

A Love Forgotten Chapter 71

I was startled and instinctively stepped back. Teri positioned herself in front of me, her expression fierce.” What do you think you’re doing?” she demanded.

Lucian’s face was flushed from drinking, and the smell of alcohol lingered on his breath. “Ladies, I just want to get to know you better. How about you add me on WhatsApp?”

Teri sneered. “No way! Move aside. We’re leaving.”

Lucian followed closely behind us, his speech slurred and lustful. “Ladies, you’ve quite the attitude. We’re just trying to be friendly here.

“It’s a shame that two beautiful women like you are out dining and drinking alone. Why not get to know me? If you’re interested in having a drink, you can find me anytime. I’d love to take you out to thr

By the time Teri and I reached the sidewalk, Lucian was still bothering us.

Teri’s irritation was evident. “You’re really starting to get on my nerves now! No means no. If you’ve had too much to drink, you should just go home.”

I noticed Lucian expression darken, so I quickly stepped in front of Teri. Forcing a smile, I said, “We’re leaving now. Maybe we can catch up another time. We’ll invite you for a meal and drinks next time.”

Lucian seemed pleased with my response. He laughed and said, “There’s no need for you to treat us. Come on! Let’s just get to know each other.”

As he reached out to grab my hand, I let out a startled scream.

Teri was shaken and quickly pulled me back. “What are you doing? It’s broad daylight—what on earth are you thinking?”

Lucian looked genuinely offended. “You ungrateful women! I’m just trying to buy you a drink, and this is how you respond?”

With a wave of his hand, a group of burly men from his table started to approach us.

Teri and I finally realized the danger we were in. Holding up her phone, Teri threatened, “Back off! If you don’t, I’ll call the police.”

Lucian laughed mockingly. “Go ahead! I have plenty of connections in the police department.” His companions joined in with mocking jeers.

Just as we were being backed into a corner, a black Ferrari suddenly sped toward them.

“Holy crap! Is he trying to kill us?”

“Who the hell drives like that?”

The sound of screeching tires cut through the air. Amid a barrage of curses, the Ferrari came to a sudden stop right in front of Lucian.

The door s

swung open, and an imposing figure stepped out. Leaning casually against the front of the car, he surveyed the group of burly men.

“What’s going on here? Who’s the idiot trying to mess with my friends?”

The group of burly men didn’t recognize him, but they could tell from the car and his demeanor that he was not someone to be trifled with. However, there was always someone unwilling to back down.

Lucian, who had been insistent about adding my WhatsApp earlier, shouted angrily, “Who are you? Are

you trying to ruin my fun?”

He cursed and prepared to charge forward, but the man simply chuckled. In one swift motion, he kicked an empty

beer bottle into the air, caught it, and brought it crashing down onto Lucian’s head. Lucian collapsed to the ground instantly.

The man tossed the broken beer bottle aside and followed up with a powerful kick, sending him sprawling. He lay there motionless.

The remaining burly men were momentarily stunned. By the time they realized what was happening, the man had already grabbed two beer bottles—one in each hand—and taken down the next two men.

As the rest of the group regained their composure, they quickly grabbed some plastic stools to confront him.

Meanwhile, the man remained relaxed. As the burly men closed in, he responded with powerful front kicks and sweeping side kicks.

“He’s a skilled fighter! Let’s get out of here!”

The group of burly men was clearly intimidated. They had thought their numbers would be enough to deter any trouble, but they were caught off guard by the man's ruthless and swift fighting style. He effortlessly fended them off.

As the restaurant staff rushed out to break up the fight, he shouted to Teri and me, "Get in the car."

Both of us were startled by the chaos, but we quickly scrambled to obey his command.

As the burly men closed in on him, the man seized a plastic stool and executed a spinning kick, sending it soaring through the air. The stool landed amid the crowd, prompting everyone to scatter to avoid it.

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The man took advantage of the chaos to hop into his car and quickly sped away.

In the passenger seat, Teri and I felt tense and anxious. The man navigated through a maze of streets before finally coming to a halt in a secluded area.

As he opened the door, Teri and I stood trembling by the roadside. The man got out of the car and pulled out a cigarette.

With a smile, he asked, "So, Ari, how do you plan to thank me for today?"

The way he addressed me sent a shiver down my spine, and suddenly it clicked. "Are you Norman?"

"Yes." Norman leaned casually against the car door and lit his cigarette. He raised his eyebrows and smiled. "It's a bit disappointing that it took you this long to recognize me," he added.

I awkwardly replied, "I didn't notice you earlier with all the commotion, but thank you for stepping in and helping us."

Teri then asked, "And who might you be?"

Norman smiled, a cigarette dangling from his lips. "Let me introduce myself—I'm Norman Wood, an admirer of Ms. York."

My face flushed instantly. "Stop! Don't say things like that! Teri, he's Logan's younger brother."

"I'm not lying, Ari. Did you receive the flowers I sent?"

I widened my eyes in surprise. "You sent those?"

Norman's smile broadened. "Who else could it be? Logan picked up on it immediately."

I was even more shocked. “He knew it was you? Why didn’t he tell me?”

Norman chuckled. “Why would he? Logan’s the type who holds onto grudges and waits for the perfect moment to settle the score,” he said, curling his lip in disdain at Logan’s behavior.

The tension in the air was palpable.

Teri tugged at my sleeve. “We should head back.”

Norman shot us a sideways glance. “Are you really just going to leave like that?”

I replied, “Well... I thank you properly another time. We really need to go. It’s not safe out here at night.”

Norman grinned confidently. “As long as I’m around, no one in Halton City would dare mess with you.”

Teri chimed in, “Then why don’t you teach that jerk Elijah a lesson?”

Norman chuckled. “I can’t do that.”

Teri’s frustration was evident. “Why not?”

Norman shot me a knowing smirk. “Because Logan wants to handle Elijah himself. He won’t allow anyone else to step in.”

I was even more taken aback, and Teri looked equally incredulous. She scrutinized Norman with suspicion. “Where did you hear that? How is it even possible? Elijah is a well-known figure-”

Norman scoffed. “Well-known? That’s a joke. I could take him out without breaking a sweat. But since Logan wants to deal with it himself, I won’t steal his thunder:”

His

s revelations were significant, and I struggled to believe any of it. If he weren’t Logan’s younger brother, I would probably think he was trying to pull a scam on us.

Teri—appeared intrigued and kept firing questions at Norman, but I had lost interest. I grabbed her arm and started to pull her away.

Just then, Norman stepped in front of us, blocking our path. “Wait a moment. Since we’re out, why not join me for a drink at a bar?”

I frowned. “I don’t drink.”

Teri clearly wanted to go, but seeing my expression made her reconsider following Norman. Under the streetlights, his captivating smile and striking good looks almost felt unreal.

He asked, “Ari, what’s your favorite flower?”

The question took me by surprise. After a moment, I snapped back to reality and frowned. “Don’t be so familiar. Mr. Wood, please call me Ms. York.” I stressed the name “Mr. Wood” as firmly as I could.

Norman’s eyes flickered with a complex mix of emotions as he looked at me with clear interest.

I quickly bid him farewell. “I’ll find a way to thank you for tonight, but it’s getting late, and we really need to head back.”

With that, I grabbed Teri and quickly hailed a cab. As the cab pulled away, I glanced back and saw Norman leaning against his black Ferrari, seemingly smiling.

The entire situation felt bewildering, but I quickly pushed those thoughts aside.

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I had a restless night. In my dream, someone was flirting with me, and Norman jumped in to defend me by getting into a fight. Suddenly, I spotted Logan nearby, watching the scene unfold.

“Logan!” I called out as I rushed toward him.

He looked at me with frustration. “What trouble have you gotten yourself into this time?”

I tried to explain, but then Elijah stormed in from somewhere, clearly furious. He grabbed my hand and scolded me. “Ariana, you’re causing trouble again. Can’t you just stay out of it for once?”

I struggled to break free from his grip and shouted, “I don’t need you telling me what to do! Let go of me!”

Elijah looked at me with disdain. “Ariana, haven’t you had enough? You’re always stirring up trouble. Don’t you realize your friend is getting pulled into this mess because of you?”

I saw Teri being taken away, and panic washed over me. “I wasn’t the one causing trouble! They were harassing us first!”

I protested, but no one stepped in to help Teri. As I tried to move toward her, Elijah tightened his grip on

me.

Frustrated, I shouted, “Elijah, let me go!”

His patience finally snapped. “If you hadn’t been flirting with those guys, they wouldn’t have harassed you. Your antics have only gotten more ridiculous over the years.”

“I didn’t-” I screamed in my dream.

Suddenly, I heard someone call my name. I jolted awake to see Teri sitting at the edge of the bed, her expression filled with concern.

I let out a deep sigh and settled back onto the bed. “I had a nightmare.”

Teri looked guilty. “It’s my fault. If I hadn’t taken you to that restaurant last night, none of this would have happened. You must have been really shaken up.”

I reassured her. “It’s okay. We’re fine now, aren’t we?”

Still visibly shaken, Teri replied, “I can’t believe how foolish I was. I didn’t realize it at the time, but the more I think about it, the scarier it gets.

‘Two beautiful ladies like us really shouldn’t be going to a place like that. It was far too dangerous.’

I couldn’t help but laugh upon hearing her words.

Noticing my reaction, Teri grumbled. “What’s so funny? I’m being serious. Just look at us—we’re both stunning. We need to be more careful about where we go. Ladies need to learn to protect themselves.”

laughed so hard my stomach hurt. “No one compliments themselves like that! But yes, we definitely need to take better care of ourselves.”

Clutching a pillow, Teri leaned in with curiosity. “Norman is so handsome, though he seems a bit full of himself. Do you think he’s interested in you? And what’s this about flowers—did he really give you flowers?”

Not eager to dive into that topic, I mumbled a vague response.

Just then, there was a knock on the door. Lora called from outside, “Ms. York, someone sent you flowers.” Teri’s eyes sparkled with curiosity. “Speak of the devil, and he appears! This has to be from Norman. Ari,

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your love life is seriously heating up.”

I got out of bed and discovered a bouquet of fresh, elegant white roses—seven in total, beautifully complemented by a few smaller blooms. I instantly fell in love with it.

Turning to Lora, I asked, “Is there a card?”

Lora handed it to me, and as soon as I glanced at the card, my smile deepened. This time, it was from Logan. Teri leaned in to sneak a peek, but I quickly tucked the card into my pocket.

Sensing that something was off, Teri asked, “Who sent these? Come on, spill it!”

I blushed furiously and replied, “It’s from... someone you don’t know.”

Teri burst into laughter. “I know everyone you know, and as far as I can tell, I’m your only close friend. You don’t have other male friends, so who else could it be?”

Realizing she might have overstepped, she quickly added, “Ari, don’t be upset. I didn’t mean to imply you don’t have admirers.”

I had a good idea why she was apologizing. Over the past seven years, I’d been so focused on Elijah that I hadn’t really developed any male friendships, let alone any admirers.

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But I didn’t mind. I happily searched for the prettiest vase I had and arranged the white roses in it.

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Each of the seven white roses was elegant and full. I admired them closely.

Suddenly, Teri leaned in and asked, “Ari, have you noticed something?”

“What?” I asked.

She pointed to my face. “Look in the mirror.”

Curious, I glanced at my reflection and was taken aback. My face was glowing with a bright, genuine smile. My eyes sparkled, and my lips curved in a way that felt almost impossible to contain.

It was such a contrast to how I had looked just two weeks ago when I was discharged from the hospital. Back then, I had felt exhausted and lifeless. Now, I looked vibrant and cheerful.

I couldn’t help but touch my face in surprise.

Teri leaned in even closer. “Come on! Are these from Mr. Wood?”

Panic set in as I quickly fabricated a lie. “No! They’re from a store I’ve shopped at before. They send birthday gifts to their VIP customers.”

Teri looked skeptical. “Really?”

To keep her from probing further, I nodded vigorously.

Disappointment flickered across Teri’s face, but she quickly furrowed her brows in thought. “Wait a minute -today isn’t your birthday.”

“Oh, It’s not? I must have gotten the dates mixed up. Anyway, they were running a promotion at the store, so I just grabbed a bouquet.”

I wasn’t too concerned about whether Teri believed my explanation. I quickly pushed past her and locked myself in my room.

Just as I locked it, Lora approached. Teri asked, “Is she hiding something?”

Lora smiled and replied, “I just got here, so I’m not in the loop.”

Teri pressed on, “Is Mr. Wood really good to Ari? Does he have feelings for her?”

Lora’s expression turned serious. “Mr. Wood is a decent man. He stands out from many of the men you see these days.”

Teri didn’t push further.

Meanwhile, in my room, I pulled out the card. It read, “Wishing Ms. York joy and peace in your new home. Best regards, Logan“.

His handwriting was elegant, reminiscent of someone who had honed their skills in calligraphy.

Even though it was just a card, I carefully tucked it into a book for safekeeping. I wasn’t entirely

sure why I felt compelled to keep it, but something about it felt significant as if it represented something beautiful.

As I was daydreaming in my room, the doorbell rang. Thinking it might be Logan, I quickly changed into a Tong dress.

Just as I was about to tidy my messy hair, I heard a commotion outside. Confused, I realized it wasn't him. I grabbed a comb and headed out.

At the front door stood Jocelyn while Teri blocked the entrance, her expression clearly displeased.

Teri wasn't holding back. Jocelyn, how did you find us here? Are you stalking us?"

Jocelyn was dressed in a black-and-white Chanel haute couture that made her look as if she were attending a funeral. However, I lowered my eyes in disgust.

Jocelyn's eyes lit up when she saw me. "Ms. York, please don't misunderstand. I just happened to see the address on Elijah's phone..."

I frowned. "I never gave Mr. Linden my address. Did he investigate me?"

Jocelyn looked upset. "I'm not sure either. I just saw Elijah chatting with someone, and that's how I found out about this address."

Happened to see? I scoffed. "That's quite a coincidence. Does Elijah know you've been snooping through his phone?"

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For a brief moment, Jocelyn's facade of vulnerability faltered, and I could clearly see the malice lurking in her eyes. It was evident that she was no ordinary person.

Elijah was entirely unaware that she had him under her influence. He probably believed her interest was insignificant. Little did he know, he was entangled with someone incredibly dangerous.

If Jocelyn could snoop through Elijah's phone, it meant she had access to many of his business secrets, company plans, and even financial details. As this realization sank in, I instinctively took a step back.

Jocelyn then said, "Ms. York, Ms. Stuart, I came here personally to express my sincerity. I want to reconcile with you."

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Before Teri could respond, I frowned and said, "Ms. Cornell, if this is about your earlier suggestion, we don't need to discuss it any further. That's a matter between Elijah and me.

“I also have no interest in being friends with you, let alone reconciling. We were never on good terms to begin with.”

Teri looked ready to applaud my words.

However, Jocelyn replied calmly, “Ms. York, even though we aren’t friends and past misunderstandings have created some hostility between us, avoiding the issue won’t resolve anything.

“If you genuinely want to divorce Elijah, shouldn’t you confront it openly?”

Confused, I asked, “What do you mean? I don’t understand.”

Jocelyn smiled sweetly. “It means you need to convince the public that your marriage is over. You have to everyone believe that you truly want a divorce. Only then will Elijah take your intentions seriously.”

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After making her point, she asked, “Ms. York, don’t you think this approach makes sense?”

Teri, standing nearby, interjected, “Ari, don’t fall for her tricks! She’s definitely up to no good.”

I was deep in thought as Jocelyn continued, “Ms. York, your past mistakes have caused Elijah to completely lose trust in you. He believes you’re just throwing a tantrum at this point.”

I asked, “He said he wouldn’t divorce me, didn’t he?”

A flicker of resentment and frustration crossed Jocelyn’s face as she replied coolly, “Yes. Elijah said that divorcing you would be too costly, both emotionally and financially. He refuses to even consider it.”

Confused, I questioned, “Emotionally? What feelings does he even have left for me?”

Jocelyn’s expression wavered. “I’m not sure. Regardless, I know my visit may seem presumptuous, but I hope you’ll think about what I’ve said.” With that, she handed me an elegantly designed invitation.

As I glanced at it, I saw it was for a welcome home party. I weighed the decision of whether to toss it aside in front of Jocelyn or wait until she had left.

Jocelyn said softly, “This is a welcome home party that Elijah organized for me. I hope you’ll dress up and bring a date.”

She blinked at me once before walking away.

As soon as she left, Teri quickly closed the door. Rubbing her arms, she exclaimed, “Wow! Jocelyn is something else. She had the nerve to come here and tell you how to get rid of Elijah! I should have recorded that to show him.”

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I shook my head. “But don’t you think she made some valid points?”

Teri waved her hand dismissively. “Arl, wake up! Don’t let her manipulate you. She definitely has ulterior motives for inviting you.”

I touched the invitation and asked, “What if I brought Logan with me?”

Teri laughed in surprise. “That’s a brilliant idea It would drive Elijah crazy.”

Then, a realization struck her. “Wait. Is that what Jocelyn is after?”

I replied calmly, “Ultimately, Jocelyn is just desperate to become Mrs. Linden. To achieve that, she wouldn’t think twice about encouraging me to provoke Elijah into getting a divorce.”

Teri sighed. “She’s truly ruthless. It’s no wonder you never stood a chance against her before.”

I gazed at the invitation, its bright colors almost blinding. A familiar tightness gripped my chest.

Before my memory loss, I must have felt heartbroken, I could only watch helplessly as the manoved hosted a lavish welcome-home party for another woman.

I wasn’t sure how deeply I had loved Elijah before my memory loss, but even without those memories, a persistent pain and dull ache remained in my heart.

My feelings for him ran deep, and I couldn’t shake the sense of injustice I felt for myself.

That day, Logan arrived quite late.

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When he arrived, the living room was shrouded in a soft, muted light. Only the warm glow of a single floor lamp illuminated the space, casting long shadows across the room.

I stood by the large window, my eyes unfocused, watching the cars and people blur together in the rain- soaked streets below.

Outside, the rain fell in a steady rhythm, a soft patter against the glass, matching the quietness inside.

I heard footsteps behind me, slow and deliberate.

“Why are you still awake at this time?” His voice was so familiar, yet it sounded colder than the rainy night outside.

Through the reflection in the glass, I could see Logan standing just a few feet behind me. In the window’s faint reflection, our figures overlapped, as if we were two lovers, drawn together in an embrace.

I turned around and met his gaze. “Can you do me a favor, Logan?”

My straightforwardness took him by surprise. I handed him the invitation, and his brows furrowed. “How did you get this?”

I briefly explained how Jocelyn had come by. For a brief moment, Logan’s expression turned icy. He must have been angered by the fact that Elijah had someone tailing me.

However, his voice was calm when he spoke. “You want me to be your date?”

I nodded. In response, Logan took the invitation, his gaze softening as he looked at me. “I’ll think about it. It’s late, you should get some rest.”

I hesitated but asked, “Do you think I shouldn’t go?”

He didn’t answer immediately. Instead, he asked, “Do you want to go?”

I shook my head. “I don’t know. Jocelyn made some valid points, but I feel like if I go, I’ll just be walking into a situation where I’ll humiliate myself. There’ll be a lot of judgmental eyes on me.”

Logan’s lips curled into a soft, knowing smile.

It was the kind of smile that could make even the darkest night feel warm like the gentle glow of the moon breaking through clouds after a storm. Something was calming about it, something that made the rain outside seem distant.

I couldn’t help but be mesmerized as I stared at him.

Logan asked, “Do you like the flowers?”

I nodded. “Yes. I loved them.”

His smile deepened. “I’m glad to hear that.”

He glanced down at his watch before gently reaching for my hand. With a tenderness that caught me off guard, he pressed his lips to the back of my hand, his kiss soft and gentle, like a raindrop.

“Goodnight, Ari,”

My hand trembled slightly under his touch. When he lifted his hand, our eyes met. At that moment, the entire cityscape outside the window seemed to be reflected in his eyes. I was dazed.

His hand tightened around mine, his gaze growing deeper. We both knew what we were waiting for, but there was an invisible barrier keeping us apart.

He leaned in, and I instinctively stepped back. My back was pressed against the cold glass of the window, my body feeling unnaturally warm, my palms sweating. Logan’s gaze shifted to my lips as he slowly. leaned down.

In a panic, I lowered my head. My voice was barely a whisper as I said, “We can’t...This isn’t right.”

He stopped. And for a moment, I regretted it—regretted the weakness in me, the confusion I couldn’t shake. Did I still care for Elijah? Was that why I couldn’t let Logan in?

Logan chuckled softly. “It’s okay, Ari. I understand. I won’t make things difficult for you.”

He gently leaned down once more, this time pressing a gentle kiss to my forehead. And then, without another word, he turned and left.

I sat by the window, dazed, reaching up to touch the spot where his kiss had long since disappeared. My heart began to ripple once again.

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That night, I slept peacefully—no dreams, just the comfort of a deep, restful sleep.

I wasn’t sure if Logan would agree to be my date, but I had already passed the decision to him. Whatever his answer would be, I no longer had to worry about it. The burden of that choice was no longer mine.

The next morning, I woke up to the quiet light of dawn and instinctively reached for my phone. As I unlocked it, I saw a string of missed calls from an unknown number. Several messages on WhatsApp filled my screen as well.

My expression darkened as I quickly blocked them all.

There was a good chance that these calls were from Elijah, trying to reach me again. But I had no desire to reconnect with him.

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Every interaction with Elijah left me feeling minor as if I were beneath him, constantly reminded of his arrogance and his belief that he was always in control. It was time to change my phone numb for all.

I got out of bed, freshened up, and went downstairs for breakfast. In the kitchen, Teri was already up, and he was chatting with Lora as she picked at her food.

When she saw me, her face lit up mischievously. “Ah, the illustrious Ms. York graces us with her presence! What’s on the agenda today? Your loyal servant is ready for duty, 24/7!”

I couldn’t help but laugh as I joined her, grabbing a sandwich from the table.

“I’m thinking of selling off more of my luxury items. This time, I’m getting rid of all that pretentious, overpriced jewelry,” I said between bites.

Teri frowned. “But those second-hand shops barely give you anything for it! Jewelry worth 20 or 30 thousand dollars? You’ll be lucky to get a fraction of that, maybe a couple thousand at best.

“Why not just keep it? You’ve saved up a bit of cash, so there’s no rush to sell.”

I shook my head, resolute. “No. I can’t stand having them around,”

Teri sighed, clearly exasperated but unwilling to argue further. “Fine. If that’s how you feel, we’ll sell them.” I nodded. But, suddenly, I had a thought and asked. “Teri, would you come with me to buy a new dress?” Teri narrowed her eyes suspiciously. “Wait. You’re going to that ridiculous welcome-home party, aren’t you?”

I hesitated but eventually nodded.

Teri groaned, already objecting. “Just wear one of those couture gowns you’ve barely touched. Do you think Jocelyn isn’t going to show up dressed to steal the spotlight? She’ll be dripping in designer clothes, trying to outshine everyone.”

I nodded again, though this time more reluctantly.

However, Teri wasn’t finished. “Honestly, though, why bother going? It’s clearly a setup. A trap. You walk in there, and Jocelyn’s just going to humiliate you. It’s not worth it.”

Her words hit home, and I couldn’t help but reconsider, Maybe Teri was right. After breakfast, we packed up the jewelry I wanted to sell and headed to the same luxury resale store we’d visited last time.

This time, we felt more at ease: After all, it was no longer unfamiliar territory for us,

We were ushered into the VIP room again and treated with the same courtesy as before.

An older appraiser greeted us this time, his expression professional and thorough. He examined each piece of jewelry with meticulous care before nodding in approval.

“They appear to be authentic, but the more valuable ones will require further verification,” he said, glancing up from his work.

I pulled out the receipts and certificates, sliding them across the table. “They’re all genuine from the boutiques,” I confirmed.

The appraiser glanced at the paperwork and nodded. “Yes, these are indeed authentic and from boutique stores. However, if I may ask, Ms. York, why are you selling this collection? The resale value is generally quite low, and these pieces are difficult to find again if you ever wish to repurchase them.”

He sounded earnest, genuinely trying to offer advice. “If you’re not under any immediate financial pressure, I’d suggest keeping a few for yourself,” he added.

However, I was resolute. “No. I don’t want them anymore,” I said firmly.

The appraiser, seeing that I wouldn’t be swayed, nodded and stopped pressing the matter,

Just then, the door swung open abruptly, and Evelyn’s mocking voice echoed through the room.

“Of course, she’s under financial pressure! Why else would she be selling off her precious jewelry?”

frowned and looked up.

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Evelyn strutted in with a man in a loud floral shirt. The man had a large belly, and his face was greasy with acne. Despite his age, he was trying far too hard to look trendy.

Teri, visibly annoyed, snapped, “Evelyn, what are you doing here?”

Evelyn patted the man’s shoulder, her voice dripping with sarcasm. “Obviously, I’m here with my boyfriend to pick out some gifts. What? You two don’t want these things, but I can’t take a look? What’s the harm in that?”

Teri shot back with a smirk. “Oh, a new boyfriend, huh? And he’s bringing you here to pick out second-hand gifts? Does that mean he thinks second-hand is all you’re worth?”

Evelyn’s perfectly made-up face darkened immediately. She huffed, “If you can shop here, why can’t I? Just taking a look around, is that illegal?”

Seeing that another argument was about to break out, I quickly pulled Teri back. However, still fuming, turned to the appraiser and demanded, “Get this woman out of here. She’s ruining

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mood.”

The appraiser looked uncomfortable. “Well... Ms. Snow is a regular client here as well. Perhaps we could finish the appraisal first and discuss prices afterward?”

But Evelyn wasn’t about to back down. She turned to the appraiser and said sweetly, “Actually, I’d buy some of her items. Isn’t that how business works? You can’t refuse a paying customer, right?”

The man in the floral shirt chimed in, his voice loud and obnoxious, “Exactly! We’re not here to play around. If you’re not interested in doing business, we’ll take our money elsewhere!”

A wave of irritation washed over me. It was obvious that Evelyn had come here to pick a fight, still holding a grudge over what happened last time when Teri had slapped her.

I tugged at Teri’s arm, trying to calm her down, and turned to the appraiser. “Please continue the appraisal. Once it’s done, Ms. Snow can take her pick.

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The appraiser looked like he’d never been in such an awkward situation before, clearly unsure of how to handle it. Nevertheless, he resumed his work, meticulously appraising the items amid the tense atmosphere.

There were ten necklaces in total, all from luxury brands. They were made of high-quality gold and adorned with diamonds, though the materials themselves weren’t worth much—it was mostly the brand name inflating their value.

There were also five brooches. While these were also made of high-quality gold, the gemstones on them held more value.

One of the brooches was particularly rare, a limited-edition piece estimated at 120 thousand dollars. The rest, such as the earrings and studs, were worth much less, around 20 thousand dollars or 30 thousand dollars each, nothing remarkable.

When the appraisal was done, I turned to Evelyn with a calm smile. “Ms. Snow, didn’t you want to buy something? Feel free to choose whatever you like. I’ll cover the transaction fees once the sale is finalized.

Evelyn picked up the most expensive brooch, her lips curling in mock distaste. “This brooch... well, I suppose it’s decent. But honestly, it’s so ugly! Who on earth picked this out? The person clearly has no

taste.”

Teri couldn’t hold back any longer. “I knew it! You can never say anything nice, can you? If you’re going to

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buy, just buy. If not, then get lost. We don’t need your money.”

Evelyn flashed Teri a fake smile, her voice saccharine. Who says I’m not buying? I’m just saying the brooch is a bit unattractive, that’s all.”

As she spoke, she began criticizing each piece of jewelry on the table, tearing them down one by one as if they were worthless.

Teri’s face was stormy, on the verge of exploding, but remained calm. Finally, Evelyn threw up her hands theatrically and turned to the man in the floral shirt.

“Honey, none of these look good. Let’s just go to the boutiques instead.”

The man in the floral shirt seemed a bit reluctant. But before he could respond, I smiled at him and said, ” Sir, Ms. Snow has very refined taste. That brooch, for example, would cost around 250 thousand dollars at a boutique. You’ll definitely find more impressive pieces, but they’ll be quite a bit more expensive.”

The man’s eyes widened, and he blurted out, “What? That tacky thing costs that much?”

He barely finished the sentence before Evelyn dug her nails into his arm hard.

Grimacing, he quickly corrected himself. “I mean, no problem! If Evy likes it, I don’t mind spending a little more.”

But it was obvious from his face that he was already regretting it.

I chuckled and picked up a pearl necklace from the table. “You’re right. This one here, for example, is almost brand new. I’ve never even worn it. At the boutique, it’s a steal for only 50 thousand dollars”

“50 thousand dollars?” The man spluttered, his eyes nearly bulging out of his head. “That’s robbery! And the appraiser just said the pearls are fake!”

I blinked innocently. “That’s true, but it’s a designer piece, and that’s the price at the boutique. Of course, as second-hand, it’s much cheaper, around 15 thousand dollars.”

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The man in the floral shirt, ignoring Evelyn’s sour expression, immediately spoke up. “Babe, let’s just buy this one. Look, she hasn’t even worn it. If we go to the boutique, we’re gonna get ripped off.”

It was clear Evelyn didn’t come here to actually buy anything. She had just dragged this guy along to stir up trouble for me. Unfortunately for her, she had picked a man who wasn’t very bright and ended up sabotaging her plan.

Teri, catching on quickly, added fuel to the fire, “He’s right, you know? Branded items like these lose value the second they leave the boutique. Anyone buying directly from a boutique is a fool.

“But what can you do? Ari’s admirers tend to enjoy spending money on this kind of stuff. It’s not that she doesn’t like these pieces anymore. She just wants to sell them and get something truly high-end.”

She shot Evelyn a look. “Ms. Snow, why don’t you skip these and just go for the real good stuff?”

Evelyn, already stewing, asked, “What good stuff?”

Teri smirked. “Take him to an auction. There are pieces worth millions, even tens of millions of dollars. The question is whether you’ve got the means for it.”

Evelyn’s anger was so palpable, it seemed to distort her nose job.

She patted the floral-shirted man’s arm, her voice quivering with tears. “You said you’d buy me something. but now you’re settling for this cheap crap? Do you even love me?”

Even heroes were weak when beauty cried. Evelyn might not have been a natural beauty, but with a little cosmetic surgery and skillful makeup, she was a solid seven or eight. Her man clearly had a thing for her looks.

“Alright, alright! I’ll buy it! But Evy, since we’re here, let’s just pick something she hasn’t worn yet. I’ll get it for you.”

Evelyn glared at me, holding back her anger. She could sense something was off, but she couldn’t quite figure out what.

I casually started putting away two necklaces. “I actually quite like these. I think I’ll keep them.”

Evelyn immediately stopped me. “What? You had them out on display! How can you just decide not to sell them?”

I looked at her, “Well, are you buying them? If not, I’ll just take them back. After all, they’re quite expensive at the boutique.”

“Of course, we’re buying!” The man quickly grabbed the necklaces from me before I could put them away.

Evelyn, furious, snapped, “Buy what? Who would want her junk?”

Teri, never one to miss a chance to throw shade, snarled, “If you can’t afford it, then don’t waste our time pretending.”

Evelyn, seething, shot back, “Who says I can’t afford it? just don’t want to buy your trash!”

She tugged on the floral-shirted man’s arm. “Let’s go. Take me to the boutique.”

By now, the man had caught on. He knew that going to the boutique would mean spending a lot more money.

Here, he could get away with tens of thousands of dollars. But in a boutique, the salespeople would swarm him, and he wouldn’t be able to leave without dropping at least ten times that amount.

He remained seated and sighed. “Babe, it’s the same thing. Why don’t you just pick something here, and I’ll pay? If you don’t choose now, I’ll really have to go.”

Evelyn was taken aback to see that the guy she brought along was actually backing out. After a long pause, she spat out, “Fine! How much for that one?”

She pointed to the pearl necklace I was holding.

*Chanel, long strand. Over 50 thousand dollars at the boutique. I’ll let it go for 20 thousand dollars.”

Evelyn gasped. “What do you mean 50 thousand? You just said 15 thousand earlier!”

I gave her a slow, amused smile. “It’s 20 thousand dollars. This one’s a limited edition. I can put it on consignment if I want, can’t I?”

Evelyn’s face turned red with fury. “You’re raising the price on purpose!”

I ignored her and turned to the appraiser. “This one, this one, and that one, put them up for consignment. For the rest, give me a bulk price.”

The appraiser, eager to put an end to this scene, punched numbers into his calculator, the br
loudly

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Evelyn's face turned pale as she stared at the limited-edition necklaces in my hands. I could tell she was tom inside, her mind in a complete knot.

The three necklaces I had chosen were hard to come by, and if she wanted them, she had to pay my price. If she didn't, she'd miss out tomorrow.

Soon, the appraiser gave me a valuation of 453 thousand dollars. I nodded in satisfaction and quickly signed the sales contract.

Evelyn, who was fuming beside me, stomped her feet in frustration. In the end, she reluctantly bought two of my necklaces for 20 thousand dollars and 35 thousand dollars each.

As she left clutching her man, Teri and I burst into laughter, nearly doubling over.

Teri nudged me, grinning. "You're so bad! How did you know that little bitch would definitely buy your stuff?"

I chuckled, "Because I set her up. She initially just wanted to humiliate me while trying to sna her 'boyfriend' wasn't on board with that.

but

"Her 'boyfriend' clearly just wanted to spend a little to win her over. Evelyn wanted him to pay but also to show off, so she had to painfully buy my necklaces.

"Even if she didn't, she'd get her boyfriend to buy something else. Regardless, it felt great to turn the

tables on her."

Teri smiled, "You really made an extra ten thousand dollars easily. Otherwise, the buyback price would've been five thousand dollars less for each piece."

I happily glanced at the balance in my bank account, savoring the sweetness of the money. Putting Evelyn in her place was just the icing on the cake.

Just as I was enjoying my newfound balance, an unfamiliar call came in. Instinctively, I hit decline. However, the number kept calling, and a message popped up.

"Hello, Ms. York. I'm your appointed designer."

I answered the call, and a friendly voice greeted me. “Ms. Ariana York? I’m your personal designer. Do you have time to come to our studio? I can assist you with your entire look.”

I asked, “I didn’t make any appointments. Who is this?”

After a brief pause, I could hear the sound of pages flipping, and the voice replied, “Oh, Ms. York, I must have made a mistake. Mr. Wood asked me to contact you. I hope that’s not too presumptuous.”

Mr. Wood? Logan? My heart raced with excitement. I smiled and said, “Sure, I’m available, but it has to be in the afternoon.”

I arranged a time and place with the designer named Andrew. After I hung up, Teri raised her eyebrows.

“I heard that. Did the CEO Mr. Wood book you a designer? Come on, did he agree to be your date?”

My cheeks flushed again. Just then, a dark blue Bentley screeched to a halt in front of us, startling both me and Teri,

The door swung open, and Elijah stormed out, his expression furious. In a long stride, he quickly approached me.

Before I could react, he grabbed my arm tightly, his face dark with anger. “Ariana, who gave you permission to sell the jewelry I bought for you?”

His grip was strong, causing sharp pain in my wrist. I remembered how he had dislocated my arm last time, and fear crept in..

I cried out, “Don’t break my arm! Please!”

Elijah hesitated for a moment before loosening his grip. Teri snapped to attention, grabbing her bag, ready to strike him.

He shoved Teri aside and coldly said to me, “Get in the car. We need to talk.”