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Bring Your A Game, Mr Chapter 187

Chapter 187 A Secret Skill

Meanwhile, Jack had rushed over to Mikayla's house and caught her words in time. He stopped in his tracks when he came up to her, and there was an unreadable look in his eyes. When their gazes met, it was clear to see that she was utterly confused, and he could not see a trace of recognition registering on her face.

"Oh, you're here," Elise said, drawing him from his thoughts. He turned to regard her with a look of askance.

However, Elise was at a loss for an explanation, too. After hearing Elise sigh in frustration, Jack walked up to Mikayla and asked plaintively, "Don't you remember me?"

Mikayla's eyes searched his face, and with a shake of her head, she inquired, "Who are you?"

Jack felt as if all the air had been sucked out of his lungs. He found himself answering without much thought. "A friend."

Comprehension dawned on Mikayla. Then, her gaze flickered over to Elise as she pointed out, "I don't know why, but you're so familiar to me."

"That's because we're best friends. We always will be," Elise said firmly, clasping Mikayla's hand in hers.

Mikayla broke into a wide smile. "Really? That's so good to hear. I thought I had no friends at all, but as it turns out, I have both of you!"

"Mikayla..." Jack pressed his lips into a grim line, and when he tried to say something again, he paused. After a while, he added, "Get some rest. We'll drop by to see you another day."

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A little displeased by this, Mikayla asked in a somewhat withdrawn voice, "Are you really going to visit me again?"

Elise hummed in affirmation. "We will, and we'll definitely help you recover your memory."

Mikayla beamed and agreed to let them leave for now. "Okay. I'll see you guys soon, then."

Elise and Jack looked grim after they had left Mikayla's family home. Alexander, on the other hand, fell in step next to Elise, and he reached out to squeeze her hand as though giving her strength.

"Any of you got an idea on how we're supposed to help her regain her memory?" Jack asked, looking uncertain.

Elise pursed her lips and said, "I've read about amnesia on the internet once. Apparently, the condition affects each patient differently; where some regain their memory in a couple of days, others could take months or years. Some never recover their memory at all."

Jack lowered his gaze in despair. "I should have been with her in Switzerland. If I had, then maybe none of this would have happened."

"All the what if's aside, we can't change what has already happened," Elise consoled. "Right now, all we can do is figure out a way to help Mikayla regain her memory."

"I know what we can do," Jack said seriously.

An idea popped into Elise's mind as well. After she and Jack had gone their separate ways, she gave Jamie a call while heading home. "Jamie, you know that expert you mentioned who deals with amnesiac cases? Do you think you could get him to come to Athesea?"

On the other line, Jamie was still groggy with sleep as he tossed in the warmth of his covers. "Hey, Boss, correct me if I'm wrong, but it's New Year's Day today, isn't it? Why are you looking for a doctor all of a sudden?"

"A friend of mine has amnesia, and I'm trying to help her recover her memory," Elise explained.

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Jamie bolted upright in bed, suddenly wide awake. "Your wish is my command, Boss. Don't you worry. I'll call up the doctor and arrange for him to come to Cittadel as soon as possible."

"Thank you, Jamie." Elise hung up the call and stared out the window, still unsettled by how shocking her reunion with Mikayla had turned out to be. You have to recover your memory soon, Mikayla, she found herself praying.

Back at the Griffith Residence, Elise and Alexander had only just stepped past the threshold and given their coats to the servants when Laura's voice rang out. "Ellie, have you and Alex returned at last?"

Hastily recomposing herself, Elise forced out a sweet smile and greeted, "Happy New Year, Grandma!"

Laura came around the corner and grinned at the younger girl. "You little brat," she said affectionately. "Where did the both of you run off to early in the morning? Did something happen?"

Elise closed the distance between them and looped her arm through Laura's. "Whatever it was, it's already been settled. What did you and Grandpa get up to?"

"What else? A bunch of friends came over to visit us for the new year, but that was all. By the way, your aunt called earlier and said that she'd be arriving in Athesea later. She wants you to pick her up from the airport."

Surprised, Elise exclaimed, "I didn't know Aunt Cynthia was coming back!"

"Well, she heard about your engagement to Alex and decided to rush back home."

Without hesitation, Elise said, "When will her flight get here? I'll pick her up from the airport."

Laura had asked one of the maids to take note of the flight arrival time earlier, and now she handed the note to Elise. Glancing at the time scribbled on the paper, Elise noted how there were three hours before Cynthia's flight landed. That being said, she was beside herself with excitement and hurtled up the stairs to change out of her clothes, determined to leave for the airport right away.

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She would have barreled out the door if Alexander had not pulled her to a stop. "Hey, calm down. I'm going with you."

She turned to grin at him, and when their eyes met, she quipped, "Thanks!"

He merely reached out to rub her head. "You don't have to thank me."

They left the house, and Alexander drove to the airport. Cynthia's flight arrived just on time, and having waited with barely-concealed anticipation by the arrival terminal, Elise and Alexander soon caught a glimpse of the familiar figure sauntering toward them.

Elise's arm shot upward, and she waved frenetically, shouting, "Aunt Cynthia!"

Cynthia spotted her immediately and brisk-walked over, musing pensively, "Here I was thinking my disguise was foolproof until you saw right through it, munchkin."

Elise coquettishly linked arms with Cynthia. "That just means I know you too well, Aunt Cynthia."

"You should have told me you were engaged, you infernal girl. You didn't even tell me you were in Switzerland the last time. I had to hear it from your grandmother, and she wasn't planning on letting it slip, either. What, are you conspiring to marry yourself off in secret or something?" Cynthia accused, glowering at her niece with mock exasperation.

"Alexander and I were hoping to keep things simple, and we were going to tell you after the new year celebration," Elise explained.

Just then, Cynthia registered Alexander's presence, and upon a faint recollection of him, she said jokingly, "Ellie's been this way since she was a child. I certainly hope you're ready to put up with her for the rest of your life."

Alexander was solemn as he answered, "I am, Aunt Cynthia."

The three of them exited the airport and piled into the car, where Cynthia proceeded to strip off her disguise and reveal her pretty face. "Have you decided on a dress for the engagement party, Ellie? And what about the diamond ring?"

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Stumped, Elise shot a brief, awkward look at Alexander, then said quietly, "Aunt Cynthia, we haven't exactly gotten around to those just yet."

Cynthia was taken aback by this. "But the big day is arriving soon! Why didn't you get around to these errands? Carelessness has no place in wedding planning, you know!"

Alexander made a timely interjection. "Aunt Cynthia, my brother Brendan is designing the dress personally, and as for the ring, our company has launched a collection this year which spotlights a one-of-a-kind pink diamond. I think it'd be perfect for Elise."

"Oh," Cynthia mumbled. Then, after a moment of thought, she added, "Why didn't you let Elise design the dress? She was always rambling on about how she'd want to design her own wedding dress."

Upon hearing this, Alexander frowned and asked Elise in bewilderment, "Do you actually know how to design wedding dresses?"

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Chapter 188 A Non-Expert

Now that Elise was exposed, she could only mumble reluctantly, "I dabbled in it."

At that point, Cynthia realized that she had had a foot-in-mouth moment. Does this mean Alexander has no idea of Elise's alter ego? Swallowing, she shot Elise a fleeting, apologetic look and quickly interjected with what she hoped was a dismissive tone, "That was just a thought. I mean, if I have to be brutally honest, Ellie's not good enough to come up with a brilliant design, so maybe it's for the best that you let a professional handle it."

However, even as Cynthia said this, Alexander still held onto the previous statement on Elise's so-called 'dabbling' in wedding dress designing.

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When they pulled up at the Griffith Residence, Cynthia was so excited that she practically bolted out of the car and hurtled into Laura's arms. "Mommy, I've missed you so much!"

The Griffith Residence was filled with raucous laughter and even better cheer now that Cynthia was home; Laura and Robin, in particular, seemed to have wide grins permanently fixed on their wizened faces.

The days went by without anyone really noticing them, and in the blink of an eye, everyone was into the sixth day of the new year. That morning, Alexander texted Elise. 'Come downstairs when you're done washing up. I'll be waiting for you by the cul-de-sac.'

Elise blearily searched for her phone when she heard it chime with a new message. Upon reading Alexander's text, she felt all the sleep drain out of her, and she clambered out of bed toward the window. She pulled aside the curtain and immediately caught sight of Alexander standing by the yard. What is he up to so early in the morning?

Without wasting another second, she washed up and put on a fresh change of clothes, then went downstairs and into the front yard. "What's going on?"

Alexander's gaze lingered on her briefly before he reached to open the car door for her. "Get in. There's someplace I need to show you."

She stared at him warily, trying to figure out why he was being so mysterious. Nonetheless, she slid into the passenger seat, following which Alexander started the car and drove away from the curb.

A few moments later, the car rolled to a stop outside Brendan's atelier. As it turned out, the festive spirit of the new year's arrival did not dampen his workaholic tendencies, given how the atelier seemed to be bustling like it usually did. "Welcome. Do you have an appointment?" the receptionist at the front desk asked courteously.

Alexander hummed in response. "I'm here to see Brendan. He's supposedly here."

When the receptionist heard that they were looking for Brendan, she replied hurriedly, "Please wait here for a moment while I call Mr. Griffith."

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She had only just said this when Brendan walked out from the main atrium of the atelier. “Alexander,” he greeted perfunctorily. His eyes slid over to where Elise stood mutely next to his brother, and while it was a little odd for him to think of her as his sister-in-law, he said nevertheless, “Hello, Elise. Come on in.”

Elise stiffened at the slight awkwardness that came with Brendan addressing her, but Alexander did not miss a beat as he took her by the hand and guided her into the atelier. This was the first time she saw Brendan’s atelier in all its glory; the space was filled with rolls of fabric and various contraptions, and rows of mannequins donning multiple designs.

Brendan led them into his office and swiftly produced a design sketch for Elise’s perusal. “Take a look at these, Elise. These are all the initial designs I came up with for your wedding dress, and there’s even a ready-to-wear piece based on one of them. Just a quick glance will do and let me know if you want to make some tweaks for whichever piece you choose. Tell me in advance, though, so I can make the adjustments in time.”

He sounded pleasant and courteous enough, but he didn’t actually expect Elise to come up with any suggestion for changes to the design. After all, as far as he was concerned, she was a non-expert and couldn’t possibly weigh in on his work.

“Hold up—all that mystery and suspense just so you can bring me here to take a look at my wedding dress designs?” Elise asked Alexander incredulously.

Alexander eyed her steadily and said, “Your aunt did say that you have an affinity for stuff like this, so I figured it would be meaningful if you could have some input on the wedding dress design.”

For some reason, a surge of warmth coursed through her when she heard this, and she beamed at him as she quipped, “Thank you!”

She pored over the design sketches eagerly. She had to admit that Brendan had a flair for designing. Where some of his designs were clearly imbued with elegance, others were a little quirky; there were no two designs that were the same, and Elise could see all the thought he had put behind them, not to mention his prowess.

At last, her gaze fell upon one of the sketches and stayed there. “This one is pretty nice.”

Brendan smiled. “You have good taste, Elise. This wedding dress is practically tailor made for you; I thought about how you carry yourself and came up with the design, so it suits you

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best. The ready-to-wear piece I mentioned earlier happens to be based on this. I could show you if you'd like."

A little stunned by how he had so accurately guessed her preferences, Elise nodded and said, "Okay, let's take a look."

With that, Brendan brought them to the atrium next door. A mannequin had been positioned in the center of the room, and a white tarp had been draped over it. Brendan stepped up and proceeded to pull the tarp off, ceremoniously revealing the intricate and elegant dress beneath.

Elise stared at the design sketch that had come to life before her, so moved by the flawless silhouette and the opulent material of the wonderfully made dress that she found herself at a complete loss for words.

"Do you want to try it on, Elise?"

She nodded numbly, and Brendan had one of his assistants bring her over to the fitting rooms.

At that moment, Brendan and Alexander were the only two left in the room. With a rueful sigh, the former commented, "Elise's figure is gorgeous enough that she'd carry the dress well, but..." He trailed off, then added with a hesitant dry cough, "I think the make-up artist would need to put in a bit of arm grease to, uh, make her look pretty."

Alexander's expression turned grim at this, and Brendan instantly knew that he had said something he shouldn't have when he felt the air around them grow cold. "Don't get angry, Alexander. For the record, I'm not trying to badmouth Elise in any way; I just think that women and vanity go hand-in-hand, and I'd hate to think that Elise would regret not looking pretty on her big day."

The hostility went out of Alexander when he heard this, but he sounded stern as he said through gritted teeth, "Don't ever mention something like this again. I will not have you badmouthing my wife to my face, capiche?"

The love Alexander had for Elise, which belied his aggressive tone, made Brendan nod hastily. "Got it! Rest assured that I'll watch what I say from now on."

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He had never thought that Alexander would be so defensive of Elise. He's not being serious, is he?

Meanwhile, in the fitting room, Elise had slipped into the luxurious dress and found that it really was made for her. The dress was perfect save for its weight, which felt like a tonne as it hung on her frame. It was almost as if she was wearing gravity itself, and breathing suddenly became laborious work.

She took in a deep breath and exited the fitting room, announcing, "Alexander, I'm done."

When she came to a stop in front of Alexander, his eyes flashed with an approving gleam. The dress accentuated her figure, bringing out her curves and flattering her silhouette. She looked like a dream.

Brendan was equally stunned as well. Despite his earlier remarks, he hadn't thought that Elise would look this good in the dress.

"What, is there a problem?" Elise asked doubtfully when neither man said a word.

Immediately, they snapped out of their thoughts, and Alexander was the first to break the silence. "No, you look beautiful. The dress becomes you."

Next to him, Brendan piped up in agreement, "You look gorgeous in the dress, Elise! You'll definitely wow the crowd at the engagement party if you show up in it."

Elise, however, was still skeptical as she pressed, "Really? Do you guys really think so?"

The men nodded in unison, and she smiled brightly at their affirmation. She rather liked the dress and how splendid it was, but if she had to nitpick, the weight of it was pressing down on her ribcage and cutting off her circulation. More to the point, she had only put the dress on minutes ago, but a light sheen of sweat was already breaking out over the small of her back.

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