

Chapter 2

Twenty-five days left.

For the past five days, this man's usually barren social media had been exceptionally lively.

By day, they fed pigeons in the square; by night, they watched the float parades from the observation deck of the amusement park hotel.

I hadn't missed a single step of their journey together.

As for the promise he made to me? I'm afraid he'd long since forgotten it.

I stood up to pack my bags, spreading a chaotic mess across the floor.

Suddenly, I received a call from Arthur's assistant.

"Madam, please don't forget to come to the fireworks show at Lovers' Point at eight o'clock."

"If anything goes wrong, Mr. Sterling will have my head."

In the eight years I'd been married to Arthur, only his assistant ever called me "Madam."

He was the only one who knew about my marriage to Arthur.

I had no intention of making things difficult for the assistant, so I agreed.

But as I actually set out for Lovers' Point, I felt a moment of daze.

Five years ago, when Arthur and I were first married,

He had gifted me a secret fireworks display then, too—and it was the assistant who had quietly tipped me off that time as well.

Five years later, heading to the same place,

My state of mind, however, was vastly different.

By the time I reached the vicinity of Lovers' Point, countless tourists had already gathered.

There were even members of the media present.

Suspicion rose within me. Fearing I had made a mistake, I dialed Arthur's number.

All I got was an endless busy signal.

I dialed again.

I didn't even know what I was expecting.

But the calls never went through, and there was still no sign of Arthur.

Checking the time, it was nearly eight o'clock.

Someone in the crowd shouted, "The fireworks show is about to start!"

"Mr. Sterling prepared this show for his Madam. We're just lucky enough to crash it."

I froze.

Arthur's public image had always been that of an unmarried man.

The "Madam" they were referring to certainly couldn't be me. It had to be someone else.

I knew the best vantage point for the fireworks was at the northernmost end of Lovers' Point.

Since I was already here, I might as well go take a look.

At least the fireworks were innocent.

It was just that there were too many people.

I was swept along by the crowd, pushed right to the very front.

I finally saw Arthur.

He was standing in the prime spot, holding Bella in a deep embrace.

Fireworks were already blooming, one after another, in a brilliant display across the night sky.

I listened to the booming explosions ringing in my ears.

And amidst the background noise of the boiling crowd and the fireworks, I heard Arthur's heartfelt confession to Bella.

A reporter thrust a microphone in front of Bella and asked:

"Madam, what is your answer?"

Arthur gently held Bella by the shoulders, looking at her with a face full of anticipation.

Bella shyly took the microphone and had just opened her mouth to speak,

When my eyes met Arthur's.

Arthur froze, and involuntarily murmured, "Eleanor..."

In that moment, all of Lovers' Point fell silent.

Even the sound of the fireworks seemed to fade into the background.

Everyone was focused on that single word he had spoken, and on me—the person he was staring at.

Bella looked at me, raised an eyebrow, and asked him, "Who is this?"

Arthur licked his lips awkwardly, trying to figure out how to salvage the situation.

I smiled, meeting everyone's gaze, and

answered: "My name is Eleanor Vance, and I am Mr. Sterling's..."

Arthur moved nervously to stop me, but the word that left my lips was: "Cousin."

As the words fell, the fingers digging into my palm slowly relaxed.

"My aunt asked me to come see if my new sister-in-law is pretty. Did I startle you?"

Arthur's expression finally relaxed, and he gave me a satisfied nod.

He had never wanted me to reveal my identity in public, and naturally, neither did my mother-in-law.

So every time I went out with her, she insisted I call her "Auntie."

Five years of calling her "Auntie" turned

out to be the perfect cover, prepared long in advance.

The fireworks show had to go on, and no one paid me any more attention.

The heavens were unkind, and a heavy rain suddenly began to fall.

Arthur hurriedly pushed through the crowd. "Bella is frail, she can't get wet. Please, make way!"

He carefully shielded Bella as he escorted her into the car.

Leaving me standing there, all alone.

The rain was biting, yet I felt no cold.

Perhaps five years of this marriage had simply made me used to it.