

Ambush OTQ 1371

Chapter 1371 Sneak Over To See Her

"The City Department Store has been taken over by a Mr. Chester and renamed the World Trade Building." Tony said. "Emmeline, have you heard about it?"

"Yes." Emmeline nodded. "I've heard something about it?"

"So, I'm planning to take on the entire advertising project for the World Trade Building," he said. "I've been wracking my brains to write a proposal, and the heavens brought you, who has a background in this field, to me. Isn't it like a godsend?"

She chuckled. "Tony, you sure know how to flatter me."

"Emmeline, I'll trouble you with this proposal!" Tony said earnestly. "If it works out, we'll share the success!"

Emmeline laughed again. "I'm still trying to grasp everything, and you're already talking about profit-sharing! You're scaring me!"

"Emmeline, this is a big deal. We're partners now!" Tony raised his glass and clinked it with Emmeline's without hesitation. "Benjamin, bear witness, the deal is sealed today!"

Benjamin also picked up his glass and clinked it with Emmeline's.

"Why do I feel like I've been recruited into a gang?" Emmeline joked.

"Emmeline, once you've written the proposal, the two of us will go talk to Mr. Chester. We're sure to succeed!" Tony said.

"Alright then," Emmeline reluctantly agreed with a nod.

After dinner, she was once again escorted back to the guesthouse by Benjamin.

Janie handled the check-in process seriously, and the two girls had a simple and relaxed conversation.

Emmeline learned that Janie was a country girl and two years older than herself.

Janie found out that Emmeline was Benjamin's friend's sister and had no romantic relationship with Benjamin.

"Janie, do you like Benjamin?" Emmeline asked.

"He doesn't like me," Janie said somewhat dejectedly but also with a hint of joy. "But he said maybe he will like me in the future. Take it slow,"

"Why would he have such an idea?" Emmeline furrowed her brows. "Liking someone should be straightforward. If there's no affection, don't force it. Both parties will end up hurt."

"Benjamin originally agreed to be engaged to me, then he refused," Janie lowered her gaze.

"That's his fault then. Marriage is a serious matter; it can't be taken lightly," Emmeline pouted. "I'll have my brother give him a lesson!"

"He refused precisely because it's not to be taken lightly Janie sighed. "I don't blame him."

"I really don't get it."

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"Take it slow; maybe he will come to like me," Janie smiled shyly. "Many girls here admire Benjamin, so I misunderstood when I saw you."

"Benjamin is a really nice person. Make sure to seize the opportunity." Emmeline blinked her eyes.

"Well, let's leave it to fate." Janie sighed softly and asked, "Is your brother coming to pick you up?"

"I didn't let him know I'm here. We'll see," Emmeline said somewhat sadly.

"Don't be mad at him. Having a brother is a blessing."

She smiled. Yes, having a brother is indeed a blessing, but that was in the past. Will it continue to be in the future?

Abel knew she was at the bus stop but still didn't allow her to see him. It was heart-wrenching, but if he didn't want to see her, then so be it.

The night had grown deep, and the rain had finally stopped.

Emmeline sat on the bed, hugging her knees, lost in silence for a long time. Eventually, she drifted into a deep slumber.

She entered that dream again.

She was still beneath that deep cliff, surrounded by ancient towering trees in the eerie darkness of the forest. She dialed Abel's number in fear, but no matter how she dialed it, the number was always wrong. She knew his phone number by heart, and there was no way she could get it wrong, but why did it keep turning out to be wrong?

"Abel!" she shouted from deep beneath the cliff, but her voice could only be heard by herself.

During this time, Abel had already arrived at the guesthouse under Benjamin's guidance.

"Emmeline has already gone to rest inside," Janie said as she turned from behind the front desk.

"Captain York, please don't disturb her."

"This is Emmeline's brother, and he's just here to check on her," Benjamin explained.

Abel took out his ID from his wallet and handed it to Janie.

Janie registered the information, and then Abel went to Emmeline's room.

Inside the guest room, a small night light illuminated the dim space in a warm yellow glow. Emmeline was fast asleep, with glistening teardrops at the corners of her eyes.

Abel looked at her little face, mixed emotions surging within him.

Chapter 1372 Don't Tell Her

After Emmeline arrived at the guesthouse, Tony immediately called Abel.

Abel had just finished washing up and was getting ready to rest. When he heard that Emmeline was at Tony's place, he was genuinely startled.

Also, it finally hit him that when Emmeline mentioned she was at the bus stop, she was referring to the city's bus stop, not the one near the elementary school! Hell, he had spent a good while searching for her near that bus stop!

Abel hastily put on his sportswear, feeling extremely anxious, and rushed to RetroWave Advertisements.

Right then, his beloved girl was peacefully asleep in the bed beside him.

In Abel's heart, there was an indescribable mixture of satisfaction and guilt.

"Thank goodness nothing happened to you, or how can I continue to live?" Abel gently held Emmeline's hand in his palm and stared at her, listening to her steady breathing.

"Abel..." Emmeline called out softly as if in a dream.

Her petite body shifted slightly, and tears glistened at the corners of her eyes, rolling down.

Abel pressed her little hand against his lips, almost on the verge of tears himself.

"Silly girl, why didn't you call me? Didn't you know that I was also looking for you at the same time?"

"Did you think I no longer cared about you? Were you angry and upset? You told Tony not to call me, saying you don't want to see me. Emma... Emma, you've made me so heartbroken..."

Abel kept vigil by her bedside the entire night, watching over her.

Several times during the night, he wiped away the tears that had fallen in her sleep.

As morning broke, Abel tucked Emmeline in, gently kissed her cheek, and then went downstairs to the lobby.

Janie was dozing off on the bar counter. When she heard footsteps, she raised her head, still drowsy.

"Is Emmeline okay?" she asked.

"She's fine. Didn't wake up all night," Abel replied.

"But your dark circles are pretty serious."

"It's okay; I stayed up the whole night."

"That must have been tough."

“Keeping vigil through the night isn’t tough; what’s tough is not being able to smoke when I’m awake,” Abel said with a wry smile.

“You’re something else.” Janie laughed. “Aren’t you waiting for Emmeline to wake up before you leave?”

“I won’t wait. It’s better if she doesn’t know I was here,” Abel said, looking somewhat downcast.

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“Emmeline mentioned yesterday that you two had some kind of disagreement,” Janie said. “But it looks to me that you two are okay. You care about her so much and are so affectionate.”

Abel smiled, settled the accommodation bill, and turned to leave.

Out of habit, Emmeline opened her eyes at 6:30 a.m.

She wouldn’t be able to do her morning exercises that day, so she thought of lying in bed for a while, reminiscing about her dream.

In last night’s dream, she was trapped on a deep cliff, overwhelmed by fear and despair.

She shouted in the mountain abyss, “Abel! Abel, where are you?”

Then, she felt Abel’s warm and reassuring large hand gently holding hers. She sensed him embracing her, protecting her, telling her not to be afraid, that he was there...

However, the morning sun was already shining brightly, and a new day had begun.

Abel, where are you? Do you know how these past two days have been for me? Don’t you know how much I miss you?

Emmeline took out her phone, intending to call Abel. She looked at the screen with Abel’s name displayed, but in the end, she didn’t press the dial button.

Abel left the guesthouse and called Benjamin.

“Abel, Benjamin asked, “is Emmeline okay after last night?”

“She’s fine. You and Tony went out of your way for her!

“Don’t mention it. It’s no trouble at all.”

“Benjamin, don’t tell Emma I came over last night.”

“Why?”

“Just don’t tell her, please.”

“I understand, Abel. Is there anything else I can help with?”

“Please help me take Emma home. I’m not in a position to do it myself.”

“But Emmeline is staying today to help Tony with a business plan,” Benjamin revealed.

“That’s fine, then. Thank you for taking care of her.”

“Don’t worry about it,” said Benjamin, and they ended the call.

On the other side, Janie changed out of her uniform and wore a floral dress.

“This is the end of my night shift. I’m going back to my dorm now, so I won’t be staying with you,” she told Emmeline.

“Thank you for last night and for your uniform,” Emmeline said with a smile.

“Whenever you have time, come visit me,” Janie said with a smile.

Chapter 1373 Advertiser

After breakfast, Emmeline walked to RetroWave Advertisements.

Tony was already there.

Outside the entrance, welders were busy constructing the advertising sign’s frame. Tony leaned on a crutch, holding a cloth in one hand, and carefully wiped the tables.

Emmeline took the cloth from him and began cleaning, saying, “Why don’t I help you, Tony?”

“You don’t look like the type to do chores,” Tony commented with a grin. “You don’t do much of them, don’t you?”

“I do do chores. I just don’t do them often,” Emmeline replied. “In most cases, there’s no need for my help at home.”

“You seem like a pampered child,” Tony teased. “And Abel, he takes good care of you.”

Emmeline’s expression turned sour at the mention of Abel. She pouted and said, “Please don’t bring him up.”

“What’s wrong? Do you have some kind of grudge against your brother?” Tony continued to smile.

Tony had witnessed Abel’s nervousness and concern for Emmeline when he knew she was with him, especially this morning when Abel called and instructed him at length to take care of Emmeline. It was clear that Abel was very protective.

“I don’t want to see him or hear about him, so please don’t mention him,” Emmeline replied, sniffing.

Tony continued to smile, thinking, What did this guy do to upset his precious sister so much?

Emmeline seemed to believe that Abel didn’t want anything to do with her anymore. She felt like she was left to fend for herself on the streets, drenched in the rain, and he didn’t care.

This thought was like a sharp knife cutting through her heart, causing her a great deal of pain.

After finishing the cleaning, Tony took Emmeline to the workshop at the back.

Emmeline saw large-format printers, plotters, monochrome printers, and other equipment for the first time.

“These machines must have cost quite a bit of money,” she asked Tony, looking impressed.

This man, indeed, has ambition.

“We invested a total of over three hundred thousand,” he replied.

“That’s quite a sum,” Emmeline commented. “How long do you expect it will take to recover the costs?”

“Now is a good time. Many shops and supermarkets are starting to operate, and there’s a high demand for large-scale advertising decoration. I estimate it’ll take about a year,” Tony explained.

“Considering that the average monthly salary for ordinary people at work is just a bit over a thousand, you’ll recover over three hundred thousand in a year. That’s impressive!” Emmeline exclaimed.

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“Emmeline, you haven’t seen the small storefronts on the pedestrian street. Some of them make four or five thousand a month! People from the south are coming here and selling whatever they can. Business is booming!” Tony said excitedly.

“That’s a good idea. I might rent a small storefront when the time is right and try my hand at it in my spare time,” Emmeline said with a smile.

“Absolutely, I fully support that, Emmeline!” Tony said. “But for now, you need to plan the comprehensive advertising project for the department store. We’ve agreed on a profit-sharing arrangement, so once you complete that, you’ll have the capital to operate a storefront.”

“That’s a great plan,” Emmeline said, her smile growing wider. “With the right incentives, even a coward can become a hero. I’ll start working on it shortly.”

Tony prepared a cup of tea for Emmeline and invited her to his office on the second floor.

There were several sets of desks and chairs in the second-floor office, but they were lacking staff. There was only a young man doing graphic design, busily working on his computer, skillfully using shortcut keys.

“Is he the only one doing the design work?” Emmeline asked.

“I’m planning to hire more people, a few graphic designers and advertising salespeople,” Tony replied. “But advertising is an emerging industry, and many people don’t understand it. They’ll need specialized training.”

Emmeline was curious about Tony’s choice in this industry. “How did you become so forward-thinking in this field?”

“I majored in fine arts in college,” Tony said. “Later, I came into contact with overseas graphic magazines, which expanded my horizons in this area.”

“It’s true that education is a powerful thing.” Emmeline commented.

“By the way, Emmeline. Tony suddenly brightened up. The Provincial Department of Transportation is organizing an advertising training program for transportation companies this month. If you’re interested, I can arrange for a training spot for Altney Transport Company to be assigned to you.”

“Me?” Emmeline hesitated. “But I’m not affiliated with the transportation department.”

Chapter 1374 Venturing into Business

“That’s okay; I have the slot reserved,” Tony said. “There’s a saying in the advertising world, ‘If you can’t be a president, be an advertiser!’ You should really give it a try. Even Melvania’s President Clinton had an advertising background!”

“But I still have a full-time job,” Emmeline said. “After the summer break, I have to go back to teaching at school.”

“That’s not a problem. You can consider this as a part-time gig with me. I won’t shortchange you,” Tony said enthusiastically. “The main thing is that you’ll undergo the training, and later you can train our staff. That’s the most critical part.”

Emmeline thought carefully. Tony’s proposal seemed to offer multiple benefits.

“Let’s go with this plan for now,” Emmeline said. Then she suddenly thought of someone. “What about your wife? Wouldn’t it be better to keep the resources for yourself?”

Tony’s expression dimmed. “We’ve just divorced, so involving her in this isn’t an option. Emmeline, you’re the most suitable candidate. I hope you won’t decline.”

“Alright then.” Emmeline didn’t press further and nodded in agreement.

Around 10 a.m., Emmeline asked Tony to accompany her to the City Department Store to take a look around. Since she was working on a proposal, she needed to have a reference point and get a clear idea.

She had already visited the first floor last time. This time, there were no more goods or salespeople at the counters. The entire building’s operation was now in the hands of the current contract holder.

“The current contractor is named Vernon Chester, and he’s involved in the electronics industry,” Tony informed Emmeline. “He’s well-acquainted with big bosses from Kirkwall, Goulcrest, and Peltragow. It’s said that they have stakes in this building.”

After spending the afternoon, Emmeline had a rough outline of her proposal. There were still many details to fill in, such as advertising visuals and budgets.

“Let’s leave it at this for today. I’ll come back tomorrow,” she said.

Seeing that it was already 5 p.m. and she hadn’t returned home for a day and night, Emmeline was worried that her parents would be concerned.

“Let Benjamin give you a ride home,” Tony suggested.

“The bus is so convenient; I shouldn’t trouble Benjamin further.” Emmeline shook her head.

Tony could only agree with her decision.

At 5.25 p.m., Emmeline was on the bus when she received a call from Abel. She hesitated for a moment and let the call ring until it ended without answering.

The phone rang again, and this time, Emmeline couldn't bear it any longer, so she answered in a low voice, "Abel."

"Where are you?"

"On the bus."

"Why didn't you answer the call earlier?"

Emmeline fell silent.

"Emma, haven't I told you that no matter what the situation, you should always answer the phone?" Abel suppressed his annoyance and worry. "Not answering the phone can make people anxious."

"Oh."

"Go straight home once you get off the bus, okay?"

"How did you know I was going home?"

"Where else would you go?"

"I have options."

Emmeline thought, Sure, I've been away for a day and night, but you're nowhere better either!

"Where are you right now?" Emmeline asked him in return.

"I'm heading back to Altney."

"What have you done?"

"I was on a business trip, okay?"

Emmeline simply replied with an "Oh" and hung up.

When Emmeline returned to her community, she saw a familiar Santana car approaching from a distance-it was Abel's car!

The car sped toward her and whooshed past her!

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"Abel! Abel!" Emmeline called out, turning around.

The car had quickly gone about a hundred yards and showed no sign of stopping.

"Abel Ryker!" Emmeline called out and started chasing after it.

Suddenly, a bicycle rushed out from an alley and, caught off guard, collided with her, knocking her to the ground.

The familiar Santana had disappeared without a trace.

“Abel, will you no longer care about me? Will you really not look out for me anymore?”

The man on the bicycle, seeing that Emmeline seemed okay, quickly rode away.

Emmeline got up, only to realize that her arm was scraped.

She stumbled back home, searching for iodine while asking her mom, “Did Abel come back?”

“No!” Kimberly replied firmly.

“But I just saw his car; he must have come back!”

“No, he didn’t!”

“How could it be so coincidental? I didn’t mistake it; it was definitely Abel’s car!” Tears welled up in Emmeline’s eyes.

Is Abel really not going to look after me anymore? He didn’t even stop when he saw me...

Chapter 1375 You Can’t Be Together

“Santanas are everywhere on the streets. There are several of them in our community!” Maxwell entered, his face grim, looking like someone had killed his family.

“Dad, did you have a fight with Mom?” Emmeline asked.

“Why would I?”

“But your face looks so terrible, like you’ve been angry.”

“I’m not angry. On the other hand, have you been with Abel these past few days?”

“No!” Emmeline thought, He doesn’t even want to see me.

“Are you sure? You really haven’t been with Abel?” Kimberly pressed.

“I haven’t!” Emmeline was annoyed. “I got a part-time job at RetroWave Advertisements for the summer doing planning!”

“Please understand us,” Kimberly said with deeply furrowed brows. “You and Abel really can’t be together. I’m serious.”

“Where are you getting this from? I haven’t even seen Abel at all. There’s nothing going on between us!” Emmeline was on the verge of tears. “Why are you acting so strange today?”

“Then don’t blame me for being ruthless when it comes to you and Abel,” Maxwell said.

“But Mom and Dad, I only want to be with Abel for the rest of my life. I don’t want anyone else!” Emmeline pleaded.

"I just said, the two of you can't be together. Don't hold on to illusions!" Kimberly was getting angry.

"There's no problem between Abel and me. We're not related by blood, and the law allows it!" Emmeline shouted.

"I don't care if the law allows it. We don't allow it! I don't want the people in our hometown to gossip!" Kimberly retorted.

Just as Emmeline was throwing the cotton swab with iodine into the trash can, she noticed a cigarette pack.

She picked up the cigarette pack from the trash can, and an idea hit her.

"Mom, Dad! Abel clearly came back. It was him just now. Why did you lie to me?"

"That's your dad's cigarette pack!"

"No, Dad doesn't smoke this brand!" Emmeline hastily took out her phone and dialed Abel's number.

"Abel!"

"Emma!"

"You came back, right? You came home just now!"

"No, Emma!"

"You're lying to me! You're all lying to me! I saw you. Because of you, I got hit by a bicycle. Didn't you see!"

"Emma, what are you saying? I really didn't know!" Abel sounded panicked. "Are you injured?"

"Don't pretend anymore. I hate you. You're all lying to me!"

"Emma!" Abel called on the other end of the phone.

"I never want to see you again! I know you just don't want to bother with me anymore!"

Emmeline stormed out of the house.

Maxwell followed Emmeline downstairs and asked, "Emma, where are you going?"

"Dad, please let me calm down," Emmeline said tearfully. "I have an important job to do tomorrow, and I won't go anywhere. I'll just stay in the garden for a while."

"Let me accompany you then."

"No, Dad, let me be alone for a while. My mind is in chaos."

"Alright, I'll wait for you downstairs."

"No, you should go back home and be with Mom. She's not in good health. Don't let her worry."

Bark, bark! The sound of a puppy's barks came.

It turned out that when Maxwell followed Emmeline downstairs, Seal also ran down with them.

Emmeline bent down and picked up the chubby little pup, holding it in her arms.

"Dad, I have Seal with me. I won't go far. You can relax now."

Maxwell nodded and returned upstairs.

Emmeline arrived at the community garden, and it was dinner time, so the garden was empty. She sat by the railing in the pavilion, tears streaming down her face.

After returning upstairs, Maxwell received a call from Abel. "Uncle Maxwell, is Emma okay?"

"She's not seriously hurt. She's sitting in the garden with Seal," Maxwell replied.

"I'm sorry, Uncle Maxwell. I shouldn't have come back today."

"I don't blame you, and I understand why you won't give up," Maxwell said. "But Emma was really hit by a bicycle, and she has some scratches on her arm."

"I didn't see it." Abel expressed deep regret. "I was so confused, and I just drove past. Is Emma badly hurt?"

"She just has a few scrapes. She applied some iodine," Maxwell said. "Abel, does it still hurt. where I hit you?"

"I'm fine. I have thick skin," Abel replied.

"It breaks my heart to hit you too," Maxwell choked up a bit. "But I'm afraid you'll make a mistake. You and Emma can't be together. No matter how much you beg me, it won't work."

Silence replied Maxwell, so he asked, "Did you hear me, Abel?"

"I understand."

"Come home for dinner whenever you can," Maxwell continued. "But you need to change. your perspective. Don't forget that you're still half a son raised by me."

"I know, Uncle Maxwell..."

Chapter 1376 Urge Her To Grow Up

Abel sat on the dam by the lake.

Two hours ago, he once again came to implore Maxwell and Kimberly to bless his union with Emmeline, whom he knew he could never live without.

The stainless-steel cover of the smoothie blender he had brought back from Sandwell had already been arranged for sample production by the technicians, and the path to securing the contract factory was well laid out. However, his heart was in turmoil.

On the day Emmeline spent at RetroWave Advertisements, he had visited twice just to catch a glimpse of her from afar. Just that one glance was enough to calm his restless heart.

Abel knew what he wanted. So, at 4 p.m., he returned home once more.

What he received was not only a scolding from Kimberly but also two slaps from Maxwell.

He knelt at Maxwell's feet without a word. However, the couple adamantly refused to allow Emmeline to marry him.

"Emma!" Abel shouted loudly across the lake, "Tell me, what should I do to keep from losing you?"

Tears had dried up.

Emmeline took out her phone, looked at Abel's name, deleted it, and then saved it again. She saved it, thought for a moment, and then added it to her block list, only to release it again.

"Abel, what's going on? What should I do to stop feeling this pain? You used to love me so much. It never changed growing up, so why are you acting like this now? Even if my parents won't let us be together, I'm still your Emma. What's gotten into you? How can you abandon me?"

As the evening grew darker, Emmeline knew she had to return as she promised Maxwell.

She had to work on Tony's project proposal the next day, and there was still a lot of research to be done tonight. She had to bury her worries.

Emmeline stood up to leave when she suddenly saw the vice principal of the school she worked in sitting on a stone bench among the magnolia trees ahead.

Standing beside him was someone who surprised Emmeline: Diesel Parker, the man who had once held her hostage at the seafood restaurant!

Emmeline thought it might be the dim light playing tricks on her eyes, but a closer look confirmed that it was indeed Diesel.

Huh? How could these two seemingly unrelated people be gathered together? Especially when one is a cultured and knowledgeable school principal and the other is a rough and aggressive ex-convict!

Out of fear of Diesel, Emmeline avoided the path she knew he would take and took a wide detour, holding onto Seal and quickly leaving the area.

The next day, when Emmeline arrived at RetroWave Advertisements, everyone was already busy with great enthusiasm.

The materials prepared last night were abundant, and writing the proposal went smoothly. It thoroughly demonstrated the benefits to businesses and the social impact on various levels. The next day, armed with the proposal and some representative visual concepts, they would meet with Vernon Chester, the contractor for the department store, to discuss cooperation.

Emmeline was thrilled, but she didn't expect Abel to show up.

She quickly turned around and ran up the stairs to her office. While she was happy to see him, she didn't want to see him either."

"I really don't understand you two!" Tony said to Abel. "You look after her, protect her, but you won't let her know, letting her misunderstand you just like that. What's going on?"

Abel smiled. "There's nothing going on. I'm just pushing her to grow up."

"Growing up is indeed painful." Tony chuckled.

"After Emma breaks out of her cocoon, it'll be your turn to suffer," Benjamin York teased.

"I do hope there will be a day. I can die without regrets then." Abel smiled wryly.

"Your approach is like a father molding his child," Tony said. "You want her to grow into a capable person, but you can't help but feel sad."

Abel pondered for a moment and then laughed. "You know, it does kind of feel like that."

"You better go upstairs and see her. It's much better than hiding across the street!" Tony remarked, making Abel self-conscious.

He arrived at the second-floor office, and Emmeline was sitting at her desk with her chin resting on her hand.

Approaching her, he quietly took her hand. Emmeline didn't move. Abel exerted a bit more force, lifting her up and embracing her tightly, not saying a word.

Emmeline felt a bit suffocated in his arms and struggled slightly.

"Where's your injury from yesterday?" His voice was low.

Emmeline remained silent and obediently showed him her arm.

"I'm sorry, babe." Abel's throat choked, and he held her closer.

"Why are you apologizing?" Emmeline furrowed her brows. "You visited home yesterday, didn't you?"

Chapter 1377 Coax Her

"I did." Abel nodded.

"Why did you lie to me then?"

"I just didn't want to tell you because I was useless," Abel said with a gloomy expression, lowering his

eyes.

"How are you useless?" Emmeline objected, lifting her head in his embrace.

Abel said nothing.

"Why did you come today then? I thought you didn't want to bother with me anymore!"

“Said who?!” Abel looked at her stubborn little face.

“That was how you behaved!” Emmeline pouted, looking annoyed.

“I didn’t. Emma...”

“I don’t want to hear it!” She pushed him away, turning to leave only for Able to grab her arm and pull her back into his embrace.

He looked at her, lowered his head as if to kiss her, and then... and then he let her go.

“I got you a gift,” Abel said with a bitter voice.

“What is it?”

“Go downstairs and see.”

It was a sapphire blue wallet.

“I don’t want it!” Emmeline said with a cold face, tossing the wallet to Abel.

“Didn’t you lose your wallet? This is a replacement.” Abel continued to coax her.

“Blue represents water in the five elements, and water flows, so this wallet will get lost too. I might as well not have it, Emmeline remained sulky.

Abel chuckled. What kind of theory is that?

“Tell me then,” he asked. “What element of wallet should I get you?”

How would I know? I haven’t studied that,” Emmeline turned away and refused to look at him.

Tony and Benjamin also laughed. This girl is clearly giving Abel a hard time! Looks like she was quite upset!

Just then, a woman entered the room. She was in her mid-thirties, of average build, and her skin was well- maintained, but her complexion appeared somewhat dull

Benjamin stood up and addressed her, Scarlett?

Tony lowered his head, looking uncomfortable.

“The remaining fifty thousand, when are you going to give it to me?” The woman, Scarlett, didn’t acknowledge Benjamin and instead stood in front of Tony with her head held high.

“I’ve said it before, three or four months. All the money has been invested in equipment,” Tony said. without raising his head. “Let me make a little more, and I’ll give it to you.”

“The court order specifies that it can’t exceed three months, and it’s been almost fifty days now. You need to be aware of this,” Scarlett spoke icily.

“Fine! If you have any further issues, find me privately. This is my company, and it’s not convenient here.” Tony also adopted a cold demeanor.

“What’s not convenient? Benjamin is your staunch brother,” Scarlett mocked. “What do you have to hide from him? You can even let him take the blame for you!”

“Don’t talk nonsense here!” Tony was getting annoyed.

“Isn’t it the truth? If it weren’t for you, Benjamin almost had to take the blame for something that wasn’t his fault, Scarlett persisted.

“Scarlett, we have guests here.” Benjamin tried to defuse the situation, and Tony was extremely embarrassed.

No wonder Benjamin showed up instead when I called his wife that time Tony was injured, Abel thought. They’ve divorced, huh? But what blame did Benjamin take?

Abel took Emmeline’s hand and said, “It’s getting late. Emma and I will be heading home. You guys chat.”

Tony hurriedly apologized, “Remember to bring Emma over tomorrow, and we’ll meet with Vernon to discuss the proposal.”

Emmeline nodded. “I’ll be there on time, Tony, don’t worry.”

Tony’s face was sweating profusely.

Emmeline also wondered what blame Benjamin had taken on.

“Should we go out for dinner or head home?” Abel asked as they sat in the car, helping Emmeline fasten her seatbelt.

It felt like they were back to how things used to be.

Emmeline realized that no matter how much resentment she had toward Abel, as soon as she saw him, it all faded away. Her heart was still filled with sweetness.

“I don’t want to go home; my parents will nag us.” Emmeline pouted, “I want to eat out with you.”

“Sure, where would you like to go?”

“How about by the lake? It’s quiet there.”

“Alright, your choice. We’ll go to the lake.”

Just then, Emmeline’s phone rang, and it was the home landline.

Emmeline sighed in disappointment and answered the call.

“Dad.”

“Emma, are you on your way back?”

“I’m on the road, Dad. I want to eat out with Abel.”

“Today’s not the right time, Emma.”

“What is it this time? I told you nothing is going on between Abel and I!”

“No, Emma, there’s someone waiting for you at home.”

A name flashed in Emmeline’s mind. A guy named Zeller...

Right, Albus Zeller! Good Lord, why is he so persistent?

Chapter 1378 She’s Missing

“I might as well not go back, Dad. I won’t see him.”

“No, the officers from the local police station are waiting for you at home!”

“What?” Emmeline was stumped. “The police? Why are they waiting for me?”

“They said something about conducting an investigation. Anyway, come back as soon as possible.” Maxwell hung up the phone.

“What’s up? Something about the officers from the local police station?” Abel asked, simultaneously turning the car around and increasing the speed.

“That’s what my dad said. It’s strange, though. Why would the police be looking for me?”

“You haven’t done anything wrong, have you?” Abel teased her, noticing her nervous expression.

“I have, Emmeline replied.

“What?” Abel was startled. “What did you do?”

“I cursed you in my heart a hundred times!”

“Oh, so the officers are here to seek justice for me,” Abel said solemnly.

Emmeline burst into laughter.

When they returned home, two young police officers were sitting on the couch.

“Are you Emmeline?”

“Yes,”

“We’re from the Altney Police Substation. Here are our credentials.” They both showed their police badges.

“Is there something I can help with?”

“Please have a seat. We need to ask you a few questions, and you should answer truthfully.”

“All right.”

“You are Emmeline Louise, a third-grade language teacher at Altney Elementary School, correct?”

“Yes, why are you asking this?”

“You just need to answer yes or no.”

Emmeline grew annoyed and glanced at Abel.

“Emma, this is the standard procedure for taking statements. Stay calm and answer their questions.” Abel stood behind her, placing his hands on her shoulders, comforting her.

“Yes,” Emmeline reiterated, feeling reassured by Abel’s warm hand on her shoulder.

“Do you know Ysabel Hemmings?”

“Our homeroom teacher, Ysabel?”

“Yes.”

“I know her.”

“When was the last time you saw her?”

“Um... about three or four days before the vacation, I need to check. I’m not exactly sure.”

“Carefully calculate the time and pinpoint the exact day.”

Emmeline thought for a moment. “June 24th.”

“Before the last time you saw her, did anything happen? Any specific incidents?”

“Before that, she had a fight with the wife of the administration head, and the wife ended up hitting her. Later, she worked for two more days and then took a long leave. I haven’t seen her since. What happened

to her?”

“Besides the situation you just mentioned, do you know of any other circumstances or personal information about Ysabel Hemmings?”

Emmeline had a sudden realization. “She was a victim of domestic violence!”

“Please elaborate.”

“She had injuries on her body. She said her husband had beaten her. Also, she mentioned that she wanted a divorce, and she wanted to be with...” Emmeline hesitated,

“You can go ahead and say it. We will be conducting interviews with relevant and irrelevant personnel from your school, and the content of your conversation will be kept confidential.”

“She wanted to marry Mr. Joseph Sayer.” Emmeline continued, “But what happened to Ysabel?”

“She’s missing.”

“She’s missing? Are you sure she has gone missing and not on a trip or... cloped?”

The officer ignored her question and pressed on, “When you last saw her, did she exhibit any unusual behavior?”

Emmeline thought hard. “That afternoon, after the students had left, I saw her coming down from the academic building through my office window. She seemed to have been crying. She didn’t come to the

office and walked straight toward the school gate. There happened to be a school-construction vehicle entering the playground, blocking my view, and I never saw her again.”

“Alright, are the statements you made today accurate?”

“Yes, they are.”

Is there anything else you’d like to add?”

Emmeline thought for a moment and shook her head. “No.”

She had only been at the elementary school for a few months, and although she shared an office with Ysabel, they didn’t communicate much. She couldn’t help but wonder why Ysabel had disappeared.

Emmeline quickly speculated, Did Ysabel’s husband discover her affair and kill her? Or could Joseph have eliminated her to protect himself?

Emmeline shuddered at her own frightening thoughts.

Chapter 1379 A Golden Opportunity

The officers had Emmeline review the statement, and after she signed and stamped it, they left without even drinking any water during the entire process.

Emmeline then told her parents and Abel briefly about Ysabel’s situation, along with her speculations.

Abel and Maxwell both agreed that it couldn’t be that simple. Criminals never leave anything on the surface, and police officers’ jobs aren’t so easy.

At that, Emmeline wondered, Where has Ysabel gone? Well, I hope she’s safe.

After dinner, Emmeline took out the jade thumb ring from the three “antiques” she had acquired during her last treasure hunt.

She said to Abel, I’ve been wanting to give you this for a while. I didn’t clean it up properly last time, but now it’s all good.”

Without

any explanation, she pulled Abel’s right hand and placed the jade thumb ring on his thumb.

“This is a precious item used by the great heroes who roamed the vast grasslands and shot eagles with their bows. It’s from a specific era and a genuine find,” she said.

“Specific era, genuine find? You’re just pulling my leg, aren’t you?” Abel laughed.

As long as Emmeline was happy, he didn’t mind at all.

Emmeline wore a mischievous smile and said, “I was indeed making it up.”

“You can fool me all you want.” Abel laughed. “But if it’s against those antique experts, you’ll be in trouble.”

Emmeline played with the “jade figurine” and the “jade cicada” in her hand and said to Abel, “Could you help me find out where I can consult an expert in antique appraisal? I want to know what these two items are.”

“These are just children’s toys,” Abel teased her. “Keep them for fun.”

Emmeline pouted. “I’ve looked at them a hundred times and researched a lot of information. These two items seem rather extraordinary, especially this jade cicada. It’s been carved in a specific style. I just don’t know if these two items are modern forgeries or genuine antiques.”

Abel, impressed by her knowledge and seriousness, nodded and said, “I got it. I’ll ask around and see if there’s an antique appraisal expert.”

Emmeline then broke into a joyful smile and planted a quick kiss on his cheek.

The next day, Abel and Emmeline headed back to Altney downtown. Abel dropped Emmeline off at RetroWave Advertisements and then headed to the factory.

Recently, there were rumors about the factory’s contracting matters, saying that the factory manager held centralized power and the four workshops were individually contracting with the factory employees. It was unclear whether this was true or not. If it were, would this contracting method benefit or harm the future development of the factory?

Samples of the smoothie blender cover had already been produced in the workshop. After various tests, there were discrepancies with the data provided by Paul Abel called Paul about this issue.

Paul said, “I suggest you temporarily hire a technical expert from Oakheart or Goulcrest to go over there. Sometimes, the problem might be lying just under the surface.”

“That’s a good idea.” Abel nodded. “It seems our technology is not up to par.”

Paul continued, “Last time we talked about taking orders, you might consider launching your own brand. Do you have any leads now?”

“We have a contracting proposal for the factory, but it hasn’t been finalized yet. Once the timing is right, I’ll start working on it.”

“Great!” Paul said. “We’ve known each other for some time, and I hope to see your new development. The business transformation is a good opportunity. You can confidently pursue it, and I’ll support you with orders!”

“Thank you!” Abel was pleased. “But I have a small idea. I wonder if you would be interested?”

“Go ahead and tell me,” Paul said.

“On my side, with the factory contracting, if you have confidence in me, I can offer you a 50% stake.”

Paul burst into laughter. “Abel, you truly are a talent! You’ve got me hooked!”

The two of them laughed heartily, reaching a mutual agreement.

Emmeline and Tony were well-prepared when they arrived at the department store.

As Tony wasn't using his crutches, he had some difficulty walking. To make it worse, Vernon's office was on the fourth floor, and the building didn't have an elevator, so they had to climb the stairs.

Emmeline supported him, helping him ascend the stairs.

"Emma, you see this? It's not easy for anyone who wants to accomplish something. They need to overcome many difficulties, Tony remarked.

"Through hardships to the stars," Emmeline encouraged him.

Chapter 1380 Successful Negotiation

"Mr. Chester, there are guests here to see you."

They arrived at the fourth-floor reception, and the attendant went to inform the general manager's office. about the visitors.

A mild-mannered male voice from inside said, "Please bring the guests in and prepare some tea."

As they entered the room, just as Tony handed his business card to Vernon, Emmeline froze.

"Is it you!" she said.

Seated behind a large desk was a middle-aged man, and it was none other than Vernon Chester, the contractor of the department store.

Upon seeing Emmeline, he smiled. "Fancy seeing you here, young lady."

Tony was surprised. "Do you two know each other?"

"More than just knowing," Vernon replied as he took something from a drawer and placed it on the desk. "I have a feeling this is yours, dear."

"My wallet?" Emmeline chuckled. "How did it end up with you?"

It turned out that Vernon was the middle-aged man who had withdrawn over a thousand dollars that day

and helped the antique vendor.

"That day, when I left the antique stall, my wallet was stolen by a pickpocket," Vernon explained. "Later, the police caught the thief and found five or six wallets on him, and one of them had your photo inside, so I kept it."

Emmeline smiled and said, "What a coincidence! Thank you!"

"I had a feeling I would run into you again," Vernon said happily.

Emmeline blushed slightly. "How did you know we would meet again? We just had a brief encounter."

“You were copying the contact number for the lease of the booth on a pillar by the entrance,” Vernon said. “I was standing nearby at the time, so I thought you would either come back or give me a call. I remembered your voice, soft and pure.”

Emmeline chuckled and marveled at his attention to detail.

The discussion on the proposal then proceeded smoothly, evolving from expected negotiations to a collaborative effort. Everyone shared their opinions on the proposal while actively expanding on ideas.

The passionate discussion continued for two hours. In the end, they decided that RetroWave Advertisements would take on the entire advertising decoration project, and certain details of the proposal would be further refined by their team.

The advertising budget was subjected to auditing and verification, with some flexibility allowed in the final

decision.

After finalizing the proposal details, both parties signed the contract, specifying the project timeline and payment terms.

“I initially intended to entrust the advertising decoration project of this building to the ‘NeonEdge Ad Agency’ in the south,” Vernon explained. “Their design level is higher than ours here, but the materials and labor costs are also much higher. Today, after meeting Emmeline, I believe choosing your company is the right decision, given her character.”

Tony quickly stood up to express his gratitude.

With this statement, everything was practically settled. Vernon added a final condition: payment would be split into three phases.

Upon signing the contract, an upfront payment of 30% would be due, allowing RetroWave Advertisements to proceed confidently with the project.

Hearing this, Tony nearly knelt in gratitude, with tears pooling in his eyes.

He was in dire need of money right now. Without an advance payment, he’d have to borrow money for the initial production costs.

Across the table, Tony shook Vernon’s hand firmly and repeated “thank you” four times.

“Your company is just getting started, and equipment investments and personnel expenses all require money,” Vernon said. “I can imagine your difficulties, and an advance payment is reasonable under the circumstances. So, please don’t be polite. Our biggest wish is to complete the project successfully.”

Vernon accompanied the two of them to the exit, but before they left, he suddenly remembered something and turned to ask Emmeline, “I remember last time you copied the contact number for leasing the booths. Do you also have plans in that area?”

Emmeline replied, “I plan to rent a few sets of booths when the opportunity arises, get some clothing from Sandwell, and try my hand at it.”

“To have such ideas at your age. You’re a future entrepreneur!” Vernon smiled. “When we go downstairs later, you can choose your preferred location, and I’ll reserve it for you.”

“That won’t be necessary. I haven’t even taken the first step in my plans yet. Space is precious in the mall, and I can’t hold it for you,” Emmeline replied.

“That’s not a problem. You take your time deciding, and if you don’t need it, you can let me know,” Vernon assured her.

Now it was Emmeline’s turn to be deeply moved, just like Tony had been earlier.