

Blind Date 111

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Finding Dexter

"Why are you here? This washroom is only open to VIPs," Mrs. Ardon asked in a condescending tone. She had a haughty demeanor, but her eyes were sharp and watchful.

"...It's because I'm also a VIP member here," Josie cleared her throat and answered without showing a hint

of weakness.

"You too?" Their faces twisted in disgust as they looked at each other in disbelief. "Show me your card."

Their gazes were pressuring and unyielding. Josie knew she was outnumbered, so she had no choice but to take the card out of her bag.

Mrs. Ardon snatched the card away from her hands and compared it to the one she had before she concluded. "It's not fake."

"Did you get it yourself?"

This question triggered a woman's dignity, so Josie answered with conviction, "Of course not. It's my husband who got it for me."

Don't tell me she's going to ask who's the husband?

"Who's your husband?"

Josie was racking her head to figure out how to answer this question without raising suspicions. After a short silence, she said, "I'm sure you know we can't carelessly reveal our spouse's identity in this industry. I hope you understand I can't answer your question."

They were wary of her but accepted her explanation as that was true.

"Mrs. Ardon, she must be a mistress of a top executive,"

Mrs. Ardon tidied her hair and found no reason to be suspicious of her anymore. "I understand. You can leave now."

Josie left in haste without looking back. She was afraid of being pried on any further.

They must've been mistresses, seeing as they accepted such a vague explanation.

On her way back to Mason Garden, Mrs. Ardon's words lingered in her mind.

Landon was the company Dexter planned to acquire. Was the evidence she mentioned related to this?

The sun was down. Josie quickly walked into Mason Garden and didn't notice any cars parked inside. "Hasn't Mr. Russell returned home?"

The maid noticed she was feeling anxious and immediately explained, "Mr. Russell called. He said he had a meeting tonight and wouldn't come home."

"Did he say where the meeting was held?"

"No, he didn't."

Josie inhaled deeply and anxiously circled the house. She hesitated for a while before making a call, but no one answered. She tried dialing the number again, but the phone immediately went to voicemail.

Is he busy now? Josie felt something wasn't right and left the house with her handbag

"Sir, please take me to Heaven on Earth."

Based on his past record, he would never conduct urgent business meetings in his personal space. Hence, there was only one other place Heaven on Earth.

—

The sky was painted with an orange hue as the sun disappeared below the horizon. The nightclub was buzzing as people streamed in.

Josie was stopped at the door again. They asked her who she was looking for.

Josie stood frozen at the doorway. She couldn't say she was there to find Mr. Lane anymore. Tim here for Mr. Barrett! The manager here. She was quick on her feet, and she answered confidently.

The attendant maintained professionalism by asking for more details. "Do you have a reservation?"

"It's urgent. You'll be accountable for the consequences if you don't let me in immediately." Josie mustered up her courage and demanded with a firm voice.

The attendant was feeling hesitant, and exchanged glances with his colleague.

Soon after, one of the attendants walked into the nightclub and whispered to someone within the crowd.

She later saw Calvin's eyes scanning the entrance. She waved her hands at him enthusiastically. It's me!

His lips curled into a wide smile when he saw her. He quickly apologized to the executive he was talking to and strode out to the entrance. "Ms. Warren, why are you here?"

Josie looked behind him and asked, "Is Dexter here?"

Calvin hinted at her to join him inside. As the music and chatter in the nightclub were deafening, they found a quiet corner to continue their conversation.

"Why do you want to find Dex?"

Josie furrowed her brows. "You haven't answered me."

Calvin's smile grew deeper as he observed her suspiciously. "Even if he's here, I can't let you enter as you wish."

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Aren't You Married to Him?

Josie's heart sank. She knew that Dexter wasn't there.

She sighed and announced, "It's alright. I'll leave now."

Calvin pulled her back by her back collar, asking, "Ms. Warren, don't you know Dex's schedule?"

"How would I know?" Josie answered. She was already feeling frustrated she couldn't find Dexter, but he had to question her about it.

"Aren't you married to him?" Calvin asked indifferently.

Josie looked unbothered by his question. But all of a sudden, her eyes widened in shock, "Dexter told you?"

"No, but your reaction tells me it's true."

Calvin's lips curled into a mysterious smile, secretly content with his discovery.

Josie took a deep breath and lightly punched his chest in frustration. "You tricked me!"

How could he act like this? Not only is he unserious all the time, but he's also even got such petty tricks up his sleeves.

He grinned at her reaction and moved his hands behind him. "I know everything that happens in Wavery. The woman who could make Dex lose his cool and risk his partnership must be someone very special to him. How can I not be attentive to my friend's relationship?"

Josie felt like a helpless fish at the mercy of the man slicing and dicing her life.

"What relationship is there..." She spoke under her breath, still feeling exasperated by Calvin's approach. "Is that not true?" Calvin moved closer. "So, why are you so concerned about Dex's safety?"

Josie froze at the spot. She wanted to refute it, but the only words that left her mouth were, "That's not the truth! I have no time to cater to your nonsense."

"Follow me," Calvin turned around.

They went into a private elevator and stopped on the third floor. Calvin brought her into a quiet private room.

When he saw her distressed state, Calvin gently reassured her. "Don't worry. The same thing wouldn't happen twice, Stay here quietly and wait for someone to fetch you home."

Without waiting for an answer, he closed the door and left.

She wanted to leave, but the memory of the cruel incident here rooted her to the spot. She shook the thought away and decided to stay, knowing it would be easy to get into an accident in this dangerous place.

Josie sat on the sofa, pondering her unpredictable actions. She was determined to enter this place, but now she wasn't sure why.

Dexter's meeting wasn't held in Heaven on Earth but in the villa of one of Landon's executives, Mr. York.

Ivy held onto his coat as she circled around the living room. Dexter had been inside for two hours.

Mrs. York poured a cup of tea for her. "Ms. Miller, don't worry. It can take a long time when they are discussing a complicated matter."

Ivy looked down; her gaze rested on Mrs. York's wrist. She wore Cartier's new bangle, which sparkled and gleamed in the light.

"Mr. York treats you really well"

Mrs. York raised her eyebrows and put on a warm smile. Is that so? Is it really obvious?"

Ivy chuckled softly and replied, "Most men leave their wives once they're at the peak of their success. But Mr. York is still loyal. You must be someone he adores very much."

"Ms. Miller must be joking. He only did something any man should do. There's no need to praise him for such trivial matters. Mrs. York spoke in a calm and composed voice, her words a testament to her elegance. She looked at the study's door and said. "Mr. Russell is also a good man. Does he have a 'girlfriend?"

Ivy's eyes turned gloomy. "That is Mr. Russell's personal matter. I'm not sure."

Mr. York was sharp and went straight to the point. "You seem like a kind and gentle woman that any man would adore. Also, I can see the love and respect in your eyes when you look at him."

But Dexter couldn't notice it.

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Get Down the Car

Ivy didn't refute her observations. Instead, she forcefully laughed and said, "It all depends on Mr. Russell

Mrs. York wanted to continue speaking to her, but the study's door opened, and Dexter walked out in a confident gait. He looked alluring as his shirt was slightly unbuttoned.

Ivy immediately stood up and passed him his coat. "Mr. Russell.

Dexter put on his coat and told Mrs. York, "Mr. York's tea is cooled down. Please make him a fresh cup. I'll come another day."

Mrs. York smiled politely as she saw her guests off. Once they were gone, her smile faded, and her face took on a look of determination as she hurried into the study. "Harvey!"

It was getting colder as the night fell. The cold wind stung their faces as they walked outside.

Ivy followed Dexter into the car. "Mr. Russell, did Harvey agree?"

"He has to agree even if he doesn't want to." Dexter tapped his fingers on the handle. "Ten years ago, he trampled on the lives of many to get where he is today. Now, he has his eyes on Russell Group's profit. He's not qualified to go against me."

Harvey was exhausted after the discussion. He looked at Dexter as if looking into the devil's eyes, fearful of what he might do,

"That's great! As long as Harvey York sells us his shares, we'll have a greater chance of defeating Martin Lane and Arnold Carter."

"Arnold wouldn't just sit around and wait. He must be convincing the other shareholders."

Dexter's phone buzzed in his pocket. He pulled it out and saw Calvin's name displayed on the screen. There were already a few missed calls from Calvin.

He looked towards Ivy, who had her head down. She felt apologetic as she explained, "It's your personal call; I did not dare to pick it up."

"What is it?" Dexter held his phone by his ear.

He spoke into the phone for half a minute, his face growing grimmer with each passing second. "Stop the car!"

The driver immediately stopped the car, and Ivy's body leaned forward and knocked her head on the back

of the seat.

"Mr. Russell..."

"Get down the car, Dexter stated calmly as he kept his phone.

Ivy was taken aback by his reaction. Her words were on the tip of her tongue, but she hesitated. Soon after, she opened the car door and went out.

The car drove away, leaving Ivy alone in the dark. Her lone solitary figure walked miserably along the road; her tears welled up in her eyes as she struggled to keep them in.

His Porsche car drove through the darkness like a knife.

Calvin was waiting at the entrance when he saw Dexter leave the car, his face twisted with anger. He looked at his watch and said, "You only took ten minutes to get here. Is that necessary? She wouldn't lose a finger while she's here."

Dexter's eyes flashed with fury as he glared at Calvin. "Can't you send her home?"

“How would I know where she stays?” Despite knowing the truth, Calvin jokingly asked, “Should I send her back to Mason Garden then?”

“Nonsense.” Dexter wasn’t in the mood to argue with him. “Where is she?”

“Third floor.”

Josie was bored, so she played a few rounds of her mobile game before her phone died. She then lay on the sofa to sleep.

Dexter opened the private room and saw the scene unfold before his eyes.

Her sleeping posture was prim and proper. She even covered her legs with a coat. Only half of her face was showing, and her eyelids were trembling.

His anger melted away at the sight of her delicate features.

Josie was woken up by the heat as her surroundings became warmer. She slowly opened her eyes and saw

a man sitting down beside her legs.

Dexter was smoking. He took a puff of his cigarette, and the smoke obscured his face. His expression was unreadable, and he didn’t say a word.

Josie rubbed her eyes, her mind still in a daze. Then, her eyes widened in surprise as she recognized the man before her.

“Dexter, you’re here?” she sat up quickly, wincing as she felt the pain in her neck.

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I Was Afraid You Would Be in Danger

He turned his head to look at her. The ember of the cigarette glowed softly, flickering in the dark room.

“Couldn’t you wait at home for me to come back?” He expressed his frustrations through his tone of voice.

Josie pondered her response, knowing he likely already knew most of what had happened earlier. She kept her head down and replied. “I know you’ve been stressed lately about acquiring Landon, so I came out in a hurry to tell you something important about the project.”

Josie suspected her accidental eavesdropping from earlier must be related to this project, so she tried her best to get to him as soon as possible.

Dexter snuffed his cigarette in the ashtray and blew the final puff of smoke in her face. She felt suffocated by the smoke and wanted to move away, but he held onto her neck and said under his breath, “What do you know?”

Josie’s face turned red. He held her so close that she could see the small mole he bore under his eyes. She held onto her breath, explained everything she knew, and said timidly. “Did I cause more trouble for you?”

That was not true. She's been here all night without doing anything.

Dexter tightened his grip, and his eyes were awash with conflicting emotions. "You must think you're very clever."

She didn't know he was already aware of Mrs. Ardon's plans and the trouble she would face if her identity were revealed. But worst of all, she didn't realize how dangerous it would be for her if she got caught by the Ardon Family.

Dexter was worried about the former, but comparatively, he was more concerned about how her negligence would affect the latter's outcome.

His heart was pounding at the thought of something terrible happening to Josie.

Josie didn't try to escape from his grasp. Instead, she apologized. "I'm sorry; I'll be more careful next time."

Her tender gaze and actions were all locked into Dexter's eyes.

He looked down and asked, "Why did you come to find me even though it's so risky?"

Josie was at a loss for words. Her eyes were dull, and her shoulders slumped. "I was afraid you would be in danger. Her voice was trembling.

Dexter felt his heart skip a beat but tried to conceal his expression. "Why didn't you call me?"

Josie felt dumbfounded when he made this comment. She even thought of taking out his phone from his pocket.

"I called you three times. You didn't answer and even ended the call immediately

Her eyes watered, and her heart pounded as she explained.

Dexter's brows furrowed as he didn't notice any missed calls from her when he checked his phone.

He grabbed her hands, which were trembling. Then, holding her hands, he suddenly asked, "Josie, are you flirting with me right now?"

Josie was stunned. She pursed her lips and swore, "No, not this time."

She sure is honest.

Dexter grinned at her reaction and raised his eyebrows. He finally released his grip from her neck and cradled her head in his hands.

The smell of the smoke was thick but wasn't unpleasant, Josie was so close to him that she could feel his breath on her skin and her heart pounding in her chest.

It's too close. They were too close.

*Dexter.

"Actually, you succeeded in winning my heart. Twice. Dexter caressed her lips with his large hands. His voice was a raspy whisper, making her knees feel weak.

Josie didn't move an inch as she probed, "When?" –

"First time was when you knelt beside Mr. Lane and looked at me with your pitiful eyes."

Dexter felt like he was losing his mind then. His rage boiled over as he glared at the filthy man. He wanted to tear him limb from limb, to make him suffer for what he had done.

Josie was startled at his confession. She had no intention of winning his heart, but he fell for her at her most devastating moment.

"What about the second time," she asked carefully.

"Now."

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Kiss

Josie's eyes widened in shock as his words registered. She slowly backed away from him.

Dexter swiftly pulled her close to him again, pushing her hair behind her ears. His warm lips brushed against her cold earlobes.

"A woman can steal a man's heart by playing the innocent yet alluring temptress. She may tremble in fear but hide it with a confident smile. A single tear or drop of blood is all it takes to make him lose his mind."

His voice was still gravelly, but she could feel the warmth of his body as he leaned in close. Through a veil of smoke, she admired his rugged yet handsome features.

With his physical features, he could captivate any woman in the world.

Are you one of them too?"

"No. You're the only person who can make me feel like I'm losing my mind."

Josie took a deep breath. She had always thought that physical appearance was the most crucial thing in love, but Dexter made her realize that there was more to it than that. It was difficult not to fall for him.

Dexter let go of his hands, and the coat she had on her legs fell to the ground, revealing her pale skin to his gaze.

His eyebrows furrowed as his eyes widened in surprise.

Josie leaned in close and kissed him, her lips soft and warm against his. As they kissed, they felt a spark of electricity between them, and their hearts pounded in their chests.

He was taken aback by her bravery that he could barely move. Only the warmth of her lips against his reminded him that this was real.

Josie was lost in the kiss and didn't know how long they had been kissing. She wanted to pull away and talk, but she felt his strong hand on her waist, pulling her closer. This time, it was Dexter who took control. His lips were on hers, demanding and insistent

The smell of smoke on his breath traveled into her mouth. The sound of their kiss shattered the silence of the room as their lips continued to meet.

Josie was overwhelmed by Dexter's kiss. He was so strong and passionate; she almost forgot to breathe.

Dexter's touch was like a fire, burning her skin and setting her heart ablaze. The moment his tongue touched hers, she felt a shiver run down her spine. Her heart was pounding so hard, she thought it might burst out of her chest.

She moaned against him, "Dexter... I..."

After two minutes, Dexter finally pulled away. He rested his forehead on hers, their breaths coming quick gasps. He pulled her hair, lifting her head and locking his eyes with hers. "Who gave you such courage?"

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Josie smirked, feeling contented as she whispered, "Mr. Russell, Dexter Russell, you finally caved in.

She trailed her fingers down his neck, feeling the hard ridge of his Adam's apple against her soft skin.

She dedicated herself to achieving the outcome she desired.

"Do you know what you looked like just now?" Dexter stared at her eyes. "An alluring fox."

Josie didn't reply. Instead, she asked him, "Was that the third time?"

He kept quiet.

"I believe it wasn't only an instant that I made you lose your mind." Josie's smile widened, and her soft hands slowly trailed to his waist. It made them seem like they had gone beyond a simple kiss.

Dexter grabbed her hands and pushed them away. "It's a man's natural instinct."

Josie believed that he had already broken down his walls when he kissed her back. Her heart pounded faster as she revealed his vulnerable and authentic self, a different side from the perfect and untouchable man she assumed him to be.

Dexter's lips were still glistening from their kiss, softening the hard lines of his face. She couldn't look away. You broke Mr. Lane's hand because you like me, and you rushed over here after your meeting because you care about my safety. Is that right?"

Dexter pulled away from her. "Josie, none of that is true."

Josie's once reserved and obedient demeanor was replaced by an air of confidence and coyness. It was as if this were her true colors.

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Over the Top

Dexter didn't look away.

Josie leaned in closer, and her breath was touching his bare skin. "At least a little?"

She tried to conceal her true feelings as hard as she could. Despite her heart beating out of her chest, she purposely acted as if she hadn't fallen for him.

Dexter didn't move. Suddenly, the door opened. "Dex"

Calvin's words slowly faded when his eyes caught onto their physical state. Later, the sounds of his hasty footsteps traveled from the hallway. "I didn't see anything"

Josie forced herself to keep her composure as she looked into Dexter's icy cold stare. She felt a shiver run down her spine and slowly pulled away from him to wear her shoes.

Dexter walked out of the door. "What happened?"

Calvin's face was filled with a mischievous grin. "I won't bother the both of you while you're having a good time. I'll get the problem solved by myself."

"Tell me." Dexter was unbothered by his teasing. He took a cigarette from the box and placed it between his lips.

"An executive associated with the Ardon Family is here tonight. He brought a mistress and two other ladies

with him."

Dexter narrowed his eyes. "Three ladies. He must be in good shape."

Calvin had a wide grin plastered on his face as he held onto the handrail. He saw Josie standing behind him with her arms crossed.

The Ardon Family won't be able to escape the blame this time. I sent the evidence to you. It'll be helpful."

Dexter took a puff of his cigarette. His mind was finally clear and composed. Thanks, I'll treat you to dinner next time.

"Sure. Are you bringing your wife?"

Josie noticed Calvin staring at her. She politely smiled back at him and waved.

Dexter turned his head around and glanced at her. His words lingered at the tip of his tongue, but he swallowed back his words and warned Calvin. "If you know, then keep it to yourself. I'm only doing this for my grandpa."

"You're over the top if it's only for your grandpa. Calvin quickly changed the topic when his face turned dark. "Don't worry. My lips are sealed."

Dexter didn't say a word before snubbing the cigarette he had been smoking. He walked to Josie. "Let's go home."

Josie immediately followed behind him.

They didn't exchange a single word throughout their journey back to Mason Garden

When they arrived, Josie deleted the voice recording of Mrs. Ardon. She was too hasty with her actions. Dexter knew the Ardon family like the back of his hand, It was true that she went overboard today and risked his plans.

After two days, Josie's face was much better, and she returned to work at Russell Group.

Once she entered the design department, she was met with the gazes of the people inside, making her hair stand in surprise. She asked Alice, "Why is everyone acting this way?"

Alice sized her up and joked, "Ms. Warren, you took so many days off. Nobody from this department... no, actually, nobody from this whole office has ever taken such a long break. How did you do it?"

Josie felt guilty. She rubbed her nose and said, "It's a medical leave. The company isn't that strict."

"Did you have to take half a month off to operate on your appendicitis?"

"You'll know once you try it out." Josie quickly changed the topic. "You haven't told me why everyone is staring at me this way."

Alice hugged the file and asked softly. "Do you know about Sylmark?"

Josie contemplated briefly before answering. "Yes, the one in the south of the city, near the school district."

"Russell Group acquired it. Alice was feeling thrilled,

Josie was surprised at the revelation. "I heard there were many companies after Sylmark, but Russell Group won the bidding?"

"Yes. They don't have the resources we do. With our financial backing, acquiring that land will be a breeze."

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Everything can be solved with enough money. Josie chuckled at that thought.

"But you haven't told me what this has to do with me?"

"With Sylmark in our hands, our design department will run the project now. Everyone is wondering whether the project will be passed to you or Claire." Alice assumed, "You came back at such a critical time, so they must think you're trying to fight against Claire,"

After all, if she wasn't back, it would naturally be assigned to Claire.

But Josie wasn't feeling optimistic about receiving the project. "Claire has participated in many big-scale projects and is much more experienced. With the number of awards she won, I believe the executives would be inclined to have her in charge. There's no need to give me any false hope.

"Why do you say such a thing? You have never gotten any awards because you've never joined any competition. If you went, Claire wouldn't be acting so arrogant. Also, you don't have enough experience because Mr. Davidson and Samantha purposely passed the projects to other people. Based on your

skills, I believe everyone in the office envies you.” Alice’s words tumbled out in a single breath, her voice rising in pitch as she felt the rage building in her chest.

Josie held onto her chin as she listened to her compliments. Her lips slowly curled up. She was telling the Truth.

“You know me well, but my manager doesn’t.”

Alice pondered a while and said, “That’s not totally true. Doesn’t Mr. Russell pay a lot of attention to you? He has a good eye for talent. I believe he wouldn’t choose recklessly.”

Josie felt her hands trembling. How did Alice know?

“Mr. Russell?”

“Yes. Maybe you caught his attention due to the incident relating to Samantha. He asked me about your whereabouts when he passed by the last time.”

Josie wasn’t aware of this. “When did that happen?”

Alice tried to recall “Half a month ago? It was the day before you took your leave.”

Based on the timeline, it was the day Claire took credit for her work, and she left Russell Group feeling angered. It was also the day she went to find Justin.

Josie fell silent. She suddenly thought of the kiss they had shared last night, and her heart started racing.

Claire entered the office, her eyes narrowing as she caught sight of Josie.

Josie met her surly glare with a cool stare of her own.

“The designer for the Sylmark project has been decided,” Claire announced calmly.

Everyone’s chatter started to fill the room. “Who is it?”

“Ms. Wilcher, who did they decide on?”

The room was silent for a moment.

“The executives have asked Josie and me to form a team for the project,” Claire clenched her teeth and forced the words out. Josie will be the main designer: I’ll assist.”

Once she announced the result, everyone gasped in shock and looked at Josie in disbelief.

Josie’s forehead wrinkled in surprise, thinking she had misheard her.

Claire marched over to her and tossed the file on her desk. “Read through everything in a day. I don’t have

time to waste.

Her discontent and rage were like a raging river, threatening to sweep away anyone who That was the moment when Josie realized it was real.

got in her way.

She scanned the document quickly, her eyes darting across the page. It was thick and had all the 'information related to Sylmark. She knew reading it all would take her a while.

"Which executive made this decision?"

Claire laughed derisively. "You could go find out for yourself. I'm sure you got this project through shady dealings. You can go to Sylmark on your own in the afternoon for the site research."

She stormed out of the office and slammed the door shut behind her.

Josie didn't bother to argue with her. Instead, she focused on the documents in front of her. After a while, she took out her phone and started to type a message to Dexter.

She had typed out a few words but deleted them and started again.

After typing another sentence, she deleted them again.

She had been wanting to text him all morning, but she couldn't bring herself to do it.

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On-Site Survey

Claire wasn't lying when she said she wouldn't participate in the on-site survey.

Josie knocked on her office twice but didn't get any response.

"Sylmark is quite far away from here. Why don't I tag along?" Alice whispered.

"Don't worry. You have work to do. I'll handle it on my own."

Josie put the files and a sketchbook in her bag and left Russell Group's office immediately.

North of Wavery was where the capitalists and wealthy families resided, while the south was home to ordinary residents. It had a lively atmosphere, with goods sold at reasonable prices.

The Warren Family also lived here. Josie had spent thirteen years in this part of the city.

She took a deep breath of the air in the familiar city. Suddenly, she recalled that Jenny hadn't bothered her lately, even after she boldly announced that she would find Dexter alone. Did she actually feel threatened. by her words?

many people lived here, there were houses everywhere. Sylmark was a thriving community with a strategic location. The town was home to several elementary, middle, and high schools. Once Russell. Group's housing estate was up for sale, it would surely be sold out quickly.

The amount of money Dexter used to bid for this property was worth every penny.

The sun beat down on the workers working on the demolished building. Josie walked around the building, scanning its overall structure. She held a sketchbook to sketch the design of the building.

She later rested under a large tree, and the warm glow of the afternoon's sun shone on her face. There was a grandmother and her granddaughter at a playground nearby. The little girl suddenly pointed toward her and repeated, "She's drawing!"

Josie felt her heart melt at the little girl's actions. She pulled a wrapped candy from her bag and offered it to the little girl with a warm smile. "I have a sweet for you."

The grandmother encouraged her to receive the candy from Josie. "Remember to thank the kind lady."
"Thank you."

Her voice was tender and adorable, filling Josie's heart with warmth.

"Miss, what are you drawing? Why are there so many lines?"

"I'm drawing for fun. Just practicing." Josie replied.

The grandmother looked quite confused. "My eldest granddaughter also learns drawing. She's very talented.

"Is she in university now?"

"She just got into university this year after she moved from the rural area to the city. Her parents contemplated for a long time whether to buy a place for her to stay in the school district. After struggling to cover the cost, it turned out that they had paid for an unfinished apartment. She had lived there for three years despite the undesirable condition."

The grandmother sighed before continuing. "Now, even this unfinished building is getting demolished."

Josie looked around her and saw many unfinished buildings. Every one of them reflected the struggles of the households.

It should be a joyful experience for a child to live in the school district as there are excellent schools, a safe environment, and plenty of extracurricular activities, but...

"I'm not sure what would happen to this building, but I hope history won't repeat itself."

Josie's eyes were awash with conflicting emotions. "It won't happen again."

Suddenly, she noticed the little girl walking towards the road. "Madam! The little girl!"

The grandmother quickly turned around and shouted, "Oh no! Darling!"

But the little girl had already stepped onto the road. She was in a blind spot, and a car was approaching her at a high speed.

Josie dropped her sketchbook and ran toward the girl. She scooped her up and hugged her tightly, relief flooding through her.

The car behind her screeched to a halt. The driver was sweating profusely as he yelled at them. "Why did you let her run away by herself? How irresponsible!"

The little girl was crying in her arms. Josie couldn't care less about the scratch in her arms as she hugged the little girl tightly and comforted her. "It's okay. I'm here now,"

She turned to the driver and apologized. Later, Josie carried the little girl to the sidewalk to let the car pass.

The car started to move slowly, Just as it was about to pass by her, the car came to a stop.

The windows of the back seat rolled down.

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An Encounter With Arnold Carter

The man seemed to have just been woken up from his sleep. His shirt was slightly unbuttoned, and he had a lazy, rebellious look as if he didn't care about anything.

He slowly opened his eyes and greeted her, "Ms. Warren, I didn't expect to meet you here."

The driver's nerves were on edge. It was an unlucky day for him. He had almost gotten into an accident, and to make matters worse, the person he almost hit was someone his boss knew.

Josie couldn't believe her eyes when she saw the figure sitting in the backseat. It was Arnold Carter.

The grandmother rushed to her and thanked her for saving her grandchild. She kindly advised the grandmother to watch the little girl closely before she stepped closer to the car.

"Mr. Carter, why are you here?"

Arnold opened the door and suggested, "Should we have a talk?"

The corners of her face drew into a tight pinch as Josie quickly muttered that she had other appointments.

Her heart hammered in her chest, and she had a strong urge to run away. She wasn't sure why, but she had always felt that Arnold had a dangerous air about him.

Moreover, he's Dexter's opponent!

After she quickly mulled over her thoughts, she decided to comply with his request.

"Mr. Carter, do you have a meeting here?" Josie started to question him as soon as she got in his car.

Arnold winded up the windows. His hands were holding a cup filled with wine. "It's a personal matter. I came here to meet someone I knew."

She couldn't pry on the subject.

He left the cup in front of Josie, "I remember you're good at drinking."

Josie didn't move an inch. "Mr. Carter, it's still daytime, and I'm only here with you by coincidence. Can I reject this offer?"

Arnold smiled at her. "You could've reject the two glasses of alcohol the last time, but you still drank it."

“That was because it was related to my work. This has nothing to do with work.”

“You sure know how to separate work and personal matters.” Arnold didn’t force her to drink. Instead, he raised a suspicion calmly. “But both work and personal matters are for Dexter, right?”

Since he mentioned Dexter, she couldn’t bring herself to answer him. Her sketchbook was sticking out of her bag and was noticed by Arnold. He pulled it out and started to flip through the pages.

She wanted to stop him but to no avail.

Arnold commented as he flipped through the pages, “I’ve never seen any woman beside him throughout these years. You’re the first one.”

Josie acted as if she didn’t understand his remark. “Isn’t Ms. Miller always beside him?”

“She has never made Dexter risk a partnership for her, Arnold paused and looked at her. “But you have”

Josie stiffened in position, and her toes curled in her shoe. “Dexter cares for his employees.”

Arnold sneered at her comment. He lifted her sketchbook and said, “Did you know that Russell Group was never this eager to acquire the land in Sylmark? It’s more likely for the Carter Group and other corporations to participate in this project, as it would help them to boost their popularity. However, the Russell Group would not benefit as much from this project, as they are already well-known to the public.”

Josie couldn’t understand what he was trying to convey. All she knew was that Russell had won another project Arnold had wanted. “What are you trying to say?”

“I couldn’t understand why Dexter would join the bidding before. But after seeing you here, I finally understand everything.”

Arnold tilted his head backward and looked her up and down, making her feel scared.

Josie straightened her back. She was intelligent, so she caught on immediately. After pausing for a moment, she started to chuckle. “Mr. Carter, I never knew I was so important. Dexter is nice, but he wouldn’t change the company’s operations for a mere employee.”

“A mere employee?”

Josie was startled by his sudden remark and felt uneasy with his prying stare.

[Chapter 120](#)

Fifty Percent of Love

The car speeded along the highway, and they were back in the northern part of the city.

“Ms. Warren, do you remember how I referred to you as Natasha from War and Peace?” Arnold didn’t hold back this time. “Would you like to help me with something? I’ll be willing to pay you more than Dexter.”

Josie continued to chuckle. “Mr. Carter, unfortunately, I don’t have the ability and strength to keep up two salaries.”

If she betrayed Dexter, he would not let her live.

with

“Don’t be in a rush to reject my offer. You might think he’s charming now, but you would soon notice that he’s a cold-blooded and arrogant person who wouldn’t let anyone into his heart.”

Arnold spoke rapidly, but his actions were gentle as he slowly placed the sketchbook inside her bag.

“It seems like Mr. Carter understands Mr. Russell quite well?”

“After years of competing with each other, that’s a must.”

“If I’m really important to Mr. Russell, as you mention, then why would he be attracted to someone like me? I’m sure you’ve investigated my background. I came from a normal family background with an average-looking face. Not to mention I have nothing to offer. So what qualifies me to be cared for by someone like Mr. Russell?” Josie only spoke the truth.

“It’s unnecessary for you to have all the perfect conditions to win a man’s heart, especially Dexter’s” Arnold leaned nearer to Josie flirtatiously. “Ms. Warren, you don’t have to put yourself down.”

Josie felt her whole body tense up, but she kept her composure and asked, “If you know him this well, could you tell me if he had any other women before?”

“Yes, he did,” Arnold swiftly replied.

Josie raised her eyebrows. “I didn’t mean a chaperone.”

He repeated his answer, this time with a resolute voice, “Yes, he did.

Dexter had a partner before. After all, he’s such a successful man. There’s no reason for him to stay single all these

years.

Josie’s smile faded all of a sudden. “If he had someone before, then I wouldn’t be able to succeed. A cold-blooded man wouldn’t value romantic relationships.”

“My requirements are low.” Arnold leaned into her ears and said, “All I need is fifty percent. My plan will succeed if Dexter is at least fifty percent into you.”

Josie’s breath caught in her throat, and she froze.

The car finally came to a stop.

Arnold helped her open her door and smiled alluringly. “I’m not sure where you stay, so I can only drop you off at Russell Group.”

Josie packed her stuff. Thank you for your concern.”

“I’ll wait for your response to drinks someday.”

Arnold’s final remark sent a shiver down her spine.

The sun was already down, and most employees had already left. When the security guard saw Josie, he asked enthusiastically, "It's late now. You still have work to do?"

Josie's lips pressed into a tight-lipped smile, and she replied, "Yes, it's hard to make a living."

She stood in the elevator for a long time. Her finger hovered along the button to the highest floor as she hesitated.

Arnold's words still lingered in her mind and made her feel anxious, so she decided to take the risk.

Luckily, there wasn't anyone there. Only the lights in Dexter's office were on.

She went inside the office. The lamp on the wall cast a warm and soft glow within his office. Dexter stood confidently in front of the windows. He had a lighted cigarette between his fingers, lost in his thoughts at the darkening scenery.

Dexter was a confident and courageous man, but he was only perceived as mysterious and wild to the outside world, like a strong force to be reckoned with whenever he set his eyes on his goals.

However, his overbearing aura was gone as she gazed upon his lone figure. It was as if he had only allowed himself to feel lonely when no one was around.

Josie's heart felt like it was being squeezed.