

No Chance 1841

[Chapter 1841 Before the Storm](#)

Bella's instincts were blaring sirens that something was off about the wine. She glanced at Luke and shook her head. "Nah, I'll take a pass. Got to keep my head clear to go home later."

"Going home?" Luke's smile contorted like he'd just heard the funniest joke and couldn't stop laughing.

Bella was caught off guard by his weird reaction. She quickly dipped into her bag, grabbed the pepper spray, and locked eyes with Luke, watching for sudden moves.

Before she could blink, Luke held a wine glass in one hand and clasped Bella's chin with a tight grip in the other.

He squeezed, and it stung like crazy. Bella pressed her hands to her chest, pushing back, and then struggled as if her life depended on it.

Luke was unrelenting, his hold on Bella's head unyielding, as if he was about to force that red wine into her mouth.

Bella realized she was cornered, so she quickly knocked the wine glass to the floor.

The glass crashed down, shattering into pieces.

Some shards even nicked Luke.

But he didn't seem fazed by the pain; his eyes locked onto Bella with a sinister stare.

"I gotta go!"

Bella sensed something was seriously wrong and bolted toward the exit.

Yet, when she grabbed the doorknob, she discovered the door had been locked outside.

Muttering a curse, Bella turned back cautiously, masking her fear from Luke's vigilant gaze.

She tried to say something to soothe the situation, but it was futile.

Luke stared at her like a poised predator, ready to strike down his prey.

But Bella wasn't about to wait for him to make a move.

Her hand sneaked into her bag and clutched the pepper spray with determination.

When Luke lunged at her, Bella whipped out the pepper spray and gave him a strong dose.

"Go to hell!"

Luke's cries of pain filled the room as he shielded his eyes.

Reacting swiftly, Bella dashed into the bathroom and quickly secured the door.

At that moment, all she wished for was a phone to call the police or find a way to contact Elisa.

At this critical juncture, her only option was to trust Elisa's instincts.

Her last resort was to pray with all her heart that her determination wouldn't waver.

Meanwhile, Elisa had already made it to the resort and teamed up with Gareth.

They arrived in SUVs, each loaded with four robust and capable men.

As it happened, those four men were police officers.

Together, the group of ten advanced toward the front desk, exuding an intimidating presence that left the receptionist visibly rattled.

Elisa stepped up, soothing the receptionist, and gestured towards the police officers with Gareth, asking, "Hey, do you happen to have a room under the name Luke Connor? Could you check that out for us?"

The police officers flashed their badges to the receptionist, who quickly retrieved the room number and passed it on.

With Elisa at the helm, the group moved confidently into the elevator, the energy palpable.

By now, Luke had cooled down, though his eyes remained bloodshot, giving him an even more menacing look.

He rubbed his eyes, shook his head, and his fury was apparent this time.

Luke surveyed the room, picked up a chair, and proceeded toward the bathroom.

Bella caught the sound of the chair scraping and glimpsed a figure outside the bathroom door.

Her heart raced, feeling as though it might burst from her chest any second.

'Thud, thud, thud...'

Bella's ears were filled with nothing but the faint rhythm of her own heartbeat.

Outside, there was still no movement—just the eerie calm preceding the storm.

[Chapter 1842 Starting Over](#)

"Bella, open the door," Luke's voice echoed through the door. There wasn't a hint of anger; he seemed oddly composed.

But Bella could read him like a book, and it sent chills down her spine.

Feeling cornered, Bella clamped her hand over her mouth to stifle any sound, attempting to suppress her fear.

"Last chance, open the door!" Luke's patience was wearing thin.

As he finished speaking, Luke grabbed a chair and slammed it against the bathroom door.

Bella couldn't help but release a scream.

"F*cking open the door!"

Luke's voice grew more manic, his movements quicker.

Each impact felt like a blow to Bella's heart.

She scrambled, searching for anything to use for defense, but there was nothing.

To make matters worse, cracks began forming in the bathroom door's glass.

The fractures slowly spread across the glass surface.

Bella's heart clenched.

"Unlock the door, now!" Luke's final furious shout reverberated, followed by glass shattering as his fist burst through, a muscular arm extending to unlock the door.

Luke's shadow loomed in the doorway.

Bella's heart sank with the door swinging open, her eyes the with terror.

Silhouetted against the light, his face remained obscured, but the rage emanating from him was palpable.

Luke entered without a word. His grip on Bella was tight as he carried her.

He could feel her trembling against him.

A cruel grin spread across his face as he tossed Bella onto the bed.

Dizziness swept over her, the sensation of the soft mattress beneath her back.

With caution, she sat up, her gaze fixed on Luke.

"Luke, don't push your luck."

"Who's pushing luck, you said?" Luke scoffed, unbuttoning his shirt deliberately.

His movements were deliberate, akin to a predator studying its prey.

"Bella, we've been engaged for ages. The closest we've come is holding hands, which is why I was tempted by that b*tch. You are partly to blame for this too! If you hadn't neglected me, things wouldn't be messed up like this!"

Luke's voice was heavy with emotion, his face a mosaic of grievances.

Bella might've erupted in laughter if it weren't for the awkward situation.

The good old victim-blaming strategy.

He succumbed to his own lust and dared to point the finger at her? How absurd!

Despite these thoughts, Bella worked to maintain her calm facade, attempting to placate Luke's feelings.

"Let's not get worked up. If we're going to make a fresh start, you have to give me time to adjust, don't you think?"

Luke appeared to be swayed and momentarily halted his actions.

With a relieved breath, Bella persisted, "I've forgiven the past, but I need time to adjust. Let's take it slow... alright?"

"No chance, not okay." Luke's sneer was palpable, and Bella sensed the strong undercurrent of mockery in his eyes.

He moved faster, shedding his clothes in deft motions, leaving him in his underwear.

Bella didn't avert her gaze, nor did she meet his eyes.

Looking would cause unease while avoiding his gaze might leave her vulnerable to a sudden pounce.

Luke maintained his eerie calm, "Relax, Bella. Your first time will be gentle, and I promise you'll enjoy it."

With that, he lunged toward her.

Bella's scream echoed as she hurried to escape the bed. Unfortunately, her foot got caught, and she was pulled back under him.

"Let go of me!"

[Chapter 1843 Farewell](#)

Bella fought back with all her might, utilizing every available means to fend off Luke. She even managed to tear off a chunk of his flesh with her teeth.

Punches and kicks acted as her barrier, keeping Luke at a distance.

The pain must've been intense for Luke, as he responded by slapping Bella across the face, causing her ears to ring.

Afterward, he used a tie to bind her hands once Bella's initial turmoil had subsided.

Yet, she continued her resistance, pushing against him.

Yet, it was as if a whisper aimed to move a hurricane. The gulf in strength was too vast.

A tear welled up and traced a path down Bella's cheek, her eyes clenched shut.

She comforted herself, drawing a parallel between today's ordeal and a minor dog nip.

Just as Luke was about to remove Bella's pants, the door was forcefully kicked open.

A familiar voice, infused with unwavering determination, reached Bella's ears.

"Only the policewoman can enter, nobody else."

Bella promptly recognized Elisa's voice, relief sweeping over her. The sense of security allowed her to unwind.

She recognized that Elisa had come to the rescue.

Her salvation was here.

The force of Luke pinning her down abruptly broke as a powerful blow sent him flying.

Elisa discarded her coat, ensuring Bella's decency was preserved, then signaled Gareth.

Quickly, Gareth and his team barged into the room.

The police swiftly apprehended Luke.

At that instant, a barrage of curses erupted from him toward Elisa.

After all, Elisa had foiled his prior wedding as well.

He couldn't wrap his head around her vendetta. Why was she so relentless in targeting him?

"F*ck! What's your problem? Hell-bent on opposing me? It was your last time, and it's still you now. You b*tch, you're headed for a miserable marriage, your husband doesn't give a d*mn about you, you deserve... Ah—!"

Just before Luke could finish, Gareth's kick landed squarely in his stomach.

In a split second, Luke coughed up a mouthful of blood, incapacitating his ability to finish his words.

Elisa held Bella closely, lending comfort, "It's okay... It's all over... I'm right here."

"Thanks, Liz."

This time, Bella didn't cry. Instead, she held onto Elisa tightly for reassurance.

The gratitude was heartfelt; Bella felt indebted to Elisa in many ways.

Time and again, Elisa rescued her from peril and despair.

Elisa patted her back reassuringly.

After the police brought the situation under control, they departed.

This was a decision made by both the chief and Gareth.

Luke was to be dealt with personally.

Once he received treatment, they would transfer him to the police station for legal proceedings.

As a result, a compact team accompanied Luke on the journey back to Bayswe.

Upon reaching Bayswe, Gareth entrusted Luke to his subordinates, individuals well-versed in the nuances of 'managing special guests.'

Rumor had it that the torment severely impacted Luke's mental state.

As a result, he was taken to the police station, where his existing charges and prior parole breach resulted in an aggregate sentence of twenty years.

The idea of Luke dodging another brutal prison term felt utterly implausible.

Bella got wind of these details from Elisa later on.

Elisa also inquired whether Bella wanted to meet Luke and say her final goodbyes.

Bella responded, "We already bid farewells a while ago, even if it wasn't the most dignified parting. He's the one who kept harassing me. That chapter of our lives ended quite a while back."

Observing Bella's reaction, Elisa chose not to delve further.

Since the day at the hotel, Luke had vanished from Bella's life.

Life carried on, and everything gradually settled into its familiar rhythm.

[Chapter 1844 Rumors and Gossip](#)

Now that the dust had settled from the whole dramatic incident, Rochelle definitely took the biggest hit from the news, no doubt about it.

She was struggling to come to terms with how everything played out.

As Rochelle delved into the matter, she discovered that Luke had been the one to contact her before things escalated.

As for Bella's kidnapping, Paul eventually filled her in about the whole story, but not until much later.

In hindsight, Luke had likely intended to rope Rochelle to his side, and Elisa had likely been the ultimate target.

To Luke, involving Bella was just a pawn in the game, with Elisa as the ultimate prize.

However, the entire plan fell through. Every time this messed-up operation crossed her mind, a surge of anger would rise within Rochelle.

But then, seemingly out of nowhere, a brilliant idea struck her like lightning.

Perhaps she should ride the wave, strategize around it, and leverage it to her advantage, flipping the odds in her favor.

With that thought, Bella prepared a delightful spread of dishes to welcome Paul when he dropped by for the second time.

She cautiously brought up the subject during their meal, carefully watching Paul's reactions.

"Never mind Elisa kicking me out; I can handle that here. But what irks me is how she belittles me to get at you. And on top of that, she's playing political games, trying to outmaneuver you, right?"

Rochelle put forth her idea carefully, reading Paul's expressions.

Noticing his initial annoyance, she pressed on, "Here's my thought: Elisa Benett might be a tough opponent for now, but that doesn't mean we can't outmaneuver her through a different route, right?"

"Take Bella, for example. Who can say what that guy had put her through during her kidnapping? Who knows if he messed with her mind, scarred her soul, or even physically offended her? It's no news that people get swayed by rumors; they'll believe any story, no matter its authenticity. We can start by throwing around some bogus stories about Bella, aiming to sully her reputation and even hinting at the possibility of a traumatic incident during her kidnapping; it could seriously mess with her mind and

emotions. Who knows, she might choose to walk away from her position. If Bella isn't there to back up Elisa, let's see how long she can keep up that high-and-mighty act!"

With her words hanging in the air, a sense of unease crept in as she turned to Paul, awaiting his response.

Rochelle wasn't sure if Paul would be on board with her plan.

An uneasy silence hung in the air, broken by Paul's suggestive smile.

His hand slid over Rochelle's back, creating an ambiguous atmosphere.

"You're quite the sneaky one, Rory, my playful accomplice," he teased, tapping Rochelle's nose.

From his reaction, Rochelle gathered that Paul was on board with her idea, and she felt content.

Things then took a steamy turn between the two of them.

Later that night, Paul had arranged for someone to put the plan in motion.

And so, under the shroud of night, rumors and gossip spread like wildfire.

When Bella entered the office the following day, she was greeted with... well, not a friendly reception – more like a flood of curious and somewhat uneasy glances from her colleagues.

Some were grinning, some seemed smug, and others were outright mocking.

Those in her department, with more discreet reactions than their counterparts from other departments, lowered their heads, avoiding curious glances.

Their peculiar responses left Bella puzzled, and at that moment, she overheard a conversation between two colleagues in the pantry.

"Hey, you know? The head of the project department got kidnapped by some guy, and Ms. Benett stepped in to rescue her."

"Seriously? That's risky business!"

"Yeah, I heard the same thing. The kidnapper was her ex-fiancé. They were discovered together, all alone, and looking quite disheveled... Honestly, it's hard not to think there's more to this. Ms. Benett is defending her reputation. But my take is that she's making a big effort to paint herself as the rescuer and the one with the high moral ground here by spinning the story to save Ms. Wickam's reputation."

That's when it all clicked for Bella – she finally understood why she'd been getting those odd and downright crazy looks since morning.

While Bella could handle them backstabbing her, she drew the line at Elisa.

And so, she strolled into the pantry.

The second the two of them laid eyes on her, panic set in, and they unconsciously made a dash to escape the situation.

[Chapter 1845 Calculated Scheme](#)

Bella extended her arm, blocking the duo's path, and cast them a sidelong glance.

"Talking thrash behind someone's back is easy, huh? Talking big when no one's looking, but when confronted, you flee? How spineless," she jeered with an icy edge.

The two quivered, realizing their mistake, and dared not contest.

Instead, they kept bowing and offering apologies.

One of them slapped her cheek as she spoke, "Ms. Wickam, I'm sorry, I was out of line. I won't repeat it, I promise."

Bella's gaze remained firm, without a hint of compassion.

"Our company doesn't need employees who can't keep a lid on things and stir up trouble, especially those who spread gossip about the management and sowing chaos in the office. Now, head to the finance department, sort out your salary, and get lost!"

Both of them pleaded, but the one who had been so eager to trash-talk just a moment ago stood there dumbfounded.

Who would've thought her loose lips would cost her the job?

Bella didn't linger. She left the two in shock and walked away.

Within an hour, the incident had made its rounds throughout the company.

Everyone was discussing it.

"Is she just trying to wield power and shut everyone up?"

"Seriously, enough! Aren't you afraid of losing your job?"

"But... What if Ms. Wickam was set up? We didn't see anything firsthand. You know how damaging false accusations can be, especially for women."

The conversation tapered off as one of the colleagues chimed in. Bella's no-nonsense handling had more or less ended the office gossip.

When the rumors came to Elisa's attention, they had, for the most part, died down.

However, Paul wasn't content.

Furious, he stormed into Elisa's office, demanding an explanation for her conduct.

Elisa appeared slightly amused but wasn't about to let Paul challenge her so boldly.

A faint smile lingered on her lips.

"Mr. Grayson, haven't you outgrown the need for tutorials? Or should I schedule a 'knocking 101' session for you?"

Paul was momentarily taken aback, then understanding dawned, and his anger flared.

Slamming his hand on the table, he pointed angrily at Elisa, his voice thick with irritation, "This is absurd! I don't need a b*tch like you to school me on conduct! Tell me, was this all part of your calculated scheme?"

Elisa's silence spoke volumes, her puzzled blink indicating her lack of awareness.

Paul's tone was disdainful as he told her, "In case you missed it, Ms. Wickam fired two interns today."

Elisa's reply was casual, her words touched with irony, "Am I your go-to for intern updates now, Mr. Grayson? Is this what keeps you occupied these days?"

Paul exhaled slowly. Suppressing his rising temper, he battled to keep his cool before saying, "It's the hot topic across the company if you're wondering. What's intriguing is that one of those interns is my niece. It makes you wonder if there's a personal grudge behind it all."

Elisa found his remark amusing, a subtle smile playing on her lips. "Mr. Grayson, as far as I know, we have no bad blood. And I'm unaware of any issues you might have with Ms. Wickam."

Paul felt a lump in his throat.

He couldn't admit that he held a personal grudge against Bella and her, often scheming to push both out, fueling the underlying resentment.

As Paul struggled to find words, Elisa's composed tone persisted, "Given that Mr. Grayson seems to be at a loss for words, I'd suggest you leave my office. Gossiping about superiors isn't appropriate behavior for subordinates. The company doesn't require employees who engage in baseless chatter.

These are your own words, if I recall. And oh, please remember to knock before entering next time."

Throughout the exchange, Elisa maintained her politeness, a demeanor that seemed to stoke Paul's anger even more.

[Chapter 1846 Wedding Anniversary??](#)

Unfortunately, Paul found himself at a loss when it came to Elisa. He couldn't pinpoint any faults with Bella either.

Frustration mounted, leading him to storm out of the room, his exit punctuated by a forceful door slam that resonated through the space.

Amused by the display, Elisa couldn't help but find the situation rather entertaining. She didn't see fit to bring up the matter with Bella afterward; there was no need.

Deliberate or not, Elisa was confident that her decision was sound. Bella had the authority to make such choices, after all.

Consequently, the office rumors flourished for a mere half-day before being altogether extinguished. Elisa's unwavering resolve had swiftly put an end to the speculation.

Upon discovering this turn of events, Rochelle seethed with a fury bordering on explosives. Yet, her efforts had come to naught. All she could do was clench her teeth and mutter, "Someday, I'll bring Elisa

and Bella to their knees, drowning them in shame and remorse, incapable of holding their heads high ever again."

Regarding Rochelle's plans, Elisa remained blissfully unaware and uninterested in becoming entangled. It simply didn't affect her in any way. Had Paul orchestrated these plans, Elisa might have approached the situation more cautiously, considering their history.

However, that chapter was closed now. Moving forward, Elisa planned to gradually erode Paul's influence over time, a process she knew would happen in due time.

Elisa was lost in her thoughts. Meanwhile, her phone suddenly rang. It was Gareth calling. She picked up, and before she could utter a word, Gareth's voice came through, "Do you happen to have some free time later tonight?"

Elisa took a moment to consider before responding, "Yeah, I've got some time."

A hint of relief tinged Gareth's voice as he continued, "Perfect. Could you please make it home a bit earlier today?"

Rather than immediately agreeing, Elisa inquired, "Is there a specific reason or something important?"

Gareth paused, his tone a blend of sincerity and hesitancy, "Well, it's not exactly a life-or-death situation, but having you there would mean a lot."

Elisa understood that for Gareth, it held significance. Yet, she also acknowledged that its importance might not be equally weighted for her.

After briefly contemplating, she acquiesced, "Alright then, I'll make it home early."

Gareth's usually chilly demeanor thawed into a rare smile akin to the winter sun melting perpetual ice and snow.

"Then I'll look forward to your return," he responded.

"Absolutely," Elisa confirmed.

And with that, the call ended. Elisa rubbed her temples, refocusing on her work while fully aware of her uphill battle in diminishing Paul's influence.

Meanwhile, Gareth left the office after the call. He even instructed Thomas to clear his schedule for the day, wanting to ensure no interruptions would disturb him.

Thomas nodded absently, but his curiosity couldn't be contained. He grinned mischievously and asked, "Mr. Wickam, planning a hot date, are you?"

Gareth gave him a side-eye, causing Thomas to promptly suppress his grin.

Fortunately, Gareth was in a good mood. He adjusted his attire and responded nonchalantly, "Mm."

He drove straight to the supermarket. His mind fixed on the task ahead. Once inside, Gareth methodically checked off items from the shopping list, gathering everything he needed for the evening.

Today marked their second wedding anniversary, a fact that now felt ludicrous.

They had never observed the occasion before; truthfully, Elisa hadn't shown much interest in it. But he remembered. It was etched in his mind, impossible to ignore.

And so, even though it might seem trivial, he couldn't let it pass unnoticed. He had promised to gradually make amends and intended to begin by weaving together fragments of their everyday life.

He genuinely believed that his sincerity would shine through, and eventually, she would accept him again.

As he neared the end of his shopping, having gathered ingredients for a sumptuous meal, Gareth was drawn to the candle section.

Yet, his attention was drawn to a different display: a setup dedicated to couples. His steps led him there almost involuntarily.

Displayed were essentials for cohabiting couples - matching items like towels, toothbrushes, and even rinse cups.

It symbolized their shared life, a concept he aimed to rebuild upon the foundation of their past.

[Chapter 1847 Ambiguous Atmosphere](#)

Gareth's pause caught the attention of a nearby salesperson who saw an opportunity. Assuming a friendly demeanor, the salesperson approached him and asked, "Are you shopping for your girlfriend, sir?"

After a moment, Gareth shook his head and responded, "No, it's for my wife."

The salesperson smiled and quipped, "Your wife must've felt pretty lucky to have you."

Gareth didn't respond, and the vibe in the air got a little awkward.

The salesperson didn't give up, keeping his pitch alive, "You should check out these everyday items. They can really jazz up a couple's happiness game. Just picture it— soft morning light caressing her face as you stand by the bathroom sink, squeezing toothpaste for her..."

Unexpectedly, the salesperson's words resonated with Gareth. When he reached the checkout, the top of his shopping cart was loaded with items crafted for couples.

Once he got home, he unpacked his purchases and headed to the kitchen, rolling his sleeves to start dinner. Time ticked from five o'clock to seven, causing the food to shift between piping hot and cooling down.

Gareth patiently waited, watching as the sun gradually dipped below the horizon. Finally, the door opened around fifteen minutes past seven in the evening, revealing Elisa's presence.

Standing in the doorway, Elisa and Gareth shared a gaze from across the room.

With a hint of bashfulness, Elisa admitted, "I'm sorry, something unexpected cropped up at work. I asked earlier if you were in a rush, and you said you weren't, so I took a bit longer."

Gareth didn't respond. Instead, he looked at Elisa, his expression pensive.

He pondered whether Elisa had somehow sensed his intention and intentionally stayed away or if her delay was work-related and coincidental.

However, whatever the reason might have been, he wasn't upset. He didn't have the right to be. After all, the outcome would always be in his favor, no matter how the situation unfolded.

At the very least, he had the joy of seeing Elisa.

Yet, during countless isolated nights in their past, Elisa had been the one left waiting, only to feel let down as he failed to appear.

"No worries. Just wash up, and we can dig in. I'll reheat the food," Gareth stated, getting to his feet and carrying the plates to the kitchen.

Elisa gave an acknowledging nod, trailing him into the spacious kitchen.

Amidst the quiet sound of running water, neither spoke, creating an undercurrent of unease.

Elisa's gaze drifted to the candles and decorations adorning the dining table. The presence of red wine and balloons hinted at this being more than just an average dinner. She had anticipated the day's significance earlier when she glanced at the date on her phone.

However, she hadn't purposely evaded it. It was simply that, after their divorce, she had made the conscious choice to prioritize a meeting over celebrating their wedding anniversary.

With the tag of ex-husband and ex-wife, commemorating their anniversary felt unusual, didn't it?

Without a word, they carried on with their tasks.

Elisa wanted to help, so Gareth let her tie the apron around him.

Elisa complied accordingly.

Given the height difference, she had to stand on her toes to loop the apron around his waist, a challenge Gareth noticed.

Consequently, he squatted down, aligning himself with Elisa's height. This shift in perspective brought them very close, close enough to discern the minute pores on each other's skin.

A somewhat enigmatic mood hung as she deftly tied the apron's knot, like subtle pink bubbles wafting around them.

With the apron secured, Gareth then instructed Elisa to wait outside.

"There's quite a bit of greasy smoke in the kitchen. Wait outside; I'll be done soon."

[Chapter 1848 Just Friends](#)

Elisa nodded and headed back to the dining room.

In a short while, Gareth joined her, placing the dishes on the table.

Elisa glanced over the array of dishes and raised an eyebrow at Gareth.

"You made all this? You're not trying to trick me with takeout, are you?"

Gareth didn't seem fazed by her doubt.

With a composed demeanor, he responded, "Seems like my cooking skills are getting a thumbs-up from Ms. Benett."

Their eyes met, and smiles were exchanged.

"Let's dig in. Reheated food tends to lose its charm," Elisa suggested as she began tasting the steak before her.

It was worth mentioning that Gareth's cooking skills were top-notch, evident in the perfectly seared steak.

Her taste was discerning, not easily pleased. Yet, this dish hit the mark—neither undercooked nor tough, just exquisitely tender and juicy, accompanied by a subtle sweetness. It was, without a doubt, a delight to the palate.

Elisa gave him a thumbs-up. "If things don't pan out at the company, you've got a Plan B in cooking."

It might have been a playful suggestion, but Gareth's demeanor showed he was taking it seriously.

"There's only one person I desire to cook for in this lifetime."

As Elisa savored the delicious dishes Gareth had whipped up, it became apparent who Gareth was alluding to when he mentioned 'that person'.

Elisa paused momentarily, and without missing a beat, Gareth slid a cup of plum juice her way. She offered a quick thank you before taking a few sips, the cool liquid easing the dryness in her throat.

Although Elisa hadn't asked about the significance of their candlelit dinner, Gareth took the initiative to bring it up.

"Do you know what special day is today?"

His words hung in the air, prompting Elisa to rest her utensils and focus on him.

Carrying a gentle warmth in his voice, Gareth continued, "Today marks our wedding anniversary, and it's also our very first celebration that we're sharing. I've got to admit, I'm feeling pretty content right now."

He added a theatrical flair as he revealed a small gift box, extending it to Elisa as though presenting a priceless gem.

"I picked out this anniversary gift just for you. Take a peek and let me know if you like it."

Elisa's deep and penetrating gaze met Gareth's as she spoke, sending a slight shiver down his spine. Breaking the silence, she delivered unexpected words, "You know, we're already divorced."

Gareth's smile wavered briefly, but he quickly regained his composure.

"I know. I just thought I could make things right, Liz. I got this silver needle for you, meticulously crafted using primitive methods and made from the finest sterling silver. Give it a shot."

Elisa politely declined the gift, shaking her head with a soft smile.

"The past is behind us. You don't need to hold onto any guilt."

Gareth's expression turned thoughtful, and he met her gaze squarely. "Liz, don't you understand what I'm trying to say?"

With a calm demeanor, Elisa responded with a counter-question, "Don't you understand what I mean?"

Gareth's eyes flickered with a hint of frustration. "No, I don't get it."

Elisa nodded, her tone composed.

"Alright, then I'll lay it out for you. The past doesn't matter to me anymore. I don't feel anything towards you, neither love nor hate. All I crave is a peaceful life, free from disruptions. You can't keep coming and going as you please, disrupting my tranquility. We're better off as friends. That's all I can offer."

Gareth's frustration became more pronounced. "I don't want to be your friend only!"

The undertone of a growl underscored his words, baring the struggle he faced in reining in his emotions.

Right then, the room was plunged into darkness, leaving only the faint glimmer of candlelight.

The room plunged into darkness as the power went out.

Elisa looked around in the dimness, her senses on high alert. Without hesitation, Gareth edged closer to her in the now-dark room.

[Chapter 1849 A Kiss in the Darkness](#)

Elisa was a little self-conscious as she hiked up her skirt, exposing a bit of her knee. The moonlight washed over her face, tinting her cheeks a rosy hue that only added to her beauty.

The warmth of Gareth's hand on her ankle was a comfort against the chill of the night air, but Elisa's foot twitched nervously, her mind flashing back to the kiss they had shared.

Gareth looked at her with concern, wondering if she feared the pain that was to come. "Are you scared of the pain?"

Elisa shook her head. She had endured many more agonizing situations; she had no reason to dread this.

Gareth raised an eyebrow. "You really are quite the tough one. Pain doesn't seem to bother you much."

He was being clever, alluding to her reputation for ruthlessness. Elisa caught his innuendo, and the glint in her eyes flashed dangerously.

"It's fine. I can take care of it myself," Elisa said as she reached for the rubbing alcohol, but Gareth dodged her attempt.

Seated on the bed, Elisa watched Gareth kneel before her. He was awkward and uncomfortable, but he tried to maintain eye contact.

"Stop moving around," he said again. He handed her the candle to hold, so he could free both hands to treat her wound.

Gareth pursed his lips as he applied the medicine to Elisa's wound. He was careful and skillful, and Elisa didn't feel any pain.

In fact, the only sensation she felt was the warmth of his hand on her skin. It was almost like his touch was setting her on fire.

From this angle, Elisa could only see Gareth's perfect profile and forehead.

Elisa couldn't help but think that God had been playing favorites when he made Gareth. He had everything: good looks, charm, talent, and strength. It wasn't fair.

After about five minutes, Gareth finished the bandaging and tied a beautiful bow.

"Done."

Only then did Elisa snap out of her thoughts. She looked at the wound, then at Gareth, and said, "Thank you."

The bandaging was neat and skillful.

Elisa refrained from asking him why he knew how to do this; everyone carried their own baggage, and if he wished to open up, he'd do it on his own terms.

"Thanks," she mumbled, withdrawing her foot.

Gareth saw Elisa's aloof demeanor, and his lips twitched in a half-smile. But his eyes were serious.

He could tell that she was putting up a wall between them. He wanted to ask her about it but knew it would be pointless.

Instead, he ventured, "Don't you want to know how I learned to do this bandaging thing?"

Elisa remained silent, but her eyes signaled him to go on.

Gareth chuckled, confessing, "I used to get into my fair share of fights as a kid, but that's all under the bridge now. If you're interested, I'll tell you more next time."

Elisa responded with a non-committal 'oh,' signaling that she wasn't interested in the topic. Gareth just smiled and didn't say anything more.

Gareth stood up, his knees dusty from kneeling on the floor.

"I'll go downstairs and check it out. You get some rest first."

Elisa nodded. Both tacitly avoided mentioning the kiss from earlier.

Elisa raised the candle in her hand, intending to give it to Gareth.

"I'll take it," he said, taking the candle from her.

He approached the bedside table and used the candle wax to secure it.

"I don't know when the power will restore. Take this and use this first. I can find my way down there in the dark, and candles are downstairs."

Elisa nodded and didn't argue.

Gareth headed downstairs, and before he left, he said, "Whatever you do. Remember not to leave this candle burning all night,"

"It's a fire hazard. If you want, you can use scented candles instead."

[Chapter 1850 Does it Hurt?](#)

Elisa was a little self-conscious as she hiked up her skirt, exposing a bit of her knee. The moonlight washed over her face, tinting her cheeks a rosy hue that only added to her beauty.

The warmth of Gareth's hand on her ankle was a comfort against the chill of the night air, but Elisa's foot twitched nervously, her mind flashing back to the kiss they had shared.

Gareth looked at her with concern, wondering if she feared the pain that was to come. "Are you scared of the pain?"

Elisa shook her head. She had endured many more agonizing situations; she had no reason to dread this.

Gareth raised an eyebrow. "You really are quite the tough one. Pain doesn't seem to bother you much."

He was being clever, alluding to her reputation for ruthlessness. Elisa caught his innuendo, and the glint in her eyes flashed dangerously.

"It's fine. I can take care of it myself," Elisa said as she reached for the rubbing alcohol, but Gareth dodged her attempt.

Seated on the bed, Elisa watched Gareth kneel before her. He was awkward and uncomfortable, but he tried to maintain eye contact.

"Stop moving around," he said again. He handed her the candle to hold, so he could free both hands to treat her wound.

Gareth pursed his lips as he applied the medicine to Elisa's wound. He was careful and skillful, and Elisa didn't feel any pain.

In fact, the only sensation she felt was the warmth of his hand on her skin. It was almost like his touch was setting her on fire.

From this angle, Elisa could only see Gareth's perfect profile and forehead.

Elisa couldn't help but think that God had been playing favorites when he made Gareth. He had everything: good looks, charm, talent, and strength. It wasn't fair.

After about five minutes, Gareth finished the bandaging and tied a beautiful bow.

"Done."

Only then did Elisa snap out of her thoughts. She looked at the wound, then at Gareth, and said, "Thank you."

The bandaging was neat and skillful.

Elisa refrained from asking him why he knew how to do this; everyone carried their own baggage, and if he wished to open up, he'd do it on his own terms.

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