

## **Seduced 51**

### Chapter 51

Although Felix claimed to be concerned about me getting hurt, he had already left me completely battered.

Felix's half-hearted concern was quite despicable.

I deleted his messages one by one and replied, "Don't worry. I've arrived."

Felix almost instantly responded and sent several lengthy voice messages on WhatsApp.

I ignored them and pu

my phone back in my backpack.

To me, his belated concern was as worthless as grass.

Colin was waiting for me in front of a black SUV, his handsome face adorned with a smile and his tall figure exuding charm. He looked mature and composed in a white shirt with subtle patterns and dark trousers.

His eyes lit up when he saw me, and he strode over to grab my suitcase. His large hands ruffled my hair vigorously. "Long time no see, Lulu, you've grown taller."

I shyly shrunk my neck and lifted my head to look up at him. "Colin, you became even more handsome."

“It was an honor to be praised by you.” He laughed heartily, stowed the suitcase in the trunk, opened the passenger door for me, and casually fastened my seatbelt.

As I buckled up, we were very close, and I could smell the distinctive fresh scent of pine on him.

“Why are you so thin? Haven’t you been eating properly?” Colin turned his face toward me, and I

struggled to find the right words to answer him.

After a whole summer of injuries, two hospital stays, and a low mood, my appetite indeed suffered, and I

lost quite a bit of weight. Mom had been nagging me about it in the morning, urging me to eat more as

she was worried I might become too frail.

“Colin, after two years, you still remember what I used to look like. Maintaining a slim figure is a lifelong

commitment for girls.” I chuckled nervously and touched my cheek.

Colin eyed me skeptically, clearly not buying my explanation. “Hmm, you’re almost skeletal. Regardless

of whether you’re aiming for a slim figure or something else, starting today, I’m going to restore you to

your original self.”

1/2.

Since the dormitory was deserted throughout the vacation, it had gathered a layer of dust. My roommates would arrive tomorrow, so I rolled up my sleeves to clean up.

It was almost 7:00 pm by the time I settled everything, and I was exhausted.

Just as I thought of lying down on the bed to rest. Colin sent me two documents and initiated a video call.

He said the documents were his brainstorming for the competition. It was just a rough outline, and the details needed further consideration. He wanted me to see if I had any new ideas to incorporate so we could join forces and aim for victory.

“Can we check it later? I just finished cleaning the dorm, and I’m quite tired. I need some rest,” I replied. I was genuinely exhausted, and even my voice conveyed fatigue.

He raised his eyebrows, flashing a set of well-aligned teeth. The tiny mole at the corner of his eye looked particularly vivid. “The feeding plan starts with this meal. I’ll come down to pick you up, and you can

come back and rest after we eat.”

Honestly, I was too tired and didn’t want to move.

However, my stomach was growling, and I couldn’t ignore it. After giving it some thought, I reluctantly agreed.

“Oh, by the way, do you mind if my friend joins us?”

“Sure, that’s fine,” I replied. Having a few extra people would prevent the awkwardness of us sitting there silently, staring at each other.

He offered to pick me up, but I declined and told him I would be there. I asked him to share the location with me.

At 7:45 pm, I reached the agreed-upon spot—a barbecue restaurant.

Since the incident with Felix, barbecue had become a source of trauma for me. Just the thought of it made me uneasy.

As I entered the restaurant, a tall and robust man stood up from a seat near the window in the back. He had sharp eyebrows, lively eyes, refined features, and a tan complexion that added to his charm.

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+15 BONUS

He lowered his gaze and said something to the guy at his table before striding toward me.

Colin was indeed tall, and his imposing figure was something I hadn’t noticed before.

Felix, on the contrary, wasn’t short. He stood over six feet tall and had a handsome appearance. He was elegant, slender, and fair-skinned. He usually kept to himself and carried a distant demeanor, making him seemingly out of reach for everyone.

However, Colin had broad shoulders and a robust physique. Even in a shirt, one could see his well-defined muscular lines beneath.

His thick eyebrows and distinctive features provided a strong sense of security. To be frank, he was a rugged man that any girl would want to rely on.

He was really tall, around six feet and three inches. At five feet and seven inches, plus a slight slope, I barely even reached his shoulders.

“I was just about to welcome you,” Colin said with a smile.

“Colin, did you grow taller again? You’re so tall.” I regretted the words as soon as they left my mouth. My

face flushed instantly.

Colin was already 20 years old. How could he possibly grow taller? That was such a foolish thing to say.

Colin seemed momentarily stunned by my unexpected comment. Then, he gradually broke into a smile reminiscent of a charming yet dangerous vampire.

I stood there, dumbfounded. While I always knew he was good-looking, I never expected that his smile could be so enchanting.

His eyes resembled a galaxy of stars.

“Do I look good?” Colin asked in a deep voice.

“Yeah, you look good.” I instinctively nodded.

Today, I only realized that I was undeniably obsessed with appearances.

Finally, my goofy demeanor cracked a smile on his face, and I could sense the enticing resonance in the laughter echoing from his chest.

+15 BONUS

Colin was truly extraordinary.

“Colin, bring the girl over. The barbecue is sizzling.”

He led me over and introduced me to everyone.

“Wow, when did Lincoln University get such a stunning junior? How did I not know about this?” one of

Colin’s friends exclaimed.

“Colin, why didn’t you introduce her to us earlier?” another guy with a cute smile added.

“Excuse me, do you happen to have sisters at home? It doesn’t matter whether they’re biological or

stepsisters,” a guy in a cap playfully added.

Then he turned to Colin and said, “Colin, let’s not be friends. Can I be your best friend–in–law instead?”

Colin laughed and scolded him, firmly stating that he wouldn’t tolerate anyone subjecting a talented girl

like me to such teasing remarks.

I nervously sweated in the palms of my hands.

Even though I had an outgoing personality and welcomed friendly banter from friends, it was my first time meeting this group of men. I felt genuinely uncomfortable.

Aside from my dad, the guys closest to me were Felix and a few other boys who admired me in high

school.

But during those times, my focus was solely on Felix. Regardless of how great others might have been, I didn’t really notice or appreciate their unique qualities.

Chapter 53

I might have missed out on many beautiful moments because of Felix.

“Stop the nonsense. If you scare her away, it’s your responsibility to bring her back.”

Colin was diligently peeling shrimp for me when he said this. After peeling one, he placed it on my small

plate. Every time I ate one, Colin would smile gently at me.

Colin was always so tender toward me. He had been like this since I was a child.

He never restricted his friends from chatting with me, but he always kept an eye on my emotions. If there

was anything that might make me uncomfortable, he would promptly intervene.

He knew what I liked and disliked. He consistently included dishes I favored but felt too bashful to

request at home.

Despite the jokes, his classmates were very caring toward me. Laughter filled the dining table, dispersing

the tension I initially felt.

I always felt relaxed and at ease whenever I was with Colin.

In short, I thoroughly enjoyed this meal.

When we left, it was raining outside.

In September in the north, the weather had turned cooler, and people were already wearing long-sleeved

jackets in the morning and evening.

I had just finished cleaning the dorm, so I came out wearing a short-sleeved T-shirt.

By the time we finished dinner, it was already 9:30 pm and raining. The outdoor temperature dropped

significantly.



As soon as I stepped out of the restaurant's main door, the autumn chill hit me, and I instinctively hugged

my arms and shivered.

"Feeling cold?" Colin asked, lowering his head.

I rubbed my goosebumps on my cold arms and nodded honestly.

Soon, a warm jacket was draped over my shoulders, and a faint tobacco scent lingered in my nose.

Wrapped in Colin's jacket, it felt as if I was being held in Colin's arms.

+15 BONUS

My face suddenly turned red, and I felt hot.

I wanted to return the jacket, thinking it was a bit too intimate.

Colin had already anticipated my thoughts. He held onto my shoulders and said, "Keep it on. It's not the first time, and catching a cold would affect your competition."

It was indeed a heavy threat, and I reluctantly succumbed to his successful bidding.

Colin mentioned that we were participating in a team competition, but in reality, the so-called team was just the two of us. The others were lending their support from the sidelines. They were not officially listed

for the competition and wouldn't contribute to the creative process.

The competition boasted a high caliber with exceptional participants. Rising above in such a challenging environment required dedicated effort, and I committed myself earnestly to the task.

Colin emphasized the need to break free from traditional norms in classical painting and encouraged us to take an innovative approach for a better chance at winning.

I agreed with this perspective and began contemplating how to express something novel using watercolor techniques.

With the competition set for late October, we had slightly less than two months, which was a reasonably adequate time frame.

When deciding what to paint, Colin and I each held firm opinions.

Since neither of us could persuade the other, we opted to independently create preliminary sketches and make a final decision based on a comprehensive evaluation.

This approach seemed fair, and I agreed to it.

Subsequently, aside from attending classes, I immersed myself in the creative process.

Colin set up a personal workspace for me in the research institute's art studio to facilitate collaboration.

Thanks to him, I became the first female student at Lincoln University with open access to the institute. This earned admiration from many girls who were fans of Colin.

## Chapter 54

Life was monotonous, yet not devoid of charm. The unsettling emotions from the summer gradually eased over time.

Even during moments of leisure, thoughts of Felix would cross my mind. I would find myself retracing the 19 years we spent together, recalling the silent affection I harbored for him.

However, it remained mere contemplation.

Each reflection brought a bitter tinge, a profound sadness that I forced myself not to dwell on. I

convinced myself that we were just neighbors, nothing more.

I believed that my fondness for him would diminish with each passing day, and I would eventually feel better.

Meanwhile, Colin continued to feed me as a daily ritual. No matter where I was or what I was doing, he would promptly arrive to whisk me away for a meal.

Over time, I grew familiar with Colin's friends, and due to his influence, they all affectionately referred to me as Lulu. In Colin's absence, each of them took turns caring for me.

I felt a sense of ease and comfort with Colin by my side.

Yet, just when everything seemed settled, fate intervened. The day before completing my artwork, an unexpected video call from Felix disrupted the tranquility.

Fresh out of the shower, I sat at my desk, blow-drying my hair as his call flashed on the screen.

Seeing his familiar profile picture stirred a blend of emotions.

This marked the first video call he had made since I started university.

I was uncertain about his intentions, and to be honest, I felt reluctant because of the many unpleasant experiences between us in the past two years.

Although I was tempted to ignore the call, I couldn't overlook the bond we shared from growing up together.

I reluctantly answered the call, and there he was on the screen, still as attractive as ever.

My heart fluttered for a moment, but the feeling vanished swiftly.

"Lulu, what are you up to?" Felix smiled cheerfully.

"Just blow-drying my hair. Any specific reason for the call?" His face, as attractive as ever, failed to stir any emotions in me.

"Can't I call you just to chat?" His lips curled up, and his eyes held a tender, enchanting charm.

Unfortunately, it had nothing to do with me.

I chuckled, opting not to partake in his playful banter. This flirtatious exchange felt out of place for us. Even during my infatuation phase with him, we never indulged in such intimate jokes, and now it seemed

even less likely.

“I need a favor,” he continued.

“What’s up?” My eyebrows raised. I had a feeling that an unpleasant topic was about to arise.

For the first time in my life, he was asking for a favor from me, and I wasn’t pleased with it.

I honestly thought it would be better for us to continue living like parallel lines, each extending in our own directions without interference.

A random call like this one seemed both pointless and unnecessary.

“Lilac’s faculty is organizing an exchange with Lincoln University, and she’s coming over the day after tomorrow. She’s never traveled far and has no experience living alone in an unfamiliar environment. I wanted to trouble you to take care of her for me.”

Chapter 55

So, Lilac was coming over, and I was supposed to look after her. Juggling my own responsibilities was

challenging enough. Did I need to add looking after her to the mix? Did she have a disability, or was she

just clueless?

I grew up pampered by my parents until high school. Even my socks were handled by my mom. But when

I went to college, no one took care of me. I learned to do everything on my own, and things went well.

Why couldn't Lilac do the same?

Truth be told, I was reluctant to agree, no matter the reason.

I had reservations about Lilac. She always appeared overly calculating and scheming. I was afraid I

might unintentionally fall into one of her schemes. Moreover, with my focus on the competition, I was

drained every day.

If it weren't for Colin, I might not even be eating well. I really didn't have the extra energy to take care of

his girlfriend.

To be blunt, I didn't have that obligation to take care of Lilac for him.

"Please, Lulu? It would mean a lot," he asked me again, smiling hopefully.

When did the usually confident Felix become so humble? He had changed a lot and invested so much in

Lilac. It was clear that he genuinely cared for her.

If it weren't for what happened later, I would have considered offering my blessings regardless of Lilac's

character as long as Felix liked her.

"Lulu, I'll be good. I won't trouble you." Lilac was always seeking attention in front of me.

I looked at the cheerful face on the screen, and her feigned innocence was too obvious.

My head was pounding.

“Why not ask Colin? He would surely take better care of you than I can.”

Felix awkwardly cleared his throat. “How would he know how to take care of someone?”

I rolled my eyes, not buying into his excuses.

Uncle Austin and Aunt Melinda disapproved of Felix’s relationship with Lilac, and Colin couldn’t be

+15 BONUS

oblivious to such significant matters concerning Felix’s lifelong happiness. Felix sought my help

because he feared that Colin, like his parents, might not approve of Lilac.

This meant that I was his second choice this time. Perhaps in his eyes, I had never been the first choice

In this lifetime.

“How long is this exchange for?” I inquired.

“At most a month,” Felix replied.

“Here’s the deal. I’m not great at taking care of people, and I can’t be as attentive as a boyfriend. I’m also busy lately, so I’ll do what I can. Tell her to contact me if she needs help, but please don’t bother me with trivial matters.”

“That’s enough. Thank you, Lulu,” Felix said with a happy grin.

“Send me her arrival time on WhatsApp. I’ll pick her up if I’m not too busy.”

I hung up, threw the phone on the table, turned off the hairdryer, and collapsed on the bed, feeling

frustrated.

The next morning, Colin took me to have almond croissants—my favorite. Despite the delicious pastries, the thought of Lilac coming made me restless. I couldn’t eat much as the idea of her arrival had already

spoiled my appetite.

Colin sat across from me, gently asking what was wrong as I barely touched my food.

“Lilac is coming, and I don’t like her,” I said.

“Who’s Lilac? What does her arrival have to do with you?” Colin was puzzled as he was unable to

comprehend my annoyance.

I was equally surprised that Colin didn’t seem to know about Felix and Lilac’s situation or the conflicts between Felix and me. Since our first meeting, Colin had never mentioned it or tried to console my broken

heart.



## Chapter 56

“She’s your brother’s girlfriend and will be part of your family in the future. Don’t tell me you don’t know,” I

said with a dismissive snort, not believing him for a second.

Colin picked up a napkin to wipe his mouth and set it down, his eyes shimmering with an unreadable light. “Don’t joke about this. You and Felix have been betrothed since childhood. He could never have another girlfriend in his life. Lilac Hawthorn, what a tacky name.”

I looked at Colin’s innocent face, suddenly at a loss for words.

He never bothered with lies. He genuinely didn’t know about Felix and Lilac’s relationship.

The idea that Felix and I were bound to be together for life had been deeply embedded in the minds of everyone who knew us.

It was like that time during our senior year in high school when I stood at the front of the classroom.

explaining that Felix and I were merely neighbors. However, no one would believe our journey had already reached its end.

More precisely, Felix and I never even started.

My past affection and pursuit of him were all one-sided.

However, the fact that Colin, Felix's brother, was completely unaware of all this was quite a shock to me.

I had initially believed that Colin's kindness toward me stemmed from guilt. It was as if he considered me

innocent and was trying to make amends for his brother's actions.

It appeared that Colin's kindness wasn't because of Felix, and it made me quite happy.

"Colin, I'm telling the truth. Felix and I never had a romantic relationship, and everything between us ended during our high school years.

"Lilac was our classmate, and she had been with Felix since their senior year. They are both studying at Jesselton College, and Felix genuinely cares for her."

Colin set down his fork, gazing at me with disbelief as if attempting to verify the validity of my words.

Perhaps everything I said seemed absurd and impossible to him.

I managed to maintain a calm composure while meeting Colin's stare. However, as memories flooded my mind, I suddenly felt a deep sense of sorrow, and my tears started brimming uncontrollably.

+15 BONUS

I swore I tried hard not to cry, but I couldn't hold it in.

Colin noticed my tears and quickly picked up a tissue to wipe them away. I took the tissue from him, buried my face in it, and cried silently, letting out all the frustration and sadness in my heart.

I had endured a great deal of pain and sorrow over the past two years. There were a few moments when tears threatened to fall, but I had always managed to hold them back. I never allowed myself to cry as

openly as I did in front of Colin at that moment.

Pouring out all the grievances and sadness buried deep inside me felt rather liberating.

"Colin, he doesn't like me, and I don't blame him for that. But he still makes me take care of his girlfriend.

It feels like he's being unfair to me."

My emotional outburst had drawn the curious gaze of diners at nearby tables. I wished to stop crying, but my overwhelming misery made it nearly impossible to do so.

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Colin took me out of the breakfast joint and into a quiet corner, allowing me to rest my head on his

shoulder.

He comforted me, saying, "Cry all you want if you're feeling hurt. My shoulder is here for you."

He didn't speak further. He just sat beside me silently. His large, warm hand patted my head occasionally while his index finger wiped away my tears.

Colin comforted me in his silent way.

After a good while, I felt much better after crying my heart out.

Chapter 57

"I've been busy with my studies and haven't paid much attention to family matters for the past two years. I wasn't here for you during your most difficult moments, and I'm deeply sorry for that, Lulu," Colin slowly said, his voice carrying a deep sense of guilt.

"Why are you apologizing? It's not your fault," I replied.

"Lulu, you must have been heartbroken. Felix is such a jerk," Colin said, his gaze filled with sympathy but as tender as sun-smitten dew.

"I'm much better now, not as distressed as before."

Time had elapsed since those difficult days, and although it had been incredibly challenging. I was slowly feeling more at ease.

"Good, Lulu. You're such a good girl. Would you like to talk to me about it? I can be your best listener."

I sniffed and glanced at my phone, realizing there was only half an hour left until class, which wasn't enough time.

Furthermore, I had no desire to delve into those painful memories. Doing so would mean reliving them, and I had no intention of revisiting that distressing Thanksgiving incident in this lifetime.

“Colin, can we not talk about it?”

“Of course, Lulu. We won’t discuss it if it’s traumatic to you. Let’s go. We need to head back as the class is starting soon. Just remember, no matter what life throws at you, I’ll always be here for you.”

“Thank you, Colin. But why are you so kind to me?”

Colin’s hand paused for a moment on my shoulder,

Emotions flickered in his eyes, something he couldn’t quite put into words, but he swiftly contained it and resumed being the warm and reliable Colin.

“Well, Lulu, a beautiful and lovely girl like you deserves to be treated well.”

That morning, Colin walked me to the classroom, watching me find my seat before turning to leave.

As they witnessed me being personally escorted to the classroom by Prince Charming, a few familiar girls came over, eager to inquire about my relationship with Colin.

1/2

+15 BONUS

They grew excited after discovering that I was Colin’s childhood friend.

They started asking if they matched Colin’s ideal type and if there was a possibility of capturing his heart

by taking the initiative.

As a responsible childhood friend, I observed these girls and began to filter them out.

One had eyes so small it was hard to tell if they were open or closed, another had a waist as wide as a bucket, a third was overly ostentatious and far from modest, the next one wore unattractive brown pants. and the girl beside me had such a sharp chin it seemed almost fake-

After a round of inspection, I publicly declared none of them were Colin's type.

The girl with the sharp chin boldly inquired about Colin's ideal partner and how to get his attention, but I couldn't come up with an answer.

\*Anyway, none of you are his type." I said.

Perhaps I truly didn't have the answer. The reasons I had offered were solely based on my personal opinions.

The girls returned to their seats with a sense of disappointment.

One of them even rested her head on her desk and remained there for the entire class. It was uncertain whether she was crying profusely or had fallen asleep.

Despite my reluctance, I went to pick up Lilac from the airport on time.

"Luna, you actually came to pick me up, huh? You always do whatever Felix asks of you. Alright, do me a favor and carry this. My hand is sore from holding it," Lilac remarked in her irritating tone.

I couldn't understand how someone so delicate and gentle-looking could have such a cunning soul. Didn't she know how annoying she was?

If I weren't someone who always kept my promises, I might have considered leaving her there and walking away.

She was incredibly irritating.

Chapter 58

Wanted to control me the moment we met? Dreamed on.

I wasn't her typical accommodating boyfriend.

"I'm tired." I said, not even glancing at Lilac.

Given what she had done in the past, it was already quite generous of me to have gone and picked her up.

And now she expected me to cater to her? No way.

She watched me as I got into the car emotionlessly and left her standing there, her anger palpable. I

pretended not to notice and continued to ignore her.

In the end, she had to load her suitcases into the taxi's trunk herself.

I couldn't help but wonder why she had brought three massive suitcases for a mere one-month exchange program. After all, she wasn't even staying permanently at the Marlmiwi.

It made me question the necessity of carrying so many suitcases, especially when Felix wasn't even present to see her all dressed up.

Later, I discovered that I had overthought the situation, and there were indeed people who paid attention

to her outfits.

"Luna, you've been here for over a year and still don't have your own car? Do you have to rely on taxis? Taxis are unhygienic and smell awful," Lilac complained incessantly, waving her hand in front of her nose as if she were disgusted.

Her expression of disgust made it seem like she was in a public restroom rather than a taxi.

She had also spent more than a year in college. Hadn't she learned even a hint of self-awareness to understand how irritating she was?

"You're free to leave if you wish. I didn't invite you to share the taxi," I retorted.

Did she assume I had endless patience, willing to be bossed around by her?

"Luna, you're being unfair to me. You promised Felix that you'd look out for me, and now you're treating me in such a manner. Do you think I won't call him and let him know?" Lilac threatened.

I raised my phone as if I were going to offer it to her, nearly striking her face with it. "Is Felix your father?"

+15 BONUS



Do you have to report everything to him? If you want to tell him, be my guest, and I'll lend my phone if your phone is dead."

The driver burst into laughter, likely because he had never encountered someone as uncooperative as me or as persistently nasty as Lilac, who refused to relent until the end.

Lilac felt deeply humiliated. Her dolled-up face now exhibited a horrifying expression.

She was overwhelmed by embarrassment and anger, clenching her teeth as if she wished she could bite me to pieces.

I hummed a catchy tune all the way, ignoring her. I wanted her to understand that I just loathed her annoyed yet helpless attitude!

When we reached the school, two other cars that had been following us also came to a halt. They belonged to the exchange students who had arrived with Lilac.

I escorted her to her dormitory. Just as I was about to leave, she stopped me. "Luna, I'm hungry. Can you

treat us to some barbecue?"

"Us'?"

“Yeah, me and my classmates, there are five or six of us... oh, seven in total None of us are familiar with this place, so can you take us?”

How shameless could she be? I was only doing this because of Felix’s request. Yet, she wanted me to treat not only her but also her classmates? Did she think I had so much money to spare?

My parents had been concerned that I wouldn’t fare well here, so they sent me a generous monthly allowance. Surprisingly, I didn’t even spend it all and managed to save a substantial amount over time.

Additionally, I had earned money through my artwork, and I had a scholarship. I wasn’t financially strained at all.

I could even afford ten barbecue meals if I wanted.

But why should I treat them?

For someone who was always hostile toward me, constantly looked down on me, and aimed to undermine me at every turn. I wouldn’t even offer her my leftovers, let alone waste a single penny on her.

“I don’t have money.” I said.

“Luna, you mentioned that someone would handle everything upon our arrival. Why are you reluctant to

treat us to a barbecue?

“Didn’t your boyfriend find people for you? It doesn’t seem like he treats you well, either. Or perhaps you’re simply boasting, and people don’t really take you seriously at all.”

Birds of a feather flocked together, after all.

The bitches were always with the bitches. It was so annoying.

Chapter 59

Lilac was vain and cared a lot about her image. Her expression shifted as she listened to my words.

She deviated from her usual gentle and delicate demeanor that she always put on in front of Felix. Instead, she grew frustrated visibly, her eyes practically blazing with anger.

“Luna Lawson! I’ll tell Felix if you don’t treat me,” she threatened.

“Go ahead. Tell anyone you want. Tell the world if you can.”

A chorus of laughter erupted from the onlookers, clearly relishing in the fact that I was refusing to compromise with Lilac.

It turned out they were just a bunch of fake sororities.

Lilac seethed with anger as she dialed a number on her phone. Felix picked up the call just as she put it on speaker, ensuring that everyone could listen to their conversation..

“Felix.” Lilac’s voice maintained its usual sweetness, though there was a hint of grievance. “I’ve just

arrived at the school and wanted to let you know.”

“Are you okay? You sound a bit hoarse. Do you have a cold?”

“It’s not a big deal. It’s just that my classmates and I are craving barbecue, but Lulu...” Her voice trailed off, and she glanced at me, pretending to struggle with her words.

There she went again!

I grabbed the phone and interjected, “Felix, is it? Your girlfriend has asked me to treat her entire class to the barbecue, but it’s beyond my budget. That’s the whole story. You can carry on.”

Lilac’s mouth hung wide open in embarrassment. She probably didn’t expect me to expose her bitchy nature so directly.

Felix stayed silent while the bystanders eagerly anticipated the unfolding drama.

Lilac called out once more as she was unable to salvage her pride, her voice tinged with a whimper.

Felix.”

The conclusion that day came when Felix transferred 500 dollars and requested me to handle it on his behalf.

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He said, “Here’s the money. Please take them out for a meal. Lili is quite conscious of her image. Let’s

not embarrass her.”

I didn’t want to respond, but it didn’t sit right with me to stay silent.

I sent a message to him quickly, saying, “I have no time.”

Felix’s behavior triggered my rebellious side.

I returned the money and told him to transfer it to Lilac himself.

Then, I sent her the location of the barbeque restaurant and left casually.

Felix called me several times that day, but I ignored them all.

Honestly, my actions were partly driven by my past grievances with Lilac. I was no saint and felt a need

for some petty revenge.

Late that night, Felix sent me a message. “Lili is just simple-minded. Please be patient with her.”

I began to wonder if Felix’s language class had been taught by a physical education teacher because he seemed to have a serious misunderstanding of the term “simple-minded”.

Either that, or he was completely blind and didn’t realize how annoying Lilac was. Or perhaps he had his own perspective, and I had no comments about that.

Furthermore, I believed that when Felix sent me this message so late at night, it wasn’t meant as an explanation but rather as a reminder not to upset her again.

I just couldn't understand why he repeatedly told me to go easy on Lilac.

What was

was his position, and under what authority was he making such demands of me?

I wasn't his father to tolerate his behavior, let alone cater to his girlfriend and potentially their future children.

That was just too much.

I didn't reply to his message and brushed it off like a fleeting cloud, continuing my peaceful life.

Lilac might have been hurt or bothered by my actions because, surprisingly, she didn't contact me for several days.

I was pleasantly surprised, thinking she might have realized her bitchy behavior and decided to change.

That was until one day, I stumbled upon a huge secret that really caught me off guard. I struggled with how to handle it, worrying so much that I might go bald.

Chapter 60

I had just finished preparing the competition draft, and it turned out even better than expected.

I was quite satisfied with it and was about to show it to Colin when my phone rang.

"Colin, I was just about to call you. The draft is ready. Do you want to take a look?" I asked.

“It seems that we think alike, Lulu,” he remarked, his voice carrying a touch of charm, much like the comforting warmth of nighttime light.

I pursed my lips, pondering why Colin appeared somewhat flirtatious.

But no, that couldn't be right.

He had watched me grow up and had always treated me like a sister. I had to be overthinking.

“So, Colin, why are you calling me so late?” I asked.

“Do you want to take on a project? It's a great opportunity,” he said.

“Do tell me, but I'm not sure if I can do it.”

“A classmate of mine is looking to create a photo album to commemorate his grandparents' 50th

wedding anniversary.

“He intends to capture their decades of memories and present them to his grandparents on the exact day. It's a high-stakes project with a tight timeline, so he's offering a good sum.”

“How much?” I asked.

Since relocating to the north, I had come to appreciate the straightforwardness and conciseness of the people here, and I had adopted their tendency to cut to the chase.

“150 thousand dollars.”

What?

150 thousand dollars! His classmate was generous.

That amount of money was enough to turn me into an independent young woman. It was truly amazing!

However, I was just an ordinary college student. Could I truly meet the strict quality requirements?

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My confidence was far from solid.

As if reading my mind, Colin swiftly reassured me, "You're amazing, Lulu. You'll do a great job."

He had so much confidence in me.

"Why don't you take on this generous offer yourself?" I inquired.

"I don't enjoy working on these lovey-dovey things," he explained.

Well, that reason convinced me.

"Alright, I'll accept it on your behalf. You can concentrate on preparing for the competition first, and once

it concludes in October, you can begin working on this project. The deadline for the artwork extends beyond New Year's Eve, so we'll have some time."

Before hanging up, he reminded me, "Weren't you going to show me your draft?"



I cradled my artwork draft as if it were a precious treasure and headed to the research institute to meet Colin on that crisp autumn night.

He initially offered to come to me, but it was late, and there was nowhere to host him in the girls' dormitory. So, I decided to take the draft to him.

My eagerness to visit the research institute was partly due to my strong admiration for the rose-covered

wall on its side.

Especially at night, each rose appeared as a dazzling beacon under the moon's gentle glow, exuding an

intoxicating beauty.

I couldn't help but wonder how the students in the agricultural economics department managed to keep them blooming in such cold weather.

As I passed through the rose-covered wall, I reached the front gate of the research institute, where Colin was waiting for me in a ground-floor studio.

The moment I stepped inside, a faint fragrance filled the air. I took a deep breath and felt every part of my body relax, as though all the fatigue from the past few days had been whisked away.

I was wearing comfortable sneakers that many students preferred, not just because they were

comfortable for walking but also because they made no noise. It was a silent stroll, and I was heading

toward the research institute's entrance.

The rose-covered wall was as beautiful as ever. Walking here always lightened my mood.

As I was halfway there, I faintly heard some discordant sounds emanating from the side.

The voices sounded oddly familiar.

Couples on dates were a common sight on campus.

While I typically didn't pry, the familiarity of those voices aroused my curiosity. I yearned to confirm whether the person I had in mind was indeed there.