

No Chance 1831

[Chapter 1831 The Mysterious Figure](#)

Though Bella was exceptional, she never saw Elisa as a peer; instead, she regarded her as an admirable role model. Receiving Elisa's praise brought genuine happiness to Bella, though she kept her emotions well hidden.

Elisa patted Bella's shoulder, commending her, "Well done. Now, go back to work. You need to adapt quickly to your new position. Gareth and I will help you with moving on Friday night."

Bella nodded, accepting the plan without hesitation.

News of the recent incident had reached their grandmother's ears, and being the caring and concerned elderly woman she is, she insisted that Bella move into the family's manor for her safety and well-being.

Feeling obligated and having no reason to refuse, Bella agreed to the arrangement.

"Will you and Gareth join us for dinner at the manor on Friday?" Bella inquired, looking at Elisa.

Elisa nodded while offering advice, "Don't dwell on the matter too much for now. Focus on your work, and we'll talk a bit after office hours on Friday."

Grateful for Elisa's understanding and guidance, Bella nodded appreciatively and returned to her office to resume work.

Outside the company, Rochelle endured the stares and comments from passersby as she drove back to the luxurious villa Paul had purchased for her. She remained confined to the opulent house for several consecutive days, consumed by her resentment and bitterness.

Initially, Paul tried to console Rochelle, promising to seek revenge on Elisa and Bella for her sake. However, as Rochelle's behavior turned increasingly vengeful and she neglected her appearance and self-care, Paul started withdrawing from her.

His attraction to her had been fueled by her youth, beauty, and the benefits she provided to his career. Now, with her downfall, the spark of their relationship had faded.

Rochelle's days were consumed by bitterness and resentment as she drowned her sorrows in alcohol and vented her anger through bitter complaints. She felt abandoned and betrayed, leading to a downward spiral of negativity and self-destructive behavior.

Seated by the French window, Rochelle was surrounded by bottles of wine and beer, drowning herself in intoxication.

Her tears mingled with curses aimed at Elisa and Bella as she wished for their demise. She extended her fury to all men, declaring that none were worthy of trust.

Amidst her drunken haze, an unfamiliar voice reached her through a phone call, promising to help her deal with Bella.

Rochelle opened the window and felt the cold breeze clear her mind. Cautiously, she inquired about the caller's identity, "Who are you? Why do you want to help me, and why should I trust you?"

Despite her caution, the person on the other end detected Rochelle's suppressed excitement. They were well aware of her intense hatred for Bella, which pleased them greatly. A foolish and vengeful woman filled with immense hatred was the perfect pawn for their plans.

The person on the phone smirked, "You don't need to care about my identity. Just know that we have a common enemy. If you want to get back at Bella, you'll have to listen to me."

Rochelle snorted coldly, "Why should I trust you?"

The voice replied confidently, "In the next few days, many capable employees working under Bella will be poached. Then you can decide if I have the ability to cooperate with you or not."

After saying that, the caller abruptly ended the call, leaving Rochelle with a mixture of both excitement and apprehension.

In the following days, Rochelle observed the unfolding situation with Bella and attempted to investigate the phone number. It seemed tampered with, and the IP address indicated it was from abroad. Yet, true to the caller's words, Bella encountered a series of valuable employees being poached.

This development both excited and fueled Rochelle's desire to cooperate with the mysterious figure. However, no further calls came from the caller, leaving her in a puddle of uncertainty if the caller was just an imagination she had conjured.

When Friday arrived, Gareth's car appeared on time outside the building after work, ready to assist Bella in moving.

[Chapter 1832 I Can't Guess](#)

Elisa and Bella settled into the car together. Bella gracefully occupied the passenger seat while Elisa and Gareth took the back seats. The vehicle glided smoothly, making its way toward the Wickam's Manor.

Gareth noticed Elisa engrossed in her phone and gently snatched it from her grip. "Aren't you afraid of getting carsick?" he asked with concern.

Elisa shot him a displeased look, extending her hand expectantly to reclaim her phone. "Give it back to me. I have something important to attend to."

Refusing to budge, Gareth held the phone playfully, daring her to retrieve it from him. "Just a few of your employees are leaving. Is it really such a big deal to you, Ms. Benett?"

Elisa's brow furrowed at the mention of the incident. Meanwhile, Bella, seated in the front passenger seat, turned to face Gareth, intrigued. "Gareth, do you know who's behind it?"

Gareth met Elisa's gaze before replying, "Not only do I know, but I'm certain you do as well, Ms. Benett."

Bella looked curiously at Elisa, wondering why she hadn't shared this information.

Elisa sighed inwardly, realizing that evasion wouldn't work in this situation. She admitted, "Yes, I took action as soon as the incident occurred and found out who was responsible."

Bella's eyes lit up, eager to know the culprit. "Who is it?"

Gareth decided to add a hint of intrigue to the conversation. "Why don't you take a guess?"

Bella racked her brain but couldn't come up with a plausible answer. While Rochelle had held a grudge against her, she had already left the company and seemed unlikely to cause trouble now.

The only other person related to Rochelle was Paul, but would he resort to such tactics for a personal vendetta? It seemed unlikely, given his position within the company.

Shaking her head, Bella gave in, "I can't guess."

Gareth dropped the bombshell, "Valor Corporation."

Bella's heart sank like a stone. Wasn't that the major client she was on the verge of signing a million-worth deal with? They had shown genuine interest in the collaboration, and Bella had been enthusiastic about the partnership.

"How could this be..." she murmured, her mind reeling with disbelief.

Understanding Bella's distress, Gareth explained, "It's perplexing, isn't it? Ms. Bennett probably didn't inform you to protect you from unnecessary stress."

Elisa glanced at Gareth, noticing his subtle effort to defend her.

Gareth blinked, hinting at Elisa to continue with her explanation.

Ever composed, Elisa turned her attention to the window, carefully choosing her words.

Bella's expression soured as the reality of the situation set in. "So, they intended to deceive us from the start? I was just a pawn for them to get closer to the company, wasn't I? I feel so foolish."

Regret overwhelmed Bella as she berated herself for not seeing through their deception.

Elisa intervened with comforting words, "It's not your fault. No one could have predicted their true motives. People's intentions are often difficult to decipher."

Overwhelmed by emotions, Bella questioned, "What should I do now?"

Elisa assured her, "Act as if you don't know anything. Continue with the negotiations and finalize the contract. But pay close attention while reviewing the terms. Refrain from impulsive decisions or attempting to make amends. Remember, this is not your fault."

Bella's cheeks flushed with gratitude. She couldn't hide anything from Elisa's insightful understanding. Nodding in agreement, she resolved to follow Elisa's guidance, though her mind remained preoccupied throughout the journey.

[Chapter 1833 Making Choices](#)

Considering it was still early, Gareth instructed the driver to head to Bella's previous residence to help her with the move. The location wasn't remote or too old, but it was a rental community with varying residents and less robust security measures.

Elisa and Bella worked together to pack clothes and personal belongings, while Gareth oversaw the movers as they packed larger items.

As Elisa and Bella emerged from the bedroom, they found Gareth sitting on the sofa, his long legs crossed, looking every bit the boss as he directed the movers. "We don't need these, and that one can go too," he instructed.

Bella stepped forward to stop him and said, "Gareth, these things can still be used; why are you getting rid of them?"

"Don't keep any of these; we already have them at the manor. Just choose a few with sentimental value to take with you, and the same goes for your clothes," Gareth said nonchalantly, casting dismissive glances at items he deemed disposable.

Bella had a different perspective. In the past, when she was living off generational wealth, she might not have cared about these things. But now that she had earned her own money, she didn't want to waste anything. She knew all these items were bought with her hard-earned salary, and she valued the effort and dedication that went into earning that money.

Seemingly aware of her intention, Gareth stood up and lightly flicked her forehead. "Don't worry; Whatever you don't take, the movers will sell it for you."

Bella finally felt reassured and turned to Elisa. It was evident that Gareth and Elisa were aligned on this matter. In the room earlier, Bella had wanted to take all her clothes, but Elisa had stopped her.

As Elisa surveyed the room, she made a thoughtful decision for Bella. "Let's take about a third of these clothes," she suggested, considering both practicality and sentimental value.

Bella contemplated arguing, but the intensity in Elisa's deep eyes left her speechless. It was as if Elisa was trying to peer into her soul and understand her on a deeper level.

After a thoughtful pause, Elisa spoke again, her words carrying a weight of wisdom, "You need to learn to make choices."

Bella wanted to defend her point of view, but the significance of Elisa's words sank in, and she found herself at a loss for words.

In the end, they had required two trucks—one to transport Bella's carefully chosen items to the manor and the other to handle the goods for sale. The movers worked efficiently, loading and securing the belongings as Bella bid farewell to her past and embarked on a new chapter in her life.

As they prepared to leave, Bella returned the key to the tenant, taking one last glance at the house that had been her home for so long in Bayswe, bidding it a solemn farewell and saying goodbye to her past.

With everything packed, the three of them got into the car, followed by the moving truck, making their way towards the Wickam's Manor. Bella's emotions remained murky; farewells always carried a bittersweet tinge, especially for someone who cherished memories.

Upon arriving at the manor, Elisa reminded Bella to compose herself so that Julia would not be worried.

The aroma of the favorite dishes Julia had prepared filled the air as they entered the manor. When Julia saw them approaching, she waved them over, saying, "You've come at the right time. The dishes are almost ready. Let's eat and chat together."

With a warm smile, Julia took Elisa's hand on her left and Bella's hand on her right, leading them to the dining table where they would enjoy the meal together.

As for Gareth, even though he was left behind, he didn't mind at all. Watching the three most important women in his life was gratifying for him. He couldn't wipe the smile off his face.

The four of them took their seats, and Bella had initially intended to sit next to Elisa.

[Chapter 1834 Moving Back In](#)

Bella felt a tinge of regret as her cunning cousin had managed to outmaneuver her, leaving her reluctantly seated across from Elisa.

Julia, observing the scene with amusement, couldn't help but chuckle. In her younger days, she had been strict about maintaining silence during meals. However, now that she was older and cherished the moments spent with her grandchildren, she didn't mind a bit of chatter and laughter at the table.

Julia began asking Bella about her recent life, and Bella playfully responded, "I'm doing fine these days. I just hope I haven't caused trouble for my boss, Elisa."

Julia then turned her attention to Elisa with a playful smile, saying, "And how about you, Elisa? Or should I say, Ms. Benett? Has Bella caused you any trouble?"

Caught off guard by the sudden question, Elisa almost choked on her food. She quickly turned in the other direction and coughed to compose herself.

Concerned, Julia immediately instructed the maid, Maria, to bring a glass of water. Maria hurriedly brought the water, and Gareth promptly put down his chopsticks, taking the towel to gently pat Elisa's back, showing his concern and care.

Struggling to stop herself from coughing, Elisa said, "I'm fine... just choked... a little..."

Gareth's expression remained stern, but there was also a touch of worry in his eyes. "Take your time with chewing, don't gobble down the food like a little kid." His words carried a mixture of reprimand and protectiveness.

Elisa took a moment to compose herself, gently using a towel to dab at the corners of her mouth. As she met the concerned gazes of Julia and Bella, she shook her head reassuringly, saying, "I'm fine."

Feeling apologetic, Julia said solemnly, "It's my fault for joking with you like that during the meal."

Elisa waved her hand to reassure her. "It's okay, Grandma. I just ate too quickly."

Relieved, Julia asked Gareth to serve more food to Elisa, who wanted to decline but didn't want to seem impolite, so she picked up the chopsticks again.

Clearing his throat, Gareth changed the topic. "Elisa, why don't you tell Grandma how Bella is doing in your company?"

Taking the cue, Elisa shared excitedly, "Grandma, you might not know yet, but Bella has been promoted to the head of the project department in my company."

"Really? That's great!" Julia beamed with admiration at Bella's achievements.

Graciously accepting the praise, Bella humbly explained that she hadn't mentioned it earlier because she was still in the probationary period. However, she realized that assuming she wouldn't pass the probation would have significantly affected her confidence.

Pleased with the achievements of the younger generation, Julia smiled and enjoyed the dinner. After finishing the meal, the maid brought in some fruits.

Suddenly, Julia inquired, "By the way, have you moved your things back?"

Bella nodded, "Yes, they are right outside. They can start bringing them upstairs one by one. The only thing is, I don't know which room I'll be staying in."

The maid, Maria, took over the conversation. "Miss, all the rooms are cleaned and ready. Why don't you all chat while I bring the workers upstairs?"

Bella thanked Maria, and they continued their conversation.

A pang of realization hit Elisa as she sensed that Julia had a hidden agenda when mentioning the topic of moving in all of a sudden.

As expected, the corners of Julia's mouth lifted as she directed her next words toward Elisa, "Let me propose this idea: why don't you and Garry move in as well? The house can accommodate all of you. With more people, you can take care of each other. Besides, you and Bell can go to work together in the morning. What do you think?" Although Julia phrased it as seeking Elisa's opinion, it was apparent that she didn't expect her to refuse.

[Chapter 1835 Being Imposing](#)

Given the complexity of her relationship with Gareth, Elisa wasn't sure about moving back in together.

"I don't think it's the right time, Grandma. I wouldn't want to impose on you," she explained.

Julia frowned disapprovingly and retorted, "Impose? Nonsense! Having you both here would make me so happy. I love our little family reunions."

Elisa smiled politely but was internally worried about appeasing Julia's unwarranted enthusiasm. She realized that Julia might bring it up again if she didn't address this now.

Noticing Elisa's dilemma, Bella jumped in playfully, saying, "Grandma, am I not enough entertainment for you? Did I do something to upset you?"

Julia's attention shifted, and she affectionately tapped Bella's forehead.

"Feeling jealous, you little monkey? Grandma loves having you and Liz here, and it's so much fun when you're both here. There's no conflict, sweetie. Grandma treats you both fairly," she said with a chuckle, patting Bella's hand.

Bella looked at Elisa, silently conveying her helplessness. Elisa didn't know what to do, but Gareth, who had been quiet until then, spoke up suddenly.

"Grandma, Liz has a point about not wanting to impose on you."

Julia frowned, "Impose? Oh, that'll never be the case!"

Gareth put the newspaper aside and explained, "You see. The way things roll for our generation is a tad different now. We're not quite in the same groove as you guys were back in the day. We need a little breathing room to work on our relationship. Swinging back here might actually put a brake on our momentum."

Elisa blushed, feeling embarrassed by his directness. What did he mean by 'work on our relationship'? They weren't even in a proper relationship, were they?

Elisa discreetly tried to pinch Gareth's waist, but he was so lean and toned that there was nothing to pinch.

Unfazed, Gareth carried on, "Don't you think, Grandma, that it might be a bit imposing?"

Being perceptive and shrewd, Julia caught Gareth's drift and burst out a knowing laugh, "Ah, I see. I'm the one imposing on you both! Alright, alright..."

Elisa shot Gareth a look that said, 'Seriously? Shut up already!'

After a bit more conversation, Julia suddenly decided it was time for them to leave. "It's late now. You two should head back."

Her change in tone contradicted her previous sentiments. Still, Elisa didn't think twice and swiftly took Gareth's hand to make their exit.

From behind, Julia sighed contentedly, "Ah, to be young and in love. They get along so well, don't they?"

Bella, hiding nearby, couldn't hold back her laughter and covered her mouth.

Inside the car, outside Wickam Manor.

With the driver gone, they were alone in the car, relying on themselves to get home.

Gareth occupied the driver's seat and turned towards Elisa.

"You're not upset with me, right? I had to say that, or Grandma wouldn't have let us leave," he explained.

Elisa remained silent, glaring at Gareth with even more intensity.

"Can you please stop making decisions without consulting me in the future? All the gossip and rumors about us are because of your actions! Urgh!"

She turned her head away, no longer interested in looking at him.

Unbeknownst to her, Gareth's eyes sparkled with mischief, revealing that it was all a deliberate move.

[Chapter 1836 A Trap](#)

Elisa realized Gareth had framed her, but she didn't want to embarrass him in front of others. She let it slide for now, but she swore he would regret it if he tried it again!

The following day at work, she felt a bit down.

When Bella came over and handed over the contract, there was a smirk at the corner of her mouth.

Elisa knew Bella had gotten the wrong idea. Still, she had no energy to correct her and let it be.

Once the contract was signed, Elisa offered, "Do you want me to go with you? This time feels different; the other party seems well-prepared. I'm concerned about your safety."

Bella picked up the contract with a grin.

"We're in a country that operates by rules and regulations. They can't just whisk me away. Believe me, if they're geared up, so am I. I know the drill. Oh, by the way, those dark circles make you look like a panda."

"With you in this state, I might have to clone myself to care for you if things go south."

Elisa jokingly scolded, "You little prankster!"

Bella smiled and got ready to head out.

Elisa's tone turned serious, reminding Bella to stay alert and summoning her bodyguards to ensure her safety.

Bella nodded solemnly, "I'll be back in one piece. Don't worry."

Elisa waved cheerfully in her direction. She couldn't help but notice that Bella had been unusually bright and mischievous lately.

Stepping out of the president's office, Bella let out a sigh.

Just earlier, she had deliberately donned an air of indifference and confidence to shield Elisa from worry.

Even if Elisa were prepared and upbeat today, Bella wouldn't let her be part of this. This meeting was a wildcard, and Bella wouldn't expose Elisa to any risks.

As for herself...

Around four o'clock in the afternoon, Bella drove to the agreed-upon location, accompanied by the trio of sturdy bodyguards provided by Elisa.

An hour earlier, Bella had received the location and timing from the other party. The place itself sent a twinge of unease through her; she felt something terrible might go down.

The location was a resort on the outskirts, quite a trek from the city center. The other party's explanation was that the boss was unwinding here. Evidently, this big shot knew how to revel in luxury and leisure.

It took Bella a little over two hours to reach the resort. When she finally pulled in, it was ten past six in the evening, leaving just twenty minutes until the scheduled meetup at six thirty.

Upon her arrival, a waiter approached her with a friendly greeting. "Are you Ms. Wickam? Please follow me."

Bella trailed the waiter's lead, flanked by the trio of burly bodyguards, and stepped into a secluded chamber.

However, the other party hadn't shown up yet.

Deciding it would be inhospitable and give off a hostile vibe to have her entourage join her, Bella had the three bodyguards wait outside the private room. It seemed more diplomatic and tactful to proceed solo.

Taking in the ambiance of the chamber, Bella deduced that it was the big boss's personal space adorned with classical decor and valuable antiques.

A display cabinet caught her attention, housing jade bracelets, including a glass similar to Elisa's taste. Bella reached for her phone to snap a picture and send it to her friend. Surprisingly, her phone had no signal.

Bella was surprised by this unexpected realization. Before she could dwell on it, someone stepped into the chamber.

Bella turned to face the newcomer, and their eyes met. Startled by the recognition, she stumbled slightly in her high heels.

It was him!

[Chapter 1837 Reunion with an Old Acquaintance](#)

Bella's heart sank, her expression instantly crumbling. She had run through countless scenarios, but the thought of the puppeteer behind Valor Corporation being him had never crossed her mind!

"Long time no see, Bella." The man, donning sunglasses and smirking, opened his arms as if expecting a hug.

It turned out that it was her despicable ex-fiancé, Luke Connor!

Bella stood her ground, fixating on him with intensity. "How on earth did you get out of jail?"

Luke took off his sunglasses, feigning a regretful look. "After all this time, I thought you'd be excited to see me. Instead, our reunion is off to a rather aggressively inquisitive start. Ouch!"

He advanced as he spoke.

Bella watched him cautiously, involuntarily stepping backward until her back pressed against the wall. With no more room to retreat, she was trapped. Her mind raced as she tried to make sense of the situation.

How did Luke escape from jail? Was he the only one who got out?

So, why and how did he end up here?

Bella couldn't possibly be naive enough to believe that after sending Luke to prison, he'd go to such lengths to catch up or discuss cooperation with her. He wasn't the type to repay evil with kindness.

Luke raised his hand, letting his fingers run through Bella's hair, from her scalp to the tips, collecting a handful and taking a whiff at his nose.

"Bella, you still smell as amazing as ever."

Suppressing the urge to gag, Bella attempted to keep the situation under control. "Let's not waste time and get down to business."

Though she was fully aware that Luke's motives for being there weren't likely about business, Bella figured that if she played dumb, maybe she could prevent things from escalating into hostility right then and there.

Luke paused momentarily as if delaying the inevitable confrontation just for a momentary thrill. His eyes were all wink-and-nudge as he retreated, creating some breathing space.

Bella felt a mixture of relief and tension, maintaining her poker face.

"Yeah, I invited you here today to discuss joining forces between our company. Come, take a seat."

Luke's tone was oddly polite as he even played the gentleman by pulling out a chair.

Suppressing her unease, Bella settled into the seat.

Luke took his place beside her, fixing his gaze on her with an almost predatory intensity.

Bella's unease sky-rocketed, and she couldn't help but ask, "Aren't they serving the food yet?"

Though she was attempting to keep her calm, her mind was racing, trying to concoct a plan to discreetly snag her phone and send an SOS message.

Luke grinned and snapped his fingers, signaling the waiters to enter one by one.

"Check it out; I've got your favorite dishes lined up. Thought it might put a smile on your face," Luke quipped as if trying to charm her.

Bella mustered a strained smile and thanked him.

She glanced at the entrance and confirmed her suspicion: the three bodyguards had vanished.

Her heart sank like a boulder.

Luke was unfazed by her unease; instead, he took the lead in serving her food with almost exaggerated attention to detail.

Bella's expression clouded over like a storm brewing on the horizon.

There was no way Bella would touch any of the food in front of her.

As she contemplated her next move, a waiter slipped at the entrance, accidentally knocking over a teriyaki beef plate.

Luke shot up, irritated as he scolded the waiter, "What's the matter with you? Are all the waiters here on the same level of incompetence?!"

Bella furrowed her brows, watching the waiter's face turn redder than the hot sauce. Initially, she planned to defuse the situation, but then an idea struck her.

Her hand discreetly reached into her bag behind her and tapped three times.

An SOS message for emergencies was swiftly sent out.

[Chapter 1838 The Ex-Fiancé's Remorse](#)

Feeling her phone vibrate, Bella's tense heart finally eased. She had designated Elisa as her emergency contact when they had gone phone shopping together, a decision that was proving invaluable now. Bella couldn't help but feel gratitude for Elisa's foresight.

With the SOS message sent, Luke swiftly handled the waiter incident, promptly dismissing the unfortunate staff member.

However, Bella wasn't concerned with the waiter's fate. Her mind was entirely occupied with devising a way to communicate with Elisa without arousing Luke's suspicion.

In the meantime, Luke continued to serve the food, and his gaze was locked onto Bella's untouched plate. His expression held neither warmth nor anger, making it difficult to gauge his genuine emotions. He simply inquired, "Why aren't you eating? Doesn't suit your taste?"

Bella shook her head. "Not hungry right now."

Luke smiled, his tone light, "How can you not be hungry? You only had fried noodles for lunch, and you've been running on empty since leaving the office."

Bella pounded the table, shot to her feet, and glared down at Luke, demanding, "How dare you spy on me?!"

Luke wiped his hands and adopted a composed demeanor as if he were a refined young gentleman rather than the destitute figure she'd once known. He slowly rose to his feet, casting a shadow that loomed over Bella.

"Spying is a strong word. Let's just say I've been quite curious about your recent activities."

His words struck a nerve, causing a series of unrelated events to fall into place like puzzle pieces, leading to a sudden understanding.

"So, you're the one who arranged that rented house. And those monthly flower deliveries were your doing too?"

Luke grinned, neither confirming nor denying her accusations.

Bella's chest rose and fell with intensity, yet she knew taking on Luke at this moment was a losing battle. She was acutely aware that letting her anger loose now would only come back to haunt her.

So, she sat back down.

As if finding a middle ground, Bella picked up her fork and spoon, focusing solely on the dishes Luke had just eaten from—a preemptive move to dodge any potential drugging.

Noticing this, Luke settled back in his chair, a grin of satisfaction quirking his lips.

"Smooth escape, huh? Just you?" Bella nonchalantly inquired with a glint of curiosity in her eyes.

Luke didn't dodge the truth but brushed it with a light touch, "You've got your bag of tricks, and I've got my own methods to scale walls. But yeah, I made it out alone."

He reached across, capturing Bella's hand, brushing off her slight resistance, and placed it over his heart. "Prison time is a reflective period. I know I screwed up. Looking back on our moments, I see my blindness and foolishness. I let go of someone incredible like you for the sake of a nobody."

Suppressing her repulsion, Bella maintained a composed facade. She'd heard these lines one too many times. But in the end, didn't he betray her and run off with her supposed best friend?

Bella's brows furrowed, and she pulled her hand away. "Enough of that—let's shift to discussing our collaboration."

Luke's demeanor shifted momentarily, a hint of unspoken thoughts in his eyes before a ringing phone cut off his words.

Bella swiveled around, retrieving her phone from her bag—it was Elisa calling.

Offering an apologetic glance, she headed toward the door. Yet, outside, Luke's security detail formed an unyielding barrier, obstructing her way.

With a sigh of frustration, Bella retraced her steps into the chamber again. She made her way to the window and answered the call.

Luke stood and approached, mouthing silently, "Turn on the speaker."

Bella shot him an irritated look before answering the call.

"Hey, Liz. Your timing is perfect. I was just about to ask you for a favor."

[Chapter 1839 Taking Matter into Her Own Hands](#)

Elisa barely had a chance to chime in before Bella launched into a rapid-fire explanation. Elisa's intuition kicked in—something was definitely off. Maybe that emergency alert had been right all along; it wasn't a mistake—it was real!

Right then, Luke swiped Bella's phone and switched to speaker mode.

Elisa's voice resonated, calm and collected. "Alright, lay it on me."

Bella understood that Elisa must have deduced her situation. Relief surged through her, marking this as a small triumph.

She quickly conveyed, "The latest contract with Magnus Lane? It's fraught with issues. Could you reevaluate it and expedite the submission?"

On the other end, Elisa furrowed. Magnus Lane? No one by that name was associated with the company. In a heartbeat, she understood that Bella was probably in danger.

Drawing a composed breath, Elisa steadied her tone, cautious not to raise any red flags. "No problem. I'll take care of it."

Tears of happiness shimmered in Bella's eyes, but she swiftly concealed them as Luke locked eyes with her.

Just as she was about to wrap up the conversation, Elisa interjected, "Oh, by the way, weren't you supposed to be knee-deep in cooperation discussions today? How's that going? When do you think it'll wrap up? Need a ride home?"

Bella's gaze flicked to Luke at her side; he was looking at her too.

Before she could respond, Luke swiftly seized the phone and ended the call.

Then, his fingers danced across the screen, composing and firing off a message.

Bella: 'Hey, Elisa. Apologies. Something came up. I had to cut the call.'

Before Bella could react, Luke propelled her phone out the window, shattering it.

Elisa received the text on the other end, and a sinking realization hit her—Bella's phone was compromised. Bella never addressed her as Elisa; it was always Liz.

Fully comprehending the gravity of the situation, Elisa instructed her team to trace the contract signing location, then dialed Gareth's number.

At that precise moment, Gareth was likely grounded in a meeting.

Anxiety started to take hold; Elisa decided to head straight to Gareth's office. Coincidentally, she ran into Thomas, who had just wrapped up his work.

Noticing Elisa's hurried demeanor, Thomas quirked an eyebrow and asked, "Everything okay, Ms. Benett?"

Elisa didn't elaborate, simply instructing him, "Take me to Gareth."

With Thomas leading the way, Elisa encountered no hindrances, arriving at the conference room's door.

"Ms. Benett, perhaps you should wait in the office. The meeting is nearly done," Thomas suggested.

Before Thomas could finish, Elisa marched right into the conference room, with Thomas following hastily.

All eyes—over fifty pairs—turned their eyes to the culprit.

Apologizing to Gareth, Thomas interjected, "I'm sorry, Mr. Wickam. I couldn't prevent her."

Fortunately, Gareth's initially stern expression softened as he caught sight of Elisa, returning to his usual demeanor. He waved his hand, signaling for Thomas to make his exit.

Thomas visibly released a breath of relief and promptly left the conference room.

Gareth subtly gestured, halting the meeting's progress as he approached Elisa.

Once outside the conference room, a flurry of speculation buzzed among those remaining about Elisa's unexpected visit.

"Who could make Mr. Wickam, the workaholic, stop working?"

"Is she the missus?"

"Missus? Oh, you must be new here. She's the boss's ex-wife, someone Mr. Wickam cares a lot about."

The employee's realization was palpable.

Outside the room, Gareth's expression showed no trace of irritation from the interruption. He simply asked, "What's going on?"

[Chapter 1840 I Forgive You](#)

Elisa had a Bluetooth earpiece and looked equally serious. "Luke Connor."

Their information aligned.

Elisa clenched her teeth and revealed, "The Connors greased palms up high, securing sentence reductions for Luke. He walked early. That woman is still in custody. No idea what Luke's up to this time."

Gareth hesitated. "Chances are high. He's targeting Bella."

"I've asked Bella before, and they hadn't crossed that intimate line before their engagement. But still, I'm worried..." Elisa didn't say it outright, but they both understood the unspoken concern.

The air grew heavy.

Elisa pressed harder on the gas pedal, almost wishing she could teleport.

Meanwhile, Luke and Bella had wrapped up their meal, the clock inching towards eight in the evening.

To buy more time, Bella suggested they stroll around the resort.

Luke agreed, and they drifted without a clear direction.

Luke kept reminiscing about their shared past, while Bella's responses maintained a detached and chilly tone. Yet, her gaze remained alert, scanning the environment for any opportunity to send a distress signal or to remember an escape route.

Unfortunately, Luke's watchful eye never wavered, and a handful of bodyguards trailed behind them. Bella's chance of escape was slim at best.

Her heart sank, and a sense of powerlessness overwhelmed her.

Luke led Bella to the luxurious presidential suite on the top floor.

Though hesitant, she had no choice but to follow him in.

The room was clearly given a makeover, exuding a subtly romantic vibe.

The air was adorned with the flicker of red candles, and the king-sized bed was decorated with balloons and flower petals. A bottle of wine awaited on the table outside.

Luke motioned for the bodyguards to depart with a wave of his hand.

He then uncorked the wine, filling two glasses. Taking one, he offered the other to Bella. With a watchful eye on Luke, Bella cautiously accepted the glass, mindful not to provoke him.

Yet, she refrained from taking a sip. Holding a wine glass, Luke began reminiscing as candlelight danced, downing his drink swiftly.

"Remember when we first ran into each other? You were this powerful and pure force to be reckoned with... Look, I know I messed up, Bella. Can you give me another chance to make things right?"

Bella managed this half-smile, trying to keep Luke cool, "Fine, I forgive you."

Luke smiled, but there was some extra meaning she couldn't quite catch.

"Great, then let's raise our glasses to that. Here's to a fresh start with this wine."