

Love's Perfect Match Chapter 31 - 40

Chapter 31

Callum embraced Elspeth tighter and sneered coldly, "That's fine. We're not that desperate to work with you anyway."

"We'll see!" Dominic scowled nastily as he glared at Callum viciously before departing in a huff.

Elspeth didn't expect Callum to speak up for her, and she swallowed the retort that was at the tip of her tongue. Instead, she turned to him and asked, "Hey, are you my knight in shining armor?"

Callum felt his heart skip a beat when he glimpsed at her smiling face, but he quickly looked away and grunted, "I can't just sit back and watch my employees being molested."

She knew his reticent character, so she stopped teasing him as she went straight back to business. "What should we do now? Our collaboration with the Alphascope Group has gone up in flames. This is such a mess."

"I've already prepared a Plan B just in case. So, even if we lost the collaboration with Alphascope Group, it wouldn't do much damage to us."

"Plan B?" She was intrigued. "What is it?"

"I've decided to work with a foreign company. It's a little more costly than we expected, but it's still well within our budget."

"Why not Azure Corporation?"

Callum paused for a second before asserting, "They have always been mysterious, and there's no pattern behind their collaboration with others. As far as I know, their president has always made decisions based on their whims. So, I think it'll be a waste of time to make an appointment to meet the president."

A waste of time?! He honestly didn't know the definition of perseverance even if it hit him, did he?! How could he give up just because she refused him once?!

Elspeth snorted. “Hmm, I’ll take care of it. I can guarantee to be able to keep in touch with the president of Azure Corporation tomorrow.”

“You?” Callum suddenly looked at her with a deep gaze.

She ignored his disbelief as she already had a plan brewing in her mind. “Alphascape and Azure are evenly matched, and they are the biggest and strongest competitors against each other in the jewelry market. So, if we can work with Azure Corporation, not only can we expand our market, but we can also give Azure Corporation a hand to develop their business and suppress Alphascape Group. Don’t worry. I’m sure the president of Azure Corporation will not refuse this kind of win-win situation.”

As he recalled the relationship between Elspeth and Harper, he nodded in agreement.

“Alright, then. I’ll contact the president of Azure Corporation in a moment.” With that, Elspeth rose to her feet and left to make the proper arrangements.

Everyone had assumed that Winthrop Group would face a slight financial downturn for some time after the failed collaboration with the Alphascape Group. Yet, to everyone’s surprise, Winthrop Group suddenly announced the news of a partnership with Azure Corporation.

Thanks to Elspeth as one of the masterminds behind this alliance, the official announcement of the collaboration was set in two days. A week later, the jewelry was officially sent into production.

She had planned to pre-sell some of them first. Then, if the response from their target audience was good, they could officially put their pieces into mass production.

Ten minutes later, she was suddenly called into the president’s office.

“Elspeth, that pre-sale jewelry...” Callum looked at her face and announced, “It is sold out within five minutes.”

“Really?!” Elspeth exclaimed in surprise.

“Yup. Not only that but there are also several comments on our official page demanding they be sold as soon as possible.”

She hurriedly clicked on Facebook and saw that the news of Winthrops' jewelry sale was trending. She clicked on the comments and skimmed through the netizens' replies.

‘Oh my goodness, the jewelry is stunning!’

‘Stunning is an understatement! The new jewelry wins among all the jewelry of this style.’

‘I still think Angel's design is the best, although Winthrop Group's products are quite eye-catching too.’

‘Angel's products are extremely difficult to come by. You should be grateful to have a designer who can make something similar to her style.’

The comments went on and on.

As she scrolled down, she suddenly frowned as she read the latter comments.

‘Wait a minute. Don't you think the jewelry is rather familiar? Angel's prized work in last year's international jewelry design competition is 70% similar to this!’

As she read the comments, a terrible premonition rose inside her.

‘We want a refund! We don't want a plagiarized product!’

‘Yeah! She should just stay as a singer! Why did she have to be a jewelry designer? What a joke.’

At this moment, the phone in the office suddenly rang. Callum answered the call, and whatever he heard caused him to frown. When he hung up the phone, he said faintly, “The sales department is receiving a large number of refund orders.”

The news didn't fluster Elspeth. After a long silence, she enunciated, “Tell the sales department to start selling ‘First Sight’.”

As he regarded her resolute stance, he knew that she had a trick up her sleeve, so he immediately informed the sales department to begin selling ‘First Sight’.

Once the jewelry was put on the shelf, the comment section on Winthrop Group's official page was bombarded by hundreds of complaints and criticism.

‘What the hell?! Not only do they sell products that are almost similar to Angel’s, this time, but they also didn’t even bother hiding that they’re copying Angel’s work! This is ridiculous!’“

‘Winthrop Group is really disgusting.’

‘They should fire the designer! But don’t tarnish the company’s reputation!’

Callum’s frown deepened when he read the comments, but she reassured him with a faint smile when she noticed that he was worried, “Trust me. I’ll turn this into a huge win for the Winthrop Group’s entry into the jewelry market.”

It was supposed to be a jewelry sale in the afternoon, but after the controversy, it instantly became a press conference. Everyone wanted to know how Winthrop Group was going to deal with this.

The reporters raised their cameras and clicked their shutters. They didn’t want to lose a single detail.

Elspeth took the microphone and slowly said, “The jewelry design is a—”

“Hold on!” a person interjected before she could even begin her speech. “We want to know why you copied Angel’s work! Don’t you have your own inspiration?”

Elspeth looked at the camera and said confidently, “I didn’t plagiarize her work.”

However, the woman who interrupted her obviously did not believe her words as she bellowed, “‘First Love’ and ‘First Sight’ are extremely similar to Angel’s award-winning design, and ‘First Sight’ is a completely fraudulent work! May I know how you’re going to explain yourself?”

Elspeth raised her eyebrows as she looked at the woman’s smug grin. “Have you ever thought of the possibility that I am Angel?”

“You’re lying! Angel has never made a public appearance and has always been abroad. You’re not Angel!” The woman barked at her with a ferocious glare.

Elspeth looked at her with amusement and chuckled. “What if I can prove that I am indeed Angel?” How does she know that I’m not Angel since Angel’s identity has never been revealed?

The woman snorted derisively, “How can you prove it? It’s impossible that you are Angel.”

Elspeth shook her head and took out a golden pen with large diamonds from her pocket. It seemed to be worth a king’s ransom.

Some people in the hall recognized the pen and gasped in awe, “This is the design that won the gold medal in the international design competition! She may really be Angel!”

Someone stepped forward and took a closer look at the pen. The logo engraved on the pen was indeed the official logo of the international design competition.

“Oh my, Angel! She’s really Angel!”

Elspeth ignored the crowd’s shock as she turned to the woman and asked, “So, do you still want to accuse me of plagiarism?”

Chapter 32

The woman’s face turned ghastly pale. “I—”

Elspeth didn’t lose her composure despite her ire as she continued all smiles, “Miss, I hope that you have sufficient evidence before questioning others next time.”

The camera flash blinded the scene at this moment as the reporters snapped photos of Elspeth. The news about Elspeth being the renowned jewelry designer Angel was far more interesting than Elspeth’s plagiarism!

Nevertheless, she didn’t forget the reason behind the press conference as she changed the subject, “This set of jewelry is a couple’s model. ‘First Sight’, which is targeted toward our male audience, symbolizes love at first sight. Meanwhile, ‘First Love’, which is their counterpart for our lovely ladies, symbolizes ever-lasting love. So, they are perfect gifts for couples.”

The press conference ended successfully. Nonetheless, that night, Winthrop Group's official website once again announced that all the jewelry was sold out.

The comment section of the social media website began to be lively again.

'Oh my gosh! Why did I hesitate?! I even doubted the jewelry's copyright issue! This is Angel's product, and I didn't buy it!'

'Me too! I didn't manage to buy them. Winthrop Group, please sell the product quickly! My wife said she will divorce me if I can't buy it!'

As Callum read the news and comments, he was astonished at the revelation. It had never crossed his mind that Elspeth was actually Angel.

He acknowledged the number of bizarre things that she had accomplished previously, but then, she appeared to be Nancy, and now Angel... She was really an inscrutable woman.

Both of them returned home later than usual due to work-related matters. Therefore, it was already 1.00AM when they finally returned home. Unfortunately, they were so swamped with work that neither of them had dinner. As a result, Elspeth's stomach grumbled in protest. "I'm going to make some quick supper. Do you want some?"

"Yes." Callum thought for a moment and nodded in agreement.

After a while, she came bearing two sandwiches with a sunny-side-up on the side.

The sandwich looked rather bland and simple. However, when he took a bite, he was surprised as it was quite delicious. "I didn't know that you could cook."

She tilted her chin proudly. "Hah! There's plenty you don't know about me."

“How many more identities do you really have?” His tone carried a hint of genuine curiosity as he asked.

She was taken aback by his blunt questioning for a moment before she laughed out loud.

“Do you even realize that you have been caring about me way more than you used to? Tell me honestly. You like me, don’t you?”

Elsbeth couldn’t see his expression clearly, but she could hear a sense of chagrin in his voice. “I’m just a little curious.”

He was indeed a little curious, but even more so, he wanted to know more about her. She seemed to have a unique charm that had succeeded in luring him toward her.

Before she could tease him, someone suddenly turned on the lights at the staircase. Arthur, who was in pajamas, stood at the end of the stairs and looked at them with a cheeky smile. “Callum, Elspeth, why aren’t you guys going to bed yet?”

His implication was apparent. He was teasing them for flirting in the middle of the night.

Callum suppressed the complex emotions under his eyes and blurted behind false bravado, “I’m going to bed. Don’t stay up too late.”

After he left, Arthur walked to her and asked, “Do you like Callum?”

She did not answer his question as she simply looked at him and remarked, “You’re quite the gossip.”

“My mom has specified that she wants Ophelia to marry Callum. So if you like him, it won’t be easy for you to be with him.”

“There is nothing I can’t do as long as I set my mind on it.”

Arthur's smile widened. "Good. Got it."

Elsbeth turned to look at him, only to feel that his smile was rather strange. It was different from the feeling she had when she first saw him.

When she returned to the bedroom, she immediately called Harper. "Did you find out who did it this time?"

"Yes. The IP addresses of those netizens who posted negative comments were all from the Flemings. Ophelia was most likely to be the mastermind behind this."

After a short pause, Harper continued, "I also learned about the strange person from the surveillance in Death Canyon. His last phone call was also to Ophelia."

"Ophelia, huh? Harper, publish all the news on social media tomorrow. I want her to get a taste of her own medicine." Elspeth's eyes were covered with a layer of frost.

"Alright, Miss Lynwood." Harper beamed and immediately did her job.

The next morning, Elspeth heard the sound of crying downstairs as soon as she woke up. She stretched her body lazily and walked down the stairs, only to see Ophelia trembling on the couch and wailing piteously, "Mrs. Winthrop, I didn't do it. I'm innocent!"

Elsbeth couldn't help but chuckle at the pathetic sight. Everyone in the living room turned to look at her, and she feigned innocence. "Why are you looking at me?"

"It's you, isn't it? You framed Ophelia and cyberbullied her on the Internet, didn't you?"

"No wonder all of you are looking at me like that." Elspeth snorted in disdain. "You think I set her up."

Ophelia's eyes were teary as she didn't hesitate to hurl accusations, "Elspeth, I didn't do it. How can you do this to me?!"

When Ophelia woke up this morning, she almost went berserk when she realized that someone had published everything she had done on the Internet. Luckily, there was no solid evidence to prove that she did it. She knew that Margot favored her, so she immediately came to Callum's house to convince Margot that Elspeth had framed her.

"Me? Set you up?" Elspeth couldn't help but chuckle. "Can you please tell me why I would do that?"

Ophelia glanced at Callum and mumbled timidly, "M-Maybe because you like Callum, so you don't like to see me around him."

Although Elspeth was smiling, there was not a single hint of mirth in her eyes. "It's truly amazing that you could assume that everyone is as nasty as you."

"B-But who else would do this to me besides you? I-I know that you've always disliked me."

Margot frowned. "Elspeth, quickly delete everything that is on the Internet and give us an explanation!" She didn't want her future daughter-in-law's reputation to be tarnished now because it might affect the reputation of the Winthrops in the future.

"Did it never cross your mind that Ophelia really did all those things?" Elspeth glanced at Margot, her gaze gleaming with absolute certainty.

"Impossible!" Margot snapped. "I told you that Ophelia would never do such a thing! She's a nice girl, so she wouldn't have done such a thing!"

Even Callum, who remained at the sidelines, spoke for Ophelia, “She... She wouldn’t do such a thing.”

Elspeth glanced at him coldly. “So, do you think of me as someone who would falsely accuse another?”

She felt disdain when she heard Margot reprimanding her and felt that the woman was an unreasonable harpy. Regardless, when he echoed Margot’s remark, she felt a dull pang in her heart.

I’m just an outsider. Since the beginning, they have isolated me from their circle, and even Callum has not accepted me. In that case, I have to release the solid proof. There’s no reason for me to pull my punches with these people.

Chapter 33

With that in mind, Elspeth posted all the evidence on the Internet.

When the post was released, it spread like wildfire. This time, the post confirmed everything Ophelia had done. The news about the unsuccessful attempt of Ophelia—the daughter of the renowned Fleming Family—to frame Elspeth became viral on the Internet and was the most discussed topic in various forums and social media platforms.

The stock market of Fleming Group plunged instantly, and the company was on the verge of collapse.

Ophelia initially thought that Elspeth was only suspicious of her, but she didn’t expect her to have evidence in her hand! Just like that, the angelic image that she had painstakingly built with all her might dissipated instantly. There was even a high chance that she might have to be charged for what she did.

“Ophelia, I didn’t know that you would do something like this...” Margot was the most devastated at the news. She did not expect Ophelia, whom she had watched growing up, to be so ruthless!

Elspeth looked at the stricken Ophelia and grinned. “That incident in Death Canyon and the rumors online that accused me of plagiarism. Ophelia, don’t you feel a bit guilty after everything you’ve done?”

Ophelia knew that denying it would be a futile attempt now, so she sobbed and explained, “I’m sorry. I wasn’t thinking straight. My friends taught me all these and said that this was the only way I could be with Callum. I’m sorry. I did this because I love him too much. Sorry...”

Elspeth felt absolutely nothing in the face of her crocodile tears. In fact, she felt rather amused. “You love Callum? To show your love to him, you drugged him and wanted to trick him into sleeping with you, huh?”

Ophelia stopped crying abruptly and stared at Elspeth in a daze. A trace of unease surged inside her.

Callum’s face sank in displeasure as he demanded, “Did you do it, Ophelia? Did you drug me?”

Ophelia parted her lips nervously, but no words came out of them. Everyone in the Winthrops was on Elspeth’s side after seeing the evidence, and no one would listen to her. Hence, her explanations would be taken as nonsense. She lowered her head, her face ashen.

“This is your business now. Please leave me alone.” After she said that, she headed to the door.

“Elspeth,” Margot suddenly called out to her.

“Yes?” Elspeth turned and asked, “What is it, Mrs. Winthrop?”

Margot cleared her throat and muttered, “O-Ophelia has done so many bad things, but that is because she loves Callum too much. I apologize to you for her. C-Can you please take down the post on the Internet? People will look down on her.”

She had always liked Ophelia, who was so sweet and soft-spoken, so she couldn’t bear to see her in such a dismal state.

Elspeth rolled her eyes and sneered, “Oh?! So, her behavior was justifiable when she made a mistake, but I had to be kicked out of the house because I was accused without proof?!” Do I look like such a pushover?!

Margot looked a little embarrassed due to her request as she sighed and mumbled, “Please, I beg you. Can you do me a favor?”

Elspeth glared at Ophelia coldly. “I never dirty my hands unless I have to. So, she has no one to blame but herself.” With that, she left without hesitation, ignoring Margot’s plea.

Margot knew that she got the short end of the stick, so she didn’t say anything else.

Even though she knew that the Winthrop Family would help Ophelia to settle this drama, she still felt utterly disgusted when she watched the news about Ophelia on the Internet gradually disappear.

Nevertheless, Ophelia’s actions were not without consequence, as her kind image was wholly shattered. This matter also drove a wedge between her and the Winthrop Family. One could even say that it was a good lesson for Ophelia.

Sure enough, for nearly a week after that, Ophelia never bothered Elspeth again, nor did she show up in the Winthrop Family's residence or the company. Elspeth thought that she preferred to stay out of public because she was avoiding the limelight and repenting for her actions.

This afternoon, Elspeth was ready to go home after work. She was about to go through the motions when she felt something nagging at her as soon as she arrived at the underground garage.

In the next second, seven to eight brawny men appeared behind her and charged toward her. When they saw Elspeth, they immediately rushed toward her. Although she was skilled in martial arts, she was severely outnumbered, so she smashed her handbag into the nearest man's face and turned to flee.

Just as she was about to run to the garage door, a foot suddenly stretched out from the side and tripped her. Then, those men swarmed over and tied her up.

The person who tripped Elspeth was none other than Ophelia. She slowly raised her head, her eyes dripping with venom. "Elspeth, I've been waiting for you for three whole days, and here you are!"

Elspeth frowned at the implications behind her words. Then, Ophelia started laughing maniacally. "I told you I won't let you off the hook. It would be best if you just kept your mouth shut, but no, you have to force me into a dead-end! I've been suffering these days. Do you know that?! Thanks to you, the Winthrops and Callum despise me!" She clenched her fists tightly and shrieked.

Elspeth was relatively calm as she replied, "I think you only have yourself to blame..."

Slap! Ophelia slapped Elspeth's face harshly. Ophelia used so much strength in the slap that Elspeth's cheek instantly swelled.

“Shut the hell up! I wouldn't have become like this if it hadn't been for you! Callum was nice to me, but he hasn't smiled at me ever since you were around! Everything changed from the day you came! Didn't you have a good time in the village? So, why did you have to come back?! Why?!”

Ophelia's nerves were already frayed, and it worsened when she noticed Elspeth's indifferent expression. She started strangling Elspeth, and her fingernails ruthlessly stabbed into her flesh. “Say something! Why aren't you saying anything?! You look down on me, don't you? You ruined my reputation, so don't even think about getting away with it!”

Elspeth knew that she had to remain calm and quiet in this scenario. She couldn't fight back for fear of irritating her even more.

After Ophelia had vented her anger, she was in a significantly better mood. So, she waved the men off, and the men took Elspeth away. Unfortunately, Elspeth was also blinded and thrown into a van.

The journey was bumpy, and approximately one or two hours later, they arrived at a remote and isolated place.

Elspeth's heart skipped a beat. Ophelia is indeed cautious and meticulous. She ordered her men to take me to a place in the middle of nowhere so that I couldn't escape easily.

One of the men pulled her hair and dragged her into a dilapidated room. She was thrown toward the wooden bed in the house, and her shoulder slammed into the bed frame. Their manhandling cost her significant bruising; she could already feel her shoulder burning.

Three men were guarding the house, while the remaining four men entered the house. They grinned lecherously as they leered at the beautiful Elspeth helpless and on the bed.

“Boss, look at her! She looks so tender and flawless. I bet it must be fun to sleep with her!”

“I’ve never slept with such a gorgeous woman. Tsk tsk, Miss Fleming is so kind to introduce us to such a pretty woman.”

Chapter 34

The head of the gang glared at the three men and said slowly, “Miss Fleming said that we could do whatever we want with her as long as we don’t kill her. Well, we have to have some fun with such a gorgeous woman...”

The men began to laugh lecherously.

Elspeth didn’t expect that Ophelia would order the men to sexually abuse her in order to torment her. She glared at the men coldly and smiled lightly. “Do you know who I am?”

“Of course!” One of the men grinned lewdly. “You’re our little darling. Don’t worry. I’ll be gentle...”

Another man was quite insightful. “You are Callum’s fiancée and a singer... Wow, I wonder if your moaning will be pleasing to the ear later...”

“Since you know that I’m Callum’s fiancée,” Elspeth hissed and glared viciously at them. “Aren’t you worried that he will come after you?!”

The men shook their heads and snorted, “To them, you’re nothing but an outsider. He will most likely break off the engagement if your reputation is ruined. Come on, let’s have some fun together. Throw all those nonsense out the win—”

Elspeth interrupted before the man could finish his words, “Do you know why I haven’t married Callum after so long?” She raised her eyebrows and curled her lips into an ambiguous smile.

The men were intrigued. They knew that she would not be able to escape, so they urged, “Tell us.”

She sighed regretfully. “Because I’m a loose woman living a promiscuous life, although I look docile and reserved and have AIDS. My pre-wedding health screening failed, and I won’t be alive for long, so of course, the Winthrops will not let their precious son marry me.”

She hung her head low and looked sad as if she really had AIDS and her life had come to an end.

The men had not heard of such news, so they were rightfully skeptical about it. “Are you sure you have AIDS?” It was very frustrating to know that they couldn’t have sex with her now.

“If you don’t mind, I’m okay with it. After all... It’s nice to have someone with me in hell.” Elspeth smiled maliciously, and her smile made these lewd men suddenly lose any interest in her. They even began to second-guess their decision.

“Boss, if she... Just forget it.”

Alas, the head of the gang clearly had some brains. So, he narrowed his eyes and looked at Elspeth. “Alright, we’ll wait and see. We have all the time in the world anyway.”

They had to report their outcome to their employer, so they must complete the mission. The power behind the Fleming Family was so influential that they were no match to them, but Elspeth was just a nobody regardless of her various identities. Hence, it was easier to take control of her.

So, she was locked in the dilapidated house, and the men took turns guarding the place. No one dared to untie her without the boss’ permission.

She didn’t bother making a fuss as she preserved her strength, trying to think of an escape plan carefully.

She couldn’t use her phone as it was confiscated. Her hands were tied behind her back, and she had already pressed on the ring equipped with a GPS signal. Once she pressed it, Harper would immediately receive the message about her current location. If Harper found that she was in a remote location, he would undoubtedly be aware that she was in danger and save her.

Time passed, and Elspeth patiently waited.

In the evening, the man guarding the door handed her a loaf of bread.

She asked with a tight frown, “Can you please untie me? I need to go to the toilet.” She did look miserable, as if she had been holding back for a long time.

The man hesitated. “No. What if you run away?”

“What?” She widened her eyes. “I’m just a weak woman, and you’re a strong man. Do you think I can run away from you?”

Once she saw his hesitation, she added, “I can’t hold back anymore. What if I pee in here? It will be so smelly. Am I right, handsome?”

The man looked rather simpleminded, and he fit the bill too. So, when she called him handsome, he grinned bashfully. “Alright, I’ll untie you, but come back quickly and don’t sneak away, or you’ll be punished severely!”

Elspeth smiled at him, and her smile melted his heart instantly. He went to the door to check the surroundings, but as soon as she stepped out, a man blocked her way.

He was the leader of the group. When he saw Elspeth being untied, he bellowed angrily, “Who the f*ck untied her?!”

“M-Me...” The man sheepishly stepped forward.

The boss whacked him brutally. “Moron! How can you believe anything she says?! What if she runs away?” Then, they tied her up again.

This time, they tightened the knot and even changed the guards around the house.

As she observed the situation, the helpless Elspeth knew that she could not escape. Therefore, she had no choice but to wait for someone to rescue her.

On the other hand, Callum became agitated as she did not return home after work, and he couldn’t contact her. He searched around in vain and finally called Harper.

“It’s very late now, but Elspeth hasn’t gone home. Is she with you?” Callum demanded in a cold voice.

Harper sounded a little anxious on the other end of the line. “She sent me her current location. It’s an abandoned hut in Southdale. I think she is kidnapped.”

Callum’s gaze turned frigid when he heard the word ‘kidnap’. “I’ll head over there right now. Call the police, and we’ll meet in Southdale.”

“Okay. I’ll send you the exact location right now.”

They went on with their respective missions. Harper called the police while Callum drove toward Southdale.

When he arrived at the abandoned hut, he found that the place was brightly lit, and two men were guarding the door, but he couldn’t see the condition inside the house.

He went around to the back and peeked in through the window. He saw that Elspeth was tied to the bed, and no one was around, so he quickly devised a plan. Due to the destitute condition of the hut, he could pry open the window easily. Thus, he successfully sneaked in and tiptoed to Elspeth.

“Callum?” she whispered in shock. How did he know I was here? And... why is he saving me?

Callum did not have the time to explain. The rope was too tight, so he quickly grabbed a sharp rock from the floor and tried to cut the cord off.

A few minutes later, the rope broke. They quickly rushed to the window and jumped out of it when the door was suddenly pushed open with a creak.

“She’s getting away! Get her!” The men chased after them. Unfortunately, Elspeth sprained her ankle. She broke out in cold sweat due to the pain and frowned. “Callum, go, or they’ll catch up soon.”

Callum ignored her and carried her. “Don’t talk if it hurts.”

The exclamations behind them became louder. Finally, the anxious Elspeth urged, “Leave! I’ll only slow you down!”

He lowered his head and looked at her seriously with a touch of tenderness in his eyes. “No, Elspeth. I won’t leave you behind.”

Chapter 35

A certain emotion surged in Elspeth's heart when she looked into Callum's determined eyes.

They couldn't run far. Then, just as she thought they would be captured again, an ear-piercing siren echoed across the field.

The men chasing after Elspeth and Callum suddenly gasped in shock and wanted to flee, but Harper darted over with the police and arrested them.

"Mi—Elspeth, are you okay?" Harper instinctively yelled, but he instantly realized his mistake and changed his way of addressing Elspeth.

"I'm fine." Elspeth leaned weakly in Callum's arms and whimpered. Then, he explained softly, "She sprained her ankle, so I'll be taking her to the hospital. You should go back, Mr. Summerfield. I'll take care of her."

A hint of discomfort inexplicably rose in Callum's heart when he heard Harper's concern for Elspeth.

"Okay." Harper knew that it was inappropriate for him to stay here, so he nodded in affirmation and went to the police to arrest the kidnappers.

It was already 3.00AM when Callum took Elspeth to the hospital. Arthur, who happened to be on the night shift, asked curiously when he saw them in such a disheveled state, "What happened?"

"She was kidnapped, and we just rescued her," Callum said flatly.

"Kidnapped?!" Arthur frowned. "Why didn't you call home?"

Callum glanced at Elspeth in his arms and said dispassionately, "It's not necessary. It would only make things worse if our parents got worried and nervous. She sprained her ankle. Check on her."

With that, he placed her lightly on the hospital bed.

Arthur sighed. "You've sprained your ankle twice in a row. You need to be careful. Repeated sprains can leave some permanent effects."

"Okay." Elspeth rubbed her nose sheepishly.

After Arthur had dealt with her injury, he was called away by the nurse. Callum sat by Elspeth's bed and asked, "Who kidnapped you?"

"Why are you even asking me?" She snorted. "You wouldn't even believe me if I did tell you."

Callum was taken aback by her words. Then, he looked into her eyes and apologized sincerely, "I'm sorry."

He was prejudiced in the past. He was overly confident of his own opinions and biased toward Ophelia.

Elspeth regarded the usually haughty Callum as being so humble. Therefore, she didn't intend to put him in a difficult position. Thus, she shrugged and replied, "Okay, I accept your apology, but Ophelia was behind this."

His eyes turned cold. "Is it really her?"

She nodded and continued, "She waited for me in the underground garage for three days. She also hired a group of men to kidnap and rape me, but I managed to buy some time with lame excuses."

The aura around him turned frosty when he heard the word ‘rape’. “She’s gone too far this time. It’s time to teach her a lesson.”

Elsbeth was astonished that he would believe her this time, and she felt slightly relieved.

At this moment, the phone rang. She answered the call, and Harper’s voice came from the other end of the line. “Miss Lynwood, the men have confessed that Ophelia was behind this. The police have already gone to her house, and Ophelia will most likely be arrested tonight.”

The men knew that honesty was the best policy for a reduced sentence, so they chose to cop a plea.

After she ended the call, she closed her eyes and looked a little weary after the incident.

Callum took notice of the dark circles under her eyes and blurted, “Rest here tonight.”

“But your father will be worried if I don’t return.” She sighed.

He looked at her coldly and rebuked sternly, “But if you do, your injury won’t heal. Do you plan to stay in the hospital for a few more days?”

“Fine. When you return, tell your father that I’m staying with a friend for two days. Don’t tell him about my kidnapping.” She had already caused a lot of trouble for Theodore, and she didn’t want him to be worried about her this time.

Callum agreed and left.

Elsbeth was discharged from the hospital two days later. She heard the news that Ophelia was taken away by the police, but she didn’t pay that any mind. Instead, she concentrated on her work.

The ‘First Sight’ and ‘First Love’ series were selling like hotcakes, but they needed a brand ambassador to endorse the good products, and Blake was the best candidate. He was insanely popular on social media, and his fans were young girls in their teens and early twenties, so they would definitely love the jewelry.

When Elspeth returned home, she talked to Blake about this, and he immediately agreed to her request.

“But these jewelry series are matching couple jewelry, aren’t they? Don’t you think it’s a little bland if I shoot the commercial myself?” He suddenly had a wicked smile on his face. “Elspeth, what about we shoot the commercials together?”

Indeed, ‘First Love’ and ‘First Sight’ were couple jewelry, so they would garner more exposure if the brand ambassador were a handsome man and a gorgeous woman, respectively.

She was astonished by his suggestion and pondered the feasibility, but Callum cut in abruptly, “Can’t we find a suitable celebrity for the ad? Must she personally become a model?”

“Callum, don’t be so petty. She’s not yours. Also, even the director praised her good looks. The other day, he even asked me to persuade her to become an actress!”

Blake grinned from ear to ear, and his eyes were full of affection when he looked at Elspeth. In fact, he had a hidden agenda. Nancy had always been his idol. Hence, he truly looked forward to shooting a commercial with Elspeth.

“No. Elspeth is busy enough with work,” Callum refused in her stead. The last time the two worked together on a music video, he saw some comments that described them as a match made in heaven. He couldn’t help the growing annoyance at that train of thought.

“Forget it. I’m not asking you anyway.” Blake pouted and turned to Elspeth. “Do you want to shoot commercials with me?”

She rubbed her brows, feeling like she was caught between a rock and a hard place.

“Let’s see how it goes. If we can’t find a suitable celebrity for the commercial, I’ll do it in person,” she agreed uncertainly.

Callum pulled a long face when he heard her vague reply, but he didn’t say it explicitly. Rather, he simply glared at Elspeth and left the dining room in a huff.

His glare confused her. She did not know why he was suddenly upset, but he had already departed for work, so she quickly ate breakfast and followed him.

As soon as they got to the office, the secretary came over with a stack of documents before she could make herself comfortable. “Miss Lynwood, Mr. Winthrop asked you to finish all these within three days.”

What? Finish this stack of documents in three days?! Elspeth felt her head pounding with a migraine. He was definitely doing this on purpose, but she couldn’t find a reason to refuse his order, so she accepted the documents and focused on her work.

To her bewilderment, he arranged all kinds of work for her in the next few days, and she was as busy as a bee. Just as she had a short break, he would assign a new task immediately.

Is it because he doesn’t want me to shoot the commercials? She snorted and inwardly rolled her eyes at him for being so immature.

Chapter 36

Blake came to Winthrop Group a few days later. He leaned against the door of the president's office and smiled leisurely. "Callum, I have contacted all the female celebrities who are free recently, but either their images do not fit the model, or they don't want to be the model. There is no suitable candidate."

Callum donned a cold expression. "We don't have to shoot the commercials."

"What? No!" Blake frowned. "How can you do that? We have agreed on this, so you can't go back on your words."

"I'll pay you the advertising fee, but you don't have to shoot the commercials."

There was a clause that Elspeth needed help understanding, so she went to Callum's office. Just as she was about to knock on the door, she heard their conversation, and a complex emotion surged within her.

"Hi, Elspeth!" Blake immediately went to her and beamed happily. "I can't find a suitable candidate for the commercial. You promised you would do it with me if I can't find someone suitable."

Her lips twitched in response to his eagerness, but when she looked at Callum, who looked irate and chafed, she didn't know what to say.

"Don't worry about him. He's agreed to let us shoot the commercials together."

"I didn't say that," Callum snapped coldly.

"In that case, why don't I give it a try?"

The celebrities' efficacy in promoting the jewelry was the way to ease Winthrop Group's intervention into the jewelry business and achieve the first victory. Elspeth did not want to give up this plan easily, so she looked at Callum carefully.

Since he did not give her any adverse reaction, she tried again, “This is for the company’s sake. It’s quite a good plan, actually.”

Callum remained silent for a long while, and finally, he mumbled a quiet ‘Okay’ as an approval.

With his approval, they could carry out the commercial smoothly. So, Blake postponed his new drama’s shooting and focused on the jewelry commercial.

The shooting location was not in the office but on a large outdoor lawn.

Callum personally came to oversee the shooting progress. He disguised his true intention by stating that he was only there to supervise them in case something might go wrong. It was inevitable for Blake and Elspeth to pose intimately during the process. Both models were in character and utterly immersed in the atmosphere. Thus, they overlooked the gloomy and grumpy Callum.

After the first scene, Elspeth went to grab a drink of water when she heard his flat and cold voice, “Good job.”

She was surprised that he was there, so she quickly turned her head and saw him standing on the side. There were some indefinable emotions in his eyes as she asked, “Why are you here?”

He cleared his throat and said, “As the president of Winthrop Group, I need to pay attention to any activities that my company conducts, including commercial shoots.”

She nodded as his reason seemed plausible. Then, when she saw Blake walking toward them, she handed a bottle of water to him. “Here, drink some water.”

After Blake unscrewed the cap and took a sip, he taunted. “Callum, I didn’t expect you to come over to watch this boring stuff.”

“Can’t I come?” Callum narrowed his eyes.

Blake laughed out loud. “Hey, I’ve been shooting a lot of commercials for the company. You wouldn’t come no matter how I begged you to, but you decided to show up out of the blue this time. What a rare sight.”

Then, he squinted and said curiously, “Wait a minute. Are you here because of Elspeth? Wow, I can’t imagine that you actually have fallen for a woman.”

Callum glared at him and hissed under his breath, “You talk a little too much.”

Blake shook his head and chuckled. “I liked her first, so back off. She’s mine.”

Callum felt even grumpier when he heard this. “We don’t know whether she’s yours or not.”

The atmosphere between the two men was getting tense. So, Elspeth quickly blurted out that she needed to use the restroom and fled the scene.

She went to the nearby public restroom and saw a familiar face as soon as she entered. It was Ava, whom she had not seen for a long time.

“It’s a small world, isn’t it, Elspeth?” Ava glared at her coldly.

Elspeth was not in the mood to converse with this woman who clearly hated her. “How are you doing, Miss Wiley? Did you find a new job?”

Ava was enraged when Elspeth brought up this topic and growled, “Don’t think I can’t do anything after you forced me out of Winthrop Group. Just wait and see. I’ll make you pay sooner or later!”

“Whatever.” Elspeth rolled her eyes.

After Ava ensured that there was no one around them, she suddenly charged forward boldly and extended her arms toward Elspeth’s face. Nevertheless, Elspeth reacted quickly as she grabbed Ava’s wrist and glared viciously. “Are you trying to hurt me?!”

“Yes! I want to hurt you so badly! You want to know how I’m doing, don’t you? After I was fired from Winthrop Group, no one wanted to hire me, and it was all because of you! You turned my life upside down, so I will let you have a taste of your own medicine!”

Ava struggled to pull Elspeth’s hair, but Elspeth pushed her back. As a result, she lost her balance and fell backward, hitting her head hard on the sink behind her.

The intense pain caused her to panic, and she completely lost it when she felt the blood flowing down her neck. She hastily took out her phone and phoned the police. “Elspeth, you’ve hurt me! You’ll rot in jail!”

Elspeth remained silent as she looked at Ava, bellowing at her.

Soon, the police came and took away both women.

Ava’s head was injured, so she went to the hospital first to treat her wound and then to the police station to make a statement.

Callum and Blake were waiting for Elspeth to continue the shooting when they heard that she was arrested. They instantly put aside their argument as they rushed toward the police station.

On the other hand, Elspeth and Ava sat side by side at the police station. They didn't say a word, so the police officer asked, "What happened?"

Elspeth remained quiet, but Ava immediately cried wolf. "Sir, please help me! I didn't do anything, but she pushed me, and now I suffered such a serious injury. I want to sue this woman!"

The officer gave Ava a tissue paper because she was crying sadly and looked quite pitiful with her bandaged head. Then, he turned to Elspeth and asked, "Miss Lynwood, is what Miss Wiley said true? Did you have a grudge against her? Was that why you pushed her?"

"It's self-defense," Elspeth said dispassionately.

Ava knew that there was no surveillance in the restroom, so there was nothing Elspeth could do, even if she lied. Hence, Ava became bolder and snapped, "Elspeth, I could have asked the judge to reduce your charge if you admit that you hurt me intentionally, but you're so stubborn. I can't let you off the hook!"

The police officer frowned. "Miss Lynwood, please confess, and the sentence will be more lenient."

"It's self-defense," Elspeth repeated.

Ava couldn't help raising her voice and shrieking, "Officer, there's no need to ask her any question. Since she's so stubborn, just lock her up!"

Elspeth chuckled in amusement. "What if I have evidence?"

Ava laughed derisively as if she had heard the funniest joke. "Oh, really? Show us then! I'll be your lapdog if you can bring out the evidence today!"

Chapter 37

Ava was confident that this was Elspeth's attempt at intimidation in order to buy herself some time, and she didn't have any evidence at all. There was no way she could have proof of her innocence! She raised her chin proudly and wanted to see what Elspeth was up to now.

"In that case, let me show you my evidence," Elspeth answered flatly and whisked out her phone from her pocket. She clicked on the player, and instantly, everyone heard Ava's overbearing voice from the phone.

"Don't think I can't do anything after you forced me out of Winthrop Group. Just wait and see. I'll make you pay sooner or later—"

"After I was fired from Winthrop, no one wanted to hire me, and it was all because of you! You turned my life upside down, so I will let you have a taste of your own medicine—"

"Yes! I want to hurt you—"

In addition to the conversation, there were also the sounds of bawling and footsteps. It was apparent that Ava was the one who intentionally wanted to hurt Elspeth in the first place.

"Sir, I think I've made myself clear. I didn't hurt Miss Wiley. Instead, she was the one who wanted to hurt me, and I was just trying to protect myself," Elspeth explained calmly.

As Ava listened to the recording and her shrill voice echoed across the station, her face turned ghastly pale. No way! How did she know that I wanted to hurt her and even turned on the recorder in advance?!

“You set me up! You deliberately upset me and then recorded our conversation to set me up!” An idea popped into her mind, and her glare became vicious and sinister.

Elspeth, on the other hand, curled her lips into an indifferent smirk. “What did you say just now? You wanted to be my lapdog, right? Please don’t. You’re too heavy for my lap.”

Then, she turned and smiled at the police officer. “Sir, I’m sure you’ll make the right decision.”

At this point, everyone knew who was at fault in this matter. The police officer felt sorry for suspecting Elspeth just now, so he cleared his throat and apologized sincerely, “I’m sorry, Miss Lynwood. I misunderstood you.”

“It’s okay. What are you going to do with her? Will she be charged?”

The police officer answered promptly, “According to our country’s constitution, aggravated assault is punishable by up to three years in prison, but the specific sentence depends on whether you want to place charges or not.”

“So,” Elspeth quipped, raising her eyebrows in amusement. “It depends on my will.”

Ava’s heart sank when she heard this. No, I don’t want to go to jail! I’m only 22 years old. I don’t want to go to jail!

She stood up, tugged on Elspeth’s sleeve, and wailed, “Please forgive me! Please don’t sue me! I’m still so young! I can’t go to jail!”

“Calm down, Miss Wiley.” Elspeth frowned.

“I know I’ve always been terrible. I always bullied you when I was a kid, and all those nasty things I did to you in the company. I’ll do anything to make up for my mistakes, but please don’t sue me! I don’t want to go to jail. Please—”

Ava was genuinely terrified at this moment. She never thought that she would fall so low.

“Hah!” Elspeth chuckled contemptuously. “So, you do know how nasty you are, huh? You’d better save those words now and reflect on them in prison.”

She glared at Ava and thought, I won’t attack unless I’m attacked. I’m not a pushover. Do you really think I’ll let you off the hook after what you did to me?!

Ava saw Elspeth’s resolute and fearsome glare and felt a chill down her spine. Finally, she gave up begging as she slumped to the ground and burst into regretful tears.

The police officer ordered a few colleagues to take Ava away and detained her before smiling at Elspeth apologetically. “I’m so sorry for the misunderstanding, Miss Lynwood. I’ll have someone send you back.”

She waved him off. “Don’t bother. I can return myself.”

The police officer didn’t insist as he was also busy with his cases. So, he had someone send Elspeth to the door.

As soon as she stepped out of the police station, Callum and Blake rushed over anxiously. Callum was relieved when he saw that she was unharmed, but Blake grabbed her shoulders and demanded, “What happened?”

“Nothing.” She smiled sheepishly. “I bumped into Ava. She tried to hurt and frame me but was detained instead.”

“Oh? I heard about her. She’s a nasty woman. What did you do?” Blake was intrigued.

Elspeth chuckled. “She tried to hit me, so I pushed her, and later she falsely accused me of initiating the fight. I turned on my recorder throughout the day because I wanted to listen to my performance during the shooting. So, our conversation was coincidentally recorded as a result.”

Callum knew that Elspeth was brilliant and capable of defending herself, but he frowned at the mention of Ava. “I fired her long ago, didn’t I?”

On the day he fired Ava, he notified all the companies in the city not to hire her, or they would become Winthrop Group’s enemies. He didn’t expect that Ava would stubbornly stay in this city.

“Yeah, you did, but she still decided to come at me.” Elspeth shrugged in exasperation. “Maybe she really despises me.”

His gaze became grave as he thought, I have to teach this woman a lesson this time so that she won’t be able to hurt Elspeth again.

Blake was relieved when Elspeth was fine. “You must have been shocked after what happened today. Let’s suspend today’s shooting. We’ll resume the shooting another day.”

She shook her head and declined, “No. Your schedule is full. I can’t delay the shooting just because of this. Alright, let’s go back now. Maybe we can finish all the shooting before dark.”

They couldn’t change her mind, so the three rushed back to the filming location to continue the shoot.

The commercial officially aired three days later. Within the first hour of airing, the sales volume of First Love and First Sight increased by thirty percent! It proved the fanbase significance of both Blake and Nancy.

The shippers were also utterly excited to see both Blake and Nancy pairing up for the commercial. They bombarded the comment sections on Nancy's and Blake's social media accounts, urging them to marry as soon as possible.

‘Elspeth has a marriage engagement to the Winthrop Family, and she and Blake are a match made in heaven! Therefore, she should marry Blake!’

‘Just look at their ad! They look so perfect together.’

‘Please date!’

‘I don't mind if you can marry such a perfect woman! Go ahead! I'm not sad! I ship you guys so hard!’

The comments went on and on.

Elspeth felt that the phenomena in the comment section were normal, and she didn't feel bothered about that. Nevertheless, Callum was frustrated about it and chose not to talk to her all day today.

In the evening, she returned home slightly late due to work. As soon as she opened the door, a stench of alcohol wafted toward her.

Margot and Theodore went on a trip, Edmund went out of town on a business trip, Blake was busy with work, Arthur was on the night shift at the hospital, and Max was at school. Hence, the source of the smell was—

“Elspeth.”

She looked up and met Callum's bright eyes.

Chapter 38

Callum's voice pulled Elspeth back to her senses. She gazed at him as he looked rather solemn under the dim light, and her heart pounded against her chest.

“Yeah?”

Callum had a few glasses of wine. He looked slightly different, and his gaze was more profound than usual.

“Do you like Blake?”

She couldn't help but raise her eyebrows at the question. “What makes you think I like Blake?”

He took a step forward. “If you didn't like him, why did you shoot commercials with him? Why didn't you reject his confession? And...” There was a tinge of something in his voice, and his gaze was so deep that she felt that she was drowning.

Elspeth held his shoulders and said softly, “Callum, you're drunk.”

When he heard the word ‘drunk’, he sobered up a little and took a step back. “No, I'm not drunk. I just want to remind you not to be with Blake. What happened last time was a lesson.”

His remarks reminded her of what happened a few months ago when Blake's obsessive fans kidnapped her, locked her up in the restroom, and beat her up. She felt a chill down her spine when she thought of the crazy fans' heinous faces.

Thankfully, she didn't fancy Blake, or his fans, obsessive or not, would have hunted her down any way they could.

“Got it. Thanks for the reminder, but I don't like Blake.” She smiled faintly. “Is that all? If so, I'm going to bed now.”

The current atmosphere was a bit strange. She didn't know what Callum was thinking about, and he was a little odd today, so she had the urge to escape from him.

He didn't say anything in response, so she quickly blurted, "Good night. Don't stay up so late." Then, she hastily went to her room.

The next day, Callum didn't call Elspeth to the office to discuss the new quarterly program as usual. She felt that it was rather odd but did not ask him about it.

When it was almost noon, she suddenly heard a cry from the desk not far away. "D*mn! There's something wrong with my computer!"

She cast a suspicious glance at the shout. In the next second, all the computer screens in the planning department became blank. At the same time, horrified shrieks echoed throughout the office.

"My draft! I didn't save it!"

"I just finished drawing the outlines!"

"What is going on? Can someone please take care of this?!"

As the complaints resonated in the office, she rose to her feet, cleared her throat, and said loudly, "Alright, calm down."

"How can we calm down like you, Miss Lynwood? Everyone's computers are broken, except yours," someone whined. Elspeth cast a cold glare at the person who spoke, and the person shut her mouth in fright.

She designed her own operating system, and no virus could invade and hack her computer, which was why her computer was fine.

Elspeth recognized the person who talked back to her. Her name was Linda Shaw. She was the closest to Ophelia when Ophelia came to the office.

“What? Miss Lynwood’s computer is fine?” All the staff looked at Elspeth’s computer and found that it was running smoothly.

Linda clicked her tongue and sneered, “Miss Lynwood, no offense, but why is your computer okay when all of our computers are broken? Did you...”

She trailed off mid-sentence, but everyone knew that she was implying that Elspeth must have done something to hack their computers. They began to suspect Elspeth’s motives for doing so.

Elspeth glared coldly at Linda and asked, “What are you implying?”

Linda raised her chin to show that she wouldn’t back down. “I’m not bad-mouthing you. I’m just stating my opinion. If you didn’t do it, prove it. You don’t have to threaten me!”

Elspeth turned to look at the other employees. “Do you need me to prove my innocence?”

A man slowly said, “Miss Lynwood, I know you, so I don’t think you’d do something like this, but—”

“Why not?!” Linda interjected. “Everyone wants to become the best employee in the company. By doing so, she can defeat the rest of us and steal the limelight!”

Elspeth immediately understood what she was trying to do with her brazen remarks.

“Linda, it seems like you know ‘my’ motive better than I do.”

“What?!” Linda’s face turned pale as she stammered, “No, I don’t! You’re trying to accuse me, aren’t you? M-My computer broke down too!”

She pointed to her computer and exclaimed, “My computer was the first to break down. The screen suddenly turned blank when I was working on the documents!”

Elspeth raised eyebrows at Linda’s triumphant smirk as she asked, “Can I take a look at your computer?”

“Sure.” Linda nodded confidently. “Feel free to look. It broke down anyway, so there’s nothing to hide.”

She had hacked the computer with the most destructive computer virus, so she was confident that Elspeth would not be able to restore the computer.

Elspeth smiled mysteriously as she warned, “Okay. Don’t come crying to me later.”

She went to check Linda’s computer and found that it was hacked by a virus called Efira. It was a notorious computer virus, and there were only five people in the world who could crack it.

Unfortunately for Linda, Elspeth was one of them.

Elspeth quickly typed codes on the computer, and strings of incomprehensible letters and mathematical symbols kept appearing on the screen. The employees watched on in amazement.

Finally, she managed to crack the virus. The moment she restored the computer, everyone saw Linda’s unfinished creation on the screen—a simple sketch of a frog.

“Oh? The documents you were working on were this frog, huh?” Elspeth mocked.

“No! M-Maybe when the virus invaded my computer, it changed my documents into this frog!” Linda tried to explain herself. As more people looked in her direction skeptically,

she flushed and added awkwardly, “I did work on the documents. If you don’t believe me, I can show you my backup file—”

She was too nervous and accidentally spilled the beans by saying that she had managed to save her file.

“You have a backup? Wow, Miss Shaw, you can predict the future, huh? You knew a virus would hit the computer, so you saved your file in advance.” Elspeth didn’t hesitate to expose her lies.

When Linda saw that her scheme had been exposed, she snarled, “Yeah, I did it, so what?! If it hadn’t been for you, I would have become the supervisor when Ava was promoted! I’ve been working diligently in this company for years, and you came out of nowhere and snatched my promotion! So, I’m pissed!”

She had spent years of effort for the company, but why didn’t she get anything in return?!

Chapter 39

Elspeth glared at Linda coldly. “Is that why you hacked everyone’s computer and framed me for it? You’re awful. Now, not only will you never be promoted as the supervisor, you’ll be fired.”

She turned and looked at her assistant. “Inform Mr. Winthrop that a person has jeopardized the company’s security, and I request for his presence.”

The moment Linda heard that Callum would be arriving, she immediately lost her arrogance and slumped to the floor dejectedly.

When he came, he saw Elspeth sitting on the chair, watching the drama unfold with amusement, while Linda squatted on the ground and bawled.

Elsbeth chuckled. “Mr. Winthrop, your good old employee tried to set me up, and I exposed her tricks. What do you think should be done?”

“I understand. I’ll be firing her according to the company’s regulations.” There was no warmth in his voice.

Linda lunged forward and hugged Callum’s thigh while sobbing, “No, Mr. Winthrop, please don’t fire me! I’ve been working here for so many years. I don’t want to leave. Please forgive me! Please!”

“I’ll give you one second to release me, or it won’t be as simple as you being fired.” The temperature around Callum plummeted at her actions.

Linda knew what he was capable of, so she hastily backpedaled.

The farce ended with her leaving the company in an utter mess. After the farce was over, Elspeth looked at her colleagues and smiled. “Don’t worry about your computers. I’ll restore them now.”

“You’re amazing!” The colleagues were so astonished that their jaws dropped. She was already a perfect woman; now, they discovered that she could even crack computer viruses! Was there anything that she couldn’t do?

Elsbeth smiled faintly. “I’ll recreate a code on my computer and transfer it to yours. Everything will be fine. Don’t worry.”

“Elsbeth, where did you learn how to crack computer viruses? It’s so cool!” The male colleagues had gathered around her and were full of awe. She looked exactly like the hackers in the movies! It was amazing!

“I learned some tricks from a foreigner while abroad a few years ago.” She smiled bashfully. “It’s nothing great.”

It was like Elspeth’s fan meeting at this moment, but Callum felt irritated when he saw the scene. “Don’t you have work to do? Hurry up and return to your seats! If you don’t return to your seats, you can kiss your one month’s salary goodbye!” He rebuked austere. The male employees hunched in themselves and scurried to their seats.

She giggled at his cold demeanor. “Are you jealous?”

“Don’t you have work to do?”

“Ooh, you’re so fierce. I’m scared. It’s true that men always speak with tongue in cheek.”

Callum glanced at her lightly, and a subtle emotion flashed across his eyes. “You’re a hacker.”

Everyone thought that Elspeth only knew a thing or two about this, not him. Only the best hackers could easily crack the virus and restore the computers to their previous state.

She shrugged and didn’t bother hiding the fact. “Oops, you found out about it. Awkward.”

“You’re awesome.”

“Nah, there are others who are better than me.” After she said this, she gracefully returned to her seat.

When Elspeth got off work and was ready to take a cab home in the evening, someone blocked her way. It was none other than Blake, whom she hadn’t seen for two days. Yet, it was something expected since he was an actor and was busy filming on the set these days.

A bright smile appeared on his face. “Come on. I’ll take you to a place.”

“No, thanks.” Elspeth shook her head. “I have something to do later.”

“Come on, Elspeth. Let’s go. There is a place where the night scene is particularly breathtaking. You’ll love it.”

Blake even gave the puppy eyes. Other girls certainly could not refuse his request, but she was different. She could vaguely guess what Blake wanted to do but couldn’t accept it.

“No, I don’t want to.”

“Come home with me.” Callum appeared out of nowhere and parked his car on the roadside.

The scenario became somewhat awkward all of a sudden. She stood between two cars, not knowing which way to go.

“Callum, I asked her out first. So, you can’t snatch her from me,” the agitated Blake complained with a raised voice.

Nevertheless, Callum remained indifferent and composed. “We have a project to discuss. Come on.” It sounded as if he was ordering her, but the reason behind the demand was impeccable.

Elspeth gritted her teeth, apologized to Blake timidly, and got into Callum’s car.

“Hey! Elspeth! Wait!”

Callum ignored him and drove away.

She didn't know what to say on the way, and she felt a little apprehensive as she looked at his prominent side profile.

"Callum."

"It's not a big deal."

Both of them spoke at the same time. She was startled by it and was forced to swallow back her words.

After a long silence, he took the initiative to say, "Didn't I tell you to keep a distance from Blake? You'll get yourself in trouble."

"I didn't do anything." His words stupefied Elspeth.

"Try not to go out alone with Blake. You guys just shot commercials as a couple. If someone took photos of you in private, we would face a PR blunder." Callum frowned in displeasure.

Elspeth nodded in agreement and looked out the window. Suddenly, she noticed a car was following them while keeping a moderate distance, and the car's speed would change according to their pace.

"Hey, I think that car is..."

"I know." Callum said seriously, "I see it too."

The Winthrop Family's residence was located in the suburbs, and they were now driving on a deserted path. It was likely that there would be some kind of accident.

He stepped on the accelerator to speed up. Sure enough, the car behind them also sped up, and they began a high-speed chase.

“Watch out!” Elspeth was a little anxious. The speed they were driving was worrying and dangerous.

“Don’t worry.”

Despite that, he drove the car smoothly, but the driver behind them had excellent driving skills, too, and almost caught up with them.

Next, the car behind them accelerated, overtook Callum’s car and blocked their way.

“Callum Winthrop! Get out of the car!”

The people from that car got out of the car and yelled at him. He knew they were after him, so he turned and said, “They’re here because of me. I’ll distract their attention later. Leave as soon as possible.”

“Do you think I’ll leave you alone under such circumstances?” Elspeth’s glance was earnest. “You saved me so many times. How can I do that to you?”

“Elspeth!” Callum frowned, and his tone became stern. “Stop messing around.”

She chuckled and flexed her wrist. “If you think of me as a weak and useless woman, you’re dead wrong.”

He looked at her confident face and felt a different emotion growing within his heart.

Chapter 40

Callum and Elspeth got out of the car together. Still, if things went wrong, she discreetly pressed the ring and sent her real-time location to Harper.

Outside the car stood a group of people who were glaring at the two of them fiercely.

“Are you Callum Winthrop?” A man with a scar on his face and a cigarette in his mouth looked at the calm Callum and smirked viciously. “Wow, you do look like a jerk. It’s like you’re asking for a beating.”

A trace of wariness flashed across his eyes. However, he calmed himself and asked, “Who are you?”

“That’s not important. All you need to know is that someone asked me to teach you a lesson!”

He swept his gaze across the men and glared at the leader coldly. “Do you know who I am?”

“Of course!” Scarface laughed boisterously. “Everyone knows who you are, Mr. Winthrop! Your reputation precedes you.”

“So, do you know the consequences of offending the Winthrops and me? Do you have a death wish?”

“Huh! The Winthrops?! You guys are nothing! I’m not scared of you at all!” Scarface taunted with a comical appearance.

Elsbeth exclaimed, “They’re just a bunch of trash. Don’t waste your time on them!”

“Trash? How dare you call us trash!” Scarface looked around and shouted sternly, “Beat them to death! Let them know who the real trash is!”

The men charged wildly toward them and swung the baseball bats in their hands. She dodged them nimbly and immediately grabbed the chance to kick the thugs.

Meanwhile, Callum was brutal in his retaliation. He punched the aggressor in the throat and flung him away. Then, he leaped and swiftly kicked the man’s head with his right leg.

The couple worked together seamlessly like perfect partners.

Soon, the group of men lay on the ground groaning in pain. They were obviously no match for the couple.

“D*mn! What a bunch of useless losers!” Scarface spat in disdain, and with a wave of his right hand, dozens more burly men came out of the woods nearby.

This is an ambush. They’ve been waiting for me here. Callum’s gaze was cold, and it carried a tint of ruthlessness.

The brawny men charged toward them fiercely. This time, there were more people, and Callum and Elspeth were obviously outnumbered. The couple began to tire as the fight dragged on, and they were forced to stay in defense.

Scarface, who was quietly observing the fight, felt that it was the right timing now. So, he drew a dagger with a grin and stabbed it toward Elspeth, who was closest to him!

Elspeth’s pupils shrank when she saw the knife coming at her. In the next second, Callum reached out, grabbed the dagger, and kicked Scarface away.

Callum felt agonizing pain coming from the palm of his hand. There were droplets of blood dripping to the ground. It was a gory and shocking sight. He couldn’t even hold onto his calm composure as he frowned.

“Are you okay?!” Her eyes widened in horror. She didn’t expect Callum to grab the dagger at such a critical moment!

He shook his head lightly, his face and lips slightly pale due to blood loss.

Elspeth turned and glared fiercely at Scarface, who was curled on the ground in pain.

“Miss Lynwood! Are you okay?!” Harper finally arrived with his men. When he saw the scene before him, he coldly instructed, “Arrest them!”

The men behind Harper rushed forward and quickly subdued the gangsters.

Harper walked over to Elspeth and asked lowly, “Miss Lynwood, are you alright?”

Elspeth nodded and pointed to the bloodied Callum as she murmured concernedly, “He’s injured because of me.”

Harper hurriedly went over to help Callum up and gasped in horror when he looked at the latter’s bloody palm. How much courage does it take for someone to hold a dagger without hesitation?!

“Come on. I’ll take you to the hospital right now.”

When they got to the hospital, Harper went to pay the bill, leaving Elspeth to take care of Callum, who was a little dazed due to the massive blood loss. The nurse bandaged him and tugged on his wound from time to time. It looked excruciating, but there wasn’t a hint of discomfort on his face.

Soon, the nurse finished bandaging his wound and left. Elspeth looked at his pallid face and asked, “Are you okay?”

Callum looked up at her. “I have a question.”

She was momentarily taken aback and could hazard a guess about what he was about to ask her.

“What is your relationship with Harper?”

How could Harper arrive in time every time something happens to her? How could he know her specific location? Why did she drink her sorrows with him? Why does he address her as Miss Lynwood? Why does he obey her commands as if he is her subordinate...

These questions swirled in Callum's mind for a long time.

Elsbeth knew that he was a meticulous man and would guess something was going on, but she didn't expect him to ask her so bluntly.

"I told you, he's my friend. We knew each other when I was abroad and got along quite well." Even then, she did not want to tell him the truth.

He coldly inquired, "Tell me, are you the president of Azure Corporation?"

Her heart skipped a beat. She desperately wanted to deny it, but he was far too clever. There was no way she could fool him now. So, in order to dissuade him, she showed a scheming grin and said lightly, "Oops, too bad. You found out about it."

When Callum saw her reaction, he was confused and began to doubt his hunch was correct.

"Mr. Winthrop, do you feel honored that the president of Azure Corporation is working tirelessly as a small-time employee in your company?" Elspeth knitted her fingers together and pressed her chin against them. "Do you believe me? I don't even believe what I'm saying."

She was being ironic, but her points made sense. There was no reason for the president of Azure Corporation to work in his company.

Nonetheless, he retained his suspicion and lowered his voice. “I hope you aren’t lying to me.”

Elspeth rolled her eyes at his threat. “Relax, don’t overthink things. Can’t good friends have close relationships?”

The image of Harper worrying about her popped into his mind. It made him feel a little uneasy and upset, and his tone carried a hint of jealousy, “You’re my fiancée. Do you think it’s appropriate to have a close relationship with other men?”

“Hmm? What’s going on here? Are you jealous? Don’t tell me that you really want to marry me?!” Elspeth laughed uproariously and was even more amused when she looked at his serious face.

“Of course not.” He looked in askance at her.

“Then, please stop interfering with my private affairs.”

It so happened that Harper had returned. So, Callum stopped talking and closed his eyes to rest.

Harper heard their conversation clearly. Therefore, he forced his laughter down his throat while he said, “Miss Lynwood, I’m heading home now. Please take care of Mr. Winthrop.”

She could hear the teasing in his words. “Screw you,” she cursed while glaring at him.

Harper mimed “I know” quietly and left with a smile, leaving only Elspeth and Callum in the ward.

“If you don’t have anything else to do here, go home.” Callum opened his eyes and spoke sternly, “It’s getting late.”

“No. I’m staying here to take care of you.” She quirked a brow at his attitude.

“You don’t have to.”

“But you’re injured because of me. I’ll be an ungrateful person if I just leave.” She sat down and took an apple from the table. “Do you want to eat this? I’ll peel one for you, okay?”