

Unbreakable 1841

Chapter 1841

Elin said with openness and sincerity.

Landen responded with a chuckle and motioned for her to come closer.

He pulled out a folder from his drawer and handed it to her. "These are the brochures for that school. Take them and have a look. Once you've made your decision, I'll take care of everything, including tuition, living expenses, and your application."

While Elin had no intention of studying so far from home, preferring to stay within the familiar surroundings of Swynborough, she accepted the folder with a respectful nod. She had already arranged her tuition through part-time work and had declined financial help from Annis, but she nonetheless expressed her appreciation. "Thank you, sir."

Landen seemed pleased with her respectful response and then changed the subject. "About that bar incident, Erick was naive and ended up being manipulated. But he was at fault, so I had reprimanded him severely."

Hearing Landen acknowledge the bar incident caught Elin off guard.

She turned to face him, her face turning pale suddenly.

Landen didn't dislike Elin. It was just that he wasn't getting any younger. The future success of the Foster family rested on Erick's shoulders if they wanted to keep shining or soar even higher.

Erick, being the heir of the Foster family, carried the responsibility of ensuring the Foster family's prosperity and also the task of locating Casey and Raegan.

Once Casey and Raegan were found back, the Foster family needed to be strong enough to avoid any future tragedies. Thus, Erick was destined to seek a powerful alliance through marriage.

It wasn't that Elin wasn't good, but she didn't come from wealth, offering no support to Erick's career.

Even if Landen felt compassionate momentarily and allowed Erick to marry Elin, what would happen if the Foster family fell one day? He refused to let Elin's parents' misfortune recur. What kind of man would he be if he couldn't protect his own woman?

So, for Elin's sake, Landen wished Elin would marry someone from a similar background to ensure a secure and joyful life.

Landen noticed Elin's hands clenched tight and sighed. "Ultimately, this is the Foster family's burden. Erick has offered to compensate, which seems fair. Use this chance to improve yourself and find a husband who will cherish you. Live a calm and joyful life. Remember, the Foster family will always support you."

The soft, yellow glow of the study lamp cast light on Elin's pale and fragile face.

"May I know was it Mr. Erick Foster's idea to send me away to study in Uchaesau?" Elin finally voiced her doubt.

Landen gave a slight nod, confirming her guess.

Elin's posture shifted slightly, her heart filled with sadness.

Landen observed her reaction and felt helpless. He understood his son well. Like himself, Erick was often slow to recognize his own feelings. It was evident that Elin had developed feelings for Erick quite some time ago, yet he remained unaware.

This predicament should have been addressed much earlier. Landen knew he had to take on the role of the villain.

Landen's tone became gentler. "Elin, I know you are a good girl. I hope you understand that I have my reasons. You and Erick are not a good match."

Elin's face turned red. In truth, she had overestimated her own worth and allowed herself to dream too far. Landen could have ignored her feelings, openly shaming her and accusing her of shamelessly coveting Erick.

However, Landen was an educated man, choosing his words with care, and taking the blame upon himself, which only added to Elin's embarrassment.

With things reaching this point, if Elin denied Landen's generosity, she would seem unreasonable and ungrateful.

Chapter 1842

Elin smiled, her deep eyes shining with a keen grasp of human nature.

"I understand. Don't worry, I... I'll go."

Landen expressed his approval, "I knew you were exceptional. If that's all, you may go about your day."

"Mr. Foster." Elin paused, gathering her thoughts.

Despite Landen treating her like a part of the family, Elin always referred to him as "Mr. Foster," recognizing the absence of a close personal connection. She consistently remembered her role.

Landen looked up and hummed in response.

Elin had regained her composure and said quietly, "I have another request."

"What's is it?"

"Please keep this from my mother. I don't want her to worry."

Landen's brow furrowed slightly. He had initially intended to tell Annis. He held Annis in high regard since the latter was a conscientious and precise employee, trusted by Casey, indicating her integrity.

With Elin being Annis' daughter and raped by Erick, Landen felt obligated to inform Annis.

Misinterpreting Landen's silence as concern over her unresolved feelings for Erick, Elin quickly clarified, "Mr. Foster, don't worry. What happened at the bar... It was truly an accident. I share part of the blame. I don't hold Erick responsible, and it won't happen again."

Recognizing Elin's sincere intent not to burden Annis with her worries, Landen reluctantly consented, "Alright, I will honor your request."

Elin said, "Mr. Foster, I'm not upset with your arrangement. You have been incredibly supportive of my family. I shouldn't have entertained the wistful idea for Mr. Erick Foster... It was my fault."

Landen was taken aback by Elin's maturity, despite her young age. She could see through people's intentions with remarkable clarity.

Talking with someone so perceptive made things much easier for him.

Elin searched the folder for the black card Landen had given her.

She then respectfully handed it back to him using both hands. “Mr. Foster, I have saved enough to cover my tuition fees. I can work part-time during my college days to support myself, so please take this back.”

Landen frowned. “You should keep this card. It’s merely a small token of my appreciation, not a significant amount. If you refuse it, it feels as though you resent me.”

Elin was about to refuse again when Landen added, “Elin, please accept this card, so I can rest easy.”

Ultimately, Landen was worried about Elin.

Elin considered for a moment and then agreed to accept the card to ease his concerns. However, she had no intention of using this card.

She planned to give it back when the right moment came.

The following day.

Chapter 1843

Elin shared her plans to study in Uchaesau with her mother.

Annis was shocked. “Elin, didn’t you plan to attend university here? Aren’t universities abroad essentially the same?”

Elin gently patted Annis’ shoulder and smiled. “Mom, it’s actually quite different. The fashion and jewelry design program in Uchaesau is more renowned. If I’m going to college, I might as well attend one that I truly like, right?”

Annis struggled with the idea of her daughter being so far away, her voice trembling. “But it’s so far...”

“It’s not that far.” Elin made it a point to sound cheerful, hiding how she truly felt. “Four years will fly by. Mr. Foster is remarkably generous by granting you a month of vacation each year. You could visit me in Uchaesau during that time, and we could explore different cultures together. Wouldn’t that be wonderful?”

Elin was sharp, and Annis was insightful. Annis rubbed her hands nervously and said, “Elin, is it because of what happened before, that you’re still upset with me... I...”

Annis’ voice choked. “I had no choice. Mrs. Foster has been so kind to us, and we really aren’t at the same level as her son. I know my words last time hurt your pride, but Mr. Erick Foster is indeed from a different world. I’m sorry. But do you understand that I only said those things for your sake?”

Understand... Landen’s words echoed in Elin’s mind. Everyone expected her to understand them, yet nobody seemed to try to understand her perspective. She never intended to seduce Erick, but she hadn’t expected that her unselfish acts could alarm others. Had she known, she would have avoided such a misunderstanding...

Elin felt a sting in her nose and fought to hold back her tears, managing a smile. “Mom, it’s nothing like that. I genuinely want to study in Uchaesau.”

Annis ultimately wanted what was best for Elin's future, so she withdrew her objections. She sighed and said softly, "You have big dreams, my girl. Just take good care of yourself."

Elin's eyes welled up. "Mom, take care of yourself too. I'll gradually become your pillar of strength..."

A few days later, Landen had taken care of all the arrangements for Elin, and she would be leaving shortly.

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Elin bid farewell to her close friends and went out for dinner, returning to the Foster estate late. Seeing that Annis was still up, Elin went to check on her as usual to see if she needed any help.

Upon reaching the main house, Elin encountered Erick, whom she hadn't seen in many days. He was seated on the sofa, looking weary as if he had been drinking once more.

Elin walked by the sofa without stopping and passed Erick by. She no longer held the right to be concerned about him. His way of making amends was to send her abroad, clearly indicating his desire not to see her anymore. The initial agony that felt as if her heart had been torn out had been days ago, and now she was better at concealing it.

Growing up, Elin endured a tough life and moved around a lot with her mother. Her resilience in handling pressure surpassed that of most people. These experiences had developed her strong self-worth, keen sensitivity, and mature personality. She feared being looked down upon, so she vowed never to make the same mistake and to stick to her own path.

Landen's words had clarified one thing for Elin. Social class existed, unseen but ever-present.

In the kitchen, failing to find her mother, Elin decided to leave.

Just as Elin was about to step away, she noticed Erick leaning against the sofa, his head tilted back, his Adam's apple moving, appearing distressed. She was aware that his throat would hurt whenever he drank.

After a brief hesitation, Elin returned to the kitchen and prepared a glass of iced lemonade for Erick as she had done before. Since she was leaving tomorrow, this would be the last time she prepared this drink for him.

Once ready, Elin silently set the glass on the table without his notice.

After a lingering look at Erick, Elin turned and walked away.

Erick had always had a chronic throat issue that made drinking uncomfortable for him. When he opened his eyes and was about to get up for some water, he noticed the glass before him, a familiar, refreshing, and appealing sight. He took a sip, then a large gulp, immediately feeling relief in his throat.

Chapter 1844

Upon reflection, Erick realized he hadn't seen Elin in several days, likely due to his recent preoccupations.

Of course, being preoccupied was no excuse for avoiding someone.

Partly, this avoidance derived from the fact that since their last encounter, Erick frequently dreamt of his intimate moments with Elin.

Her soft whimpering, reminiscent of a distressed kitten, had provoked an unwanted response from him in those dreams.

Previously, Erick had never seen himself as someone driven by desire.

He suspected it was his youthful impulses that had made him lose control. However, when the women at the bar approached him, he felt nothing but disgust. Simply being near them was awful, let alone the thought of intimacy.

His mind was in chaos. On one side, he felt monstrous, as Elin had just become an adult, and yet he

repeatedly dreamt of sleeping with her. On the other side, he struggled to grasp his own feelings and thoughts. Why did these feelings occur only for Elin, even though he had viewed her as a sisterly figure? It filled him with guilt.

Erick set his glass aside and pulled out a four-leaf clover necklace from his pocket. A childhood friend had suggested it, mentioning that girls appreciated gifts like earrings and necklaces.

Erick had instantly been drawn to this red four-leaf clover necklace, a symbol of happiness. He had carried it around for a few days, always meaning to give it to Elin but never finding the perfect moment.

With determination, Erick finished his glass of ice lemonade, deciding to present it to Elin the following day.

The next day, after sorting out business matters, Erick tried to call Elin. However, the opposite side's tone sounded disconnected, making him furrow his brows. Unwilling to accept it, he redialed, but the number was still disconnected.

Erick paused for a moment and then sent a questioning mark to Elin.

Immediately, a bright red exclamation mark popped up.

Erick had never imagined that Elin would block him. He reflected on the past days, convinced he had done nothing wrong. His avoidance was merely to prevent any awkwardness. Why... He couldn't make sense of it.

The red four-leaf clover necklace lay inside a lovely gift box on the table. Erick glanced at it and firmly closed the box, tossing it into the trash bin. He didn't have time to dwell on the thoughts of a young woman. If that was how it was, then so be it.

Erick got up, ready to attend a meeting, but before he left, he looked at the gift box in the trash bin and impulsively reached down to pick it up.

The trash bin in the administrative office was empty, having just been replaced.

After all, it was the first necklace Erick had ever purchased, and it didn't seem right to simply discard it in the trash. He placed it in a secluded corner of a drawer and put it out of his mind.

Shortly afterward, a significant project demanded his attention for nearly three weeks, keeping him away from home.

When the project was finally finished, the company celebrated with a large banquet, where Erick drank quite a bit. Once he got into the car, he felt completely worn out.

The driver asked, "Sir, shall we head to the apartment, or..."

Erick massaged his temples, feeling a slight pain in his throat and a craving for the soothing taste of iced lemonade. He responded, "Let's go home."

The car soon arrived at the Foster family estate.

Erick entered and found the living room unchanged. He discarded his suit and collapsed onto the sofa in exhaustion.

Late at night, his sore throat worsened. Reaching out, he found a glass of iced water neatly placed on the table.

Without looking, he picked it up and drank, feeling the coolness spread through his throat, but something about the taste was amiss.

It was only at that moment that he realized he was just holding a glass of plain iced water.

Erick sat up, and just then, a servant walked by. He asked, "Where is Elin?"

The servant seemed surprised by the question, thought for a moment, and answered, "Mr. Foster, Elin left for her studies quite some time ago."

Erick, still fuzzy from the alcohol, didn't grasp it immediately.

Then, it hit him that she was off at college. He asked, "Doesn't she come back on weekends?"

The servant gave Erick a disbelieving look and responded, "Mr. Foster, are you serious? Elin is studying in Uchaesau. A connecting flight to Swynborough takes a day and a half, so two days wouldn't suffice for a round trip."

Erick was taken aback. A few seconds later, there was a "thud" as the glass slipped from his hand onto the carpet. Luckily, it didn't break.

He repeated in disbelief, "She's studying in Uchaesau?"

"Right!" The servant nodded. "You didn't know?"

Confusion clouded the servant's face. After all, Erick and Elin appeared to get along well, yet Erick seemed oblivious to Elin's studying abroad in Uchaesau.

Noticing Erick's puzzled expression, the servant added, "Elin has been overseas for a month now. Annis mentioned Elin won't be returning for the holidays. Annis planned to fly to Uchaesau instead."

At the servant's words, Erick suddenly stood up and bolted outside.

The servant, witnessing an unprecedented disturbance in Erick, paused.

After a brief moment of astonishment, the servant retrieved the glass that lay forgotten on the floor.

Erick sprinted to where Elin resided and swung the door open without knocking.

Annis habitually left the front door unlocked at night, just in case of emergencies. Positioned close to the main house, the housekeeper's quarters were considered safe within the estate.

Erick stepped into the small room once vibrant with Elin's presence, now stark and empty. The desk where Elin used to study had vanished.

With everything removed, the room lay bare. Not even a bed was left.

At that moment, Erick's gaze turned icy, his demeanor chilling. Elin had really gone, and he was completely unaware.

"Mr. Foster?" Annis' voice, tinged with astonishment, floated from behind Erick.

As Erick turned around, Annis registered his face. In a tone laced with bewilderment, she inquired, "Mr. Foster, to what do I owe this visit?"

Erick, rigid in the doorway, demanded, "Annis, where is Elin?"

Chapter 1846

The news from the servant seemed surreal to Erick. Vividly, he recalled Elin's plans to pursue her studies locally.

Annis' eyes went wide. "Mr. Foster, Elin left for her studies."

"I'm aware of that, Annis, but where exactly?"

Annis replied, "In Uchaesau, Mr. Foster."

Upon hearing this, Erick's already cold gaze sharpened, a wintry chill emanating from him.

"She. Why Uchaesau of all places?" he questioned, his throat constricting.

Annis let out a weary sigh. "She felt the universities there were a better fit. She won't be home for the holidays and even considered flying me out to join her."

Acceptance settled heavy on Erick. Elin was indeed an ocean away.

With barely a murmur, he questioned, "Then why strip her room?" It wasn't a permanent goodbye. Why then, had her space been emptied?

Elin's delicate nature was known to him. The emptiness might wound her upon her return.

Erick's face was an icy mask as he pressed, "Who decided to clear out Elin's room? Was it my father?"

His tone laced with ire, Erick turned to leave. "On the expansive Foster grounds, are we in such dire need of this one room?"

Annis, noting Erick's resolve to seek answers, called out, "Mr. Foster, Mr. Foster!"

Annis finally caught up to Erick, out of breath, and revealed, "Elin emptied the room herself."

Erick paused, stunned. "She did?"

"Yes," Annis confirmed, nodding. "She handed me a sum, her unspent allowance and savings from part-time work. Together we found a small home in the suburbs. She planned for a fresh start there, away from the Foster estate upon her return."

This revelation hit Erick unexpectedly. Elin had made a decisive move.

Purchasing her own place, she had cut ties with the Fosters definitively.

Confusion clouded Erick's thoughts. Elin hadn't appeared resentful before... Why would she. She had slipped away, leaving no words behind. It dawned on him that she sought distance not just from his family, but from him as well. Years of friendship dissipated in silence. Her departure was indeed merciless.

Erick's eyelids were heavy, his face etched with fatigue, devoid of any hint of wrath. Silently, without bidding Annis farewell, he turned and walked away.

Annis watched his retreating form, a pang of worry tightening in her chest. A thought struck her suddenly. Perhaps Elin's withdrawal from the Foster fold was for the best.

The seasons cycled, spring gave way to fall.

Erick buried himself in work, the days blurring in a flurry of activity.

Until a message from a representative from Uchaesau arrived, proposing a collaboration with the Foster family's shipping empire.

Uchaesau was far from Swynborough, and after calculating the costs, it became clear that this route

was not profitable and was even likely to result in a loss. Historically, the Foster Group hadn't entertained the thought of venturing into the Uchaesau market.

Chapter 1847

Nonetheless, Erick agreed to a site visit, finding himself in Uchaesau's biting winter after a long journey.

The temperature plunged far beneath what Swynborough ever experienced.

The thought of Elin, always shivering away from the chill, choosing an academic life in such a frigid place puzzled Erick.

On his first day, after a succinct summit with the prospective allies and dismissing their social invitations, Erick set off to Elin's college.

The college's century-old reputation was reflected in its grandeur and allure.

After a simple check-in, Erick received permission to explore the grounds. His footsteps led him, almost aimlessly, until he paused outside the women's dormitory, lingering without clear intent.

Maybe it was hope, however faint, that guided him.

As the snow thickened, he observed young men delivering hot meals to the girls they were smitten with.

The scene was charming, echoing echoes of days filled with the vibrancy of youth.

Just then, a couple came into view.

Clad in a khaki beanie and a long down coat, the girl nestled into the boy's embrace, a picture of a couple lost in love.

Erick's heart stuttered. Despite her bundled-up appearance, he knew it was Elin.

As the snowfall intensified, it dusted Erick's shoulders while he stood, nearly camouflaged against the white backdrop of the wall, under the shelter of a tree.

The absurdity of the moment struck Erick. He couldn't fathom why he'd come. Elin had put oceans between them to escape his reach, yet here he was, fabricating reasons to trail her to Uchaesau. He had persuaded himself to pursue a losing deal, bordering on insanity.

Those five minutes, while brief, stretched into an eternity for Erick.

The truth dawned on him in that chilling clarity. Madness had indeed taken hold. Elin was blossoming, a world away from his shadow, evidently faring better than him.

As Erick made to leave, a surge of frustration propelled him to disturb the snow-laden branches, drawing the attention of the nearby duo.

The young man stared at Erick's receding back, bewildered. "Was there someone there just now?" Elin, grappling with a throbbing headache and blurred vision, discerned only a vague outline. Yet, that silhouette resonated with familiarity. It bore an uncanny resemblance to the man etched in her heart. With a flutter of her lashes, she dismissed the notion. That figure couldn't possibly be Erick. Elin had hoped that by relocating to Uchaesau, changing her contact information, and severing her past connections, the memories of Erick would fade with time. Surprisingly, visions of Erick lingered. Every tree, each blanket of snow, even a vague figure in the distance, seemed to echo his

image. She was undeniably spellbound.

Desperate to move on, Elin found time had only intensified her yearning for Erick. A few months had passed since her departure, yet it felt like an endless expanse of time since their paths had crossed.

Inwardly, Elin scolded herself and grasped the need to shed this longing. Even if she couldn't truly forget Erick, at least she could pretend to be indifferent.

"Elin? Are you alright?" The concern etched on the young man's face was unmistakable. "You're not looking well. Do we need to see a doctor?"

Shaking her head, Elin replied, "No need, it's nothing serious. Some medicine and rest should do the trick."

Acclimating to Uchaesau's chill proved difficult. Elin regularly fell victim to colds and fevers. These persistent ailments had whittled away at her, resulting in noticeable weight loss. Thankfully, her winter attire was forgiving, with the voluminous down jackets masking her diminished frame.

Chapter 1848

Today, a sudden spike in temperature overwhelmed Elin in class, leaving her too weak to make it back to her dorm alone. A professor asked a classmate, known as the young man, to assist. At first, Elin managed to walk with support, but eventually, her strength waned completely.

"Elin, do girls from Ambrosia always push themselves this hard?" The young man quipped, light-hearted, "So small, yet so spirited."

Unable to muster a smile, Elin felt her discomfort grow. The young man, sensing her plight, offered his support. "Elin, should I help you up?"

"I'm alright," Elin insisted.

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But the young man wasn't convinced and sought the dorm supervisor's aid to escort Elin back to her room.

With the dorm emptied for the holidays, Elin found herself in solitude, the stillness only punctuated by the rigorous schedule of a diligent student abroad.

The dorm supervisor watched on, her heart full of empathy for Elin.

Even when ill and voiceless, Elin insisted on attending classes. She was undoubtedly pushing herself too hard.

The dorm supervisor offered remedies, filled cups with steaming water, and helped Elin with medication.

In the midst of fevered delirium, as Elin clung to the supervisor's hand, her thoughts turned homeward. "Mom..." she whispered, her grip tightening, tears carving paths down her cheeks. "I really want to go home... But he doesn't want to see me..."

Elin's words, steeped in her native tongue, were lost on the supervisor, who sensed the universal yearning for a mother's comfort and cradled her kindly. "Dear, if home is where your heart lies, why not visit?"

Tears cascaded from Elin's eyes, resembling pearls as she gripped the supervisor's hand. At

nineteen, she grappled with the sting of unrequited love for the first time, and the pain was profound. A void echoed within her, a space hollowed out by heartache. She vowed never to let her heart bleed this way again.

Through her sickness, Elin never thought to pause her studies. By the dead of night, her fever broke. Dawn found Elin stirring early, trekking to the cafeteria for a meal before lectures.

Passing under the tree from the previous night, the silhouette flashed through her mind again. It bore such resemblance to Erick.

Yet, Elin swiftly dismissed this notion.

The relentless white of the snow was taxing on Elin's eyes until a sudden glint of red captured her focus.

Glancing downward, Elin noticed a red four-leaf clover emerging from the snowy blanket. She doubted her eyes, blinking hard, yet the image persisted.

Stooping, Elin reached for what she thought was a four-leaf clover, only to unearth a rose gold necklace with an intricately crafted pendant. The craftsmanship was both exquisite and strikingly beautiful. By a stroke of coincidence, the rose gold frame of the clover bore tiny engraved initials. Peering closer, she saw "EL" etched upon it! It was a serendipitous moment, stumbling upon a necklace that mirrored her initials.

Elin admired the beauty of the necklace but acknowledged that it wasn't hers to keep. She turned it in at the school's lost and found.

Such opulent items often had serial numbers to identify their rightful owners.

Three days afterward, Elin's phone rang with news from the school's lost and found department. Astonishingly, the luxury brand had confirmed the necklace was Elin's, the ID number a perfect match.

With confusion swirling, Elin collected the necklace. She was sure she'd never bought it, and a check with the brand's customer service yielded no insight. Privacy policies restricted them from revealing the purchaser.

Left with no leads, Elin tucked the necklace away.

Chapter 1849

University life whizzed by.

For the first three years, Annis visited Elin in Uchaesau to celebrate the New Year. However, the final year saw Elin returning to their new home for the festivities.

Over the twenty-day break, Elin rarely ventured out, only venturing to familiar malls and schools before leaving Uchaesau, not crossing paths with anyone familiar. Solitude had become her preference, her desire for social interaction blunted by time.

On the eve of Elin's departure from Uchaesau, Annis brought up Erick, a name not mentioned in years.

Erick had stepped down from his executive role three years back, weary of the corporate chase. He had pivoted from his corporate path to academia, becoming a visiting professor. His research won him acclaim on the international stage.

Elin, absorbed in her studies and steering clear of the media, was slow to catch wind of his accomplishments.

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She heard that before his departure from Foster Group, Erick had launched a service route to Uchaesau. The venture was clearly not profitable, sparking a rare show of fury from Landen, yet Erick was adamant about getting it started.

Subsequently, each time Annis visited Uchaesau, the Foster Group’s staff coincidentally needed to be there as well, making Annis’ journeys more convenient.

In time, this ostensibly unprofitable route earned high praise from Uchaesau’s leaders, lauding the Foster family for their generous spirit. This acclaim had an unexpected boon. It surged the Foster family’s stock value and expanded their commercial footprint.

The venture, initially seen as unprofitable, ultimately propelled the Foster family to greater prominence.

Elin didn’t dwell on it. She was familiar with Erick’s business acumen. He was not one to pursue a venture that didn’t promise success.

After completing her studies in Uchaesau, Elin lingered for another year before she headed back to Swynborough.

At a social event, Elin crossed paths with Erick once more and met his childhood confidant, Dayton.

What ensued was a chapter Elin wished to erase. It was a tumultuous span, a chapter of darkness seared into her memory. Dayton, to her, was a terror more daunting than any creature of the night. As midnight neared and weariness set in, Elin’s eyelids grew heavy.

Through the haze of sleep, her phone chimed in with a message. She hadn’t yet looked at the screen. It was from Dayton.

In a haze, Elin reached out and felt her phone on the bedside table.

She blinked her eyes open and saw a line of text on the screen.

It was from Dayton. “Elin, you can’t escape me. I’ll find you.”

Suddenly, the phone slipped from Elin’s grasp and crashed to the floor. Her head buzzed as if she had been struck by a stick.

The ghosts of nightmares past swirled around her, and Elin wanted to scream out in pain and fear. Yet, no sound came out. Her throat felt blocked. “Ah...” Elin managed a muffled roar.

Then, a loud bang echoed. Elin fell down from her bed. Pain surged through her body.

Elin blinked. The room was dark and quiet. She groped for her phone but found nothing.

As panic set in, a harsh sound cut through the silence. It was the familiar ring of her alarm.

Chapter 1850

Elin traced the noise to the bedside table and saw her phone lying there. She turned off the alarm and unlocked the screen. No messages.

It had all been a nightmare.

Elin had changed her phone number, and Dayton couldn’t possibly know her current contact information. Moreover, Dayton had been restricted by Farley Schultz from leaving Swynborough. He couldn’t have come here to locate her.

Elin steadied herself. Using the cabinet for support, she climbed back into bed.

After resting briefly, she got up. Her rest had been poor, and she lost her balance immediately upon standing.

After sipping some warm water, the doorbell rang unexpectedly.

Elin found it odd. Only Erick, Raegan, and her mother knew where she lived. Her mother was back in Swynborough, and Raegan wouldn't visit this early. Erick had her passcode.

After a short pause, Elin remembered that she had changed the passcode last night. But why would Erick come at such an hour?

Approaching the door without thinking, Elin paused as the doorbell rang out a warning. "Wrong entry!" The lock beeped automatically.

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The person outside tried again, the impatience palpable.

"Wrong entry!" The warning repeated again and again.

A chill crept up Elin's spine, a sense of dread filling her. She peered through the peephole.

Outside stood a tall, thin man with a distinctive red birthmark beside his ear. He looked menacing. Elin's scalp tingled with a sudden chill. She pinched herself hard, doubting if she was still trapped in a nightmare. She had just dreamt of Dayton approaching her. How could he possibly be here now?

She pinched herself again and again, the sharp pain snapping her back to the harsh reality.

"Tok!" The sound of Dayton pounding on the door echoed through the room. In his impatience, he even kicked at the door.

"Elin, open the door for me. I see your car. I know you're at home,"

Dayton's voice boomed from outside.

Elin's face drained of color. Her car was indeed parked outside, visible to anyone who looked. She hadn't anticipated that Dayton would not only come here but also investigate her.

In a panic, Elin ran to call the police but stumbled in her haste.

The noise seemed to drive Dayton to further frenzy.

"Elin, I advise you to open the door while I can still speak nicely."

Dayton's voice carried a chilling edge. "Otherwise, I won't be as patient as I am now."

He banged on the door again, this time using something that sounded like a belt.