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Bring Your A Game, Mr Chapter 66

Chapter 66 H, Is That You?

Elise shook her head and didn't think much about his words. Then, she took out her phone to hail a ride home.

When she arrived at the Griffith Residence, Jonah was engaged in a game of chess with Alexander. They were both surprised when they saw her. "Ellie, you're back so suddenly! You should've told us beforehand and I'll get Alex to fetch you."

Elise explained, "It's fine; there's not much difference if I return on my own."

Jonah beckoned to her. "Come, let me have a good look at you. I haven't seen you in half a month! Ellie, you seem to be thinner! You must be tired from all of your studying. Stella, prepare some chicken soup for Ellie, won't you?"

Stella hastily replied, "Understood, sir."

"Ellie, come have a game with me," he invited. At that, Alexander, who was seated opposite Jonah, rose to his full height and allowed Elise to take over his place.

As Elise had previously learned the ropes with Robin, she was aware of the general rules since she was half a beginner herself.

"Alex, please watch the game for us. Don't let her lose terribly."

Alexander nodded. "All right, Grandpa."

Thus, with Alexander as her support, Elise felt a little more confident. However, it was only reasonable to lose when the opponent was a master like Jonah. They played three rounds, all of which she had lost.

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She was upset as she asked Alexander, "Didn't Grandpa ask you to watch the game? Can't you help me win for once?"

He simply replied, "It's bad manners to comment on the game from the sidelines."

Inasmuch as Elise wanted to say something, she found that Alexander had a point.

"All right, Ellie. You fought well. You were always exceptionally close to winning and I even thought you might be doing it on purpose."

She stuck her tongue out mischievously. "I'm not as good as you say, Grandpa."

Jonah smiled, but he didn't say more. Instead, he asked Elise about her studies. "Now that the boot camp is over, you're setting out to Northcliff to join the national Math Olympiad, aren't you?"

Elise nodded. "I'll be leaving tomorrow. The test starts the day after and it'll only take half a day to complete."

He nodded in understanding before he looked at Alexander. "Doesn't the company have some business relations in Northcliff?"

Alexander reported honestly, "Some, I think."

Jonah quickly added, "Then, that's the perfect opportunity! You can head to Northcliff with Elise tomorrow. Make sure she's safe and you can handle company matters while you're at it."

Upon hearing that, Elise quickly rejected the idea. "It's fine, Grandpa, I can head there on my own."

However, he wasn't about to back down. "Girl, don't be stubborn. Northcliff is a big city and it's not safe for a girl like you to be on her own. I was thinking of your safety when I asked Alex to accompany you. Also, he can settle some company business while he's there, so you can relax and join the nationals without any worries."

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"But..." She trailed off as she stole a glance at Alexander, who didn't seem like he was against the idea. "But it's just us two. It won't look too good either, will it?" she asked as she picked up from where she left off.

Jonah looked like he didn't catch her gist. "Don't worry! Ellie, Alex is quite a steady guy compared to the rest of them. I won't have to worry if he's the one accompanying you."

"He might not agree, though." Elise passed the responsibility to Alexander. She thought that he definitely would reject the idea, but she underestimated the weight of Jonah's words.

"Grandpa, I'll ask my secretary to get the plane tickets ready in a moment."

A satisfied Jonah nodded. Upon seeing that, Elise could only acquiesce.

Elise and Alexander arrived at the airport together the next morning with their first class tickets. It was after boarding the plane that she finally asked, "Why did you agree to head to Northcliff with me?"

He returned her question with another one. "Well, isn't that what Grandpa wanted?"

What she heard merely made her speechless.

She decided to keep her mouth shut. Since it was Jonah's intention, there was nothing more to question. The plane landed at the Northcliff Airport after two hours of flight.

After Elise disembarked the plane with Alexander, they found that someone was already waiting for them at the arrivals hall.

"Mr. Griffith!" the chauffeur greeted with all due respect before he took over the luggage in Alexander's hand.

"Get in."

Elise nodded, then did as she was told.

As the car drove away from the airport, she asked, "Where are we going to?"

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Alexander was responding to his business matters on his iPad as he replied, "I'll take you to the exam venue first, so you can familiarize yourself there. Then, we'll head to the house in Northcliff."

"You have a house in Northcliff too?"

He replied, "We're staying there for the night. I looked it up and found that the house is closest to the exam venue. It only takes 5 minutes to get there, so it's not that far either."

Elise nodded. "All right, understood."

She went to the exam venue and printed out her admission ticket. After finding her seat, she familiarized herself with the surroundings before returning to the accommodation with Alexander.

As it was a detached villa, it wasn't as grand as the Griffith Residence. However, land prices in Northcliff were extremely overpriced, so a villa in itself would've set the Griffith Family back by a hefty sum.

"I've already asked someone to clean the house. You're getting the bedroom on the left and I'll stay in the bedroom on the right. The study is in the middle and I'll be working there. If you need anything, you can let me know."

Elise nodded. "Got it." With that, she went straight to the room assigned to her.

Alexander watched her leave and he only looked away after she disappeared from sight, thereafter he made a call. "Find someone to cook meals here."

After hanging up the phone, he made his way to the study and started to busy himself with work.

Once she arrived in her room, she didn't dally and immediately took out her phone to call someone. It was around half an hour later when she knocked on the door to the study.

"Come in!"

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Elise opened the door and walked inside. "I'm taking a walk outside, so I thought I'd notify you. You can have dinner without me."

Alexander looked up at her. "You just arrived, so don't go around on your own. I can take you wherever you want to go."

Elise hastily rejected the idea. "It's okay, I'm really just walking around. I'll be back at night."

The look in his eyes darkened as he felt that Elise didn't trust him much, which made him upset. "All right, you can go. Be careful, though."

After she signed an 'OK', she closed the door behind her..

As Alexander listened to the footsteps dying down, he quickly lost interest in his work even though he was originally busy. He remained in his seat for a while before he rose to leave as well.

Elise hailed a cab the moment she left the villa. As she sat in the car, she watched the scenery gradually becoming familiar while a faint smile graced her lips. The cab stopped at a public toilet by the road and she exited the car to head into the toilet cubicles.

By the time she emerged from the place, the ugly makeup on her face was replaced by a wholly new one. She then hailed another cab, which headed toward an old alley that seemed to be forgotten by time.

She walked in the alley until she arrived at the end where a row of courtyard houses silently stood. Moments later, she punched the right password on the access control panel, thereby unlocking the door and providing her with passage.

"Long time no see, Julius."

A young man was seated on the rocking chair in the yard while enjoying the sun. The sudden female voice frightened him and when he recovered his senses, his eyes brightened. "H, is that you?"

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Bring Your A Game, Mr Chapter 67

Chapter 67 Sorry, I'm Not

Elise smiled as she answered with another question, "What do you think?"

Julius immediately jumped from his chair and ran toward her. However, when he was half a step away from her, she stopped him. "Hey, calm down. There's no need to get too worked up."

His eyes reddened. "It's been so many years and you're finally back! We've looked everywhere for you..."

As he spoke, his voice started choking up.

Then, Elise patted him on the shoulder. "Look, I'm back in one piece. I see that you're learning to enjoy life more now, eh? You seem to be getting by quite nicely on your own."

It took a while for Julius to finally calm down, albeit slightly. Then, he asked, "Do Noel and the others know that you're back?"

"For now, I don't think so."

He hurriedly wiped the tears from his eyes as he added, "Noel has been waiting all these years for your return and he's the only one who insisted on waiting for you in the same place. I heard that he's the exclusive lyricist for an artist since he still has his way with words. However, without your voice and songs, the best effect cannot be achieved no matter how good the lyrics are."

Elise didn't say a word as she looked around at the courtyard houses. After a while, she suggested, "Let's go out for dinner tonight."

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An elated Julius replied, "Then, I'll ask them to come along."

She quickly responded, "No, don't tell them that I'm back. Let's just have dinner together."

There was hesitation on his end. "I promised Noel to inform him of any news relating to you the moment I receive them." After saying that, he seemed to arrive at a conclusion. "Never mind, I'll just keep quiet. Maybe I can show you around instead?"

After voicing her agreement, Elise walked to the backyard where some limited edition motorbikes were parked neatly in a row. She reached out and touched one of them. "It's been so long since I last patted them."

While Julius grinned, he fished out a set of keys and tossed it to her. "Let's go for a drive."

She caught the keys before she quickly sat on the bike. Wearing the helmet had made her absolutely stunning. With a smile, she stepped on the ignition and brought the bike out of its parking spot.

They both rode a bike each and cruised the road side by side. It was obvious that Julius was overjoyed because it felt like he had returned to the good old times with Elise and their friends.

He brought her to a bar, where the two of them ordered a few classics to sample.

Then, she held the wineglass and clinked it with his. "How have you been, Julius?"

Julius replied, "It's been a long while, H."

The two downed the wine before Elise finally asked, "Really, how have you been these few years?"

"Ever since you left, everyone went their separate ways too." He smiled. "Noel is the only one who's still active in the field whereas everyone else retired. As for me, I run this bar, so I come here at night to keep an eye on things. During the day, I sunbath in the courtyard houses. Noel is quite lucky, seeing how he gradually brought that particular artist to fame. That artist is quite the star these days, I believe. What's the name again? Right, Jack Griffith! You can look up his songs; Noel is the lyricist for some of the most notable ones."

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The moment she heard Jack Griffith's name, Elise was dumbfounded. It's a small world. Way too small.

"I'll give it a listen when I feel like it. Your bar is rather presentable."

Julius smiled. "Why don't you make an appearance tonight? Sing a song or two."

She shook her head. "No, it's okay. I haven't sung in years and I've already forgotten the feeling."

He wasn't about to throw in the towel either. "Just go and sing a song! Won't you grant my little wish, please?"

Elise didn't know whether it was her inability to win against Julius in an argument or her desire to have some satisfaction, but she found herself hesitating for a while. Then, she donned a mask as she took to the stage.

"A mystery guest has decided to join us in Kimi Bar tonight. She will be performing a beautiful song called Concealed Fragrance. Let's welcome her with applause!"

As the host ended his introduction, Alexander frowned from his perch on the second floor. He sat alone at the side and he couldn't help but focus on the middle of the stage.

Concealed Fragrance was H's trademark song. After she left the entertainment field, he had never heard of the song ever since. He never thought that he would chance into this song just by heading out for a drink in boredom.

Elise was wearing a white dress as she gracefully walked onstage. As she wore a mask, no one could figure out what she looked like. However, the moment she opened her mouth, the audience fell silent.

"When petals fall away from the flower, the concealed fragrance remains. It went away in the rain, and no one knows..."

As soon as Alexander heard her voice, he was shaken to the core. He was overcome with disbelief, for this voice was exactly the same as H's voice in his memories...

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The angelic voice seemed to be reciting a tale in the song and every member of the focused audience was fully immersed in the experience. Since he was the first to come to his senses, he quickly rose to his full height and strode toward the backstage.

"Sir, this is the backstage. You cannot enter." A waiter blocked Alexander's way, but Alexander retrieved a stack of cash from his pocket and pressed it into the waiter's hands. The waiter paused for a while before he pretended to turn away, thus allowing Alexander passage.

After the song was over, the audience erupted in thunderous applause. Elise smiled as she bowed, then she proceeded to walk off the stage. However, a moment later, she saw Alexander walking toward her while saying, "Wait..."

He was calling out for her, which stunned her as she stopped in her tracks. Her hand had also subconsciously tugged at the mask she wore. She forced her voice into a lower pitch as she asked, "Is there anything, sir?"

"I just wanted to ask, are you H?"

Elise never thought that Alexander would recognize her. She was taken aback by his question, but she could never allow him to know of her identity. "Sorry, I'm not."

With that, she moved to leave, but he grabbed her wrist instead.

"What are you doing? Please let go, sir."

Alexander examined the woman before him and he felt that her figure was identical to someone whom he knew, but he also thought that it was impossible.

After a pause, he asked again, "Are you really not H? You two have identical voices, though."

Elise explained, "I only know how to mimic her. You're giving me compliments I don't deserve, but that just means I've improved at mimicking, so thank you for that."

So, I see. He seemed to be convinced by her answer as he released his grip on her.

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Now that she had regained her freedom, Elise refused to delay a moment longer as she quickly walked off.

Julius approached her and asked, "Who is that man? What did he say to you?"

Bring Your A Game, Mr Chapter 68

Chapter 68 No Buts!

Without providing any explanation, Elise then dragged Julius out of the bar and soon vanished from Alexander's sight.

Alexander believed that him seeing H was a product of his hallucination since he was under the influence of alcohol. After disappearing without a trace for ages, it wouldn't make sense for her to show up and sing at this bar. Plus, the girl he saw earlier had a different aura from his memory of H. He withdrew his gaze and turned to leave.

Once Elise was out of the bar, she released her grip on Julius. "I need to head back now because there's something I have to do tomorrow."

It was Julius who appeared reluctant to part ways with her. He finally expressed the thoughts he had wanted to tell her all along, "H, did you see that? They were all engrossed in your music earlier. After so many years, some of your fans are still checking in on Twitter daily to wait for news on your comeback. Are you really okay to say goodbye to the fans who love you?"

"I guess I can only apologize to them." She pursed her lips.

Julius was aware that Elise would react in the same way that she did years ago—she would not renegade on her words. Still, he was clinging on to a sliver of hope. "No matter what,

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we're waiting for your comeback. We'll be here to witness you recreating the glorious years from before."

Without replying to him, she merely smiled and patted him on the shoulder. "Send me home now," was what she said next.

After sending her to the lobby of her apartment, Julius added before leaving, "If you arrive at a decision at any time, feel free to contact me. I'll be waiting for you."

Elise waved at him before she headed straight into the apartment. Since Alexander was not back yet, she decided to retire to her room, wash up and go to bed.

As there was an exam the next day, she woke up earlier to prepare herself for it. Then, she realized that Alexander, who stayed in the room next door, had stayed out for the entire night. She didn't give it much thought and hastily grabbed a bite at the joint in front of the neighborhood entrance. Then, she hailed a cab to the exam venue.

Once she arrived, she saw Samantha and Riley waving at her from afar. "Elise, we're here!"

It was at that moment when Elise walked over to them. "You guys are quite early."

Riley chuckled. "We actually arrived yesterday! Last night, we even had some northern cuisine for dinner! It was delicious!"

Then, Elise asked, "Which exam hall are you in?"

Riley checked her entrance pass and replied, "I'm in Hall 7. What about you?"

"I'm in Hall 21."

Samatha chimed in, "Oh, what a coincidence! I'm right next to you—I'm in Hall 20."

The three of them headed into the campus while chatting. When they were close to the exam halls, they happened to run into Zachary. He had also spotted Elise and handed her a pouch full of stationeries that he prepared beforehand. "I packed you some 2B pencils and ballpens."

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Elise was a little taken aback and hurriedly turned him down. "It's fine! I brought mine."

He did not reply to that and instead shoved the pouch into her hands. Before leaving, he added, "See you after the exam."

She looked dumbfounded as her friends exchanged looks beside her. "Miss Elise Sinclair, tell us the truth. What's going on?"

"Nothing," Elise replied as she shrugged in confusion.

Samantha and Riley obviously didn't believe Elise's words and continued to pester her. After having been defeated, she playfully knocked them on their heads. "Quit being busybodies and focus on your exams!"

Although Riley wanted to ask further, she ultimately held her tongue. "I think he must have fallen for you." Then, she stuck out her tongue at Elise before she waved and wandered into her exam hall.

Upon seeing that, Samantha hurriedly comforted Elise, "Don't mind her. All the best!" Then, she waved at Elise, who watched as her friends walked away.

Elise looked at the pouch in her hand and wondered whether Zachary had truly fallen for her. What does he want from me, though? I don't have the most beautiful face... Since she could not figure out his intention, she gave up and handed his pouch to her classmate who didn't bring any stationery.

The duration of the exam was two hours, but because Elise had performed so well, she was able to submit her papers half an hour before the time was up.

She strolled out of the exam hall, checked the time and hailed a cab back to the apartment. At that time, she bumped into Alexander, who was about to leave his room. When he saw her, his expression had remained calm. "Something came up at the last minute. I'll head home tomorrow."

Elise was fine with that. "If you're busy, don't mind me. I can head home on my own today."

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As Alexander narrowed his eyes, he replied, "Grandpa asked me to take care of you. If you return alone, do you think he will let this slide?"

Indeed, using Grandpa as an excuse to shut her down was always effective. She instantly agreed to stay for another day. "Are you heading out? Where to?"

He said nothing as he scanned her from head to toe. "If you are bored, you can join me."

Elise wanted to turn Alexander down, but upon a second thought, she realized that she'd be bored if she stayed in the apartment after her exams. That was the reason why she decided to follow him out. Little did she expect him to bring her to a luxurious salon.

A panicked Elise then tugged on his sleeve. "Why did you bring me here?"

He explained, "I will meet a client later. Do you think you look presentable?"

She quickly checked her appearance but thought she looked alright. In fact, she was used to her lack of fashion sense.

On the other hand, Alexander had directly passed her case to the stylist. "I'll give you an hour. Style her and give her a totally different look."

Upon hearing that, the stylist scrutinized Elise to the point where Elise felt a little on edge. She hurriedly urged, "It's fine; you don't have to exercise too much effort. Just give me a formal suit."

After looking at Alexander for confirmation, the stylist only brought Elise to pick an outfit after he agreed.

"Miss, please pick your outfit first. When that's done, we will style you."

A layer of cold sweat started to coat Elise's forehead as she replied, "I don't want to trouble you! I can take care of my own hair and makeup."

The last thing she wanted was to allow the stylist to work on hair and makeup because she'd be in deep trouble if her identity was exposed.

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In the face of Elise's apprehension and insistence, the stylist did not insist on styling her. She finally changed into a black formal suit, pulled her hair back into a bun and retouched her ugly makeup. As a result, she looked a little fairer than before and her features seemed to be more harmonious. Other than that, she looked quite similar to before.

Elise regarded her new look in the mirror. When she confirmed that she looked decent, she walked out and announced, "I'm done."

When Alexander looked up, his eyes flickered with strange emotions because she had a voluptuous body and her gown did its part to accentuate her alluring figure.

"Do I look okay?" she asked hesitantly.

He turned away and answered with a question, "Is your French good?"

As Elise was confused by the purpose of Alexander's question, she blinked a few times. "Well, I can hold basic conversations."

"If that's the case, help me to interpret later."

She clarified, "Huh? You mean to say that you want me to be your interpreter?"

"Yeah," he retorted. "Do you have any problem with that?"

There was a slight frown on her face. "But—"

He ignored her reservations and replied, "No buts!"

Then, Alexander stood up to his full height and led Elise out of the salon.

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Bring Your A Game, Mr Chapter 69

Chapter 69 There Goes My First Kiss

As a global conglomerate, the Griffith Group had maintained business relationships with entities in various countries. On that particular day, Alexander brought Elise to an upscale French restaurant and they saw their guests the moment they stepped into the private dining hall—a group of French people.

The moment Alexander entered, the French people were joyful and they enthusiastically greeted him whereas Elise shot him a glance and understood his hint. Then, she started to interpret for both sides and her fluency in the language was more than conversational as she had spent some time abroad.

His gaze had intermittently swept past her throughout the course of the dinner. It was then he realized that she had a captivating charm.

When Elise saw that the meal was almost over, she whispered to Alexander, “I’ll head to the washroom.”

He slightly nodded, thus allowing her to excuse herself from the hall. After she left, the guests couldn’t help but ask him in French, “Alex, what’s with you today? Why were you quiet during the meal? The missus was the only one speaking to us.”

Alexander smiled beguilingly as he slowly replied in fluent French, “She’s my assistant. Since she’s unfamiliar with the operations, I was giving her a training opportunity earlier.”

The French guests exchanged looks with each other and grinned. “So, she’s only your assistant, Alex? I clearly saw how you looked at her just now, though. I thought she was your girlfriend.”

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Upon hearing the term 'girlfriend', Alexander oddly didn't feel repulsive because he seemed to agree that it was a suitable nickname for Elise.

He fell silent and took a huge sip of the wine in front of him. The French were always passionate, sensual and especially open-minded when it came to relationships. When they saw Alexander agreeing with them in silence, they couldn't help but joke with him. "Alex! It looks like the missus' identity is not as simple as you said! I think you should be more courageous to meet the true love of your life."

The wine didn't smoothly slide down his throat because the moment he heard their words of encouragement, he choked on his wine.

It so happened that Elise was back from her trip to the washroom. She could sense that something had shifted in the air the moment she entered the hall, but she quickly handed him a tissue regardlessly. "Are you alright?"

Alexander looked up and met her clear eyes that sparkled with his reflection in them. As it reminded him of the 'advice' from his guests, it caused him to hurriedly look away and reply, "I'm okay."

She could feel that he was acting in a strange manner, but she couldn't pinpoint exactly what went wrong.

The amused guests looked like they had made a new discovery. As they were about to speak, Alexander swiftly handed them the bottle of wine and smiled knowingly before he downed the contents in his glass.

His abrupt action was clear—he wanted to prevent them from exposing him.

Since it wasn't their first time collaborating with him, they exchanged grins as they were elated to witness him losing his composure. No one was stopping him and by the end of the event, he had already downed more than he could handle.

In the end, Elise had to support Alexander as they walked out of the restaurant, which made her pant from the exertion. "Why did you drink so much?" she grumbled as she couldn't hold back her annoyance, to which he simply commented, "I haven't had so much fun in a long time. I am only feeling a bit dizzy."

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She replied, "How could you not be dizzy after all the drinking? Stand still for now. I'm calling a cab."

He grunted and was about to stand straight when he lost his balance a second later, leaving him with no choice but to lean against her.

It left her at the end of her wits. After hailing a cab with her phone, she brought him back to the apartment.

It was with much effort that Elise finally hauled Alexander into the unit and the action of doing so had exhausted her. She leaned against the wall for a short rest and wanted to reach out for the light switch. Much to her surprise, his body fell toward her and she hurried over to hold him. As she failed to catch him, she watched as he fell flat onto her and sent them crashing to the ground.

She was still reeling from the pain when she heard a loud thud somewhere. A pair of warm lips pressed themselves against hers in the middle of the dark, causing her eyes to widen in shock as she stared at the enlarged face in front of her. Her nose was filled with a unique masculine scent, after which she shoved him away carelessly in a frantic manner. "Alexander, what are you doing?"

Alas, he had too much to drink and he was slumped on his side as he leaned against the wall limply.

Elise quickly wiped her lips and forced herself to rise from the floor. As she left Alexander behind, she rushed to the bedroom and stared at her reflection in the mirror while regrets washed over her. "Ahhhhhhhhhhh! What was that?! Elise, that was your first kiss! It's gone just like that!"

She sounded so regretful that she badly wanted to repeatedly cleanse her lips.

Even though the corners of her mouth had turned red from the rigorous wiping, she still refused to stop.

After what seemed like an eternity, she took a deep breath to calm down. "It will be fine. Elise Sinclair, just forget what happened before. Act like nothing has happened."

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Despite her attempts to convince herself, the earlier scene was still playing itself in Elise's mind. She finally lost her cool and cursed in desperation, "Dammit! What the heck was that?"

As she had lost her mood to care for Alexander, she left him asleep on the floor until late after midnight when she felt a little sorry for him. She headed out of the bedroom to take a peek and found him still on the floor. Now that she was feeling sorry for him, she caved in and dragged him to his bedroom.

The next morning, Elise woke up almost close to noon and rummaged for her phone. When she realized that it was already 11:00AM in the morning, she washed up and exited the bedroom. She saw Alexander seated on the couch and furiously typing away on his laptop.

"You're awake?" he asked. When she heard his voice, she was instantly transported to the scene last night, which irritated her to no end.

When he didn't receive any answer, he looked up at her and closed his laptop. "I had too much to drink last night, so it must have been tough for you."

Elise then glared at him sharply before she couldn't help but complain, "Good that you know it! Do you know how much effort I used to get you home? I was so exhausted!"

At the sight of her animated expression, Alexander unknowingly broke into an almost unnoticeable smile that would easily be missed. "My mind went completely blank last night. I didn't cross a line, did I?"

Upon hearing that, she had wanted to retort, but she resisted and coldly replied, "No."

Alexander looked reassured after hearing Elise's reply. When he first woke up, some vague memories lingered in his mind and he was worried that he had crossed a line. Come to think of it, he found his reaction after he drank the alcohol rather odd. He rarely was tipsy even after downing many glasses of wine on normal occasions, but last night was an exception. I totally blacked out! I think I need to cut down on drinking next time.

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Bring Your A Game, Mr Chapter 70

Chapter 70 Do Some Matchmaking

"When are we heading home?"

Alexander snapped back to reality and answered, "Pack your stuff. Let's head back in the afternoon."

After hearing his answer, Elise relaxed and turned around to enter her bedroom.

In the afternoon, they traveled in silence throughout their journey to the airport. He could sense that she was intentionally creating distance between them.

Moments after they returned to Athesea, he asked the driver to send Elise home while he himself headed to the office.

Once she arrived at home, a concerned Jonah asked, "Ellie, how was the exam?"

She replied, "It was fine. Not a problem for me."

He then gave a warm smile. "I knew it! Ellie is the best! By the way, why are you home alone? Where's Alex?"

The last thing she wanted to talk about was Alexander, so she answered curtly, "He went to the office."

The old man clearly sensed the change in Elise's mood and assured, "Ellie, he didn't bully you in the past two days, did he? If he bullied you, just let me know. I have your back!"

Elise focused on a particular spot on the floor before she shook her head. "I-I'm fine! Grandpa, I feel a little tired. So, I'm going to rest in my room."

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Now that she had greeted Jonah, she went upstairs into her room. He flashed a smile of knowledge at the vanishing figure and the butler beside him interjected, "Sir, you seem to be in a good mood."

Jonah's smile widened even more. "Yeah! It looks like my trick has worked pretty well. In the future, you need to figure out ways to make them spend time with each other. I don't want to let this future granddaughter-in-law escape!"

The butler rarely saw Jonah in such high spirits. "Sir, you're right! Miss Elise and Young Master Alex look quite compatible."

Confirmations of his greatest wish was what Jonah loved to listen to.

"This boy, Alex, keeps everything to himself and he is extremely calculative. Someone like Ellie by his side would only spice up his life even further!"

"You're right indeed! Young Master Alex's birthday is around the corner. Do you think we should... do some matchmaking?"

Upon hearing the suggestion, Jonah agreed and nodded. "Let's observe for now. When the time is right, we'll give them a push."

Elise returned to her room, opened her laptop and logged into the account that she previously used to help Alexander with interpreter work. She found herself staring at the message he sent to her half a month ago—he asked whether she wanted to help him with interpreting on the spot at Aris. Without a second thought, she replied, 'No!'

She instantly felt much relieved after she replied with a one-word answer. Now that she had sent the message, she closed the laptop and shoved the matter to the back of her mind.

Now that she was done with the National Mathematics Olympiad, she returned to school once again.

Alexander should have been the one to send her to school, but she stubbornly decided to leave with Danny.

Since Elise was absent for half a month, she found herself longing for school life.

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Mikayla approached Elise and gave a bear hug. “Elise, you’re finally back!!!”

“That’s enough! You’re squeezing me; I can’t breathe!”

Upon hearing that, Mikayla released Elise from her embrace. “Do you know how badly I have missed you in your absence?”

They interlocked their fingers in an intimate manner while heading to the classroom. As Mikayla suddenly thought of something, she lowered her voice. “Oh, right, I have something to tell you. Jasmine is going to be engaged. She came to school two days ago to deliver the invitation cards for her engagement party to us.

Now that Elise was hearing Jasmine’s name once again, it no longer evoked any reaction from her. She then replied airily, “Her life has nothing to do with me.”

In contrast, Mikayla looked indignant. “How could someone like Jasmine live such a good life? I refuse to accept that! Shouldn’t the bad receive their karma?”

Mikayla looked confused, but Elise merely ruffled her friend’s hair. “Okay, stop overthinking! We just need to live our lives to the best of our abilities. The lives of others do not concern us.”

After being comforted by Elise, Mikayla immediately cheered up and they both entered the classroom.

At the same time, Alexander was seated in his luxurious executive chair in his office at the Griffith Group. His eyes were staring at the words on his computer screen—the reply he received regarding his request for interpreting on the spot No!

He lifted a brow in surprise and finally made an internal call. Soon, an assistant came into the office.

“I told you to look for Arisian interpreters. Are there any candidates? Send their resume to my inbox, please.”

Upon hearing that, the assistant responded in nervousness, “Young Master Alex, we have not received any resumes so far.”

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Alexander's eyes narrowed as he fell into deep thought. "Did you ask the foreign language college? I don't mind fresh graduates as long as they can help with basic interpretation work."

"I have checked with a couple of colleges in Aris, but nobody has majored in the language since the population of Arisian speakers is small. That's why I can't find a candidate until now."

As he rapped his knuckles rhythmically on the table, Alexander stared at Elise's reply before he finally decided and messaged, 'What's your offer? As long as you are willing to work, the pay is not a problem.'

After sending his reply, he felt that it wasn't enough and added, 'If you have any issues, you can talk it out with me face-to-face. As for the pay, I can match your preferred salary.'

This was the first time Alexander had lowered himself to beg for a favor. It was all because the company urgently needed talent, yet it was hard to come across.

To be more blunt, he was running out of options.

"Get back to work and search for an Arisian interpreter. Once you receive an application, let me know right away."

"Sure, Young Master Alex."

With that, the assistant left, but the door to the office was opened again soon after. As Alexander was buried deep in work, he thought that his assistant had returned. "Anything else?"

Jonah smiled and announced, "It's me."

Alexander looked up with a surprised face. "Grandpa, why did you visit today?"

Calmness had enveloped Jonah when he replied, "You must have endured a lot this time. I'm just bored at home, so I decided to swing by."

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Then, Alexander rose to his height and handed his grandpa a couple of financial reports that he had vetted. "Grandpa, these are the financial reports for this month. Take a look! I have a meeting soon, so I'll need to run."

Jonah accepted the reports, but he placed them aside for the time being. "Those aren't urgent. I need to talk to you."

Upon seeing his grandfather's grave expression, Alexander thought that serious matters would be discussed and he asked the assistant to close the door. "Grandpa, what's the matter?"

Much to his surprise, Jonah flashed a smile. "Why are you so nervous? It's nothing much. I just noticed that it's going to be your birthday soon. Do you have any thoughts on how you want to celebrate it?"

Alexander was taken aback by the question. "Grandpa, it's just a birthday. It's not that important."

As usual, he never liked anything ceremonial and would prefer a simple dinner with family for his birthday.

"Well, here's what I think. Since our family hasn't gathered for a long time, let's have everyone over to celebrate your birthday. What do you think?"

Alexander was still in the dark about his grandpa's plan and tried to reject the suggestion with the excuse of being busy. "Grandpa, I have a lot of projects to work on. I even have a work trip to Aris in a few days' time. As for the birthday celebration, let's put it aside for now."

"Look at you! You're only focused on work. If so, I'll take care of your birthday celebrations and you'll just need to focus on your work. When your birthday rolls around, all you have to do is to show up."

Since Jonah was insistent and even offered to help, Alexander did not reject the idea and allowed his grandfather to take charge instead.

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