

The Kiss 41

Chapter 41

Tracy consoled her daughter, "Sheila, don't sweat it, Mom's got your back! We'll restore your reputation Now, no more tears."

Ellinor stood quietly nearby, watching the mother-daughter drama unfold before her. A smirk tugged at the corners of her mouth, and she let out a soft chuckle.

Upon hearing Ellinor's laughter, Sheila immediately stopped crying. She scowled, pointing a finger at Ellinor in accusation. "Ellinor, it's you! You've set me up

Ellinor put on an innocent face and shrugged. 'Sis, I'm just a lowly maid What power do I have to harm you? Hiring internet trolls is pricey, and I can't afford it."

Indeed, she didn't spend a dime and just used some technical tricks.

Sheila still glared at her angrily, "Even if you didn't hire internet trolls, you're the one driving a wedge between me and Dad. If you hadn't returned, Dad wouldn't have found out!"

Ellinor frowned, "Sis, wasn't it you who asked Dad to call me back?"

Sheila was speechless

Ellinor continued, "Besides, even if I hadn't come back today, Dad would've found out from the news anyway Sis, if you don't want people to know, don't do it in the first place"

Sheila had no comeback and could only continue to sob.

Tracy couldn't bear to see her daughter in such distress and revealed her true colors, 'Ellinor, stop throwing shade! Do you think you're a saint or something? You're just a little rat, always playing the good girl in front of your dad!"

"I know who I am, even if you don't. But I'm well aware of the kind of people you two are," said Ellinor calmly, with a faint smile, "Auntie Tracy, Sheila, do you know what this is? It's karma for your bad deeds!"

With that, she turned and left to find Arnold.

She had some words for her father.

Tracy was gritting her teeth in anger as she watched Ellinor strut away.

This little rat, Ellinor, dared to laugh at them!

Just wait and see, she'll get what's coming to her!

Tracy had always wanted to kick Ellinor out of the Mendoza family but never succeeded.

Although their family wasn't wealthy, they had a lot of property left by their ancestors. The rent alone was enough for them to live comfortably.

But how could Tracy tolerate this little outsider rat getting a piece of the pie?!

Before, Tracy tried to marry off Ellinor quickly, making her an outsider and losing her inheritance rights.

But the matchmaking for Ellinor kept hitting snags and dragging on until now.

It looked like she needed to come up with another plan to deal with this little rat soon.

She was a troublemaker in the house!

Arnold was fuming in his study when someone knocked on the door. He snapped, "Buzz off!"

"Dad, it's me."

Ellinor's sweet voice came through.

Arnold cooled down a bit, "Ellinor? Come in."

Gently, Ellinor opened the door to the study and walked in with a painting in her hand.

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Arnold was still fuming about Sheila's scandal making the trending list, his brows furrowed in frustration.

Ellinor quickly stepped in and gently reminded him, "Dad, don't sweat it. This whole drama won't be the talk of the town forever. Once the dust settles, it'll be forgotten"

"Mmm"

His youngest daughter was always the sensible one, saving him a lot of headaches

Arnold, with a gloomy look on his face due to recent hitches, let out a sigh, "Ellinor, you needed something?"

Nodding. Ellinor placed a painting on the table, "Dad, have a look at this painting"

As she spoke, she carefully peeled off the brown paper covering it, revealing an incredibly stunning piece

What she had brought was the painting "Whispers in the Wind," one of her mother's masterpieces, given to her by a certain gentleman.

Arnold froze for a moment upon seeing the painting, then asked excitedly. "Ellinor, this is Lady Lotus's masterpiece, Whispers in the Wind! I heard it was auctioned off for a whopping five million by some mysterious buyer! Where did you get this? Is it authentic?"

Ellinor replied calmly, "Yes, Dad, it's authentic. The man who bought this painting is my employer. He gifted it to me as a thank you for saving his grandmother's life"

Arnold was flabbergasted, "He just gave you a painting he spent five million on?"

Nonchalantly, Ellinor nodded, "Yes, he's loaded and incredibly devoted to his granny. To him, five million isn't a big deal."

"What a stroke of luck!" Arnold exclaimed, his hand tenderly tracing the lines of Whispers in the Wind, his gaze filled with fascination and a touch of melancholy as if the painting triggered some distant memory.

Noticing her father's changing emotions, Ellinor asked, "Dad, Lady Lotus, that was mom's pseudonym, right?"

Arnold stiffened, looking at her in shock, "How... how did you know?"

His daughter explained, "I remembered bits and pieces from when I was little. I found an old photo of Mom in the house and the name Lady Lotus was written on the back. The handwriting matched the signature on Lady Lotus's paintings."

So, that's how she found out...

Knowing the cat was out of the bag. Arnold admitted, "Yes, Lady Lotus was your mother."

Ellinor, already knowing the truth, probed further, "Dad, I noticed some of Lady Lotus's supposed posthumous works seem fresh, not like they've aged. Could mom still be alive?"

"Enough!"

Arnold cut her off sharply. "Your mother passed away when you were very young! The new-looking paintings you're talking about are probably fakes; someone is trying to cash in on Lady Lotus's style. And, Ellinor, never mention that your mother was Lady Lotus in public. Understood?"

Ellinor frowned, "Why? Why can't I mention her?"

Arnold was at a loss for words. After a moment of silence, he finally said impatiently. "Your mother wasn't my official wife. If you bring her up, people will start calling you an illegitimate child"

He always dodged questions about her mother and always changed the subject.

There must be some secret he's hiding.

Although her memories of her mother were hazy, Ellinor remembered her as a proud, aloof woman who would never settle for being the other woman!

She never believed the rumors about her mother being a mistress. Even if her mom had passed away, she was determined to uncover the truth and clear her mother's name. Leaving Whispers in the Wind with Arnold for safekeeping, Ellinor bid her father goodbye

She knew Arnold would take good care of her mother's masterpiece. She could tell that he still cared deeply for his deceased wife,

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She wasn't worried about Tracy and her daughter ruining her mother's paintings.

First off, they didn't even know that Lady Lotus, the painter, was her mom. Arnold had done a great job keeping it hush hush

Secondly, even if they knew, they wouldn't do anything to her mother's paintings.

Even though these two weren't fans of her mom, they sure did love money And with a painting worth five million, they'd treat it like their own treasure

After stepping out of her house, Ellinor walked alone towards the nearby bus stop, preparing to take the bus back to the Blanchet family's mansion.

While waiting for the bus, a black Mercedes-Benz slowly drove by and stopped right in front of her.

It was that old man's car

Oh, Lord! Why did she keep bumping into him? Was she unlucky or was it that he was always following her around?

Collin got out of the passenger seat and courteously opened the backseat door for her, saying "Please get in. Mr. Blanchet sent me to pick you up"

Seeing that Theo wasn't in the car, Ellinor immediately knew it wasn't a mere coincidence

Frowning unhappily, she asked Collin, "How did he know I was here? Did he have someone tailing me? Is he afraid I might run away?"

Collin seriously replied, "Ms. Mendoza, you mentioned yesterday on the phone that you would be back here today. That's why Mr. Blanchet asked me to wait for you here."

"Oh, I forgot Realizing she had no choice, Ellinor obediently got in the car and asked, "Where are you taking me to?"

As Collin took his seat, he turned to respond, "Mr. Blanchet asked me to pick you up for dinner and then take you both home."

Ellinor looked surprised and furrowed her brows, "What's up with him? Has he gone mad today? He's actually inviting me for dinner?"

Collin looked embarrassed and pulled a slight smile.

He was getting used to Ms. Mendoza's straightforwardness and honesty, so he seriously explained, "Old Mrs. Blanchet called Mr. Blanchet today, scolding him for always leaving you alone at home, so..."

"Ah, I see! I knew that weird man wouldn't really invite me to dinner."

Ellinor raised her eyebrow, "What are we having?"

Collin politely replied, "I'm not sure if Ms. Mendoza would like...."

Ellinor cut him off, "I don't! Tell the old man that I want BBQ!"

Collin was taken aback, his hand shaking on the steering wheel, "Alright... I'll tell Mr. Blanchet right away."

Ms. Mendoza was quite a character

Most women would be over the moon to have dinner with Mr. Blanchet, not being picky about the food.

And she actually asked Mr. Blanchet to have BBQ with her?

As far as Collin knew, Mr. Blanchet had never eaten BBQ in his life. That greasy stuff could really smoke someone out!

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At the entrance of the BBQ joint, Theo stepped out of the car and followed Ellinor inside

Standing by the car, Collin watched Theo's retreating figure with awe

When Ellinor said she wanted BBQ, he dialed Theo on autopilot, informing him of Ms. Mendoza's request. He didn't expect Theo to agree to ditch their upscale dinner reservation for a BBQ joint.

Theo's attitude towards Ellinor was clearly out of the ordinary

However, he wondered if Theo could stomach the smell of BBQ.

Inside the BBQ joint, the air was thick with the scent of grilled meat and smoke.

Ellinor sat by the window, pen in hand, ticking off dishes on the menu before looking up and asking Theo, "Can you handle spicy?"

Sitting across from her, Theo nodded and said, "Sure."

Ellinor acknowledged and chose the spicy seasoning.

*The seating in the BBQ joint was very close—
knit. You could hear the conversations of the people next to you clearly*

*"Look at that guy, he's so hot!**

"He really is!"

"Is that girl across from him his girlfriend? She looks a lot younger than him!"

"Maybe she's his sister."

"I'm so jealous, I wish I had a hot brother like that!"

"Well, I'm different. I don't want a brother, I want a husband that handsome!"

A handsome man in a suit, sitting in a BBQ joint, stood out and caught the attention of the female diners at nearby tables.

Theo looked around the noisy environment, his face stern, "Isn't there a quieter private room?"

Ellinor chuckled, "Who needs a private room for BBQ? It's supposed to be eaten in a bustling environment, that's when it's the best!"

Theo looked at her, not understanding but choosing to comply with her wishes.

After Ellinor finished ordering, she handed the menu to Theo, I'm done; anything else you want to add?"

Theo took the menu, handed it to the waitress, and said, "A bottle of mineral water, please."

The waitress had been staring at Theo's face until he gave her a puzzled and impatient look. She snapped out of it, took the menu, and awkwardly smiled, "Okay, sir, please wait a moment"

After the waitress left, Ellinor pulled out her phone to play games while waiting for the food. She and Theo had nothing in common to discuss

Suddenly, there was a knock on the window

Ellinor looked over and saw Belinda standing outside the BBQ joint, her face pressed to the window, looking at them in surprise and joy.

Upon closer inspection, Ellinor noticed two other people beside Belinda. One was the curly haired bombshell with Theo at the Twilight Bar yesterday, and the other was the online friend who almost tripped her.

Belinda soon excitedly rushed into the BBQ joint to find them, "Uncle, I thought I had mistaken you! I didn't expect you to dine in such a small restaurant!"

Theo looked at Ellinor seriously, nodding slightly, "She wanted to eat here."

His

tone was flat, but that short sentence shocked the young man and the woman with curly hair who had followed Belinda....

So he was willing to come here because she wanted to eat here Has Ellinor really achieved such a high status in Theo's eyes?

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Belinda looked at Ellinor with admiration and awe,

"Ellinor, you are amazing! My uncle only eats at upscale restaurants, and you're the only one who can make him willing to stay in this crowded, noisy barbecue place!"

Ellinor pulled a half-hearted smile

It was not that she had any unique ability, it was just that he needed Ellinor to play lovey dovey with him in front of Marissa, that was why he generously invited her to dinner Theo glanced at Belinda coldly. "Didn't I tell you to reflect on your actions at home? Who allowed you to come out?"

Belinda pouted and stuck out her tongue, "I don't want to reflect at home! I got dumped by my boyfriend, and I'm not even married, I'm already unlucky enough! Uncle, how can you bear to let me stay at home bored"

Theo ignored her, looking at the curly haired woman and the young man beside her.

Byran looked at Theo, his eyes full of admiration, and greeted. "Hello, Theo."

Theo nodded slightly in response, "Why are you three together? Where have you been?"

The curly-

*haired woman flashed a charming smile, adjusting her hair as she stepped forward, "Theo, Byran, and I were shopping and just bumped into Belinda at a nearby mall **

Theo responded indifferently, without further comment.

The curly-

haired woman glanced at the new food on their table and enthusiastically said, "Theo, it seems you just started eating. We are also looking for a place to eat, why don't we eat together?"

Theo didn't answer but turned to look at Ellinor.

Ellinor was concentrating on grilling the meat. Realizing that Theo was looking at her, she immediately understood his meaning and casually said "Sure, I don't mind!"

After all, this meal was on Theo's dime, she was just here to eat. She didn't care about anything else.

After Ellinor expressed her opinion, Theo agreed, "Sit down then"

Watching the interaction between the two, the curly-haired woman looked a bit gloomy.

Belinda affectionately sat beside Ellinor, and the curly haired woman sat beside Theo.

Since there were only four seats, Byran had to sit on a chair brought over by the waiter

After ordering different vegetables and meats, the curly-haired woman smiled and greeted Ellinor, "Hello. I'm Haillie Knotts, a long-time good friend of Theo."

Ellinor took a sip of water and nodded in response, "Hello."

Belinda looked at Ellinor with passionate admiration, "Ellinor, I forgot to ask you yesterday, how are you so good at video games? Did you study it before? You're really amazing!"

Before Ellinor could respond, Byran scoffed, "Hmph, being good at video games makes her your goddess? Belinda, what kind of taste is that!"

Belinda frowned unhappily and glared at Byran, "My goddess is Ellinor, what's it to you! You think your taste is so high, who's your goddess?"

Byran raised his eyebrows proudly. "Do you know one of the two top hackers in the world, Snow Bunny? That's the goddess in my heart! She will also be my future wife! I will definitely win her over and spoil her!"

Upon hearing this, Ellinor almost spat out the beef she just put in her mouth, coughing nonstop

Belinda immediately became nervous, Auntie, are you alright?"

Theo, who was being roped into a conversation by Haillie, instantly looked over when he heard Ellinor's cough. He handed her a tissue, instructing her to spit out the food before coughing.

"Don't rush, no one is racing you to eat"

Haillie was stunned. She had never seen Theo care for a woman like this!

Byran sneered, "Really, such a drama queen!"

Haillie quickly intervened, "Byran, how can you talk like that! Ellinor was really choked"

Byran was dismissive,

“Choked on a barbecue! I think she’s just putting on an act! Trying to look weak on purpose!”

Haillie sighed, “You kid.”

Ellinor wiped her mouth, stood up, and said, “Excuse me, I need to use the restroom.”

Haillie also stood up. “Ellinor, let me accompany you!”

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“Auntie, I wanna go too! Belinda stood up, wanting to follow Ellinor, but Byran blocked her by stretching his leg across the seat

Annoyed, Belinda said. “Byran, what are you doing? Move it!”

Byran smirked. “You wanna get past? Well, why don’t you hop over!”

Belinda helplessly said, “Uncle, look at him.”

Theo’s gaze shifted

from Ellinor’s disappearing figure back to the two. With a stern look, they immediately quieted down, not daring to bicker anymore.

Bathroom

Ellinor exited the toilet and went to the sink to wash her hands.

Seeing her coming out, Haillie handed her the coat she just took off, saying awkwardly,

“Ellinor, could you hold my coat for a bit? I just realized there’s nowhere to hang it in here”

Ellinor nodded, dried her hands with a paper towel, and took her coat

Haillie also came out from the toilet in a bit of a while.

Washing her hands, she looked

apologetically at Ellinor and said, “Ellinor, Byran has always been blunt. Don’t take his words at the table to heart.”

Ellinor raised an eyebrow, “Hmm? What did he say?”

Stunned, Haillie smiled, “If you don’t care, that’s great! Ellinor, you’re so easy-going!”

Ellinor also smiled, ‘Am I? You flatter me.’”

Today’s Haillie was different from the one at the bar last night, she was dressed more casually, and her makeup was exquisite, enhancing her natural beauty.

Ellinor thought this must be the sister that Byran mentioned. Byran tripped her yesterday for this sister, causing her to fall onto Theo.

However, suppose Haillie really liked Theo, and Theo liked her, why wouldn’t he marry Haillie and introduce her to the elders of the Blanchet family?

It was perplexing

Haillie had finished washing her hands and reached for a paper towel but accidentally knocked the box in to the trash bin...

She sighed in embarrassment, "Oh no! The towels are unusable now! Ellinor, I must bother you with my coat again, my hands are still wet."

Ellinor was indifferent, "Hmm, no problem"

Theo was gone when they returned to the table, leaving only Belinda and Byran arguing.

Haillie looked around and confusedly asked, "Byran, Belinda, why is it just you two left? Where's Theo?"

Belinda replied, "He went out to take a call it's too noisy here"

"Oh, I see Haillie's eyes drifted towards the window, seemingly searching for Theo..."

Ellinor, unconcerned, sat back in her original spot and continued to enjoy her barbecue.

After a while, when everyone was almost done eating. Theo still hadn't returned

Belinda suggested everyone go outside for some fresh air and wait for Theo there, as the barbecue shop was getting hot.

Everyone agreed with her idea.

As they were about to leave, Haillie stood up, put on her coat, and reached into her pocket, and her face suddenly changed, "Oh no! Where's my watch?"

Belinda helped her look for it on the table and under it. "There's nothing on the table or on the floor! Haillie, are you sure you brought it today?"

Haillie shook her head firmly. "No! I'm sure I wore it. I took it off because it was inconvenient while eating barbecue and put it in my coat pocket! What should I do? I could

live with it if it was something else, but that watch is essential. It was the last birthday gift my grandfather gave me before he passed away!"

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Belinda showed a hint of sympathy, "Hey, don't panic, let's help you look for it"

Ellinor squinted seeming to have foreseen what was about to happen.

Byran also started to help search then Suddenly, as if he remembered something, he looked at Ellinor with suspicious eyes and questioned, "Oh weren't you the one who brought back Haillie's coat?"

Ellinor nodded. "Yes, I did. Got a problem with that?"

Byran's eyes showed a hint of contempt. "Then why didn't you return Haillie's wristwatch to her?"

Ellinor remained calm, "I didn't take it, so what am I supposed to return?"

Byran suddenly grabbed Ellinor's arm, as if afraid she would run away, "From the beginning to end, you were the only one who touched Haillie's coat. If you didn't take it, then who did?"

Ellinor remained calm, "When going to the restroom, she asked me to hold it for her; I just did her a favor"

Byran scoffed. "Then, you took the opportunity to rob someone's pocket!"

Ellinor remained calm, "I didn't."

Clearly, Byran didn't believe her, he threatened, "Your words don't count! If you didn't take it, dare to let us search you?"

Belinda pushed Byran away unhappily.

"Have you lost your mind! How could my aunt steal a watch! My uncle would buy it if she really likes it!"

Byran scorned with a sneer, "Then she should agree to the search! To prove her innocence!"

"No search, why should we let you search! Searching in public is an insult!" Belinda stood firmly before Ellinor, determined not to

Yesterday at the bar, her aunt risked herself to save her, today, she would protect her aunt no matter what!

Feeling that Belinda was in the way, Byran tried to pull her aside. In the scuffle, Ellinor had been pushed back a step...

With a thump, something fell onto the ground

Het him approach.

Byran

let go of Belinda and picked up the thing that fell next to Ellinor, his eyes wide open, "What's this? Do you still dare to say you didn't take it? You look so innocent, but you're actually a thief! You don't deserve to marry Theol

Haillie looked at Ellinor with disbelief, "Ellinor, did you take it?"

Ellinor didn't know where the watch fell, she furrowed her brows.

She looked at Haillie and gently curled her lips, "Whether I took this watch myself or you deliberately put it on me, Haillie, you should know better than me, right?"

Haillie feigned innocence, "Ellinor, what are you talking about? Why would I do such a thing?"

Byran couldn't help but interject,

"Enough is enough! The watch clearly fell from you, you not only deny it but even dare to slander Haillie!"

The BBQ shop crowd had gathered around to watch the show, all eyes were on Ellinor, and whispers filled the room....

"Aren't they at the same table? Why would she steal from a friend?"

"That girl doesn't seem like the type!"

"Hah, in this world, you can't just judge by appearances!"

"What's going on?" A cold voice suddenly rang out.

Theo's presence made the atmosphere instantly drop.

This man's aura was too strong, the crowd naturally parted to make way for him.

Belinda quickly ran to Theo and said. "Uncle, you're finally back! Byran keeps saying my aunt Ellinor stole Haillie's watch, he even wanted to search her!"

Byran wasn't afraid, he held up the evidence and said: "Theo, bro, I'm not slandering her! Haillie's watch fell from Ellinor, everyone here saw it!"

Theo looked down at the watch, then looked at Ellinor. His expression was inscrutable; he asked sincerely: "Did you steal this?"

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Was this guy starting to doubt her, too, just like Byran?

They were just a couple for the show so they have no absolute trust.

Ellinor was a bit disappointed but didn't really give a hoot. She shook her head and coolly replied, "I didn't nab it."

Theo's face was poker-faced, he just casually nodded and said, "Alright, let's bounce."

The food in the barbecue joint was strong-smelling, and the place was hot and noisy, not his cup of tea.

They were about to leave, Byran paused, and his brow furrowed lighter.

He couldn't swallow that it would end like this, he stepped in front of Theo and said, "Theo, she's a thief, how can you still trust her?"

Theo squinted, "The thing wasn't stolen. What do you want her to do?"

Byran stubbornly said, "But she's a thief! Theo, how can you let a thief stick around you!"

Theo's face turned icy, he coldly asked, "Who are you calling a thief?"

Byran was a bit scared, but he still firmly pointed at Ellinor, "Her..."

Theo's face turned stern, "Say that again?"

Haillie stepped forward, softly saying. That's enough, Byran, don't say any more. I feel bad for causing such a fuss over my watch."

She took the watch from Byran and walked up to Ellinor...

"Ellinor, if you fancy this watch, I can give it to you"

After saying this, Haillie put the watch on Ellinor's wrist, smiling, "Consider it a gift for our first meeting"
Byran frowned. "Haillie, she's a thief, why are you gifting her
your
watch!"

Haillie looked helplessly at Byran, "Byran, don't say that. Ellinor probably didn't mean to."

Byran mumbled discontentedly. "Hallie, you're too kind"

Ellinor looked at the watch on her wrist; it was delicate and beautiful, encrusted with a few large diamonds.

She laughed like she had gotten a treasure, appreciating the watch for a while, and then looked up at Haillie, "Is it okay? Isn't this the last gift your grandfather gave you before he died? Can you really give me such an important thing?"

Seeing Ellinor's naive expression, Haillie suddenly felt she was just ordinary, she smiled and said, "Of course. The watch is precious to me, but as long as it doesn't fall into strangers hands, I don't mind. Ellinor, I think we have a unique bond. So, gifting it to you is another kind of memory"

Ellinor smiled lightly and raised her eyebrows, "Then I should accept your kindness?"

Byran didn't like the fake and materialistic side of Ellinor, he scoffed, "You actually took it!"

Ellinor just gave Byran a glance, ignoring him. She lifted her arm, swung the watch, and asked Theo, "Honey, if I say I like this watch, would you buy one for me?" The term "honey" gave Theo a jolt.

He raised his eyebrows slightly, looking at her intensely. "Sure."

"That's good!" Ellinor nodded in satisfaction, carefully took off the watch, and tossed it directly into the barbeque dish on the table!

Her action stunned everyone present, it was an expensive watch!

Haillie was in shock, her whole body trembling. "My watch..."

Byran shouted in surprise and anger, "Ellinor, what are you doing!"

Ellinor calmly took a napkin from the table, carefully wiping her wrist and fingers, her expression as if she had just touched something disgusting.

After cleaning her hands, Ellinor threw away the napkin, then said to Theo, "Honey, you don't have to buy me any watch, just compensate Haillie for her watch!" After saying that, she turned around and left, leaving alone.

Haillie could no longer keep up her smile, she said awkwardly. "Theo, why is Ellinor acting like this..."

Theo watched Ellinor's retreating figure with a hint of amusement in his eyes.

He looked at Haillie, his expression returning to normal, "That's just how she is, straightforward. Send the watch's price to Collin, he will compensate you ten times later."

Haillie was stunned, she said sadly, "Theo, we've known each other for so many years; you know I don't care about the money of a watch, but that watch really meant a lot to me Isn't Ellinor being a bit too much?"

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Theo squinted his eyes slightly and retorted, "If it's so important, why did you just hand it over to someone else so easily? Since you've given it to someone else, how it's dealt with is her business."

Haillie looked absolutely livid..

Byran explained to Haillie, "Theo, that woman, she..."

Theo sternly shot him, "And you, if you slander my wife again in front of me, don't even think about calling me your friend"

Wife? Theo actually referred to Ellinor as his wife!

Byran was utterly stunned!

Theo had already turned to leave.

Byran clenched his fists in frustration and shouted, "Then, if she's your wife, then what does my sister mean to you?"

Theo paused briefly but didn't answer and quickly walked towards Ellinor.

Belinda snapped out of her daze and humed to catch up. "Uncle, Auntie, wait for me!"

Both Haillie and Byran looked extremely upset...

The onlookers were whispering amongst themselves. Annoyed, Byran glared at them and rudely said, "What are you all looking at? Go eat your barbecue!"

They first sent Belinda home.

With the chatterbox gone, the car became unusually quiet.

Ellinor rolled down the window and enjoyed the cool night breeze.

"That watch just now was worth a million."

Upon hearing Theo's calm voice, Ellinor sneered, "My innocence is priceless!"

Theo smiled faintly, "So, I still owe you this time?"

Ellinor gave him a resentful look, "Do you also suspect that I took Haillie's watch?"

Theo gazed at her, "Does it matter if I suspect you?"

Ellinor frowned, "Although we're a fake couple, we are real partners! I believe there needs to be basic trust between partners. Otherwise, our collaboration won't be pleasant!"

Theo nodded calmly, "Hmm, you make a good point. But I didn't suspect you today."

'Really?' Ellinor's eyes lit up, a little skeptical

Theo reached out to smooth a few strands of hair that the breeze had ruffled on her head, "If you're fond of money, my stuff would be worth more. You could take it directly from my house, no need for all this hassle."

Ellinor laughed, "What if I plan to pack up everything valuable in your house after the three months?"

Theo's usually aloof expression softened, "Everything at home is old, nothing good. If you need something, tell me, and I'll have someone buy you a new one!"

Huh, he had said before that he could give her anything except for his feelings within these three months. He really wasn't kidding!

Ellinor sighed, "I just want these three months to end as soon as possible!"

Theo's gaze darkened, his eyes narrowing in displeasure, "So, being with me for three months is a burden to you?!"

Ellinor frowned, "It's just too much trouble! Your rich people's lives are too complicated, I don't want to get involved!"

Theo watched Ellinor's annoyed face, a hint of displeasure creeping into his heart.

Did this girl really detest his family that much?

Beep beep!

Ellinor's phone suddenly received a text message.

She picked up her phone and saw it was from an unknown number – [If you don't want your relationship with Theo to be exposed, let's meet at the coffee shop under the bridge at 3 pm tomorrow!]

The message also included a photo of her and Theo sitting across from each other at the barbecue restaurant. Judging from the angle of the image, it was taken from outside the restaurant window

Ellinor frowned, who was messing around?

Chapter 50

The next day at 3 pm., Ellinor rolled up to the agreed-upon café.

It was a humble yet classy joint, eerily quiet on the inside.

Just a couple seemingly on a date and a bespectacled guy bustling away were the only other patrons in sight.

Ellinor picked a random spot, ordered herself a cup of coffee and a dessert, and started people watching as she enjoyed her treats

The pair appeared to be having a date, asking each other about their preferences, nothing suspicious about them.

The bespectacled guy was also constantly hammering away at his laptop, completely engrossed in his work.

She wondered, who could have sent her the text? Or, had the person not arrived yet?

"Ellinor!"

At the sound of a familiar voice, Ellinor looked up, "Mr. Morgan?"

It was her boss from her internship, Morgan.

Morgan seemed to have packed on a few extra pounds, he had a wide grin on his face, 'Ellinor, it's been ages.'

Even though Ellinor hadn't quit that long ago.

Could Morgan be the one who texted her?

Ellinor decided to test the waters, "Morgan, what brings you here?"

Morgan plonked himself down, all gleeful, 'Ellinor, it was me who wanted to see you'

Ellinor took a sip from her coffee, "So it was you who texted me yesterday?"

Morgan gave her a nod, "Yep, it was me! I know all about what happened between you and Mr. Blanchet."

Ellinor arched an eyebrow, "So what?"

Morgan grinned, "Ellinor, I need to tell you, because Mr. Blanchet didn't agree to cooperate with our company on the new project last time, I got axed. I believe you had a hand in this too!"

Ellinor remained nonchalant, "My fault? Morgan, you've got it all twisted. As far as I know, it was your cousin Debby who messed up by gaming on the job and got our system hacked, I was just the scapegoat. I haven't even settled scores with you guys, and here you are blaming me?"

Morgan was taken aback. He didn't expect Ellinor to know about what happened after he got fired in such detail. He coughed awkwardly, "It's all water under the bridge, who's to blame doesn't really matter now! Ellinor, do you know how hard it was for me to climb up from a nobody to a manager's position? At my age, it's hard to land another good job, and I have a family to feed..."

Ellinor cut him off, not wanting to hear any more of his sob story, "Morgan, spit it out if you've got something to say!"

Morgan, seeing she was all business, got straight to the point, "I saw you in Mr. Blanchet's car the other day, and just yesterday I saw you dining with him. I know you're tight with Mr. Blanchet! So, I was hoping you could do me a favor."

Ellinor was a tad curious, "What can I do for you?"

Morgan gave her a sly smile, "Ellinor, considering your special relationship with Mr. Blanchet, it should be easy for you to persuade him, right? As long as you can get Mr. Blanchet to agree to work with Nexus Industries again, they'll let me have my old job back!"

Ellinor got his drift, "And if I refuse?"

Morgan was full of confidence, his eyes narrowing into slits, "I've done my homework, Mr. Blanchet got hit not long ago. Ellinor, what do you think would happen if Mr. Blanchet's legit wife finds out about his side chick?"

His legit wife?