

Crushed Affections

Chapter 18 Missed Calls

Felix had completely underestimated how much trouble Bella could cause.

She hardly slept all night, alternating between bouts of vomiting and rambling incoherently. Every time she quieted down, it wasn't long before she started throwing up again.

He spent the entire night taking care of her, only managing to catch a brief nap at the edge of the bed as dawn approached.

Bella, suffering from a hangover, woke up not long after. The pounding in her head was a stark reminder of how much she'd had to drink the night before.

As she took in her unfamiliar surroundings and the sight of a tired Felix asleep by the bed, her headache intensified. How had she ended up at Felix's place?

Fragments of the previous night's memories swirled in her mind, and she cursed herself as she checked her phone's call log. It was then that she realized she had indeed called Felix.

But there was something else. She received numerous missed calls from Dominic.

Panic set in. What was going on? Why had Dominic called her so many times?

Felix, who was groggy from his brief rest, noticed she was awake. He got up and, seeing the missed calls from Dominic on her phone, explained, "You were too drunk last night... When I saw it was him calling, I didn't answer. I didn't want to create any misunderstandings."

Felix had always been meticulous—fully aware of the complicated relationship between Bella and Dominic.

Bella felt a deep sense of embarrassment. Felix had once liked her, and now she had made a fool of herself in front of him. There was nothing more humiliating.

"I'm sorry for all the trouble. I should go now. You should get some rest," she said.

Felix stopped her. "Wait a minute. It's chilly in the morning, and your coat got dirty last night. Wear mine for now. It's hard to get a cab around here. Let me drive you home."

Bella opened her mouth to refuse, but Felix anticipated her objection. "After a night like that, what's a little more time? It's no trouble. Let me take you."

The words she was about to say got caught in her throat. All she wanted now was to leave this place as quickly as possible. She felt utterly mortified.

Just then, her phone rang. It was Lia. As Bella answered, Felix draped his jacket over her shoulders. She pretended to be fully engrossed in the call, trying to ignore the gesture. "Lia, are you okay after last night?"

Lia's voice was loud and frantic. "Forget about me! Are you okay? Have you seen what's online? Someone posted photos of you and Felix!"

Bella's mind couldn't keep up. "What? What are you talking about?"

Lia didn't waste time explaining. She hung up and sent her a link instead. When Bella opened it, she saw photos taken of her and Felix getting into his car the previous night.

In the pictures, she was practically draped over him, and they looked incredibly intimate. Her flushed face made the whole scene appear even more suggestive.

The headline read, "Cardiothoracic Surgeon's Scandalous Night Out with a Rich Playboy at the Bar."

In the comments section, someone had anonymously exposed Bella's real identity and the name of the hospital where she worked. Even Felix wasn't spared.

It felt like a bolt from the blue. Bella stood frozen, her hand trembling as she held her phone. Was this why Dominic had called her so many times? Had he seen this online?

Seeing her reaction, Felix took the phone from her and glanced at the article. His expression darkened. He tried to reassure her, "It's just baseless rumors. Don't worry. I'll handle it. Let me take you home first."

This was the first time Bella had encountered something like this, and she felt both angry and helpless. "I'm so sorry. If I hadn't called you last night, you wouldn't be dragged into this..."

Felix smiled gently. "I told you it's okay. Let's go."

Her mind was in a fog, and she felt disoriented. Felix naturally supported her as they walked.

As they reached the front gate, they both noticed a black Rolls-Royce parked right in front of Felix's villa. Standing by the car was Dominic.

In the cool morning breeze, he stood there like a perfect yet distant figure. His expression was calm, his demeanor composed, but there was an undeniable coldness and detachment in his eyes.