

The Kiss 781

Chapter 781

Dean was caught red-handed, and he cleared his throat nervously. "No, I just wanted to invite you over for dinner. I really wanted to thank you. And Grandma Alyssa wants to meet you too. She wants to thank you personally for saving me."

Ellinor thought for a moment, "When?"

Dean immediately replied, "You can come anytime today!"

If she went to the Howard family's home during the day when Balfour wasn't home and Patricia was too busy taking care of the sick kid, she might have a chance to find some clues related to her mom being framed back then.

After thinking about this, Ellinor agreed, "Grandpa Dean, I really don't need any thanks. But since you two are inviting me so warmly, it would be rude if I refused. So, I'll pay you a visit."

Dean was overjoyed, "Great! That's fantastic! I'll send a car to the Blanchet Villa to pick you up later."

Ellinor responded, "Okay"

After hanging up the phone, she saw a message from Theo on her phone that he had sent that morning. "Don't forget to eat breakfast when *you* wake up"

Ellinor replied with a smile. "Theo, you're such a nag!"

After washing up and changing her clothes, Ellinor went downstairs to find that the mess from **last** night was gone and everything was neat and clean. Devin respectfully came over, "Ellinor, your breakfast is ready; please have it while it's hot."

Ellinor nodded, and as she was heading to the dining room, she asked, "Devin, who cleaned up downstairs?"

Devin truthfully replied, "Ellinor, it was Ms. Veronica. She didn't sleep all night and cleaned up all the water and broken things on her own.

I was surprised to see everything so clean this morning, but since it's Ms. Veronica's first time doing housework, some details were missed. I had someone do a thorough cleaning afterward.

Veronica, afraid of being scolded by her brother in the morning, turned her fear into motivation and learned how to clean up on her own.

Ellinor was pleased, "Where **is** she now?"

"Ms. Veronica just went back to her room to sleep this morning: she must be very tired."

"Alright, let her sleep till she wakes up on her own." Ellinor sat down at the dining table and started eating her breakfast leisurely, then **said**, "Oh! Devin, I have to go out after breakfast. There will be a package delivered later; it's a gift for Ms. Veronica. Give it to her when she wakes up."

"Okay, Ellinor."

Devin nodded in reply, feeling a bit touched. She didn't expect Ellinor to give Ms. Veronica a gift. It seemed like their relationship was going to improve. which was a good thing.

Before Ellinor finished her breakfast, a servant came in to report to Devin, "Devin, there's a car outside. They said they are here to pick up Ellinor."

Devin looked at Ellinor in confusion, "Ellinor, what's this?"

Ellinor put down her utensils and wiped the corners of her mouth with a napkin, "Yes, they're here to pick me up."

Devin seemed a bit worried, "Ellinor, where are you going? I can arrange a car for you, you don't need to let others pick you up. Uh... Ellinor, who's driving the car that came to pick you up?"

Ellinor knew what Devin was worried about, "Don't worry, I've told Mr. Blanchet where I'm going and who I'm meeting. He knows all about it. He'll pick me up tonight, and we'll come back together. You don't have to worry."

Devin nodded, "That's good, Ellinor. Please be careful."

"Okay, I got it!"

Then Ellinor walked out the door and got into the car sent by the Howard family to pick her up.

Chapter 782

Fred, the butler **of** the Howard family, led all the servants to wait at the entrance for an important quest, just as his boss had instructed.

The moment the car pulled up, before Ellinor could even open the door herself, Fred had already gotten there first, opening the car door for her. Bowing slightly, he said, "Ms. Mendoza, It's an honor to have you here. Dean Howard has been expecting you"

Ellinor was **at** a loss for words.

She felt a tad uncomfortable with such a grand welcome.

Following Fred, Ellinor walked into the Howard family's living room. Dean, who was enjoying a cup of coffee, immediately set down his cup and greeted **her** with a broad smile, "Ellinor's here! Come! Come, take a seat!"

Ellinor walked over and politely said, "Grandpa Dean, you really didn't have to have people waiting for me at the door. I was just coming to visit."

Dean was very kind, but he also had that certain stubbornness characteristic of older people, “My savior is here, how could I not **make** a big deal of it? Of course I had to send people to greet you! Stop being so formal, Ellinor. Have a seat! Fred, serve our guest some coffee.”

“Sure.” Fred nodded in response, then turned to order the servants to bring coffee.

Ellinor took a seat on the sofa next to Dean, politely thanking the servant who served her coffee.

With a cheerful turn of his head, Dean shouted towards the study on the second floor, “Alyssa, our savior is here! Come out and meet her!”

After a short while, an elderly lady slowly walked out of the study, “Our savior is here? Where is she?”

Dean gestured towards Ellinor, “Just arrived, right here!”

Alyssa Howard was dignified and gracious, with a kind face. But when she saw Ellinor, it was as if her expression had frozen, she didn’t even blink.

Out of courtesy, Ellinor stood up to greet her, “Hello, Grandma Alyssa”

Alyssa still stared motionless at Ellinor, taking some time to collect herself.

Ellinor’s polite smile faded, and she started to feel uncomfortable under the intense gaze.

Dean noticed his wife’s unusual behavior and found it quite inappropriate. He cleared his throat to remind her, “Alyssa, what’s with the daze? The guest is saying hello to you”

Alyssa finally snapped out of it and gave an apologetic smile, “Um, hello, you must be Ellinor, right? My husband talks about you a lot.”

Ellinor gave a small smile, “Hello, Grandma Alyssa. Yes, I’m Ellinor.”

Alyssa came over and naturally took a seat next to Dean, “Ellinor, please sit; there’s no need to be so formal.”

As Ellinor took

her seat again and sipped her coffee, she kept an eye on Alyssa from the corner of her eye.

Despite her greying hair, Alyssa’s features were exquisite. It was clear she must have been a beauty in her youth.

Dean treated his wife with gentleness and respect, and they seemed to share a deep bond.

While Ellinor was observing Alyssa, Alyssa was also observing her.

But while Ellinor was subtle about her observation, Alyssa was quite open about hers, scrutinizing her from head to toe and focusing on her face for a while before finally saying, “Ellinor, thank you for helping my husband when he was bullied. Most young people these days avoid getting involved in such matters. It’s not often you come across a young woman as courageous as you.”

Ellinor modestly shook her head, "It's what I should do. You and Grandpa Dean are giving me too much credit."

Alyssa was quite taken by this young girl's manners and humility. Smiling kindly, she asked, "Ellinor, how old are you this year?"

Ellinor replied in a soft voice. "I'm twenty"

Alyssa pondered for a moment, her fingers moving as if she were calculating something, then asked again, "When's your birthday?"

Ellinor paused briefly, a hint of wariness seeping into her heart. Why was Alyssa suddenly interested in her birthday? Had she noticed something?

After a moment of thought, she responded calmly and naturally. After my mother passed away, no one celebrated my birthday, so even I'm not sure when exactly it is."

The confusion in Alyssa's eyes deepened, "Darling, did your mother pass away when you were young, or did she leave and never come back?"

Ellinor's face darkened, and she remained silent..

Alyssa's questions stung. Why was she motherless since childhood?

Wasn't it the distrust in this family that led to her mother and her being kicked out, leading to her mother having to leave her and leaving her clueless about whether her mother **was** alive or **dead**?

Ellinor's

silence tugged at Dean's heartstrings. He nudged Alyssa lightly, "Why did you ask that? You've reminded the kid of her sad past."

Alyssa snapped out of it and quickly apologized, "I'm sorry, Ellinor. You just reminded me of a child I knew long ago, so I asked a few too many questions. If I've reminded you of unhappy times, that's my fault."

Ellinor gave a placid smile, "It's fine, Grandma Alyssa. You just mistook me for someone else."

Alyssa speared a piece of apple from the fruit plate and handed it to her, "Here, Ellinor. Have some fruit first. We'll have a simple lunch at home later. Dean has already ordered lots of fresh ingredients that are all delicious. You can leave after dinner."

Seeing as she was already here, Ellinor didn't refuse, "Alright, thank you for your hospitality"

Alyssa changed the subject, "Oh, Ellinor. I heard from Dean that you've married into the Blanchet family"

Ellinor nodded, "Yes, I suppose so."

Mention of the Blanchet family caused Alyssa to frown, "You're such a good girl; why marry into their family? What a shame! Ellinor, if you were still single, Dean and I could introduce you to many excellent young men."

Those two were a pair, always playing matchmaker.

Ellinor gave a small smile, "I appreciate your and Grandpa Dean's good intentions, but I'm doing well in the Blanchet family, so there's no need for you to worry about my personal matters."

Dean huffed unhappily, "Look at that! The Blanchet family's kid has married such a wonderful wife, while our grandchild can't even get a girlfriend!"

Alyssa tried to soothe her husband. "Don't be like that. Balfour has his own plans. Don't push him too hard, he'll bring a girl home eventually."

Dean was getting more and more upset, "When will that be? When I'm six feet under?"

Alyssa laughed helplessly, "There you go again! Ellinor is here; don't make a scene. Alright, you chat with Ellinor. I'll go bake some cookies that I've been learning to make for Ellinor to try"

"Ellinor, Alyssa is going to bake cookies for *you*, so I'll take you around the garden."

"Okay." Ellinor was more than happy to explore the Howard family estate, as she might uncover some new clues.

And so, Alyssa went off to the kitchen, and Dean led Ellinor to the garden.

In the shadows, a scheming servant stealthily ran upstairs.

Chapter 784

"Mr. Howard, we've got a situation!"

Byran was in the middle of doing his homework when Carlos rushed in, interrupting his train of thought. Irritated, he said, "What's up now? Carlos, if you keep panicking like this, I'll slap you!"

Carlos looked innocent, "Mr. Howard, there really is a situation. I just saw a guest arrive downstairs. Dean and Alyssa are being super nice to her.

Byran was even more irritated, "So what? We always have guests. They're just old friends of my grandparents, there's nothing weird about that."

Carlos shook his head, "No, it's different this time. It's not an old friend of Dean and Alyssa's, it's a young girl. You know her too!"

Byran frowned, "A young girl that I know? Who? Carlos, can you just tell me everything at once?"

Carlos said, "It's that Ms. Mendoza who always gives you a hard time"

Byran immediately put down his pen, looking surprised, "Ellinor?!"

Carlos nodded, "Yes, Ellinor! Mr. Howard, don't you think it's weird? The Howards and the Blanchets have been on bad terms for years. Why are Dean and Alyssa treating Ellinor like she's their savior?"

Byran wasn't listening anymore; his eyes were burning with rage, "Ellinor dared come here?! Where is she? I need to settle some old scores with her!"

Carlos replied, "Dean just took her to the garden. Mr. Howard, what old scores do you have to settle with Ellinor?"

Byran rolled up his sleeves determinedly. "You don't need to know! Finish my homework for me; I've got to step out for a bit.

Carlos looked troubled, "Mr. Howard, I can't do your homework for you. If Balfour finds out, he'll kick me out!"

Byran said dismissively. "Just do it! If you don't tell, I won't tell, how would he know? Hurry up and write it for me!"

Carlos shook his head in exasperation. He knew he shouldn't have told Mr. Howard the news.

The Howard family's garden was huge. Apart from the house in the middle, the rest of the area was filled with various plants. It was very well maintained and looked absolutely beautiful.

Dean was leaning on a cane with the help of a servant, happily introducing to Ellinor which flowers he planted and which ones were taken care of by his wife, Alyssa.

Ellinor was listening to Dean's introduction while observing the environment of the Howard family's home.

She didn't **have** much of an impression of the Howard family's home.

If her mother had taken her away from the Howard family when she was already five years old, she should've been able to remember things from that age, but aside from a vague sense of familiarity, she had no memory of this place.

Or perhaps she had almost no memories from before she was five.

As she was walking, she noticed a particularly stunning sea of flowers in front of her. The flowers were a rare grayish-blue color and were incredibly beautiful.

Ellinor had never seen such flowers before. She was about to ask Dean what they were when she turned around and saw that the old man's face was

slightly off, "Grandpa Dean, are you okay?"

Grandpa Dean stopped walking and rubbed his head, "I'm fine. I'm just really happy that you came to see me today. I forgot to take my blood pressure medicine this morning"

Hearing this, the servant immediately became nervous, "Dean, how could you forget to take your medicine? You absolutely can't forget that. I'll take you back to take it right now."

Dean felt it would be inappropriate to leave a guest halfway through a tour, so he wanted to hold on a little longer.

Ellinor saw what Dean **was** thinking and said, "Grandpa Dean, it's okay. Go back and take your medicine first. I'll walk around by myself for a bit and come find you later."

Chapter 785

Dean gave a nod after hearing this, "Alright, Ellinor. You can go have a look by yourself, and whenever you get tired, just come back."

Ellinor obediently responded, "Sure"

Then, a servant helped Dean into the car parked nearby and took him back to take his medicine.

After watching Dean leave, Ellinor's gaze turned back to the sea of flowers in front of her.

She was so stunned by the beauty of the **unique** flowers that she didn't have time to ask Dean **what** they were

She walked up to the flower bed alone, bent over, and took a sniff. There was indeed a nice and sweet scent, but it was mixed with a strange sour smell.

How could such beautiful flowers have such a smell?

As she was pondering, a tall, middle-aged man suddenly appeared from the flower bed, giving her a scare.

The middle-aged man was standing in the flower bed, his hands covered in mud.

Instinctively, Ellinor took a step back, looking at him in surprise.

The **man** just smiled **at** her, "Sorry to startle you, I was just fertilizing the flowers."

After saying that, he walked out of the flower bed, went over to a faucet not far away, and bent down to wash his hands, "Are you today's guest?*

Ellinor nodded, "Yes, Mr. Howard. Nice to meet you, sorry to intrude."

McNeil Howard, having washed his hands, turned around to look at her with a somewhat surprised expression, "You know who I am?"

He was now wearing a gardener's uniform and hadn't introduced himself; how could this young girl know his identity?

Ellinor explained, "I saw you once at the Bagley family's home during old Mr. Bagley's birthday. It wasn't too long ago, so I remember."

McNeil looked at her with his deep-set eyes, "I remember you too."

"Really?" Ellinor was somewhat surprised.

She had only briefly met him that day, and he hadn't been as observant as she had been, how could he remember her?

McNeil laughed, answering her question, "Because you look very much like my daughter, so I remember."
"

He said she looked like his daughter?

This made Ellinor a little nervous, but she quickly calmed down. The daughter he was talking about must be Patricia.

She and Patricia share the same father, so it wasn't strange that they looked alike.

McNeil sat down on a bench nearby, unscrewed a water bottle that he had placed there earlier, and took a sip while giving Ellinor a once—

over, "So you're the one who saved my father's life? I've heard about you."

Ellinor replied, "I'm not a savior; I just lent a hand. I'm here today because Grandpa Dean invited me so warmly that I was afraid he'd be disappointed if I

refused"

McNeil nodded. "You're very modest and sensible."

Ellinor didn't want to talk much with the man who had betrayed her mother, so she turned her head and asked, "Mr. Howard, what are these flowers?"

McNeil looked at the sea of flowers, his voice becoming softer with the breeze, and responded, "Cockscomb."

Chapter 786

This flower was called a cockscomb? What a unique name.

Its color was bright, and it did kinda look like a rooster's comb.

Ellinor stared at the flowers in a daze for a bit, then curiously asked. "Mr. Howard, why would someone of your stature personally fertilize these flowers? Don't you have professional gardeners at home?"

McNeil replied, "This is my wife's favorite flower. It needs a lot of care and is very picky about temperature, humidity, and soil conditions. I don't trust anyone else to take care of it."

Wife?

Hmph, his current wife was Patricia's mother.

This heartless man betrayed his first wife but was now so attentive to the flowers his current wife liked. How ironic!

Did he think this made him look deeply affectionate?

What a hypocrite!

Ellinor struggled to control her emotions as she thought about the possible injustices, betrayals, and grievances her mother may have suffered in the Howard family.

Everyone else was one thing, but the man who should have been the most trusted by her mother and who should have trusted her mother the most was also bullying her mother. It was too much!

After thinking

about this, Ellinor didn't want to be nice to him. She scoffed and exposed his hypocrisy. "Let me be blunt, Mr. Howard, if you have time to fertilize these flowers, you should spend more time with your beloved wife. That's more meaningful than pretending to be moved by your own laziness here!"

McNeil was stunned. This was the first time anyone had criticized him so directly, and it was a young girl he'd just met.

The girl was glaring at him furiously, as if she had a great enmity towards him.

McNeil didn't know why Ellinor was hostile to him, but he didn't want to quarrel with a young girl. He nodded and said thoughtfully, "Hmm, you make a good point. But there are some things that you don't understand when you don't do them at the time. When you finally understand and want to do them, it's already too late."

Ellinor was taken aback. Too late? What did he mean?

"Ellinor, you liar. So you're here!" Byran suddenly jumped out, panting and angrily pointing at her.

Ellinor looked at him, raising an eyebrow. So this silly boy was also home?

After seeing his son pointing at someone and speaking rudely, McNeil frowned, "Byran, how can you talk to a guest like that? It's rude!"

Only then

did Byran notice his father, and he quickly became more polite, "Dad, you're here too! Uh.... I need to talk to her!"

McNeil sternly said, "Even if you need to talk to her, you should speak properly. You can't point at people! Besides, she's older than you; you should respect her."

Byran frowned, and before his father, he reluctantly said, "Um... Ellinor, I need to talk to you. Can you come with me?"

Ellinor nodded, "Sure"

Then she turned to McNeil, "Mr. Howard, I'll be going."

McNeil took a sip of water and calmly said, "Alright, you can go."

As Ellinor left with Byran, McNeil watched the girl's back, who was about the same age as his lost daughter, and fell into deep thought..

He closed his eyes, recalling his wife and daughter.

"Dad, are you planting these flowers here again?"

After hearing the word 'Dad, McNeil snapped back to reality, only to see Patricia's face, a trace of melancholy flashed through his eyes.

To Patricia, McNeil was also gentle.

"Yes, what happened, Patri?"

Chapter 787

Patricia said, "Mom's feeling a bit off, can you go upstairs and check on her?"

McNeil frowned, "If she's not well, someone should take her to the hospital. I'm no doctor."

Patricia was taken aback. Her father's response was almost identical to Theo's.

Did all men treat women they didn't love this way?

Ever since her mom married McNeil, she did everything she could to please him and his parents. But she had never been able to earn their respect or McNeil's love.

Even after all these years, it was only because of her and Byran that her mother's position in the Howard family had remained stable.

She really couldn't wrap her head around what these men were thinking. Her dad had been obsessing over his good-for-nothing ex-wife and her daughter for years, completely neglecting her mother.

As for Theo, he was smitten with that crafty country girl, Ellinor, and couldn't care less about her.

Patricia wasn't going to let this slide. She tried again, "Dad, can you please go check on Mom? I heard that at Grandma and Grandpa have an important guest at home today. If Mom gets sick and has to go to the hospital, they'll be upset!"

McNeil rubbed his forehead, "Go back and stay with your mom. I'll check on her later."

Pretending to be distressed, Patricia said, "I wish I could stay with Mom, but I have to look after Baber. Dad, please go to Mom quickly!"

With a sigh, McNeil got up.

Byran took Ellinor to his room, afraid that if they spoke outside, the elders would see and scold him.

Carlos, who was being forced to help with Byran's homework, was stunned when he saw Byran bring Ellinor back.

Byran ordered, "Carlos, get out!"

Carlos weakly replied, "Mr. Howard, I haven't finished..."

"You're dismissed! Get out!"

"Yes, sir."

Carlos felt relieved. He put down his pen and got up. He didn't know how to answer most of the questions, and if he got them wrong, Byran would yell at him. He was glad to be let off the hook.

After Carlos left, Byran slammed the door and angrily pointed at Ellinor, "Ellinor, you liar!"

Ellinor leisurely looked around his room, then found a chair and sat down, "Oh? What did I lie to you about?"

Byran glared at her angrily, "You're playing dumb now? You lied to me about losing interest in Theo and about not competing with my sister for him anymore. But you're back with the Blanchet family now, aren't you?"

Ellinor admitted calmly, "I'm back with the Blanchet family, but I'm not competing for anyone."

Byran crossed his arms angrily, "Right! You don't have to compete. Just the sight of you makes Theo surrender. You're really something!"

Ellinor yawned with boredom, "Did you bring me here just to say that?"

Although it was irritating, Byran had become accustomed to Ellinor's casual attitude.

"Can you give Theo back to my sister?"

Ellinor answered directly, "No!"

Byran was clearly not satisfied, "Why? Going back on your word, are you?"

Ellinor smiled, casually resting her elbow on the armrest, "There was a misunderstanding between Theo and me because of your sister, which left me disappointed in him. Now that we've cleared things up, Theo likes me, and I like him. Why should I give him up for your sister?"

"Ellinor, quit making excuses! You just don't keep your word!"

"Even if I were willing to give him up, would he even accept your sister? Before I came along, didn't your sister spend all those years failing to win Theo's heart?"

Chapter 788

Byran was seething, but had no comeback.

Ellinor happened to plop down right where Byran was doing his homework, so she casually flipped through his workbook on his desk, "You can't even finish your own assignments and even had someone else do it for you. And yet, you still have time to poke your nose into other people's business?"

Byran got anxious and embarrassed when he saw her looking at his work. He barked, "Put that down! Don't touch my stuff! Mind your own business!"

Ellinor put his work down and lightly tapped on the desk, "I'm not meddling, I'm an outsider, and I don't have the right to."

Byran let out a smug chuckle, "Glad you know!"

Ellinor's tone was flat, "But I could tell Balfour what I saw, and let him sort you out."

Byran tensed up instantly, "You wouldn't dare!"

Ellinor gave a tiny smile, "Scared I might spill the beans about you getting someone else to do your homework?"

Byran stared at her unhappily. "No shit! You're just stirring the pot."

Ellinor smiled faintly; her eyes turned serious, and she tapped the desk again, "Then erase it and start over!"

Byran looked defiant, "I don't need you butting in! You're a flake yourself; what right do you have to tell me what to do?"

Ellinor didn't argue. She just took out her phone, ready to make a call.

After seeing this, Byran's face turned pale, and he rushed forward to stop her, "What the hell are you doing? Stop!"

Ellinor hid her phone behind her back and dodged Byran's attempt to snatch it, "So, are you gonna erase it and start over?"

The thing Byran feared the most was his strict older brother. No matter how defiant he was, he had to compromise, "Fine! I'll do it myself. Put your phone away, don't you dare call my brother!"

Ellinor raised an eyebrow. After seeing him finally give in, she temporarily put her phone away.

Truth be told, she never had any intention of calling Balfour. She just wanted to scare Byran a bit.

She didn't want to have anything to do with Balfour; there was no way she'd call him.

She just wanted Byran to do his homework properly and stop bothering her over Patricia.

Byran sat back down, erased the part that someone else had done for him, and reluctantly started over.

Ellinor watched as he wrote a few words, then shook her head, "Who would have thought that a boy with your handsome looks would have handwriting that looked like a spider crawled across the page."

Byran's face turned red, "Ellinor! You're crossing the line! Who asked you to watch me do my homework? Scram!"

Ellinor didn't leave, as he had demanded. Instead, she took a pen out of the pencil box and circled a point on the problem Byran was working on, "This is how you do this question? Look at it! Remember the formula I taught you? Apply it yourself!"

Chapter 789

After Ellinor reminded him, Byran remembered the formula she had once taught him. It seemed like it could help him finally deal with the question.

Suddenly, it all clicked into place for him, and he knew how to solve the problem. But he stubbornly grumbled, "Hmph, I don't need your help"

Ellinor didn't bat an eye at his attitude. She put down her pen and said, "I'm off to the loo. If you haven't figured it out by the time I'm back, don't blame me for having a good laugh."

With that, she breezed past Byran and disappeared into the restroom in his room, shutting the door behind her.

Byran watched her retreating figure, then bowed his head and started seriously working on the problem, keeping in mind the formula from his memory.

Suddenly, there was a knock at his door. Byran, with his homework still unfinished, tensed up. He thought Balfour was back to check on his work.

"Byran, are you in there?"

After hearing his mom's voice, Byran let out a sigh of relief.

"Mom, come on in! I'm working on my homework!"

His mom walked in and asked, "Byran, how come you haven't finished your homework yet?"

Byran scratched his head. "The homework Balfour left me today is kinda tough, that's why I'm a bit slow."

His mom sighed and said, "Byran, you really need to buckle down. How am I supposed to face your grandparents if you don't get into university this year?"

Byran frowned. "What does me getting into university have to do with your dignity in front of my grandparents?"

His mom looked troubled. "Of course it does! We could've pulled some strings to get you into a good university, but your brother wouldn't hear of it. He insists our family doesn't ride on coattails. If you don't get into university this year, won't that prove that the son I gave birth to is less smart than the one from your dad's ex-wife?"

Byran was annoyed. "Mom, that's just the way it is. I can't hold a candle to Balfour."

His mom looked disappointed. "That's why I want you to try your best! I've been through a lot at home. If it weren't for your sister always standing up for me, nobody here would give me the time of day. Byran, I just hope you can take over the family business, so I can have some dignity here!"

Byran said dismissively, "Mom, I've told you, don't hold your breath for me to take over the family business. I'm not interested in that! And I don't want to fight with Balfour over the inheritance. Even if I did inherit the business, I wouldn't run it as well as him. I'd rather do what I want to do."

"What do you want to do? What can you do besides play video games all day? Byran, can you stop making me worry? If you don't fight for the family business, then when your father is gone and I'm old, Balfour will kick us out!"

"Mom, Balfour is not like that. He won't turn against me. If he wanted to guard against me, why would he spend so much time and energy helping me study and setting high academic standards for me?"

Mrs. Howard frowned deeply and said, "This situation puzzles me. Balfour has been tutoring you for so many years, but your grades haven't improved at all. I think he might be deliberately not teaching you well. If he was really doing his best then how could you not even get into an ordinary university?"

Byran

said helplessly and guiltily, "Mom, this is my problem, not Balfour's. I just think I'm naturally bad at studying."

Mrs. Howard was furious at her good-for-

nothing son. "Byran, you're so naive. Balfour and you don't share the same mother. How sincere can he be towards you? You have to understand that only your sister and I truly care about you. Only we genuinely wish you well and wouldn't hurt you. So, you must listen to us."

Chapter 790

Byran frowned. He wasn't really happy with his mom and sister pushing him to inherit the family business. He couldn't care less about the Howard family

fortune!

He also wasn't a fan of his mom always trying to second-

guess his brother's intentions. Sure, his brother could be tough on him, and yeah, he did kind of scare him, but he never doubted that his brother meant well.

His mom was right. He and Balfour weren't exactly womb-

mates, but ever since he was born, it was Balfour who had been looking out for him, teaching him to talk and learn.

Balfour might not have spoiled him rotten, but no matter how tough he was, Balfour never did him wrong.

Even though Balfour was against him getting into e-

sports, whenever he needed some tech gear, Balfour would lecture him about not studying, and not long after, his right-hand man, Quinton, would show up with the gear.

He knew very well that Quinton wouldn't be sneaking him those gadgets without orders from Balfour.

In recent years, Balfour even started teaching him some odds and ends about running the company, but he was just too stubborn to learn and didn't pay enough attention.

"Mom, if you keep dissing Balfour like that, I'm gonna get pissed." Byran stated firmly.

"Byran, I just wish you could be as sensible as your sister!"

Mrs. Howard was getting more and more ticked off at her good-for-

nothing son. She felt like she was just spinning her wheels.

Over

the years, she married into the Howard family as she wanted, tying the knot with McNeil, but she never got any real love or affection from her husband. Even when she was sick, he didn't give her any tender loving care.

Her son was no better, completely

ignoring her requests. Only her sensible daughter was willing to join forces with her

Suddenly, the bathroom door swung open, and Ellinor came out.

Mrs. Howard turned her head at the sound with a surprised look on her face, "Who are you?"

Ellinor didn't respond. She just squinted at Mrs. Howard, her eyes flashing with a cold light.

Mrs. Howard was her mother's good friend and also the other woman in her father's affair. Now that she had successfully taken over her mother's position, she was now trying to coax her son into fighting for her father's inheritance.

Although Ellinor and Balfour didn't share any sibling bond, she didn't want to see this woman get what she wanted.

Mrs. Howard didn't get a response and started feeling a bit uneasy. She frowned and turned to her son, "Byran, who is this? Why didn't you tell me there was someone else in your room?"

Byran looked at Ellinor and started, "Mom, she is..."

Ellinor cut him off, "Byran, did you solve that question just now? Do you get it?"

Byran was taken aback, "I got it, but I haven't finished yet. Don't underestimate me; wait a bit, and I'll show you when I'm done."

Ellinor smiled, "Alright, then hurry up; I'm here waiting to see."

Mrs. Howard, listening to their conversation, thought for a moment, "So she's a tutor, huh? Byran, is this another tutor Balfour sent for you?"

Byran wanted to keep his dignity. He was busy trying to prove to Ellinor that he really got it, so he didn't get around to answering his mother's question.

Even without her son's answer, Mrs. Howard saw that as soon as he saw the girl coming out of the bathroom, he started hitting the books, which made her even more certain that Ellinor was a tutor.