

Chapter 24: A King's Collection

"Tell me about your mother," Renee asked.

Adrian smiled, his eyes showing a hint of sadness as he said, "My mother. Her name was Freya. I loved her very much -"

"Loved?" Renee inquired. Minutes passed, and Renee questioned Adrian about his background.

Adrian answered, "She passed away years ago."

"I'm sorry. What about your father?" Renee sought.

"My father, Anthony King, our relationship is... complicated. It began when he decided to remarry. His intentions were good at the start, to provide me with a mother figure, but our blended family dynamic was far from harmonious," Adrian explained. "Over time, my stepfamily seemed to win his favor, while I felt myself slipping away from him."

"I'm telling you this so you won't be surprised when you meet my family in the future," Adrian admitted. He knew his father would oppose his plans to marry Riley, so he had to be upfront about his relationship with Anthony King.

"I envy Riley for having you until this day. You have raised Riley well as she turned out to be a wonderful person," Adrian heartily remarked. He recalled his last memory of his mother and said, "I believe mothers are irreplaceable."

There was a moment of silence before Renee suddenly gasped. Tears flowed down her cheeks, alerting Adrian. He grabbed a box of

tissue from the side and gave it to Renee, asking, "Did I say something wrong?"

Accepting the tissue, Renee wiped the tears from her face. She replied, "Nothing. I was - I was touched by your words." 1

Renee turned to Adrian, still teary-eyed. She said, "I'm sorry about your mother, but I hoped you found someone to lean on after she passed away."

Adrian nodded. He replied, "My grandpa and my aunt Linda."

"Then, I look forward to meeting them," Renee said before taking a deep breath and forcing a smile.

"What's going on?" Riley suddenly walked in. She looked panicked as she asked, "Mom? Are you crying? Adrian?"

Adrian was stunned when Riley suddenly glared at him. At the same time, he fully understood how Renee was so important to her, so much that she would frown at him.

"No, no, Riley. It's not Adrian's fault. We talked about his family, and the situation touched me," Renee explained.

"Oh," Riley sighed, then looked at Adrian apologetically. "Sorry, Adrian."

After that chat with Adrian, Renee had to undergo an echocardiography. The caregiver and two medical staff brought her to the second floor, whereas Adrian and Riley remained in the room. Adrian took the opportunity to discuss the plans for the jewelry

company.

As they sat in front of a coffee table, he said, "I'm still in the process of acquiring a small jewelry manufacturing company. For now, we will outsource the production. I'll need to see some of your designs."

"Oh, I have left two sketchbooks here," Riley said before going to the closet and taking out the sketchbooks. She showed Adrian her sketches and remarked, "I just love diacut designs that are two-toned. It gives a gleaming diamond impression."

Adrian flipped through the first set of designs. In addition to what Riley had shared, several pieces were combined with diamonds and other gems. He said, "I'm not a woman, but I can tell these are great." He looked at her and suggested, "They all would look great on you."

Riley smiled. Then, she revealed, "I also made some male jewelry. I have been working on this in the past two days." She blushed before showing the next sketchbook, saying, "I call this A King's Collection."

Adrian paused and looked at Riley intensely. For a second, their eyes met.

Riley admitted, "I thought these pieces would suit you." 1

His lips curved up approvingly as he started at the first drawing. It was a semi-closed bangle with a crown in the middle.

"Its surface will be enameled with black while the white gold will remain underneath," Riley described. "I noticed you don't wear jewelry, so I figured you did not want one to be super flashy."

Adrian nodded. He declared, "I'll wear white gold."

Indeed, Adrian was not fond of wearing men's jewelry, but he had a collection of expensive watches and cufflinks. However, since Riley designed an entire jewelry set in his name, he would definitely wear it. It might not be obvious, but A King's Collection technically meant Adrian King.

Riley smiled brightly and said, "I'm glad you will."

She excitedly showed Adrian the rest of the designs for A King's Collection. There were also chained necklaces, all with white gold and black enamel; some had a touch of gold or diamond.

Riley's enthusiasm was evident in her smile, the sparkle in her eyes, and her animated hand gestures. It had been almost three weeks since Adrian had found the broken-hearted Riley, but now she had gradually regained that glow on her face.

Adrian could not help but ask, "Does it still hurt?"

"What?" Riley reacted with a bemused expression.

"When you think about Brian and his betrayal, does it still hurt?" Adrian questioned.

"Hurt?" Riley echoed. Her brows met as she admitted, "I'm still angry with him, but I can't let that anger hinder me from becoming a better person. I'm actually relieved now that we have divorced."

With a smile, Riley added, "And I have you to thank for that."

"Another question," Adrian said. "Have you ever designed a jewelry for Brian?"

The question took Riley aback. Her face turned tomato red as she confessed, "No. You are the first man I had designed jewelry for."

A faint smile formed on his face. He said, "Then, I'm honored. Thank you, Riley."

Meanwhile, at Brey Jewelry & Apparel Co., Brian interviewed a jewelry designer who had previously worked with luxury brands like Cartier and Tiffany & Co. 1

This applicant was the best among the fifteen candidates HR forwarded to him. Sadly for Brian, the designs looked more like those of the Cartier and Tiffany brands. How could his company stand out if his designs looked like copies?

"I don't want our jewelry to look like Cartier and Tiffany," Brian said sternly. "You have to develop better designs if you want this job."

"I'm sorry. If you give me a chance, Mister Martin, I will give you another set of sketches," the applicant said.

"You have two days," Brian replied.

After dismissing the applicant, Brian angrily pulled his hair. He was starting to feel the pressure of Riley's dismissal. Their valued clients had been asking for new jewelry pieces, but the company didn't have one yet. Months prior, Riley was so distracted about his affair, she

didn't make any new designs.

"Fuck, what should I do?" Brian hissed. He got up from his seat and walked around his office several times.

Suddenly, an idea crept into his mind.

"Maybe I should talk to Riley about working for the company on a commission basis... until I find a suitable designer. And I'll give her back sales commissions to her previous designs," Brian said. "Yeah, she would appreciate it - getting back the rights to her designs." 6

"Yeah," Brian convinced himself. "I'll set the rules. She won't be allowed to enter the office that way; we don't see each other."

The last thing Brian wanted was to give Riley the impression that he wanted her back. He couldn't do that, not when he had decided to move on with Claire and their coming baby. 11

 Lilhyz Author

“May 23, 2024. 1 chapter only today. Thank you for understanding. The next update is tomorrow.”

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