

A Caged songbird escape into the arms of predator

Chapter 102

Everyone was included in the project.

When Zachary Jones told them all to head to the lobby for afternoon tea, Elissa, knowing it was important to fit in, joined the group.

She hadn't expected to be pulled aside as soon as she arrived. Lorraine caught her by the arm. "Elissa, are you alright after last night? Mr. Murphy can be... blunt sometimes. Don't take it to heart."

"I'm... okay."

Elissa was surprised, unsure what Lorraine was getting at. "Thank you for the tea," she replied politely.

It was obvious Rowan had made it clear that he didn't get along with her.

So why was Lorraine being so warm?

‘No need to be so formal,” Lorraine said with a light laugh. She glanced over at the three men from the Traditional Medicine Unit and called out, ‘Don’t think you can dismiss Elissa just because she’s a woman. You all need *to* work together.”

‘Secretary Lynn,” Elissa murmured, biting her lip. “You don’t have to look after *me* like I’m *your* little sister. Whatever you think is going on between me and Mr. Murphy... it isn’t like that.”

‘Oh? Then what is it?”

Lorraine smiled, her curiosity gentle. “Besides, it seems to me Mr. Murphy does care about you, little sister or not.”

At the very least, Lorraine had never seen that kind of dazed look on Rowan’s face before that night.

Before Elissa could reply, Lorraine handed her a piece of cake, her eyes kind. “Regardless of what’s going on with Mr. Murphy, you and I get along just fine.”

19:07

Elissa accepted it without protest. “Thank you.”

It was clear Lorraine had plenty of influence in the Murphy Group.

The least Elissa could do was show respect.

As the workday drew to a close, the receptionist suddenly popped in with

a teasing look. “Ms. Drummond, your husband’s here to pick *you* up.”

“My husband?”

“Yep. He said his name’s Frank.”

Elissa blinked, baffled by whatever game Frank was playing. “Tell him to

wait. I’ll be done soon.”

She finished up her tasks before heading out.

Frank was waiting on the lobby sofa, calm and unhurried in a tailored grey three-piece suit, taking a work call as if he had all the time in the world.

Sensing her gaze, he looked up, his expression softening. He murmured something to the person on the other end, ended the call, and rose to

meet her.

“All finished?”

His *tone* was as warm and composed as ever.

It was almost enough to make her wonder if the tension between them the other day had just been a figment of her imagination.

Elissa avoided his eyes. “What are you doing here?”

“A husband picking up his wife from work—do I need a reason?”

He *took* her bag from her, speaking unhurriedly. “Besides, I accused you unfairly. I should at least give you a proper apology.”

She paused, glancing up at him. “It doesn’t really matter whether you apologize or not.”

19:07

After all, there was nothing between them anymore.

“Still mad at me?”

They reached the elevator. Frank pressed the button, then draped an arm around her shoulders, leaning in as if to coax her. “I really was in the wrong. I shouldn’t have forced you to apologize before knowing the truth. Don’t hold it against me, alright?”

Ding-

Before he could finish, the elevator doors slid open.

Instinctively, Elissa stepped away from Frank—only to find herself face-to-face with Rowan’s fathomless, dark eyes. A flash of mockery crossed his face before he spoke, his voice tinged with amusement:

“Ms. Drummond, what is this? Do you need someone to pick you up from kindergarten?”

Elissa hadn’t expected anything kind from him.

Frank, on the other hand, simply smiled, glancing at Lorraine at Rowan’s side, and replied in his typically genial manner, “Mr. Murphy, once you have someone special in your life, you’ll understand.”

With that, the elevator doors closed behind them.

Even Lorraine, usually poised and self-assured, couldn’t help but flush at being teased so openly. She ducked her head, just as Rowan remarked, his tone unreadable, “Then why don’t you go pick up your own special someone?”