



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

**JUST LIKE ELISE** had expected, Schmidt didn't hold back on either class nor price, and took Elise to what seemed to be the most expensive restaurant in their area instead of an average bar. Admittedly, perhaps he was trying to impress Elise but he had done that a long time ago and whatever activities or locations he would choose for their date, the woman would be more than delighted, just because she got to spend the evening with him. A part of her was, truthfully, somewhat disappointed for having to give up her personal alone time, but when she weighed her options, going out with Schmidt sounded a lot better.

Even if it was awkward and quiet, just what Elise had feared. It was certainly not as casual and laid-back as she had hoped for, and they seemed to have zero topics to handle over dinner, leading into a painful silence despite being good friends already. But apparently, going out on a date and having breakfast together were two very different things. It didn't help that Elise was terrible at flirting and dating in general, and going out with someone she actually loved was even worse. On top of that, Schmidt seemed to be equally silent and out of things to say despite being rather outgoing and talkative otherwise.

Due to being an extremely insecure, anxious person, Elise couldn't help but doubt herself. Was it her fault? Was Schmidt simply not interested in her, or all? Had the dress, and the thick lipstick been too much? Was she chewing too loudly, staring too much, smiling oddly?

Frankly, it was not her fault and she hadn't done anything wrong. If anything, it was the mere opposite and Schmidt found himself shy and unable to speak due to the woman opposite him being so undeniably gorgeous and perfect in every possible way. She was often so unable to see it herself, but Schmidt did in fact look at her like she was the most important thing in the world, like she was all that mattered, all she needed and that deep, deep love that ran throughout him was why he was so quiet. Because even if he was Schmidt, so confident and brave, Elise brought out a side that he hadn't explored in a long time. She made him feel like the luckiest man on Earth, yes, but she also made him utterly, absolutely weak.

However, Elise wasn't the only one who noticed the awkwardness of the dinner. And once Schmidt understood that it was because they weren't used to being so formal with each other, he took out his phone to ask for a favor from Nick in order to bring back the casual atmosphere. Elise was still eating the remains of the salmon she had ordered, but she noticed his phone anyway, and started to scream internally. Was she that unbearable to be with? Obviously, she didn't know the truth, and that gave her the option to feel like she was doing everything wrong — in fact, it was the only option.

Once they had eaten dinner and Schmidt had paid, which he insisted on doing just to be a gentleman and impress Elise some more, he helped Elise up from her seat and smiled at her. "I know this was terribly awkward, and for that I am sorry. But, the night isn't over yet. I'm still taking you somewhere", Schmidt explained and for a moment, Elise feared for what was about to come, but from the warm genuine smile on Schmidt's tempting lips, she gathered the bravery to nod and accept his vague suggestion. Still, she was more than glad to leave the restaurant behind, even though it was a lovely place but as they left, they walked away from awkward memories and nothing more.

They sat in Schmidt's car, and as the radio played the playlist Schmidt had put together, consisting entirely of rock songs, Elise took his hand. It was a bold move from her, but it felt like the right thing to do and accordingly, Schmidt squeezed her hand slightly as their fingers interlocked and he began to drive. They took turns singing the lyrics of whatever happened to play, and it felt nice and much more comfortable than the experience at the restaurant.

At some point, Schmidt told Elise to close her eyes and as soon as she had done that, he took off his tie and used it to blindfold her in order to keep their location a secret. As soon as he had hurried out of the car and went to open Elise's door, Schmidt took her hand again and started to lead her through the parking lots and towards a destination she wasn't aware of yet. Elise wasn't sure how to feel about being left in the dark about their next activity, because a part of her enjoyed surprises but they also troubled her and she felt discomfort in having to trust someone entirely, and right now Schmidt was leading her through a parking lot where she could get hit by a car and that scared her. But, obviously she was a fool to doubt her safety in Schmidt's presence.

"Don't worry, babe. I would never do anything to upset or hurt you. You're safe, I promise", he assured, as if he had read her mind, and Elise's cheeks heated up at the words, from the nickname to the guarantee that he would protect her no matter what. Suddenly, being blindfolded and walked to somewhere she had no clue of didn't feel so terrifying, thanks to Schmidt and the safety he promised in his company. And there weren't any signs of doubt in Elise, who broke into a careful smile and let the man lead her farther.

They entered a building, and a calming warmth wrapped Elise into its comfort as they walked to the elevator in the floor, and at the feeling of the platform moving, the woman slightly leaned onto Schmidt due to her undeniable fear of elevators and the tiny chance of it breaking in the middle of their ride. She had no idea where they could possibly be going, but she trusted Schmidt and believed that whatever he had in mind, it would be wonderful. After all, nothing could be more awkward than the dinner they had had, so it wouldn't take much for the experience to be bested.

"I feel like Daredevil. Just a little less badass", Elise muttered and fixed the blindfold covering her eyes to stop it from sliding. Schmidt chuckled so ly, but didn't reply, only took out his keys, at least concluding from the jingling Elise could hear clearly. With one of the keys, Schmidt seemed to open the door they had stopped at and Elise tensed at the realization that they were most likely nearing their destination, and she wasn't mistaken.

As soon as Schmidt had gently tugged on Elise's hand to lead her in, he let go and unfolded the tie around her head to give her back her ability to see. "Open your eyes", was his simple whisper, and when Elise did as had been requested, she found herself in a very familiar place, only that it was a lot prettier now. It was their apartment, but instead of looking like it always did, there were candles lighting up the otherwise dim room and the roses on the coffee table only heightened the romantic touch. Beside the vase of roses, was a box of pizza and a stack of DVDs, which was a sight that excited Elise dearly and caused her to cover her red mouth with her palm as she gasped quietly. It was truly beautiful, and the effort was visible and nearly brought the woman to tears.

"Schmidt...", Elise began with a shaky voice, glancing at the man with amazement clear on her features, but it wasn't a very surprising reaction. After all, Schmidt had done something absolutely wonderful, something that no one else had ever done for Elise.

Schmidt shrugged casually, as if it was no big deal but the smug smile on his lips gave away the pride he was feeling rather strongly. "I texted Jess to set this up with the guys. They're not here anymore though, so it's just you, me and all your favorite fictional characters", he smiled, and nodded towards the movies and TV shows on the coffee table. Elise was still in genuine shock, truly touched by what Schmidt had done just for her. In fact, she was somewhat unable to realize that it was indeed all for her, that the effort he had seen was just to please her, to make her happy, because no one had ever treated her so incredibly.

"This is perfect, Schmidt. This is the sweetest, kindest thing anyone has ever done for me", Elise breathed out and jumped towards Schmidt to wrap her arms around his neck and pull him into a tight hug. "Thank you so much", she murmured against his shoulder while he wrapped his strong arms around her body and held her close to himself. It was quiet for a while, just the two of them body to body and Elise's smiles breaking the silence once in a while. She was, indeed, a sensitive person and right now, she was witnessing one of the greatest things ever and it evidently made her burst into tears.

Once Schmidt had dried her tears and pressed a gentle kiss onto her forehead, the two of them moved onto the couch where she got to choose the first movie to watch, and he split the pizza into even slices. They got comfortable — Schmidt got rid of his jacket and Elise kicked off her high heels and as the couple of commercials on the DVD rolled on, she changed from the tight dress to the overalls she had mentioned earlier. Yet, she wasn't any less attractive in Schmidt's eyes, no, she was still the lovely, beautiful woman he had fallen completely in love with. Cuddling underneath the cozy blanket, Elise and Schmidt both felt like they were on top of the world, infinitely happy and at home as she rested on his arms and he offered his opinions on all of the characters she seemed to be rather fond of.

They watched a couple of movies, until it was getting late and they began growing unable to focus and concentrate on anything else except each other and the tempting lips that seemed to be right there. On top of that, Schmidt had warned that he had given their friends the permission to come home for the night, and considering it was already nearly midnight, they were running out of time alone. But it had been a great night, and Elise wanted Schmidt to know that.

"Tonight was... amazing. Thank you for everything, Schmidt", Elise smiled shyly and bit on her lip as she looked down at her hands, only to then return her gaze into Schmidt's eyes. Slowly sitting up on the couch, she smiled at him and he mirrored the expression happily, leaving them staring into each other's eyes as the end credits of another movie rolled on the screen of the television. Schmidt shrugged lightly as his smile lost its innocence and became replaced with a hint of pride, but she didn't blame him — after arranging such a special end for the evening, he definitely deserved some recognition.

"I'm glad you liked it. I did too. Besides, you deserve the world, Ellie. You're worth so much more than just five bucks, you're worth all of my money and all the stars from the sky and all the happiness there is", Schmidt sighed and placed his hand on her cheek, caressing the skin so ly whilst leaning closer and glancing at her red lips. Elise's cheek regained the familiar shade of pink on them, but instead of pulling away, she did the same and leaned in until their lips met in the middle and the sheer enjoyment caused by the touch forced her eyes to shut.

Gently cupping her cheek, Schmidt drew Elise to her lap and as soon as she was steadily set on his arms, he stood up and started to carry the woman. The kiss broke for a second or two as she gasped at the sudden lift, her eyes widening as she understood that her feet weren't touching the floor and the reaction earned a grin from Schmidt, before kissing her again. With slow, but steady steps, Schmidt started to walk towards his room yet he managed to move his lips on Elise's in a talented fashion, one that took Elise's breath away and weakened her — therefore, perhaps it was a good thing he was carrying her on his arms and not letting her rely on her legs, which were surely turning into jelly with each passing second.

Schmidt did admittedly struggle with the door a bit, but eventually the two of them got it open and a few steps through the door, he stopped for a second to ignite a new, but equally a reaction kiss. After nearing his bed finally, Schmidt gently and carefully set Elise on the mattress, as if she was a glass angel and he feared that any kind of rough handling would cause her to crack and break right in front of his eyes. And that was by no means his desire.

It was, however, one hell of an ending for one hell of a date and it was safe to say, the both of them fell asleep smiling that night.

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cuties

**but hey, i'm planning on maybe eventually doing a winston fic at some point** because a) winston is way too under-appreciated and b) it would give me the chance to write some more schmelish

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