

The Kiss 501

Chapter 501

How

could Hailie possibly say no to the man she fancied? She nodded gently and said, "Sure thing, Balfour. Do n't you worry, I'll get Patricia right away."

A feeling of indescribable joy washed over her. The fact that Balfour entrusted her with taking care of Patricia affirmed her special place in his heart.

As for Ellinor, she was just an average secretary.

After Haillie left, Balfour glanced at the remaining crowd. His eyes were polite but cold, "Anyone else here for the show?"

The crowd fell silent. Everyone quickly caught his drift and left.

Balfour turned to Ellinor, "Ms. Mendoza, how do you feel about running into someone you'd rather not see?"

Ellinor could sense the sarcasm in his words, but she simply replied, "Not great."

Balfour smirked, "Ms. Mendoza, you're brutally honest."

Ellinor sighed, "Mr. Howard, if there's nothing else for me to do here, can I knock off early?"

Balfour looked at her, "Taxis are hard to come by around here. How do you plan on getting home?"

Ellinor was aware that it was indeed hard to hail a taxi in this affluent neighborhood. She initially planned to call Chase for a ride, but she couldn't let Balfour know about her connection with the Crescent Society. Otherwise, she'd lose her job as a secretary.

"Don't worry, I can book a ride online."

"An online ride?" Balfour scoffed, "Ms. Mendoza, you're a full-time employee of the Howard Group now. If something happens to you on your way home, the company will not only be responsible but also be blamed by the public. Are you trying to cause trouble for the company?"

Ellinor forced a smile. Was he cursing her? Why would she get into an accident so easily on the road?

If he was truly concerned about the safety of his employees, Balfour could have arranged for someone to give her a lift home.

But he didn't. That proved he wasn't genuinely concerned her; he was just being difficult.

"Fine, I'll wait until the party's over and leave with you."

Balfour nodded and stood up to leave.

Ellinor followed him. After a while, she spotted a restroom.

"Mr. Howard, I need to use the restroom."

"Go ahead."

Ellinor entered the restroom, locked the door, and let out a long sigh of relief. She was sweating bullets.

She sat on the toilet lid, lifted her skirt, and saw a large scrape on her thigh that was raw and bloody.

She got it when she climbed out of the window from one room to another. She hit a broken window edge, which hurt so bad, but she kept a poker face, afraid that someone might find out about her escapade.

After cleaning and tending to her wound, Ellinor exited the restroom.

But Balfour was nowhere to be seen.

She figured, why would Balfour wait for an insignificant secretary like her?

Moreover, Balfour was genuinely annoyed by her.

Whatever, she didn't care about Balfour at the moment. She just wanted to find a spot downstairs to sit and rest.

Ellinor slowly headed toward the stairs. No one could tell she was injured.

Suddenly, a large hand landed on her shoulder. The palm was rough and slightly cold.

Who was it?

Ellinor jumped out of her skin!

Chapter 502

"Ellinor, I knew it was you!"

Ellinor was stunned to see Bartlett Rex's handsome face for a moment and then breathed a sigh of relief, "So it's you!"

Bartlett smiled, "What's the matter? Who did you think it was?"

"Nothing; you just scared me a bit by popping up out of nowhere."

Was she scared that Theo would come back to find her?

She was overthinking things.

Bartlett gracefully walked over to her, "Ellinor, do you remember the last time we met? That day I asked you when we could meet again, and you said it depended on fate. Today we met here; doesn't this mean it's fate for us to be together?"

Ellinor scoffed. "Well, it's quite a coincidence."

Bartlett

feigned dissatisfaction and furrowed his eyebrows, "You sound so nonchalant! Aren't you happy at all to see me?"

Ellinor yawned, "Am I supposed to feel happy?"

Bartlett sighed. He suddenly leaned closer to her, "But I feel really happy to see you!"

Ellinor showed no expression, "Oh, really?"

Bartlett's affectionate eyes stared at her for a good half a minute, but it didn't move her at all.

He obviously felt a bit disappointed, but he still smiled, "Ellinor, the previous times I saw you, you were always casually dressed. This is the first time I've seen you dressed up so nicely; you look beautiful."

"Thanks."

Ellinor went downstairs and looked around, but couldn't find any more quiet spots in the banquet hall; every couch or seating area was occupied with people chatting.

She didn't want to disturb others or become the topic of their conversation.

As she came down from upstairs, Bartlett, looking relaxed, was still following her. She didn't know if he had anything to do.

Ellinor turned her head to ask him, "Bartlett, have you seen Balfour?"

Bartlett raised his eyebrows, "Why do you need to see Balfour?"

"He's my boss now. I'm his secretary and I came here with him today."

Bartlett seemed quite surprised, "Ellinor, when did you become Balfour's secretary?"

"Just a couple of days ago."

"Hmm? Is it for Lady Lotus's painting?" Bartlett looked at her.

It was Bartlett who told her about the relationship between Lady Lotus and Balfour, so Ellinor didn't plan to hide her purpose from. Bartlett, in fact, she couldn't.

"Exactly! Please don't blab about this in front of Mr. Howard."

"I certainly won't." Bartlett chuckled.

"Thanks, Mr. Bartlett!"

"Just call me Bartlett!"

Ellinor thought for a moment. Considering the accurate information Bartlett provided, she decided to go along with his wish, "Alright then! Thanks, Bartlett."

Chapter 503

Bartlett seemed a bit spaced out.

Then he smiled contentedly, "No worries, Ellinor. I just rushed over after finishing work. Jonah Wyton called me and told me that they're hanging out at the Pavilion in Pearl Moon. I figure Balfour must've been summoned as well. Wanna tag along and find your boss?"

Mr. Howard might be with Jonah and the others, and since Theo had definitely left, she wouldn't run into him again. Considering this, Ellinor nodded, "Sure, let's roll!"

The Pavilion of Pearl Moon was a separate villa within the estate, a good distance from the party venue, and quite peaceful.

Ellinor followed Bartlett into the Pavilion. Right at the entrance, she spotted three men engrossed in a game of poker, with Balfour among them.

Bartlett chuckled, "What are you guys up to?"

"Bartlett, you're just in time, Join us!" Jonah laid down his cards, glanced up, and saw Ellinor by Bartlett's side. He was taken aback for a moment, then joked in surprise, "Bartlett, your lady friend looks familiar!"

Bartlett clarified, "Don't get it twisted. This lady friend is my secretary Angel. Ellinor came today as Balfour's companion. I just ran into her looking for Balfour, so I brought her over."

Jonah looked even more puzzled and turned to Balfour, "Balfour, is that right?"

"Yes, Ms. Mendoza is currently my secretary" Balfour replied calmly.

Ellinor had reappeared as Balfour's secretary after leaving the Blanchet family?

Things were getting interesting!

Jonah gazed at Ellinor for a moment, then turned towards the window, making a face, Theo, an old friend of yours is here. Aren't you coming over for a chat?"

Ellinor was stunned when she heard Jonah say this.

Theo hadn't left yet?

She turned her head and saw Theo lounging lazily by the window with a cigarette in his hand, surrounded by smoke, looking like a

heartless statue.

He just hadn't joined their poker game, but he hadn't left Pearl Moon.

By the time Ellinor snapped back to reality, Bartlett had already led her to a seat.

As she sat on the couch watching the men play poker, she couldn't shake off the feeling of an icy gaze fixed on her.

It was uncomfortable, like sitting on pins and needles or having a fish bone stuck in her throat..

Plus, she was feeling a bit tired now. Pregnancy made her easily fatigued; she had an injury on her leg, and she was simply not feeling well.

Bartlett noticed her discomfort and asked, "Ellinor, what's wrong? Are you feeling unwell?"

Ellinor shook her head, "No, I'm just a bit parched."

Bartlett immediately got up to pour her a glass of water, "Here."

"Thanks." Ellinor took the glass.

Bartlett's thoughtfulness was touching.

She took a sip of water and felt slightly better.

After Bartlett sat down again, he suddenly leaned over and whispered, "If you're not feeling well, I can take you home first."

I remember that today should be your period. Are you feeling unwell because of that?"

Ellinor was taken aback and surprised at Bartlett's words.

She didn't feel embarrassed. Having periods was a normal thing for girls. She just found it curious, "Why would you remember my period?"

Bartlett chuckled and whispered in her ear, "Don't you remember? The first time you came to my gallery, it was because you were feeling unwell due to your period. And that day was four months ago today."

Chapter 504

Ellinor smirked, "Bartlett, I've gotta say, you're a real bore sometimes. So boring that you can actually remember stuff like that."

Bartlett replied calmly, "I didn't make an effort to remember, it's just that I can't forget that day. To me, it was like our first date, Ellinor."

Date? What date?

She was a married woman then, albeit just in a business partnership with Theo. But if that could be counted as a date, wouldn't that be betrayal?

Ellinor didn't want to chat with Bartlett anymore. Every word he said was like a tease. Too bad he picked the wrong girl. She wasn't falling for his tricks.

Across the table, Balfour was busy rearranging his poker cards. He looked up to find Ellinor and Bartlett whispering and a hint of disdain appeared in his eyes.

Haillie often mentioned that Ellinor was a man-magnet and was always ready to flirt when given the chance. He was skeptical, as Ellinor didn't strike him as a frivolous girl.

But now, even a seasoned player like Bartlett couldn't resist her charm. There was no denying that Ellinor had some tricks up her sleeve.

Balfour was growing a distaste for his new secretary.

Suddenly, a ringtone echoed in the room, followed by intermittent vibrations.

Balfour glanced at the caller ID and picked up. "What's up? Alright, I'll be right there!"

After hanging up, Balfour turned to Ellinor, "Ms. Mendoza."

Ellinor put down her glass and stood up, "Yes, Mr. Howard?"

Balfour commanded, "Mind the cards for me; I've gotta step out for a bit."

Even though she was reluctant, Ellinor had no choice but to comply, "Alright."

She took over the deck of cards from Balfour and took his seat at the table.

After Balfour left, Jonah Wyton seemed quite excited. He raised an eyebrow and had a smirk on his face as he began teasing Ellinor, "You know how to play poker? Are you brave enough to take over Mr. Howard's place?"

Ellinor answered, "A little."

Jonah Wyton chuckled, "Well, let's see how you do. Don't cry if you lose all of Mr. Howard's money!"

Ellinor sighed, "I'll do my best."

After Jonah played a card, he pointed at Ellinor, "Your turn, Ms. Mendoza!"

Ellinor looked at Jonah's card, adjusted her own, and played a card.

Jonah checked her card and saw that she had made no mistake. She seemed to know the game.)

Bartlett was also at the table, but he didn't want to get involved and just played his cards casually

Kemp Larios and Jonah were obviously on the same team. They stayed quiet but played aggressively.

Who would've thought? Ellinor surprisingly won after a few rounds.

The men at the table looked at her differently now, with a mix of admiration and doubt.

Her poker skills were far from novice level.

Furthermore, Ellinor remained expressionless throughout. She even yawned occasionally and seemed distracted while playing.

And she still won?!

It was like a silent slap in their faces.

Jonah frowned, "Why did you say you only knew a little with skills like this?"

Ellinor gave a slight smile, "No, it's Mr. Howard who's lucky. The cards were good."

Jonah chuckled, "Oh! You're being modest. Let's see how you fare in the next round! Since you're so good at poker, how about we raise the stakes?"

Ellinor didn't take the bait, "If you want to up the ante, you can wait for Mr. Howard. I'm just an employee; I don't have the money or the authority. I'm just here to hold on to Mr. Howard's stake and won't raise."

Jonah wasn't going to let her off the hook, "No problem, we don't have to bet money! The next round is on you. Are you up for a bet against us?"

Ellinor shook her head, "No."

Chapter 505

Jonah obviously wasn't pleased, "Huh, you're just a secretary, yet you're so full of yourself, interesting! When your boss comes back, I'll ask him to hand you over to me. You'll be my secretary tomorrow, and I'll teach you a thing or two! Do you think Balfour will agree?"

Ellinor was speechless.

Well, that was hard to say.

The main reason Balfour kept her was because she successfully negotiated a major collaboration between the Howard Group and Arab clients. Now that the contract had been signed, they could easily replace her for the follow-up work.

Furthermore, Balfour had clearly expressed his dissatisfaction with her. He could really give her away as a gift to a friend.

Absolutely not! She had to stay with the Howard Group to conveniently investigate the real reason her mother was kicked out of the Howard family years ago.

Jonah's provocation did put some pressure on Ellinor.

After some thought, Ellinor asked, "Mr. Wyton, what do you want to bet?"

Jonah's wicked face broke into a triumphant smile. He said very sarcastically, "I know it's not easy to land a new job. You might be tight on cash. Let's bet on a striptease then! Whoever loses will do a little dance here. Sound good?"

Upon hearing the bet was a striptease, Bartlett gallantly spoke up for Ellinor, "Jonah, that's a bit over the top! Ellinor's a lady, don't bully her."

Jonah didn't care, "Bartlett, do you think she can't play cards? Maybe I'll be the one losing! Then you'll be in for a treat when I put on a dance!"

Kemp indignantly said, "No one wants to see you strip."

Jonah confidently replied, "Then it'll have to be Ms. Mendoza's show!"

Ignoring Jonah, Bartlett turned to Ellinor and said. "Ellinor, don't push yourself. It's okay to say no."

Ellinor thought for a moment, then sighed helplessly, "Alright, I'll take the bet, Mr. Wyton! But if I win, please dance in the ballroom, Mr. Wyton. Any objections?"

Both Kemp and Bartlett looked at Ellinor with admiration. Was she really this brave?!

Jonah laughed carelessly, "Sure! I love a good crowd. I'm just worried you

won't

so lucky!"

Ellinor didn't say anything else and just asked, "Is it sudden death?"

"Yes!"

"Well, then, let's shuffle the cards!"

The moment she agreed to bet with Jonah, she felt a cold gaze from another direction tighten around her neck like a steel wire.

She didn't know if it was an illusion, but it made her feel a strange pressure.

Jonah started shuffling and dealing.

Looking at her cards, things didn't look promising. Her cards were much worse than the last round.

Jonah was skillful and unconventional.

Ellinor frowned. She was good at cards, but her hand was mediocre. Winning seemed difficult.

Several rounds went by without her gaining any advantage.

The outcome was clear. Jonah, grinning broadly, taunted, "Ms. Mendoza, why aren't you playing? Have you run out of options?"

Ellinor glanced at him while maintaining her cool.

She was just thinking about which card to play and trying to predict what the opponent would play next. She wanted to seize every possible chance to turn the game around.

Her hand was dwindling. If she made the wrong move now, she would lose everything. She needed to be extra cautious.

Just then, the sofa beside her sank a little. Someone sat down next to her, bringing a faint smell of tobacco.

Ellinor jumped. Without looking, she knew it was Theo.

The sudden presence of the man next to her jumbled up her thoughts. Goosebumps erupted on her arm.

Chapter 506

Ellinor Mendoza's game plan got all scrambled up. She took a deep breath, steadied herself, and got ready to play her hand.

Out of nowhere, Theo Blanchet's big hand reached out. His rough fingertips pressed her card back into the pile, then picked a new

one for her to play.

Ellinor stared at the card he played and had an epiphany. Playing the card his way was indeed unexpected and increased the odds.

of winning.

She didn't understand why Theo, who was ignoring her just now, was helping her all of a sudden.

They locked eyes.

Theo showed no emotion. "What are you looking at me for? Look at your cards!"

Ellinor fell silent. There was no need to be so serious.

She wanted to thank him, but....

Anyway, Theo's reminder was well-intentioned.

But after he scolded her, Ellinor's gratitude instantly vanished.

She pouted and turned her face away, frowning at her cards and feeling a bit annoyed.

Theo's action surprised everyone, but it was also expected.

Jonah Wyton and Kemp Larios exchanged glances, understanding each other without uttering a word.

Bartlett Rex squinted at Theo, then looked at Ellinor as complex emotions emerged in his eyes.

The girl, who had always been cold to him, always seemed calm and composed and did not frown no matter what happened.

However, just because Theo got close, she changed her face. This was a reaction he could never get from her, no matter what he

did.

Under Theo's guidance, Ellinor decided to follow his strategy and the game went much smoother.

Occasionally, Theo would help her adjust the order of her cards, then whisper to her about what to watch out for.

Every time he spoke, there was no emotional color, but Ellinor could always feel his cold aura and pressure.

Ellinor was now focused on winning the game; she wouldn't care about anything else. As long as she thought he was right, she

would listen.

A few rounds later, Jonah saw the situation spiraling out of control and realized he couldn't win. He complained, "Theo, you know, a real gentleman doesn't talk while looking at his cards."

Theo, expressionless, gave him a cold look, "A real gentleman also doesn't pick the best cards for himself when dealing."

Jonah, whose magic skills were high, laughed when Theo exposed him, but he didn't feel ashamed, "Theo, whose side are you on? Ellinor is with Balfour; she has nothing to do with you now. You don't need to stick your nose in this."

Jonah's words made Ellinor feel very uncomfortable; he brought up the topic they had avoided before, and the atmosphere instantly became awkward.

Theo picked up the water glass on the table and drank a sip without expression, "I'm not trying to interfere. I'm just curious to see how you would perform a striptease."

Jonah looked horrified and pretended to cover his chest, "Theo, I thought you were my friend, and you want..."

Theo's face darkened, a hint of disgust flashed in his eyes and he said coldly. "Bug off!"

Ellinor glanced at Jonah's dramatic expression, then turned to look at Theo next to her, discovering the cup he was drinking from was the one she just used.

Why did he pick up her cup and drink from it again?

Chapter 507

Wasn't he a clean freak?

Ellinor felt a bit strange. She frowned but didn't want to overthink it, so she urged the next player to play their card.

In the end, Ellinor put the last card on the table, once again claiming victory.

She raised an eyebrow at Jonah, "Your turn, Mr. Wyton! I'm really looking forward to your dance!"

The smile on Jonah's face disappeared at this moment.

Bartlett had a face full of anticipation for a great drama, "Yes, Mr. Wyton. You raised the stakes yourself. It wouldn't be good if you couldn't deliver, right?"

Jonah crossed his arms and gave a side glance, "Bartlett, are you still my friend? Does seeing me lose make you this happy?"

Kemp said coldly, "Whose fault is that? Isn't this something you brought upon yourself?"

Jonah pretended to be hurt, "Kemp, you're not even sympathizing with me!"

While Bartlett and Kemp were teasing Jonah, Ellinor heard Theo's deep voice in her ear, saying sarcastically, "Ms. Mendoza was lucky this time."

Ellinor was taken aback but didn't turn her head to look at him and just replied softly, "It was luck, but I still appreciate your guidance."

"How old are you, Ms. Mendoza? Don't you know people usually lose when they gamble? How could you accept a bet without assurance?"

"I didn't want to gamble either, but I don't want to be Jonah's secretary!"

Theo was silent for a minute, then took a sip of water, "So, you're saying you only want to be Balfour Howard's secretary?"

Ellinor nodded frankly, "Um, yes."

Theo didn't say anything more as he suddenly gripped his cup tightly. The knuckles of his long fingers stood out more prominently, as if he were about to crush the porcelain cup.

Ellinor always felt a chilling atmosphere around her, so she subconsciously moved a bit further from him.

Her actions were very irritating in Theo's eyes.

At this point, Kemp got up, ready to catch Jonah, who was trying to escape, sneering, "A bet's a bet. Let's go, Mr. Wyton; it's time to fulfill your wager!"

Bartlett smiled and said, "Ellinor, Theo, shall we go to the banquet hall and see how Jonah will dance?"

Theo didn't move right away. Although he had just said he wanted to see Jonah strip, he wasn't really interested.

On the other hand, Ellinor got up, "Sure, it seems that today's guests are in for a treat!"

"Hey, hey, hey, you guys are a bit too interested in my body! You're all so mean!"

This guy, Jonah, could still joke at such a moment?!

Banquet hall.

Kemp pushed Jonah directly to the center of the dance floor.

The gentlemen and ladies who were dancing the waltz didn't know what was going on. They saw Mr. Blanchet, Mr. Larios, and Mr.

Rex all standing by the dance floor watching Mr. Wyton in the center, so they all consciously backed off.

Jonah's handsome face was still hanging a kind of strong smile, but unfortunately, his smile looked so bad it was like he was crying.

Chapter 508

Jonah was rocking a white suit, standing tall and proud in the middle of the dance floor, looking like a dashing and refreshing prince charming. No one could guess what he was about to pull next.

As the waiter passed by with some glasses of red wine, Bartlett flagged him down, grabbed a glass, and with a nod of his chin, indicated to serve his buddies too.

Kemp and Theo each grabbed a glass and clinked them together, excitedly anticipating Jonah's upcoming show.

Ellinor gave the waiter a shake of her head, saying lightly. "Thanks, but I don't drink."

Bartlett smiled, telling the waiter, "Fetch this lady a glass of juice."

"Right away." The waiter nodded in response and left.

Bartlett moved closer to Ellinor, leaning towards her and grinning, "Ellinor, you don't usually drink, do you?"

Ellinor answered nonchalantly, "Depends on my mood."

Bartlett raised an eyebrow, curiosity and interest twinkling in his eyes, "So, you drink a bit when you're in a good mood? Or a bad mood?"

"Both." Ellinor replied.

Bartlett chuckled, "Well, if I get a chance, can I ask you out for a drink?"

Ellinor turned her head to look at Bartlett, intending to tell him to quit messing around.

But as she did, she caught sight of Theo watching them; his narrow and sharp eyes were cold and intimidating.

Ellinor felt a bit off. She turned her face back, not wanting to engage with Bartlett anymore.

Suddenly, the piano music in the banquet hall stopped and was replaced by a lively dance number.

Kemp announced, "Jonah, it's showtime."

Jonah Wyton flipped his hair back with a swift motion of his hand.

At this point, he didn't care anymore, "Let's dance! I, Jonah, a grown-ass man, am not scared of anything! Let me show you all my dance moves!"

As he chatted away, he unbuttoned his suit jacket, moved to the music, swung his coat around a few times, and then flung it off.

The girl

who caught his coat blushed, her friends around her screamed excitedly, and even sniffed his jacket.

Bartlett didn't get a response from Ellinor, but he wasn't bothered; instead, he clinked glasses with Kemp and Theo, sipping his wine and enjoying Jonah's dance.

Ellinor was also engrossed. A smile crept onto her face as she was amused by Jonah's dance.

Surrounded by the buzzing crowd, she didn't notice the change in those cold eyes next to her.

Jonah had completely taken off his shirt; his wide shoulders, narrow waist, and eight-pack abs looked incredibly sexy under the dance floor lights and exuded an irresistible masculine charm. The women were captivated and totally engrossed.

Jonah danced passionately, teasingly raised his eyebrows at the girls around the dance floor, unbuckled his belt, and prepared to strip off his lower garments.

Suddenly, everything went black.

A power outage?

Everyone was taken aback, and confusion ensued.

In the darkness, there was chaos.

"What's going on?"

"Is it a power outage?"

"It's so dark! What should we do? I'm scared of the dark..."

Suddenly someone rushed over, and Ellinor was pushed back, nearly losing her balance. Luckily, she managed to grab Bartlett's arm.

She was wearing heels, which she rarely wore, so her balance was greatly affected. Plus, she was pregnant. If she fell in this darkness and there was a stampede, her life would be in danger.

Ellinor clung tightly to Bartlett's arm to keep her balance, saying, "Bartlett, I need you to keep me steady!"

Chapter 509

Bartlett didn't answer her, but he also didn't try to shake off her hand.

Soon after, a light suddenly appeared in the darkness. The butler of the mansion hurried over with a flash light, calming everyone down, "Guests, please don't panic. The power outage is due to a circuit short-circuit! We have sent someone to fix it; it should be

back on soon."

"Please fix it ASAP, my girlfriend is scared of the dark!"

"Man, you gave us real fright!"

"Don't worry everyone, it's just a power cut!"

About a minute later, the chandeliers in the banquet hall lit up again.

Everyone finally heaved a sigh of relief. Everything was back to normal.

However, Jonah was already standing in the middle of the dance floor, having straightened his clothes and tie.

He smiled at his friends, "Sorry guys, I finished my dance during the blackout. If you missed it, well, better luck next time!"

Ellinor was suspicious. Could the blackout have been Jonah's doing?

If not, Jonah was quite lucky. A power outage right at the crucial moment.

She didn't want to watch Jonah strip, but he had obviously raised the stakes in the poker game just now on purpose. It was of a letdown to not see him get his just desserts.

The power was back on, and Ellinor let go of Bartlett's arm. She looked up to thank him, "Thank you..." bit

Her words suddenly stopped because when she looked up, she didn't see Bartlett as she had expected. Instead, she was met with Theo's cold and expressionless face.

Theo?

How could it be him?

He clearly wasn't standing there before the power cut.

Ellinor never expected that the person she grabbed in the dark was Theo.

Instinctively, she stepped back, wanting to get away from him.

However, because Bartlett had ordered a juice for Ellinor, the waiter bringing it was approaching from behind her.

Startled by Ellinor's sudden move, the waiter almost dropped the tray, and the juice almost spilled on her .

"Watch out!"

At that moment, Theo reached out and pulled her back, preventing her from colliding with the waiter.

Although the waiter was visibly shaken, he still managed to steady the tray.

Ellinor had wanted to get away from Theo, but instead, he pulled her towards him. He tightly embraced her and the atmosphere instantly became tense. .

Theo

Patricia Howard's voice suddenly rang out.

Ellinor snapped back to reality and looked towards the source of the sound..

Patricia was standing not far away, holding her child named Baber, and watching them. She blinked her doe-like eyes and furrowed her brows.

Balfour and Haillie were also standing next to Patricia, looking at her with puzzled eyes.

Realizing the situation, Ellinor immediately stepped away from Theo, making space for Patricia and the child.

Patricia walked towards Theo with the child in her arms, adopting a tender and loving wife's demeanor, "Theo, the sudden power outage scared both me and the child. He has been fussing to find you!"

Chapter 510

Baber reached out his arms to the man, mumbling something that sounded like "Daddy."

The guests began to whisper among themselves.

"Is that Patricia's and Mr. Blanchet's child she's holding?"

"I think so, the kid looks a lot like Patricia!"

"Are they still not married? How come they already have a kid?"

"What's the big deal? Mr. Blanchet and Patricia have been together for a while, but just because their parents don't approve, they haven't tied the knot! But they're so lovey-dovey, it was only a matter of time before they had a kid, right?"

"Wow, Baber is so cute!"

Listening to the chatter, Ellinor felt a bit out of place and backed away a bit more.

Balfour also seemed to think she was out of place and he beckoned her over in a low voice, "Ms. Mendosa, come over here, let's

go."

Finally, she could leave. Ellinor breathed a sigh of relief and obediently walked towards her boss, Balfour.

"Alright, Mr. Howard."

Haillie, however, reluctantly blocked Balfour's way, "Balfour, you're leaving so early?"

Balfour replied, "Yeah, you stay here and keep Patricia company for me."

"Okay, don't worry, Balfour, I will!" Haillie nodded readily but shot a meaningful glance at Ellinor.

Ellinor didn't take Haillie's look to heart and followed Balfour out of the noisy banquet hall.

Bartlett watched Ellinor's retreating figure as he took a sip of his red wine.

Jonah Wyton suddenly waved his hand in front of him, "Bartlett, you seem particularly enthusiastic about Ellinor today; do you have feelings for her too?"

Bartlett smiled, "Why not?"

Jonah Wyton paused and exchanged glances with Kemp, both feeling a bit uneasy.

"Bartlett, bro code! Don't let a woman come between us."

Bartlett looked at Jonah dismissively, "Ellinor is whose wife again?"

Jonah looked towards Theo.

At this moment, Theo was surrounded by Patricia and the child, unable to extricate himself.

Jonah Wyton thought for a moment and shrugged, "... True! Theo and Ellinor are pretty much done!"

Bartlett's lips curled up in a smile, "Yeah, I think so too."

The Howard Group's car was on the road. Balfour was looking at his phone, his face expressionless.

Ellinor looked out the car window, noticing that they were on the highway late at night and not on the way to the city.

She asked, puzzled, "Mr. Howard, where are we going?"

Balfour looked up from his phone screen at her, didn't answer her question, but instructed the driver, "Stop."

"Alright. The driver pulled the car into the emergency lane and slowly came to a stop.

Balfour nodded slightly, "Ms. Mendoza, you can knock off now, get out."

Ellinor was stunned and began frowning, "Mr. Howard, we're on the highway."

A smirk appeared on Balfour's lips, "Where we are is not my concern. When I say you can knock off, you should get out and go home. No boss is obliged to give employees a ride home."