

## The Kiss That Sparked it All Chapter 1431

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#### Chapter 1431

Veronica frowned in annoyance. “How is the Blanchet family being selfish?”

Bartlett replied sternly, “Your brother has been missing for years without a trace. He never married Ellinor, yet now you want to keep her tied to your family. You expect her to raise the kids and manage the company without allowing her to start a new life. Don’t you think that’s being selfish?”

Caught off guard, Veronica gritted her teeth. “My brother is just temporarily unavailable. He’s not dead! He will return one day!”

Bartlett smirked coldly. “If he was going to return, he would have by now. He would never leave Ellinor and the kids here without a word, right?”

Veronica couldn’t argue with Bartlett/ so she blocked his way instead.

“Your words mean nothing! This is the Blanchet Corporation, and if I don’t want you in, you’re not getting in!”

Bartlett leaned in closer. “You won’t let me in? Then I might just have to make a move on you.”

Veronica, fearless, retorted. “What? You dare hit me on Blanchet territory?”

Bartlett leaned in until his breath could touch her face. “I won’t hit you. If you won’t let me pursue Ellinor, then I might just pursue you instead. After all, Miss Veronica, you’re becoming more charming. I don’t mind changing targets.”

With that, his hand lifted Véronica’s chin.

Veronica, who had feelings for another man, was caught off-guard by his touch and instinctively backed away.

This gave Bartlett the opportunity to enter the CEO's office.

By the time Veronica reacted, it was too late, which left her fuming.

Ellinor was busy typing on her keyboard when she heard someone enter. Assuming it was Veronica, she asked, "Back again? What else do you need?"

Bartlett smiled. "Busy, Ellinor?"

After hearing Bartlett's voice, Ellinor stopped typing and looked up.

"Why are you here?"

Her tone and expression made it clear that she wasn't thrilled to see him..

Bartlett, used to her cold reception, pulled out the chair opposite her desk and sat down.

"Just checking in on you. How did things go with the old shareholders of the Blanchet Corporation? Did they give you a hard time?"

Ellinor's gaze

returned to her computer screen as she replied casually. "They're manageable. They are nothing I can't handle."

Bartlett admired her work ethic. "Ellinor, honestly, are you okay with staying with the Blanchet family and working for them for free?"

Ellinor continued to type. "What do you mean? I'm not working for free. I receive a salary."

Bartlett chuckled. "Have you ever heard of a CEO who only gets a salary? Ellinor, you're working harder than a horse but eating less than a cat. Doesn't that seem

foolish?"

Ellinor was unfazed. "Is it necessary to keep an account of everything in one's own family?"

Hearing her refer to the Blanchet family as her own made Bartlett furrow his brows. "I'm afraid you're the only one who considers the Blanchet family **as** your own. They probably don't see it that way."

Ellinor glanced at him. "Really? And what do you think their perspective is?"

Bartlett asked, "Do you really want to hear my opinion?"

Ellinor smiled. "You're already here. Isn't it because you want to talk? Go ahead; I'm listening."

Bartlett grinned. "Well, if you insist. I think they're just using you and don't really consider you family."

Ellinor raised an eyebrow. "Oh? How so?"

## **Chapter 1432**

Bartlett stared at her with an intense gaze. "You and Theo never really tied the knot, you know. That ceremony was just a ruse to make his old man happy, **and** you didn't even have any significant witnesses.

Now, you're basically working for their family without any official recognition. No matter how much you do for them, the day they decide you're no longer of use, they can cut you loose. And then, you'll be left with nothing."

Ellinor hit the return key one last time, saving her document.

She then tiredly yawned and turned to Bartlett. "So, you think I'm helping the Blanchets in hopes of getting a piece of their pie?"

Bartlett shook his head. "Of course not. But when they use you and then cast you aside, it's going to hurt."

Ellinor shrugged. "Whether I'm being used or whether I'm doing this with no recognition, it doesn't matter. Until we find Theo, I'll hold down the fort. When he returns, I'll give it back to him, just as it was. Everything else is inconsequential."

Bartlett watched her as he fell silent.

Yes, other women might make foolish sacrifices out of confusion, but Ellinor knew exactly what she was doing. She knew what mattered to her and didn't care about the gain or loss.

Such a girl couldn't be considered astute.

But what drew him to her was this very purity of hers, wasn't it?

With that thought, Bartlett smiled and decided not to say anything that would upset her further.

"Alright, as long as you know what you're doing. Enough about that, Ellinor. Today's your first day as the temporary CEO of Blanchet Corporation, and I came here especially to cheer you on. Do you have time for dinner after work?"

Ellinor took a sip of her bottled water, giving him no quarter. "No time."

Bartlett had expected her to decline, so he quickly countered. "Don't worry; it won't be just us. Your brother will be there too. How about a relaxing dinner?" Ellinor replied, "No, I really don't have the time. After work, I have to pick up the children. I promised to take them to the amusement park."

Bartlett frowned. "Ellinor, aren't you stretching yourself too thin? Running a corporation and taking care of three kids is a lot."

Ellinor explained, "Usually, there's a professional nanny who takes care of them. Today, I'm going because I promised to take them to the amusement park." "That's a relief then." Although Bartlett was disappointed that he couldn't schedule dinner with Ellinor, he didn't let that deter him from changing his strategy. "Ellinor, it's been a while since I've seen your three little ones, and I happen to have some free time today. Why don't I accompany you to the amusement park?" Ellinor looked at him with distaste. "Mr. Rex, it's a virtue to avoid the appearance of impropriety."

Bartlett shrugged nonchalantly. "Avoid what? We're not going on a one-on-one date. Surely, you're not planning to take three kids to **the** park by yourself. If I'm not mistaken, your sister-in-law, Veronica, will be joining you, right?"

Ellinor, what's the harm **in** bringing along one more friend? It's been a long time since I've been to an amusement park. Maybe I can relive my childhood memories today."

Ellinor was speechless.

Bartlett cast her a flirtatious wink. "I can also act as your driver, carry your bags when you're tired, and even help with **the** kids."

"I have a driver."

"Great, it's settled then. I'll pick you **up** after work, and we'll **go** get the kids."

Ellinor was taken **aback**.

Having made the decision, Bartlett didn't give her a chance to refuse. He simply waved and sauntered off.

### Chapter 1433

Ellinor didn't pay much attention to Bartlett. She brushed off his advances and concentrated on her own work.

Yet, to her surprise, Bartlett showed up again when she was leaving work.

At the base of the Blanchet Corporation building.

As Ellinor and Veronica were exiting the building, about to climb into their private limousine, the sound of a car horn startled them.

They turned around to see Bartlett's car parked behind them. He had rolled down his window, sticking his head out and flashing a dazzling smile at them. He was even waving.

Veronica frowned at the sight of Bartlett. "What's he doing here again?"

Ellinor's eyebrows creased slightly. "Who knows why he's so idle?"

Huffing in annoyance, Veronica exclaimed, "Let's go! We don't need to bother with him. Let's get in our own car."

With that, Veronica hurriedly pulled Ellinor into their car and urged the driver to go.

"Quick. Start the car. Let's leave that piece of junk behind."

The driver acknowledged the order, but before he could step on the accelerator, Bartlett's car swiftly drove up and blocked their path, nearly causing an accident. Veronica was furious. She was ready to get out of the car and confront Bartlett. But Bartlett had already exited his car and casually climbed into theirs through the passenger door.

Veronica was astounded by Bartlett's audacity. "Hey! Are you out of your mind? Not only did you block our car, but you climbed into ours without permission." Bartlett turned his head and grinned at Ellinor, who was sitting in the back seat. "Ellinor, didn't we agree to go to the amusement park today?"

Ellinor was speechless and forced a small grin.

Who agreed with him? He **must** have made that agreement with himself.

Veronica looked anxiously at Ellinor. "Did you really agree to take him with us?"

Ellinor responded coolly. "No."

Veronica felt relieved to hear that Ellinor had rejected him and glared at Bartlett. "You heard her, right? She didn't agree to take you. Stop being presumptuous and get out!"

Bartlett, however, had no intention of leaving. He buckled his seat belt and sat back comfortably.

His nonchalance made Veronica livid. "Hey you..."

"Let it go." Ellinor glanced at the time. It was getting late, and she **didn't** want to keep the kids waiting.

"Drive!" She said to the driver.

"Yes, Ellinor."

The driver obeyed. He backed their car out and bypassed Bartlett's, heading towards the daycare.

Veronica was upset that she couldn't kick Bartlett out and complained to Ellinor. "Why do we need to bring this guy when we're picking up the kids?" Ellinor absently replied, "The daycare is about to close. We don't have **time** to fuss over him. It's a waste of time."

Veronica made a face.

## **Chapter 1434**

But luckily, Ellinor seemed less interested in Bartlett and more focused on just not wasting her time on him.

When her brother was not around, she worried about other men trying to woo her.

Sunny Pines Preschool.

Their car pulled up near the entrance of the preschool.

It was time for the kids to get out of school, and many parents were queuing up for pickup.

Sunny Pines was the most prestigious preschool in Greenhaven and had strict regulations for the safety of the children. Only one parent was allowed in to pick up their child to avoid any confusion that might distract the teachers.

Veronica volunteered to get out and queue up. "I'll go pick up the kids. You can stay in the car."

Ellinor nodded and let her go,

However, she didn't stay in the car but got out and stood by the car, looking at the preschool entrance.

There was an old man selling balloons at the gate. Thinking that the kids would love them, she went over to ask about the price, planning to get three, one for each child.

She paid the money but didn't choose the balloons right away.

There were too many balloon designs. It would be better for the kids to choose their own styles and colors when they come out.

Bartlett had been following her since she got out of the car, and he stood by her side with his usual charming smile.

Their striking presence drew the attention of the other parents, queuing up at the gate.

Ellinor felt a bit uncomfortable with this.

Bartlett, however, thoroughly enjoyed it. "Ellinor, do you think we look like a couple picking up our kids to them?"

Ellinor rolled her eyes at him. "Then why don't you stay away from me?"

Bartlett shrugged. "Who cares! Let them think whatever they want. We have nothing to hide."

Ellinor gave him a disdainful look. She stepped away, ignoring him, and looked towards the preschool gate to see where Veronica had queued **up**.

Just then, a large black SUV pulled up in front of them, blocking her view.

Ellinor frowned. She was annoyed and was about to ask the driver to move the car forward.

The car door opened, and a slender woman got out. She was holding a child wearing a Batman mask.

The child was crying loudly for some reason, and the woman was frantically trying to soothe him. "Tristan, sweetheart, stop crying. Mommy will buy you a cartoon balloon, okay? Look, which one do you like?"

Recognizing the familiar voice, Ellinor took a closer look at the woman's face as her expression slightly stiffened and her eyes narrowed.

The woman was too busy trying to soothe the child to notice Ellinor at first. It was only when she felt Ellinor's gaze that she turned to look at **her**.

Their eyes met, and their expressions varied.

The woman holding the child was the first **to** speak. "Oh, it's you, Ellinor! Long time no see! What a coincidence, I just came back to the country and ran into you. It seems like **our** fates are intertwined."

Ellinor looked **at** Sophia, whom she hadn't seen in three years, and then at the child in her **arms**. Without any polite preambles, she asked directly, with a **hint of** suspicion. "**Is** this child **yours?**"

## Chapter 1435

Sophia glanced down at the child in her arms, his face hidden behind a Batman mask, with a warm glow of happiness in her eyes.

"Indeed, this is my son. I'm married now, did you know? This is Tristan, my husband and I's child. Say hello to Ellinor, Tristan."

However, the young boy, whose face was hidden behind the Batman mask, ignored his mother's command to greet Ellinor. His attention was solely on the balloon in the old man's hand.

Ellinor's brows furrowed thoughtfully as she observed Sophia. "You're married now? To whom?"

Sophia responded with a cheerful laugh. "You wouldn't know him. My husband is an average Joe and was raised abroad his whole life. He's never been here before. You've never met him, Ellinor."

"Is that so?" Ellinor squinted her eyes as a thoughtful look appeared on her face.

After noticing Ellinor's expression, Sophia broke into a laugh. "Ellinor, you're not thinking my husband is Theo, are you?"

Upon hearing Theo's name from Sophia's lips, Ellinor's heart tightened slightly, but her gaze was still scrutinizing.

Sophia's face held no guilt of oddity. There was even a hint of self-deprecating humor. "I wish I could have married Theo, but he didn't have feelings for me

Despite my pleas, he insisted on annulling our marriage and returning to you.

It was a blow to me, but I gradually accepted it and moved on.

Luckily, I met my current husband, who loves me dearly. I feel truly blessed.”

Ellinor couldn't find any flaw in Sophia's act, yet a shadow of doubt lingered in her heart. She asked, “What's your husband's last name?”

Sophia didn't shy away from the question. “My husband's last name is Rogers. Ellinor, I know you're suspicious, but you're overthinking it.

I heard that there's still no trace of Theo after all these years. It's quite regrettable.”

“But even if Theo isn't here, you now hold the title of Mrs. Blanchet. Isn't that what you've always wanted?”

Sophia sounded pleasant, but everything she said was laced with sarcasm and irony

Ellinor didn't care about Sophia's sarcasm. During these years, she never stopped suspecting that Sophia had something to do with Theo's disappearance, but she never found any evidence.

Three years ago, she flew to M State to confront Sophia as soon as her twins were out of the incubator.

At that time, Sophia confidently claimed that after the annulment, she had sent Theo to the airport and never seen him again. She didn't know where he went.

And she even allowed them to search her father's estate.

But they found no clue.

The only lead they found in M State was a surveillance video from the airport showing Theo being wheeled into the terminal by Collin. That was the last image of him before he vanished..

In the end, neither of them boarded the plane. They just... disappeared.

“By the way, Ellinor, what brings you here?” Sophia asked with a smile.

Ellinor snapped back to reality *and* answered Sophia's question. “Picking up my children.”

Sophia's gaze flickered to Bartlett standing beside her. She asked with a hint of mischief. “Both of you are picking up the kids? Your kids, or...”

Bartlett was about to respond with a chuckle, but Ellinor beat him to it. “I'm here to pick up my kids. He's just passing by.”

**With** a knowing smile, Sophia said, “So Mr. Rex is just pa\*\*ing by. And here I thought you two were dating.”