worry about.

But once the words came out of his mouth, Xavier hit him hard on his head and berated

him, —Forget about the contract! If I don't seize this opportunity to pursue Hannah, Fabian

might get the upper hand. How can I relax at a time like this?

—You, on the other hand, can't do anything right! I'm convinced that if it weren't for you, I

would have won Hannah many times over. You give me so many bad ideas! Gosh, it's like

you're a jinx or something!||

—I... I swear, Mr. Jackson, I do not mean anything else. I have been serving you faithfully from

the get-go. I should at least deserve credit for my efforts, right? What I suggested, you see...

I believe it works on any girl...|| Xavier's assistant began.

He sounded aggrieved, but before he could finish what he wanted to say, Xavier flicked the

back of his head again. —Use your head, will you? Do you think I'd fancy just any other

woman?||

—Of course not, sir. You're right. I just...||

—Ah, damn it!||

Unsurprisingly, Xavier whacked his assistant one more time. —What the heck is wrong with

you? Just take me there already! Or should I get someone else to do your job?||

—I'm on it, sir!||

Xavier's assistant grimaced. Darn, I shouldn't have said all that.

But Xavier knew that his assistant was just giving him good advice.

However, since the subject matter involved Hannah, he could not take it as a joke. He had to

be cautious when making his next move, so he decided to take on the task personally.

—Mr. Jackson, we're here,|| the assistant reminded Xavier as he slowly parked the car in front of an apartment building.

Xavier nodded, opened the car door, and got out of the vehicle. He had barely embraced the fresh air outside when he spotted a white Lincoln parked just a short distance away. His eyes narrowed at the sight. Huh? Could that be Fabian's car?

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—Come on, let's go!||

Xavier somehow had a bad feeling about this. Why is a luxury car like this one parked in this kind of neighborhood? I remember Fabian happens to like this type of cars.

Unless Fabian had arrived one step ahead of him, Xavier could not think of any other

possibility. As the thought came to mind, he quickened his steps.

As Xavier walked closer to his destination, he ran into Fabian, as expected.

At that time, Fabian was standing in the corridor, his assistant next to him. The two were

engaged in discussion with the resident living right opposite Hannah's unit.

Xavier had a bad hunch about the scene that was taking place before him. He quickly shot a

glance at his assistant, and his eyes darkened before he directed a cold gaze at Fabian.

Fabian had yet to notice Xavier's arrival. He was merely waiting in silence while his assistant

explained their proposal to the resident. His face was one of confidence with not a single

hint of worry. He believed that no ordinary family would refuse the price he offered.

After meeting Xavier's gaze, the assistant understood what he was meant to do. As if on cue,

he sprinted forward, walked in front of Fabian so that he reached the resident's other side,

and then introduced himself, —Hello, nice to meet you. I'm the assistant to the president of

Jackson Group. You can call me Mr. Lockhart.||

At that moment, Fabian's assistant showed a hint of dissatisfaction. Why are you stealing my job? Mr. Norton finally assigned a task to me, and you're ruining it! Do you have a grudge against me or something?

But as Fabian's assistant, if his employer had nothing to say about it, he ought not put on an overly tough attitude. Otherwise, he would only dishonor Fabian. This was not a line he could cross, so he resisted the anger that was boiling from within. He cast a fierce look at Xavier's assistant before glancing at Fabian, hoping to get clued in on his employer's next move. At Fabian's orders, he would be more than willing to compete with that intruder. What a joke!

Phoenix Group was the top company in Chanaea, and Jackson Group was out of its league. Fabian furrowed his brows, his hawkish eyes sharpening with a glacial look. He gave his assistant a nod before turning around to face Xavier. He had a hunch that since Xavier's assistant was present in the compound, that meant the big man himself was definitely here too. He chortled under his breath. Oh, my. What now?

Can't hold back, can you? Want to make this a fair competition? —Mr. Norton, what a coincidence. Fancy meeting you here. For someone as busy as yourself, I can't imagine you'd come to a place like this. It certainly blows my mind.||

Xavier noticed Fabian's chilly, pensive eyes, and brushed it off. Both he and Fabian came from the five prominent families, after all. He was not intimidated at the least. He approached Fabian with a smile. Xavier thought he had hidden his discontent pretty well, but Fabian still managed to see through him. Fabian shook his head in disapproval, before responding to Xavier in a flat tone, —Ah, Mr.

Jackson. This place isn't exactly small, so I wonder what brings you here. Or are you telling me that this place actually belongs to your family, and outsiders aren't allowed to come here?||

Fabian did not mince his words at all. How could he be polite to someone who was constantly plotting to steal his woman away from him? Xavier could not help but laugh at Fabian's statement while his heart hardened. Wow. Such harsh words, Fabian. Are you afraid that I'll steal Hannah away? —Oh, Mr. Norton. What makes you say that? It's your freedom to go wherever you want. It's just that I hear you've taken to the bottle these days, so I admit I'm a little surprised to see that you're able to find time to visit this part of town.||

Xavier managed to draw blood with every word he spoke. Each syllable was as heart-wrenching as the next.

Fabian later reflected on himself. Indeed, it's true I have some misgivings, but nevertheless those are my private affairs. I don't suppose they have anything to do with you.

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Fabian shrugged his shoulders, ignoring Xavier's insults. With a disdainful look, he smiled at the latter. —Well, I was distressed and upset a few days ago, so I was drowning my sorrows instead of indulging in fine wine. Luckily, things changed, and I overcame it.||

He then approached Xavier and added, —Now that you mention it, I want to thank someone whom you know.||

With a sardonic smile on his face, he continued, —That's my wife, Hannah Young. I wouldn't be able to meet you today if it hadn't been for her!||

In fact, Fabian said that deliberately. Ha, how ridiculous! He thought he could surpass me!

Immediately, Xavier's expression darkened when Fabian asserted his identity as Hannah's

husband. Still, he responded with a haughty smile, —Haha! It's good to know that!!

Meanwhile, their assistants were competing spectacularly with each other, as if the winning party would be handsomely rewarded.

—Well, let me tell you. Phoenix Group is the largest enterprise in Chanaea. Mr. Norton will definitely stand by his promise, so please give my words some careful consideration!!

Fabian's assistant highlighted the influence of Phoenix Group, trying to convince the resident.

Clearly, Xavier's assistant knew Fabian's assistant approached the resident for the same purpose. Oh well, it is undeniable that Phoenix Group is so powerful, but does it matter? No, it doesn't! What matters most are who can acquire the house and who can persuade the resident.

—Haha! I don't deny what he said. Xavier's assistant forced a smile, and his face turned stony in the blink of an eye.

He then continued, —Though Phoenix Group is the largest enterprise in Chanaea, they can't even resolve their internal affairs, let alone fulfilling their promise to you. —Try to imagine. If you joined their fiercely competitive company, you could be defeated anytime. Well, put that aside and look at the cohesion in the workplace. Would you stay in a company that is rife with office politics or would you rather work in a company with diligent and highly motivated staff whom the employer cares about?

—Besides, Phoenix Group won't permanently be the largest enterprise in Chanaea. A company that is full of contradictions won't last long, so you should choose Jackson Group instead!!

Staying close to Xavier, his assistant would definitely pay attention to the affairs of the other

families. After all, the five prominent families had been collaborating and competing with each other. Therefore, it was understandable that Xavier's assistant knew about the internal split-up in Phoenix Group.

Upon hearing those remarks, Fabian's assistant felt a flicker of irritation. If it had not been for the fact that he had a task at hand and Fabian was around, he would have taught Xavier's assistant a lesson.

In fact, that incident had left an emotional scar on each of the employees in Phoenix Group. They would not have betrayed the company if it were not for Lyna's dirty tricks.

Fabian took good care of his employees' welfare and was highly respected in Phoenix Group. That was also the reason why his assistant was annoyed with those remarks.

—Oh! By the way, if you don't believe this, you can check out some posts! You should be able to discover the truth there. After all, the truth will come to light!||

Xavier's assistant added, gloating over the ruin of his rival.

The resident looked at them with suspicion gleaming in her eyes. Actually, when she learned about the purpose of Fabian's assistant's visit, she wondered why someone wanted to buy her house all of a sudden. Besides, the offer put forward by him was way too tempting.

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Indeed, she was eager to hand over the house to Fabian's assistant one day earlier for fear that he would revoke his offer. However, the sudden appearance of Xavier's assistant surprised her.

In fact, her small house was in a remote area and no one had ever inquired about it or offered to buy it, but it had suddenly become a hot commodity that everyone wanted to

buy it. Furthermore, the offer price was so lucrative that she could easily get a house which was several times bigger than the current one, in Baykeep city center. Such an offer would definitely tempt her. She learned from their conversation that both of them came from influential backgrounds. Nevertheless, it sounded that Jackson Group was performing well and flourishing, whereas Phoenix Group was facing some problems and might collapse despite being the largest enterprise in Chanaea. That resident then glanced at Fabian's assistant, and her eyes were filled with doubt, which seemed like questioning the credibility of those remarks. Upon seeing the doubtful glint in her eyes, Fabian's assistant gritted his teeth in anger. How dare he mention this to her! That's just too much! Immediately, his expression darkened. Looking at Xavier's assistant, he warned, —If you continue making false statements, we'll sue you for defamation!|| Naturally, Xavier's assistant, who had gone through ups and downs with Xavier all that while, would not be taken aback by his words. Instead, he defended, —You should know clearly whether or not those statements were defamatory! Of course, I won't be afraid if you really sue me for defamation!|| Meanwhile, Fabian and Xavier were walking slowly toward their assistants. When Fabian came near to Xavier's assistant and heard those words, it roused his anger. —Oh, Mr. Jackson has hired so many talented people! Even a mere assistant has a silver tongue. Every cock will crow upon his own dunghill. That's really awesome!|| Xavier knew Fabian was trying to imply that his assistant was aggressive and relied on his power to bully others. Instead of confronting Fabian, he smiled faintly and paid no heed to his words. Then, Xavier responded, —Haha, it's not worth mentioning! Being the head of the group, we

should possess a keen eye and be able to pick excellent talents!||
With an ulterior motive, he purposely added, —Well, as for your
assistant... tsk, tsk! He isn't
up to par yet! Shall I send two of my staff over to train yours?||
Though Xavier was being sarcastic, Fabian remained calm and responded
impassively,
—Haha! Indeed, my assistant isn't as good as yours. After all, our
company is cultivating
talents instead of training them to become bullies. I don't think it's
necessary to send your
staff over, as I still prefer the existing way. Though they don't hold an
imposing presence,
they possess good character, unlike others!||
He then turned toward Xavier's assistant and shot him an icy glare, like a
domineering boss.
After that, he sneered, —Even if our group were to collapse, we would
still be more powerful
than many other companies. You can't judge a book by its cover! In fact,
those who failed
dug their own graves!||
Though Xavier's assistant met some big shots before, they were no
match for Fabian.
Besides, they were friendly to him, whereas Fabian was the only one
who gave him a hard
time.
Thus, when he looked at Fabian's evil smile, he could not help but
shudder. Eventually, he
was rigid with fear and dared not fight back.
Upon seeing that, Xavier came near to them and said
indifferently, —Fabian, don't argue with
a junior! Tsk, tsk! Isn't it unreasonable?||
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—Ha! Are you saying that I'm calculative? Huh! Whatever!||
Without giving Xavier a chance to respond, Fabian immediately
approached the resident. He
patted her gently on the shoulder and said indifferently, —I want to buy
this house. Since you
are not happy with our price, you name your price then!||
Though Fabian's tone was calm, he looked domineering indeed. His
words set off a ripple of

excitement within her.

What? I'm going to make a fortune! Yes! Should I ask for one million five hundred

thousand? Wait a minute—is this too little? What about two million? Oh Gosh, I should ask

for more! Alright, five million! This will be more than enough for me to live a happy life

abroad for the rest of my life. Okay, that's it!

The resident swallowed her saliva and looked at Fabian. When she was about to make her

offer, Xavier, who was standing at the side, coughed. Then, she hesitated. Both of them

come from similar backgrounds and are filthy rich! Of course, I'll sell my house to the one

who is willing to pay more! After all, who doesn't love money?

—Oh, I've forgotten that Mr. Jackson is also interested to buy this house!|| Fabian sneered.

Actually, instead of coaxing Hannah to get back together with him, he wanted to buy that

house for a different purpose.

Fabian tried that tactic before. If he repeated it, Hannah would keep her distance from him.

After all, she did not want to get back together with him.

By the time she realized it, she would not have any reaction toward him.

In fact, Fabian just

wanted to let Hannah's protector move into the house so that he could afford her better

protection.

Therefore, it did not matter if he could buy the house. Since Xavier wanted to get involved,

Fabian did not mind letting him suffer a loss.

—Haha, what a coincidence! It happens that I want to buy this house as well. Why don't we

have a fair competition? The one who offers the highest price will get it!|| Xavier smiled

faintly.

He despised Fabian for what he had done. How dare he approach the owner directly! He's

so arrogant and doesn't respect me at all, despite having the same standing. How could he

say that to me? Don't we want to buy the house for the same purpose? Hmph! Let's compete and see if Jackson Group or Phoenix Group will win!

It's not about the value of this house, but it's all about dignity! Whoever pulls out will be

despised for being a coward!

Indeed, he was not as bold as Fabian.

Meanwhile, the resident happily nodded her head upon hearing the suggestion put forward

by Xavier. She knew if the two competed, she would benefit from it.

—Haha! Fair competition? Forget about it! Don't you remember you were badly defeated in

our last competition? I don't want it to happen again!|| Fabian replied with a subtle smile.

His words stabbed Xavier to the heart like a sharp blade.

—Well, you can have the house then!|| After Fabian finished his words, he snapped his fingers

and was about to leave.

He said that purposely to provoke Xavier, knowing that the latter was also from a prominent

family and could not tolerate such a humiliation.

Immediately, spasms of irritation crossed Xavier's face. He glared at Fabian while trying to

suppress his anger. —You don't have to do that! Jackson Group can definitely afford such a

small house!||

—Oh well! You can pay my offer price!|| Fabian turned and walked away, leaving Xavier

behind. It left him no choice but to clench his teeth angrily.

On the other hand, the resident was upset. Sigh! Why don't they compete? I don't even

know how much Jackson Group offer will!

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Knowing that the offer price would at least drop by half without Fabian's offer, the resident

said languidly, —Just name your price!||

After all, losing a fortune distressed her.

—Hmph!|| Looking at the resident, Xavier snorted and walked away as anger welled up in his

chest.

He was so arrogant that he would not accept such a voluntary giving from Fabian.

Knowing that anger rose in Xavier like a tide, his assistant, who was standing behind him,

cautiously asked, —Mr. Jackson, what about...||

He was afraid that he would offend his boss and have to bear the consequences.

Surprisingly, Xavier turned and gave him a faint smile. —Yes? I guess Fabian hasn't bought

the units above and below Hannah's unit. Help me get these two units.

We shall see where

else he can stay!||

His assistant responded in a worried tone, —What if... I mean—what if Mr. Norton stays

opposite Ms. Young's house? Then, we'll be on the losing side!||

—Oh, that's impossible! He won't buy that house. After all, people with such a status like us

won't simply go back on our word, or else we will suffer a loss of credibility. So, I'm sure that

he won't stay opposite Hannah's house. Alright, you do as I say!|| Xavier said confidently.

He finally realized the reason why Fabian always defeated him. Xavier cared too much about

the outcome and failed to suppress his anger, whereas Fabian was completely different and

always kept calm.

After he understood that, his anger vanished.

Nothing can stump me! Fabian, be prepared! I will make Hannah fall for me! Since you don't

cherish her, don't blame me!

Meanwhile, Fabian was sitting in his luxury car smoking after he lit a cigarette.

—Mr. Norton, are we going to let it rest?|| Obviously, his assistant could not take the matter

lying down.

After taking a puff, he raised his head and blew smoke rings. Then, he responded calmly,

—What are you talking about? Didn't we let them buy the house?||

—What about Ms. Young's safety...|| His assistant sighed helplessly and dared not say further,

knowing that it would be a vain attempt to persuade his boss.
—Don't worry about that! Natasha is staying by her side. It shouldn't be a problem under normal circumstances. We get more people to protect her just to be on the safe side,||
Fabian replied impassively.
If I arrange for people to move into the opposite house, their identity will be revealed easily.
Besides, if Hannah discovers it, she will guard against them and get rid of them. It won't serve the purpose of protecting her. She will definitely resent me. This could mess up my plan of getting back together with her!
Thinking about that, he instructed his assistant, —Well, send someone to investigate Lyna and see if she has any tricks up her sleeve recently! By the way, at the appropriate time, you let her know we are keeping an eye on her.||
Fabian wanted Lyna to believe that he had taken precautions and warned her not to act rashly. By doing so, Hannah would be safer.
As soon as his assistant left, his phone rang.
After glancing at the phone, Fabian took a deep breath and answered the call.
He said with his calm and stretched voice, —Hello!||
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The intelligence officer said, —Mr. Norton, we have got some clues!||
He continued, —I have some leads to the death of Ms. Young's mother. We found the housemaid who worked for the Blackwood family at that time and should be able to get some clues from her. We also checked all the hospitals' records in Baykeep that year and finally found a ledger recording Felicia's purchase of psychedelic drugs in a private hospital.
I will send it to you shortly.||
Upon hearing that, Fabian ordered, —Alright, continue to investigate. Please be careful and don't let the Blackwood family or Yvette discover it!||
He then hung up and stubbed out his cigarette in the ashtray.

After that, Fabian lowered the car window, looking at the bustling city outside, and sank in thought.

Why did Felicia buy psychedelic drugs? Presumably, Hannah's mother committed suicide because of these drugs.

Thinking of it, he could not help but shake his head. Hannah's life is so sorrowful! She has gone through so many hardships. How did she manage to survive? Oh well, I can't do anything about that. These things have already happened. No matter how strong and powerful I am, it is impossible to turn back time and save her biological mother or our baby!

From now on, I must treat her well and pamper her, so that she can live happily.

The more Fabian thought about her past, the more he pitied her.

Hannah, I'm sorry for making you suffer!

Soon, he arrived at Phoenix Group. His driver reminded, —Mr. Norton, we're here!||

It was only then he regained his composure.

Fabian opened the car door, stepped out of his slender legs, and walked toward his office.

His figure was as tall and straight as before. He was full of confidence, with a look of gentleness and compassion on his face.

—Mr. Norton, someone sent over this document for you!|| As soon as he went into the lobby, the receptionist approached him with a sealed envelope.

—Alright!|| Fabian knew the intelligence agency for the five prominent families sent over the ledger recording Felicia's purchase of psychedelic drugs.

Immediately, someone behind him took the envelope from the receptionist and followed him to his office.

While sitting in his chair, Fabian looked at the trusted aide who was holding the envelope

for him and said impassively, —Alright, you can leave now!||

—Yes, Mr. Norton!|| The latter put the envelope on the desk and walked out of his office.

After he left, Fabian did not open the sealed envelope. Instead, he stared off into space,

thinking of a way to win Hannah's heart.

He tried very hard to think and eliminated those ideas one by one. No, that's old-school!

Hmm, this is not sincere enough!

After a while, he finally decided. —Alright, I'll use this to give her a surprise!||

It was only then Fabian picked up the envelope and opened it. He pulled out a ledger that

was neither thick nor thin.

Since the intelligence agency retrieved this ledger, it should be reliable.

Fabian flipped it

open and saw the yellowed pages. He then turned to the folded page.

Meclofenoxate, Donepezil...

The ledger showed Felicia bought more than one type of drug, which he knew some of

them were for the prevention of Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

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When Fabian looked downward, he gasped. —What? That's a lot of meclofenoxate.||

Meclofenoxate was a kind of drug that could stimulate the brain. In suitable amounts, it was

useful to the human body. However, in doses too large, the human brain would be

overstimulated, and the individual would start hallucinating. At night, the effects would be

worse.

As Fabian tapped the table, he furrowed his brows and mumbled under his breath,

—Hannah's mother should have been forced to take large doses of meclofenoxate, and that

was why she committed suicide.||

At that, a murderous urge flashed past Fabian's mind.

How ruthless is Felicia to do this.

Hannah was Fabian's wife, and Fabian was sure that Hannah would eventually return to his

side. Even if Fabian never saw Hannah's mother, she was still his mother-in-law.

Right then, Fabian saw the same name written across the back of the drug packaging—

Felicia.

A glacial look overtook his eyes, and it was as though he wanted to freeze those packaging with his gaze alone.

—Someone like you should spend the rest of your life in jail. There is no way you should ever

be let off the hook,|| Fabian said quietly.

Despite the soft volume of his voice, no one thought Fabian was joking.

They could see

from his eyes that he was fuming.

—Wait a minute, didn't he say there's a witness?||

With that question, Fabian took out his phone and called the intelligence agency that

worked for the five prominent families.

—Hello? Where's the person you mentioned to me?|| Fabian asked right after the call went

through.

—She is at Baykeep's suburbs right now. Our men are already rushing over there.||

Naturally, the one who was on the other end of the line knew that the person Fabian was

talking about was the maid who worked at Blackwood Residence then.

—Okay, tell them not to do anything rash. Send me the address, and I'll be going there

myself,|| Fabian said with confidence.

This time, he was going to find out everything about how Felicia had hurt Hannah's mother.

—Understood,|| the other person replied before Fabian ended the call.

Fabian spent a while rubbing his temples before leaving the room with his jacket.

—Mr. Jackson, I've received news from the intelligence agency that Fabian has been

investigating someone named Felicia recently,|| Xavier's assistant reported to Xavier.

At that moment, Xavier had his back facing the assistant as he sat on his chair, deep in his

thoughts.

After a while, he turned around. However, before he spoke, his assistant placed a file in front of him.

Turning the pages of the file, Xavier wondered, —Why is Fabian investigating Felicia?||

His curiosity only grew after reading Felicia's file. Felicia is Leo's second wife? Doesn't that make her Hannah's stepmother? Technically, she was Hannah's stepmother.

However, Hannah did not even want to admit Leo as her father, so she would never admit Felicia as her stepmother.

—Ask our men in the intelligence agency to find out more about Fabian's investigation of

Felicia as well as why Hannah is back at Baykeep,|| Xavier instructed his assistant before dismissing him.

Then, he leaned back on his chair and stared at the ceiling.

Hannah left this time because she can't bear children. According to my sources, Fabian's mother went to the hospital once. She must have said something to Hannah.

With the kind of person Hannah is, she won't come back for no reason. If she really misses

Fabian, why doesn't she go back to him then?

Hence, Xavier was sure that Hannah was not back for Fabian; there was another reason for her return.

But what are the things that can make Hannah decide to come back?

That was something

Xavier had yet to figure out.

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Furthermore, there was another question that plagued his mind. Why did Fabian ask the men of the five prominent families to investigate Felicia? Under normal circumstances, no one would mobilize this intelligence agency.

Is there a connection between Fabian's investigation of Felicia and Hannah's return to

Baykeep?

Xavier could not figure it out, so he decided to stop thinking about it instead. Straightening

himself, he then took a sip of his coffee as his head throbbed.

Somehow, there was a foreboding sense that was settling at the bottom of his stomach. It

was like a storm that was about to strike.

What is it? What's going to happen?

On the other end, Hannah was deep in her thoughts as well. However, unlike Xavier, she was

not at a loss; she knew what she should do, and she knew what she was going to face.

Her thoughts were about who she should look for to investigate the matters and how she

should face Fabian. When she returned, she knew Fabian had sent men to protect her. Now

that those men retreated into the shadows, she knew Fabian wanted to keep his protection

a secret from her.

At the end of the day, Hannah still felt helpless toward Fabian. What she felt for him should

not only be described as love but devotion.

Similarly, Fabian loved her with every fiber of his being. Yet, the two could not be together.

Even Hannah felt like laughing at herself. Why am I back this time? Am I not here to bring

justice to my mother? Why am I thinking about everything else?

Let the Fabian stays in my heart and dissipates over time.

That was how Hannah consoled herself despite knowing that it was impossible.

—Hannah? Hannah?||

Natasha had been helping Hannah read through some documents, and she had stumbled

upon a section she could not understand. When she raised her head, about to ask Hannah

her question, she saw the other woman's red and teary eyes.

—Hannah?||

Natasha called her out twice, but Hannah still did not answer her.

Feeling a sense of worry,

Natasha patted Hannah on her shoulder. If Hannah still gave her no response, Natasha was ready to send her to the hospital. After all, it would be disastrous if anything happened to Hannah again.

—Hm?||

Finally, Hannah came back to her senses. However, she had not heard Natasha's words, so she cast a perplexed look on her and asked, —What's wrong? Is something wrong somewhere?||

Natasha sighed in relief. I'm so glad she's fine. After a pause, she continued, —Yes. I'm having trouble understanding some of these. Please take a look at them for me.||

With that said, Natasha then handed her the documents and began voicing her questions.

The entire time, Hannah was patient in explaining the important points and logic to Natasha.

Once Natasha's question was resolved, she hesitated a moment before she asked, —Hannah, what were you thinking about earlier? I think I saw you crying.|| A startled look flitted across Hannah's face before she hid it behind a smile.

—What? I wasn't thinking of anything. I'm just too tired, so my eyes were hurting,|| Hannah explained with a forced smile.

She told Natasha nothing, but it was not because she did not trust her; she just did not want Natasha to worry about her.

Natasha knew what Hannah was going through, so she did not force the latter to speak the truth. Instead, she consoled, —If you're tired, you should get some rest. Everything will be fine when you wake up tomorrow.||

—Okay. I understand.||

Hannah nodded as a warm feeling spread across her heart. She felt glad that Natasha was by her side in time of need.

Right then, Hannah's phone rang. Despite not wanting to pick up the call at the start, she hurriedly accepted it after a glance at the caller ID. Even when she spoke, anxiety laced her

tone. —How is it? Do you have any news?||

On the other end of the call was Hannah's senior editor. Now that she did not have Fabian by her side after her return, the only one she could rely upon the most was her company.

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Left without a choice, Hannah ended up looking for her senior editor.

Naturally, she

revealed little to her supervisor; she only asked him to look for the current welfare and

whereabouts of the maids who once worked in the Blackwood Residence.

As Hannah had once contributed much to his team, the senior editor agreed to help her without hesitation.

—Huh? Oh right. Hannah, don't feel anxious about that first. What you need to do is to

concentrate on your work. I'm currently working on it, okay?||

The senior editor was stunned, having not expected Hannah to ask him about that right after accepting the call.

—Oh.||

Hannah thought her senior editor had found something was about to tell her. However, her guesses were wrong.

—May I know why are you looking for me?|| Hannah mumbled disappointedly.

—Ahem, Hannah, I've asked someone to investigate what you've asked for. Don't feel anxious

about it. I'm sure we'll have some results in a day or two,|| the senior editor muttered

apologetically when he heard her tone.

After all, he had forgotten about it despite agreeing to help her.

—Just focus on your work. You'll be interviewing Mr. Xavier Jackson at the Jackson Group

tomorrow,|| Xavier instructed.

Although he was still feeling embarrassed about the previous matter, this was work, and he had to tell her about it. Furthermore, this was a request from Xavier himself.

—Okay. I understand.||

Hannah gasped before responding to him. Although she was reluctant to work on it, this was her job.

After ending the call, she sighed. Hannah knew why Xavier asked her to interview him. He had no serious matters to talk about; he simply wanted to approach her. Yet, she still had to go even though she knew about that. At the end of the day, he was the president, and she was the leader of the team tasked with interviewing him. There was no way she could reject him when he had requested for her to do the interview personally.

Beside her, Natasha could not help but feel worried when she saw Hannah's frown. Swiftly, she queried, —What's wrong, Hannah? Did something happen? Is there any news about your biological mother?||

Hannah had to take in a deep breath before she could explain to Natasha. —It's nothing. I asked the senior editor to find out some things about my birth mother, but he hasn't found any leads on it yet. He called earlier to ask me to conduct an interview tomorrow,|| Hannah explained patiently, not wanting Natasha to worry about her anymore. After nodding, Natasha then asked, —Hannah, what time is the interview tomorrow? Who are you interviewing? What are you planning to interview? I'll look into it and do some preparation.||

Natasha was now Hannah's assistant, and it was normal for her to ask those questions. Her job was to organize the documents for Hannah before doing research on the interviewee; she had to come up with various questions based on the background of the person Hannah

was going to interview.

Hannah knew Natasha was worried about her mental state and about her health. That was why the latter wanted to prepare the materials for her. However, Hannah still hesitated.

Xavier was not looking for her to do an interview, so the materials they prepared would only go to waste. She was afraid that Natasha would worry about what Xavier would do to her.

At the same time, Hannah was afraid Natasha would assume she had no trust in her, and that was why she was not telling Natasha anything. Hannah did not want to hurt Natasha's feeling.

After a moment of hesitation and rumination, Hannah finally revealed the truth. —Natasha, you don't need to prepare any materials for the interview. Actually, the person I'm interviewing tomorrow is... Xavier. The president you brought me to meet the last time.||

Unsure if Natasha remembered Xavier, Hannah intentionally mentioned his identity.

—What? Him?||

Natasha was shocked. Hannah had yet to meet her boss after her return, but before she could think much about that matter, this rascal had taken the initiative to approach her.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1444

Natasha couldn't help but worry as she thought about it. That guy looks pretty decent...

What if he manages to win Hannah over with his sweet-talking? What will Mr. Norton do then?

Considering how close Xavier was with Hannah, Natasha's concerns were indeed justified.

Hannah knew what she was worried about and told her, —You don't have to worry, Natasha. I

know Xavier, and he's not the type who would do something if it makes me uncomfortable.

You can come with me tomorrow if you're still worried, but you'll have to wait outside. I'll give you a call if anything happens, okay?||

Natasha found herself unable to argue with that statement. She's right... Xavier may be a bit of a jerk, but he isn't a complete a*shole... Still, what if Hannah falls for his sweet lies? He might even offer to help her investigate her mother's death, which would allow them to spend a lot of time with each other and possibly develop feelings over time!

Noticing the frown and look of concern on her face, Hannah said after giving it some thought, —Natasha, I know you don't trust Xavier and all, but... you should at least trust me, right? Besides, I'm sure everything will be fine! Even if anything does go wrong, I have you there to protect me, don't I?||

Hannah even made sure to flash her a smile in hopes of reassuring her, which seemed to work as Natasha nodded with a smile in return. She's right, I have nothing to worry about! I should have more faith in the strength of their relationship! Hannah was willing to spend the rest of her life all alone in the house her mother left her, and she's doing all that for Fabian's sake! Besides, I could tell from the previous incident that she has no feelings for Xavier at all. She has only returned to investigate her mother's death, so there's no way she'd have the time and energy for anything else.

With that in mind, Natasha rolled up her sleeves and flexed her biceps as she replied, —All right, Hannah. Just make sure you bring me with you tomorrow, okay? I can't protect you if you don't!||

Hannah let out a chuckle when she saw how childish Natasha was. —Sure thing, Natasha.

Don't worry, I'll bring you with me no matter what!|| Haha, she sure is an interesting one!

Having received her reassurance, Natasha replied, —Okay, best of luck with your investigation! I'll be getting back to work now, so just let me know if you ever need anything else!||

—I will! All the best with your work!|| Hannah felt relieved to have a friend like her and gave her a little cheer in return as well.

However, her eyes were filled with a slight melancholy as she returned to her desk. I don't have a lot of connections. While I do know a few presidents from my previous interviews, my marriage with Fabian was a secret at the time, so I didn't really keep in touch with them.

Even just having a little chat with them made Fabian extremely unhappy, so I have cut all ties with them. Without any support, I can't even find a single person who would testify against Felicia, let alone take her down...

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1445

Hannah let out a sigh. What am I going to do now? Who could I possibly go to for help?

Fabian? No way! I've decided to cut ties with him completely, and going to him for help will only result in things getting messy between us! It'll hurt a lot more if I end up falling for him

again! On top of that, I heard he was depressed and heartbroken after I left, so going back

only to leave him a second time would just hurt him a lot more!

Would it have been better for him if I stayed instead? Nah, that's impossible! I mean, Fabian

is the freaking president of Phoenix Group as well as the sole heir and backbone of the

Norton family! I can't even imagine the amount of pressure he'd face if I were to stay with

him! Besides, there's no way someone with that much wealth wouldn't want an heir of his

own, but I can't bear any children...

At that moment, an idea popped up in Hannah's head. What if I go to Xavier for help, then?
He likes me a lot, so he'll definitely agree to lend me a hand, but... wouldn't this count as using him because of his feelings for me? No, this won't do... He'll definitely want me to repay his favor by marrying him or something! My heart only has room for Fabian, so I couldn't possibly be with Xavier!
Having dismissed that idea, Hannah began crossing out her options one by one, only to smile wryly when she realized she didn't have anyone who could help her at all.
—Don't worry, you still have yourself to rely on! Everything will be fine! You can do this,
Hannah!|| she told herself after letting out another helpless sigh. I'll keep pushing forward bravely, no matter what lies ahead of me! I'm sure everything will be fine as long as I have faith in myself! I must get to the bottom of my mom's death before I return to that house she left me, or I won't be able to live the rest of my life in peace! I have to get this done while I'm still young and capable of going at it without rest, especially while people still know who I am...
—All right, it's decided!|| Hannah mumbled to herself with a nod before immersing herself fully in the pile of documents in front of her.
Natasha who was seated nearby had heard everything Hannah said to herself and knew she had probably figured something out. She stole a glance at Hannah who was busy with her work before pulling out her phone and sending Fabian a text: How are things on your end, Mr. Norton? Mrs. Norton hasn't been able to find anything on her end, and she seems to be a little out of it right now.
Fearing that Fabian would call her immediately after receiving her text, Natasha sent him

another one: I'm working with Mrs. Norton in her office right now, so I can't talk to you on the phone.

She then stole another glance at Hannah to make sure she wasn't looking before hitting the send button.

Natasha even made sure to delete her messages and put her phone on silent before breathing a sigh of relief.

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Fabian's reply came in shortly after: Okay, got it. Your mission is to keep Hannah safe, so

make sure nothing goes wrong. I've already had someone look into her mother's death, and

we managed to find some evidence too. We're currently looking for witnesses, and I'll

arrange for you to meet them once we found one. I believe you know what to do with them,

right? Oh, I'll also be giving you a number. You two can meet up to discuss your plans

before having this person bring the witness to Hannah.

Natasha quickly saved the phone number provided at the end of the text before replying: By

the way, there's something else I need to tell you. Mr. Jackson has been in touch with our

senior editor and has requested for Mrs. Norton to conduct an interview with him

tomorrow. I'm still unsure of the exact time of the interview, but it's definitely taking place

tomorrow.

Natasha had no idea what Fabian thought of it as he didn't reply after that, but she deleted

their conversation anyway.

She then took another peek at Hannah to make sure she was still busy with her work before

texting the contact Fabian gave her: Hello, this is Natasha. I believe Mr. Norton has arranged

for you to help out. Send me your personal details right now, and I'll call you in a bit to

arrange for us to meet up. Just say you're a friend of my brother or something, okay? Don't reply to this text, and just email me the file instead.

Natasha let out a sigh of relief after deleting her messages and went back to work. Please let this all to be over soon... That way, Hannah will be able to get together with Fabian again! I can tell that she truly loves him, and I want her to be happy too... She received the personal details of Fabian's contact in her mailbox shortly after, and it was sent anonymously just like she requested. That way, Natasha would be able to show it to Hannah later without any issues.

Meanwhile, Fabian was busy with something in his office as well. However, he wasn't going through documents or checking his company's stocks like he usually did. Instead, he was writing something down at his desk with a pen.

Fabian had been racking his brain trying to win her back, and he decided on giving her a love letter as a gift after eliminating every other option he had available to him.

Of course, a love letter coming from Fabian was no ordinary one, and this was no exception. While there wasn't anything special about the pen and paper that he used, the contents of the pen were what made it extraordinary. By filling it with milk instead of ink, Fabian was able to write her a message that would be invisible unless held over a flame.

Naturally, Fabian had taken several factors into deep consideration before choosing to give her something like this as a gift. A creative and romantic gift like this is sure to melt her heart! I used to be too tyrannical and domineering in our relationship, so this should help change how she perceives me.

Secondly, she's been with me long enough to know I'm not the kind who would write love

letters, and that is especially unlikely now that I'm the president of the number one company in the country! This is my first time doing such a thing, so it should reflect my sincerity and seriousness in being together with her. I'm sure this is a lot more effective in winning her over compared to fancy cars, expensive villas, or branded cosmetic products!

Fabian even made sure to have someone make him a special box which was painted light blue and looked like an ordinary box for storing books and files. What made the box extraordinary was the fact that it was hollow on the back.

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It had a lid on top and a wooden board about two inches long in the front. Two nails were driven through the board from the bottom, one of which would be used to pin the love letter while the other would have a red candle attached for Hannah to light up and view the contents of the letter.

Fabian was sitting completely straight as he meticulously wrote the letter at his desk, and his handwriting could only be described as strong yet graceful at the same time.

Due to the significant amount of force he applied when writing, his words left a slight imprint on the paper which reflected his domineering personality. Unlike Xavier who had his staff come up with his pick-up lines, Fabian's words came from the bottom of his heart and represented his true feelings for Hannah. The fact that they were all handwritten by him only served to make it all the more meaningful and endearing.

I want to find someone who would travel the world with me and stay by my side till the end of our lives, even if it means waiting for you till the final moments of my own. The reason I don't tell you I love you is because you know by heart that you mean the world to me.

All of that may seem impractical and unrealistic to most people, but they were what Fabian felt deep inside. It was only until Hannah left that he realized how much she meant to him.

Life is simply too short. What's the point in being the president of the top company in the country if I can't even be with the woman I love? I would never be able to find someone else

like her even if I were to spend all of my money! I'm sure Hannah will understand the meaning of these words as we are both still deeply in love with each other. I've hurt her over

and over again with my stupid attitude, and now she's left me as a result... I swear, I'm

definitely bringing her back into the Norton family if I ever manage to find her again! Even if

I have to go against everyone in the family and stand up to those who oppose my decision

for marrying an infertile woman, I will do all that I can to protect Hannah and keep her safe

from all harm, be it physical and emotional!

Fabian thought to himself as he carried on writing his love letter at his desk, refusing to stop

until he got to the end of it. Heh, what a joke! As if there is an end to my love for Hannah!

—Mr. Jackson, I have an update on that thing you had me look into,|| Xavier's assistant said as

he entered his office after knocking on the door.

—Oh? You've managed to find something, then?|| Xavier asked anxiously as he was eager to

know how Hannah's return was related to Felicia.

—That's right, Mr. Jackson. According to our sources, Hannah has returned because she

suspects that Felicia had something to do with her mother's death,|| his assistant replied

after a brief pause.

Xavier narrowed his eyes in confusion and asked, —What do you mean?

Didn't we already

investigate this incident back then? Things got pretty crazy at the time, and it was a known

fact that Leo had an affair while Felicia abandoned Hannah. That angered Hannah's mother so much that it gave her depression which eventually resulted in her suicide. Hannah knew all that a long time ago, didn't she? What is she suspecting now?||

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His assistant shook his head as he replied, —Please allow me to finish my explanation, Mr. Jackson. It appears that Felicia may have drugged Hannah's mother and ultimately caused her depression. Of course, this is just a suspicion Hannah has at the moment as she has yet to obtain any sort of evidence, and neither have we. I'm not too sure about Fabian, though. The five prominent families have their own trusted aides when it comes to such information, and they will never betray the families they work for. Regardless, given how our resources are on par with his, I doubt Fabian has found anything either. I've put some men in charge of investigating the death of Hannah's mother as well as keeping an eye on Fabian. That way, we'll be the first to know his every move.|| Fabian is bound to make a move the moment he discovers something, so we can just monitor him to stay ahead!

—You idiot! All you have to do was have them investigate her mother's death! Putting aside the possibility of us even finding anything useful out of monitoring Fabian, we both promised to compete for Hannah fairly and squarely! Are you trying to get me labeled as a coward who goes back on my word?||

Xavier was furious. This is unbelievable! My own assistant has sent someone to tail Fabian when we've promised to compete fairly! As the heir to one of the five prominent families, there's no way I could tolerate something this dishonorable! I will either win like a champ or accept my defeat like a man!

—It isn't that bad, Mr. Jackson. You see...|| His assistant was about to try and justify his actions but kept his mouth shut when he saw the terrifying look in Xavier's eyes. Oh dear, working with him never fails to surprise me... While it's great that he trusts me unconditionally and admires my talents, we've gotten so close with each other that there are no boundaries when he reprimands me.

—I'll head downstairs and take care of things according to your instructions,|| the assistant said.

—Okay. Remember, even if we lose, we will do so honorably. I don't want you trying any dirtier tricks like these ever again. Do you hear me? They may be acceptable to use on some of our enemies, but it is just downright humiliating if we're going against someone like

Fabian!|| Xavier said with a satisfied nod. Good thing I found out about this before Fabian does, or I wouldn't be able to explain my way out of it! Even if I wasn't the one who gave the order, they are still my men, so he'd hold it against me for sure!

—Yes, Mr. Jackson!|| the assistant said respectfully.

—Good. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?|| Xavier asked.

—As a matter of fact, I do. I've purchased the units above and the two units beneath

Hannah's apartment as per your instructions. When would you like to move in, Mr.

Jackson?|| the assistant replied with a smile.

The main reason Xavier had kept him around up till then was not only because they were classmates for many years, but also because he was extremely reliable and trustworthy to get the job done well.

A great example of that would be how he had all the newly purchased units fully furnished

as he knew how serious Xavier was about Hannah.

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—Well done. Have some men clean up the units below Hannah's. I'll be staying there later on,|| Xavier said after giving it some thought. That apartment complex is six stories high and has no elevators, so Hannah would have to walk past the units on the lower floors whenever she leaves the building. Seeing as she lives on the fourth floor, I'll take the one on the third!

—Both the cleaning and the purchase of household items have already been taken care of, Mr. Jackson,|| the assistant replied with a chuckle.

—Got it, you can go now,|| Xavier said with a satisfied smile on his face.

—Yes, Mr. Jackson.||

The assistant then left his office while Xavier leaned against his chair and went into deep thought.

Does this mean that Hannah came back specifically to investigate the death of her mother? If so, would she be grateful to me if I were to lend her a hand? We'd be able to spend a lot of time together if we investigate it together, and she might just develop feelings for me over time! Yeah, there's nothing wrong with me helping her out in a time of need like this!

There shouldn't be anything unfair about this because Fabian could do the same too! In fact, he has already started making his move. That's it! I've decided I'm going to help Hannah out regardless of whether she chooses me in the end! After all, I have nothing to lose anyway! Hmm... Seeing that her primary concern is her infertility, my best bet would be to show her that I don't mind it at all.

Xavier nodded to himself at the thought of that and rushed home to begin his preparations.

As he usually lives at home, his family members didn't think much of his return until they heard what he said in the living room, —I'm planning on getting married.||

—What? You're getting married? Are you serious?|| his mother asked in surprise.

—It's about time you get married, Xavier! Your mom has been bugging me about this every single day!|| his father said with a chuckle.

—Yes, I'm serious. I really am planning on getting married,|| Xavier reassured them as he sat down on the sofa and poured himself a cup of tea.

His mother got really excited upon hearing that. Oh, my god! My boy has finally come to his

senses and decides to get married! Dear me, I sure hope I'll be fit enough to help look after their kids later on!

She sat down beside him and asked, —Who are you marrying? Can you show me her picture?

I have no objections as long as you two truly love each other.||

His father joined them on the sofa as well. —That's right! As long as you like her, Xavier!||

They had been asking Xavier countless times about his plans for marriage, and he had always brushed them off by saying he would get married after finding the woman he loved.

Despite them being incredibly anxious about it, they couldn't just tie him up and hand him

over to some random woman either. As such, it was only natural that they got all worked up

when he finally told them he was getting married.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1450

I wonder if Mom and Dad would still be so excited once they find out that Hannah is

infertile... Xavier thought to himself as he stared at them in silence.

—Well? Say something, son! The suspense is killing me here!|| his mom pressed him for an

answer, seemingly a lot more anxious about it than he was.

—Calm down, Mom. I came back specifically to discuss this with you, so hear me out,|| Xavier

said calmly.

—What else is there to discuss? Just let us know who she is and what she does for a living! If

it's a proper job, we can proceed to prepare the wedding gifts and make the necessary

arrangements!|| his mom exclaimed impatiently. My goodness, what on earth is he thinking?

Just get the wedding done and bring her home first! Everything else can wait!

Xavier flashed them an awkward smile when he saw his father nodding in agreement as well.

Just like that, the two of them continued to stare anxiously at him while he hesitated as to

whether he should tell them about Hannah's condition.

They had introduced Xavier to countless women over the years, but he found none of them

to his liking. As a result, the way he brought up the topic on his own accord only to keep

them hanging in suspense was driving them insane.

—Xavier, her appearances and family background aren't that important.

What matters most is

whether or not she's willing to spend the rest of her life with you,|| his father spoke up

eventually, breaking the awkward silence.

—Exactly! Nothing else matters as long as she treats you well! All that we ask is for the two of

you to be happy together and get us healthy grandchildren!|| his mother chimed in, and the

two went back and forth while Xavier sat there wondering how he would tell them the truth.

How do I tell them?

—What does she do for a living, Xavier?|| his mother was dying to have a look at her future

daughter-in-law.

That snapped Xavier out of his train of thoughts, and he seized that opportunity to explain

himself, —Hmm? Oh, she's a journalist. She's really kind, strong, and independent. It's just

that...||

—It's just what? Out with it, damn it! Don't keep us hanging like this!

Are you trying to give

your mom and I a heart attack or what?|| his father shouted impatiently and slammed his

hand on the coffee table.

His mother nudged him gently with her elbow and motioned at him to calm down before

smiling at Xavier as she said, —Just ignore him and carry on.||

—She is infertile.||

The living room fell silent once again after he said that, and the excited smiles on their faces

vanished as well. Xavier saw them frowning at him in silence and realized he would have a

much harder time winning Hannah over until he resolved the issue with his parents.

Fabian may be separated with her right now, but he hasn't let go of her completely.

However, if I get the green light from my parents, I'll have much less resistance to deal with

in my pursuit for Hannah, which would make things a lot easier for me as a whole.

—I like her very much. So what if she's infertile? We could just adopt a child if we have to!

Given how advanced technology is these days, we can even opt for an IVF which would save us a lot of trouble...||

—But that's child isn't your own... What if something goes wrong, and your child ends up with disabilities or something?|| his mother whispered worriedly.

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Faced with a dilemma in having to choose between a healthy grandchild and a daughter-in-law, she could only look at her husband who had been sitting there in silence.

“We're fine with everything else, but we can't accept the fact that she is infertile. Xavier,

there are plenty of women out there that are much better than she is. If you really like her, you should...”

His father was interrupted by his mother who smacked him on the arm and motioned at him

to stop. Realizing he had gone overboard, he cleared his throat and quickly changed his

choice of words, “I-I mean, you should bring her home so we can meet her and get to know

her better! Marriage is a very important thing, after all!”

“So you don’t agree to us getting married, then?”

Xavier was running out of patience at that point. He had expected some resistance from his

parents because of Hannah’s infertility and was prepared to talk things out with them, but

they were a lot more stubborn than he had thought.

“It’s not that we don’t agree to it...”

Noticing his opportunity, Xavier quickly took advantage of the loophole in his father’s

statement and said, “That means you agree to it, then. Very well, she’ll be interviewing me in

my office tomorrow. If all goes well, we should be able to get our marriage certificates then.

If you two would like to meet her, tomorrow would be the best time to.

Anyway, I’ve still got

some stuff to take care of at work, so I’ll be on my way now. Call me if you guys need

anything, okay?”

With that, he grabbed his coat on the sofa and left the house without even looking back. It

wasn’t until his car had disappeared in the distance that his parents realized what had

happened. “Damn it! That little sh*t played us both!” his father exclaimed helplessly.

“Hannah,” Natasha called out to her after making all the necessary preparations to have her

meet Fabian’s contact. I sure hope this will cheer her up and give her some confidence! It

pains me to see her all depressed like this...

Hannah looked up at her and asked, “Hmm? What is it?”

“Well, you see... My brother has a colleague in Chanaea who seems pretty capable... I

figured he should be able to help you out, so I told him about your situation, and he is

willing to lend us a hand. I’m sorry I told him without asking you for permission first... You

wouldn’t mind, would you?” Natasha said after giving it some thought.

She had actually

come up with her lines beforehand, so she didn't have problems reciting them.

Hannah took a deep breath and shook her head as she knew Natasha was only doing it out of concern for her.

"Of course not, Natasha! I know you meant well, so there's no way I'd mind!" Hannah said

with the sweetest smile she could muster despite the bitterness in her heart. I'd better pull

myself together or I might actually collapse... As for that person Natasha mentioned... Well, I

don't mean to underestimate her connections or anything, but I would probably be a little

more convinced about his abilities if we were in Remdik... After all, how many people could

she possibly know here in Chanaea? I bet she's gone through a whole lot of trouble just to

find this guy...

"Here, this is the information we have on him. I think he has what it takes to help you out,

Hannah. On top of that, he's a friend of my brother, so I'm sure he'll be willing to lend us a

hand! While we don't know for sure if it'll work out, having his help is still better than having

none at all, right?" Natasha tried to convince her further when she saw the look of doubt on

Hannah's face and knew she didn't dare place much hope in it for fear of disappointment.

Hannah nodded in agreement. Natasha is right! In order to find out the truth behind my

mom's death, I'll have to make use of every resource I have available! Regardless of whether

it works out or not, she did put in a lot of effort for my sake, so I can't be disappointing her

now!

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"Sure, thanks," Hannah said as she took the phone over from Natasha, only to gasp in shock

when she read the person's information.

This guy is the general manager of a company owned by one of the five prominent families?

Holy sh*t... He's definitely no ordinary guy! If someone with his resources is willing to help

me out, it would definitely make things a lot easier!

Natasha grinned when she saw the hopeful smile on Hannah's face.

"I've asked him out for

dinner, so you can fill him in on the details and have him look into it as soon as possible.

Who knows, we might even have our answers ready by tomorrow morning!"

"Thank you, Natasha!" Hannah had tears of joy in her eyes as she nodded and held her

hands tightly. Oh, my god! I didn't think Natasha would turn out to be the most helpful

person in such a trying time! She must really care about me!

Natasha played along and gave her hands a gentle squeeze. "What are friends for, right?"

Just like that, Natasha led her to the café that they had agreed to meet up at. After getting

Hannah seated, Natasha went outside to wait for the man. She had to be the first to meet

him and could brief him on the situation so he wouldn't let it slip that Fabian had gone to

him for help. There's no way Hannah would accept his help if she finds out that Fabian was

the one who arranged for this meeting!

Hannah was seated by the window and pursed her lips as she anxiously glanced at her

watch and her surroundings.

I'm so glad Natasha was able to find me someone who could help out with my

investigation! I've been feeling really guilty because I wasn't able to find any clues regarding

Mom's death after so long. She raised me ever since I was a kid, and yet I couldn't even find

out how she really died... Had it not been for Natasha's help, I wouldn't have known what to

do... God knows what I might even do if that were the case...

"Hannah!"

She stopped stirring her coffee when she heard a familiar voice calling out to her.

Hannah looked in the direction of the voice and saw Natasha waving at her while a man in a black face mask followed behind her.

She then waved back at them and ordered two cups of cappuccino for them while Natasha proudly led the man to their table.

The waiter brought the cappuccino over right as Natasha sat down beside her. After

thanking the waiter, Natasha took a huge gulp of it, only to tear up as her tongue burned from how hot it was.

“Ah! It’s so hot!” she exclaimed while fanning her tongue with her hands, sending Hannah into a fit of laughter.

“By the way, allow me to introduce you two. Hannah, this is a friend of my brother. He’s really amazing! I thought I’d try my luck and asked my brother for help with your investigation, and guess what? I got lucky, and he ended up actually finding something!”

Natasha said after taking a moment to cool her tongue off.

Naturally, Hannah got excited when she heard that they were making progress and thanked

the man profusely, “Thank you so much, mister! You’ve been a great help!”

“You’re a friend of Natasha. It’s the least I can do,” the man replied calmly without even touching his steaming hot cup of cappuccino.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1453

“How may I address you, mister?” Hannah asked awkwardly as his name was not mentioned

on the files. How could I ask for his help without even knowing his name?

However, her question was simply met with a cold response from the man, “Sorry, I can’t disclose my identity.”

Feeling that it would be inappropriate to press on after what he said, Hannah decided to

skip that question instead.

Without anything to talk about, things became a little awkward for the three of them as they sat there in silence. Natasha quickly pulled out her phone and handed it over to Hannah as she said, "Ah, I can't believe I almost forgot about this! Hannah, this is the information we've managed to gather for the time being. Here, have a look!" Hannah tightened her grip on the phone and teared up a little from relief as she read through the email.

After so long, I finally have some information to go on with... At this rate, I'll be able to

uncover the truth behind Mom's death in no time! Let's see... A

hallucinogen? So that's why

Mom was so emotionally unstable at the time...

Natasha felt a little bad for lying to her when she saw the tears in her eyes. H-Hey, I'm just

following Mr. Norton's orders here! It's not my fault if she ends up crying when she learns

the truth! Still, this information is only the tip of the iceberg. If she's already crying this much

from reading this, I don't know if she can handle the full truth behind Felicia's horrendous

evil deeds...

To her surprise, Hannah was quick to regain her composure as she returned the phone to

Natasha and thanked the man once again, "Thank you so much for your help, mister! Please

let me know if there is anything I can do at all to repay your kindness!"

"That won't be necessary." The man stood up and looked at her as he continued, "It isn't me

that you should be thanking."

"What?" Hannah didn't quite hear him as his voice was drowned out by the sound of a car

horn blaring outside.

"Nothing," the man replied and walked out of the café without saying another word.

"Geez, what's with that guy?" Natasha pouted as she muttered under her breath. Thank god

he doesn't talk much, or he might really let it slip and ruin everything for Mr. Norton!

Fortunately for her, Hannah was too distracted by the update on her mother's death to care about the man's words.

"What do you think, Hannah? Is he helpful?" Natasha asked while leaning in closer to her.

Hannah breathed a sigh of relief. "It isn't very detailed, but it's good enough. I'm really grateful to both you and that friend of your brother's. I'll be able to take it a little easier for a bit now."

Natasha nodded. "Glad to hear that."

The two of them then returned to the house allocated by the company, and Natasha gave

Fabian a quick call while Hannah was taking a shower, "Mr. Norton, we've met up with the guy and shown Hannah the file as per your instructions... Don't worry, we made sure to make no mention of you... Yes, that's all for now."

Fabian wasn't worried in the slightest about Hannah's safety as he knew she was with

Natasha at the moment, but he was afraid of her getting caught talking to him, so he hung up after a very brief exchange.

He heard a knock on his door shortly after and frowned as he had specifically instructed for no one to disturb him while he was preparing his gift.

"Come in."

It was his trusted aide that he had assigned to spy on Yvette and Lyna.

"Mr. Norton, we noticed another group of men also spying on Lyna," he said respectfully.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1454

Fabian's frown deepened. Another group of men? Who could they be? What's the meaning of this?

"Also... according to the information we've received from the five prominent families, there is someone else from the five prominent families investigating Felicia. However, it remains

unclear who that person is.”

Fabian put the two pieces of information together, and one person’s name came to mind immediately.

Xavier! He’s the only one in the five prominent families who would have any sort of

connection with Hannah! But, how did he know about Felicia? Did Hannah tell him? No,

that’s impossible... I know Hannah, and there’s no way she’d go to him for help, no matter

how hard things get! Well, I don’t care how he found out as long as it wasn’t through

Hannah. I’m confident that she will never fall in love with Xavier, not because he’s inferior or

anything, but because I know the place I hold in her heart. Xavier must’ve sent someone

over to spy on Lyna to help her find out about her mom’s death and win her over that way.

While she is undoubtedly my woman, I can’t just sit by and let another man get involved in

her business! I mean, what would that make me, right?

The look in Fabian’s eyes grew cold as he instructed his trusted aide, “If he wants to stick his

nose into my business, he’ll have to pay the price. Bring some men with you and get rid of

those guys.”

The trusted aide was hesitant as he knew it would affect the relationship between the five

prominent families and tried to talk Fabian out of it, “Mr. Norton, those guys are from the

five prominent families, so maybe we should...”

He stopped himself when he saw the terrifying gaze in Fabian’s eyes and shuddered a little

as he nodded. “I-I mean... Right away, Mr. Norton...”

“Good, you can go now,” Fabian replied coldly.

He waited for that man to leave before pulling out his phone and calling the trusted aide he

assigned to investigate the death of Hannah’s mother, “How is it going?

Did you find

anything?”

“We aren’t making much progress, but we have confirmed the location of the person who used to work as a servant in the Blackwood family. We’re heading over right now.”

“Okay, send me the location. I’m going there too,” Fabian said after giving it some

thought. Since this is about Hannah, I should put in a little more effort...

“Mr. Jackson, we’ve confirmed that Yvette hasn’t left the country, and that she and Lyna

were the ones behind what happened to Ms. Young,” Xavier’s assistant reported.

The look on Xavier’s face turned gloomy upon hearing that. I can’t believe those two would

do such a heinous thing to her... It hurts me so much to see the state that Hannah is in

because of her infertility...

“Find Yvette, and make sure to keep a close eye on Lyna so she doesn’t find out and make a

run for it! On top of that, continue digging for all the evidence of her crimes! I want to bring

these two to justice and avenge Hannah!” Xavier ordered coldly.

At that moment, his assistant got a call on his phone and decided to answer it when he saw

that it was from the people in charge of spying on Lyna. Better take this call just to make

sure everything is okay...

“Hello, what is it? What? Okay, got it...”

He had an uncomfortable look on his face as he knew Xavier was going to lose his temper again.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1455

“Mr. Jackson, I’ve just received word that the men we assigned to spy on Lyna have been

discovered and beaten...” the assistant said hesitantly after a brief pause.

As expected, Xavier was furious and glared at his assistant as he shouted,

“What? Who did

this? How dare they lay a finger on my men!”

The Jackson family was one of the five prominent families, so it was perfectly

understandable for him to get mad at being disrespected like that. "From what I've heard, it was Fabian's men who did it," his assistant said cautiously, fearing that Xavier would take his anger out on him. "Fabian? Damn it, why is he always ruining things for me... When I get my hands on him, I'm going to..."

Xavier was so angry that he almost unleashed a string of vulgar curses, but held himself back when he remembered how his bad temper had always led to Fabian gaining the upper hand in almost all their previous confrontations. "Heh... I know you're doing this for fear of me stealing Hannah from you... Weren't you really confident about it before? What, are you scared now? Fine, you want to go there? Two can play that game, so don't blame me for what I'm about to do!"

Xavier muttered to himself with a smile after thinking it through. He then turned towards his assistant and said, "Have a team of our elites spy on Lyna. If Fabian's men dare make another move, we'll just fight back!"

The assistant frowned for a moment before he replied, "Yes, Mr. Jackson."

"All right, you can go now. Keep me updated on this."

Xavier was a little anxious about getting a lead on the death of Hannah's mom as he believed she would be grateful to him for it and end up falling for him if they spent enough time together.

Meanwhile, Hannah was sitting by herself in the bedroom with a sad look in her eyes. I may have found some documentation on Felicia's involvement in my mom's death, but that's far from enough for me to pin anything on her. I'll need witnesses and physical evidence, or I won't even be able to get her under police custody for a few days...

Natasha came in shortly after and comforted her when she saw how depressed she looked.

The two of them then watched some television before heading off to bed.

Fabian didn't get any rest, though. Even after arriving at the house of the woman who used to serve the Blackwood family, he spent all night using a "carrot and stick" approach just to make her submit.

The next day, both Hannah and Natasha got up very early to prepare for Xavier's interview despite how reluctant she was about doing it.

With a smile on her face, Natasha waited till Hannah had walked off to contact her

supervisor before pulling out her phone to make a call, "About the interview that Hannah will be conducting with Jackson Group today... Oh, all right, I understand."

After getting off the phone, Natasha nearly jumped in shock when she turned around and saw that Hannah had returned from her call. Holy sh*t! Thank goodness she didn't hear anything...

"When will we be heading out, Hannah?" she asked with a smile as she grabbed her handbag and walked towards her.

"The office has sent a car over, so I think we should go now. Sorry to keep you waiting, I was fixing my makeup."

"Oh, no worries!"

Natasha then took her hand and left the house with her.

Thinking that Hannah was arriving soon, Xavier had his assistant wait for her downstairs

while he checked his appearance to make sure he looked sharper than usual.

"Welcome, Ms. Young. Mr. Jackson has been expecting your arrival. Please follow me," the

assistant said politely as he greeted Hannah at the entrance.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1456

Hannah simply flashed him a smile in response and followed silently behind him.

“Mr. Jackson, Ms. Young is here to see you!” the assistant said after knocking on the door to Xavier’s office.

“Come in!” Xavier called out calmly.

The assistant then opened the door for Hannah and took a step back as he motioned for her to enter.

It’s only a matter of time before I deal with him anyway... With that in mind, Hannah took a deep breath and walked into the office.

Natasha decided to not enter, so the assistant arranged for her to wait in the lounge instead.

“Mr. Jackson, I believe you are an honest and straightforward man, so how about we proceed with this interview?” Hannah asked in a clear yet polite manner as she stood in front of him.

“Haha... take a seat, Hannah,” Xavier took no offense at all as he responded with a huge grin.

“Please address me as „Ms. Young“.”

Xavier shook his head and smiled wryly as he walked towards her with a file he had prepared for her.

Hannah stared at him curiously, wondering what he was trying to do.

“Here, have a look at this,” Xavier said casually while handing her the file.

“Hmm?” Hannah stared blankly at the file in front of her.

What is this? Why is Xavier showing me this?

After a brief moment of hesitation, Hannah decided to take the file as she knew he meant her no harm.

This... This is evidence that Felicia has purchased the drugs from Wholehealth Pharmacy!

There’s even a doctor’s signature on the prescription! Isn’t this exactly what I’ve been

looking for? Does Xavier already know about my situation? Is he trying to help me out here?

Wanting to know more, Hannah opened the file and glanced through the contents inside.

Huh? A Chanaean household register, a share transfer agreement, an identification card, and

a certificate of private property ownership... What the hell is all this?

Why is he showing me

this when I don't even have anything to do with his company?

"I know all about what happened to you..." Xavier kept his gaze fixated on Hannah who was

still recovering from the shock as he continued, "including the reason you left. I've had my

men gather evidence on Felicia's purchases of those drugs and located the doctor who

prescribed them to her. He has agreed to testify against her in court."

"But... what's all this, then?" Hannah asked in confusion.

"These are the documents for our marriage registration. I've had a talk with my parents, and

they have no objections regarding your infertility. As for the company... Well, I plan on

handing it over to my brother afterward," Xavier replied calmly.

Hannah's jaw dropped when she heard what he said. "Marriage? I... Mr. Jackson, I wasn't

planning on marrying you, nor do I have any intention of having a relationship with you!"

What the hell is Xavier saying? What makes him think I would even want to marry him when

we've got nothing going on between us at all? Besides, I've decided to remain single for life!

"I understand that this can be a little hard for you to accept at once, so we can take it nice

and slow. Fabian left you because you're unable to have children, but that won't be a

problem for us. We could just adopt a child of our own," Xavier said when he saw her

reaction.

"That's not the issue here, I..."

Having lost all her calm and not knowing what to say, Hannah turned around and made her

way towards the door.

However, Xavier quickly stepped forward and grabbed her by the wrist.

“Hannah, you know

how I feel about you. You and I are meant to be together! Believe me

when I say that I will

treat you well!”

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1457

“Let go of me, Mr. Jackson! It’s impossible for us to be together!”

Hannah tried to break free of his grip, but Xavier was simply too strong for her.

“Why? I know Fabian has let you down, but you can’t just shut everyone else out because of

him! I won’t...”

Hannah cut him off angrily before he could finish, “This has nothing to do with Fabian! I told

you that it’s impossible between us! Now, let go of me!”

“But why? Give me a reason, and I’ll give up on you if I find it acceptable!” Xavier snapped

back at her.

“Because of... well...” Hannah stammered for quite a while, but she was unable to give him

an answer.

“Because she has me!” Fabian shouted angrily as he pushed the door open and stormed

into Xavier’s office.

“Fabian!”

Hannah felt an urge to throw herself at him when she saw him, but held herself back as she

remembered she was no longer related to him.

Fabian simply shot Hannah a brief glance before shifting his gaze towards Xavier. “Oh, my...

How bold of you! Is this how you have your interviews, Mr. Jackson?”

Realizing he had gotten too emotional and crossed the line, Xavier quickly let go of Hannah

and apologized to her, “I’m sorry, Hannah... I lost control for a bit there...”

He then turned towards Fabian and sneered, “Heh... I believe how I have my interviews is

none of your concern, Mr. Norton!”

“Hmph! Your shamelessness sure knows no bounds!” Fabian said as he stepped forward and

grabbed Hannah by the wrist.

“Hey! How dare you step into my office and take my woman away from me?”

Xavier shouted angrily when he saw that Fabian about to leave with Hannah. The amount of disrespect from this guy is unbelievable!

Fabian stopped in his tracks and shot him a cold glare before asking Hannah, “Are you going to stay here, or are you coming with me?”

Go with you? But we’re not related anymore! O-Of course, I wouldn’t want to stay here either...

After a brief moment of hesitation, Hannah said decisively, “I’ll go with you.”

With that, Fabian shot Xavier a taunting smile as he led Hannah out of the office.

Xavier was livid, but there was nothing he could do about it since Hannah had made that choice on her own.

“Thank you for the rescue, Mr. Norton, but I’ll be on my way now,” Hannah said as she brushed Fabian’s hand off shortly after leaving the office.

She then turned towards Natasha and said, “Come on, Natasha. Let’s go.”

Fabian chose not to stop her as he wanted to take care of her mother’s case before he would try to win her back again. Having her return to him simply because he got her out of a sticky situation was unacceptable by his standards.

However, both Natasha and Hannah went missing after leaving the building, and that drove Fabian insane with worry.

Natasha would always report Hannah’s condition to me at this hour, and yet I haven’t heard from her at all... There’s no way a professional assassin like her would forget something this important, so they must’ve run into some sort of trouble!

Fabian was able to trace Natasha’s location using the GPS in her phone and rushed over to

the airport with a group of men, only to find two mobile phones on the ground with neither of them in sight.

Consumed by panic and fear, Fabian shouted at his trusted aides, "Search the area! Turn the place upside down if you have to! You must find them both at all costs!" Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1458

"Why is it you again? Haven't you hurt me enough?" Hannah roared at the person before

her in a voice filled with rage, hatred, and most of all, resentment.

"This is all on you! Initially, everything was fine after you left. But then, you came back and

started investigating my mother! Well? Can you blame me for this?"

The person who was speaking was none other than Lyna, the daughter of Felicia Chalamet,

the woman who had caused the death of Hannah's mother.

"How was that wrong of me? Your mother was cruel and ruthless to kill my mother in such a

despicable way! She had committed a crime, so she should be brought to justice!" Hannah

bellowed at Lyna in unbridled fury.

"Huh? You're right. You're absolutely right! Bringing her to justice, you said? But have you

ever heard of the saying, „every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost?" If your

mother hadn't died, would I be able to enjoy such an easy life?" Lyna retorted with a sneer.

"Hmph! You'd better pray that my mother is fine, or you'll soon be accompanying your mother in the afterlife."

Changing the subject abruptly, she then threw Hannah a look before leaving.

"Mr. Norton, there's a woman here to see you, and she's now downstairs," Fabian's trusted

aide murmured cautiously, afraid that Fabian would fly into a rage.

"Throw her out!"

Fury swamped Fabian, for Hannah was the only woman he loved. Yet, a woman actually

came to seek me out at such a time? Does she have a death wish or what?

“Mr. Norton, she claimed... to know Ms. Young’s whereabouts.”

As soon as Fabian heard that, he immediately perked up. He sprang to his feet at once.

“Take me to her.”

When he got downstairs, he learned that the woman who sought him out was none other than Yvette, the person who had colluded with Lyna time and again to hurt Hannah.

Confronted with her, he naturally treated her with utter contempt.

“Well? Where is Hannah?”

he demanded coldly.

If it weren’t for the fact that she knows where Hannah is, I would’ve killed her a long time ago!

Taking a deep breath, Yvette cut straight to the chase. “In a factory in the suburbs of Baykeep.”

The moment her words fell, Fabian instantly rushed over with his men. Meanwhile, Natasha was no weakling as a professional assassin. She loosened the rope around her wrists bit by bit. Then, she whispered to Hannah, “Hannah, feign passing out with a stomachache.”

All at once, Hannah understood her plan. While she wasn’t certain whether it would work, she still chose to trust her. Letting out a loud cry, she then faked a faint. “Someone, help! She has passed out!” Natasha shouted at the top of her lungs.

Hearing that, the three men who were responsible for keeping guard over Hannah and Natasha rushed over at once. After all, their boss had left instructions for those two women to remain unharmed, so there would be hell to pay if anything happened.

“What’s wrong with her?”

“I have no idea.”

“Huh?”

“Hurry up and check her over! What if something happened to her?”

The three of them cast Hannah and Natasha a glance. Thinking that two petite women

would be no match for them, one of them strode forward and leaned over Hannah.

Seizing the opportunity, Natasha shot out and restrained the man who had leaned over. In

the next moment, she kicked another man in the lower abdomen, sending him flying with

an agonizing cry.

Flipping the man whom she had restrained, Natasha then punched the remaining man. As a

professional assassin, her blows were naturally lethal, so the man lost consciousness as the

punch landed solidly on his neck.

After having subdued all three men, she helped Hannah up and urged, "Let's go, Hannah."

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1459

A niggling of worry plagued Natasha, for there were four skilled fighters and a few strapping

men with Lyna besides the three men keeping watch here. If I'm alone, I can naturally

escape without any problem, but what about Hannah? My main task is to protect her.

Taking Hannah's hand, she carefully walked out. To their surprise, they didn't encounter a

single soul throughout their trek out.

As Hannah worriedly pondered on that, she suddenly caught sight of a huge group of

people in front of her that had appeared out of nowhere. Staring ahead, it was a vast sea of

black.

"Quick, run!"

Grabbing Natasha's hand, Hannah made to whirl around, but Natasha stilled her.

Natasha had swiftly discerned that they were Fabian's men, while Lyna's men were all

kneeling in front of Fabian.

"Understood, Mr. Norton."

As Natasha said that, she started toward Fabian and the others without giving Hannah any

chance to protest.

"Are you okay?" Fabian asked anxiously when he saw Hannah.

Then, he grabbed her, looking her up and down to check whether she sustained any injuries.

Pushing his hand away in slight embarrassment, Hannah murmured softly, "Thank you, Fabian... I mean, Mr. Norton."

However, Fabian didn't loosen his hold on her this time. Instead, he took a step forward and pulled her into his arms. No matter how much she struggled, he showed no signs of letting her go.

"Please come back to me. Hannah, I really can't live without you!" he declared passionately

as he stared into her eyes while cradling her head with both hands.

In truth, Hannah really wanted to say "okay" right then and there.

But can I do that? I'll only bring him greater trouble if I go back!

Nonetheless, Fabian didn't give her an opportunity to answer. He instantly dragged her into

the car and drove back to their villa.

Subsequently, he took out everything that he had prepared beforehand and said to Hannah,

"I've already convinced my mother, so she won't mind your inability to have children

anymore. This is a gift I prepared for you."

As he said that, he slowly backed away, revealing the wooden box on the table behind him.

Without saying anything, Hannah dragged her feet over to the wooden box. After staring at

it for a long while, she lit a candle and read the letter.

After an eternity had passed, she started sobbing. Fabian didn't say anything either, merely

gazing at her with love shining in his eyes.

A while later, Hannah got up and walked over to him. Wrapping her arms around his waist,

she started kissing him slowly.

Thank God she has finally accepted me!

At once, Fabian breathed a sigh of relief. Phew! Thank heavens she has finally returned to

me!

Needless to say, the two of them naturally made love for the entire night.

Early the next morning, a ray of sunlight shone into the room. Fabian groggily blinked his eyes open even as he stretched his hand to the side, only to find no one beside him.

At that, he heaved a sigh. He knew that Hannah was still bothered about her inability to have a child, but he also believed that it was only a matter of time before she returned to his side after the incident this time.

In the course of the next few days, he settled the matter of Hannah's biological mother. Lyna and Felicia were both brought to justice and sentenced to life imprisonment.

As for Yvette, she was also sentenced to three years in prison. Fabian showed her mercy considering the fact that she told him the truth.

Of course, he also pursued Hannah relentlessly. A few days later, he proposed to her in a grand affair and asked her to marry him again.

Hannah tearfully agreed, but she then fainted out of the blue, only to be found pregnant...

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1460

Ring, ring...

An ear-splitting alarm broke the initial tranquility of the morning. A few seconds later, a long and fair arm shot out from under the covers and turned the alarm off.

Another few seconds passed before Joan rubbed her groggy eyes and started her morning

ritual of getting out of bed, washing up, and having breakfast.

Throughout it all, she didn't make a single sound.

Joan then arrived at the company where she worked and started completing her daily tasks.

Ever since she started working at her cousin's company, she had been very conscientious.

While her performance wasn't exactly impressive, she hadn't made any mistakes either.

"Good morning. This is Opulent Designs. How may I help you?" Joan answered the call

skillfully when the company's landline rang.

“Good morning, I’m from Norton Corporation...” After having conversed for some time, Joan

then hung up the phone in jubilation.

Oh my God, I’ve finally gotten a huge project! I’ve got to work hard. I’ll definitely do my

best! she resolved while jumping for joy.

Calming herself down, she then got to her feet and rushed to Norton Corporation. I’ve got

to hurry over to Norton Corporation immediately and discuss the details of the project with

the person in charge lest anything happens!

Upon arriving at Norton Corporation, Joan took the elevator to the thirty-third floor. Staring

at the plaque with the word “office” in front of her, she inhaled deeply before knocking on

the door.

“Come in.” A deep and mellow voice drifted out of the room.

The moment Joan heard the voice, a sense of familiarity inexplicably niggled at her. Having

no time to mull it over, she pushed open the door and walked in.

“Nice to meet you. I’m Joan Watts from Opulent Designs.” She started introducing herself as

soon as she entered the room. However, she didn’t notice that the person who had his head

buried in his work at the other side of the table had stilled upon hearing her name.

As she didn’t notice anything amiss, she continued, “I came here to discuss the details of the

collaboration this time. May I know...”

All of a sudden, she froze because the person in front of her lifted his head at that precise

moment. The face that greeted her was a countenance she had missed greatly and was so

familiar to her that it was engraved in her mind.

Larry Norton! He’s a man I’ll never forget until the very day I breathe my last. Everything I

experienced with him has long since been imprinted in my mind. I love him, yet I had no

choice but to push him away. At the thought of that, she abruptly found it difficult to

breathe.

“W-Why is it you?” Joan muttered dazedly as she stared at the man before her.

“Why can’t it be me?” Larry countered, his voice no longer gentle and mellow but threaded with a sharp edge. “Isn’t this Ms. Watts? Why are you here at my company?”

“I-I’m here to discuss business with you,” she stammered in a flustered voice.

“Discuss business? In that case, do you know who’s going to discuss business with you?”

Then, Larry commented mockingly, “I trust you still remember me, Ms. Watts? Anyway, it doesn’t matter even if you don’t. After all, you usually care only about yourself. You never cared about others.”

Joan merely stood there in a daze, her lovely face drained of all color at that very moment.

She stared at Larry intently with a conflicted gaze.

As Larry spoke, he became increasingly enthusiastic. A sense of gratification at having obtained his revenge flooded him as he pinned his gaze on her panicked and helpless expression.

“Oh yes, where’s the person you love, Ms. Watts? Where’s your boyfriend? After such a long time, you must have had quite a few boyfriends, huh?”

His words were like a knife that mercilessly stabbed Joan right in the heart. I’ve fantasized about meeting him again countless times, but never have I thought that it would be like this. Tears of aggrieve brimmed in her eyes, and she hastily lowered her head, not wanting him to see her looking all miserable.

The project was no longer important to her anymore. At that very moment, the only thing she wanted was to leave. Just as she was about to put her desire into action, the door of the office was slowly pushed open.

In the next instance, a seductively dressed woman sashayed in. She had on a mini skirt with reddish-orange hair and bright lipstick. On the whole, she was a very beautiful woman.

However, her slightly lifted eyebrows marked her as a scheming woman. "You have a guest, Larry?" As a coquettish voice sounded, the owner of it leaned against

Larry.

"She's an old friend." Larry's voice was neutral. In the next moment, he pulled the woman

into his arms and kissed her on the cheek in a possessive move.

At that, jubilation flooded the seductive woman though she had no idea why he suddenly

did that when he had previously been lukewarm toward her. Anyhow, she then cast a smug

glance at Joan who had her head hung low. Extending a hand, she murmured sweetly, "Nice

to meet you. I'm Larry's girlfriend, Gabriella Ward."

Gabriella Ward? Could there truly be such a coincidence? Joan's head snapped up in

astonishment, and she met Gabriella's likewise surprised gaze.

"Joan? It's you? What a coincidence! Why are you here?" Gabriella greeted warmly even as a

flicker of disdain and arrogance flashed across her eyes, but she promptly concealed them.

Gabriella was Joan's best friend during college. Her father was a renowned jeweler in

Marsingfill, so the Ward family was extremely wealthy. Despite that, Gabriella was friendly

with everyone and showed nary a hint of superiority over anyone. Back then, she treated

Joan especially well. Of course, that was merely Joan's naive perception.

"Gabriella! I never thought that I'd meet you here. I'm here to look for La... I mean, Mr.

Norton to discuss a business matter," Joan answered with a faint smile while suppressing

the anguish within her.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1461

"Oh, I see. By the way, this is my boyfriend, Joan. Larry is very amiable, so there's no need to

be shy with him.” Gabriella took Larry’s hand with a warm smile on her face.

She’s his girlfriend? Ah well, that makes sense. Only a beautiful and kind woman with a

good family background like Gabriella is worthy of an outstanding man like him, Joan

mused. At that thought, a bitter smile tugged at her lips.

“Thank you, Gabriella. But I’m about done discussing business with Mr. Norton, so I won’t

disturb the two of you. We’ll talk another day. Please excuse me.”

Instead of feeling thrilled

to bump into her best friend during college, she was driven by guilt to leave as soon as

possible.

“Mr. Norton, this document contains the specifics of our collaboration this time, so I’ll leave

it here for your perusal. If you have any opinions or suggestions, feel free to voice them out.

Someone from our company will contact you further.” Her sense of responsibility to the

company overshadowed her conflicted emotions at present, so Joan steeled herself and

extended the contract in her hand to Larry.

However, Larry didn’t move to take the contract. He merely stared at her coldly. As he

looked at the woman who had once left him ruthlessly despite his fervent pleas, the

emotions brewing within him were no less complicated than hers.

I should hate her, so why do I feel inexplicably distressed at the sight of her vulnerable

expression? No! Why should I help her when she was the one who abandoned me? As that

thought occurred to him, a white-hot rush of fury abruptly surged within him.

Snatching the contract from her, he threw it onto the table without even sparing it a single

glance.

“I never expected you to be the person in charge of the project this time.

It seems that your

company's credibility and integrity are questionable, so I still need to look into it further."

Sneering, he declared, "You may leave now."

His rejection was clear as day, making it known in uncertain terms that he didn't want to

discuss business with her. Joan wanted to leave posthaste, so she nodded and replied, "Sure.

Someone else will contact you soon, so please excuse me."

Then, she glanced at Gabriella at the side before spinning on her heels and left.

Gabriella was just about to say something when she glimpsed Larry's forbidding expression.

All at once, she tactfully zipped her mouth.

Meanwhile, Larry's hands clenched and loosened intermittently as he stared at Joan's forlorn

back. As a wave of irritation assailed him, he slammed his fist against the table hard before

he stalked out of the office.

Gabriella, on the other hand, took note of it all.

"Joan Watts, I wonder what's your story with Larry Norton," she muttered with a

contemplative gleam in her eyes.

After leaving Norton Corporation, desolation engulfed Joan. She had never expected to

meet Larry again and had buried her abiding love for him in the deepest depths of her

memories. Nevertheless, fate was a fickle b*tch. They met each other once again in an

unexpected manner, and he already had a girlfriend of his own.

Her mind brought her back to the past, and she recalled the days when they got acquainted,

fell in love, and dated. However much we loved each other, the depth of their love

determined the severity of their hurt.

Back when they were both madly in love to the point of no return, she was informed during

a medical checkup that she had a tumor in her brain, and it was already at the advanced

stage.

That news was undoubtedly a severe blow to Joan who was in the prime of her life. The doctor told her that she needed to go abroad for treatment immediately, and the possibility of recovery was less than ten percent. Worse still, she might go blind anytime because the tumor was putting pressure on her central nervous system. That very same day, her parents helped her to defer her studies. But the most agonizing aspect for her was having to face Larry who loved her deeply. To save him the anguish if anything happened to her, she chose to break up with him. And for that, she made up an excuse that she no longer loved him and had fallen in love with someone else instead. Larry begged her fervently, hoping that she would change her mind. Despite that, Joan didn't tell him the truth although she was grief-stricken herself. On the contrary, she further provoked him with words in hopes that he would forget about her sooner.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1462

The next day, Joan left without leaving a single word to Larry. And from then on, there was no news of her. Heartbroken, Larry's personality underwent a drastic change. He then went abroad to study. When he returned to the country, he inherited Norton Corporation and became the company's president. Initially, they thought that their lives would be like two parallel lines without ever intersecting again after breaking up, but destiny had brought them together once more. When Joan subsequently returned to the office in a daze, she notified another staff member to contact Norton Corporation. She then tried her best to forget everything that had happened that day, but his image and the wonderful memories of the past kept playing in her mind on a loop no matter how much she tried shaking them off.

At the end of the day, I still can't forget him. But alas, he's no longer mine.

Meanwhile, Larry sat in the chair in his office with his hands clasped against his forehead as

he thought about everything that had happened earlier.

Similarly, his emotions were a chaotic mess. After that woman left me, I once spent my days

in a drunken stupor and led a licentious life. I thought I'd forgotten about her entirely, but I

only realize that I merely buried her in the deepest part of my heart.

Once I came into

contact with her, our memories burst forth like water rushing out of a dam, rendering me

unable to resent her or be angry at her anymore.

Having struggled for a long while, he picked up his phone and rang up Opulent Designs.

"Hello, this is Larry Norton here. Tell Joan Watts to come to my office tomorrow. Otherwise,

don't even dream of getting the contract from me." After hanging up the phone, the corners

of his mouth lifted a fraction. "Hmph! I'll make your life a living hell, Joan Watts!"

"What? Larry... no, I mean, Mr. Norton asked me to go to his office to collect the contract?

W-Why me?" Joan's eyes almost popped out of the sockets when she learned of that. After

confirming it with the other person multiple times, she finally accepted it as the truth.

She had no desire to face Larry, but she was left with no other choice since it was the first

huge project for the company and would yield long-term benefits to the development in

the future. As one of the staff, she had no reason to decline.

"I'm just going over to discuss the collaboration, so don't think about anything else, much

less mention anything irrelevant!" After convincing herself for a long time, she finally

mustered up her courage to go over to Norton Corporation once more.

When she again returned to Norton Corporation, she felt as though she was standing at the

gates of hell.

Well, there's no other choice but to face it head-on! Firming her resolve, she strode in as

though she was going to her death.

Knock, knock, knock.

"Come in."

Joan's heart jolted, but it was already too late to make an escape when she was standing

right outside his door. At that thought, she pushed open the door and walked in.

"M-Mr. Norton, I'm here to collect the contract," Joan murmured with her head hung low.

"Come closer. Are you going to collect the contract from the door?"

Larry's voice was as

chilly as ever.

Upon hearing that, Joan gingerly moved forward.

"Speak!" Larry's voice that brooked no argument rang out.

At that, Joan swallowed as his oppressive aura struck fear into her. "I'm here to collect the

contract from you. If you have any suggestions, feel free to voice them out to me."

"Hmph! Here's the contract. I've included my suggestions for your proposal and the aspects

that have to be further improved." Pausing for a moment, Larry then continued, "And most

importantly, everything I mentioned there is to be completed by you alone. Remember,

you're to do everything by yourself."

Joan nodded dazedly in response. But after glancing through the contents of the contract,

she questioned skeptically, "Did you mean that I'm to complete all the work here by

myself?"

"Is there a problem?" Larry's voice was threaded with an obvious hint of impatience.

"No." How would I dare to say otherwise when the entire company's fate is resting my

shoulders alone?

"You must complete everything in a week. Any problems with that?"

“No problem.” Joan was on the verge of tears, but still, she gritted her teeth and agreed to his demand.

“You may leave now,” Larry sneered after casting her a glance.

“That’s all?” Joan was a tad surprised since she felt that he would never let her off easily. Yet,

I can now leave after just a few words?

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1463

“Are you deaf? If you have a problem with it, put down the contract and get lost!” Larry

roared, livid. Hah! This woman is still as stupid as ever!

“Yes, yes, I understood. Goodbye, Mr. Norton,” Joan hastily replied as she trembled in terror.

“Please excuse me, Mr. Norton. I look forward to working with you.”

Without waiting for him to answer, she bolted out of the office like the hounds of hell were

nipping at her heels.

“This is just the first step. I want to get back everything you owe me. I look forward to

working with you as well,” Larry mumbled as he watched her leave.

Nevertheless, even he

himself didn’t realize that his attitude had long since changed.

“Phew! I’m finally out of there!” Joan breathed in deeply, for every single second she was in

his office was torture to her.

But at the thought of her conversation with him earlier, her lips that had just curved upward

turned down again.

Such a massive amount of work will require at least two people to complete in a week, so if

I’m doing it alone...

Despite her misgivings, she could only suffer in silence. Without fretting over it anymore,

she instantly went back to the office and started on her insane workload.

Every day, she worked overtime until late at night. Then, she woke up early the next

morning and rushed back to the office. Without her having realized it, three days had

passed.

Throughout the three days, she merely buried herself in work. While it was tiring, it was a blessing for her since she could temporarily put the matter of Larry at the back of her mind.

While Joan was swamped with work, Larry was conversely very much agitated. Not all company matters required his personal attention, and he could also easily resolve matters involving major decision-making with his outstanding capabilities, so he had quite some time on his hands.

Whenever he was free, Joan's image always appeared in his mind. Ever since she left, he decided to close his heart off to everyone. After all, it was only when one felt nothing that one wouldn't get hurt.

Tons of beautiful women flocked to him due to his imminent background and handsome outlook, yet he wasn't at all interested in any of them. Even when it came to Gabriella, it was only because of his business dealings with the Ward family and her insistent demand to work at Norton Corporation did he agree to take her in.

He tried his best to regard Joan as a mere business partner, but even after giving it his all, he discovered that he was merely lying to himself. The truth was, he still loved her despite hating her.

Joan Watts, you still owe me an explanation! At that thought occurred to him, he no longer hesitated but instantly drove over to Joan's company.

When the limited-edition Lamborghini gradually came to a stop in front of Opulent Designs, it attracted the attention of some passersby and staff members. All of them were curious to know which tycoon was the owner of the car.

As the car door swung open, a shining leather shoe extended out of the car, followed by a tall man in a suit. He had a handsome and captivating countenance, coupled with a pair of

intelligent and profound-looking eyes. It was none other than Larry.
“Wow! He’s so handsome!” Some ladies had long since started gawking by the roadside.
“And he’s driving such a luxurious car despite his young age! Who is he?”
“Don’t you know him? That’s Larry Norton, the new president of Norton Corporation!”
Larry was very much accustomed to the commotion he had created, so he didn’t tarry at all.
Instead, he strode into the building.
His arrival had the entire company descending into chaos. In no time, Joan’s cousin, who was also the owner of the company, personally came over to greet him. After exchanging some pleasantries, Larry asked for directions to Joan’s office and headed there right away.
At that exact moment, Joan was taking a nap. Exhausted physically and mentally from the deluge of work for several days in succession, she was so tired that she dozed off. Larry sauntered in without knocking on the door. When he spotted Joan who had fallen asleep while sprawled over the table, his heart clenched abruptly. Unbidden, he stretched out a hand to touch her face. Coincidentally, Joan jolted awake at that precise moment. As their gazes locked, she jumped to her feet.
“Why are you here, Mr. Norton? I wasn’t sleeping!” In the next moment, she hurriedly clapped a hand over her mouth upon realizing that she had misspoken. Surprisingly, Larry didn’t sink his teeth into her remark. Instead, he slowly retracted his hand that was suspended in midair and awkwardly rubbed his nose. “I just want to take a look at your revised proposal.”
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Larry feigned calmness.
“Sure. Here you go.” Joan swiftly handed him the proposal.
“What’s with this crappy proposal? This won’t do! Draw up a new one!”
Larry naturally didn’t forget his intention in coming to her office.

“But why? I think it’s pretty good.” Bafflement inundated Joan.

“Is the decision in your hands or mine? Of course, you can opt not to change it...”

“I’ll do it, I’ll change it,” Joan interrupted him, knowing that the matter was in her control.

“There’s no need to do it now. I’m thirsty, so get me a cup of coffee,” Larry ordered.

“I’ll have someone make a cup of coffee for you.”

“You do it!”

Joan could tell that Larry was deliberately making things difficult for her, but she didn’t mind

it. I owe him too much, so it’ll assuage my guilt if I even get to repay him the slightest bit.

“Here’s your coffee, Mr. Norton.” Lacking the guts to look at him, she dipped her head.

Larry took the coffee and placed it on the table. Then, he stared at her.

At that moment, it

was as though time had come to a standstill.

After a long moment, he demanded, “Lift your head up, Joan Watts. I’ve got a question for you.”

Upon hearing that, Joan shook slightly. Has this moment finally arrived despite me hoping

otherwise? But what should I do?

She raised her head and met his deep and conflicted gaze.

“You still owe me an explanation. Why did you leave me back then?”

Larry’s voice carried a

weight that overwhelmed her.

However, Joan remained silent.

“Why? Why did you leave? Do you know how much your actions hurt me?” Larry’s voice was

no longer calm. “Do you have any idea how I suffered back then?”

Gradually, Joan’s eyes turned red-rimmed, and tears shimmered within them. “I know I have

wronged you, but we can never go back to how things once were.”

She tried her utmost best to suppress the urge to wail aloud. I love him! I love him so much,

but he already has a girlfriend of his own now, and she’s my best friend to boot! In that

case, how could I tell him the truth and make us both miserable?

At the sight of the tears swimming in her eyes, Larry felt as though someone had stabbed him in the heart. "So, you're still unwilling to tell me the truth? Or was it truly because you had fallen in love with someone else back then?" In the end, Joan's tears still escaped her eyes and streamed down her face like a faucet. "If you think so, then just continue to believe in that. I'm sorry. I'm really sorry."

At the end of the day, she still chose to sacrifice the love she could have attained. Even now, she was still willing to do anything for him.

Seemingly grasping the sorrow and despair in her eyes, Larry felt that he shouldn't continue coercing her. Perhaps she truly had her own reasons in doing that. "You don't need to apologize. Neither of us owes the other anything, for I did everything for you willingly."

He reverted to his calm and unruffled state once again. He couldn't bear to see her in distress even if they could no longer go back to how things once were. "There's no need to change the proposal anymore. You may continue your work. I'll leave now." After saying that, he left without a backward glance. He didn't dare tarry for even a single second, afraid that he would relent and hug her tightly upon seeing her sad and helpless expression.

He has left, so he has probably given up on me, huh? I've pushed him away again, just like how I ruthlessly left him back then!

Joan's love for him remained in her blood, and the vivid memories consumed her time and again. As she crouched on the ground in agony, tears flowed soundlessly.

Since I've made my choice, I shouldn't regret it anymore! She chose to forget the past. Her present self merely wanted to complete the business deal smoothly and she would sever all ties with him after that.

I don't want to be hounded by the past anymore. I only want to live my life peacefully, and

at the same time, wish him happiness!

It was good to have a resolution, but Larry didn't give her such an opportunity.

Presently, it was already the fourth time he came to Opulent Designs, and the staff members

had already gotten used to his presence from their initial surprise and awe.

Starting from his third visit, the owner of Opulent Designs no longer came out to greet him

personally. Good Lord, his visits are so frequent that I truly can't be bothered to welcome

him every single day!

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1465

He made his way to Joan's office casually, Larry pushed open the door and parked his

butt on a chair before staring at the woman who had her head buried in her work.

"You're here, Mr. Norton?" Joan greeted without even lifting her head as though she had

known about his arrival in advance.

"Yeah. Anyhow, just carry on with your work. I'm just here to check on your progress," Larry

answered. He was still a tad perturbed by her addressing him as Mr. Norton, but he couldn't

do anything about that.

"Okay, please make yourself at home, then. I'll entertain you in a moment." Joan maintained

a businesslike attitude.

Sensing the distance in her tone, a wave of irritation assailed Larry. He took out a cigarette

from his pocket and lit it. That was a bad habit he had developed after she left, and it had

now become an addiction.

At the sight of him smoking, a flash of desolation flittered across Joan's eyes. He never

smoked in the past, so it might be because of me as well. At the thought of that, her guilt

multiplied.

Larry was sitting very close to her, so Joan inevitably inhaled the lingering cigarette smoke. She had an inherent dislike of cigarette smoke, so despite having tried her best to suppress her distaste, a few light coughs still escaped her in the end. Upon hearing her coughing, Larry's brows furrowed. All of a sudden, he remembered that she loathed the reek of cigarette smoke in the past. After hesitating for a long while, he snubbed out the cigarette in his hand and threw it into the trash can at the side.

"I'm hungry, Joan Watts. Accompany me to lunch." Larry sounded as though he was issuing an order, his tone brooking no argument.

"Thanks, Mr. Norton. I'm not hungry at the moment, so I'd like to continue with my work for a while," Joan declined tactfully. She had been doing her best to avoid having too much interaction with him although her efforts had been futile.

"This is just business, what with me having a meal with a collaborator. So, don't read too much into it. Also, I've got some business matters to discuss with you."

Larry gave her no room to turn him down. "Let's go."

At that, Joan inwardly heaved a sigh. Good grief, why am I still so obedient to him, just like I did in the past?

Subsequently, the two of them went to a western restaurant and took their seats at the table.

"Just order whatever you want to eat." Larry handed the menu to Joan.

"Thank you." After thanking him politely, Joan ordered a steak. Likewise, Larry also ordered something at random.

Thereafter, a long silence reigned. Larry was waiting for Joan to speak, but the latter still seemed exceedingly reluctant to do so.

In the end, he broke the silence himself. "The proposal is almost done, right?"

"Yes," Joan replied softly. "It should be ready by tomorrow."

“What’s your plan after that?” An unprecedented bolt of apprehension shot through Larry at the thought that he would no longer have an excuse to seek her out in the future.

“My plan? I don’t have any plans. I just want to focus on my job and live a simple life. That’s enough for me,” Joan answered calmly.

Also, to stay away from you. She added inwardly after she finished saying that.

“I see.” Words eluded Larry for a moment, so he buried his head in his food.

Unbeknownst to them, it so happened that Gabriella’s best friend, Lynette, witnessed the lunch date and even secretly took a video clip of it.

After the two of them had finished eating, Larry drove Joan back to the office before

speeding off. When Joan had returned to the office, she continued working on the proposal.

Lynette then sent the video clip to Gabriella. After watching it, Gabriella blew a fuse.

Ever since she met Joan the previous time, she had sensed that her relationship with Larry

wasn’t as simple as they claimed. Thus, she had someone investigated the matter, only to

discover that they actually dated during college.

She went abroad to Beskary then, so she didn’t know about their relationship before that.

“You’re such a vixen, Joan Watts! How dare you attempt to seduce Larry again when I

treated you so well in the past? What an ungrateful wretch!” Gabriella hissed through

gritted teeth.

She had been regarding Larry as her prospective boyfriend, so she felt as though someone

had stolen something off hers upon seeing that Joan and Larry could possibly rekindle their

relationship.

That feeling was particularly acute when she could distinctly sense that Larry still loved Joan.

While she had no evidence of that, her womanly intuition told her otherwise. As that thought occurred to her, the unease within her snowballed.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1466

“Well, well... I’ve got to teach you a lesson since you don’t know your place,” Gabriella snarled resentfully. Then, she made a phone call.

“Quincy, it’s me, Gabriella Ward. I need a favor. Don’t worry, I’ll reward you accordingly.”

Shortly after, she hung up the phone with her lips curved into a contemptuous smile.

“You want to go up against me, Joan Watts? I’m afraid you’re still far from being my match!”

Joan glanced at her cell phone, only to realize that it was already past midnight. “Let’s call it a day now. I’ll work overtime again tomorrow, and I’ll be able to wrap it up,” she muttered to herself.

After mumbling that, she stretched before packing up. Then, she shouldered her handbag and left the office.

She had to go through a relatively short alley on her way back to her rented house.

Nonetheless, she didn’t really pay it much heed since she was used to taking that alley.

As it was the middle of the night, the alley was devoid of any life. When a gust of wind swept past, she suddenly shivered and pulled her clothes tighter against herself even as she instinctively quickened her steps.

The moment she reached the corner of the alley, however, she was abruptly startled. Three men were standing around the corner while puffing away, and their gazes were pinned intently on her.

All of a sudden, a sense of panic seized her. Oh God, I’d better not provoke these ruffians in the dead of the night! She hastily lowered her head and quickly walked away.

As soon as she had walked past those three ruffians, she wanted to breathe a long sigh of relief.

“Why are you in such a hurry, missy?” But alas, one of the ruffians spoke in a heavy accent.

“Where are you headed to?”

“Missy, you’re Joan Watts, yes?” the man who was obviously the leader of the ruffians drawled. He was none other than the person whom Gabriella phoned, Quincy.

“I-I’m not Joan Watts. You’ve got the wrong person,” Joan hurriedly denied as she glanced at Quincy, who was as thin as a stick and had a vertical scar bisecting his face. Naturally, she could tell that these people were here to target her specifically.

“Regardless, you’re still a pretty good choice to satisfy our desires first.” “Haha, that’s right, Quincy. She must be pretty fun to fu*k since she’s so beautiful.”

Giving Joan no chance to escape, the three of them surrounded her. Terrified by the situation that was unfolding before her, Joan could no longer think of any good method to deflect their attention.

Desperate, she started yelling at the top of her lungs, “Someone, please help me! Help!”

As she shouted relentlessly, she attempted to break out of the three men’s confined circle.

However, she failed to do so with the puny strength she had. Instead, Quincy grabbed her shoulders.

“Haha, do you think all those scenes in TV series actually work? Go on and shout. We’ll just see whether anyone will come to your rescue,” Quincy drawled with a leering smile as he caressed her face.

“This is a really great job. Not only do we get to make a few quick bucks, but we’re also getting to enjoy such a beautiful girl!”

By then, the ruffian on the left had already started tearing at Joan’s clothes.

“No! Let go of me!” Joan wailed in despair.

“Actually, this isn’t such a great job.”

A cold, hard voice split the air just when the three ruffians were just about to make their move on Joan, and it was none other than Larry, who had just rushed over.

“Who are you?”

The sudden voice startled all three of them.

“The person who’ll be putting you in the hospital!”

At the sight of Joan in tears, stark fury gripped Larry, and he sounded just like a devil who had come from hell.

“You? What a joke! Buddies, beat him up!”

Infuriated by his words, Quincy teamed up with the other ruffians to teach him a lesson since he was so impudent.

But just as Quincy’s words fell, Larry had already shot out like a cheetah and streaked over to him, grabbing his fist that was headed at his face.

Crack!

After the crisp sound of bone cracking, Quincy’s agonized scream pierced through the air.

His arm was already bent at a ninety-degree angle before he had even realized it.

Having snapped his arm, Larry then bent forward without a moment’s delay to dodge the knife someone swung at his back even as he kicked out his leg with the momentum. In the next instance, another crack rang out, and the ruffian collapsed to the ground, howling and hugging his leg.

In just a few seconds, two ruffians were already defeated. Upon seeing the abysmal state of affairs, the other ruffian wanted to take off, but he was then sent sprawling to the ground with a kick from Larry.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1467

“Well? Spit it out! Who sent you? Otherwise, you’ll end up like the two of them!”

Larry’s voice was dripping with a bone-deep chill as he placed his leg on the ruffian’s body.

"I-I don't know anything! I only know that it was a woman! I don't know anything else!" the ruffian blurted without even thinking about it.

After all, the sight of his two buddies howling on the ground struck such terror into him that his heart was about to pound out of his chest.

A woman?

After pondering for a moment, the answer came to Larry.

Disregarding the ruffians, he then rushed over to Joan. When he saw her shaken state, his

heart shattered, and he pulled her into his arms lovingly.

"You're fine now. I'm here, so everything is going to be okay."

Larry stroked her back gently, and his voice was a soothing tenor.

Hugging him tightly, Joan sobbed softly. A sense of security engulfed her at his solid and warm embrace.

"Let's go. I'll walk you home," Larry murmured.

Only then did Joan realize that she had been hugging him for some time, and she swiftly

released her hold on him. When her hands were empty, she instinctively clutched the hem

of her clothes with embarrassment written all over her face.

"Thank you."

She didn't quite know what to say, so in the end, the many things she wanted to say all

condensed into a succinct expression of thanks.

"Nah," Larry grunted in response. "Let's go."

Then, he took the lead and walked ahead of her.

When they arrived at Joan's house, he stayed for a while. After ascertaining that she was

fine, he told her to rest well before leaving.

As his car sped off, his face was blanketed with a layer of frost.

The entire night passed in silence. When Larry went to work the next morning, he headed

straight for Gabriella's office.

At that moment, Gabriella was spacing out as she contemplated how she should handle

Larry's confrontation. In fact, she had already known about everything that had happened

last night itself.

Besides panic, she also felt a hint of regret.

Damn it all to hell! It was such a great opportunity to teach Joan Watts a lesson, but alas, my plan was ruined by Larry's appearance!

"Gabriella Ward."

Gabriella jumped at the sudden voice. When she saw who it was, she forced a smile.

"Oh, it's you, Larry?"

She then promptly got up to entertain him.

"Last night, your best friend, Joan Watts, was ambushed by three ruffians in an alley."

Larry cut straight to the chase without wasting any time.

"What? How did that happen?" Gabriella's face paled upon hearing that.

Then, she queried,

"Is she okay?"

"You should know the answer to that better than anyone else, no?"

Larry retorted in a terse voice.

"What are you saying? How would I know about that?" Gabriella put up a calm front as she

said that. "You've got to believe me, Larry!"

"I've already gotten the answer to the entire matter. Are you still planning on lying to my

face? Gabriella Ward, if you've got the guts to do something, you should also have the guts

to admit to it! Don't make me hate you."

Gabriella's pretentious expression repulsed Larry, so he didn't give her any quarter.

Upon seeing that the matter was already out in the open and feigning innocence would

only make him despise her all the more, Gabriella bit the bullet. "Yes, it was indeed my

doing! I've investigated your past with her thoroughly, and it was she who ruthlessly left you

back then. In that case, what right does she have to seek you out again now? She's nothing

more than a b*tch! I'm the one who truly loves you!"

"Shut up!"

It was glaringly obvious that Gabriella's play to his emotions had zero effect on him.

“That is not a reason to hurt someone else. If it happens again, my company will have no use of you!”

After saying that, Larry left without a backward glance.

“This is all on you, Joan Watts! I’ll definitely get back at you for this!” Intense hatred gleamed in Gabriella’s eyes when she saw him whirling around and leaving so resolutely.

Thereafter, Larry went to Opulent Designs. Despite having suffered a severe blow from the incident yesterday, Joan was adamant about coming to work. She was working on the proposal when Larry arrived, and she hastily stood up at the sight of him entering her office.

“Y-You’re here,” Joan stammered.

“Yeah. How’s the proposal coming?”

Larry didn’t mention a single word about the incident last night as though nothing had ever happened.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1468

“It’ll be ready to be handed over to Norton Corporation tomorrow after a bit of overtime tonight.”

Joan’s eyes were fixed on Larry. Everything that had happened last night was still vivid in her mind, and she remembered all that he had done for her.

“Submit the proposal to me the day after tomorrow. In the future, try not to work overtime anymore. It’s bad for health.”

Larry’s voice was a tad cold and stiff, but Joan could still discern the smidgen of concern in it.

A burst of warmth instantly infused her, and she replied with a smile, “Thank you.”

At the thought that the day after tomorrow would be the last time they were seeing each, a wealth of anguish weighed upon her.

It was only when she was swamped with work could she control herself from thinking about

him. Whenever she had a little free time on her hands, his image and every single detail about him would flood into her mind and occupy every inch of it. I can't deny that I still love him deeply, but he already has a girlfriend, and she's my best friend during college. How could I be the third party who destroys their relationship? After having concluded this business deal, I'll leave. In the end, she chose to run away from him. However, no one knew whether leaving would actually be a relief or an agonizing torture.

Meanwhile, in the residence of the Ward family...

"Dad, is our family the biggest business partner of Norton Corporation?"

Gabriella inquired

sweetly as she massaged her father, Landon Ward.

"Yup. At present, the Ward family's biggest business partner is indeed Norton Corporation.

But as Norton Corporation is the biggest company in Marsingfill, we're not their most important collaborator. Rather, we are the one depending on them in many aspects."

Landon had his eyes closed as he luxuriated in his daughter's rare show of filial piety.

"What's wrong, Gabriella? Why did you suddenly ask about business?"

"Ah, it's nothing. It's just that I really like Larry, and he has feelings for me as well. Will it be

beneficial to our family and mutually benefit both parties if the two families join in marriage?"

Finally, Gabriella revealed her ultimate goal—to bind herself with Larry by making use of the

excuse of uniting with Norton Corporation via marriage. In that case, no matter how much

Larry Norton loves Joan Watts, he can't possibly go against his family's wishes!

"Hmm? You mean, Larry Norton is also enamored of you?"

As Landon looked at his fair and beautiful daughter, he felt that she wasn't lying to him.

"Yes, Dad. That day, Larry even kissed me." Shyness was written all over Gabriella's face.

“Haha, this is indeed a good choice since you’re both in love with each other, and joining in marriage is beneficial to us!” Landon exclaimed cheerfully. “I’ll phone Finnick in a while and feel him out.”

“Thank you, Dad! You’re the best!”

Over the moon, Gabriella planted a hard kiss on Landon’s cheek.

Shortly after, Landon made a call to Norton Residence.

“Hello, Finnick! It’s me, Landon.”

“Oh, it’s you! Why did you suddenly ring me up, old boy?”

Larry’s father, Finnick, and Landon were old friends, so they weren’t all that restrained with each other.

“Finnick, there’s a fantastic matter I’d like to discuss with you.”

“Hmm? What fantastic matter are you speaking of?” Finnick asked.

“I heard that my daughter and Larry’s relationship is really good, so I’d like to ask whether you’re interested in joining in marriage.”

Finnick was taken aback for a moment before he replied with a chuckle,

“This is indeed a fantastic matter. You know what? Larry hasn’t mentioned a single word to me! But Landon, Larry’s mother and I don’t really interfere in Larry’s marriage. Why should we trouble ourselves with our children’s affairs? Just let them be.”

Hearing that, a bitter smile bloomed on Landon’s face. “You’re right. I was just eager to have even closer ties with you that I didn’t consider that. In that case, I’ll just let them be.”

“Haha...”

At the side, Gabriella heard the conversation loud and clear. While resentment blazed within her, she herself knew that an arranged marriage was likely out of the question.

It was the day Joan was going to Norton Corporation to submit the proposal, and she had made all the preparations early in the morning.

This was her third time standing at the entrance of Norton Corporation, and each time, her emotions were vastly different.

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Joan hesitated for a moment before she took a deep breath and entered.

Larry's office was open. Joan stood at the side of the door and stared at him, who was working away at his desk.

He is just as he has always been. Chiseled jawline, clear gaze, and a small frown as he worked intently...

Everything seems familiar, but...

Larry looked up when he sensed that someone was looking at him. That was when he caught Joan staring.

"You're here," commented Larry calmly. His voice carried a hint of excitement, but it was virtually undetectable.

"Yeah, I'm here to hand the report in," replied Joan softly.

"Oh, okay. Just place it on the table," replied Larry after being momentarily stunned.

Joan put the report on the table. She then stood there without saying a word. Larry

remained quiet as he sat in his chair as well. The atmosphere in the room instantly turned slightly tense.

"Mr. Norton, it was a pleasure to collaborate with your company. We wish that we can collaborate again in the future," said Joan.

She grinned. I have to let go, regardless of how unwilling I am.

She then extended her hand politely. It seemed that she wanted to feel the warmth of

Larry's hand one last time.

The ridiculously polite tone and gesture that Joan made got Larry a little speechless. After

some time, he stood up and shook Joan's hand.

"Sure. I hope we'll get the opportunity to work together again."

Will that really happen? thought Joan with a bitter smile on her face.

"Well, I better not take up any more of your time, Mr. Norton.

Goodbye," said Joan.

She took one last look at Larry and smiled at him before she turned around and left the

office.

Larry didn't say anything. He simply watched as she left.

Joan's life reverted to its calm and uneventful style over the next few days. She went to work

like she had always done so, but her heart simply couldn't stop yearning for him.

Someone dropped by her workplace on a random day. He wore a casual outfit and had a

baseball cap on. He was handsome, and his smile seemed especially cheery.

He walked right up to the receptionist and smiled before asking, "Hello. May I know how to

get to Ms. Joan Watts' office?"

The receptionist answered the man politely.

"Thank you," said the guy before he left.

"What is up lately? Why do handsome dudes keep dropping by to look for Joan? How I wish

someone that good-looking would come look for me too..." mumbled the receptionist.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Someone knocked on the door to Joan's office.

"Come in."

Joan looked up. Her nonchalant expression instantly turned gleeful as she did so.

"Dustin! What brought you here? Come in," invited Joan excitedly as she stood up.

Dustin Silverman was Joan's doctor while she was getting treatment for her illness. They

spent a lot of time together as they battled her illness, and Dustin eventually fell for Joan.

He found her to be a sweet, kind, but sometimes clueless woman. Joan, on the other hand,

regarded him as a great friend because he took good care of her.

The reason why Dustin came all the way to Marsingfill was to court Joan and get her to be

his girlfriend.

For that, he specifically put in a request to be transferred to the place where Joan was

staying. He did all that just to be close to her.

“Joan, how have you been?” asked Dustin as he sat down. He had a smile on his face the entire time, and it seemed like he was delighted.

“I was transferred to the city for work. Looks like we’ll be seeing each other a lot again,” said Dustin.

The two of them exchanged some pleasantries and chatted away happily. They were old friends who were catching up, so before they knew it, they had already spent a lot of time together.

“You’re working now, so I better not disturb you. Let’s hang out again once you’re free.”

Dustin’s objective for visiting was to see how Joan was doing. He didn’t want to overstay his welcome after seeing her, so he stood up to leave.

“How about I treat you to dinner after I clock off? Let an old friend treat you for traveling all the way over to her humble city,” suggested Joan.

Dustin grinned brightly after receiving that invitation.

“Deal, but I have to warn you, I will be asking for an expensive meal,” joked Dustin.

“No problem. It’s settled, then,” replied Joan.

The two of them smiled as they looked into each other’s eyes.

Meanwhile, Larry was troubled over the past few days.

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Larry’s mind warned him against looking for Joan again. She hurt me and heartlessly abandoned me. I have no reason whatsoever to go to her. Anyone who had been hurt would not do the same thing that hurt them in the first place.

However, his heart kept yearning for her. It told him that he loved her so, so much. It didn’t matter what Joan did to him in the past. He was convinced that she didn’t have a choice.

Larry had been troubled by that issue for days, but he decided to follow his heart after debating endlessly with himself.

Since I’m still in love with her, I should just go all out.

With that thought in mind, Larry drove his car and hurried over to the office where Joan worked. She should be clocking off any minute now. Larry wanted to treat her to a meal and take the opportunity to talk to her. Maybe we can clear out all the misunderstandings or something.

Larry lit up a cigarette as he waited in his car. He was bored because Joan hadn't shown up yet.

When he finally saw Joan's figure, energy surged through his body, and he jumped a little.

He extinguished the cigarette and was ready to head over right away. However, before he could, he paused. Wait, Joan's not alone. She's walking with another man!

"Dustin, what cuisine would you like to have?" asked Joan as she swiped on her phone.

"You decide. I'm good with anything," replied Dustin with a grin.

"It's not safe to walk while checking your phone. Let me guide you," offered Dustin.

After saying that, he held Joan's arm to guide her. Joan wasn't bothered by his gesture. She even smiled sweetly at him.

The two of them chatted happily as they walked down the street. Larry, on the other hand, was burning with fury as he sat in his car.

The way Joan interacts with that man makes them seem like a couple! Larry almost lost control of himself upon coming to that conclusion. He was so angry that it felt like his rage would soon burn away all of his sanity.

He didn't spare any time to consider the situation. Stepping on the gas, Larry zipped his car toward the two adults immediately after.

Joan and Dustin were discussing where they might eat when they heard a noise behind them and instinctively turned around only to see a car speeding toward them.

"Dustin, watch out!"

Joan shrieked to warn Dustin.

The Lamborghini was practically touching Dustin's body when it screeched to a halt.

Larry hopped out of the car and walked to Joan. He interrogated angrily, "Joan Watts, who is this? Why are you hanging out with him?"

Joan slowly recovered from the shock. When she saw that the driver was Larry, she huffed in an annoyed tone, "Larry, what kind of a driver are you? You almost hit my friend!"

"Friend? He's not your boyfriend, is he?" growled Larry icily.

"What does that have anything to do with you?" refuted Joan loudly,

"Mr. Norton, our

business deal has concluded, and that last bit of connection between us has been severed.

What right do you have to butt into my private life?"

"Who is he?" demanded Larry once more.

He ignored Joan's words and insisted on getting an answer out of her.

"You don't get to care. So what if he is my boyfriend?" challenged Joan.

She was losing her temper as well, and she refused to back down.

Just then, Dustin wrapped his arm around Joan's waist gently and glared tauntingly at Larry.

It was as if the former was declaring his territory.

"Please stop bothering Joan. She is not interested in you, and bothering her won't help your cause whatsoever!"

Larry saw how Dustin was holding Joan, and how she didn't seem to mind at all. That got

Larry to give up interrogating her about the matter.

She has someone else with her now, and it no longer matters to her if I am here for her or not.

"Oh, so that's how it is... right, Joan? This is your boyfriend. You left me all those years ago

because you fell for someone else too! Am I right?" demanded Larry. His eyes were burning

with immense fury when he growled, "And to think that I assumed your hands were tied

when you left. You truly disappointed me!"

Larry tried his best to control himself, but he still couldn't calm down.

After howling and spewing insults, Larry got into his car and left, looking like a lone wolf with a broken heart.

Joan's heart felt like it was being shredded. She had repeatedly hurt him, so it no longer

mattered if her hands were tied. I am not worthy of his love.

"Joan, are you alright?" asked Dustin in a concerned tone. "I held you because the

circumstances forced me to do so. You're not mad about it, are you?"

Joan quickly wiped her tears away before she grinned and replied, "No, I'm not mad. Thank

you, Dustin."

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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1471

"I'm glad to hear that. Let's go have dinner together now."

"I'm sorry, Dustin. But I don't think I can go have a meal with you tonight. I'll make up for it

some other day," promised Joan.

She sounded apologetic and hurt. At that moment, all she wanted to do was to go home

and have a good sleep.

"Then, let me walk you home," offered Dustin. "We'll have plenty of opportunities to have a

meal together. It's fine to postpone this one."

"Thank you."

"You don't need to be that courteous with me."

Seeing Joan and Dustin walking side-by-side together, Gabriella finally revealed herself from

the dark.

"My, my, Joan. You really are a popular succubus, but you won't defeat me this time," said

Gabriella with a gleeful smile before she left happily.

Meanwhile, Larry was deep in his thought while hiding in the dark as well. He needed some

time to process everything that happened that day.

As it turned out, he didn't actually leave earlier. The reason being when he turned around,

he caught Gabriella spying on Joan.

Larry was a little suspicious and had his guard up when he saw Gabriella there. She is the

one who hired the guy to bully Joan. I wonder what she has up her sleeves this time.

Gabriella showing up also helped calm Larry down quickly. He was no longer furious when

he observed everything from the side.

From his position, he could somewhat make out the conversation between Joan and Dustin.

Ah, so Dustin "s not her boyfriend... His mood immediately brightened upon realizing that.

But why did that foolish woman lie to me? Looks like I will have to investigate the matter further.

Larry drove his car and disappeared into the night.

Gabriella sent someone to investigate Dustin as soon as she got home.

The Wards had always had a good rapport with the underworld society in Marsingfill, so she

was able to learn everything quickly.

Gabriella grinned at her discovery.

So Dustin is a renowned doctor who treated Joan in the past. If I can get my hands on the

old photos they took together, I can send them to Larry and tell him that Joan heartlessly

dumped him for the doctor. After that...

Gabriella suddenly felt as if her fantasy of being with Larry was within reach and could

indeed become reality.

She decided to strike while the iron was hot. The first thing she did was gather photos of

Joan and Dustin together. She collected anything that could make anyone mistake those

two as a couple. Then, she had her people printed everything out.

All that"s left now is to get them to Larry.

Gabriella grinned happily at that thought. Unbeknownst to her, however, Larry had already

seen through all her schemes.

On the following day, Gabriella walked into Norton Corporation confidently with the printed

photos in hand.

The evidence is all here. I"d like to see how you defend that b*tch now, Larry!

"Larry, can I come in?" said Gabriella.

She deliberately made her voice sound sweet while waiting patiently behind the door.

"Come in," said Larry.

He sounded as calm as he had always been.

"Larry, I need to tell you something," informed Gabriella with a straight face on.

"What's wrong, Gabriella? You can tell me anything," replied Larry.

He had put his pen down and stopped working entirely because he wanted to see what

Gabriella was up to.

"It's... Well, I think I should just show you these photographs," said

Gabriella before handing

the photos over.

Larry accepted the folder and checked the photos out. That was when he realized that those

were photos that Joan took with Dustin. The two of them weren't

physically close, but it was

obvious that they were good friends.

Larry was uncomfortable when he saw the photos of Joan hanging out with other men. Still,

he turned to Gabriella and asked, "What are you trying to say?"

"Larry, these photos are taken from a few years ago. That means Joan was already with that

Dustin guy back then. She left you for him, and this is proof of her betrayal!" announced

Gabriella firmly. It was as if she had investigated everything thoroughly.

Larry nodded. He had already gotten used to Gabriella's tricks.

"Alright, I got it," replied Larry. "You don't need to worry about this anymore."

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Gabriella was stunned. Why does Larry sound so calm? It's as if he already knows all that.

Also, what does he mean when he says that I don't need to worry about this anymore?

"Well, what do you plan to do? You can't let her get away with it!"

insisted Gabriella, who

was starting to feel nervous.

"I have my plans, so don't you do anything to hurt Joan."

“After everything I’ve shown you? How long are you going to keep defending her blindly?”

roared Gabriella.

“All you need to do is keep my words in mind. I’m tired and you should leave,” said Larry.

He showed no signs of hesitation as he chased her away.

Gabriella was so angry that she was gritting her teeth. Unfortunately, there was nothing she

could do about it. In the end, she stomped on the floor and left begrudgingly.

Joan Watts, since things have turn out this way, don’t blame me for being cruel and

ignoring our past friendship!

Gabriella grinned evilly as a vile scheme made its way to her mind.

She got home and sat on the sofa for a while before dialing a number.

“Hello, who is this?” asked the man on the other end of the line.

“It’s me, Gabriella Ward.”

“Why are you calling again?” demanded the other party angrily when he heard her reply.

The man in question was none other than Quincy, who didn’t accomplish his mission of

bullying Joan and instead got his arm broken by Larry.

At first, Quincy thought that he got a lucrative job, but he hadn’t even gotten anything

before someone else broke his arm. Hence, he was furious with the situation.

He was also filled with resentment for Gabriella.

“I want you to do something for me,” requested Gabriella, who seemed to be ignorant

about how angry Quincy was at that moment.

“I’m not interested. Find someone else,” said Quincy. He didn’t dare to accept any more jobs

from Gabriella.

“I will transfer a million into your account once everything is done.”

The man on the other side of that line turned quiet. He was just a street hooligan, and a

million was a fortune to him.

He didn’t hesitate for long. Unable to resist the tempting call of wealth, Quincy gritted his

teeth and asked, “Tell me what you need.”

“Go after the woman I targeted earlier. I want you to kidnap her and drug her before getting someone else to sleep with her. Then, I want you to videotape the entire thing and share it on the internet. I don’t care what you have to do to accomplish it. Just know that I will pay you a million when it’s done, and you are to leave this city immediately after,” said Gabriella in a cruel tone.

Quincy gasped a little as a chill ran down his spine. He never thought that someone as beautiful as Gabriella would turn out to be that evil. Still, he had no reason to reject her request. “I’ll leave Marsingfill as soon as I get the money and I’ll be able to lead a good life.

He gritted his teeth before agreeing, “Fine, I will do as you asked. However, I want the money paid to me immediately after the deed is done. You know what we will do to you if you don’t pay up.”

“Don’t worry, it’s just a million. I’ll definitely pay you.”

Gabriella didn’t hesitate to agree to those terms. After all, the money meant nothing to her.

In fact, she was willing to pay ten million if it meant destroying Joan.

“It’s a deal, then!” both parties agreed to the plan.

Meanwhile, Joan, who had her guard down at the moment, was oblivious to the fact that a devious scheme to bring her down was in the making.

She had a rare day off, so she slept in. After she woke up, she went for a walk to relax her mind.

Getting out of the house and having some fresh air eased the depression she had been feeling over the past few days.

As she walked, she thought about what meal she should treat Dustin to that night. They agreed to meet up yesterday, and Joan wanted to welcome Dustin into the city.

Suddenly, two men with a baseball cap on ambushed her from behind. They walked up to

Joan and tossed a sack over her head immediately.
It was obvious that it was not the first time they committed a crime like that. They clamped her mouth shut and dragged her into a white car that was parked at the side of the road.

“Mmm! Mmm!”

Joan tried to call out for help, but all that could be heard were muffled sounds. She

struggled endlessly to try to get someone else to notice her.

That was when one of the men hit the back of her neck and made her faint on the spot.

When she finally came around, Joan discovered that she had been taken to an abandoned

warehouse. They had tossed her to the floor and had bound both her hands and her legs.

She was also gagged.

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Joan scanned her surroundings fearfully. Hopelessness filled her heart, and she had no idea

what she would have to endure later. She didn't know if anyone would come to rescue her,

either.

Larry, please come and rescue me, was the first thought that surfaced in Joan's mind. She

was frantic at that moment and the scene of Larry rescuing her back then kept replaying in

her mind. He was now her only hope.

The door to the warehouse opened, and two men with masks on entered. They removed the

gag they placed on Joan.

“Who are you? Why did you kidnap me?” asked Joan.

Her big, round eyes were shining with fear.

“Hahaha!”

The two men laughed maliciously as they stared at Joan.

“We don't really have an agenda. All we want is to put on a show with you,” replied one of

the men before he got a pill out of his possession. He then walked over to feed it to Joan.

“Here, take this. It will make things so much better later!”

“Hehe.”

The two men chuckled as their gaze burned with lust. Joan clamped her mouth shut. She could tell from the two men's tone that the pill was nothing good. She tried to fight back as much as possible. Seeing how stubborn Joan was got one of the men to pinch her nose. He laughed and taunted, "Let's see how long you can keep your mouth shut." Joan couldn't breathe because her nose was blocked. All she could do was hold on for as long as she could. A minute later, she finally parted her lips. The man with the pill pinched Joan's mouth the second she opened them and threw the pill in.

Cough! Cough!

Joan tried to cough the pill out, but she couldn't.

The men grinned evilly. Everything is done. All that's left now is for the drug to take effect.

At that moment, Larry was inside his office in Norton Corporation.

A private number suddenly showed up on his phone and checking the screen prompted

Larry to jump up.

"Hello, what's wrong?" asked Larry grimly.

"Something happened to Joan Watts, Mr. Norton," replied the man politely from the other end of the line.

"What? Explain!"

Larry had sprung up, and he seemed nervous.

"Someone kidnapped her this morning, and I'm tailing her right now. It looks like they are leaving the city."

"Follow them. I will go to you right away!"

"Understood."

After hanging up the call, Larry grabbed his coat and ran out of the office immediately. He

felt as if his heart was burning at that moment.

"Please be alright, Joan," prayed Larry silently.

After the last incident with the three hooligans, Larry sent his bodyguard to keep Joan safe.

He didn't want her to get hurt again.

However, Joan was unaware of any of that.

When Joan was kidnapped, Larry's bodyguard observed from the dark, so that he wouldn't alert the culprit. He wanted to get to the bottom of it all, and that was why he chose to tail the culprit while calling Larry.

Larry sped down the road. He knew that the faster he went there, the less likely Joan would be hurt.

Fifteen minutes after Joan took the pill, her body started reacting to it. At first, she felt thirsty, followed by a burning sensation all over her body. It was as if a fire was burning in her abdomen.

That was when she finally realized what the pill was. It's an aphrodisiac drug.

Joan fought endlessly to combat that strange feeling inside of her, but she was so thirsty that she was burning. She started to lose consciousness, and her vision blurred.

The two men noted that it was about time. With sly grins on their faces, they approached Joan.

Joan, however, was completely unaware. The burning in her body made her feel like stripping.

Bang! Just then, a loud noise came. Someone had kicked the door down. Larry got there in time to rescue Joan.

He sighed a breath of relief when he saw that Joan was not hurt. It only took him a few moves to deal with the hooligans, and he pulled her into his arms after that.

"Joan, are you alright?" asked Larry in a worried tone.

Joan didn't realize that she was rescued. In fact, she couldn't even recognize Larry at that moment.

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"Hot... I am so hot..."

Joan's gaze was blurry, and she stripped as she spoke. Her beautiful skin revealed itself in front of Larry.

It was only then that Larry noticed her abnormality. Her body's burning, and she's panting so much that it's obvious that someone drugged her.

Larry was infuriated when he discovered that. The woman I loved was almost...

"Drag them out of here and break their limbs. Wait for me by the door after that," instructed

Larry.

His demeanor was frigid when he gave that order to his bodyguard. This is considered the

lightest punishment I will give after what they have done.

"Understood."

The bodyguards dragged the two men away after receiving the order.

Larry loosened the ropes that bound Joan's arms and legs before he took off his coat and

draped it over her.

She plastered herself to Larry as soon as she was free. Her hands locked his face in place as

she kissed him fervently.

Larry could guess what drug they used and knew that the drug would crush Joan if he didn't

sleep with her.

Seeing how engrossed Joan was in the kiss instantly got Larry aroused as well. He pulled her

into his arms and kissed her back passionately.

Soon, the entire warehouse was filled with a romantic aura.

A few hours passed before Joan woke up groggily. She opened her eyes and saw

chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

"Where am I?" she murmured.

It took her mind some time to clear up. Wait, wasn't I kidnapped and trapped in a

warehouse? What am I doing here?

Joan struggled to get up. She suddenly sensed a sharp pain in her body and recalled that

she was drugged.

"No, this can't be real. It can't be!"

Joan muttered mindlessly as tears slowly rolled down her cheeks. That was her first as she

had kept herself pure. She never expected that in just a matter of hours she would lose the virginity she had treasured for over twenty years. Joan suddenly heard a soft sigh coming from the corner of the room, and she realized that someone else was there.

“Who are you?”

Joan’s voice quivered with fear. She was traumatized.

She didn’t know how else she would be abused in that foreign place.

“Don’t be scared. It’s me,” said the man in the corner before he walked to Joan’s side.

It’s Larry!

When Joan saw who the mysterious man was, she instinctively sighed a breath of relief. She

soon realized something, though.

“W-were you the guy who...” asked Joan.

Her voice was trembling.

Larry stood there without saying a word.

Slap! A crisp voice echoed, and a clear palm print showed up on Larry’s face.

“You assh*le. H-how could you?” shouted Joan with a broken heart.

She couldn’t believe that the man she loved and trusted the most had drugged her. At that

moment, she felt like her life had just turned grim.

“Rest up, and don’t move about too much,” advised Larry when he finally spoke. He then

added, “This is my responsibility, and I will do right by you. Also, just so we’re clear. I’m not

the one who drugged you.”

“Who else would’ve drugged me, then?” demanded Joan loudly. “Am I supposed to believe

that you just happen to be there to rescue me and had no choice but to sleep with me?”

Larry found himself at a loss for words when faced with Joan’s accusations. He couldn’t give

a plausible explanation for what happened, because even he himself thought that

everything was unbelievable.

“Stop pretending, Mr. Norton. I don’t need you to do right by me, either. All I want is for you

to fade out of my life completely because I don't ever want to see you again!"

Joan sounded extremely firm when she said those words. She wanted to believe him, but

the events of the day made it so that she couldn't.

After lashing out, Joan got up to walk away. The sharp pain, however, got her to hiss.

Nonetheless, she was still adamant about leaving.

Larry knew that Joan wouldn't listen to him at that moment, so the only thing he could do

was leave.

"Rest well here. This hotel is under my management, so you don't have to worry. It's safe

here," murmured Larry.

"The most dangerous place to be right now is beside you, Mr. Norton," scoffed Joan.

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"I know that there is no point in saying anything right now. Try to calm down. I'll have my

chauffeur take you home once you're feeling better."

Larry didn't want Joan to refuse his help, so he added, "If you don't want to owe me

anything, then I will have my people send you the hotel bill later, and you can pay for it all."

After saying his piece, Larry walked out of the room. He instructed the manager to take care

of Joan before driving away.

Gabriella Ward, you have crossed the line this time.

When Larry left the room, he clenched his fists as a dangerous glint flashed across his eyes.

He decided then and there that some people were not worthy of forgiveness.

Joan slowly calmed down after Larry left.

She knew Larry well. He would never lie... could it be that he's really not the one who

drugged me?

But if he's not the culprit, then how did he show up within such a short amount of time and

become the one who sleeps with me? There are simply too many coincidences.

The harder Joan worked to analyze the situation, the more confused she got. In the end, she gave up.

It doesn't matter if he was the one who drugged me. He is still the reason I am no longer a virgin, not to mention he still has a girlfriend from the same social status as he is.

Too much had happened that day, and Joan was both physically and mentally weary. She fell asleep soon after.

After parking his car in Norton Corporation, Larry made a beeline toward Gabriella's office.

He didn't knock on the door politely. Instead, he kicked it down. The loud bang surprised Gabriella, who was touching up her make-up at that moment.

Annoyed, she turned around to yell at the intruder, but she became frightened when she saw that it was Larry.

Quincy didn't tell her that he would kidnap Joan that day, and she definitely didn't know that her vile plan had failed and been exposed. All she could do at the moment was stay calm and feign confusion. "Larry, what's wrong? Why are you so angry?" asked Gabriella.

Larry lost control when he saw Gabriella's pretentious expression. Without saying another word, he stepped up and slapped her right across her face.

"Why did you slap me?" demanded Gabriella.

Larry's merciless slap ignited Gabriella's fury, and she had her hand on her face as she howled.

"Why? You're asking me why even at a time like this?" shouted Larry angrily, "I've always thought that you were immature and will grow out of it soon. Turns out, you are a purely evil b*tch. I can't believe you'd stoop as low as hiring others to drug her!"

Gabriella was stunned.

She didn't expect Quincy to initiate the plan so quickly, and she certainly didn't think that

Larry would discover everything.

"Listen to me, Larry," said Gabriella. "I am not the one behind this. It's Quincy! He has been upset about you breaking his arm. That must be why he went after Joan again. It's not me.

I'm innocent."

"You're still denying it?"

Larry knew then that Gabriella was beyond help.

"Pack your things right now and get the f*ck out of Norton Corporation.

The company

doesn't need a malicious creature like you!"

"No! Larry. Please, don't chase me away."

Gabriella was panicking. If she left Norton Corporation, she would lose her only avenue of getting close to Larry.

"I was wrong, Larry. I was blinded by my love for you and couldn't bear anyone threatening

our relationship. I promise it won't happen again. Please give me a chance to redeem

myself. Don't chase me away," begged Gabriella pitifully as she gripped Larry's hand.

"You no longer have the opportunity to do so!" growled Larry. He didn't believe her and

demanding, "Leave immediately. If I ever see you near Norton Corporation again, I will make

sure your entire family suffers along with you!"

With that, Larry left without ever looking back.

Tears rolled down Gabriella's cheeks. She stared at Larry's back as he walked away

heartlessly.

She simply couldn't understand it. Why is Larry unmoved even though I'd loved him

persistently?

Joan abandoned him once. Yet, she has always had a place in his heart. Why?

No... I will not admit defeat. I won't!

The more Larry cared about Joan, the more Gabriella hated her.

"I'm won't ever let you off, Joan Watts. This isn't over yet!"

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1476

After the incident, Joan asked for some time off from work. She locked herself in her house and refused to leave because she needed time to overcome the trauma that Larry caused her.

Dustin, on the other hand, became a regular visitor in Joan's place. He didn't know what had happened, but he could tell that Joan had gone through a terrible ordeal. This is my shot at getting her to open up and talk to me. Dustin knew that Joan was in love with someone else, but he didn't care. He believed that time would prove how much he loved her, and they could be together in the future.

"Joan, I came to visit. I made some soup for you. You seem weak lately and you'll need to replenish the nutrient you lost."

Dustin had tons of bags with him when he showed up at Joan's place.

"Dustin, I'm happy that you're visiting. But you don't need to take anything over. I'll feel bad about it," said Joan.

She sounded a little exasperated as she accepted the gifts from Dustin.

"Here we go again. You're treating me like a stranger once more. How many times have I told you? You don't need to be so courteous with me. I'm really gonna be mad if you keep treating me like that," replied Dustin.

He pretended to be angry, but his eyes carried a hint of warmth.

"Alright, alright, I got it," said Joan.

She smiled when she saw Dustin acting like that.

She needed someone by her side at that moment, and Dustin was there every day. His

gesture touched her because he had always been attentive and kind to her ever since they

first got to know one another. At that point, Joan saw Dustin as a trusted friend she could confide in.

They interacted freely, and time passed them by. Before either of them knew it, Dustin had already spent a lot of time with Joan.

“Joan, I have to go back to deal with some things, and I can’t stay here any longer. It’s been

nice hanging out with you,” said Dustin as he stood up.

“Thank you, Dustin. I am truly glad to have a friend like you,” replied Joan genuinely.

“Do you only see me as your friend?” asked Dustin.

He was eager to learn the answer to that question.

“I...”

Dustin’s question troubled Joan. Truth be told, she noticed his feelings for her some time

ago, and she could see what a good man Dustin was.

Unfortunately, she was in love with Larry at the time, so she pretended to be oblivious and

refused to deal with Dustin.

But things had since changed. Larry has found his better half, so should I give Dustin a

chance?

“Truth is, Joan, I came to Marsingfill for you, but I have to return to A Nation in a few days.”

Dustin noticed how Joan was at a loss for words, so he continued, “Joan, I love you, and I’d

like to ask... Will you go to A nation with me?”

Joan’s mind was in a mess at the time. Larry being in Marsingfill meant that they would

inevitably see each other if she stayed in the city. However, she didn’t know where else she

could go.

Now that she knew Dustin flew to another country just for her, it would be a lie to say that

she was not touched by that act. Still, isn’t it a little impulsive for me to move to A Nation

just like that?

“I have a few more days before I have to leave. Please take the time to consider my offer,”

said Dustin when he saw how hesitant Joan was. He could tell that she was swaying, so he

spoke some more.

“It has been a while since you’ve recovered, Joan, and it’s time you follow up on your

condition. This is a good opportunity to go to A Nation and check if everything is fine. You won't have to be worried about it anymore once that is done." Joan fell deep in thoughts as she stared at him. Back then, she received her treatment in A Nation, so she didn't suspect the credibility of Dustin's words. "Let me think about it," answered Joan. "I'll give you an answer soon." Moving to another country was a huge matter, and Joan needed to talk to her parents about it. "Okay, then I'd better leave now, Joan," replied Dustin. "Let me walk you out." Joan decided to go home and discuss the matter with her parents after she walked Dustin out. Her parents lived in Zaprington, which is right next to Marsingfill, so it only took Joan two hours to reach their place via a cab. "Mom, dad, I'm home!" Joan called out to her parents as soon as she got into the house.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1477

This was the place that sheltered her from wind and rain. She did not need to worry about getting hurt here. "Joan, why are you back?" Surprise was evident in her mother's voice. She wasted no time in expressing concern for her daughter's wellbeing and chastised Joan for getting skinnier. On the other hand, Joan's father was smiling with relief as he stood beside her mom, pretending to be calm about her return. After going through the whole ordeal with Larry, Joan was afraid to return home to her parents. She was worried that she would break down and cry in front of them, causing them great worry. "I just came back to see you. There is something that I would like to discuss with the two of you."

Joan took a deep breath and said to her parents sweetly.

“Come, sit down. There is no need to hurry. Let me cook you a meal.”

In the blink of an eye, Mrs. Watts prepared a feast.

While they were eating, Mr. Watts asked affably, “So Joan, what did you want to discuss with us?”

Joan told them that she needed to go to A Nation to follow up on her condition and her

plan to stay abroad. However, her lips were sealed when it came to her recent misfortune.

She did not disclose anything about that.

“I understand that the follow-up is crucial. As for going overseas on your own... Do you have any idea how difficult it is for you to live there all by yourself?” asked Mr. Watts solemnly.

“Don’t worry, Dad. I’m all grown up now. I can take good care of myself,” answered Joan.

She tried to make light of her plan.

“Joan, I don’t agree with you going abroad and staying there alone. You should come home right away after the check-up. I don’t want you to suffer hardships on your own over there.”

Mrs. Watts’ eyes watered as she spoke.

“Alright, let’s not talk about this anymore. We will wait until you get treated before we discuss anything else concerning the future.”

Mr. Watts concluded the discussion with a tone of finality. The family then enjoyed their precious time together.

In Larry’s room.

“Caspian, what are the results of your investigation?” Larry asked the bodyguard next to him.

“I have completed the investigation, Sir. Dustin Silverman is the doctor who treated Joan

Watts a few years ago,” he answered respectfully.

“Treated Joan? What illness did she have?”

Larry was confused. He never knew that Joan had any illnesses.

“Sir, these are the investigation results from our people. Just have a look and you’ll have

your answer.”

Caspian passed a notebook to Larry.

After scanning through the contents in detail, realization dawned on Larry, and he scolded

himself severely for being stupid at the same time.

It was only then that he knew Joan had only left him because she had a tumor in her brain.

The fact that she was uncertain of how much longer she could live made her decide to cut

off all ties with Larry so that he would not pine after her. As a result, she made up a lie about

leaving him for someone else.

As for Dustin, he was the doctor who was in charge of Joan’s treatments.

Upon learning the truth, Larry was guilt-ridden. Joan had suffered so much in silence these

few years... But what did I do? I had been rude to her at every opportunity and made life

immensely difficult for her. There’s no doubt that I had hurt her deeply...

With that thought in mind, he decided to go find her immediately. Right now, all he wanted

was to be right next to her and pull her into his embrace. He wanted to apologize to her.

Before long, Larry reached the place where Joan was renting. He eagerly knocked on her

door.

“Joan, it’s me! It’s Larry!” he called out at the top of his lungs.

“I know everything now! I’m sorry for treating you horrendously. Can you please forgive

me?”

All he got in response was silence.

“Joan, can you please open up? I know I’ve hurt you. But I will treat you well for the rest of

my life. So please just give me another chance!”

Larry rapped on the door for a very long time, but he did not get any response. Instead, the

racket he made caught the attention of the neighbor next door.

“Young man, the girl who lived here left this morning. She seems to have moved away,” said

the old lady.

"Do you know where she went, ma'am?" Larry asked in a hurry.

"I have no idea," replied the old lady slowly.

"She went with a young man who was roughly your age."

"Thank you, ma'am!" responded Larry.

Upon hearing what the old lady said, he hurried down the stairs while dialing Joan's number.

"Sorry, the number you have dialed is currently unavailable..."

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1478

Joan did not give any chance for Larry to contact her. Even her phone was switched off.

The young man that the old lady mentioned must be Dustin.

But, where could they have gone? Larry racked his brains but nothing came up.

After he got into his car, Larry dialed another number urgently.

"Caspian, find out where Joan's parents live! Be quick!"

Larry barked his order into the phone anxiously.

"Yes, sir. I'll get to it immediately."

Caspian replied swiftly before hanging up.

Larry could only wait in his car apprehensively.

After ten excruciating minutes, Larry received an address on his phone.

He read the address and stepped on the gas, heading straight for Zaprington.

He drove like a madman all the way. In a little over an hour, he was at the doorstep of where

Joan's parents lived.

"Mr. Watts, I'm Larry! May I know where Joan is?" asked Larry.

Joan had mentioned Larry's name while talking to her parents previously. As such, Mr. Watts

recognized that his name was familiar and didn't think much about it.

"Young lad, didn't Joan tell you that she was going to A Nation today?"

Mr. Watts asked in a friendly tone.

"A Nation? Why is she going there?"

Larry felt as if he was hit by a bolt of lightning. If Joan went to A Nation, would I still have

any chance of finding her?

"It's not in my place to tell you why. But I can tell you that her flight is scheduled for three in

the afternoon. I don't think you can make it in time to see her."

Lifting his wrist to glance at his watch, Larry's stomach dropped when he noticed that it was almost half-past two.

"Mr. Watts, can you please give me Joan's number?"

He was frantic. He couldn't let Joan leave. I'm not letting her go! I need to be with her for the rest of my life!

After getting her current phone number, Larry hastily bade goodbye to Mr. Watts and

started rushing over to Zaprington airport.

Joan, please wait for me!

Larry threw the speed limit to the wind. Luckily, the airport was located in the suburbs of

Zaprington, so there wasn't much traffic. Still, a lot of car owners had to stomp on their

emergency brakes to avoid him. This earned him lots of profane cursing and swearing.

"You crazy a*shole! Are you trying to kill yourself driving like that?"

"What a lunatic!"

He wasn't the least bothered by the insults. His sole focus now was to get to Joan as fast as possible.

With his left hand gripping the steering wheel, his right hand reached for his phone to dial

Joan's number.

In the meantime, Joan and Dustin were waiting to board the plane.

When she saw the unfamiliar number on her phone, she was puzzled.

Only a few people

know about my new number, so who could this be?

"Hello?"

She decided to take the call.

"Joan, it's Larry! Where are you now?"

He was ecstatic to finally hear Joan's voice.

Larry? Joan was stunned. How did he get my number?

"Larry, I'm leaving. I am going to a place where you won't be around. I hope you will be

happy. No, you must live a happy life."

She tried her best not to cry. She even willed herself to hate him with all her might. But

when she heard his voice, she realized that she was about to leave him forever. Her heart ached as if a knife was plunged through it.

“No, Joan! Only you can give me happiness. Please wait for me at the airport. I beg you, please don’t go!” Larry pleaded desperately.

Joan could no longer hold back her tears.

This scene right now was a reenactment of what happened a few years ago. She

remembered how he pleaded and begged her not to leave.

She still loved him deeply, but once again, she had to steel herself to leave him.

“Larry, this is our fate. We can’t go against what is destined for us!”

With that, Joan burst into tears. She felt it. The familiar feeling of her heart being ripped to

pieces. The pain was so overwhelming that even breathing was a luxury.

“Joan, I’m almost there. Please, wait for me...”

A loud screech cut through, followed by the sound of a huge crash. Then, it was complete silence.

“Larry? Larry!”

Joan was panic-stricken. “Larry, answer me! What happened to you? Say something!”

Larry did not respond. Joan was petrified and completely blanked out.

Her phone slipped

from her rigid hand and made contact with the cool surface of the airport floor.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1479

“Joan? Joan, are you alright?”

When he saw how Joan had stiffened up, Dustin’s heart was filled with bitterness.

“Joan, the plane is about to leave. It’s time for us to board,” Dustin reminded her.

Joan regained her senses. “No... no! Dustin, Larry is in trouble. I have to see him! I have to!”

“What about me then? Don’t you want to go to A Nation with me?”

Dustin pleaded

desperately.

“I’m sorry, Dustin. But I can’t leave with you. I can’t let him go. He is everything to me!”

Joan finally faced the truth, admitting it to both Dustin and herself. "I know you like me. But, there's no space in my heart for anyone else. I'm sorry, I can't go to A Nation. Even if I can't treat my sickness, I still have to know what happened to him."

Dustin sighed. No matter what he did, Joan's heart was always shut to him.

Even if she leaves with me, her heart still belongs to him.

Dustin felt overwhelmingly dejected.

Nonetheless, he wasn't a stubborn man. As such, he smiled at Joan, and without any

hesitation, he said, "It's alright Joan. I have known for a few years now that there's someone

in your heart. It's just that I thought I could replace him. But now, it seems the gulf is too

wide to be bridged. I wish both of you all the best."

When he finished, he gave Joan a smile of relief. "Joan, forgive me for lying to you. In truth,

your sickness no longer needs any further treatment. I hope we can still stay friends and see

each other in the future. I will be going now."

After looking at Joan longingly, Dustin steeled his heart and headed toward the boarding

gate.

After sending Dustin off, Joan hurried out of the airport, screaming hysterically in her

heart. Larry, please be alright!

Immediately after Larry's car accident, some good Samaritans called the City Hospital in

Zaprinton. Soon, an ambulance arrived before sending Larry, who was unconscious, and

the truck driver together to the hospital.

Right before the accident, Larry was speeding and speaking anxiously over the phone.

Hence, he didn't notice a truck traveling at high speed around a bend, causing both their

vehicles to crash into each other.

Luckily, Larry reacted in time by jamming the brakes. Given the top-notch performance of

his Lamborghini and the fact that the airbag deployed in time, Larry escaped largely unscathed.

The moment Joan left the airport, she hailed a cab right away.

"Mister, have you heard anything about an accident just now?" With a helpless expression,

Joan asked the taxi driver as she couldn't get through Larry's phone.

"Yes, I did. It happened just a few streets away from here."

"In that case, please take me there."

Joan was relieved that she no longer needed to search blindly.

"Miss, the victims have already been taken to the hospital," the driver replied.

"Which one?"

"City Hospital, I'll take you there instead."

"Thank you."

Joan was silent throughout the journey until they arrived.

Rushing over to the front desk, Joan asked anxiously, "May I know where the victim from the recent car accident is?"

"Both of them are in the ICU on the fourth floor."

"Thank you."

Once she had the information she needed, she ran toward the fourth floor.

After searching ward by ward, she finally saw Larry's figure lying on a bed and entered accordingly.

"Miss, do you know this man?" A doctor emerged from the side.

"I do! Doctor, how is he?"

Grabbing the doctor's arm, Joan asked anxiously.

"May I know if you are a family member?"

"I... I'm his friend."

Joan repeated her question, "What is his condition?"

The doctor sighed gently. Seeing that, Joan felt as if her world had collapsed. Could it be that he...

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1480

Fearful to continue her thoughts, Joan felt her head beginning to spin.

"He's fine. All he has is some minor injuries and a slight concussion."

The doctor slowly finished his sentence.

What?

Joan was dumbfounded. He's fine? Then what's with the sighing?
Joan was so infuriated that she almost cussed. Seething, she snapped,
"Why did you sigh
then?"

"He's fine, but the other person isn't so lucky," the doctor replied.
"Miss, since you're his friend. Please help him complete the admission
procedures and
inform his family."

"Sure, I'll get right on it."

When she realized Larry's life was not in danger, Joan breathed a sigh of
relief. In a much
better mood, she headed downstairs to complete Larry's hospital
registration.

Once it was done, she returned to Larry's ward.

After checking his body and verifying that his injuries weren't serious,
Joan's mind was put
at ease as she sat by Larry's bed.

However, he was still unconscious. When she saw Larry's pale face, she
couldn't help but feel
her heart ache.

If it wasn't for me, he wouldn't be in this condition. Joan blamed
herself.

Looking at him longingly, she realized this was the first time over the last
few years she had
seen him in such close proximity.

At that moment, he looked like a sleeping prince with his chiseled face
and exquisite
features. With his eyes closed, his lips emanated a sensuous allure while
his eyelashes could
be clearly differentiated.

The elderly had a saying that people with long eyelashes were
exceptionally smart. That
description fitted Larry perfectly.

Holding that thought, Joan couldn't help but smile.

She desperately hoped for time to freeze at that particular moment.

That way, she could

stay by Larry's side without having to worry about anything else.

Joan leaned closer to Larry before resting her cheek on his chest,
listening closely to his

heart.

Pounding strongly, his heartbeat brought her a sense of security and strength.

Suddenly, she felt Larry move. Startled, she quickly sat back up, worried that he would

notice what she was doing.

When she glanced at him, she saw him beaming at her, causing her to spring to her feet.

"Y-y-you're awake!"

Joan quickly lowered her head as she blushed all over.

"When did you wake up?"

"When you just arrived."

Larry's voice was gentle while the look he gave Joan was filled with affection.

Having heard him speak, Joan couldn't help but hope the ground would open up and

swallow her.

Why didn't he move when he woke up?

"How do you feel? I'll get the doctor to see you."

Joan's eyes glistened as she gave an excuse to escape.

Just when she was about to leave, Larry grabbed onto her hand.

"Don't worry, I feel fine. Just stay with me for a while," Larry remarked with a smile.

The warmth from his hand caused her heart to race. She suddenly didn't know how to react.

"Even if you have nothing to tell the doctor, you should let him run some checks."

Joan reminded herself not to stay and become a lame duck. If one excuse didn't work, she

needed to come up with another one.

"Stop being silly. There's a button here that I can press and call for the doctor."

Larry obviously understood what she was trying to do. But, he wasn't going to pass up such

a wonderful opportunity.

"Joan, come here and sit down."

Larry slowly pulled her back to her seat. "I have something to tell you."

When Joan realized there was no escape, she sighed in resignation and sat down beside

Larry.

"I know everything now. Joan, I was wrong about you."

Larry tightened his grip on her hand as if she would disappear the moment he let go.

Despite her shock, Joan kept herself together. "What do you know?"

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1481

"I know why you decided to leave me. Why didn't you tell me the first time we met?"

Larry caressed her face affectionately.

Having heard Larry's words, Joan knew that she had to come clean with him.

Taking a deep breath, she looked at Larry and replied, "Larry, it's time we clear the air. The

reason I left you then was because I had a tumor in my head that needed to be treated

overseas. Furthermore, I didn't even know whether I could survive. To save you the pain, I

told you that I was in love with someone else, hoping that you would forget me."

She continued, "After that, I traveled to A Nation and there was where I met Dustin. He was

my doctor then and treated me exceptionally well. His care and concern were both attentive

and meticulous. However, I only ever saw him as a good friend."

Joan slowly immersed herself in her own memories.

"All these years, there was never a moment where I wasn't thinking about you. However, I

kept reminding myself to forget you. Just when I finally buried you deep down in my heart, I

ran into you again only to find that your heart had been stolen by someone else."

Pausing for a moment, Joan sneered at herself. So what if I still love him?

Although Larry was aware of most of what Joan told him, his heart still ached when he heard

her say it out loud.

However, he was also delighted that the reason she didn't tell him the truth was that he

already had a girlfriend.

Holding that thought, Larry smiled. "You have always been the only one in my heart. Do you

really think I have a girlfriend?"

Stunned by his response, Joan asked doubtfully, "Isn't Gabriella your girlfriend?"

Everything suddenly clicked for Larry. Joan must have assumed that Gabriella's my girlfriend when I pretended to be intimate with her.

"You foolish gal. How can she be my girlfriend? I was only faking it in front of you," Larry

explained with a smile as he stroked her head affectionately.

"Really?" Joan asked, tilting her head. Her silly expression simply made her look adorable.

"Of course."

Now that the misunderstanding had been cleared up, Larry was overjoyed.

As for Joan, she giggled like a child when she found out the truth. Never in her dreams did

she think that it was all just a mistake.

"Do you blame me for hiding the fact that I'm leaving?" Joan asked with a serious expression.

"Of course I do!"

Larry's expression changed as he glared at her. "When you decided to leave without telling me, did you ever stop to consider my feelings?"

It seems he has yet to forgive me.

When she saw the look on Larry's face, Joan's buoyant mood was suddenly gone. She felt so depressed that she was on the brink of tears.

Noticing the shift in mood and the disappointment on her face, Larry quickly cheered her

up. "Since you didn't tell me you were leaving, your punishment will be to stay by my side forever!"

When she saw Larry's mischievous expression, Joan wasn't confused for once and quickly realized that Larry was just teasing her.

"You scoundrel!"

She waved her fist at him and almost pounded him on his chest.

Beaming in response, Larry pulled her into his embrace.

Just like a kitten, Joan curled in his arms and relished in the warmth of his body. At that

moment, she was overwhelmed with a sense of bliss.

Larry, everything is perfect when you are by my side.

Joan whispered to herself.

As Larry's injuries were minor, there was no need to stay overnight in the hospital. Hence, he

was discharged on that day itself.

Before long, his bodyguards arrived at the hospital and prepared to send him home.

After helping Larry into the car, Joan felt reluctant to see him leave.

However, without any

excuse to stay back, she had no choice but to say goodbye.

"Larry, rest well at home. I'll visit you when I'm free," Joan remarked.

"Joan, I'll likely have trouble moving around for the next few days due to my injuries. Can I

trouble you to take care of me?"

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1482

Reluctant to see Joan leave, Larry decisively came up with an excuse.

"Don't you have a maid at home? Why do you need me to look after you?"

Joan felt ambivalent as she thought Larry was joking.

"No, I stay alone. There's no one else at home," Larry quickly replied.

"Really?" Joan was skeptical.

"Of course, why would I lie to you?"

Just as he spoke, he shot his bodyguard a glance.

As Caspian had been working for Larry for a long time, he recognized the cue at once and

added, "Ms. Watts, Mr. Norton has bought a new place where he is staying by himself."

Larry gave him a satisfactory nod. Good job Caspian. I'll definitely give you a raise after this.

"Aren't you living with your boss to protect him? Don't you consider yourself human?"

Joan's candidness stumped Caspian. "Besides, even if you don't have a maid, you still have

your bodyguard. Why must it have to be me?"

Larry laughed wryly as he wondered if Joan was playing dumb. Despite how obvious his

intentions were, she didn't seem to get it.

Larry looked at Caspian again.

People like us will always have to sacrifice for the boss, huh...

Caspian sighed in his heart before adding. "To be honest, Ms. Watts, other than protecting Mr. Norton, I'm not really good at anything else. Even for my own laundry, I have to send it out to the dry cleaners. Hence, it'll be better if you take care of Mr. Norton."

"Oh, you really are useless, then," Joan murmured softly to herself. "Fine, I'll take care of you for a few days."

"Great."

Overjoyed, Larry patted the glum-looking Caspian on his shoulder.

"Come on then, let's go now."

In a short while, the car arrived in front of a villa.

"Come with me."

As Caspian helped Larry into the villa, Joan followed closely behind them.

"Your house is really big and yet, you live alone?"

Joan was puzzled as it felt troublesome to do so.

But of course! Larry was proud of his quick thinking. On the way home, he had ordered

everyone to leave so that he could maintain the illusion.

After helping Larry to his bedroom, the bodyguard left, leaving Joan and Larry alone in the massive villa.

"Joan, you should take a look around since you will be staying over for the next few days.

Your room is next to mine, so you can just call me if you need anything," Larry explained to her.

Joan was still apprehensive about staying alone with Larry in his villa. But, she did agree to

take care of him and couldn't bring herself to go back on her word.

Since I'm already here, I'll just go along with it. Joan told herself.

The next few days, Larry enjoyed the meticulous attention that Joan showered on him.

Under her attentive care, Larry "recovered" very quickly.

In truth, there was nothing wrong with him and he could move his limbs just fine. He simply

pretended to have restricted mobility just so that he could be together with Joan.

"Time for dinner, Larry."

As usual, Joan would bring the food into his bedroom.

"Feed me."

Larry clung to Joan like a child. For the past few days, it had always been the same as he was

reluctant to part with her even for a single moment.

"Sure," Joan replied helplessly.

Despite his clinginess, Joan seemed to enjoy every moment the two of them spent together.

Over the last few days, Larry and Joan's affection for each other grew significantly. Although

they never reaffirmed their status as a couple, it was just a formality by now.

"Here, open up."

Joan's voice was gentle as if she was coaxing a child.

As Larry opened his mouth, his gaze was fixed upon her. The warmth emitted from his eyes

felt as if it could melt her heart.

Staring at Joan longingly, he observed her exquisite oval-shaped face, bright sparkling eyes,

and alluring lips. The serious expression she had while feeding him made him feel as though

she had taken root in his heart and no one else would be able to pull her away.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1483

"Joan, be my girlfriend," Larry mumbled.

"What did you say?"

Joan couldn't hear properly because Larry's voice was too soft.

"Be my girlfriend."

Larry sat up straight and looked at her in all seriousness with passion in his eyes. "I love you

and want to be together with you forever. I want to laugh and cry with you as we watch the

sunrise and sunset together. Happiness to me simply means hugging you to sleep every

night and see you the moment I'm awake. Say yes and we will never be apart from each

other ever again."

Joan was overwhelmed with happiness at Larry's confession. She had always dreamed about

it but never believed that it would become reality.

“Yes! I will be with you!”

Joan’s eyes were filled with tears of joy. “Being with you is the one thing that I desire the most in this world.”

Hugging each other tightly, they relished in the truth of each other’s words.

After a while, Joan whispered in Larry’s ear in a bashful tone, “Larry, let me tell you a secret.”

“Hmm? What secret?” Larry asked softly. He was stroking her hair as she lay in his arms.

“I... I think I’m pregnant.”

Just as she spoke, she buried her face in Larry’s embrace.

“Oh, it’s good that you’re pregnant.” Larry didn’t grasp the full magnitude of the situation.

“Wait... What? You’re pregnant!”

Larry grabbed Joan’s shoulders in shock. “Is the child mine? I’m the father, right?”

When Joan saw that Larry wasn’t making any sense, she couldn’t help but roll her eyes.

“Who else can it be if not you?”

Having heard Joan’s confirmation, Larry burst into hearty laughter.

“Hahaha, I didn’t expect to not only have a new girlfriend today but also a child. This is really a joyous case of „buy one get one free!““

Joan wondered if Larry had gone crazy as his ramblings made no sense at all.

“Joan, I love you.”

Larry was so ecstatic that he swept her off her feet and whirled her around in his arms.

Joan exclaimed in surprise but quickly realized something was wrong.

“Larry, aren’t you supposed to have trouble moving? How are you able to prance around like that?”

Larry gasped at his mistake. He had forgotten about his charade in the midst of his joy.

“Ouch, it hurts! My arm!” Larry pretended to moan in pain.

“You scoundrel! You can drop the act now!”

Joan was infuriated. She had been puzzled as to why Larry was taking such a long time to

recover when the doctor told her that he only suffered minor injuries. She now realized that it was a hoax all along.

"I'm going to kill you!"

"Please have mercy!"

As both of them argued affectionately, the air was filled with bliss.

"Enough, enough, let's take a break," Larry said to Joan with a smile as both of them were tired.

Only then did Joan bother to stop her exacting her revenge.

"Joan," Larry whispered into her ear as he pulled her into his embrace.

"Hmm?"

She felt her pulse race the moment his warm breath brushed across her ear, causing her to blush.

"Since you're now my girlfriend and carrying my child. It's time I take you to see my parents."

"Isn't that too hasty?"

Joan was shocked. "I'm still not ready yet."

Are you kidding me? I haven't even prepared anything. How do you expect me to see your parents just like that?

What if I get on their nerves? It will all be my fault!

Holding that thought, Joan suddenly realized that they had to think through the matter carefully.

Despite her concerns, Larry didn't seem to think they were warranted.

"It'll be fine. My parents are easygoing people and won't mind at all.

After all, we will be a

family soon. All you need is to just be yourself."

"No! No! Definitely not!"

Joan shook her head vehemently, "I must get myself ready before I meet them."

Given Joan's response, Larry had no choice but to agree. At the same time, he was secretly

delighted at how seriously Joan took the matter.

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Without any delay, Joan grabbed Larry as they headed out together.

Their first stop was a clothing store where Joan bought some new clothes.

As most of her clothes were for casual occasions, she figured she needed something proper

for such a momentous occasion.

"Larry, what do you think of this?" Joan asked as she emerged from the changing room.

"Looks good," Larry responded.

"How about this one?"

"Not bad."

"What about this?"

"Looks good on you too."

Joan tried out many different outfits while Larry patiently waited to provide his objective

opinion.

"Hey, can you treat this more seriously?"

Joan grumbled, "Don't just keep saying that it looks good. You have to provide more

constructive suggestions."

"But they really do look good."

Larry wasn't lying at all. Given Joan's exquisite features and curves at all the right places, she

could easily carry anything she wore.

"In that case, just pick one for me, then."

Joan insisted on Larry choosing for her.

"That's easy. Miss, please pack everything up. I'm taking all of them."

With a wave of his hand, he handed his card to the sales attendant and bought everything.

"Of course, Sir. Please wait for a moment."

The sales attendant was ecstatic as she was able to achieve two months' worth of sales in

one go.

"Larry! That's too much. I won't have the chance to wear them all."

Joan quickly stopped him.

"Don't worry, you look good in all of them. Besides, I'm the president of Norton Corporation

while you are my girlfriend. There's nothing wrong with you splurging on some clothes."

It didn't bother Larry at all as he just wanted to buy her whatever she desired.

Given how persistent Larry was, Joan relented and felt pampered at the same time.

"Sir, your clothes are ready for pick up. Here's your receipt."

The sales attendant politely handed over Larry's card and receipt while giving Joan an envious look. I would willingly give up twenty years of my life just to have a boyfriend like that.

"Let's go. Anyway, you look great in that outfit. So, just leave it on," Larry commented with a smile while holding Joan by her waist.

"Alright," Joan acknowledged submissively. After all, she had to admit that she did indeed look great in her current outfit.

Holding Larry's arm, Joan left the store under the envious stares of the sales attendants.

"Shall we buy some gifts for your parents?" Joan asked for Larry's opinion.

"Sure."

He obviously had no issues about it. As both of them chatted cheerfully while walking down the street, their bodyguard, Caspian, had his hands full with shopping bags and a glum expression on.

"Shouldn't the boyfriend be doing this? Why am I carrying the bags?" Caspian's grumbles were unfortunately heard by Larry.

"What did you just say? If you are upset about something, please don't keep it to yourself."

Larry glared at Caspian.

"No, it's nothing. I'm not upset about anything." Caspian was so stressed that he almost burst into tears.

"That's more like it," Larry remarked smugly, causing Joan to giggle aloud.

Joan was struggling to decide on what to buy for Larry's parents. Finally, based on Larry's suggestion, she bought a box of premium exotic tea and some health supplements for Larry's mom.

When Larry was about to pay, Joan stopped him and insisted to do so instead.

"This is the first time I'm buying gifts for your parents. So, I must pay for them myself," Joan

explained to which Larry agreed.

Despite the fact that both items would cost her a lot, Joan didn't feel reluctant at all. Instead,

she was overjoyed at the opportunity.

When Larry noticed how sincere she was toward his family, he swore to himself that he

would treasure her for the rest of their lives.

After buying the gifts, both of them got into the car and headed for the Norton Residence.

"Larry, do you think your parents will like me?"

Along the way, Joan agonized over the question. She was so stressed that her palms were

sweating profusely.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1485

"Don't worry Joan, my parents will definitely love you," Larry reassured her while stroking

her hand.

"Really? In that case, do I look presentable today? Is there anything wrong with how I look?"

Joan asked again.

She was wearing a fitting, white full-length dress. Her flawless fair skin, slender neck, and

delightful makeup accentuated her exquisite features, making her a stunning sight to

behold.

"Don't worry. You look gorgeous today," Larry replied with conviction as he looked at Joan.

In my heart, you will always be the most beautiful, Larry whispered in his mind.

While they were still chatting, the car finally came to a stop.

Larry patted Joan's hands. "Come on, time to get down."

That's fast! Just when Joan had managed to calm herself, her pulse began to race again.

Noticing her anxiety, Larry beamed at her. "Don't worry. Once you meet them, you will know

how friendly they are."

Larry's words had a mysterious way of calming Joan. Just by looking at him, her racing heart rate began to slow down.

Hand in hand, they stepped into the Norton residence.

"Let's go, it's time to meet your in-laws," Larry remarked with a laugh.

"You're making me nervous!"

Feeling annoyed, Joan rolled her eyes at him.

Larry's joke had caused the last of her anxiety to melt away. Holding onto his hand tightly,

Joan was filled with anticipation as they walked into the living room.

There, Larry's parents were seated and having tea.

"Mom, Dad, I'm home."

He led Joan toward them.

"Welcome home, son."

When she heard his voice, Vivian put down her cup and look in Larry's direction.

When she saw a beautiful and elegant girl beside him, she was stunned.

She asked

thoughtfully, "Son, who is this you have brought with you?"

Despite not saying a word, Finnick was quietly scrutinizing Joan. Is she Larry's girlfriend?

"Mom, Dad, let me introduce her. This is my girlfriend, Joan Watts."

Just as he spoke, he looked at Joan. "Joan, these are my parents."

"Hello, Mr. Norton, Mrs. Norton."

Although Joan felt nervous when she met Larry's parents, she didn't forget her manners and

greeted both of them with a sweet voice.

"Hello."

Vivian was so ecstatic to see Larry's girlfriend that she sprang to her feet.

"Joan, come closer.

Let me take a closer look at you."

The last of Joan's nervousness faded away when she heard Vivian's warm tone. Walking up

to her confidently, Joan remarked with a smile, "Mrs. Norton, I have heard a lot about you

from Larry. Especially about how stunning you are."

Delighted by Joan's words, Vivian held her hand warmly. "You sure know how to flatter me.

Look at how beautiful you are, Larry must be really lucky to have found a girlfriend like you."

“Mom, I’m not that bad, alright. Joan and I aren’t even married yet and you’re already siding with her. What’s going to happen when we do?”

Larry was overjoyed to see how well Joan was getting along with Vivian. It was obvious to him that Vivian was happy with her.

“Joan, did Larry ever bully you? He has always been spoilt by us. So, if he does, you have to tell me and I will definitely punish him.”

Vivian reminded Joan as she was worried that Larry didn’t treat her well enough.

“Mrs. Norton, don’t worry. Larry has been very good to me,” Joan replied at once. She, too, had a good impression of her future mother-in-law whom she found to be down to earth.

“That’s good. That’s good.”

Vivian shot Finnick a glance as he had yet to say a word throughout.

“Hey, Finnick, why haven’t you said anything? Your son has brought his girlfriend home.”

Finnick returned her glance helplessly. “You have been talking non-stop since just now. I

had no chance to get a word in at all.”

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1486

Just as Finnick spoke, he looked at Joan. “Joan, next time, come by our place whenever you are free. Since Larry is staying by himself outside, you can remind him to come home more often.”

“I understand, Mr. Norton. I definitely will,” Joan replied with a smile.

“Vivian and I have never interfered in Larry’s relationships. As you are the first girl he has

brought home, it must mean that he fancies you a lot. We are equally happy to meet you

too. Both of you should try your best to be happy together and take care of each other,”

Finnick advised in a serious manner.

As his words resonated with Joan’s feelings, she replied immediately,

“We will try our best to

be happy. Don’t worry, Mr. Norton.”

After that, Joan chatted with Vivian about random topics while Larry talked to Finnick about other matters. Before they knew it, night had already fallen. When it was time for dinner, Vivian invited Joan to sit beside her. After that, she took a bracelet off her wrist.

"Joan, this bracelet used to belong to Larry's grandma. In other words, my mother-in-law handed it to me. And now, I'm giving it to you. Both you and Larry must strive to always be happy. Whatever problems you may encounter, you have to face them together, alright?"

Joan was surprised at how warm Vivian was to her. She didn't expect Vivian to shower her with such attention on their very first meeting, to the extent of giving her a family heirloom.

She quickly stood up and replied, "Mrs. Norton, this gift is simply too valuable for me to accept. Larry and I will be happy together. But this is something I don't deserve to have yet."

"As long as I say you deserve it then you do."

Vivian had expected Joan to refuse. "Joan, it's obvious to me that both of you love each other dearly. It's just a matter of time before the two of you are married. With that in mind, there's nothing wrong with me giving this to you ahead of time. Besides, are you really going to turn down the first present I'm giving you?"

"But..."

Before Joan could say anything further, Larry interrupted. "Joan, just take it. My mom really likes you. If you refuse, you will only upset her."

After giving it much consideration, Joan finally accepted the bracelet with both her hands.

"Mr. Norton, Mrs. Norton, I will treasure this bracelet more than my own life. And I will also do my best to protect the relationship I share with Larry so that you will not be disappointed."

"That's the spirit!"

Vivian laughed in delight while Finnick let out a gratified smile. "Don't just stand there, sit down and eat," Finnick reminded. With that, the whole family happily enjoyed a scrumptious dinner together.

As it was getting late after dinner, Larry took his leave. "Dad, Mom, we have to go now. I need to send Joan home."

"Are you leaving already?"

Vivian was reluctant for them to leave. But she knew it wasn't the right time to invite Joan to stay over. Hence, she had no choice but to reply, "Send her home safely, then. Joan, whenever you are free, you are welcome to visit us. I look forward to seeing you again soon."

"Mrs. Norton, I will definitely drop by often. But for today, I have to go off first."

After that, she turned toward Finnick. "Goodbye, Mr. Norton." After bidding their farewells, Joan held onto Larry's arm and left together.

The moment she stepped out the front door, Joan heaved a sigh of relief. Beaming in joy, she remarked, "Larry, I didn't expect your parents to be such wonderful people. I'm just so happy!"

Tenderly helping Joan tidy up her hair, Larry replied in a gentle tone, "Of course, I told you that they were easygoing and warm. You were the one who overreacted out of fear."

"I wasn't afraid at all! I knew that they would definitely like me because I'm just too adorable!" Joan insisted.

Obviously, she would never admit that she was scared.

When he saw how she shamelessly declared her cuteness, he simply found her irresistible and pulled her in to kiss her cheeks. However, she managed to duck away with a nimble move.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1487

"Hmph! I'm not letting you kiss me. What if someone sees us?"

"I'll kiss you when we're home then."

"No, you're still not allowed to!"

"I won't stop kissing you when we're home. In fact, I have more plans for you," Larry

remarked with a mischievous smile.

"You pervert..."

After both of them got into the car, their voices faded away.

Under Larry's persuasion, Joan finally agreed to move into his villa.

From then onwards, both

of them enjoyed a wonderful time cohabiting together.

However, one man's meat was another man's poison. Just when Larry and Joan were

immersed in their happy lives, Gabriella couldn't stand for it.

"What did you say? Joan and Larry are living together in his villa?"

She was outraged by her subordinate's report.

The man was a private investigator she hired just to monitor all of Larry and Joan's

movements.

"Yes. Over the last two days, Larry even brought Joan to see his parents," the private

investigator added.

upon hearing that, Gabriella smashed the glass she was holding onto the floor. She could

feel a heavy burden hanging over her head to the extent of suffocating her.

"Why! What gives her the right!" Gabriella screamed out her lungs.

"Larry, how is Joan better than me in any way? Why do you treat her so well and yet be so

cruel to me! I can't accept it! I just can't!"

After venting her frustration, Gabriella suppressed her rage and asked the private

investigator, "Did Larry's parents say anything?"

Perhaps, his parents might not approve of her.

Gabriella tried to be optimistic. After all, Joan wasn't from a prominent family which was an

important consideration for society's elite.

"This, I have no idea."

The private investigator could only follow them and observe their movements. As to what

happened in the Norton residence, there was no way he could find out.

Although she didn't receive a confirmation from the private investigator, she calmed herself

down and began racking her brains.

How can such a prominent family like the Nortons accept a nobody like Joan into their family?

So what if she's as pretty as a fairy? Without the backing of a prominent family, she still

won't be worthy of joining the Nortons.

With that thought in mind, Gabriella snorted.

Only I am fit to be Larry's girlfriend and the lady of the Norton family.

Joan you are but a third wheel in our relationship.

Gabriella was so consumed by the matter that she now saw herself as the rightful Mrs.

Norton.

"Joan, I won't allow you to break apart my relationship with Larry. Just you wait!"

Her eyes glistened as schemes filled her head.

After clearing the air with Larry, Joan returned to work at Opulent Designs.

Although they were now in a relationship, her competitive nature pushed her to make her

own living instead of staying at home and relying on Larry.

While she was working in the office, her phone suddenly rang.

When she saw that it was an unknown number, she ignored it due to her busy work.

However, when the call kept coming in incessantly, she finally picked up the call as she was

worried it might be something urgent.

"Hello," Joan answered cordially.

"May I know if this is Joan Watts?"

A woman's voice rang out.

Joan was stunned as she couldn't recognize Gabriella's voice over the phone. Furthermore, a

long time had passed and the only impression Joan had of her was from the recent glimpse

she caught.

"It's me, Gabriella. Joan, have you forgotten me?" Gabriella added in a half-joking manner.

"Oh, it's you, Gabriella."

Joan was actually delighted to hear her voice.

"I'm at work now. Is there anything I can help you with?"

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1488

"Joan, do you still remember what we said the last time we met? That we agreed to meet up

another time?" Gabriella suggested with a smile.

She continued, "Don't tell me you already forget?"

Of course Joan didn't.

"But, Gabriella, I'm at work now. Why don't you decide on a venue and I will see you there

after work?"

"Fine with me. Meet me at Rainbow Café when you get off work then.

I'll send you the

address in a while."

Gabriella pretended to be friendly.

"Alright Gabriella, I'll head over there once I'm done with work," Joan replied.

"I'll be waiting for you. Anyway, sorry for bothering you at work. See you later, Joan."

Gabriella ended the call smiling. However, in the very next moment, her expression changed drastically.

As for Joan, even though she was quite surprised at receiving Gabriella's call, she didn't find it suspicious at all.

Thinking back to the time when she just entered university, everything was unfamiliar yet

exciting. Gabriella was the first friend she got to know.

"Hi, I'm Gabriella, it's a pleasure to meet you."

"Hi, I'm Joan."

Both of them quickly became good friends. They went to class together, ate together,

shopped together, and even had sleepovers.

In Joan's eyes, although Gabriella was gorgeous and came from a rich family, she didn't look

down on anyone and treated everyone with respect. Hence, Joan

considered Gabriella to be

her best friend.

Despite how sincere Joan was in their friendship, Gabriella didn't share her sentiments at all.

When she first got to know Joan, Gabriella assumed she was from a rich family given how pretty she was. That was the only reason she made friends with her in the first place.

Once she found out about Joan's ordinary background, she no longer concerned herself with her.

Even when they interacted with each other, Gabriella would always treat her in a condescending manner.

However, for the sake of maintaining her own reputation and the fact that Joan was also

popular in school, Gabriella kept up the charade that they were close friends. Unfortunately,

Joan didn't notice her hypocrisy at all.

After work, Joan hailed a cab and headed to the address provided by Gabriella.

When she entered Rainbow Café, she spotted Gabriella in a corner and approached her quickly.

"Hi, Gabriella," Joan greeted with a smile.

"Joan, have a seat."

Gabriella didn't sound as enthusiastic as she was on the phone. In fact, she even sounded upset.

As Joan took her seat opposite Gabriella, she noticed that there was a cup of coffee ready

for her. Joan was delighted by Gabriella's thoughtful gesture.

"Gabriella, it's been a while now. We didn't manage to talk much the last time. So, how have you been?" Joan enquired warmly.

"Not bad," Gabriella replied coldly, staring at Joan.

The moment she arrived, Joan had noticed Gabriella's gloomy expression. She figured that something unpleasant must have happened to her.

"What happened, Gabriella?" Joan asked with concern.

As her close friend, Joan felt the need to show some concern.

"The man I love has been stolen by a gorgeous yet shameful b*tch. I come from a better

family than her and am more highly educated. Furthermore, I'm not inferior to her in terms of looks. So why does my man like her so much? What makes it worse is that I have always treated that b*tch as a good friend," Gabriella gritted her teeth as she explained.

"The person you are talking about..."

Stunned, a sense of dread suddenly fell upon Joan.

"That's right. I'm talking about you! Joan Watts!"

Gabriella stared daggers at her.

"Why must you interfere with my relationship with Larry when I have always treated you as

my friend? Do you really enjoy being the third party?"

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1489

"But, Larry denied that you are his girlfriend. He says that both of you were just acting in

front of me," Joan retorted as she was skeptical of Gabriella's words.

"I'm not his girlfriend? We are already engaged and everyone in the high society knows that.

It was your appearance that has thrown our happy relationship onto the rocks," Gabriella

blatantly lied in order to deal a blow to Joan.

"Larry won't lie to me. In fact, he has brought me to see his parents."

Joan began to waver as Gabriella didn't look like she was lying. However, she still had

reason to be confident of her own stand.

"How unscrupulous can you be? So what if you have met his parents? He brought me to see

his parents too. Furthermore, both our parents had decided upon the engagement. Joan, do

you think someone like you deserves Larry? The Nortons are a distinguished family while

you... you are a nobody!"

Just as she spoke, Gabriella grabbed her glass of water and threw it at Joan. Thereafter, she

shrieked hysterically, "You are nothing but a vixen that seduces the boyfriends of others!"

Gabriella's screams had attracted the attention of everyone in the café.

They were all

watching curiously and ridiculing Joan in front of her.

“Look, everyone! This is the vixen that stole my fiancé. To think that I even treated her as my best friend! Joan, you are nothing but a mistress that destroys the relationship of others!”

Gabriella was so convincing in twisting the facts that the crowd gradually believed that she was the victim.

Within a short time, many of them sympathized with her and their criticism against Joan grew louder.

“This woman is really pretty, why does she need to be a mistress?”

“The prettier they are, the more tempting they become when seducing the fiancé of others!”

“Pfft, what a shameless woman!”

“That’s right, death to mistresses!”

Joan sat dumbfounded in her chair, drenched by the water that Gabriella had thrown on her.

At that moment, she was utterly confused. She didn’t believe what Gabriella said but reality seemed to persuade her that it was true.

“No! I’m not a mistress, I’m not! Larry and I truly love each other!” Joan yelled with an insecure tone as if she was trying to convince everyone around her, including herself.

Just as she screamed, she grabbed her bag and pushed her way through the crowd before running off miserably. She needed to calm herself down and gather her thoughts about the shocking news she had received.

Looking at Joan’s pathetic retreat, Gabriella finally felt satisfied over venting her frustration.

Pointing at Joan, she declared, “Look, that vixen doesn’t dare stay and challenge me because she knows she’s in the wrong! A mistress will definitely meet a miserable end!”

Gabriella ended her sentence with a gloating laugh.

When the crowd realized the altercation was over, they slowly dispersed as there was no point in staying.

Only Gabriella was left standing there, staring in the direction that Joan had run.

“Joan, just you wait, there is more to come. Challenging me will only end in your doom!”

Just as she spoke, Gabriella left with a sneer as she had something more important to attend to.

The next morning, the headline: Mysterious Mistress Breaks Apart Relationship of Ward

Group’s Daughter and Norton Corporation President was splashed across the front page of all the major newspapers.

As the Norton Corporation was among the largest conglomerates in Marsingfill, the young president of Norton Corporation was naturally a character of interest for gossip and the subject of attention of many youngsters.

Meanwhile, the Ward family was also a prominent family, as they too wielded enormous influence in the city.

Therefore, the scandal about Larry and Gabriella easily spread like wildfire.

While everyone was discussing the controversy, they were extremely curious as to who this mysterious mistress named Joan Watts was.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1490

“Hey, have you heard that Larry of Norton Corporation is engaged to Gabriella of Ward Group?”

“Yes, I’m sure many single young men and women would be heartbroken to hear the news.”

“That isn’t even the juiciest part. Who do you think the mysterious mistress named Joan Watts is?”

“Gabriella is already a beauty. To be able to steal Larry away from her, Joan must be even more of a stunner.”

“Sheesh, so what if she is prettier, isn’t she nothing but a relationship destroying vixen?”

“What a pity. Why did she need to be a mistress?”

The scandal became the talk of the town while Larry, Gabriella, and Joan's names were now the most recognizable within the city. Meanwhile, Gabriella, who was the culprit behind the news, was drinking tea at home triumphantly while closely monitoring the latest developments. After she left the café, she had instructed her men to share this news with all the major media outlets. Naturally, such a juicy scandal attracted a lot of attention from the media. Thereafter, the headlines were all published. Following that, a "good Samaritan" leaked Joan's home address to the media. This resulted in a huge group of reporters swarming Joan's rented place. They had wanted to see the face of this mysterious mistress and also interview her. After leaving pathetically last night, Joan returned to her own rented abode. As she had been staying in Larry's villa, this was the first time she came back since then. After giving it some thought, Joan realized that there were tons of loopholes in what Gabriella had said. But, there were some parts that were undeniable still. She felt what Gabriella said was right. An ordinary girl like her was not worthy of Larry. Only a girl from a prominent family like Gabriella would make a good match for him due to their similar family backgrounds. However, Joan couldn't ignore how Larry's parents treated her. She could tell that they were being sincere to her. After all, they had given her the bracelet which was a family heirloom. Therefore, how is it possible that such a distinguished couple lie to me? With that thought in mind, Joan's fears were allayed a little. After covering herself with her blanket, she fell asleep right away. By the time she awoke, it was already the next morning.

As it was a habit of hers to check her phone, she saw the shocking news right away.

Mysterious Mistress Breaks Apart Relationship of Ward Group's Daughter and Norton

Corporation President. When Joan saw the headline, she subconsciously tapped into the article.

The moment she finished reading it, her face turned as white as a sheet. Gabriella actually announced it to the media?

Then... could it be that what she said was really the truth? That I destroyed their marriage

and stole Larry? Otherwise, what gives her the confidence to publicly declare such a thing?

Holding that thought, Joan suddenly felt that everything was preposterous. She had naively

assumed that she got together with Larry when in reality, it was all just a farce. She was but

a mistress who interfered with someone else's relationship.

Clenching her fist, she dug her fingernails into her skin in anger.

However, the pain she felt

in her hand was nothing compared to what she felt in her heart.

Joan felt dejected. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't escape the jaws of fate. She

seemed to never be able to get her way in love.

Given how sad she was, her thoughts began to fall into a vicious cycle of negativity.

At that moment, Joan had forgotten how well Larry treated her and how his parents had

handed her the bracelet.

There was only one thing in her mind, that is to leave Larry. After having betrayed Gabriella

and labeled a vixen, she felt tired and didn't want to continue the relationship.

Just then, she suddenly heard a commotion outside her house followed by someone

knocking on the door.

Peeking outside, she saw a large group of people with cameras and microphones standing

outside.

It was obvious to her that the reporters were there to interview her.

She decided not to open the door as she didn't know how to deal with their questions.

More importantly, she didn't even know how to face herself.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1491

"Ms. Watts, will you accept our interview?"

The reporters somehow knew she was inside and kept insisting on questioning her.

"Ms. Watts, do you have any comment about Mr. Norton and Ms. Ward's marriage problems?"

"Someone alleged that you came in between their relationship, can you tell us if that's true?"

Joan stood behind the door, covering her mouth as tears streamed down her cheeks.

She could hear everything being said outside clearly. Face with the damaging accusations,

she couldn't think of a single reason to defend herself with.

Unfortunately, Larry had no idea what was going on. When Joan sent him a message telling

him that she wasn't coming home the night before, he didn't think too much of it.

At that moment, he was busy working at Norton Corporation.

Ring... Ring... His private line suddenly rang. When he saw that it was his father calling, Larry

quickly answered.

"Dad, why are you calling me so early in the morning?" Larry asked.

"Why? Where are you now?"

The voice over the line sounded exasperated.

"I'm at the office, working. What happened?" Larry asked when he senses the concern in his

dad's voice.

"Something has happened to Joan and yet you don't know a thing? How irresponsible can

you get?" Finnick barked in rage.

"What? Joan is in trouble?"

Larry sprang to his feet as his tone darkened.

"Turn on the television and see for yourself," Finnick replied.

"Also, what is this about Gabriella? I'm warning you, Larry, you'd better clean up your mess

and not hurt Joan's feelings!"

Doo... Doo.... Doo...

The call ended abruptly. It was obvious that Finnick thought Larry was somehow involved

with Gabriella. Therefore, he was furious at his son's actions.

As for Larry, he quickly found out about everything that had happened.

This is all my fault!

Larry blamed himself. Ever since Joan moved in with him, he reassigned Caspian from his

duty of protecting her.

Furthermore, he didn't suspect anything when Joan didn't come home the night before.

If he had known about this in advance, he could have prevented Joan from getting hurt.

But now, Joan must have found out about everything.

With that thought in mind, he had the urge to rush toward Joan's home.

When his car stopped in front of her house, Larry saw a huge group of reporters.

Worried that Joan would be in danger, he rushed toward her house.

When they saw that Larry was approaching, the reporters turned their attention and

swarmed toward him.

"Mr. Norton, are you here to see Ms. Watts? May I know what your relationship with her is?"

"Mr. Norton, is it true that you and Ms. Ward are engaged? How do you plan to deal with this matter?"

Surrounded by reporters, Larry had no choice but to reply, "Please let me pass. This is all just

a misunderstanding. In a short while, the Norton Corporation will organize a press

conference and the truth will be revealed."

With that, Larry pushed his way through the crowd. Arriving at her front door, he called out,

"Joan, open the door, it's me."

The door opened quickly, and Larry slid in before closing the door behind him.

"Joan, are you alright?" Larry asked with concern.

"Why don't you ask your fiancée? Why are you even here?" Joan replied coldly without even

making eye contact.

Realizing that she must have misunderstood the whole situation, Larry quickly explained,

“Joan, listen to me. This is just a misunderstanding. Gabriella and I are not engaged.

Furthermore, she has never ever been my girlfriend.”

“Why are you still lying to me? If she isn’t, why has the matter blown up to this extent? I’m

just an ordinary girl and not worthy of the president of Norton Corporation. Stop

tormenting me and go away!” Joan yelled with tears glistening in her eyes.

When he saw how devastated she was, Larry was heartbroken as he gave her a hug.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1492

“Let go of me! Let me go!”

Joan pounded her fist on him forcefully to keep him away.

However, Larry refused to let go as he held onto her tightly.

After struggling for a while, she stopped moving when she realized it was futile. Allowing

Larry to hug her, she continued sobbing in his arms.

“Joan, please believe me. I love you for who you are and I don’t care about your

background. In fact, my parents feel the same way too. Have you forgotten that they told us

to take care of each other?”

Holding Joan in his arms, the sound of her sobs broke his heart.

Nevertheless, Larry’s embrace managed to give Joan strength. The images of his parents

advising them to stay strong together and handing her the bracelet began to emerge in her

mind.

Once she began to calm down, Joan considered the matter thoroughly.

She had initially found the matter to be strange, but it was what happened later that caused

her to lose her rationality.

After giving it some thought, Joan felt that she had reacted childishly.

“Do your parents really not care about my background?” Joan asked skeptically as she

buried her head in his chest.

“Of course, you silly gal. Isn’t that obvious to you too?”

Larry’s voice was gentle like the breeze.

“What about Gabriella? What is your relationship with her?”

At the mention of Gabriella, Joan couldn’t help but feel guilty.

“There is nothing going on between Gabriella and me. The Nortons and the Wards have

always been business partners. Therefore, when Gabriella insisted on working at Norton

Corporation, I had no reason to refuse. She had tried to ask her dad, Landon, to arrange a

marriage of convenience but my parents never agreed.”

He continued, “Ever since what happened last time, I kicked her out of Norton Corporation. I

didn’t expect her to cook up such a drama now. This time, I’m not going to let her off!”

Larry’s gaze darkened.

Gabriella, after challenging my threshold repeatedly, don’t blame me now for being

merciless.

“Last time? What do you mean?”

Joan chose to believe Larry but her curiosity was piqued when she heard him mention what

Gabriella did last time.

This gal is simply too naive to see Gabriella as nothing but a good friend.

It’s time I break

the news to her.

After pondering a moment, Larry asked, “Do you remember when you were kidnapped,

brought to the outskirts, and drugged?”

Obviously, she would never forget such a traumatic experience. One of the reasons she left

for A Nation was because she couldn’t put the incident behind her.

“I’ll never forget it,” Joan replied as she could feel the lingering trauma.

If it wasn’t for Larry arriving in the nick of time, I would have been...

In the event the worst happened then, she would likely have committed suicide.

“What does that have anything to do with Gabriella?” Joan inquired.

“It has everything to do with her because she was the one behind it,”

Larry asserted with

conviction.

“What?”

Joan widened her eyes in shock, “That’s impossible! We are best friends.”

Never in her wildest dreams did Joan think that Gabriella would do such a thing to her.

“Larry, did you make a mistake? Gabriella is a good friend of mine! This isn’t something to joke about.” Joan felt that Larry had got it wrong.

“Joan, don’t judge a book by its cover. Gabriella may be nice to you on the surface but you will never know what she is thinking. If she really sees you as a good friend, how do you explain everything that has happened today?”

Larry’s voice was solemn as he hoped Joan would be able to see the truth after this incident.

“But, why is she doing all this?”

Joan was devastated upon the realization that her best friend had been scheming against her.

“Because she thinks that you have taken something that was rightfully hers. That you have stolen the position of Mrs. Norton, wife to the president of Norton Corporation. But it was never hers to begin with. It was her narcissism that convinced her otherwise, and then you coincidentally appeared,” Larry explained patiently.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1493

Although Joan might feel disturbed by it, he still had to tell the truth to prevent her from being hurt again.

Joan fell into silence after having heard Larry’s words.

Even though she refused to believe it, the facts spoke for themselves. She realized the friendship that she treasured was easily cast aside in the face of a conflict of interest. She couldn’t help but sneer at herself in a self-deprecating manner.

When he saw how disappointed Joan was, Larry gently kissed her on her cheeks and comforted, “Don’t be sad, you still have me. I’ll always be by your side.”

When she heard Larry's affectionate words, Joan's nose twitched as she tried to hold back her tears desperately. She leaned into Larry's chest. "Larry, thank you. Thank you for always staying by my side."

"Silly gal, why are you even thanking me?"

Both of them hugged each other tightly and immersed themselves in the rare emotional moment.

"Larry, what do we do now?" Joan couldn't help but ask when she thought about the swarm of reporters outside.

"Don't worry, just leave it to me."

Larry knew it was time for him to take charge of resolving the matter. On the same day afternoon, he organized a press conference at Norton Corporation.

The office entrance was swarmed with people. Other than a huge legion of reporters, there were also hordes of curious onlookers. They were all interested to know the latest developments of the scandal.

Larry brought Joan to the press conference. After all, she was the scandal's biggest victim as her reputation was ruined by it.

To redeem her name, Larry had to clarify the truth and announce something at the press conference. Therefore, he forced Joan to come along with him.

The moment both of them appeared at the press conference holding hands, it caused a stir among the reporters present.

After taking their seats, the reporters scrambled to asked questions.

"Mr. Norton, can you tell us the real reason for holding this press conference?"

"Mr. Norton, why are you here together with Ms. Watts? Is it true what they have alleged on the internet about your relationship?"

"Ms. Watts, many people accuse you of being the third party. Do you have any comments on that?"

When the reporters had fired away most of their questions, Larry began to speak.

After he answered most of the key questions, he began to clarify the matter to everyone present.

“Gabriella isn’t my girlfriend, and we have never been engaged. As for her desperate attempt at spreading such rumors, I have hired a lawyer and will be taking legal action against her for slandering both myself and Joan.”

He continued, “At the same time, I hope everyone can see this matter rationally and not

spread further lies about us. Or else, I will not tolerate any of it.”

Larry’s voice was firm and emitted a domineering aura that cowed all the reporters into silence.

Larry’s parents were also present at the press conference. After Larry had finished, Finnick began to speak.

“I would like to reiterate that the Norton family never agreed to a marriage of convenience with the Wards. I can guarantee this upon my honor. Please do not dwell on this matter any further and more importantly, do not trouble the victim, Ms. Watts, anymore.”

With the honorable Finnick, who was the previous chairman of Norton Corporation, clarifying the matter, everyone was convinced that Gabriella was the one who fabricated the whole incident.

Now that the truth was revealed and having recovered her reputation, Joan smiled in relief as she thought that the matter had been resolved.

However, Larry still had something important to announce. “There’s one more thing I would like to share with everyone. I, Larry Norton, would like to officially ask Ms. Watts for her hand in marriage. Joan, will you marry me?”

The moment Larry popped the question, he caused an uproar at the press conference.

The reporters had planned to rush back to their respective publishers to publish the contents of the press conference. However, they didn't expect the momentous surprise at the end.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1494

The next moment, cheers erupted everywhere.

Just like an elegant prince, Larry walked up to Joan and brought out the ring he prepared.

Kneeling with one knee on the ground, he gazed longingly into Joan's eyes.

"I love you Joan, marry me!"

"Marry him! Marry him..."

With everyone immersing themselves in the romantic moment, loud cheers rang out through the crowd.

Face with Larry's affectionate gaze, Joan couldn't help but cover her mouth in shock.

Everything before her felt so much like a fantasy that she couldn't believe it herself.

She was already thankful that she could redeem her reputation at the press conference.

Hence, she didn't expect Larry to come up with such a surprise at all.

"Joan, will you marry me?"

When he saw how emotional she was, Larry popped the question again.

"I will love you for the rest of my life and I will not allow you to come to any harm. I..."

Before he could finish, he was interrupted by Joan's sobbing voice.

"I will! I most definitely will!" Joan replied aloud as tears streamed down her cheeks.

After having gone through so much, nothing was more important than staying by each other's side.

As she had never been this happy before, Joan looked at Larry and felt that he was the world to her.

"That's wonderful!"

The moment was so beautiful that even the reporters were touched by it.

Cameras began to

flash incessantly as they recorded the romantic moment.

Larry slowly stood up and lifted Joan's right hand. He then helped her put on the ring while gazing passionately into her eyes.

Joan, from now on, you will be known as Mrs. Norton.

Surrounded by anticipative stares, Larry kissed her on her tender lips. The raging passion within his kiss spilled onto her endlessly, as if to show how strong his feelings for her were.

Larry, from now till the end of time, till death do us part.

Showers with thunderous applause, Larry and Joan hugged each other affectionately.

Just when both of them were relishing the beautiful moment, something unexpected occurred.

Gabriella had just arrived at the press conference.

She was feeling guilty as she didn't expect the matter to have escalated to that extent.

When she heard that Larry had organized a press conference, she began to panic and rushed to the scene to see what was going to happen.

She had regretted her actions as the moment she was exposed, she would be spurned by the public.

Now, the only thing that gave her courage was the business relationship the Wards shared with the Nortons.

She felt that Larry would restrain himself in order to preserve their partnership.

Obviously, Gabriella had overestimated the importance of her own family. Larry exposed her with total disregard for the business relationship both families shared.

The moment she arrived at the press conference, she coincidentally saw Larry helping Joan put on the ring followed by their affectionate hug.

At that moment, Gabriella charged forward hysterically as she couldn't tolerate how happy Joan and Larry were in front of her.

Larry is mine and can only be mine!

Just when she was making a commotion, her mouth was suddenly covered by someone.

Mmm... Mmm... Mmm...

Despite struggling vehemently and trying to shout, all Gabriella could manage was muffled screams.

The person who had caught her was none other than Caspian. Evidently, Larry had expected Gabriella to cause trouble at the press conference. Just as a precaution, he had arranged for Caspian to monitor the event so that Gabriella could be stopped the moment she appeared.

Naturally, his fears turned out to be true. When Caspian noticed the maniacal Gabriella, he covered her mouth and dragged her away.

Despite her desperate attempts to free herself from Caspian, her struggles were futile as the difference in strength was just too big.

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Caspian easily dragged her to the entrance of Norton Corporation and threw her out of the building.

Gabriella almost fell to the ground from the shove. After regaining her balance, she became hysterical as she had never suffered such humiliation before, especially as a daughter of the prominent Ward family.

“You dog of the Nortons, do you know who I am? How dare you touch me!”

Gabriella continued to roar at Caspian, “Let me in, or else I will get Larry to fire you!”

Staring at Gabriella who had lost all senses, Caspian remained expressionless and replied calmly, “I’m sorry Ms. Ward, my boss has told me that everyone is allowed to enter except for you.”

“That’s impossible! Larry would never treat me that way. How dare you keep me out?”

Caspian’s words had only served to infuriated Gabriella further.

“You must have decided to not let me in on your own accord!”

Gabriella refused to give up as she charged forward again, screaming.

“Let me in! Let me in!”

Standing in front of her, Caspian's body was like an immovable mountain.

"You're just a dog of the Nortons!" Gabriella was so outraged that she hurled a slap at Caspian's face.

However, Caspian managed to catch her hand and glared coldly back at her.

You crazy woman. I had wanted to show you mercy but it seems that you are not

appreciative of it. Don't blame me for being rough, then.

"You deserve this!" Just as he spoke, Caspian returned her slap.

Slap! As the crisp sound rang out, a palm print appeared on Gabriella's face.

"You... you dare hit me?"

Gabriella looked at Caspian in disbelief. A mere bodyguard dared to slap me!

"My boss had ordered me to teach you a lesson if you continue to cause trouble. He said

that he will shoulder the responsibility of whatever happens."

After slapping Gabriella, Caspian was filled with a sense of gratification.

However, he dared

not push his luck. After all, she was a daughter of the Wards.

"Ms. Wards, my boss would like to warn you that if you continue to be difficult, he will

expose you as the mastermind of the kidnapping incident. When that happens, I'm afraid

you will have to go to prison."

Running thin on patience, Caspian issued her an ultimatum.

Evidently, Caspian's threat of sending her to prison shook her back to her senses.

However, unwilling to leave quietly, she glared at Caspian and scowled,

"Just you wait, I'll

get back at you one day!"

Not wanting to be humiliated further, Gabriella quickly got into her car and drove away.

When she arrived home fuming and wanted to return to her room, she coincidentally ran

into Landon.

She didn't feel like talking to him, so she turned in another direction to avoid him.

“Stop where you are.”

Noticing that she was trying to hide, Landon called out to her. “Now that you’re back, I have something to ask you.”

Realizing that there was no avoiding it, she turned around and replied with her head

lowered, “What is it, Dad?”

“Gabriella, I heard that the Norton Corporation has organized a press conference. Does it have anything to do with you?”

Landon was just informed that his daughter was now in an awkward position for fabricating lies. Storming downstairs in rage, he had wanted to find out the truth and didn’t expect to run into Gabriella.

“Dad, it’s nothing. Don’t worry.”

Unwilling to tell him, Gabriella planned to hide the truth from her father.

“Gabriella, I have heard some rumors. You must tell me everything truthfully. If you have gotten yourself into any trouble, I will definitely help you.”

Landon looked affectionately at Gabriella. Given that she was the only child, he couldn’t tolerate her being hurt in any way.

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Landon’s words moved Gabriella, causing her to realize that only her own family would truly care about her.

Holding that thought, her expression drastically changed when she recalled how caring

Larry was toward Joan.

However, she recovered her composure quickly as she didn’t want to lose her temper in front of Landon.

When she saw that her father was waiting for her response, she gathered her thoughts and explained to him what happened without any hesitation.

However, she left out one key detail. She only declared that she was in love with Larry but didn’t mention Larry was in love with Joan.

Out of jealousy, she accused Joan of coming in between her relationship with Larry, and that Joan was the third party. Furthermore, Gabriella also claimed she was manipulated by someone else into causing the whole drama to unfold. Throughout her explanation, she never admitted her role in the matter. All she did was blame her own impulse.

“Tell me, were you the one who went to the press about the matter?”

Landon asked skeptically once Gabriella had finished.

“No, it wasn’t me. All I did was scold Joan out of anger. I didn’t expect the matter to escalate to such an extent.”

Gabriella pretended to be in agony. “It’s all my fault. If I hadn’t made the wild accusations, this wouldn’t have happened. I wouldn’t have ruined our family’s reputation and caused my good friend, Joan, grievous hurt. Dad, you should punish me for what I have done.”

When he saw how repentant Gabriella was and the tears that welled up in her eyes,

Landon’s heart ached for his daughter. He consoled her, “Gabriella, although you acted on impulse this time, it isn’t entirely your fault. It’s obvious someone has been using this episode to do harm to our family. Going forward, you have to remember to keep your calm and think before you act.”

Evidently, Landon loved his daughter greatly. Not only did he believe Gabriella’s words entirely, he even saw her as the victim and comforted her.

“I’ll keep that in mind and won’t repeat my mistake again, Dad,”

Gabriella promised as she smiled sweetly at her dad.

As long as my dad supports me, there’s nothing for me to worry about, Gabriella thought smugly to herself.

“Gabriella, what happened to your face?”

When she looked up, Landon noticed the red print on her cheeks.

As she had returned home hastily, she forgot the mark that was left on her face. Now that Landon had noticed it, she was stumped by his question. "Tell me the truth, who hit you?" Landon was obviously angered. "Who dared to hit my daughter? Do they have a death wish?" Despite feeling encouraged by her dad's support, she still pretended to be pitiful. "It was Larry's bodyguard that hit me. I wanted to apologize to Joan at the press conference but he didn't allow me to enter. Instead, he ridiculed me and even gave me a slap." Tears streamed down Gabriella's cheeks as she related what happened to her father. Regardless of whether it was done on purpose, her tears caused Landon to be outraged. "How dare a lowly bodyguard hit you. I will call Larry to complain right away!" Just as Landon picked up the phone angrily, Gabriella quickly stopped him. "Dad, don't. If you get into a quarrel with him, our family will be the ones to suffer. For the sake of our business interest, let's just endure it for the time being." Although Gabriella made it seem like she was concerned about her family, she was actually worried that Larry would expose her lies once both men started arguing. If that happened, the trust that she painstakingly gained from Landon would disappear, and she would fall into dire circumstances. For the sake of her long-term interests, Gabriella decided to bear with her grudge for the time being. When Landon saw how sensible his daughter was for prioritizing the interests of the family, he couldn't help but smile in contentment. Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1497 Landon clenched his jaw. "I'm proud that you've grown into such a fine and considerate

young woman. Alright, we'll tolerate the matter for now. Don't worry, even if we don't start a feud against Norton Corporation, I'll still make them pay for harming my daughter!"

He then phoned someone and said, "This is Landon. Have we started our business

collaboration with Norton Corporation? No? Good. I want you to cancel the collaboration

immediately because I'm no longer interested in doing business with them. Compensation

for breach of contract? Just pay it, then! I want them to know what happens when they

upset us Wards!"

What Landon canceled was a long-awaited business collaboration with Norton Corporation.

Ward Group's sudden withdrawal was definitely going to cause Norton Corporation massive

losses, but that was nothing compared to the severe damages that Ward Group would face.

However, Landon was so consumed with avenging his daughter that he forgot to consider

the consequences of his actions.

A second passed when he finally realized how grave a mistake he had made. His thoughts

scrambled for a way to reverse his actions, but it was far too late now.

Damn it. My blind rage has single-handedly shoved our family company into a deep

grave. Unfortunately, this came as an afterthought.

Standing next to him, Gabriella was extremely touched by his father's decision to defend her

honor. Her arms coiled around his neck as she placed a grateful kiss on his cheek.

"You're the best, Dad!" Gabriella sang in a honeyed voice.

"Anything for my daughter." Landon's lips curled into an affectionate smile.

Unbeknownst to them, this incident would later become the catalyst for causing a major rift

in their relationship.

Meanwhile, Joan had officially become Larry's fiancée now that she had accepted his

marriage proposal.

She terminated her lease and moved into Larry's villa. This way, it was easier for them to share romantic and intimate moments in their own private little bubble. Joan's eyes cracked open from sleep. She reached an arm over to Larry's spot but realized that he had already gotten out of bed.

She yawned and peeled her back off the bed, getting up to see what Larry was up to.

Soon enough, she saw Larry standing near the bedroom window. He stared blankly at the view outside with a half-burnt cigarette between his fingers, unaware that Joan had approached him.

Back when Joan had left him, he picked up smoking as a way of relieving stress.

This developed into a habit over the years.

It was normally manageable when Joan was beside him. However, there were still times

when he would gravitate towards a cigarette naturally, especially when he felt troubled or when Joan wasn't around.

"Larry," Joan called out softly from behind.

Once Larry heard her voice, he immediately put out his cigarette and turned to face Joan

with a smile. "You're up early, why didn't you sleep in a bit?"

"I woke up and couldn't go back to sleep." Joan paused and scrunched her brows into a frown. "Larry, why are you smoking again? You know that it's bad for you."

"Force of habit." Larry's gentle gaze met hers as he apologized, "Sorry. I know how much you hate the stale smell of cigarettes."

Joan was well aware of Larry's smoking habits. She knew that he picked it up because of

how she suddenly disappeared from his life back then, and the thought of this made her chest tighten with guilt.

She placed a hand on her belly and continued distressedly, "Larry, I know you started

smoking because of me. Now that we're together again, will you please quit smoking? It'll be best for you, me, and our baby."

Obviously, there was no way Larry would refuse after seeing Joan's bright and hopeful eyes.

Besides, Joan was pregnant with his child now. He felt a sense of dread as he looked at her swollen belly, feeling terrified of how smoking would negatively affect his child.

"Don't worry, I promise I'll stop from now onwards," Larry spoke with an iron-like determination as he wrapped his arms around Joan.

Laying against his chest cozily, Joan felt all fluttery inside. "Good, now you have to keep your word! So what happens if you don't?"

"Then you can punish me however you see fit," Larry chuckled at her adorable, cat-like smile.

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"I trust that you won't break your promise. After all, you have to set a good example for our children."

Joan's eyes squinted and her smile curved deeper as she teased Larry.

"An outstanding man like myself would never break promises," Larry complimented himself, to which Joan rolled her eyes.

Realizing that neither of them had breakfast yet, she asked thoughtfully, "What do you feel like having for breakfast? I'll make it for you."

"Hmm... anything?" Larry grinned slyly.

"Of course, I'm sure I can whip anything up."

Joan puffed her chest confidently, oblivious to the fact that she had fallen into Larry's trap.

"How about... you!" Larry's voice boomed while he scooped Joan up and carried her back to the bed.

Joan gasped. Her face burned a tomato-red once she realized his intentions. "Put me down, it's too early for this!"

“It’s never too early to stretch your muscles. Don’t you agree, Mrs. Norton?”

Playful laughter rumbled from Larry as he gently laid her onto the bed.

Desire clouded his eyes as he stared intensely at Joan.

Seeing this, Joan’s heart thumped louder and wilder in her chest. She felt dizzy with shyness,

but more so with anticipation.

Larry crawled toward her slowly, towering over Joan as their eyes met.

Their faces were so

close that they could hear each other’s heavy breathing.

Joan exhaled. Her warm breath tingled the fine hairs on Larry’s face, driving him wild with

lust.

He gazed affectionately at Joan before kissing her with an uninhibited passion. Soon, the

temperature in the room rose as romance filled the air.

An hour later, Joan lay on Larry’s chest panting while he stroked the strands of her pitch-black hair in contentment.

“Larry, what should we name our baby?” Joan’s eyes rounded hopefully as she thought of

the exciting years to come.

He was still combing his fingers through her hair but paused to respond, “Come now, silly.

It’s still too early to settle on a name. We should take our time to find the right one.”

“Then, do you prefer a boy or a girl?” Joan asked him seriously.

“Either is fine, as long as they’re our kids.”

Neither Larry nor his parents were biased toward having sons over daughters. Hence, Larry

would love his baby dearly, regardless of its gender.

“If it’s a boy, he has to be as exceptional as his daddy; if it’s a girl—” Joan trailed off as she

fantasized about their future.

“If it’s a girl, then she’ll be as beautiful and as kind as her mother.

However, she has to

inherit her father’s intelligence, that’s not an option,” Larry finished her sentence.

Joan smiled giddily at his compliment, but that smile dropped as soon as she heard that last

bit he said.

“Hey! Are you calling me dumb?” Joan huffed at him.

“Well, if the shoe fits.” Larry stuck his tongue out at her.

“I’m gonna get you for this!” Joan said through gritted teeth as she pounced onto Larry.

As soon as she did, he grinned dangerously at her. She knew what was coming from the way

he wriggled his fingers.

“N-no! Don’t tickle me, don’t you dare!” Joan roared once his fingers reached the sides of

her waist. “You meanie!”

“H-hahaha, I’m sorry, I’m sorry! Please stop!” Joan begged as she squirmed around.

Helplessness filled Joan’s exhausted body. If I knew it would end like this, I wouldn’t have

tried to tackle him.

After their tickle fight, Larry tensed as he brought up a serious matter.

“Joan, I need you to pack some clothes. We’re going to visit your parents and tell them

about our marriage, as well as ask for their approval.”

Although Joan accepted my proposal, I still haven’t gotten her parents’ approval yet.

“Okay, let’s go after breakfast then.”

Joan instantly agreed because she had hoped to tell her parents about the good news as

soon as she could.

“Aren’t you worried that your parents won’t approve of me or our marriage?” Larry

questioned curiously after seeing how eager Joan was.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1499

“Why would I be worried?” Joan’s eyes sparkled with adoration at him.

“I have the utmost

faith that you, my boyfriend, is not some ordinary guy that they’ll reject so easily.”

Despite her confidence in him, she still felt the need to warn him to be on his best behavior.

So she added, “But don’t be too arrogant! My mom’s not too fussy, but getting my dad’s

approval won’t be an easy task.”

Larry’s confidence soared as he bragged, “Relax. It’s like you said, I’m not some ordinary

guy. I'm sure Mr. and Mrs. Watts will love me."

"Wow." Joan rolled her eyes as she pouted, "I compliment you once, and now you're getting big-headed."

Larry chuckled softly at her.

When Joan first met Larry's parents, he insisted that Joan didn't need to show up with a visiting gift.

However, now that it was Larry's turn to meet her parents, he prowled at every shop in the mall for gifts. Even Joan couldn't stop him.

"Okay, that's more than enough. You need to stop!" Joan ushered, but to no avail.

Larry's bodyguard, Caspian, had already made two trips to pack away the gifts into the car. Yet, he currently had various bags looped around his arms as he carried tall stacks of gift boxes.

"Just a little more." Larry was unswayed by Joan. He continued to sift through gifts while

ordering, "Caspian, take these back to the car. We'll be done soon."

Caspian couldn't help but slump at this. "Sir, we should stop now since this seems plentiful enough."

"Oh? Caspian, are you incapable of transporting the gifts? or is it because you think you know better?"

Larry then shot a cold glare at Caspian, "Are you doubting my orders?"

"Never, Sir. Your word is the law." Caspian forced a smile. You're the boss.

Larry scoffed before his focus begrudgingly returned to the infinite display of gifts before him.

"This seems like a good amount, right?" Larry eventually mumbled.

"Yes!" Joan hurriedly linked her arm around his. "That's more than enough. Let's go, dear."

Dissatisfaction lurked in Larry's voice as he replied, "I guess this is it for now then. Caspian, make the payment with my card."

"Right away, Sir."

Despite carrying many bags and boxes, Caspian dashed without dropping a single item. He moved with haste, relieved that he was finally released from his shopping duties.

Larry realized just how much he had bought once all the gifts were piled into the car. It was as if brightly colored bags and boxes had exploded in the entirety of the car's trunk.

"Caspian, you'll have to take a cab back on your own."

It just wouldn't be right to bring my bodyguard along to visit my parents-in-law.

"Sure thing, Sir. I'll be off then." Caspian nodded politely.

He then turned and nodded with an equal amount of respect for Joan.

"I'll take my leave,

Ma'am."

Caspian definitely felt like Joan was equally, if not more formidable than Larry. Hence, it was

better to tread carefully than to cross her.

Joan was stunned for a moment before bursting into hearty laughter.

"Ma'am" was definitely an interesting title that she had never expected to be called.

Larry chuckled along, feeling pleased with her new title before waving for her to get moving.

"Let's head back."

On the drive there, Joan snuck multiple glances at Larry to see if he was nervous. To her

disappointment, Larry's face remained gravely calm.

Larry caught onto her suspicious behavior and teased, "Are you staring at me because of my dashing looks?"

"Aren't you nervous?" Joan blurted. I was such a nervous wreck when I first met his parents, so how is he not freaking out right now?

"What is there to be nervous about? I'm simply meeting your parents," Larry hummed

complacently. "Not everyone wets themselves as you did."

At this, Joan pouted and focused on the passing scenery outside the window.

Once she wasn't looking, the corner of Larry's lips twitched subtly. Silly girl, there's no way

that I'm not nervous!

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Although Larry felt confident, there was still no saying if Joan's parents would approve of him.

Nevertheless, he plastered on a calm and collected expression, lest Joan mocks him.

The rest of the two-hour drive went by swiftly. Larry had been to her parent's place before, so he navigated the road well.

"Mom, Dad, I'm home!" Joan announced out of habit.

"Joan! You're back." Mrs. Watts came to greet her.

Seconds after, Mr. Watts paced out of his study and approached them too.

Mrs. Watts beamed brightly, but her smile faltered when she saw Larry standing next to Joan.

"Joan! Why didn't you tell me that you would be bringing a guest?" Mrs. Watts' panicked

gaze darted back to her daughter. "I didn't prepare any refreshments or snacks!"

"Mom, it's fine. He's not some outsider," Joan giggled.

Not some outsider? Mrs. Watts stilled. Does that mean... he's her boyfriend?

The thought of this straightened Mrs. Watts' back. She then eyed Larry from top to bottom.

Not bad. Not bad at all. An approving smile grew on Mrs. Watts' face as she scanned every

inch of Larry's appearance. He was tall and handsome, yet elegant and well-composed at

the same time. All of this won Mrs. Watts over.

Once both her parents had gathered before them, Joan announced proudly, "Mom, Dad.

This is my boyfriend—Larry Norton."

Larry took the chance to step forward and give a slight bow. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. and Mrs. Watts."

We've met before, Mr. Watts. Larry couldn't help but wonder if the man remembered him as well.

Mr. Watts briefly smiled in acknowledgment of Larry's greeting. Unbeknownst to Larry, Mr. Watts did remember him. Joan's boyfriend, huh? I'll be the judge of whether he's worthy enough to be with my daughter. It wasn't a lie when people say that fathers are their daughters' first love. Mr. Watts had always spoiled Joan, and even to this point, he wanted the very best man for his daughter. So he examined Larry's every move and every breath with extreme prejudice. "Alright now," Mrs. Watts said. She wasn't as fussy as her husband when it comes to Larry's worth. All she knew was that she really liked this well-behaved young man and approved him as her future son-in-law. "Come in, Larry. You guys have a seat while I make you some tea." "Please don't trouble yourself, Mrs. Watts." Larry smiled before turning to Joan and said, "You go on in. I'll bring over the gifts from the trunk." "Mm-hmm. You go ahead," Joan replied in a singsong voice. "Oh my! You didn't have to bring gifts. Your presence is more than enough." Mrs. Watts' lips parted into a wide grin. She had hoped that her daughter would find a good man and settle down happily. Now that Joan had formally introduced such an exceptional man as her boyfriend, Mrs. Watts' face lit up with glee. She couldn't contain the joy that warmed in her chest. In the following ten minutes, the Watts watched as Larry carried boxes and bags of gifts from his trunk over to the living room. They initially didn't think much of it, but as the minutes went by, Mr. and Mrs. Watts' jaws gradually dropped in shock. "Joan, what's all this?" Mrs. Watts asked. Joan shrugged helplessly. "I told him not to get so many gifts, but he kept insisting." "Do you think that's the last of it?"

“Hmm, seems like it.”

“Why is he still going, then?”

“Give him a minute. I’m sure he’s almost done.”

“Is that it?”

“I-I’m not so sure anymore.”

The Watts’ eyes widened in disbelief once Larry was done moving the gifts.

There was now a mountain-like pile of gifts that almost reached the ceiling in the living

room. At this, Mrs. Watts twiddled her thumbs. “Did you guys buy everything in the mall?”

Larry chuckled before calmly explaining, “I wanted to get you guys gifts since it’s our first

time meeting. However, I didn’t know what you guys liked, so I got a bit of everything. Once

we get to know each other better, I’ll bring over gifts that you prefer the next time I visit.”

“That’s very thoughtful of you, Larry.” Mrs. Watts grinned from ear to ear, feeling more and

more satisfied with her daughter’s choice in men.

“But really, there’s no need for gifts in the future. I’ll be more than happy if you two visit us

often. Don’t you agree, darling?”

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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1501

Mrs. Watts nudged her husband, who had been awfully silent the whole time.

However, Mr. Watts only nodded in response.

“Don’t mind him, Larry. He’s a man of few words,” Mrs. Watts tried to diffuse the

awkwardness caused by her husband’s actions.

“It’s okay, Mr. Watts, I understand.” Larry flashed a controlled smile.

Although Joan’s mom took to me immediately, I still have my work cut out for me. It won’t

be easy to get her dad’s acceptance, it seems.

Larry leaned into the sofa, pondering his next move.

“Alright then, you guys have a nice chat while I prepare dinner.” With that, Mrs. Watts

turned and started walking in the direction of the kitchen.

However, in the next moment, she said with a fond look, "Joan, why don't you help me out, hmm?"

"Okay, Mom." Joan stood up and left for the kitchen.

At this, Mr. Watts rose to his feet and instructed, "let's head to the study."

Larry nodded before following Mr. Watts into the study and shutting the door.

Worry nipped at Joan's chest as she peeked in the direction of the study.

She wasn't sure

what her father had in mind for Larry, but she could only pray for the best.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Watts' eyes glimmered with excitement once her daughter entered the

kitchen. She hurriedly asked, "Joan, tell me about Larry. He doesn't seem like some random guy."

"Well... Larry's the president of Norton Corporation," Joan admitted nervously.

"Norton Corporation? Isn't that the most dominant company in Marsingfill?"

Mrs. Watts had never cared about such things, but even she knew about the renowned

Norton Corporation.

"Yeah, that's the one."

Mrs. Watts froze before gasping enthusiastically, "I knew it! I knew that he wasn't just some

ordinary guy. I can't believe that he comes from such prestigious background!"

She wasn't normally materialistic but having such a reputable son-in-law was undeniably

something that she could brag to her friends about.

The joy was short-lived however when she suddenly realized something. Her eyes snapped

back to Joan as she protested, "Won't people nitpick at you and make your life difficult since

your boyfriend's so wealthy and powerful? If that's the case... Then, absolutely not! I won't

approve of your relationship if it's going to put you through hardship!"

No matter how prestigious he is, I won't allow my precious daughter to live a life of suffering!

Warmth spread across Joan's chest. She was moved by her mother's concern and hastily explained, "Don't worry, Mom. Larry treats me well, and I think his parents like me too."

"You've met his parents?"

A sigh of relief slipped out of Mrs. Watts' lips. "That's good to hear, then. I had a feeling that your boyfriend is a decent young man. I'm really pleased that you found someone like him."

Now that her daughter had found a lovely man whose family also accepted her, Mrs. Watts felt like a weight was finally off her shoulders.

"Speaking of... Larry proposed to me two days ago in a press conference, and I accepted it."

Joan met her mother's eyes bashfully. "We actually came over to ask for your and Dad's approval."

"He proposed?" Mrs. Watts perked up at this. "Oh my God, that's great news! There are no objections from me. I'm so pleased!"

Joan beamed at her mother's approval, but still couldn't help but raise her doubts. "But

Mom... I don't think Dad is fond of Larry. What do I do?"

Mrs. Watts sighed, "I understand. I know how stubborn and foul-tempered your dad can get

when his mind is set on something. However, I think he's just messing with Larry because

he's sad to see his little girl leave her nest. So, there's really nothing to be worried about."

Despite her mother's comforting words, Joan couldn't help but still feel worried, if not worse.

Nonetheless, Joan and Mrs. Watts worked swiftly on preparing dinner. It didn't take long

before they had plated their dishes and set the table.

"Darling! Larry! Dinner's ready," Mrs. Watts called out to the study as she placed the last dish

on the table.

"Coming," Mr. Watt's voice sounded.

He then paced over to the dining room with a wide grin on his face as he chuckled heartily,

"Come along, Larry, let's have a drink."

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"Sure, Mr. Watts. Whatever you say," said Larry as he walked out of the study with a smile.

"Come, sit over here! Don't stand on ceremony at home," invited Mr. Watts as he beckoned him over.

"Please, take your seat first, Mr. Watts."

Both men sat down together. The atmosphere was so harmonious that it barely seemed like

they had just met. The hostility Mr. Watts showed earlier had also disappeared.

Looking at how amicable they were with each other, the mother and daughter pair was stunned.

What's going on? They were acting so awkward with each other earlier... Why did they

suddenly become friendly now? They glanced at each other, their eyes filled with confusion.

Both of them shook their head simultaneously, not knowing what had gotten into the men.

"Joan, bring two glasses over. I'd like to have a good drink with Larry." Mr. Watts was in high spirits.

"Oh, okay."

Although Joan did not know what had happened, she felt relieved that her father was

treating Larry nicely. She turned around and headed to the kitchen to grab two glasses.

"Larry, I've kept this bottle of wine for five years, it's my prized possession. Since I'm in such

a great mood today, let's drink up!" said Mr. Watts as he brought a bottle of wine out of the room.

Larry quickly stood up and poured a glass of wine for both of them. Then, he picked the

glass up, sniffed it, and praised, "This is an amazing wine. Your taste is definitely much more superior than mine, Mr. Watts."

After receiving that compliment, Mr. Watts was delighted. He exclaimed happily, "You're not so bad yourself either, having made a name for yourself at such a young age. I'm glad that Joan is together with you."

"Darling, are you feeling uncomfortable?"

Mr. Watts' abnormal behavior caused Mrs. Watts to feel slightly worried. It's fine that he has a bad temper, but what's with his weird attitude now? Could it be his brain fried itself or something?

"What are you talking about? I'm fine! In fact, I'm in an extremely good mood today!"

"But I thought you were reluctant to let your daughter get married? You were still angry earlier!" asked Mrs. Watts, unable to hold herself back any longer.

"Initially, I was a bit upset and afraid that my daughter would not have a good life with Larry.

However, I changed my mind. After having a few rounds of chess with Larry in the study, I realized what kind of a man he is."

"What?"

Both Joan and Mrs. Watts were even more confused after listening to his explanation. They thought that something had happened, but it turned out that Mr. Watts merely had a few rounds of chess with Larry.

"What can a game of chess tell?"

Mrs. Watts was a bit unconvinced. "He managed to change your mind with just a few rounds of chess? I thought that you'd be a stubborn man to convince?"

"Hmph! What do you know?"

Mrs. Watts' mocking tone stirred Mr. Watts up. "You can judge a person's character and temper by how he plays chess! Larry's moves are very strategic, yet open. He doesn't play

any underhanded tricks at all. It's obvious that he's a righteous and kind man. Naturally, I won't be worried to entrust Joan to someone like him."

Joan and Mrs. Watts could not grasp what he was trying to say. However, both of them knew that Mr. Watts had finally approved of Larry. Not only did he approve of Larry, but he was also very pleased. Hence, the mother and daughter duo felt relieved. Now that Mr. Watts had no objections, Larry and Joan's marriage could finally be settled. Joan asked, "Dad, there's something that I need to tell you. Mom has already agreed to it, but I'd still like to ask for your opinion."

"Are you talking about your engagement with Larry?" asked Mr. Watts with a chuckle.

"Larry already told me about it when we were playing chess. Since I said that I trust Larry, I'll let him settle the time and details of the engagement."

Joan was still stunned by her father's drastic change in attitude. However, now that everything could be settled nicely, everyone was pleased. The family started to eat harmoniously, chatting along the way. It was truly a heart-warming scene.

After eating, Larry and Joan lingered around for a long time. Although Mr. Watts said that Larry should handle everything, there were still some important aspects that would need to be discussed.

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After everything was settled, Larry and Joan stood up and bade her parents farewell.

"Mr. and Mrs. Watts, I still have some work to attend to at my office, so I won't stay any longer. I'll send the details of the engagement to the two of you for your perusal soon," said Larry respectfully.

"Okay. We're not worried if you're the one handling things. We won't force you to stay anymore. Remember to visit more often," said Mr. Watts kindly, his attitude drastically

different from when he first saw Larry.

"Larry, you must take good care of Joan and not let her get hurt," reminded Mrs. Watts.

She continued, "Also, remember to visit whenever you're free. Although we don't have much to host you with, we can still have a nice chat together."

"Rest assured that I'll remember everything that you said, Mr. and Mrs. Watts. Joan and I will definitely visit you often," guaranteed Larry seriously. "We'll take our leave, then."

"Dad, Mom, go back first. We'll take our leave now."

Joan waved her parents farewell.

"Drive slowly!"

Mrs. Watts waved back longingly.

After both of them left, Mrs. Watts cast a glance at Mr. Watts, who was still chuckling with a

silly grin on his face. She remarked unhappily, "Look at how happy you are now. You weren't

like this when Larry first came. You're so easily influenced!"

"I'm giving the youngster a chance! Besides, Larry's a really impressive man. You're so

delighted that you can't stop smiling too."

Truth be told, Mr. Watts felt a little embarrassed that he got convinced just by a few rounds

of chess. It was not a glorious thing to tell everyone.

Ignoring him, Mrs. Watts rolled her eyes and walked toward the house.

Scratching his nose awkwardly, Mr. Watts followed his wife in.

While they were driving back, Joan looked at Larry and remarked light-heartedly, "I didn't

expect you to pass my parents' trials so easily. It's gonna be smooth sailing from here on

out."

Larry smiled. "Mrs. Watts didn't pose a challenge at all. She's dying to entrust her daughter

to me. As for Mr. Watts..."

He deliberately paused there.

"What about my father? I keep thinking that it's very unlikely that you managed to win his

favor just by playing chess. Is there another reason for it?" Joan could not help but probe

him further.

“Chess played a part. However, there was another reason. Not only did he fail to defeat me each time, but I also helped him solve a problem that stumped him.”
“I see...”

Joan understood it slightly now. Her father placed a lot of importance on chance. There were barely any who could defeat him in chess, while Larry was the only one who could triumph over him in every single round.

Joan pouted. “I can’t help but feel like I just got given away by my dad...”

Thinking that her father agreed to the marriage just because he lost at chess, Joan could not help but wonder if she was his actual child.

Although she felt gloomy, Larry was in a great mood. Now that both of their parents agreed to their relationship, it was easier to proceed with everything else. For the following days, Larry immediately returned home to discuss with his parents about the engagement after settling his work. It was obvious how much importance he placed on this engagement.

Finally, they decided to hold it on the 25th that month.

They did not want to make it a grand event, so they merely planned to invite a few relatives and friends that were close to the Norton and Watts families. However, news that the president of Norton Corporation was getting engaged soon spread like wildfire.

On the morning of the 25th, a large crowd of journalists waited outside the Norton family, desiring to get more information.

Unfortunately, they were barred from entering the house. After the engagement ceremony ended and the guests left, they headed back dejectedly.

During the engagement ceremony, Larry and Joan’s parents met each other for the first time. They got close rather quickly. As Mr. Watts and Finnick liked playing chess, they

became good friends while Mrs. Watts and Vivian took a liking to each other too.

In front of their parents, friends, and relatives, Larry and Joan exchanged their engagement rings.

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Without any overly complex procedures, the engagement ceremony ended successfully with everyone's well-wishes.

For the party afterward, Larry and Joan toasted their friends arm-in-arm. Enveloped in a heartwarming and lively atmosphere, they started to enjoy the sumptuous meal.

Throughout the party, a sweet smile was constantly hung on Joan's lips. From then on, she was no longer Larry's girlfriend, but his fiancée.

She gazed at Larry lovingly, thinking that she could look at him like that for the rest of eternity.

Larry, as long as I can be with you, all suffering and hardships are worth it.

Joan smiled brightly as she thought about it.

The engagement party ended very quickly. After sending their guests away, tranquility returned to the Norton Residence.

As Finnick and Vivian kept insisting that they stay over, Joan's parents did not return to

Zapington and stayed at the Norton Residence instead.

Mr. Watts and Finnick, who had become quick friends, went to play chess in the study while

Mrs. Watts and Vivian went shopping at the mall.

Only Larry and Joan were left in the spacious living room.

"Are you happy?"

Larry hugged Joan gently, his voice filled with affection.

"Yeah."

Joan leaned against Larry's chest. "Today's the happiest day in my life."

"Since it's such a memorable day, shouldn't we do something meaningful?" asked Larry with a mischievous tone.

When Joan saw his naughty smirk, she understood what he was hinting at and snapped,

“Why is your mind always filled with these nasty thoughts?”

“What are you thinking about? I just want to bring you out to have fun.”

Larry burst out

laughing.

“You...”

Joan blushed. You’re bullying me again!

“Alright, jokes aside, let’s go Dear.”

Larry held Joan’s hand and walked out.

He initially planned to drive Joan around, but she said that she wanted to take a stroll.

When he heard that, he kept his car keys, and both of them walked on the bustling streets

hand-in-hand.

The Norton family lived in a prime location at the city center. The streets were congested

with cars and crowds.

Hence, Larry brought Joan to the Times Plaza, which he thought was quieter.

However, he forgot that the plaza had already been filled by other middle-aged women.

Looking at the women dancing on the plaza, Larry was stunned.

On the other hand, Joan was not bothered at all. She thought that watching them dance

was an enjoyment.

As she watched the women’s dance moves, Joan felt eager to join in as well. Tempted, she

suggested to Larry, “Larry, let’s dance too.”

No way!

Larry was so shocked that he felt his legs turn weak. Why do I have to dance with a bunch of

middle-aged ladies? Isn’t it embarrassing for a guy like me to do it?

“No, I don’t want to!” Larry shook his head vigorously.

“A big, hunky man like me dancing there? No way in hell!”

Not to mention I’m such a rich, powerful and talented man! So how can I just start dancing

in public? Larry lamented in his heart silently.

“It doesn’t matter if you’re a guy or not. Look, there are so many youngsters there,” Joan

continued persuading him.

He turned around and scrutinized the crowd. It was true that there were a few young people

inside, with some guys engrossed in the dance.

"Doesn't matter, I still won't go." Larry refused again.

"Joan, if you want to dance, I'll accompany you to the dance machine at the arcade, okay?"

he suggested quickly upon thinking of this better idea.

"Fine, since you don't like this, let's not go."

Joan's initial grin disappeared as a dejected look crossed her face.

Looking at Joan, Larry felt his heart ache. He planned to bring her out to have fun, but he

ended up disappointing her instead.

After a slight hesitation, he said through gritted teeth, "Joan, since you're so interested to

try, I'll dance with you."

Thinking that it was so dark, Larry reckoned that no one would be able to recognize them.

Even if someone did, no one would believe that the president of Norton Corporation would

dance at a place like this.

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Larry calmed down as he consoled himself.

"Really? You're the best, Dear!"

Joan was so elated that she jumped up and kissed Larry's cheek. All traces of sadness were gone by now.

When Larry saw her cunning gaze, he knew that she had tricked him, knowing that he would definitely agree.

"I can't believe I fell for your trap..."

Larry sighed silently and let Joan drag him to the center of the plaza.

As everyone else danced to the rhythm of the music, Joan's body swayed gently as well.

"You should dance too."

"I won't!"

"Come on, dear."

"I refuse!"

Knowing that he had probably mustered up all his courage to accompany her here, she did

not force him further. Instead, she started imitating the dance moves of the ladies around her.

Joan was smiling, looking like a beautiful angel. She wore a high-collared white sweater, which accentuated her long and beautiful neck. The skinny jeans revealed her perfect figure, while a sweet smile was spread across her pretty face. Larry fell into a daze as he stared at her.

As long as I could make her happy, I couldn't be bothered about other things.

Watching Joan, who was learning the dance moves attentively, he smiled.

Even a man with such high standards like Larry fell into a daze watching Joan. So it was safe to say that the other young people at the plaza were staring at her too, attracted by her beauty.

However, when they spotted Larry standing beside her, they sighed silently.

Since she already had a boyfriend, they knew that they stood no chance. Although most decided to give up, some foolishly courageous youths came to ask her out.

"Hello, beautiful. May I ask what your name is?" a young and shy youth walked forward and asked.

"I'm sorry, but I already have a boyfriend."

It was obvious that Joan wanted to ignore him. She simply pointed at Larry, so the young man would get the hint and leave.

"Well, we have the freedom to love. I have the right to pursue you too," insisted the youth stubbornly.

Then, he looked at Larry. "I want a fair competition with you."

Larry shrugged and smiled.

A cold glint appeared in his eyes, but he immediately concealed it.

He's just an ignorant child, so there's no need for me to be too riled up over him.

"How old are you?"

Joan found it amusing. He's probably not an adult yet, right?
"I'm nineteen already, so I'm an adult," replied the youth.
He even added smugly, "Besides, I already own my own Audi A6 car.
Your boyfriend
probably doesn't have a car yet, right?"
He threw a proud glance at Larry, wanting to make him feel guilty.
"Let's go, Larry."
Joan could not be bothered to talk to the youth anymore. After dancing
for so long, she was
also a little tired.
"Sure, let's go."
With that, he draped an arm over Joan's shoulders and was about to
leave, ignoring the
youth.
"I will never give up!" the youth yelled loudly, feeling slightly humiliated.
Although this small incident happened, none of them was bothered by it.
As he was just a
child, it was unnecessary for them to stoop to his level.
"Harrold, help me investigate this beautiful lady and the man's
background," instructed the
youth.
He was furious as this was the first-ever setback he faced.
"Why don't you just forget it? It's obvious that he's no ordinary man.
Furthermore, they're a
couple. What else can you do about it?" replied the old man who was
standing beside the
youth exasperatedly.
He knew that his boss was not evil by nature, but the young man had a
tendency of doing
nasty things like this.
"I don't care. I like that woman. Investigate them for me quickly!" The
youth was reluctant to
give up.
"There's no need for that. You can't touch that woman, nor can you
provoke that man."
At that moment, a cold voice sounded.
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Both men, young and old, were taken aback.
"Who are you?" the young man yelled, feeling embarrassed

Ignoring the young man, the man spoke to the elderly directly, "You'd better watch this kid so that he doesn't offend people who are out of your league."

After that, the man disappeared into the crowd.

Seeing as the man showed him no mercy at all, the young man was prompted to go after him and argue further but was immediately held back by the elderly. "Let's just go home, Sir."

The old man didn't disregard the message conveyed by the man.

Instead, he started giving careful thought to the identity of the couple they just saw.

After racking his brains for a long while, an image of a man became increasingly vivid in the old man's mind, and his features started matching that of the man he just saw. At that

moment, he was overcome by astonishment with his mouth agape.

That was the president of Norton Corporation, Larry Norton!

As a shiver crept down his spine, the old man quickly yanked the young man and walked away.

It's time to really discipline this kid. If he spouts out anything inappropriate again, the entire family might be done for!

It turned out that the man who just warned them was none other than the leader of Larry's bodyguards, Caspian.

As Larry's personal bodyguard, Caspian always kept him safe by following him around closely.

Especially since Larry and Joan were taking a stroll that day, he was even more meticulous and kept a close watch on their surroundings at all times, which was how he noticed what happened just then.

"That kid must be mad."

Caspian felt that the young man was not in his right mind. Otherwise, why would he try to steal someone else's girlfriend?

Fortunately, Mr. Norton was in high spirits and didn't mind what he had done, or else that

kid would have been dead meat.

After resolving the hiccup, Caspian continued to follow Larry and Joan from a distance,

protecting them dutifully.

Larry and Joan wandered around for a long time, and eventually, they went home when

Joan got a little tired.

While Larry and Joan were leading their humdrum yet romantic life,

Gabriella, on the other

hand, was having a rather difficult time.

Not only was she infuriated by the news about the engagement between Larry and Joan

which spread like wildfire a while ago, but Ward Group also seemed to have faced some

issues as well.

Their business faced oppression from a large number of companies and enterprises, and

Gabriella's father, Landon, was so bogged down with the company's affairs that his attitude

toward her changed for the worse. He even lashed out at her that day.

Gabriella was greatly aggrieved. Why is Dad venting his anger on me?

Little did she know that the difficulties the Wards were facing at the moment were brought

about by her.

Back then, to relieve his daughter's frustrations, Landon canceled a huge collaboration with

Norton Corporation on impulse. The negative impact resulting from his decision started

emerging slowly after some time.

First of all, the Wards incurred a huge loss from the termination of the collaboration, and he

thought he would be able to find another collaboration partner soon.

After all, there used to

be many enterprises competing to work with the Wards on that project, but Norton

Corporation came up with much better terms, which prompted Landon to choose them as

the group's collaboration partner.

Nevertheless, when he tried to find other companies to work with, he found that there was no company willing to work with Ward Group anymore. Currently, Ward Group was overloaded with an enormous amount of products without any wholesaling or retailing channels to sell them. Landon was extremely distressed, but he couldn't really figure out what went wrong.

Other shareholders of the company began to pressure him as the decision to withdraw the collaboration with Norton Corporation was made by Landon. If the problem could not be resolved, they would jointly decide to remove Landon from the chairman position of Ward Group.

Landon was particularly remorseful about his previous impulsive decision, and he happened to bump into Gabriella that day. Hence, he flat-out jumped at Gabriella when he saw her.

For that reason, Gabriella was still brooding on the sofa right then. Out of the blue, her phone chimed, and Gabriella took a gander at it just to find that it was a notification from the group chat with her high school classmates. It was the day of their annual gathering. In the past, Gabriella had never been present at the gathering as she felt that such occasions were too lowly for someone with a superior status like her. Therefore, she always turned them down with some made-up excuses.

However, right then, she was in such a bad mood that she felt like she could use a little distraction and attend the gathering to soothe her nerves.

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The gathering would be held in the afternoon at one of her high school classmates' abode, which was not very far away from her home. Without much hesitation, Gabriella agreed to be present.

In the afternoon, Gabriella arrived at the classmate's house as promised. Just as she entered

the house, everyone was captivated by her.

Gabriella was in a low-cut mini dress whereby a large area of her porcelain skin was

exposed, and her hourglass figure was accentuated.

Even though the makeup on her face was heavy, she still looked very elegant and graceful.

In her high heels, Gabriella strutted like a peacock and paced into the middle of the crowd.

Even though she was having a hard time recently, Gabriella was still undoubtedly the most

eye-catching person among her high school classmates.

Elated, Gabriella enjoyed the instance when all eyes were fixated on her, and it distracted

her from all the recent chaos in her life and helped her regain her self-confidence.

Seeing as Gabriella was approaching, those who were engaged in casual chats, especially

men, drew themselves closer to her simultaneously. There was a fervently expectant glint

glowing in their eyes.

"Gabriella, you're here. You're still as beautiful as before."

"You've grown so much prettier, Gabriella. You look so graceful."

"Have you found a boyfriend? The man who marries you in the future must be one lucky

man!"

All the flatteries from everyone around her put a contented smile on Gabriella's face.

She was still the goddess in everyone's eyes. Joan, you're no match for me!

Gabriella's arrival certainly drove the gathering to its culmination. At that moment, she was

surrounded by many of her male classmates. However, seeing that she was nonchalant to

everyone, they gradually walked away. Only one man remained at Gabriella's side, and he

was Carl.

The moment Gabriella walked into the house, Carl's eyes lit up instantly.

Even when they were still in high school, Gabriella had been his dream girl, and he had

always wanted to pursue her.

For one, Gabriella was indeed gorgeous and alluring. If he succeeded in courting her, he

would be guaranteed a wonderful time with her.

Secondly, the Wards were affluent and powerful. Furthermore, Gabriella was Landon's only

child. If he managed to get Gabriella, it would be as good as getting hold of Ward Group.

Carl came from a rather mediocre family. Therefore, with a rags-to-riches opportunity in

front of him, how could he ever let it slip past him?

Unfortunately, even as he racked his brains to please Gabriella, his efforts were in vain, and

Gabriella was totally uninterested in him. Hence, he had no choice but to give up in the end.

Meeting Gabriella once again at the gathering, the dissipated desire within him flared up

once more. Moreover, Carl had also received news of what happened to Gabriella of late.

Knowing that she wasn't exactly in the best shape, he felt that he was being gifted another chance.

"It's been a while, Gabriella. I missed you so much. There has never been a minute that I

don't think about you since high school. It's so good to see you again!"

Carl said to Gabriella

in a very cringy manner, seemingly desperate to seize this golden opportunity to win her over.

"Carl, it's been a long time. I appreciate that you still remember me, but just like before, I

still have no feelings for you," Gabriella replied coldly.

You, of all people, are trying to be with me? You're reaching way above your station.

Gabriella kept that within herself, but the contemptuous look on her face said it all.

"Gabriella, why can't you just accept me? I'm the person who loves you the most." Carl

didn't mind Gabriella's attitude toward him and continued to pester her.

"I told you before that I don't like you, and I never ever will."

Gabriella was losing her patience. "Do you understand?"

"How can you be so certain, Gabriella? Interests and feelings can be cultivated over time.

You may not like me now, but maybe you will someday."

Carl chased after Gabriella, unwilling to give up just yet.

"Gabriella, why don't you just give me a chance? Perhaps you'll see the good in me later.

Gabriella, say something. Are you thirsty? Let me get you a drink, alright?"

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1508

Relentlessly, Carl continued his prattling. However, at that point, Gabriella was exceedingly

irritated to the extent that she wasn't even willing to say a word.

"Enough, Carl!"

Finally, Gabriella couldn't take it anymore. Fumed, she bellowed, "Why don't you take a look

at yourself? Do you really think you're good enough for me, huh? With such status and

appearance of yours, things will never work out between us!"

Disdain and scorn were written all over Gabriella's face, and as she looked at Carl, her eyes

were filled with derision and mockery.

The penetrating glint in her eyes pierced directly through Carl's heart.

Cheap tart, I'll make

you beg for mercy between my legs one day!

Despite his thought, Carl kept his composure and didn't let it show via his expression.

Gabriella's brutal words didn't stop him, nor did they make him retreat.

Instead, his

harassment became even more intense.

"Gabriella, I don't care how you perceive me. My love for you is genuine!

I've heard about

the troubles you encountered recently. I'd say that a man like Larry is really a blinded fool.

How can he not cherish such a perfect woman like you? I'm sure he'll regret it sooner or

later!" Carl expressed himself eagerly. The way he gazed at Gabriella was notably keen and

affectionate.

In fact, Gabriella was deeply affected by the last sentence Carl uttered.

Larry is indeed blind, which is exactly why he fell for that wretch Joan. At some point in the future, he'll definitely regret it and come begging for my forgiveness! At that thought, Gabriella stopped pulling a long face. Out of the blue, she even felt that Carl wasn't that annoying anymore.

The change in Gabriella's expression was fully captured by Carl. In his mind, he was cursing Gabriella for indulging herself in her whims. Between his lips, however, sweet talks were spurted non-stop.

"Gabriella, trust me. I'll do anything for you, as long as you promise to be with me."

Carl's voice was honeyed and filled with temptation. It sounded as though he would even be willing to pluck the stars for Gabriella if she agreed to his request.

"Are you really willing to do anything for me? Anything at all?"

Upon listening to what Carl said, an idea that targeted Larry and Joan occurred to Gabriella.

Carl was in a daze as he didn't expect to see a change in Gabriella's attitude so soon. He thought that it would take some time for Gabriella to finally give him her word. Immediately, he exclaimed in joy, "Of course! As long as you're willing to accept me, I'll agree to whatever you ask me to do, even if it means going through fire and water!"

"Well, if you can complete this successfully, I'll consider accepting you."

Thoughts and ideas whirled in Gabriella's mind, and a smile crept up on her face.

"Go on, Gabriella. What is it?"

Happiness came too suddenly, and Carl was still in a trance-like state. If Gabriella does give me an opportunity, I will find ways to sleep with her and set it in stone so that she has no choice but to accept me in the end.

Then, when the time comes, I'll be able to get a piece of the pie of the Wards' family business.

Carl was getting even more excited and couldn't wait to get started on Gabriella's task for him.

“Are you aware of the engagement between Larry and Joan? You should know that I hate

Joan to the core now. Aren’t you a smooth talker? Since you can come up with all sorts of

flatteries and sweet nothings, I want you to set Joan up and sleep with her. I don’t care how

you do it, and it’s not necessary for you to really sleep with her as long as you can convince

people of your romantic involvement with her and send me some intimate photos of you

two together.” Gabriella wrapped it up and turned to Carl.

“You’re asking me to hook up with Joan? But I’m afraid it’ll be difficult for me to get past

Larry.”

Even though Carl would do everything he could to capture Gabriella’s heart, that didn’t

mean he was an idiot. The power Larry and Norton Corporation held wasn’t something he

could contend with.

“I won’t force you into doing it. The decision is entirely up to you, and my stance remains

the same. If this is successfully done, I’ll consider being with you.”

Gabriella’s tone was full of

temptation.

Using Carl as my cat’s paw to settle this matter and detaching myself from it at the same

time, what a flawless plan I have. Gabriella couldn’t help boasting in silence.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1509

Even though Larry has a considerable influence in Marsingfill, if I were to pursue Joan as an

admirer, he can’t really do anything to me, right?

Carl rationalized it within himself and decided to give it a go.

You can’t really get what you want without sacrifices. Besides, it’s not really possible to win

Gabriella’s heart without taking any risks. In that case, I’d better agree to it promptly to

leave a more favorable impression on Gabriella.

“Alright, I’ll do it for you! Don’t worry, Gabriella. I’ll get it done perfectly, and I won’t

disappoint you,” Carl assured her in a confident manner.

“Well, it looks like I wasn’t wrong about you, Carl. I’m starting to take a liking to you,” In

order to motivate Carl to work for her, Gabriella started showering him with compliments.

“Of course, Gabriella. You’ll discover more of my strengths in the future,” Carl replied rather

smugly as he looked at her.

Just you wait. I’ll be able to do whatever I want with you once I get hold of you.

If you get it done, Larry would never ever let you off the hook, and I’ll be able to free myself

from your harassment. This is simply killing two birds with one stone.

In that instant, the two of them, both with a secret agenda on their minds, laughed aloud in

unison.

“Gabriella, come on. The gathering is going to start soon. Let’s go over there.”

Carl took the opportunity to reach out and hold Gabriella’s hand. Let’s see what other

excuse you can come up with to reject me. If you’re not even willing to compromise to such

a simple act, that would mean you have not even a single trace of sincerity.

Carl was complacent as he thought about that.

As Gabriella was about to fume when she felt her hand being grasped, she was reminded of

her agreement with Carl. Turning against him now isn’t sensible.

Suppressing the overwhelming disgust within her, she let Carl hold her hand and lead her

forward.

When the gathering started, Carl sat next to Gabriella, making an impression that he was

very close to her. That made all the other men present extremely envious of him.

Throughout that period, Carl tried to take advantage of Gabriella by pretending to touch her

unintentionally, but every time he did that, Gabriella was able to dodge him in time.

Eventually, Gabriella made an excuse to discuss something personal with the other ladies

and left directly, which upset Carl.

Staring at Gabriella's attractive figure, Carl couldn't help licking his lips.

You'll become my

plaything sooner or later.

Suppressing his desire, Carl started deliberating about how he should approach Joan and

fulfill Gabriella's request.

One day, Joan was ready to go home after work. All this time, Larry had always wanted to

pick her up from work.

Nevertheless, Joan insisted on going home on her own in a cab. Since she was only an

ordinary member of the company staff, she refused to receive any privileged treatment

which would distance herself from her colleagues.

After some consideration, Larry thought that she was right. Besides, the company where

Joan worked wasn't very far away from the villa. It was a journey of at most ten minutes.

Hence, Larry allowed her to travel home in a cab.

Taking her bag, Joan was ready to leave as it was getting late, and she was afraid that Larry

would worry about her. Therefore, she rushed outside the company, and just as she was

about to take a turn at the entrance, she bumped into someone.

"Ouch!"

The forceful collision sent Joan falling on her hip. Covering her forehead, Joan was in a daze

for quite a long while.

"Miss, are you alright?"

The other person was also hit hard. But as a man, he reacted more quickly than Joan.

Stepping forward in a polite manner, he was ready to help Joan up.

"It's fine. I'll get up on my own," Joan rejected his offer as she came back to her senses.

Larry had been reminding Joan to avoid contact with strangers, and she always kept that in

mind.

The man was a little bashful as he smiled apologetically. "I'm really sorry. I was in a hurry to discuss something with your company, so I didn't really notice you. It was my fault."

"It's okay."

Apparently, he didn't do it on purpose, so Joan didn't really mind. "Oh, it's past working

hours now. Why don't you come again to our company tomorrow?"

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1510

Joan kindly reminded him.

Most people had already left for the day, save for the security guard stationed at his post.

There was virtually no one to discuss business with him.

"Is that so? I didn't know that."

Evidently, he did not expect everyone to have knocked off. Chuckling, he replied, "I'll just

have to visit again tomorrow. Thanks for your reminder."

"No problem," Joan politely responded.

The man was elegant and well-mannered, so even though Joan was not interested in him,

he managed to leave a good impression on her.

After she finished her sentence, she walked out to hail a cab.

Without hesitation, the man followed after her.

"Miss, you must be a really hard worker, given that you've just ended your day," the man

casually flirted with her.

"It's nothing. I'm used to it."

Joan had no intentions of interacting with him any longer, and her response was merely out

of courtesy.

"It's getting late. How about I send you home? See it as my compensation to you for taking

up your time," the man offered to drive her home.

"There's no need for that. I live nearby, and my boyfriend's waiting for me to have dinner."

She could tell that he had ulterior motives for inviting her to take his car, so she decided it

was better to use Larry's name and directly reject his advances.

"Alright then. Be careful on your way back. I'll be on my way."

The man flashed a grin and bade her farewell without any resistance.

Joan was pleased that he did not pester her any further and returned his smile. "You too."

With that, Joan flagged a cab and gently nodded at him before boarding the car.

His gaze lingered on her cab for a brief moment before he sneered.

"Hmm, I guess she's

pretty smart. But hey, I'm not gonna let you off so easily. You're bound to fall into my trap!"

The sophistication he exuded previously had vanished into thin air.

Instead, his expression

transformed into a lecherous one. The man was none other than Carl.

As someone who was no stranger to elite education, it was no feat for

Carl to feign a

gentleman.

However, Joan didn't manage to get a good look at him, which was why she failed to notice

his act.

The purpose of his visit was to assess the fiancée of Norton

Corporation's president. He

wanted to figure out her character, so he put up an act to get to know her.

Everything, up to the timing of his appearance, was planned out

meticulously. In order to

fabricate a coincidental meeting, he made sure to catch Joan getting off work so that it

could pave the way for his future plans.

"Just you wait. The show has yet to begin..."

With a contemptuous smile on his face, Carl boarded his car and left.

Soon after, Joan was home.

"You're back."

Larry, who was patiently waiting for Joan on the sofa, turned to beam at her.

"Yeah."

Seeing that, Joan grinned from ear to ear. Her exhaustion after a long day was relieved by

Larry's presence instantly.

"You must be dead beat. I've cooked up a feast. It's your reward for working so hard."

Putting down the notebook in his hand, Larry rose to his feet. He then walked to Joan and

gazed at her lovingly.

"You can cook?"

Joan was stunned, probing doubtfully, "Why haven't I heard of this?"

Larry mumbled affectionately, "I only learned to cook recently, and since I had time today, I

decided to prepare a few dishes. That'll help to reduce your burden too."

"It's no bother at all."

Joan shook her head. "I think you have it worse than me. On a side note... is your food

edible?"

She eyed him with suspicion. Clad in a formal suit, Larry didn't look the slightest bit like

someone who could cook.

"Hold on a minute... Are you trying to make me your guinea pig? What if I die from food

poisoning?"

Larry's eyes rolled at the sight of Joan pretending to be horrified.

"Wait here. I'll go heat the food up. Even if you are the guinea pig, you're to savor them all."

With that, he proceeded to the kitchen.

The sight of a clumsy Larry frantically running around the kitchen warmed Joan's heart. She

had never expected that the almighty president of Norton Corporation would enter the

kitchen just to whip up a meal for her, and it was all because of his deep love for her.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1511

Joan found herself unable to peel her eyes away from Larry, whose focused comportment

made him even more dashing.

The twinkling, bright eyes that adorned his chiseled visage

complimented his arched nose

and slightly pursed lips. At that moment, she felt like she would do anything and everything

for that man.

"Don't just stand there. Come have a seat."

Larry barely gave her any time to daydream and called out to her.

"Coming!"

Having said that, she hurriedly washed her hands and walked to the dinner table. Then, she sized the dishes up.

Upon her first glance at the table, she gulped nervously. Larry, who was ever so thoughtful, had prepared four different dishes and a soup for her. This should be... pumpkin soup, right? Yeah... I think so. Although its color looked odd, Joan was sure it was pumpkin soup.

Hmm... I guess the plate of sauteed mushrooms looks rather appetizing. And this must be... mashed potatoes? The color looks a little funny though... Now, this is... mac and cheese with bacon bits? Or is that beef?

Joan was unable to determine the ingredients of that dish. Wait! What the hell is this? Why is it all dark and burnt? Joan briefly scanned the table and weighed her options. It seemed like the sauteed mushrooms were the only dish that was edible, while the others looked rather venomous.

Nah... The worst thing that could happen is that the food tastes bad. I'm sure it's not poisonous...

"Quick. Try them. This is my first time cooking, so I hope you don't mind."

Larry looked up at her in anticipation. With the sacrifices Larry had made for her, Joan found it difficult to reject him.

She plucked up the courage and slowly reached out for the sauteed mushrooms.

Gasp!

Joan picked up a piece of mushroom and put it in her mouth. After the first bite, she sneezed. These mushrooms are nice, just way too salty...

"How's it? Good?"

Larry questioned enthusiastically like a child.

"Yep, it's great. Just a tad salty."

Joan said with a smile as her eyes twinkled in amusement.

"That's great. I will improve the next round. Try this."

Larry pointed at the plate with a black mass.

The dish looked all dark and sticky. Worried, Joan hesitantly put a small serving into her mouth.

“Mm? It tastes fine!”

She originally thought she was doomed after ingesting the dish that looked inedible, but to her surprise, it turned out fine.

“This egg tastes quite delicious,” Joan quickly praised Larry.

“That’s not egg! That’s salmon.”

Larry gave her a puzzled look.

“Oh, I see... They’re quite similar anyway. Hehe.”

She eked out an awkward smile and carried on scooping a tiny serving of mac and cheese.

Upon putting it into her mouth, she realized that the bacon bits weren’t even fully cooked.

She contemplated spitting it back out. However, she feared upsetting Larry.

Larry was quick to notice that she paused after taking a bite. Confused, he fed himself a spoonful of the dish.

“Ugh...”

He barely took a bite before spitting it all out. Now, he finally understood why Joan had that odd expression.

After that, he quickly tasted the other dishes, but they all tasted funny, to his dismay.

“You should tell me if the food tastes bad! Why are you pretending like they’re scrumptious?”

He felt a tinge of guilt and uttered, “I didn’t know I was so bad at cooking.”

“It was your first time! Don’t beat yourself up over it. When I first started cooking, I was nowhere near your standard.”

Joan hurriedly tried to console him.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1512

“I’ll dispose of them immediately and order takeout.”

His face darkened when he said that, as though he was frustrated with himself.

“Dear.”

Joan rushed over and embraced him tightly. In a sweet voice, she muttered, "You already tried your best. Even though the seasoning in some dishes is a little off, the rest are alright."

"Really? But they taste so awful."

Even though he was still upset, his mood lightened slightly. "My cooking is hopeless."

"No! That's not true."

Joan found it amusing that Larry was sulking like a child. "If you want to learn to cook, I can

teach you. Come on, let's head into the kitchen."

"Maybe next time. The thought of the kitchen irks me right now. I don't want to set foot into

it for the time being. Let's just order takeout."

He was clearly still unhappy with himself.

"You have to mend my broken heart," he uttered, staring at Joan earnestly.

"How am I supposed to do that?"

A glint of amusement flashed in her eyes.

"Using your body!"

Before Joan could register his words, he was already pouncing on her.

"No! The delivery will arrive any time now. Let's eat first."

Luckily, she was swift enough and avoided him.

"Fine. We'll have dinner first."

He reluctantly acquiesced to her demand.

After dinner, Larry took the initiative to ask Joan to teach him cooking.

The dishes he made today disappointed him greatly. Since young, he had always excelled in

all that he did.

Therefore, he felt the need to master the art of cooking too. He was determined to salvage

his reputation in front of Joan.

The pair made their way to the kitchen, where Joan patiently explained the use of all the

seasonings and condiments, as well as the basic steps in cooking.

With his exceptional learning ability, it only took Larry one night to get the gist.

By the time they finished, the weariness was apparent on Joan's face.

Concerned about her

wellbeing, Larry promptly brought her to bed to turn in for the night.

The next day, Joan ran into Carl even before stepping into the office.

“Hey! What a coincidence! We meet again.”

Carl cordially greeted Joan upon seeing her.

“Yeah. Are you here for business purposes?” Joan courteously replied.

It’s not coincidental at all! Carl scoffed inwardly.

Before their encounters, he already knew her working hours. The fateful meetings were all

staged so that he could gradually get closer to her.

Despite his thoughts, he kept his expression neutral.

With a smile, Carl quipped, “That’s right. I’m here to look for your boss.

The office is now

open, right?”

“Not yet. But you can wait inside.”

As an employee of the company, Joan was friendly to all potential clients.

“Do you require

my assistance?”

“No need. I’m just waiting for a friend here. You can go ahead and carry on with your work.”

Carl made it a point to be considerate.

“Alright. I’ll go in first. See you.”

With that, she turned and left.

“See you! Hope we’ll get to meet again,” said Carl politely as she walked away.

We’ll definitely see each other again.

After ensuring she was inside the office, Carl waited a little longer before returning to his

vehicle.

In fact, all that was a ruse; an excuse he invented so that he could talk to Joan.

After he boarded the car, he made a phone call to someone and briefly gave a few

instructions before he hung up and drove off.

Time flew by, and it was already nightfall, which was time for Joan to end work.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1513

To Joan’s surprise, she ran into Carl at the exact same spot as the previous day.

“You’re off work, Joan.”

Carl looked at her with a grin.

“Yep. Just knocked off.”

She felt that something was amiss but couldn't quite place her finger on it.

"How do you know my name?" she asked in astonishment.

"Your boss mentioned your name during our discussion."

Carl pretended to be chummy with their boss.

"I see."

With that, Joan didn't dwell on the matter. After all, since she was a member of the staff, it

wasn't surprising that he knew her name.

"What are you doing here? The office is closed."

Since they've met a couple of times, he wasn't really considered a stranger.

"I'm waiting for someone, and she's here now," Carl joked.

Studying her surroundings, Joan took a while to realize that there was no one else there.

"You were waiting for me?"

"Yes, I was." He was grinning from ear to ear.

"Why?"

Hearing his words, she became even more perplexed. Her impression of the man was quite good, and he didn't seem like a fickle person, so it didn't cross her mind that he was trying to court her.

"Well, your boss and I confirmed a deal earlier today. The actual details and the final contract are to be discussed further. Your boss asked me to look for you to talk things through, so I waited till you got off work. I was thinking of treating you to a meal so that we can talk about the contract."

At that moment, she sensed that something was amiss, but she couldn't tell what it was.

"But why didn't my boss tell me?" Joan questioned.

"Perhaps he was too busy and forgot all about it."

Carl deliberately tried to sound casual as he added, "Ms. Joan, do you have time now? I

would like to discuss the contract with you. If it's not convenient, I can come back

tomorrow."

Carl was obviously good with words.

Since he seemed as though he was only interested in the deal, Joan lowered her defenses.

After a short pause, she consented to his request, "Let's talk about it now. But we will skip the meal, yeah? I'm going home to have dinner with my boyfriend. We can find a place to sit down and discuss."

Carl eagerly agreed to her suggestion.

Before setting off, Joan sent a text message to Larry: Hey dear, I'm with a client right now. I

may reach home a little later than usual, but I'll be back for dinner. Love you.

Then, she turned to Carl and said, "Let's go. There's a café right beside the office. We can discuss there."

"Sure, let's go."

Thus, the two headed toward the café.

However, Joan failed to notice a mysterious shadow creeping past behind them immediately

after they started walking. The shadow lurked in the dark for a while, observing their movements before following them.

"What would you like to drink?"

Carl's tone was nothing but gentlemanly.

"I'll have an earl grey latte. Just to make it clear, the drinks are on me, okay?" Joan chuckled.

"No, that won't do. I'm the guy here, so I have to pay the bill. No questions about that." Carl smiled.

"No! You're our client. I have to foot the bill. Besides, I'll be sure to get the company to reimburse me."

Joan made it clear that she was here on business terms.

Seeing that she was persistent, Carl stopped insisting.

Both of them then took their seats.

"By the way, we're about to sign off on a deal, and I don't even know your name yet."

Joan was quick to jump straight into work. After all, Larry was still waiting for her at home, so she had no time to waste.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1514

"I'm Cory Jefferson."

Carl did not tell her his true name. After all, he was not actually planning to collaborate with

Joan. Moreover, it would do him no good to reveal his identity since he was scheming against her.

"Hello, Mr. Jefferson. Let's get straight to business then," Joan said solemnly.

"Ms. Joan, there's no need for us to rush, right? What's the point of life if we don't enjoy it?

So why don't we try to know each other first?" Carl suggested.

A topic too solemn was not going to help him with his plan, so Carl was trying to liven up the atmosphere.

Joan was baffled, sensing something odd about Carl's words.

Even if I want to enjoy life, I won't be doing it with a stranger like you.

Moreover, why

should I share my private life with you?

Despite her displeasure, Joan maintained the polite smile on her face.

"Mr. Jefferson, I don't think we're that familiar with each other. It'll be inappropriate for us to

talk about personal matters, so let's discuss the contract instead," Joan rejected respectfully, hoping to change the topic.

"Let's be honest, Ms. Watts. I'm very interested in you, but since you have a boyfriend, I

know I don't stand a chance. I just want to find out who's the lucky guy who has such an

amazing girlfriend like you," Carl said with intentional nonchalance.

"How about this? Let's make a deal. I'll show you my girlfriend's photo, and you'll let me see

who your boyfriend is." As Carl spoke, he stood up and showed her his phone.

Perplexed by Carl's series of actions, Joan rejected again, "That won't be necessary, Mr.

Jefferson. I'm not interested in your personal matters. If we're not going to talk about work, I

won't be able to stay around anymore. I'll be heading home then."

With that said, Joan began rising to her feet, not wanting to waste any more of her time with Carl. If there really was anything important for them to discuss, they could just do it the next day.

“All right, all right. Ms. Joan, since you don’t like to talk about personal matters, let’s not.”

Almost immediately, Carl pressed down on Joan’s shoulders to make her sit again. Then, he

headed back to his seat and began talking about “work.”

Meanwhile, someone had taken photos of Carl showing her his phone and holding onto her

shoulders, and that person was the man stalking them earlier on.

Once the mysterious man had gotten what he wanted, he grinned in satisfaction before

leaving.

He had to proceed with the rest of Carl’s plan. With that, a malicious scheme targeting Joan

began to unfold.

In the meantime, Joan had no idea someone had taken a sneak shot of her; she was still

somberly discussing business with Carl.

However, Carl did not actually have a business deal with Joan’s boss, so he could not raise

any substantial points during their discussion.

His words only made her confused, and she could not comprehend what he was trying to

convey.

“Mr. Jefferson, you don’t seem well-informed about our company,”

Joan pointed out

honestly.

“That’s true.” Carl chuckled. Of course I don’t know anything.

Fortunately, he had figured out what services Joan’s company provided before he came, so

he did not end up exposing himself.

“I’ve only briefly talked about the contract with your boss back then, so I don’t really know

the details. I’m really sorry,” Carl muttered apologetically.

“That’s understandable,” Joan replied.

Despite her words, she still sensed something strange about the man opposite her.

However, she did not dwell on it.

"I guess that's that for now, Mr. Jefferson," Joan said. "Do consider how you'd want the design and what style you would like. Then, please send the details to me, and I'll draft up something for you. How about that?"

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1515

With that, he would be able to mull over it, and she would not have to waste her time. In

other words, it was a decision that would benefit them both.

"Okay. I'll come back after I figure things out. I'm really sorry. I never thought it'd be as

complicated as this. I sincerely apologize for wasting your time, Ms.

Joan," Carl agreed

immediately.

In fact, he had been stumped by how he should keep up with his lies, so upon hearing

Joan's suggestion, he quickly grabbed hold of the opportunity to avoid exposing himself.

"It's okay, you're our client, and this is my job," Joan replied. "So we'll stop here today, Mr.

Jefferson. I have other things to attend to, so I'll be taking my leave."

"Sure, Ms. Joan. I'll be leaving too. Would you like me to send you back?" Carl joked.

"Thank you, but it's best that I take a cab," Joan rejected instantly with an apologetic smile.

"It's fine. Let's walk out together. I'll help you hail a cab."

Carl then gestured for her to step out of the café first.

"All right. Thank you."

As the two stood by the side of the road, they chatted away.

Slowly, Joan became anxious. It seemed that there were barely any cabs around that day,

and the ones that drove past them already had passengers on board.

"Be careful!" Carl yelled as he pulled Joan aside.

Right then, a car sped past where Joan had been standing a second ago.

Although Joan had fallen onto the ground from Carl's pull, she was safe.

On the other hand, Carl was not as fortunate as she was. Although the car had not collided

with him, it still clipped him and sent him flying a few yards away from where he stood earlier.

Joan was still sitting on the ground, frightened by what just happened. If she had been knocked over by the car, the consequences would have been unimaginable.

Then, Joan came to her senses. How is Cory?

With that thought in mind, she scrambled to her feet and hurried toward Carl.

“Mr. Jefferson, how are you? Are you okay?”

She panicked when she saw him sprawling on the ground with agony written all over his

face. He wouldn’t have ended up like this if not for saving me.

It took Carl a while before he could squeeze out, “I’m fine. Don’t worry, Ms. Joan. The car only clipped me. I’m alright.” He then gave her a reassuring smile, albeit it looked forced.

“Mr. Jefferson, let me take you to the hospital for a checkup.” Carl’s words made her racing

heart calm down a little, but she was still worried about his condition.

Right then, the driver that nearly knocked Carl over rushed out of his car.

Looking at the two of them, he apologized, “Are the both of you fine?

I’m really sorry. I was

taking a call earlier, so I didn’t have a good grip on my steering wheel.

I’m really sorry.”

“I’m alright, but I can’t say the same about him. Since you’re responsible for all this, you

should take us to the hospital to have him checked up.”

Although Joan did not blame the driver for the accident, some things had to be said,

nonetheless.

“Ms. Joan, I’m fine. You don’t need to come with me. I’ll just go to the hospital with this

guy,” Carl uttered.

“Are you sure?”

Joan still felt uneasy. After all, Carl was injured because of her, so there was no way she

could let him go to the hospital alone.

“I’ll come with you,” she insisted.

“You should go home instead. Don’t worry. He will bring me to the hospital. It’s best not to let your boyfriend worry about you. If there are any problems, I’ll inform you,” Carl suggested.

“Okay then.”

Since Carl insisted, Joan had no choice but to give in.

“Mr. Jefferson, please give me your number. That way, it’ll be easier for me to contact you.”

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1516

After the two exchanged numbers, Carl got into the driver’s car with his help. He then waved at Joan before the car sped off.

Watching the distant car, Joan was still worried. As she hailed a cab, she planned to tell Larry about the incident once she reached home.

Meanwhile, Carl dropped the act the moment the car sped off. He stretched and crowed,

“She’s definitely fooled. I’m sure she’ll visit me in the hospital soon.”

Then, he turned to look at the driver. “Your driving skills aren’t that great, are they? You

nearly clipped me earlier and frightened the living daylights out of me.”

The driver sneered. “If I don’t make it look more realistic, Joan won’t believe you. Honestly,

your acting was superb. I thought I actually hit you.”

“Ha! It’s just like what you’ve said earlier. If I didn’t make it look more genuine, how would

Joan fall for the trick? Let’s go to the hospital. We’ll take a photo of Joan visiting me in the

hospital before we proceed to the next step of the plan.”

The two then laughed in unison.

Everything that happened earlier had merely been part of Carl’s plan.

He was worried about Joan’s indifference toward him.

That was why he came up with this plan and found someone to work with him in faking the

accident earlier. The man pretended to lose control of his vehicle, almost crashing into Joan.

Carl then swooped in to save her in the nick of time and feigned his injury.

Although it was not as dramatic as movies, Carl had still saved Joan. Because of that, Joan would definitely have a better impression of him. With that, things would be smooth-sailing for them from then on. When Joan reached home, she plopped herself onto the couch and begin mulling over what happened earlier.

"You're back. How's work?" Larry was focused on his own work, so he barely noticed what Joan was doing. Similarly distracted, Joan was lost in her thoughts and did not hear Larry's words. When he realized her lack of response, he raised his head to notice her strange behavior.

"What's wrong, Joan? Did something happen?" Larry asked. Her miserable look was making him upset as well. It was then that she came back to her senses. Worriedly, she mumbled, "Something happened earlier when I was negotiating with a client. A car nearly crashed into me, and my client saved me. However, the car grazed him. Now, the driver is sending him to the hospital, and I don't know how he is doing."

"Really?"

Larry's heart skipped a beat when he heard her. Thank god nothing happened to Joan. Otherwise, I don't know what I would do.

"Is your client badly injured? Was he able to stand up? Was there blood on the ground?"

Larry calmly asked.

"He lay on the ground for a while, then I helped him up. There wasn't any blood on the ground, and he could walk by himself. I think he should be fine," Joan responded as she recalled the scene.

"That's good to hear. It means he wasn't hurt terribly. He should be fine after getting checked by a doctor," Larry consoled.

"Yes. I've asked for his contact details. I'll call him later to check on him."

Joan sighed. "How am I going to repay the favor? He was hurt because of me."

"I'll take you to visit him after the result of his checkup is out."

With his hands on her shoulders, he queried, "By the way, what's his name?"

"Cory Jefferson. He came to the office to wait for me to get off work and talk about a

contract. He's really a gentleman."

As he was now her savior, Joan could not help but shower "Cory" with praises.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1517

Even though her praises were subtle, Larry still felt uncomfortable hearing Joan compliment

another man. Regardless, he knew it was not the time to get jealous, so he did not dwell on

it. However, he repeated Cory's name in his mind.

After a while, Joan said to Larry, "I should call Mr. Jefferson now, shouldn't I?"

Larry nodded as he felt that the man's checkup must be completed by now. "Yes. Call him."

"Okay." Joan then called the number Carl gave her.

"Hello, Ms. Joan," came Carl's voice from the other end of the line.

"Mr. Jefferson, how was your checkup? Are you okay?" Joan asked nervously.

"I'm fine. Don't worry, Ms. Joan. However, the doctor said that I have a minor fracture, so I'll

have to stay in the hospital for a few days," Carl said with an intentionally light-hearted

chuckle.

"I'm glad that you're fine."

Joan was relieved upon hearing his words. "Mr. Jefferson, I'll be visiting you in a bit. Which

hospital are you in?"

Joan found the need to visit him since he was in a hospital now. After all, she was the reason

he was injured, and it was only polite of her to do so.

"It's okay, Ms. Joan. I've only suffered minor injuries. I won't trouble you anymore. However,

we won't be able to discuss the contract for the time being."

On the other end of the line, Carl grinned slyly while speaking in a polite tone.

Although Carl was completely unscathed, he decided to stay in the hospital for a while longer. This way, he would be able to gain Joan's sympathy, and the two would become closer. Moreover, he could avoid spinning tales just for the supposed contract.

In his mind, Carl praised himself for his intellect.

"That won't do. You were hurt because of me, so it's only right that I come to visit you," Joan insisted.

"I'm really fine. Honestly, you don't need to visit me. I know you're busy. Besides, we'll be able to meet once I've recovered."

The cunning man made it seem like they were actually close and that Joan wanted to meet him because she was truly cared about him and not only because he saved her.

"No. Just tell me which hospital you're in. I'm going to visit you now," Joan hastily declined.

"All right, then."

Carl sighed. "I've texted you the address. I'm sorry for troubling you."

"Okay. It's only right for me to do this. Well then, Mr. Jefferson, I'll end the call first," Joan responded before ending the call.

The moment she ended her call, Larry inquired, "How was it?"

"Mr. Jefferson said he has a minor fracture and has to stay in the hospital for a few days."

Raising her head, Joan then continued, "Dear, let's visit him at the hospital. Otherwise, I'd be guilt-ridden."

Although she had promised Carl that she would visit, she still had to get Larry's permission to do so. Nevertheless, she knew Larry would agree to it.

As expected, he smiled and patted her head. "Silly girl, of course we have to visit him. Why would I say no? Let's go right away."

Since both of them were not hungry, they decided to eat at a nearby restaurant after the

hospital visit. Once they were ready, they headed to the hospital. After asking the receptionist in the hospital for "Cory Jefferson," Joan went straight to his ward.

Meanwhile, Larry headed in another direction. As "Cory" got injured from saving Joan, he had to pay for the man's medical fees. Thus, he went to the payment counter instead.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1518

"Hello, could you please check the total fees for Mr. Cory Jefferson's stay? He was admitted today," Larry asked.

Seeing the handsome man who was in a suit, the young nurse behind the counter said enthusiastically, "Please give me a moment, sir. I'll calculate it right away."

"Thank you."

He then gave her a polite smile.

"No worries."

The young nurse was dumbstruck by his dashing smile. For a moment, she thought she was in paradise.

"Mister, sorry for the wait. Mr. Cory Jefferson will be admitted for four days. He has paid the deposit, so here is the remainder," the nurse muttered in a sweet voice as she stared at Larry with lovestruck eyes.

"It's strangely little," Larry mumbled after pausing briefly.

"Could you please check it again?" he asked, worried that the nurse might have made a mistake.

"There's no need to. The amount is definitely correct. Mr. Cory Jefferson has only done the paperwork to be admitted into the hospital. He doesn't need to pay for any medical fees," the nurse explained.

Why? Larry was even more puzzled after hearing her words.

Is Cory a VIP of the hospital? Why does he not need to pay for his medical fees?

Seeing the confounded look on Larry's face, the nurse added, "Mr. Jefferson is so strange.

He's completely fine without any illnesses or injuries, but he insisted on getting hospitalized.

I have no idea what's with that guy."

"Did you say that he has no injuries?"

Larry was taken aback, unsure about Cory's intentions. "But he said he has minor fractures."

When the nurse saw the handsome man's puzzled expression, she felt the need to clarify the

matter. "Dr. Schmidt was just grumbling about it. Here, this is Mr.

Jefferson's bill. There

aren't any medical fees listed in it."

The moment Larry saw the bill, he realized that both Joan and he had been fooled. He's

obviously targeting Joan. But why?

Larry did not know what that man was trying to do, so he had to keep his guard up.

"Thank you," Larry said to the nurse with a friendly smile.

If not for her, Larry would have been kept in the dark.

With that said, Larry walked away, leaving the lovestruck nurse who had a silly smile on her

face.

Without delay, Larry headed to the ward "Cory" was in. When he saw the man lying on the

bed and chatting with Joan, he quietly took a photo of "Cory" with his phone.

Then, he sent it to Caspian.

Larry texted: Caspian, check who this man is. The quicker, the better.

Caspian: Got it.

Larry then kept his phone and knocked on the door.

Knock, knock.

After the polite announcement of his arrival, Larry stepped into the room.

"Joan," Larry called out before shifting his gaze to "Cory" and sizing him up.

"Larry, you're here."

Joan quickly made her way to his side when she saw him. She then introduced, "Mr.

Jefferson, this is my boyfriend, Cory. We came together to visit you."

As she spoke, she hooked her arm around Larry's.

"Dear, this is Mr. Cory Jefferson. He's my business partner as well as my savior," Joan said jokingly.

"Please, Ms. Watts, I've only lent a helping hand. I'm no savior."

Carl waved dismissively before turning to Larry. "I've heard great things about the renowned

president of Norton Corporation. It's an honor to meet you today."

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1519

To be frank, the moment Carl saw Larry walked in, the former's heart skipped a beat.

Larry had such an overwhelming aura. It was as though his eyes could see through

everyone's mind.

Thus, Carl felt himself like an open book in front of him.

On the other hand, it might be because of Carl's own guilty conscience that made him

feared of having eye contact with Larry. After all, Carl was completely suppressed by Larry

the moment they met.

Even though Carl hated this kind of feeling, he could do nothing to defeat Larry's charisma.

He was fully aware that he was but a nobody compared to Larry's high status in the business

world.

Carl clenched his fists tightly, thinking to make Gabriella his. Only then, he might be able to

be at the same status as Larry.

While Carl was thinking about all these, Larry had also been observing the former.

Larry tried to remember Carl, but it did not ring a bell. In fact, he doubted they had even

met before.

However, Larry was great at reading people. His first impression about Carl was that he was

the ambitious type that would do anything to achieve his target.

Hence, even before they talked to each other, Larry had his defense mode on.

Just then, Larry walked over to Carl and smiled at him. "Mr. Jefferson, I am impressed with

your success at such a young age. Today I've come here to thank you for helping Joan. How is your wound recovering?"

"It's fine. It is a just minor bone fracture. Thank you for your concern, Mr. Norton and Ms.

Watts," Carl replied with a polite smile.

"By the way, where are you working now, Mr. Jefferson?" Larry was trying to gain more information about Carl's plan by naturally asking some questions about him.

"Right now, I am managing a small company, which is nothing compared to Norton Corporation."

Carl was fast to sense Larry's motive, so, of course, he would not be revealing his true information so easily.

"You have injured yourself for Joan's sake, and I feel much obliged to thank you. Why don't you tell me the name of your company so that we can take care of each other in the future?"

Larry's message was obvious, which was to help Carl with his company's development.

If it were years back, Carl would have revealed his company name eagerly, yet he was cautiously having second thoughts at that moment.

Are you kidding me? Do you want me to tell you so that you can destroy it? Hah! I am not a fool.

"As I said, it was just a coincidence that I helped Ms. Watts. I appreciate your goodwill, but I won't want to receive any favor because of my deeds."

Again, Carl skillfully avoided Larry's question, but at the same time, he presented himself as a noble gentleman.

Upon hearing what Carl said, Joan grew a deeper affection towards him. Not only did Mr. Jefferson risked his life to rescue me, but he does not intend to take advantage of this heroic act. He even rejects Larry's offer to help even though he knew of

Larry's status and power. It isn't easy to find a man with such a personality nowadays.

"Mr. Jefferson, you should at least give us a chance to express our gratitude," Joan said with a gentle smile on her face. Her smile was genuinely sincere, unlike the one from Larry.

"Let's have dinner some other day then." Carl flashed back a smile towards her.

"No problem! After you fully recover, I will bring you to a decent restaurant I know. It's on me!" Joan's grin grew wider.

At that instant, Larry was gazing at both of them emotionlessly. If he did not know

beforehand that "Cory's" injury was a fake, he might have believed the latter's flawless acting.

However, at that moment, "Cory" was nothing more than a clown in Larry's eyes.

The two did not stay long in Carl's ward. After a brief meaningless conversation, they were getting ready to leave.

"Alright, we shouldn't disturb you for too long. Please rest well. We will come to visit you again." Joan smiled faintly.

The hour was already late, and both of them had not eaten yet. Hence, it was time to leave.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1520

"Okay. Thanks for stopping by." Carl replied courteously.

"Bye. See you again." Joan waved at Carl while Larry just nodded slightly towards him before they stepped out of the ward.

After making sure the both of them left, a man reentered Carl's ward. It was none other than the driver responsible for the accident.

"Why did Larry come too?" The driver asked sternly, apparently troubled by Larry's visit.

"Don't worry. It doesn't matter if he came. You've taken the photos, right?" Carl curled his lips into a cold smile.

“Yes, I’ve taken plenty of them. All the places outside the company, including this ward and the coffee shop. Anyone who sees them would surely believe you two are having an affair.”

The driver replied with confidence.

“Great. No matter how powerful Larry is, I doubt he would be able to defeat these rumors and proofs.”

Carl let out another boisterous laugh as he saw everything progressing according to his

plan. Gabriella will be mine soon.

His face was filled with satisfaction as he imagined the perfect future...

After Larry and Joan left the hospital, they stopped by a random restaurant and ordered some food.

“Joan, how did you meet Mr. Jefferson?” Larry asked directly as he needed to know as much as he could about this man.

However, he did not tell Joan of “Cory’s” fake injury. He figured she would find out sooner or later when the time was right.

His other concern was Joan’s straightforward temper. If she were to find out, there was no guarantee that she would act rationally. All Larry’s strategy would be messed up if she did anything rash.

Seeing that Larry showed massive interest in her and “Cory’s” relationship, Joan began telling him all the details he wanted to know without suspecting anything.

The more Larry heard about Joan’s story, the more he confirmed this was a play set up by

“Cory.” He believed the latter’s intention was no other than to gain Joan’s heart.

As for why “Cory” needed to gain Joan’s heart, Larry was still uncertain. However, he was not

worried as he felt that “Cory’s” purpose would be exposed in no time.

On the other hand, there was a high chance that the car accident was also planned by

“Cory.”

Although feeling resentful, Larry had to admit “Cory’s” acting was indeed a masterpiece of work. The fact that Joan did not even have the slightest suspicion for him was the best proof.

“Joan, don’t you feel that „Cory” has an intention?”

Nevertheless, Larry felt to need to give a little warning to Joan, just in case something would happen in the near future.

Joan was stunned momentarily by Larry’s words. As she knew better than anyone that Larry was not the kind that gave abrupt assumption, she began to think cautiously.

Indeed, recalling all the encounters she had with “Cory,” it would be hard to believe they were all coincidences. But the latter had admitted that besides business purposes, he did have a thing for her, and he wanted to know who her boyfriend was. “Cory” did not even try to create excuses to come near her, but he honestly expressed his feelings. It was what made Joan’s guard down against him.

And the most important thing was that “Cory” actually risked his life for her. Regardless of what intention he might have, Joan found it hard to ignore the fact that he was willing to sacrifice for her.

Joan wanted to tell Larry about all these, but at that moment, she could not care less about what Larry thought.

Meanwhile, Larry was also aware that his words might not have much influence on Joan’s mind. Thus, he did not further discuss the matter, as he did not want to look like he was jealous.

He figured as long as Joan was careful, nothing serious would happen. Meanwhile, Caspian’s efficiency was indeed unbeatable. In a just short time, Larry received a call from the former.

“Hello.” Larry picked up the phone.

“Boss, I have done investigating the whole thing. Cory is a fake name; his real name is Carl.

He is from a rich family in Marsingfill. He was once a gangster back in high school. Even

now, he does not have a real job. So he is nothing more than a wastrel depending on his

parents’ wealth.” Caspian gave a brief report on Carl.

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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1521

Carl? Cory? Larry snickered when he heard “Cory” was indeed a fake name, just as he

expected. And now, all he needed to know was the reason he disguised his real identity.

“Go on,” Larry instructed Caspian as he knew the latter was waiting for him to digest that information.

“Not long ago, Carl attended a high school reunion gathering, where he coincidentally met

an old friend. She was Gabriella, whom you are familiar with.”

Gabriella? Now, what does she have anything to do with this?

Everything seemed to be more complicated than Larry thought.

Nonetheless, he kept his

silence and waited for Caspian to continue.

“It turns out Gabriella and Carl were schoolmates. Carl had a crush on her and had tried

numerous ways to pursue her but failed in the end. And since he encountered her during

the reunion, Carl started talking to her again. At first, Gabriella showed rejection, but

surprisingly after a while, they started acting intimate like close friends.

That’s all for my

discovery so far. I will continue to investigate.”

Indeed, Norton Corporation had a boundless power within the territory of Marsingfill.

Hence, they would be able to get their hands on any kind of information they wanted.

So Carl and Gabriella, huh... It is not surprising that Carl made a move on Gabriella, but

Gabriella's change of attitude towards the former seems rather peculiar. I think there is something she wants from him, or they have already come to some sort of deal. Judging from Carl's approach toward Joan by using his fake name, I can say that Joan is a vital part of their deal. In other words, all these are either about Joan or Carl himself. Obviously, Carl changed his name to prevent us from finding out the truth after he carries out his plan.

Based on the information given by Caspian, Larry was able to predict most of the situation.

Needless to say, he also had a terrifying level of intelligence.

Technically, Carl's plan had no flaw, and it was designed perfectly. The only mistake was that

Carl underestimated both Norton Corporation's power and Larry's intelligence.

These two elements alone could cause him a deadly price.

However, even though Larry got hold of the truth, he decided not to take any action.

As for the current state, the best move seemed to be doing nothing at all.

After all, Larry had yet to figure out the deal between Carl and Gabriella.

As a matter of fact,

he was curious to see what wave this two could create.

"Spy closely on Gabriella and Carl. Inform me the second you discover anything suspicious,

and remember not to expose yourself. They plan to play dirty with me, but they don't realize

that I'm way out of their league." Larry instructed Caspian while his eyes flashed in

confidence.

"Yes, Boss," Caspian responded steadfastly.

After hanging up the phone, Larry stared outside the window for a long moment before he

headed back into the bedroom to Joan's side.

"What is it?" Noticing Larry's furrowed brows, Joan could not hold back her concern.

"It's nothing." Larry sat down beside Joan with a smile on his face.

"Caspian had just called

me about something. I am afraid that from now on, our life won't be as peaceful."

"What happened?"

Anxiousness started to fill Joan's heart. Perhaps it was due to the multiple tragedies she had experienced in the past; she would be easily nervous whenever something unexpected was to occur.

"It's fine. Don't worry." Larry immediately comforted Joan, as he could feel her stiffened body in his embrace. "Nothing will happen. Even if something happens, I will always be by your side."

Staring at Larry's determined gaze, Joan felt instant relief in her heart. She no longer cared about the whole truth as she knew Larry would never let anything harm her. That was the only truth that mattered to her at the moment.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1522

Larry was waiting patiently for Gabriella and Carl to reveal their move. Meanwhile, Carl had no idea that his true identity was exposed and that Larry was closely monitoring all his moves.

In blind, Carl was in a rather joyous mood, as the plan he had been so diligently sowing finally seemed to reap.

With this in mind, he made a call to Gabriella.

Meanwhile, Gabriella was feeling frustrated. She finally understood why her own father lost his temper on her that day.

It was because of all the lies she planted inside Landon's head, which triggered Landon to cancel the deal with Norton Corporation. This had caused an irreparable blow for the Ward family's business.

Later, Landon found out that Norton Corporation was the reason why no one wanted to deal with the Wards.

After finding it out, Landon furiously called Finnick and questioned him harshly. But Finnick only replied with a simple yet insulting answer – you reap what you sow. First on the list was the incident where Gabriella deliberately defamed Larry and his fiancée, Joan. Besides that, the Wards broke the contract, which resulted in a great loss for Norton Corporation. With all these, Norton Corporation was starting to counterattack.

Finnick was sending a clear message, that Norton Corporation would not allow anyone to take advantage of them. If anyone were to play the game with them, they would be sure to return the same favor.

Landon was beyond exasperated, but he knew the Wards was no match at all to Norton Corporation, whether in personal connections or economic strength. If Norton Corporation decided to destroy the Wards, he would not stand a chance to survive. Thus, Landon regretted his rash action out of his stupidity. If he had known of the outcome, he would not have easily believed his daughter's fabrication.

The entire empire he had poured his sweat and blood for was nearly brought down by some random lies from his daughter. At the thought of this, Landon could no longer suppress his wrath. He stormed into Gabriella's room and slapped her.

"You insolent fool, look at what the Ward family has become because of you!"

Landon had fallen out with Gabriella as he roared furiously at her. Meanwhile, Gabriella stared fearfully at her father's exasperated eyes while her body was trembling incessantly. He had never laid a hand on her before. At that moment, she knew she had crossed the line.

Gabriella buried her face in her hands as she dared not to say a word in front of Landon. She knew she was the one held responsible for this mess. As much as she blamed herself, she resented Larry and Joan.

Right then, she no longer hoped to marry Larry. Her last hope was to destroy Larry and Joan with everything she had left. It was all their fault that she was on this path.

After Landon finished releasing his rage upon Gabriella, he stomped his way out from her room.

He knew it was meaningless to scold Gabriella. Eventually, he would still need to solve this mess on his own.

After Landon left, Gabriella froze on the spot as the color drained from her face.

It was all up to Carl at this stage. If Carl was able to pull it off, not only could she destroy

Larry and Joan's marriage, she might be able to create turmoil in Norton Corporation.

If putting Norton Corporation into chaos could help the Wards, there would be a chance for her father to forgive her.

Carl, please don't let me down!

Just then, her phone rang. The instant she saw Carl's name on the screen, she quickly picked it up.

"Hello, Carl." There was a trace of hope in Gabriella's voice as she felt that her anticipation was about to be fulfilled.

"Gabriella, do you miss me?" Carl greeted with a lecherous tone.

Gabriella was utterly revolted by his voice. Despite that, she had no choice but to humble herself as he was her only hope at the moment.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1523

Gabriella tried hard to act coy. "Yes, I do miss you a lot. How's everything at your end?"

Her question simply could not hide her eagerness.

"Well, I have completed most of them perfectly. The only thing left is to send those photos

to the media to spread rumors." Carl was complacent as he spoke. "As soon as the rumors

spread, regardless of how powerful Larry might be, there will be no way he could possibly

wipe them clean.”

Gabriella smiled coldly as she wanted far more than just some rumors.

“Carl, besides sending the photos to the media, you should play the victim and keep

disturbing Joan. Make the whole world believe that she abandoned you for Norton

Corporation’s wealth. Don’t forget that Norton Corporation used their power to threaten

you not to find Larry and Joan. You should avenge this and bring them into the eye of the

storm.”

Carl hesitated upon hearing the proposal. “Won’t it be too over?

Spreading rumors is fine as

no one will know who does it. But if I go after them directly, ain’t I

putting myself under the

spotlight?”

Initially, he used a fake identity to prevent Norton Corporation from seeking revenge, but

Gabriella wanted him to take on Norton Corporation directly. That sounded more and more

like a blunt suicidal move.

“This is not what we agreed on in the first place. If I do this, surely

Norton Corporation will

come after me in all possible ways. Heck, I may not even see them coming!”

Unexpectedly, Carl rejected her.

Even so, Gabriella did not give up persuading. “Carl, there is no turning back for us now.

Don’t you think so? Besides, if u act as a victim, I doubt the Norton family would dare to do

anything to you. And after we accomplish this, I will tell my father about us right away. Then

we will be able to get married.”

Gabriella bit her lips as she played her ace card.

As expected, Carl did not pay much attention to what she said, except for that last sentence,

making his eyes beamed with excitement.

If I could marry Gabriella after all this is over, the power of the Wards will be in my

possession by then. My victimized image will be my advantage in this incident, plus the protection from the Wards. I'm sure Norton Corporation won't be able to harm me in any way.

Eventually, Carl could not reject Gabriella's offer, or one could say the temptation of power and lust. He accepted her proposal with a willing heart right that instant. "Alright, I will do as you said. But I hope you keep your promise, as I have recorded our conversation. If you trick me, I will send the recording to Larry. If I am to go down, I will make sure not to go down alone." Carl let out an unexpected threat. Son of a b*tch!

Gabriella cursed silently in her heart.

She was too naive to believe that she could escape all the responsibilities and leave Carl to face Norton Corporation's wrath alone. Never did she think that Carl would outsmart her like this.

Nevertheless, she responded willingly. "What are you talking about? Since I have agreed to marry you, I will never take my words back. Don't worry. As soon as we finish this, we will set a date for our marriage, and you will be one of the Wards."

Gabriella's heart was boiling with rage, yet she could not show a trace of it.

Right now, I can only improvise; one step at a time.

Meanwhile, Carl hung the phone, secretly elated with his brilliant move. By doing so, Gabriella was now in the same boat with him. If anything happened to him, she could not get away with it either.

At that, Carl finally could move on his plan without any worry.

His first step was to make a call to the biggest media in Marsingfill.

"Hello, I have a piece of important news to tell you. There is no need to know who I am. I am merely a concerned citizen. I will send the photos and information to you in a while. That's it."

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1524

ended the call as soon as he finished speaking. Without wasting any time, he sent over all the photos taken of him and Joan, together with a document containing pure fabrications about their relationship. Needless to say, the media would publish any news that could get good ratings for them, regardless of the truth. The following morning, an article about the fiancée of the Norton Corporation's president having an affair with a mysterious man became a headline. The content went like this: Joan, the fiancée of the Norton Corporation's president, used business reasons as an excuse to go on a date with a mysterious guy during office hours. According to a source, the mysterious man's name was Cory, while his occupation remains unknown. At the bottom of these lines, a few intimate photos of Joan and Cory were attached. These photos were secretly taken at the coffee shop where Carl deliberately acted friendly with Joan. Some others were taken when Joan visited Carl at the hospital when they were chatting and laughing. In just a few days' time, another headline became the hottest topic in Marsingfill. While last time it was about Larry and Joan, this time it was about Joan as well. Since Larry had announced his engagement with Joan in front of all the reporters, Joan had become a well-known figure in Marsingfill. The moment the news published her affair with another man, it inevitably caused an uproar among the community. Soon, Joan became the hot topic, together with the mysterious man, Cory. While most of the community was more interested in how Larry would react to this news, many wondered if he would call off the engagement due to this public embarrassment.

In a blink of an eye, the entire city was gossiping about this incident. Some “caring” gossipers in Marsingfill even started on a mission to search for the mysterious man. They tried all kinds of methods to get hold of his location, but all were in vain.

At the same time, all the media were hoping this “Cory” would step up to provide a solid explanation regarding this affair.

In the meantime, Carl also sensed that it was about time to reveal his true identity to the world.

Once again, he called the media anonymously and told them that “Cory” was only a fake name, whereas Carl was the real name.

As soon as Carl’s identity was exposed, bunches of journalists found his address, and all gathered there in an approach for another headline.

At that moment, Carl had already returned home from the hospital. He had been waiting for the journalists with a well-prepared script in his mind.

Noticing numerous journalists waiting outside his house, he unhesitatingly opened his door and started responding to their questions.

“Mr. Johnson, why did you call yourself ‘Cory?’ And are you the one who reveals the affair to the press?”

“I have no choice but to use a fake name because I am afraid that the Norton Corporation will surely retaliate. And I find it preposterous even to assume that I was the one who revealed this. I love Joan very much, so why would I put her into such a situation? My hope is for her to have a happy and peaceful life.” His gaze seemed extraordinarily sincere as he said this.

Just seconds into the interview, Carl had revealed yet another shocking detail. He knew well how to manipulate the media’s mind. Thus, all the journalists were exhilarated, and they

continued to shoot him questions one after another.

“Mr. Johnson, why did you say that you are afraid of their retaliation? What is the reason that the Norton Corporation wants to do so?”

Carl was satisfied with that question from one of the journalists. This was exactly where he hoped to direct the media, as his purpose was to destroy the Norton Corporation.

“Mr. Johnson, based on your response, we can sense that you are deeply in love with Ms.

Watts. But she is already the fiancée of the Norton Corporation’s president, don’t you think it is inappropriate for you to talk like this?”

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1525

The journalists raised some pointed questions, but Carl had come prepared. As long as he played the victim card while announcing the “truth,” everything else would develop naturally.

“Before Joan and Larry, the president of Norton Corporation, got engaged, I was her one true love! “It’s all Larry’s fault! He was the one who forced us to break up. He also threatened me that if I come looking for Joan again, he’ll go to any lengths to cause devastation to my family and myself!

“My family is of little significance. How could we possibly compete with the powerful Norton Corporation? So, reluctantly, I vowed never to see Joan again. “So much time has passed, yet I still cannot forget her. Left without a choice, I created a fake identity to meet Joan. That way, I don’t have to worry about retaliation from the Norton Corporation. I just didn’t expect my cover to be blown.”

Carl put up a miserable front as he spoke. The journalists at the scene were instantly hooked and began to buy his lie.

“Mr. Johnson, so what you’re saying is, you and Ms. Watts have been madly in love with

each other all this time, but it was Mr. Norton, the president of Norton Corporation, who destroyed your relationship?”

The journalists continued to ask. They could hardly believe that Larry was the third party in that relationship.

“No, Joan doesn’t love me anymore. She has made her choice. Larry is indeed a much more suitable partner for her compared to me. But I just can’t forget about her, so I came to see her.”

And with that, tears welled up in his eyes.

To their relief, Larry was not who they imagined him to be—a person who would come between other people’s relationships. It was certainly unrealistic to think that the dignified president of Norton Corporation would turn out to be such a despicable person. If that were true, the journalists might have second thoughts about broadcasting the interview.

“Mr. Johnson, if what you’re saying is true, then we certainly sympathize with what you’ve been through. But please know that Ms. Watts has a fiancé now. So it’s not right of you to keep pestering Ms. Watts like this.”

One of the journalists was sharp enough to point out.

“I know what I’m doing isn’t right, but I just have to see her and our child.”

Carl, with his head lowered, admitted with a twinge of sorrow.

“What? Is Joan pregnant with your child?”

Carl practically dropped a bombshell on them all, igniting their agitation at once.

“Mr. Johnson, I sure hope everything you say is based on the truth and facts. Otherwise, you could go to jail for committing slander.”

Another journalist reminded him out of courtesy, hoping that he was not deceiving them.

“Why would I lie about that? Joan is indeed pregnant with our child.

Although she has made

a different choice, the child is undoubtedly mine. I can't bear to leave them!"

Somehow, Carl had gotten wind of the news that Joan was pregnant, so he used that to his advantage, claiming the unborn child as his to stir the pot. Naturally, his story left the journalists in utter shock.

The news they got today was simply too huge to ignore, and they needed time to sort it out.

The journalists raised a few more trivial questions before deciding to call it a day. After all, the information they had collected so far was more than enough to cause an uproar.

Sure enough, after the journalists announced the news to the public, the whole city of

Marsingill was shocked to the core!

First of all, they could not tolerate the fact that Norton Corporation abused its power to threaten Carl.

Carl's role was apparently much closer to the average person, and he represented the masses. Hence, the fact that Norton Corporation threatened Carl was really getting on their nerves.

Secondly, Carl and Joan used to be a couple, and Joan was now pregnant with his child!

Carl might not have admitted that Larry single-handedly destroyed his and

Joan's relationship, but considering that Larry had threatened him not to see Joan, it was

not far-fetched to say that he was not above breaking up a couple who were in love.

Perhaps the president of Norton Corporation was a homewrecker through and through, but

he held such a powerful position that he could cover up all his nasty deeds.

A repeated rumor would eventually become a fact.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1526

When rumors spread like wildfire by word of mouth, those rumors would soon be recognized as the truth.

In the eyes of the masses, Norton Corporation at present was an evil force that would use its own power to harm the interests of the public in order to get what they want.

Larry had also become an unscrupulous homewrecker, as labeled by the public, who forcibly trampled on other people's feelings!

And just like that, Joan, Larry, and the entire Norton Corporation were suddenly in the eye of the storm.

Not long after, the news traveled to Joan's ears. When she heard about it, she was in utter disbelief.

Cory is only a fake name! The man's real name is actually Carl!

For the longest time, Joan thought he was a nice person. He was gentlemanly and displayed impeccable manners, and when Larry reminded her to watch out for Carl, she failed to take heed.

Right then, she realized that she had been too naïve. Carl merely approached her just so that she would let her guard down around him and enable him to achieve certain goals.

In a fit of rage, Joan called Carl on the phone.

"Hey, Carl, is it? Why did you do this? When have I, Larry, and the entire Norton Corporation

ever wronged you? What can you possibly gain from framing us?"

Joan, on the verge of losing her mind, shouted angrily over the phone.

"Oh, it's you, Joan. I didn't mean for anything like that to happen. It wasn't my intention at all."

Carl was still putting up a pretense.

"What do you mean it wasn't your intention? You defamed Larry and me in front of all those journalists. You even framed the whole Norton family. And now you're telling me it's not your fault?"

Joan questioned him harshly. Never in her life had she met someone as brazen as him.

“Why, I’m only telling the truth, Joan. Although you fancy Larry now, you can’t deny the fact

that we were once lovers, not to mention you’re currently carrying my child. Have you

forgotten what happened during that night of passion?”

Carl intended to keep up the act, sticking to the story he had made up on his own. He

wanted to see if he could drive Joan insane. Moreover, he was afraid that there might be

other people on Joan’s end who were listening in on their conversation.

So he had to be

careful not to make mistakes just in case.

“Shut up!”

Joan panted heavily, infuriated by Carl’s shamelessness.

“It will not end well for you! Sooner or later, you will get your retribution!”

Joan had nothing more to say to him. She yelled her last sentences into the phone before

she hung up in a rage. Then she sat down and held her head, groaning in misery.

After they received news of the scandal that morning, Larry had hurried to the company to

deal with the follow-up issues arising from the matter. Joan was the only one at home.

At the moment, Larry was in the company cooking up countermeasures to deal with their

predicament. Although he had expected that Carl and Gabriella would take some sort of

action, he did not think that they would be so well-prepared. They even managed to

weaponize public opinion to work in their favor, painting Joan, himself, and Norton

Corporation as the enemies this time around.

Larry found himself in a sticky situation, but he was still able to stay grounded. When faced

with such a situation, the solution was actually quite simple. As long as he could somehow

get the dirt on Gabriella and Carl, all the rumors would eventually bury themselves.

The official team of Norton Corporation was dealing with the aftermath of the incident,

hoping to minimize the negative publicity as much as they could.

Conversely, Larry returned home nonchalantly. Since there was nothing he could do at

present with Norton Corporation's official team sorting things out behind the scenes, all he

had to do was sit back and wait for updates, from Caspian in particular.

In his opinion, the most important thing right then was to go home and accompany Joan.

He wondered if the ordeal would cause her imagination to run wild again.

Back at home, Joan was quietly wiping her tears away.

Seeing that, Larry quickly approached Joan and took her into his arms.

He whispered to her,

"There, there, Joan. What's gotten you so upset?"

"Larry, I really don't know Carl at all. He made everything up. Please, tell me you don't believe him!"

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1527

Joan gazed at Larry with teary eyes, fully expecting to see the look of affirmation on his face.

"Of course, silly girl. Why wouldn't I believe you? Do you remember me telling you before

that I think there's something fishy about Carl? I've sent a team to investigate him again.

Don't worry. We'll get to the bottom of this in no time."

Larry stroked Joan's long hair affectionately as he assured her in a gentle tone.

"I... I thought you wouldn't believe me. I thought you wouldn't want me anymore!"

Joan had indeed freaked out when she thought that Larry might choose to leave her

because of public pressure. After all, people would believe what they wanted to believe, and

any further explanation would be futile.

"Silly girl, even if the sky falls, I won't give up on you," Larry declared firmly.

“Then what do we do now? It’s all my fault. If only I had realized Carl’s wretched intentions from the start, we wouldn’t be in this mess. You wouldn’t become the talk of the town, and Norton Corporation would not be at the receiving end of public criticism.”

As she thought about their current situation, Joan could not stop blaming herself.

“Shh... don’t blame put the blame on yourself. This didn’t happen because of you. Even without this incident, those people out there would still find other ways to make us look bad. But don’t worry, I know a way around it,” Larry said as he watched Joan intently.

“Yes, I believe you can fix everything!”

Joan was no longer in a panicked mode. Since starting a life with Larry, she had become

accustomed to trusting him unconditionally.

Leaning against his chest, Joan could feel the warmth of his body. That was where she could

find a sense of security and peace; that was her safe haven.

Feeling the gradually even breathing of the person in his arms, Larry had his mind made

up. Gabriella, I won’t allow you to continue doing this. Since you aren’t afraid of anything,

then I’ll let you have a taste of what it’s like to be framed.

Caspian was really quick at gathering information, so Larry did not have to wait long before

he received a call from his bodyguard.

Larry did not answer the phone at the first ring. Instead, he carried Joan, who had fallen

sound asleep, to bed and put her down gently. Then he exited the bedroom, found a

relatively secluded area in the house, and picked up the phone.

“Sir, we have some news.”

Caspian got straight to the point once Larry answered the call.

“Do tell. I’m listening.”

“My men managed to find evidence of Gabriella and Carl working together in secret. This

was all a setup. They were the ones behind everything. We've obtained the voice recordings

of their phone conversations. I'll send those to you soon."

Caspian has always spoken in a concise manner and preferred to keep his words simple.

After he finished reporting, he paused and waited for Larry's command.

"Good job, Caspian," Larry gave his compliments.

As Larry's most trusted man, Caspian had yet to disappoint him.

"That's all. Send your men to keep a close eye on Gabriella and Carl.

Notify me immediately

when you sense any sort of activity," Larry instructed Caspian.

"Yes, sir."

Caspian hung up the phone when Larry had nothing more to say.

After a while, a voice recording was sent to Larry's phone. It was of Gabriella and Carl

discussing ways to sabotage Larry and Norton Corporation.

Carl had initially planned to keep the recording in case Gabriella went back on her promise

to marry him. If that happened, he could use it as proof to threaten her.

Somehow, Caspian

managed to get his hands on the criminal evidence.

Carl thought he had been smart to save a copy of the recording, not knowing that it would

eventually help Larry to put an end to this farce effortlessly.

With the evidence in his grasp, Larry was more than confident that he could resolve the

problem, and he became much more composed.

Now that the crisis was on its way to resolution, he might as well take the time to relax and

observe what other tricks Carl and Gabriella, the two scheming clowns, had up their sleeves.

He had even ordered Norton Corporation's PR Department and the official team not to

come forward to settle the company's negative publicity.

With that, the entire Norton Corporation waited like a dormant beast to deal the fatal blow.

News coming from Carl was still being reported. There was talk about Norton Corporation's

inaction, having succumbed to the unbearable pressure from the public, and rumors

claimed that Joan had begun to regret choosing Larry over Carl and that she intended to reconcile with the latter. Other than that, there were reports saying that Norton Corporation was barely surviving and that the corporate champion could possibly go bankrupt soon.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1528

Carl spared no mercy in fabricating any sort of tall tales that he deemed capable of

threatening Larry and Norton Corporation.

For a time, Carl's name resounded throughout Marsingfill. Everyone wanted to know

whether this insignificant commoner could bring down the local legend, Norton

Corporation, to its knees, causing the company to fall into disrepute or even bankruptcy.

Carl found himself riding on the crest of success. Norton Corporation's inaction made him

believe that they dared not show their faces because they simply could not produce

corresponding evidence. Therefore, his words became bolder in front of the journalists, his

ego getting the better of him.

He also called Gabriella numerous times, asking when she would marry him.

Gabriella told him that they were currently at a crucial point in time and warned him not to

keep calling her so as not to risk exposure.

But Carl would not listen. He even swore that he would reveal everything to the press if

Gabriella went back on her word.

Left without a choice, Gabriella appeased him by saying that the Ward family was still

recovering from the major blow dealt by the Norton family. It would take some time for the

Wards to get back on their feet, but once they did, she would marry him immediately.

Carl happily agreed. Now all I have to do is wait for Norton Corporation to declare

bankruptcy due to overwhelming debts.

At the same time, there was also a large number of journalists and media representatives who wanted to interview Larry and Joan, hoping that they could provide some reasonable explanation for their current predicament.

But they were disappointed as Larry and Joan rejected all forms of interviews. Even when rumors were flying everywhere, they chose to ignore the chaos.

As the farce continued to fester and the rumors soared to new heights, Larry and Norton

Corporation finally took action. He declared his willingness to accept interviews from the press.

When the journalists got wind of his announcement, they flocked to Norton Corporation immediately. All of them wanted to witness how Norton Corporation intended to resolve the crisis.

After he had attracted enough attention, Larry moved on to the next step. He signaled the journalists to quiet down, and then he played a recording.

“Carl, now that we have come to this stage of our plan, do you think you can still turn back?

You should know that everything you do is based on your claim as a victim. That’s why the Norton family dares not mess with you. When this whole issue is done and dusted, I’ll tell

my father all about us, and then we’ll get married!”

They heard a woman’s voice in the recording.

The journalists scratched their heads when they heard that Larry was going to play a

recording for them. You’re neither providing any explanation nor allowing us to interview

you. Instead, you let us listen to a recording. What’s the meaning of this?

However, after they listened carefully to the recording, they began to understand.

What Larry wanted to convey to the press was that the entire commotion had been directed

by Carl and the woman in the recording.

But what could be proven from a single tape?

Soon, the journalists began to raise questions.

“Mr. Norton, I don’t know what you’re trying to tell us by playing that tape. I don’t think we can get any substantive information from it.”

“Let’s not rush things. This is merely the tip of the iceberg,” Larry assured them.

“The woman in the recording is Gabriella. You all should know by now that, some time ago, Gabriella was the one who accused Joan of being my mistress and even pretended to be my fiancée.”

Before the reporters could respond, Larry continued, “Gabriella has always held a grudge against me and Joan, my fiancée. That was why she directed this sham.

“She colluded with

Carl, who approached Joan on purpose and had someone take photos of the two of them

that seemed intimate. She then framed Norton Corporation, accusing me of threatening

Carl and sabotaging his relationship with Joan.

“But in fact, Carl and Joan never knew each other. In fact, he was the one who arranged for

someone to take candid photos of their initial meeting. “Besides, you can’t piece a whole

story together just by looking at these photos, can you? Don’t simply buy into Carl’s one-sided statements.”

“Mr. Norton, you’re telling us not to believe Carl’s side of the story. But how do you expect

us to believe that you’re telling the truth? The evidence you have so far is merely a

recording from an unknown source.” One of the journalists raised his suspicion.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1529

Larry smiled faintly. “Of course, this may not even prove anything. So please, let’s not get

ahead of ourselves. The real fun has yet to come.

“I’m sure everyone remembers what Carl said at the interview last time.

He mentioned that

he only wanted to see Joan and that it wasn’t him who leaked the news to the media. So,

let's see what happens next, shall we?"

Larry fished out another thumb drive as he spoke.

After plugging the thumb drive into a laptop, he played a video that showed the news

agency that first reported the case, and the person caught on screen entering said news

agency was none other than Carl himself.

Larry continued to speak at a steady pace, "I'm sure everyone can see clearly that the person

caught red-handed right here is Carl. The question is, what's his purpose for entering the

news agency?"

The journalists said nothing as all of them sank into deep thought.

They were not idiots, and Carl's purpose for sneaking into the news agency was self-evident—to provide a scoop.

The date on the surveillance was as clear as day as well. The footage was taken on the day

before that particular news agency rolled out the headline regarding Joan's tryst with a

mysterious man.

It was glaringly obvious what Carl had provided the firm.

No wonder Norton Corporation managed to stay calm amid their plight.

They had solid

evidence in their hands all along!

Larry took note of the expressions hanging on each of the journalists' faces. He could tell

that they were beginning to believe him. After that, Larry brought up another fact.

"Let me tell you something else. Carl had mentioned before that he got hit by a car as a

result of saving Joan, and he was subsequently taken to the hospital because of that. I'm

sure you've all heard about that.

"We've managed to find the driver who caused the accident. In a while, you'll get to hear

what really happened, straight from the horse's mouth," Larry stated confidently.

The journalists were interested in finding out the truth, so they waited patiently.

Soon, Caspian made his appearance and brought a man to stand before Larry. The man had a bruised face and a swollen nose. After delivering their witness, Caspian stood aside with his head bowed.

“This is the driver I was talking about. Let’s hear what he has to say.”

Larry stared at the man beside him.

The man hesitated, obviously contemplating his next move. While Larry watched him

without saying a word, Caspian was not as patient as his employer, snorting at the driver.

The man shuddered involuntarily as he looked back at Caspian. As his fearful eyes met

Caspian’s bloodthirsty ones, he swallowed hard and began to speak.

“I swear, I’ve got nothing to do with this. Carl made me do it. He asked me to wait for him at

the entrance of Joan’s company. Once he gave me the signal, I would start driving and

pretend to hit her. Then he would take the opportunity to rescue Joan. That way, he would

get on her good side.

“He even feigned an injury and got himself admitted into the hospital. I swear, I didn’t even

hit him. It was all an act.”

The man spilled everything, not daring to hide any details.

“Then why did you help him?” a journalist questioned the man.

“Because he promised me a sum of money as payment after I finish the deed. I thought it

was all an act, that it was not a big deal, so I agreed,” the man replied.

“Is there anything else you want to add?” Larry duly reminded the driver.

“Yes, there is.”

The man dared not go against Larry. If he offended the president, he would only land

himself in more misery.

“Carl also ordered me to take the photos, which he later submitted to the news agency. He

wanted me to snap pictures that showed him being intimate with Joan so that he could

claim that he and Joan go way back. But they were all fake!”
Larry was quite satisfied with the man’s tact. He asked the man again,
“So, what’s the
relationship between Carl and Gabriella? I hope you can give a good
answer if you want a
lighter sentence.”

The man was more than eager to oblige. “It was all Gabriella’s plan. She
told Carl that once
he’s successfully completed the task, she’ll marry him, and then he can
inherit the Ward
family fortune. That was why Carl arranged a series of elaborate plans,
with little care for the
repercussions he might get himself into for offending Norton
Corporation. He wanted to
take advantage of public pressure to bring down Norton Corporation.”

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1530

While the journalists listened intently, they were finally able to piece the
whole story
together.

The truth of the incident had come to light. Norton Corporation and Joan
turned out to be
the victims of this entire scandal. To everyone’s surprise, the real culprits
were Gabriella and
Carl!

When everything was over, the journalists left. Things had escalated
rather quickly, so they
had to hurry back to their respective agency and get the news out as
soon as possible. The
earlier their firm made the announcement, the more benefits they
would gain.

As soon as the news came out, Carl became the target of criticism from
all walks of life. They
despised his dirty practices of weaponizing other people’s sympathy to
run the rumor mill
and gain public support.

Instantly, Carl became the object of everyone’s ire.

Similarly, Gabriella’s reputation was also ruined. This was the second
time she was
completely exposed under the limelight.

The first time was when she accused someone else of being a homewrecker, lied about her marriage arrangement with Norton Corporation, and garnered lots of clout because of it.

This time, she colluded with another man to keep the rumor mill spinning and even attempted to drag Norton Corporation through the mud. Hence, the public's aversion to the schemer was far greater than that of Carl.

All the while, Larry and Joan remained at home, watching the turn of events unfold before them like spectators enjoying a show.

Truth to be told, Norton Corporation's power certainly stretched far and wide. Not only had they effortlessly dug up the recorded conversation between Carl and Gabriella, managed to get their hands on the footage of Carl entering the news agency, but they also found the driver responsible for assisting Carl in completing his atrocities.

When Caspian got hold of the driver who caused the accident, the latter initially refused to admit that he was Carl's accomplice. Without bothering to argue with him, Caspian straight up gave the man a good beating. He even resorted to using some special techniques he had picked up from the mafia.

The driver, having had enough of the torture, eventually surrendered and told them everything.

The whole ordeal was settled almost effortlessly. The farce came to an end just as strangely as it had begun.

Larry had always been one who would not go looking for trouble but would fight back when provoked. It would have gone against his nature if he failed to retaliate after Gabriella and Carl had gone to such great lengths to plot against him and Norton Corporation.

The Ward family was severely weakened after that episode. Moreover, Larry had made it

clear that Gabriella and her family got what they deserved and had no one else to blame but themselves.

Consequently, the Ward family lost a large number of business partners. It started with a few collaborators who had not been very close with them to begin with, and eventually, their long-time clients decided to stop doing business with the family. The main reason Ward Group was facing such a major setback was Landon's blunders in decision-making.

Hence, the major shareholders came together and requested Landon to resign as the chairman of Ward Group in order to make way for a much more capable candidate to take up the mantle and lead the company out of the troubling situation. Landon told the shareholders to give him some more time. If Ward Group had not improved by then, he would voluntarily resign and stop interfering in the company's business matters.

Meanwhile, Carl's clan was also facing a terrible disaster. Larry did not immediately utilize his influence to bring Carl down but merely oppressed his small company using Norton Corporation's financial prowess.

The Johnson family was far inferior to the Wards, and they suffered the consequences almost right away. Luckily for them, Larry only wanted to teach the Johnsons a lesson, not cut off their livelihood, which was why the Johnson family was saved from ruin. However, the heir to the Johnson family business had been stripped of his status. Carl's father claimed that the man was too reckless to inherit the company. After the announcement, he completely ignored his son's pleas for forgiveness. Carl called Gabriella again. Last time, the woman had agreed to marry him.

After the call was connected, Carl quickly asked for assurance, "Gabriella, let's set our

wedding date. I have done everything that you asked me to do, all in accordance with your wishes.”

When Gabriella realized that the caller was Carl, she flew into a murderous rage. “Carl, how could you still have the audacity to ask for my hand in marriage? Just look at what you’ve done! My family’s reputation is tarnished because of you!

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1531

“You should be grateful that my family doesn’t intend to get even with you, and yet, here you are still asking to marry me? Are you completely delusional? “Take a good look at yourself in the mirror! What makes you think you can marry me? You think way too highly of yourself!”

After venting her frustrations on the man, Gabriella hung up the call immediately.

Similarly, Carl gritted his teeth and smashed his phone to the ground. He had failed to secure his bride, lost his chance to inherit the Ward family’s fortune and rights, as well as his status as the heir to his own family business!

Moreover, Gabriella’s hand in marriage had been his only hope. In an instant, Carl felt that he had no way out.

Larry, this is all your fault! Since you’ve been so cruel to me, don’t blame me for returning the favor!

A trace of hatred flashed in Carl’s eyes.

He attributed his devastation and utter failure to Larry and Joan, believing that if it had not

been for the pair, he would not have ended up in such a sorry state.

But he seemed to have forgotten that he had brought everything upon himself, and he had no one else to blame.

But there was no turning back for Carl anymore. He could either walk the path to self-destruction or destroy others.

That night, Carl went drinking at a small bar. He was drowning his sorrows when a gang of

thugs recognized him and went up to him.

“Carl, is it? I heard you were looking for us.”

The one who was obviously the leader of the gang of thugs spoke first. Although Carl’s family was not very influential, they were still deemed noble. Moreover, Carl had always been generous to the thugs, so they often hung out together.

However, it was uncertain whether the thugs would have the same opinion of Carl if they were to find out that Carl had been stripped of his status as the family heir.

“Ugh, I’m not doing well recently. Come, drink with me.”

Carl casually called out to them when they appeared before him. They had heard a thing or two about what the man had been through lately, but they were not very informed of the details.

“It’s going to be okay, Carl. This messy situation will blow over soon. Come on, let’s drink our troubles away.”

One of the thugs patted Carl on the shoulder.

“That’s right, Carl. Don’t overthink it. Let’s drink,” echoed the other two.

“Yes, of course. Let’s drink!”

Carl said no more as he raised his glass.

After several rounds of drinks, Carl pretended to strike a casual conversation. “You guys have been around these parts for a fairly long time, haven’t you? Do you know any desperadoes who could... I don’t know... pack a hefty punch?”

“Carl, I won’t say I’m well acquainted with them, but we do know quite a number of desperadoes around here by name. I’m telling you, each one of them has quite an impressive body count.”

“Do you think you guys can get in contact with any of them? Anyone at all.”

Carl asked for a favor as he eyed the gang. A hint of urgency flashed in his eyes

“If it’s contacts you want, there’s one man I know who can definitely reach them. Why do you ask, Carl?” one of the thugs asked in confusion.

“Nothing much. It’s just been on my radar. I’ve heard that these people are some of the most vicious ones around, and they live every day as though it’s their last.” Carl sighed wistfully.

“Oh, no. See here, Carl. We cannot afford to provoke these people. We don’t mind you asking, but please just leave it at that. Don’t get involved with them,” the gangsters kindly reminded him.

“Relax. I’m not that dumb.” Carl smirked.

“Alright, let’s not talk about this. Let’s all drink till we drop, boys! It’s my treat tonight!”

Several hours later.

“Carl... My man, thank you for the drinks today. We’ll be leaving now. Next time we meet...

our treat!” the leader exclaimed.

“You guys take it slow, alright? See yourselves out.”

Carl was feeling a little dizzy too, but he could still maintain a clear mind. The thugs staggered out of the bar, supporting one another’s weight as they wobbled, leaving Carl behind.

He had managed to fish out information and contact numbers of several desperadoes from the mouths of the thugs themselves while they were in their drunken state.

Carl snickered and downed his final glass of wine before turning to leave.

The following morning, Larry got up when it was bright and early. He turned to check on

Joan who was snoozing next to him, kissed her lightly on her cheek, then rose from their bed and headed to the study.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1532

The past few days had been emotionally tiring for Joan, so Larry felt that it might be good

to take her out for some rest and relaxation to get her mind off things.

While he was dealing with some work in the study, Joan crept into his workspace and

approached him from behind.

In fact, Larry had already detected the sounds of the intruder when Joan came into the room, but he pretended to be oblivious to it and played along. Just when Joan was inches away from him, he quickly turned around and grabbed her by the waist.

Joan let out a soft cry before falling into Larry's arms.

"How did you know I was here?" Joan asked in discontent.

"Dummy, I could smell your perfume."

Larry smirked as he buried his head in her hair.

He was instantly filled with joy when he took in Joan's pretty face as though he just could not get enough of it.

"Joan," Larry whispered her name.

"What is it?"

Joan was also enjoying the rare moment of bliss.

Larry had been taking care of recent events while she spent the past few days in anxiety, so

they were both physically and mentally drained.

"Let's go somewhere for fun today. We haven't really been anywhere as a couple yet."

Larry felt guilty when he realized that he was always swamped with work and rarely spent

time with Joan or went on trips with her.

"Do you mean it?"

Joan lifted her head from Larry's arms and exclaimed in joy.

She had always wanted to spend time with Larry in the great outdoors, admiring what

nature had in store.

But since Larry was always busy, she could not bear to trouble him and ask him to take her

sightseeing, so she never brought it up.

Nevertheless, Joan had a strong desire to travel, especially with her loved one.

She might have never mentioned it, but the idea had crossed her mind countless times.

"Of course I do."

Seeing the look of surprise on her face, Larry could tell that Joan had waited a long time for

this day. It made him feel even more guilty.

Larry made a promise in his mind. I'll definitely spend more time with you in the future.

"That's great! So, where are we going?" Joan squealed excitedly.

"Wherever you want."

Larry's voice was filled with adoration for her.

"Oh, how wonderful! We're finally going on a trip!"

Joan was brimming with childlike happiness. Just the thought of going on vacation with

Larry and their child filled her with joy.

Larry was pleased to know that Joan was genuinely excited at the idea of going on a trip.

"Joan, we'll get to travel more often from now on. You can do whatever you desire. As long

as you're happy, I'm willing to do anything."

Larry's eyes were full of affection as he looked into hers. At that moment, he felt like he was

seeing the entire world.

Joan was instantly moved by Larry's confession. Choosing to be with him was the best

decision she had ever made.

They did not have much planning or preparations. Larry simply handed over the company

matters to someone he trusted before the two embarked on a journey at the drop of a hat.

Sometimes, happiness was just that simple.

Larry had to return to settle some important work-related affairs within a week, so they did

not intend to go anywhere too far.

They swiftly packed their luggage and boarded a tour bus.

Other than a road trip, taking a tour bus was another great option to travel.

Throughout the journey, Larry and Joan spent their time in the bus bantering happily.

This was the most relaxing time the couple had since they established the relationship. They

could put aside all their worries for now, and their hearts only had room for each other.

"Larry, look at the view over there!"

"Larry, isn't it gorgeous?"

"Dear, take a photo of me, will you? Come one, let's take one together!"

“Dear, I want to eat that!”

“Larry, you idiot! People are watching!”

Joan was like a chirping bird, filling Larry’s entire world with joyful notes.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1533

Alas, how time flies when one was having fun. Those few days passed in the blink of an eye,

drawing Larry and Joan’s vacation to a gradual end.

They were then in Horington, a city that was a near distance from

Marsingfill. Also, it was the

final stop of their vacation.

“Ah, time truly flies! Larry, we’re going home tomorrow, but I’m really

happy! In fact, I’m

over the moon!”

The two of them were ambling along the street in Horington, and a

blissful smile bloomed

on Joan’s face.

“I’m glad you’re happy! In this case, we’ll go on vacations more often in the future. After

some time, when there’s less work at the subsidiaries, we’ll go abroad and travel all the

countries you love,” Larry promised with a smile.

Joan had told him that she loved Pillere, mainly because of its romantic atmosphere, rich

civilization and culture, local customs, and most importantly, the fact that lovers could be

spotted everywhere on the streets.

But when she went there, he wasn’t by her side.

Now, you have me by your side. I’ll be with you forever! Larry mused

joyfully as he gazed at

her.

“Sure! Let’s go to Pillere!”

Without even thinking about it, she blurted out the place she wanted to visit most.

She wanted to go to the most romantic place with the person she loved most.

“Okay, we’ll go to Pillere.”

Larry nodded, for he didn’t mind going anywhere she liked.

“Then, let’s also go to Norham, Beskary, Irushea...”

Joan held up her fingers as she named every single place she liked, looking incredibly

adorable as she pondered with her head tilted.

“Oh yes, let’s also go to Lightspring! That’s a must! Do you remember why we’ve got to go there?”

She then stared at Larry mischievously, seemingly having thought of something.

“Of course, I do. We’re going there to visit Kobe.”

Larry smiled as well, for that was a beautiful memory they shared.

During college, Larry was the school campus beau whom thousands of females students

idolized. It wasn’t only because of his handsome looks, but there was also another major

reason— his outstanding basketball skills.

Before he got acquainted with Joan, he streaked about the basketball court every day,

competing with various skilled players on campus.

He wasn’t the tallest in terms of height, nor was he the brawniest in terms of physique.

However, one thing no one could deny about him was that his skills were the best among them all.

His sharp breakthroughs, graceful shots, precise three-pointers, and swift dribbling always

elicited cheers from the female fans on the sidelines.

Even his opponents respected him a lot, for he posed a challenge to them regardless of

whether he was on the defensive or offensive end.

Due to a myriad of reasons, his opponents then gave him a nickname, dubbing him “Little

Kobe.”

After all, not only did he possess a rich arsenal of offensive maneuvers, aggressive defense,

and realistic fake moves, but also Kobe’s deadly mamba-like temperament.

Of course, his idol was none other than Kobe.

Back then, Joan was also one of Larry’s fans.

She liked to go to the basketball court to watch him play, and unknowingly, it became a

habit.

She loved how he looked when he sweated, his elegant and cool movements, as well as his handsome looks.

Slowly, he started inching his way into her heart, and she fell in love with him.

When she realized that she had fallen in love with him, she felt rather uneasy since she wasn't the kind of person who was good at expressing herself. Instead, she was already contented to just look at him silently.

When someone had taken a fancy to someone else, the person in question would be seized

by a fervent desire to know everything about the other person.

Thus, she started paying attention to everything about him at all times—every single detail

about his life, his personality, likes and dislikes, habits, idols, and even beliefs. All those were

things she wanted to know about him.

But even when she had gotten to know everything about him, she didn't dare approach him

because he was too outstanding, so much so that she felt inferior.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1534

Although Joan was very beautiful, a bizarre sense of inferiority plagued her.

She felt that she wasn't worthy of Larry. Thus, she told herself that she would just love him

from afar since he deserved better. That was her perception.

Nonetheless, fortune smiled on her, for they still made each other's acquaintance. What was

more, it was on the basketball court familiar to them both.

That day, as she was apt to do, she went to the basketball court to watch him play. She sat

on the sidelines, a negligible distance from him, so they were only a few meters apart.

Girls of that age were always filled with wonderful fantasies of love. To top it off, he was the

perfect Prince Charming in her eyes.

Thus, her mind wandered. If only he would look at me! Perhaps we can become friends,

then maybe we'll even become a couple as the relationship progresses!

Well, the thoughts of a girl in love were inexorably straightforward and simple.

As she stared at him, a silly smile overtook her entire face.

Just when she was engrossed in her glorious fantasy, she was abruptly jolted awake. No,

accurately speaking, she was knocked awake.

The ball in the basketball court accidentally shot out of the court and hit her on the head

squarely.

It so happened that the culprit was none other than him, Larry.

The sudden bolt of pain had Joan clutching her head and crouching on the ground. The

pain was so strong that tears almost escaped her eyes.

“Are you okay, miss?”

Upon seeing that he had hurt someone, Larry hastily sprinted over and inquired about her

condition.

Is he talking to me? Stunned, a burst of delight instantly flooded Joan.

She quickly lifted her head and smilingly replied, “I-I’m fine. It doesn’t hurt at all.”

After saying that, she actually massaged her head.

At that, he stared at her. At the sight of her smilingly telling him that it didn’t hurt despite

the tears shimmering in her eyes, his heart fluttered.

It felt like he was captivated by her, but he couldn’t be entirely certain.

Nevertheless, the

feeling he had toward the beautiful girl in front of him was one he had never experienced.

“How about I treat you to a meal as an apology?”

After saying that, he himself was taken aback because he had never voluntarily asked a girl

out.

And much to his surprise, she actually declined.

“No, no, it’s okay. I’m perfectly fine,” she declined without even thinking about it.

She craved having contact with him, but when it was poised to happen, fear had her taking

a step back again.

Meanwhile, the other girls on the sidelines had already lost their minds ever since Larry

trotted over in this direction, and they were all shouting fanatically.
“Wow, my idol! My idol is coming over to me!”
“Dream on! Look at yourself in the mirror! He’s heading over to me!”
“Hey, stop that nonsense! I’m the nearest to him, so he must be here for me!”
“Stop arguing! He’s here!”
When the girls on the sidelines saw Larry approaching Joan, jealousy ignited within them, and their eyes blazed scarlet.
Then, the moment they heard him asking her out for a meal, their hearts lodged into their throats.
Phew! What a relief! That fool declined the invitation!
When they heard her declining without even an ounce of hesitation, their hearts immediately settled back in their chests. Inwardly, they exclaimed happily, I’ve still got a chance!
“Handsome, she rejected you, but I don’t mind having a meal with you!”
“Yes, yes, that’s right! I don’t mind eating with you either!”
“Choose me! Choose me!”
“Buzz off! I’m the most suitable candidate!”
Once again, the girls on the sidelines exclaimed loudly.
However, Larry wasn’t the least bit affected. Pinning his gaze on Joan, he enunciated, “What if I insist?”
Joan’s heart pounded wildly even as she inwardly chastised herself for being stupid. Isn’t this exactly what you want? So, why are you so hesitant now?
Meanwhile, the other girls were screeching inwardly, No! Don’t say yes!
“W-When?” Joan stammered.
“In just a few moments. Wait for me here.” After Larry had said that, he strode back toward the basketball court.
Having taken his leave from his friends on the court, he walked back to her.
“Let’s go. We’ll go for a meal.”
Without the slightest bit of hesitation, he started forward as soon as he had finished saying that.

Joan silently trailed behind him with conflicting emotions blanketing her face; there were anxiety, apprehension, and even faint anticipation.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1535

Behind Joan, the sound of hearts shattering pierced the air.

Larry, who had been walking in front, started slowing down until he was side by side with

Joan.

“What’s your name?”

As he looked at the girl before him, he felt his heartbeat gradually accelerating. Could this

be the so-called love at first sight?

“I’m Joan Watts.”

Joan’s voice was a mere whisper, yet Larry could hear her clearly.

“I see. I’m Larry Norton.”

He then smiled, appearing to be in high spirits.

I know, Joan mumbled inwardly.

After having exchanged those two utterances, neither of them said anything else.

Larry didn’t know what to say, while Joan was so nervous that she was at a loss.

In no time, the two of them arrived at the school cafeteria. At that time, Larry had never

dated, so he had no idea that he should be taking a girl to a high-end restaurant when

treating her to a meal.

“What would you like to eat?” Larry asked softly.

“Why don’t I pay for it myself? You don’t need to treat me,” Joan murmured with her head

lowered.

“No way! I said I’ll treat you, so it’s my treat!” Larry declared in a voice that brooked no argument.

“In that case, you decide. I’m fine with anything.”

Joan was still acting very much cautiously.

After simply ordering two lunch boxes, Larry and Joan started eating.

Later, Joan kept using this incident to tease Larry, making him exceedingly embarrassed. Of

course, this only happened when they had gotten familiar with each other in the future.

Neither of them had ever thought that the first meal they shared upon getting acquainted was a lunch box at the school cafeteria.

Throughout the meal, they both said nothing, merely finishing the food silently.

"I'll be leaving first." Looking at Larry, Joan then stated, "Thank you for the meal."

"You're welcome. Let's go."

Larry got up to leave as well.

Thereafter, Larry still went to the basketball court to play basketball every day, and it was even more frequent than before. Meanwhile, Joan sat at the same place and watched him play.

Nothing changed, with the exception that they both interacted more. On the court, Larry would gaze in Joan's direction from time to time, while Joan always flashed him a smile in return.

Therefore, the basketball court on campus became the place they got acquainted.

After Larry had was done playing basketball in the afternoon, he always went to the cafeteria to eat with Joan. Joan, on the other hand, stopped protesting after having declined his invitation a few times. Hence, eating together gradually became a habit of theirs.

It wasn't as romantic as one would have imagined, nor was it a passionate love story.

Instead, they merely got together with the flow, when things felt right. On the day they confirmed their relationship, Larry said to Joan, "Meet me at the basketball court tonight."

Despite having no inkling why he asked her to meet him, Joan still went to the basketball court at the agreed-upon time.

Larry was standing there with a basketball in his arms, his silhouette elongated under the streetlights. Despite the dim streetlights, one could still discern his chiseled and handsome

countenance. While innocent youthfulness remained on his face, he already had a faint sense of an imposing aura.

As he watched Joan walking toward him, step by step, his lips curved into a smile that was utterly captivating.

At that time, Joan noticed him staring at her intently, his gaze brimming with affection that almost had her melting into a puddle.

All of a sudden, she sensed her heart skipping a beat. She knew that something was about to happen, and it had her feeling both nervous and expectant.

“Is something the matter that you asked me here, Larry?”

A touch apprehensive, Joan dared not look at him but kept her head ducked instead.

“Yup.”

Larry’s voice was filled with an enthralling allure, and it made her heart race all the faster.

“Joan, the reason I asked you here today is that I’ve got a question for you. Will you be my girlfriend?”

His voice wasn’t as calm as usual. Instead, it was tinged with a trace of urgency and anticipation.

Upon hearing that, Joan’s mind abruptly went blank.

Did he just ask me to be his girlfriend? Am I going to be his girlfriend?

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1536

Joan was stumped for a moment before she suddenly felt so happy that she couldn’t quite breathe.

Oh my God, I didn’t even dare dream of this, yet it has come true today!

“Forget it if you won’t be my girlfriend.”

Upon seeing that Joan wasn’t saying anything, Larry thought that she wanted to turn him down, so he spun around dejectedly to leave.

“I do!” Joan hastily blurted.

After all, how could she turn him down when this was something she wanted more than anything else?

All at once, Larry promptly whirled around in surprise. As he did so, he wore a wide smile on his face.

“Here, this basketball is for you. It was my birthday present from my father, and there’s Kobe’s signature on it!”

He handed the basketball in his hands to Joan.

With astonishment written all over her face, Joan took the basketball. Is this my first gift from him? Undeniably, this gift is truly unique.

After getting together, Larry and Joan soon fell deeply in love to the point of no return. As for everything that happened later, well, that was already common knowledge.

As they both snapped back to reality at the same time, they laughed in concert as nostalgia teemed in their eyes.

“Regretfully, Kobe has already retired, so you won’t get to see him play basketball anymore,”

Joan lamented with dismay.

“It’s okay. As long as you’re by my side, it no longer matters where we go and who we see,”

Larry insisted smilingly.

At that, a wealth of warmth enveloped Joan.

“Let’s go! This is our last stop, so let’s wander around. We’ll see what’s delicious and fun here!”

Taking Joan’s hand, Larry started walking forward.

At the mention of food, Joan’s eyes lit up.

“Sure, sure! Let’s go and see what’s delicious here!” she urged.

“I heard that there’s a very delicious snack ahead,” Larry drawled, deliberately teasing her.

“What’s that?”

“I’m not telling you! Haha...”

“Hey, that’s unfair! Stop right there!” Joan cried out huffily.

Nonetheless, she allowed Larry to continue strolling forward while holding her hand.

Meanwhile, Carl presently was waiting for someone in a restaurant.

Although he had been

waiting for a long time without any sign of the other person, he was dead certain that she

would come.

A while later, a woman with a nice figure in a black coat walked into the restaurant. Her face was obscured since she was wearing sunglasses, but one thing was certain—the woman was very beautiful.

The woman glanced around the restaurant. The second she caught sight of Carl, her eyes lit up, and she strode toward him.

When she reached his table, she sat down right across from him before slowly removing her sunglasses. It was none other than Gabriella.

As Carl stared at Gabriella before him, he beamed.

Back when he drank with a few ruffians, he obtained the contact information for a few

desperadoes who straddled the edge of society from them.

At present, his life was bleak and miserable. Not only had he lost the golden opportunity of

getting his big break by cozying up to the Ward family, but he had also lost the right to

inherit his family business.

Thus, all those who had once followed him around and fawned all over him had also started giving him attitude.

During this time, he had experienced the cruelty of life and the fickleness of human beings.

For that reason, he hated Larry and Joan. If it weren't because of them, he would never have

ended up in such a sorry state.

Therefore, he was frantic to get his revenge against them. It was only when they were

eliminated could he obtain gratification.

To that end, he had contacted a few desperadoes, hoping that they would help him finish

Larry and Joan off. If that wasn't possible, he wanted them to at least suffer some grievous

injuries, perhaps breaking their arms or legs. Only by doing so would he be able to

experience the rush of perverse pleasure.

Thereafter, he swiftly received a reply from the desperadoes. It was very simple to have them do a job—as long as the person offered enough money to entice them to take the risk, they would do it. But if the money was a mere pittance, they would never agree to the job.

Naturally, Carl expressed his understanding of their stance. After all, despite living a life fraught with risk, those desperadoes weren't vulnerable to judgment by the law since they hid in the darkness.

However, once they make a move, they would be quickly targeted by the police.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1537

Thus, such danger wasn't something the desperadoes would simply risk. "How much do you want?" Carl asked through gritted teeth, prepared to be paying them a king's ransom.

"Who's your target?" the person on the phone questioned.

"Larry Norton, but Joan Watts is fine, too," Carl snarled while clenching his jaw.

"Okay, then. The price for Larry Norton ranges between five million to ten million, while Joan

Watts will cost you between two million to five million. As for who exactly you want us to eliminate, you should consider it carefully."

"What?" Carl almost jumped out of his skin. "Why is it so expensive?

Don't simply rip me off

just because I'm asking you guys for a favor! If you guys don't work out, I can also go to

someone else!" he hissed through gritted teeth.

Hah! They're asking for such an exorbitant amount that I can't afford to pay it even if I rob the bank!

"This will be the price no matter who you go to. Even ten million is a pittance to me when

you're going against the president of Norton Corporation and his fiancée. Considering

Norton Corporation's influence in Marsingfill, we won't be able to stay here anymore even if the police don't find us!

"If we were found out by Norton Corporation, we would end up a hundred times worse than if we were arrested by the police. You can take your time and consider it carefully. Perhaps we'll be even happier if you go and have someone else do it!"

After saying that, the assassin hung up the phone. As Carl listened to the disconnect tone on the other end, he felt exceedingly conflicted.

That assassin is right. If I want to make a move against Larry Norton and Joan Watts, I must pay a hefty price. However, I simply don't have that much money now. If I were still the heir to the family business, I'd be able to produce five million easily by utilizing some connections, much less two million.

But the thing is, I'm no longer the heir! On top of that, Dad has frozen my primary bank card out of fear that I'll act recklessly. So, it's already a feat if I can fork out half a million. No, I need someone else to bear the cost with me. Furthermore, two minds will definitely be better than one in planning this assassination.

Thus, he thought of a person who detested Larry and Joan to the bone, just like him—

Gabriella.

If I pull Gabriella into the boat with me, my financial burden will be reduced significantly.

Besides, the Ward family's connections extend further than mine, so this matter can be done more imperviously.

Most importantly, if she agrees to this, she'll undoubtedly be bound to me. And it's different this time, for once the matter comes to light, she might even lose her life. Therefore, she'll definitely choose to be with me for the sake of her life!

Having made up his mind, he then resolutely contacted Gabriella. Gabriella didn't even

bother picking up his call in the beginning, but she later truly couldn't stand his persistent harassment calls, so she finally answered it.

"Gabriella, it's me, Carl."

The first thing Carl did was to introduce himself as though afraid that she wouldn't know that it was him.

"I naturally know who you are!" Gabriella huffed.

If it weren't for you, why else would I be avoiding picking up calls?

"Why on earth did you keep calling me? Just spit it out if you've got something to say!" she demanded impatiently.

After all, she found it a waste of time to even say a single word to him.

"I have a very important matter to discuss with you, one that's definitely of interest to you."

Carl's voice was unhurried.

"Well? Cut the crap!"

Gabriella was so incensed at him leaving her hanging despite knowing full well that she was impatient that she blurted a crude word.

"Be patient and listen to me."

Carl didn't take her wrath and censure to heart. Instead, he slowly told her his ultimate goal.

"I want to find someone to bump off Larry Norton or Joan Watts. Even if I don't kill them, I want them to pay in blood!"

His voice was vicious, making it clear as day that he harbored bone-deep hatred toward Larry and Joan.

"What?"

Shock seized Gabriella, and her jaw dropped.

Carl's words were like a sledgehammer that hit her right in the chest, leaving her overwhelmed for a long time.

Although she had long since loathed both Larry and Joan to the marrow, she had never thought of doing such a thing.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1538

It wasn't that Gabriella didn't want to do so, but she didn't even dare entertain such a

thought!

After all, the Ward family was already in such a desperate state that it was gasping for

breath when they merely had some business conflicts with Norton Corporation. Thus, if she

were to plan an assassination of the leader of Norton Corporation, the consequences would

definitely be devastating once the matter came to light.

“Have you lost your mind, Carl Johnson?” Gabriella was both shocked and livid. “If you want

to die, do so yourself! Don’t drag me down with you!”

She was living a dismal life now, but she was still the high and mighty young lady of the

Ward family, not to mention a socialite at the upper echelons of society. Despite being

rather embarrassed at the recent turn of events, she believed that everything would pass.

However, if she were to assassinate Larry and Joan, she would certainly lose everything were

it to come to light even if the attempt succeeded. Worse still, she might even pay with her

life.

“I know your concerns, Gabriella, but are you really that indifferent when you see Joan Watts

by the side of the man whom you once loved deeply? What’s more, he even relegated you

to your circumstances now because of that b*tch, Joan Watts!”

Knowing that she wouldn’t agree, Carl started reeling her in with various enticements.

“Joan Watts’ position now should have been yours, but that’s not the case now. Don’t you

hate her when you think of how happy she is with Larry Norton?”

“Of course, I do! How could I possibly not hate her?”

Hatred glinted in Gabriella’s eyes. How I wish that Joan would just drop dead!

“But this matter is simply too serious. I don’t have such capability.”

“No, that’s not true. You simply lack the guts to do it because you worry too much. The

loathing you harbor toward Joan Watts have you wishing that you could slash her into

ribbons, but you can't do anything to her because of Larry Norton. Also, you're afraid of losing your identity now because it's more than sufficient to allow you to enjoy life. But have you ever considered..."

At that, Carl deliberately paused for a moment so that Gabriella could hear him loud and clear.

"Once the Ward family's current power and influence cease to exist, will you still have the identity of a socialite of the upper-class society? Don't think that I'm trying to scare you, for you know the situation of the Ward family now better than me. Once the Ward family collapses and goes bankrupt or your father surrenders his position as chairman, those he had once offended or disregarded will walk all over you, mocking and oppressing you. Is that a life you want?"

Step by step, he battered at her defenses, breaking them down. Upon hearing his words, an inexplicable wave of fear gripped Gabriella out of the blue.

She was naturally well aware of the Ward family's situation at the moment. It was already at a precarious point, tottering on the edge of destruction. Once the Ward family goes bankrupt, I'll lose my glamorous identity now and become the target of scorn and oppression!

At the thought of those she had once trampled under her feet looking at her with contemptuous expressions and the smug gratification on their faces as they picked on her, she felt as though she was going to lose her mind.

I'll never allow such a situation to happen! Never in a million years!

"Nonetheless, this matter is still too risky. Even if we do attempt it, how are we going to do it? Larry and Joan are protected by bodyguards 24/7, so we might not necessarily succeed

even if we do attempt an assassination. And once this matter comes to light, we'll be facing relentless retaliation from Norton Corporation."

As her thoughts went in this direction, she again hesitated.

"You don't need to worry about this. I've already made arrangements for the most part, but I still need your help. Also, we need to plan this out again."

Carl continued persuading her when he noticed her wavering.

"How about this? I'll give you a few days to consider it. Three days later, if you've made up your mind and would like to join hands with me, come and look for me at eight o'clock at night. We'll discuss and plan it out in detail. I'll send you the location by phone."

Gabriella remained silent, making it apparent that she was still weighing the pros and cons of this matter.

Seeing that she wasn't saying anything, Carl didn't continue bugging her.

"Alright, it's decided, then. Think about it carefully, but as I said, why don't you try fighting for it if you don't want all those things I said to become a reality in the future?"

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After saying that, Carl hung up, leaving Gabriella with her chaotic thoughts.

Those three days were the most arduous days in Gabriella's life.

Throughout the three days, not only did she consider Carl's proposition carefully, but she also paid close attention to the changes in the Ward family's financial situation.

On the fourth day, the financial capability of the Ward family had already fallen to its lowest point in history.

Although Landon was doing his best to persevere, she couldn't see the slightest ray of hope.

If this continues, bankruptcy is only a matter of time.

Recalling Carl's words, her defenses slowly collapsed.

She really couldn't think of a better way to save the Ward family and herself. The only method was the one he proposed.

Three days passed in the blink of an eye. While she was still struggling inwardly, she was gradually inclined toward Carl's proposition. In the end, she decided to seek Carl out. No matter what, I can just go and see what he says. If I don't agree, I can just turn around and leave without getting myself involved in the mess. As that thought occurred to her, she finally stopped hesitating and drove to the location he sent her.

In other words, it was the aforementioned restaurant. Carl wore an expectant smile on his face as though having known that Gabriella would definitely come.

"You're here, Gabriella? What would you like to eat?" he inquired gentlemanly.

"I've got no appetite," Gabriella answered bluntly.

All the while, her eyes were fixed intently on him.

"Oh well, I'll just eat by myself, then.

As Carl said that, he picked up the fork and knife on the table before eating his steak unhurriedly.

Gabriella waited for him to speak, for it was only when he initiated the conversation would she be able to take the reins. In that case, she could nonchalantly extricate herself from the collaboration and leave.

However, Carl said nothing. Instead, he acted as though the steak in front of him was the sum of his world at that very moment.

Both of them were waiting for the other to speak, so the atmosphere fell silent in a flash.

At long last, it was Gabriella who snapped and broke the silence.

"Tell me about your plan."

She didn't want to waste time with him here, so she went straight to the chase.

At that, Carl smirked triumphantly.

"Patience, Gabriella. Haste makes waste. I know you're very eager to have our collaboration go smoothly, but patience is a virtue."

The moment his words fell, Gabriella was consigned to a passive position.

Ugh! What a scoundrel! Gabriella cursed inwardly. Then, she declared, “I think you’ve made a mistake here, Mr. Johnson. I’m not here to collaborate with you. I’m only here to listen to the so-called plan you asked me here to discuss.”

Gabriella spoke coldly without a hint of expression on her face.

“There’s no rush about the plan. It’s been a long time since we last met, so let’s have a chat first,” Carl murmured with a smile.

But on a closer look, one would see that the smile carried a hint of smugness for having cornered his prey.

“We haven’t seen each other in a long time, so did you miss me, Gabriella? I missed you like crazy,” Carl drawled, grinning.

His words had repulsion invading Gabriella. Sick of being kept hanging, she issued an

ultimatum and hissed, “If you’re not going to talk business, I’m leaving.”

“Alright, then, Gabriella. Since you’re in such a hurry, let’s talk about the plan first,” Carl concurred languidly.

In the next moment, he had even schooled his expression and put his smile away.

Without waiting for her to start, he began speaking. “I’ll tell you about the general plan first.

It’s actually very simple. Larry Norton and Joan Watts are currently on a vacation. However,

there have always been tons of work to be done at Norton Corporation, so he can’t be away

for too long. Hence, he’ll probably return in these few days to handle business. What we

need to do is to plan for something to happen during their vacation so that they can’t make

it back to Marsingfill,” he snarled resentfully.

“Of course, we’re not doing this ourselves,” he added. Seemingly having anticipated her

question, he continued, “I’ve already contacted a few assassins. They’re all desperadoes

whose lives are always in the balance as they act as assassins. They don't care who's hiring their services, asking only for money. So, we don't need to reveal our identities. As long we pay a certain amount, they will do their jobs."

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After saying all that, Carl said nothing further since he knew that Gabriella would surely have questions for him.

"Don't the assassins know who you are when you've already contacted them?"

After all, Gabriella had some knowledge about assassins from hearsay. The majority of them were purportedly locals though there were also plenty from other

countries. They had undergone specialized training and lived solely to carry out

assassinations. Besides, they merely asked for money without ever bothering about who

hired them. Hmm... they're indeed the best choice to do this.

"They're assassins, so they never asked for my name. For safety purposes, even the phone

number I'm using to contact them is registered under a false name. Thus, you can rest

assured about that."

"Since you've already done all the preparations, why did you seek me out?" Gabriella was very much puzzled.

"Don't tell me you sought me out just to pull me into this so that I'll shoulder the risk with

you? You're truly vicious, Carl Johnson!" Gabriella snarled furiously as she gritted her teeth.

The more she pondered upon it, the greater her conviction that such was indeed his intentions.

Nevertheless, she naturally didn't dare raise her voice as they were speaking of something shady.

"Why would you think that? Of course, I wouldn't do such a thing when I love you so much,"

Carl hurriedly cajoled in a soft voice when he saw that she was on the verge of blowing her top.

“I sought you out because I need your help in terms of connections and financial support.”

Carl finally revealed his ultimate goal.

“What do you mean?” Gabriella asked despite seemingly comprehending something or other after listening to him.

“I’m no longer the heir of the family business now. Although it was merely an insignificant family in the grand scheme of things, it still provided me much help in terms of financial backing. Now, however, I have nothing except for the few hundreds of thousands in my bank card,” Carl admitted helplessly.

At the thought of his predicament, he was all the more reminded of the culprits who brought about all that—Larry and Joan. And so, the hatred within him blazed all the hotter.

“The amount of money I have now isn’t enough to hire assassins. In fact, it’s far from enough. Therefore, I hope you can supply me with a sum of money. Also, I won’t be able to investigate their exact movements with my current capabilities. But without providing their location, the assassins won’t be able to carry out the assassination. Thus, I need the Ward family’s backing to know their real-time movements in detail.”

After saying all that, Carl said nothing further. He merely stared at her and awaited her decision.

“The assassins have no idea who we are? Are you a hundred percent sure about that?”

Gabriella asked, seeking confirmation once again.

“They definitely won’t know who we are, and I can stake my life on that!” Carl asserted firmly, only stopping short at swearing it.

“So, how much does it cost to hire the assassins?” Gabriella inquired further.

“That depends on what you want them to do to Larry Norton and Joan Watts,” Carl replied

grimly. “Since the former’s identity is rather unique, the price will be higher. As for the latter, it’ll be relatively cheaper.”

He then told her the price quoted by the assassins. Upon hearing that, Gabriella herself sucked in a breath.

“What? It’s that expensive?”

She was shocked, but at the thought of Larry’s unique identity, she felt that it did make sense.

As a deposit was required in the hiring of assassins, Carl and Gabriella decided to pay them

two million after discussing the matter among themselves. Besides, they came to an

agreement that Larry and Joan were only to be injured instead of killed.

After all, if the president of Norton Corporation died, the Ward family would also be

implicated regardless of their involvement.

Hence, the best solution was to have the two of them injured and hospitalized.

By doing so, Norton Corporation would definitely plunge into chaos and ease its

suppression of Ward Group. Ward Group could then have a respite amidst all that. On top

of that, it would certainly be extremely beneficial toward its development in the future.

Gabriella and Carl then discussed the plan meticulously before confirming it in the end.

Both of them obtained great satisfaction from the plan. For Gabriella, not only would the

Ward family gain a certain degree of respite, but she would also be able to avoid the series

of consequences following the Ward family’s bankruptcy.

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As for Carl, the assassination plan would ensure that Gabriella was firmly bound to him. It

would result in a great possibility of her marrying him, so it would only be a matter of time

before he inherited the assets of the Ward family. Most importantly, a sense of gratification flooded both Gabriella and Carl at the thought of Larry and Joan lying in the hospital because of their plan. To them, nothing made them happier than having obtained their revenge. After having discussed everything, they both went their separate ways. Carl was tasked with informing the assassins of the plan. Gabriella, on the other hand, not only had to prepare the money but also furtively use the Ward family's influence to investigate Larry and Joan's exact movements. When Gabriella went home, she headed straight for her bedroom, but she just so happened to bump into Landon. "Where did you go?" Ever since the Ward family started having financial problems, Landon had never been amiable with Gabriella. When they would usually bump into each other, he either put on a cold expression and said nothing or chastise her impatiently. While Gabriella felt extremely aggrieved at that, she didn't dare utter a single word of complaint. "I went out to meet a friend," Gabriella answered cautiously. "What friend? I hope it wasn't any of those useless friends of yours?" Landon demanded impatiently. "No, it was my best girlfriend. She was feeling down, so she asked me to keep her company and lend her an ear," Gabriella fibbed. She knew that he would definitely blow a gasket if she were to tell him that she went to meet Carl. "Good. Don't simply wander around these days. The Ward family is now in a crisis, so I don't have much time to take care of you. Also, don't make any more trouble for me."

Landon's tone was much better now. Although he was still peeved, Gabriella was still his daughter, so he couldn't simply shut his eyes to her. "Got it, Dad. You should rest more, too. I'm sorry for having worried you."

Despite his belligerent demeanor toward her recently, Gabriella could still sense the concern underlying his words.

"I'm fine, so you can get back to your work."

At that, Landon spun around and went about his business without bothering about her anymore.

After going back to her room, the first thing Gabriella did was to calculate how much money she had on hand. Despite their financial strain lately, Landon didn't limit her daily expenses, and her monthly stipend hadn't been deducted either. Thus, she could afford to pay the assassins albeit smarting slightly.

Then, she furtively arranged for some people to observe Larry and Joan's every movement closely with the Ward family's remaining influence.

As for the rest of it, it all hinged on Carl.

Meanwhile, Carl immediately contacted the few assassins upon arriving home and wired the two million Gabriella transferred to him to the bank account provided by the assassins.

After the information from Gabriella's spies was conveyed to the assassins through Carl, the assassins set off for Horington right away.

Thus, an assassination plan targeting Larry and Joan quietly kicked off. Nevertheless, Larry and Joan were still ignorant of the impending danger, enjoying the final moments of their rare vacation.

Subsequently, night fell. After tiring themselves having fun out there, they decided to return to their hotel to rest so that they could return to Marsingfill early the next morning.

They both stood by the roadside while waiting for a cab. At that precise moment, a cab

slowly cruised toward them.

When Joan spotted the oncoming cab, her eyes lit up, and she quickly held her hand out to hail it.

Sure enough, the cab gradually came to a stop before them.

Larry and Joan then got into the cab without delay.

“Where to?” the driver inquired.

His voice was low and hoarse, marking him apart from the average person.

“Hello, mister. We’re heading to Washington Hotel,” Joan replied politely.

“Okay.”

Without saying anything further, the driver started the engine and slowly drove forward

after a single word of acknowledgment.

The driver was wearing a baseball cap with the brim lowered as though afraid that someone

would discern his countenance.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1542

Larry surreptitiously studied the driver. He simply couldn’t shake off the feeling that

something was off about him.

The driver was driving very slowly, but it was already night, so it wasn’t a big deal since

neither Larry nor Joan minded.

“Are you a local, mister?” Larry asked.

“No. My daughter is studying here, so her mother and I moved to this city. I couldn’t find a

job, so I started driving a cab.”

The driver’s voice was a mere whisper, but it gave off a sense of oppression.

“No wonder you don’t sound like a local,” Larry commented.

Well, well... he was probably in the killing profession before he became a cabbie.

After all, he was no stranger to the aura that the driver was emanating.

Only those who had

experienced peril and near-death brushes would develop such an aura.

He was very familiar with such an aura because he had once possessed it himself. But as

time passed, or more accurately speaking, the changes in his social circle made it imperative that he conceal it.

Wait a moment!

All of a sudden, he was taken aback by his own thoughts—this cabbie is an assassin!

That intuition couldn't be wrong, for the driver possessed all the traits of an assassin—low-key, disguised, and a faint murderous aura.

Is he targeting me and Joan, or was he an assassin in the past but had retired long ago? he mused inwardly.

Nonetheless, he still cautiously kept his guard up.

"What are you thinking, Larry?" Joan queried when she saw him spacing out.

"Nothing. Something just occurred to me, but I'll tell you when we get back," Larry answered with a smile.

He feigned an expression of utter nonchalance, but his nerves had long since stretched taut.

"Oh, I see. We should be arriving back at the hotel soon, no?" Joan asked.

In truth, they should have reached the hotel by then.

"Yup, we're probably arriving soon."

Larry looked around, only to discover that he had never seen the place before.

While this was considered an unfamiliar city to them, he could still remember the surrounding landscape.

Inwardly, Larry cursed. Damn it, this is bad! Now, I can say for certain that the cabbie is an assassin, and he's targeting us!

At the thought of this, he broke out in a cold sweat.

He naturally wasn't afraid of those so-called assassins, but he was worried about Joan.

"Mister, please pull over by the side. I need to get out for a while," Larry said to the driver.

Unsurprisingly, the driver didn't answer but merely continued driving silently.

"I said, pull over! I've got an urgent matter to attend to!" Larry repeated upon seeing that he

was ignoring him.

"May I know what the matter is, sir?" the driver finally replied.

"That's none of your business! You only need to pull over!" Larry declared glacially.

The look in his eyes as he stared at the driver was filled with frost.

"I'm sorry, sir, but my cab isn't pulling over before reaching its destination."

Snickeringly maliciously, the driver abruptly accelerated.

By then, Joan had also realized that something was off. "What should we do, Larry?" she

questioned in panic.

At that, Larry cast her a consoling look and reassured, "I'm here, so everything will be fine."

"I'm afraid it's useless even if you're here. Both of you aren't escaping today!" the driver

proclaimed malevolently as he bared his vicious teeth.

Larry kept mum, knowing that nothing he said would make a difference.

Fearing that Joan

would suffer the slightest bit of hurt, he didn't even dare to grab the assassin's steering

wheel.

But despite the tense situation, he was still extremely calm. Having seen too much of the

world, such a situation was nothing more than child's play to him.

Furthermore, he had

great backup.

Screech!

As the sharp screech of tires pierced the air, the car finally came to a stop.

The impact almost flung Joan out of the windshield, but fortunately, Larry had been keeping

his arms around her, so she wasn't affected much by the sudden brake.

"Get out. Someone wants to meet you both," the assassin ordered coldly.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1543

"Larry, what do we do?" Panic consumed every inch of Joan as she felt she was at her wits'

end.

"It's okay. If this is the case, let's get out of the car and see what they want."

Seeing that the assassin did not immediately take their lives in the car, Larry's nerves began to calm down. Might as well make the best of the situation! Larry helped Joan out of the car as he took in their surroundings. Ruins of what used to be buildings surround them, allowing Larry to soon realize they were in a demolition area. The buildings around them seemed to be under reconstruction. With no one in sight, Larry easily deduced that they were brought there to be away from prying eyes. The assassin that disguised himself as the driver joined a few other men after he got out of the car. The men stood in a line, staring intensely at Larry and Joan opposite them. Larry examined all of them in a calm manner. There were five men in total, all of them masked, showing only their eyes. "So, why did you bring us here?" Unable to tell who they were behind the masks, Larry had no choice but to ask. "As expected of the president of Norton Corporation, bold words for a man face to face with danger. Hats off to you for maintaining your confidence even in times like this," responded one of the assassins coolly. "Let's cut the pleasantries, shall we? Tell me, what do you plan to do with us? Surely you don't want to take our lives." Larry raised an eyebrow, confident in his deduction. If the assassins wanted them dead, they would have done so long ago instead of wasting their time for mindless chit-chat. "You are shrewd indeed, Mr. Norton." The reply came from the same person as before. It wasn't hard to guess that he was the one in charge of this mission. "To offend you, and therefore offending Norton Corporation is not something we have a say in. I'm sure you know, Mr. Norton, that we only carry out the tasks we were paid to do,

helping whichever party that hired us, no hard feelings. Now, let's not make things more difficult than needed. We just need to cleave off an arm from you and Mrs. Norton each."

Joan inhaled sharply as she edged closer to Larry, eyes widening as she gripped Larry's sleeves out of fear. Knowing what the assassins had planned did not ease her mind.

Contrarily, her heart pounded faster in fear.

Sensing her panic, Larry patted her hand gently, attempting to comfort her.

"Since it's just about money—and you said so yourself, no hard feelings—then there should be some space for negotiation."

Larry kept his eyes fixed on the person in charge before continuing, "Whatever you've received, I'll offer you twice the amount for you to give me the name of your employer, and everyone will leave here unscathed. Do we have a deal?"

Keeping Joan's safety in mind and worried that she might be harmed, Larry hoped to resolve the situation by talking instead of spilling blood.

"Mr. Norton, I'm sure you know people like us carry out our missions seriously once we've received a task from the employer. We won't stop until it's done, so... please excuse us!"

With that being said, the leader was the first to unsheathe his dagger and lunged towards the couple.

"Get them!"

As the other four rushed forward with their weapons, chaos ensued. It was impossible to know who had shouted the command.

The assassins all knew that once they defeated Larry, going after Joan would be a piece of cake, so right that second, all five men charged towards Larry with their daggers.

"Run, Joan!" exclaimed Larry, shoving Joan behind him as danger closed in, all the while raising his fists and getting into a fighting stance.

Fully aware that staying beside Larry would make him distracted, Joan turned around and sped off without hesitation.

“Be careful, Larry!” cried Joan as she sprinted away.

Please God, don’t let Larry get hurt. Joan prayed silently, in hopes that everything would be fine.

Noticing Joan’s attempt to escape, one of the assassins chased after her, not allowing her to get away as the other four surrounded Larry.

Being a highly trained assassin with special training, there was no chance Joan could have

outrun him. The distance between the two got closer and closer. The assassin stretched out

his hand, almost touching Joan when a huge shadow appeared and kicked the assassin in

the stomach, knocking the air out of his lungs and saving Joan in the nick of time.

Before Joan could even respond, the assassin had been kicked a good few feet away.

As Joan regained enough composure to see the face of her hero, her eyes widened as her heart beat wilder.

“Quick! Go help Larry!” To her immense relief, Joan begged the person who protected her a second ago.

It was none other than Caspian!

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1544

As Larry’s personal bodyguard, Caspian would be fired without a doubt if he failed to show up in times of crisis.

“Don’t worry.” Caspian comforted Joan. “Boss has this covered!”

Regarding Larry’s combat skills, Caspian had nothing but the deepest admiration and trust.

Seeing Joan safe and unharmed with Caspian by her side, Larry breathed a sigh of relief

before turning his undivided attention upon the four assassins in front of him.

As someone who had intense training and life or death experiences, the assassins were far

more deadly in comparison to the thugs on the streets. Their moves were seamlessly in tune with each other, showing that they had trained together for years. Each strike of the blades was carefully calculated with extreme precision. Any blow could have been vital to Larry.

If they were up against any other person, they would have completely slaughtered the victim by then.

But this wasn't any other person. This was Larry Norton.

As skilled as the assassins were, Larry could still easily spot their many weaknesses and loopholes.

After all, with Larry's past, this was nothing but a mere child's play. Within minutes, the four assassins collapsed to the ground, clutching their broken arms or legs and wailing in agony.

Larry calmly straightened his shirt that had been messed up in the fight and walked away as if nothing had happened. With huge strides, he made his way towards Joan.

"Freeze! Don't move!"

Just as the three of them thought it was over, an icy voice rang out. Larry turned his head slowly towards the direction of the voice. The assassin that Caspian had kicked to the ground had climbed up from his fall and was standing with a gun in his hand, aiming it at Larry.

"You better stay still, or even I wouldn't know what might happen." The assassin bared his teeth as he looked at Larry, his finger fixated on the trigger. Seeing his mates sprawling on the floor, anger, and resentment coursed through his veins as he wanted nothing more than to shoot Larry to death.

"You shouldn't be rash either. If the gun goes off, it'll be over for you too," replied Larry slowly with no hint of fear in his voice.

"Silence! Don't think for a second that I wouldn't kill you, even if it means being

decapitated!” roared the assassin ferociously. Larry’s nonchalance seemed to be an insult to his pride.

“Is that so? Well then, go ahead!” Larry gave a dry laugh as he pointed to his own chest.

“Come on. Shoot me here, and you would be free.”

Larry smirked, inching closer to the assassin with each word he spoke.

“Don’t come any closer! Or I’m really going to shoot!”

Consumed by rage, the assassin glared intently at Larry. His fingers flexed as he slowly began to pull the trigger.

Just then, a hand appeared and snatched the gun out of his grasp.

It was Caspian! The bodyguard had begun sneaking behind the assassin the second he saw

the gun. Seeing Caspian’s movement, Larry quickly caught on and provoked the assassin as a distraction.

Bang!

The deafening sound of the gunshot reverberated throughout the dark of night.

As the gun was being snatched away, the assassin still pulled the trigger. Caspian sucked in a deep breath before swinging a heavy fist at the back of the assassin’s

head. The latter fell to the ground, unconscious.

As the danger resolved, Caspian slowly lowered himself to the ground, clutching his stomach.

“Caspian, are you alright?”

Joan, who had been standing at the side the entire time, hurried towards Caspian. Larry

followed closely behind her, his eyes filled with worry and concern.

“It’s alright, I’m fine. The bullet had merely grazed my stomach.”

Caspian grinned good-naturally at Joan and Larry.

“Good. That’s good.”

Joan let go of a breath she didn’t know she was holding as she felt an invisible weight lifted off her shoulders.

“Roll up your shirt. Let me take a look,” ordered Larry sternly with a blank expression.

Seeing Larry's cold look, Caspian immediately rolled up his shirt, keeping a wary eye at Larry

like a helpless mouse being cornered by a cat.

Larry looked at the wound and frowned slightly. Caspian was right about the bullet not

penetrating into his stomach, but Larry wouldn't say Caspian was "grazed" either. A wound

about a few inches long was strewn across Caspian's stomach, causing warm blood to trickle

down slowly.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1545

"How many times do I have to tell you? You must be quick and precise when it comes to

dealing with enemies! Any form of mercy for the enemy is cruelty to yourself! If you had

given in your all since the beginning, you wouldn't have been shot!" thundered Larry.

Needless to say, Caspian's injury did not sit well with him.

Caspian lowered his head as Larry continued to yell at him like a kid being punished, not

saying anything to retaliate.

"Oh Larry, stop scolding Caspian. If it wasn't for him, we could have still been held hostage

at gunpoint!" Joan interrupted, unable to withstand Larry's unfair lectures at Caspian any

further.

"If he hadn't underestimated the enemy, he wouldn't be in this position!

He can't even carry

out such a simple thing with perfection, how more stupid can he be?"

Larry did not stop ranting, refusing to drop the subject. However, it was Joan who didn't

realize the pain behind his anger.

"But..."

Joan opened her mouth to refute but was interrupted by Caspian.

"Thank you for defending me Ma'am, but Boss was right. It's all my fault. I had

underestimated the enemy. I apologize, Boss."

Hearing Caspian's apology, Larry softened his gaze and stopped reprimanding him.

"Stay here, I'll go grab the first aid kit in the car."

Though he spoke in a disapproving tone, even Joan could hear the concern in Larry's voice this time.

As Larry brisk walked to the car, a lump formed in Caspian's throat as he sniffed.

Boss really is still the same person from years ago. He hasn't changed a bit, still the same

strict and serious boss that'll lose his temper over something trivial.

Even so, Caspian knew that none of their best mates would blame Larry for that, because

everyone knows Larry cared for them the most, even when he never showed it. After all,

Larry being stern with them was for their lives' sake!

Reminiscing those years together, Caspian sighed, overcome with mixed emotions.

Those fervent years were in the past. A lot of their friends were no longer in contact with

each other. Nevertheless, whenever Caspian recounted those memories, the familiar sense

of passion would course through his veins. Their brotherhood would always be permanently

etched upon his bones, and nothing could change that.

Caspian's eyes began to redden. Joan was deeply moved by the picture as she kept looking

back and forth between Caspian and Larry. Their deep care for each other—surpassing all

relations between an employer and an employee—was plain for all to see.

Although Joan could not and could never fully understand the true definition of

brotherhood, she had no doubt that those two would trust each other with their lives, even

to the point of sacrificing oneself.

"Caspian, what exactly is your relationship with Larry? Why do you address him as Boss?"

Joan couldn't help but ask. The more she couldn't understand, the more she wanted to

know.

"Boss... is Boss!" laughed Caspian. "He's my boss, always has been and always will be!" A

genuine grin appeared on his face.

Joan was taken aback slightly. Normally, Caspian would show the emotions of a brick wall.

Even if Larry were to put him in a difficult position, Caspian would still remain his calm and collected self. Before that day, Joan would have never suspected Caspian of being capable of smiling.

But now, seeing Caspian grinning only did Joan realize the big heart underneath all those muscles. I guess appearances really are deceiving.

“But... what’s your relationship with him?”

Refusing to drop the matter, Joan continued to press Caspian for more information.

“An employer-employee relationship. He’s my boss after all. Other than that... I won’t tell you.”

No matter how hard Joan tried to sway him, Caspian still kept his lips sealed.

“Fine, don’t tell me. I don’t want to know anymore,” mumbled Joan, pursing her lips since she did not get the answer she wanted.

As Joan huffed in annoyance, a cheeky idea struck her. Since you won’t let me know, don’t blame me for teasing you. She smirked playfully before turning to look at Caspian. “You two... can’t possibly be in that kind of relationship, right?”

“What kind of relationship?”

Caspian was dumbfounded. Could she have guessed it already? That’s impossible! Ma’am shouldn’t be smart enough to figure it out!

“Did you use to dine and sleep together?” Joan widened her eyes, feigning innocence as she tried to suppress her laughter.

“Well, yes. We would dine and sleep together. We would even shower together at times,” answered Caspian truthfully, oblivious to Joan’s intentions.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1546

“Then did you feel a deep emotional connection with each other, and hope that you’ll be

together forever?" continued Joan.

"Of course! I would lay down my life for Boss! And admittedly, I did hope that we'd be together forever."

Too bad those days won't ever happen again. Caspian looked down on the ground and sighed wistfully at that thought.

"I can't believe this! I would have never expected you to be this type of person!" gasped

Joan before glaring at Caspian. "I'm warning you, Larry already has a fiancée, so don't even think about it!"

What? What does this have anything to do with what we were saying?

Caspian was utterly baffled and confused.

However, he caught on immediately the second he noticed the sly smile on Joan's face.

"That was not what I meant. Don't misunderstand me, I do not swing that way. I don't like

Boss at all!" Caspian quickly explained with a straight face, clearly not amused at Joan's little joke.

"Hahahahaha..."

Joan broke into a peal of hysterical laughter, clutching her stomach as it was starting to ache for laughing so hard.

"What were you guys talking about? You sure are in a good mood." Larry smiled as he asked

Joan. He was returning from the car with the first aid kit in his hand when he heard Joan's

magnetic and irresistible laughter. He then turned his head towards Caspian and shot him a

glare, "Also, what do you mean, you don't like me at all?"

"I-I didn't mean that I don't like you! Wait, no... I don't like you! I mean-" stuttered Caspian

before sighing heavily, not knowing how to explain the situation. With misery written all

over his face, Caspian shot a pleading look at Joan.

"Ahahahaha..." Joan laughed harder at Caspian's loss for words.

"I-"

Caspian opened his mouth to speak but was interrupted by Larry. "Shut up. Roll up your shirt again. Let me deal with your wound first," ordered Larry.

Caspian instantly snapped his mouth shut and obediently rolled up his shirt, not daring to defy Larry's instructions.

Larry stopped speaking as well, concentrating as he wrapped up Caspian's wound.

He was surprisingly good at it. Within minutes, Larry had completely secured Caspian's wound with bandages.

Seeing Larry's skilled movements as he treated the wound nonchalantly, Joan became more perplexed and curious at Larry's past.

At that moment, she made a decision to ask Larry about his past some other time.

Once he was done treating Caspian's wound, Larry began to inspect the assassins lying on the ground, either wounded or unconscious, and called the local police. Soon, numerous cops arrived at their location, arresting all the assassins. Larry, Joan, and Caspian were also brought to the police station for investigation purposes.

Before long, the three left the police station after a careful inspection for hidden wounds.

"Larry, what do you think will happen to those people?" inquired Joan curiously.

"Well, those people have a lot of blood on their hands and were probably involved in many other crimes. They just kept their identities hidden to prevent getting caught. Now that justice is served, they'll most likely be facing a death sentence," answered Larry in a calm manner.

"So that means we've done some good to the world!"

Joan clapped her hands excitedly. All traces of the panic and fear she had felt earlier vanished into thin air.

"Mm-hmm. If people like such are caught, it would mean the end for them." Holding Joan

by her hand, Larry led her to the car. "Come on, let's head back to the hotel."

The three of them got into Caspian's car. Even though Larry and Joan did not drive during

their vacation, Caspian still had his duties as a personal bodyguard.

Therefore, Caspian

needed to follow them wherever they go, hiding in a car to not interrupt the couple.

Sigh... it sure isn't easy being a bodyguard. Caspian thought bitterly to himself.

In reality, however, Larry did not require Caspian to be by his side twenty-four seven. He

would only ask Caspian to help carry out certain tasks if needed or when trouble arose.

Most of the time, Caspian could do whatever he liked.

The "bodyguard" title was in fact just a cover. In truth, Caspian is Larry's most trusted friend,

a brother in arms.

As the three returned to the hotel, Larry coaxed Joan to rest while he and Caspian discussed

the events of the night.

"Boss, regarding what happened just now, do you have any leads on who was behind it?"

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"Not yet," mused Larry. "Whoever was behind the assault wanted to harm us, yet at the

same time not wanting us to be dead. Clearly, they're afraid of being dragged into this

matter if we did die."

This would mean whoever was behind the attack would benefit from my injury. If I were to

lose an arm and had to be admitted to the hospital for some time, the administrations of

Norton Corporation would be all over the place. If so, who would benefit from it?

The wheels in Larry's brain kept turning as he went through the names in his memory,

eliminating those he believed to be innocent. In the end, he zeroed in on the most likely

suspects.

The Wards or the Johnsons!

The more Larry thought about it, the more possible it seemed to be true.

In fact, he was

almost convinced that it was them behind the events that night.

“They really don’t know what’s best for them, do they?” murmured

Larry softly to himself.

Ever since Carl Johnson and Gabriella Ward plotted against him and Joan, Norton

Corporation had suppressed the Wards and the Johnsons, causing both families to struggle

as they tried to stay afloat.

Nonetheless, it had never crossed Larry’s mind to kill or harm anyone.

He just intended for

them to suffer for a while so that they would repent.

However, perhaps the two families did not agree.

If I were hurt and Norton Corporation be thrown into chaos, they would have the

opportunity to take a breather and start afresh. Perhaps that was why they had planned the

assault.

Although that was a very likely theory, it was still a lot of guesswork.

Without solid proof,

Larry would never act hastily.

“Caspian, I’m going to need your help again. Help me investigate the recent movements of

the Wards and the Johnsons. Moreover, I also suspect that Gabriella and Carl were behind

this,” instructed Larry.

He paused for a second before continuing, “But this might not be an easy task. Since they

had hired assassins, their identities would most likely be concealed.

What happened today

was intended to be a secret mission. As for how you are to carry out the investigation, I’ll

leave that to you.”

“No worries Boss, I’ll take care of it,” declared Caspian as he patted his chest in confidence.

“Good. Give out the orders to everyone. Don’t do everything on your own since you’re

injured. Leave the hands-on investigation to the men,” advised Larry.

“Yes, Boss!” replied Caspian respectfully. The two continued to chat for a little while more before retreating to their own rooms.

Norton Corporation was a powerful corporation with many connections. Along with the fact that Caspian had been known for his efficiency, it was no surprise when Caspian showed up at Larry’s room first thing in the morning to present what he had uncovered.

“Morning, Boss. We haven’t gotten any solid proof, but we did find a lot of clues. Two days ago, Carl Johnson and Gabriella Ward met up in a restaurant. They seemed to be discussing something rather mysteriously, but no one caught what they were talking about. After Gabriella went back, she had used the forces of the Ward family to find out about your whereabouts.”

Caspian paused and flip a page of his notes before continuing, “We got this information from the Wards. Even Landon Ward had no idea what Gabriella was up to, so it’s safe to say the Wards have nothing to do with last night, and only Gabriella Ward is responsible,”

remarked Caspian. “Other than that, we’ve discovered that Gabriella Ward had transferred a sum of two million to Carl Johnson, and Johnson had immediately transferred the money to another unknown account,” announced Caspian before continuing, “All these events happened the day before the incident.”

Caspian looked up at Larry and tucked away his note. “One more thing. Carl Johnson had been seen asking about the details on hiring assassins when he was drinking with a bunch of thugs in a bar. That’s all we have so far.”

With that being said, Caspian fell silent as he waited for Larry to speak. “That’s enough for us to safely conclude that it was Carl Johnson and Gabriella Ward who

were responsible for this. On one hand, they probably hate us for ruining their reputation and therefore wanted to seek revenge. On the other hand, they would have wanted for me to be injured so their families can benefit from my absence.” Larry placed his hands on his chin as he expressed his thoughts.

“If I were injured, some weight would be lifted from their households. I might even let them off the hook. And they thought that everything was carefully planned out. Hah!” Larry scoffed. “They’ve truly underestimated the power of Norton Corporation.”

Larry analyzed the clues given by Caspian. He was now certain that the assault was planned by none other than Carl and Gabriella.

“So, what’s next, Boss?”

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After Larry had done speaking, Caspian immediately awaited the next order.

“Carl Johnson might not be powerful, but he is cunning, cruel, and malicious. I have no doubt that it was him who came up with the plan and convinced Gabriella to help him.

Gabriella probably agreed to do so as she caved in to the temptation,” commented Larry.

No matter what, both of them should be severely punished. I have been kind enough, but not anymore.

“Since you two love planning in the dark, let me show you what darkness really means.”

Larry sneered before looking at Caspian.

He then leaned forward to whisper in Caspian’s ear. Caspian nodded profusely in response.

Reassuring Larry that he would get it done, Caspian turned and left.

As the sun set on the next day, Carl showed up in his usual bar once again, downing shots repeatedly.

He had received the news that the assassins he had hired to harm Larry and Joan not only

failed their mission but were thrown into prison.
Since he hadn't revealed his identity, Carl wasn't worried about the police coming for him.
Nevertheless, he still felt utterly disappointed and depressed.
After all, the plan that he had poured his heart and soul into had gone down the drain.
Gabriella, the riches of the Ward family, the dreams of being the heir of the Johnsons, and
all that he had hoped for once again slipped out from his grasps.
That thought alone was enough to dishearten Carl completely, which explained why he was
drowning himself with alcohol.
When he left the bar, Carl was thoroughly wasted. He could not even walk in a straight line
as he swayed with each step he took.
As usual, Carl stumbled through a secluded street.
Just then, a few men emerged from the shadows. They grabbed Carl, covering his mouth as
they dragged him into the darkest corner of the alley before tossing him onto the ground as
if he were a sack of grains.
Carl sobered up almost instantly. As he caught sight of the masked men cornering him,
terror pulsed through his veins.
"W-Who are you people? What do you want?" interrogated Carl at the top of his voice,
hoping to boost his own confidence and draw the attention of passerby at the same time.
"Who we are is none of your business, but the fact that you'll soon forever be bound to a
wheelchair sure is," a low voice spoke out among the shadows.
"No! You can't do this to me! Do you know who I am?"
Carl struggled in an attempt to escape, but the combination of fear and alcohol kept his
knees weak and his feet nailed to the ground.
"I'll pay you! As much as you want! Just please, don't hurt me!" begged Carl as he sobbed.
Tears and snot streamed down his face as panic took over his body.
"Whatever you say now would be of no use. It's your fault for messing with someone you

shouldn't mess with. You have no one to blame but yourself, so you might as well give up."

As he was speaking, the man in the middle gave a signal. Without missing a beat, the two men beside him grabbed Carl by his arms, lifting him up and pinning him to the wall, each on one side.

Carl understood immediately who had sent those men after him. In that instant, he knew it was over for him.

"No, please! Please, I was wrong, I'm sorry! Please let me go. I promise I will never... mff... mmmffff"

Before Carl could finish his sentence, the men stuffed a ball of cloth into his mouth, muffling his words.

"Ahhhh!"

Even with his mouth fully stuffed, Carl's still let out a full-fledged scream as excruciating pain shot through his body, his cries piercing through the silence of the alley.

The blood-curdling screech echoed through the streets and made the hair of a few passersby stand on end. They couldn't help but stop in their tracks, looking around with heightened senses before scurrying away, afraid to encounter anyone—or anything—they shouldn't.

Carl fell to the ground, unconscious. His breath uneven and rasp as he tried to hold on to the brink of his life. The men looked at each other and nodded before parting and disappearing once more into the shadows.

Only Carl was left in the suffocating darkness.

Not long after, police sirens blared across the alley as the police sealed off the area.

An ambulance reached the scene shortly after and the paramedics rushed the almost lifeless body to the hospital.

“Have you heard? Carl Johnson had been attacked last night near the bar he frequents. I

heard someone had broken his legs and severed his tendons. Looks like he would have to

use a wheelchair for the rest of his life from now on!”

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The incident quickly became the hottest gossip around town. It seemed to be the only thing

everybody was talking about the next morning.

“Carl Johnson? I’ve never heard of that name. Is he famous?” the other person asked.

“Carl Johnson might not be very famous, but you definitely would have heard about what he

has done. Remember the rumors regarding Mr. Norton and his fiancée, Joan Watts? That

was all Carl’s doing.”

“Oh, so that’s who he is. Please, that’s not fame, that’s notoriety. Even so, who would be so

heartless to sever the tendons of his legs? That seems a bit too cruel...”

“Who knows? He probably offended someone he can’t afford to cross.”

“Say, do you think it could have been Larry Norton, the president of Norton Corporation? I

mean, since Carl had framed him and his fiancée, it wouldn’t be a surprise if Mr. Norton had

hired someone to do it as revenge.”

“Shhh! Watch your tongue! You don’t want to offend anyone!”

That was how most of the conversations of the public went.

Unbeknownst to them, it really

was Larry that ordered Caspian to carry out the brutal retaliation.

Larry had asked Caspian to think of a fitting punishment for Carl, and that it would be best if

Carl could never cause trouble for others ever again. Thus, Caspian ordered his men to

sever the tendons of Carl’s legs. After Larry found out, he acquiesced.

Since Carl Johnson was cruel enough to hire assassins to detach one of his and Joan’s arms,

Larry had no reason to be merciful.

There were bound to be grey areas that would usually escape the sanction of the law.

Just like this one.

The night Carl had been taken to the hospital, the cops had already begun to investigate.

At first, they had considered the case as attempted murder and had conducted a series of investigations and interrogations, but the buzz soon subsided and things started returning to normal.

Once Carl was sent to the hospital, the surgeons had performed emergency surgery on him, preserving his life. However, as he did not receive immediate care after the incident, his severed tendons could not be rejoined, causing him to lose the ability to walk forever.

When the doctors broke the news to Carl, the latter was in denial. Once the doctors reaffirmed him of the grim news, Carl broke down and wept, devastated. As the saying goes, you reap what you sow. Carl finally accepted his fate as bad karma after all the evil he had done.

"It's done, Boss," announced Caspian respectfully as he entered Larry's room.

"All the clues and evidence of the incidence had been wiped out. Certain people had also been silenced. No one would ever know we were the ones behind the case."

"Good. Since people like Carl could not be apprehended by the law, we could only take care of him this way."

Larry nodded in satisfaction at Caspian. "Thank you for the trouble. Go get some rest. You deserve it."

Unexpectedly, Caspian remained in his position. "But Boss, what about Gabriella? That woman is just as cruel and wicked. Are we really not going to do anything about her?"

questioned Caspian in a cautious manner.

To Caspian, Gabriella Ward was just as vicious as Carl Johnson. If she weren't punished, it could lead to greater disasters.

“Gabriella...” Larry groaned. “As of now, I haven’t been able to think of a fitting punishment for her. Any suggestions?”

Every time Gabriella crossed his mind, Larry was sure to have a headache. Gabriella had crossed his bottom line so many times, yet Larry did not have any ideas on how he could teach her a lesson. If she were a man, Larry would certainly have her killed.

Too bad she’s a woman. As vile and vicious as she was, Larry wouldn’t lay a hand on a woman.

“Since you’re so conflicted, Boss, how about this?” interrupted Caspian as he saw the dilemma written on Larry’s face.

“Oh, you have an idea? Tell me.”

Not knowing what to do, Larry happily listened to Caspian’s suggestion.

“Gabriella Ward has repeatedly defamed you and Ma’am. Not only did she sabotage Ma’am numerous times before, she even worked together with Carl to have you and Ma’am

assassinated. If we don’t teach her a lesson, she could do something worse and potentially harm your loved ones. By then, you would be crying over spilled milk.”

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Larry nodded. He’s right, Gabriella was a ticking time bomb. It doesn’t matter if she hurt me,

but I’ll die in regret if she lays a finger on Joan.

Larry remained silent as he knew Caspian had more to say.

“Since she’s a fan of setting up traps for others, why don’t we give her a taste of her own

medicine? I’d reckon it’s the best punishment for her. Let’s set her up with something so

bad she wouldn’t be able to cause any more harm,” Caspian continued.

“Since she likes to plot against Ma’am with Carl, why don’t we lure them into sleeping with

one another and post the video clip on the Internet; she had used the same method to

frame Ma’am after all, and karma’s a b*tch.”

Although Cas's plan was fairly simple, it was undoubtedly the best punishment for someone like Gabriella.

Larry was satisfied with his plan as he quickly agreed. "Sounds good. Let's go with your plan.

It's time she got a taste of her own medicine."

The corners of Larry's mouth curled into a devilish smile.

That's what you get for hurting my loved ones.

Gabriella was roaming around in a mall on a fine day. She was not there on an errand run

nor did she buy anything, but merely wanted to relax.

She had heard the news regarding Carl's incident. He was seriously injured and became

disabled. Carl's news had served as a deterrent to Gabriella as she did not dare to do

anything that would harm others. Or else, she would become like Carl.

Hence, Gabriella stayed under the radar as she kept herself at home and did not think of

plotting against anyone. She was indeed traumatized by Carl's incident.

She knew for a fact that Larry was behind Carl's incident.

Gabriella could not sleep or eat well whenever she was reminded of the things she had done

to both Larry and Joan for the past few days. She was worried Larry would come after her to

avenge Joan.

However, Gabriella slowly realized no one intended to come after her after living in fear for

a few days. Thus, she decided to head to the mall to get some fresh air.

Gabriella continued to walk forward absent-mindedly as her mind drifted towards her future

plans.

I don't expect myself to marry Larry at this point. However, the Ward family's at risk of

falling apart. I'll instantly lose my glamorous life if that happens. What should I do when the

time comes? She thought to herself as she continued walking.

She did not realize she had walked into a secluded area where there was little to no human

traffic.

She quickly walked towards a crowded area when she came to her senses as remote areas often made her anxious.

When she was about to reach a crowded area, a hand appeared out of nowhere and slashed her on the neck.

Before she could register what was happening, Gabriella's vision went dark and she lost consciousness.

On the other hand, Carl had finally made peace with the fact that he could no longer walk after some time.

He stayed home throughout this period as he planned his next step. He always thought that he'd be safe as long as he was home, yet he was proven wrong.

He wanted to live a peaceful life for a short period on his own.

Hence, his father sent him to one of the Johnson family's manor to stay alongside two housemaids to take care of him.

This day, a few men in black forced their way into Carl's residence and made their way into his bedroom.

Carl was terrified when he saw the men as flashbacks of when his legs were seriously injured hit him. He looked at them in fear as he thought to himself. Why's this happening? I've just recovered slightly and yet something terrible had befallen me once again.

Before he could shout for help, the men rushed to his side as they knocked him

unconscious. Carl's vision went dark as he fell to the ground.

Moments later, he subconsciously touched his sore neck when he woke up. He looked up and suddenly realized that he was kidnapped.

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He studied his surroundings and noticed that he was in an abandoned warehouse.

Carl was extremely anxious as he tried to shout for help. However, all he heard was his own echo

that resounded within the warehouse.

He instantly gave up as he knew no one would come to his rescue at a deserted place like this.

Carl did not care about life and death after experiencing the previous incident.

Hence, he stopped shouting and waited in silence for the mysterious kidnaper to appear.

At this moment, he noticed someone lying beside him. He looked at the person closely and was stunned.

“Gabriella?” Carl murmured to himself.

He was in the dark as to what the kidnappers wanted to do with him.

Moments later, Gabriella slowly gained consciousness as she opened her eyes. She was equally

stunned when her eyes fell upon Carl.

Something clicked in her mind as she said angrily, “How dare you tried to kidnap me, Carl! Do you

have a death wish? And to think I was worried about you!”

Gabriella was very displeased. We are in the same boat. Yet, I can’t believe that you kidnapped me.

“Excuse me? Could you take a better look around?” Carl answered. “I was kidnapped too.”

Gabriella looked at him and the surroundings suspiciously and realized they were both tied up.

“This place,” she said as she continued to study the area.

“Why’s it so familiar?”

“Of course it was. It was the place where you kept Joan after you kidnapped her.” A voice said as

three muscular men appeared.

“Who’re you?” Gabriella asked in surprise as the men continued walking towards her.

Gabriella shuddered in fear when she heard those words.

“What do you want? Why’d you bring me here?”

The leader among the trio smiled coldly and he stared at her and said,

“Have you forgotten what you

have done to Joan? My plan’s simple. I would like to finish what you didn’t back then.”

The leader eyed Gabriella from top to bottom when he said those words. She shivered in fear when she caught sight of his stare.

Gabriella instantly understood the purpose of these men and who sent them.

“You guys- Were you sent by Larry?”

She panicked as she was reminded of the things she had done to Joan.

“I’d advise you not to mess with me. I’m the daughter of the Ward family. I’ll put you in jail if you lay a finger on me!”

If they fed me the drug like how I did to Joan, then...

“Ms. Gabriella, I have to say, I didn’t think you’d be so naive. You don’t even know who we are.

Even if you do, what can you possibly do? Do you have any proof? Well, don’t worry about that. We won’t leave a trace! Haha!”

The leader laughed triumphantly as his eyes were burned with vengeance.

“No! Please, I beg of you! Don’t do this!” Tears streamed down Gabriella’s cheeks as she pleaded in fear.

“Let me go! Please! I can pay you as long as you let me go! Just name the price!”

“Money? Are you trying to bribe us as you did with the assassins?”

“Well, sorry to disappoint but we’re not in this for the money.” The leader let out a cold laugh.

“How’d you know I was responsible for that?”

How did they know that I paid for the assassins? I didn’t involve myself in any of the plans after.

“As the saying does, the day has eyes, the night has ears. What’s done by night appears by day.

Hence, you should have given it a second thought before you did all those nasty deeds. You deserved this, Ms. William.”

The trio smiled in satisfaction as the vicious woman in front of them would be punished very soon.

“Well, what goes around comes around! Let’s do this, boys!” he ordered.

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The two other men nodded as soon as their leader gave them the signal. They took out a

bottle of an aphrodisiac drug as they walked towards Gabriella with a malicious grin.

“No. Please, I beg of you! Let me go!” Gabriella begged for mercy. “I was wrong. Let me go, please! I promise I won’t do it again!”

The men ignored her pleas as they forcefully opened her mouth and dunked the drug into her mouth.

Retch....

Gabriella tried to resist them as they forced the drug into her mouth.

However, she could

not go against the strength of two men. Thus, she tried to spit out the drug but failed.

“Enjoy your moment while it lasts, Ms. William.”

The leader of the trio grinned widely, “Place the camera at a good angle and untie her before we leave!”

The two men untied her and placed the camera at a place where she could not reach.

Once they were done, the trio left them alone as they walked out of the warehouse and closed the door.

“Open up! Please!” Gabriella ran to the warehouse door as she shouted and slammed the door with her fist violently.

When the realization dawned that there was no point in doing so, she slowly sat on the

ground in despair. She curled herself into a ball and started to shiver.

Carl was watching the entire incident unfold before him coldly. His nerves were gone when

he understood the motives of the kidnapers. Instead, he felt a slight sense of excitement.

Who knew my dream would come true in such a way! I must say, fate is on my side. I can

regain the wealth and power that I once had as soon as I sleep with her. All I had to do now

was patiently wait for the drug to take its effect.

Gabriella, who was curled up in the corner, walked up to Carl after some time.

She felt her body burning up, especially her lower abdomen. It was so hot she thought she might melt away any second. She gradually lost consciousness and her mind was filled with lust.

She jumped on Carl as she began taking off her clothes. Then, she kissed him incessantly as her hands roamed freely across his body.

Gabriella's behavior immediately set off Carl's sexual desire as he had been waiting for this moment for a long time. In fact, his sexual desire was even stronger than hers.

The couple held each other tightly in their arms while the warehouse was filled with lustful desires and heavy breathing.

The leader of the trio was annoyed at the sound that was coming from the warehouse.

"Damn it! Both of you stay put! I need to get some fresh air. This job sucks!"

The leader took off his mask and it turned out to be Caspian.

Caspian groaned in annoyance as he knew he was the one who got himself into this.

I thought it'd be a thrilling job. Who knew it'd be such a pain in the ass.

"If we weren't doing this to punish Gabriella for the sake of Boss and Ma'am, I wouldn't have done such a thing!" Caspian muttered dissatisfiedly.

An hour later, Caspian was notified by his man that the deed was done.

Caspian quickly hurried over as soon as he heard the news.

When he got there, he saw Gabriella fully dressed as she stared at a distance blankly. She

must be feeling devastated and wanted to end her life. Caspian thought.

Whereas, Carl sat there calmly and seemed like he was deep in thought.

"Well, it seemed like the show's over. Hence, we'll be off now. Here are your phones. So do

contact someone to come get you." Caspian teased with his mask on.

Gabriella's eyes were filled with hatred as she clenched her teeth and cursed, "You won't get

away with this! I'll make you pay!"

"I understand how're you feeling. But, you can't blame us for this.

Hadn't you been doing

the same thing to others? Tell me, how does it feel to have a taste of your own medicine?"

Caspian gloated.

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"Ahh, before I forget, let me remind you both that the show isn't over! I hope you're excited for what comes next."

With that, Caspian and his men left.

She stared in their direction as tears streamed endlessly. Everything that's happened today

seemed like a nightmare. Unfortunately, it was one that I'll never wake up from.

"Carl, why didn't you stop me? You're such a jerk!" She screamed as she vented her anger towards him.

"Gabriella, I was doing you a favor! You wouldn't be able to get off if I didn't do so! Imagine

what would happen next? Please, Gabriella, try to understand from my perspective!" Carl

answered sincerely.

Gabriella was disgusted as she watched him said those words with a straight face.

"What? Did you forget that you acted even wilder than I was? Cut your gentleman crap with me. You'll only make me feel sick!"

Carl decided to change the topic and said, "Gabriella, let's talk about this matter in the

future. Don't worry, I'll take full responsibility for what has happened.

The most important

thing right now was to find a way to get out of here." He said anxiously.

"No sh*t, Sherlock! And I don't need you to take responsibility for me!"

She shot him a cold

glance and ignored him. She then picked up her phone and contacted the Ward family for help.

Carl also did the same as he called up his friend for help. Moments later, the Ward family

arrived at the warehouse and picked up Gabriella while Carl left with his friend.

Both Gabriella and Carl went home with different emotions as they knew that things weren't over yet.

Sure enough, a video titled daughter of the Ward family domineering the heir of the

Johnsons was uploaded to the Internet with millions of views.

Both Gabriella and Carl who stayed away from the public's eye had once again become the talk of the town in Marsingfill. Everyone was discussing this hot topic among one another.

The public was very interested in the video clip based on the number of views. Even when

the website was blocked, no one could seem to forget about it.

Gabriella also watched the video clip. She was very embarrassed when she saw how crazy and shameless she was.

What should I do now? How am I supposed to have a normal life now that this humiliating

clip is out? I am the daughter of the Ward family and was exposed to doing such a

shameless thing. I bet I'm a laughingstock to others now. She panicked.

Suddenly, she received a call from Carl.

A ball of fire burned within her when she saw the caller ID. She instantly answered the call

angrily.

"What do you want, Carl? I'm already in a miserable state, no thanks to you, Jerk!" Gabriella

shouted in agony.

I'm done for! My life's over!

"Gabriella, I didn't want this to happen as well. However, since it has happened, I promise to

take up the responsibility as a man. I love you. So, let's get married!"

Carl said passionately

as if he didn't care about her past.

"In your dreams, Carl! I'll never marry you even if it costs me my life! Get over it!" Gabriella

didn't appreciate Carl's affection towards her. Before Carl could say anything further, she

hung up on him.

Carl let out a cold laugh and said, "Stupid b*tch, what's with the attitude when I'm just trying to be nice to you. I'll make you pay once the time comes!" Carl was unfazed by Gabriella's rejection and attitude. You'll marry me in the end anyway because no one would want to marry a loose woman like you. I'll treat you the same way you did to me, just worse. Carl thought to himself.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1554

Once Gabriella hung up, she stared blankly at her phone for a long time. She was unsure of what to do.

Then, she suddenly remembered her father, Landon.

Yes, only he can help me now! He can use his power and prestige to minimize the negative

effect of this matter. Then I should go to a place where no one knows to start a new life! I

could marry a man as well as stop the bad deeds I have done in the past!

Yes, that's what I'll do! Gabriella quickly went to her father as soon as she made up her

mind. She believed he was the only one that could help her now.

When Gabriella arrived at Landon's study, she noticed that he was livid.

She burst into tears

and said, "Dad, please help me!"

Landon was drowned in anger when Gabriella came to him. He could not believe his ears

when his men told him that Gabriella was in trouble. He was unconvinced at first as

Gabriella was home all this while. Thus, it was unlikely that she would have caused trouble.

However, he was stunned when his men showed him the video clip.

He smashed the laptop onto the ground as his eyes were filled with rage.

Coincidentally, Gabriella came to him at that moment.

"Help you? How should I help you?"

Landon's emotion got the best of him when he saw Gabriella as he walked up to her and

slapped her.

Slap! A visible handprint was seen on Gabriella's cheek. Landon was still very furious when

he had slapped her and raised his hand again. However, he hesitated and stopped when he saw her crying with eyes filled with desperation.

“You rebellious girl! How could you have done such a thing! How am I supposed to help you?” Landon sighed heavily as his eyes were filled with despair.

“Dad, only you can help me! Please! I know you can settle this matter with the power of the Ward family. I promise I won’t cause trouble anymore!” Gabriella cried loudly.

She knew she had to cry a river so her father would choose to help her.

“Our family was already in a precarious state and now something scandalous like this happened. We were already on the verge of bankruptcy and now we’ve also lost our reputable name.”

Landon was in anguish when he said those words. The Ward family was a family of success, but now it was destroyed by the hands of his own daughter.

“There must be a way! There must be! Dad, please, think of something! Please help me.”

Gabriella observed Landon’s response closely and realized her only chance of saving herself

from the pit of fire was slipping away. She quickly grabbed his arm helplessly and she continued to beg.

“Well, there’s only one way to save the Ward family now.” Landon sighed as he looked at Gabriella uncomfortably.

“What is it, Dad? Tell me!” A glimmer of hope had appeared as she quickly urged.

“I’ll need your help, Gabriella. Only you can help the Ward family now.” He took a breath as if he had made his decision.

“Yes, of course. I’d do anything if it meant that I could help the Ward family. Anything, Dad!

Tell me!” Gabriella said repeatedly. She understood that she’d have hope only if the Ward family was in a stable condition.

“It’s simple. But you have to be prepared.”

Landon let out a sigh and continued, "I'll have to disown you. The Ward family's reputation would then be saved when you're no longer a member of this family. Similarly, the Ward family would have a second chance in rising again." Landon didn't dare meet Gabriella's eyes as he lowered his head in shame.

"What did you say, Dad?"

Gabriella was stunned as she did not expect that her father planned to disown her.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1555

"Gabriella, I really didn't want to do this. It's your fault that we're in this hot water. I can no longer protect you with the current situation of the Ward family."

Landon was heartbroken when he saw Gabriella's reaction. However, he had to do it for the sake of the Ward family.

"Dad, this isn't real, right? You're lying, aren't you! I'm your beloved daughter!" Gabriella's voice trembled. She looked at her father as her heart shattered into pieces.

"Gabriella, please forgive me. I really had no choice."

"I'll host a press conference tonight and announced that you're no longer a member of the Ward family. Hence, you should prepare yourself for it. Pack your things and leave the Ward family. I promised that I'll restore your name once everything's stable again."

Landon immediately left the study before Gabriella could respond. He could not bear to face her daughter's disappointment as he was afraid he might change his mind.

There's no room for error now. Another mistake might lead to the end of the Ward

family. Landon thought to himself as he stood in the hallway blankly. I thought Dad would help me get through this. Yet, who knew my most beloved father was the first to abandon me.

"No! This isn't real!" Gabriella shouted as her voice resounded through the entire

compound of the Ward family.

What kind of father and daughter relationship is this? Where did all the love and affection

go? It's nothing in comparison to the family interest!

"I hate you! I hate you all!"

On the same night, Landon held a press conference as he invited every media in town. He

decided to host an interview session to briefly speak about the recent economic crisis that

the Ward family were facing.

When one of the journalists asked how Landon intended to deal with Gabriella's scandal, he

announced shocking news. "After much consideration, I have decided to banish Gabriella

from the Ward family. She's no longer my daughter as well as a part of the Ward family. Her

words and actions do not represent the Ward family nor do we share any sort of

relationship!"

Nevertheless, Landon had used the cruelest way to banish Gabriella from the family.

There was a huge uproar among the community of Marsingfill as soon as the news was

released.

It was the first time in history that someone had publicly cut ties with their own daughter in

Marsingfill. The people of Marsingfill were busy discussing among themselves as many

different opinions surfaced. Some claimed that the Ward family was too cruel while others

agreed that Gabriella should be punished for all the terrible things she had done in the past.

Everyone had different opinions. However, the reputation of the Ward family was saved

after the press conference was held. Everyone had their focus solely fixated on Gabriella as

the Ward family was not involved.

A source claimed that someone saw Gabriella leaving the Ward family with a suitcase the

same night Landon broke the news. However, no one knew where she had gone to.

She was no stranger to the people in Marsingfill not only because of her renowned

background but her countless scandals as well. Finally, she was punished for her bad deeds

and disappeared from the public's sight.

Gabriella was now staying in a rented villa. Although she was driven out by the Ward family,

she still refused to admit that she was now on her own.

She still believed that she was the daughter of the Ward family. Thus, it was natural for her

to indulge in a luxurious life. She couldn't bring herself to rent a small place, but a villa

instead.

Gabriella's heart was filled with despair when Landon announced the news. It was a feeling

that no one would understand.

Forget it, what had been done cannot be undone now. But life goes on, so I shall make it

count. Besides, Dad did say he'll regain her identity once the Ward family's in a stable

condition. Hence, I'll look forward till that day comes.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1556

Gabriella had gotten used to the life of overspending. Even now, she had yet to get rid of

this habit of hers.

Even though Landon had given her a large amount of money before he left, she soon

almost finished spending it.

In the beginning, Gabriella had some savings left, but she had spent a substantial amount

hiring assassins with Carl and paying those people to keep things a secret.

Back then, Gabriella had spent all of her savings.

Now that she had none of Landon's money left, she had to figure out how she was going to

live without money.

She was too used to her carefree life; Gabriella did not even know how to do basic

housework, not to mention cooking for herself.

The moment she found herself stuck in this situation, the first thought Gabriella had was to seek her friends' help.

In the past, the proud Gabriella would have never asked for help, but now, things were different.

"Hey, Lulu? I'm Gabriella."

No longer the arrogant woman she was, Gabriella began chuckling when the call went through.

"Oh, it's Gabriella. How strange. Why would you think of calling me?" came the sarcastic voice from the other end of the line.

"I-I have a favor to ask. Don't worry, Lulu. I'll definitely return the favor in the future,"

Gabriella continued as if she had not heard the tone of the other woman.

"What is it? Speak your mind," Lulu muttered nonchalantly.

"Can you lend me some money? I'm really in need of some money now. I'll definitely return it to you in the future," Gabriella guaranteed.

"Borrowing money? This isn't like you, Ms. Ward. Aren't you a conceited girl in the past?

Didn't you always ignore everyone? Does the high and mighty Ms. Ward need to borrow

money from others now? Have you ever thought of a day like this when you were mocking

me back then? Let's put aside the fact that I won't ever lend you any money first. Even if I

did, how are you going to give the money back to me? Do you really think you're still the

beloved daughter of the Wards? Sober up. You're nothing now."

With a bitter look on her face, Gabriella awkwardly mumbled, "All right, then. Lulu, I'll be

getting out of your way now."

Gabriella swiftly ended the call, not wanting to endure the humiliation a second longer.

She had always been a proud individual. Even if she was now a down-and-out socialite, she

did not want to beg for anything from anyone.

However, she still needed help from others; she did not know what else to do.

Mustering her courage, Gabriella then made another call, “Jemma, I need your help with something. I was wondering if you can—”

“Lend you some money? Hahaha! I’m sorry, Gabriella. Lulu called me earlier, telling me that the dear Ms. Ward was asking if she could borrow money from her. I didn’t believe in her at the start, but now I do. Gabriella Ward, you brought this upon yourself. I won’t lend you the money. I’d rather throw them into the sea than to give them to an ingrate like you.”

With that said, Jemma ended the call.

“Kelsi, I’m a little short of money recently. Can you lend some to me? I’ll definitely give it back to you in a while. Trust me.”

“Gabriella, I know you’re in some difficult times now, but I really don’t have the money. I’ve used them all on plastic surgery. I’m sorry. Next time. When I have money in the future, I’ll definitely lend you some.”

“Thank you, Kelsi. I’ll end the call, then.” Gabriella ended the call.

How can she not have the money? She just doesn’t want to give it to me, the girl who’s no longer the rich daughter of the Wards.

A bitter smile crept upon Gabriella’s face. It was then she realized she had no true friends; they were all only interested in her status. Even if they put on a friendly demeanor when they interacted with her, Gabriella realized they must have despised her. Maybe I used to have real friends, Gabriella thought sullenly. But I chased them all away myself.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1557

Seeking help from her friends was no longer a viable option; no one would help her, the one who once looked down on them all. If she kept this up, she would only humiliate herself.

Left without a choice, Gabriella went to look for a job. While she had the educational qualifications, Gabriella did not have any working experience. Moreover, she had no talents of her own. As Landon's only daughter, Gabriella had always been the cherished daughter of the Wards. Everyone thought Gabriella would one day marry into a rich family; they never thought she would end up looking for a job of her own. Gabriella had no practical experience, and she could not even grasp the theories. All she had was a piece of paper to show others her educational qualifications. Hence, her job search was met with failure, again and again. It was until someone finally gave Gabriella a chance. Gabriella received a call from a company, telling her she had passed the first test. After discussing details with the company, she could then go to work. Gabriella was overjoyed. Never in her life would she have thought that there was a day she would be as thrilled as this to have found a job. Without hesitation, Gabriella went to the company. The one who greeted her was a pot-bellied, plump, and ugly man. The moment Gabriella sat down, the man's eyes lit up and nearly drooled. She was perplexed when she saw him. This isn't the one who interviewed me that day. However, she still politely queried, "May I know if you'll be the interviewer today?" The man froze before he hastily said, "That's right. I'm the interviewer for the day. However, you seemed quite well. You've passed. You can come to work starting tomorrow." "Really?" Gabriella was delighted to hear his words. Although she was uncomfortable with the way the man was staring at her, his words were pleasant to Gabriella's ears. When the man saw how excited she was, he, too, became excited. "It seems like this job is important to you," the man hummed. "That's right. It's very important to me," Gabriella said as she beamed.

With this job, I'll be able to pay for my bills as long as I save up.
The man continued, "Our company pays well, and there is a high monthly commission. Most importantly, it's easier than other jobs. As long as you're sensible, I'm sure you'll earn a lot."
"May I know what the job details are?" Gabriella eagerly asked.
She was still nervous. This was her first job and the start of her life.
"You'll be my secretary, and you'll be taking care of what I need in life."
A perverted grin then emerged on the man's face.
However, Gabriella did not understand the hidden meaning of his words. I know about secretaries, but why do they have to take care of his needs in life?
When she voiced the questions out loud, the man's grin grew wider.
"Let me teach you now, then. Learn to the best of your abilities, babe."
The man then came closer to Gabriella and began unbuckling his belt.
It was then Gabriella realized what was going on. This was not a job; the perverted man was interested in her and wanted her for himself.
"Come, babe. I'm ready. Don't you need money? I can give you lots and lots of money, as long as you're a sensible girl."
A lewd smile appeared on the man's face.
"I don't want this job anymore," Gabriella snapped. "I'm leaving now."
She thought she had finally gotten a good job; she had not anticipated that things would turn out this way.
"Don't go, babe. I can give you any amount of money you want, as long as you agree to my requests."
Right then, the man reached out to touch Gabriella's face, but the latter nimbly avoided it.
"I don't want your disgusting money! I just want a job. Keep your hands to yourself!"
Gabriella roared.
Shameless people like him sickened her.
"Let go! Let go of me right now!"
Gabriella tried her best to struggle out of his grasps, but her efforts were to no avail.
Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1558

Slap! Gabriella gave the man a hard slap.

“Have you no shame?”

Furious from Gabriella’s slap, the man raised his hand to return the slap.

The force of it sent

her falling toward the ground.

“Since you won’t appreciate my kindness, I’ll do it myself. It’s the same

at the end of the day,

anyway.”

The man then lifted Gabriella to place her on the office desk, about to

tear her clothes away.

“No! Don’t! Let go of me! Help!”

Gabriella flew into a panic. When she looked at the disgusting man who

nauseated her, she

felt as if she had been plunged straight into hell.

Gabriella flung her hands around in desperation, but she could fight

against the man’s

strength. Right as desolation was about to overtake her heart, she

abruptly touched

something solid. It was an ashtray.

Suddenly finding strength in her arms, Gabriella then smashed the

ashtray onto the man’s

head.

“Ah!”

With a shriek, the man collapsed onto the ground with his hands holding

onto his head.

Gabriella stared at the man in agony for a few moments. Blood was

gushing past his fingers

and down his face. She was terrified. It took her a few moments before

she recollected

herself enough to think about escaping. The moment she did, she

stumbled her way out of

the office.

The entire way back to her rented villa, Gabriella could hear her rapid

heartbeats in her ear.

Only when she stepped into the safety of her house, then could she

finally calm down.

Recalling what had just happened, she thought, That man should be fine.

He’s only bleeding

badly because it’s a head wound. His life won’t be in any danger. With

those thoughts,

Gabriella's heart returned to her chest from her throat. However, she still had not found a job yet. She was a talentless person in this complicated and tough society; she was worse than an ordinary person. It seemed like selling her looks was the only way for her to make a living. However, Gabriella's ego refused to let her do that. No matter what happened, she was once the daughter of the Wards; she would not let herself become the plaything of others. As she grabbed her head in frustration, Gabriella realized she could not do anything. She was trapped between choosing between life and dignity. Just as she was stuck in a dilemma, Carl called. When she saw the familiar number, Gabriella accepted the call, wanting to find out what else he had to say to her. "Gabriella, I'm Carl. How are you?" came Carl's concerned voice. Somehow, his words made Gabriella tear up. She could not believe that Carl would be the one who would voice words of concern to her at her most upsetting moment. "I'm fine, Carl. What's the matter?" Gabriella inquired with faked tranquility. Despite her calm tone, thousands of thoughts were flashing past her mind. "Gabriella, stop lying. I know life is horrible for you now. I'm really upset that this has happened to you. I love you so much to the point my heart breaks when I see you sad. I wanted to court you when you were still the esteemed daughter of the Wards, but I didn't have the courage to. You were like the sun, and a peasant like me could never be a match for you. But, Gabriella, you didn't understand what my feelings for you were back then. You didn't know whether or not my feelings for you were sincere. I'm sure you know now, don't you? I love you. Please accept me!"

Carl's voice was so earnest, and it was as if he was going to show her his heart just to convince her.

"What do you mean?"

Carl's words moved Gabriella. She was in the darkest moment of her life, and his words were like glowing fireflies, lighting up her heart.

"What I mean is, Gabriella, marry me. I can understand why you won't accept me when you were in your prime moments. After all, you were brilliant back then. However, in times like these, I hope you can accept me so that I can take care of you. I don't want to see you suffer anymore."

When he heard Gabriella wavering, he decided to win her heart over once and for all.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1559

"Will you still accept me? I'm no longer the great princess. Now, I'm even worse than an average person. I can't even do housework. Will you still think of me as someone great?"

Gabriella's voice was trembling. Carl's words made tears brimmed in her eyes.

Adoration filled Carl's voice as he pleaded, "I will. The one I love is you and not your identity as the Wards' daughter. You might not have believed it back then, but I'm sure you do now.

Gabriella, marry me!"

As she listened to Carl's proposal, tears finally escaped Gabriella's eyes and streamed down her cheeks.

She never thought Carl, the one she once looked down on and detested, would choose to

propose to her when she was at the hardest time of her life. I've always misunderstood him.

He really does love me.

A warm sensation seeped into her heart at that thought. Although he was not excellent—he was even disabled now—what Gabriella needed now was a family who could protect her

and a man who would worry about her.

Right as she was about to speak, Carl continued, "Gabriella, I know I'm not good enough for you. I lost the use of my legs because of some things in the past, and I really am not worthy of you. But still, I hope you can accept me. Please consider it, Gabriella. If you want me, I'll come and pick you up at your place tomorrow. Let's go back to my house. Let's go back to a place where you'll be loved."

"I don't need to consider it. I do. I'll come with you!"

By then, Gabriella was already sobbing, her defenses having broken down by Carl.

Carl could give her everything she wanted. Why would she not say yes to him?

"That's great, Gabriella. I'm so happy. I didn't think you'll accept me; I thought you were going to reject me without hesitating."

The joy was audible in Carl's voice. It was a day he had been waiting for long.

"How can I? I'm glad that you don't think I'm a burden now."

Gabriella heaved a heavy sigh. After experiencing so many things, she realized she had

changed the way she saw things.

She was no longer the vain and prideful Gabriella. Now, she was just an ordinary woman

who craved a blissful, stable life.

"Gabriella, prepare yourself, then. I'll be picking you up from your place tomorrow. We'll go

to the Johnsons before we discuss further marriage," Carl said to her.

"Okay. I'll pack up and wait for you," Gabriella cooed.

I'm going to finally have a family of my own and a man who loves and will protect me. We'll

have a happy life ahead of us.

Blissful fantasies began filling Gabriella's mind. For a moment, she felt as if her happily-ever-after was standing right in front of her.

Meanwhile, after Carl ended the call, the smile on his face dropped.

"Gabriella, you've finally stopped rejecting me. However, do you really think I have those

feelings for you? You're only my plaything. Once we're married, I'll pay back a thousand times the humiliation you forced me to endure."

Once Carl had achieved his aim, he took off his sheep's clothing and bared his fangs. He still loved Gabriella, but it was no longer the same love as the love he used to have.

In the past, she was the goddess he could never have. Although he wanted her, he knew it was an impossible dream of his.

It was no longer the same. Carl only wanted her body now. He only craved the excitement of dragging a goddess down the pedestal and turn her into a mortal like him; he only wanted to take revenge on Gabriella for looking down on him and humiliating him.

That night, Gabriella contacted the owner of the villa to get a refund on her rental. After

packing all of her things, she quietly waited for Carl to come.

The next morning, Carl arrived as promised.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1560

"Gabriella, I'm here."

Carl had dressed himself up that day. He was wearing a suit, and there was a polite smile on his face. To Gabriella, he even looked handsome.

Once upon a time, Gabriella detested him and wished he would never appear in her line of sight. Now, not only did Gabriella not find Carl detestable, but she even found herself starting to like him.

When Carl saw her, he could not help but say, "You're beautiful, Gabriella."

He had to admit that Gabriella was born with pretty features. Now, she no longer wore expensive clothes nor put on heavy makeup.

However, without those, she was still beautiful. For a moment, Carl was lost in a daze staring at her.

What kind of thrill will I feel when I have a pretty woman like her under me?

As that thought surfaced in his mind, various fantasies came along with it. Even Carl's desire was crying out for her.

To avoid her noticing it, he swiftly took in a deep breath to tamp it down.

Carl's praises made Gabriella shy. She quickly lowered her head, not daring to look at him in anxiety.

"Gabriella, have you prepared your things?" he asked as he continued staring at her.

"Yes. I've packed everything, so we can leave anytime," Gabriella murmured.

"Okay, then. Let's go. Let's go to the Johnsons' place; back to our home," Carl said with a smile.

Back to our home?

Carl's words made Gabriella's face flush red.

I finally have a home. A place where I won't be hurt; a place where I can let my guard down, was what Gabriella naively thought.

After asking someone to place all of Gabriella's luggage into the car, Carl said, "Let's go home, Gabriella."

With that said, the people then lifted Carl into the car.

At that, Gabriella hurriedly entered the car. The two then headed to the Johnsons' place.

"Caspian, what's your relationship with Larry?" Joan could not help but ask.

After the earlier assassination attempt, Joan had clung to Caspian, hoping to find out more about Larry from Caspian. However, Caspian was good at keeping secrets; he revealed nothing to Joan.

"Stop asking. No matter what you do, I won't say anything."

Caspian tried to escape, but Joan was swift to grab his sleeve.

"Just say something! I really want to know. Can't you just give me a little tidbit?" Joan

whined as she tugged on Caspian's arm.

Unfortunately, no matter how insistent she was, Caspian refused to tell her anything about

Larry. It made her frustrated.

“Ma’am, Boss has told me not to reveal any of his past to you, or else he’s going to break my legs. Let me off the hook! I’m still young; I don’t want to die now!” Caspian cried out.

However, Joan was as clingy as bubblegums. No matter what he did, he could not get rid of her. Most importantly, she was someone he could not lay a finger on. If she were someone else, Caspian would have kicked her away in seconds. However, this was Joan. If he dared to do anything to her, he would be sent straight to his maker.

“Fine.”

Deflated, Joan finally stopped asking after multiple failed attempts to obtain any information from him.

“Hmph! I’ll ask Larry myself,” she huffed as she headed toward Larry’s study instead.

Staring at her retreating figure, Caspian breathed a sigh of relief. If she had continued questioning him, he would have gone mad eventually.

Now that Joan was off to pester Larry instead, Caspian fled the scene in joy.

Upon reaching the study, Joan spotted Larry, who was buried in his work.

After deciding that it was best for her not to interrupt the man focused on his work, Joan sat

down beside him quietly. Then, she gazed at his perfect side profile.

As she stared at him, her thoughts drifted.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1561

“What’s the matter? Is there something on my face?”

Larry’s voice startled her out of her thoughts, and when she looked up, their eyes met.

“No. I was just thinking of something,” Joan replied with a smile. “Are you done with work? If you’re not, you can continue. I have nothing to do, so I’m fine with just sitting here.”

She knew Larry was busy with his work, so she was understanding. Joan never insisted on

Larry to spend more time on her, nor did she interrupt him while he was working.

Staring at him, Joan thought, is more than enough for me.

"I'm done. I was dealing with the Wards' matter earlier," Larry calmly said.

However, his gaze was fixed on Joan, as if he could not get enough of seeing her.

"The Wards? What is it?" Joan queried.

She knew about Gabriella's incident. Although Gabriella now had a terrible life, Joan could

not find it in herself to feel pity for her.

What goes around comes around.

For her not to hate Gabriella nor make her life difficult was already an act too kind from

Joan. After all, what the former had done to Larry and her was almost unforgivable.

"Landon Ward called last night, asking for our forgiveness," Larry continued. "He said this is

all Gabriella's fault and that he had lost his mind back then because of her words. Now, he

knows that he's in the wrong, and he's hoping that we can forgive him.

Also, he said he'll be

compensating for our loss."

"I see," Joan muttered with a nod. "If this was all Gabriella's fault, should we forgive the

Ward family then? They're already having a hard enough time."

Joan knew what the Norton Corporation was doing to the Ward family.

Nevertheless, she did not think that there was anything wrong with what the Norton

Corporation was doing. Since the other party was the one to provoke them, Joan thought it

was normal for them to punish them in return.

Now that the Wards were offering their apologies, Joan's kind heart revealed itself; she

immediately began putting in a good word for them.

After all, Gabriella was already disowned by the Wards, and the Wards had paid a large price

for their mistake.

"Yes, I think so too. The Wards weren't really the ones who made the mistake, and I don't

plan to drive them to the edge of the cliff. I'm actually quite satisfied with how the Wards had dealt with the matter. Well, then. Let's let the Wards off the hook now," Larry stated with a nod.

Promptly, he called to tell his subordinates to stop targeting the Ward Group and let them do as they pleased from then on.

"What? What do you mean by someone is here to discuss a business deal with us? Who's that brave individual? Didn't the Norton family get rid of all our business partners?" Landon whispered in disbelief as he sat in his office.

"Mr. Ward, it's true. It isn't just one; several companies are contacting our company, hoping to collaborate with us," the general manager of Ward Group assured Landon.

"Why? What happened?"

Landon would never believe that the companies would look for theirs without a good reason. Something must have happened.

However, no matter how hard Landon mulled over it, he came up with no answers.

"Norton Corporation has accepted our apology and stopped targeting us. That's why various companies are hoping to collaborate with us again," the general manager explained.

"That's great news! God is really still on our side!"

Landon threw his head back to laugh boisterously. The Ward Group had been stuck on the verge of death for what seemed like eons, and Landon had done everything to save the Ward family. In fact, he even used his savings to salvage the family and the company.

Right as despair was about to overwhelm him, good news arrived.

The Wards were finally going to get better.

But the daughter I love...

Landon sighed. Guilt surged in his chest whenever he thought about his daughter.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1562

A peaceful moment finally came to the lively Marsingfill. As always, Norton Corporation was the leading company in the city. Both Larry and Joan had a sweet and peaceful life. At the same time, Ward Group slowly returned to its original stability.

As Larry did not plan to settle the score with the Johnson family, they remained the same.

The only change they had was that a new member joined them.

That day, Gabriella engaged Carl.

The Johnsons were no prominent family, but the engagement ceremony was still a vibrant

one where many friends and family came to witness the event.

At the end of the day, Gabriella and Carl became a family despite their complicated past.

With everybody's blessing, the two exchanged rings. From then on, Gabriella was Carl's fiancée.

"We'll have a good future," Gabriella mumbled to herself as hope filled her eyes.

She wanted to have a peaceful and blissful life from then on; she was tired of setting people up and getting set up.

If Carl could read Gabriella's mind, he would have laughed at her for being too naive.

You've hurt me so many times. Now, you're the fish on my chopping board.

Gabriella, Gabriella. This is only the start of your living hell.

The bright smile on Carl's face concealed the cruel look that flitted across his eyes.

Half a month after the engagement, the two then held a wedding.

The guests at the wedding were all relatives and friends of the Johnsons.

There was no way

Gabriella's family members could attend her wedding, and she had no genuine friends of

her own. Even the bridesmaids were friends of Carl.

As Gabriella walked down the red carpet in a white dress, a radiant smile was on her face.

This was the first time she wore a wedding dress, and it would be her last.

Like all women, she looked forward to her bright future. That day, Gabriella became Carl's wife.

That was also the day her miserable life in the Johnson family began.

On the next day after their wedding.

Gabriella slowly woke. When she looked at Carl, who was still sleeping, she wondered if she

was dreaming. Everything seemed surreal.

She then leaned closer into Carl's arms. That was the only way she would feel a sense of

security.

Sensing movement by his side, Carl woke. When he saw Gabriella in his arms, he smiled.

"Dear, were you happy last night?"

When he thought about the maniacal activity they engaged in the previous night, Carl's

breathing turned heavy.

His words made Gabriella blush. She, too, recalled her desperate actions last night.

Promptly lowering her head, she shyly said, "How can you ask me in that way?"

"So, were you happy?"

Carl's smile widened. It seemed like he was adamant about finding out what her answer was.

"Yes," came her reply after a moment of hesitation.

At the same time, she nodded as a blush crept to the tips of her ears.

When Carl looked at the woman in front of him, a victorious sense filled his heart.

She was once the goddess he could never get, but now, she was looking meek in front of

him. It inflated his ego.

Turning around to pin her under him, he then roughly kissed Gabriella.

Once again, the two

engaged in vigorous activity.

After that, Gabriella leaned on Carl's chest. Carl had been rough with her, and her lips were

swollen.

Even a while after that, her body still ached. There was no trace of gentleness as he

previously promised. Instead, it felt as if he had been vengeful.

Instead of dwelling on that thought, Gabriella asked, “Carl, do you love me?”

“Do you want to hear the truth?”

Carl smiled, but there was a hint of something else in that smile.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1563

“Of course I want to hear the truth.”

Quietly, she lay in his arms, waiting for him to whisper sweet nothings to her.

“The truth is,” came Carl’s abruptly loud voice. “I’ve never loved you.

Not before, and

certainly not in the future.”

Finally, on that day, Carl revealed his true self.

Gabriella froze for a second. Then, she whined, “I’m serious. Stop joking.”

“I’m serious too. Look at me.”

Staring into her eyes, Carl enunciated, “I have never loved you.”

When Gabriella saw the hatred and malice in his eyes, her eyes widened in disbelief.

“Why? Why don’t you love me? Why did you marry me then?” Gabriella mumbled to herself.

She could not bring herself to believe in his words at all.

“At the start, I only loved you for your body. I wanted to find out what it felt like to have an

arrogant woman like you under me. Most importantly, I want to get the Wards’ assets, and

that’s why I want to become the Wards’ son-in-law. You’re the only and beloved daughter

of the Wards, why won’t your father give me all of your family’s assets?

But who knew

everything would go wrong? Not only did the Wards nearly go bankrupt, but that old man

Landon even kicked you out of the Ward family. My dreams are dashed, but it’s fine. This

way, I can win you over easier and make you my plaything. Honestly, I wanted to spoil you

and give you a good life in the beginning, but the way you looked down at me hurt my

dignity. Therefore, I want to take revenge on you, and I want to make sure you can’t escape

it. That’s why I married you.”

Carl was smug, for he had achieved his goal.

“Why? I’m already in this state. Why won’t you let me off?” Gabriella muttered.

Carl’s words were a sharp knife that stabbed repeatedly in her heart; it shredded her heart, which had just begun beating again.

“Why? You deserve this!”

Carl’s face was twisted in anger. “If you didn’t do all those horrible things, why would this

happen to you? I don’t even have my legs anymore, but this is such a light punishment for

you. You should feel grateful for this. However, this punishment of yours will last the rest of your life. Hahaha!”

Ever since Carl lost the use of his legs, he had gone insane. He wished everyone would be as miserable as he was. The more melancholic they were, the happier he was.

Gabriella’s heart sank.

She thought she had found a love of her own, far from the complicated life she used to

have. Yet, this was now just a wishful thought of hers.

Yet, she had no choice but to submit to her fate.

As time went by, Joan’s stomach grew bigger.

By then, she was already four months pregnant.

A while back, Joan had already left her job at Opulent Designs. She wanted to rest for her pregnancy.

Whenever he was free, Larry would return to keep Joan company.

“Joan, I’m back.”

After work, Larry rushed home. When he saw Joan reading books about child-raising, he could not help but laugh.

“Joan, you’re only four months pregnant. No rush in reading them now,”

Larry softly said as

he walked over to her.

“I have nothing else to do at home anyway. I never took care of children before this, so I

have no experience with raising a kid. I’ll have to depend on these books in the future.”

When Joan spoke, she did not turn to look at him; she remained focus on the book in her hands.

Sitting down on the couch, Larry then pulled Joan into his arms. When he looked at her side profile, he smiled.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1564

“My kid’s already stealing my wife’s attention from me before they’re being born. Once the baby’s born, doesn’t that mean I’ll have no place in my wife’s heart?”

Larry exclaimed dramatically.

Upon hearing that, Joan put down the book in her hands. “How old are you? Why are you jealous of your kid? Aren’t you childish?”

“I don’t care. Other than when you’re taking care of the kid, the rest of your time is mine. No one can steal you from me.”

Larry was like a kid defending his dignity; he refused to let an unborn baby win against him.

“Okay, okay. Whatever you say it is.”

Joan relented, not wanting to continue arguing with the childish man.

“By the way, Larry, shouldn’t we check whether our baby’s a girl or a boy now?” Joan pointed out.

“Yes, but is that important to you?” Larry replied with a chuckle.

“Of course it is. I can only read more in-depth after finding out whether our baby’s a girl or a boy.”

What if I find out too late about the baby’s gender? What if I’ve been preparing for a daughter but the baby turns out to be a boy? What will I do if the boy grows up like a girl?

Ever since Joan was pregnant, she was alarmingly alert with her motherly instincts. It got to the point Larry was fearful. Joan was often going on and on about which foods she could

not eat and what activities she could not do. Larry was speechless.

Thinking that it was better if they did a checkup, Larry agreed, “If so, we’ll do a checkup

sometime soon. After that, we can tell Mom and Dad about it.”

“Yes, I’d like to go back to my parents’ place too. It’s been a long time.”

After all those things that had happened, Joan had yet to go home to visit her parents.

Although it had been peaceful for a while, Joan had been preoccupied with the thoughts of

her child. Hence, the thought of visiting her parents did not cross her mind.

At that, Joan could not help but feel guilty.

“Okay, we’ll do a checkup in the hospital tomorrow. I’m free these few days, so let’s stay at

Mom and Dad’s place for the next few days,” Larry said as he looked at Joan lovingly.

“Yes, yes!”

Joan was delighted when she heard that they were going to her parents’ house.

Clearly, despite the quiet moments, Joan was bored at home. Therefore, she was thrilled to

be able to get out of the house.

“Dear, you must be hungry. Let me cook something for you.”

Realizing that it was getting late but the two had yet to eat, Joan hastily got to her feet,

about to head to the kitchen.

“Sit there. I’ll prepare the food instead.”

Larry hurriedly stopped her and motioned for her to sit.

“You’re going to cook?”

Somehow, Joan was nervous when she heard Larry was going to cook for her. When she

thought about the dishes he made a while back, she could not help but shudder. Even the

sight of his dishes had been terrible.

“I’ll do it. It’ll be a quick one, so I won’t be tired.”

Joan knew Larry was afraid that cooking would tire her out, and that was why he

volunteered to cook. However, Joan still found it best that she rejected his offer.

The reason was simple. Even if she could eat his cooking, the baby in her could not. What if

my baby won’t eat properly in the future?

Larry saw all the expressions that flitted across Joan's face. He knew his horrifying cooking from the previous time had traumatized Joan. Thus, she dared not let him in the kitchen.

However, after the previous time, Larry had been practicing cooking. He often studied

recipes, and now, his cooking was unlike before.

"Let me. Give me a chance to prove myself. What happened last time won't happen again."

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1565

Larry was confident as he patted his chest while giving her a guarantee.

At his confident look, Joan reluctantly agreed.

I shouldn't insist. He seems to mind this a lot.

"Okay. I trust you to succeed in this," Joan said encouragingly. "But I'll still be in the kitchen

with you. I won't do anything; I'll just stand by the side and watch you."

Joan felt that there was a need for her to watch Larry cook. That way, she would be able to

salvage the dishes he could not, and therefore, prevent him from feeling embarrassed if he

failed.

"Okay. Let's go," Larry swiftly uttered.

With a smile, Joan followed him into the kitchen.

Once Larry entered the kitchen, he started taking out the ingredients after putting on an

apron. Meanwhile, Joan was watching quietly from the side.

Tomatoes, potatoes, eggs, and meat.

It was then Joan realized that Larry was going to make the same dish he made the other

time. It seemed like he truly wanted to prove himself to her.

Then, when Larry began cutting the ingredients, Joan was stunned by the skillful way he did

it.

It was almost as if Larry was showing off his knife skills rather than just cutting the food.

Joan was sure that, without at least eight years of experience, there was no way anyone

could show off skills like those.

Hence, that was why Joan was stunned. It was only a month or two since he started cooking.

It was an astounding improvement.
In a mere few minutes, Larry was done preparing the ingredients. All that was left was for him to display his cooking prowess.
Joan was at a loss for words when she saw how familiar he was with everything in the kitchen. She had followed him into the room, planning to help him out. However, Larry's cooking was evidently better than hers now. It would seem like a joke if she were to lend a helping hand to him now.
Minutes tick away. Soon, Joan recomposed herself and silently watched Larry busy himself.
Despite having an apron on him, he still looked as handsome as ever. Not only did it not ruin his overall noble temperament, but it even added a touch of gentleness to him.
Joan could not tear her eyes away.
My man's the greatest, was what she thought happily.
"Okay, it's done," came Larry's voice. "Are you ready to try them out?"
Joan snapped her head in Larry's direction. The only dish he had yet to make was the soup.
"Coming," Joan quickly replied when she saw Larry serving the last dish onto the table. Once she grabbed the utensils, she walked over.
"Smells amazing," she could not help but praise.
The moment she sat down at the table, the fragrant scents of the dishes rushed into her nose.
"Really? You're not just trying to console me like the last time, are you?"
Larry chuckled, but he was still a little unhappy about the previous incident. In a way, it was like a humiliating event in his life.
"I'm serious. I'm truthful this time." Joan chuckled as well. "You're amazing to be able to cook something as wonderful as this on your second try."
Right then, a thought entered her mind, and she asked tentatively, "Is this really your second try? Was the previous attempt your first?"
"Of course it was my first try back then. However, this isn't my second try. I've been

experimenting and practicing while you're away."

There was a delighted grin on Larry's face, and it seemed like he was satisfied with the way

how Joan was pleasantly surprised.

"But the way you cut the food earlier was as though you've been in the kitchen for a long

time," Joan remarked, feeling confounded.

Of course, I've been using the knife for a long time, just not in the kitchen.

However, that was something he would not tell Joan. Instead, he lied,

"That's because I'm

talented. I'm the only one who can learn that well in such a short time.

How is it? Aren't I

impressive?"

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1566

As Larry was immersed in pride, Joan couldn't help but mock, "Why are you such a

narcissist? But to be fair, you're awesome." She also commended him sincerely.

Larry was on cloud nine with her compliment.

"Let's dig in," Larry said to Joan while handing over a fork and a spoon to her.

Joan took the cutlery from him. As she was nearly drooling over the food, she quickly picked

up some shredded potatoes and began eating.

"Wow, this is delicious!" Her eyes glowed after chewing the food for a while. "Try this. It's

really delicious."

Joan had turned into a glutton. After asking Larry to try the food, she basically ignored him

since then and focused entirely on trying different dishes.

Meanwhile, Larry felt an inexplicable stirring of pride.

Besides, he was relieved that all of his efforts didn't go down the drain.

After all, it was the

best reward to see that Joan was delighted.

"Slow down. Wait for me."

She had finished half of the dishes even before Larry started eating.

After a while, Joan patted her stomach and said with much satisfaction,

"I'm so full. It's

wonderful to have such delicious food."

“I’ll cook for you more often since you like it so much,” Larry said delightedly upon seeing

Joan gleamed with satisfaction.

“Really? Dear, you’re the best!”

The next moment, she sprang toward him and kissed him on his cheek.

“I don’t have to cook from now on! You’re the perfect househusband!”

Joan said with a wry

smile on her face.

“Since you’re so smug, I think you should cook instead. Otherwise, you’ll become an idler,”

Larry huffed when Joan was still smiling smugly.

“No way. I’ve a lot of things to do.”

Joan thought he was serious and immediately explained, “I’ll start educating our baby in my

pregnancy so that they can be as outstanding as their father when they grow up. I mean,

you can do everything perfectly! Besides, I’m going to give you a massage.”

As Joan was speaking, she began to give Larry a massage.

Larry was delighted to hear Joan’s flattery and even squinted his eyes as she was providing

him the thoughtful service.

“Well, that’s more like it. You look like Mrs. Norton now,” Larry replied smugly and joyfully.

Larry seemed to be comfortable, Joan thought the time was right for her to ask a question

that she had kept to herself for a long time.

“Dear, can you tell me something about your past? I really wish to know more about your

past. After all, there should be no secrets between husband and wife,”

Joan persuaded.

“Do you really want to know about my past?”

Larry had avoided the same question all the while. First, he was reluctant to recall some of

his past. Second, given that he used to live a life full of battles and fights, he thought Joan

might be worried upon hearing it.

Nonetheless, Joan was insistent on understanding Larry’s past. Larry felt that keeping it from

Joan would undermine the trust between them.

“Yes, I really wish to know about it. Can you tell me? Anyway, I won’t force you if you’re reluctant to share it with me. I can understand that everyone has a little secret, after all.”

Although she was curious, she decided not to dwell on it if he wanted to keep it a secret.

Regardless, she would always believe in Larry.

“It’s not that I don’t want to tell you, but you might be worried about me once you’ve heard

it. Okay, I’ll tell you since you really wish to know.”

With that, Larry began to tell her his story.

“You always want to know what the relationship between Caspian and me is. Well, Caspian

is my best friend. We went through fire and water and participated in hundreds and

thousands of missions together. Actually, I used to have many friends like him, but most of them left in the end.”

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1567

They left? Where did they go? Although Joan had doubts, she didn’t interrupt Larry but

continued listening silently.

“My ambition is to be a soldier since I was young. I love the excitement when I fight on the

battlefield. Besides, I enjoy the feeling of mapping out strategies.

“Now that we’re in a peaceful era, where can I get such an opportunity?”

“My dad said I was

born in the wrong generation. Instead, I would have become a hero if I was born in the past.

In this new era, I can only inherit my family’s wealth and become an influential entrepreneur.

“Nonetheless, I was reluctant to accept my fate. I was passionate about becoming a soldier

and unwilling to live a boring life.

“One day, I came to know about the special forces by chance. I finally realized that a group

of people in this world is really facing life-and-death situations almost every day.

“I was obsessed with the feeling of controlling my own life and living a life filled with

surprises, shocks, and passion.

“So, one day, I told my dad that I wanted to join the special forces.

“He said there were many types of special forces and asked which one I wished to join.

“I replied that I wanted to be a special force member who would have to fight hard and go through fire and water every day.

“When he asked me why I wished to be part of it, my answer was that I liked it.

“However, knowing that it was my only answer, my dad advised against it. Also, he added that I would insult the noble occupation.

“Although he rejected me, I didn’t give up and kept begging him to give me a chance. I

even thought about many creative ways to persuade him. “In the end, he failed to dissuade

me and agreed to my request instead. “I still remember that he looked helpless and

dejected, yet I didn’t understand what it meant because I was young and arrogant.

“He said that I could come home when I understood the significance of being part of the special forces.

“Back then, I agreed delightedly but didn’t take it seriously.

“He made the arrangements so that I could become an ordinary soldier. After all, I had to work my ass off to be qualified to join the special forces.

“Since then, I trained myself every day based on the requirements of the special forces.

“At last, my hard work bore fruit because one of the special forces units accepted me.

“It was a pretty good start. I got my wish and became a qualified special forces member.

Besides, I even made friends with a few of my comrades.

“There were only eight members in my squad. At first, all of us thought highly of ourselves.

“When it was time to choose a squad leader, we expectedly voted for ourselves.

“Hence, we had no choice but to have a competition.

“In the end, I won the competition. The rest of them conceded defeat and recognized me as their squad leader.

“After carrying out several missions, the relationship between the eight of us improved a lot.

It even became something that many other comrades envied about us.

“Soon, we received the captain’s compliment before everyone in the troop.

“Since then, almost everyone looked up to me and wished to surpass me; nonetheless, I

never gave them a chance to do so.

“The eight of us eventually became even closer than blood brothers.

Besides, our squad

survived several life-and-death crises because I was there to lead them.

Therefore, they

willingly called me “Boss” even though I was the youngest among them.

“Everything seemed wonderful to me. After all, I could challenge my limits and live my life to

the fullest every day. Furthermore, I had a bunch of good friends who went through fire and

water with me. All of these were what I wanted when I joined the special forces.

“Although I still didn’t understand my dad’s words, I wasn’t bothered by it. I loved being

there and even wished to be part of the special forces for the rest of my life.

“Soon, the captain wanted to promote us due to our outstanding capabilities.

“However, all of us rejected his offer. Since it became our habit to live and fight together, we

couldn’t think of a reason to separate.

“After all, we accepted various major and minor missions together.

Some of them were easy, but others were risky.”

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1568

Larry paused for a while and continued, “Fortunately, we survived every mission and never

suffered any severe injuries or casualties.

“Everything was smooth until our superior assigned a precarious mission to us.

“When he met us, he stated clearly that the mission was important but dangerous. In fact, he said that the probability that all of us could survive was merely twenty percent.

“Since the mission was the most dangerous one that we had ever accepted, we couldn’t help but feel heavy-hearted.

“Nonetheless, we couldn’t opt out because it was our duty, responsibility, and immense honor to serve the country.

“At that time, I somehow understood what my dad meant.

“We flew to Manchernius for the mission. Since the mission went on smoothly, we were delighted and thought that our superior exaggerated.

“However, when we were halfway to complete the mission, a mole revealed some classified information to the enemy. Hence, our whereabouts were exposed, and we were surrounded by more than three hundred enemies.

“It was too late for us to realize that the mission was indeed precarious. As the mission failed, we had to try our best to escape.

“We fought hard for a way out.

“Unfortunately, only five of us returned to the country. Two of us were severely injured and passed out. As for the remaining three comrades, we failed to even locate the bodies.

“I still remember one of my comrades said before he died, “Boss, run for your life. They can’t make it if you don’t lead them. Take care of them. Also, take care of my parents!”

“With that, he sprang upon the enemies to distract them while I grabbed the chance to escape. Do you know how heartbroken I was at that time?

“He died because of me. I watched as he fell to the ground. He dared not to even glance at me, for fear that the enemies would discover me. At that moment, I felt that my heart was sliced piece by piece with a knife!

“Nonetheless, I knew that I couldn’t die, for I had to live not only for myself but my

comrades. Besides, I had the responsibility to take care of his parents!

“I finally understood what my dad meant. It wasn’t as simple as I

thought to become a good

special forces member. The moment I joined the special forces, I had

been shouldering huge

responsibility and calling!

“Alas, it was too late for me to understand it. Among the eight of us who went through fire

and water, three could never come home.

“As for my comrades who suffered severe injuries, one of them had a disabled right arm,

while the other lost both of his legs. Despite the tragedy, they didn’t regret their decision.

After all, as part of the special forces, we are mentally prepared for accidents since day one.

“After the mission, both of them left the army. Our superior looked for a job for them to live

their life peacefully.

“Although they were still passionate about being part of the special forces, they had lost the

right to pursue their dream.

“The remaining three of us eventually applied to retire.

“Among all, we felt guilty about failing the mission, though it was beyond what we could do.

Also, we were tired and wished to go home.

“Our superior didn’t stop us but approved our applications straightaway.

Besides, he didn’t

get any jobs for us because we requested him not to.

“After leaving the army, the three of us visited our friends who left earlier. When we met, we

didn’t utter a word but merely hugged each other.

“That night, we were wasted and cried like babies.

“The past is in the past. Apart from reminiscing, we also pondered about our future.

“When one of them asked about our plans, I said I would go home and take over my dad’s

company.

“The other said he wanted to go home and take some rest.

“After a while, one of them said, “Boss, I’m used to following your orders without having to

think too much. Let me follow you. I can be your bodyguard!”

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1569

Larry paused for a while and added, “I knew that he was serious. Among all of us, he valued

friendships the most and always act impulsively. He couldn’t deal with the tragedy and still

wished to stay by my side.

“He was Caspian, whom I cared about the most. Also, he relied upon me the most.”

Larry sounded calm as he finished. Nevertheless, tears had streamed down his face while his

body was shivering. It was obvious that he was trying his best to hold in his emotions.

Meanwhile, Joan also sobbed. She never thought that the easy-going Caspian went through

hell in the past.

She was even more surprised that Larry’s past was heart-wrenching, to the extent that she

cried upon hearing it.

“Dear, I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have asked you about it in the first place.

I’m so sorry,” Joan

apologized guiltily while hugging Larry, who was still immersed in sorrow.

“It’s okay. It’s not your fault. In fact, I feel better after sharing my past with you.” Larry forced

a smile.

Joan couldn’t help but feel heartbroken when she saw his forced smile.

“Actually, Caspian is the most broken man among us. Although he seems to be easy-going,

he values every relationship and can hardly let go of the past.”

Larry felt sorry for Caspian.

“I didn’t know that you guys have a legendary past. Dear, let bygones be bygones as all of

us have to look ahead. I’m sure that your friends in heaven will be relieved to know that you

live a good life now,” Joan comforted him. “Most importantly, you still have me! I’ll be with

you, and we’ll never leave each other!”

“Yes, when you’re here with me, I can go through any difficulties. As you said, we have to look ahead. We can still reminisce, yet it is even more important to live our life to the fullest,” Larry said.

Holding on to her hand, he felt he had everything.

“Alas, I pity Caspian. While you still have me, he’s still single. I think he’ll feel awful when he’s alone. Should we get a girlfriend for him?” said Joan worriedly as she thought about

Caspian.

“Well, I agree that it’s time to look for a girlfriend for him,” Caspian murmured, “but I’m afraid he might not cooperate with us.”

“In that case, we can...” Joan came closer to him and whispered in his ear.

“Mm, this idea sounds good,” Larry’s eyes sparkled as he replied.

As they were on the same page, they decided it within seconds.

Meanwhile, Caspian, who was miles away on a business trip, sneezed.

“Damn it. Who’s scolding me?” he murmured.

Since Larry gave him a simple task, he finished it quickly and began to walk around the place leisurely.

Suddenly, a girl, who was wearing a yellow dress and a ponytail, came into sight. She looked

youthful and cute with her sweet smile and her big, round eyes.

Caspian stared at her, his heart thumping. At this moment, he had a strange feeling as

though his heart was meant to live for her.

Meanwhile, the girl also saw that Caspian, who wore a suit, was standing still and gazing at

her. The next moment, she flashed him a cute smile in response.

Interesting fellow. It was the first thought that came to the girl’s mind.

As Caspian watched the girl left and disappeared into the crowd, he couldn’t help but feel a

little dejected.

“I hope I can see you again, beautiful girl.”

Caspian wasn’t good at expressing his feelings and would always hide his true self due to his previous occupation.

Even if he had feelings for her the first time they saw each other, he was still reluctant to talk to her.

We'll meet again if it's fated. It was part of Caspian's ostrich approach. Caspian returned to Marsingfill with some regrets.

Since Caspian met the girl on the street, he went to the same place for the next two days.

He sincerely hoped that they would meet again.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1570

Unfortunately, the girl never showed up again.

It appears we're not fated to see each other again. Caspian was disappointed.

Since he had been in this place for quite some time, it was time for him to go back and report to Larry.

"Boss, I'm back."

Caspian arrived at Larry's house to report to him about his progress.

"It's nice to have you back. How's everything?"

Although Larry pretended to talk to him calmly, he was ready to execute his plan.

"Boss, don't worry. I've handled everything well," Caspian lowered his gaze and answered.

"Good. You've worked hard," Larry said and patted Caspian's shoulder.

"It's not a big deal. Well, if there's nothing else, I'll make a move,"

Caspian said.

Usually, Larry would give Caspian two days' leave after he completed a mission. Hence,

Caspian thought it would be the same this time around.

"Caspian, I know you've worked hard to finish the task. However, I have another important task for you." Larry pretended to say guiltily while a wry smile flashed across his face.

"Boss, no worries. Just give me the instructions, and I'll do as you say," Caspian said with doubts in his mind.

I think something isn't right about Boss today.

Despite having some doubts, Caspian was passionate about doing anything that could resolve Larry's problems.

"After this, I'll give you a long holiday so that you can get some rest."

Larry was delighted as the plan went on as planned.

"Here are the time and venue of the mission. You've to meet someone. Since she's not an ordinary woman, you've to watch her closely and don't leave till the end. After meeting her, remember to drive her home. Also, be mindful of her house address." Larry was joyful on the inside, though he pretended to gaze at Caspian seriously.

"Don't worry, Boss. I'll complete the mission."

Caspian promised solemnly.

After all, it was his duty to complete every mission that Larry assigned to him.

"Alright, get some rest today and carry out the mission tomorrow evening."

Larry gazed at Caspian intently as though he had placed all his hopes on Caspian.

"I'm counting on you to complete the task!"

"Understood!"

The more concise Caspian's words were, the more determined he was. This task appears to be very important. I must accomplish it to live up to his expectations!

Determination and seriousness were written all over his face as he left. Once Larry confirmed that Caspian had left, he couldn't help bursting into laughter.

"Hahaha, Caspian is an idiot! I've fooled him! Joan, how are my acting skills? Do I deserve an Oscar award?"

Larry laughed like a drain.

While Larry was laughing smugly, Joan said worriedly, "Larry, do you think Caspian will be angry if he finds out that we're lying to him?"

"Don't worry. He won't be angry with us. I understand him very well, and he won't be offended by something like this. Besides, I'm interested to know how he would react once he finds out his task is to join a blind date! Hahaha..." Larry laughed once again.

A moment later, Larry turned around and suddenly stopped laughing. He happened to meet Caspian's eyes.

Caspian returned because he had some questions to ask Larry yet didn't expect to witness this.

"Hmm... Caspian, why have you come back?"

Larry immediately calmed himself down and scratched his head awkwardly. "Do you need anything else?"

Caspian probably didn't hear what we said, right? Yes, he definitely didn't hear it. Larry lied to himself deep down.

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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1571

"Boss, did you mention a blind date just now? What is it about?" Caspian asked Larry as he was apparently confused.

"A blind date? My god, you must have misheard it."

Then, Larry said casually to convince him, "Just finish the task as you always did. I mean, when did I ever lie to you?"

Larry patted his own chest as a gesture to assure Caspian.

"Since you're not telling me the truth, I won't finish the task as you instructed."

Caspian decided to disobey Larry, given that Larry still wanted to hide it from him.

"Please don't do that. I'll tell you."

Larry got nervous as Caspian wanted to opt out of the mission. As such, he immediately

said, "Actually, the mission that I gave you is to join a blind date. Since you're not young

anymore, I reckon you should look for a girlfriend. Just give it a try. If you don't have

feelings for the girl, Joan and I will introduce a few more girls for you. I'm sure you will find

your loved one sooner or later!"

Larry paused for a while and added confidently, "Rest assured that I'll help you!"

"Boss, why did you suddenly arrange a blind date for me? I disagree and won't be joining it!"

Caspian shook his head profusely as he was a bundle of nerves.

“Caspian, you’re already an adult and can’t stay single forever. Since I already have Joan, I think you should look for your loved one as well,” Larry persuaded him patiently.

“I won’t rush into that. Besides, don’t worry about me because I can look for a girlfriend myself.”

Once Caspian finished, he recalled the cute girl whom he met two days ago.

“Why are you so bad-tempered? My kids would have already grown up when you have a girlfriend. I mean, it’ll be too slow. Why don’t you join the blind date and take a look at the girl? You can leave anytime if you don’t like her,” Larry continued tempting Caspian.

“Forget it. I really don’t want to go. Boss, please don’t put me in a difficult situation.”

Caspian declined again.

As Caspian didn’t want to dwell on it, he turned around and wanted to leave.

“Stay right there!”

Since Larry couldn’t persuade Caspian, he decided to do it the hard way.

“Caspian, I’m going to say this one more time: This is an order. You have to go whether you like it or not! You’re disrespecting me if you still refuse to listen.”

Caspian was shocked and stopped walking. He turned around and pled, “Boss, I really don’t want to join a blind date. Besides, it’s too hasty. You should at least give me some time to prepare for it.”

“I gave you some time, which is why you only have to be there tomorrow. Let Joan give you some advice on choosing the best outfit so that the girl won’t loathe you at first sight.”

Larry waved his hand as he made the final decision.

Caspian almost burst into tears because Larry ignored him no matter how many times he pleaded.

Knowing that Larry was insistent, he eventually submitted to fate and stared at Larry

disgruntledly.

"Alright, I'll go," Caspian said helplessly as though he had lost hope in life.

"That's my buddy."

Larry finally put on a smile upon hearing it. Then, he rested his arm on Caspian's neck and

said gently, "Listen to Joan later. She'll give you some advice on how to dress up. Don't

embarrass yourself before the girl!"

Caspian followed Joan into a room listlessly. When Caspian came out later, Larry felt that he

had virtually turned into another man.

At this moment, Caspian looked tall and strong in a suit. Besides, his face looked clean after

shaving.

Actually, Caspian had attractive facial features. After Joan designed a new hairstyle for him,

he was now a handsome guy indeed.

Larry gazed at Caspian with satisfaction. After all, Caspian was thought to be slovenly and

scruffy-looking only because he rarely spent time taking care of his appearance.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1572

"Good job, Caspian. All the girls out there will swoon over you with that look."

Larry was very confident about it.

Caspian ignored Larry as he sighed. "Boss, can I go now?"

"Sure, you can leave anytime. No one is stopping you."

Caspian hummed indignantly at his words but didn't dare voice out his frustration.

"Well then, I will take my leave."

He excused himself hastily and was about to leave.

"Don't forget about your mission tomorrow. I'll give you an earful if you fail," Larry warned.

"Ok."

Caspian replied petulantly and left.

He was worried he would go berserk if he stayed any longer.

"Larry, Caspian didn't look too happy about it. Is he angry?" Joan asked.

"That's not possible. Caspian isn't that petty. He'll even thank me tomorrow if all goes well,"

Larry replied. "We'll see how it goes."

Caspian arrived at the restaurant the next day even though he didn't really want to since it was Larry's request.

He sat down and waited patiently for his date to arrive.

Caspian figured he would make conversation with the girl for a bit before excusing himself.

That way, his mission would be considered complete and he'd get to avoid any awkward situation.

Five minutes seemed like forever for Caspian. Just as his patience was growing thin, he suddenly felt like someone was walking towards him.

"She's finally here."

Caspian took a deep breath as he grew nervous and slowly lifted his head.

He was stunned when he saw who his date was. She's the cute girl I met on my business trip.

The latter also looked really startled to see Caspian.

"Why are you here?"

They spoke in unison as an embarrassed smile crept onto their faces.

"Good to see you. Please take a seat."

Caspian didn't know what to say as he quickly stood up and gestured for the girl to take a seat.

The girl nodded and sat opposite Caspian.

The both of them didn't know what to say to one another. After a while, the girl spoke up.

"You look better than when we last met."

Caspian was a disheveled and sloppy-looking man during their last meeting. But he looked like a whole different person now.

"You look as beautiful as ever."

Caspian wasn't sure why he said that.

His heart fluttered when he saw the girl's shy smile.

"Hello, I'm Nancy."

The girl reached out and said sweetly.

"I'm Caspian. Nice to meet you."

Caspian grinned shyly in response.

“Caspian, what a unique name.”

Nancy repeated after him as she took note of his name.

“It was given to me by the Chief when I was in the forces.”

Nancy. The name suits her well.

“You used to be a soldier?”

“Yeah, I was in the special forces for a few years.”

“Wow, soldiers are my favorite. Tell me about all that has happened during your time as a soldier.”

“Sure. What would you like to know?”

“Start from the beginning when you first joined the forces.”

They hit it off right away as if they were long lost friends.

Their affection for one another grew as time passes.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1573

“Wow, you’re so amazing!” Nancy stared at him in admiration.

“I’m nothing compared to my boss. He’s the best soldier I’ve ever met.”

Caspian said humbly even though he was over the moon with Nancy’s praise.

“You’re always talking about that boss of yours. Is he really that good? I think you’re the

best. Oh right? Why did you agree to this blind date? Did your family force you too?”

Nancy was very curious about Caspian. It was a wonderful feeling.

“I’ll introduce you to my boss if I get the chance in the future.” Caspian smiled. “I’m not

forced to be here by my family, but rather my boss. He intends to introduce a girlfriend to me.”

Caspian suddenly felt a longing to have a girlfriend as he stared at the pretty and cute girl

sitting in front of him.

“I see. Your boss really cares about you.” Nancy replied cheekily.

“Yeah. Did your family force you to be here? You were at Yartran when we last met. Where are you from?”

Caspian suddenly felt inappropriate to ask so many questions all at once. He quickly added,

“You don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to. I’m being too nosy.”

“I’m from Marsingfill. I went to Yartran because I heard the cherry blossoms there are out of

this world and wanted to take a look.”

Time flew by as they were engaged with one another.

“It’s getting late now. I should head home. It’s been a pleasure meeting you. I hope we meet again in the future.”

Nancy smiled sweetly at Caspian.

“Ok. We will meet again.”

Caspian suddenly felt reluctant to let her go, but was too embarrassed to ask her to stay.

“Ok, I will take my leave then. Bye.”

Nancy hesitated for a bit before she bid goodbye.

“Wait.” Caspian plucked up his courage and asked, “Can I have your number please?”

“Of course. Here, jot it down.”

Nancy gave Caspian her number without hesitation.

The two of them parted ways soon after.

Caspian chuckled as he stared at Nancy’s contact number on his phone.

He giggled all the way back to Larry’s. Caspian rushed up to Larry with the intention of

giving him a big hug when he saw him.

At the moment, Larry was deep in thought when he suddenly felt someone coming towards

him. He aimed a kick at Caspian without a second thought.

“Ouch!”

Caspian fell to the ground and snapped, “Boss, are you trying to kill me?”

Larry gave a bashful smile when he saw that it was Caspian. “Oh, it’s you.

I was deep in

thought just now. Sorry.”

Caspian groaned, dusted his butt, and stood up. “Luckily, I’m well trained.

Else, I would have

been crippled by that kick of yours.”

Larry smiled awkwardly and asked, “Caspian, how did your blind date go?”

Caspian grew excited again at the mention of his blind date. He wrapped his arms around

Larry’s neck and chirped, “Boss, thank you so much. If not for you, I would never have met

Nancy.”

“Nancy? Is she your blind date? How did it go?”

Larry felt like things went well with the look on Caspian’s face.

“We hit it off right away! Nancy was the girl I met during my business trip to Yartran. I even got her number. Boss, thank you so much. I’ll do anything you ask of me in the future. I’m all yours—dead or alive.”

Caspian hugged Larry excitedly and almost wanted to peck him on the cheek.

“Hey, get lost!”

Goosebumps crawled all over Larry’s body as he quickly kicked Caspian away from him.

However, he was also beaming with joy. He was genuinely happy for Caspian.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1574

Just like that, things heated up between Caspian and Nancy.

After one month, Caspian announced to Larry and Joan that Nancy had agreed to be his girlfriend.

Larry and Joan were very happy for him. They also felt like a weight had been lifted off their shoulders.

Caspian finally found his potential other half. They didn’t have to worry about him anymore.

Larry brought Joan to the hospital for a medical checkup.

Just as they were waiting for their turn, they spotted a familiar figure in the crowd.

Gabriella!

It had been a long time since they last met her. She was no longer the proud and arrogant girl she once was.

She no longer dressed herself in beautiful clothes and only wore light makeup. Even though she was still very pretty, she no longer stood out in the crowd.

“Larry, why is Gabriella here?”

Joan didn’t know that Gabriella had married Carl few months ago as she asked out of curiosity.

Larry explained to Joan how Gabriella had married Carl and how she was being treated by the Johnsons. It wasn’t hard for him to find out everything since Norton Corporation had

power over a lot of things.

Joan sighed after she found out about Gabriella. What happened to her was terrible.

Gabriella, who was once the center of attention, ended up in the hands of Carl with so much pain and suffering.

Although Joan felt overwhelmed, she did not pity Gabriella one bit.

Perhaps she would have sympathized with Gabriella if she didn't know her that well.

However, she no longer considered Gabriella her friend after everything she did to her. It

was already very kind of her to not gloat over Gabriella's misfortune.

Gabriella queued up silently without Carl by her side. Her head was lowered as if she was

deep in thought and had not noticed Larry and Joan.

Both of them were not about to greet Gabriella either as they waited patiently for their turn.

Joan did a full body checkup. Larry felt relieved when the doctor concluded that everything was good.

They even found out that they were going to have a baby boy.

Even though the baby's gender didn't really matter to the both of them, Larry's parents

preferred a boy in order to carry on the family name.

They decided to head back to Norton Residence in order to tell them the good news after

Joan's medical checkup.

Joan looked around for Gabriella after her medical checkup but couldn't find her anywhere.

She didn't think much of it and walked out of the hospital with Larry.

They first headed to the mall to purchase a few gifts for Larry's parents after they left the hospital.

"Dad, Mom, we're back."

Larry spoke up the moment they stepped foot into Norton Residence.

Vivian and Finnick walked out upon hearing Larry's voice. Joan had been receiving VIP

treatment ever since her pregnancy. Finnick and Vivian were very keen on meeting their

soon-to-be grandchild.

“Dad, Mom.”

Joan called out sweetly.

“You’re back, Joan. Come, have a seat.”

Vivian walked over and said to Joan kindly.

Finnick beamed as he watched Joan worriedly.

Larry felt indignant as he watched his parents fuss over Joan.

“Dad, Mom, your son is back. Do you guys not see me?” Larry said with a hint of jealousy.

“Oh, course I do. You can come in on your own since you’re such a big boy now.”

Vivian totally ignored him while Finnick responded nonchalantly.

Larry felt disconsolate. Am I really their biological son now?

He looked in Joan’s direction grudgingly, but the latter had already been invited into the

room by Vivian and Finnick.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1575

Larry heaved a long sigh and walked into the room.

“Have a seat, Joan. I’ll go get you a glass of water.”

Vivian said after making sure Joan had settled down.

“No need, Mom. I’m not thirsty.”

Joan quickly turned her down. She couldn’t bear to see Finnick and Vivian fuss over her.

“No way. It’s important to stay hydrated,” Vivian insisted.

Sigh. When will I ever be treated like that?

Larry was really jealous.

“Mom, stop busying yourself. We have something to tell you.”

Larry would probably lose even more of his parents’ attention after telling them the news.

He felt really displeased about it.

“What is it?”

Vivian stopped in her tracks and asked. Finnick was also listening intently by the side.

“We went to have a medical checkup today. Turns out we’ll be having a baby boy.”

Larry announced the news calmly and waited for their response.

“A boy? It’s a boy! That’s great news!”

Finnick was the first to react as he slapped Larry’s thigh and said happily.

Larry hissed. Why are you slapping my leg instead of yours?

He had no choice but to suffer in silence in his seat.

Vivian was also at a loss for words as she paced around the room back and forth. Her face was flushed red with excitement.

Larry and Joan were genuinely happy to see Finnick's and Vivian's reaction.

They had yearned for a grandchild for a long time. Hence, their loss of composure was totally understandable.

"This calls for a celebration." Excitement laced Finnick's voice. "Right, have you guys thought of a name yet? My grandson must have a good name."

"We haven't thought of a name yet. Do you have any suggestions?"

Larry and Joan had yet to decide on a name. Now seemed like a good chance to ask for

Finnick's and Vivian's opinion.

"The baby's name is an important affair. I'll get a good fortune-teller to name the baby,"

said Vivian.

"What are you talking about? This is just feudal superstition," Finnick said begrudgingly.

He disagreed with Vivian's opinion.

"Then, why don't you suggest a name for the baby?" Vivian rolled her eyes at Finnick. "Don't

tell me you can come up with a good one with that pea brain of yours," Vivian mocked.

"I..."

He was about to refute when Larry cut them off.

"Ok, this is enough. We can decide on a name in the future," Larry said in exasperation.

Vivian kept her mouth shut and busied herself in the kitchen.

Even though they had housemaids to cook and clean for them, Vivian felt the need to

personally cook for Larry and Joan whenever they came back for a visit.

It was a small

gesture of love as a mother.

"Mom, I'll help you." Joan stood up.

"No need. I can do it myself. You just stay here and get some rest."

Joan had no choice but to sit back down since Larry, Finnick, and Vivian unanimously

opposed to her suggestion.

Dinner was soon ready. With that, the entire family happily enjoyed a scrumptious dinner together.

After dinner, Finnick spoke up. "Joan, you're in your fifth week of pregnancy now. It's not very convenient for the both of you to stay all alone in the villa. Vivian and I hope that you can move back in so we can take better care of you. What do you think?"

Larry wasn't against the idea of moving back in since he might not be able to take good care of Joan when he was so busy with work. If they were to move back in with Finnick and

Vivian he wouldn't have to worry about Joan anymore.

Hence, he turned to look at Joan.

Joan understood what Larry was thinking and nodded. "We'll move back then. Sorry in advance for all the trouble I'll be causing in the future," Joan said, feeling embarrassed.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1576

"What are you talking about? It's no trouble at all. We're doing it voluntarily even if there is," said Vivian.

"Haha."

The entire family laughed joyfully.

Just like that, Joan and Larry moved back into Norton Residence.

Joan received all the attention during her time spent with the Nortons as everyone looked forward to the baby.

Larry also accompanied Joan to stay in her parents' home for two days before she moved into Norton Residence. She was able to prepare for childbirth with peace of mind, learn more about her postpartum care, and did some prenatal education for her unborn baby.

"Larry, do you think our child will look like you or me when he grows up?"

Joan lay in Larry's arms as she asked.

"Me of course," Larry said narcissistically. "After all, I am awesome, so he got to take after

me.”

“So you’re saying I’m not good enough?”

Joan’s tone changed as she pretended to be mad.

“Don’t get me wrong. You’re pretty, gentle, kind, elegant, thoughtful, and very capable. In

fact, you’re just perfect!”

Larry quickly cleared the air and praised her.

“Hmph. That’s more like it.”

Joan nodded, pleased.

“Let’s go out for a walk tomorrow. I’m so bored just staying at home.”

Joan whined coquettishly at Larry.

Larry didn’t want to put Joan out there ever since her pregnancy for fear of getting hurt.

However, he couldn’t bear to turn her down after seeing the expectant look on her face.

“Ok, I’ll go with you tomorrow.”

Larry nodded in agreement. Things should be fine with me around.

“Thank you, Dear.”

The next day, Joan was finally able to walk out of Norton Residence with Larry in tow.

She was like a kite with a broken string the moment she breathed in the fresh outdoor air

no matter how hard Larry tried to stop her.

She was going crazy after spending two months at home. The outside world felt refreshing

and way more interesting than Norton Residence.

She totally ignored Larry’s words. Larry had no choice but to keep up with Joan in case

anything happens to her.

Joan’s baby belly was getting visible five months into her pregnancy.

Nonetheless, she

walked around with a spring in her step and wasn’t even tired out after a long walk.

“Larry, let’s go to the mall. I want to shop for some baby clothes for our future child,” Joan

said cheekily.

“What’s the rush? We can wait till he’s born.” Larry looked at Joan affectionately. “However,

we should get you some maternity clothes.”

“Then, let’s go!”

Joan hooked her arm around Larry's as they walked to the mall.
"But, we'll have to head home right after. You mustn't tire yourself out since we've been out for so long now."

Larry said with a serious look on his face.

"Alright, I got it. You're so naggy, just like my mom." Joan muttered, displeased.

Larry smiled helplessly. How dare you say I act like your mom? I'll whack your ass if you're not pregnant.

Both of them chatted happily on the way to the mall. Joan insisted on visiting the children's clothing store while Larry insisted on getting her some maternity clothes.

In the end, Larry relented and accompanied Joan to the children's clothing stores.

Unknown to Larry and Joan, they were being watched by a woman nearby who was shopping for clothes. A trace of madness flashed in her eyes as she pretended to shop for clothes while following closely behind.

Her name was Xyla. She was the wife of one of the assassins who tried to kill Larry.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1577

Xyla was also an assassin. Assassins were supposed to be killing machines void of emotions.

But Xyla fell in love with that assassin during a mission and things spiraled out of control.

They were both in one of the deadliest jobs in the world. Hence, they were tired of putting their lives on the line and were thinking of leaving the industry to live their own lives.

However, they didn't have much choice about it. It wasn't too hard for Xyla to put everything behind since it had only been a short period of time since she became an assassin.

Nonetheless, things were different for her partner. He didn't know what else he could do after quitting his job as an assassin. Hence, he didn't want to quit.

Soon after, Xyla told her partner she had fallen pregnant. He was over the moon when he heard the news. He said he would make more money by taking on a few more missions and quit his job forever as an assassin. His last job was to assassinate Larry and Joan. Xyla had been looking forward to the day when she would finally reunite with her lover, put everything behind them, and live happily ever after. However, her dreams of a life together were shattered during his last mission. Her partner failed his last mission and was captured by the police. In the end, he was sentenced to death because of the number of people he had killed in the past. Their last meeting turned out to be their final farewell. Xyla was in so much pain that she wanted to die with him after getting her revenge. However, she was already eight months pregnant at that time. Her top priority was to give birth to his child before anything else. Her resentment reduced after her child was born. Revenge wasn't her number one priority anymore as she wanted to focus on bringing up her child. She was planning to buy some milk powder for her child today but ran into her husband's killer unexpectedly. Hatred poured out of her once again and she wanted revenge! She wanted to kill them or even teach them a lesson, at the very least, to appease her dead husband. At the moment, Larry and Joan didn't notice they had been followed by a woman who had been blinded by hatred. "Larry, what do you think of this?" Joan asked. "Very nice. Darling, you've asked about a dozen times already. Have you decided on one yet?" Larry was going crazy with the torture. "Ok, ok, this one then." Joan ignored Larry's complaints and proceeded to pick a dress.

Larry breathed a sigh of relief. It finally ended.

Then, they went to the maternity section and picked out two maternity dresses for Joan.

Joan couldn't get enough of shopping and wanted to roam around a little while longer but

was dragged out of the mall by Larry.

"Joan, you must be tired now. Let's take a cab back."

Larry couldn't bear to let Joan walk the extra mile as he spoke.

"Ok, let's take a cab."

Joan felt a little tired after a long day and agreed to Larry's suggestion.

At the moment, a middle-aged woman selling flowers walked towards them.

"Flowers for sale. Fresh and beautiful flowers for your wife and girlfriend."

The middle-aged woman shouted as she walked towards Larry and Joan.

It was Xyla in disguise.

Xyla was skilled in disguising herself since she was an assassin. Hence, dressing herself up as

a flower seller was a piece of cake.

"Larry, why don't you buy me a bouquet of flowers? I've never received flowers from you

before."

Joan whined coquettishly to Larry when she saw the beautiful flowers.

Indeed, Larry had never gifted her any flowers before.

In the past, he only ever brought Joan to the canteen for meals because he simply wasn't a

romantic man. Now, he kept forgetting about it because he was too busy.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1578

"Ok, as long as you like it."

Larry agreed to Joan's request affectionately.

"Hello, would you like to buy some flowers?"

The middle-aged woman approached them when she heard their conversation.

"How much are you selling it for?" Joan smiled and asked.

"Ten for one stalk of flower."

A sinister smile flashed across Xyla's face as she replied Joan with a smile.

"Give me nine then."

Larry didn't notice Xyla's strange behavior as he spoke.

“Ok, your total is ninety.”

Xyla handed Joan the flowers while she secretly observed Larry.

A sharp glint flashed in Xyla’s eyes when she saw Larry reaching for his wallet. She quickly

pulled out a dagger from her flower basket and stabbed at Joan fiercely. I’ll make you pay for killing my husband.

Larry could still see Xyla and Joan out of the corner of his eyes even though he was pulling

some notes out of his wallet.

Larry snapped his head up when he noticed Xyla’s strange behavior. He cried out in terror

when he saw her pulling out a dagger.

“Joan, be careful!”

Larry shouted and pulled Joan to his side. Joan almost got hurt as the dagger brushed over

her back.

Xyla slashed at Joan once again. She knew it wouldn’t be easy to take Larry down. Hence,

she figured Larry would be more wary if she targeted Joan.

Xyla slashed at a very tricky angle. Joan was going to get hurt no matter how hard she tried

to avoid it.

Larry had no choice but to block the attack with his own body.

He lowered himself as Xyla stabbed him in the shoulder.

“Ouch!”

Larry grunted, resisted the sharp pain on his shoulder and aimed a kick at Xyla’s lower

abdomen.

“Ahhh!”

Xyla screamed in agony as she flew backwards. Even though she had been specially trained,

Xyla couldn’t get up from the ground after receiving such a heavy blow from Larry.

Blood was trickling out of the corner of her mouth when she got back up again. She was

injured.

Xyla didn’t hesitate to run away after her attempt failed. However, Larry wasn’t about to let

her get away as he kicked her down once again and locked her shoulder.

“Who are you?”

Larry asked coldly as he ignored the injury on his shoulder. Only then did Joan regain her senses. She was shocked when she saw the dagger on Larry's shoulder.

"Larry, how are you feeling? Let's hurry to the hospital!"

Joan's heart ached as she watched blood trickling down his shoulder.

"Don't worry about me, I'm fine. Let me find out more about this woman first."

Larry quickly consoled since he didn't want Joan to worry too much about him.

He then turned his attention to Xyla once again. Soon, something about her caught his eye,

he wiped Xyla's face with his hand.

Very soon, the wrinkles were replaced with a young and pretty face.

"Who the hell are you?"

Larry asked once again since he couldn't recall when he had crossed paths with this woman.

"Hmph. Of course, you wouldn't know who I am! But I hate you with a passion!"

Xyla glared at Larry hatefully.

"Do you still remember the assassins who tried to kill you two months ago? The leader was

my husband! It was his last mission. He promised me he would quit his job as an assassin

forever after that. He said he would come back home and live a happy life with me. But he's

not coming back anymore because of you! I have lost my darling husband forever. My child,

who just turned one-month old, would never get to experience a father's love ever!

Xyla shouted angrily. Tears flowed out upon thinking of her poor child.

Then, she started sobbing uncontrollably.

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"I hate both of you! You're the ones who destroyed my family! You're the ones who caused

my child to lose his father! I'm gonna kill both of you!"

Xyla continued to struggle, but Larry pinned her against the ground, immobilizing her.

Hearing Xyla's accusations, he kept quiet. After some time, he slowly said, "It's a punishment that your husband was given a death sentence after being arrested for assassination. How can you seek revenge on us? Have you ever thought about those being killed by your husband? On whom should their families seek revenge? Wake up already. Don't be so stubborn anymore."

"I don't care! The people he killed deserve it! He did all this for our family! He isn't wrong at all! Those people deserve to die, and so do you! You all must go to hell!" After speaking, Xyla let out a loud laugh that was filled with despair and hatred.

Looking at her coldly, Larry knew that she had gone mad, so he did not say anything else and just waited in silence.

Joan had called the police right after she saw that Larry was injured. The police should be there any second.

With her eyes on Xyla, who had given in to madness, Joan felt conflicting feelings of sympathy, hatred, and regret. "Why are you so obsessed with getting revenge? Have you ever thought about your baby son? His father has been punished by law for committing many crimes, whereas you, his mother, will be sent to the police station because of your impulsive action. Have you ever thought about your kid's future? You adults don't care about the consequences, but why must the child bear it? The child is innocent!"

The thought of Xyla's newborn filled her heart with sympathy. As a mother-to-be, she understood very well what a mother meant to a child, so she resented Xyla for her action. But she's also a poor soul. It must be tough for her to raise a newborn on her own after her beloved husband died.

However, there must be a reason for her pitiful situation. At that moment, Joan seemed to come to a realization.

Joan's words left Xyla stunned. The thought of her kid being all alone and getting bullied in the future filled her heart with remorse.

"Oh, my baby," she muttered as tears of remorse streamed down her face. Unfortunately, it was all too late, and she could never go back to the way things were. After the police came, she was taken away.

Before she left, she stared at Joan with a pleading look in her eyes. Joan knew that she wanted her to take care of her child.

However, all Joan cared about at that moment was to send Larry to the hospital soonest possible.

Looking at his pale face as he lied on the bed, Joan was heartbroken. She held his hand tightly with concern.

"Don't worry. I'm all right now," Larry assured her upon seeing how anxious she was.

"How could you be all right after bleeding so much? Don't talk anymore. Get some rest."

Unconvinced, Joan was still worried.

"I can recover from such a minor injury in just a few days. After all, I've survived the injury

that's ten times more serious than this," Larry said nonchalantly.

Sensing the jittery grew in Joan, Larry knew that he had said the wrong thing.

He brought up the past to comfort her, but her reaction made him regret bringing it up.

Joan gave him an annoyed look and teased, "Why are you so smug? Didn't you have a painful grimace while you were getting bandaged earlier?"

Larry was embarrassed. "I was feigning it so that you'd be worried about me."

Seeing that Larry was acting tough, Joan chuckled, and her anxiety slowly dissipated.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1580

"Larry, there's something I wanna ask you," stated Joan as she thought of something.

"Go ahead." Larry looked at her.

“Why don’t you have a single scare on your body even though you were in the special forces for so long?”

Joan had always been curious about the lack of battle scars on Larry’s body, but she had been too shy to ask previously. Now that she had the opportunity, she brought it up.

“You can’t laugh at me if I tell you,” said Larry as he looked embarrassed. He had been trying to avoid being asked about this by Joan, but it seemed that he had to tell her now.

“Of course, I won’t laugh at you! Tell me,” Joan promised seriously. That’s if it’s not particularly funny, Joan added inwardly.

“Upon my discharge, I went to the hospital for surgery to remove all the scars.”

Larry stole a glance at Joan, wanting to see her reaction.

“Why did you want to remove them? I thought scars are the medals for men? Why did you want to get rid of them on purpose?” Joan asked, feeling more perplexed.

“Because I’m such a perfect man. I don’t want to have any scars on my body. They are too ugly!”

Larry gritted his teeth and finally told the truth.

“So you’re saying you removed the scars because you’re a neat freak?” Joan could not help but widen her eyes in disbelief. What a weird reason.

“Yeah.”

Larry nodded with a serious expression.

“Hahahaha! This is hilarious! You’re a man, and yet you’re actually scared of having scars on your body! I can’t believe you’re such a neat freak! Haha! I’m gonna die laughing.”

Joan burst into laughter, making Larry’s face turn gloomy.

“Didn’t you promise not to laugh at me?” Larry protested, looking displeased. Being laughed at by her embarrassed him.

“I’m sorry. Hahaha! It’s too funny. I couldn’t hold it back. I am laughing so much I can hardly breathe. Hahaha!”

Joan continued to laugh like a drain, whereas Larry got so angry that he turned his head to the side and stopped looking at her.

Seeing that he was mad, Joan remembered that he was still a patient and stopped laughing.

"I'm sorry, Dear. I won't laugh at you like this again."

She stood in front of him and pacified, "Come on. Don't be angry. Give me a smile."

Only then did Larry smile and decide to drop it. Afterward, he changed the subject and

asked, "Joan, what are you going to do about Zyla's baby?"

He had also noticed the pleading look Xyla gave Joan. As Joan was kind-hearted, he knew

that she would dwell on it and decided to ask her first.

Joan fell silent at the mention of Xyla.

She had learned the name of the woman who stabbed Larry from him.

She had also thought about Larry's question, so she replied without hesitation, "Although

Xyla's husband deserves the punishment, and Xyla should also be punished for what she did

today, the child is innocent. Why don't we adopt him? What do you think?"

She asked for Larry's opinion because his consent was needed before she could make it happen.

Larry had long known that she would want to help Xyla's kid, so he had come up with a win-win solution and made the arrangement.

"Joan, I know that you're kind and will surely help the child, but the child is a newborn. The

most important thing now is that you need to take good care of yourself, so you can't take

care of the child. If we adopt him, it won't do us and the child any good," explained Larry in

a soft voice. What he said was reasonable.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1581

"But..." Joan wanted to say something but Larry interrupted her. "But you don't have to

worry. Since we're not the best fit to adopt the child, I've found a suitable person to adopt

him. The butler of Norton Residence has been childless and wanting to adopt a child, but he hasn't had the opportunity. I've called him just now, and he said that he's happy to adopt this child, so you don't need to worry anymore," Larry assured her while holding her hand.

"Really? In this case, we won't have to adopt this poor child."

The news brought smile to Joan's face.

"Actually, I also know that we're not the most suitable person to adopt him, but I feel really sorry for him. Knowing that he'll be in good hands now, I feel the weight being lifted off me."

Joan's sweet smile made Larry want to kiss her, but he could not due to his injury.

Suppressing the urge, he thought of something else and said seriously, "Joan, do you still

remember my close friends whom I told you about before? It'll be the death anniversaries of

Hector, Tom, and Marc in a few days. We'll visit their gravesites and their parents. It's also

been a long time since I last met my other friends, so we'll meet them too this time. What

do you think about it?"

Hearing his suggestion, Joan agreed without the slightest hesitation. "Of course, I'm up for

it. I've long wanted to meet all these respectable friends of yours. I'm more than happy to

go and see them and their parents."

Larry was relieved to see that Joan was being so sensible.

"Great. My injury will likely heal in a few days. Then, we can go that time."

"Okay. You need to lie down and recuperate first. We'll talk about it after you've recovered."

Joan hurriedly motioned for him to lie down.

"You have to take care of me these few days then. It's really inconvenient for me to do

anything now," Larry said with a grin. Obviously, he recalled the time when he feigned injury

and asked Joan to take care of him previously.

Joan had apparently thought about it too as she gave him an annoyed glare. "You still have the nerve to smile. You kept me in the dark and made me take care of you for several days that time. You're so bad!"

"If I hadn't feigned injury, we wouldn't have reconciled so quickly and gotten to where we are today, would we? So it was all part of my plan back then. Ain't I smart?" Larry asserted smugly.

Having never seen such a brazen person before, Joan snorted coldly while rolling her eyes at him and ignored him.

In the next few days, she witnessed how fast Larry recovered as his wound had scabbed over the day after the wound was sutured.

Later on, he was heard complaining of itching on his wound. After a few days, he appeared before Joan looking very much alive while the dressing on his shoulder was also nowhere to be seen.

"Are you all right now?"

Joan gaped at him in surprise.

"Yeah. Like I said, this is just a minor injury. If it were in the past, I wouldn't even dress it."

Larry was so puffed up with pride that it got under Joan's skin.

"You can brag all you want, but you can't change the fact that you looked so pale and can't even stand the pain when your wound was being dressed that day."

In order to prevent him from being too complacent, Joan kept mocking him.

Touching his nose awkwardly, Larry quickly changed the subject. "Let's pack up and leave the hospital. It'll be their death anniversaries tomorrow. We need to hurry up and get there as soon as possible."

With that, Joan immediately put away her feelings and responded in agreement before starting to pack up his things.

She knew how much this meant to Larry and also believed that any joke on this matter was

a disrespect for these respectable ex-members of special forces.

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1582

After packing up their things, Larry and Joan called to inform Finnick and Vivian and left

directly without going back to Norton Residence.

Back then, five out of eight of Larry's group who survived decided to bury their three

deceased friends in Pillere as it was relatively close to the city where they lived.

Initially, they used to talk about their plan to live in Pillere after retirement, so Larry and the

rest decided to bury them there to fulfill their wish.

Guys, since it's your wish to settle down here, we've fulfilled it for you by laying you to rest

here. Rest in peace.

While on the way, Larry concentrated on driving and said nothing as he was engrossed in

thought.

Knowing that he was in a bad mood, Joan did not talk to him either.

After a few hours, they arrived in Pillere.

As agreed beforehand, they drove straight to the hotel Larry's friends stayed.

As soon as they got out of the car, four of Larry's friends, including Caspian, went up to

greet them.

Since Larry was hospitalized a few days ago, he asked Caspian to come over first to make

the arrangement, which was why he did not come with Larry and Joan today.

"Boss, you're here."

They greeted Larry one after another, and the latter gave each of them a hug.

Despite Larry's calm facade, he was feeling excited deep down.

"You must be Joan. I've long heard from Caspian that you're not only kind and virtuous but

also beautiful. Blessed is he who has you," said Larry's friends

half-jokingly after exchanging

greetings with Joan.

Their compliment made Joan blush. After greeting them politely, she stood behind Larry, feeling a little shy.

“Boss, it’s been a long time since we last met. Let’s go inside and catch up,” Leon suggested.

Larry nodded. “Let’s go.”

He had always been the backbone of the group since the beginning, so the rest had no

objection to his words and entered the hotel room where Patrick and David were waiting.

As they were both wheelchair-bound, Larry told them not to go to receive him.

At first, the two of them refused but relented after Larry dissuaded and even ordered them.

“You’re here, Boss,” Patrick and David said in unison. Then, they greeted Joan with a smile,

“Nice to meet you, Joan.”

“Nice to meet you too,” Joan replied, feeling shy that they even knew her name already.

Afterward, they took their seats and began chatting.

“I haven’t seen all of you for a year, but you haven’t changed a bit. How are you guys doing recently?” asked Larry.

“We’re doing well, but apparently, we’re not doing as good as you are, Boss. Not only are you rich and influential, but also have such a kind and pretty wife like Joan. You’re doing so much better than we are,” Patrick teased.

Even though Patrick and David were crippled, they were optimistic and had a good mindset, so they lived a happy and carefree life.

“That’s right, Boss. Why don’t you introduce this pretty lady to us formally? We don’t know much about her,” David urged.

With the two of them around, there had never been a single moment of boredom.

“You guys have already learned everything from Caspian, and yet you still want me to do an introduction. Alright then, I’ll make an exception and introduce her again. Guys, this is my

fiancée, Joan Watts.”

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1583

“We got engaged a while ago, but I didn’t invite you because you were all busy. In a few

months, we’ll get married. This time, no matter how busy you are, I demand that all of you

come for my wedding, or you’d better watch out,” Larry threatened with mock severity,

making everyone burst out laughing.

“Haha. Don’t worry, Boss. No matter what happens, we’ll definitely attend your wedding.”

“Yeah...”

Looking at the group of men, Joan was inexplicably moved.

They were a group of real men who had gone through countless life-and-death situations

and received numerous honors. Yet, they were laughing like kids at this moment. There were

not any wheeling-and-dealing and back-stabbing, but only a sincere friendship.

Perhaps this was the bond among men which surpassed brotherhood.

Tears suddenly welled up in Joan’s eyes as she looked at the group of adorable yet

respectable men in front of her.

“Let’s go, Boss. Let’s see who’s the best drinker now!” Leon proposed with a hearty laugh

with a sincere look in his eyes. The rest then echoed.

“Let’s go and drink!”

“We’d like to see how much liquor Boss can hold!”

“Imma see you guys get dead drunk!”

Larry was happy to be with his close friends and took a deep breath as he tried to hide the

tears in his eyes. Then, he shouted, “Let’ go then! Let’s get wasted!”

That night, Larry and his friends put aside the troubles in their lives and drank to their

hearts’ content in a cheerful and carefree atmosphere.

Other than Joan, all of them were drunk.

As Joan looked at them getting so drunk that some even passed out under the table, she

did not feel displeased. On the contrary, she was somehow moved and glad that time did

not take away their genuineness, which had been buried deep in the depths of their hearts

due to circumstances in life.

The sight of Larry sleeping soundly in her arms brought a faint smile to her face. After

planting a kiss on his face, she fell asleep too.

The next day, a ringtone jolted her awake.

When she got up to check the time, it was already almost ten in the morning. As Larry had

told her to wake him up before ten on the night before, she hurriedly gave him a nudge.

“Larry, it’s ten already. Wake up!”

After being woken up by her, Larry massaged his head that was ringing slightly, looking

groggy.

However, the thought of the important thing that he was going to do later immediately

brought him to his senses.

“Wake up. Hurry up and wake up.” He got up and woke the others up.

“It’s almost time.

Don’t sleep in. We’ve got things to do.”

Hearing his words, the rest of the men sobered up as it was a really important thing that

they needed to do.

Some of them got up from the chairs and some from the floor, and began to tidy up their

clothes.

“Caspian. Where’s Caspian?” Larry asked after he looked around and did not see Caspian.

“Yes, Boss, I’m here,” Caspian was heard replying in a sleepy tone.

Looking in the direction where the voice came from, Larry finally saw Caspian lying under

the table.

“Hey, wake up! We’ve got important things to do!” Larry shouted, finding it funny.

“Yeah. Important things. Five more minutes,” murmured Caspian as he rolled over and

continued to sleep.

Left with no choice, Larry went up to him to wake him up.

“Ouch. Ouch! Boss, Boss, easy. Easy, Boss. I’m awake. I’m coming out.”

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As Caspian wailed in pain, Larry pulled him by the ear to get him out from under the table.

“Oh, my ear’s falling off. Let go, Boss,” Caspian pleaded.

Looking at the scene, everyone burst into laughter.

After packing up, they went to the public cemetery in Pillere.

While on the way, they did not chat and joke like they did the day before as they kept their

heads down in silence with a gloomy look on their faces, seemingly absorbed in thought.

When they reached the middle of the cemetery, Joan finally saw the tombstones of the

three deceased friends of Larry and got heavy-hearted as well.

On the headstones were photos of three young and lively faces that spoke of the

perseverance and sternness unique to a soldier.

The three smiling men were staring back at the men who stood before their tombs and used

to be the people closest to them.

Looking at the three tombstones, Joan was in awe, whereas Larry and his friends already had

tears welled up in their eyes.

Their tombs were empty as Larry and the rest narrowly escaped death that time, so they

could not even bring their bodies back.

The thought of their unrecovered bodies pierced the hearts of Larry and his friends.

Standing before the tombstones, Larry and his friends bowed as they recalled the times the

eight of them spent together with mixed feelings.

In just a few years, they were separated forever. Even after a few years, they still found it

hard to accept this hard truth.

Rest in peace, guys! We’ll live well for you!

Looking at the men standing before the tombstones like a kid who refused to accept the

truth, Joan could not help but shed tears.

After a long silence, Leon suggested, “Boss, it’s cold now, and Joan’s pregnant too. I think

Hector and the others appreciate our visit today. Why don't we go back now?"

Standing at the same spot with his head down, Larry came to his senses and replied,

"Alright. Let's go back then."

After speaking, he took one final glance at the tombstones, and the smiles on the three

faces stung his heart. Unable to bear to look at them anymore, he turned around and

walked out of the cemetery.

The rest of his friends also gazed at the tombstones for a while before they went up to

Larry.

It was not until sometime that they finally got over the grief and began chatting again in a relaxed atmosphere.

"Let's have a meal together. After that, we'll go and visit the parents of Hector, Tom, and

Marc, okay?" proposed Larry.

"Sure. Let's visit them together."

Everyone agreed with Larry's suggestion. It had become their annual habit to visit the

parents of their deceased friends, buy them some food and give them some money.

After eating, they went to Hector's house with bags of goods as they did in previous years.

"Dad, Mom, we're here to visit you!" shouted Larry as soon as they entered the house.

The rest of his friends also greeted Hector's parents joyfully.

The five of them had vowed to treat the parents of their deceased friends as their own

parents, so they changed the form of address to "Dad" and "Mom" since the beginning.

At this time, two middle-aged people walked out of the house and beamed at the sight of

Larry and his friends. "Oh, it's our sons! Hurry up. Come on in!"

The middle-aged man began to greet them enthusiastically, while the middle-aged woman

went to get them some drinks.

“Dad, it’s been a long time. How are you and Mom doing?” Larry asked respectfully while

sitting in front of the middle-aged man.

“Don’t worry. We’re living a good life!”

The middle-aged man laughed. Obviously, their presence breathed life into the initially

gloomy place and made him happy.

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“Dad, Mom, you must tell us if there’s anything happen. You have our phone numbers, don’t

you? We’re your sons, so don’t treat us as outsiders!” Leon said

thoughtfully while holding

the hand of the middle-aged woman.

“Oh,” she hurriedly replied, “that’s so kind of you. We’re doing well.

We’ll definitely tell you if

anything major happens. You’re all such a good person. It’s a pity that Hector...”

The thought of her deceased son made her heart ache as she wiped the tears off her eyes.

“Alright, drop it! Now that they’re here, you should go and cook for them, while I have a

drink with them,” The middle-aged man hurriedly interrupted his wife, fearing what she

might say next.

“Okay, fine.” She wiped the corners of her eyes again and added with a smile, “I’m going to

cook for you. You guys have a chat first. Do have some water I prepared for you when

you’re thirsty.”

After speaking, she went into the kitchen.

Larry and his friends initially planned to leave after visiting them, but the fervent look in

their eyes stopped them from turning them down, so they stayed to keep the couple

company.

The middle-aged couple had only one son, who sacrificed in a foreign country during a

mission, so no one could look after them as they aged.

Fortunately, Larry and the others were very close with their son, Hector, and treated them as

their parents, so they had someone to depend on.

Now that their sons were there, the couple would not let them leave without having a meal at their place.

As their home finally became lively again, they were overjoyed even though they had to get busy.

Larry and his friends also lent them a hand in the kitchen. It was hilarious yet heartwarming

to see a bunch of men doing some household chores.

With the concerted efforts of everyone, a delicious meal was ready.

Everyone took their seats at the dining table and began to enjoy the meal in a heartwarming atmosphere.

The middle-aged man was in a good mood, so he had quite a few drinks with Larry and the

rest, whereas the middle-aged woman chatted away with Joan.

As it was not suitable for Joan to remain seated for too long due to her pregnancy, she was

brought to the woman's bedroom and was then asked to lie down on the bed. The two of

them began to talk about pregnancy and parenting.

Being a first time mother, Joan was curious about everything related to children, so she

asked the woman many questions regarding parenting, and the two of them had a pleasant chat.

As it was getting late, the couple wanted them to spend the night at their place. After a

quick discussion, Larry and his friends decided to stay and would only leave the next day.

The next morning, they bade the couple farewell and visited the parents of the other

deceased friends.

The parents of the other two friends were also particularly welcoming, so Larry and the rest

stayed overnight at respective homes.

On the third day, it was finally time to part ways.

Early in the morning, Larry and Joan packed their things up and was ready to bid farewell to

the others.

Unexpectedly, Larry's friends were already waiting in the lobby. Seeing Larry and Joan, Leon said, "Boss, it's time for us to part ways again. Let's save the goodbyes for next time when we meet again, which will be in near future."

Larry and Joan smiled.

"Of course. My wedding with Joan will be held in a few months. Each of you must be present then," Larry replied happily.

"That's a must. Even if you don't invite us, we'll also show up," Patrick joked.

David echoed, "Yeah. And we'll surely give the two of you a great gift!" All of them laughed.

When it was time to leave, Larry wiped the smile off his face and announced sadly, "Guys, this is it. See you soon."

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The rest nodded and went their separate ways without saying anything else.

They knew that they had to part ways to meet again as they became a better versions of themselves.

Finally we can head home, Joan thought, feeling glad.

Although she was not too fatigued these days, she still felt that home was always where the heart was. She could only feel relaxed when she was home.

Caspian also got in Larry's car to return to Marsingfill with them.

When he came, he had taken a taxi, so he was glad that he could return with Larry in his car.

Larry, on the other hand, was happier as he had Caspian to drive for him. Poor me. I actually work for such an uncaring and exploitative boss.

"By the way, Caspian, how's your relationship with your girlfriend now?"

Larry suddenly became concerned about Caspian's love life.

"Still the same."

Caspian became a little awkward when asked about his love life.

"What do you mean by that? Why are you so shy like a girl?" Larry teased.

Looking at how embarrassed Caspian was, he could not help but make fun of him.

“Before we came to Pillere, I’ve brought her to meet my parents,” Caspian said with a grin.

“She’s met your parents so soon? I’m impressed.”

Larry smiled. He was happier than anyone else to see Caspian like this.

“What did your parents say about her?” Joan asked, feeling curious.

“They said that Nancy’s very fair-skinned, pretty and polite, but she’s too skinny, which isn’t very good for childbearing.”

As Caspian spoke, he was even more embarrassed.

“Whoa, your parents think really long-term, don’t they? They even thought about

childbearing! Haha!” Larry guffawed.

At this, Joan also chuckled.

“What’s so funny? How can you laugh at me? I don’t wanna drive anymore!” Caspian

protested annoyedly as he was embarrassed being laughed at by Larry.

“Alright, alright. We’ll stop laughing.” After Larry was done making fun of him, he asked

seriously, “When are planning to get engaged, Caspian?”

“We don’t have a specific date yet, but it should be within these three months.”

Caspian put on a happy smile, seemingly thinking of Nancy.

“You’re so lucky, Caspian. Even though you’re so stupid, you can still get such a good-looking girlfriend like Nancy!” Larry could not help but

tease again upon seeing Caspian’s expression.

Caspian was rendered speechless. Ever since Boss has Joan, he’s become chatty. He barely

spoke before this, but now, he’s so annoying.

However, he had no choice but to keep his mouth shut and focused on driving.

“Caspian, when are you going to bring Nancy to our place? We’ve never met her!”

Joan was curious about this girlfriend of Caspian as he was an adorably kind man.

“Soon. I’ll take her to meet you soon, Joan,” replied Caspian, brimming with happiness.

As they chatted and joked during the journey, they soon reached Norton Residence.

Lying in the bed in her bedroom, Joan somehow felt contented. No matter how fun and lively the life outside her home was, she still thought that her home was the coziest.

Lying in Larry's arms, she slowly drifted into sleep.

Looking at her sleeping soundly, Larry also found his heart filled with indescribable happiness.

Time flew, and three months went by.

During the period, Caspian had brought Nancy to Norton Residence several times.

Larry and Joan had had a very good impression of her the first time Caspian brought her over even though she was a little shy.

"Nice to meet you, Boss, Joan," Nancy greeted them sheepishly when she first met them.

"Nice to meet you too. You're Nancy, right? You're so pretty. Caspian is so lucky to have you as his girlfriend."

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As Joan spoke, she hurriedly stood up and got Nancy to sit.

Hearing what Joan said, Caspian was not displeased at all. Instead, he nodded approvingly as though she was right.

Meanwhile, Larry also smiled in relief and wished Caspian the best inwardly.

Joan and Nancy hit it off right away and soon became good friends.

From then on, Nancy often visited Norton Residence with Caspian. As Joan had a companion, she no longer felt bored at home.

"Joan," Nancy called her sweetly upon reaching Norton Residence that day.

Hearing Nancy's voice, Joan flashed her a smile. "You're here, Nancy. Come on in and have a seat."

By then, Joan was already eight months into her pregnancy. Despite having a large bump,

she still looked stunningly beautiful and exuded motherly vibes.

"Joan, it'll be the engagement day of me and Caspian tomorrow."

Nancy looked a little excited and thrilled.

"I know. You've said it more than ten times," Joan replied with a helpless smile as Nancy had repeated it multiple times.

"It's cause I'm nervous," Nancy explained with an embarrassed smile. Joan could relate to her as she was also no less nervous than Nancy back then when she got engaged.

She advised, "I understand how you feel, but you have to relax; otherwise, you'll be even more keyed up during the engagement ceremony."

"Okay!"

Nancy gave her a firm nod.

"Joan, you're already eight months pregnant, right? Does your baby move?"

Looking at Joan's bump, Nancy was full of curiosity.

"Of course, he does. He often kicks me as well. He is a naughty kid."

As soon as Nancy mentioned the baby, Joan got all motherly and happily shared about her pregnancy.

"Really? Let me listen to him."

Nancy placed her ear close to Joan's belly.

"Whoa, it's really moving," Nancy exclaimed with a surprised look on her face.

While Joan and Nancy were chatting in the bedroom, Larry and Caspian were in the study having tea.

Larry was not very busy with work recently and often stayed home to keep Joan company, so Caspian was free as well.

"Boss, nothing much happens in Marsingfill recently. Norton Corporation is thriving,

whereas Ward Group's development is also very stable. However, I think Carl may target

Norton Corporation again as he's been acting sneakily these days."

As usual, Caspian reported some of the latest developments in Marsingfill to Larry.

"This kind of small fry can't do anything."

The look in Larry's eyes were full of contempt as he had never seen Carl as a threat from the beginning.

“Just keep an eye on him. Once he does anything that harms Norton Corporation or Joan, get rid of him for good.”

“Yes, Boss,” replied Caspian.

After they were done talking about the important matters, Larry lightened up and urged

Caspian, who was standing by the side, “Enough standing. Are you still not going to sit

down after we’re done with the matters at hand?”

Larry had been telling Caspian not to be so formal when they worked as the latter was his

close friend, but Caspian liked to draw a clear line in their superior-subordinate relationship

when he worked.

Larry was satisfied yet angry at him for this.

After being urged by Larry to sit down, Caspian obeyed. He had always been a man who

knew when to be serious and relaxed.

“So are you nervous? You’re getting engaged tomorrow,” Larry asked with a smile.

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“What’s there to be nervous about?” Caspian looked calm. “Engagement is just a ceremony,

so I’m not nervous at all. If it’s a wedding, maybe I’ll be a little nervous.”

“Are you really not nervous at all?”

Larry found it hard to believe. This guy often spends a long time thinking about something,

but why would he not be nervous when he’s about to get engaged?

“Not at all.”

Caspian still had a nonchalant expression on his face.

“Oh, Nancy, why are you here?” Larry greeted with a smile as he looked past Caspian.

“Nancy’s here!”

Hearing Larry’s words, Caspian nearly spilled his tea. Yet, when he saw the evil smile on

Larry’s face, he immediately knew that the latter was pulling a trick on him and quickly

recomposed himself.

“So what if Nancy’s here? I’m not afraid of her. Besides, like I said, I’m not nervous about the

engagement at all!” Caspian repeated himself as if to cover up his earlier panic.

“Wow, such bravado.”

A woman’s voice was heard, leaving Caspian stunned. “I don’t mind that you’re not afraid of

me as I’m not scary after all. As for your claim that you’re not nervous, I beg to differ. You

were actually so nervous that you couldn’t even sleep last night, weren’t you?”

Nancy slowly walked into the study.

Seeing her, Caspian felt his legs turn jelly.

“Nancy, why are you here? I was just joking with Boss. Hehe. Hehe.”

Caspian went up to her while simpering. “Come on, Nancy, have a seat.

Are you tired? Take

a seat. I’ll give you a massage.”

Caspian’s behavior made Larry see him in a different light as Larry had never thought that

the former had such a side to him.

After a while, he came to his senses and teased, “So, Caspian, it turns

out that you were just

bragging. I thought you were so tough!”

“Boss, what else did Caspian say?” Nancy asked Larry curiously after giving Caspian a glare.

“Oh, Boss, please don’t talk anymore! I’m begging you! You’ve got me good!”

Caspian kept winking at Larry, but the latter did not bother him and smirked smugly.

Embarrassing Caspian gave him great pleasure.

Ignoring Caspian, Nancy said, “Boss, we still need to make some preparations for tomorrow,

so we can’t stay any longer. I’ve told Joan as well. We shall get going.”

“Alright, then. Joan and I will rush over tomorrow morning.”

Larry nodded in agreement.

After Caspian and Nancy left, he returned to his bedroom and saw Joan stroking her bump

like a mother would while muttering something with a smiling face.

The sight brought a smile to Larry’s face as he walked up to her quietly and asked, “Are you

talking to our baby again?”

Ever since her belly got bigger, Joan often talked to the baby as though he could hear her.

"Yes, I am," she replied sweetly.

Her adorable face filled Larry's heart with love.

Larry then gently put his head on her belly and felt the warmth from Joan and his baby.

Gradually, his restlessness vanished.

"Look, the baby's moving. He's saying hello to you!" Joan hurriedly told Larry after feeling a movement in her belly.

"That's right. I saw it too. He's quite a frisky kid, isn't he? He can't even stay still in his mommy's belly."

Larry chuckled. His heart was brimming over with happiness as he imagined the life ahead with his wife and son.

"Larry, have you decided on the baby's name?" asked Joan softly while lying in his arms.

"I've been thinking about it for a long time. Let's name him Leslie Norton. What do you think about it?" Larry told her the name he had in mind after thinking for a while.

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"Leslie, Leslie Norton," murmured Joan softly before she grinned and said, "Okay, let's call the baby Leslie."

"You have a name now, baby. You're Leslie Norton. Do you like the name?" asked Joan sweetly, while caressing her stomach.

"Let's share the name with our parents right away. They've been asking about it for a while now," reminded Joan. She shifted her gaze to Larry.

She hadn't used her phone or any devices that emitted radiation in a while since she was pregnant. Her daily pastime had since changed to watching tv and gardening.

Hence, Larry had to be the one to call their parents and share the news.

"Don't worry and rest well. I'll go tell them now," promised Larry lovingly, before planting a soft kiss on her forehead.

Larry woke up early the next morning and softly called out to Joan to get her up as well.

She had been sleeping a lot ever since she got pregnant and spent most of her time in dreamland.

At first, Larry didn't want to let her attend Caspian and Nancy's engagement party.

Unfortunately, Joan was persistent in going, so Larry had no choice. After freshening up, the two of them got into the car and hurried over to Caspian's place.

Caspian lived near the Norton Residence, so it only took a little over ten minutes to go over.

Larry was quick to help Caspian set everything up, while Joan stood at the side and stared happily.

The engagement party started soon after. Only a few people were present as only family members and several close friends were invited.

Naturally, parents from both sides were present as well.

The Barrymores were a pretty prominent family in Marsingfill, and Nancy was their only heir.

Hence, she was very much loved and well cared for since she was a child. Unlike Gabriella though, the Barrymores valued honor and discipline, so Nancy was a remarkable woman with good manners.

At first, Nancy's parents were upset to hear that their daughter was dating a bodyguard. The

Barrymores were a powerful family, so they didn't like the idea of having a bodyguard as a son-in-law.

Still, they never protested that relationship verbally because their daughter loved the man.

They weren't happy with their daughter's choice and didn't agree to that wedding until they learned that Nancy's boyfriend was Caspian.

Caspian was one of Larry's best friends. He might be a bodyguard on paper, but everyone knew that Caspian was practically the second in command of Norton Corporation.

How could they not be satisfied under those circumstances?

The engagement party was regal but simple. There weren't any complicated rituals. The emcee simply delivered a speech and kick off the ceremony before Caspian went down on one knee and asked for Nancy's hand in marriage. It was like any regular engagement party, and everyone left after going through the ceremony.

The only thing interesting about the whole thing was Caspian. He was especially handsome in his outfit, and everything looked picture perfect when he stood beside Nancy.

The only problem was that Caspian was blushing red the entire time. It was as if someone shoved a few bottles of wine down his throat just before the party started. In fact, he was stuttering and made no sense even when he was proposing to Nancy. That got everyone to giggle.

Larry and Joan sat quietly at their designated spots. They were both happy for the new couple.

Seeing the two engaged lovebirds got Joan to recall how things were at her own

engagement party. Sweetness ambushed her, and she was happy.

"Dear, when are we going to get married?" asked Joan.

Anticipation filled her voice as she spoke.

All their lives, women had always looked forward to having a romantic wedding ceremony that they could call their own.

The mere thought of the wedding got Joan to feel warm and fuzzy.

"We'll have a grand wedding as soon as the baby is born. I will get you the most beautiful wedding gown, and you will be the most stunning bride," replied Larry firmly as he looked into Joan's eyes.

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Joan smiled as brightly as a blooming flower. Hearing a response like that from the man she loved made her feel like she was the luckiest woman on Earth.

She was about to reply to him when she suddenly felt a sharp pain in her lower abdomen.

The pain was so intense and so sudden that Joan felt ambushed. She lost control and

shouted in response.

“Ah!” shouted Joan before she gripped Larry’s hand, “Larry, my stomach hurts. It hurts so

much.” It only took a few seconds for a layer of sweat to form on her forehead. All that

showed just how much pain she was in.

“Joan, Joan! What’s wrong?”

Larry panicked when he saw her suffering like that.

“I’ll take you to the hospital right away. Hang on, Joan!”

Joan’s screams stabbed Larry’s heart. He was so heartbroken that he couldn’t calm down. All

he did was hold Joan close while panicking.

Fortunately, the spectators heard the commotion and gave him some suggestions. Larry

called the hospital right away.

“Hello? Is this the hospital? My girlfriend’s stomach suddenly hurts. I think something is up

with the baby. Please send someone over right away! We’re at...”

After hanging up, Larry held Joan’s hand nervously and said in a comforting tone, “Don’t

worry, Joan. The doctor will be here soon. You have to hang on, Joan.”

“Larry, the baby. Will the baby be okay? Larry, I’m scared.”

Joan’s voice was quivering, and her grip on Larry’s hand was tight.

“It’ll be fine. The baby will be fine, and so will you. Don’t worry, the doctor will be here

soon.”

Larry’s voice was soothing and sweet. He had forced himself to calm down by then. Joan is

worried enough, and I cannot afford to panic. She needs me now!

Joan stopped shouting nervously after hearing those words. She clamped her mouth shut,

but groans still escaped from her lips. It was obvious that she was enduring intense pain.

It felt as if a century had passed before they finally heard the ambulance’s siren. Larry

seemed calmer when he shared, "The doctor is here, Joan. We'll be fine!"

The ambulance stopped near Larry and Joan before two doctors in white coats hopped out of it.

"Doctor, please tend to my girlfriend. You have to help her," requested Larry in an anxious tone.

"Calm down, sir. We'll do our best to help her. Please step aside for now."

The doctor spoke politely. They received many similar calls on a daily basis, so they were calm when dealing with the matter.

Larry understood that he would just get in the way, so he quickly moved aside. He was brimming with worry when he stared at Joan.

The two doctors performed a quick examination on Joan before they frowned and informed

Larry grimly, "Her water broke, and she is bleeding. We must take her to the hospital right way to give her proper treatment or her life will be at risk."

"Her life is at risk?" blurted Larry.

The doctor's words were the last straw that broke the camel's back.

Larry couldn't stay calm

anymore, and he clutched the doctor's collar before shouting, "Well, then what are you

waiting for? Take her to the hospital now! Please save her. Don't let anything happen to her."

Larry was agitated and unreasonable, but the doctor didn't dare to complain or even show

any signs of dissatisfaction. Before they rushed over, they were informed that Larry Norton,

the president of Norton Corporation, was the one who called. That was why they knew that

they couldn't afford to offend him.

The doctor quickly replied, "Don't worry. We will do everything we can.

Hurry up and get the

patient into the ambulance carefully."

Two medical staff quickly set the gurney up and carefully placed Joan on it before pushing

her to the ambulance.

Larry gave some quick instructions to the men he brought with him before he got into the

ambulance as well.

Inside the ambulance, Larry was drowning in worries as he stared at Joan. He couldn't help

but think of what the doctor said earlier, and that gripped his heart.

Joan, please be alright!

Joan was half-unconscious as she laid on the gurney. Despite that, she was still frowning,

and it was clear that she was still in pain.

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Joan was taken into the operating theater as soon as she reached the hospital.

Larry was so nervous that he wanted to go into the room as well, but the doctor stopped

him.

"Sir, the patient's condition is grim at the moment, and we must operate immediately.

Please wait here patiently," instructed the doctor firmly.

"Doctor, please..."

Larry spoke up, but the doctor ignored him. Instead, the doctor just turned around and went

into the operating theatre to do his job.

The lights in the operating theater were on, and an hour crawled on by.

Larry kept pacing around in front of the operating theater. He would turn his gaze to the

door of the operating theater every now and then, and he would pray that the surgery

would be over soon. He wanted to see how Joan was.

"Joan, Joan!"

Hurried footsteps accompanied nervous calls as they echoed in the hospital corridor. Finnick

had taken Vivian over to the hospital.

"Larry, how is Joan?" asked Vivian.

Her eyes shone as soon as she saw Larry, and she hurried over to him to ask him about the

situation.

"Things are not looking good. She is inside, and the doctor is operating on her now,"

answered Larry while wearing a horrified expression.

"Everything was fine just days ago. How did it turn out like this?" said Vivian.

She looked terrible and was holding Finnick's arm as she spoke.

"Please let everything be alright! If anything were to happen to Joan..."

"Shut up," scolded Finnick, "They're treating her now, aren't they? Stop bullsh*tting and just

wait patiently. What's the point of panicking?"

Only then did Vivian realize that she had said the wrong words. She lowered her head

guiltily and stopped talking. She waited patiently outside the operating theatre. It seemed

she had recalled something soon after, and her eyes reddened with tears.

Finnick was just as nervous as Vivian, but he had been through a lot of hurdles and dealt

with too many disasters. He knew that they couldn't afford to panic, so he walked to Larry

and tapped on his son's shoulder. Finnick then said, "You should stand numbly here, either.

Take a seat and rest up. You will be very busy once Joan's surgery is over."

Larry nodded because he knew that his father was right. The former turned around quietly and sat on the bench.

Time trickled by, and two more hours passed them by.

Just then, the door to the operating theater was opened. The doctor walked out of the room with a heavy heart.

Larry, Finnick, and Vivian rushed over when they saw the doctor.

"How is it, doctor? Is Joan alright?" asked Larry quickly as he stared at the doctor.

"The patient's life is still hanging on the balance. Her water broke, and it is likely that the

baby will be born prematurely. Unfortunately, her bleeding is a bad sign, so you should all

prepare yourselves for the worst," replied the doctor grimly.

“What is that supposed to mean?” asked Larry.

He felt as if he had fallen into the deepest, coldest pit. Fear was spreading all across his body.

The worst case scenario is that it is likely that you will have to choose between saving the mother or the baby. If that happens, the mother might become barren afterward...”

The doctor trailed off. It was obvious that he was waiting for Larry to decide.

“If the worst happens, then please save the mother,” replied Larry without even a hint of hesitation.

Larry’s love for Joan was deeply rooted in his very soul. He still felt apologetic and guilty for abandoning his unborn child, but he could not hesitate at a moment like that.

“He’s right. Save the mother,” added Finnick. Vivian, on the other hand, didn’t say anything.

Both Finnick and Vivian wanted to have grandkids, but under such circumstances, saving the mother was the best option. It didn’t matter if Joan would become barren, and they would never have a grandkid. They wouldn’t regret their decision.

The doctor nodded when he saw that everyone was in agreement. He said, “Okay, then if it comes to it, we will save the mother. Still, nothing is set in stone. There is a good chance that we can save both the mother and the baby, so you don’t need to feel hopeless. We will do everything we can.”

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“Thank you, doctor,” said Larry upon learning that there was still hope. He sounded hopeful when he uttered those words.

The doctor gave Larry an affirmative nod before returning to the operating theater.

“Joan is such a sweet girl. Why is this happening to her?”

Vivian couldn’t hold her tears in any longer. After the doctor went back into the operating

theater, she wiped her tears away as she was very sad to hear the news. Finnick sighed. He couldn't bring himself to say anything, so he waited quietly and patiently.

Larry's mind was all over the place at that moment. He recalled everything that happened after Joan got pregnant, and he knew what having a baby meant to her. He didn't know how to face Joan if they lost the baby, and he could only imagine how devastated she would be.

The more he thought about it, the more frustrated he felt. In the end, he stopped his mind from going to that dark place and waited patiently.

The torturous wait continued to drag on. Two more hours passed. The light on the door of the operating theater finally got turned off. Everyone stared nervously at the door of the operating theatre as they waited for the end result.

Larry was so terrified that he didn't dare to face anything, but he had no choice. He had to go through with it.

"How is it, doctor?" asked Larry stiffly after he walked up to the doctor. The doctor exited the room while looking exhausted. When he saw Larry and the others, the doctor shook his head in exasperation.

Larry's heart skipped a beat when he saw the doctor shaking his head like that. We must've lost the baby.

The mere thought got Larry's legs to go numb. He was about to ask the doctor what the verdict was when the doctor spoke up.

"What is going on? Your wife is only eight months pregnant, so how is the premature baby over three kilograms? The baby is so plump and healthy that there is no sign of him being premature."

The doctor looked confused. He was talking to himself and to Larry at that moment.

"Wait, what did you say? Did you say that the baby is fine?" asked Larry in disbelief. He was

so happy that he smiled from ear to ear.

"Yeah, I just told you, right? It's a chubby fella that weighs over three kilograms," replied the doctor, who stared at Larry. It looked like the doctor was wondering if there was something wrong with Larry's ears.

"Then, why the hell did you shake your head earlier?" growled Larry. He was tempted to punch the good doctor right across the face, but happiness soon overwhelmed him.

The baby is fine, and so is Joan! There is nothing better than that.

Moreover, I'm a dad now!

Larry felt surreal and ecstatic when he thought about how he was a father.

Vivian and Finnick sighed a breath of relief upon hearing the good news from the side. Both

the mother and the child are safe. All is good!

"Doctor, can we go see how Joan is?" asked Larry immediately. He really wanted to see how

Joan was and to meet his baby.

"Of course, but please be aware that the patient is still weak and needs to rest. Remember

not to make a ruckus," answered the kind-hearted doctor.

"Got it. Thank you, doctor."

Larry was quick to thank the doctor before he walked into the room with his parents.

Joan had regained consciousness by then, but she still looked pale and weak. A baby was

sleeping in her arms as a beautiful smile donned her face.

"Joan," said Larry softly when he entered the room.

Joan shifted her gaze as soon as she heard Larry's voice. She sounded delighted when she

told him, "Come quick, Larry. This is our baby."

"Mom, dad, you're here too," greeted Joan politely when she saw Finnick and Vivian.

"Yeah, we came to see you. How are you feeling, Joan?"

The elderly couple walked to Joan. They were genuinely concerned about her.

"I'm okay now. Sorry for worrying everyone," replied Joan sweetly.

Larry couldn't speak. He was staring at the baby in Joan's arms. His heart filled with an inexplicable feeling that words could not describe. That was the bond between a father and his child. The endless paternal love within him got ignited the second he saw the baby.

"Come, let daddy hold you."

Larry got the baby from Joan. At that moment, he was on cloud nine, and it felt like his life was complete. He no longer had any regrets.

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The little baby in Larry's arm was exploring the new world he had just arrived in. When the baby's gaze found Larry, his tiny lips curved slightly. It was as if the baby was smiling at Larry.

"Look, look! The baby is smiling."

Finnick and Vivian were beyond excited. They had been waiting for so long, and they were finally blessed with a grandchild. The joy in them was indescribable.

"Come here. Let grandma hold you too."

Vivian suppressed the immense joy in her heart before she headed over to take the baby from Larry.

The family of five was happy together, and the bland hospital room seemed much brighter.

Caspian and Nancy still had some things to tend to at their engagement party, so they couldn't visit Joan at the hospital.

Regardless, Larry called the newly engaged couple and told them the good news.

Joan went into labor while attending Caspian's and Nancy's engagement party. There

weren't many guests there, but a lot of journalists showed up.

Those journalists witnessed everything, so the news entitled „The Wife of Norton

Corporation's President Was Rushed To The Hospital" started trending. It made it so that many instantly learned that Joan was hospitalized, and that Larry was in

the hospital as well. That was just how influential the paparazzi were.

Larry didn't want to let people with ill-intentions take advantage of the situation and spread malicious rumors. Hence, when the journalists showed up in the hospital and asked Larry about Joan, he announced directly that his fiancée had given him a son that day.

Soon, Larry's response to the camera became a written story shared all over the internet.

Everyone learned of it, and Marsingfill, which was usually quiet, became lively.

Carl was watching the television when he learned everything.

His serene expression instantly turned dark upon hearing that news. He clenched his fists, and hatred burned wildly in his eyes.

It is them again! Larry Norton and Joan Watts.

My life is so miserable, and I can't even live like a normal person anymore. Why do you two

get to be so happy and even have a baby together?

"I will not take this quietly!"

Carl tossed the remote to the floor. He looked downright evil at that moment.

You think you've gotten your happily ever after? I will make you pay for everything you've done!

Carl's gaze exuded a vicious and toxic vibe. I will fight! I will fight this unjust destiny even if it's the last thing I do.

It was obvious that the emotional distress Carl had endured had distorted his mind. At that moment, nothing was more important to him. He must destroy the happy life that Joan and Larry shared.

Gabriella was no longer with Carl. She had lost all hope after going through all that injustice at the Johnsons.

She struggled for a long time before she finally made the tough decision of leaving the

Johnsons by divorcing Carl.

Doing all that undoubtedly meant that Gabriella's life would be full of hardship and poverty.

She had no skills, and no one was around to protect her. She would struggle all alone in that complicated society, and she would definitely face a lot of danger. The direst bit, however, was that Gabriella was pregnant with Carl's baby at the same time.

She could've chosen to tough it out with the Johnsons because she was pregnant. They would have to be good for her and the baby regardless of how Carl treated her, she would at least have no financial troubles.

Unfortunately, she was truly done with Carl. She didn't want to waste her youth on a man who only saw her as a plaything.

She might've been chased out of the Ward family, but that didn't mean that she no longer had any dignity.

When Gabriella first asked for a divorce, Carl laughed and mocked her. He didn't believe that Gabriella could survive without the Johnson family's care, so he took it as a joke.

He didn't know that she was serious until she had requested several times for that divorce.

In the end, Carl agreed to grant her the divorce she wanted. He believed that Gabriella would regret her decision soon and would be on her knees to beg him to take her back.

That belief got Carl to grin amusingly.

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It had been a while since the divorce was finalized, but Gabriella never returned to the Johnson family's home or ask Carl to take her back.

That prompted Carl to send his men out to look for her. Unfortunately, Gabriella was nowhere to be seen. It was as if she had fallen off of the face of the world, and there was no sign of her anywhere.

Carl became even more worried when he learned that Gabriella was pregnant with his baby.

He prayed that she would be back soon, but even something as minor as that had become a fantasy.

He became more unreasonable after Gabriella left. He locked himself in the house all day, and no one knew what he was doing.

The news about Joan and Larry simply triggered Carl and made him redirect his focus to them. He had put everything on the line to destroy them.

At that moment, Carl was defeated and had lost everything, so he no longer cared about his life.

When Larry broke both of Carl's leg and got the latter disabled, the insurance company compensated Carl with a hefty sum.

Carl had always been unwilling to spend that money. However, he could carry out his final plan if he added that money to the liquid assets that he embezzled earlier from his family business.

He knew that even if he were successful in exacting his vengeance, Norton Corporation would still have enough resources to trace everything back to him. But who cares? Living meant nothing to Carl at that moment. Death was a sweet release, and with that idea in his mind, he decided to tap into his last resource. That day, a man in a black outfit and a black mask showed up in Carl's place.

Everyone was curious about who the man was, but they didn't investigate further because he specified that he was there to see Carl Johnson.

The man in black knocked on the door to Carl's room.
"Come in."

Carl's voice was calm. It seemed he had been expecting that visit. The door slowly flung open. Carl grinned when he saw the guy there, and he greeted, "Yuri, you're here."

"Carl, I heard that you got into some trouble lately."

The man in black had a heavy accent when he spoke, and he was definitely from a foreign

country.

His name was Yuri Jovovich, a member of the mafia in J Nation. He traveled to Marsingfill some time ago while on a mission, but his subordinates were all killed before he accomplished his mission. Carl showed up in time and rescued Yuri when the latter was in grave danger. Due to that, Yuri was thankful for that help and promised that he would do Carl a favor in the future.

When Carl called Yuri over, it meant that it was time to return that favor. "My issue is rather complicated, but with you here, anything is possible," replied Carl.

He laughed it off. Carl never told Yuri the truth, anyway.

Rescuing Yuri was just a coincidence. Carl was driving around that day when a bloody man suddenly stumbled on to the middle of the street and asked for help. Yuri was already dying at the time, so Carl wanted to step on the gas and leave as quickly as possible. However, the man spoke with a heavy accent and claimed that he was a member of the mafia in J Nation. He also promised to repay Carl a favor when the time came.

That promise was what got Carl to change his stance. He was an ambitious man and having an ally like that would undoubtedly be beneficial.

Regardless of the situation, having an ally from J Nation's mafia would help a lot. Moreover, if he was sent to Chanaea for a mission, then he must be rather influential within his organization.

Carl helped Yuri into the car upon coming to that conclusion. The former even sent the latter to the best hospital to receive treatment.

Yuri and Carl had been friends since then. Whether their friendship would last without the allure of power and money... Well, that was something no one really knew.

Yuri Jovovich, the mafia member of J Nation... That was Carl's last trump card.

“Stop lying to me, Carl. You wouldn’t have called and asked for my help if your issue is only slightly troublesome. Besides, you promised that this will be the only request you will ever make from me.”

Yuri spoke arrogantly. He knew just how powerful he was, and Carl making the call meant that the latter couldn’t solve the issue on his own.

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Carl wasn’t angry when he saw how proud Yuri was. If anything, the former felt like laughing aloud.

Good. The more arrogant you are, the more likely you will help me accomplish the mission.

That thought made Carl’s day that there was a spark in his eyes.

“It’s been so long since we last saw one another, but I still can’t hide anything from you,”

said Carl to butter Yuri up, “If that’s the case, then I won’t hide the truth anymore. I’d like to

ask you to help me destroy a man. He is Larry Norton, the president of Norton Corporation.”

“Larry Norton... From what I heard, this man is not a simple enemy.”

Yuri was proud, but that didn’t mean that he was dumb.

On the contrary, his intelligence and ability to read other’s expressions were the reason he got to where he was.

“Norton Corporation is the biggest corporate entity in Marsingfill, and having almost

complete control over the company is just one of Larry’s advantages. He also has a good

rapport with the underworld You’ve really overestimated me when you say that it is just slightly troublesome.”

F*ck, this arrogant punk knows so much. Carl still wore a polite grin on his face.

“Norton Corporation might be powerful in Marsingfill, but you are not a citizen of the city.

You live in J Nation, and from what I have learned, you will be heading back over soon.

“Yes, this is an arduous task, but you will return to your country, regardless of whether the mission is carried out successfully. Larry might be powerful, but even he can’t go all the way over to J Nation and fight a formidable foe like the organization you work for. The notoriety of your organization is famous globally, and he is not stupid enough to go after you guys.”

Every word made sense, and Carl spoke so politely and firmly that Yuri’s ego was slowly chipping his rationality away.

“Well, you’re right about that. We have always thought little of all Chanaeans, and the president of a puny corporation means nothing to us.”

Yuri lifted his chin proudly as he spoke, and his voice was filled with discrimination.

You asshole. I wish Larry kills you off as soon as you accomplish the mission.

Carl secretly gritted his teeth. He loathed Larry and Joan, but hearing a J Nation citizen diss

Chanaea made him angry.

I can’t act out my frustration before the deed is done...

“You are right, Yuri. Then, will you be able to do it?”

Carl waited patiently for Yuri’s reply.

“Well...”

Despite everything that was said, Yuri was still hesitating because he had to go back to J

Nation in two days. There was no point in offending a powerful figure in Marsingfill at that moment.

“Yuri, I heard that you are a man of your word, and I will not ask for anything else from you.

All I ask is that you do this one thing for me,” said Carl with a straight face on, “Besides, you

are too strong to be toppled by a task like this. Why are you still hesitating? Are you scared?”

Carl knew that the more arrogant Yuri was, the more bothered he would be when his ability was questioned.

“Hah! Me fearing him? That’s not even possible. Just tell me what you need me to do. I will show you how powerful my organization and I are!”

Yuri no longer hesitated and agreed to help when he saw that a cripple was discriminating against him.

“That is great. I knew I can count on you, Yuri.”

Carl was delighted to hear that. He quickly butter Yuri up even more by saying, “The task is actually quite simple. Let me give you an overview. “Both Larry and his wife, Joan Watts, are in the hospital now because she just gave birth to a child. She will be tired because she needs to take care of the baby.

“You and your men have many options. You can kill Joan, or go after the baby. “It’d be best if you can bring them over, but if that is not possible, just kill them off in the hospital!”

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Carl’s voice had so much hatred in it that even Yuri, who was standing at the side, could sense it. A chill ran down Yuri’s spine.

“Y-you want me to kill them?”

Yuri started hesitating. Killing either Joan or the baby would mean making a lifelong enemy out of Larry, and Yuri wondered if it was worth it.

“Do not let them off the hook even if you can’t kill them. I want you to torture them,” spat

Carl through gritted teeth.

After saying his piece, he got a package out from under the table and handed it to Yuri

before promising, “Here’s two million, Yuri. Take it as your compensation for carrying out the mission. Once everything is done, I will give you another three million. Don’t feel bad

accepting the money. It is but a small thank-you gift from me.”

Carl didn’t give Yuri all the money because he wanted to keep some for himself. If anything went awry, Carl would use it for his escape plan.

The sack of money in front of Yuri drowned out that last bit of hesitation he felt. For a

middle-ranked mafia leader like Yuri, two million was a huge deal.

At first, Yuri only felt compelled to carry out the task because he wanted to clear his debt.

He became a lot more inspired with the cash in front of him.

"I see that you are truly a good friend, so don't worry, Carl. I will definitely complete the task

and make Larry pay for what he's done!" said Yuri confidently.

Carl nodded in satisfaction. As suspected, Yuri is a greedy, money-minded fool who changes

his stance as long as money is involved. That's good. This is exactly what I need.

You've accepted my money. Now, do my bidding!

Carl grinned slightly. A calculating glow that screamed double-cross was on his face, but

Yuri was too engrossed in the money to notice anything.

The scheme was slowly and secretly unfolding...

Larry had been taking care of Joan every day from morning to night after she gave birth to the baby.

Hence, she had recovered quite a bit and could go home after a few more days.

"Leslie, come let daddy hold you."

Larry had a loving grin on him when he took the baby out of the baby cot. Happiness was

overflowing in his heart.

"My mom said that the baby looks exactly like me when I was younger.

Looks like he chose

to take after me. Awh, I guess that can't be helped since I am so amazing," said Larry in a

narcissistic tone. Glee was written all over his face.

Joan found Larry's immature style to be hilarious. Still, she mercilessly retorted, "I just hope

that he doesn't become like you when he's older. I heard that a certain someone didn't like

going to the toilet and often wet his bed until he was eight years old.

Dear, you are such a

wet... I mean, wonderful example."

"H-how did you know?"

Larry turned red with shame. Joan's grin and her seemingly nonchalant gaze got him to feel

so awkward that he wanted to hide under the bed.

"Ah, my mom is just messing with you. That is not real at all. Don't be fooled."

Larry tried to deny it, but Joan had already seen through it all. "It's fine.

So what if you wet

the bed? It's not a big deal. You're so good in everything else after all, so it's only natural

that there are some things that other kids can do easily while you struggled a little," teased

Joan.

Then, she stared amusingly at Larry. Hah! I'd like to see you boast now.

"That only happened because I had a nightmare... Ah, never mind,

let's just change the

topic, okay?"

Larry was blushing red when he tried to explain the situation, but he

later realized that there

was no way to do so. Hence, he ignored Joan completely and went out to have some fresh

air.

When he left the room, he bumped into a stranger and instinctively

looked up to see who it

was. Turned out, it was a plump doctor in a white coat. Larry had hit the doctor so hard that

the good doctor was massaging his own tummy.

"Sorry, doctor. I didn't see you there. Are you alright?" asked Larry, who sounded a little

apologetic.

"I'm fine."

The doctor's reply was a little stiff and walked away without ever looking back.

Ah, the doctor was probably behaving that way because he's mad at me.

Larry tossed that

incident out of his mind after grinning bitterly.

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Larry was working on his phone as he stood behind the door. He had been using his phone

to read the reports that his assistant sent and would deal with certain matters when needed.

Just then, a nurse with a cart walked over.

"Hi Denise, are you here to deliver the meal?" asked Larry with a smile. As requested by Larry, the hospital specially assigned Denise to take care of Joan's diet.

Naturally, that cost extra.

"That's right, Mr. Norton."

Denise didn't look at Larry, and she sounded a little off when she said, "I, uh, I better head in now, Mr. Norton."

"Okay, Denise. Thank you," replied Larry politely before asking, "Denise, are you troubled?"

Or are you in a bad mood or something? How about I take over for you?"

Larry suggested sweetly when he saw how distracted Denise was.

He could help take care of Joan anyway, and it was right for him to take over if Denise was burdened.

"No, no. It's fine. I can do it. You don't need to worry at all, Mr.

Norton," replied Denise

quickly as if she didn't want to trouble Larry.

Larry didn't push when he saw how reluctant she was. The two of them weren't close

anyway, and they only knew each other on a professional level.

Denise pushed the cart into Joan's room.

"Hey Denise, you're here," greeted Joan politely when she saw Denise there.

"Yeah, Ms. Watts. It's time for lunch," replied Denise with a skin-deep grin on, "This is what

the hospital prepared today. Here, let me feed you."

"Wow, everything looks good today."

Joan was grinning like a kid. She never noticed anything off with Denise and was simply

happy to see the delicious meal.

Larry entered the room just then.

"Why are you so happy over a meal? It's as if you've been starving," teased Larry lovingly.

Joan ignored him and picked up her cutleries to chow down.

"Ms. Watts, wait," interrupted Denise suddenly.

"What's wrong, Denise? Is something up?"

Joan didn't know what was up or why Denise was acting so strangely, so the former asked curiously.

"N-no, I just made a mistake and thought that I saw something in the food," answered

Denise. She looked like she was struggling to speak up, and grinned awkwardly when she

added, "Ah, these old eyes of mine are getting worse. Sorry, Ms. Watts."

"Denise, that is not true. You're only a little over thirty. How is that old?" replied Joan with a

smile. She thought that Denise was just joking.

Larry stood at the side and stared at Joan without saying a word. For some unknown reason,

he felt like something was off with Denise that day, but he couldn't quite put a pin on it. It's

as if she is hiding something...

Unfortunately, he had no way of figuring the problem out since Denise refused to voice up.

All he could do was to observe from the side.

Joan picked up the spoon and sipped some soup.

"Wow, that is amazing. Denise, the hospital chef's cooking is getting better!" praised Joan

instantly. She showed no signs of hesitation and was ready to dig in.

"M-Ms. Watts, the food might not be cooked properly. Let me get you something else."

Denise finally spoke up when she saw how Joan was about to eat up. The former had been

struggling for a while, but she had since made a decision. The gaze in her eyes was filled

with sorrow.

Joan got curious and was stunned momentarily. She simply stared as Denise put the food

back into the cart.

"What's wrong, Denise? Just tell us if there is anything troubling you. I will help you if I can."

Larry finally figured out what was up. There must be something wrong with the food.

Denise panicked after hearing what Larry said.

"I-I..."

Denise hesitated. She didn't know what to say, but the sweat forming on her forehead had betrayed her and showed everyone just how nervous she was at that moment.

"The food was poisoned, wasn't it? Who is the culprit? I know you don't want to hurt anyone, so just tell me the truth, Denise. We won't make things difficult for you."

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1598

Denise's expression had exposed everything, so Larry was quick to deduce everything.

Hearing those words got Denise to stop hiding and finally confessed.

"I am so sorry, Mr. Norton and Ms. Watts," said Denise apologetically and in a regretful tone,

"I didn't want to do this either, but I have no choice. Someone made me poison your food. I

never wanted to do any of it. Please forgive me!"

"Someone ordered you to do that? Who is that person?"

Larry was furious when he heard Denise's confession. We're lucky that she has a conscience.

If she doesn't... the consequences would be unimaginable.

"I don't know who the culprit is either. I received a call today, and the man told me that he

has kidnapped my child. He said to do as he instructed or he will hurt my baby. He even

forbade me from calling the police and threatened to kill my baby if I do."

Denise cried as she told the truth. She walked to Larry and went on her knees to beg for his

help. She said, "Mr. Norton, I never intended to hurt Ms. Watts. Please save my child since I

confess in time and turn things around before it's too late? I know that you are a powerful

man, and you must have the means to save my baby."

Joan had always been kind, so she couldn't bear to see how crushed Denise was.

"Denise didn't have a choice, Larry, and she never actually ended up doing anything to hurt

us. Instead, she confessed, and that alerted us. Please help her," said Joan.

“Calm down, girls. I know that Denise’s hands must’ve been tied, and I never intended to blame her. Still, we have to work around this carefully. I will send Caspian to find out where Denise’s kid is. I am almost certain that they guessed that Denise wouldn’t do as asked, so they must’ve had a backup plan,” replied Larry. He helped Denise up before giving her a forgiving and understanding nod.

“Then, what do we do now?” asked Joan nervously. She knew that Larry must’ve already made a plan because he had already put things that way.

“All we can do is wait until they reveal themselves,” answered Larry, “Denise, it’s not safe for you to stay here, so go home for now. If that is not an option, then stay in another corner within the hospital. I will call you immediately after I learn about your kid’s situation.”

“Okay, sure,” replied Denise immediately, “I will do anything as long as my child is safe.

Please help me, Mr. Norton.”

Larry didn’t answer. He simply nodded. Denise said goodbye to Joan before leaving the room entirely.

Larry was deep in thoughts as he watched Denise leave.

Who would want to hurt Joan and I?

He honestly couldn’t figure it out. Anyone who held any grudge against them was either crushed or disabled, so they didn’t have the resources to carry out a task like that.

Looks like I will have to watch my back for now.

He called Caspian later and instructed, “Caspian, help me locate Denise’s child right away.

The kid was kidnapped, and you must have him rescued.”

“Understood.”

Caspian had always been that direct when dealing with serious matters.

At that moment, Caspian and Nancy were on their way to the hospital.

They had been busy

and didn’t have time to visit Joan until then.

After hanging up, Larry realized that someone was spying on him from behind the door.

That got Larry's eyes to glow with cruelty and evil.

"Who's there?" roared Larry before he went over to chase after the culprit.

The man outside the room quickly ran upon realizing that he was discovered.

He had already left when Larry opened the door, and all that could be seen was a shadow

turning a corner.

"Joan, I'll go check things out and will be back soon," informed Larry, before he turned

around and ran down the corridor.

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The man was fast, but he left an obvious trail behind him so Larry wouldn't lose him. It was

almost as if he wanted Larry to catch him.

Eventually, Larry found the man on the rooftop of the building.

He was dressed in a white lab coat and wore a face mask which covered most of his face,

but Larry could see the look of mockery in his eyes.

"You fell for it!" the man said in Chanaean with a strange accent.

He's from J Nation? Oh, no... I'm not his target... They're actually after Joan! I can't believe

how stupid I was! They were obviously trying to lure me away, but I was so obsessed with

finding the mastermind behind everything that I let this possibility slip my mind! I'm almost

there, Joan! Please be all right...

Larry thought to himself as he turned around and ran back to Joan's ward.

Larry heard her scream as he got closer to her ward and ran at full speed towards the door.

He let out a sigh of relief when he arrived and saw Joan about to leave the room. Oh, thank

goodness, she's all right!

"Larry! Our baby! They took our baby! Go get him back!" Joan's voice was filled with despair.

A man dressed like a doctor had entered her ward moments after Larry left and snatched

her baby out of her arms.

“What?”

Larry tensed up instantly when he realized he had been so focused on Joan that he didn't even notice his child missing.

It hasn't even been a minute since her screams earlier, so whoever took my baby couldn't have gotten far! If their plan was to kidnap my baby, then their main priority must be escaping the hospital!

With that thought in mind, he then ran out of the room and made his way towards the hospital's entrance.

Larry stopped in his tracks when he saw the two guys from J Nation at the hospital's entrance. His eyes were filled with rage, and he looked like he wanted to rip them both to pieces.

The two guys stopped running as well and had troubled looks on their faces when they saw Caspian and Nancy in front of them.

The guy holding the baby was Yuri who had been sent by Carl to go after Larry and Joan.

After a lot of planning, Yuri decided it was easier for him to complete the mission by kidnapping the baby instead of Joan.

Yuri didn't have a lot of men in Marsingfill, and it would be too conspicuous to kidnap someone in a public area with a large group of people anyway.

As such, Yuri decided to only bring one guy with him for the operation. Unfortunately for him, Caspian and Nancy had arrived right as his plan was about to succeed.

“Give me my baby, and I'll spare your life,” Larry pointed at Yuri and said coldly.

“Do you take me for a fool or something? I'm not about to hand over my one and only ticket out of here!”

Yuri was panicking a little at being surrounded, but he refused to back down without a fight.

“You guys had better think this through! I have your baby, and he’ll be the one to pay the price for your rash actions!” Yuri threatened them coldly, not leaving any room for doubt.

“No, please! Don’t hurt my baby, I’m begging you!”

Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1600

Joan was the first to crack in the face of Yuri’s threats.

She was the type who wouldn’t think twice to sacrifice her life if it would keep her baby safe.

Yuri sneered. “Good! It’s reassuring to see how much you love your baby! Now, back off and

let me get out of here unless you want to see your baby bleed! I’m not sure how much

blood he can afford to lose, though!”

His tone was ice-cold, and he sounded like he would really kill the baby.

“All right, you have our word! Just don’t hurt my baby!”

Joan had lost all rationality when she saw her baby in danger. “Larry, will you please let him

go? I just want our baby to be safe!”

It pained Larry to see how helpless and desperate she was, but he knew it was even more

unlikely for him to get his baby back if he let Yuri leave.

As he couldn’t tell her that in front of Yuri, all he could do was flash her a reassuring gaze.

Joan seemed to have understood what he meant and slowly calmed down.

She had so much trust in Larry to get the job done that it had become second nature to her.

Yuri got increasingly nervous when he saw them all simply staring at him in silence.

“This is your last warning! Let me go, or be prepared to give your precious baby a funeral!”

he repeated his threat in a louder voice.

Fearing for his baby’s safety, Larry gave in and motioned for Caspian and Nancy to step aside.

Yuri let out a sigh of relief when he saw them backing off. Phew! Good thing I’ve got this

baby in my hands, or I wouldn't even be able to make it out of here alive!

With a gleeful smile on his face, he then slowly stepped out of the hospital while keeping an eye on Larry and Caspian.

Larry waited until Yuri was about to pass him and Caspian by when he asked, "Carl sent you, didn't he?"

His tone was filled with certainty, and Yuri felt his eyelid twitch a little when he heard that.

Did he already know about me and Carl? Is this all just an act? Yuri's confidence began to

waver when he assumed Larry had known about his plans all along.

"It doesn't matter who sent me. Your baby is in my hands right now!"

He tried his best to sound as calm as possible despite being utterly terrified.

"Carl must've paid a lot of money to have J Nation's mobsters working for him!" Larry said with a smile.

"Y-You..." Yuri was at a loss for words from the shock of having his suspicions confirmed. So

Larry does know all about it!

Noticing his window of opportunity, Caspian made his move while Yuri was distracted. He

grabbed the arm that Yuri was holding against the baby's throat and twisted it with all his might.

Thanks to his immense strength as a former special forces agent, Caspian was able to dislocate Yuri's shoulder with ease.

There was a loud snap, followed by Yuri's agonized screams.

"Ahhhhhh!"