

Chapter 246

Colin noticed Autumn grinning at her phone across the table and poured her a glass of warm water. 1

He slid it over to her. "Miss Lewis, it's hot today. Have some water first."

Autumn was just about to send Keith a voice message and already had her finger pressed on the record button.

Hearing Colin speak, she hesitated and instinctively lifted her finger.

The voice message went out immediately. Startled, her scalp tingled as she rushed to recall it.

But Keith called her right away.

Autumn glanced at Colin, lifted her phone, and said with a polite smile, "Excuse me, I'll take this outside."

Only once she stepped out did she answer.

Keith's voice came through, unreadable. "I heard the voice message you tried to retract. You're with Colin?"

Autumn looked out at the view. "Mm. We were eating, and he came over asking to share a table. So, we ate together."

The fact that he'd caught it in the split second before she withdrew made the whole thing awkward.

Was Keith really sitting by his phone waiting for updates?



To stumble onto this exact moment—it made her scalp prickle again.

Then Keith said, "He seems to care about you quite a bit."

Her hand went a little numb holding the phone, so she switched to the other. "So? You didn't call just to ask me that, did you?"

There was a pause on the line, then his voice came low. "Stay away from him. Don't get too close."

Autumn wanted to ask why, but the call had already ended.

She was left baffled. She and Colin had only met today. They weren't even friends.

Yet Keith had called just to warn her to keep her distance. What was he playing at?

Soon, it was time to head back to Northhaven. Ethan suggested she take a day off before returning to work.

But Autumn felt she'd rested enough. After the exhibition, she was struck by a sense of urgency and buzzing with scraps of new ideas.

She returned to Vanguard with Ethan, and together they spent hours in meetings built around her fresh inspiration.

Everyone was so caught up in the discussion that no one wanted to lose momentum by taking a lunch break.

They ate in the conference room instead, talking through bites and keeping the ideas flowing.

Seeing the team so full of energy left Autumn satisfied. She stayed

with them, brainstorming together until the end of the workday.

When Ethan suggested taking everyone out for dinner, Autumn declined, thinking of her grandmother who was still in the hospital.

After leaving the office, she called her. The line rang for a long time before Ginny finally picked up. "Autumn, are you back from your trip?"

Autumn slid into the car. "Mm, Grandma, are you still at the hospital? I just got off work. I'll come see you now."

"Do you have anything you'd like to eat? I can bring it on the way."

She realized it had been several days since her last visit—it was about time she went.

There was a pause on the other end before Ginny said, "Autumn, I was discharged today. I'm home now. Do you want to come over?"

"Luna caught a cold, so the whole family went to take care of her. They're not home."

Autumn had been about to refuse, but the moment she heard her grandmother had just been discharged, and everyone had gone to look after Luna's cold, something heavy welled up inside her.

Luna was always treated like she was made of glass—everyone rushing to dote on her—while no one seemed to care whether her grandmother lived or died.

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