

Chapter 594 Ex

Despite knowing nothing real had occurred between Cole and Wanda, Elliana still burned when she remembered everything—how he had hurried to the Campbell family and proposed to Wanda right after waking, and how that engagement had ended with Wanda plotting to kill her.

What Elliana felt toward Cole wasn't simple anger—it was mixed with jealousy. The sharp edge of her fury was nothing more than a disguise for the jealousy eating her alive. As jealousy surged, a childish impulse followed. She and Cole had been kissing only a moment ago, yet now all she wanted was to jab at him, to make him feel the sting she carried.

Tilting back with a sly little smile, Elliana whispered, "Don't look so troubled. It's quite normal to have an ex. I don't mind that you were once engaged to Wanda—as long as she's no longer part of your life."

Though her phrasing sounded generous, the hidden message in her words was impossible to miss.

Cole zeroed in on the one crucial detail. She had an ex. The idea hit him hard, flipping his world upside down. His jealousy was about to drown him out completely.

Sure, he had been engaged to Wanda once, but it had ended quickly, fading into nothing. The question clawing at him now was about Elliana—what history did she share with this so-called ex, and how far had it gone? Even if, like him and Wanda, nothing had happened between her and that ex, the notion of her once belonging to someone else was unbearable.

A fierce possessiveness swelled within him, so intense and foreign that he could hardly believe he was capable of it. While jealousy churned violently in him, a fragile hope held on—perhaps he'd misheard, perhaps she was only teasing.

Fighting to mask his emotions, Cole forced a strained smile. "You had an ex?"

Elliana knew Cole's jealous streak all too well. His fake composure was paper-thin, and seeing through it gave her a quiet thrill of triumph. Jealousy had him by the throat now—in truth, he was boiling with it. Delighted by his reaction, her smile deepened, her eyes curving with mischief. "Naturally," she said, pretending to be innocent. "I once loved my ex... ex-boyfriend dearly."

The word "ex-husband" nearly slipped from her lips, but she stopped herself just in time. Their marriage records had been erased. On paper, their marriage had never existed. So she smoothed it over with "ex-boyfriend."

Her admission shattered his fragile hope, and the jealousy he had tried to contain erupted like fire tearing through dry brush.

Logic told him she was a woman any man would have admired, that she likely had someone before him, that he shouldn't care. Yet, reason meant nothing against the raw possessiveness clawing at his chest.

Inside his mind, everything dissolved into a storm of noise and fury. The thought tore through him—how could the woman who consumed his every breath have ever belonged to another man?

Right then, Elliana remained curled in Cole's arms, their closeness deceptive. The tenderness was gone, replaced by tension that pulsed through his muscles, radiating off him like the searing heat of a forge.

When enraged, Cole was a creature to fear. Still, he clung to control. Instead of exploding, his mouth contorted into a brittle smile. "Were you and your ex-boyfriend... close?"

"Extremely," Elliana replied, letting her candor cut like a blade. "He had looks, money, and a gentle nature. He adored me, spoiled me endlessly, and would have thrown himself into danger for my sake. He was the embodiment of every romantic fantasy a woman could have."

"So you once loved him deeply?" Cole asked, his expression blackening with each word that left her lips.

With calm detachment, Elliana nodded. "Yes. I loved him deeply."

Darkness rolled off him in suffocating waves, and his stare was sharp enough to wound. So it was true—she and her ex had shared a love that

ran deep. "If you were so madly in love, why didn't it last? Why settle for me?" he retorted, sarcasm curling in his tone.

Casting him a careless glance, Elliana let out a light laugh. "Oh, he left me. Chose another woman to marry instead. Heartless, wasn't he?"

So she had been cast aside. That meant he was nothing more than her next choice after rejection—a rebound, plain and cruel. He, Cole, who had never loved anyone before, was merely a substitute. A pitiful stand-in. That thought broke him. He ripped the car door wide and shoved her roughly off his lap.

Taken off guard, Elliana tumbled forward, her body aimed straight for the hard pavement. Anyone slower would have crashed face-first, but her sharp reflexes saved her.

Her palms hit the ground first, breaking the fall. With one smooth motion, she pushed off and landed lightly back on her feet.

Regaining her balance, she pivoted to face the man still seething inside the car. His eyes blazed with fury, yet beneath the rage lay bitterness and raw hurt—the gaze of a man who believed himself completely betrayed.

A laugh, sharp and unexpected, bubbled up inside her chest. The entire moment played out with uncanny familiarity.

Her memory drifted back to when Cole had chased her so persistently. After she had rejected him, he had tossed her from his car in nearly the same rage. Even then, though he was at fault, he had worn this same wounded expression, shouting again and again that she was a heartbreaker.