

## Chapter 13 Long Time No See

"Dad, you don't have to worry about me. I have a plan already," Belinda answered calmly.

"You're just a little girl. You couldn't even find yourself a good husband. What sort of plan could you possibly have?" Larry said that without thinking. As soon as he finished speaking, he realized the error in his ways and immediately fell silent.

Harley and Victor cast a cold glance at Larry at the same time, which made Larry gulp nervously.

Looking at the three men before her, Belinda felt warm in her heart.

She was already used to Larry's sharp tongue, but she knew that he cared about her deep down.

"Dad, Victor, don't worry about it. I know Larry didn't mean what he said." After saving Larry's ass, Belinda explained her plan. "The studio had been closed down ever since I married into the Kameron family. I had put a lot of time and effort into it in the past, and I don't want to give it up."

To build a successful design studio had always been her dream, and she wasn't about to give up on her dreams just yet.

The Lindfield family had always been supportive of whatever she wanted to do.

This request was no exception.

Soon, Belinda's old studio was renovated. When Belinda returned to this small space, she felt nostalgic, as though her past self was gradually being restored.

One year later, there was a grand banquet being held on the topmost floor of an international five-star hotel.

Wearing a red dress, Belinda handed her invitation to the staff by the door. Then, the crystal gate opened. She walked into the banquet hall elegantly, looking both noble and cold.

When Victor saw Belinda enter, he put down his glass and immediately walked towards her.

"Victor!" Belinda linked arms with her brother naturally.

"You look confident you'll win the cooperation tonight," Victor teased.

Belinda stuck out her tongue at him naughtily. "I hope I will."

On the sofa in the corner of the hall, a man in an haute couture suit sat cross-legged. His cold gaze was drawn towards the gorgeous woman in red. As soon as he recognized her, his expression darkened.

His ex-wife had found a new boyfriend so soon?

Suddenly, he felt inexplicably angry. Without thinking, Russell walked towards Belinda. A waiter happened to pass by. Russell glanced sideways and plucked a champagne flute from the waiter's tray.

"Mr. Lindfield, long time no see."

At the sound of this familiar voice, Victor turned around unhappily. "How can I help you, Mr. Kameron?"

"I didn't expect that you'd bring a female companion to the banquet tonight. I wonder when you'll send out wedding invitations."

As Russell spoke, he looked Belinda up and down unscrupulously. Within just a year, this woman had really changed a lot.

Russell had always known that Belinda was quite pleasant-looking.

But he never thought she'd be as delicate and unattainable as she was today.

What on earth had happened to her in the past year?

Seeing her here tonight ignited something in the bottom of Russell's heart.

Noticing Russell's unscrupulous gaze, Victor felt disgusted. He was about to tell him off when Belinda suddenly let go of his arm and said, "This gentleman really likes to meddle in other people's business, doesn't he?"

Dumbfounded, Russell didn't know what to say.

"Who people choose to bring to the banquet doesn't concern you. Just mind your own business." Belinda made no effort to mask her contempt.

As the CEO of Kameron Group, Russell wasn't used to being disrespected like this.

Too stunned to react, Russell found himself unable to retort.

Since when had this woman become so sharp-tongued?

"Mr. Lindfield, there's something I have to do. Please excuse me."

After giving Victor a gracious smile, Belinda walked away elegantly, her high heels clicking against the marble floor. At a loss for words, Russell also left, following Belinda secretly.

In the garden, with a tablet in her hand, Belinda busied herself, checking and double-checking the design draft she had prepared.

She came here tonight to win a cooperation with the international fashion brand, IS.

Over the past year, her studio had developed very quickly. It had built up a name for itself and had found a comfortable niche in the market, but it still lacked in popularity. Although Belinda didn't want to be run by a big brand, it was undeniable that sometimes she still needed to cooperate with big brands for the studio to expand.

After a long time, she felt satisfied with the design and put away her tablet.

She bumped into a man's broad chest as soon as she turned around.

This familiar scent...

Belinda's expression darkened. "Mr. Kameron, what the hell are you doing

here? Are you only attracted to women who dislike you?

"Belinda, what's wrong with you? That was uncalled for," Russell said with a frown.

Belinda smiled and ignored Russell's long face. "Oh, you just realize that I'm mean? Then don't talk to me. It's that simple."

With that, Belinda left him in the dust.

She was unwilling to waste her breath on this bastard!

Russell watched as the woman walked away from him, feeling inexplicable rage. He was in no mood to socialize now. In a fit, he went downstairs and sat in his car.

With the windows rolled down, Russell gradually calmed down as the cool night wind blew at his face.

When he was finally calm, he picked up his phone and dialed a number. "Belinda's at the banquet. Investigate her thoroughly. And find out her relationship with Victor Lindfield."

After a while, Enzo called him back.

"Mr. Kameron, Miss Fletcher is the founder of a small design studio and is a little famous in the design circle. She was invited to the banquet tonight to talk about a cooperation with a famous brand, IS. And Miss Fletcher has provided the Lindfield family with several suit designs. It seems her relationship with Victor Lindfield is one out of work."

A working relationship?

Indeed, the Lindfield family enjoyed such a high status. It wouldn't make sense for them to have anything to do with Belinda, who came from a lowly family.

Victor likely just appreciated her works.

Realizing this, Russell felt much better.

After getting off the phone with Enzo, Russell was about to step out of the car when he saw a woman in red coming out of the hotel and hailing

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a taxi.

He pursed his lips tightly.

After leaving the banquet, Belinda felt totally exhausted. But she didn't go home just yet. She went back to her studio, where her friend Betty Durie was waiting. Betty sat on the sofa and poured herself a glass of wine as soon as Belinda arrived.

"I heard that you ran into your ex?"

Cross-legged, Betty swirled the wine in her glass with great interest. She was obviously excited to hear the juicy gossip.

Belinda rolled her eyes at her friend and muttered, "Before I say anything, let's make a deal first. Don't mention that man in my studio ever again. I'm afraid that it'll ruin my good luck."

"Oh, come on. To be honest, I'm just worried you still have feelings for him even after all this time."

After all, back then, Belinda had gone out of her way to marry Russell, even going so far as to cut off her family for three years.

But that was all in the past.

That Belinda didn't know any better. Hopefully she had really changed.

"Don't worry. I don't."

"Okay, good."

Hearing Belinda's flat answer, Betty finally felt relieved.

"So, now you really have no feelings for him at all?" Betty asked after a while, still unwilling to let go of the topic.

Belinda snorted incredulously. Seeing the stubborn look on her friend's face, she finally sat upright and said solemnly, "I swear I don't have any feelings for him anymore!"

She was fine now. She was busy developing her own studio, doing things she liked, and she had her family by her side. Why would she throw all

that she had worked so hard for and go back to Russell?

The two girls chatted for a little while. Seeing that it was getting late, Betty picked up the bottle of wine and headed out. Now that the studio was peaceful and quiet, Belinda closed her eyes to rest, but then the doorbell rang again.

Belinda thought that Betty might've forgotten something.

Annoyed, she opened the door and said, "I really don't have any more wine left..."

## Chapter 14 The Negotiation

When Belinda saw who it was outside the door, her blood ran cold.

Russell was closely observing Belinda's reaction. The kindness in her eyes disappeared as soon as she recognized him, instantly replaced with coldness. "Is stalking your hobby now?" she asked icily.

"Of course not," the man answered unhappily.

Just then, he realized something.

Belinda didn't buy his cold facade anymore. If Russell dared to put on airs in front of her, she'd only give him an even harder time.

Not wanting to waste her breath on this man, Belinda shot him one last glance and was about to close the door. However, Russell reacted quickly and managed to block the door with his foot. It didn't take much strength for him to force the door open, and he let himself in.

The studio smelled faintly of roses. Russell frowned. Belinda used to like putting scented candles around their bedroom when they were still married. He didn't mind the scent per se, but for some reason, when he saw that it was Belinda who had set up those candles, he'd get very angry.

Then he'd bark at the servants, ordering them to get rid of all the scented candles in the house.

Nobody talked about it, but everyone knew why he made such an absurd request.

Love me, love my dog. Conversely, one would despise the things related to a person they hated.

Thinking of this, Russell's expression turned even colder. "I don't have time for this nonsense, Belinda."

Then he pulled out a check book from his pocket and asked gruffly, "Tell me. How much do you want? Is five million enough?"

Looking at the complacent expression on Russell's face, Belinda became more and more dubious of her previous taste in men.

She had been so blind for years.

Crossing her arms over her chest, Belinda sneered in disdain. "Your company must be doing well lately, am I right? It seems you have too much money than you know what to do with. You might not give a damn about the five million, but someone does. Just save it for Cassidy."

Russell's eyes flashed dangerously. Through gritted teeth, he hissed, "Belinda! I'm trying to do business with you."

Business?

Bullshit! Out of all the things they needed to sort out, he wanted to talk about business?

"Russell, you're out of your mind. Go to a psychiatrist, not me." It took every ounce of her willpower not to lose her temper. Looking resolute, Belinda opened the door and stood by it firmly, indicating that Russell was not welcome here.

Russell tried to be patient—which was very rare—and explained the situation to her. "The money is an investment in your studio. If you think it's not enough, I can add more."

"What're the terms?" Belinda never believed in free things.

"Give up the cooperation with IS."

"What?! No way!"

Belinda shook her head without hesitation. Her beautiful face was shrouded in coldness as she asked, "Russell, who do you think you are?"

Russell sneered arrogantly. "Your studio won't survive without money. If you don't raise enough by Monday, you'll be in big trouble, am I right? Don't take everything for granted or just turn down any opportunity casually in the business world, Belinda. Don't let the past and your own



stubbornness be your business's downfall."

His words made Belinda sick to her stomach.

He was so disgusting.

Did he really think that she still love him and would be willing to do business with him?

"You investigated me?" she asked incredulously.

"Do we have a deal or not?" Russell waved the check in front of her tauntingly.

Belinda caught a glimpse of the figure he had jotted down—seven million dollars. He had even signed it already, and his sharp-stroked signature was as overbearing as his character. Unfortunately for him, Belinda was the daughter of the Lindfield family.

Money was the only thing she didn't lack.

Since her studio was experiencing financial trouble, her family had been trying to persuade Belinda to accept their help, but she didn't think it was necessary.

She wanted to rely on her own wits, not her family's resources.

More importantly, her studio's money problems weren't borne out of poor financial decisions, but because she had spent a lot of money signing on a new talented designer, effectively dwindling the studio's operating capital.

All her problems would be solved if she could win a cooperation with IS.

As for Russell's so-called helping hand...

Belinda raised her head and studied Russell carefully. His suit was tailor-made and was obviously expensive. He looked down on her, even more domineeringly than he did a year ago.

Finally, she put on a bright smile and said, "No, thank you."

Her answer didn't go against Russell's expectations.

Still, he gritted his teeth and said with difficulty, "Is seven million not enough? Belinda, I'm only offering you that much because we used to be married. Don't get too greedy."

Russell was such a hypocrite!

A second ago, he claimed that money wasn't a problem for him. Now, he was accusing her of being greedy!

That was the last straw for Belinda. She raised her voice and snapped, "Russell, do you actually think I lack money? I divorced you a year ago and I didn't take a single penny. What makes you think I need your money now?"

"Why, you—"

"Fuck off!"

How dare Belinda speak to him like that?!

In the past, Belinda was so submissive to Russell and always spoke gently. But now, she had the balls to tell him to "fuck off"?

Something buried deep within Russell suddenly snapped.

Blinded by rage, he grabbed her by the wrist and forced her into a corner. No matter how hard Belinda struggled to push him away, he had no intention of letting her go.

Russell deliberately lowered his head and exhaled on her neck, sending shivers down her spine.

"Belinda, I'm giving you one last chance. Cancel your talks with IS and I'll —"

A crisp slap sounded in the small studio.

Russell's cheek stung painfully, his face forced to the side. Perhaps it was because of this slap, or perhaps it was something else, but Russell finally loosened his grip. Belinda quickly scrambled away from him, retreating to the corner farthest from him.

"I'm giving you ten seconds. If you're not gone by then, I'll call the police."

As she spoke, Belinda picked up the check from the floor, crumpled it into a small ball, and threw it at Russell's forehead. "Remember to take out your trash."

Trash?

Jesus.

Seven million was nothing to her.

But what about him? Was she referring to him as trash as well?

As soon as this thought occurred to him, even Russell himself was shocked, but he decided not to pursue the topic.

He simply stood glued to his spot, showing no intention of leaving. He looked down at the crumpled-up check and smiled wryly. "Belinda, I highly doubt that you don't love me anymore."

Belinda rolled her eyes impatiently. "Well, you'd better believe it. I stopped loving you a long time ago. Can you fuck off now?"

Hearing this, Russell's expression hardened, and his eyes flashed angrily.

Her words were so harsh that no ordinary man could stand it, let alone an arrogant one like Russell. Belinda started counting down from ten. By the time she reached the number three, Russell suddenly turned around and left, slamming the door behind him. Then the studio returned to silence.

Belinda peeked out the window and saw his black Bentley zooming away. Only when it disappeared around the corner did she sigh in relief.

What Russell said just now wasn't completely false...

Over the past year, she had deliberately avoided dealing with the Kameron Group because she was afraid that her personal grudges against its president would affect her work. She didn't expect that the day she'd have to face him like this would still come.

She knew Russell well.

He was notoriously merciless in this industry. Now, his eyes were set on

severing her cooperation with IS. Unfortunately for her, she wasn't able to seal the deal with IS earlier that night.

Even Belinda had to admit that when it came to doing business, she couldn't outsmart Russell.

Realizing this, Belinda felt helpless.