

Chapter 74 Tonight was Definitely a Disaster

Apricot eyes snapped awake; beads of cold sweat rolled down her face as Cathy jolted upright in bed. With a heaving chest, she looked around. The tubes attached to her body were no longer there, and the subtle heat tickling at her skin was not from an imminent threat of a fire but the soft streaks of orange passing through the windows. It's already morning.

Wiping the sweat off her forehead, she let out a long sigh and laid back down on the sheets. Nothing like that has ever happened to her before. So, what exactly was that dream? She didn't know, but it was as vivid as they come, like a past life she had forgotten.

Taking a deep breath, she told herself it was probably the movie she had watched last night that messed her up a little too much. She closed her eyes to drift back to sleep when her phone suddenly rang. Chris Jensen's name lit up on the screen.

"Are you broke again?" Her voice came out in a drawl, and she pinched the bridge of her nose. "Dad, you have to stop drinking every day. I know you have a high tolerance because you used to be in the special forces, but drinking like this daily is only going to cost you your health in the long run." She sighed. Her voice was laced with concern. "You should look for a job—"

"Cathy." Chris interrupted before she could finish her sentence. "Daddy's calling to say goodbye."

Goodbye? Cathy's eyes flew open, her body immediately shot up into a sitting position on the bed. "W-what do you mean goodbye? Where are you going?"

"Remember how I used to work as a bodyguard for a few years, after retiring from the special forces? Well, my ex-employer reached out to me a couple of days ago and requested my services once more..." he trailed off, hesitating with his next words. "There isn't much time. Daddy's already at the airport, so I won't be able to say goodbye to you in person."

"Dad, I..." Cathy's grip tightened around her phone. "I-I didn't mean what I just said. I was just worried about you. So please..." Her voice trembled. "Don't go. I'll give you all the money you need. Just please don't go."

Years of physical training in the special forces might've given Chris a physique healthier and sturdier than most, but he was well over his fifties now. This line of work could potentially cost him his life.

Cathy was never exactly fond of Chris, but she knew deep down that he was the only person who treated her right. For the first eighteen years of her life, Chris was hardly ever around, and she resented him for that. But when they had reunited five years ago, he had taken it upon himself to make up for lost time, and went out of his way to be the father he should've been a long time ago.

It had taken him a while to redeem himself. But without him, Cathy would've never learned the art of self-defense, nor be the seasoned stunt double she was today.

A sigh came through the other end of the line. "I'm not going back for money this time. I'm going back to repay someone's kindness." His tone was rueful as he spoke. "I didn't contact you too much in fear that it might get in the way of your life. But now that I'm going abroad, I'm afraid it will be much less than before."

There was a long pause before he finally said, "Cathy, take care of yourself."

That was all it took for the dam to break. Tears began spilling from the corners of Cathy's eyes, but she managed to utter between choked sobs, "You too. Please be careful out there."

"I will." Chris smiled. Then he gasped as if remembering something. "The jade pendant I gave you; you have to keep it with you at all times, and never simply show it to anyone. Got it?"

At the mention of the pendant, Cathy's heart sank. "The jade pendant... I lost it."

The last time she left Chris' house, she had the misfortune of being abducted by Dick's men, and she has been busy ever since. When she did finally remember, she could no longer find it. Not in the place she was attacked, not even after inquiring to the police involved in the investigation of that day.

"I'm sorry, dad. I... wasn't careful," she lied. Her father had enough on his plate. The last thing he needed was to know of his beloved daughter's abduction.

The line was silent for a long while before Chris spoke again. "Such is life. You don't have to blame yourself for it. That pendant wasn't worth a lot of money anyway."

He let out a sigh. Perhaps it was good that things turned out this way, then Cathy and that family would never have to meet again. "Then take it as if you never had that jade pendant. Protect yourself, hide your birthmark, and live your life well."

"Dad, do you have a photo of the pendant?" Cathy asked. "I've always felt guilty for losing mom's keepsake. So, I posted about it once online with the promise of a reward. But without a picture or a clear description of it, I couldn—"

"No!" Chris barked from the other end of the phone, startling Cathy. "When I tell you not to look for it, don't go looking for it. Photo or no photo, just leave this matter alone."

Cathy wasn't sure why her father was so exasperated. But before she could ask, he let out a sharp exhale. "My flight's here, I have to go. Remember, don't look for it!"

The line cut off into a beep. Cathy frowned and dialed his number again, only to be sent straight to voicemail this time. He turned his phone off.

Sighing to herself, she got on her laptop. The post about the jade pendant's reward had garnered the attention of several people. Some were even private detectives who had left their contact information for her.

Heeding her father's request, she took a deep breath and deleted the post. The jade pendant is just mom's keepsake, so why was dad being so aggressive about it? The answer never came to her no matter how long she mulled over it. In the end, she just gave up trying.

Just then, a notification popped up on her screen. It was an email, sent to her by the chief screenwriter, containing a new script.

Cathy swiftly opened it, her eyes sweeping through every line of it in nervous anticipation. This script seemed to have undergone drastic changes. For one, the lovesick second female lead had been turned into a character with strong career-driven goals. So much of her romantic scenes with Xavier had been cut out, that they were only used occasionally as a filler. As a result, Cathy did not have many scenes with Xavier.

When she did finally film with him again, it was the day of the Academy Awards.

The Awards didn't start until the evening, but Xavier's assistant was already bossing the crew around from way early in the morning. "Hurry up and put some makeup on Master Carter! He'll be preparing for the Awards ceremony this evening! Don't you all know he'll be winning the Best Actor award this year? Look out, people! You're in the presence of the best actor of the century!"

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"What's so great about that?" Cathy's makeup artist scoffed while deftly applying makeup on Cathy's face. "The ceremony doesn't even start until a few hours and he's already making it sound like he's won. How annoying!"

The makeup artist glanced at Cathy through the mirror. "Also, I heard that Xavier's ex-girlfriend was disqualified from the Best New Actress category, and who knew just last week she was added back to the list? Heard her chances of winning are quite high."

She nudged Cathy with her arm. "What do you think would happen if they bump into each other tonight? I bet it'll escalate into a huge shitshow."

Cathy frowned a moment, then a smile appeared on her lips. "Yeah, I don't doubt that for a second." But not a typical fallout one would see between exes. No. After all, Cathy knew very well that Xavier and Willow hadn't broken up at all. The shitshow she had in mind... was going to be on another level.