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Never Late, Never Away Chapter 1513

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To Joan's surprise, she ran into Carl at the exact same spot as the previous day.

"You're off work, Joan."

Carl looked at her with a grin.

"Yep. Just knocked off."

She felt that something was amiss but couldn't quite place her finger on it.

"How do you know my name?" she asked in astonishment.

"Your boss mentioned your name during our discussion."

Carl pretended to be chummy with their boss.

"I see."

With that, Joan didn't dwell on the matter. After all, since she was a member of the staff, it wasn't surprising that he knew her name.

"What are you doing here? The office is closed."

Since they've met a couple of times, he wasn't really considered a stranger.

"I'm waiting for someone, and she's here now," Carl joked.

Studying her surroundings, Joan took a while to realize that there was no one else there.

"You were waiting for me?"

"Yes, I was." He was grinning from ear to ear.

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“Why?”

Hearing his words, she became even more perplexed. Her impression of the man was quite good, and he didn't seem like a fickle person, so it didn't cross her mind that he was trying to court her.

“Well, your boss and I confirmed a deal earlier today. The actual details and the final contract are to be discussed further. Your boss asked me to look for you to talk things through, so I waited till you got off work. I was thinking of treating you to a meal so that we can talk about the contract.”

At that moment, she sensed that something was amiss, but she couldn't tell what it was.

“But why didn't my boss tell me?” Joan questioned.

“Perhaps he was too busy and forgot all about it.”

Carl deliberately tried to sound casual as he added, “Ms. Joan, do you have time now? I would like to discuss the contract with you. If it's not convenient, I can come back tomorrow.”

Carl was obviously good with words.

Since he seemed as though he was only interested in the deal, Joan lowered her defenses.

After a short pause, she consented to his request, “Let's talk about it now. But we will skip the meal, yeah? I'm going home to have dinner with my boyfriend. We can find a place to sit down and discuss.”

Carl eagerly agreed to her suggestion.

Before setting off, Joan sent a text message to Larry: Hey dear, I'm with a client right now. I may reach home a little later than usual, but I'll be back for dinner. Love you.

Then, she turned to Carl and said, “Let's go. There's a café right beside the office. We can discuss there.”

“Sure, let's go.”

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Thus, the two headed toward the café.

However, Joan failed to notice a mysterious shadow creeping past behind them immediately after they started walking. The shadow lurked in the dark for a while, observing their movements before following them.

“What would you like to drink?”

Carl’s tone was nothing but gentlemanly.

“I’ll have an earl grey latte. Just to make it clear, the drinks are on me, okay?” Joan chuckled.

“No, that won’t do. I’m the guy here, so I have to pay the bill. No questions about that.” Carl smiled.

“No! You’re our client. I have to foot the bill. Besides, I’ll be sure to get the company to reimburse me.”

Joan made it clear that she was here on business terms.

Seeing that she was persistent, Carl stopped insisting.

Both of them then took their seats.

“By the way, we’re about to sign off on a deal, and I don’t even know your name yet.”

Joan was quick to jump straight into work. After all, Larry was still waiting for her at home, so she had no time to waste.

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"I'm Cory Jefferson."

Carl did not tell her his true name. After all, he was not actually planning to collaborate with Joan. Moreover, it would do him no good to reveal his identity since he was scheming against her.

"Hello, Mr. Jefferson. Let's get straight to business then," Joan said solemnly.

"Ms. Joan, there's no need for us to rush, right? What's the point of life if we don't enjoy it? So why don't we try to know each other first?" Carl suggested.

A topic too solemn was not going to help him with his plan, so Carl was trying to liven up the atmosphere.

Joan was baffled, sensing something odd about Carl's words.

Even if I want to enjoy life, I won't be doing it with a stranger like you. Moreover, why should I share my private life with you?

Despite her displeasure, Joan maintained the polite smile on her face.

"Mr. Jefferson, I don't think we're that familiar with each other. It'll be inappropriate for us to talk about personal matters, so let's discuss the contract instead," Joan rejected respectfully, hoping to change the topic.

"Let's be honest, Ms. Watts. I'm very interested in you, but since you have a boyfriend, I know I don't stand a chance. I just want to find out who's the lucky guy who has such an amazing girlfriend like you," Carl said with intentional nonchalance.

"How about this? Let's make a deal. I'll show you my girlfriend's photo, and you'll let me see who your boyfriend is." As Carl spoke, he stood up and showed her his phone.

Perplexed by Carl's series of actions, Joan rejected again, "That won't be necessary, Mr. Jefferson. I'm not interested in your personal matters. If we're not going to talk about work, I won't be able to stay around anymore. I'll be heading home then."

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With that said, Joan began rising to her feet, not wanting to waste any more of her time with Carl. If there really was anything important for them to discuss, they could just do it the next day.

“All right, all right. Ms. Joan, since you don’t like to talk about personal matters, let’s not.”

Almost immediately, Carl pressed down on Joan’s shoulders to make her sit again. Then, he headed back to his seat and began talking about “work.”

Meanwhile, someone had taken photos of Carl showing her his phone and holding onto her shoulders, and that person was the man stalking them earlier on.

Once the mysterious man had gotten what he wanted, he grinned in satisfaction before leaving.

He had to proceed with the rest of Carl’s plan. With that, a malicious scheme targeting Joan began to unfold.

In the meantime, Joan had no idea someone had taken a sneak shot of her; she was still somberly discussing business with Carl.

However, Carl did not actually have a business deal with Joan’s boss, so he could not raise any substantial points during their discussion.

His words only made her confused, and she could not comprehend what he was trying to convey.

“Mr. Jefferson, you don’t seem well-informed about our company,” Joan pointed out honestly.

“That’s true.” Carl chuckled. Of course I don’t know anything.

Fortunately, he had figured out what services Joan’s company provided before he came, so he did not end up exposing himself.

“I’ve only briefly talked about the contract with your boss back then, so I don’t really know the details. I’m really sorry,” Carl muttered apologetically.

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“That’s understandable,” Joan replied.

Despite her words, she still sensed something strange about the man opposite her. However, she did not dwell on it.

“I guess that’s that for now, Mr. Jefferson,” Joan said. “Do consider how you’d want the design and what style you would like. Then, please send the details to me, and I’ll draft up something for you. How about that?”

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With that, he would be able to mull over it, and she would not have to waste her time. In other words, it was a decision that would benefit them both.

“Okay. I’ll come back after I figure things out. I’m really sorry. I never thought it’d be as complicated as this. I sincerely apologize for wasting your time, Ms. Joan,” Carl agreed immediately.

In fact, he had been stumped by how he should keep up with his lies, so upon hearing Joan’s suggestion, he quickly grabbed hold of the opportunity to avoid exposing himself.

“It’s okay, you’re our client, and this is my job,” Joan replied. “So we’ll stop here today, Mr. Jefferson. I have other things to attend to, so I’ll be taking my leave.”

“Sure, Ms. Joan. I’ll be leaving too. Would you like me to send you back?” Carl joked.

“Thank you, but it’s best that I take a cab,” Joan rejected instantly with an apologetic smile.

“It’s fine. Let’s walk out together. I’ll help you hail a cab.”

Carl then gestured for her to step out of the café first.

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“All right. Thank you.”

As the two stood by the side of the road, they chatted away.

Slowly, Joan became anxious. It seemed that there were barely any cabs around that day, and the ones that drove past them already had passengers on board.

“Be careful!” Carl yelled as he pulled Joan aside.

Right then, a car sped past where Joan had been standing a second ago.

Although Joan had fallen onto the ground from Carl’s pull, she was safe.

On the other hand, Carl was not as fortunate as she was. Although the car had not collided with him, it still clipped him and sent him flying a few yards away from where he stood earlier.

Joan was still sitting on the ground, frightened by what just happened. If she had been knocked over by the car, the consequences would have been unimaginable.

Then, Joan came to her senses. How is Cory?

With that thought in mind, she scrambled to her feet and hurried toward Carl.

“Mr. Jefferson, how are you? Are you okay?”

She panicked when she saw him sprawling on the ground with agony written all over his face. He wouldn’t have ended up like this if not for saving me.

It took Carl a while before he could squeeze out, “I’m fine. Don’t worry, Ms. Joan. The car only clipped me. I’m alright.” He then gave her a reassuring smile, albeit it looked forced.

“Mr. Jefferson, let me take you to the hospital for a checkup.” Carl’s words made her racing heart calm down a little, but she was still worried about his condition.

Right then, the driver that nearly knocked Carl over rushed out of his car.

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Looking at the two of them, he apologized, "Are the both of you fine? I'm really sorry. I was taking a call earlier, so I didn't have a good grip on my steering wheel. I'm really sorry."

"I'm alright, but I can't say the same about him. Since you're responsible for all this, you should take us to the hospital to have him checked up."

Although Joan did not blame the driver for the accident, some things had to be said, nonetheless.

"Ms. Joan, I'm fine. You don't need to come with me. I'll just go to the hospital with this guy," Carl uttered.

"Are you sure?"

Joan still felt uneasy. After all, Carl was injured because of her, so there was no way she could let him go to the hospital alone.

"I'll come with you," she insisted.

"You should go home instead. Don't worry. He will bring me to the hospital. It's best not to let your boyfriend worry about you. If there are any problems, I'll inform you," Carl suggested.

"Okay then."

Since Carl insisted, Joan had no choice but to give in.

"Mr. Jefferson, please give me your number. That way, it'll be easier for me to contact you."

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After the two exchanged numbers, Carl got into the driver's car with his help. He then waved at Joan before the car sped off.

Watching the distant car, Joan was still worried. As she hailed a cab, she planned to tell Larry about the incident once she reached home.

Meanwhile, Carl dropped the act the moment the car sped off. He stretched and crowed, "She's definitely fooled. I'm sure she'll visit me in the hospital soon."

Then, he turned to look at the driver. "Your driving skills aren't that great, are they? You nearly clipped me earlier and frightened the living daylights out of me."

The driver sneered. "If I don't make it look more realistic, Joan won't believe you. Honestly, your acting was superb. I thought I actually hit you."

"Ha! It's just like what you've said earlier. If I didn't make it look more genuine, how would Joan fall for the trick? Let's go to the hospital. We'll take a photo of Joan visiting me in the hospital before we proceed to the next step of the plan."

The two then laughed in unison.

Everything that happened earlier had merely been part of Carl's plan.

He was worried about Joan's indifference toward him.

That was why he came up with this plan and found someone to work with him in faking the accident earlier. The man pretended to lose control of his vehicle, almost crashing into Joan. Carl then swooped in to save her in the nick of time and feigned his injury.

Although it was not as dramatic as movies, Carl had still saved Joan. Because of that, Joan would definitely have a better impression of him.

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With that, things would be smooth-sailing for them from then on.

When Joan reached home, she plopped herself onto the couch and begin mulling over what happened earlier.

“You’re back. How’s work?” Larry was focused on his own work, so he barely noticed what Joan was doing.

Similarly distracted, Joan was lost in her thoughts and did not hear Larry’s words.

When he realized her lack of response, he raised his head to notice her strange behavior.

“What’s wrong, Joan? Did something happen?” Larry asked.

Her miserable look was making him upset as well.

It was then that she came back to her senses. Worriedly, she mumbled, “Something happened earlier when I was negotiating with a client. A car nearly crashed into me, and my client saved me. However, the car grazed him. Now, the driver is sending him to the hospital, and I don’t know how he is doing.”

“Really?”

Larry’s heart skipped a beat when he heard her. Thank god nothing happened to Joan. Otherwise, I don’t know what I would do.

“Is your client badly injured? Was he able to stand up? Was there blood on the ground?” Larry calmly asked.

“He lay on the ground for a while, then I helped him up. There wasn’t any blood on the ground, and he could walk by himself. I think he should be fine,” Joan responded as she recalled the scene.

“That’s good to hear. It means he wasn’t hurt terribly. He should be fine after getting checked by a doctor,” Larry consoled.

“Yes. I’ve asked for his contact details. I’ll call him later to check on him.”

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Joan sighed. "How am I going to repay the favor? He was hurt because of me."

"I'll take you to visit him after the result of his checkup is out."

With his hands on her shoulders, he queried, "By the way, what's his name?"

"Cory Jefferson. He came to the office to wait for me to get off work and talk about a contract. He's really a gentleman."

As he was now her savior, Joan could not help but shower "Cory" with praises.

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