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Chapter 491 None of Them Have Brains

Elise's expression darkened. "I really don't understand how you are still able to flirt around even when your life is in danger right now."

"It's not my fault that you are too beautiful. I can't help myself from falling for you as soon as I see you, so you must take some responsibility for this too." Kenneth pretended to be weak and sorrowful.

"In that case, I probably shouldn't even appear so that you won't be distracted. I don't have to get into trouble too," Elise said ruthlessly as she loosened her grip on him after helping him regain his balance.

Kenneth rubbed the spot where he was hit, a cheeky grin on his face. "I believe you won't turn a blind eye to my troubles, Miss Sinclair."

"You're wrong. I will." Elise shot him a cold stare.

He pouted at that, slightly disappointed that he did not elicit much reaction from her.

"Cut the crap. None of you are able to escape today. Get them!" At this point, the man who managed to hit Kenneth spat on the ground and tightened his hold on the wooden baton in his hand.

With that, the group of men immediately got up and ran toward them.

Elise kicked the person who was the first to reach her and used the impact to sprint across the wall before she landed behind them. Then, she took out her silver needles and sealed the meridians of four of them.

Their muscles froze and they sank to the ground, having seizures.

When the remaining people saw this, they did not dare to get closer to her even though they had weapons in their hands.

Who on earth is this woman? She actually defeated four of our guys in the blink of an eye!

The leader of the group ran toward them and yelled in disbelief, "Don't worry! We are from Dukethorn, after all. What haven't we encountered? If we catch this woman, we will get a hundred thousand!"

Money was the root of all evil. The influence of money was apparent as soon as it was mentioned. Upon hearing the words 'a hundred thousand', the fighters immediately became different.

At this point, their initial fear and hesitation turned to excitement as they calculated the odds of getting the biggest share based on when they would start their attacks.

Soon, someone charged toward Elise with a loud yell, followed by the rest.

Elise did not avoid them. Instead, she looked at them impassively as she touched the spray in her pocket.

It was given to her by Claude when he was still around, and it was made of hallucinative ingredients. It could make the victims quickly lose their consciousness, a much better way compared to her silver needle attack.

If she had slept better just now, she would definitely use these guys as her training partners but as she was not used to the bed, she was not well-rested. Judging by the current situation, it was better to end the fight as soon as possible.

Elise's fingers tightened around the small spray bottle. Just as she was about to take it out, a loud yell rang from behind the fighters.

"Stop, all of you!"

They froze before turning around in hesitation. Though their leader was full of arrogance and fighting spirit just now, he was already subdued by Kenneth. The latter had placed a huge knife, that did not suit his looks in the least, at the leader's neck as he admired and picked on his fingers with his other hand.

Elise loosened her grip on the spray bottle as she waited for the drama to unfold.

He's actually quite smart, seeing how he knows that it's the most efficient to catch the leader first.

Unfortunately, he's not very good at fighting. There are so few people here, yet he got himself injured.

The leader lowered his head to look at the knife. Upon seeing that it was millimeters away from his skin, he gulped in trepidation. "Bro, you're not a local, are you? To tell you the truth, I'm from the Carnegie Family. It won't bring you any good to offend me."

Kenneth grunted, thereafter flicking his fingernails and blowing on his fingers to get rid of the dust. Then, he turned around and asked indifferently, "So what?"

There was a pause as he deliberately slid the knife across the man's neck repeatedly. "Are you implying that I can't afford to offend the Carnegie Family and that I should let you go? Should I kneel and kowtow to you when I admit my mistakes?"

Though Kenneth did not exert much force, the sharp knife still broke through the man's skin and blood trickled out.

The fighters were used to violent scenes. If Kenneth instantly gave him a blow, perhaps he might not even let out a groan. However, with a knife to the neck, the leader was fearful to even move an inch. The fear of death was much more real to him at this moment.

As his limbs turned to jelly, he did not dare to act tough anymore. Upon hearing Kenneth's tone, he knew that the other man was not someone he could antagonize either, so he softened his stance. "You're mistaken—how could I accept your kowtow? I was just saying that the incident today was a misunderstanding. Everyone in this world is one big family, after all. If you let me go, I'll pretend this didn't happen and we can even be friends after that. How about that?"

"What about her?" Kenneth looked at Elise.

"We will bring her elsewhere to settle the score with her so that we won't be a nuisance to you. Don't worry about that," the leader of the group replied ingratiatingly.

Kenneth heaved a sigh before he said in a remorseful tone, "No one in the Carnegie Family has brains. How can I rest assured..."

"What do you mean?" The leader felt a sense of danger.

"You don't have to know." Kenneth's gaze darkened as he lifted the knife upward until it reached the eye level of the leader. Then, he slashed the latter's eyes.

The man's howls reverberated through the entire alley.

Kenneth pushed him away, and he landed on the floor and struggled painfully as blood oozed out of his eye.

"My eyes! My eye hurts! Help me! Help me!"

"Boss!"

The rest of the fighters surrounded him, and two of them got their leader under control so that he would not scratch his own injuries.

Even so, the pain tormented the leader every second, making him struggle helplessly as though he was a fish out of water.

This scene jolted the rest of the men back to their senses. When they raised their heads weakly to look at Kenneth, who was lowering his gaze at them from his height, they finally understood how terrifying he was.

He merely threw the knife on the ground carelessly. Taking out his handkerchief, he wiped his hands slowly while saying, "Go back and tell Jim Carnegie that I don't give second chances. If this happens again, he will be blind. Now, get out of my sight."

The fighters stood still like statues, none of them daring to move an inch.

Kenneth's expression darkened upon seeing this. He then turned around to look at them frostily before yelling, "Just f*ck off!"

The nearest fighter from him tripped and fell. Getting up, the fighter quickly dragged his leader and staggered away.

When they reached the end of the alley, one of them turned around and hollered bravely, "Just you wait! We will be back to take revenge!"

Upon hearing that, Elise was rather amused.

Do they think this is an action movie? What's with the 'I'll be back' type of lines?

In the end, she patted dust from hands and prepared to leave.

However, before she even turned around, a thud rang out from the end of the alley, signaling that someone had fallen to the ground.

She turned around and saw Kenneth sink to the ground as he leaned against the wall.

And so, Elise walked over suspiciously and she stood in front of him, appraising him from head to toe. "If I remember correctly, you only suffered a blow. Is this all you can take?"

Cold sweat broke out of his forehead, but he managed to force a smile.

"You have to experience it yourself to know, Miss Sinclair," he said weakly.

With that, his head sank against the wall as he lost consciousness.

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Chapter 492 | Respect Your Decision

Elise was slightly amused by this, but she soon noticed that something was off.

Kenneth is rather good at fighting. I don't think he was tricked by those guys just now, so why did he faint?

Narrowing her eyes, she bent toward him and took one of his wrists to take his pulse.

After a short moment of silence, she stared at his face, a conflicted look flickering in her eyes.

What is going on here? Why is he suffering from the same poison as Grandma?

He has the same symptoms as Alexander—they are both showing early stage mutations because of the poison.

Her thoughts in chaos, Elise looked at the man in front of her who shared nothing similar with Alexander.

After thinking about it for a long time, she could not find any connections between both of them.

In the end, she helped him up and walked out of the alley.

There was no apparent reason for helping Kenneth out. Since he was also struck by the misfortune, she could only hope that someone would help Alexander the same way and save his life if he fainted by the roadside due to the effects of the poison.

Fortunately, Elise found Kenneth's hotel card and realized that they were staying at the same hotel. Hence, she did not need to make a detour.

Even so, it took her a lot of effort to bring him back. After all, he was almost more than six feet tall.

When they reached the stairs, Kenneth trembled slightly as he slowly regained consciousness.

With his head lowered, he saw a woman's shoes as soon as he opened his eyes, and he immediately knew that it was Elise who brought him back. His lips twitched into a triumphant smile as he deliberately dragged his feet against the stairs, and this escaped Elise's notice.

Because of that, their bodies quickly separated. Seeing that the unconscious Kenneth was about to fall to the ground, Elise quickly stretched out her arms to pull him back.

With that, the both of them went from being side-by-side to being right in front of each other.

Kenneth deliberately slumped against her weakly, but there was a sly smile on his face, showing that he had succeeded in his plan.

Just as Elise was glad that they did not fall to the ground, a waiter walked past them with a huge mirror in his hands, so she shot a curious glance at the mirror.

Coincidentally, she saw Kenneth's triumphant smile and she instantly narrowed her eyes dangerously.

Meanwhile, Kenneth, whose eyes were closed, suddenly felt a shiver down his spine as he felt a murderous aura around him. He quietly opened his eyes to look around him, but he found nothing out of place, apart from a waiter who was moving a mirror. Hence, he closed his eyes again to enjoy Elise's warmth around him.

However, she gritted her teeth and took a sharp breath before she took out the silver needle that was hidden in her sleeves.

This filthy man actually played a trick on me!

All my kindness and effort to bring him back for such a long distance have gone to waste!

Should I let him suffer like those fighters just now, or should I directly destroy his manhood so that he is unable to tease other girls in the future?

Elise let him take advantage of her while she thought of a perfect plan to punish him.

Suddenly, her eyes lit up and she came up with a good idea.

There's nothing better than making everyone leave him!

Thinking about this, she raised her hand without any hesitation and plunged the needle into the nape of his neck.

Kenneth's body gave a jolt before he passed out for real this time.

A few minutes later, Elise brought him to Melody's room and rang her doorbell.

Soon, the door opened and Melody appeared. Her expression turned curious as she saw the weird position of Elise and Kenneth.

How did he offend her again this time?

"Miss Sinclair, is there anything I can help you with?" Melody kept her usual calmness.

Elise did not expect that, so she did not react for a moment.

“Ahem!” She then cleared her throat before saying slowly, “Miss Melody, you know very well how he pestered me over the past few days. He even followed me today with evil intentions.”

“Evil intentions?” Melody arched her eyebrows as she looked at the both of them in front of her.

I wonder who actually has evil intentions between the two of them.

Elise could tell what she was thinking, but she remained firm as she shot a glance at the unconscious Kenneth. “Since he can’t beat me, I guess I’ll say it’s a failed attempt to attack me. But I guess this is enough to show you his true colors.”

“He lost to you?” Melody placed her focus on the wrong point. If I remember correctly, he has never lost to anyone before this.

“Yes. This man is useless. Since you are quite eligible, you’d better change a partner,” Elise said solemnly. “There are so many fish in the sea and you don’t have to stick to this one. Since I’m planning to start a new company, you can join me if you are willing to. I’ll give you all the benefits Kenneth has given you. On top of that, if you do a good job, I will even introduce you to some men. How about that?”

Melody felt awkward upon hearing that. No matter where I go, it’s all the same in the end.

“Does he know that you are recruiting me?” she asked.

“The person who lost doesn’t have to know about this.” Elise then loosened her grip and let Kenneth slide to the ground. “I’ll be frank with you—I have a good impression of you, but I simply can’t stand Kenneth. If you jump ship to my company and break off all ties with him, I don’t have to take pity on him when I settle scores with him in the future.”

Melody nodded thoughtfully. “Does this mean that I’m saving his life?”

“Hmm? I guess so,” Elise replied subconsciously before realizing that Melody had brought the topic astray yet again. “This is not the point. I just want to know if you want to work for me or not. Are you willing to leave him and give yourself a chance to lead a new life?”

Melody stared into Elise’s eyes for a few seconds before she replied calmly, “No, thank you.”

“Sorry?” Elise thought her ears were playing tricks on her. “Think about it—based on Kenneth’s unremorseful behavior, he will definitely tick me off one day. If you continue to stay with him, I might even attack you along with him. Miss Melody, you are a smart

and educated person. You should know that your life continues even after you leave him. Don't be too sentimental here.”

“Thank you for your kind advice, Miss Sinclair. However, Mr. Bailey saved my life, so I will live and die for him. No matter what happens, I will never betray him,” Melody said calmly.

Upon hearing that, Elise merely shook her head pitifully.

She is loyal, but fate likes to play a fool on us.

In the end, Elise only turned around and shot a cold stare at Kenneth, who was currently on the ground.

I wonder where his luck comes from to have such an amazing woman with him.

Forget it! When the gem auction event is over, I'll try my best to avoid them.

“I respect your decision,” Elise said gallantly before turning around to leave.

When she was waiting for the elevator, she seemed to sense something and turned her head around. Then, she saw Melody carefully pick Kenneth from the ground and brought him into her room.

Elise had no idea why she felt slightly uncomfortable upon seeing this, as if her beloved toy was being taken away by another person.

She did not understand the reason for such feelings.

Could it be that my pity for Melody is so much that I feel upset as soon as I remember that Kenneth is going to continue to affect her life?

Ding!

As the door of the elevator opened, Elise shook her head to let go of such emotions.

No matter how much Melody and Kenneth torture themselves, it's none of my business.

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Chapter 493 Being Pestered Incessantly

As soon as the door was closed, Kenneth opened his eyes and let go of Melody.

He then stood up and tidied himself up before he walked further into the room steadily, leaving a speechless Melody behind.

She froze for an awkward second before returning to her senses and followed behind him.

“As the intensity of work is constantly increasing, I hope you can increase my salary, Mr. Bailey,” Melody said in a sarcastic tone as she leaned against a shelf next to the television.

However, Kenneth acted as though he did not hear her. Sitting on the couch, he drank a glass of water and straightened his tie before he spoke calmly. “Money always hurts people’s feelings. Melody, you should pick up our local culture and stop learning all the unhelpful things from abroad.”

“You want to talk about feelings with me?” Melody did not show him any respect at all as she arched her eyebrows. “But that hurts my income instead. Without enough money, I don’t feel secure. How can I have feelings for you and be able to finish my job at the same time?”

“If that’s the case, Melody, your sense of security comes from too simple a source,” Kenneth replied with a half-smirk on his face.

“I don’t think this is a bad thing. Having one source means that there won’t be too many changes. If like you, I have to change into a different person to please others, I would much rather be killed by an avalanche of money,” Melody muttered.

Kenneth merely shook his head as he made a sound between a sigh and a laugh. “You are not foolish either. Even if you die, you want to die with lots of money.”

“I would prefer it if you describe me as a person who has a clear goal,” she retorted seriously.

In the end, Kenneth did not reply to her anymore and stood up to walk out of the room in silence.

As Melody thought he wanted to return to his room, she asked, “Do you need me to call room service for you so that they send the food straight to your room?”

“It’s fine.” With that, he gave a wave and opened the door before disappearing.

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After Elise walked out of the elevator, she was still submerged in her own thoughts.

Who is the culprit who poisoned Kenneth? Can I somehow find the clues for saving Grandma and Alexander from him?

She took a right turn habitually. When she was just several meters away, Elise instinctively took out her room card.

Just as she placed the card on the sensor, the room was opened from someone inside with a beep.

She raised her head and locked eyes with the owner of the room.

“Miss Sinclair?” Owen was pleasantly surprised to see her.

“Owen?” Elise, however, was perplexed to find him here. “Why are you in my room?”

“Your room? Ha! Are you drunk, Miss Sinclair? You must be mistaken, because I’ve been living in this room for almost a week. If I have a beautiful lady like yourself in my room, I would definitely notice you,” he joked.

Elise blushed and raised her head to look at the room number.

The room number 1303 is correct, but this is B1303.

My room is A1303, which is on the other end of the corridor.

Looks like I walked in the opposite direction.

And so, she quickly apologized before turning around to leave. “Sorry, I think I got the wrong room.”

“Wait, Miss Sinclair!” Owen called out to her. “Since it’s such a rare coincidence, would you like to have a cup of coffee in my room?”

“No, thank you.” Elise rejected him politely. “It’s quite late now so if I drink too much coffee, I might have trouble sleeping.”

“In that case, let me see you to your room.”

With that, Owen closed the door of his room and walked outside in large strides.

However, Elise felt awkward about this. “There’s no need. It’s just nearby.”

“Don’t worry about it. I’m about to head outside anyway. Come on.” With that, Owen made an ‘after you’ gesture. It was quite difficult for Elise to reject him, so she just followed suit.

After taking a few steps, he initiated the conversation. "How's Mr. Fassbender doing?"

"Not bad. He is quite healthy and energetic."

"What about yourself, Miss Sinclair? Why are you in Dukethorn? If you don't mind telling me, maybe I'm able to help you out."

"Nothing much. I'm just here on a vacation," Elise replied mechanically. In no time, they had arrived at her room.

"Alright. I'm here now. You can get going now, Mr. Morgan."

He raised his head to look at her room number, but a wistful look flitted across his eyes. It quickly disappeared as he gave her a gentlemanly smile. "Miss Sinclair, before you enter, may I have the honor of having your contact?"

"Is that necessary?" Elise asked. "Honestly, I don't really like small talk."

"Let's put it this way—we probably will meet tens of thousands of people in our lifetimes, but not everyone has the opportunity to meet the same person again. This rare coincidence is enough for us to be friends." He smiled and passed his phone to her. "Do you mind?"

Since Owen already said so, she would seem petty if she refused to give him.

Even if she did not care about herself, Elise still had to give enough respect to Quentin. After all, Owen was not someone they could easily offend.

However, she had a sudden brilliant idea.

She took his phone and entered a series of numbers as she created a new contact in the phone.

Then, she gave him back the phone.

Owen took it back and he had a flirty sort of smile on his face, as if he had gotten some rare treasure.

Standing at a corner not far from them, Kenneth saw what took place and his gaze darkened.

His fists were clenched tightly next to his body and in the next second, he immediately started walking toward Elise.

"Now that we are friends, can we have breakfast tomorrow?" Owen pressed the issue further after putting his phone away.

By this time, Elise was getting slightly impatient.

What is wrong with this guy's neverending, annoying requests?!

It seems like if I'm too kind, people will take advantage of me indeed.

Thinking about this, she did not plan to give him a kind hint anymore and was about to reject him upfront.

Just as she was about to open her mouth, someone suddenly leaned against her. Before Elise could even make a decision, she supported the figure instinctively.

In that instant, it looked like the princess saving the prince, instead of the other way around.

"F*ck!" Looking at the 'prince' in her arms, Elise cursed out loud. "Why are you still pestering me?"

"I should be the one asking that! What did you tell Melody? As soon as I returned to my senses, she chased me out instantly. I'm feeling very weak now and you need to take responsibility for this."

He pretended to be a weakling, ignoring how much strength Elise had to muster to support him. At this moment, he looked like a thick-skinned hooligan who refused to let go of her.

She deserves this for giving another man her contact! I'm going to throw a tantrum because I'm unhappy about it.

When they were at the lobby earlier, Elise already knew that Kenneth was alright. Hence, a sharp look flickered in her eyes as she looked at him behaving in this way now.

"Miss Sinclair, do you know this man? Is he drunk? Do you need me to settle this for you?" Owen asked kindly.

"Nope!"

"Get lost!"

Both Elise and Kenneth roared at the same time, sending Owen reeling.

Kenneth slowly turned around and glared daggers at Owen.

If you dare to touch me, you are doomed.

Elise looked conflicted. She wanted to ignore Kenneth but judging at how 'warm' Owen was, she might be in lots of trouble if the latter helped her out this time.

"Actually, he is my friend and we have something to discuss, so I'll take my leave first, Mr. Morgan."

With that, Elise quickly pulled Kenneth up and turned around to open the door. Then, she shoved him in and quickly closed the door.

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Chapter 494 I'm Here to Protect You

The door slammed shut with a loud, ruthless thud that sent a jolt through Owen. He returned to his senses and his exquisite facial features darkened. Did Elise just abandon me for a weak, sissy man? Wait a minute! Her fiancé is Alexander, so why is she so intimate with that man?

From their attitude toward each other, Owen could feel the duo avoiding each other, as if they had something to hide. Is it possible that Elise is cheating on Alexander with this man? It's good news if that is the case. This proves that Elise and Alexander's relationship is not as stable as I thought. However, I don't think she is as pure and innocent as I assumed.

From Elise's strengths, she was, without a doubt, a woman of many talents who was good enough for Owen. However, he despised her slightly for her messy private relationships. At the thought of the both of them having fun on their own even after getting married, Owen left her room quietly.

Meanwhile, behind the closed door, Elise had been leaning against the peephole as she kept watch on the corridor. Upon seeing Owen turn around, she finally heaved a sigh of relief. At the same time, she narrowed her eyes dangerously at Kenneth, who was currently against the wall as she held him by the neck.

"After he gets into the elevator, you have no chance of staying here, understand?"

Kenneth, however, smiled indecently and raised his other hand to stroke her hand that was clamped on his neck. This made Elise quickly loosen her grip and retract her hand as she thundered, "You jerk!"

With that, she remembered that Owen was not that far from them, so she lowered her voice. "Kenneth, there's a limit to my patience," she warned. "Don't you go around assuming that I won't dare to kill you!"

Kenneth's lips twitched into a taunting smile as he countered, "Go ahead, then. Even if I'm dead, I will be a flirty ghost."

Speechless, Elise narrowed her eyes again. “If you don’t know the meaning of the words, don’t simply say them.”

Kenneth looked like his parents were of different nationalities and he was raised abroad when he was younger, so he likely did not fully grasp the language. However, he took two steps towards her as he purred, “What do you mean? Why don’t you teach me, Miss Sinclair?”

The passage leading to the door was neither narrow nor wide, but as the both of them stood opposite to each other, they were not that far from each other. Now that Kenneth had gotten closer to her, Elise was forced to take a few steps back until her back leaned against the wall. His warm breath landed on her face, making her ears tingle.

She averted her gaze rationally and turned her palms around. In an instant, a silver needle was wedged between her fingers.

Suddenly, a huge, warm hand wrapped around her hand that was holding the needle. His callused hand felt slightly rough when he touched her flawless skin. Surprisingly, this inexplicably calmed her down. Her thoughts of killing him off, as well as her anger, disappeared in that instant.

“Stop poking me with all your sharp edges. I’m here to protect you.” Kenneth looked at her with his earnest and honest black eyes.

Thump! Thump, thump! What is the noisy sound? Oh—it’s my heartbeat.

Elise raised her head to look at Kenneth blankly. In that instantly, a familiar feeling surged through her, as if she was facing Alexander right now.

Her short-lived calmness dissolved into a frantic mess the moment she realized that. How can I fall for two guys simultaneously?

“No!”

Troubled by her own thoughts, Elise didn’t realize that she yelled out loud. Then, she quickly shook his hands off and turned around to open the door of her room to force herself not to look at Kenneth.

“You’d better disappear from my sight this instant!”

Kenneth’s face darkened as he felt that something was off. This time around, Elise was very different compared to the times she got annoyed by his teasing. He had no clue where he had stepped over the line, but he knew very well that he could not continue this any further. Hence, he walked to the door without another word. When he reached the door, he turned around to look at her, his expression worried.

However, what greeted him was Elise's icy, firm expression as she shut the door in his face. An inexplicable pain suddenly shot through his heart, making him have a hard time breathing.

After a while only did Kenneth turn around, something flashing in his gaze as he walked away in huge strides.

On the other hand, Elise leaned against the door listening to the sound of his footsteps getting faint, a deep frown on her face. What is wrong with me? Why do I feel attracted to a man who already has a girlfriend? I shouldn't harbor such feelings!

...

The next day, the gem auction event continued smoothly.

A day had passed and many people were successful in their auctions and managed to get what they wanted. Because of this, the auction gained a lot of popularity and attracted people who wanted to get rich overnight.

Some of them stayed there from the beginning without any urge of leaving—they were all gambling fanatics who were unwilling to leave without seeing the precious prizes.

Nevertheless, even without the prizes, if they hung in there until the very end, they could watch the match between Elise and Ziggy. After all, the only thing that humans never lacked was curiosity.

At ten o'clock, Elise finally appeared at the auction site, the venue crowded with attendees. As soon as she walked past them, she elicited a rather big commotion from the people who were gossiping about her.

"There she is! I already told you that this young lady will not let us down."

"It's quite dramatic indeed. Ziggy already brought his secret weapon, yet Elise still doesn't know that she is going to suffer a terrible defeat. My heart breaks whenever I think of such a beautiful lady weeping because she lost. Hahaha!"

Though Elise heard their conversation, she pretended as though she didn't and walked past them calmly without speaking a word.

Meanwhile, Tom, who was walking toward her, could not keep his cool.

"Miss Sinclair, you already know that Ziggy brought his secret weapon. His ancestors are all important customers of the gem auction event. An average person cannot even imagine his connections in this industry. I'm sure his secret weapon this time around is impressive."

Tom's brows were furrowed together and he had a hopeless expression.

"Is that so? Is the secret weapon better than me?" Elise merely asked indifferently with a confident expression.

Tom was speechless upon seeing her attitude. Have you forgotten that the crowd laughed for the entire day at the gem you opened yesterday?

Her blind confidence and courage made him sigh continuously as he walked. He did not have any hopes in her at this point, and he was just hoping that she could get lucky and not embarrass them.

However, before he could say something, Elise let out another loud yawn. He was torn between amusement and anxiety as he could guess what she was going to say.

Sure enough, she rubbed her hands together and said, "The air-conditioning is so cold that it makes me sleepy. I guess it's better for me to go back and take a nap."

Just like yesterday, she confirmed the crowd's suspicions openly and walked toward the entrance, leaving Tom alone in his fight.

At that point, Tom was utterly speechless. It's not reliable to depend on Boss. As an employee, I have to depend on my own hard work.

After cheering himself up, he walked back to the hall to pick from a collection of gemstones.

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Chapter 495 Scared Himself to Death

However, Elise did not take a nap. Instead, she took this opportunity to meet Xavier.

Exactly at 2 PM., there was a series of knocks on the door.

Knock, knock, knock! Knock, knock! Knock!

Upon hearing the rhythm, Elise quickly walked over to open the door.

Xavier stood there in a shirt, vest, and a bow tie, looking like a hotel cleaner as he announced, "Room service! Do you need me to clean your room?"

"You're just in time—I accidentally spilled something on the carpet, so please come in and clean it up. And do be quiet, as I'm about to take a nap." With that, Elise calmly let him in.

After she closed the door, he turned around. The perfunctory smile on his face instantly disappeared and his eyes turned vigilant as he looked at her.

“Xavier?” Elise broke the silence first.

“You work for Joseph?” Xavier asked.

Upon hearing that, Elise shook her head. “I’m just like you—he doesn’t have any control over me. I’m just working for him for a certain period.”

“Then you are from the SK Group. When will Joseph be arriving?” Xavier’s tone immediately took an arrogant turn.

He did not associate the weak-looking girl in front of him with Eliza, the ace of the group. Instead, he thought she was instructed by Joseph to deal with him.

But Joseph doesn’t need to do that. Apart from Eliza, no one else is good enough to be the middleman between Joseph and me, let alone this young lady who doesn’t even look like she’s of age.

“Who told you that he is coming?” Elise asked innocently.

“Are you fooling around with me?” Xavier’s eyes narrowed as killing intent flashed across them.

Back when he was ambushed in Lithium City, even though it proved that the people who called him were right, it didn’t mean that their motives were simple.

As a skilled member of the SK Group, Xavier instinctively questioned whether he had fallen into another trap.

“Calm down. I don’t have any malicious intent. Alright, alright. To tell you the truth, I’m actually Eliza.” Elise revealed her identity in hopes of winning his trust.

However, Xavier heaved an impatient sigh. “Hasn’t Joseph told you that Eliza is a man?”

“Nonsense! I’m a young and pretty girl!” Elise protested in annoyance.

“Even without him telling me, I can think for myself, alright? I heard Eliza’s voice, so I’m pretty sure I can tell if it’s a man or a woman,” Xavier replied impassively.

“Oh—about that...” At that, Elise took out her phone and made some changes before she recorded her voice. “Is this the voice you heard?”

After the application processed it, the voice of that man rang out. "Is this the voice you heard?"

Xavier's expression instantly darkened before he looked incredulously at the smooth and dewy face in front of him.

Is the heavens playing a trick on me? How could a girl, who is not even twenty years old, be a hidden boss whom I can't even gauge her strength?!

However, Xavier soon found an acceptable answer for his question.

Joseph must have joined forces with this woman to trick me.

I'm sure that's it!

Since the internal network of the SK Group could be hacked and two Josephs could appear, there's nothing impossible.

Though Xavier did not know their reason for doing so, he was sure that he could not stay at this place any longer.

Once he sorted his thoughts out, he immediately threw a smoke bomb on the ground that instantly emitted smoke in the entire room. In the blink of an eye, the door was opened and a figure ran out of the room, right in front of Elise.

Looking at the smoke bomb that still emitted smoke, she was rather speechless.

Xavier is too paranoid!

I look like a harmless young lady, so he doesn't need to use thermal weapons just to escape from me, does he?

Heaving another helpless sigh, she closed the door calmly and walked into the room to pick up the smoke bomb. Then, she walked to the kitchen to switch on the ventilator to remove the smoke in the room. If this went on, the fire alarm would be triggered.

And so, Elise took a knife and took the smoke bomb apart in no time.

The smoke had stopped, but her exasperation still remained.

In the end, she took her phone out to send a message to Joseph.

'Why is this Xavier so paranoid?'

He is just a rank lower than me, after all. To have such an overreaction from such a small case... He probably might scare himself to death one day!

Initially, Elise planned to get some information about Timothy Lancaster and his wife from Xavier, but looking at the current situation, she had no choice but to delay it.

Hence, she changed her plans and looked into the marketing report of Shaw's Jewelry Co.

When her stomach finally grumbled in protest at 8 PM, Elise put away her stuff and went out to look for food.

Since she was a rather wild kid when she was younger, she did not like the exquisite-western food and preferred street food instead.

After she walked out of the hotel, she headed toward the food street immediately and bought some takeaways. Holding a bag of chips in her hand, she nibbled on them as she walked back to the hotel but before she reached the end of the street, she wanted to get another serving of tacos.

Just as she was approaching the stall, she saw a young woman in a heated argument with a local middle-aged woman.

"I'm sorry, madam," the young woman said. "I really don't understand you. Is this enough?" Throughout, she kept taking money out of her wallet.

Perhaps she wanted to use money to resolve the problem to save herself some trouble.

However, the middle-aged woman refused to take the money, and she gave it back to the young woman, all the while trying to explain in another language, a troubled look on her face.

After standing there for some time, Elise could make out the younger woman's expression. And so, she walked over with a slight smile on her face, planning to resolve the misunderstanding between both of them.

"She is telling you that she doesn't want your money and is giving you the food for free."

The young woman froze for a moment. Upon realizing that she had misunderstood the situation, she felt even more embarrassed. "No, I can't accept that! Madam, you are running a small business here. I can't take advantage of you."

With that, the tug of war with money continued.

Elise felt troubled seeing both parties refusing to take the money. After finishing her chips, she threw the bag into a nearby bin and took a stack of brochures from the stall and passed it to the woman.

“It’s not that she doesn’t want your money. Her son went missing and she wants you to take these brochures to further places to look for him, as you are not a local.”

Though the middle-aged woman did not speak the language, she could understand it. When she heard Elise’s clear explanation, she smiled as she loosened her grip on the young woman’s hand.

In the end, both Elise and the young woman bought a set of tacos each and told her that they would take a few brochures with them.

The middle-age woman was so happy that she grinned widely as she prepared their orders.

While she was busy conversing with Elise, the young woman placed a few banknotes under the plates furtively.

Though she did it inconspicuously, Elise noticed her actions.

As they walked out of the food street, Elise teased, “You are quite generous, miss.”

The young woman smiled and pointed at the huge stack of brochures in her hand. “Same goes for you, too.”

They exchanged warm smiles with each other.

“I have to thank you for helping me out there. Otherwise, I would have thought the middle-aged woman was going to scam me. Are you from Dukethorn?” the woman asked.

“No, I’m not. I just happen to understand what she’s saying,” Elise said.

“I see. You must be very smart, then. The local language in Dukethorn is very difficult to understand. Even after learning it for a few years, I still can’t understand any of it.” The woman suddenly appeared to remember something at this moment. “By the way, I still don’t know your name. I’m Tina Baker, and you are?”

“I’m Elise Sinclair. I was born in Lithium City, but I just came from Landred City,” Elise replied.

[Bring Your A Game, Mr Chapter 496 Read online](#)

Chapter 496 Who’s That?

Tina laughed upon hearing that. “Your self-introduction was quite special.”

“Yeah? I thought so too.” Elise giggled.

“You helped me, so let’s exchange numbers. I’ll treat you to a meal some time after this.” Tina took out her phone with the intention to get Elise’s number.

“There’s no need. Let’s talk about it in person tomorrow.”

As Elise had things in both her hands, she was unable to take out her phone, so she rejected Tina’s offer. Then, the former turned around and strode off in the direction where she had come from.

When she returned to her room, she turned on the computer to contact Joseph while she ate.

Joseph, whose body was still weak, was not in any condition to take a plane, so he didn’t come along. Instead, he remained in Athesea to monitor the internal communication of the SK Group.

However, that wasn’t the reason why Elise looked for him at that moment. In fact, it was due to the poster of the stall owner.

When she was at the food street earlier, she took note of all the details on the poster. The stall owner’s son was a physics graduate student from a research institute in Dukethorn, who had gained the lecturers’ special attention due to his outstanding academic performance. He had mysteriously gone missing six months ago and nobody knew whether he was currently dead or alive.

Researchers usually had dull and boring lifestyles and they rarely made enemies. Therefore, it was apparent that this person’s disappearance was more or less related to the suicide case of the physicist from Athesea.

Joseph soon went online, but he used the new identity that Elise had given him and a separate communication channel.

‘Did everything go well with your trip to Dukethorn?’ he texted, to which she replied, ‘Everything’s good. I need you to analyze a set of data right away. Please tabulate the total number of physicists that we have in our country in the past two years.’

Joseph then typed, ‘Ten minutes.’

The national database was relatively vast, so it would take time to analyze the data.

Fifteen minutes later, Joseph sent her a report together with his summary. ‘Two years ago, the total number of top physicists registered in the database was 1760. It was 1680 last year, and this year, there are only 1440 physicists. Other than 20 of them who passed away due to old age, the rest of them either disappeared or died. Besides, most of the missing university students studied physics.’

Elise's gaze was fixated on the statistical report on the screen while her expression sank.

She was practically certain that someone was targeting Cittadel or to be precise, they were trying to achieve the goal of suppressing the technological advancement of Cittadel by eradicating their researchers.

A country's technological advancement was usually determined by their top physicists. However, there were people who schemed to slowly annihilate Cittadel's researchers in order to bring the country's science and technological advancement to a standstill. Who in the world has such a huge ambition and capability? Also, what does this have to do with me and how does this relate to the SK Group?

There were too many unresolved mysteries but fortunately for her, Elise wasn't completely clueless on what to do next.

After some contemplation, she replied, 'I understand. Memorize the data, then destroy them. Make sure that no one finds out that we investigated this. Also, figure out a way to summon Xavier back to your side. He doesn't trust me, so I have to leave him to you. I'm afraid that he may get into trouble if he's allowed to run freely out there.'

Joseph texted, 'Alright, I will do so right away.'

After reading the last message, Elise exited the chat and destroyed all the data that she had received before switching off the computer.

Perhaps it was because she had slept for a long time during the day, she wasn't sleepy at all when she lay on the bed. Instead, she was wide awake.

Staring at the ceiling, she pondered whether she had ever shown her face in the field that consisted of the top physicists. In the end, her answer to it was no.

Although she had secretly joined international physics competitions out of her anger toward Reuben, that happened after she had been targeted, which proved that that wasn't the reason she was targeted in the first place.

She again recalled how the fake 'Joseph' had provoked her. Just you wait, I'll definitely find you.

Ding! A sudden doorbell interrupted her train of thought.

She glanced at the clock on the wall, only to see that it was already 3.00 AM. Who would come at this hour?

In the end, Elise warily clambered out of the bed and tip-toed to the foyer. She then opened the peephole to secretly look outside.

There was nobody outside, so she retracted her gaze. Could it be that I'm hearing things? Maybe I'm indeed too anxious, she thought to herself.

However, just after she took two steps back to return to her room, the knocking sound on the door became hasty.

What the heck? Who is this prankster who's pulling such a trick?

She returned to the door in frustration. When she looked into the peephole again, it was still empty outside—there wasn't a single soul out there.

With her brows knitted, she thought, Could it be that it's a kid? Possibly, since a kid wouldn't be visible through the peephole with their height.

Just then, a loud knock was heard from the lower part of the door.

It's a kid. She was certain. Alright kiddo, let me teach you a lesson for scaring others in the middle of the night when you are supposed to be in bed!

Elise took a deep breath and put on a fierce expression. Then, she pressed on the door handle hard and abruptly pulled the door open.

However, before she managed to begin her fierce lecture, a body fell onto the floor along with the momentum of the door opening. The person's head happened to land by her feet.

She instantly recognized Kenneth, who seemed to be unconscious at the moment.

He had cold sweat on his forehead and blood stains all over him as crimson blood gushed out from his abdomen, which was possibly the reason he was currently unconscious.

His familiar side profile gave her mixed feelings but in the end, she gave in to her conscience. So, she dragged the man into her room and plopped him on the couch to bandage his wound.

"You are lucky that the medical kit in the hotel room is still usable."

After Elise found a medical kit, she undid his buttons to assess his injury.

The wound was much deeper than she had imagined and it would require some stitches. However, the tools and medicines she had in the medical kit only allowed for a simple treatment.

The fact that Kenneth had not gone to the hospital showed that he didn't want anyone to know that he was hurt, so she naturally couldn't take him out.

All she could do at the moment was to disinfect the wound to prevent inflammation before going out to purchase some tools for suturing.

After confirming on the treatment method, Elise used a tweezer to hold a disinfected cotton ball before rubbing it on his wound.

The sharp pain instantly woke Kenneth up. He subconsciously grabbed Elise's wrist that was holding the tweezer as his eyes snapped open.

Elise peered at him impassively, silently warning him with her gaze the danger that would happen if he were to continue to grab her hand.

With a heavy head, Kenneth looked at Elise and weakly murmured, "Ellie?"

A menacing intent flashed across her stunning eyes as she narrowed them. "Are you aware that your injury will eventually kill you if I just leave you be? I don't even need to lift a finger."

Kenneth's glazed eyes cleared as he mused, Right, I'm now Kenneth, not Alexander.

He let out a bitter smile and retracted his hand. "If that's the case, I hope to die in your hands."

She rolled her eyes at him and intentionally pressed the cotton ball harder against his wound.

Kenneth inhaled sharply in pain, but Elise curled up the corner of her lips, grinning at him for her successful mischievous act.

He took notice of her slight expression, which made him exhale in resignation. Who knew my Ellie could be so cruel? However, the very next second, he felt happy inside. She always gives me special treatment.

When he was Alexander, she would be gentle and patient; when he was Kenneth, she would be hot-tempered and grumpy.

He had seen different sides of her. Hence, although the pain that he was enduring was so excruciating that he had broken out in cold sweat, he felt a strong sense of satisfaction well up inside him.

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Chapter 497 Let Me Sleep on the Floor

Elise treated his injury in a rough manner. When she was dressing his wound, she looked up and saw him smiling, which in turn made her grit her teeth menacingly.

Maybe I shouldn't have saved this irritating man. He nearly died, yet he's able to laugh. I wonder what could make him put away his frivolous attitude.

After putting on the last piece of plaster, Elise tossed the remaining ones into the medical kit, then rose up and clapped her hands. "I'm done bandaging your wound. You may now get lost and return to your own room."

Kenneth sat up on the couch, slowly buttoning his shirt as he replied roguishly, "I can leave, but if I do and my wound becomes inflamed and I die out there, I'll still come back to knock on your door. If you wish to experience again how it feels like to be woken up from your sleep, I don't mind leaving."

She turned to face him, her gaze freezing. "Kenneth Bailey, have you ever heard of the phrase called 'biting the hand that feeds you'?"

"What if I have? Or what if I haven't?" He looked up at her with a weak smile. Under the lights, he seemed feeble but he was still good-looking.

"What you are doing now is exactly like that phrase. I've saved you, but you are not going to let me have a good night's sleep," Elise growled in a cold tone with her arms folded across her chest.

"I swear that I want to stay simply because I want you to be able to sleep peacefully. If I were to leave now and those who were chasing after me find me, I doubt that the problem you would be facing would be as simple as not having a good night's sleep." In all honesty, his explanation sounded logical.

Elise's gaze flicked from his face then to the door, and she decided that he had a point. "You can stay, but you'd better be good and stay in the living room. Otherwise, I'll throw you out of the room regardless of whether there are killers out there."

Kenneth shrugged, not taking her words seriously.

Elise then darted a look in his direction and saw a blanket on the couch, so she returned to her room at ease.

After she had switched off the light and was about to get on her bed, she saw Kenneth's figure standing by the door of her room.

"What are you trying to pull off now?" she growled impatiently through gritted teeth.

As he lifted his foot and marched toward the bed located near the floor-to-ceiling window, he responded, "The couch is too small and I'll hurt my wound further if I sleep with my legs curled up. Since you have offered to help, don't leave things unfinished. Let me sleep on the floor in the room."

With that, he supported himself by holding onto the edge of the bed and sat on the carpet without waiting for Elise to reply.

“Do you have a death wish?!” Elise warned him fiercely.

As soon as she said, he raised a hand and showed her the blood on it while uttering with an innocent expression, “Look at this—blood is seeping through the wound. Could you bear to see me suffering on the couch?”

Elise wanted to say that she wouldn't mind, but the words seemed to be stuck in her throat.

In the end, she caved in and awkwardly muttered, “This is the last time I'm going to make a concession. You'd better not have any funny plans. I'm a light sleeper, so I'll immediately wake up no matter what you do and I'll kill you.”

Kenneth simply nodded. “Miss Sinclair, I'll remember everything that you said. I dare not forget them.”

Elise rolled her eyes at him and was not bothered to fight him on this. Her back facing him, she pulled the duvet over herself and shut her eyes.

As she had her guard up against him, she was paying attention to the sounds behind her.

Kenneth kept inhaling sharply in pain at first, but he slowly became quiet and she soon heard his regular breathing.

Only then did she let her guard down and fall asleep.

As the night grew, Elise felt as if she was wrapped in her soft duvet and after some time, she felt as if she had fallen into a hot spring, whereby her whole body was enveloped in warmth. It still remained even after daybreak when the morning sun had lit up the entire room.

Elise slowly opened her eyes. After a few seconds of grogginess, she saw a large hand that was placed on her. She instantly turned to her side and before the owner of the hand could react, she kicked the figure off the bed.

Even Kenneth was unable to identify if he had been woken up due to her kick or the fall. Holding his injury, he clambered up, his face pale from the pain.

Last night before they went to bed, he had deliberately rubbed his hand on his shirt to stain it with blood. However, at this moment, his wound had indeed torn open. He could even feel warm blood gushing out of the injury.

When she saw that he was enduring the pain, Elise softened for a moment but she quickly put that feeling aside.

I shouldn't sympathize with a touchy jerk who takes a mile when given an inch.

In the end, she kept quiet and left the room to do her morning routine.

When she exited the bathroom, Kenneth was seen sitting on the couch in the living room.

"There's nobody outside now. Please leave immediately." Elise asked him to leave, her voice cold.

At that, Kenneth raised his head and looked at her. "I've ordered breakfast. Let's eat before I leave."

"I lose my appetite when I see you." She folded her arms across her chest. "You now have two choices. First, leave on your own. Second, I'll kick you out. You have sixty seconds to make a decision."

Kenneth pouted reluctantly. Just as he was about to continue pestering her, his phone rang in his pocket.

He took it out and brought it to his ear. A few seconds later, he calmly said, "I understand. I'll be back right away."

He then killed the call, exhaling a deep breath in disappointment before raising his head to look at Elise.

For some reason, he wished to stick to her when he was hurt. Having her in his sight alone was able to ease the pain. She was his medicine, his cure even, so he was reluctant to leave.

"It's time for you to make a decision," she urged.

A dispirited Kenneth pulled a long face and rose to his full height, sluggishly dragging his feet to the door.

As soon as he stepped out of the room, he turned around and wanted to say something, but the door slammed shut in his face.

It was fortunate that there was a gap between his face and the door that saved him from being hit in the face.

"She must have eaten a bomb." Kenneth let out a doting yet self-mocking smile and shook his head before he left.

In the room, Elise tried to recall what had happened last night, thinking if she had done anything that she wasn't supposed to do, like hugging him or something along the lines.

She cracked her head trying to recall anything, but nothing came back to her.

This proved that she still had her honor and hadn't cheated on Alexander.

Alexander, Alexander... Elise missed him, so she gave him a call. Right now, she was like a person who had fallen into the churning water, desperately struggling to grab onto a log.

The moment Kenneth stepped out of the lift, he felt a vibration from the other pocket, the one he used to keep his personal phone in.

Even before he took his phone out, he grinned brightly, because only Elise was able to reach him on that phone.

"Ellie." Kenneth altered his voice and returned to using Alexander's, his tone warm and doting.

With the skill of faking his voice, he was able to perfectly conceal his identity, although he had nearly exposed himself in front of Elise last night when his head had been groggy due to the injury.

Upon hearing his voice, Elise felt much relieved. That's right, the man I love is Alexander Griffith. Only he is able to give me this special sense of security.

"Why aren't you saying anything?" he asked when he didn't get any response from her for a long time.

"Nothing. I just missed you a little." Elise pursed her lips as she raised her hand to hold her burning cheeks. She couldn't believe that she could be so forward to the point of confessing her love to him through the phone.

Upon hearing that, he chuckled softly, the disappointment from being kicked out of her room now completely disappearing. "I love you, Ellie."

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Chapter 498 Exclusively Elise's

Elise could feel her face burning. After inhaling deeply, she changed the topic. "Don't sweet-talk me. Are you done with your business over there? I'm almost done here. Do you want me to go over to help you?"

"There's no need. I'm almost done too. Let's meet up in Athesea," Kenneth replied.

“Alright, then. You’d better attend to your business.” She shrugged, unfazed by his rejection. However, as if she was suddenly recalling something, Elise dropped her usual gentleness and growled, “But you are not allowed to flirt with other women. Do you hear me?”

Kenneth was stunned to hear that at first but when he returned to his senses, he grinned even wider. “Sure. When I get back, I’ll have Cameron make a sign that says ‘Exclusively Elise’s’. I’ll hang it over my neck and carry it around. What do you think?”

This successfully made Elise laugh. “Won’t that make you a pet dog? Only dogs wear nameplates.”

“I’m not a dog, but I’m your pet. By wearing a nameplate, when someone dares to lay a hand on me, other people will know to inform you to take me home.” He coaxed her, treating her like a child as he subconsciously slowed down his pace.

At a hallway far away from where Kenneth was, Melody took notice of the wide grin on Kenneth’s face from afar. It made her frown, as if she was looking at a monster.

Here we go again—the same old trick of giving a reward after a punishment.

Even without him having to tell her, Melody knew that Kenneth must have asked for the ‘punishment’ on his own accord.

She pouted, a look of disgust on her face. Perhaps Mr. Bailey has a slight fetish for self-abuse. I bet no one could tell that from how he looks...

Meanwhile, Elise, who was delighted to hear his sweet words, played along. “Sure, I’ll have to buy some rope and tie you by my side for the rest of your life.”

Kenneth stopped in his tracks, his voice as tender as a silk garment that slid across a lady’s delicate skin. “If that’s true, I can’t wait for it to happen.” He briefly paused before he added, “Ellie, I can’t wait to devote my whole life to you.”

Elise pursed her lips in utter embarrassment. “Alright, alright. I know. Considering that you are so madly in love with me, I promise you that I won’t fall for anyone else no matter how tempting it is.”

“Is there anyone you find even more tempting than me?” Kenneth joked deliberately.

“Of course there is. You’re such a narcissist!” Elise blurted out but when she thought about it, she had to admit that a good-looking and capable man like Alexander was indeed a rare gem.

Although Kenneth had excellent capabilities, he was a playboy who loved to flirt around and he couldn’t even protect himself. Hence, he did not even hold a candle to

Alexander. D*mn it! Why am I thinking about that b*stard named Kenneth now? How could I think of another man when I'm on a call with Alexander?

The realization made Elise feel uneasy and it put a tight furrow between her brows. Her good mood suddenly disappeared and she became depressed once again.

Kenneth, who was clueless about her mood changes, continued to prattle on, his tone reflecting his longingness. "You have to be good and ensure you're not taken away by others. Otherwise, I'll hang a sign on you as well."

"I will." Elise's tone was adamant, but she herself couldn't tell if she said this more to herself or Alexander.

"Ha! I'm just joking. Of course I have faith in you. Alright, I have to get back to work now. I'll call you again."

"Sure."

After Elise had said that, Kenneth hung up. He put the phone in his pocket, the smile on his face dimming.

"You went to provoke Mrs. Bailey-to-be again, didn't you?" Melody teased.

Kenneth darted a look at her, a shadow of a smile by his lips. "Calling her Mrs. Bailey-to-be is not very appropriate. It's easier to call her Mrs. Bailey instead, since there won't be any other candidate for the position."

"If that's the case, I'll call her Mrs. Bailey when we see her at the gem auction event, then," Melody said.

Upon hearing that, Kenneth chuckled as he muttered, "You may if you want me to die." Then, he moved away his hand that was concealing the stab wound, revealing the soiled blood stain on his clothes.

"Boss"

"Boss, what happened?! I'll get a doctor right away!" Melody's expression instantly became serious.

"There's no need." He shook his head. "Let's go in first. Contact Cameron in a bit and ask him to bring a doctor along when he comes to pick me up. Make sure to keep a low profile so that nobody finds out about this."

Melody frowned at his words, but she nodded and agreed to him without questioning his decision. "Alright." With that, she turned on her heel and quickly opened the door, ushering Kenneth into the room.

Upon seeing how nervous she was, he let out a comment of self-mockery. “You only remember that I’m your boss when I’m in a life or death situation.”

Melody pulled a long face, unable to squeeze out even a tiny smile. “Please be serious. It’s not a good time to make jokes.”

He shrugged. “Alright, then. Can’t you put on a show for a little longer and don’t lecture me all the time...”

Meanwhile, Elise fell into a daze that lasted for a long time after Alexander’s voice had disappeared.

What is it about Kenneth? I understand myself well enough to know that it would be impossible for me to fall in love with two people at the same time. However, why did Kenneth’s name enter my subconscious so easily? I don’t love him, yet I can’t ignore him. What’s wrong with me?

Elise dragged herself to her room, feeling muddle headed. When she inadvertently glanced at the clock on the wall, she paused for three seconds before she shouted, “What the heck? It’s 11.00 AM already?”

It was the last day of the gem auction event and they hadn’t even found a single rough stone. She had to depart right away, else she would be late.

It’s all that damned Kenneth’s fault! It’s his fault that I went to bed so late last night. He’d better hope that we don’t meet again today, else I will skin him alive!

...

At 11.30 AM, the entrance into the hall was already packed like sardines.

Everyone tried to squeeze into the hall. Upon seeing Elise jogging in their direction, they started to squeeze their way inside more eagerly, struggling to reach the innermost part of the hall to get the best view to watch the upcoming show.

“Our female lead has finally arrived!”

“Everyone, open your eyes wide and look over there—our beauty is here!”

“Oh my, it really is her! I thought that she chickened out after Ziggy’s outstanding result yesterday after he managed to find a few good-quality jadeite!”

“Who are you to comment about her? She ventures into danger knowing what she will face. You all should learn from her; she still comes even when she knows that she will lose. This sort of dedication and spirit of selflessness. Which one of you has anything similar to that?”

“I admit that I’m no match for her. Even if I have the intention to compete with her, I have to first possess that face and figure!”

Words of mockery were heard from the crowd. Tom, who heard the commotion, came over and immediately spotted Elise.

He ran toward her in large steps and cried like a man grasping at straws, “Miss Sinclair, you have finally shown up. I thought that you were going to give up!”

Elise panted a little as she had run all the way there. She lifted her hand and waved at him as she said, “Stay calm. I’m exhausted lately so I slept in a bit. We still have some time, so let’s go and choose our rough stone.”

As soon as the two of them stepped into the hall, they heard a louder commotion inside.

“There’s four!”

“Victory is within Ziggy’s grasp! After adding those that he found previously, he now has four top-quality rough stones. I reckon that nothing will go wrong with the few remaining rough stones, so I’m sure that he will win!”

“I don’t see the girl around. Could it be that she chickened out?”

Expression indifferent, Elise darted a look in the direction where the stones would be broken open. Currently, Ziggy was enjoying the crowds’ compliments, and quietly standing next to him was a woman.

The woman was no stranger to Elise—it was none other than Tina, the woman whom she had met yesterday.

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Chapter 499 No Need to Be So Self-Defeating

Cleverly dodging them, Elise symbolically searched inside the room with Tom before turning around and leaving.

Following behind her, Tom reminded, “Ziggy’s found several pieces of special-quality jade these few days, Miss Sinclair. I imagine there’s not much left inside that’s good.”

“I see,” she replied flatly without showing too much of a reaction.

With that, she stepped out of the room and headed to where the second-grade rough stone was piled.

“Miss Sinclair,” Tom protested, growing anxious as he saw that, “you haven’t paid much attention these few days, so you might not know that the Carnegie Family’s higher-grade rough stone was selected from inside the room. Everything out here is waste rock. We’d best save time by returning inside.”

“Sure,” she answered off-handedly but she had no intentions of turning back. After surveying the display cases in the outer hall, she walked directly up to the person in charge of registration and rattled off a series of numbers, “10896 ...11023.”

There were a total of five numbers, all above ten thousand.

Speechlessly, Tom watched on as he mused, Surely she doesn’t need to be so self-defeating, does she?

The rough stone at the venue was numbered according to the organizers’ preliminary review of them. The smaller the number was, the higher likelihood there was of the stone producing a jade; the larger the number was, the worse condition the stone was in. Since the stones numbering six thousand and below were in the inner hall, there was no doubt that everything Elise chose came from the outer hall.

By now, Tom was certain she knew nothing about stone gambling.

“We still have time, Miss Sinclair. Perhaps we still have the chance to look through the stones carefully,” he made a last-ditch attempt to convince her. “Even if we’re going to throw in the towel just like that, we could still choose stones from the inner hall—that way, we might not suffer so many losses in the end. Or perhaps a miracle might happen like it did in Landred City!”

With a smile, she patted his shoulder and comforted, “Hasn’t lady luck been by your side all along? You’re being too nervous. Calm down.”

In the past, Tom might have been bolstered by her confidence but now, he could only feel endless despair. “Miss Sinclair, please listen to me. There isn’t much left in the inner hall, but there’s still a chance someone missed something. It’s better than us trying to fill the quota by picking something from the waste heap.”

“Okay. You go pick; I’ll pay,” Elise answered him good-humoredly before shushing him with her index finger when she saw that he was about to say something else. “I respect your choices, Mr. Shaw, and I ask that you respect mine as well. When it comes to stone gambling, there’s no harm in buying a few more. Why are you so caught up in trying to convince me otherwise? Believe me, you’re only wasting the time you have left to choose your own stones if you continue to pester me. So, go do what you wish, but do not interfere with my choices.”

Once again, Elise’s imposing, majestic manner subdued him.

The thing was, she had the air of a natural winner, and he knew that even a loss at this time would not stop her from shining, for she was pure gold through and through.

So, Tom didn't say anything else to her and only turned to instruct the registrar, "Please help Miss Sinclair register her choices."

"Okay. Just to confirm, you both registered only one stone previously. Are you sure that on the last day of this auction event, you'd like to choose these many stones from the outer hall?"

Having heard quite a bit of gossip through the past few days, the registrar knew that Tom and the woman with him were the objects of Ziggy's bet. Thus, the registrar deliberately raised his voice, emphasizing the words 'outer hall' and attracting quite a bit of attention.

"Look, she has goals in mind now!"

"F*ck! She's bold. From the very beginning, she's only chosen materials from the outer hall. Clearly, she wants to stand out against Ziggy!"

"Oh—please. I bet she's creating a gimmick because she knows she's going to lose. Maybe the organizers hired her to drum up attention!"

"Rough stones from the outer hall? Ha! Is that any different from directly admitting defeat?"

No one in the crowd believed in Tom and Elise.

Very quickly, the registration was done.

Lifting her head, Elise looked at Tom. "What about the ones you like? Go note down their serial numbers and have them registered alongside mine."

"There's only one I fancy, and even then I'm not certain about it..." he hesitated.

"If you think it fits, you should choose it. Don't worry about it. I'm paying." She had always been magnanimous to her friends.

At this moment, Tom didn't know what to say.

Inwardly, he sighed.

Initially, he had thought he could ask her to help him assess the stone once she arrived, but based on today's scene, she was merely choosing at random, so how could he rely on her?

“I understand—” he told her sincerely. “—but I still have time. I think I’ll look through the stones once more.”

Making no comment, Elise simply nodded to indicate her approval. Thus, girding his loins, Tom went back into the inner hall.

Just like that, Elise was left alone to her boredom. Since there wasn’t much time left before the halls would close for the morning, she retreated to the rest area for some drinks, intending to leave with Tom later.

It didn’t take more than a few minutes for Ziggy to appear with Tina by his side.

He reached out to snag two glasses of champagne from a passing waiter before approaching Elise with an expression that suggested he already knew he would win.

A glass of champagne in each hand, he asked lightly, “You seem to have some free time on your hands, Miss Sinclair. Will you humor me by having this glass of champagne with me?” With that, he passed the drink to her while lecherously eyeing her delicate neck at the same time.

In response, Elise lowered her head to glance down at the champagne before turning away with not much of a change in expression. Without reaching for the glass, she told him flatly, “Get lost.”

The smile on his face instantly disappeared, only to be replaced with annoyance. “You’re not above me, you b*tch! Do you think you’ll be able to escape my grasp once the results of breaking open the stones are announced this afternoon? Very soon, you’ll know what it feels like to be in the depths of hell!”

“And?” she sneered. “Have I already lost? You don’t know yet who will get the last laugh.”

“I have four pieces of jade in hand and no doubt that at least half of my selections that haven’t been broken open yet will contain jade. You rooted through the outer hall for a pile of trash that nobody wants. How could you possibly compare to me?” Ziggy scoffed disdainfully.

Knowing it would be meaningless to argue with him since someone like him would not admit defeat until he was at the end of his tether, Elise ignored him.

Meanwhile, noting her lack of response, the previously timid Tina finally stood up for her. “It’s a gentleman’s virtue to respect women, Mr. Carnegie. It reflects badly on the Carnegie Family for you as a man to pester a woman like that, not to mention that such a bet is meaningless, anyway. I think—”

“Shut your godsd*mn mouth!” he snapped impatiently at her with a look of contempt and disgust. “Your job here is to pick out the jadeite. You needn’t interfere with anything else and you’d best remember your place!”

Thus being reduced to worthlessness, Tina paled in mortification.

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Chapter 500 Go Ask Your Father

After glancing between Elise and Ziggy, Tina finally clenched her teeth and left in indignation.

For his part, Ziggy wasn’t the least bit affected and simply put down his champagne before going to sit on the couch next to Elise.

Disgusted, Elise moved away, only for him to cling to her like a limpet and move in the same direction as her.

After several such rounds, she was finally pressed against the arm of the couch with nowhere else to go, so she began to get up to leave. Immediately, he reached out and grabbed the armrest, blocking her escape route.

Since she would have to touch his dirty arm if she still tried to get up and leave, she had no choice but to settle back into her seat.

At this point, she turned to give him a cold, loathing look.

Deep down, she was thinking that if he dared to touch her, she would incapacitate him so badly that he would never be able to have children.

“Surely you’re not intending to molest me in front of everyone else?” Elise murmured neutrally.

Ziggy’s gaze was flirtatious and lecherous as he answered, “What are you afraid of? It’s only a matter of time before we go further than that.” With that, his free hand began to reach for her.

His eyes were on Elise’s waist—the waist so slender he would be able to envelop it with one arm. No longer could he wait to experience the feeling of hugging her.

From this angle, he could vaguely even see the curves of her upper body. Truly, he couldn’t resist her any longer.

Meanwhile, the smile on Elise's face was growing, but there wasn't a shred of warmth in her eyes. The cushion of the couch was quickly going out of shape beneath her fingers, and she was prepared to replace it with a death grip on his hand at any moment.

When she felt him leaning toward her, she let go of the couch, getting ready to strike.

However, before she could grab hold of his collar and send him tumbling over her shoulder, he suddenly screamed as his arms tensed. "Ow! Ow!"

And then, as stiff as a board, he was made to stand up.

Finally, Elise relaxed her fists and looked over her shoulder to see what had taken place.

At some point unknown to her, Kenneth had appeared behind her. With his black shirt and black pants, coupled with an unreadable expression and an even more unapproachable demeanor, he looked like the Grim Reaper.

Currently, he not only had a hold on Ziggy's hands, but had turned them outward by ninety degrees. With the slightest force, Ziggy would likely be able to experience the marvels of living with outward-facing palms.

Despite the change in Elise's expression, she didn't react any other way than to stare at Kenneth, unmoving.

The frequency at which he appeared just in time to save her was completely beyond her expectations.

Very quickly, she remembered his wound and quietly looked at his waist.

An injury there meant that he should not be exerting force, which was why his current actions suggested that he was tugging at his injury and had likely torn it open.

Inexplicably, Elise felt her heart squeeze uncomfortably.

Meanwhile, Ziggy was in so much pain that spots were breaking out before his eyes and the cold sweat on his forehead was causing his spiked fringe to collapse from his melting hair wax. In short, he looked worse for wear. "Who the f*ck are you clueless piece of sh*t? How dare you interfere in my affairs? I'll have you know that you won't be leaving Dukethorn alive if you go up against the Carnegie Family!"

"Go and ask your father if I'm worthy of provoking you." Kenneth was calm and unintimidated, clearly looking down on Ziggy.

It wasn't as if Kenneth hadn't thought of the consequences. It was simply that, to Smith Co., the Carnegie Family represented less than the tip of an iceberg in power. As Smith Co.'s leader, he naturally didn't fear losing their backing.

"Your family managed to achieve the status it has today only through accumulating the few assets it made from stone gambling and working with the local underground Eagle Gang. We'd easily be able to tear down Eagle Gang, let alone crush your family with just a word!" Elise threatened faintly. Indeed, she had had this thought before.

After all, with the exploitative rich, there was no reasoning to be had, only lessons to be learned.

To be fair, she was somewhat exaggerating.

There were countless underground organizations in Dukethorn, with the Eagle Gang being one of the more formal and widespread ones. Since even the local government couldn't do much about them, exterminating them wouldn't be as simple a matter as giving a word.

Not expecting her to stand on the same front as him, Kenneth glanced at her out of the corner of his eye in surprise.

In truth, before he made his move, he had considered whether she would be on the same side as Ziggy just to oppose him.

From the look of things now, though, her hate didn't run as deep.

Nevertheless, she still guessed something he never expected.

Pale-faced and flustered, Ziggy blabbered, "Who told you..."

Without answering, Elise ducked out from underneath his and Kenneth's arms to stand off to the side.

She could find out low-level information like which businessmen were colluding with which gangs just by walking the street. She didn't need an informant for that.

Did he actually think she went looking for street food just to sate her appetite?

With that, she glanced at Kenneth once more before an idea suddenly popped into her head and she went to his side. Acting like someone who had the upper hand, she warned Ziggy, "Take a clear look at this face. He's Kenneth Bailey, someone even your dad wouldn't dare to provoke. It wouldn't be a problem for him to exterminate the Eagle Gang, or do you wish for your family to disappear alongside them?"

"You're Kenneth Bailey?" Ziggy had finally guessed the other man's identity.

Narrowing his eyes, Kenneth replied, "What do you think?"

That confirms it, Ziggy thought. No one else could have that insufferably arrogant attitude.

Not too long ago, Jim had told Ziggy there was someone he couldn't afford to provoke by the surname of Bailey at this gem auction event. Who knew he would run into Kenneth Bailey just like that?

Still, with everyone at the venue watching on in curiosity, Ziggy couldn't afford to embarrass himself and could only stubbornly retort, "So what? It's true that Smith Co. is powerful, but the wager between me and Miss Sinclair is of a private nature. Everyone here knows it wouldn't be appropriate for Smith Co. to poke their nose into this affair!"

"And if I said that it was appropriate?" Kenneth turned Ziggy's hands outward even further.

"Ow! Stop! Stop that! Is the owner of Smith Co. just like that, forgetting his promises and bullying the weak just for a woman?" Ziggy persisted, gritting his teeth. As long as he had the moral upper hand, everyone would stand on his side.

"Well, no one said to cheat!" Elise interrupted, raising her voice. "You're the one who's being bold enough to sexually harass me, the wager of the bet, before the results of the competition have even come out. Mr. Bailey only interfered because he saw the injustice in that. Now that you're on the losing side, you're suddenly in the spirit of honoring the contract? Your parents must be proud."

The corners of Kenneth's mouth hooked up proudly before it immediately dropped. As the light in his eyes dimmed, he suddenly exerted force, dislocating Ziggy's forearms and pushing the man away.

"Young Master Ziggy!" Finally, Ziggy's bodyguards rushed up, surrounding him and wanting to seek revenge on his behalf, only to be terrified into turning tail by Kenneth's bloodthirsty gaze. With no other choice, they could only slink away, dragging the yowling Ziggy behind them for treatment.