

The Kiss 291

Chapter 291

"She won't hurt you"

The man coldly cut off Patricia's unfinished subjective conjecture

Patricia was a bit sad. "Theo, do you trust Elinor that much? You've only known her for over a month"

Theo didn't directly answer Patricia's question. He was intently watching the situation in the ward and said to her lightly, "No reasons are needed, spouses should trust each

other."

Spouses...

Patricia's expression froze, but soon she smiled, grinning innocently,

"Hmm, maybe there's some misunderstanding I also think Elinor is not a bad person

Haillie and Bryan burst out of the elevator, rushing over

Haillie angrily said, "Theo, we heard everything! What Elinor did was way out of line! Patricia just returned to the country, she didn't even bother her, but she was so evil to harm Patricia!

Theo calmly looked at Haillie and said. "There's no final verdict yet, watch your mouth!"

Haillie was terrified and opened her mouth, but she dared not say anything. She assumed that once Patricia returned, Theo would dump Elinor

But it seemed Elinor still had a place in Theo's heart! And all of Bryan's attention was on Patricia

While Bryan only cared about Patricia

Despite being the younger brother, he was taller than Patricia. He asked nervously, lowering his head.

"Sis, are you okay? I just found out about what happened yesterday! They said they didn't tell me because they were afraid I would freak out!"

Patricia smiled and gently touched Bryan's face, comforting him: "Don't worry, I'm fine. Theo came to my rescue in time yesterday".

Bryan sighed in relief after confirming that Patricia was okay, then clenched his fists and said. "That bastard! If I see that jerk, I'll beat him up!"

Seeing Bryan getting a bit aggressive, Patricia pretended to be angry and furrowed her brows, reminding him "The bad guys will be punished by the police. You can't mess around, and certainly no fights! You can't make me worry, got it?"

Not wanting to upset his sister, Bryan immediately complied, nodding obediently, "Got it, I won't mess around, don't worry."

Only then did Patricia smile at ease, saying "Hmm, I knew Bryan was the best!"

Just then, the door to the ward opened.

The police came out with a record, looking dissatisfied.

Haillie, eager to know what happened to Elinor, was the first to ask, "Officer, how's the investigation going? it must have been Elinor who had someone do this, right?"

The policeman sighed and helplessly shook his head, saying "We haven't reached a conclusion yet, she denies everything"

Haillie frowned, puzzled. "Just because she denies it, she can't be convicted? I heard that the police have witnesses and evidence; why not let the witness confront her directly, put the evidence in front of her, and see how she can explain it?"

The police responded, "Our witness is the criminal who exposed her. The evidence is the chat history provided by the criminal and a transfer of ten thousand dollars from Elinor's account. But Elinor insists that the criminal is trying to frame her. She claimed that the chat history was forged and that the transfer was because her account was hacked. She insists that she'll consider confessing only if there's evidence of her having contact with the criminal."

The officer felt a headache just thinking about the interrogation with Elinor.

Elinor seemed very innocent and was very cooperative throughout the investigation, able to answer every question.

But her logical thinking was incredibly strong. As soon as she spotted a loophole, she would immediately question them. After several rounds, she successfully overturned their evidence chain, even making them start to question their own intelligence.

Now, she even managed to convince their superiors, making them believe she was innocent and that she was not a suspect.

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From the cops' words, Haillie could feel their frustration with Elinor. She had had a taste of Elinor's cunning herself, and the more she thought about it, the angrier she got, cursing under her breath in irritation

"That Elinor is such a fox!"

Bryan furrowed his brows, somewhat dissatisfied with Haillie's attitude

"Haillie, don't jump to conclusions too soon, maybe it wasn't her doing?"

Haillie was taken aback, giving Bryan a puzzled look "Bryan?"

She dared not argue with Theo; was she not even allowed to argue with Bryan?

"Bryan! This time Elinor hurt your sister, why aren't you standing up for her but instead speaking up for a stranger?"

Bryan frowned in annoyance Haillie, don't talk nonsense; no matter what happens, I'm always on my sister's side! I just don't think Elinor is that evil, and several times before, you've misunderstood her!"

Haillie was momentarily speechless. After all, what she did before Patricia came back was indeed a bit over the top.

But wasn't she doing all this for Patricia's sake?

She just wanted to eliminate Elinor, this pesky love rival, so Patricia could nip problems in the bud! But she didn't succeed every time.

Looking at Bryan's goof, Haillie was somewhat disappointed, complaining to her friend.

"Patricia, you wasted your kindness on your brother, he's even considering others now!"

Patricia seemed to be pondering something, only returning to her senses when Haillie called her name, smiling kindly

"No, my brother is actually a kind boy.

I understand him, he just doesn't like to think the worst of people, and I'm the same

Bryan nodded

Haillie rubbed her forehead, feeling that she was more anxious than them!

They were too innocent and too kind, maybe they would even speak up for Elinor when they were deceived by her one day!

Patricia wasn't in a hurry, but she couldn't just watch Elinor get away with it!

So Haillie asked the cops again:

"Officer, is there any evidence that can prove Elinor's guilt?"

The police officer shook his head regretfully and said. "There's no strong evidence at the moment. Unless there's surveillance or someone captured images of Elinor meeting the suspect, Zachary But if they were planning a crime, they wouldn't choose to meet in a public place under surveillance. The chances of being accidentally caught by passersby are even smaller! So, it's difficult."

Hearing that it was hard to find evidence, Haillie was even more anxious, hoping to confirm Elinor's guilt as soon as possible!

"Since there's insufficient evidence, unhandcuff her for now"

Theo, who had been quiet all along, suddenly spoke, his voice calm and exuding an intimidating aural

The police officer looked embarrassed and hesitant, giving Theo a troubled look. "Mr. Blanchet..."

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Mr. Blanchet's influence

was something they can't just brush off, while Ms. Howard's brother, Balfour, has repeatedly stressed that they can't just let suspects off the hook.

On one hand, they're feeling the heat from Mr. Blanchet on the other hand, it's Mr. Howard putting the squeeze on them. They're basically caught between a rock and a hard place right now

"Who says there's not enough evidence?"

A cool voice suddenly came from the elevator, that's Balfour

Haillie's eyes lit up at the sound of the man's voice Balfour!"

With a stride as smooth as butter, Balfour walked over, exuding an aristocratic air to rival Theo's

Seeing her brother, Patricia's face lit up, but she stayed quietly by Theo's side, not wanting to leave.

Bryan, on the other hand, became tense at the sight of Balfour, wanting to leave but afraid of getting chewed out.

Haillie, all smiles, went over to greet him, saying, "Balfour, you showed up just in time! The police said they needed a witness who saw Elinor and the thug who attacked Patricia together before Elinor could be convicted! But they don't have a witness."

Balfour said, "Who says there's no witness?"

Haillie's taken aback, her eyes full of confusion. "There is? Balfour, do you know where the witness is?"

"I am the witness!" Balfour's tone was gentle but firm: "The other night, I happened to see Ms. Mendoza and that thug together."

Balfour walked into the center of the crowd, nodded politely to the police, and said hello.

Then he turned to Theo with a friendly gaze, although he's humble, there's a resolute look in his eyes.

"Theo, unfortunately, this involves my sister Patricia's safety, I have to step in"

Theo squinted at Balfour, a dangerous glint in his eyes, smirking, "So, Balfour, you're just going to perjure yourself like this?"

Balfour frowned then smiled. "Theo, you're underestimating me! Everything I said is true; I won't perjure myself, nor will I tolerate anyone harming my sister, no matter who

she is or whose wife she is!"

These words, though polite, were loaded with tension.

The atmosphere between the two men gradually became tense

The two families had a deep-seated feud. Patricia didn't want her brother and Theo's conflict to escalate; that would only push her and Theo further apart.

So, Patricia threw herself into Balfour's arms, cooing, "Balfour, let it go; Elinor is Theo's wife, I think..."

Balfour naturally held his sister, stroking her hair, and slowly said.

"Patricia, if a person is too kind, they'll be taken advantage of, once bitten, twice shy I can't expose you to any risk, so we can't just let this go!"

Patricia was his half-sister. Even though he and his stepmother weren't close because he was separated from his full sister when they were young, he transferred his regrets onto Patricia, treating her like his own sister.

He can't let this sister get hurt.

Theo calmly looked at Balfour and said, "Balfour, are you determined to sacrifice my innocent wife no matter what?"

Balfour explained, "Theo, if it were anyone else, I wouldn't bother looking for evidence, but because Elinor is your wife, I'm willing to take the time to give you an explanation. Whether I misunderstood her or you misjudged someone, we'll know after we confront her."

Balfour was very confident, after he finished speaking, he turned his head and respectfully asked the police, "Officer, as a witness, can I confront the suspect?"

The police were a bit taken aback, then hurriedly nodded, "Uh, yes, you can!"

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Balfour gave a polite nod and said, "I'll have to bother you guys then. Please take me to chat face to face with the suspect, Elinor" The cops huddled for a bit, then took this new witness. Dalfour, into Elinor's hospital room

Theo kept his cool, tagging along

However, the cop on guard duty at the door stopped Theo, saying

"Mr. Blanchet, sorry we're in the middle of an investigation, and since you're not involved in the case, could you please wait outside?"

Theo coolly asked. 'Then why does he get to go in?'

The cop understood that the 'he Mr Blanchet was referring to was Balfour, who'd just gone in, so he explained.

"Because Mr Howard is involved in the case, he's going in as a witness to talk to the suspect"

Theo asked, "Who says I'm not involved in this case?"

The cop looked surprised "Mr. Blanchet, then you and this case are...

"I'm the one who reported this case, I have the right to know the progress. Now, I want to go in to see their conversation"

Theo's tone was calm, but it carried a certain pressure

He was the one who reported the case.

It was Theo who had Collin call the cops, and of course, Collin would report it under Theo's name.

The cop had no rebuttal, hesitated for a moment, lowered his arm, and let Theo in.

When Patricia saw Theo going in, she wanted to follow.

The cop stopped her and said, "Ms. Howard, you can't go in right now!"

Patricia said, "Officer, I'm the victim in this case, I have the right to know what's going on, and I want to find my brother I'll be scared without him around"

Patricia was good—

looking her head was wrapped in bandages, her face anxious; it made one's heart ache.

The cop softened, hesitated a bit, sighed, lowered his hand, and let Patricia in.

Seeing everyone else going in, Haillie and Bryan also wanted to enter.

The cop's tone grew stern. "You two, don't follow in!"

Bryan frowned unhappily "My brother and sister have gone in, why can't I?"

The cop hadn't met Bryan before, couldn't

verify his identity, even though he might be there to stir things up.

"And who are you? Who are your brother and sister?"

Haillie acted on the fly and held Bryan back, not letting him speak.

Then she stepped forward, smiling, saying. "Officer, the kid's got a temper; don't mind him

We're relatives of Patricia, the victim of a car accident who's now hospitalized. She went through some stuff yesterday that took a huge toll on her physically and mentally: her condition's pretty unstable now It's her medication time, but she went in

without taking her meds. We have to go in to give her the medicine, or she might not be able to hold on due to her poor health. So, please understand and let us in to give her the medicine. Once we've done that, we'll leave immediately

The cop frowned, recalling the Ms. Howard he'd just seen, she did seem in bad shape.

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The cop was really at his wits' end!

Everyone had a seemingly valid reason to get in, and he knew damn well he shouldn't have given them the nod from the get go

Letting this person in and not letting that person in was a tough nut to crack

Finally, the cop just threw up his hands in exasperation and said, "Fine, fine, everybody in Just keep it down and don't interrupt my colleagues work!"

Haillie quickly grabbed Bryan and thanked the cop then they slipped in.

The cop gave his forehead a good rub and felt utterly drained

Thankfully, the formal interrogation

was done and dusted There was no need to be as uptight as earlier, so he just let them all in!

Mr. Howard, being the victim's brother, was still up for grabs as a witness. The higher ups' take was to let Mr. Howard in first to see how he squared up against the suspect.

If it really helped move the case along, they'd haul him back to the station for the formal evidence submission process.

When people shuffled in, Elinor was reaching for the water cup on the bedside table.

Having chatted away with the cop, she felt a bit parched and needed a sip.

However, with her hands all wrapped up in bandages and still a bit swollen, she was as clumsy as a bear. Add to that, the cup was as slippery as an eel

The bandages offered no grip, making it a real struggle to grab the cup. Every time she got a handle on it, it would slip out of her grasp!

Just as she was getting flustered, a hand reached over, picked up the cup, and brought it to her lips.

She lifted her gaze to find the tall and handsome Theo..

There was a straw in the cup, all she needed to do was open her mouth to drink.

Elinor didn't accept Theo's offer to help her drink, thinking it was a bit much.

She insisted on taking the cup with her own clumsy hands, one holding the bottom, the other the side. She got a grip on the cup, then opened her mouth for a sip, soothing her dry throat.

She didn't forget to thank Theo for his kind gesture. "Thanks."

Her stubborn yet polite demeanor made Theo frown slightly. He was a bit miffed but didn't say anything.

The hand that just passed her the cup moved up and patted Elinor's head a few times, like a parent soothing a child, exuding a calming aura.

Elinor quietly sipped her water. After the pats on her head, she looked up at Theo, paused for a moment, then cracked a small smile.

Theo returned the smile.

That kind of understanding, not needing words to know what the other person was thinking, was indescribable.

At that moment, Patricia stood by her brother Balfour, watching Theo and Elinor communicate so naturally without words. Her beautiful eyes clouded over with disappointment. She turned and leaned into Balfour's embrace.

Balfour hugged Patricia tightly, patting her back gently to comfort her.

Then, he also looked over at Theo and Elinor, and a hint of determination flashed in his eyes.

He knew Patricia was top-notch in every way, but whenever it came to anything related to Theo, she became extremely vulnerable.

Every heartbreak and sorrow Patricia experienced was almost always because of that guy, Theo.

And now, Theo, who had already changed his mind, was exchanging flirty glances with Elinor right in front of Patricia. Wasn't that just twisting the knife in Patricia's heart?

Seeing Patricia being treated unfairly, Balfour decided to cut to the chase and interrupt their intense eye contact, his voice laced with sarcasm: "Miss Elinor, we meet again."

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Elinor turned to Balfour and said, "Seems like the check I gave you yesterday didn't do its job. Weren't we clear that you disappeared from my sight for a year after you took my money? It's not even 24 hours; why are you here again?"

Balfour, having experienced Elinor's unpredictable antics, wasn't surprised. He said seriously, "Ms. Mendoza, now's not the time for jokes. If it weren't for Patricia's case, I wouldn't bother you."

Elinor took a leisurely sip of water and said, "About Patricia's case, I've told the police everything. Mr. Howard, if you have any questions, you can ask the police directly."

Balfour looked at her with a polite yet cold gaze and said, "I'm here to speak with you with the police's consent."

Elinor: "Speak with me?"

Just then, a cop stepped forward and addressed Theo, who stood silently by the bedside, saying, "Mr. Blanchet, please step aside for a moment. We need to record a conversation between a new witness and the suspect."

Theo, with his hands casually tucked into his pockets, stood solid as a rock without uttering a word. His strong presence was spine-chilling.

The cop seemed a bit awkward seeing this: "Mr. Blanchet..."

Hearing the cop, Elinor glanced and said, "Theo, I'm done with my water. Could you put it away for me? Thanks! And go sit down somewhere; you must be tired of standing!"

Cuffed, she couldn't move her hands far apart; she awkwardly held the cup and extended her arm to hand it to Theo.

Theo calmly took the cup from her. But instead of putting it away, he just held it naturally in his hand.

Following Elinor's advice, he moved a chair, sat down at a distance, crossed his legs elegantly, rested his elbow on the armrest, propped his forehead, took a sip of water from the cup, and decided to see how Elinor would handle the situation.

Everyone in the room except the police was surprised by Theo's seemingly normal action!

The Theo they knew, who was always a clean freak and hated physical contact with others, was actually drinking from the same straw Elinor used and didn't seem to mind!

Patricia watched every move Theo made. Her eyes first showed tension, then became dim, and her fists unconsciously clenched.

Balfour could feel Patricia's disappointment. With a heavy heart, he held her hand, sat down with her on the sofa in the ward, gently patted her shoulder, and silently stood by her side.

The police were ready to record. The machine and manual recording were carried out simultaneously.

Balfour spoke, stating his purpose directly.

"Ms. Mendoza, you said before that you needed someone to testify that you'd met the criminal Zachary before, then you admitted your guilt, right? Now, I'm here to be that witness!"

Elinor yawned behind her hand, saying, "Sorry, what I need is a real witness, not a fake one."

Balfour remained calm. "Don't worry, I wouldn't confront you here without evidence."

Elinor leaned lazily against the head of the bed and said, "So, Mr. Howard, how are you going to prove that I've met that criminal?"

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Balfour sat up straight, leaning forward with his hands crossed between his knees, showcasing his serious demeanor. He slowly asked: "Before we proceed, may I ask Ms. Mendoza a few questions?"

Elinor casually responded, "Sure."

Balfour began his interrogation: "Two nights ago, Ms. Mendoza, you visited the Trent River, correct?"

Elinor nodded. "Yes, I was at the Trent River two nights ago."

Balfour continued, "May I ask why you went to Trent River, Ms. Mendoza? Were you feeling down and needed to clear your head?"

Elinor frowned. "Does my mood have anything to do with the case?"

A glint of meaning flashed in Balfour's eyes. "Indeed, please don't dodge my question, Ms. Mendoza. Speak honestly."

Elinor considered her mood at the time a complex mix of emotions hard to put into words. "I was just bored and wanted a breath of fresh air at the river. Is there a problem?"

Balfour cracked a small smile and said, "That night just so happened to be when my sister returned from overseas. Your husband, Theo, an old friend of Patricia's, arranged a feast for her at Pearl Moon. You were also at Pearl Moon that night, Ms. Mendoza. You saw it all, right?"

Theo's eyes narrowed as he slowly sipped his water, watching Elinor's reaction.

Elinor recalled the scene at Pearl Moon, full of pink tulips, and Patricia jumping out of the gift box and running towards Theo. She unconsciously frowned and fell silent.

“Ms. Mendoza, why aren’t you speaking? Don’t you want to admit you saw the grand and romantic feast your husband prepared for another woman?”

Balfour’s tone was mild, but his words stung.

Elinor felt the gaze of another man on her aside from Balfour.

She pulled herself together and looked at Balfour squarely, saying, “Yes, I was at Pearl Moon that day and saw what you’re talking about.

So what?”

Balfour’s smile disappeared as he abruptly stood up. “So, from that moment on, you considered Patricia your love rival and decided to hire a hitman to harm her, meeting Zachary at the Trent River and bribing him with money! You then informed Zachary about Patricia’s hospitalization immediately, letting him insult Patricia at the hospital in the middle of the night! Ms. Mendoza, am I correct?”

Elinor was taken aback, then

lightly laughed, “No, you’re mistaken. I neither had the time nor the money, and I’ve never met this Zachary you’re talking about! Mr. Howard, if you have no substantial evidence and are just interrogating me based on your assumptions, this is not an inquiry but a forceful questioning!”

“Ms. Mendoza, please stay calm; I’ll present the evidence right away.”

With a wave of his hand, Balfour’s secretary handed him a phone.

“Do you remember the internet celebrity who parked in a non–designated area at the Trent River the other night? She was live streaming at the Trent River and accidentally caught you, Ms. Mendoza, meeting with the wrongdoer. The live stream video is right here on this phone!

With video, comes truth!”

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Elinor wasn’t phased, nor did she buy what Balfour was saying.

How could she have been caught on tape doing something she’d never done? Was it some sort of illusion?

“Where’s this video? Let me see it,” she said coolly.

Balfour nodded subtly at his secretary, who turned on the TV in the room.

Then he started fiddling with his phone, casting the video onto the big screen for everyone to see.

The video showed a female influencer standing by the rails on the Bund, live streaming with her selfie stick.

Her angle just so happened to capture the street behind her, with Elinor unwittingly stepping into the frame.

There was Elinor, off to the right edge of the video, sitting alone on a bench by the Bund with a Coke in hand, gazing vaguely upward with an indiscernible expression.

But her solitude made the scene appear rather melancholic.

Seeing herself on the screen, Elinor frowned awkwardly and asked, "Isn't that just me?"

Balfour turned to her and said, "So, Ms. Mendoza, you admit that the person sitting on the bench in the corner of the frame is you?"

Elinor shrugged. "It's me; where's the bad guy you mentioned?"

"He's coming." Balfour said firmly, then began fast-forwarding the video until he paused again.

As the video returned to normal speed, a man distributing flyers strolled into the frame and took a seat next to Elinor.

He was wearing a striped shirt and glasses and was around 57" and a bit chubby.

After sitting for a while, the guy handed Elinor a flyer advertising a newly opened barbecue joint with grand opening discounts.

Elinor accepted the flyer absentmindedly and gave it a quick glance.

The guy suggested that she add him on social media and register as a member through his link for a free premium beef dish.

Feeling sorry for the guy working so late and making such an effort, Elinor agreed, scanning his QR code and signing up as a member of the barbecue joint.

She figured, What's the harm? Maybe she'd try the place out someday....

And this whole interaction was accidentally captured by the live streaming influencer!

But because they were quite a distance away and the wind by the riverside was strong, coupled with the influencer's focus on soliciting gifts from her viewers, the actual conversation between Elinor and the flyer guy couldn't be heard!

With their conversation not audible and the video only showing them sitting together, with Elinor scanning the guy's QR code,

It left a lot of room for speculation!

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The video stopped at this point, and a cop said with a stern face:

"Yep, that's the guy! That dude chatting with Elinor is the same jerk, Zachary, who tried to attack Ms. Howard last night!"

Then the cop turned and looked at Elinor, grilling her: "Elinor, have you got anything to say now?"

Elinor was stunned and silent, her lips quivering slightly. Wow, that was something! The person trying to frame her had this all figured

out!

Balfour was one sharp cookie; he started with a string of seemingly harmless questions, but every single one of them had a purpose: to make her motive seem plausible, hinting that she committed the crime out of jealousy, and then pulling out the evidence.

At this moment, Patricia saw that bad guy who almost hurt her on TV and flung herself into Balfour's arms, shivering with fear, her voice choked with tears.

"Bro, that's him. He was the one who tore at my clothes; he wanted to..."

Thinking of Patricia, whom he had cherished and protected since they were kids, Balfour's eyes flashed with anger. He gently comforted his frightened sister.

"Don't worry, it's all over now! I'm here; no one will dare to mess with you!"

Patricia was not only scared but also deeply hurt. "Bro, why did this happen? Why would Elinor want to hurt me? I really wanted to be friends with her."

Balfour gently stroked Patricia's hair and said softly, "You can't always judge a book by its cover. You need to be more guarded from now on, okay? Some people just aren't worth it."

Balfour appeared gentle, but in reality, he was quite cold.

To others, he was polite and well-mannered because of his upbringing and high standards for himself. But in reality, he was often expressionless.

To Patricia, Balfour's eyes were filled with real tenderness; he was always patient, comforting her, "It's okay, don't cry; I'm here; no one can hurt you."

"Bro..." Patricia gradually calmed down under Balfour's comforting words.

Bryan, who was standing by the side, hadn't spoken a word from the start. With his brother Balfour there, he didn't need to.

When he saw the irrefutable evidence that Elinor was the one who hired someone to hurt his sister, Bryan lost control. He looked at Elinor with anger and disappointment, approached her, and pointed at her, saying:

"Elinor, how could you do such a wicked thing? I thought you were a good person; I even defended you! How dare you hurt my sister? You're a girl too; how could you?"

Elinor lifted her eyes to look at the resentful Bryan. Her gaze was indifferent and cold; she didn't even want to argue.

Haillie stepped forward, pulling Bryan back and urging him to calm down. Then she sighed and said,

"Bryan, haven't I told you before? She's cunning, not a good person. But you just wouldn't listen; you always believed in her. Well, better late than never to see her true colors."

After saying this, Haillie turned to look at Theo, who was still silent. She felt a sense of satisfaction but pretended to be helpless, shaking her head and saying,

“Theo, you’re the same, always fooled by Elinor’s fake innocence. Thankfully, Patricia’s brother helped uncover the truth this time; otherwise, who knows how long you would have been left in the dark?”

Patricia got up from her brother’s arms, turned her head, and looked at the man sitting in the chair, his face serious and silent.

She wiped her tears and walked over to him, whispering comfortingly. “Theo, don’t be mad; Elinor might have just been confused.”

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Theo sat there, a straw still hanging out of his mouth, looking like he was sipping on water but not uttering a word.

The man remained silent, and Patricia thought he might not have heard her. So she moved closer, tugging at the corner of his shirt. “Mr. Blanchet, what’s going on?”

Theo still didn’t respond; he didn’t even look her way and seemed to be lost in thought..

Seeing Patricia being ignored, Balfour stepped forward, shielding Patricia and shooting Theo a disapproving glance before turning to Elinor on the hospital bed and saying:

“Ms. Mendoza, because you helped old Mr. Howard the other day, I can believe you’re not a bad egg and that you would lend a hand to a stranger in need. But when something threatens your interests, you’re not so kind-hearted. No matter who it is, you’ll act decisively, am I right?”

Elinor looked puzzled. “Threatening my interests? What interests of mine?”

Balfour squinted. “You think Patricia’s returning will threaten your status as Mrs. Blanchet, so you took action, didn’t you?”

Elinor was taken aback, then laughed, saying, “If she wants that title, she can have it.”

Theo, sitting beside her, furrowed his brows.

Balfour was taken aback, then a sarcastic smile appeared on his handsome face: “Ms. Mendoza, playing the generous one now won’t lessen your guilt.”

Elinor looked at him nonchalantly; even with handcuffs on, she appeared relaxed. “I’m not playing anything. I really don’t care about the title. Whoever likes it, can have it!”

Hearing her say this, Theo bit down on his straw, his gaze growing darker.

Aside from him, Balfour and everyone else in the room thought Elinor was just putting on airs!

How many women in the world wouldn’t want to be associated with Theo, wouldn’t dream of marrying into the Blanchet family, and wouldn’t enjoy the wealth and power a man could offer?

Especially for a country girl like Elinor, who's never seen the finer things in life, wouldn't she always fantasize about changing her fate?

Now that she's got the chance to claim that position, who would let go easily? Who would willingly give it up?

Her words just made her seem more fake!

Balfour scoffed, "Ms. Mendoza, are you sure you want to keep this up? I'll give you one last chance. If you admit to attacking Patricia, I can consider your help to old Mr. Howard and ask the court to be lenient."

Elinor yawned, "Thanks for the kind offer, Mr. Howard, but I'll pass!"

Balfour elegantly adjusted his eyebrows. Looking at her fearless ignorance, he laughed again. "Alright then, Ms. Mendoza, brace yourself for the worst."

At that moment, a police officer closed his notebook, stood up, and said, "Mr. Howard, thank you for your cooperation in our investigation. We'll need you to come with us to the station later to describe your process of evidence collection."

Balfour nodded. "Sure thing."

Then, the officer turned around, took out a pair of handcuffs, walked over to Elinor, locked one end around her slender ankle, secured the other end to the bed rail to prevent her from escaping, and then sternly told her:

"Elinor, we've got eyewitnesses, physical evidence, and your—much wanted secondary evidence. There's no use denying your crime anymore! Once your condition is stable enough for discharge, we will officially arrest you!"

Elinor scoffed lightly. "Whatever you say!"

Seeing the 'suspect' still acting so indifferent, the officer was a bit peeved and about to say something more when he heard the scraping sound of a chair leg on the floor behind him. Someone was getting up!

Instinctively, he turned around, and sure enough, Theo was on his feet, the tall figure walking towards him....

The man was expressionless, exuding a strong aura that was intimidating!