

The Kiss 1161

Chapter 1161

"Who are you texting? You've been staring at your phone since you got here." Balfour, with his coffee in hand, eyed Bartlett who was sitting in his office.

Bartlett snapped out of it and put away his phone, "Nothing much, just some work stuff."

Balfour glanced at him, "If you're swamped with work, why did you come bother me?"

Bartlett took a sip of his coffee and said, "Nothing major, just some annoying errands. I just wanted to chat."

But Balfour didn't have time to shoot the breeze; he had a meeting to attend soon.

Just then, Quinton knocked on the door. Without waiting for Balfour to say come in, he walked in looking upset, "Mr. Howard, we've got trouble!"

Balfour looked up seriously, "What's wrong?"

Even after noticing Bartlett in the office, Quinton still blurted it out without reserve. "Mr. Howard, there's a problem with the Blanchet family; Ms. Mendoza... seems to be missing!"

Balfour's calm face turned stern. "What? How did that happen?"

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Quinton explained. "There have been more security guards at the Blanchet Villa lately; we thought they were ramping up security to protect Ms. Mendoza. This morning, Ms. Mendoza went to Central Park with Marissa Blanchet, and then she disappeared. The Blanchet family is currently looking for her everywhere."

Furious, Balfour slammed his coffee cup on the desk, "Theo can't even protect his own wife; what the hell is Ellinor still doing with him?! Quinton, get some people to search for her too. If you find her, bring Ellinor to me; don't send her back to the Blanchet Villa!"

Quinton responded, "Yes, Mr. Howard!"

Once Quinton left, Balfour's face was still gloomy.

Bartlett, sitting across him, seemed pretty chill though.

He had promised Ellinor that he wouldn't spill the beans to Balfour.

"Balfour, don't stress. Ellinor was doing just fine before she met Theo, right? I believe she'll be okay."

Balfour glared at Bartlett, "She's not your sister, so of course you're not worried!"

Bartlett raised an eyebrow, took a sip of his coffee, and said with a smile, "Ellinor may not be my sister, but I do have a thing for her."

Balfour snorted, "What good does your crush do? She will never be yours! I don't have time to shoot the breeze. I need to find Ellinor! She's expecting! What if something happens?!"

With that, Balfour got up to leave; even though he was hobbling, he still moved with urgency on his cane.

Bartlett quickly caught up and stopped Balfour, "Seriously, dude, you're gonna find someone in your condition? You should let Quinton and his guys do it, or they'll have to babysit you instead!"

Balfour was itching to ditch his cane and run. At a critical time like this, it was really holding him back.

Bartlett patted Balfour's shoulder. "Trust me, Ellinor will take care of herself."

Balfour looked puzzled. "How can you be so sure? Do you know where Ellinor is?"

Bartlett shook his head with a smile. "I have no idea. But from what Quinton said, it sounds like Ellinor purposely left the Blanchet family. If she planned her departure, she would have arranged everything. You need not worry."

Balfour frowned. "Ellinor planned to leave the Blanchet family? Why would she want to leave? Weren't she and Theo all lovey-dovey just a few days ago?"

Bartlett shrugged. "I have no idea. I'm just guessing. Maybe Theo's being too controlling, and Ellinor's not happy."

Chapter 1162

Balfour snorted. "I should've never let Ellinor stay with Theo!"

Bartlett patted his shoulder lightly, "Don't sweat it; you're not in the best shape right now, so just chill here and wait for updates! I'll go find Ellinor for you!" After saying that, Bartlett turned around and swaggered off.

Balfour, looking at Bartlett's retreating figure, furrowed his brows deeply and heaved a sigh.

Once he found Ellinor, he definitely needed to bring her home. He couldn't let her be wronged by the Blanchet family anymore!

Late at night.

The plane landed.

Theo practically raced home. He didn't even have time to greet his grandparents and went straight upstairs to his room to look for clues.

The room still had the faint scent of her favorite shampoo, but she was nowhere to be found.

He opened the wardrobe, and he saw that all her clothes were still there; she hadn't taken anything.

She left again?

Just like last time, she left without a word! Why?

Frustrated, he punched the wardrobe, making a loud noise that woke Veronica, who hadn't been able to sleep.

Veronica came in and saw Theo looking furious.

She asked cautiously. "Bro, you're back?"

Theo looked up at Veronica and asked, "Did she say anything to you before she disappeared this morning?"

Veronica shook her head, "No... she seemed perfectly normal; neither Grandma nor I noticed anything wrong. We have no idea why."

Theo clenched his fists and gritted his teeth, "Who gave you the permission to take her out?!"

Veronica looked puzzled and said. "She said she was feeling cooped up at home and wanted to go out to feed the pigeons in the park. Grandma felt sorry for her, so she agreed."

Theo took a deep breath, "Now that she's missing, are you guys happy?"

Veronica looked innocent and said, "Bro..."

Just then, Sophia, who had come back with Theo, walked in and said. "Theo, don't blame Veronica and Grandma; they didn't intend for this to happen. The most important thing now is to find Ms. Mendoza, right?"

The veins in Theo's forehead were bulging. Didn't he know that finding her was the most important thing?

His guys had been looking for her all day, but they didn't find a single clue!

Where was he supposed to find her?

Veronica looked at Sophia, who had suddenly appeared, with confusion. She looked at her outfit, which didn't seem to be in line with local fashion, and asked cautiously, "Who is this woman?"

Before Theo could say anything, Sophia walked up to Veronica with a smile and introduced herself. "I'm Sophia! Veronica, you might not have met me, but I've heard a lot about you from Theo!"

Veronica furrowed her eyebrows and asked her, "Are you close with my brother? Why are you here?"

"Yes, we're close. We've known each other for many years."

Veronica looked at Sophia with suspicion. She said she was close with her brother, but how come she never knew her brother knew such a woman?

A few nights ago, her brother and Ellinor had a fight. Could it be because of this woman?

Chapter 1163

Veronica ignored Sophia and turned to Theo, intending to ask him a few things.

But Theo didn't wait for her to speak; he just turned and left.

“Where are you off to at this hour?” Veronica caught up and asked loudly.

However, Theo didn’t answer her.

At that moment, another voice answered her. “Isn’t it obvious? He’s off to see Ms. Mendoza, of course!”

Snapping back to reality, Veronica shot Sophia an annoyed look, “What’s your deal with Theo? Who asked you to butt into our family’s business?”

Sophia, cheerful and open-minded from living abroad for a long time, replied, “Didn’t I just say? Theo and I are friends, very close friends!”

Veronica was put off by this woman, “Even if you’re his close friend, it doesn’t give you the right to just waltz into Theo’s bedroom! Get out now!”

Sophia shrugged and asked, “So where am I supposed to sleep tonight?”

Veronica frowned, “Go back to your own home! You can’t seriously be thinking of staying here?”

Sophia looked helpless, “But my home is overseas; I don’t have a place here, and it’s too late to book a hotel.”

Veronica’s frown deepened. She knew from the beginning that something was off about this woman. Turned out that she grew up in a foreign environment.

Why on earth would Theo bring such a woman home? Wouldn’t Ellinor be upset?

No, Ellinor was already upset. Her leaving this morning was probably because of this woman!

However, since this woman was a friend that Theo brought home, she couldn’t just kick her out. Veronica thought for a moment and said impatiently. “Fine, I’ll arrange a guest room for you.”

But Sophia shook her head, “I don’t like staying in a guest room that hasn’t been used for a long time. The vibes are off. Since Ms. Mendoza isn’t home, I’ll just stay in this room.”

Veronica was stunned. This foreign woman actually cared about the vibe of a room. How bizarre!

Annoyed, Veronica retorted, “Sophia, are you for real? This is Theo and Ellinor’s bedroom; do you think it’s appropriate for you to stay here?”

Sophia nodded, “I think it’s perfectly fine! They’re not home, and I’m not sharing a bed with them. I’m just sleeping in it.”

Veronica firmly rebutted, “Absolutely not! You might not care about this since you live abroad, but in our home, this is totally inappropriate! If you don’t want the guest room, then leave now! There’s no way you’re sleeping in Theo and Ellinor’s bedroom!”

Sophia insisted, “No, I won’t stay in the guest room! The vibes are off. I’ve had a fortune teller tell me it would affect my luck.”

Veronica rolled her eyes, “Where did you find this fortune teller? I think you’ve been swindled! We don’t believe in that stuff.”

Sophia shook her head, "That fortune teller is very well-known where I come from and always accurate! Veronica, if you don't want me to stay in this room, can I stay in your room? Bottom line, I can't stay in the guest room!"

What? This woman wanted to stay in her room?

"No way! I don't like people staying in my room!" Veronica said resolutely.

At that, Sophia started to take off her coat, "Then I guess I have no choice but to stay in Theo's room!"

Veronica glared at her, "Do you have any manners? Who comes to someone's house and immediately wants to stay in the master bedroom?"

Sophia shrugged, "I did offer to stay in your room, but you refused!"

"Why should I agree? Who do you think you are? Do you think you can just spend the night anywhere in our house?"

Chapter 1164

Veronica, why aren't you getting some shut-eye and instead making a ruckus in your brother's room at this ungodly hour?" Marissa's weary voice came out of nowhere, and she pushed the door open to investigate.

Worries about Ellinor kept her wide awake, and after hearing her granddaughter making a fuss, she decided to check up on her.

Veronica immediately rushed to her grandmother, "Granny, my brother brought a chick home and claims she's his good friend. I suggested she crash in the guest room, but she insisted on bunking in Theo and Ellinor's room. She said the vibe in the guest room was off, and it'd mess up her luck. Granny, don't you think she's pushing it?"

Marissa gave a puzzled look in the direction Veronica pointed, her face a mix of confusion.

Sophia greeted Marissa with a warm smile, "Hello! I'm Sophia; sorry to disturb your rest!"

Marissa snapped back to reality and nodded, "Since you came back with Theo, make yourself at home. But this room is off-limits; if the guest room isn't up to your standards, you can stay in Veronica's room, and she can sleep in the guest room."

Sophia grinned, "Alright, thank you!"

Veronica wasn't thrilled, "Granny, why should she stay in my room? I don't want anyone sleeping in my room!"

Marissa gave her a stern look, "You need to learn some hospitality! She's your brother's friend, and she came all the way here; we should make sure she's comfortable. Go clear out your room for Ms. Sophia, and be quick!"

Veronica was baffled. Why was Granny siding with this stranger?

“Granny, Baber is still sleeping in my room! It took me forever to get him to sleep; we can’t just wake him up again!”

Marissa replied, “Then don’t wake Baber. Just gently move him to the guest room.”

“Granny!”

“Do as you’re told! Now!”

Veronica was disgruntled, but she dared not defy her grandmother, so she stomped her foot and stormed off.

What was so special about this Sophia? How did she manage to win Granny’s favor?

After Veronica left, Sophia gave Marissa an apologetic smile, “I’m sorry to cause you trouble, Granny.”

Marissa replied, “It’s no trouble; you’ve done a great favor for the Blanchet family, so it’s only right that we fulfill your requests. Now, follow Veronica to her room to see if you need anything, and feel free to ask the servants to get it for you.”

“Okay!” Sophia followed Veronica, still smiling.

Marissa stayed behind, casting a meaningful look at Theo and Ellinor’s bed before she left the room, gently closing the door behind her.

Meanwhile.

In a strange room, Ellinor tossed and turned, unable to fall asleep. She decided to sit up and play some games on her tablet.

Just as she was engrossed in her game, the doorbell rang out of the blue.

Ellinor was instantly on high alert. Who could it be?

Bartlett had told her that this house had been empty for a long time. Who would visit at this late hour?

Could Theo’s people have found her?

She put down her tablet, quietly got out of bed, and tiptoed to the peephole.

But all she saw was an eye, and she jumped in fright.

Before she could recover from the shock, Bartlett’s amused voice came from outside, “Relax, it’s me. You can open the door.”

Chapter 1165

Ellinor frowned as she opened the door. “What are you doing here this late?”

Bartlett held up a bag of food. “I bet you can’t sleep, so I brought you some midnight snacks!”

Without another word, he walked right in and changed into slippers, making himself at home.

Well, it was his home.

After closing the door, Ellinor crossed her arms and muttered, "Bartlett, I asked for your help, but you can't just do as you please, okay?"

Ignoring her words, Bartlett walked into the kitchen with the food, fetched some utensils, and asked with a smile, "Roasted beef or chicken, want some?" Ellinor frowned and said seriously, "Yes!"

Laughing softly, Bartlett waved her over. "What are you waiting for? Come and eat! The barbecue from this place is fantastic. Try it!"

Ellinor walked over and looked at the barbecued meat Bartlett had plated. It looked tempting and smelled delicious.

But she was puzzled. The street food joint didn't seem like a place Bartlett, a rich young master, would frequent

She was curious and conflicted.

Bartlett passed her a fork and knife, grinning "Daydreaming? Go on, try it?"

Ellinor reached out but didn't take the cutlery. Is there only meat? No soda?"

Ignoring her question, Bartlett placed the cutlery in her hand, gently pushing her to sit down.

Ellinor frowned, thinking that Bartlett seemed to have a hearing problem.

She had asked for soda

Usually, you'd have wine or soda with barbecue.

Just as she was about to complain, she saw Bartlett taking out two bottles of soda from the fridge

Before she could say anything, Bartlett sat down. He carefully cut the meat into small pieces and placed them on her plate. He then started cutting another piece.

Ellinor was stunned. What was he doing?

Delivering food late at night and now cutting her meat?

"Are you going to eat? Or continue daydreaming? Bartlett reminded her with a chuckle after noticing that she had spaced out.

After snapping back to reality, Ellinor said. "You don't need to do this I can cut it myself

Bartlett smiled. "Even if you can cut, you don't have to as long as I'm here. You just need to eat."

Ellinor didn't respond.

She knew he meant well, but it still felt awkward

She picked up her fork and started eating the beef on her plate, watching Bartlett's thoughtful actions. "Mr. Rex, you must have cut meat for many girls, haven't you?"

Bartlett paused and looked at her. "Why do you always think the worst of me? Can't you believe I'm just a kind person?"

Ellinor scoffed. "Someone like you would only cut meat for others if you were trying to woo a girl!"

Bartlett chuckled, "You really underestimate me! Do I need to do this to win a girl over? Even if I didn't do this, there are still girls who would chase after me. You're the only person who has ever been reluctant to accept me

Chapter 1166

Ellinor smirked. She unabashedly gobbled up the meat he'd cut for her and mumbled, "You knew I didn't wanna talk to you, yet you insisted on coming over?"

Bartlett slid a freshly cut piece of beef towards her, "That's exactly why I'm gonna try my best to make you wanna talk to me in the future."

Ellinor wasn't used to being fed, so she used a fork to pick up the meat before putting it in her mouth.

Without batting an eye at her defiance, Bartlett asked with a smile, "Want to know what's going on with the Blanchet family now?"

Ellinor paused, not saying a word.

She tried her best to avoid using her electronics all day. She didn't contact Chase or Ida, fearing Theo's people would track her down via satellite.

Even though she wasn't aware of what was happening with the Blanchet family, she had her suspicions.

The Blanchets were probably searching high and low for her; after all, she was carrying Theo's baby. They wouldn't let his child be left out in the cold.

Not wanting to bring up the Blanchet family, Ellinor changed the subject. "The grilled meat here is really good. Where did you get it? Send me the address later!"

Bartlett arched an eyebrow, "If I gave you the address, would you actually go there? Weren't you planning on laying low and then skipping the country?"

Ellinor casually replied, "Oh right, I almost forgot!"

Bartlett clicked his tongue, "Thought you were having second thoughts and wanting to go back."

Once Ellinor decided to leave, she wouldn't go back. There was nothing to regret.

"Enough about me. Bartlett, can I interview you?"

A glint of amusement flashed in Bartlett's eyes. "Interview me? Sure, what do you want to ask?"

Ellinor looked around the two-bedroom apartment. "You said this was where you grew up, but isn't the Rex family a big clan? Why were you living in such a basic place?"

Bartlett paused slightly, though his hands didn't stop. "Didn't Theo tell you? I'm not the Rex family's biological son."

Ellinor was taken aback. "He didn't tell me! What's the deal? Were you adopted by the Rex family?"

Bartlett chuckled. "You could say that. The Rex family elders are my adoptive parents. They had a son, but he died young.

Due to some special circumstances, my adoptive father couldn't have children anymore, so they chose an heir from their relatives' children.

I was originally the child of a distant relative of the Rex family. My parents died, and as an orphan, I was chosen to be sent to the Rex family and raised as an heir.

And this house was my biological parents' home."

So that was what happened.

Ellinor looked at Bartlett, feeling a sense of kinship.

Being chosen as an heir by wealthy relatives may seem lucky, but he probably couldn't do whatever he wanted like those rich kids.

Both of them were raised in other people's homes, and they both felt out of place.

Ellinor asked again, "So how old were you when the Rex family took you in?"

Bartlett replied, "I was about seven or eight, so I remember a lot about my biological parents."

Chapter 1167

Ellinor stopped eating and held her face in her hands while looking at him. "You seem very optimistic and have a good personality."

Bartlett smiled faintly. "Am I optimistic? Life isn't easy as the heir of a family like this. A strict upbringing left me with hardly any childhood, and because everyone knows I'm an adopted son, they don't really respect me. It's hard for me to fit into their circle. When I first took over the company, the shareholders were very unhappy; they wanted to kick me out."

Ellinor nodded sympathetically. "I can imagine how tough it must have been for you back then. But you've overcome it, and now, who doesn't address you with respect as Mr. Rex?"

Bartlett chuckled bitterly. "Do you think they respect me behind my back? It's not just strangers, even Theo and the others are the same. They don't truly accept me. Your brother is the only person who doesn't hold back with me."

In Ellinor's view, Balfour was the most condescending person she had ever met.

Theo, Jonah, and Kemp had a closer bond, but they didn't look down on Bartlett.

Given the personalities of those three men, if they genuinely looked down on someone, they would never sit together.

"I don't think Theo is that kind of person. Don't overthink it." Ellinor said calmly.

Bartlett narrowed his eyes. "Are you still defending Theo?"

Ellinor spoke candidly. "I'm not defending him; I'm just stating facts. If he truly looked down on people, he wouldn't be spending time with someone like me."

Bartlett smiled and said, "But he doesn't treat you sincerely; otherwise, why are you leaving now?"

Ellinor fell silent.

That was the truth!

Why was she still defending Theo?

"Never mind, let's not talk about him anymore. You should eat too." Ellinor began to soften her attitude towards Bartlett.

Bartlett smiled. "It's okay; I'm happy to serve you."

Ellinor rolled her eyes. "I can't finish so much food by myself, and eating alone is boring. It's more fun with you here."

"All right, I'll eat with you." Bartlett sat down and smiled as he joined her in eating grilled meat.

Ellinor began cutting her own meat.

"Ellinor, do you know why I think we're a good match?" Bartlett suddenly said.

Ellinor looked at him while eating. "Hasn't the grilled meat filled your mouth yet?"

Bartlett laughed. "But just eating without talking is pretty boring."

Ellinor said, "Hasn't anyone ever told you not to talk while eating?"

Bartlett smiled. He could tell that Ellinor was deliberately changing the subject, but he didn't want to give up; he wanted to express his feelings.

"Ellinor, the reason I think we're a good match is that I believe we have similar experiences, and our views and values are very similar. In comparison, you and Theo are like people from two different worlds that have been forced together. I believe we're better suited for each other; we have more common ground."

Ellinor really didn't want to discuss emotional issues with him. "There are many people in the world with similar backgrounds and experiences; does that mean they should all be together? Bartlett, if you don't want to eat grilled meat, just leave it all to me. You should go home and rest!"

Bartlett smiled helplessly. "Okay, okay, I won't say anymore. Is that alright?"

Theo pulled up to Chase's apartment.

Chapter 1168

Although it was called Chase's apartment, it was actually shared between Ellinor, Chase, and Ida.

Last time, after Ellinor left the Blanchet household, Theo found her holed up here.

The moment Theo stepped out of the elevator, he started hammering on the door like a madman. When no one answered, he got antsy and kept banging away.

Thankfully, the building was designed so each elevator served only one unit; otherwise, the neighbors would've been onto him for the racket he was making.

Eventually, after Theo's relentless assault, the door swung open.

Chase, decked out in his pajamas and sleepy-eyed, ran his fingers through his hair and asked, "Mr. Blanchet, why are you here this late instead of catching some Z's at home?"

Without changing his expression, Theo cut to the chase. "Where's Ellinor? Get her out here now!"

Chase, nonchalantly, shrugged his shoulders, spread his hands, and said, "Mr. Blanchet, your guys have already searched my car. Why are you still hounding me? I actually wanna know where you stashed her."

Ignoring Chase, Theo barged right into their place.

"Ellinor, come out!"

Chase followed him in, frowning and clearly miffed. "Mr. Blanchet, do you realize you're trespassing? I could call the cops, you know!"

Theo ignored him. He made a beeline for the room where he'd last seen Ellinor packing, knocked, and, without waiting for a reply, barged right in.

But there was no Ellinor. Just a chubby white cat asleep on the bed, whose fur puffed out in alarm at the sight of a stranger invading its territory. "Meow!" Chase walked in, picked up their cat, and said to Theo, "Mr. Blanchet, she's really not here!"

His bloodshot eyes scanned every corner of the room, but Theo couldn't find Ellinor, which only made him angrier. "Where are you hiding her this time?"

Chase, looking innocent and cuddling the cat, replied, "We're not hiding her! Mr. Blanchet, if she wanted to avoid you, she wouldn't be somewhere you could find her. She hasn't even been in touch with us to avoid being found. We called her today, and it went straight to voicemail!"

Theo's fists clenched, and his heart filled with rage. Did the mischievous woman really not want to be found?

Other men's wives might run away to blow off steam, deliberately going to places where their husbands could easily find them.

But Ellinor seemed to want to run away to somewhere far away from him.

-Theo's expression was so cold that he looked like someone owed him money.

Regardless, Chase continued to irritably speak to him. "Mr. Blanchet, maybe you should reflect on why she wants to run away from you in the first place! If you've wronged her, I suggest you stop looking for her! Knowing her, even if you find her, she won't forgive you!"

Theo's brow furrowed. "What did I do wrong to her?"

Chase snorted. "How would I know your marital problems? I'm just guessing since she wouldn't disappear for no good reason!"

Theo's eyes dimmed, and his brows furrowed even further. "Do you know where she is or not?"

Chase answered solemnly. "I swear, I really don't know! I wish I knew where she'd run off to; I've been calling her non-stop and I can't get through!"

Chapter 1169

He was telling the truth. To this day, he really didn't have a clue where Ellinor was hiding.

In order to keep Theo from getting any leads, Ellinor had made it clear that they shouldn't dial the phone number she was currently using.

Theo didn't say a word. He had Ellinor's phone on him and had tinkered with it the last time they parted. Now, except for his number and emergency calls, nobody else could get through.

He had a hunch that day that Ellinor was planning to bolt, so he heightened his guard and even posted a bunch of bodyguards at home to watch over her. He planned to stash her at home until he finished his business abroad, and then they could sort out their issues.

But, to his surprise, none of this was able to hold Ellinor back. She ran away anyway.

Theo didn't intend to give Chase a hard time. He had already checked all the places where Ellinor could be but found no trace of her. He said coldly, "If you hear anything about her, tell me right away!"

Chase really wanted to retort by saying, "In your dreams!" But in order not to raise any suspicion, he just complied. "Alright."

With that, Theo left with a somewhat disheartened air.

Ida came out of her bedroom just in time to see Theo enter the elevator. She squinted in confusion. "Mr. Blanchet seems really worried, huh?"

Chase chuckled sarcastically, "Well, duh. His kid's missing. What man wouldn't be?"

Ida gave a thoughtful nod. "I think he cares about more than just the baby in Ellinor's belly."

Chase scoffed. "So what if he does? He still betrayed Ellinor's feelings and got married to another woman abroad! Now he's playing innocent?"

Ida speculated. "What if Mr. Blanchet had some unspoken difficulties?"

Chase was dismissive. "What kind of 'difficulties' could lead to a secret marriage? Even if there were, he could have been honest with Ellinor. She's a reasonable woman, but he kept her in the dark, so what kind of man does that make him?"

Ida shrugged. "It's just a thought! We don't even know where Ellinor is now or if she's had anything to eat!"

Chase reassured her. "She'll be fine! Remember, she said she had someone else to help besides us. She's probably settled in by now. We'll just wait for the dust to settle, and then she'll get back to us."

Ida sighed and nodded in agreement. "Hmm."

Ellinor hadn't told Chase and Ida that she had enlisted Bartlett's help. She knew that once Theo discovered her escape, he would grill them about it. She didn't want them to know too much and blow their cover.

So it was better not to tell them at all.

Ida went to close the front door to prevent the cat from running out, then prepared to go back to her room to sleep.

But Chase stopped her. "Hold on, Ida!"

Ida turned around and raised an eyebrow. "What's up?"

Chase pulled out his phone and tossed it over to her.

Ida quickly caught it and asked what this was all about.

Chase, with a mischievous smile, said, "Byran Howard has been blowing up my phone because he couldn't reach yours. Why don't you handle him yourself?"

Chapter 1170

Ida frowned and glanced down to see that Chase's phone was on silent.

It was ringing, and the caller ID was showing the number of that boy named Byran.

She wasn't sleepy at all; she was just feeling quite peeved.

"Why don't you just turn your phone off?" Ida asked impatiently.

Chase shrugged helplessly. "The lad said if I turned off my phone, it would seem like I had something to hide, and he'd call the cops, claiming I kidnapped you and wouldn't let you answer the phone. I don't fancy being hauled off by the police!"

Ida was speechless.

What a little rascal!

After taking Chase's phone, Ida retreated to her room. Seeing the number calling again, she leaned against the headboard and answered while massaging her temples.

"Chase! I've checked. You and Ida are living in the same place! If you don't let her answer the phone, I'm really gonna call the police!"

Ida responded coldly, "Would you really call the police?"

The voice of the boy on the other end faltered and then rose in pitch. "Ida! You finally answered! I've been worried about you!"

Ida replied sharply, "Worried about what?"

Caught off guard, Byran huffed arrogantly. "I don't know, I just am!"

Growing impatient with the lad, Ida said, "Byran, I was doing just fine before I met you, and I'll be fine after. You don't need to worry so much and stop bothering my friend, got it?"

Sucking in a breath, Byran's voice was shaky but still childish stubborn. "I get it, I get it! I didn't mean to bother your friend! It's just that all my calls to you were answered by Ellinor, and I'm stuck at home, which is why I've been so anxious!"

Ida sat up straight. "What did you just say? Ellinor answered my calls?"

Byran nodded honestly, "Yes, it was her! I was really shocked. How did your phone end up with her?"

Ida asked sternly, "What did you say to her when she answered?"

Byran sounded guilty, "I... I didn't say anything!"

"What do you mean you didn't say anything? Repeat your conversation!"

"Oh, come on! I didn't expect her to answer! I just mentioned that we had a one-night stand, and you should take responsibility."

Ida covered her forehead with her hand. "And how did she respond?"

Byran's voice trembled. "She asked when it happened."

Ida sighed. "And what did you say?"

Byran replied honestly. "I didn't dare answer! I remembered you told me not to let Ellinor know, so I just hung up."

Ida massaged her temples. A secret that should've stayed that way was now out in the open. What good was hanging up now?

Ellinor knew about her one-night stand with her brother. She was probably furious.

Ida didn't realize that Byran had been pushed too far; when she wanted to end it all, he was no longer under her control, and then...

"Alright! It's late; go to bed. Don't call me unless it's necessary. I don't have time to play games with you!"

As she was about to end the call, she heard Byran's trembling voice. "I'm outside; I can't sleep! It's too cold..."

Her hand, originally ready to disconnect the call, stopped. She frowned. "It's late. Why aren't you at home sleeping? Why are you out wandering?"