

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 29

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My Ex-Husband isaaOut of Control Chapter 29

Sophia's POV

"Sophia, you look amazing!" Kayla exclaim, her eyes widening in surprise, as soon as I answered her video call. "I can't wait to see you again when I go back to Paris."

Sitting at my desk in Urban Next, I smiled and thanked my best friend. "Gosh, it's been three years!"

"I know. Three years in Paris have made you confident, stylish, fashionable... I just love it!"

Her words made me laugh. "Thanks, Kayla. Perhaps it's the inner joy and peace. I've come a long way from that last time we saw each other, when I just got out of the hospital..."

Mentioning the hospital suddenly reminded me of that day when I got discharged. and had to be rushed back again because of abdominal pain. Luckily, it turned out to be nothing serious and I only needed more rest.

"Gosh, I'm really glad that part of your life's over now." Kayla exclaimed. "But at least. you drove him away. Look how everything turned out to be."

"I know. It was worth it."

I changed the subject then, showing her some of my recent designs. "I've been applying some of your tips!" I shared excitedly.

"You're so talented, Sophia. Those are wonderful!"

We chatted some more about our respective design projects, even exchanging ideas. It was just like how we did our artistic ventures back in college.

Eventually, we put the phone down and I went back to work. Later on, a colleague of mine named Anna came up to me. She used to be in one of my classes, but she was immediately hired here after her graduation.

"Hey, Sophia, are you excited for your graduation tomorrow?" she asked with a gleam. in her eyes.

I was so engrossed with my projects lately that it almost slipped my mind. “Oh, my gosh!” I exclaimed, realizing that the big day was already tomorrow. “I’m really graduating already, am I?”

“Yes, you are! And I won’t be surprised if you’re awarded with some distinction, Gosh, I’d love to have your natural talent, you know.”

I smiled widely, grateful for her compliment. Thanks so much, Anna, but you know you’re just equally good, and you have taught me a lot too since we started working together here.”

“Well, I’m glad we’re both able to inspire one another,” Anna replied. “I’ve always admired your excellent work, and even your work ethics and friendliness. I mean, you’re one of the few who truly get along with everyone here!”

When she said that, she glanced toward the other desk where Julia was busy retouching her makeup.

“Well, there’s Julia who’s always Miss Congeniality,” she added, referring to how Julia has always had amazing people skills even though she had a tendency to prioritize unimportant things like hanging out with friends, shopping, and dancing in bars.

“Yes, I know,” I said with a smile. “Julia’s friends with everyone, so it’s not only me.”

“But you’re a rare breed,” Anna said, chuckling. “You’re not just friendly, but your work is impressive too!”

Before I could respond again, she had to excuse herself because a client was looking for her. Meanwhile, I found myself gazing at Julia and remembering the few times Chris had come to talk to her before.

During those incidents, I had to keep myself hidden because I didn’t want him to find out I was an intern here too. Although I was curious, I never asked Julia what he wanted from her. But I noticed how she often became agitated when he was around.

Finally, one day, he just stopped coming. Maybe he finally realized Julia isn’t interested in him? But I don’t think he wanted to date her or anything like that. It seems like something more...

My thoughts were interrupted when Trevis came up to me. “Well, well, I wonder who’s graduating tomorrow,” he said teasingly. “Congratulations, Sophia! There’s no one else who deserves it more.”

“Thanks so much,” I sincerely said as we exchanged a hug. We have definitely grown closer to each other over the past years since I began interning here. He was like the

big brother that I never had, always looking out for me and helping me become better in my work.

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Sophia's POV

"Can you tell me more about this project?" I asked Trevis, though I was greatly excited already.

"You know that I have been traveling back and forth between here and the US and I've finally been able to establish a branch there," Trevis began explaining. "Part of this business expansion is partnering with a strong and stable real estate developer there."

"Yes, that's definitely a good move," I agreed, nodding. "That could boost the company name faster."

"Of course." He pulled up a chair and sat on it, giving me a serious look as he continued to discuss the new design case.

"This is really big because the project will cater to a very high-end market, so we'll need to combine the aesthetics and functionality very efficiently. We'll have to ensure that this is a novel design, one that no one else has done before. It has to be of a high standard."

I was listening attentively, nodding as he spoke and getting even more excited. It sounded like a challenge, which I loved! I wondered, though, why he was offering it to me instead of to more senior designers in the company.

"I believe in you, Sophia," Trevis added. "You've always been good at creating novel designs that are greatly functional and feasible, taking into consideration all other factors in a project."

There's my answer. What a great way to officially start after my graduation! I beamed at him, eager to take on the project.

During my three years of study in France, I had pushed myself to try new things and tackle a variety of project requirements. It had been challenging, but I had grown so much, both personally and professionally. Now, as I sat there at my desk talking to

Trevis, I felt confident that I could do a good job.

"I'd love to do it," I told him. "I promise to do my best, Trevis. You won't regret this decision."

"I know," he said with a grin. "You're the right person for this, Sophia. I'm glad you're saying yes, because I have no doubt you'll do a fantastic job. And of course you can count on me to support you at all times."

"Thanks, Trevis. I really appreciate it."

"Well, anyway, I hope you're all set for your graduation tomorrow?"

"Yes! I've submitted all the necessary portfolios, essays, everything! The school has cleared me, and all I have left to do now is to buy my grad dress later."

"Wow, I'm glad to hear that." Then lowering his voice, he snuck a glance at Julia before turning back to me. "I don't know about Julia, though... Do you think she'll make it by the next graduation?"

I didn't know what to say because I was also doubtful about her ability to finish all the requirements for graduation. But at the same time, I didn't want to say anything negative about her.

Julia's creativity knows no bounds, and her ability to connect with others is remarkable. In fact, I loved how she dealt with the clients! However, when it comes to execution, she often falls short, producing work that is barely passable. Despite this, I've always admired Julia's dedication and passion for her craft.

Suddenly, I got a flashback from a few days ago when I found Julia in the studio, burning the midnight oil to catch up on her assignments. Seeing her struggle, I decided to stay behind and help her out. We worked overtime, going over her projects and discussing ways to improve them. It was challenging, but Julia's determination was inspiring, and I was glad to lend her a helping hand.

"I think she's capable," I finally answered. "With some push and assistance."

Trevis nodded, understanding what I meant. "We'll do what we can to continue supporting her."

The next day, I sat with many other students in the elegant auditorium of the Goldwell Institute of Art, dressed in a nice white dress under my toga. I couldn't help but feel a sense of happiness and pride. Graduation day had finally arrived, marking the culmination of years of hard work and dedication.

"Sophia Bennett..."

My heart skipped a beat as my name was called. I stood up, my eyes fixed on the stage ahead. I made my way toward the stage, my steps light with excitement. As I climbed the stage, I was greeted by the istrators and professors, who congratulated me warmly and shook my hand.

After receiving my diploma, I suddenly heard someone from the audience shout my name. I turned to see who it was, and my heart leaped with joy when I saw Kayla standing there, her face beaming with pride.

“Congratulations, Sophia!” she called out, clapping enthusiastically.

I can’t believe it. She came to Paris for my graduation and surprised me once again!

Beside her, Daniel stood there smiling from ear to ear and clapping his hands too. He waved at me, and I proudly showed them my diploma before taking a bow at the center. Tears welled up in my eyes just as I was making my way back to my seat. It was so heartwarming to see my two good friends supporting me and cheering for me. They’ve been here since the start of this journey, and I was utterly grateful.

As the graduation ceremony came to an end, I couldn’t contain my excitement. I hugged Kayla and Daniel tightly, and we jumped up and down, celebrating this milestone together. The sense of accomplishment and joy was palpable in the air.

As we were reveling in the moment, my attention was drawn to a commotion in the distance. To my surprise, I saw Julia arguing with a man whose face I couldn’t see because of the cap he was wearing. There were plenty of other people gathered around them too, so it was hard to tell who it was.

Julia was known for her ability to socialize and say sweet things to please people. I had never seen her in a confrontation before, and it concerned me.

“Hey, guys, give me a minute,” I said to Kayla and Daniel. I headed toward Julia, hoping to help her if she was in trouble. As I got closer, I could hear raised voices and see the tension in Julia’s body language. I called out her name, trying to get her attention.

“I told you already! I’m not the Sabrina you’re looking for!” Julia suddenly yelled as I came closer. “Just leave me alone!”

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Elijah’s POV

Three years that I haven’t seen her, that I have tried my hardest not to find out anything about her while she was in France and I was here in the US.

I stared at the pile of documents on my desk, unable to concentrate. I kept thinking about what Connor had informed me about a few days earlier.

“She’s graduating next Friday,” he’d told me. I felt like he’d just dropped a bomb and it had exploded in front of my face, leaving me helpless and confused. I know I’d asked

him to keep tabs at her school, but it's been a long time since he'd given me an update. And now, suddenly, here it is. Graduation.

I tried to pretend I didn't care. I tried not to think about it too. But deep inside, I wanted to see her, to be there for her during this very important moment of her life.

One day, I simply told Connor, "I have a trip to Italy next week, right? I'm leaving earlier. Book me a flight to Paris first. I'm dropping by there before my business meeting in Italy."

"Yes, sir. Right away."

After that, I groaned, knowing that I was still greatly affected by this woman whom I had once called my wife.

A week passed, and I soon found myself sitting discreetly at the back of the graduation ceremony, watching Sophia receive her diploma. A flood of emotions washed over me. Seeing her walk across the stage, her face radiant with happiness and pride, brought a bittersweet feeling to my heart.

God, she's even more beautiful now. And the way she walked and smiled and talked to her friends... She's different somehow, but in a good way.

I watched in silence as her best friends cheered for her. I could feel my heart being squeezed tightly as I realized how much she had accomplished and how far she had come. I wanted to be one of the people cheering for her, to show her how proud I was of her, but I couldn't do it. I had to stay hidden in the shadows.

I had known this day would come. Who am I kidding, thinking that I wasn't actually falling in love with her all those years? I'd tried to ignore the feelings for the longest time, because I was busy and they seemed silly and stupid... I thought it was just a passing emotion...

But now, as I watched her, I knew it was more than I had ever imagined.

I became curious when Sophia began moving away from her friends. When I followed her, I was surprised to see Chris in a heated argument with a woman whose back was turned to me.

Can that be Julia? I wondered silently. From where I was standing, I could decipher Chris's emotions from the way he was moving his arms.

I know that he has returned to Paris several times the past few years just to find out more about this Julia. Last time, he told me she still wouldn't agree to a DNA test, and I just said that maybe it's not Sabrina at all. He should just drop it already.

Chris was certainly persistent. He was very much convinced that Julia was actually his sister Sabrina,

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who was also my childhood best friend and my very first love.

+25 BONUS

"I told you already! I'm not the Sabrina you're looking for!" Julia bellowed at him in distress. "Just leave me alone!"

I felt sorry for her. I could tell from Chris's stories before that Julia didn't want to acknowledge his claims because she was already happy with her life.

"You have to help me, Elijah," I remembered Chris pleading with me some weeks ago. "You need to come to Paris and convince her, because Sabrina has always listened to you when we were little."

At that time, I hadn't wanted to come here because of Sophia. For one, she didn't want anything to do with me anymore. Second, it would be a waste if I couldn't even get her to speak to me, much less be persuaded to give me another chance.

When did I become this pathetic? I thought, hating myself for these uncontrollable feelings. When we were together, I couldn't show her how much she meant to me. I didn't make the most of that opportunity, and now I was paying for it. Big time.

My eyes watered as I continued to watch Sophia from a distance. Even if she was stressed, she was still so damn beautiful. She still moved gracefully and seemed to radiate a light, positive aura.

She may not be carrying my child anymore, but that doesn't mean I've given up on us. It doesn't mean I've moved on and forgotten about her.

In fact, the opposite happened. Throughout the three years that I hadn't seen her, every single day that I was away from her made me realize how much I cared about her. My actions in the past had hurt her so much and driven her away, and I regretted them every single day. I realized that I'd always been in love with her.

I loved my wife. I still do.

"Julia!" I heard Sophia call the strange girl. But Julia didn't seem to hear her. She was so pissed off at Chris that she hurried away and disappeared into the crowd.

Sophia was about to go after her. But then she suddenly stopped and turned around. Someone was waving at her. And when he came nearer, I was taken aback.

"It's Travis," I whispered to no one in surprise. Do they know each other?

I saw Travis shake her hand briefly before moving on to talk to Chris.

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Sophia's POV

When Julia mentioned the name Sabrina, my heart skipped a beat. Even though there could be plenty of other people with the same name, I couldn't shake the feeling that it was significant.

I glanced over at the man she was arguing with and immediately recognized him as the same Chris who'd been bothering here before.

Is he a stalker? What does he really want and why did Julia mention Sabrina?

I could feel a migraine forming as the unanswered questions swam in my mind. I wanted to help out Julia and talk to her, but she'd already moved away.

Luckily, Travis called me and distracted me from the weird situation. I forced myself to brush off the odd feeling that there was more to this thing.

Shut up, Sophia, I told myself silently. But on the surface, I was smiling and nodding as Travis congratulated me.

Don't even go there anymore. You've lived your life to the fullest for the last three years and things are going great. You've already moved on from everything that had occurred in the Sinclair household when you were still Elijah's no-good wife.

But nevertheless, the name Sabrina stayed with me. Even as I went out of the auditorium and met up again with Kayla and Daniel, the name was stuck in my head. It was quite disturbing.

"These are for you, Sophia," Daniel said sweetly, handing me a large bouquet of fresh flowers.

My eyes widened in alarm. Did the flowers mean anything other than friendship? Was he trying to strike up romance again with me? I certainly wasn't open or ready for it.

"Thanks so much, Daniel," was all I said. Kayla was grinning and wiggling her eyebrows at me, but I simply decided to ignore her.

As I opened the car door of the passenger's seat, something caught my eye. Wait, is that Elijah?! But the figure was so far away, and I couldn't tell for sure.

“Let’s go, Sophia,” I heard Kayla say from the backseat. I ignored the figure and climbed inside Daniel’s car. I didn’t bother to look closely if the person was actually Elijah.

It doesn’t matter. I don’t care.

Soon we all sat together in a restaurant, celebrating my graduation. The atmosphere was filled with excitement and anticipation. I was so glad that I had these two good friends of mine with me today.

“Guys, I have some news,” I began, excitement bubbling in my voice. “Trevis offered me a huge project in the US. It means I’ll be moving back soon,”

Daniel’s eyes lit up, and a smile spread across his face. “That’s amazing news, Sophia! I’ll be working there soon too with a new business partner. We can still see each other regularly!”

“I’m so happy for you!” Kayla exclaimed. “And I’m glad that you two can still get together when you’re there.”

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+25 BONUS

“But it’ll be the three of us, right?” I said enthusiastically. “What are your plans, Kayla?”

“I need to stay in Paris for now,” she said, making me feel a tinge of sadness. “I need to do some research, and Paris has plenty of design resources that will be beneficial for my projects.”

“Just when I thought we could finally be together for a very long time,” I said. “But hey, it’s okay. I know this is good for your career.”

“Yes, but I don’t intend to stay for more than a few months. So just wait for me back home!”

“Yes, of course!” I agreed. Daniel and I then looked at each other. I had to admit it felt a little nerve- wracking to be coming back to the US after a long time. But with Daniel around, I knew that everything would be fine. I gave him a smile and touched his arm briefly, my heart brimming with gratefulness for how he had taken care of me the past three years or so.

The next few days passed by quickly but delightfully. I spent my time happily exploring Paris with Daniel and Kayla, We went shopping, visited museums, and went on tours, making the most of our time together before our paths diverged.

Eventually, reality caught up with us, and I found myself back at work in Urban Next Design Studio,

“Hey, guys, listen up!” Trevis said as he happily sauntered into the office. “For those of you who’ll be coming with me to our branch in the US, I have great news. We’re all scheduled to leave next week so you better pack your things and prepare yourselves.”

I gasped, and my heart began to pound wildly in my chest. This is it! I’m both nervous and excited about the project and the amazing start to my official career. However, it also rattles me to think that I’ll be going back to the place where I had experienced all those hurtful things in the past. Am I ready for that?

“How can I pack when I’m revising this design for the nth time,” Julia muttered from behind me, cutting through my reverie. I looked at her as she buried her head in her work with a frown on her pretty face. “I hate to be left behind...”

“But you’re not behind, Julia,” I tried to assure her in a kind voice. “There’s still time to prepare for the trip. I’m sure you’ll finish the revision within today.”

“Yeah, but I’ll probably get home so late,” she complained.

I could tell that Julia was becoming impatient and probably felt pressured because of the recent announcement. She could sometimes act like a little spoiled brat, but nonetheless, I treated her like a sister. We’ve been friends since I started my internship here and eventually became a part-time employee of the company.

I must help her. She’s like a sister to me.

“Don’t worry, Julia,” I told her. “I can stay here with you and help you with the revision. Then tomorrow, I can even help you pack your stuff.”

She gave me a grateful smile. “Thanks, Sophia! You’re the best!”

The week flew by in a blur of packing, last-minute preparations, and bittersweet goodbyes. Before I knew it, I was standing at the airport, saying goodbye to Daniel and Kayla. Daniel’s hug was lingering, and he whispered that he looked forward to seeing me soon in the US.

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+25 BONUS

Kayla, ever the determined one, assured me that she would hurry up her research so she could join us soon. We hugged tightly, both of us feeling the weight of the moment. I promised to keep in touch and to let her know how everything was going once I was settled in the US. 3

Later on, I was just about to board the plane with my colleagues from Urban Next when Trevis went to me. “I’ve got wonderful news for you,” he whispered excitedly. “Remember I told you that we still have to submit your info to the program director at that real estate company?”

I nodded, eagerly anticipating his news.

“Well, your application has been approved! So it’s all set, and you’ll handle the project for sure.”

“Wow,” I whispered in awe.

“You can expect an email from the director for further instructions.”

“Okay, thanks so much.”

And so I kept checking my phone even as we were getting into the plane. Once I settled in my seat, before we were asked to turn our phones off, I got an email notification that made my heart jump. (1

When I clicked on it, I was shocked to see the email address of the so-called program director that Trevis had told me about.

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 33

Elijah’s POV

I settled back into my office chair, the familiar surroundings offering some comfort after my business trip to Italy. Connor, my assistant, was updating me on the latest developments when he hesitated, a furrow appearing on his brow.

“Is something wrong, Connor?” I asked, noticing his sudden change in demeanor.

“Well, um, I heard something... about Sophia,” he began, choosing his words carefully. “She’s back here in the city. It seems like she’s planning to stay for a while.”

My heart skipped a beat at the mention of her name. Sophia, back here in our city. The thought filled me with a mixture of emotions, but I kept my composure, not wanting to show any vulnerability.

“Thank you for letting me know, Connor,” I replied calmly, though my mind was racing. I wanted to ask more questions, to find out where she was staying, and what she was doing, but I couldn’t bring myself to

do it.

Instead, I focused on the task at hand, trying to push aside the thoughts of Sophia that threatened to

consume me.

She doesn't want to see me or have anything to do with me, so why should I bother seeing her?

I then remembered how she'd looked at me from afar during her graduation. There was no emotion in her eyes. It was like I was invisible, and it broke my heart.

"And your stepmother has also met up several times with our newest luxury resort investors while you were away," Connor continued.

That piece of information caught my attention, drawing me back to reality. I narrowed my eyes because I really didn't want Morgana to get closely involved with company matters. However, I chose not to say anything for the moment. "Thank you, Connor. Is that all?"

"Yes, sir."

"Okay, you may go."

When I was finally all alone again, I poured myself a glass of wine and gulped it all down. Slowly I walked to the window, thinking about this new project that Morgana had proposed. It was certainly challenging and required an innovative design, especially with the target market in mind. But that wasn't the reason I first turned it down. It was simply because I didn't want Morgana to take charge while using my company's resources. And now she's meeting up with potential investors already.

"Well, I think it sounds great," Trevis had told me when we'd talked some time ago while he was still in France. Only a few days ago, he had called me to say he was already back in the US, but we haven't met up yet.

"I don't know..." was my reply to him when we had discussed the new development. "This is definitely going to be challenging. We'll need a skilled designer and architect to work together and be very creative and resourceful, to think outside the box and come up with something new and different."

"I think I can help you with that."

"Thanks, Trevis. I appreciate it. Perhaps I'll consider it... After all, if it turns out very well, then it'll be very good for the company. If not, then I'll have a reason to refuse Morgana."

Trevis had chuckled. "Very clever, Elijah. Good thinking. But I have just the right pair in mind for this project."

"Alright, Serena can take charge of screening them. I'm assigning her as the program director of this luxury resort project. Send her their details."

"Okay, sure. I won't let you down, Elijah. This is the perfect first venture for our partnership in the US."

"Yeah, let's see what happens... But hey, listen, enough about that. What's happening to Chris? Is he still there in Paris?"

"Yes, but I haven't talked to him yet. I think he's still trying to convince Julia to have a DNA test." He sounded sorry. "Maybe I shouldn't have told him about Julia."

"Well, it's too late. Just let him be, I guess. He needs it."

As my mind drifted back to the present, I thought about meeting Trevis later today. He'd sent me a message earlier that we could talk over lunch. Then I remembered seeing him and Sophia talking during her graduation.

Hmmm... What was that about? How do they know each other?

Maybe I'll find out soon enough.

The hours passed by quickly, and I got immersed in meeting after meeting. When I finally went over to the restaurant where I was supposed to meet Trevis, I was already running late.

In my hurry, right before I rushed through the entrance, I almost collided with a small child about the age of two or three. The beautiful little girl looked up at me and smiled sweetly.

"I'm sorry," she murmured, her big, innocent eyes gazing into mine. She was so adorable.

"What a polite little girl!" a familiar male voice exclaimed. I looked up to see Trevis behind her, smiling.

I was about to say something more when I got a good, close look at her. That's when I felt my heart race. Holy shit! She's like a miniature version of Sophia! And she even reminds me of Sabrina too.

As Trevis motioned for me to join him toward a nearby table, a strange woman came running forward, taking the little girl's hand. She looked at me, saying, "I'm sorry she almost hit you"

“Oh, no, it was my fault,” I replied quickly. “I was in a hurry and I didn’t see her coming. Is she your daughter?”

Her eyes widened. She shook her head. “She’s my sister’s child.”

Suddenly, the child gave me a bright smile. “Hello, there! My name is Reese.”

That’s when the woman, her supposed aunt, pulled her away, giving us once again an apologetic look. I couldn’t help but follow them with my eyes as they sat near a window on the other side of the restaurant. Even when Trevis and I were already seated and eating, I kept glancing in their direction.

“Serena has given the go signal,” Trevis informed me. “Do we have a deal then?”

“Sure, I’ll have my people draw up the necessary contracts.”

Trevis went on to tell me about their initial ideas for my latest real estate development. He thanked me as well for partnering with his company. I nodded absentmindedly, my mind still drifting back to the little girl who seemed to have captured my attention.

“Thanks again. Sorry, I need to leave early. I have some more stuff to deal with in our office.” Trevis stood up, shook my hand, and left.

I decided to go to the restroom first before heading back up to my own office. That’s when I saw the little girl, her green eyes fixed on the hallway leading to the restrooms. I wondered if she was waiting for someone. The woman who was with her was busy tapping on her phone’s screen.

As I made my way down the hallway, my mind still preoccupied with thoughts of the little girl, I turned the corner and nearly collided with someone coming out of the restroom.

“Sophia?” I exclaimed, hardly daring to believe my eyes.

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Elijah’s POV

“Hi, Sophia,” I heard myself say to her. My voice was filled with mixed emotions upon seeing her.

Sophia looked shocked at first, but then she relaxed and managed a faint smile. “Hello, Elijah.” She didn’t give me a chance to say anything else, though. It was as if we were acquaintances chancing upon each other. She just simply continued to walk on.

I turned around, trying to decide if I should follow her. I saw her eventually put her phone to her ear. “Daniel?” I heard her say. “Meet me now at Georgia’s.”

Hearing Daniel's name and Sophia's tone of voice, I felt a surge of curiosity. As she passed by the little girl's table, I decided to follow her, intrigued by their interaction. Sophia seemed unusually distant from the child, almost as if she were pretending not to know her. I watched them closely, trying to gauge their connection.

Sophia didn't even glance at the child. She walked much faster toward the exit while talking on the phone.

"Reese, darling!" I suddenly heard someone say. A brown-haired woman who looked nothing like the little girl came toward her and gave her a hug. The scene seemed strange to me, as if it wasn't natural.

She doesn't look like the child's mom! But she could certainly pass off as Sophia's little girl, the way they look so much alike!

I glanced at Sophia's retreating back and her face flashed back in my head. Yes, they really look alike.

"Hi! Sorry I'm late." I saw Daniel entering the restaurant and kissing Sophia on the cheek. They even embraced each other warmly, which definitely pissed me off.

Why does this man always get in the way? I thought bitterly. He's a total pain in the ass.

I watched them take their seats at one of the tables. From time to time, Daniel would smile and reach out to briefly touch her hand or her arm. I glared at them from where I was standing.

I couldn't help myself then, and I soon found myself joining them uninvited, sitting across from Sophia. It's really good to see you both back here," I said nonchalantly, as if we had always been good friends." How are you both?"

Sophia threw me a puzzled look. But she still answered, "We're fine."

"

I tried to observe their body language closely, trying to determine if they were finally together after three years. I couldn't tell for sure.

"So how long are you staying here in the US?" I asked, wanting to strike up a conversation. I didn't know why, but I wanted to just linger there.

"Sophia's working on a new project here while I'm expanding my business," Daniel answered for both of them. "We'll probably stay a few months before we head back to our home in Paris."

Our home. What the hell did he mean?!

“What project are you working on, Sophia?” I asked curiously.

Sophia hesitated before opening her mouth. “Just some design that my boss needs for his business partner.”

“She’s been chosen out of the many designers available,” Daniel quipped. “Sophia has risen so much from her humble beginnings in the industry, and to think she just graduated!”

I frowned as he kept on answering my questions while Sophia looked at me coolly, like she just wanted it all to be over because she had other better things to do.

I don’t like Daniel one bit.

It was a woman’s voice that cut through our rather interesting conversation. “Sophia, you’re here too!” she said in a cheerful voice.

When I turned to look at her closely, I was shocked. I found myself staring at a face that reflected Sabrina’s strongest features. The young woman didn’t even notice me as she took a seat beside Sophia. “Hey, I didn’t know you were coming here already!” Sophia said in a friendly manner. She appeared to be close friends with this girl. “When did you arrive?”

“I flew in yesterday.” As she began gesturing with her hands while talking about some project she had to finish revising before her flight, I noticed the bracelet dangling from her right wrist.

Holy shit! I know that bracelet.

It was made with purple and green strings, Sabrina’s favorite colors. And there were a few charms attached.

I can’t be mistaken. That bracelet used to be Sabrina’s. I know because I made it for her! Suddenly, I got so excited that I grabbed the woman’s wrist and demanded, “What’s your name?”

Her head whipped around, and her eyes locked onto mine with a sudden gasp. For a moment, she just stared at me wide-eyed. Sophia froze as she watched us.

I held my breath, waiting for her answer. She seemed to relax as she continued to gaze into my eyes, her surprise turning into intrigue and fascination. A soft smile began to play on her lips and her eyes glimmered with interest.

“I’m Julia,” she finally said, her voice slightly breathless. “Julia Stanford.”

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 35

Sophia's POV

Before returning to the United States, I had prepared myself for another encounter with Elijah, but I hadn't expected it to happen so soon. As I walked out of the restroom, my mind was racing. I had thought about this moment for so long, rehearsing what I would say and how I would act, but now that it was actually happening, all of that preparation seemed to have vanished from my mind.

I'm just glad I'm not panicking.

I remembered how I had prepared for this before coming over here. I had arranged for Reese's nanny and the nanny's sister to come and help look after my daughter..

Now, I was grateful for that foresight, as it gave me some peace of mind knowing that Reese was in good hands and I could continue to pretend that she wasn't my own child while Elijah was around.

"It's going to be okay," Daniel assured me, reaching over the table to gently rub my hand.

"I want to get out of here now, but it might seem too obvious," I told him nervously.

"Relax, Sophia. Everything will be okay." He ordered drinks for us, then leaned forward to whisper. "Do you think he noticed anything?"

"I'm not sure, but I'm just not comfortable having him and Reese here together," I hissed, keeping my

voice down.

Our drinks arrived fast, thank God. We tried to act normal, though I was feeling very much on edge.

Suddenly, Daniel was staring hard at me. From the corner of my eye, I could see Elijah approaching our table quickly. My body tensed, but on the surface, I pretended not to be affected.

"Yes, Daniel, I think you should do that for your business," I said aloud, thinking fast and changing the subject.

He was able to catch on at once. "Of course, Sophia," he answered casually, leaning back on his chair with a smile. "I'm definitely going to hire that consultant."

I knew that Elijah was now within earshot. He could probably hear what we were saying. Then to my horror, he actually sat down and began chatting us up. Daniel acted naturally and just kept responding for

both of us.

“Sophia, you’re here too!” I suddenly heard a cheerful voice greeting me. When I looked up, I was surprised to see Julia.

She explained to me that she’d been looking for me and wanted to surprise me. “You helped me do that revision, so I only had to finalize a few things more,” Julia told me gratefully. “Then I was allowed to fly here and be with the team.”

That was when I noticed how Elijah was looking at her with immense intrigue and great interest. I felt a blaze of irritation igniting within me. Now he’s fascinated with another woman again. So what’s new?

I was shocked when without warning, he grabbed her wrist and asked for her name. When Julia turned toward him, I noticed how her eyes lit up after the initial surprise. Her gaze lingered on him for a long time before she answered his question.

“I have a meeting in a few minutes,” I suddenly announced, standing up and surprising everyone. “I need to go.”

I began walking away even before the others could respond. I didn’t want to sit there and just watch my ex -husband flirt with another woman in front of me.

“Sophia, wait,” Daniel called after me. He caught up with me outside the restaurant. “Let me go with you. I can drive you back to your office.”

“No, it’s okay, Daniel,” I told him. “I can go by myself. It’s just near here.”

“Where’s your office located?”

I hesitated before answering him. “The Sinclair Realty Group building.”

“What?!” he asked, bewildered. “Are you kidding?”

Sighing, I shook my head. “I wish I was. But nope, it’s actually there. Apparently, Urban Next is using a space there because one of the investors in this branch is Sinclair Realty.”

“But you wanted to avoid Elijah at all costs,” Daniel pointed out.

“Yes, that’s right. But what can I do? The big case that Trevis assigned me to turned out to be a project for Elijah’s company! I only found out when I arrived here.”

“Oh, wow.” Daniel was shaking his head in disbelief.

“And here’s the other catch...” I continued, my heart pounding as the hard truth came back to me. “Guess who the program director is for that project? It’s Serena!”

“Whoa, that’s really something else. What do you plan to do?”

I shrugged. “You know, at first, I wanted to tell Trevis that I couldn’t take on this project anymore. But he’d spent a lot already on bringing me here, setting up an apartment for me and even a temporary car, giving me a signing bonus, and all that. Of course I considered just returning everything when I got the chance...” I trailed off, suddenly feeling weary and worried again as I was reminded of this fact.

Rubbing my temples, I continued, “I even considered resigning from Urban Next and just going back to Paris to work somewhere else.”

“But?” Daniel asked. He knew there was a but somewhere,

“But I’m supposed to be over Elijah, you know? He can’t be the reason that I’m going to stop my life again

have my new career disrupted. I can’t give up the project just because it involves him and Serena! I want to be professional about this, so I thought it shouldn’t matter. I can go through with this, and I can prove to them and to myself that I’ll excel no matter what.”

I was filled with determination as I said it, but my heart was still thumping hard. I was trying to be strong and courageous, but there were doubts inside of me.

“Are you sure about this?” Daniel looked really concerned.

Y nodded. “I’ve already confirmed it with Trevis. Besides, I’ve built up a great idea for the project already, and he absolutely loves it.”

“I see. Well, if you’re sure, then I’m supporting your decision. Just know that I’m always here for you, Sophia.”

Before I got into the car I was using, Daniel told me he’d be the one to wait for Elijah to leave. Then he’d see to it that Reese and her nanny got back to our apartment safely.

“You’re the best,” I told him with much appreciation. “Thank you!”

After several minutes, I found myself glancing around before walking into the elevator at the Sinclair Realty Group building. I wondered if Elijah had gone back here too.

Just then, to my astonishment, a blonde-haired woman in a stylish suit came in. It was Serena herself! She sneered at me, saying, “I didn’t know you were such a stalker.”

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 36

Serena's POV

Elijah's in love with Sophia.

It was a realization that had hit me years ago, but was now rushing back like a terrifying flood as Sophia stood in front of me – live in the flesh. Right here in the Sinclair Realty Group building.

He loves her, I thought bitterly, a lump forming in my throat while anger rose within me like a huge flame of fire. I could see it in his eyes, and hear it in his voice, long before he even acknowledged it himself. I thought he'd give up on her once he was back in the States, especially after Sophia terminated her pregnancy. 1

But no... He chose to dive headfirst into work, burying himself in projects and meetings, because he's affected by what happened. Because he didn't want to get emotionally involved.

As the days turned into weeks, I noticed a change in Elijah. He became more distant, more formal. Our interactions became purely professional, and I found myself missing the easy banter we used to share. He trusted me with the design department, letting me run it almost single-handedly. At first, I was thrilled -it was a recognition of my abilities. But as time passed, I realized it was also a way for him to keep his distance. 1

I tried to bring up Sophia a few times before, to talk about what was happening between them, but Elijah shut down those conversations quickly. It was clear he didn't want to discuss it, didn't want to acknowledge the feelings that were bubbling beneath the surface.

And so, I watched from the sidelines as Elijah threw himself into his work, using it as a shield to protect himself from getting hurt. It was heartbreaking to see. And I was frustrated and angry that he still couldn't realize that I was the one for him. I was the one who could make him happy.

I remembered using Morgana, Elijah's stepmother, to get closer to him. It was also a good way to gather information.

"Are you worried about Elijah because he'd become an even bigger workaholic?" Morgana asked me once. "Well, maybe he'll soon get distracted with the good news of Sabrina Baker."

That definitely piqued my interest. "Sabrina, his childhood best friend?"

Morgana nodded. "Her brother Chris has been visiting France every now and then because they heard that there's someone there who could possibly be Sabrina."

When I learned that, I was afraid it had something to do with Sophia in France. And so I hired a private investigator to dig up the details. Apparently, it had to do with a young woman named Julia Stanford. I was certainly relieved that Sophia wasn't part of it.

But then, I wasn't about to celebrate. Shortly thereafter I was informed that I would be working with a designer and an architect from Urban Next Design Studio, a company owned by Elijah's friend Trevis. I remembered meeting him in Paris, and I was even ecstatic when he personally called me.

His news hit me like a blow to the stomach—I was going to be paired with Sophia Bennett for the project. It was a shock, to say the least. I couldn't help but feel that Sophia was deliberately antagonizing me, that she was somehow still in love with Elijah and was using this opportunity to get closer to him.

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CHAPTER 36

+25 BONUS

Elijah can't know about this. Not right now. I don't want to give him the satisfaction of knowing that Sophia was back in our lives. Would he be ppy to see her? Would he use this to try to win her back

again?

It was painful to wrap my head around the situation, and I couldn't shake the feeling that Sophia's presence was going to complicate things even further.

Now, as I stood inside the elevator, sizing up her appearance, I had to admit that she looked a lot more gorgeous and radiated confidence, intelligence, and professionalism like never before. She was even dressed stylishly! Gone was the plain and boring Sophia, and I hated it.

Sneering, I couldn't help taking a jab, saying, "Oh, Sophia! I didn't know you were such a stalker! Back for round two with Elijah, are we?" My voice dripped with sarcasm.

Sophia bristled at the remark. But before she could come up with a retort, I added, "Of all the studios to work for, you had to choose one that belonged to Elijah's friend!"

I saw the astonishment on her face when I said that, but I knew that she was just faking it, trying to play

innocent.

“Well, don’t worry. You’ll surely be turned down again! Elijah’s too busy to pay you any attention!”

I was taken aback when she smirked and gave me a cruel smile. “Oh, you’re the one who’s actually worried that I’m back, aren’t you? After all, you’ve been pining for him forever but he still won’t give you the time of day!”

Ouch. That hit the mark. I glared at her in response. I wanted to slap that smile off her face. “That’s not true,” I replied angrily, lying through my teeth. “We’re happy together, and you can’t stand it so you’re here to ruin us again! But you won’t succeed, because you’re nobody. You’re just a startup desig get anywhere.”

“We’ll see about that,” Sophia answered smoothly and haughtily. who won’t

I was getting really furious. I’d always thought of her as weak, but she had definitely changed after three years in France.

I was about to throw another insult at her when I noticed that the elevator wasn’t even going up. It wasn’t moving because we had been busy arguing, and no one had pressed any button.

Just then, the elevator doors opened again, making me turn in that direction. I gasped when I saw Elijah’s cold face outside, his expression unreadable. Beside him stood a strange, pretty girl, her eyes wide with curiosity.

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 37

Sophia’s POV

Elijah! With Julia?! These were the words that immediately formed in my head upon seeing them together outside the elevator. So I guess they talked more in the restaurant and came here together!

I was still fuming from my heated exchange with Serena, but now, my anger had turned toward my ex- husband. What a real jerk! I’m so lucky to have gotten rid of him when I could.

Elijah and Julia stepped in to join us within the small confines of the elevator. I felt trapped, making it harder for me to breathe.

“Hi again, Sophia,” Julia greeted me warmly. She probably still had no idea that Elijah was my ex–husband.

“Hey, Julia,” I greeted back, trying to sound normal.

The elevator continued its ascent, and I could feel Elijah's gaze on me. I fixed my eyes on the digital screen that showed the floor number, waiting for us to reach the 8th where Urban Next was located.

When the elevator stopped and the doors opened, I quickly stepped out, feeling relieved. Julia followed behind me.

Elijah's voice then cut through the air, calling out to me. I stopped in my tracks, turning to face him, my heart pounding in my chest.

"Sophia," he called out again, his voice tinged with urgency.

At the same time, Julia stopped beside me, her curiosity piqued.

"I didn't know you also worked at Urban Next," Elijah continued, glancing at Julia for a while before turning his attention back to me. Obviously, Julia had already mentioned to him where she worked. Maybe she didn't tell him yet that we were interns here together before.

It was Serena's face that made me pause in my response. She looked shocked and pissed off.

"Soon I won't," I said curtly. I didn't wait around to see the reactions on their faces. I simply went on to get to our office.

"What do you mean by that?" Julia asked, catching up with me. "Are you planning to resign soon?"

"It's something I've thought about, but I intend to finish this big project I'm assigned to first." I hastened my steps to avoid more questions from her, but Julia hurried too.

"How do you know Elijah?" she asked curiously.

I stopped walking and turned to face her. It was evident that she was into him. It was written all over her face. "Do you like him?" I bluntly asked.

Julia immediately blushed as she nodded.

I had the urge to roll my eyes. "Elijah and I went to the same college together, so we knew each other a long time ago."

"Oh, that's cool!" Julia gushed, sounding eager. "Maybe you can tell me more about him."

“Maybe next time,” I said, brushing her off. “Right now, I need to work on my designs. See you later.” With that, I quickly headed to a separate office that I’d requested from Travis. It gave me the privacy I needed and yearned to be able to focus on my work.

I can’t afford to think about Elijah or Serena or Julia at the moment. To hell with them. I’ve got to finish the first draft of my design today.

As I sat at my desk later that afternoon, immersed in my project, there was a sudden knock on my office door. I looked up to see Craig Miller standing there, a bright smile on his face.

Craig was a colleague who had been hired after the studio moved to the U.S. He was an architect with a master’s degree from the U.S. whom Travis had assigned to work on the same project. He was younger than me, but his brilliance and creativity were undeniable.

“Hey, Sophia,” Craig said, stepping into my office. “Mind if I bounce some ideas off you?”

I gestured for him to take a seat, intrigued once again by the prospect of discussing our differing concepts and ideas. Craig had a unique perspective that often challenged my own, and I enjoyed our spirited debates.

“Sure, Craig,” I replied, smiling. “What do you have in mind?”

As Craig began to explain his latest concept, I listened intently, impressed by his innovative approach. Our discussion was lively and engaging, and I found myself greatly impressed and feeling even more excited to present the first draft of our combined efforts.

“Let me show you what I’ve also done so far,” I told him. We sat together in front of the designs I’d laid out on the desk, our heads a little close to each other as we brainstormed.

We were so engrossed in our discussion that I didn’t hear anyone approaching. It was the loud knock on the door that made me look up and realize that my office door was ajar and Elijah was standing outside, staring at us with an infuriated expression on his face.

Beside me, Craig hurriedly stood up with a panicked expression on his face.

I frowned at Elijah, feeling like he was stepping into my private life uninvited. “Why are you here?” I demanded, annoyed.

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 38

Sophia's POV

I tried to control my feelings and remain cool and professional, especially since Elijah's company was technically our client.

"I'll talk to you later, Sophia," Craig murmured before hastily leaving the room. He nodded in acknowledgment to Elijah, who simply ignored him and invited himself in.

He closed the door behind him and faced me squarely. "We need to talk, Sophia."

"You've been saying that for the longest time, Elijah," I said, rolling my eyes. "It's getting old, and I have a lot of work to do."

I sat behind my desk and began sifting through the documents and design plates on top of it, completely ignoring Elijah.

"I came across this little girl today, about the age of three," he began, making my heart skip a beat. I certainly knew who he was talking about, but I tried not to let him see that. I continued what I was doing without bothering to look up.

He went on, "She looked so much like you, Sophia. And she was in that restaurant where I happened to see you too."

Finally, I looked up with a bored expression on my face. "So what are you insinuating? Does it have to mean anything?"

Elijah moved forward and placed his hands on my desk, locking his eyes with mine. "Are you hiding something from me?" he asked, breathing heavily, his voice sounding strained. He was obviously stressed about this matter.

I scoffed. "It's funny Serena called me a stalker earlier, but it's obviously you who's doing the stalking."

He wasn't fazed. "I want to know the truth, Sophia," he insisted.

I began packing up my things then. "Why were you looking at Julia strangely when you first saw her?" I suddenly asked, changing the subject. "And why did you grab her hand and demand for her name?"

He looked flustered and didn't seem to know how to answer.

"I'm thinking she must be related to Sabrina," I carefully said as I finally finished gathering all my stuff. I stood up straight and looked him in the eye. "If you want to get back your first love, then yeah, you should definitely get to know Julia better."

I didn't wait for him to respond. I grabbed my bag and the folder that now contained my work materials, then strode away without another word.

I'll have to finish this at home instead, I thought. I'd rather bring home my work than share another minute breathing the same air as Elijah in this small office room.

first

The following day, I sat in the conference room, surrounded by Trevis and the rest of the Urban Next design team. After the previous discussions and presentations, my turn finally came to present my draft. As I went through my proposal, I could see nods of approval and interest from my colleagues. My design met all the requirements of the program, and I was confident that it was going to be approved.

"In conclusion, my design concept revolves around celebrating the rich local culture and heritage of the region," I said with a big smile, happy and confident about this unique design concept. "I propose integrating indigenous materials and architectural elements inspired by local traditions to create a unique and authentic resort experience."

"That sounds fantastic, Sophia," Trevis remarked when I was done. Then looking around the room, he asked, "Anyone want to share a comment or feedback? We're all here to help each other improve our projects."

I saw a hand shoot up. To my astonishment, it was Julia.

Julia spoke up, her voice clear and firm. "I have some concerns about the innovative aspect of your design," she began. "While it looks new and modern, I feel that the innovative element is still old- fashioned. It lacks the wow factor needed for a successful design case."

Because I didn't expect her to provide such an opinion, I was caught in surprise. I couldn't answer at once. I'd somehow expected that I would get unanimous approval.

"Thanks for that, Julia," Trevis said. "Do you have any suggestions or ideas to help Sophia improve this particular element?"

Julia smiled, standing up, seemingly eager to give a proposal. "Well, I was thinking we could incorporate more sustainable features into the design. Maybe use renewable energy sources or implement a green roof to blend the resort with its surroundings. This would not only enhance the guest experience but also align with current trends in eco-friendly luxury..."

She continued to detail her idea while the others nodded. Some of the faces were lighting up as they listened to her. Meanwhile, I tried to keep an open mind even though I was wondering how she was able to come up with this proposal so fast.

I listened in silence as Julia's proposal unfolded, feeling a mix of surprise and disbelief. Her design concept was eerily similar to one of my original scraps, albeit more complete and polished. I couldn't shake the feeling that I had seen this idea before, that it was something I had once scribbled down in a

moment of inspiration.

Did she get this idea from me?

But I refused to believe that Julia would plagiarize someone else's design. Without any concrete proof, I had no choice but to keep my suspicions to myself.

As Julia wrapped up her presentation, the room erupted in praise. Everyone seemed to agree with her ideas, and some even suggested that she was better suited for the project than I was. It was a bitter pill to swallow, but I had to admit that Julia's idea was a good one.

Objectively speaking, many of her new ideas could be seamlessly integrated into the design, enhancing its appeal and functionality.

I took a deep breath, pushing aside my personal feelings. If Julia's proposal was truly the best choice for the project, then I would have to accept that.

As Trevis deliberated, I could sense the tension in the room. He finally made a decision, his expression torn but resolute.

"Sophia and Julia, I believe both of your Ideas have merit," he began. "You know, I'd really love to put them

together but it's best that we highlight just one concept and work it into the whole unifying design of the resort. So... I propose that you each take the next two weeks to expand and refine your concepts. When the final versions are ready, we will reconvene and decide which direction to take."

This decision meant more work and pressure, but it also offered a chance to prove the value of my idea. Julia's gaze met mine, and I could see the determination in her eyes.

The competition was on, and I was ready to rise to the