

Coolest Girl in Town Chapter 496

Chapter 496 Who's That?

Tina laughed upon hearing that. "Your self-introduction was quite special."

"Yeah? I thought so too." Elise giggled.

"You helped me, so let's exchange numbers. I'll treat you to a meal some time after this."
Tina took out her phone with the intention to get Elise's number.

"There's no need. Let's talk about it in person tomorrow."

As Elise had things in both her hands, she was unable to take out her phone, so she rejected Tina's offer. Then, the former turned around and strode off in the direction where she had come from.

When she returned to her room, she turned on the computer to contact Joseph while she ate.

Joseph, whose body was still weak, was not in any condition to take a plane, so he didn't come along. Instead, he remained in Athesea to monitor the internal communication of the SK Group.

However, that wasn't the reason why Elise looked for him at that moment. In fact, it was due to the poster of the stall owner.

When she was at the food street earlier, she took note of all the details on the poster. The stall owner's son was a physics graduate student from a research institute in Dukethorn, who had gained the lecturers' special attention due to his outstanding academic performance. He had mysteriously gone missing six months ago and nobody knew whether he was currently dead or alive.

Researchers usually had dull and boring lifestyles and they rarely made enemies. Therefore, it was apparent that this person's disappearance was more or less related to the suicide case of the physicist from Athesea.

Joseph soon went online, but he used the new identity that Elise had given him and a separate communication channel.

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'Did everything go well with your trip to Dukethorn?' he texted, to which she replied, 'Everything's good. I need you to analyze a set of data right away. Please tabulate the total number of physicists that we have in our country in the past two years.'

Joseph then typed, 'Ten minutes.'

The national database was relatively vast, so it would take time to analyze the data.

Fifteen minutes later, Joseph sent her a report together with his summary. 'Two years ago, the total number of top physicists registered in the database was 1760. It was 1680 last year, and this year, there are only 1440 physicists. Other than 20 of them who passed away due to old age, the rest of them either disappeared or died. Besides, most of the missing university students studied physics.'

Elise's gaze was fixated on the statistical report on the screen while her expression sank.

She was practically certain that someone was targeting Cittadel or to be precise, they were trying to achieve the goal of suppressing the technological advancement of Cittadel by eradicating their researchers.

A country's technological advancement was usually determined by their top physicists. However, there were people who schemed to slowly annihilate Cittadel's researchers in order to bring the country's science and technological advancement to a standstill. Who in the world has such a huge ambition and capability? Also, what does this have to do with me and how does this relate to the SK Group?

There were too many unresolved mysteries but fortunately for her, Elise wasn't completely clueless on what to do next.

After some contemplation, she replied, 'I understand. Memorize the data, then destroy them. Make sure that no one finds out that we investigated this. Also, figure out a way to summon

Xavier back to your side. He doesn't trust me, so I have to leave him to you. I'm afraid that he may get into trouble if he's allowed to run freely out there.'

Joseph texted, 'Alright, I will do so right away.'

After reading the last message, Elise exited the chat and destroyed all the data that she had received before switching off the computer.

Perhaps it was because she had slept for a long time during the day, she wasn't sleepy at all when she lay on the bed. Instead, she was wide awake.

Staring at the ceiling, she pondered whether she had ever shown her face in the field that consisted of the top physicists. In the end, her answer to it was no.

Although she had secretly joined international physics competitions out of her anger toward Reuben, that happened after she had been targeted, which proved that that wasn't the reason she was targeted in the first place.

She again recalled how the fake 'Joseph' had provoked her. Just you wait, I'll definitely find you.

Ding! A sudden doorbell interrupted her train of thought.

She glanced at the clock on the wall, only to see that it was already 3.00 AM. Who would come at this hour?

In the end, Elise warily clambered out of the bed and tip-toed to the foyer. She then opened the peephole to secretly look outside.

There was nobody outside, so she retracted her gaze. Could it be that I'm hearing things? Maybe I'm indeed too anxious, she thought to herself.

However, just after she took two steps back to return to her room, the knocking sound on the door became hasty.

What the heck? Who is this prankster who's pulling such a trick?

She returned to the door in frustration. When she looked into the peephole again, it was still empty outside—there wasn't a single soul out there.

With her brows knitted, she thought, Could it be that it's a kid? Possibly, since a kid wouldn't be visible through the peephole with their height.

Just then, a loud knock was heard from the lower part of the door.

It's a kid. She was certain. Alright kiddo, let me teach you a lesson for scaring others in the middle of the night when you are supposed to be in bed!

Elise took a deep breath and put on a fierce expression. Then, she pressed on the door handle hard and abruptly pulled the door open.

However, before she managed to begin her fierce lecture, a body fell onto the floor along with the momentum of the door opening. The person's head happened to land by her feet.

She instantly recognized Kenneth, who seemed to be unconscious at the moment.

He had cold sweat on his forehead and blood stains all over him as crimson blood gushed out from his abdomen, which was possibly the reason he was currently unconscious.

His familiar side profile gave her mixed feelings but in the end, she gave in to her conscience. So, she dragged the man into her room and plopped him on the couch to bandage his wound.

"You are lucky that the medical kit in the hotel room is still usable."

After Elise found a medical kit, she undid his buttons to assess his injury.

The wound was much deeper than she had imagined and it would require some stitches. However, the tools and medicines she had in the medical kit only allowed for a simple treatment.

The fact that Kenneth had not gone to the hospital showed that he didn't want anyone to know that he was hurt, so she naturally couldn't take him out.

All she could do at the moment was to disinfect the wound to prevent inflammation before going out to purchase some tools for suturing.

After confirming on the treatment method, Elise used a tweezer to hold a disinfected cotton ball before rubbing it on his wound.

The sharp pain instantly woke Kenneth up. He subconsciously grabbed Elise's wrist that was holding the tweezers as his eyes snapped open.

Elise peered at him impassively, silently warning him with her gaze the danger that would happen if he were to continue to grab her hand.

With a heavy head, Kenneth looked at Elise and weakly murmured, "Ellie?"

A menacing intent flashed across her stunning eyes as she narrowed them. "Are you aware that your injury will eventually kill you if I just leave you be? I don't even need to lift a finger."

Kenneth's glazed eyes cleared as he mused, Right, I'm now Kenneth, not Alexander.

He let out a bitter smile and retracted his hand. "If that's the case, I hope to die in your hands."

She rolled her eyes at him and intentionally pressed the cotton ball harder against his wound.

Kenneth inhaled sharply in pain, but Elise curled up the corner of her lips, grinning at him for her successful mischievous act.

He took notice of her slight expression, which made him exhale in resignation. Who knew my Ellie could be so cruel? However, the very next second, he felt happy inside. She always gives me special treatment.

When he was Alexander, she would be gentle and patient; when he was Kenneth, she would be hot-tempered and grumpy.

He had seen different sides of her. Hence, although the pain that he was enduring was so excruciating that he had broken out in cold sweat, he felt a strong sense of satisfaction well up inside him.

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Chapter 497 Let Me Sleep on the Floor

Elise treated his injury in a rough manner. When she was dressing his wound, she looked up and saw him smiling, which in turn made her grit her teeth menacingly.

Maybe I shouldn't have saved this irritating man. He nearly died, yet he's able to laugh. I wonder what could make him put away his frivolous attitude.

After putting on the last piece of plaster, Elise tossed the remaining ones into the medical kit, then rose up and clapped her hands. "I'm done bandaging your wound. You may now get lost and return to your own room."

Kenneth sat up on the couch, slowly buttoning his shirt as he replied roguishly, "I can leave, but if I do and my wound becomes inflamed and I die out there, I'll still come back to knock on your door. If you wish to experience again how it feels like to be woken up from your sleep, I don't mind leaving."

She turned to face him, her gaze freezing. "Kenneth Bailey, have you ever heard of the phrase called 'biting the hand that feeds you'?"

"What if I have? Or what if I haven't?" He looked up at her with a weak smile. Under the lights, he seemed feeble but he was still good-looking.

"What you are doing now is exactly like that phrase. I've saved you, but you are not going to let me have a good night's sleep," Elise growled in a cold tone with her arms folded across her chest.

"I swear that I want to stay simply because I want you to be able to sleep peacefully. If I were to leave now and those who were chasing after me find me, I doubt that the problem you would be facing would be as simple as not having a good night's sleep." In all honesty, his explanation sounded logical.

Elise's gaze flicked from his face then to the door, and she decided that he had a point. "You can stay, but you'd better be good and stay in the living room. Otherwise, I'll throw you out of the room regardless of whether there are killers out there."

Kenneth shrugged, not taking her words seriously.

Elise then darted a look in his direction and saw a blanket on the couch, so she returned to her room at ease.

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After she had switched off the light and was about to get on her bed, she saw Kenneth's figure standing by the door of her room.

"What are you trying to pull off now?" she growled impatiently through gritted teeth.

As he lifted his foot and marched toward the bed located near the floor-to-ceiling window, he responded, "The couch is too small and I'll hurt my wound further if I sleep with my legs curled up. Since you have offered to help, don't leave things unfinished. Let me sleep on the floor in the room."

With that, he supported himself by holding onto the edge of the bed and sat on the carpet without waiting for Elise to reply.

"Do you have a death wish?!" Elise warned him fiercely.

As soon as she said, he raised a hand and showed her the blood on it while uttering with an innocent expression, "Look at this—blood is seeping through the wound. Could you bear to see me suffering on the couch?"

Elise wanted to say that she wouldn't mind, but the words seemed to be stuck in her throat.

In the end, she caved in and awkwardly muttered, "This is the last time I'm going to make a concession. You'd better not have any funny plans. I'm a light sleeper, so I'll immediately wake up no matter what you do and I'll kill you."

Kenneth simply nodded. "Miss Sinclair, I'll remember everything that you said. I dare not forget them."

Elise rolled her eyes at him and was not bothered to fight him on this. Her back facing him, she pulled the duvet over herself and shut her eyes.

As she had her guard up against him, she was paying attention to the sounds behind her.

Kenneth kept inhaling sharply in pain at first, but he slowly became quiet and she soon heard his regular breathing.

Only then did she let her guard down and fall asleep.

As the night grew, Elise felt as if she was wrapped in her soft duvet and after some time, she felt as if she had fallen into a hot spring, whereby her whole body was enveloped in warmth. It still remained even after daybreak when the morning sun had lit up the entire room.

Elise slowly opened her eyes. After a few seconds of grogginess, she saw a large hand that was placed on her. She instantly turned to her side and before the owner of the hand could react, she kicked the figure off the bed.

Even Kenneth was unable to identify if he had been woken up due to her kick or the fall. Holding his injury, he clambered up, his face pale from the pain.

Last night before they went to bed, he had deliberately rubbed his hand on his shirt to stain it with blood. However, at this moment, his wound had indeed torn open. He could even feel warm blood gushing out of the injury.

When she saw that he was enduring the pain, Elise softened for a moment but she quickly put that feeling aside.

I shouldn't sympathize with a touchy jerk who takes a mile when given an inch.

In the end, she kept quiet and left the room to do her morning routine.

When she exited the bathroom, Kenneth was seen sitting on the couch in the living room.

"There's nobody outside now. Please leave immediately." Elise asked him to leave, her voice cold.

At that, Kenneth raised his head and looked at her. "I've ordered breakfast. Let's eat before I leave."

"I lose my appetite when I see you." She folded her arms across her chest. "You now have two choices. First, leave on your own. Second, I'll kick you out. You have sixty seconds to make a decision."

Kenneth pouted reluctantly. Just as he was about to continue pestering her, his phone rang in his pocket.

He took it out and brought it to his ear. A few seconds later, he calmly said, "I understand. I'll be back right away."

He then killed the call, exhaling a deep breath in disappointment before raising his head to look at Elise.

For some reason, he wished to stick to her when he was hurt. Having her in his sight alone was able to ease the pain. She was his medicine, his cure even, so he was reluctant to leave.

"It's time for you to make a decision," she urged.

A dispirited Kenneth pulled a long face and rose to his full height, sluggishly dragging his feet to the door.

As soon as he stepped out of the room, he turned around and wanted to say something, but the door slammed shut in his face.

It was fortunate that there was a gap between his face and the door that saved him from being hit in the face.

"She must have eaten a bomb." Kenneth let out a doting yet self-mocking smile and shook his head before he left.

In the room, Elise tried to recall what had happened last night, thinking if she had done anything that she wasn't supposed to do, like hugging him or something along the lines.

She cracked her head trying to recall anything, but nothing came back to her.

This proved that she still had her honor and hadn't cheated on Alexander.

Alexander, Alexander... Elise missed him, so she gave him a call. Right now, she was like a person who had fallen into the churning water, desperately struggling to grab onto a log.

The moment Kenneth stepped out of the lift, he felt a vibration from the other pocket, the one he used to keep his personal phone in.

Even before he took his phone out, he grinned brightly, because only Elise was able to reach him on that phone.

“Ellie.” Kenneth altered his voice and returned to using Alexander’s, his tone warm and doting.

With the skill of faking his voice, he was able to perfectly conceal his identity, although he had nearly exposed himself in front of Elise last night when his head had been groggy due to the injury.

Upon hearing his voice, Elise felt much relieved. That’s right, the man I love is Alexander Griffith. Only he is able to give me this special sense of security.

“Why aren’t you saying anything?” he asked when he didn’t get any response from her for a long time.

“Nothing. I just missed you a little.” Elise pursed her lips as she raised her hand to hold her burning cheeks. She couldn’t believe that she could be so forward to the point of confessing her love to him through the phone.

Upon hearing that, he chuckled softly, the disappointment from being kicked out of her room now completely disappearing. “I love you, Ellie.”

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Chapter 498 Exclusively Elise’s

Elise could feel her face burning. After inhaling deeply, she changed the topic. “Don’t sweet-talk me. Are you done with your business over there? I’m almost done here. Do you want me to go over to help you?”

"There's no need. I'm almost done too. Let's meet up in Athesea," Kenneth replied.

"Alright, then. You'd better attend to your business." She shrugged, unfazed by his rejection. However, as if she was suddenly recalling something, Elise dropped her usual gentleness and growled, "But you are not allowed to flirt with other women. Do you hear me?"

Kenneth was stunned to hear that at first but when he returned to his senses, he grinned even wider. "Sure. When I get back, I'll have Cameron make a sign that says 'Exclusively Elise's'. I'll hang it over my neck and carry it around. What do you think?"

This successfully made Elise laugh. "Won't that make you a pet dog? Only dogs wear nameplates."

"I'm not a dog, but I'm your pet. By wearing a nameplate, when someone dares to lay a hand on me, other people will know to inform you to take me home." He coaxed her, treating her like a child as he subconsciously slowed down his pace.

At a hallway far away from where Kenneth was, Melody took notice of the wide grin on Kenneth's face from afar. It made her frown, as if she was looking at a monster.

Here we go again—the same old trick of giving a reward after a punishment.

Even without him having to tell her, Melody knew that Kenneth must have asked for the 'punishment' on his own accord.

She pouted, a look of disgust on her face. Perhaps Mr. Bailey has a slight fetish for self-abuse. I bet no one could tell that from how he looks...

Meanwhile, Elise, who was delighted to hear his sweet words, played along. "Sure, I'll have to buy some rope and tie you by my side for the rest of your life."

Kenneth stopped in his tracks, his voice as tender as a silk garment that slid across a lady's delicate skin. "If that's true, I can't wait for it to happen." He briefly paused before he added, "Ellie, I can't wait to devote my whole life to you."

Elise pursed her lips in utter embarrassment. "Alright, alright. I know. Considering that you are so madly in love with me, I promise you that I won't fall for anyone else no matter how tempting it is."

"Is there anyone you find even more tempting than me?" Kenneth joked deliberately.

"Of course there is. You're such a narcissist!" Elise blurted out but when she thought about it, she had to admit that a good-looking and capable man like Alexander was indeed a rare gem.

Although Kenneth had excellent capabilities, he was a playboy who loved to flirt around and he couldn't even protect himself. Hence, he did not even hold a candle to Alexander. D*mn it! Why am I thinking about that b*stard named Kenneth now? How could I think of another man when I'm on a call with Alexander?

The realization made Elise feel uneasy and it put a tight furrow between her brows. Her good mood suddenly disappeared and she became depressed once again.

Kenneth, who was clueless about her mood changes, continued to prattle on, his tone reflecting his longingness. "You have to be good and ensure you're not taken away by others. Otherwise, I'll hang a sign on you as well."

"I will." Elise's tone was adamant, but she herself couldn't tell if she said this more to herself or Alexander.

"Ha! I'm just joking. Of course I have faith in you. Alright, I have to get back to work now. I'll call you again."

"Sure."

After Elise had said that, Kenneth hung up. He put the phone in his pocket, the smile on his face dimming.

"You went to provoke Mrs. Bailey-to-be again, didn't you?" Melody teased.

Kenneth darted a look at her, a shadow of a smile by his lips. "Calling her Mrs. Bailey-to-be is not very appropriate. It's easier to call her Mrs. Bailey instead, since there won't be any other candidate for the position."

"If that's the case, I'll call her Mrs. Bailey when we see her at the gem auction event, then," Melody said.

Upon hearing that, Kenneth chuckled as he muttered, "You may if you want me to die." Then, he moved away his hand that was concealing the stab wound, revealing the soiled blood stain on his clothes.

"Boss"

"Boss, what happened?! I'll get a doctor right away!" Melody's expression instantly became serious.

"There's no need." He shook his head. "Let's go in first. Contact Cameron in a bit and ask him to bring a doctor along when he comes to pick me up. Make sure to keep a low profile so that nobody finds out about this."

Melody frowned at his words, but she nodded and agreed to him without questioning his decision. "Alright." With that, she turned on her heel and quickly opened the door, ushering Kenneth into the room.

Upon seeing how nervous she was, he let out a comment of self-mockery. "You only remember that I'm your boss when I'm in a life or death situation."

Melody pulled a long face, unable to squeeze out even a tiny smile. "Please be serious. It's not a good time to make jokes."

He shrugged. "Alright, then. Can't you put on a show for a little longer and don't lecture me all the time..."

Meanwhile, Elise fell into a daze that lasted for a long time after Alexander's voice had disappeared.

What is it about Kenneth? I understand myself well enough to know that it would be impossible for me to fall in love with two people at the same time. However, why did Kenneth's name enter my subconscious so easily? I don't love him, yet I can't ignore him. What's wrong with me?

Elise dragged herself to her room, feeling muddled. When she inadvertently glanced at the clock on the wall, she paused for three seconds before she shouted, "What the heck? It's 11.00 AM already?"

It was the last day of the gem auction event and they hadn't even found a single rough stone. She had to depart right away, else she would be late.

It's all that damned Kenneth's fault! It's his fault that I went to bed so late last night. He'd better hope that we don't meet again today, else I will skin him alive!

...

At 11.30 AM, the entrance into the hall was already packed like sardines.

Everyone tried to squeeze into the hall. Upon seeing Elise jogging in their direction, they started to squeeze their way inside more eagerly, struggling to reach the innermost part of the hall to get the best view to watch the upcoming show.

"Our female lead has finally arrived!"

"Everyone, open your eyes wide and look over there—our beauty is here!"

"Oh my, it really is her! I thought that she chickened out after Ziggy's outstanding result yesterday after he managed to find a few good-quality jadeite!"

"Who are you to comment about her? She ventures into danger knowing what she will face. You all should learn from her; she still comes even when she knows that she will lose. This sort of dedication and spirit of selflessness. Which one of you has anything similar to that?"

"I admit that I'm no match for her. Even if I have the intention to compete with her, I have to first possess that face and figure!"

Words of mockery were heard from the crowd. Tom, who heard the commotion, came over and immediately spotted Elise.

He ran toward her in large steps and cried like a man grasping at straws, "Miss Sinclair, you have finally shown up. I thought that you were going to give up!"

Elise panted a little as she had run all the way there. She lifted her hand and waved at him as she said, "Stay calm. I'm exhausted lately so I slept in a bit. We still have some time, so let's go and choose our rough stone."

As soon as the two of them stepped into the hall, they heard a louder commotion inside.

"There's four!"

"Victory is within Ziggy's grasp! After adding those that he found previously, he now has four top-quality rough stones. I reckon that nothing will go wrong with the few remaining rough stones, so I'm sure that he will win!"

"I don't see the girl around. Could it be that she chickened out?"

Expression indifferent, Elise darted a look in the direction where the stones would be broken open. Currently, Ziggy was enjoying the crowds' compliments, and quietly standing next to him was a woman.

The woman was no stranger to Elise—it was none other than Tina, the woman whom she had met yesterday.

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Chapter 499 No Need to Be So Self-Defeating

Cleverly dodging them, Elise symbolically searched inside the room with Tom before turning around and leaving.

Following behind her, Tom reminded, "Ziggy's found several pieces of special-quality jade these few days, Miss Sinclair. I imagine there's not much left inside that's good."

"I see," she replied flatly without showing too much of a reaction.

With that, she stepped out of the room and headed to where the second-grade rough stone was piled.

“Miss Sinclair,” Tom protested, growing anxious as he saw that, “you haven’t paid much attention these few days, so you might not know that the Carnegie Family’s higher-grade rough stone was selected from inside the room. Everything out here is waste rock. We’d best save time by returning inside.”

“Sure,” she answered off-handedly but she had no intentions of turning back. After surveying the display cases in the outer hall, she walked directly up to the person in charge of registration and rattled off a series of numbers, “10896 ...11023.”

There were a total of five numbers, all above ten thousand.

Speechlessly, Tom watched on as he mused, Surely she doesn’t need to be so self-defeating, does she?

The rough stone at the venue was numbered according to the organizers’ preliminary review of them. The smaller the number was, the higher likelihood there was of the stone producing a jade; the larger the number was, the worse condition the stone was in. Since the stones numbering six thousand and below were in the inner hall, there was no doubt that everything Elise chose came from the outer hall.

By now, Tom was certain she knew nothing about stone gambling.

“We still have time, Miss Sinclair. Perhaps we still have the chance to look through the stones carefully,” he made a last-ditch attempt to convince her. “Even if we’re going to throw in the towel just like that, we could still choose stones from the inner hall—that way, we might not suffer so many losses in the end. Or perhaps a miracle might happen like it did in Landred City!”

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With a smile, she patted his shoulder and comforted, “Hasn’t lady luck been by your side all along? You’re being too nervous. Calm down.”

In the past, Tom might have been bolstered by her confidence but now, he could only feel endless despair. “Miss Sinclair, please listen to me. There isn’t much left in the inner hall, but

there's still a chance someone missed something. It's better than us trying to fill the quota by picking something from the waste heap."

"Okay. You go pick; I'll pay," Elise answered him good-humoredly before shushing him with her index finger when she saw that he was about to say something else. "I respect your choices, Mr. Shaw, and I ask that you respect mine as well. When it comes to stone gambling, there's no harm in buying a few more. Why are you so caught up in trying to convince me otherwise? Believe me, you're only wasting the time you have left to choose your own stones if you continue to pester me. So, go do what you wish, but do not interfere with my choices."

Once again, Elise's imposing, majestic manner subdued him.

The thing was, she had the air of a natural winner, and he knew that even a loss at this time would not stop her from shining, for she was pure gold through and through.

So, Tom didn't say anything else to her and only turned to instruct the registrar, "Please help Miss Sinclair register her choices."

"Okay. Just to confirm, you both registered only one stone previously. Are you sure that on the last day of this auction event, you'd like to choose these many stones from the outer hall?"

Having heard quite a bit of gossip through the past few days, the registrar knew that Tom and the woman with him were the objects of Ziggy's bet. Thus, the registrar deliberately raised his voice, emphasizing the words 'outer hall' and attracting quite a bit of attention.

"Look, she has goals in mind now!"

"F*ck! She's bold. From the very beginning, she's only chosen materials from the outer hall. Clearly, she wants to stand out against Ziggy!"

"Oh—please. I bet she's creating a gimmick because she knows she's going to lose. Maybe the organizers hired her to drum up attention!"

"Rough stones from the outer hall? Ha! Is that any different from directly admitting defeat?"

No one in the crowd believed in Tom and Elise.

Very quickly, the registration was done.

Lifting her head, Elise looked at Tom. "What about the ones you like? Go note down their serial numbers and have them registered alongside mine."

"There's only one I fancy, and even then I'm not certain about it..." he hesitated.

"If you think it fits, you should choose it. Don't worry about it. I'm paying." She had always been magnanimous to her friends.

At this moment, Tom didn't know what to say.

Inwardly, he sighed.

Initially, he had thought he could ask her to help him assess the stone once she arrived, but based on today's scene, she was merely choosing at random, so how could he rely on her?

"I understand—" he told her sincerely. "—but I still have time. I think I'll look through the stones once more."

Making no comment, Elise simply nodded to indicate her approval. Thus, girding his loins, Tom went back into the inner hall.

Just like that, Elise was left alone to her boredom. Since there wasn't much time left before the halls would close for the morning, she retreated to the rest area for some drinks, intending to leave with Tom later.

It didn't take more than a few minutes for Ziggy to appear with Tina by his side.

He reached out to snag two glasses of champagne from a passing waiter before approaching Elise with an expression that suggested he already knew he would win.

A glass of champagne in each hand, he asked lightly, "You seem to have some free time on your hands, Miss Sinclair. Will you humor me by having this glass of champagne with me?" With that, he passed the drink to her while lecherously eyeing her delicate neck at the same time.

In response, Elise lowered her head to glance down at the champagne before turning away with not much of a change in expression. Without reaching for the glass, she told him flatly, "Get lost."

The smile on his face instantly disappeared, only to be replaced with annoyance. "You're not above me, you b*tch! Do you think you'll be able to escape my grasp once the results of breaking open the stones are announced this afternoon? Very soon, you'll know what it feels like to be in the depths of hell!"

"And?" she sneered. "Have I already lost? You don't know yet who will get the last laugh."

"I have four pieces of jade in hand and no doubt that at least half of my selections that haven't been broken open yet will contain jade. You rooted through the outer hall for a pile of trash that nobody wants. How could you possibly compare to me?" Ziggy scoffed disdainfully.

Knowing it would be meaningless to argue with him since someone like him would not admit defeat until he was at the end of his tether, Elise ignored him.

Meanwhile, noting her lack of response, the previously timid Tina finally stood up for her. "It's a gentleman's virtue to respect women, Mr. Carnegie. It reflects badly on the Carnegie Family for you as a man to pester a woman like that, not to mention that such a bet is meaningless, anyway. I think—"

"Shut your godsd*mn mouth!" he snapped impatiently at her with a look of contempt and disgust. "Your job here is to pick out the jadeite. You needn't interfere with anything else and you'd best remember your place!"

Thus being reduced to worthlessness, Tina paled in mortification.

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Chapter 500 Go Ask Your Father

After glancing between Elise and Ziggy, Tina finally clenched her teeth and left in indignation.

For his part, Ziggy wasn't the least bit affected and simply put down his champagne before going to sit on the couch next to Elise.

Disgusted, Elise moved away, only for him to cling to her like a limpet and move in the same direction as her.

After several such rounds, she was finally pressed against the arm of the couch with nowhere else to go, so she began to get up to leave. Immediately, he reached out and grabbed the armrest, blocking her escape route.

Since she would have to touch his dirty arm if she still tried to get up and leave, she had no choice but to settle back into her seat.

At this point, she turned to give him a cold, loathing look.

Deep down, she was thinking that if he dared to touch her, she would incapacitate him so badly that he would never be able to have children.

"Surely you're not intending to molest me in front of everyone else?" Elise murmured neutrally.

Ziggy's gaze was flirtatious and lecherous as he answered, "What are you afraid of? It's only a matter of time before we go further than that." With that, his free hand began to reach for her.

His eyes were on Elise's waist—the waist so slender he would be able to envelop it with one arm. No longer could he wait to experience the feeling of hugging her.

From this angle, he could vaguely even see the curves of her upper body. Truly, he couldn't resist her any longer.

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Meanwhile, the smile on Elise's face was growing, but there wasn't a shred of warmth in her eyes. The cushion of the couch was quickly going out of shape beneath her fingers, and she was prepared to replace it with a death grip on his hand at any moment.

When she felt him leaning toward her, she let go of the couch, getting ready to strike.

However, before she could grab hold of his collar and send him tumbling over her shoulder, he suddenly screamed as his arms tensed. "Ow! Ow!"

And then, as stiff as a board, he was made to stand up.

Finally, Elise relaxed her fists and looked over her shoulder to see what had taken place.

At some point unknown to her, Kenneth had appeared behind her. With his black shirt and black pants, coupled with an unreadable expression and an even more unapproachable demeanor, he looked like the Grim Reaper.

Currently, he not only had a hold on Ziggy's hands, but had turned them outward by ninety degrees. With the slightest force, Ziggy would likely be able to experience the marvels of living with outward-facing palms.

Despite the change in Elise's expression, she didn't react any other way than to stare at Kenneth, unmoving.

The frequency at which he appeared just in time to save her was completely beyond her expectations.

Very quickly, she remembered his wound and quietly looked at his waist.

An injury there meant that he should not be exerting force, which was why his current actions suggested that he was tugging at his injury and had likely torn it open.

Inexplicably, Elise felt her heart squeeze uncomfortably.

Meanwhile, Ziggy was in so much pain that spots were breaking out before his eyes and the cold sweat on his forehead was causing his spiked fringe to collapse from his melting hair wax. In short, he looked worse for wear. "Who the f*ck are you clueless piece of sh*t? How dare you interfere in my affairs? I'll have you know that you won't be leaving Dukethorn alive if you go up against the Carnegie Family!"

"Go and ask your father if I'm worthy of provoking you." Kenneth was calm and unintimidated, clearly looking down on Ziggy.

It wasn't as if Kenneth hadn't thought of the consequences. It was simply that, to Smith Co., the Carnegie Family represented less than the tip of an iceberg in power. As Smith Co.'s leader, he naturally didn't fear losing their backing.

"Your family managed to achieve the status it has today only through accumulating the few assets it made from stone gambling and working with the local underground Eagle Gang. We'd easily be able to tear down Eagle Gang, let alone crush your family with just a word!" Elise threatened faintly. Indeed, she had had this thought before.

After all, with the exploitative rich, there was no reasoning to be had, only lessons to be learned.

To be fair, she was somewhat exaggerating.

There were countless underground organizations in Dukethorn, with the Eagle Gang being one of the more formal and widespread ones. Since even the local government couldn't do much about them, exterminating them wouldn't be as simple a matter as giving a word.

Not expecting her to stand on the same front as him, Kenneth glanced at her out of the corner of his eye in surprise.

In truth, before he made his move, he had considered whether she would be on the same side as Ziggy just to oppose him.

From the look of things now, though, her hate didn't run as deep.

Nevertheless, she still guessed something he never expected.

Pale-faced and flustered, Ziggy blabbered, "Who told you..."

Without answering, Elise ducked out from underneath his and Kenneth's arms to stand off to the side.

She could find out low-level information like which businessmen were colluding with which gangs just by walking the street. She didn't need an informant for that.

Did he actually think she went looking for street food just to sate her appetite?

With that, she glanced at Kenneth once more before an idea suddenly popped into her head and she went to his side. Acting like someone who had the upper hand, she warned Ziggy, "Take a clear look at this face. He's Kenneth Bailey, someone even your dad wouldn't dare to provoke. It wouldn't be a problem for him to exterminate the Eagle Gang, or do you wish for your family to disappear alongside them?"

"You're Kenneth Bailey?" Ziggy had finally guessed the other man's identity.

Narrowing his eyes, Kenneth replied, "What do you think?"

That confirms it, Ziggy thought. No one else could have that insufferably arrogant attitude.

Not too long ago, Jim had told Ziggy there was someone he couldn't afford to provoke by the surname of Bailey at this gem auction event. Who knew he would run into Kenneth Bailey just like that?

Still, with everyone at the venue watching on in curiosity, Ziggy couldn't afford to embarrass himself and could only stubbornly retort, "So what? It's true that Smith Co. is powerful, but the wager between me and Miss Sinclair is of a private nature. Everyone here knows it wouldn't be appropriate for Smith Co. to poke their nose into this affair!"

"And if I said that it was appropriate?" Kenneth turned Ziggy's hands outward even further.

"Ow! Stop! Stop that! Is the owner of Smith Co. just like that, forgetting his promises and bullying the weak just for a woman?" Ziggy persisted, gritting his teeth. As long as he had the moral upper hand, everyone would stand on his side.

"Well, no one said to cheat!" Elise interrupted, raising her voice. "You're the one who's being bold enough to sexually harass me, the wager of the bet, before the results of the

competition have even come out. Mr. Bailey only interfered because he saw the injustice in that. Now that you're on the losing side, you're suddenly in the spirit of honoring the contract? Your parents must be proud."

The corners of Kenneth's mouth hooked up proudly before it immediately dropped. As the light in his eyes dimmed, he suddenly exerted force, dislocating Ziggy's forearms and pushing the man away.

"Young Master Ziggy!" Finally, Ziggy's bodyguards rushed up, surrounding him and wanting to seek revenge on his behalf, only to be terrified into turning tail by Kenneth's bloodthirsty gaze. With no other choice, they could only slink away, dragging the yowling Ziggy behind them for treatment.