

Single Mother of a Werewolf Baby – Chapter 21

Eleanor looked at her wristwatch; there were still a few minutes left before her meeting. Deciding to use the time wisely, she turned to Emmanuel, curious about his role at the school and his decision to work as a guard despite his high standing.

“Why are you working as a guard here instead of managing your clan business?” she asked.

Emmanuel smiled warmly. “I was in the police service for a long time. When I turned 50 in human records, I decided to retire early and join this school. You might not know, but this school was actually established by our family. Our younger generation studies here and learns how to blend with humans from an early age.”

“Some of our fighters work as guards to protect the children from any potential harm. As for me, I joined to stay close to my granddaughter. She’s very attached to me and refused to attend school without me. So, I decided to retire from the police force and take the role of guard captain here. Everybody knows the story by now.”

Eleanor smiled. “You must really love your granddaughter.”

“She’s my treasure,” Emmanuel replied proudly. “She’ll be six next month.”

“That’s wonderful,” Eleanor said before pausing. “By the way, is it possible to enroll my daughter directly, outside the usual admission window? Sorry to ask so suddenly.”

Emmanuel chuckled. “It’s okay. Since the admission window is closed, the only way to enroll her now is through a donation. But this school doesn’t accept money as donations. You need to contribute something significant to the school’s development. Of course, my father could make a call to the headmistress if you want, and everything would be taken care of.”

Eleanor thought for a moment, then said, “Your surveillance system is outdated. Before I arrived here, I hacked into it to observe the school. If you’re interested, I can provide one of the world’s best surveillance systems for free. You can search my company, Heimdall Technologies, to know more.”

“Heimdall is your company?” Emmanuel looked stunned. “No wonder I’ve been hearing about it for the past two days. You know, a lot of wealthy families have children studying here, and they gossip about all kinds of things. The news about Heimdall taking over the regional business sector is the latest hot topic. Most importantly, nobody knows who the boss of Heimdall is.”

He paused for a moment, then said, “We can talk more later. Your meeting time is near.”

Turning on his radio, Emmanuel spoke, “Mili, come to the main gate. I have a guest who needs to be escorted to the headmistress’s office.”

He then turned to Eleanor. “It’s a good deal. Go and meet the headmistress. I’ll call my father before your meeting and try to arrange your daughter’s admission.”

He handed her his phone. “Please scan this to add me on WhatsApp. We can talk more later.”

Moments later, a young female guard arrived and saluted Emmanuel.

“Mili,” Emmanuel said, “she’s my friend. Please escort her to the headmistress’s office.”

“Okay,” Mili replied. “Please follow me.”

Eleanor followed Mili inside the building. When they arrived at a plain-looking room, Mili stopped and said, “This is the headmistress’s office. Please wait here; someone will call you in soon.”

“Do I need to knock?” Eleanor asked.

“No need,” Mili replied. “An assistant already saw you on the surveillance feed.” With that, she left.

After a few moments, a young woman opened the door. “Did you come to meet our headmistress?” she asked.

“Yes,” Eleanor replied. “My name is Eleanor, and I have an appointment.”

“Oh! You’re five minutes early. Please come in,” the assistant said, gesturing for Eleanor to follow her.

Eleanor was directed to a waiting area. She sat in a chair there. After some time, another assistant appeared from an inner room.

“Miss Eleanor Raynor, please come in. Madam is waiting for you.”

Inside the office, Eleanor found a scholarly-looking elderly woman seated behind a desk, glasses perched low on her nose.

“I am Stella Rimington, Headmistress of this school. Please have a seat,” she said.

“Thank you,” Eleanor replied as she sat down.

“You asked for a meeting regarding your daughter’s admission, correct?” Stella asked.

“Yes,” Eleanor confirmed.

“Was there a problem with her current school?”

“No, we recently moved here from the US. My daughter was homeschooled before this.”

“I see,” Stella said thoughtfully. “In that case, we’ll need to assess her before deciding which class she should join. Also, I believe you know our admission window is currently closed. However, just before you arrived, the chairman of the board informed me that you’re offering to provide us with a new surveillance system. Is that correct?”

“Yes,” Eleanor confirmed. “Our system is one of the most advanced available. It includes an AI that can detect security breaches or protocol violations in real-time. For example, if one of your students suddenly faints on campus, the AI will immediately alert you and provide live video footage of the student. It’s highly customizable to meet your school’s specific needs.”

Stella’s eyes widened. “That sounds incredible. Please donate the system, and I’ll ensure your daughter’s admission is processed without issue.”

“Thank you,” Eleanor said. “I’ll arrange for my team from Heimdall Technologies to meet you soon. One request, though... we’re developing this system for security agencies, and while it’s currently in use at our offices, it’s not available on the market yet. I’d appreciate it if you didn’t publicize this donation.”

Stella nodded. “That’s understandable. Please bring your daughter tomorrow at 10 for her assessment. We’ll place her with some incoming transfer students next week to avoid suspicion or unwanted attention.”

Eleanor smiled gratefully. After discussing the school’s rules and facilities, she bid farewell and left the office.

Later, at her own office, Lily greeted her with updates.

“We’ve acquired 11.9% of HFCL’s total shares,” Lily reported. “We’re sending someone to finalize the deal.”

Eleanor said, “It’s okay. Decide for yourself as long as you can. Since our team is capable of handling such matters, I suggest leaving the matter to them.”

Teresa also informed Eleanor that twelve directors from the previously acquired companies had agreed to join Heimdall Technologies. Teresa proposed giving them positions that held shares rather than directly transferring ownership.

Eleanor agreed. “That sounds smart. Just make sure they sign confidentiality agreements first,” she reminded.

After reviewing all the documents at hand, Eleanor finally headed home, feeling satisfied with her progress.

Since she had driven here on her own, she decided to visit Piccadilly before returning home. She needed to buy some clothes, a bag, and some supplies for Freya's school.

Due to the shortage of parking space, she left her car behind and walked to the Louis Vuitton store to buy a backpack and some stationery items for Freya.

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Eleanor looked at the copper-colored storefront after more than five years. They hadn't changed the design a bit, just the art pieces had been replaced. "The old ones were better," she thought.

She walked in and noticed that the interior had changed significantly since her last visit. There were new types of products on display, and the overall layout seemed more modern. She scanned the store until her eyes landed on a section showcasing several backpacks.

She walked over to the rack and picked up a pink backpack. A salesgirl quickly approached her with a polite smile.

"Miss, this is an excellent choice, but it might not be suitable for you. This backpack is designed for younger girls. If you don't mind, we have a similar design that would be more appropriate for you. May I show you?" the salesgirl offered.

"It's okay. I wanted to buy it for my daughter. Can you tell me more details about this one?" Eleanor asked.

"Certainly, Miss. This bag is made of organic cotton and natural cowhide leather. The straps are adjustable but non-removable. It is crafted in France and designed to be both stylish and durable," the salesgirl explained.

At that moment, a sarcastic voice came from behind. "Oh my! Isn't this Eleanor Whitmore? I heard you were expelled from your family and ran away. Do you even have the money to buy something from Louis Vuitton? If not, don't dirty the store. Hey, you, salesgirl, send this poor woman out."

Eleanor turned around and saw her former school senior, Willow White, standing there with a middle-aged man. Willow had been her stepsister Jennifer's classmate and had taken every opportunity to bully her in the past. Now that Eleanor thought about it, her ex-fiancé, James, had won her heart by always protecting her from bullying. It must have all been a setup, and she had unknowingly fallen into their trap.

She merely glanced at Willow and then ignored her. She had no interest in talking to the likes of her and focused on the bag instead. She just wanted to finish her purchase and leave the store.

However, Willow wasn't ready to let it go. She had enjoyed bullying Eleanor in the past, and there was no reason for her to stop now. She was here with her new boyfriend, a manager at NexaByte Technologies who earned a six-figure salary. He even had a Louis Vuitton membership card, which made her feel even more superior.

“Oh! Are you playing deaf now? No matter how hard you try, you can't afford that bag. You're no longer the young miss of the Whitmore family. You're nothing but a poor beggar on the street,” she sneered.

Receiving no reaction from Eleanor, Willow turned her fury on the salesgirl. “Hey, you! Can you not hear me? Why are you still attending to this worthless woman? Come and help me instead!” she demanded.

The salesgirl maintained her professionalism. “Miss, everyone is a customer. She arrived first, so I am attending to her. There are other sales assistants available. If you can't find someone right away, please wait. I'll assist you as soon as I'm finished here.”

“Oh! Now a mere salesgirl is talking back to me? Do you know who I am? I am the eldest daughter of the White family! I could have you fired with just one phone call!” Willow shouted.

Hearing this, Eleanor couldn't stay silent any longer. She turned to Willow with an icy glare and said, “Why are you picking a fight with this innocent girl? She's just doing her job. If you really have the power, then try and throw me out yourself.”

That single look sent a shiver down Willow's spine. She couldn't understand why she was feeling such oppressive energy from Eleanor, whom she had known since childhood. Meek and easy to bully. But she wasn't one to back down easily. Angrily, she turned and marched toward the counter.

Eleanor looked at the salesgirl and said, “I'll take this backpack. Please process my payment. And if you ever face trouble because of this incident, come find me at Heimdall Technologies. I appreciate your courage and dedication to your job.”

Meanwhile, Willow reached the counter and shouted, “Where is your manager? Call him right now!”

The store manager, a middle-aged man with a slightly protruding belly, came out from the storeroom upon hearing the commotion. “Miss, what seems to be the problem? I am the manager here. If you have a complaint, we can resolve it in a civil manner,” he said.

Willow pointed at Eleanor and declared, “I want that woman thrown out of this store! And I want that arrogant salesgirl fired immediately!”

The manager frowned. “Miss, everyone is a valued customer here. If she has caused you any trouble, I will handle it fairly. But could you explain what exactly happened?”

Willow scoffed. “I already told you! She’s been expelled from her family, which means she can’t afford anything here. I told your salesgirl to kick her out and attend to me, but she ignored me!”

The manager sighed, trying to remain neutral. “Miss, please don’t be upset. She’s new here. I’ll attend to you personally. What would you like?”

“Who asked for your help?! I said, throw that woman out!” Willow snapped.

The manager was now in a tough spot. He didn’t want to offend a membership cardholder, but kicking someone out without cause would damage the store’s reputation. After thinking for a moment, he decided on a middle ground. He turned to Eleanor and said, “Miss, this backpack costs 2,500 pounds. If you can’t pay, I suggest you leave and find a cheaper store. Please don’t disturb our VIP customers.”

Eleanor sighed. She didn’t want to cause a scene, but her patience had limits. She handed the manager her Black Card and said, “Okay. Pack the bag and process my payment.”

The manager froze. His hands trembled as he recognized the card in front of him. Cold sweat trickled down his back. An American Express Black Card wasn’t something just anyone could get. It was only issued to those with an extraordinary net worth, and it didn’t even have a preset credit limit.

Realizing his mistake, the manager quickly changed his attitude. “I-I’m terribly sorry, Miss. Please forgive my earlier behavior. If you’d like, I can assist you with anything else. And this bag is a gift from the store as an apology for the inconvenience you faced.”

Eleanor shook her head. “No need. I don’t have time for more shopping. Just pack the bag and complete the payment.”

“O-of course! Thank you, Miss!” the manager stammered before hurrying off to retrieve a fresh bag.

Willow’s boyfriend, sensing something was wrong, pulled her away. Though he hadn’t seen the Black Card himself, the manager’s panicked reaction told him everything he needed to know. His precious membership card was worthless in comparison.

Ignoring Willow’s protests, he dragged her out of the store, leaving Eleanor in peace to finalize her purchase.

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Willow White's mood was terrible. After returning home, she furiously threw several items on the floor, breaking them in an attempt to diminish her anger. Her boyfriend had warned her to stay away from Eleanor, hinting that she had powerful backing from somewhere.

Although Eleanor had been a school beauty back then, she seemed to have bloomed even more now. She was more stunning than before, and there was an air of confidence around her that only enhanced her beauty further. Willow couldn't deny the jealousy boiling inside her when she caught her boyfriend secretly ogling Eleanor from behind. In fact, she had only noticed Eleanor today because she had been following her boyfriend's line of sight. That had been the last straw.

Her fury intensified as she recalled the scene at the store. The day had started so well... she had been overjoyed when her boyfriend promised to buy her a bag and some accessories from Louis Vuitton while they were at the hotel last night. But that vixen had ruined everything. In the end, she hadn't even had the chance to buy the bag she had been eyeing for months.

After finally calming down, Willow picked up her phone and called Jennifer Whitmore, informing her about her encounter with Eleanor. Of course, she left out the embarrassing details of the confrontation. She didn't particularly like Jennifer, but since the White family's business was linked with the Whitmores, her father had ordered her to maintain a friendly relationship. After all, their family was financially weaker than the Whitmores and heavily dependent on them.

Once Jennifer confirmed that Eleanor had truly returned, she immediately called her father.

"Dad, Eleanor is back in Manchester. Willow saw her at Louis Vuitton today, buying an expensive bag," Jennifer reported.

"Are you sure?" William Whitmore's voice was filled with disbelief. "The police couldn't find her back then, even after issuing a search warrant across the kingdom."

"I'm sure, Dad. Willow even spoke to her to confirm her identity."

William gnashed his teeth in frustration. "Why did that bitch have to return now of all times? It's been six years! The board agreed to appoint me as custodian for seven years. Just one more year, and I could have legally inherited her shares. I didn't want to show my hand with the documents I had her sign, but she's forcing me. Those old fools on the board will never support me if they know Eleanor is alive... they were all loyal to her mother."

Jennifer hesitated for a moment before asking, "What do we do now?"

William took a deep breath. “Let me think. Call James this evening. We need to prepare for this unexpected situation.”

A few hours later, William, Jennifer, Jeanne, and James were gathered in his study for a serious discussion.

“Dad, I went to Louis Vuitton with Willow and checked their CCTV footage. It was definitely Eleanor. She even purchased a bag worth 2,500 pounds,” Jennifer said.

Jeanne’s face twisted in anger. “Why didn’t that bitch just die all these years? Where could she have possibly hidden that the police couldn’t find her? I thought she had either perished in some accident or killed herself out of shame.”

James scoffed. “The important thing is that she spent more than two thousand on a bag. That means she has financial support. With her looks, she probably found herself a wealthy sugar daddy after running away.”

Jeanne sneered. “Who in their right mind would take her as a mistress? Her rape and pregnancy scandal was all over the news back then.”

William rubbed his temples. “We shouldn’t waste time speculating about her past. What matters is why she’s come back now. There’s still one year left before she would have been presumed dead. I suspect that someone on the board is involved in this. One of the directors must have discovered our scheme and protected her all these years. I checked Eleanor’s call records before she disappeared... no one except us had contacted her. So who could be powerful enough to orchestrate this?”

Jennifer pursed her lips. “I suspect Elliot Grant. He holds the second-highest share after us, 16%. He was also the one who proposed the seven-year presumed death rule, which limited you to being just a custodian and temporary chairman.”

William’s eyes darkened. “How many shares have you managed to buy from the market so far?”

“Just over 8%,” Jennifer replied.

William nodded. “With Eleanor’s 35% under my name and your 8%, that makes a total of 43%. We still need support from other shareholders to secure a majority. We have to prepare for the worst. If we have to show our hand, we must ensure we win. I’ll work on securing additional support. Jennifer, as the general manager, you need to reach out to other shareholders discreetly. Be careful not to reveal too much.”

Jennifer nodded. “I understand, Dad. I’ll be cautious.”

William turned to James. “I need you to contact your underground connections. If we can eliminate her quietly before she reclaims her shares, we’ll avoid a lot of trouble.”

James smirked. “Understood, Uncle. But after our last investment in Chen Group, my family is short on funds. You’ll need to provide some financial backing.”

William waved a hand dismissively. “Don’t worry. When the time comes, send your men to me... I’ll handle the rest.”

Jeanne added coldly, “James, this time, make sure she’s dead. Don’t believe anything unless you see the body with your own eyes.”

James nodded. “Don’t worry, Aunt. I’ll confirm her death personally before disposal.”

William exhaled deeply. “Also, try to find out exactly who is backing her. I’ll send someone to monitor Elliot Grant’s movements.”

After further discussion, the meeting concluded, and everyone dispersed to handle their respective tasks.

The next morning, Eleanor was preparing to take Freya to school for her assessment when Ethan arrived at the villa.

“Freya, are you ready for school?” Ethan asked, taking a few glances at Eleanor. She was wearing a light green casual suit, her lips lightly colored with lipstick. She looked captivating. Though he wanted to admire her longer, he restrained himself, not wanting to appear indecent.

Freya pouted, clinging to him. “Daddy, I don’t want to go to school! Mommy said I’ll read, write, and play games there, but I can do that at home too. Why do I have to go?”

Seeing her small pout, Ethan chuckled. “But at school, you’ll make lots of new friends. It’s much more fun! Daddy went to school at your age, and so did Mommy.”

Freya huffed. “But I have fun at home too.”

Eleanor crouched beside her daughter and gently stroked her hair. “Sweetie, we talked about this last night. It’s only for a few hours. Mommy will drop you off and pick you up every day. You’re always home alone during my work hours... this way, you’ll have friends instead of being by yourself.”

Ethan said, “Since it’s her assessment day, I thought I’d come along. Otherwise, people might think her father doesn’t care about her.”

Eleanor glanced at him, her heart warming at his thoughtfulness. Though she didn't express it, she appreciated his efforts. Ethan had been pursuing her for a long time, but she had yet to give in. She wanted the best for Freya and didn't need a man to provide it.

However, she had noticed the growing bond between Ethan and Freya. As a werewolf, she wasn't sure if her daughter's attachment was entirely voluntary or if the alpha-parent bond played a role. Ethan didn't know that she had already accepted him as Freya's father... she was just hesitant about making him her husband.

Shaking off her thoughts, she followed Ethan to the car. He secured Freya in the baby seat, waited for Eleanor to settle in, and then got into the driver's seat. Their journey to school began.

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Eleanor sat anxiously in the waiting room of Heaton Mersey Independent School. Although the headmistress, Stella Rimington, had reassured her that there was nothing to worry about, she couldn't help but feel uneasy. It was just an assessment to determine Freya's classroom placement, yet she found herself glancing at her wristwatch repeatedly, counting down the fifteen minutes as if they stretched into an eternity.

Finally, after what seemed like forever, Freya appeared in the waiting room, accompanied by a teacher. She looked perfectly fine as she walked straight into her mother's embrace.

The teacher smiled warmly. "Although she surpassed the level of a third-grade student during the assessment, considering her age, we've decided to enroll her in first grade. The children in that class will be around six to seven years old. Otherwise, she might feel lonely among older classmates."

Ethan stood up and extended his hand. "Thank you, Miss. What should we do next?"

The teacher replied, "We've already informed the admissions office, which is right beside the main entrance. If you head there now, they will guide you through the next steps."

After expressing their gratitude, the trio made their way to the admissions office. By the time they finished all the paperwork and emerged from the school, it was already close to noon.

Ethan turned to Eleanor. "Grandma is in town. If you don't have any urgent matters to attend to, let's have lunch at her villa."

Eleanor hesitated for a moment before nodding. "Okay."

Freya clapped her hands excitedly. “Yay! I want to see Great-Grandma!”

Ethan chuckled. “Alright then, let’s go.”

He helped them into the car and drove towards the outskirts of the city, where Fiona Raynor’s villa stood amidst lush greenery.

As soon as they arrived, Fiona opened the door, her eyes lighting up as she saw her great-granddaughter. “My dear Freya! Did you miss your old great-grandma?”

Freya threw herself into Fiona’s arms. “I missed you one million—no, one trillion!”

Fiona laughed heartily. “Well then, let’s go inside. I’ll make your favorite chicken noodle soup.”

Freya beamed. “I love Great-Grandma’s chicken noodle soup! Mommy can’t make it as delicious as you do.”

Eleanor playfully frowned. “Hey! Don’t badmouth me. I cook plenty of delicious dishes for you.”

Freya pouted. “But Great-Grandma is the best.”

Fiona smirked. “Eleanor, just accept your defeat. I am the best!”

Everyone laughed as they entered the villa. While Fiona went into the kitchen to prepare lunch, Eleanor followed her, leaving Freya in Ethan’s care.

As Freya busied herself watching cartoons, Ethan’s phone buzzed. Recognizing the number, he stepped outside, making sure Eleanor wouldn’t overhear him—even with her enhanced werewolf hearing.

“Mr. Raynor,” came a hushed voice from the other end. “The Whitmore family is on the move. One of my colleagues has started investigating Miss Eleanor again, unofficially. They’re currently trying to track her movements using yesterday’s CCTV footage from Piccadilly.”

Ethan’s expression darkened. “Understood. I’ll take care of it. Keep me updated.”

He ended the call and immediately dialed another number. “I’ll send you a bug. Make sure it gets planted in William Whitmore’s phone. Just insert it into his charging port. It won’t interfere with the phone’s function, but it’ll give us access to all his communications.”

After issuing the instructions, he made a third call. “The time has come. Present that investment opportunity to Jennifer Whitmore. Make sure she invests every penny of their cash reserves. If

you can push them to mortgage their properties for a bigger investment, there's an additional reward in it for you."

Meanwhile, across the city, James Clifford sat in his private villa, rocking in his chair while smoking a cigarette. He contemplated his next move.

"Eleanor must resent me after our breakup," he mused, exhaling a plume of smoke. "But I played my part well. I ended things after she got pregnant... it was the logical thing to do. There's no way she could know about my involvement in her kidnapping and assault."

His fingers tightened around the cigarette as he recalled those events. Even now, he shivered when thinking about Jennifer's ruthlessness. It had been her idea of rape and inject Eleanor with a high dose of Clomiphene before the assault, increasing the chances of pregnancy.

Although he had some issues with Eleanor, that stubborn girl never gave him a chance beyond a few kisses. Many times, he wanted to sleep with her, but she was old-fashioned and insisted that it should be saved for marriage. Every time, he had to release his frustration on Jennifer. It was a pity that her first time had been stolen by those thugs.

At first, he wasn't involved with Jennifer. Jeanne, his mother's cousin, was technically his aunt. One day, she approached him with a proposal that could benefit them both. She suggested that James pursue a romantic relationship with Eleanor, the primary heir to her family's business. Since James was the fourth son of the Clifford family, his chances of inheriting their business were slim due to his three older brothers. Considering this, he agreed.

But none of this would have happened if it weren't for Eleanor. It began on her birthday, years ago, when they were still teenagers. Eleanor's bosom had just begun to bloom, soft curves visible beneath the fabric of her dress... a detail he couldn't unsee. Later that night, after the party guests had left, he slipped into her room. They kissed as they often did, but this time, his hands drifted lower, eager to explore what her new silhouette promised. Eleanor stiffened. She shoved him away, her voice sharp as shattered glass. "Not before marriage," she hissed. "Never."

And just like that, she'd drawn a line in the sand... one he'd spent years resenting.

Frustration seethed in James' chest as he stormed out of Eleanor's room. The hallway air felt cold, sharp against his heated skin... until Jennifer appeared. Her voice was a balm, soft and coaxing, her touch steadying his restless hands. He didn't remember agreeing to follow her, yet suddenly they were in her room, the door clicking shut behind them. Words dissolved. Then her lips were on his, a spark to tinder, and every thread of restraint unraveled.

It was clumsy, their first time... a fumbling exploration guided by half-remembered scenes from films they'd watched in secret. Awkward laughter mingled with gasped breaths as they navigated unfamiliar terrain. No theory could have prepared them for the reality: the trembling, the missed

rhythms, the way urgency clashed with hesitation. Yet in that haze of curiosity and rebellion, they pressed on, chasing a fleeting escape from the anger that had started it all.

After the defloration, Jennifer took the lead and rode on top. They both were young, and she was wild. James had sex with many girls after that, but no one was as active as Jennifer. That night, they tried side by side, sixty-nine, from behind, seated and many other positions. Due to Jennifer's encouragements they also did anal that night. Although he had some reservations about this particular way of sex, after the penetration and several thrusts, he enjoyed it more. Now, sometimes he goes to Brazil only to have anal sex. In his view, there was no ass like a Brazilian in the whole world.

That night, he lost count of how many times he erected inside and outside of her holes. There were many times, Jennifer took the lead to eat his sperm. Due to the excited states of their minds, they lost track of time. It was when the daylight came in from the window, they felt that they were dead tired after a long nightly activity. James had no energy to go to his home. So, he went to the guest room to sleep as he had stayed there before.

What they didn't know was that due to their inexperience, Jennifer's moan was so loud that it was heard from outside the room. When Jeanne came to check on Jennifer before sleep, she heard it. They also didn't turn off the light or lock the door. Jeanne slightly opened the door to check. When she saw her daughter with James, she locked the door and went to her room silently.

Instead of being furious, she saw an opportunity. The next day, she called them into Jennifer's room, and their plans took a darker turn. Jeanne convinced them that Eleanor needed to be removed from the equation. From that moment on, there was no turning back.

James snapped back to the present, stubbing out his cigarette. He pulled out his phone and dialed an overseas number.

"Eleanor Whitmore is alive. She's in Manchester," he said flatly. "I want her eliminated as soon as possible."

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James heard no reply from the other side, so he added, "Last time, I paid for the kidnapping and rape case... same woman."

A rough voice answered, "100,000 pounds. You know the rate. My people will be at Manchester Arndale tomorrow at noon."

James smirked. “No problem. Send your men to William Whitmore. I’ll inform him about the payment.”

There was a low, mechanical chuckle on the other end of the line before the call disconnected. James leaned back, exhaling deeply. “This time, Eleanor, you won’t escape.”

He dialed William’s number. “Uncle, the deal is set. Keep 100,000 pounds in cash in a bag and go shopping at Manchester Arndale tomorrow between 12 and 1 PM. Someone will approach you at their convenience.”

“Okay. I’ll be there. Will you come?” William replied.

James said, “No, Uncle. I have a meeting with the Chen Group tomorrow. You know how important it is for me.”

He paused, then added, “Don’t worry. They are professionals. You saw their work last time.”

“Okay,” William ended the call.

Back at Fiona’s villa, lunch was finally ready. As they sat around the table, Fiona served steaming bowls of her famous chicken noodle soup along with several side dishes.

Ethan watched Eleanor as she helped Freya with her meal, a soft smile on his lips. “She has no idea of the storm coming her way. But I will be ready. No one will take Eleanor away from me... not this time. And if the Whitmores think they can scheme against her so easily, they are gravely mistaken,” he thought.

In the kitchen earlier, Eleanor updated Fiona about her company and discussed several strategies. Fiona had been in the business sector for over 300 years. Although she mostly worked in the shadows now, she remained well-informed about the current market landscape.

After the meal, Ethan took Eleanor and Freya back to their villa before heading to his business meeting, which he had postponed earlier that morning.

Eleanor put Freya to sleep and went to her study to review some documents from her office. Just as she was about to finish, Teresa called her.

“Boss, there has been some movement in the Chen Group today. They applied for a new company that will manufacture microwave communication products like RF Antennas, Small Cell Antennas for live mobile journalism, Backhaul Fiber Solutions for transmitting live videos, and some GPON equipment. I received information that a Chinese manufacturer is involved in this company due to the recent increase in taxes on Chinese products,” she said.

Eleanor responded, “Okay. Let them proceed. Keep an eye on their movements. I believe HFCL is producing similar equipment. Compare both and determine which one is better. Also, find out which Chinese company is involved with them. Investigate and send me a report on that company. We might need to interfere in the Chinese market in the future.”

Teresa said, “Understood. I’m on it.”

The next day, Eleanor decided to do some shopping for Freya’s upcoming school term. She had already bought her school uniform earlier; now, she needed to match other accessories with it.

After breakfast, Eleanor took Freya to B&M. It was the first time she had taken her daughter shopping since arriving in Manchester. They bought pens, pencils, notebooks, art kits, and several books for first-grade students... all chosen by Freya, making their shopping cart a colorful display of excitement.

To make their outing more memorable, Eleanor took Freya to Platt Fields Park after their shopping trip. Although the park had a fantastic playground for kids, Freya was more of a nature lover than someone who enjoyed playing with other children.

Eleanor led Freya to the Shakespearean Garden, which featured plants mentioned in Shakespeare’s works. Having read some of Shakespeare’s plays, Freya was delighted to see the garden.

They also visited the park’s Eco Arts Garden, adorned with colorful flower beds where art and nature intertwined beautifully. After spending over two hours in the park, they returned to their villa for lunch.

Meanwhile, in Manchester Arndale, in front of the Apple Store, a man wearing a black overcoat and hat stopped in front of William Whitmore.

“Are you William Whitmore?” he asked.

“Yes. And who are you?” William responded.

The man didn’t answer directly but said, “I believe you have a bag for me.”

William immediately understood and handed over the bag containing the cash he had prepared earlier. “Yes. This is the bag.”

The man took it, nodded, and simply said, “Thank you.” Without another word, he walked past William and disappeared into the crowd.

To make his visit appear natural, William entered the Apple Store and purchased the latest iPhone, had it gift-wrapped, and returned to his office. There, he called his newly appointed secretary and presented her with the gift.

It had been more than six months since Lydia Barker joined EverBuild Solutions Limited as his secretary. Her facial features bore a striking resemblance to Jeanne when she was younger. From the first day, William had fallen for her. It was a stroke of luck for him that her brother was ill and she needed money, allowing him to easily lure her into his bed by offering financial support.

After receiving the gift, Lydia kissed him on the lips and said shyly, “How could I accept such an expensive gift? You should give it to someone more deserving.”

William smiled. “I bought this phone especially for you. If I wanted to give it to someone else, I would have sent an assistant to pick one up.”

Lydia’s face turned bright red. “Why do you love me this much? I’m just a poor countryside girl. I have nothing to offer you in return.”

William pulled her into his embrace. “You have something no one else has. Will you offer me your love tonight after work?”

“Okay,” Lydia agreed. “I’ll go to Parkview Hotel after office hours. Please come early to our usual presidential suite. I bought a new lingerie set just for you. It’s red... the color you always want me to wear.”

“Oh! Now I’m even more eager to see you,” William murmured, hugging her tighter. Lydia could feel something hard pressing against her stomach through William’s trousers.

She playfully pushed him away. “Stop it! You have an image to uphold. If you act like this, there might be a scandal. Calm down for now. I’m not going anywhere... I’ll be waiting for you.”

She took the gift box, placed it in her bag, and left William’s office, leaving him with an eager anticipation for the evening ahead.