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Chapter 276

Bella paid attention to every e-hailing cab she saw-she thought that was how Jack would arrive.

He smiled and called, "Bella."

She turned, and her eyes brightened at the sight of him. They shared a tender moment before Bella held Jack's hand. She led him to a private room.

Though she tried her best to hide it, Jack could still tell from the slight dampness of her tightly clasped hand that she was nervous.

When they entered the private room, he was surprised to find that Clarice wasn't alone. There were others with her. They all sat around a round table while chatting and laughing.

Bella brought Jack to Clarice's side and said, "Mom, Jack's here."

Clarice appraised Jack sharply, seemingly wanting to look through his body and into his heart. He was used to being looked at like that, so it didn't bother him.

The rest of the people mostly consisted of Clarice's friends and old classmates. They observed Jack curiously, wanting to know what was special enough about him to make Bella be so head over heels for him.

A woman couldn't help teasing, "Your boyfriend is pretty handsome, Bella!"

Everyone else laughed, and the atmosphere became more relaxed.

Clarice pointed at the seats beside her and said coolly, "You two can sit here."

Bella and Jack did as told. The atmosphere turned lively again.

Since most of the people were Clarice's friends or old classmates, they were generally around her age and of similar family backgrounds. Naturally, this meant they had endless common topics.

As the conversation deepened, the women started talking about their children. One woman said, "I heard Bella is studying at Alnewgo University, Clarice."

Clarice nodded, a hint of pride in her expression. "Yes, she is. She wanted to go to the capital, but I felt Alnewgo University was good enough. All of us graduated from there, after all."

The other women chimed in, proud of their alma mater. The woman who'd previously spoken, Arianna Poletski, took the opportunity to brag about her son, Ray Clinton. "Ray might not be as outstanding as Bella, but he's also studying hard at the Civil Aviation University.

"He and his friends pooled their money to start a bar, and business seems to be doing well. He's paying for his tuition and expenses himself-he's even bought a car!"

Her words made the rest of the women envy her. Clarice expressed her admiration. "Keep it up, Ray. I have high hopes for you, and I'm sure a bright future awaits."

Ray nodded, looking proud of himself. He sneaked a glance at Bella. Due to Arianna and Clarice's friendship, he'd known Bella since childhood and had always had a crush on her. He was filled with hostility toward Jack. It was too bad Bella was uninterested in his accomplishments.

Arianna suggested, "Do you remember when we used to live in the same neighborhood, Clarice? Ray always loved playing with Bella. Since they're familiar with each other, it's only right for them to spend more time together. Bella's in her sophomore year, and Ray's a junior. He can give her some guidance in terms of her studies, too."