

The Kiss 451

Chapter 451

Balfour

helped Patricia up, gracefully stood himself, and grabbed his coat. "Let's take Patri out for lunch and have a chat while we're at it"

"Alright"

Ellinor, listening from behind the bookshelf, unconsciously placed her hand on her two month pregnant belly, her gaze cold and sarcastic

The matter Balfour wanted to discuss with Theo probably involved Theo and Patricia's upcoming engagement.

The two of them already had a child together, their parents definitely couldn't object anymore.

It was likely that the elders of the Blanchet and Howard families had already reconciled and broken the deadlock.

Balfour, with his arm around Patricia's shoulders, walked with Theo toward the office door. Suddenly, he stopped as if remembering something, he said

"Theo, something urgent came up, can you take Patri there first? I had Quinton make a reservation. You guys go ahead and eat. As soon as I'm done here, I'll come find you."

Theo agreed His tone was calm and emotionless.

"We'll head to the restaurant first then! Make sure you catch up with us soon!" Patricia said sweetly.

Balfour smiled indulgently, "Sure!"

Ellinor breathed a sigh of relief upon hearing that Theo and Patricia were about to leave. Thankfully, she hadn't been discovered

But suddenly, she felt a wave of intense nausea. She instinctively covered her mouth and did her best to suppress any noise

Her morning sickness had worsened recently, perhaps due to stress or a lack of rest.

Feeling incredibly sick, Ellinor took a step back with her hand still over her mouth. Finally, the nauseating feeling in her stomach made her cough softly.

*Cough..."

Theo, who was about to leave with Patricia, was caught by the cough. His eyes instantly narrowed.

Theo stopped in his tracks. He turned around with his cold gaze fixed on the bookshelf.

That sound... It sounded like Ellinor.

Patricia also heard it, stopped in her tracks, and looking back, she asked curiously “Balfour, was someone just coughing? Is there someone else in your office?”

Balfour turned his face, glancing at the bookshelf in his office with his expression unchanged, “Sound? Patricia, you must have heard wrong.”

“No, I’m sure I heard something! Sounded like a girl, too! Balfour, are you hiding a woman in here? I want to check!”

After being teased by Balfour, her face was all flushed. If Balfour really was hiding a woman in his office, Patricia also wanted to seize the chance to tease him back,

Seeing Patricia heading for the bookshelf, Balfour’s eyebrows slightly furrowed, but he said nothing.

He didn’t plan on helping Ellinor, he just thought if she was found, things would get a bit complicated.

But he didn’t care

There was nobody else here.

Hearing Patricia’s approaching footsteps, Ellinor felt a sense of unease. She had nowhere to hide anymore. After retching, her face turned somewhat pale, and her breath started to quicken.

Patricia, wearing a mischievous smile, peeked behind the bookshelf. But when she saw Ellinor, her face instantly froze.

For almost a minute, her expression went from frozen to surprised, and finally to anger and disgust.

Why on earth was Ellinor here?!

Patricia was eyeing Ellinor and Ellinor was looking right back at her.

In

Why was Ellinor in Balfour’s office? What was she up

At the same time, the sound of sturdy footsteps was drawing nearer

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Patricia knew it was Theo coming to check on things, but she didn’t want him to see Ellinor again

After a moment of thought, a sly grin crossed Patricia’s face and she loudly said, “Balfour, when did you start keeping a cat in your office? The poor thing just choked on some fish it was eating. Good thing it coughed it

up, or we could’ve had a real situation on our hands! You need to be careful not to feed such a small cat fish!

Balfour got the hint from Patricia’s words and responded,
“Ah, my bad, first time owning a cat. I’ll keep that in mind.”

With Balfour's cooperation, Patricia threw Ellinor a cautionary look, then stepped out from behind the bookshelf, blocking Theo's path. She feigned innocence, saying 'Mr. Blanchet, Balfour just got a kitten. I went over and it hid, I can't see it now!'

Theo glanced at Patricia, then his stern gaze turned to the row of bookshelves, filled with suspicion.

Ellinor felt the threat. She took a deep breath to suppress her nausea

Worried that Theo might come over, she forced a smile and went along with Patricia's story, softly meowing "Meow meow~"

"I'm starving! Balfour, Mr. Blanchet and I are heading to the restaurant. Don't forget to join us when you're done!" Patricia said, tugging at Theo's sleeve, "Mr. Blanchet, let's

go!"

Hearing the meowing. Theo's deep gaze dimmed a bit. He withdrew his gaze and left with Patricia.

Balfour was left alone in the office.

He walked back to his chair and lazily sat down "Come on out, kitten."

Ellinor emerged from behind the bookshelves with her face calm again.

Balfour looked at her sideways, 'Ms. Mendoza, what were you hiding from?'

"Nothing. I just didn't want to see certain people."

Balfour pondered for a moment, then purposely asked. "You didn't want to see Theo? Why?"

Ellinor didn't want to explain, "No reason, I just didn't want to see him. There's no need to pry. Patricia didn't want me to see Mr. Blanchet just now, did she?"

Balfour leaned back in his chair, his posture exuding contempt for his subordinates, yet he had a coldly elegant smirk.

"Ms. Mendoza, as long as you know, Patricia and Theo have been getting along very well recently, as you've surely noticed.

So, I hope you can keep this in mind and stay away from her boyfriend. Stop meddling in other people's relationships."

Ellinor frowned, when did she interfere with anyone's relationship?

The only reason she had to marry Mr. Blanchet was because she was forced to.

Even if she did develop some feelings for Theo afterwards, that was because Theo lied to her.

Theo had told her that Patricia was just his lifesaver, nothing more.

She believed him, so she....

Chapter 453

Ellinor, not in the mood to explain, retorted, "Mr. Howard, seems like you're fine with Patricia marrying into the Blanchet family, that's had beef with yours before?" Balfour's expression screamed helplessness as he answered, "From a family perspective, I obviously wouldn't want them together because I'd be roasted by the elders. But Patricia is head over heels for Theo; she can't go on without him I can only do my best to protect her wishes and ensure her happiness. I won't allow anybody to threaten Patricia's happiness and safety, and I won't be polite about it either Ms. Mendoza, I hope you get that."

Ellinor looked at Balfour, a slight smile tugging at her lips. "Alright, I got it Patricia is lucky to have a brother like you"

Balfour didn't care if Ellinor's praise was genuine or fake, he just hoped she understood to steer clear of Theo and not mess with Patricia and Theo's relationship

His love for Patricia included the feelings he had for missing Pearl Howard, two forms of affection wrapped into one.

Not being able to protect his mother and Pearl fifteen years ago was a lifelong regret.

So he couldn't stomach Patricia suffering any form of harm.

Especially Ellinor, who always seemed to hurt Patricia. He couldn't stand her.

After Ellinor emerged from behind the bookshelf, her position was different than when she came in.

At that moment, she was standing by Balfour's desk, and from that angle, she could see some of the items on his desk.

She didn't intend to peek at his stuff, but with a casual glance, she saw a photo in a frame on his desk.

She was instantly frozen.

The photo in the frame was of a beaming woman holding a toddler girl, with a boy around ten standing beside them, all three laughing heartily at the camera.

The beautiful woman in the photo looked familiar, like...her mother.

The woman's features were strikingly similar to Ellinor's memory of her mother.

In her dreams and memories, the fuzzy shadow of her mother finally became clear.

Ellinor's heart raced and her eyes turned red.

Balfour noticed something was off, he shot Ellinor a warning look, then followed her gaze to the photo frame on his desk. He furrowed his brows and turned his most precious photo around, away from her sight.

"Ms. Mendoza, you may leave now! Quinton, show our guest out!"

"Yes!"

As Quinton entered in response, he gave Ellinor a look, then reported an urgent matter to Balfour, "Mr. Howard, there's a problem with our client in Arabia."

"What's the problem?" Balfour looked up seriously

"The previous translator wasn't up to par, a lot of technical terms weren't accurately translated and the client is very unhappy about this; they've already let the translator go. saying they don't want to see him again."

Balfour knitted his brows. The mineral cooperation with Arabia was very important.

"Then find another professional translator for the client!"

The problem that bothered Quinton was exactly this

Tve already looked through the talent pool of Arabic professionals! No one who could get here quickly meets our standards. And those who do aren't in Greenhaven, they can't get here quickly. Now that things are so messy, the clients are pissed and are pushing to leave immediately."

Balfour's brows were knitted tightly, this was indeed a thorny problem, and a rare trace of anxiety appeared on his usually calm face.

Ellinor raised an eyebrow and said, "If you can't find a suitable translator, I can give it a shot!"

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Hearing this, Balfour and Quinton both turned their gazes to Ellinor, giving her another once over

After a brief silence, Balfour skeptically asked her, "You can speak Arabic?"

"Yes, a bit' Ellinor replied with a smile

Quinton snorted, his opinion of Ellinor dropping even further than it had been during her interview. He thought she was too cocky. "Knowing a foreign language isn't as simple as picking up a few phrases! Ms. Mendoza, Mr. Howard and I are discussing important matters. Please don't interrupt

Ellinor's resume hadn't indicated she knew any foreign languages. Quinton didn't buy that she spoke Arabic, one of the hardest languages in the world if she did, why wouldn't she have it on her resume?

"I may not be fluent, but I can manage

Quinton chuckled dismissively, ignoring her, and turned to their boss, "Mr. Howard, what do you think we should do now?"

Balfour had already lost interest in Ellinor. He was considering other ways to find a professional Arabic translator

Like Quinton, he thought Ellinor was just trying to stir up some drama.

Seeing that they didn't believe her, Ellinor stepped forward and said again, "Mr. Howard, your problem is that if you can't find a suitable translator, you might lose this big deal. Instead of waiting for failure, why not let me try?"

Balfour looked at her coldly, "Ms Mendoza, this isn't child's play!"

Ellinor smiled. "Mr. Howard do I look like I'm joking? Let's make a bet!

If I help you secure this deal, you give me the position of CEO's secretary!

If I fail, I promise to leave and never bother you or Patricia and Theo again. What do you say?"

Honestly, Ellinor didn't like Balfour's disposition. Even though he might be her relative, she didn't appreciate his condescending attitude.

But after seeing her mother's picture on Balfour's desk, Ellinor was more determined to stay with the Howard Group than ever.

Because only by staying at the Howard Group could she possibly uncover the truth.

After hearing Ellinor's words, Balfour looked at her, silent for several seconds, then slowly said, "Alright Quinton, take her and give it a shot."

Quinton was stunned, "Ah? Mr. Howard, this..."

Ellinor didn't seem reliable. Was Mr. Howard risking a big deal?

But Balfour wasn't joking or just speaking off the cuff.

At this point, they couldn't find a suitable translator in short order. What was the worst that could happen? They'd lose a deal!

Ellinor's proposition appealed to him. If things didn't pan out, she promised to stop bothering Patri and Theo, which could help alleviate a significant emotional issue for Patri.

So, why not let her try?

"Quinton, if Ms. Mendoza doesn't satisfy the client in the end, don't bother bringing her back to see me. The Howard Group won't welcome an arrogant person back in!"

Chapter 455

"Alright then!"

Quinton reluctantly accepted the order, turned around, and gave Ellinor a disgruntled look, saying impatiently. "Ms Mendoza, please follow me then."

Ellinor nodded and followed behind Quinton.

The hotel where the Arab clients were staying

Three men dressed in exotic attire were eating in the hotel lobby's restaurant.

They were speaking in a foreign language, and their expressions and tones were very serious, as if they were complaining about something that was making them angry.

Not far from the restaurant, Quinton handed Ellinor the details about the business, "Those three Arab clients are over there, do you need me to walk you over?"

Ellinor waved her hand, "No need, I can go by myself!"

Quinton had no intention of escorting her, he had no idea what kind of outrageous things Ellinor might do, and he couldn't bear the responsibility if anything went wrong.

Quinton was actually ready to give up on this business, and so was Mr. Howard, they just wanted to use this opportunity to deal with the troublesome Ellinor

Ellinor quickly skimmed through the information in her hand, and after getting a rough idea, she confidently walked over without any hesitations and greeted the three men

in exotic attire

Quinton, who didn't understand Arabic, found a seat and watched the clients reactions from afar.

At first, the three Arab men might have been gloomy due to the previous translator's issues, but after Ellinor introduced herself and spoke to them in Arabic, their faces lit up with smiles and they even warmly invited Ellinor to join them for dinner. Ellinor gracefully sat down and began chatting with them

Quinton was a little surprised, he could hardly believe what he was seeing and wondered if his eyes were playing tricks on him.

After watching for a while, Quinton was quite impressed to see Ellinor's composed and professional demeanor while conversing in Arabic

Ellinor was quite something, huh?

Meanwhile, at a famous French restaurant in Greenhaven.

Balfour elegantly entered the restaurant, and the manager immediately greeted him warmly.

"Mr. Howard, you've arrived! Mr. Blanchet and Ms Howard are waiting for you in the VIP section, please follow me."

Balfour nodded slightly and followed the manager.

In the VIP section, Patricia was talking with someone across from her. As soon as she saw Balfour, she stopped and waved at him with a smile, "Balfour, you're here!*

A waiter respectfully pulled a chair out for him. Balfour walked over and naturally sat down next to Patricia

After ordering. Balfour handed the menu back to the waiter, then waved them all away, indicating that they no longer needed service.

Theo, sorry to keep you waiting" Balfour said to Theo, who was leisurely cutting his steak across the table.

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"Nah, the food just arrived. Theo replied

Balfour smiled, and everyone started eating without speaking any further.

Feeling cheerful, Patricia cut a piece of foie gras from her plate and held it up to Theo's mouth with her fork, laughing as she said

"Theo, try

the foie gras here I find it much better than the one we had overseas. It's so tender and just melts in your mouth"

"Thanks, but no need" Theo replied without looking at her, not even raising an eyebrow, as he put a cut piece of steak into his mouth, chewing slowly and deliberately.

He rejected her offer, and Patricia's smile froze on her face, her hand still in mid air.

It would be awkward to just take back the foie gras now, so she carefully used her knife to move the piece of foie gras from her fork to the edge of Theo's plate and added, "Theo, just give it a try. Trust me, it's really really good!"

He only responded with a grunt, did not touch the foie gras, and continued eating his bloody steak.

Balfour, watching Patricia's desperate attempt to win over Theo, frowned slightly.

He felt bad for Patricia, but

what could he do? Patricia, after all, was infatuated with this unresponsive guy in front of her.

Suppressing his discomfort, Balfour tried to lighten the mood and spoke gently to Patricia,

"This foie gras is so tasty? Why don't you let me try it too?"

Patricia's embarrassment eased a bit. She cut another piece of foie gras and put it on Balfour's plate, "Here, you try it too; see if it's as good as I said"

Balfour smiled, picking up his knife and fork, eating the whole piece of foie gras Patricia had shared, nodding, "Mmm, it really is good! Theo, are you sure you don't want to try?"

Though his tone was polite, he was clearly pressuring Theo

She offered him the foie gras out of kindness; why couldn't he taste it?

However, Theo remained unmoved, not even touching the foie gras, not answering and cutting straight to the chase.

"What do you want to talk about? Just spit it out"

Balfour saw that Theo was still not playing along, his eyebrows furrowed in annoyance, but he didn't say anything in front of Patricia.

He didn't respond to Theo's words and instead turned to Patricia. "Patricia, I bought your favorite cake on the way here. I forgot to bring it in. Can you go get it from the car? We can try it together with Theo."

With that, he handed her the car keys.

Patricia was smart enough to understand that Balfour wanted her to leave so he could talk to Theo alone.

Balfour was the person who loved her most in the world and spoiled her even more than her parents did.

He had a serious talk with her previously, understanding that she had decided to spend the rest of her life with Theo, and he had finally agreed not to oppose their relationship.

Now, Balfour

wanted to have a talk with Theo, probably intending to help her secure her engagement to Theo.

With that thought, Patricia took the car keys, "Alright, I'll go get it now! Theo, wait for me to come back and we'll eat the cake together. The cake from that shop is really, really good!"

Theo responded with a grunt, his face expressionless and void of any emotion.

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Patricia stood up to fetch the cake.

Balfour watched Patricia's retreating figure, then turned his gaze to Theo sitting across the table. His eyes hardened.

"Theo, don't you think you're a bit too icy towards Patricia?"

Theo looked up. "Is this your first time meeting me or what?"

Balfour was left speechless.

Fair enough, they knew each other since they were kids and they ran in the same circles.

Theo had always been aloof and never showed any warmth to anyone.

However, thinking about his little Patricia, whom he had always protected, marrying such a man who didn't know how to look after a girl, Balfour couldn't help but sigh. He really couldn't figure out what Patricia saw in this guy.

Deciding not to dwell on Theo's attitude towards Patricia, Balfour changed the subject.

"Theo. I know about the child you and Patricia adopted abroad."

Theo's hand, which was cutting steak, paused slightly.

"And Patricia's been running around from dawn till dusk these days, all to take care of the kid, right?"

Theo's expression didn't change. After swallowing his beef, he spoke, "I'm sorry, we should've asked for the Howard family's consent before doing this."

Balfour glared at him, snorting coldly, "Theo, I didn't call you here to give you a lecture. Since the child's been brought back, the Howard family will treat him as Patricia's own and take good care of him.

But it's about time you and Patricia cleared things up. She can't just keep following you around cluelessly."

At this, Theo looked up at him, raising an eyebrow, "Balfour, you seem to have misunderstood. There's never been anything unclear between Patricia and me"

Balfour frowned, "Nothing unclear? Then what do you call adopting a child together?!"

Theo calmly put down his cutlery, wiped his mouth with a napkin, straightened up, and met Balfour's gaze with a stern look, saying firmly. "To me, Patricia is my lifesaver. I respect her, help her, repay her, and see her as a friend. There's nothing more between us."

"A friend? So, you'd adopt a child with a friend?" Balfour scoffed sarcastically

Theo picked up his water glass and took a sip. "To be honest, I've always found this arrangement a bit of f.

But Patricia kept pleading with me, saying she wanted to experience motherhood and wanted me to accompany her abroad to adopt a child. I thought long and hard before agreeing"

"From the way you're talking, you sound like an observer. Don't you know why Patricia wants to adopt a child at such a young age? Theo, you mustn't forget! Patricia lost her chance of having her own baby and experiencing motherhood, all because of you""

Upon hearing this. Theo's eyebrows furrowed tightly and he fell silent

Chapter 458

"Patri sacrificed her childbearing ability to save your sorry ass from that snakebite, and you know as well as I do what a heartbreak it is for a girl to lose the chance to be a mother. Especially for Patri, whose life long dream was to be a mom! You are the one who made her dream impossible to achieve. And now you're treating her as if she's nothing?"

Theo scowled but kept his mouth shut. Balfour was spilling nothing but the truth

Fifteen years ago, he got bitten by a poisonous snake while hiding in a bush to avoid some danger. He couldn't see, let alone save himself. A little girl passing by sucked the venom out of him and saved his life

Turned out the girl was Patricia, who was vacationing in the countryside with her family. She found him later with the token he left behind. Because of her act of bravery. Patricia suffered damage from the venom and lost her ability to bear children

He couldn't make up for her loss, so he did everything he could to help her over the years.

A month ago, Patricia came crying to him, saying she envied a classmate who was pregnant. She wanted to be a mom too. She said having a child would complete her life. and she wouldn't bother him anymore so as to avoid misunderstandings with Ellinor

Although he knew it wasn't right, he agreed to help Patricia after some thought, due to his guilt.

Patricia suggested adopting a child from K State, a poverty-stricken country where they didn't need marriage certificates or complicated paperwork to adopt a child. She didn't want to tell her family and didn't trust other men, so she asked him to accompany her as her boyfriend and help her adopt a child.

They spent half a month going to K State, completing the adoption process, and coming back. The child fell ill the day they brought her back from K State and was sent straight to the hospital from the airport. Luckily, it wasn't severe

The same day, Ellinor called him for the last time and then disappeared. The thought of the missing Ellinor made the veins in Theo's eyes throb.

Balfour sighed in frustration when Theo remained silent

"Adopting a child can't fully compensate for Patri's loss, Theo. Her only wish in this world is to spend her life with you. Only you can give her a happy life. Despite the past disputes between our families, I'm willing to do whatever it takes to make amends. So, I hope you'll do the same!"

Theo came back to his senses, his gaze unreadable.

"Balfour, have you forgotten? I'm already married. It's illegal to marry again!"

Balfour paused, then burst out laughing.

"Married? You mean to Ellinor? As far as I know, you didn't officially register your marriage. You married her in the first place to convince Putnam Blanchet to cooperate with the transplant surgery"

Chapter 459

Even though the other party had hit the nail on the head, Theo's expression remained unchanged.

"True, we're not legally married, but we've held a wedding ceremony, which is considered a marriage.

I get that you're concerned about

Patricia, and I'll spend the rest of my life making up for what she's lost because of me. But I can't offer her a marriage or the happiness you define. I'm sorry"

At this point. Theo glanced at his wristwatch, 'I've finished eating, and I have a meeting at the company this afternoon, so I need to get going'

He got up and decisively turned to leave.

Balfour, watching Theo's indifferent reaction, was at his wit's end and couldn't hold his anger any longer, 'Theo! Do you even have a conscience?'"

Just then, Patricia came back with a piece of

cake. She saw Theo about to leave and Balfour fuming. She was clueless about what had happened and asked blankly

"What's going on? Theo, where are you going? I've just brought back a piece of cake. Let's share it!"

"No need. I have other things to attend to."

Theo passed Patricia without any expression and walked out of the door

Theo

Patricia called out to him reluctantly, but he didn't turn back or stop.

In the end, she could only watch his retreating figure leave the restaurant despondently. Then she turned around and glared at Balfour a bit resentfully

“What on earth did you say to Theo? Why is he leaving?”

Balfour suppressed his anger towards Theo and for Patricia’s sake, quickly regained his composure and said gently, “Nothing much Theo has an urgent matter at his company so he had to leave early Patricia, come sit down and share this cake with me!”

How could he tell Patricia that the man she deeply loved was not willing to marry her.

Watching her loved one leave, Patricia sat down with a look of loss on her face, not even finding her favorite cake appetizing.

Suddenly, she remembered something turned to Balfour, and asked softly. “By the way! Why was Ellinor in your office? She was hiding behind your bookshelf. Looking like she was up to no good! She seemed keen on not being discovered, even pretending to be a cat!”

Regarding Ellinor, Balfour had no intention of hiding it from Patricia. He replied while eating, “She came to the company today to apply for the position of my secretary”

Patricia was taken aback, her eyes wide with surprise, “What? Ellinor applied to be your secretary? Did you hire her?”

Just as Balfour was about to answer Patricia’s question, his phone rang

It was Quinton calling

Looking at the caller ID, Balfour squinted his eyes, anticipating that the client had completely rejected cooperation and was preparing to fly back home.

The loss of such a big partnership, although not enough to plunge the company into trouble, was still a bit of a bummer.

Balfour frowned, picked up the phone, and before he could even say ‘hello’, Quinton’s anxious voice came through

“Mr. Howard, we’ve made it! Ellinor has reached an agreement with the client. They will come to the company tomorrow morning to sign a contract for a ten-year mineral cooperation!”

Chapter 460

Arabia’s mineral resources have become a hot potato that a lot of companies, both local and foreign companies are scrambling to get their hands on. Many of the big state-owned enterprises are chomping at the bit for this collaboration. So, folks here have always been a tough nut to crack because they’re so bloody arrogant.

The Howard Group originally planned a five-year collaboration with Arabia, but the Crown Prince of Arabia wasn’t having any of it. He only agreed to a three-year contract, with a renegotiation of terms after that.

Even this three-year contract was like pulling teeth to negotiate.

And Ellinor knocked out a ten-year collaboration in just one hour?

Balfour paused with surprise flickering in his eyes, "Does she really speak Arabic?"

Quinton responded with confidence, "Yep, she's pretty fluent and seems to have a wicked sense of humor. She had the boss laughing his head off. Ms. Mendoza wants to know when she can start. How about tomorrow?"

Balfour mulled it over, "She can come to the office tomorrow morning. If we actually get this ten-year contract with Arabia signed, she can officially start."

"Sounds good."

Quinton, who initially had his doubts about Ellinor, seemed to have no qualms about her joining the team now.

Balfour, usually cool as a cucumber, still looked a bit taken aback.

Seeing this, Patricia felt a twinge of unease and asked, "Balfour, who did you just say is starting? You're not... really hiring Ellinor as your secretary, are you?"

Balfour snapped back to reality and nodded, "The girl seems to have some chops. If she really is a talent, then we should keep her."

Since Ellinor had already secured the deal with Arabia, she'd need to be the one to follow up once the contract was signed. That way, the folks from Arabia would be at

ease.

Patricia's eyes flickered with wariness at the thought of Ellinor being hired, but she hid it behind a friendly smile, "Balfour, Ellinor is indeed a smart cookie. Having her as your secretary should take a load off. But...

I know I shouldn't stick my nose in the company's business, but I still want to put in my two cents."

Ellinor is nice, but she's a bit of a hard-ass. In terms of personality, she might not be cut out for a role that requires high levels of obedience. Think it over."

Balfour affectionately patted Patricia's head, "Yeah, I've got it under control. Thanks for worrying about me."

He knew what Patricia was really worried about.

Ellinor's arrival was a threat to Patricia, who had been feeling insecure about her relationship with Theo.

For Balfour, hiring Ellinor was purely a business decision based on her abilities.

Keeping Ellinor close also allowed him to keep an eye on her to ensure she didn't go after Theo again.

Seeing that Balfour hadn't changed his mind, Patricia forced a smile, "Alright then..."

Balfour sat upright and took a sip of water, "Patri, how's that kid doing?"

Patricia was taken aback and a bit guilty. "Which kid?"

Balfour shot her a stern look, "The one you and Theo adopted from overseas! When were you planning to tell me?"

Knowing she couldn't hide it any longer, Patricia put on a pitiful face, "You already know?"

Balfour grunted, "You've been running around like a headless chicken this past month; I had no idea what you were up to. I couldn't sit idly by, so I had Quinton track your movements."

Afraid of Balfour's reproach, Patricia began explaining tearfully, "You know, my biggest dream since I was little was to marry the man I love, have lots of kids with him, and live happily ever after"