

The Kiss 581

Chapter 581

Besides, for a long time, she had been copying the habits and preferences of Pearl Howard, who disappeared years ago

She did this to win the affection of Pearl's family, hoping they would pour all their love for Pearl onto her.

Like Balfour, who treated her like his own sister and spoiled her rotten.

However, the Bagleys weren't so easily swayed by her attempt to resemble Pearl.

Patricia was frustrated by this, but she hadn't given up trying to win over the two old folks from the Bagley family

This was because the Bagleys held a significant position among the rich and powerful families, and they were old friends with the Blanchets. If she could get on their good side, she would have a powerful network backing her, which would help if she were to marry into the Blanchet family.

Thus, she had been trying hard to make the two old Bagleys treat her like their long-lost granddaughter, but she had been unsuccessful all these years

"Old Mr. Bagley"

Someone called out softly

Everyone turned to look at a middle-aged man in a grey suit who was walking over slowly

Old Mr. Bagley's friendly face instantly turned sour upon seeing the man and he grumpily asked, "What are you doing here?"

The middle-aged man was polite and said, "It's your birthday today I came to give you a gift and wish you a happy birthday"

Old Mr. Bagley grumpily said. "Take it away! The Bagleys don't need your stuff!"

The middle-aged man didn't get angry and just sighed resignedly. He gave the gift to old Mr. Bagley's servant and instructed, "Add a little of this when you make soup for old Mr. Bagley it's good for his health, but remember not to add too much Too much won't be effective"

The old servant just nodded and took the gift

Having delivered the gift, the middle-aged man politely said, "I won't disturb your birthday celebration, Til come see you another time."

Old Mr. Bagley waved him away grumpily, "Get out! Don't come to wish me a happy birthday, don't come here at all, you bring nothing but trouble!"

The middle-aged man didn't say anything and just sighed. He seemed used to old Mr. Bagley's attitude and turned to leave.

By this time, Byran and Patricia had come over.

Byran said, "Dad"

Patricia said, "Dad, are you leaving?"

McNeil Howard nodded to his two children, "You two stay here and keep your grandfather company on his birthday. Byran, don't make trouble and annoy your grandfather. Patricia, put on more clothes, don't catch a cold"

Byran said, "OK, I got it. I'm not a kid, I won't cause trouble!"

Patricia nodded, "OK, Dad, I'll go put on a coat later"

Ellinor, an outsider, stood aside, quietly observing their interactions.

The middle-aged man was McNeil Howard, head of the Howard family, and her biological father

Ellinor felt a mix of emotions upon seeing her biological father for the first time. She smirked with a hint of sarcasm on her face

The man was in his forties, dressed neatly but not overly refined. He was tall and handsome, with fine lines at the corners of his eyes, which were just signs of age.

As Ellinor watched him, Mr. Howard senior walked towards her.

Chapter 582

McNeil Howard felt someone burning holes in the back of his head So he followed the gaze and paused just a tad.

The girl was about the same age as his daughter Patricia and radiated a familiar aura, which caught his attention. He was a bit out of it, as if some past events or a certain someone from his past came to mind. But he didn't linger on the girl and headed straight toward the door instead.

Ellinor dropped her gaze from the man. Her mixed emotions finally settled down

McNeil Howard had once hurt her mother, driving her into a corner and forcing her to leave home with young Ellinor. That's why old Mr. Bagley couldn't stand his guts. She had no memories of her biological father, not even a vague shadow of him resided in her memory. A man this heartless must have never taken care of her when she was a child. So there was nothing for her to remember.

"Marlinie!"

Ellinor was still mulling over these thoughts when suddenly an old pair of hands grabbed hers tightly.

She jumped, looking up to see an elderly lady.

The old lady looked at her worriedly, "Marlinie, why are you coming home so late from school? Where have you been?"

Ellinor was taken aback, "I think you got the wrong person"

The old lady didn't seem to hear her and kept mumbling to herself, "Marlinie, you can't keep coming home this late. It worries me and your father"

Just then, McNeil Howard reached the door. Hearing the old lady call the name Marlinie, he stopped in his tracks, turning to look back. The old lady was talking to the girl.

Ellinor said helplessly. "You really got the wrong person. I'm not Marlinie!"

The kind old lady frowned and admonished "Marlinie, stop being angry with me! Be a good girl, stop hanging out with that boy from the Howard family! He doesn't look like good news, you'll get hurt."

McNeil Howard and Ellinor both fell silent.

From the old lady's words, Ellinor figured out she was the matriarch of the Bagley family, her grandmother.

Old Mrs. Bagley thought she was her mother?

Marlinie was her mother's name

Byran came over to help old Mrs. Bagley "Grandma, you've mistaken her for someone else again. She's my friend, not Marlinie."

Old Mrs. Bagley shook her head, saying excitedly. "Marlinie! She's Marlinie, Marlinie is back."

Byran said helplessly, "Grandma, she really isn't Marlinie."

Old Mr. Bagley coughed heavily a couple of times, then came over, "Stop it. You're scaring the kids."

She looked at old Mr. Bagley with tears brimming in her eyes, "Dear, it's Marlinie! Marlinie is back; Marlinie is really back."

"Alright, alright, she's back, she's back!" Old Mr. Bagley played along like it was nothing new. He helped her over to his side and then looked at the young girl that old Mrs. Bagley was pointing at. He was stunned. Whose daughter was this? She looked so much like Marlinie!

Ellinor blinked, feeling a bit uncomfortable under his gaze. She managed to force a smile.

Old Mrs. Bagley's eyes welled up with tears, "It really is Marlinie! Look, Marlinie is really back."

Old Mr. Bagley seemed to have an epiphany and he sighed deeply, "Yeah, I see it, I see it. It's time for your medication. Let's go take your medication, and then you can see Marlinie."

He soothed old Mrs. Bagley, leading her away to calm her down.

Ellinor watched the two old folks walk away, feeling a mix of emotions

Chapter 583

Byran sighed. "My grandma has Alzheimer's; she often mistakes people"

Ellinor nodded. "I get it."

Just then, old Mrs.

Bagley, who had walked off, turned back and looked at Ellinor, asking, "Marlinie, what do you fancy for dinner tonight?"

Ellinor, with mixed feelings, thought for a moment and replied with a smile, "Just what I usually love"

Old Mrs. Bagley laughed with tears welling up in her eyes, "Alright! Alright."

Old Mr. Bagley also turned back and gave Ellinor a deep look, then assisted old Mrs. Bagley upstairs for her medication.

Byran, a little exasperated, continued to explain to Ellinor, "After my father's ex-wife went missing, my grandma got Alzheimer's. It's up and down, she didn't scare you just now, did she?"
*

Ellinor shook her head, "I'm fine."

"Byran, who is this?"

Mr. Howard senior, who was about to leave, turned back. His gaze was complex as he studied Ellinor and asked his son.

With a bit of surprise at his father's return, Byran replied, "Dad, she's a friend and also works at the Howard Group."

Mr. Howard senior looked at Ellinor, and Ellinor looked back at him.

"Mr. Howard senior, hello, I'm Ellinor, currently working at Mr. Howard's company."

McNeil Howard nodded slightly. "Mhm, hello."

Before leaving, the middle-aged man took another deep look at Ellinor. Her aura reminded him of his ex-wife Marlinie; no wonder old Mrs. Bagley was confused.

But she actually reminded him more of his long-lost daughter, Pearl.

However, his missing daughter Pearl had a distinctive mole on her brow, which this girl didn't have.

It was just a slight resemblance, how could she be Pearl? After all these years, no one in the world could locate Pearl; how would she just show up here?

McNeil Howard didn't say anything more and just instructed Byran a bit before leaving the Bagley family.

Ellinor smiled faintly.

Did Mr. Howard senior just now also think of his long-lost wife when he saw her?

He betrayed his ex-wife, so did he feel a twinge of guilt?

Ellinor felt a chill, as if a cold gaze was fixed on her.

She instinctively looked up and found herself locked with Theo's unfathomable eyes.

Theo stood there coldly, staring at her with an inscrutable gaze that was hard to read.

Patricia was by his side, yet he kept staring at another woman. Was it amusing?

At that moment, old Mr. Bagley, assisted by a maid, slowly descended from upstairs.

His aged but bright eyes examined Ellinor from head to toe, "Whose daughter are you? How old are you? What's your name?"

Chapter 584

Ellinor shot him a smile and replied cheerfully. "Hi, old Mr. Bagley. I'm Ellinor I just turned twenty this year"

Old Mr. Bagley squinted his old eyes and gazed at her intently. "Twenty, huh? And who are your folks?"

"I come from a plain Jane family You probably don't know my parents, but they're alive and kicking. They live in Greenhaven Ellinor answered

If pushed further, she would say she belonged to the Mendoza family She didn't consider them her kin, but she didn't want to spill the beans about her real family situation here and raise eyebrows

Old Mr. Bagley gave a nod, "Did my wife scare you earlier? You look a bit like our long-lost daughter and granddaughter, so she got a bit too excited"

Ellinor smiled back, "No worries, she didn't scare me I totally get where old Mrs. Bagley is coming from. It's an honor to resemble your daughter and granddaughter"

Old Mr. Bagley took in Ellinor's poised demeanor and her attire.

She wasn't decked out like other young gals, flaunting skin even in the dead of winter.

She wore a simple white shirt with straight pants. She looked low-key and not overly dolled up for the party, but she had a vibrant energy, the kind of get-up-and-go that was rare among young folks these days.

Old Mr. Bagley found himself warming to Ellinor at their first encounter. He gave a serious nod before asking her.

"Ms Mendoza, you mentioned your parents live in Greenhaven. How about your grandparents? Are they there too?"

Ellinor shook her head. "I don't have any grandparents. I never met them."

There was a hint of tenderness in old Mr. Bagley's eyes as he looked at Ellinor, "In that case, would you be willing to."

"Ellinor, you made it! Didn't expect to see you at my grandpa's birthday bash!" Patricia interrupted, greeting Ellinor with a grin.

She did this on purpose because she knew what old Mr. Bagley was about to say and she wouldn't stand for it.

Old Mr. Bagley was about to ask Ellinor if she'd be willing to become his granddaughter.

Because old Mrs. Bagley's dementia had been worsening over the years, she had been mumbling the names of their long-

lost daughter Marlinie and granddaughter Pearl all day long, having forgotten almost everything else.

So, over the years, Old Mr. Bagley had been eyeing girls who bore some resemblance to their missing daughter or granddaughter, hoping to find someone who could keep old Mrs. Bagley company and ease her condition.

But old Mr. Bagley had high standards. He wasn't satisfied with any of the girls who came knocking, nor with the ones introduced by friends and family. The issue remained unsolved.

Patricia firmly believed that if she tried hard enough to mimic the habits and character of the Bagleys' missing daughter and granddaughter and made herself look as much like Marlinie Bagley's old photos as possible, she could win their hearts.

But the reality was different. The Bagleys never gave her a second look.

Chapter 585

Today, old Mrs. Bagley mistook Ellinor for their long-

lost daughter as soon as she saw her. Thus, old Mr. Bagley got the idea for Ellinor to become his granddaughter. Luckily, she was sharp enough to interrupt the old man before he could even open his mouth, not giving Ellinor a chance to accept.

It was ridiculous! If Ellinor had the backing of the Bagley family, even if she was just temporarily playing the part of the Bagley family's granddaughter, it would elevate her social status and make her more eligible to compete with her for Theo.

How could she let Ellinor surpass her?!

Absolutely not!

Ellinor responded to Patricia's words calmly, "I heard that it's Mr. Howard's grandfather's birthday today, so I came here after work."

Patricia's heart was filled with dark thoughts, but her face was all smiles. She didn't care whether Ellinor was willing or not, and she directly grabbed her arm.

"Really! I really appreciate you coming over for my grandpa's birthday!" Patricia said.

**Ms. Howard, you're being too polite, it's my duty." Ellinor's face was calm as usual. She was just trying to pull her arm away, but Patricia held her tightly*

Patricia would never let go easily and give Ellinor a chance to talk to old Mr. Bagley.

She stood in front of Ellinor, turned her head, and sweetly said to old Mr. Bagley, "Grandpa, you must be tired, go sit down and rest! In a bit, you'll be able to see the birthday present I've prepared for you. You and Grandma will love it!"

Old Mr. Bagley's gaze became heavy. He coldly glanced at Patricia, not accepting her enthusiasm.

Because he was interrupted by Patricia, he didn't continue speaking and signaled the servant to help him go to the front to sit down.

Patricia still didn't let go of Ellinor's arm even after watching the old Mr. Bagley slowly walk away.

At this time, Byran came over curiously and asked, "Sis, what gift did you prepare for Grandpa? Why so secretive?"

Seeing that her grandpa had left and didn't mention the adoption of a granddaughter again, Patricia was pleased with herself and smiled at Byran, "Byran, don't be impatient. You'll know in a bit!"

Byran frowned, "What is it? I want to know now!"

Patricia winked at Byran, "You must behave, my gift isn't something for boys to see. But girls can take a sneak peek!"

Patricia turned her face and sweetly looked at Ellinor, "Ellinor, let me show you the birthday present I prepared for grandpa!"

Ellinor knew that Patricia was up to something again.

She really didn't have time to deal with this drama queen today, so she forcefully pushed Patricia's hand away. After freeing her arm, she waved dismissively, "I'm sorry, Ms. Howard, I don't have time now."

However, Patricia came forward again and even started to act coquettishly. "Ellinor, just have a look. Before my grandparents see the gift, I want to hear your opinion first!"

Chapter 586

Ellenor didn't budge She knew Patricia was up to something and was trying to frame her So she avoided Patricia's gaze

"Ms. Howard, you said this is a gift you carefully prepared so there shouldn't be any problem right? Plus even if I give suggestions now there's no time for you to make changes Gifts are all about the thought as long as your heart is in the right place other people's opinions don't matter that much I don't think I need to help you check it"

With a face of innocence, Patricia moved closer to Ellinor trying to catch her hand again, Ellinor, you're right Gifts are all about the thought put into them, but I want to make sure the gift is as perfect as possible! Alen Ellinor, if you give me advice now there's still time to make changes Because I have two options for the gift I prepared for Grandpa I'm a bit hesitant and don't know which one to choose

So I want you to help me decide which one is better Ellinor the gift is in the rehearsal room behind the stage. I don't think it will take up much of your time

Patricia's sweet talk didn't move Ellinor, it only made her impatient.

But she couldn't be too harsh with Patricia

So, Ellinor backed away step by step like avoiding the plague, then purposely hid behind a tall man, letting him block Patricia to prevent her from bothering her again

Patricia followed closely but stopped when blocked by the man. She looked at the man and said in her usual gentle voice

"Theo, let me pass I just want Ellinor to help me check the gift for Grandpa"

Theo didn't move he just coldly looked at Patricia and said.

"She's an outsider She's just here for the show There's no need for an outsider to see your gift"

Ellinor's heart twitched when she heard him call her an outsider and a smirk crossed her lips

Patricia was secretly pleased it seemed that in Theo's heart, Ellinor had become an outsider

She was relieved

Patricia put on a frustrated look, then decided to obey Theo, "Alright, Theo. Actually, I'm just unsure about which outfit to wear on stage, so I wanted Ellinor to help me

choose

Theo squinted his eyes and said in a calm tone, "Not all women know how to choose clothes. If you want someone to help you choose, at least find someone who dresses appropriately not just any woman"

Ellinor frowned. What did he mean? Was he saying she was not dressed appropriately and didn't know how to choose clothes? Ridiculous!

After hearing Theo say this, Patricia became even more certain that Theo was very dissatisfied with Ellinor

So she didn't refute him

but instead smiled faintly, lightly tugged at his sleeve, and whispered, "Theo, you make a good point. Why don't you help me choose? I trust your taste the most!"

Before Theo could reply, Byron frowned and

protested. "Sis, didn't you just say only girls could see the gift you prepared for Grandpa in advance? Now you're willing to let Theo help you? Is Theo a girl?"

Patricia's face stiffened She then let out a shy laugh and gently scolded him "Byron, it's because you're still a kid! Theo and I are adults, he can give me more mature

Chapter 587

Byron crossed his arms and grumbled in a huff, "I'm an adult now, I'm not a kid anymore! This is clearly a double standard!"

Patricia's face reddened even more. Byron's sarcastic comment made her uncomfortable, but there was a hint of sweetness in her eyes, suggesting that she didn't actually mind the teasing

However, Theo, who stood next to them, showed no reaction, as if Byran's comments had nothing to do with him.

Patricia lifted her head again to look at his expressionless face and asked, "Theo, are you ready to go shopping for clothes with me now?"

Theo took a couple of seconds before responding in a detached tone, "Let's go."

Patricia nodded cheerfully. "Great, let me take you there, it's just around the corner!"

Theo, with his hands in his pockets, followed her without ever glancing back at Ellinor, who was hiding behind him.

Patricia, trailing Theo, suddenly turned back to flash a triumphant smile at Ellinor. Her smile overflowed with the pride of a victor.

Feeling relieved to be free of Patricia's pestering, Ellinor didn't care about Patricia's smug smile.

Byran pouted and said, "Hey! Ellinor, my sister just asked you to help her check out the gifts. Why didn't you go? You really missed an opportunity! I told her I wanted to look, but Patricia wouldn't let me.

Ellinor glanced at Byran, "Why should I go? The gift is from Patricia to your grandfather, not me. What's the point of

me looking? Besides, it seems like Patricia's gift is quite extravagant. Everyone will see it sooner or later; why should I bother looking now?"

"Hmph, you've got a point!"

Not only was Ellinor uninterested in Patricia's gift, but most importantly, she was afraid Patricia would create more trouble for her.

Today's situation was different, she was at her mother's house for her grandfather's birthday party.

Though she didn't come to see her relatives, she also didn't want to cause trouble and ruin her grandfather's party because of her presence.

She had experienced Patricia's tricks too many times. That woman was like an angel on the outside but a demon on the inside, and she had no boundaries.

Just now, Patricia insisted on dragging her to help with the gift because she probably had another trap waiting for her.

Thankfully, Theo helped her. Even though he'd thrown a few insults her way, he had indeed gotten her out of a sticky situation.

Suddenly, Byran's face changed, "Crap! Balfour's coming, I've gotta hide or I'll be sent home to do homework again! Ellinor, remember, don't let him know I brought you here!"

Ellinor nodded, made an "OK" hand gesture, then watched as Byran scurried off.

Geez, this didn't look like a reunion of brothers; it looked more like a scared animal running from a predator

Chapter 588

Ellinor shifted her gaze to the banquet hall's entrance.

In walked Balfour, decked out in a light-colored suit, exuding an undeniable charm.

Guests nodded to him, raising glasses, exchanging greetings, and creating quite the buzz.

In fact, when Theo walked in earlier, he had quite the fan club too. But Theo's icy demeanor meant he wasn't exactly the warmest guy in the room. The crowd soon got the hint and backed off.

Balfour, on the other hand, handled the compliments and attention like a pro. He'd raise his glass and flash a smile, cleverly feeding off the crowd's energy. But beneath the pleasantries, one could sense a cold indifference.

As Ellinor watched Balfour, he caught her eye. A brief flicker of surprise crossed his face, but he quickly regained his composure and went back to chatting with an older gentleman, not giving her a second glance.

Ellinor shrugged off the encounter and redirected her attention to other parts of the hall, observing the scene in detail.

Most of the crowd was made up of older men and women, with a sprinkle of young people here and there.

The birthday bash had an old-school vibe; it was not really the hip and happening party younger people would enjoy.

Instead of a dance floor and a classy orchestra, they'd set up a quaint stage in the middle of the hall. A performance was underway to honor old Mr. Bagley's birthday.

But seriously, how many young guns today could sit through something like this?

Most of them were there to drop off a gift, sit politely for a bit, and then scam at the earliest chance available.

This party was just too darn boring

But not for Ellinor. She had a soft spot for traditional art forms

Growing up in a monastery without any playmates, she devoured all the books she could find. In her free time, she'd seek out traditional performances, and over time, she found them rather fascinating

So she was actually having a ball at this party.

The Bagley family's home had a very cozy and welcoming vibe.

She wondered if she'd been here as a kid. Maybe her mom had brought her over? Her mom's hometown was always filled with sweet and warm memories. She couldn't recall the specifics, but the feeling lingered in her subconscious.

Caught up in her thoughts, her eyes drifted back to old Mr. Bagley, who was chatting with a group of his old buddies

Mr. Bagley seemed to be in good health and spirits. But when the conversation turned to his missing daughter and granddaughter, a hint of sadness crossed his face.

A pang of bitterness hit Ellinor. Her mom must've been a cherished daughter in this family. It was such a shame she ended up marrying the wrong guy and wasting her life.

"Why are you here?"

Balfour's questioning voice snapped her out of her thoughts. Without missing a beat, she turned to him, calm as ever, and replied, "Mr. Howard, I'm here to celebrate your grandfather's birthday

Balfour looked annoyed and furrowed his brows, "Who let you in?"

Ellinor said, "It was Ms. Howard"

Chapter 589

She told a lie because she had pinky sworn to Byran that she wouldn't tell Balfour that he had let her in.

If she said she broke in by herself, that would sound fishy, and she could be booted out on the spot. So, she had to say it was Patricia who brought her in.

Only when Patricia was mentioned did Balfour not get his knickers in a twist. Even if he was a bit miffed, he couldn't go blaming his sister.

"Patricia brought you in?" Balfour furrowed his brow

Ellinor's guess was spot on, Balfour didn't blame Patricia, and he didn't kick her out right away.

Just then, Quinton hurried in, spotting Balfour. He beelined over and said, "Mr. Howard, there's a pressing call for you"

Balfour shot Ellinor a chilly glance, then took Quinton's phone, "What's up? Found it? Where?"

All she could hear was Balfour speaking a few terse words into the phone, then he turned and walked to a quieter spot to continue his call.

After that, he never came back.

Ellinor

hung around in the banquet hall for a bit, got the lay of the land, then got up and moved around, on the hunt for any clues about her mother's disappearance

As she wandered about, she spotted a massive family portrait in the mansion.

Many faces were painted on it, perhaps dozens. Ellinor didn't recognize most of them but did pick out old Mr. Bagley, old Mrs. Bagley, her mom, Mr. Howard senior, and a seemingly ten-year-old Balfour

And herself.

Back then, she was a tiny baby cradled in her mother's arms.

There was no mistaking the brush strokes on the painting for Ellinor. It was a family portrait that her mother had painted herself

At that time, she was a newborn. She was a child with a family and a mother by her side.

Alas, life was unpredictable. Some stuff she didn't understand happened and her mom was framed by the Howard family as a loose woman and got the boot. Her mom then took her and hightailed it out of there.

Later on, she was separated from her mom, and they haven't met since.

One thing that didn't add up for Ellinor was why her mom, after being kicked out by the Howard family, didn't take her back to her maternal grandparents. Why didn't she leave her with them but instead handed her over to an old classmate with no blood relation?

She had too many questions about what happened back then, and it was super confusing.

Suddenly, Ellinor felt something was off in the air, she spun around and spotted a figure trying to skedaddle.

Chapter 590

Etnot quarkly caught up with the figure and blocked his path

It was a male servant He was no spring chicken and probably in his forties

"Who are you? Why the rush?"

The servant, comered awkwardly shook his head. Tim an old servant here I wasn't running just in a hurry to fetch some stuff from the kitchen for the banquet hall."

Ellinor narrowed her eyes. "You were clearly sneaking a peek at me just now, and you only botted when I caught your

The servant shook his head vehemently No not

Ellinor raised an eyebrow. "Not coming clean? Then I have no choice but to report you as a creep to your boss"

The servant panicked and hurriedly said. "No, please! I meant no harm"

"Then tell the truth why were you spying on me?"

"I thought you looked like Mc Eagles who disappeared from our household many years ago I was somewhat taken aback when I saw you, thinking Ms Bagley had returned. thats why I was staring But when you turned around realized I was mistaken, felt utterly embarrassed and wanted to leave I'm truly sorry if I offended you

Ellinor listened to his explanation and eased up her stance Me Bagley? The woman holding a baby in the painting

The servant nodded. "Yes that's her

Ellinor glanced at the painting "Do I really look like her?"

When the servant talked about his chenshed Me Bagley hit expression becaTTIE

is only a tad similar not much"

Detecting the unrequited affection the servant held for her mother Ellinor sighed regretfully, then probed

The servant furrowed his brows and indignantly said Ms Bagley was taken by the Howard family"

Ellinor why are you asking about this?

Suddenly, a very unfriendly female voice interjected cutting off the servant

Ellinor turned around to see a dolled up Haillie Knotts strutting over eyeing her like she was a Prest

The servant seeing a guest approaching took the opportunity to quickly excuse himself

Ellinor felt a bit disappointed to see the servant leave before frusting his story. She thought she might have had finished

Illinoi, I'm talking to you! What are you doing at old Mr. Bagley's birthday gathering asking about Balfo

Ellinor snapped back to reality and lazily looked at her "Saw a beautiful woman in a painting go

resembles the young Ms. Bagley, but your face

happened that made Ms. Bagley disappear?"

out her mother's disappearance if he

be asked bluntly

just asking around"

"Just asking around? I bet you're up to something Haillie's eyes held more than just disgust for her but also deep suspicion. "I heard from Patricia that you're also here for old M Bagley birthday (knew something was fishy You have no relation to the Bagley family, why are you here? And you're even secretly asking about Balfours mother! Ellinor you better not have any inappropriate thoughts about Balfour I bet (re trying to dig into his ta

Ellinor rolled her eyes too lazy to explain and turned to leave

"Stop right there! Who said you could leave? Haillie called out loudly