

"Nicole, you're still in pain. Why did you lash out at Jared? What happened to the both of you?"

Martin stared at Nicole, confused and curious.

"Nothing happened. Can I just go home now?" Nicole asked Martin.

"Yeah sure, but you can't go home on your own." Martin helped her up and walked out.

"I'll take you."

"Thank you."

Nicole looked at him and nodded.

"There really isn't a need for formalities."

Martin shook his head.

"I really don't understand the both of you."

Then, he helped Nicole into his car and drove her home.

"Give me the address of your house," Martin asked Nicole the moment he got into the car.

"You've been to my house before, haven't you?" she asked as a hint of doubt flashed across her eyes.

"In your current state, do you think I should send you back to Mrs. Wallace Sr's house? Are you sure she won't get mad when she sees you the way you are?"

Martin eyed Nicole, not knowing what to say to her anymore.

Nicole sighed. She really did get hit on her head, or else she would not have asked him to send her to her grandmother's residence.

But after some thought, she realized that she had no other place to go home to, barring Jared's.

But then again, she did not want to be in Jared's presence in her current state, so she said, "Send me to the hotel."

"Hotel? Do you not have anywhere else to go to?" Martin frowned and asked Nicole.

"Nope."

"Alright."

Martin drove her to the hotel, disappointed.

"Do you really want to stay here?" Martin surveyed the lobby once they had arrived.

"Thank you again for sending me."

Nicole opened the car door and was about to get off when she spun around and glared at Martin, having remembered something.

"Please keep this as a secret. Even if Jared asks you where I'm staying, please do not tell him," she said.

"Is that even necessary?"

Martin looked at Nicole with his brow raised.

"It very much is, so please, help me out."

Nicole clenched her fists and begged him. *πισνελεβσσκ.φσm* Then, she slammed the door shut and made her way into the hotel.

As Martin watched her disappearing into the lobby, he could not help but shake his head, before muttering, "Women really do confuse me."

The hotel which Nicole had entered was also the one that Carl was staying at.

After she had checked in, one of the staff members brought her to a room directly across Carl's.

"Miss, this is your room."

"Alright, thanks." Nicole said, waiting for the staff to leave, after which she knocked on Carl's door.

Carl was working out in the room when he heard a knock and walked up to the door to see who was standing outside. He wasn't expecting it to be Nicole, and so, he quickly answered the door.

"Nicole, what are you doing here?"

Carl greeted her happily, but the sight of the bandage on Nicole's head shocked him.

"What happened to your head?" he asked.

"It's nothing. I got myself into a minor accident and bruised my head."

Nicole walked into the room without any care in the world.

Seeing that Nicole was in good spirits, Carl was not as worried.

"What would you like to drink?"

"Water," she replied, prompting Carl to get her a glass.

"Are you working out?"

Nicole caught sight of Carl's abs as she took the glass of water from him.

"Yeah, I've got nothing much to do, so I've decided to work out for a bit."

Carl quickly put a shirt on.

"That's good."

"Anyway, what have you been up to these days?"

"There were some issues at my brother's company. I was having a discussion about the solutions that we can implement with a friend of mine today," Nicole lied, in spite of the fact that she had never done that to him, especially in regards to her personal life.

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Chapter 1122

"How severe are the issues?" he asked, genuinely concerned.

"Do you need my help?"

"No, we've found a solution already," Nicole replied.

"Oh yes, I've been meaning to tell you this. The Beacons which I've ordered will be produced in the next few days. We can head over to the factory and pick the shipment up together."

"Sure, no problem. And where should I send them to?" Carl asked.

"You can pass them to Zane," Nicole replied.

"He'll know what to do."

"Alright."

"That's all I came here to tell you about. I'll," Nicole said, having done what she came here to do, and proceeded to leave.

Carl took his coat while saying, "Judging by the state you're in, I think I should just send you home."

"It's fine. I'm staying in the room across yours,"  $\text{ισνελεβσσκ.ϕσm}$  she said, after which she noticed that he was frozen as he stared at her, baffled.

"Across mine?"

Carl could not believe what he had just heard.

"Do you really want to stay here in this hotel?"

"Yeah, you won't have to send me home. Bye now."

Nicole walked out of his room and into hers.

Lying on her bed, Nicole's mind was racing as she pondered on the way Jared had acted back in the hospital.

'When did he become so compliant? He left just because I asked him to?! Back in the headquarters, Jared had just reached, and Max was already approaching him.

"Has everything been settled?" Jared queried, his face deadpan.

"Yes," Max replied.

"Sir, after having conducted an investigation for the past few days, I've found the man with a pentagram tattoo on his hand."

Upon hearing this news, Jared's heart skipped a beat.

"Where is he? it "He's currently in town."

"Don't alarm him. Just be discreet and take note of the people he meets." Jared said, before drifting off into his thoughts again.

This man must be an agent. I'm sure that through him, I'll be able to trace the man who is in charge...the one with the Leonardo shoes.

"Understood," Max said.

"Have you gotten any news about Conrad?" Jared asked.

"There's none so far," Max replied.

"Our people are still searching for him."

"Alright. Make sure you keep an eye on this tattooed guy. We might be able to find a few more leads through him," Jared said, unsmiling.

"Understood. I'll pass your orders on at once,"

Max finished, and walked out.

Jared sat in the office and was thinking quietly.

'After all this time, I've finally managed to gain some leads from all the investigations. The person who hurt grandpa? I'll make sure he pays for what he did once I get my hands on him!' "Sir, I've already made the arrangements," the tattooed man reported while standing before Henry.

"You weren't being followed when you came here, right?" Henry stared at him.

"No."

"Good job," Henry said.

"You may take a few days off. After you're done, I need you back in that hideout so that you can keep an eye on Conrad. I'm worried that without you around, Jared's men might find him and take him away."

At this point, Conrad and the family were Henry's biggest worry.

If Jared managed to find them, Henry would be in hot soup.

"Sir, why not just dispose of Conrad? Once he is gone, everything will be settled."

The tattooed guy eyed Henry with a piercing look.

"What the hell do you know?" Henry asked.

"We might have kidnapped them, but we can't just start with this whole business of murdering them. These are two different things!"

Henry's initial motive was to become the chairperson. He did not wish to kill anyone, or else, everything that he had done up to this point would go to waste.

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#### Chapter 1123

"Right," Henry said.

"Well, the old man seems to be recovering well, so do you have any more bright ideas so as to leave him in a vegetative state? If you don't, I'm afraid that the both of us will be in hot water."

Henry Johnston had not been at ease since he discovered that his father, Maximillian Johnston, had been making a speedy recovery.

This would only mean that he would be forced vacate his position as the chairman of the Johnston Group.

At this juncture, the only option he had would be to deal with the old man as soon as possible "They have beefed up the security in the hospital," the man said.

" It's impossible to act against the old man."

"Still, we must make the impossible possible as soon as we can! This is our only chance to act. I'll be having nightmares if we don't act any sooner!"

Henry glanced at the tattooed guy.

"Yes, sir," the tattooed man affirmed.

After the both of them were done with the conversation, Henry placed his hat on and left the private room at the hotel.

After waiting for several minutes, the tattooed guy carefully examined his surroundings and strode out.

With his head bowed, he walked on and left after he was certain that nobody was on his tail.

As careful as he was, he did not know that he had been photographed by the security detail who was guarding Jared Johnston in the distance.

Jared was working when his phone burred. Upon picking it up to check his messages, he saw photos of a tattooed man and an unidentified person.

"Max, get someone to tail these two individuals, and see where they're going," Jared ordered.

"Yes, sir," Max replied.

Once evening had arrived, Jared returned to the villa.

Having not seen Nicole for a while now, he took his phone out and proceeded to make a call.

"Tia, has Nicole returned to the mansion?"

"Miss Riddle?" Tia answered.

"No, she didn't tell me that she was coming back today. Why? What's the matter? Did Miss Riddle head over to your place?"

Tia said, confused upon hearing the questions coming from Jared.

"During the day, she mentioned that she wanted to visit Mrs. Wallace Sr., so I thought she'd returned home after that. Well, she's not back yet, but she could be on her way. It's alright, I'll contact her."

Jared hung up, confused.

'If she's not at her grandmother's place, could she have returned to the Riddle family home?' Jared thought.



He was in a tizzy as he laid on the sofa. He could not directly call the Riddles, nor did he wish to contact Nicole.

"Martin, do you know where Nicole went after you've treated her wound?" he asked on the phone.

Martin hesitated for a long time.

Nicole had ordered him not to tell Jared, but at this juncture, he was in a dilemma, as he was worried about Nicole as well.

"I..."

Upon registering Martin's hesitation over the phone, Jared pointed out, "Nicole told you not to tell me, didn't she?"

"Yeah."

"No worries," Jared said.

"Let's do it this way. I'll ask the questions and you answer yes or no."

"Okay."

Martin did not like the feeling of being in the crossfire between the two of them at all, as he felt as though he was betraying both of their trusts.

"Has Nicole returned to the Riddle residence?" Jared asked Martin.

"No."

'If she didn't go back to the Riddle residence and she didn't go back to her grandma's residence either, then where is she?' he thought.

'Does she have other places to go to?'

"Mr. Johnston, Nicole should be safe now. You don't have to worry. As she doesn't want you to know where she is, I think we should respect her decision. Let her calm down for a few days, and perhaps she'll take the

initiative to contact you then," Martin said, looking at the situation from the perspective of a bystander and objectively reminding Jared.

"Yeah, okay."

Jared concurred, hoping that Nicole was indeed safe and sound.

Jared had not received any calls from Nicole for several days. He was getting anxious.

'where is she hiding? Did she go over to Harvey Ellison's place?' Jared could not stop overthinking about all the possibilities, so he stood up, put on his coat, and walked outside.

"Nicole, the goods that you've ordered are all here. Please take a look at them."

Martin pointed to The Beacons that were neatly placed behind him.

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Chapter 1124

Nicole walked over and checked the shipment.

"It's good," she said.

"Thank you for your hard work."

"It's nothing. When can you pick them up?" Martin asked, looking at Nicole.

"We can get them today." Nicole glanced at Carl.

"Okay. I'll arrange for the workers to load them in the truck right away," Martin said, and went over to instruct Charles.

"Let's head upstairs for a little chat while we wait." Martin extended his palm in a gesture of invitation.

At that exact moment, a luxury car pulled up at the factory, with everyone looking at it.

A tall figure got out of the car, revealing Jared, who proceeded to glance at everyone as he approached them.

Upon seeing that it was Jared, Nicole glanced at Martin, who quickly explained, "I didn't tell him."

"I was not expecting you to be here," Jared told Nicole with a look of surprise on his face.

"Yeah, I didn't expect you to be here either." Nicole looked at Jared with a blank stare.

"Mr. Johnston, are you here to inspect our work?"

As soon as he had gotten Nicole to believe that he was not here for her, he had to clear the suspicions in front of Nicole.

Jared proceeded to glance at Martin, understanding what he had meant.

Then, he looked at Nicole with a slight twitch at the corner of his mouth.

"Yes, I am here to inspect the work. What are you all doing here?"

"We came here to pick our goods up. If Mr. Johnston has nothing else to ask, we will be on our way,"

Nicole responded, giving Carl a wink.

As the two walked over to the workers in charge of loading the cargo, Jared noticed that Nicole was still angry. His face became downcast as soon as he saw this.

"Martin, what are these?"

Jared looked at Martin and asked.

"Oh, Nicole ordered a batch of goods from us, and now that the production is complete, we are delivering it," Martin explained.

"Nicole ordered an entire batch of Beacons?"

"Yes." Jared walked to where Nicole was loading the goods.

"Nicole, why haven't I heard of you mentioning this before?"

"Mr. Johnston, you have a lot of things to manage on a daily basis. I don't think you should be concerned about trivial matters like these," Nicole said, deliberately ignoring his anger.

Jared took Nicole's hand and pulled her to the side.

"Why are you pulling me? Let me go!" Nicole broke free from his grasp.

"Where were you staying yesterday?" Jared could not help but ask.

"Do I have to report to you where I live too?" Nicole glared at him.

"You know that's not what I meant."

Jared said, with the second half of the sentence remaining unsaid.

"How long are you going to be staying elsewhere?"

"If you're just here to ask me about this, I've got nothing to say to you. There is much work to be done," Nicole said, after which she left and walked over to Carl.

"How long will it take for us to load the truck up?" Nicole asked Carl.

"A few hours." Carl glanced at Jared.

"Do you have anything you want to do?"

"No, I'm just keeping track of the time."

"Don't worry, we should be able to send it all out before noon."

"Alright."

"Go upstairs and wait.I'll watch them here."

Carl looked at Nicole, not wanting her to stay there with the awkwardness of having Jared around.

"Well then, thank you for all the hard work,"

Nicole joked and made her way upstairs.

Jared stood there and watched as Nicole went up.He felt that if he were to follow her, she would be even more furious at him, and so, he turned around and left.

Martin, who was watching him leave, then went upstairs and saw Nicole, who sitting on one of the chairs in his office, scrolling through her phone.

Martin coughed.

"Nicole, what happened between you and Mr.Johnston?"

Then, he proceeded to eye her with a look of puzzlement on his face.

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Chapter 1125

"Is Jared Johnston still downstairs?" Nicole asked while looking at Martin with inquiring eyes.

"He had left when I came up."

"I thought he would follow us up too...,"

Nicole murmured.

"What did you say?" Martin asked, not having caught up with what Nicole had said.

"I said, our affairs can't be explained in a sentence or two. So, you should just drop it."

Nicole did not even look at him and was still scrolling on her phone.

Noting that Nicole did not want to talk to him, Martin did not press further.

After all, this was an issue between the two of them, and thus, it was better for outsiders to stay out of it.

"Nicole, I heard that Mr. Johnston invited you to participate in his latest project. What is that project about?" Martin asked with his head tilted.

"You heard that too?"

Nicole looked up from her phone and glanced at Martin.

"Yes. Rumors has it that it seems to be a very big project, so much so that various international companies have already begun investing in it."

"You seem to know a lot, and you also know that certain things can't be spoken about in a casual way, but since you are a good friend of mine, and I can tell you about the general stuff."

"I understand."

"It is said to be a project that is very helpful to the traffic at present," Martin said, looking at her.

"That's all I can reveal. Well, I guess I am socially responsible now." Nicole laughed.

"It seems so."

Then, they both looked at each other and smiled.

After the goods had all been loaded into the truck, Carl went upstairs to look for Nicole.

"The goods are all loaded and set to go."

"Okay, let's go."

Nicole put her phone away and stood up.

"Martin, we're leaving now."

"Okay, have a safe trip."

Martin got up and sent them off.

Nicole and Kyle proceeded to drive to the cargo plane with their truckload of goods.

"Carl, I won't be going back with you. There are a few other things I must attend to here. Be careful on the way back," Martin instructed Carl.

"Well, I'll send you a message after we land, then I'll leave."

Carl bade him goodbye and walked toward the plane.

"Tell me what you need."

"Okay, let's go back,"

Carl waved to Nicole and then the area disappeared little by little from Nicole's sight.

"Mr. Johnston, we tailed the tattooed man and found Conrad Calhoun's hideout. What should we do now?"

Claus Junkerman's voice issued through the phone.

"Are you sure you'll be able to bring back the tattooed man in together?" Jared asked.

"The other party seems to be heavily guarded with a substantial number of henchmen, and we may not be able to fight them all," Claus replied, analyzing the situation.

"Then let's just not risk it. Just bring Conrad Calhoun and his family in. We'll look for opportunities to capture that tattooed goon in the foreseeable future," Jared instructed over the phone.

"Yes, sir."

Claus Junkerman had led people to surround and raid Conrad Calhoun's hideout. He waited for the tattooed man to leave before he started the siege.

After a few days of patient waiting, the tattooed man had finally gotten into his car and left after a conversation.

Following the tattooed man's departure, Claus and his men loaded Conrad Calhoun and his family into the truck and was prepared to transfer him to another location.

Claus saw the opportunity and signaled for them to make their moves. His men then surrounded him from both sides, and soon, the guards were eliminated.

Conrad Calhoun was in the truck when he heard the fighting outside and was about to walk out to check, and that was when he coincidentally got himself into the arms of Claus Junkerman.

"Where do you think you're going?" Claus asked him, his voice low and icy.

"I just wanted to see what was going on,"

Conrad was scared and sat back down at once, unsure of what this group of people were doing.