

Chapter 100 Her Best Friend

Chris's low voice interrupted her thoughts.

She snapped back to reality, just in time to avoid a crash with the car ahead. She swiftly turned the steering wheel, narrowly dodging an accident. The scare left her forehead slick with cold sweat. She slowed down and carefully pulled over to the roadside.

Chris's brows came together in a gentle frown. Seeing Kimberly's shaken state, he said softly, "Why don't you take a break and let me drive?"

Kimberly nodded without really thinking got out of the car, and they switched seats. Now in the passenger seat, she took a moment to collect herself and then turned to look at Chris.

The traffic light ahead turned red, and they stopped. Chris looked over at Kimberly, concern evident in his eyes. Noticing her gaze, he pressed his lips together, trying to seem indifferent. "Are you okay?"

His concern was clear, especially following the close call that her distraction had caused. Yet, he didn't blame her for the near accident.

Thinking about the car accident from six months ago that took her parents' lives made Kimberly's face go pale, and she felt disoriented.

She pinched her palm to regain her composure and managed a weak, unconvincing smile. "I'm fine."

"If you don't feel like smiling then don't force it. There's no need to pretend for anyone," Chris said, frowning as the light turned green. He turned his attention back to the road, his hands tightening on the steering wheel.

He didn't like to see Kimberly fake a smile. It was better if she didn't, in his opinion.

No one was forcing her.

Kimberly looked at him briefly, then touched her tense face. She remembered what Chris had just said and raised her eyebrows.

Was he suggesting something?

She thought about inviting Chris for dinner but remembered Archie had cooked especially for her today. It would be rude to invite someone else without asking Archie first.

Kimberly discreetly took out her phone and texted Archie. "Grandpa, can I invite a friend over for dinner tonight?"

Archie responded instantly, "A friend? Is it Elena?"

Kimberly hadn't had many friends growing up, but Elena had been a close one. The Holden family knew Elena well.

However, since her marriage, Kimberly has lost touch with Elena.

Kimberly's expression darkened as she thought about her distance from Elena and forced a bitter smile.

When Declan entered Kimberly's life suddenly, Elena, her best friend, had tried to keep them apart.

"It's been over ten years. Why now, when the Walsh family is struggling does Declan show up? Don't let him deceive you! It's too coincidental," Elena had warned.

Kimberly and Elena were in different schools; Kimberly had skipped three grades and finished her education early, meeting Declan while Elena was still a sophomore elsewhere. Though Elena had been skeptical of Declan from the start, young and inexperienced, Kimberly had fallen for him, disregarding Elena's concerns.

By the time Elena returned to Javille during winter break, Kimberly and Declan were already planning their wedding.

The Walsh family was in a tough spot at that time. Seeing the man she loved constantly worried about his family, Kimberly had been eager to help. So, when Declan proposed skipping the engagement and rushing into marriage, Kimberly agreed immediately.

Kimberly got so caught up in the wedding preparations that she forgot to let Elena know about her upcoming marriage.

Kimberly could still recall that night three years ago. It was bitterly cold, and snow was piling up. She had just stepped out of the bridal shop when she spotted Elena standing in the snow, tears reddening her eyes. Elena had her backpack slung over one shoulder and a suitcase next to her, having evidently rushed from the airport to confront Kimberly.

"Kimberly, did you just dismiss everything I said? If your mom hadn't told me about your wedding to Declan and how it was unstoppable, when were you planning to let me know?"

That encounter turned out to be their last. Elena stood there, shaking from either rage or the cold, tears brimming in her eyes.

A cold shiver ran down Kimberly's spine. She thought Elena still resented Declan. Moving closer, she took Elena's cold hands in hers, pleading for her approval.

"Elena, I didn't mean to keep it from you. I've been busy and didn't get the chance to tell you. I knew you'd be home for the winter break, and I wanted to tell you then... Elena, I really love him, and he treats me well. I'm hoping for your blessing."

Upon hearing this, Elena's face fell. She pulled her hands away and sneered, "He treats you well? Kimberly, you're deceiving yourself! If he really cared, he wouldn't have let you come here to try on wedding dresses alone in such awful weather!"

It was an unusually severe blizzard for what was typically a mild climate, and there was Kimberly, alone in a bridal shop trying on wedding dresses. Elena had seen Kimberly from the shop window, staring bitterly at her reflection, while other couples inside laughed and shared joyous moments, highlighting Kimberly's isolation even more.

This sight enraged and saddened Elena, intensifying her hate for Declan.

And yet, Kimberly's first words were in defense of Declan and seeking Elena's blessing.

Absurd!

"Elena..."

Elena's doubts and harsh words led to a fiery argument. They parted ways angrily, and Elena cut off all contact, not even showing up for Kimberly's wedding.

In her previous life, Kimberly was initially discouraged, but as time passed, she began to see the truth in Elena's accusations. However, her pride prevented her from acknowledging she might have married the wrong man.

The car pulled up in front of the Holden Mansion. Chris turned to Kimberly and announced, "We're here."

Kimberly lost in her memories, felt a pang of sadness. She nodded and was about to exit the car when Archie appeared, hurrying out of the house with a welcoming smile. However, his expression froze when he noticed Chris. "Wasn't it supposed to be Elena you invited?"

Kimberly pressed her lips together and then introduced Chris. "Grandpa, this is Chris Howard."