

Chapter 51 Accident on a Business Trip

After hearing that, Elspeth couldn't help laughing and said, "I have nothing to do with Callum, not to mention meddling in their relationship."

Ginna was so paranoid.

"Miss Lynwood, you are smart, but I have my own judgment." She stroked her hair and continued, "When you're with Callum, I can see the hidden emotion you two have, or I wouldn't have come all the way here to see you."

Elspeth looked at her coldly and reassured her, "Don't worry. Nothing is going on between the two of us."

"That'll be the best. I'm leaving tomorrow on a flight at 8.00AM, but I must remind you that my sister will be back in six months. So, I suggest you keep your distance from Callum; otherwise, you'll be the one who ends up getting hurt." After saying those words, Ginna got up and left.

Was Emma coming back soon?

Elspeth's eyes were dim and hard to distinguish. Lowering her head, she took another sip of wine.

When Harper returned, she had already passed out from drinking. When he leaned closer to her, she was mumbling someone's name. "C-Callum Winthrop... B*stard..."

Sure enough, it was Callum who made her upset. However, now that she was drunk, Harper couldn't send her home, so he carried her upstairs to the lounge instead.

When Elspeth woke up and found herself lying in the lounge upstairs of the bar. He had already left, but beside her were a new set of clothes and a bottle of powdered Ganoderma. Then, she got up, took a shower, changed her clothes, and left the bar.

She returned to Winthrop Residence with her items, and the moment she walked in, she noticed Callum reading on the couch. Since it was the weekend, he didn't go to work. He

wore dark blue pajamas, which made him look neat and gentle, unlike his usual aloof appearance.

“Are you back?”

He seemed to have forgotten their minor argument the night before and took the initiative to talk to her.

Instead of responding, Elspeth snorted at him.

“Don’t go drinking at night anymore. You reek of alcohol.”

Smelling the faint scent of jasmine on her body, she frowned. “I don’t reek of alcohol.”

Without uttering another word, Callum closed the book.

“Did you send your men to stalk me?”

A quick possibility flashed in her mind.

His gaze was calm as he replied, “No. My father sent someone to follow you in case something happens.”

Hearing his explanation, she felt uneasy. “If that is the case, I don’t need your concern. I’m going to sleep now. Bye.”

Just as she was heading upstairs, her arm was yanked. “Don’t get worked up.” Callum softened his voice for the first time, trying to have a good talk with Elspeth.

She wanted to break free but realized she couldn’t, so she stared at him with fierce eyes. “Callum, it’s none of your business whether I’m angry or not. Let me go.”

“I’m going on a business trip this afternoon for two days, and my dad said that you have to accompany me.” When he said that, his eyes were clear, and it didn’t seem like he was lying.

Elspeth intended to refuse him, but she realized that if Theodore was the one who wanted her to go, she would have to bite her tongue.

“Why does Mr. Winthrop wants me to go with you?” She couldn’t figure out how Theodore found out about Callum’s business trip and purposefully wanted her to accompany Callum.

When he noticed that she had calmed down, he let go of her and replied, “Maybe he wants us to spend more time together and try to get along.”

Now that Ophelia was out of options, Theodore hoped Elspeth could marry Callum, so he deliberately created opportunities for them to be alone.

“When do we have to leave?”

Although she didn’t want to be alone with Callum, especially after what had transpired over the past two days, she had an inexplicable aversion to him. However, if she refused him, Theodore might probably act pitifully toward her again. She wouldn’t be able to refute him by then.

“3.00PM flight and we’re going to Bellville.”

“Okay. I’ll pack my stuff now, then we can leave.” Elspeth let out a defeated sigh.

Since they were only going to be away for two days, she didn’t need to pack too much. After lightly packing her bags, she accompanied him to the airport.

The flight to Bellville took only two hours, and Callum booked first-class tickets. Only a few seats were occupied, and most of the passengers were typing away on their laptops.

Elspeth covered her lap with a small blanket while sipping a cup of coffee.

The plane was flying smoothly through the stratosphere when it suddenly began vibrating violently. A broadcast was made to remind passengers to remain seated.

“Callum, something seems wrong.”

As the turbulence became increasingly apparent, she could not help but become serious.

Then, he turned off his computer and began to assess the situation. When he felt the amplitude, he calmed down. “There’s not much turbulence right now. Just wait and hear what the captain says.”

The following instant, the plane experienced a sudden, severe tremor and began a steep nosedive!

“Everyone, don’t panic. Please stay calm as the captain is controlling the plane...”

The radio beeps became more frequent, making Elspeth realize the gravity of the situation.

After a minute or so, the plane seemed to descend at a slower rate, but it was still a steep dive toward the ground.

“Callum, I want to go to the cockpit.”

He responded with a frown. “Don’t cause trouble right now.”

As the situation became more critical, she unfastened her seat belt and stood up. “I’m not trying to cause trouble. I just want to try if I can make the plane land safely.”

Before she left, her wrist was firmly grasped. “Elspeth, human life is not a trivial matter, and the cockpit is the most dangerous place of a plane. Do you know that?”

“I know, but trust me, Callum.” Her gaze was firm, and then she pushed his hand away. “I have a pilot’s license and have flying experience. I want to give it a try, even though I don’t usually fly planes.”

Nevertheless, Callum didn’t let go of her. “It’s not safe.”

The repeated words on the radio suddenly changed this time. “To all passengers aboard flight G12548, do any of you know how to fly a plane? Do any of you know how to fly a plane—”

“Listen up, Callum. The captain is incapable of handling this type of emergency. If I don’t try, everyone on board will die.”

He felt his heart tighten as he looked into Elspeth’s determined eyes, but he still slowly released her hand.

“I’ll come with you.”

Elspeth declined without hesitation. “Don’t. The air pressure in the cockpit isn’t stable. It’ll be risky for you to come.”

“Why don’t I come with you?”

She abruptly turned her head to find the source of the voice, which came from a stranger seated in the last row.

Chapter 52 Dealing Together

The man appeared to be in his twenties and had a dashing good look with a pair of charming peach blossom eyes. Even his gaze was gentle.

“May I have your name, please?”

The man responded with an elegant smile. “You can call me Mr. Carr.”

Then, Elspeth asked in a deep voice, “Why do you want to come with me?”

Jordan Carr smiled. “Just like you, I have experience in flying planes. I believe it will be more efficient with two people operating the plane together.”

Listening to his sincere words, she agreed to go with him.

In the cockpit, the captains were showing signs of extreme anxiety. They had just started working as pilots, so they didn’t have a ton of experience in the field. They were mentally collapsing under the strain of the situation and had no viable solutions to weather the storm.

When Elspeth and Jordan arrived, the captains were tense and frowned upon seeing the two of them.

“What are you two young people doing here?” Seeing that the two of them looked young, the captain couldn’t help scolding, “This is not a place for fun. Go back to your seats!”

She took a step forward and asked patiently, “Hello, captain. I have experience in flying planes. May I give it a try?”

“You? Young lady, aren’t you only in your twenties? This is a commercial plane, not your private jet. Go back to your seat!” As expected, the captain didn’t trust her and tried to shoo her back to her seat.

“I haven’t even tried yet. How do you know that I can’t do it? Besides, the plane is facing an issue and is about to hit the ground soon. Will you sacrifice everyone’s lives because of your subjective judgment?”

At this moment, Elspeth couldn’t care less about talking nicely. She just wanted to convince the captain to let her control the plane.

Jordan, on the side, chimed in, “Let her try. Aren’t we running out of options? After two minutes, the plane is still descending, proving that the crisis cannot be resolved with your level of expertise.”

His words were blunt, making the two captains lower their heads in guilt. Indeed, they had failed to handle the current situation, so they asked the stewardesses to broadcast for help. Thinking of that, the two captains got up and let the young people take over.

“We’ll depend on you now. Don’t blame yourselves if it is irreparable. You’ve tried your best.” The captains patted the young people’s shoulders and sighed.

Elspeth didn’t have time to respond politely, so she sat down quickly and started controlling the plane manually. On the other hand, Jordan assisted in monitoring the aviation situation and the plane’s trajectory.

“The plane has sufficient fuel, and the air pressure is stable. What is causing the problem?”

She couldn't figure out why this was happening because all indicators were normal.

He studied the numbers on the table intently for a while before uttering, "Is there a possibility that the numerical value of the plane's flight path has been tampered with?"

She was a little surprised. "You mean manual modification?"

Jordan pointed to the dashboard in front of him and explained, "Look at the current flight trajectory. It should be flying in the direction of Bellville, but the plane is hitting a high mountain not far away at high speed. Even if it doesn't hit the mountain, it will hit the ground, causing the aircraft to explode."

Elsbeth doubted the reliability of his words. "But this is a commercial flight."

"What about that? To tamper with the flight data of a single aircraft, all you need is top-notch hacking skills." He raised his eyebrows. "What? Don't you know about hackers?"

"Ordinary hackers will not challenge something like this, and hackers with a conscience will not harm the public." Although she possessed extremely top-notch hacking skills, she would never do such an outrageous thing.

While Jordan studied the information in front of him, he murmured, "If a hacker modifies the data, it may be possible to change the flight trajectory back to its original course, making it much easier to operate manually."

Elsbeth abruptly stood up when she heard that. She hurriedly returned to retrieve her laptop and started hacking into the traffic management department's information network. Although it was a little more challenging than anything else she had attempted before, the invasion was still successful. After acquiring the relevant information regarding the

flight, she modified and adjusted the flight trajectory, and even optimized and upgraded it on her own accord.

Afterward, she started manually operating the plane with his assistance. He guided her through the process by giving her instructions from time to time. The two cooperated tacitly, and the plane eventually stabilized.

“We did it!” She couldn’t help exclaiming as she watched the plane’s condition gradually improve.

Jordan softened this time. “Yeah. It’s all thanks to you.”

She smiled lightly. “Without your advice, I would not have been able to do this.”

“Come on, give yourself some credit. Let’s head back now. The plane can fly on its own.”

Elspeth nodded and returned to the first-class cabin with him.

Though it wasn’t long before they left, Callum felt like he had been waiting for ages.

When he saw her return unscathed and was able to successfully control the plane, he was at a loss for words to describe how he felt. “Did you get hurt?”

She burst out laughing, “Of course not. I’m Elspeth Lynwood. There’s nothing I can’t do.”

“I can’t imagine you to be such a talented person, although you look young. You’re truly courageous.” Jordan’s eyes glowed with genuine surprise and gratitude as he spoke, making Callum uneasy.

As a man, he naturally knew what Jordan’s gaze meant.

“Same to you, Mr. Carr. You are such a knowledgeable person. Without you, I would never have thought of the possibility, and I would not have been able to complete the rescue,” she returned the praise politely.

“You can do it even without him,” Callum spoke coldly.

His voice was remarkably abrupt, and only after that did Elspeth realize he was competing with Jordan.

Could he be... jealous?

She couldn't help snickering in her heart but she still defended Callum. “This friend of mine has always been like this. He's a little competitive, so please don't take his words to heart.”

After understanding the relationship between the two, Jordan remained smiling. “I understand. Mr. Winthrop is just... eager to protect his girlfriend. That's why he is hostile to me.”

He could naturally tell that Callum had overbearing protection and possession of her.

“What are you talking about, Mr. Carr? I have nothing to do with him. Don't speak nonsense.” Elspeth was surprised to hear that, so she couldn't help but defend herself.

After hearing this, Callum didn't rush to refute but yanked her into his arms instead.

“Okay, problem solved. Go back to your seat. We'll arrive in Bellville soon.”

Chapter 53 Attempted Assault

“Why do you care so much...” Elspeth rolled her eyes helplessly, but she was not as strong as Callum. So, she had no choice but to resign herself to being pinned down on the chair.

Seeing that, Jordan stopped chatting with her and returned to his seat to rest.

Soon after arriving in Bellville, she and Callum got off the plane and parted ways with Jordan.

“I suddenly realized I forgot to ask Mr. Carr’s full name.”

When Callum heard that, a sudden trace of coldness lit up in his eyes. “What? Do you want to know his name?”

She didn’t realize he sounded off as she replied, “Yeah. He’s a friend who fights by my side, so I’m curious about his identity.”

A friend who fights by your side.

Turning his head away, he stopped talking to her.

Unexpectedly, when they arrived at the hotel, Elspeth saw that familiar face again at the reception.

“Mr. Carr, what a coincidence you’re staying in this hotel too.”

Jordan turned her head and saw Callum and Elspeth walking toward him. A smile bloomed on his face. “You two are here too? We’re neighbors for the time being, then!”

She asked curiously, “Mr. Carr, may I have your name, please?”

He chuckled, “Jordan Carr.”

Jordan Carr!

Elspeth was not unfamiliar with the name at all. It was only three years ago when the previously unknown NK Group shot to fame overnight. After only three years of

development, the company had already held a pivotal position in several industries. Jordan was the president of that company, but he maintained a low profile and never appeared in public.

She was slightly surprised but still introduced herself. “I am Elspeth Lynwood, and this is Callum—”

“I know. You’re popular all over the country, and I’ve also seen you on TV.” Jordan then turned around and smiled at Callum. “It’s nice to meet you, Mr. Winthrop.”

In response, he extended his hand and waited for Callum to shake it. Callum watched Jordan quietly with his deep eyes, and after a long time, he shook Jordan’s hand firmly.

“If there’s nothing else, I’ll return to the room first.” Jordan was not timid in the face of Callum’s hostility but he had an amused smile instead.

When Jordan left, she couldn’t help asking, “Callum, do you have a grudge against Jordan?”

“No,” Callum answered with a cold expression.

“Then, why do you look like he owes you millions?”

He looked at her meaningfully but didn’t explain. Instead, he uttered lightly, “Okay, let’s go back and rest. We have a collaboration to discuss at 8.00PM.”

“Sure,” Elspeth hummed perfunctorily, but suddenly, she thought of something and turned around to ask him. “Callum, do you know what caused the issue with the plane today?”

“Is it human-related?”

She was shocked. “How did you know?”

Callum responded with a voice as calm as a millpond, “I know some flying principles, and it doesn’t seem like a normal accident.”

“Then, do you think Houston or Alphascape Group could have been involved in this accident?” After giving it some thought, Elspeth concluded that, aside from them, no one was desperate to kill.

He paused briefly before deducing, “It isn’t them.”

She didn’t particularly understand him. “Why?”

“Houston just set fire to Winthrop Group, so I’ve already suppressed him. For the time being, he will not risk causing trouble. As for Alphascape Group... I don’t believe this matter is a simple one. If they’re caught, they will face more than a dozen years in prison. Alphascape Group employs hundreds of staff, so I doubt they would dare to take such a big risk.”

Elspeth admired Callum’s meticulous thinking but still couldn’t help feeling curious.

“Then, who do you think did it?”

He shook his head. “I don’t know, but it is possible they are not targeting us.”

She nodded thoughtfully. “Alright, go to your room now. I’ll see you at the hotel lobby in half an hour.”

The two then returned to their room. She was just about to wash up and change into fresh clothes when there was a knock on the door.

“Room service.”

Without thinking too much, Elspeth opened the door. The next moment, a burly man rushed in and reached out to choke her neck. She backed away before kicking him in the face.

Obviously, the man was strong. Since the kick didn't do him much damage, he decided to lock the door before he pounced on her. This time, he aimed for her waist.

"Let me go!" She struggled to break free by hitting the back of the man with her elbow.

"Stop struggling, beautiful. You're mine tonight!"

The burly man took a deep sniff, and his intoxicated appearance was disgusting.

Elspeth calmed down and began to observe the surrounding environment while thinking about countermeasures. The hotel's sound insulation was so good that it was clearly unrealistic to throw something to attract the attention of others. She also took off her ring to take a shower earlier, so she wouldn't be able to contact Harper. The strength of the burly man was surprisingly great, and she couldn't break free. She was a little apprehensive and was ready to fight the man with all her might.

Just as the burly man's stinky mouth was close to her skin, she raised her head in disgust. The next second, the door was suddenly kicked open. Callum looked at the scene in front of him and a trace of anger rose in his heart. He grabbed the big man by the collar to yank him up before he kicked the man to the ground.

"Who sent you here?" Callum's deep voice carried a menacing aura.

The burly man could still pin Elspeth down, but now that Callum was here, he couldn't fight Callum. Worried about his safety, the big man pursed his lips in his refusal to make a sound.

Callum crouched down; his eyes were cold. “Refusing to tell me, huh?”

The burly man was terrified by Callum’s frightening eyes. He was a little scared, but he still managed to answer him, “W-What can you do to me?”

He didn’t know who Callum was and only knew that someone had paid him to assault the woman in this room. Besides, when he saw Elspeth’s photo, he was immediately aroused, which was why he hurried over.

“I will make you disappear from this world quietly.”

Seeing how serious Callum looked, the burly man was suddenly terrified. “Don’t kill me. I didn’t do it on purpose. I-I was instructed by someone!”

Callum knew it was impossible for a stranger to locate her room precisely, so he concluded that the man was being manipulated from behind.

“Tell me. Who is it?”

The burly man began to think hard about the man he had traded with. “He told me to address him as Mr. Bishop, but I don’t know his full name. He said he would give me half a million after I was done. I was intoxicated when I saw this lady’s photos, so...”

Chapter 54 A Pawn

Houston?

Callum and Elspeth looked at each other and instantly understood who was behind it.

“I really didn’t expect that Houston would not give up and challenge my bottom line again and again. Does he really think I dare not lay a hand on him?” She was gnashing

her teeth in hatred. If it wasn't for Callum today, she would most likely be fighting this buff man to death.

“Erm... Can I go now?” The burly man stood up slowly, trying to escape, but Callum kicked his knee hard, sending him tumbling to the ground once more.

Callum then uttered in a calm and cold voice, “Attempted assault also warrants legal repercussions.”

“Huh!” The man cried loudly without caring about the situation. “But, I already told you about the mastermind behind it. Why can't you let me go?!”

Elsbeth shot him a threatening gaze. “If you speak one more word, it won't be as simple as going to jail.”

The man shut his mouth after being intimidated, feeling completely dejected.

She first called the police, sent the big guy to the station, and then merely tidied up a bit. In addition, she intended to settle accounts with Houston after returning from the business discussion.

The two met in the private room on the first floor of the hotel. As soon as Elsbeth walked in, she noticed a familiar man opposite her.

“What a coincidence. We meet again.” Jordan greeted her with a smile.

She was shocked beyond belief, and her head whipped around to look at Callum as though she wanted to know why their business partner was Jordan.

Callum explained patiently, “Our partner is NK Group, but I just found out an hour ago that he is the president.”

Jordan chuckled. "I guess we are fated to meet each other."

The three then sat down, and Callum began to discuss cooperation with him. "I can sell this land to you, but NK Group has to give Winthrop Group a 10% dividend."

Jordan's eyes lit up. "Mr. Winthrop, you sure know how to make demands, but ten percent is too high. What about five percent?"

Despite that, Callum was unwilling to give in. With a determined attitude, he uttered, "Ten percent is my minimum limit. If you're unwilling to take it, I'll have to look for another company."

"Are you threatening me?"

Although he spoke with a smile, Elspeth could hear the impending storm from the lively conversation between the two.

Callum chuckled in response. "Of course not. We're all businessmen; seeking profit isn't crossing the line, is it?"

Jordan suddenly stopped answering him and stared at her with a smile instead. "If it's for Miss Lynwood's sake, then a ten percent dividend shouldn't be too much, though."

Hearing that, Callum furrowed his brows.

"Mr. Carr, you don't have to do it for my sake. You two should talk it out between yourselves." Elspeth already felt the pressure from the surroundings and didn't want to get involved in the situation.

"Miss Lynwood, I admire your ability. NK Group rarely tolerates such counter proposals. This is my first time."

After hearing that, Callum mocked, “What a flirt you are, Mr. Carr. I’m sorry to tell you that Elspeth is my fiancée. Wouldn’t it be inappropriate for you to take the offer for her sake?”

In response, Jordan laughed out loud. “Miss Lynwood is an outstanding woman. Which man wouldn’t be tempted by her? I’m just an ordinary man. If you’re unhappy about it, it’s alright to tell me. You don’t have to feel threatened.”

Callum raised his eyebrows and countered with a hint of sarcasm, “Of course, I won’t. It’s not like she will be satisfied with just any man.”

Elspeth felt helpless in her heart. Why do you have to involve me when you’re boasting?

Jordan withdrew his smile and uttered with an unnatural expression, “There’s no need for you to be oppressive. For Miss Lynwood’s sake, I shall agree to your unreasonable request. I’ll treat it as doing her a favor.”

“She doesn’t need your favor.”

Jordan stood up. “If you are unwilling to cooperate with NK Group, then let’s put this collaboration on hold for the time being. We shall continue the conversation when you come to discuss with sincerity.” After saying that, he left the room directly.

Elspeth knew that Jordan was upset, so she nudged Callum’s arm. “Callum, what’s the matter with you? Why are you so impolite? You are here to discuss cooperation, not to quarrel with him!”

He stared at her face with a burning gaze before spitting, “Are you dumb?”

She was taken aback by his mockery. “Why are you scolding me?”

He didn't bother to explain to her, so he stood up and walked out. After that, he returned to his room, but she didn't want to return to hers, so she left the hotel for a stroll in the garden by herself. She walked to an empty corner where no one was around and dialed Houston's number.

"Who is this?" Houston's voice sounded weak.

He was unlucky. The same night he set fire to Winthrop Group, someone set fire to his residence. During that time, he was sound asleep in the room, and five family members came perilously close to being killed by the flames. They were extremely fortunate to have escaped the fire unscathed.

However, his assets were frozen the following day. The reason for this was that during his time working for Winthrop Group, there were issues with his assets, and as a result of an investigation, all his assets were confiscated. It was even more infuriating that Alphascape Group gave up on him on the same day because they believed Winthrop Group had dismissed him from his position!

Now, his family of five was crammed into a small rented house and complained endlessly on a daily basis. Their frequent quarrels had almost exhausted him physically and mentally.

"Houston Bishop, do you know who I am?"

The voice sounded pleasant to the ear, and he was almost immediately able to identify the person whose voice it was.

"Elsbeth, are you calling to mock me too?" He sneered and inhaled a long breath of smoke.

"You sent someone to assault me. Do you really think I'll let you go easily?"

Houston didn't understand what she said, so he questioned, "Assault you? That wasn't me. Don't accuse me of what I haven't done!"

She snickered. "You know best whether you have done it or not."

This time, he burst into laughter.

"Are you putting the blame on me because you were framed by others? Elspeth, oh, Elspeth. Why do you have so many enemies? If I were you, I would have killed myself and ended all this misery."

Hearing what he said, she suddenly sensed something was wrong. "Are you sure you didn't do it?"

"How could it be me? My life has been ruined by you. My house and job are gone, and I can hardly afford to feed myself. How can I hire someone to take revenge on you?"

"OK." After hanging up the phone, Elspeth started pondering the possibilities.

He didn't sound like he was lying, so it seemed he wasn't the one behind this.

Who could have used him as a spear, then?

Someone capable of doing bad things in the name of Houston while also having a grudge against her... She immediately realized who it might be.

Chapter 55 Elspeth Is Tempted

After realizing who it might be, Elspeth went back to the hotel and knocked on Callum's door. "Callum, I have something to talk to you about."

Before Elspeth could finish what she wanted to say, she was interrupted by Callum's cold voice. "I'm in the middle of something now. I don't have time."

Noticing that Callum was currently not in a good mood, Elspeth stopped talking and kept quiet.

The two were in a stalemate at the door for a while before Callum realized that his tone was a bit harsh. Just as he was about to speak to ease the situation, he received a call.

Callum answered the phone and Arthur's voice sounded on the other end. "Callum, Emma is back." Those three words were like a stone being thrown into a calm lake, causing ripples in Callum's already silent heart.

Arthur and Emma were from the same department in college, so they were pretty close. Arthur wouldn't be lying to him. Without giving it another thought, Callum subconsciously blurted, "Where is she? Tell me."

Since the surrounding was quiet, Elspeth could hear their conversation loud and clear.

Emma, his first love whom he liked for years, was back?

It seemed that what Arthur said was true. Callum couldn't forget her.

"She'll only be back for a short while this time. She'll be leaving for Eden tomorrow morning."

Arthur's intentions were obvious. If Emma was taking the plane back tomorrow morning, Arthur was implying that it wasn't too late for Callum to see her if he left now.

Callum hummed and replied, "I'll be back later."

After hanging up the phone, Callum lowered his head and suddenly saw Elspeth's dazed expression.

His heart clenched unexpectedly.

"I..."

"What about the collaboration? Are we still going to discuss it?" Elspeth questioned after taking a deep breath.

Callum's gaze gradually turned dark. "Let's give up on the collaboration for now."

“Cooperating with NK Group will bring a huge profit for Winthrop Group. Do you really want to give up?” Elspeth questioned in a deep voice, feeling bitter.

From what she knew about Callum, he was someone who cared deeply about the interests of the company.

“I have something urgent coming up, so let’s cancel it for now.”

“Something urgent? Your urgent matter is to go back and see her. Callum, I can still negotiate the cooperation without you. Feel free to leave.”

Callum frowned. “It’s not what you think.”

“Whatever. That’s your business.” After Elspeth finished speaking, she didn’t bother to listen to his explanation before turning around and leaving without looking back.

Callum’s eyes dimmed a little. He resisted the thought of catching up to her and left the hotel anyway.

After returning to her room, Elspeth felt a ball of anger forming within her. Just then, Harper called. Elspeth answered the call, sounding displeased.

“What’s up?”

Hearing her tone, Harper was taken aback and inquired, “What’s wrong, Elsie?”

Elspeth frowned and continued, “Just go straight to the point. I’m fine.”

“Azure Corporation encountered a problem recently. I think you should come back and take a look in person.” Harper’s tone was serious as if there was a huge issue.

Recalling how Callum lost control over the mention of Emma, she quickly told Harper that she would return as soon as possible. However, the discussion for collaboration wasn’t done yet, so Elspeth decided to negotiate with Jordan before leaving.

When Elspeth found Jordan, he was drinking coffee behind the screen in the hall. The aroma of coffee filled the surroundings while smoke lingered in the air.

“I knew you’d come and see me, Miss Lynwood.” Jordan looked like he had expected her, which left Elspeth puzzled.

“Why do you say so?”

“I believe you’re a wise woman. You know that cooperating with NK Group will bring you huge benefits.” When he was saying that, he was all smiles, but it wasn’t a pleasant sight.

Elsbeth smiled in response. “What about you, Mr. Carr? What are your thoughts on the cooperation with Winthrop Group?”

Jordan intentionally built up suspense. “I’m sad that Mr. Winthrop isn’t willing to work with NK Group... but if you can offer me an interesting token, I might still consider proceeding with the cooperation.”

As for the bargaining token, it would depend on whether Elspeth’s offer was attractive enough.

“The development of Winthrop Group is obvious to all. I believe you understand that cooperation with us will be a win-win situation.” Contrary to his expectations, her words did not make his heart waver. Smiling, he suggested, “I think you can offer me something else.”

Frowning, Elspeth thought, Does this not work?

“I don’t get what you mean. Please tell me directly.”

Jordan no longer concealed it this time. “I think you are a worthy token of negotiation, Miss Lynwood.”

A trace of displeasure painted across Elspeth’s face. “I don’t understand what you’re referring to.”

Looking at her with an unnatural expression, he laughed out loud. “Don’t be nervous. Although I admire you, I have no intentions of taking advantage. Frankly speaking, I have taken a fancy to your capability. I’d like to offer you a placement in NK Group. If you accept it, I will definitely offer you a senior management position.”

Fearing that Elspeth would not like the idea, he even made the conditions more attractive. “You’re probably already aware of NK Group’s development strength, so it won’t take long for us to catch up with Winthrop Group. Besides, if NK Group and Winthrop Group

were to collaborate, then it doesn't matter who you work for anymore since both parties would benefit."

His words were impeccable. He did not only introduce NK Group's development strength but also provided Elspeth with an excuse to leave her current company.

If it were an ordinary person, they would have been tempted long ago, but she was different. She was Elspeth, or to put it bluntly, she had the status and money, so these things couldn't tempt her at all.

"I'm just an insignificant employee. How could I be worth as a bargaining token for the cooperation between Winthrop Group and NK Group?" Elspeth's intentions were clear. This sentence was a tactful rejection.

"If you are not willing to take it, I will not force you, but NK Group shall not give in to this cooperation."

Hearing that, Elspeth got up and offered him a light smile. "I understand what you mean now. If that is the case, I won't force it on you." With that said, Elspeth got up to leave but was stopped by Jordan. "Please wait, Miss Lynwood."

Elspeth smirked and turned around. "What's wrong?"

Sure enough, the shrewd Jordan would never let go of this collaboration opportunity. In fact, she made the right bet.

Helplessly, Jordan gave in. "I'm defeated by you, Miss Lynwood. Let's proceed with the collaboration between Winthrop Group and NK Group. I'll draft the contract and email it to you later. Looking forward to the cooperation with Winthrop Group."

This time, Elspeth showed a sincere smile. "Me too."

"To be honest, I like you more now."

Unlike the vanity and frivolity of ordinary women, Elspeth's smile was like a ray of sunshine in the morning.

Most importantly, Elspeth was smart and cunning, an attractive aspect that could easily lure any businessman.

Chapter 56 The Way of Making Tea

“Thank you for your admiration, Mr. Carr. I hope that you don’t only take interest in me, but also Winthrop Group.” Her words resolved the awkwardness between them.

Jordan smiled in reply. “Sure.”

After dealing with Jordan, Elspeth booked the earliest flight back. She went back to Winthrop Group first and was going to take a few days off to settle the problem with Azure Corporation, but she bumped into Callum head-on.

“Elspeth,” Callum called out to her first.

“Hey, shouldn’t you be reuniting with your first love now? Why are you here?”

Elspeth felt annoyed when she saw his nonchalant expression as if nothing had happened. In that instant, she couldn’t hold back her anger.

“No. It’s not what you think.”

When he returned in a rush the other day, Arthur informed him that he saw the wrong person. Emma wasn’t back yet.

Moreover, the reason he left in such a hurry was not to relive the memories he had with Emma, but because he had a doubt that hadn’t been answered for several years, so he needed to face Emma to untie his knot.

Just as Callum was about to explain the situation, he was interrupted by Elspeth. “You don’t owe me an explanation, Mr. Winthrop. I don’t have time to talk to you about your old lover right now.” Leaving him with that, Elspeth went to the HR department to request leave without looking back.

Looking at her resolute back, Callum felt ripples in his heart. Coincidentally, his phone rang at that time. The moment he saw the screen displaying Jordan’s name, he couldn’t help but feel irritated. Connecting the call, he heard Jordan saying, “Did you receive the contract, Mr. Winthrop?”

Callum knitted his brows. “What contract?”

“Didn’t Miss Lynwood tell you? If it wasn’t for Miss Lynwood’s sincere desire to cooperate with NK Group, the cooperation might have been delayed for a long time... Weren’t you aware of that?”

Jordan was surprised, and then quickly added, “I thought Miss Lynwood would tell you the news first, but it turns out she didn’t. How strange.”

These words were obviously said to provoke him, but Callum ignored them and questioned, “You refused to cooperate, so what made you change your mind?”

Jordan raised his eyebrows. Slowing down his tone of speech, he added a hint of mystery to his words. “Miss Lynwood gave me a bargaining token that made me waver, so...”

Jordan had always shown his admiration for Elspeth, and now that he said so, Callum subconsciously thought of some strange ideas.

“What did she do?” He couldn’t believe his assumptions, so he asked calmly.

“You should ask Miss Lynwood about it.” Jordan smiled. “Mr. Winthrop, I have to go now. Goodbye.”

Jordan hung up the phone, leaving Callum with an unsolved mystery. The latter heard from the HR department that Elspeth would take a one-month leave starting today. After pondering for a while, he decided to call Elspeth. “Where are you?”

Listening to his questioning tone, Elspeth sneered, “That’s none of your—”

“You’re not allowed to take leaves. Come back and work.”

Callum sounded so certain of what conditions she offered to Jordan. Otherwise, she wouldn’t have left so suddenly.

“I’ve gone through the proper process to request leave. You shouldn’t have the right to interfere.”

Callum’s voice sounded even more serious now. “Don’t make me repeat my words.”

“What’s wrong with you today, Callum?”

Callum suddenly let out a sneer. “Elspeth, you are on your way to NK Group, aren’t you?”

Elspeth was taken aback for a moment, unable to fathom why he thought so.

“I know Jordan offered you some benefits, and you’re leaving Winthrop Group because of this, aren’t you?” Callum took a deep breath and continued.

Elspeth snickered before uttering in a cold voice, “Even if I did accept an offer from NK Group, it’s my right to seek companies with better conditions. It’s not necessary for you to get worked up.”

“Alright, then. Go.” After saying that, Callum ended the call.

Elspeth was stunned when she heard the beep tones from the phone. There was no way she was going to tell him she took a month off to deal with Azure Corporation’s business, so she rather let him misunderstand her. Nevertheless, he didn’t care about her at all. All he did was reprimand and suspect her.

When Elspeth returned to the headquarters, Harper was already expecting her. Seeing Elspeth’s return, he visibly relaxed.

“What’s the matter? What happened?”

Harper hurriedly answered, “Azure Corporation recently encountered problems with the cooperation with the foreign company, Centaria Group, but that company is being absurd. They’ve asked to see you.”

“See me?” Elspeth frowned.

“Yeah. They’ve asked to meet Azure Corporation’s president to have a chat over tea. If we refuse to, they will terminate the cooperation, no matter how much money they have to pay.” Then, Harper sighed. “This cooperation is a big deal. If it were to be terminated, though the other party will pay a large amount of liquidated damages, our company will also lose a lot of money. Azure Corporation recently invested in a new project, and the capital turnover isn’t enough, which in turn might cause huge damage to the company.”

Elspeth instantly understood the situation now. This time, she had no choice but to meet the other party.

“Elsie, this president is probably an expert in tea ceremony. Are you sure...” Harper barely kept his mouth shut.

Elspeth understood what he meant, so she gave him a reassuring smile. “Since when have I ever made a fool of myself?”

As soon as those words came out, Harper’s eyes, which had been droopy earlier, suddenly lit up.

That’s right! She’s Elspeth. There’s nothing she can’t do!

Elspeth smiled without uttering another word.

The president of Centaria Group made an appointment with Elspeth in a teahouse on Sunday afternoon. There were not many people in the teahouse, and when Elspeth arrived, only a few people occupied the place.

She stood at the door of the private room and knocked on the door.

There was a powerful answer from inside the room, which was a cue for Elspeth to enter.

The president was quite old and looked to be in his sixties, but he was standing tall and straight like a tree trunk. He held his cup before taking a sip of tea. When he saw Elspeth push the door open, he smiled and greeted her, “As expected from the rumors of Azure Corporation’s president. Every movement of yours exudes refined temperament.”

Elspeth returned a polite smile. “Same to you, Mr. Lou. You don’t look like you’re in your sixties. You look way younger than your actual age.”

“Hahaha.” Mr. Lou laughed heartily, “Come on. Since we’re having a tea ceremony today, tell me what you understand.”

Elspeth had expected this, so she smiled and explained, “The tea ceremony can be divided into the warming, setting, brewing, pouring, serving, and drinking process. Different tea leaves have their own characteristics. Some are hard, some are soft. We have a variety of tea leaves in our country, and they vary according to the local conditions and customs.”

“Good. You have a strong grasp of the basics of making tea.” Mr. Lou chuckled. “I wonder who taught you that.”

At the mention of that, Elspeth’s thoughts drifted away.

“My father taught me this when I was very young. His way of making tea was also taught by my grandfather. My grandfather is proficient in tea art and has many friends who love tea art—just like you.”

Chapter 57 Max Plagiarized

Mr. Lou suddenly became interested as he asked, “What’s your grandfather’s name?”

“Hunter James.”

Hearing that name, Mr. Lou instantly felt a bolt from the blue. Gradually, his eyes turned moist. “I can’t believe you are Hunter’s granddaughter. Your grandfather and I were close friends! But...”

He couldn’t help pulling Elspeth’s hands and sighing. “I can’t believe you are Azure Corporation’s president. You are so successful at such a young age. I believe Hunter will be able to rest in peace in the afterworld.”

“Mr. Lou, about the collaboration...” Elspeth asked tentatively, but before she could finish her sentence, Mr. Lou interrupted her, “There’s no need to mention this cooperation anymore. Even if there are future projects in store, I would continue cooperating with Azure Corporation!”

After hearing that, his assistant widened his eyes. “Mr. Lou, you can’t say that... Some of our cooperation depends on the ability of the partner!”

Mr. Lou was infuriated as he glared at his assistant. “What? Do you think Elspeth is not capable enough, or are you questioning an old man’s vision?”

The assistant lowered his head in fright and stopped talking.

Elspeth smiled after hearing that. “Thank you, Mr. Lou.”

“Don’t worry about it. Feel free to visit Lou Residence when you have time. You really did inherit your grandpa’s temperament...”

Mr. Lou then chatted with Elspeth for a long time until the sky turned dark. Only then did he reluctantly let her go.

Elsbeth originally thought that it would take a long time to solve the matter, but eventually, she successfully completed the task after a meeting. Now that Azure Corporation's crisis was resolved and they even gained a strong and solid supporter, Elspeth suddenly felt relieved. Right now, she should return to Winthrop Group to resume work, but when she thought of what Callum said to her that day, she no longer wanted to return to the company.

Callum should have gotten back together with his first love, and the two must be in a fiery session right now. If she were to go home, it wouldn't seem appropriate, and she would only be a buzzkill.

Just as she was contemplating whether to go home, a phone call came. "Elsie, it's Max. Where have you been these few days? Why haven't you come back?"

Elsbeth was taken aback by his question and was about to explain when Callum's familiar voice sounded from the other end of the phone.

"Max, why are you not studying yet? You have an exam the day after tomorrow. Don't you know that?"

Max replied pitifully, "I know, I know. I'm asking Elsie for help, Callum. One of her majors was marketing. She can definitely help me out with revision."

"Look at you cramming everything at the last minute and refusing to study early on. You deserve to fail."

Though Callum's words were harsh, he was speaking the truth.

Shrugging, Max continued asking on the phone, "When will you be back, Elsie? I can't do this anymore. I've been busy playing games this whole semester. I don't even know what they taught in school."

When Elspeth heard Callum's voice, she was ready to hang up the phone, but hearing Max's pitiful cry, she couldn't bear to reject him. "Okay. I'll be back by tomorrow morning."

A smile immediately bloomed on Max's face. "Got it. Thank you, Elsie!"

Elsbeth hummed and hung up the phone.

The next day, Elspeth returned to Winthrop Residence as promised. At that time, Max hadn't woken up yet. On the other hand, Callum was having breakfast in the dining room by himself.

"Oh? I thought you had forgotten where home is." While having breakfast leisurely, he didn't forget to make sarcastic remarks. His words triggered the waves that had calmed down in Elspeth's heart.

"I think that's none of your business, Mr. Winthrop. You should worry about your own affairs."

Elspeth was naturally unwilling to lag behind, so she spat words that sounded even more ruthless.

Pulling a piece of tissue, Callum wiped his lips and uttered, "I'm taking care of you because my father ordered me to. I don't want to nag at you all day long either."

"If that is so, then don't worry about me." Elspeth was irritated upon hearing that.

This time, Max rubbed his eyes and came out of the room. Seeing the strange and tense atmosphere between the two adults, he was a little puzzled. "What's the matter with you two? You both look like enemies."

"It's nothing. Max, come and have breakfast already. I'll come to your room to help you with the revision later."

Nodding his head, Max quickly finished breakfast and returned to his room.

"Elsie, I haven't learned much of this in the past six months. Do you think I can study everything at once?" Sitting in the bedroom, Max supported his head and bit the nib of his pen, feeling depressed.

"Of course not." Elspeth pointed out the facts.

Max let out a cry, and then came back to his senses. "Then what should I do? I won't fail the exam, will I?"

Elspeth supported her forehead and sighed. "Of course, you won't fail the exam. As long as I'm here, you won't fail the exam, but you probably won't be able to score full marks."

Full marks? He would be thankful as long as he passed his subjects.

Hearing that he wouldn't fail, Max grinned. "Alright, Elsie. Let's start then."

Elsbeth opened the book and began to highlight the key points for him.

She knew almost the whole book by heart. When highlighting the key points, she was quick as if she was the one who drafted the exam papers.

"Elsie, this..."

Max was surprised because lecturers in school would usually highlight the whole paragraph, but Elspeth merely highlighted a single sentence after flipping so many pages. Moreover, she was done highlighting the points in a whole thick textbook within ten minutes.

"Believe me. These are the common questions that will be out on the test. If you take time to study them, it should not be a problem for you to score above 80 on the test."

Max nodded, only half-grasping what she said. "Thanks, Elsie. I got it."

"As for the judgment questions, if you see those that you're uncertain of, just leave them as false. This is just the final exams for the semester, so generally speaking, I doubt there'll be questions that are too difficult."

All these were obtained from her exam experiences, which were useful tips.

"Elsie, do you usually study last minute before an exam?" Max could no longer hold back his curious inquiry.

Rolling her eyes, Elspeth grabbed a book, rolled it, and knocked him in the head. "Of course not! If I were like you, I wouldn't have been able to rank in the top 20, not to mention being top 1."

"Okay. I'll focus on my studies starting next semester and will never study last minute again."

Elsbeth nodded in satisfaction. "Great."

The next day, Max sat for his exams. Meanwhile, Elspeth made medicine for Sonny in her room. She took a bottle of pink powder and poured it into the water to dissolve it,

then took out the powder made from hundred-year-old Ganoderma and poured it in too. She then collected the combined liquid in a bottle and sealed it with a wooden stopper.

Elspeth knew that the old man had trouble remembering things, so she specially put a seal on the bottle. Once that was done, she was about to go downstairs when she heard someone exclaim all of a sudden. It was Blake who exclaimed, and when Elspeth went down to enquire about the situation, he replied with a frown, “Max was reported for plagiarism. He’s in the principal’s office right now. The school informed us that they will punish him severely. They are going to expel him!”

Chapter 58 Revealing the Truth

Plagiarized?

Recalling Max’s stubborn face and judging from his rebellious character, she couldn’t imagine him to be someone who would plagiarize during an exam.

“Where is he now?” Elspeth walked downstairs and asked.

Blake’s brows were so tightly knitted that even a fly could be crushed to death. “He’s in school now. The teacher just called us, but I have an opening ceremony to rush to now. There’s no way I can postpone it as the consequences will be hard to bear.”

All of a sudden, he thought of an idea. With a torn look, he inquired, “Why don’t... Elspeth, do you mind visiting Max’s school?”

“Me?”

Elspeth never expected Blake to make such a request.

“Yes. I heard that you were the one who helped Max study before his exams. If there is any misunderstanding, you might be of help to him.” Blake’s phone buzzed suddenly, and he glanced at the screen to find an urgent message. While heading out, he asked, “Elspeth, please help me out this time. I will go to you as soon as I finish my work.”

Although she was a little overwhelmed, thinking of what Max might encounter, she decided to take a look at the situation.

When Elspeth arrived at school and reached the principal's office, she heard Max's furious voice coming from inside. "I said I wasn't the one who copied the note. How many times do I have to repeat myself?"

Elspeth was surprised to hear that. Sure enough, her assumptions were right. Max was probably wronged.

"Max, is this how you talk to our teachers?" The principal was furious as he slammed the table.

With a cold face, Max sneered disdainfully. "I've already made it clear. I wasn't the one who did it. Even if you ask a hundred times, it's not me."

The counselor then spoke up, "Max, although you are from the Winthrop Family, your identity is first and foremost a student. No matter how strong your family background is, it cannot cover your wrongdoings." After hearing that, Elspeth felt ironic. She couldn't stand it anymore, so she walked in directly.

"Good morning, sir. I heard Max was involved in plagiarism, so I'm here to find out what happened." Elspeth showed a polite smile, and all three people inside were stunned.

Max was a little surprised. "Elsie, what are you doing here?"

The principal and the counselor naturally knew Elspeth, who was now a household name. After all, she was a public figure, so the principal talked to her politely. "What brings you here, Miss Lynwood? Oh. You must be here for Max. Max has always been a stubborn kid, so I think it'll be better for you to ask him instead."

A trace of coldness flashed in Elspeth's eyes. "Are you sure that Max plagiarized in the exams?"

"Of course. This note was picked up from Max's desk, and the handwriting is exactly the same as his. More importantly, Max's good friend, Jacob Reyes, reported the matter to us, so we are quite certain that he did it."

Elspeth felt something was off when she heard that. "Reported to you? Can I meet that person?"

The counselor immediately asked someone to call Jacob.

Seeing so many people, Jacob began to act pitiful the moment he entered the door. "Miss, sir, what's happening? Did I do something wrong?"

"Don't worry too much, Jacob. Just repeat what you said about Max's plagiarism in detail."

The counselor gave Jacob a comforting look, signaling him not to be afraid, but to speak out boldly.

After gulping, Jacob started explaining, "Well, I thought Max was behaving strangely this afternoon, so I paid special attention to him and was surprised to find him writing cheat sheets. I was tormented inside because as his good friend, I thought I should help him get rid of this bad habit, and also for the sake of the fairness of exams, I took the cheat sheet and submitted it to the teacher."

After hearing that, Max yelled at him directly, "Jacob, I have been friends with you for so long. Is this how you're going to frame me?"

“I didn’t frame you. Admit your mistakes. Plagiarism is wrong.” Jacob looked regretful, and seeing Max’s ferocious expression, he shrugged in fright.

“That’s enough, Max. Don’t try to deny it anymore. Jacob is your friend. His words are credible!” The principal was almost certain of his decision. “Max plagiarized without repentance, so after unanimous discussion among the teachers, we’ve decided to expel him.”

After saying that, the headmaster glanced at Elspeth and uttered with a smile, “I’m sorry, Miss Lynwood. He’s going to be a bad influence on other students, so I can only resort to this.”

“Wait a minute, isn’t it too early to draw conclusions like this?”

The principal asked suspiciously, “Why? Do you have any insights on this?”

“Sir, here’s the thing. I was the one who helped Max in his revision for the exams, so I doubt that he will resort to plagiarism.”

After hearing that, the principal smiled helplessly. “Miss Lynwood, that’s not it. You should know—”

“If you think that can’t work, just make Max take the test on the spot. You should have backup test papers, don’t you?”

The principal was taken aback as if he didn’t understand the situation.

After listening to Elspeth’s sentence, the counselor replied, “Indeed, there are. The exam is divided into Paper A and Paper B. Paper A has been used, but paper B is slightly more difficult...”

“Take it out and let him sit for it,” Elspeth said without hesitation.

The principal smiled. “Sure. If we make him drop out fair and square, others won’t talk behind our backs.”

With that, the teacher took out the exam paper and placed it before Max. “This set of paper is more difficult, so I’ll give you 150 minutes, an extra half an hour.”

Max pushed it away coldly. “I won’t do it.”

Elsbeth frowned. “Do it.”

“Elsie, I did not even plagiarize in my exam. How can they make me do it again?” Max was annoyed this time, so he sounded harsher.

In response, she chuckled. “Just do it and leave the rest up to me.”

Seeing her gentle smile, Max calmed down somehow. “Fine. I’ll do it.”

While Max was working on the paper, the others waited quietly. An hour and a half later, Max closed the pen cap and handed the paper to the principal.

When the principal marked the paper, his jaw dropped in shock. “Did this test paper get leaked out? Why did you only get one fill-in-the-blank question wrong?”

The counselor didn’t believe it either, so he took the test paper and checked the answer carefully while murmuring, “This is impossible... The students don’t even know that there is a Paper B.”

“Now that Max’s level can be proven, let’s talk about Jacob next.”

When he was suddenly being cued, Jacob trembled. “I have nothing to say. Maybe he lucked out this time and got the right answers...”

Elspeth sneered, “Seems like Max made a really good friend.”

Chapter 59 Jealousy Kills

Jacob was feeling a little guilty, his gaze flickering.

“The classroom should have a surveillance camera. After we check it, we will then know whether Max was framed.”

Jacob felt relieved when he heard Elspeth suggesting to check the surveillance footage.

Fortunately, he had gone to the principal’s room earlier and deleted today’s surveillance footage. Otherwise, he would be exposed right now.

True enough, the principal shook his head and said, “I’m afraid we won’t be able to do so. The surveillance camera appears to be having issues today, and the footage is not saved.”

Without the surveillance footage, Max couldn’t clear his name from everyone’s suspicion. Furthermore, he had always been a rebellious student, so the principal subconsciously assumed that his words were bare denial.

“Let me check it now.”

The principal then opened the surveillance settings in the computer, while Elspeth went over to check. Things were as she had suspected—the footage had been deleted on purpose, rather than due to a flaw in the surveillance system.

She then spent a few minutes entering codes to recover the data on the computer.

With that, the previously deleted footage then reappeared on the screen.

“Look at this, principal.”

Elspeth smiled as she pointed to the image of the surveillance footage. “This figure appears to be familiar. Is that... Jacob?”

The screen clearly showed that during recess, when no one was in the classroom, Jacob entered and sneakily placed the note on Max’s table before leaving, pretending nothing had happened.

“This...” The principal stared at the screen in disbelief. How is this possible? How could Jacob be the one who framed Max?

Elspeth, on the other hand, sneered. “I knew it was you.”

With his trembling voice, Jacob responded, “No... That’s not me! The footage is forged!”

However, Elspeth merely raised her brows and smiled mockingly. “I’m sure you know whether or not the footage is true.”

Realizing that he couldn’t hide the truth any longer, Jacob suddenly let out a vicious laugh. “Me? We are all humans, but how can he be born with a silver spoon and hold such a noble status? How could he obtain such a high score even for this examination that none of us prepared for?”

It was clear that Jacob’s heart was filled with jealousy. The long suppression accumulated into a volcano and erupted, which was why he did what he did this time.

Elspeth lightly shook her head in response. “No matter what, it is wrong for you to harm others. Max’s plagiarism is minor, but your framing of him is not.”

The principal naturally understood what was going on at this point.

However, Elspeth did not stop there. She turned to face the counselor and smiled before saying, “Counsellor, I believe you’re related to Jacob, yes? Your gaze has been fixed on him since you entered. When Jacob’s acts were exposed earlier, you appear to be as nervous as he is.”

Feeling ashamed of his earlier misjudgment, the principal quickly apologized to Elspeth. Then, he turned his head and reprimanded Jacob sternly, “You’re usually obedient, Jacob. I never expected you to do something like this. Don’t come to school from tomorrow onward. It’s such a disgrace to the school that this happened here!”

Jacob’s face was ashen as he heard that and he turned around, about to leave.

However, it was obvious that Elspeth was dissatisfied with the matter stopping here. Hence, she extended her hand to prevent Jacob from leaving.

“Wait. It’s a crime to malign others for plagiarism.” She was smiling, but her smile was as cold as a sneer. “The police should be here anytime soon. You better take some time to come up with an explanation.”

Her sentence deprived Jacob of all hope as his legs wobbled, bringing his entire body to the ground.

After the matter was settled, Elspeth then brought Max home.

Mas stared at Elspeth when they walked on the road, and after hesitating for a long while, he finally expressed his gratitude.

When she noticed his awkward demeanor, she couldn’t help but tease, “Why are you acting like a shy girl?”

“I’m not! I just wanted to say thank you!” he responded, his face flushed. After a few moments of thought, he opened his mouth again. “Thank you for helping me out today, Miss Elspeth.”

“You’re welcome.” Elspeth said as she smiled and carressed his head. “You just need to focus on your studies.”

Max looked at her, a bizarre feeling rising in his heart.

“I understand why Callum likes you now...”

That stunned Elspeth for quite some time. When she finally understood what he was saying, she smiled ironically. “Didn’t you know Callum has a crush on someone else?”

Max was surprised by her words. “Are you referring to Emma? She was Callum’s first love; his feelings for her have long faded!”

“That’s simply because you’re unaware of it. Callum gave up a collaboration project a few days ago just to rush back to meet her.”

Perplexed, Max replied, “What? Callum has been in the company for the past few days, and not a single woman has managed to get near him!”

Elspeth was taken aback when she heard that. Was everything that happened previously my own misunderstanding?

Meanwhile, Callum was rushing to school after hearing about Max’s incident. When he was on his way, he noticed Elspeth and Max walking by the roadside and slowly pulled over.

“Callum!”

“Plagiarism? What have you done, you rascal?”

Callum was obviously too concerned with Max’s behavior at school to spare Elspeth even a glance.

Max scratched his head, looking embarrassed. “Everything is fine now, Callum. It is thanks to Elspeth! Otherwise, I would have been expelled from school as a plagiarist by now!”

Hearing that, Callum turned to Elspeth, who was standing off to the side. It was only after a while that he commented softly, “Thank you for helping Max.”

Such a sentence from him seemed to have distanced their relationship. It was as if they were strangers to each other.

That didn’t sit well with Elspeth. However, she remained polite and responded to his gratitude.

Max, too, sensed that something was amiss between Callum and Elspeth. Hence, he let out a light cough, intending to leave so that the two of them could have some alone time.

Yet, before he could do so, Elspeth sensed what he was about to do and quickly said, “If there’s nothing else, you both may go back first. I’ve got something else to do.”

“Where are you going, Miss Elspeth?”

“Don’t meddle in other people’s business,” Callum said indifferently.

Elspeth, on the other hand, simply forced a smile. She then turned on her heel and left.

As she walked down the street, she felt increasingly aggrieved. How could Callum treat me with such an attitude when he was the one who misunderstood my relationship with Jordan?

The more Elspeth thought about it, the more enraged she became, making her unwilling to return to the Winthrop Group right now.

She even considered leaving the Winthrop Residence so she wouldn't have any contact with Callum in the future.

“Miss Elspeth!”

A yell rang out from behind. Elspeth turned around to see Max panting as he ran after her.

“What happened?”

Max quickly approached her. Something flashed across his gaze as he asked, “Miss Elspeth, are you giving Callum the cold shoulder?”

“No. You're overthinking things. Why would I do that when there's nothing between us?” She pursed her lips, suppressing all the bitterness in her heart.

“Don't say anything that you don't mean. I'm sure something happened between the two of you. Why can't you both talk it out calmly instead of acting strangely toward each other right now?”

Chapter 60 Ophelia Is Back

To that, Elspeth merely sighed in response. “Max, you don't understand...”

However, Max cut her off and said, “I’m only two years younger than you, and I understand Callum better than you do. Though he appears to speak to you coldly, he cares a lot about you.”

“I’ve decided to move out from the Winthrop Residence, Max, so you don’t have to go on any longer.”

Max was shocked when he heard that. “You’re moving out from the Winthrop Residence? Why?”

Looking at his stunned expression, Elspeth then explained, “As what you’ve said, my relationship with Callum is strained. It’ll be even more awkward if we continue to stay together.”

“You have feelings for Callum, right?”

“No!” Elspeth quickly denied it.

Max let out a light chuckle in response. “Why did you want to avoid him if you didn’t? The Miss Elspeth that I know would never try to flee from someone she dislikes.”

Elspeth was so taken aback by his words that she had no idea how to respond.

“Just admit it if you truly have feelings for him. After all, I can tell Callum likes you as well.”

Max had already made it so clear that whatever Elspeth was about to explain would merely be seen as her attempt to conceal her feelings.

Thus, she shut her mouth and remained silent for a long while.

After hesitating for a few moments, she decided to go to the company.

Just as she stepped into the company, she saw a familiar figure.

Ophelia?!

Elspeth furrowed her brows, preparing to turn around and walk away. But, before she could, Ophelia noticed Elspeth and began smilingly approaching her.

“It has been a long time since we last met, Elspeth.”

Elspeth was disgusted by Ophelia’s words, but her expression remained calm and aloof.

“It has indeed been a long time. I thought you were still paying for your wrongdoings.”

She expected her words to enrage Ophelia, but to her surprise, Ophelia merely responded with a smile. “Thank you for your concern, Elspeth. I know I’ve made numerous mistakes in the past. Hence, I returned this time to make amends.”

“I hope so.”

Elspeth knew Ophelia wasn’t as simple as she made herself out to be, so she didn’t take Ophelia’s words seriously.

“Elspeth, could I treat you to lunch later? I’d like to properly apologize to you as well.”

However, Elspeth turned Ophelia down right away. “That’s not necessary. I’ve got something on at noon.”

A disappointed look appeared on Ophelia’s face. “Is it because you still harbor resentment toward me that you’re turning me down? Elspeth, I’ve truly turned over a new leaf. Could you please forgive me?”

Her pitiful appearance drew sympathy from the onlookers.

“In fact, Ophelia is somewhat pitiful. After all, she was simply overly obsessed with love.”

“She already knew where her problem lies. Everyone deserves a second chance. I think Elspeth is too cold-hearted.”

“Hey, tone it down! You’ll be in trouble if Miss Lynwood hears it!”

Hearing the onlookers’ comments and seeing Ophelia’s pitiful yet detestable expression, Elspeth suddenly understood everything.

Ophelia had intentionally returned to act pitifully this time in order to gain everyone’s sympathy, and with that, everyone would see her in a new light.

She had indeed changed significantly after spending a few months in jail.

“What do you suggest for lunch, then?”

Ophelia immediately smiled when she heard Elspeth’s words. “You’re so nice, Elspeth! I’ve also asked Callum for lunch. The three of us can discuss where to eat lunch later.”

When Elspeth heard that Callum would be joining as well, her heart sank.

But she did not have the chance to change her mind, as Ophelia quickly left the office with the clacking sound of her high heels.

That left Elspeth with no choice but to join them for lunch later.

At noon, Callum had some extra work to deal with, leaving both Elspeth and Ophelia waiting for him by the entrance.

Since he wasn’t there yet, Ophelia began initiating some conversation topics.

“I heard that the Winthrop Group soars to new heights when I’m not around. It’s all thanks to you, Elspeth.”

Ophelia’s eyes were filled with admiration as she said this, as if she was sincerely congratulating Elspeth on her accomplishment.

“Thank you for saying so, Miss Fleming, but that is not my effort alone. It is the result of the hard work of all the Winthrop Group’s employees.”

“Don’t be so humble. Callum has already told me everything. He said that you truly worked hard and that your capability is unrivaled. It would be the Winthrop Family’s blessing if you could marry into their family... Hey Callum! We’re here!”

Ophelia saw Callum as she spoke and quickly waved her hand, signaling to him to come over.

Callum, on the other hand, had not expected Elspeth to join them for lunch. Hence, his gaze flickered when he saw her.

“Callum, I was just discussing what to have for lunch with Elspeth. Do you prefer Japanese, French, or Chinese cuisine?”

“I’m fine with anything.”

Ophelia then smilingly asked Elspeth, “How about you, Elspeth?”

Faced with Ophelia’s question, Elspeth simply suggested Japanese cuisine.

But Ophelia immediately displayed a troubled expression. “Oh... But Callum has a sensitive stomach. He shouldn’t eat Japanese food because it’s mostly cold and uncooked.”

She was obviously attempting to sow discord between Callum and Elspeth.

That came as no surprise to Elspeth. Ophelia had always wanted Elspeth to stay as far away from Callum as possible, but she purposefully asked both of them out now. Clearly, she had no good intentions in doing so.

“Anything else is fine, then.”

Ophelia, however, suddenly became aggrieved right after Elspeth’s words. “Do you dislike me, Elspeth, and that’s why you don’t want to have a meal with me?” she asked, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Elspeth was getting irritated. “Stop with the pretense. Are we still going for lunch or not?”

However, Ophelia sobbed even more pitifully. “I’ve already apologized to you, Elspeth. Even if you don’t want to forgive me, you don’t have to be so aloof...”

“Are you done yet?”

Elspeth was disgusted with Ophelia’s words.

“That’s enough. Stop being so fierce to Ophelia,” Callum opened his mouth unexpectedly.

Fierce? Me?

Elspeth responded with a scowl. “I don’t need you to teach me what to do, Callum. Since both of you think I’m being ridiculous, I better not disturb your lunch. Enjoy.”

To that, Callum merely shot her a nonchalant glance before turning to Ophelia and saying, “Fine. Let’s go, Ophelia.”

Elsbeth was stunned as she saw that. She did not expect Callum would actually let her leave.

But, aside from being shocked, she was also disappointed.

She was disappointed in him for failing to recognise Ophelia's deliberate words.

Since that was the case, she had no reason to stay in the Winthrop Group anymore.

Hence, she went back to her office, drafted her resignation letter, and immediately emailed it to Callum.

After that, she returned to the Winthrop Residence to pack her belongings, preparing to leave.

Arthur, who was at home, witnessed everything. He couldn't help but laugh lightly as he said, "What exactly are you doing? Do you no longer want to stay at the Winthrop Residence?"

"I simply felt that it is not suitable for me to stay here; I don't mean anything else," Elsbeth replied indifferently.

"I've already told you long ago that Callum is a heartless fellow. The only thing in his heart is his work. In other words, all of his feelings had died three years ago. Even if he had some feelings for you, those are worth nothing. Given your intelligence, you should understand what I mean."

She nodded in response. "So?"

"So... Do you want to consider being with me? I promise I'll be more than a thousand times better than Callum."

Elspeth, however, stared right into Arthur's smiling eyes and asked solemnly, "But Arthur, do you like me?"

When Arthur heard that, his smile immediately stiffened.