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# Coolest Girl in Town Chapter 188 - 189

## Chapter 188, Coolest Girl in Town

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. 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

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

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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." 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

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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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“I think that the fabric of the dress could be better since it’s weighing me down and extremely tight as well. I believe there may be ways to make it a lot more comfortable.” As soon as these words tumbled out of Elise’s mouth, Brendan’s smile faded. He was a fashion designer, after all, and as far as an artist’s ego was concerned, he couldn’t stand having others criticize his work, especially one which he held with esteem. However, given that the present critic was Elise herself, he suppressed his injured pride and asked with forced patience, “In that case, what fabric do you suggest we incorporate?”

Although Brendan sounded casual enough, there was a trace of disdain in his tone that seemingly implied that she had no right to comment on the making of the dress, given that she was not an expert. Elise, on the other hand, did not bridle at the hostility underlying his question, and instead replied mildly, “I personally think that a fiber-based tulle would be a better choice and there should be some adjustments to the skirt to make it weigh less. It might help with the aesthetics, too.” At that moment, he was sure that the girl was besmirching his design.

While keeping his resentment at bay, he bit out, “Well then, since you’ve said so, I guess I’ll just try to tweak the dress.” With that, he gestured for his assistant to help her out of the dress. Upon sensing his disgruntlement, Elise quickly explained, “Don’t get me wrong; I love your design and how beautiful it is. Whatever I said earlier was merely a suggestion.” Brendan hummed curtly in response. “That’s fine. If you think the dress needs some tweaking, then I’ll just go along with it.” Not wanting to further prod the bruise on his artist’s esteem, she conceded and changed out of the dress, which was later taken away by his assistant.

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Meanwhile, after having observed the slightly tense exchange, Alexander knew instantly that Brendan was very much offended by Elise's remarks. Fashion design was not his forte, but he understood Brendan's temperament and he was only too familiar with Brendan's intolerance toward any criticism about his work. "Brendan, I don't think it's a bad idea to make a few slight adjustments, but if you don't want to go along with it, why don't you let Elise take charge instead?"

Alexander placated while delicately selecting his words. Upon hearing that, Brendan's expression softened. He thought Elise was presumptuous to have nitpicked on his design when she wasn't even a fellow designer, but Alexander's words made sense. As such, he decided to allow her to tweak the dress as she saw fit. *Let's see if you can do what I do, Elise.* Brendan wanted her to know that fashion designing was no walk in the park. A hint of contempt sneaked into his voice as he drawled, "You know what?"

I think you're right, Alexander. Elise, if you have better ideas for the dress, then you're welcome to make all the adjustments as you please. There's no harm in trying, right?" When she heard it, Elise paused in thought and finally agreed, "Alright then, I'll give it a shot." Her response was beyond what Brendan had expected of her. He thought that she might become flustered and turn down his offer, but exasperation seized him when he saw how confident she looked.

*How could a girl be so insubordinate and cocky at the same time? Let's just see how she fares at the end!* With a strained composure, he added, "Then, I'll leave the dress to you, Elise. You can come to me if you need any help, or would you prefer I dispatch two assistants to lend you a helping hand?" A mild 'hmm' escaped her before she replied, "I think one assistant should suffice. I'll drop by tomorrow and start on the tweaking if that's alright with you." There was no hesitation in her words and her gaze was steady as she waited for him to say something, but he did not.

When she and Alexander made their way out of Brendan's office, they piled into the car. Alexander peered at her in the rearview mirror and pointed out, "You can do whatever you like with the dress and it won't matter if you mess up. I'll be there for you." It was the first time she had heard anyone making such promises to her. The five syllables strung together into a simple assurance, but it made her tingle with warmth nonetheless. *I'll be there for you.* As the words reverberated in her headspace, she smiled and responded, "You could have a little more faith in me, you know."

After all, I'd never do anything without first having the confidence that I could pull it off." There was something magnetic about her when she behaved this way and it tugged at

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Alexander's heartstrings. It was as if he had discovered the true reason behind his attraction for her; he could see the same stubbornness in her that he used to have back in the day. To that extent, they thrived in the same league. The next day, Elise showed up at the atelier alone. Unlike yesterday, everyone at the atelier was too preoccupied with their own work to notice her presence.

She paid no mind to this and found her way to Brendan's office, thereafter knocking cursorily on his door. "Come in." After having heard his disembodied voice, she pushed open the door. "What is it?" Brendan asked impassively as he looked up and when he saw her, he stiffened. "Oh, you're here." She nodded before asking, "I can get started on the dress right away. Where is it?" He gaped at her in surprise; he hadn't expected her to actually turn up, believing that she was nothing but a big talker at that time. Then again, he'd like to see how she was going to ruin the dress now that she was here.

"Come with me," he said as he rose from his seat. He led her down the hallway and when they came to a stop at the end, he declared, "You can work on the dress here. All the tools are in there and I'll have my assistant, Molly, lend you a hand." Elise thanked him and went through the door. She was immediately greeted by the sight of the dress, which hung on the mannequin's frame. As she walked toward it, she appraised the dress from all angles and began to sketch something on a piece of paper. Meanwhile, Brendan was cooped up in his office when Molly entered.

"You wanted to see me, Mr. Griffith?" He gave a flippant wave of his hand and replied, "I need you to head over to Design Studio No.1 to assist with some adjustments. You can get whatever is needed from storage." She nodded. "Got it, Mr. Griffith." However, just as she was about to leave, he stopped her in her tracks. "Hold on. Make sure you watch every single tweak that girl makes to the dress, and let me know as soon as you spot a problem." "Yes. Mr. Griffith," she replied. "I'll get going now." In truth, Molly was a little taken aback by how eager Brendan seemed and she wondered what the big deal was.

When she arrived at Design Studio No.1 and caught sight of an average woman pawing around the dress that he had painstakingly made, Molly cried out, "Hey! What are you doing? You're probably new around here, but I should warn you not to touch anything that Mr. Griffith has personally designed—like that dress!" Elise frowned at the intrusion, but a sudden thought flashed in her mind as she asked, "Are you the assistant Brendan mentioned?" Astonishment colored Molly's face. *Did she just call Mr. Griffith by his first name? Who is she to have such audacity?*

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Instantly, she understood that regardless of who the girl might be, the girl was not one to be trifled with. While Molly nodded, she answered hastily, "Yes, Mr. Griffith sent me over to assist you." "Oh," Elise responded. "Could you pass me the scissors, please?" In a show of obedience, Molly turned to grab the scissors before she handed it over to Elise without further delay.

"Here you go." After she took the sharp tool, Elise swept her gaze over the dress and there was not even a flicker of doubt that crossed her expression as she snipped away the inseam of the dress. Molly's eyes nearly popped out of their sockets as she gasped and stammered, "W-What in the world are you doing?"

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