

The Kiss 551

Chapter 551

Scoring this job wasn't a piece of cake. With Ms. Howard's offer of money, he finally gave in to temptation.

But when it came time to get his hands dirty, he couldn't go through with it. The child was so innocent and adorable that he was having an internal battle. His hands were shaking so badly that he couldn't even hold the soup pot steady

Lucky for them, Ms. Mendoza jumped in just in time. Otherwise, the kid would've been scalded even worse. He was so scared that he bolted.

But compared to what was happening now, the evidence of him swiping a customer's phone didn't even matter anymore.

Balfour noticed the glances that Gavin and his sister Patricia were exchanging. He frowned, coldly stared at Gavin, and said, "Stop looking at her Spill it! What did she say to you outside the restroom?"

Gavin was freaked out by the intense vibe Balfour was giving off. With his conscience nagging at him, he couldn't hesitate or hide the truth anymore, so he spilled the beans.

"She... she asked me to scald her kid a little when I get the chance, then pin the blame on Ms. Mendoza. She said it was Ms. Mendoza who grabbed the soup pot and afterward she would give me a chunk of change. At the restroom door, the first thing she gave me was a down payment. That's how it all went down."

Balfour, known for his cool demeanor, was visibly shaken as Gavin revealed the truth, and he stepped back in disbelief!

His sister! His sweet, innocent, kind-hearted sister was capable of such a vile, cold-blooded scheme, willing to let her own child get scalded just to frame

her rival?

Even if the kid wasn't hers, he was still an innocent life. How could she?!

Patricia, teary-eyed, shook her head, "He's lying..."

Balfour glared at Patricia, "Patri! How could you? The kid's not even a year old!"

With tears streaming down her face, Patricia shook her head innocently, "It's not like that: he's making stuff up! Baber is my child, and I love him so much. Why would I get someone to scald him on purpose? This waiter's sudden change to his story is suspicious. Surely he's been paid off by Ellinor; they're both in on this to frame me!"

As she said this, Patricia angrily stared at Gavin, "You! Why would you slander me like this? Where's your proof? Did Ellinor pay you to say all this?"

Gavin, having had a change of heart, didn't want to play along anymore. He looked at Patricia, puzzled, "Ms. Howard, why can't you admit your mistakes? It was you who asked me to hurt your child and transferred me the money. I've never been in contact with Ms. Mendoza"

Patricia glared at him with red and swollen eyes,, "Where are the messages? The bank transfer records? You have no evidence; how dare you accuse me like this? Show me some proof at least!"

Gavin was taken aback; he frowned and helplessly said, "What proof could I possibly have? After transferring me the money, you kept insisting I delete you from my contacts and clear all the records!"

"You have no evidence, no messages, and no bank transfer records. You're clearly framing me!" Patricia threw herself into Balfour's arms while sobbing pitifully.

"They're in cahoots to set me up! I love Baber so much; how could I possibly do something that harms my own child?"

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Balfour looked down at his sister, who had suddenly collapsed in his arms, making no move to comfort her.

In the past, he would have gently patted her back, telling her not to cry and not to be afraid because he was there for her and she didn't need to worry about anything.

But now he felt like the sister in his arms was not real.

Ellinor gave a soft chuckle as she watched Patricia continue her act.

"Ms. Howard, when Gavin accused me just now, he didn't provide any chat logs or transfer records either. But you were quick to insist that I admit my mistake and stop fighting back. Why is it that when the same thing happens to you, you think his words hold no weight? Don't you think you're being a bit hypocritical?"

Patricia

leaned against her brother, looking pitiful. "...I'm not being hypocritical... I'm Baber's mother. How could I possibly arrange for someone to hurt my own child? Ellinor, how much must you hate me to go to such lengths to frame me?"

Even at this point, Patricia was still blaming others for her actions.

Hoping for someone as ruthless and unscrupulous as her to have a change of heart was just wishful thinking.

Ellinor didn't bother arguing with Patricia anymore. She simply gestured to Gavin, "Gavin, let me see your phone!"

The waiter, Gavin, seemed a bit hesitant but quickly handed his phone over to Ellinor.

Patricia wasn't worried about Ellinor finding anything on Gavin's phone.

She knew very well that Gavin had deleted all chat logs and removed her from his friend list on social media after receiving the money, just as she had instructed. She had personally made sure of it.

Under these circumstances, no one could find anything on Gavin's phone.

Ellinor tapped on the screen a few times before handing the phone to Balfour. "Mr. Howard, see for yourself!"

Patricia felt a surge of anxiety. What was Ellinor showing her brother?

Balfour's eyes widened as he took the phone from Ellinor.

The social media app on Gavin's phone had restored his friendship with Patricia, and the chat logs were back.

Balfour scrolled through the chat logs, reading each message carefully.

He spotted a message sent by Patricia to Gavin via the social media app half an hour ago.

"Go to the private room and destroy the memory card in the camera right now. I'll transfer the money to you immediately!"

Gavin: [Ms. Howard, I've flushed the memory card down the toilet, just like you asked. Here's the proof!]

Patricia: Delete the record of me being your friend and all our chat logs! You know what to say next, right?

Gavin: [Yes, don't worry, I know!]

Balfour's heart ached.

Since they were kids, Patricia had always been a sweet and innocent girl in his eyes. He had always doted on Patricia and protected her from any harm or bullying. All the love he had for his lost sister, Pearl Howard, was poured into Patricia.

But had he spoiled Patricia into a cunning, ruthless, and deceptive girl?

His real sister, Pearl, would never have done something like this. She would never have become someone like her!

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Balfour ruthlessly pushed Patricia away, who was snuggled up against him.

This was the first time Patricia had been treated like this by her brother, and she was a bit shocked, "What's up with you?"

Balfour handed her his phone coldly. "See for yourself!"

Patricia took the phone and was shocked beyond belief. How could this happen? Why did the friends and chat logs that had been deleted reappear?

"No! These chat records are all forged' I didn't say those things, they really aren't my words; they're fabricated! You mustn't believe?"

The evidence was irrefutable. The chat records weren't screenshots, and they were confirmed to be real. Still, Patricia adamantly denied that they were fabricated

Balfour looked at Patricia, who was in a state of panic and stubborn denial, vastly different from her usual gentle demeanor. A hint of disgust flashed in his eyes

When did she become like this?

Ellinor yawned listlessly, looking at Patricia, who showed no signs of remorse. She casually said to Balfour, "Whether the chat records are forged or not, Mr. Howard, you can have the computer engineer you brought check them, or you can go to the police to inspect them. The answer will be the same."

"Ellinor, stop trying to undermine my brother's trust in me! I know you're just jealous that I have a brother who loves me so much, so you're trying to drive a wedge between us!"

Patricia glared at Ellinor, almost seething with rage, then turned to Balfour with tears in her eyes, "You must believe me! Don't be fooled by those fake chat records. It's all their attempt to frame me."

Balfour frowned in disappointment and disgust, "Patri, I can tell if the chat records are forged or not. If you can admit your mistake now and sincerely repent, I might still think there's hope for you, but you're really disappointing me right now!"

Patricia never thought that the brother who doted on her the most would have such a fed-up attitude toward her. Her heart went cold, I didn't really didn't... It's Ellinor who set me up...She's the one who ruined me..."

Balfour massaged his temples, not wanting to say anything more to his stubborn little sister. He needed to reflect on whether he had been spoiling Patri too much over the years, leading her to become the way she was today.

"Please believe me, I really didn't do this."

Patricia was crying, and suddenly, like being hit hard, her eyes rolled back and she fainted.

Luckily, Quinton, who was standing next to Balfour, quickly stepped forward to catch her.

Seeing his sister fall, Balfour instinctively reached out his hand, but in the end, he stopped, reluctant to touch this disappointing and unfamiliar sister.

Holding up the fainting Patricia, Quinton asked, "Mr. Howard, Ms. Howard has fainted, what should we do?"

Balfour's eyes were filled with complex emotions, both worried and frustrated, "Take her to the hospital first."

"Alright, Mr. Howard!"

Quinton picked up Patricia and quickly walked out.

Balfour also left the room, ending the issue at this place.

"Wait a minute."

Ellinor called out to him.

Balfour stopped, turned his head, and looked at Ellinor unhappily, "What else do you want?"

Ellinor walked up to Balfour; her eyes were bright like a pixie, and she said firmly and calmly, "Mr. Howard, don't you think both you and your sister owe me an apology?"

Balfour frowned. He looked at Ellinor as if she were a joke. How could she dare to provoke him? He squinted his eyes and said, "Are you asking me to apologize to you now?"

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Ellinor nodded resolutely, "Yep! Your sister's just playing dead, so don't bother, because you can't wake someone who's pretending to be passed out! Mr. Howard, could you apologize to me on behalf of your sister?"

Balfour fell silent.

No one had ever dared to ask him to apologize so bluntly

At this moment. Theo, smoking not far away, smirked. His eyes squinted slightly, looking at Ellinor, who was demanding an apology from Balfour, both admiringly and mockingly.

That girl hadn't changed a bit. No matter where she went or who she faced, she never backed down, never tolerated injustice, and always stood up for what she believed in

Balfour had met his match this time!

Theo exhaled a smoke ring, the more he admired her, the more annoyed he became.

Because she couldn't care less about him, and she quietly left and even got married to someone else

At that time, Bartlett Rex's eyes were filled with even more amusement

Ellinor looked like a sweet girl, but she had the guts to make her boss apologize to her. How interesting!

Balfour was silent for a long time. Seeing that Ellinor was neither joking nor backing down, he finally said coldly. "Sorry, Ms. Mendoza, we were wrong today. Are you satisfied now?"

Ellinor smiled, "Fair enough, I accept your apology! As compensation for misunderstanding me, could you please approve my half-day leave this afternoon, Mr. Howard?"

Balfour frowned and looked at her in disbelief.

Ellinor laughed, explaining. This incident has tired me out, so I want to go home and rest this afternoon. I believe Mr. Howard, being a reasonable man, will approve, right?"

She sure knew how to seize an opportunity.

Balfour snorted coldly, "If you want to go home and rest, then go. If you don't want to go to the company, you can stay away forever."

Ellinor put on a professional smile, "Don't worry, I'll be on time for work tomorrow. See you tomorrow, Mr. Howard!"

Balfour was completely dumbfounded.

Balfour glared at her for a minute. He had a certain admiration for her poise, but that didn't mean he liked girls of her type.

Then Balfour walked straight past Ellinor and left.

Ellinor shrugged, not caring about Balfour's attitude.

She chatted with the restaurant owner with a smile, "Sorry for the trouble. We'll be leaving soon!"

"No, no..." The restaurant owner, not understanding the relationships and conflicts between these people, still smiled politely and said a few courteous

words.

Ellinor had drunk a lot of water and decided to go to the restroom once more. As she turned around, she noticed that the man who had been smoking nearby was gone. He must have left already.

Patricia had just passed out, so he must be worried and gone to take care of her.

With a faint smirk on her face, Ellinor slowly walked towards the restroom.

After leaving the restaurant, Ellinor was planning to take a taxi home but was blocked by two obviously luxury cars parked at the front door.

One was the vehicle Theo often drove, which was a limited-edition high-end business car.

The other was Bartlett's streamlined sedan, which looked rather low-key but was also a high-priced luxury car.

However, what caught people's attention was not just these two luxury cars, but their two owners.

With his hands in his pockets, Theo stood tall and handsome in front of his car, his face expressing a serious and cold demeanor. When he saw her coming out, he said to her coldly, "Get in!"

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Bartlett, with a rebellious charm, leaned against his car nonchalantly, waving at the girl, "Ellinor, come here. I take you home"

Ellinor fell silent.

What the heck were they doing? Were they posing like models?

Wait, wasn't Theo leaving? Shouldn't he be checking on Patricia, who fainted just now?

Theo's face darkened when he saw her being so indecisive. His brows furrowed, and he spoke coldly, "Ellinor, come here!"

Bartlett showed no sign of backing down, saying, "Ellinor, come here! I have your favorite chocolates in my car."

Ellinor was completely taken aback.

The crowd kept glancing back at them. Some even stopped to watch this love drama.

With two hotties vying for her, what choice would the girl make?

Ellinor glanced at the man on her left, then at the man on her right, and as if she'd made up her mind, she walked over.

The crowd watched her closely, only to find her walking straight between their cars, heading straight into the subway station across the street.

Everyone was dumbfounded.

So she didn't pick either of them and totally blew them off!

Everyone felt disappointed. Either of these hotties would be a good catch.

Didn't she fancy them?

Maybe she was just too pretty herself and had a lot of boyfriends.

The anticipated love story didn't pan out, but the crowd lingered, with some checking out the cars and some checking out the hotties.

Finally, faced with Theo's cold aura, everyone reluctantly left.

Theo was expressionless as he watched Ellinor enter the subway station. He stood silent for a while, then headed towards his open car door.

Theo

Bartlett called him.

Theo stopped and glanced at him lightly, waiting for him to speak.

Bartlett came over. His smile was both gentlemanly and friendly, but his eyes challenged him, "Theo, I think you should go to the hospital to see Patri. That's more important"

Theo raised an eyebrow, "That's none of your business."

Originally planning to take a taxi, Ellinor, bothered by the two men, had to take the subway home.

Thankfully, it wasn't rush hour. Otherwise, the crowded environment would be really unfriendly for her baby and herself.

Half an hour later, she arrived at the terminal station.

Alone, she slowly came out of the subway station, heading towards home. As she passed a quiet alley, Ellinor suddenly found her vision darkened and her head covered with a sack.

"Should be this woman, right?"

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*Yup, that's her. She's just like the chick in the photo. Tie her up!**

"But I think she's pretty hot; isn't it a waste to just off her like that?"

"You and your dirty mind!"

"Haha, I'm just telling it like it is! Such a beautiful girl might even be a virgin. It would be such a waste to just kill her!"

"Don't get any ideas; we've gotta do this job clean and quick. We have no time for your shenanigans!"

After a sack was thrown over Ellinor's head, her hands were twisted behind her back by a dude with some serious muscle and tightly bound with sturdy

rope.

Facing this, she didn't put up much of a fight, just calmly asked. "Hold up, are you sure you got the right person?"

The guy in charge answered her, "Aren't you Ellinor? We've got the right person; we're looking for you."

Ellinor was confused, "Why are you after me?"

**Because you pissed somebody off and that someone doesn't want to see you breathing anymore!"*

"Who?"

"You don't need to know who. Your fate is sealed anyway; knowing it won't make any difference!"

Another henchman sounded a bit regretful, "Darling, don't be scared. Because of your pretty face, I'll make sure you get an easy death."

With that, the muscular dude dragged her into a deserted alley, where there was a sound of something sharp being unsheathed.

With her hands bound and her vision obscured by the sack, Ellinor was at a clear disadvantage.

She understood these guys weren't looking to kidnap her; they wanted her dead. They weren't even giving her a chance to beg, so escaping seemed highly unlikely.

Was she really going to die today at the hands of these strangers?

Hell no!

She still had to find out the truth about her mom, plus she had a baby in her belly to protect.

As Ellinor was frantically thinking of a plan, she was interrupted by the screeching sound of brakes.

Then there were steady and swiftly approaching footsteps.

Their task was interrupted and the guy in charge was clearly pissed, "Who the hell are you? Better stay out of our business if you know what's good for you!"

There was no reply, just the sound of footsteps growing closer and louder.

The next second, Ellinor heard the sounds of a fierce fight.

Unable to tell if the newcomer was a friend or foe, she took advantage of the chaos and moved to a corner, frantically rubbing the ropes against the wall, trying to free her hands and fight off the bad guys.

The footsteps gradually receded and her surroundings grew quiet. It seemed like one side had been chased off.

Not wanting to be controlled by whoever was left, Ellinor sped up her efforts to untie the ropes.

She felt a powerful presence approaching, but the ropes around her wrists didn't break.

She was so anxious that she began to sweat.

The sack over her head was suddenly removed.

Luckily, the ropes also broke at that moment.

Without seeing who it was, Ellinor threw a punch

It was caught by a large hand, and a familiar, deep voice said, "Ms. Mendoza, that's not a very friendly greeting."

Ellinor regained her composure and saw that it was Theo standing in front of her.

Her heart, which had been racing, settled down instantly, like she'd taken a calming pill, and she breathed a sigh of relief.

"Mr. Blanchet, what are you doing here?"

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Theo towered over her, giving her a cold stare. "At the hospital, I told you to leave, but you didn't. At the hotel entrance, I told you to get in the car, but you didn't either. I saved you, yet you wanna hit me? If those guys had hurt you just now, you might not realize until your next life that some things shouldn't be messed around with!"

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I didn't mean to hit you. I didn't know the person coming was you!" Ellinor frowned, suddenly realizing something wasn't right. "Wait, what did you mean by what you said just now? It seems like you knew someone was going to make a move on me."

Theo didn't answer, seeming too lazy to bother explaining. He turned around and slowly walked out of the narrow alley.

Ellinor, not getting an answer, quickly followed him. "Do you know who ordered those men?"

Yep."

The man lit a cigarette, not even bothering to look at her.

"Tell me, who was it?"

Ellinor wanted to know who held such malice toward her and even wanted to take her life.

"Your boss."

Theo's voice was flat.

Ellinor stopped in her tracks, surprised and puzzled. "You mean... Balfour? He sent someone to kill me? Why?"

Theo was a bit ahead, took a puff of his cigarette, and said, "Patricia was bullied by two female classmates in middle school. Those two girls disappeared later, and they've been missing ever since."

Ellinor was stunned.

So what Theo meant was that Balfour had those girls who bullied his sister Patricia disposed of in retaliation?

So, at the hospital, Theo had already seen Balfour's murderous intent and called her away, creating a diversion for her to make an escape.

At the hotel entrance, he had also predicted what might happen to her on the road, so he told her to get in the car.

And she didn't cooperate at all.

"Is Mr. Howard really that ruthless?"

Ellinor didn't want to believe that Balfour was such a ruthless person. In a way, she and Balfour were relatives.

Theo gave her a sideways glance. "You thought Balfour was a good guy?"

Ellinor was silent. She didn't think Balfour was a good guy, but she also didn't expect Balfour to be so extreme, willing to kill her to avenge his sister

Patricia

"And Bartlett, stay away from him too!" Theo coldly added.

What did this have to do with Bartlett? Ellinor was stunned and frowned.

"Mr. Blanchet, do you think there are no good people in this world except for you?"

Theo glanced at her coldly, his voice indifferent and deep. I'm not a good person either."

Ellinor chuckled lightly. "So you know!"

Theo held a cigarette in his fingers as smoke swirled around him. He turned his head and squinted at her. "Whether I'm good or not depends on who I'm dealing with."

Ellinor was still smiling, but Theo's affectionate gaze made her feel uneasy. Her smile froze on her face.

Theo didn't expect her to understand his words. He sneered and then continued to look ahead, smoking his cigarette.

Ellinor watched him smoke. Although he looked handsome, she still frowned. "Mr. Blanchet, could you smoke less? You've already had 16 today!"

Theo paused for a moment, then turned to look at her, his eyes full of meaning. "What did you say?"

Ellinor suddenly realized what she said was a bit inappropriate and quickly turned her head,.....I didn't say anything!"

She quickened her pace, trying to keep a certain distance from him.

But then Theo raised his arm to block her path, his eyes narrowed. He asked again, "Ms. Mendoza, are you counting my cigarettes because you care

about me?"

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As Theo approached, Ellinor's eyes flickered uneasily, "Because I can't stand the smell of smoke!"

Theo frowned, leaning in even closer and mockingly blowing a puff of smoke above her head, his tone dripping with sarcasm, "Don't like the smell of smoke, huh? Then steer clear of me!"

After saying this, he extinguished his cigarette on the wall behind her and accurately tossed it into a trash can up ahead.

Since Ellinor had been walking along the roadside wall, she had no choice but to lean back when he stopped her until she had nowhere else to go.

Now, you could say Ellinor was cornered. She scrunched up her brows, glaring at the man unhappily, "How am I supposed to get away from you like this? Mr. Blanchet, do me a favor and step aside. I'll make sure to keep my distance"

Theo seemingly saw right through her, his eyes narrowing into dangerous slits, "Ms. Mendoza, are you nervous?"

Ellinor was speechless.

He was way too close, beyond what was socially acceptable. Anyone would be nervous!

Theo made no move to back off; his gaze locked onto the girl's eyes, as if determined to see right through her.

Their proximity was uncomfortably close, their eyes met, and the tension was palpable.

Theo couldn't shake the feeling that she didn't really come off as married. It seemed like she was hiding something.

"Darling, I get a little jealous when I see you so close to another man at our doorstep!"

Suddenly, a gentle yet reproachful man's voice came from the other side.

Theo and Ellinor turned their heads almost simultaneously.

It was Chase Larios.

Chase looked at

the two of them with a slight smirk on his face, "Mr. Blanchet, would you mind keeping your distance from my wife? I'm a bit of the jealous type and don't fancy other men being too close to my wife!"

Theo's eyebrows creased. He had just been doubting whether Ellinor was pretending to be married, and now her husband showed up, seemingly jealous.

His suspicions vanished in an instant.

Theo withdrew his arm from the wall, stood up straight, and moved aside from her.

Finally freed, Ellinor immediately distanced herself from the dangerous man and walked towards Chase.

Chase, the consummate actor,

gently held her shoulders, speaking in a gentle whisper, "Darling, why did you let Mr. Blanchet walk you home again? You shouldn't always trouble others; remember to call me next time, okay?"

Watching Chase's act, Ellinor couldn't help but twitch the corner of her mouth, but she had to play along, "Oh, got it! Weren't you in a meeting? I didn't want to disturb your work! I bumped into Mr. Blanchet not far from here. He helped me chase off some thugs, and then we walked back together!"

"Understood Chase's smile was filled with warmth and consideration.

He then looked at the man in the distance with a stern expression, "Mr. Blanchet, you're quite the good Samaritan, always so eager to walk other men's wives home!"

The statement was a clear territorial claim.

Theo's complex gaze swept over Ellinor, who was standing next to another man. His icy eyes met Chase's, "If you cared about your wife, you would have sent more people to ensure her safety these past few days and not let her go out to work. Fulfill your duties as a husband!"

"My wife works because it's her personal preference. I respect her and will fulfill my responsibilities towards her. Even if I fall short in certain areas, there's no need for you to fill in for me."

The atmosphere became noticeably tense.

Theo's eyes were indifferent and arrogant and a hint of murderous intent seeped through. He sneered, "If you didn't leave any gaps, no one would be able to fill in for you!"

Theo turned around, got into his car that was parked behind him, and then drove away

After watching Theo's car vanish at the end of the road, Chase turned his gaze to Ellinor and asked, "Ellinor, what's the deal? Why did Theo drop you off again, and you mentioned that someone's got it in for you? Is that true?"

Although Theo had left, Ellinor let out a sigh of relief, but her anxiety didn't ease up. She waved her hand tiredly. "It's a long story! I'm beat; let's head home and rest first."

Meanwhile, somewhere else.

In a car on the road, Collin, who was sitting in the passenger seat, turned to look at Mr. Blanchet in the back seat, whose face was as dark as thunder. He felt the pressure and dared not speak.

However, when Mr. Blanchet stepped out of the car to rescue Ms. Mendoza, he left his phone in the car and Ms. Wesley called. Fearing it might be an emergency, Collin picked up the call instead.

He had to relay what Ms. Wesley had told him to Mr. Blanchet.

After a moment of consideration, he mustered up the courage to speak.

"Mr. Blanchet, Ms. Wesley just called. She said it's her mother's birthday today and she hopes you can come over for dinner to celebrate."

Belinda Wesley's mother was almost twenty years older than him.

Theo's mother passed away when he was very young, and Belinda's mother had always cared for Theo like a parent.

Collin waited a long time without getting a response from Theo, so he gathered up his courage to ask again, "Mr. Blanchet, are we going to Ms. Wesley's or back to the Blanchet villa?"

Theo seemed to snap back to reality, slowly raising his head and blankly said, "To the Wesley's."

Ever since Ellinor left, the Blanchet villa lost its liveliness and he rarely went back during this period.

"Alright."

Collin received his instructions and then signaled the driver to change direction.

At the Wesley's.

Belinda came out of the kitchen holding a platter of fat and juicy crabs with a bright smile on her face, seeming to be in high spirits.

She put the platter of crabs in the middle of the dining table. But once she looked at the abundance of dishes, she felt it wasn't enough. So she turned around and called into the kitchen.

'Mom! You and Zola should get a few more dishes ready: Theo's surely bringing his wife today! It's her first time at our house; we can't treat her shabbily!' Mrs. Wesley came out with a plate of salad, looking at her daughter, who was always bustling about, *"I know! You've said it*

at least a dozen times! It's my birthday today and you're making me cook so much; aren't you afraid I'll drop dead from exhaustion?"

Belinda gave a small smile, walked up to her mother, wrapped her arm around her and cooed, "Mom, I know now you're working hard! But the food I make doesn't taste that good; only the crabs are passable, or else I'd cook everything myself!"

I'm mainly worried that my cooking will be so terrible that it will scare people off!"

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"Mom, you know Theo's been having a rough month! After weeks of searching, we finally found Ellinor. We can't let him down and we can't let Ellinor slip through our fingers because of our carelessness Poor Theo!"

Mrs. Wesley gave a resigned yet gentle smile, "Alright, enough! I know you're worried about Theo; I'll take good care of Ellinor."

Belinda grinned in satisfaction, "That's more like it!"

Suddenly, she heard a car in the yard and excitedly released her mother's hand, "Mom! They must be here, you go to the kitchen and whip up some dishes; I'll go out to welcome them!"

With that, Belinda darted out.

Mrs. Wesley just chuckled and shook her head before returning to the kitchen to help with the dinner preparations

By the time Belinda reached the yard, Theo had already stepped out of the car.

Theo, you're here! The food is great today!" Belinda cheerfully greeted.

Theo gave her a cold glance and made his way into the house.

Belinda didn't catch on to any awkwardness since Theo was always this indifferent.

She didn't follow Theo back inside; instead, she ran to the car and opened the door in search of someone.

As she opened the car door, she grumbled, "Theo, seriously! How could he not wait for Ellinor and just go inside? Hmph, is he not afraid Ellinor would leave him again?"

"Ellinor, I'm here to greet you!"

But to her surprise, the person she was expecting was not in the car.

"Where's Ellinor?"

Belinda leaned into the car and saw that the back seat was empty. She then turned to the front seat, only to see the driver and Collin.

Both the driver and Collin turned around with surprised expressions.

"Ms. Wesley, who are you looking for?" Collin asked.

I'm looking for Ellinor! Didn't she come with Theo?" Belinda replied.

Collin's expression darkened, and he carefully advised, "Ms. Wesley, I'd suggest not to mention Ellinor in front of Mr. Blanchet."

Belinda furrowed her brows, feeling that things were not as expected, "What's going on? Did Theo and Ellinor not make up?"

Collin regretfully shook his head.

"So, don't bring up Ms. Mendoza in front of Mr. Blanchet; it might upset him."

Belinda was puzzled. She wanted to ask Theo, but she knew Theo was a man of few words and might not tell her. So she hopped into the car and started grilling Collin.

"What happened? We've found her; why isn't everything going as planned? Did Theo still play hard to get in front of Ellinor? Didn't he try to coax his runaway wife back home?"

Collin frowned, "It's not Mr. Blanchet's fault."

Belinda was even more confused, "Not Theo's fault? So it's Ellinor's then? What could be the problem with such a nice person?"

Collin knew it wasn't his place to discuss Mr. Blanchet's affairs, but he feared if he didn't, Ms. Wesley, being a bit of a scatterbrain, might keep bringing up Ms. Mendoza in front of Mr. Blanchet, which could potentially infuriate him.