

Chapter Fifty-One

The music stopped as the hall became still, and silence took over the atmosphere since people could not believe what the police had just said.

Then, after getting over their shock, the guests started to whisper to each other.

“You think you know a person until they show you their true color.” A lady said out loud.

“Oh, yes! How can a child be so black-hearted to his family?” A fellow uttered.

Following his remarks were numerous comments about how terrible Jeff's action was.

Their words anger Mr. Barlow, and when he gazed at his grandson, rage was the only emotion he felt.

“You have shamed this family to a great degree!” Mr. Barlow coldly mumbled, balling his hand into a fist.

“Grandfather, I can explain. It's all Chloe's fault that I did what I did! I burned it first because she was going to do it!” Jeff shouted as the police handcuff him.

The sound of mumbling rose in the room, and one of the guests said, “I never knew that this is how chaotic the Barlow family is. On the outside, they look decent, but it turns out that they are disorderly people.”

Hearing those words, Madam Rosey approached Jeff and gave him a harsh slap on the cheek.

“We have tried our best to bring you all up in the right way.” Madam Rosey shouted, hoping that those words will change people's minds.

“I guess you did poorly at that.” Mr. Ford said out loud.

It grew silent as he walked up to the Barlows and coldly gazed at their faces one after the other.

“It can't all be your grandchildren's fault that they turned out this way. Maybe your parenting skills are awful. Don't you think so, Rosey?” Mr. Ford coldly intoned.

“Yes... Of course. Mr. Ford is a wise man. If you think our parenting skills are awful, then it means we are not doing something right in bringing up our grandchildren.” Madam Rosey said with a fake smile on her lips.

Frowning, Mr. Ford narrowed his eyes and walked away, heading out of the hall.

After he left, ten bodyguards surrounded the Barlows, and one of

them said, “Boss Asher needs you guys to leave the hall. He's not pleased with the disturbance that this family has caused.”

The sound of giggling and mumbling echoed in the room as the guest stood by and watch.

The Barlow family didn't have the guts to lift their heads as the bodyguards and officers escorted them out of the hall. ①

When they got in the corridor, the doors slammed shut in their faces.

"Why would you do something this foolish!" Anthony yelled in his son's face as his veins bulged on his neck.

“Dad, please. When my spy told me what Chloe was up to, I decided to hire someone to set the fire since she was going to do it anyway!” Jeff cried out with fear in his eyes.

“Do you know how stupid you sound!

Burning down the warehouse because your cousin planned to do it!” ①

“It was to give her the taste of her own medicine. I didn't blow the whistle on her to Hanson, but she decided to punish me for something that I didn't do!”

Anger swept over Anthony when he noticed the hateful stares he was getting from the others.

“When did you become an idiot!” Anthony shouted.

“Dad, I wanted her to feel what it feels like to get accused of something that you didn't do! I wanted her to know the feeling of being punished for a crime you didn't commit!” Jeff angrily intoned. ①

In a fit of rage, Anthony folded his fingers into a fist, punched Jeff in the face, and shouted, “Shut up!

Tasting blood on his tongue, Jeff pitifully gazed at his father with wet eyes as the police dragged him away.

“I don't want to go to jail! Dad! Please, you got to bill me out tonight. Please, dad, please!” Jeff screamed, struggling to break free from the policemen's hands.

But their grip on him only got stronger as his screams echoed throughout the hallway.

“Honey,” Madam Rosey sadly intoned, gazing at her husband's cold expression.

“This matter will get discussed at home.” Mr. Barlow stiffly said.

Then he walked away, leaving the rest of the family behind.

“You are such a failure as a father, and here I thought Elijah was the only one!”

William mockingly mumbled, feeling enraged that his son was in prison because of Jeff.

“Say the fool whose son is behind bars for his idiocy.” Anthony coldly said.

Out of anger, William rushed towards his brother and collared him by his shirt.

“I said, ‘This matter will get discussed at home!’” Mr. Barlow shouted without looking back.

Knowing not to test their father's patience, William let go of Anthony, and walked ahead of his brother, fearing that he might lose it if they walked near each other.

After finishing his hot dog, Rome stood from his seat, walked over to the other bench, and sat beside Catherine.

“The sky looks beautiful tonight,” Rome mumbled, stretching his arms.

Then he rested his hand around her shoulder, and she snuggled into his side.

“Yeah, it is,” Catherine mumbled, entangling her fingers with his as a lovely smile surfaced on her lips.

The gentle breeze blew against their faces as they listened to the noise from the busy streets while admiring the moon.

Suddenly, Catherine's ringtone disrupted their entire mood, and she slowly withdrew from Rome's arms.

Then she picked up the phone and answered the call.

“What is it, Dad?” Catherine asked, looking away from Rome to hide the worry in her expression.

“Come home now!” Edward's harsh voice echoed in her ear.

“What happened?”

“Jeff got arrested. We are heading to the house. Your grandparents are enraged. Don't let them get home, and you are not there!”

“Okay, Rome and I are on our way.”

After her father ended the call, Catherine took in a deep breath. Then she looked at Rome and said, “We got to go. Apparently, Jeff got arrested, and my grandparents are in a bad mood. So it will be good if we are home before them.”

“Okay,” Rome uttered, keeping his calm gaze fixed on her.

Then he watched Catherine stand up and thought, ‘I'm sorry that you are the only lamb among the foxes in your house. But I promise to keep you safe in all of this.’



Rever  Author

" A big "Thank you!" to all my readers. This novel has come this far because of you amazing people. I read the reviews, and I taking you all words in to consideration. I'm proofreading the past chapters (Started yesterday.) But it will take a while to complete all of them because I have to write new chapters. Also, I will step up the chapters to two or more a day when I have the opportunity. Thank you again for the gem, reviews, and cash you guys spend on this novel.

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 Comments

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Chapter Fifty-Two

After Rome parked Catherine's car into the Barlow mansion garage and the two of them got down from the vehicle, the other family members' cars started entering the yard.

"We should head inside," Catherine whispered.

"Okay," Rome said.

Both of them went into the house and took a seat on the living room's couch as they waited for the others.

It took a few minutes, then the sounds of footsteps and mumbling from the hallway echoed into the living room.

Subconsciously, Catherine rested her palm on the back of Rome's hand. But he turned his hand around, allowing their palms to touch as he laced his fingers with hers.

The first person to enter the living room was Catherine's mother, and when her gaze rested on her daughter, she moved her lips to speak but stopped when Edward came into the room.

“If you wanted to rebel against this family, why didn't you do it alone! Why did you drag my daughter into your mess knowing fully well that you can not shield her!” Edward lashed out as he lunged towards Rome.

But the calmness in Rome's eyes didn't fade, even when Edward was two steps away from them.

“My daughter will not get dragged in the mud, nor will she lose her position in this family because of a mindless and down-and-out loser like you!” Edward coldly said, fixing his icy gaze on Rome.

“Honey,” Catherine's mother cried out, staring at her husband in shock.

Although she wasn't a fan of Rome, she knew what it felt like to get married into a wealthy family, and you are from a humble background.

After hearing the sadness in his wife's voice, Edward's expression softened a bit. Then he paused for a moment to get his anger under control.

“Catherine, I want you guys to divorce. You deserve someone who can build you up, instead of pulling you down with him.” Edward said with his hands resting on his hips.

“I'm sorry, Dad. But that's not ever going to happen.” Catherine boldly said, maintaining eye contact with her father to let him know that she was serious.

Suddenly, madam Rosey walked into the living room.

Then she glared at Catherine and said, “Still defending your so-called husband!

He's truly a bad influence on you.
That's why I agree with your father!"

"Grandmother, I can't divorce Rome.
I'm sorry." Catherine said, fighting
back her tears.

Then she felt Rome gently squeezed her
hand, and a sense of comfort took over
her, knowing that he was there with
and for her.

"How dare you go against your
grandmother and talk back to her in
such a manner! When did you lose your
discipline!" Mr. Barlow shouted when h
e walked into the living room.

Afterward, Anthony, William, Elijah,
their wives, Chloe and Richard, entered
the room.

"When did my family become so daring
and disrespectful!" Mr. Barlow shouted
in a fit of rage.

"Honey," Madam Rosey mumbled,

noticing that her husband was enraged.

Swaying his gaze on her, Mr. Barlow frowned and said, “Did you have to lose control over your anger and slap Catherine in front of all those influential people?”

“It wasn't Catherine that I wanted to slap. It was her ill-bred and worthless husband I intended to hit!” Madam Rosey harshly intoned, scowling at Rome.

“Does that matter! Every issue about our family should get discussed at home! You should know that and not lose yourself!”

“Honey! Don't you think your words are harsh? I was humiliated today. There's no need to add insult to injury!”

"We all got humiliated this evening, and you contributed to it!"

Everyone else stared in shock at the

couple's fight, and it felt awkward to watch because the family knew that Madam Rosey and Mr. Barlow were a united front, and they had never gone against each other until tonight.

“Mother, Father, please.” Elijah anxiously said.

His words snapped Madam Rosey and Mr. Barlow out of their anger for each other.

Then Mr. Barlow stared at Elijah and harshly uttered, “The mess this family is going through is somewhat your fault!”

Afterward, he gazed at the rest of the family's faces and shouted, “Everyone has a demon in their closet! Why did you guys have to open your closets door and cause this family to lose face!”

The living room fell silent, and no one dared to speak as Mr. Barlow glared at them. ①

Then his gaze rested on Catherine and Rome, and he said, “Catherine, your father is right. Our family has suffered enough humiliation. We can't afford to have a useless son-in-law that rebel against us.”

“Grandfather, what are you saying?” Catherine mumbled, squeezing Rome's hand a bit tighter.

“There are a lot of potential suitors out there that can help this family regain its glory, and you and Chloe should engage with them.”

“Grandfather...”

“Catherine, everyone in this family has to make sacrifices to lead this family to glory, and yours is to divorce this dud.”

Although Rome wanted to intervene, he stayed silent as a test to see how much their love meant to Catherine.

“What about my great-grandfather's promise to the Millers. You can't break it.” Catherine cried in desperation.

As Chloe rolled her eyes, she smirked and said, “It seems like my dear cousin has gotten brainwashed by her husband.”

“That's why we need to get them to get a divorce soon before he completely poisons her mind,” Edward said, staring at his father, then at his mother.

In a fit of rage, Catherine let go of Rome's hand, stood to her feet, and straightforwardly said, “Enough! I'm not being poisoned or brainwashed by anyone. I'm in love with my husband, and I'm not getting a divorce.”

The room grew silent as her family glared at her. But Catherine stood firm on her words and wasn't planning on taking them back.

“If that is how you feel, then we will respect your decision. But you just lose your right as the granddaughter of this family. Starting from tomorrow, you will get expelled from the company.” Mr. Barlow coldly said.

“Father, that's too harsh,” Edward uttered with a touch of anger in his tone.

“She sounds just like you when you decided to rebel against your mother and marry a woman that brought no benefit to this family. That's why I have to be tough on her.”

“But, father...”

Without saying a word, Catherine held Rome by his hand and walked away with him following closely behind her.

“Wow, this is so shameful that you choose a stupid loser over power and your family.” Chloe teasingly said out

loud as she watched Catherine and Rome walk out of the living room.

When they got to their bedroom, Catherine rushed to the bed and dropped flat on it, shoving her face into the pillow as she cried.

After closing the door, Rome walked towards the bed. Then he laid down beside her without saying a word.

When Catherine had sob for a while, she finally stopped, withdrew her face from the pillow, and gaze at him.

Then Rome patted his chest, and Catherine drew closer to him and rested her head against his chest, listening to his calm heartbeat.

“Do you regret saying the things that you said tonight?” Rome asked as he slowly ran his fingers through her hair.

“No. I don't. I meant everything that I said.” Catherine mumbled without

thinking for a second.

Smiling faintly, Rome gazed at her and thought, 'Good. From now onward, you will be the only one to lead this family to glory. I'm going against everyone else.'

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 Comments

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Chapter Fifty-Three

When the first light of dawn hit the window and beamed on Rome's face, he raised his eyelids and stared at Catherine, laying on his bare chest.

Then he slowly picked his phone from the nightstand, clicked on his inbox icon, and started typing.

After writing everything he needed to say, he sent the message to Mr. Ford and put the phone back on the nightstand.

Suddenly, Catherine raised her head and looked up at him.

"Did I wake you up?" Rome asked.

"No," Catherine mumbled, resting her head back on his chest.

Then he wrapped his arms around her and gently intoned, "What's the plan

for today?”

“I think it will be best to clear my things from Charles's office,” Catherine mumbled beneath her breath.

“And then, we can go sightseeing?”

“Umm, that sounds interesting. Let's drive around the city after getting my things.”

A while later, Catherine and Rome came downstairs and entered the dining hall.

Immediately, the atmosphere in the room became hostile, and none of the other Barlows looked their way.

But it grew more uncomfortable for Catherine when she noticed her chair was gone, and her spot at the table was empty.

“Hi, cousin,” Charles said with a mischievous smile on his lips as he gazed at her.

“When did you get out?” Catherine asked, striving not to look bothered.

“Oh this morning, and imagine my joy when I heard that I was getting my position back at the company. Isn't that good news?”

“Yes, it is.”

Staring at the mocking smile on her cousin's lip, Catherine kept calm. Then she turned to Rome and said, “We should leave.”

“Catherine, don't be a stubborn child! Your grandparents will forgive you if you apologize sincerely and divorce that fool.” Edward called out to his daughter.

But Catherine held Rome's hand and walked out of the dining room with him by her side.

After she and Rome arrived in the

garage, Catherine tried to unlock her car door, but her hand kept shaking.

“Let me drive,” Rome said, taking the key from her hand.

A few minutes later, he drove the car out of the garage with Catherine seated in the front seat.

The ride was a silent one, and when they finally reached the DreamTeam building, Rome stopped the car in the parking lot.

Then he and Catherine got down from the car and headed into the building.

When they arrived in Charles’s office, Catherine tried to reach for the box. But her hand couldn't touch the top shelf, even after she tiptoes.

Seeing her struggle, Rome stood behind her and reached for the box.

After getting it off the shelf, Catherine

turned around to face him, and he handed the box to her.

“Thanks,” Catherine mumbled with a slight smile.

Then she walked over to the desk and started carefully placing her belongings into the box.

“Is that all?” Rome asked, looking at her.

For a moment, Catherine gazed around the room. Then she took a deep breath and said, “Yep, that's all.”

Afterward, she lifted the box from the desk. But Rome took it from her hands and tightened his grip on the box.

“Are you ready to leave?” Rome asked when he noticed the sadness in her eyes.

“Yes,” Catherine said, pressing her lips together as she took in a deep breath.

Then she and Rome left the office and

got into the elevator.

When he and Catherine arrived in the lobby, all eyes were on them, and the employees were whispering to each other while giving them dirty looks.

But neither Catherine nor Rome paid any attention to their behavior as they left the building.

After they got to the car, Rome put the box in the backseat, shut the door, and then got into the driver's seat.

“What's our destination?” Rome asked after Catherine had got into the car.

Gazing at him, she smiled and said, “The beach.”

By nine o'clock, Mr. Barlow was in his office when his phone rang, so he took his focus off the papers before him and answered the call.

“Sir, Mr. Ford is here to see you.” His

secretary's voice flowed from the telephone.

“Let him in!” Mr. Barlow said with a hint of fear in his eyes.

After he ended the call, a few minutes passed. Then the door opened, and Mr. Ford walked into the office.

“Good morning, Mr. Ford.” Mr. Barlow said, standing to his feet.

Then he walked over to Mr. Ford and stretched his hand out towards him for a handshake. But Mr. Ford ignored him and sat down.

“Why did you grace me with your presence this morning?” Mr. Barlow humbly asked, withdrawing his hand to his side.

“I'm not pleased with what I saw yesterday.” Mr. Ford said, hardening his expression.

Feeling embarrassed, Mr. Barlow walked back to his seat, sat down, and said, “Yes, yesterday was ugly because we allowed our anger to get the better of us. But I promise that we are a decent and family-originated people.” ①

“I'm not here to discuss your family righteousness, nor do I care about the skeletons in you guys' closet. What I'm talking about is Jeff.”

“Oh, right. Believe me when I tell you that my grandson is a capable and talented young man. He wasn't himself when he did what he did!”

Fixing his icy gaze on Mr. Barlow, Mr. Ford sat up straight and said, “I didn't give Jeff the position because of his so-called talent or capabilities! I did it because of the position he holds in the company.”

“What do you mean?” Mr. Barlow mumbled, feeling nervous that his

company was about to lose a contract that could earn them a fortune.

“Only someone at the top, I trust with my project. But it turns out that your grandson is a criminal, and I don't want him handling any of my works.”

“Does this mean you are withdrawing the contract with our company?”

When Mr. Ford didn't answer, Mr. Barlow stood to his feet, bowed slightly, and said, “I am pleading with you to give us a second chance!”

“Well, your family may be a wreck, but you do have a talented granddaughter, and I won't mind if Catherine is the one over my project.”

For a few seconds, there was total silence in the room. ①

Then Mr. Barlow raised his head, eyed Mr. Ford, and thought, ‘How could I have forgotten that Mr. Ford had taken

a liking to Catherine because of the work she did for Mr. Jeffery. He even praised her before others.'

After wandering in his head for a moment, Mr. Barlow sat back down and said, "What would you say if Catherine was the CEO of our company?"

"The project will stay with DreamTeam because I admire people with potential, and your granddaughter has it. Because of that, I'm willing to give this company a chance." Mr. Ford said with a straight face.

"Well, then, as the CEO of DreamTeam, Catherine will be the one over your project."

"Where is Catherine? I want to have a conversation with her."

Even though Mr. Barlow had already gotten informed that Catherine had cleared her desk and left the company, he was afraid to own up to his mistake,

knowing what was at stake.

Therefore, he picked up the phone and dialed Catherine's number. Then he listened to her phone ring.

“The number that you called hasn't answer. please check the number and dial again.”

When Mr. Barlow heard those words, he began to feel heated even though the air-conditioning was on.

Watching Mr. Barlow struggling not to freak out, Mr. Ford rested back in his seat and thought, ‘How can you be afraid of the father when the son is the one you all should fear?’

Then he smiled to himself and thought, ‘Because he has all of you in his palm and playing his games.’

 Comments

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Chapter Fifty-Four

As Rome and Catherine sat side by side with her in the comfort of his arm, they kept their eyes focused on the ocean waves.

The wind caressed against their faces, making a mess out of their hairs.

The breeze was so strong that Catherine couldn't hear the sound of her phone ringing in the car.

At this point, Mr. Barlow's coat felt hot on him, and when he got another answer from Catherine's voicemail, he became even more frustrated and anxious.

“What is the matter? It's been fifteen minutes, and Catherine is still not here.” Mr. Ford said, frowning at him.

The first thought that crossed Mr. Barlow's mind was to slander Catherine

and Rome's name so the family can not take the fall if Mr. Ford gets mad.

Then it clicked to him that Catherine was their only ticket to the 2.5 billion dollars resort project, and he needed her to be on good terms with Mr. Ford.

Finally, after getting a hold of his emotions, he realized that the was a simple answer to Mr. Ford's question.

“Catherine is not in the building. She's attending an important meeting.” Mr. Barlow said, resting his phone on the desk.

Then he looked at Mr. Ford and uttered, “Once my granddaughter gets back to the company, I will send her over to you.”

“Okay. The moment you get a hold of Miss Catherine, tell her that I need to speak with her.” Mr. Ford said as he stood to his feet.

With his gaze on Mr. Barlow, he calmly intoned, “The position of a Project Management Director is not an easy task, and I need to know if she is capable of it.”

“Wait, you want Catherine to be the Project Management Director?”

Even after saying it out loud, Mr. Barlow still couldn't believe it, and yet he knew it was true.

“Yes,” Mr. Ford said.

Then he smirked and thought, ‘Well, that's what her husband wants.’

It took a few seconds for Mr. Barlow to gather his thoughts. Then he paused for a moment and then said, “But that's not what you offer Jeff.”

“Because he doesn't have the potential that your granddaughter possesses.” Mr. Ford casually uttered.

“I see.”

“Don't forget to pass my message onto Miss Catherine. If she fails to meet me today, I will hold you accountable.”

Fear clouded Mr. Barlow's expression as he watched Mr. Ford leave the office.

When the door shut close behind him, Mr. Barlow sluggishly rested back in his seat and thought, ‘Project Management Director, that's a high-rank.’

Then he sighed and mumbled, “Have I been blinded by her cousins' tricks that I have been overlooking my granddaughter's potential?”

After sitting in silence for a while, Mr. Barlow sat up straight and started making calls to every family member, asking if they knew where Catherine was. But none of them did.

Once Mr. Barlow had exhausted every

number he could think about, he finally decided to call Catherine again, and every passing second that she didn't answer, he felt his heartbeat increasing.

After experiencing fear came regret, and Mr. Barlow's mind kept replaying all the harsh words he had said to her.

“What if she ran away with that loser?” Mr. Barlow abruptly shouted.

Then he stood to his feet and started pacing around the room.

“No, no, no. Catherine can't leave. She's too important now! Plus, being held accountable by Mr. Ford will destroy our family and wealth.” Mr. Barlow mumbled, feeling overwhelmed by stress.

As the wind intensify, Catherine started to tremble a bit.

“We should get back to the car,” Rome said, pulling his coat off his shoulder.

Then he placed it around Catherine, and the both of them got up from the sand.

After they had gotten into the vehicle, Catherine opened her mouth to speak, but the light from her phone screen caught her attention.

“I wonder who it is?” Catherine mumbled, picking up the phone.

Then she gasped as she stared at the screen and said out loud, “Seventy miss call! Fifty of them are from my grandfather!”

“You should call him back,” Rome mumbled, buckling his seatbelt.

Feeling hesitant, Catherine clicked on her grandfather's number and dialed it.

A look of pure excitement crossed Mr. Barlow's face when his phone rang, and he saw that it was Catherine.

“My lovely granddaughter, why haven't you been answering my calls.

Grandfather was worried about you.” Mr. Barlow softly said.

Thinking it was a prank call, Catherine withdrew the phone from her ear, gazed at the screen, and studied the number for a while before resting the phone against her ear.

“Grandfather, is it you?” Catherine doubtfully intoned.

“Of course, dear. Can you do a favor for grandpa and go to Mr. Ford? He has a project for you.” Mr. Barlow calmly intoned, keeping his voice as gentle as possible.

It was finally clear to Catherine why her grandfather was acting so affectionate to her.

“But I don't work at the company anymore. I got expelled by you,

remember?” Catherine uttered in confusion.

“Expel? No, you got a promotion. You are now the new CEO of the company.”

For a second, Catherine's brain went blank. Then she gazed at Rome, and he stared back at her with concern in his expression.

“Did something happen?” Rome asked after she had blankly stared at him for a while.

“Grandfather, Rome, and I will visit Mr. Ford. But concerning the promotion, we will discuss that at home.” Catherine said.

When Mr. Barlow heard the name “Rome,” he felt annoyed, but he kept his tone calm as he said, “The project that Mr. Ford and you are going to discuss, it's important. So can you leave your husband in the car?”

“Grandfather,”

“It's not like he can contribute anything in the meeting. He's just going to be a distraction to you, so for this family's sake, leave him in the car.”

“I understand, grandfather.”

After ending the call with Mr. Barlow, Catherine gazed at Rome and said, “We need to drive to Mr. Ford's office.”

“Put the location in the GPS, and I will drive you there,” Rome said as he put the car in gear.

After driving according to the GPS instructions, Rome stopped in front of a skyscraper.

“You have reached your final destination,” Siri said.

“So this is his office?” Rome asked, pretending like he had not visited this place before.

“Yes,” Catherine mumbled, staring in admiration at the glass building.

Then she gazed at Rome and said, “I can't believe this is just Mr. Ford office and not one of his companies. How rich can he be to afford an entire building as his office?”

“I guess, filthy rich,” Rome mumbled, realizing that he too didn't know the actual worth of his father.

Taking in a deep breath, Catherine reached for the door handle. Then she paused, turned back to Rome, and asked, “Do you want to go in with me?”

“Nah. I got nothing to contribute in the meeting, and I might end up being a distraction.” Rome said.

“You sound like my grandfather.”

Even though he heard what she said, Rome raised his brows and mumbled, “

Uh?”

“Nothing,” Catherine said beneath her breath.

After she got out of the car, Rome waited for her to enter the building before he pulled out his phone and called his father.

The sound of his ringtone drew Mr. Ford’s attention towards his phone. Then he dropped his pen and answered the call.

“Catherine is on her way to you,” Rome said.

“Son, things are going to become difficult and dangerous for her after this. Are you sure you want to put her in the spotlight, knowing the family that she has?” Mr. Ford asked.

“Father, I'm capable of protecting my wife.”

“Chloe paid people to burn down her family warehouse. But Jeff hired someone to set it on fire first, and Charles bribed someone to lie on his cousin's name, and they all did it in the name of revenge.”

“Dad,”

“Rome, what I'm saying is that these people are capable of anything. So what length are you willing to go to keep Catherine safe?”

“I'm willing to make her enemies pay tenfold of whatever they plan for her.”

At that moment, Mr. Ford's office door opened, and when his gaze rested on Catherine, he smiled and said, “Miss Catherine, it's nice that you came.”

Then he ended the call and gently intoned, “Please sit down. We have a lot to discuss.”

Chapter Fifty-Five

It took a while, then Catherine finally came out of the building and got into the car.

“So, how was the meeting?” Rome asked, smiling at her.

“Mr. Ford wants me to be his project management director,” Catherine said while staring blankly at the windshield.

“That's a good thing, right?”

“Yeah,”

“Judging from your tone and attitude, I don't believe that it is. Catherine, you look pale. What's going on?”

Sighing heavily, she turned to Rome and said, “I'm over the moon about this project. It's like a dream come true for me. I'm...”

“You are just what?” Rome asked, gazing at her.

“I'm afraid, Rome. Even though I'm so excited about this project, I can't help panicking that I'm going to be my cousins' target again.”

“Catherine, if this project is what you want, then let your desire to succeed be greater than all of your fears.”

Taking her hands in his, he looked deep into her eyes and said, “From now onward, you should only focus on being great, okay?”

When Catherine nodded her head, Rome smile and thought, ‘Leave your family to me. I will handle them.’

By eight-fifteen, Catherine and Rome arrived at the Barlow mansion, and when they entered the living room, her jaw dropped, and her eyes widened.

“Our lovely grandchild, please come sit down. We made the maids cook all of your favorite foods.” Madam Rosey gently intoned, patting the chair beside her.

Wondering if she was dreaming, Catherine gazed at Rome and mumbled, “pinch me,”

“Uh?” Rome asked, raising his brows.

“Pinch me,”

“Okay,”

Without hurting Catherine, Rome pinched her and asked, “Was that okay?”

“It was okay enough to make me realize that I'm not dreaming,” Catherine mumbled as she stared back at her family.

“Rome, you too can sit at the table and eat with us.” Mr. Barlow said, forcing a

smile as he stared at him. ①

With a carefree expression, Rome took Catherine's hand and led her to the table.

Afterward, he pulled a chair out for her and allowed her to sit down before he got seated.

Then he picked up his knife, cut Catherine's steak, and put it before her.

Afterward, he served himself some of the dishes and started eating while the others watch in shock.

“Give a starving monkey a bunch of bananas, and he will eat just like a pig!” Chloe said, rolling her eyes at Rome.

“Watch your tone with your cousin's husband!” Madam Rosey lashed out, glaring at her granddaughter.

“But grandmother, he's not worthy to sit at the same table as us!”

“That's not for you to decide. Rome is the husband to your cousin, and he deserves to get treated well.”

Speechless from shock, Catherine looked at her grandmother. Then she stared at Rome, eating carefreely, and her lips curved into a smile.

The way he looked relax made her feel comfortable, and her anxiety started to fade slowly.

“Catherine, go ahead and eat.” Mr. Barlow gently intoned.

“Okay, grandfather,” Catherine mumbled, picking up her fork and knife.

Then she tried not to gaze at her cousin's hateful expression or the angry look on her uncles and their wife's faces.

A few seconds later, Mr. Barlow sat his wine glass down, gaze at the faces

around the table, and said, "I'm glad to announce that Catherine is the new CEO of the company."

No one spoke for a while as they all blankly stared at him. Then their gazes swayed towards Catherine.

"Father, this is unacceptable! Jeff worked his butt off to get to that position! You can't simply hand it over to her!" Anthony harshly said.

"Don't you dare raise your voice at me! Your idiot of a son ruin his name and brought this upon himself!" Mr. Barlow shouted, scowling at his son.

"Jeff will not be happy about this."

"Do I look like I care if he isn't! You guys should remember that you are not irreplaceable! Any of you can get easily replaced by another family member if you mess up!"

Although Anthony didn't utter another

word, his expression hardened when he gazed at Catherine.

As he coldly stared at her, he and Rome made eye contact, and he noticed Rome glowering at him.

‘Why does this wretched fool have such a domineering presence?’ Anthony thought, gazing away from Catherine and Rome.

“You are a pro at getting what doesn't belong to you,” Charles said with a frown.

The thought of Catherine being above him in status was enraging him and increasing his hate for her.

“I didn't ask for this position, and I don't want it. I'm okay with going back to my old job.” Catherine said as she stared at her grandfather.

“Don't say silly things, Catherine,” Edward said, smiling at his daughter.

But she ignored his warning, gazed at her grandfather, and uttered, “I don't want the promotion.”

“Well, you don't get a saying in it. The decision has already gotten made.” Mr. Barlow said. ①

Knowing that no amount of pleading will get her grandfather to change his mind, Catherine let the matter go.

“Why does she get to be the CEO. I had my eyes on that position for a long time, and she gets it!” Chloe angrily intoned as she made a face.

“Catherine is worthy of that position because she is now the Project Management Director of Mr. Ford's 2.5 billion dollars resort project.” Mr. Barlow said with a pleased smile on his lips.

“She's what!”

“Don't yell at the table, Chloe, and close your mouth. You will drool if you keep it open like that.”

It suddenly grew quiet in the dining hall, and even though Catherine kept her head bent, she could still feel their eyes on her.

A few minutes into dinner, Mr. Barlow looked at Catherine and asked, “So what did Mr. Ford say?”

“Well, he wanted me to sign the contract, but I told him to give me time to think it through,” Catherine mumbled.

A frown flickered across Mr. Barlow's forehead as he raised his voice and said, “What's there to think about!”

The table grew silent as everyone gazed at him. But Rome wasn't a tiny bit shocked about the change in his attitude.

“Rome talked me into signing it, so I will stop by Mr. Ford's office tomorrow and sign the contract,” Catherine said, smiling faintly.

“That's good. I'm sorry about raising my voice, dear. Grandfather is just stressed.” Mr. Barlow gently said.

Without raising her head, Catherine mumbled, “It's not a problem, grandfather.”

It became quiet for a while. Then Elijah looked at Catherine, beamed at her, and said, “Now that you are the project management director of such a big project, can you help my daughter with a position too.”

“Dad! I don't need her handing things out to me!” Chloe said in annoyance.

“Shut up! Families ascend to higher levels, so they can be able to help others.”

“But...”

Noticing the angry expression on her father's face, Chloe sealed her lips and crossed her arms.

“I'm sorry, uncle. But I can't.”

Catherine mumbled.

Immediately, a commotion arose at the table with her uncles, their wives, and cousins spilling terrible comments about her.

“How can you be selfish! You are finally worth something to this family, and you have allowed your ego to expand!” Elijah lashed out.

Their words caused Rome to put his fork down. Then he watched Catherine pick at her meat.

“Are you filled?” Rome asked.

“Umm, yeah,” Catherine mumbled, resting her fork on the plate.

“Let's go to bed.”

“Okay,”

As Mr. Barlow watched Catherine stand to her feet, he knew that he couldn't allow her to leave the room, feeling awful about the family since she held their success in her grip.

“How could you all be so greedy! Instead of congratulating Catherine, you decide to attack and ask things from her! You all are the selfish ones!” Mr. Barlow shouted, glaring at Elijah.

Although they weren't happy about getting scolded because of Catherine, none of them utter a word.

“I... I apo-lo-gize. I'm sure you have a reason for not helping your cousin even though it will help this family gain more wealth.” Elijah cunningly said.

His son's remark made Mr. Barlow

frown at Catherine as he asked, “Why can't you help your cousins get a position on the 2.5 billion resort project?”

“Because I don't have the authority to,” Catherine said.

“Wait, does that mean only Mr. Ford is appointing people for his project?”

“I guess.”

Looking away from her grandfather, Catherine stared at Rome and said, “Let's go.”

After she and Rome had left the dining hall, the room grew silent as everyone focused on their food.

‘If Catherine can get such a position, then I can. All I need to do is win Mr. Ford's favor, and her position is mine.’ Chloe slyly thought, biting her meat. ❶

Chapter Fifty-Six

A few days had passed after Catherine signed the contract with Mr. Ford, and early that Wednesday morning, she and Rome came downstairs for breakfast.

When they entered the dining hall, Catherine froze as she stared at Jeff, glaring at her.

Since the other family members had not arrived in the dining room, it was just Catherine, Rome, and him.

“You are out?” Catherine mumbled, feeling her heartbeat increasing.

The way Jeff kept staring at her made Catherine feel a chill run down her spine.

“Yeah, My dad finally billed me out with grandfather's permission!” Jeff angrily intoned.

Unknown to herself, Catherine grabbed onto Rome's hand and squeezed it.

“Are you okay, wife?” Rome mumbled, staring at her.

Then he followed her gaze and his sight rested on Jeff's icy expression.

“You should sit down,” Rome whispered.

His words snapped Catherine out of her head. Then she walked to the table and got seated. But Rome kept standing with his eyes fixed on Jeff.

When he noticed Rome staring at him, he clenched his fist and shouted, “What are you looking at, loser!”

“I don't like your tone with my husband.” Catherine boldly stated, finally getting over her nervousness.

With a frown on his face, Jeff looked at Catherine and said, “I wasn't speaking t

o you, was I?”

‘I guess a few days in prison wasn't enough?’ Rome thought as he strived to stay calm.

Looking away from Catherine, Jeff stared at Rome and said, “What! You got something to say to me!”

When Rome didn't speak, he felt enraged by his silence, stood to his feet, and shouted, “Say something, dummy!”

‘Arguing with a fool is a waste of words. Besides, I'm a man of action.’ Rome thought with a smirk.

Speechless from anger, it took Jeff a second before he rudely intoned, “You and your wife only know how to feed off others ' hard work like parasites!”

“Jeff! Watch your language!” Catherine angrily said, throwing him a hard look.

“I got a score to settle with you, so if I were you, I would quiet down.” Jeff lashed out.

‘Think about harming Catherine, and I will drag you in the mud so hard that even small enterprise companies will not want to give you a project.’ Rome thought with a deadpan expression.

At that moment, his phone buzzed, so he pulled it out of his pocket and answered the call.

“Good morning, son. Remember your promise to your old man?” Mr. Ford’s voice flowed into his ear.

“Remind me again.” Rome casually said with his cold gaze still fixed on Jeff.

“The important meeting that I need you by my side for is today. Now before you give me some lame excuse, know that the president is going to be there.”

“Okay, I'm on my way.”

After ending the call, Rome looked Catherine's way and said, “I got to go.”

At that moment, other members of the Barlow family began entering the living room.

But Rome's focus was on Jeff as he glowered and thought, ‘You are the first on my list.’”

Afterward, he walked out of the dining hall and left the Barlow mansion.

A few minutes later, Rome was in a black Lamborghini with Mr. Ford behind the driver seat and K in the front seat. ①

“Young Master, your suit is ready for you at Jerry's. We will make a stop at his store, then our next destination is the white house.” Mr. Orlando said with his eyes focused on the road.

“Okay,” Rome mumbled, wondering in his thoughts.

Then he pulled out his phone from his coat and made a call.

When his call got answered, Rome said, “I need your best men to protect my wife. Make sure she doesn't know that you guys are following her.”

“Yes, boss.” Blaze said from the other end of the line.

Time went by naturally, and after Rome got dressed at Jerry's place, Mr. Orlando drove them to the white house.

When the car came to a stop, K got out and opened the door for Rome, and he stepped down from the vehicle, wearing a two-piece black suit that got adorned with 480 0.5 carats, color G, vs2 quality diamonds.

When Mr. Ford saw Rome, he smiled

and walked over to him.

Then both men matched into the white house with securities shielding them from every angle.

After they got into the conference hall, Rome realized that he was the only young person in the room, and everyone else looked to be in their fifties.

“Dad, I feel out of place,” Rome whispered as he and his father walked over to their seats.

When they sat down at the large oval table, Mr. Ford gazed at Rome and said, “Nonsense, this meeting is to discuss business, economic issues, and as my successor, you need to attend these kinds of meetings.”

“I know, but...”

“Rome, it benefits you a whole lot if you shake hands with the right people, and

the individuals in this room are the right people.

It took five hours for the meeting to adjourn, and afterward, Mr. Ford took Rome around to greet some dignitaries.

“Ah, Mr. Ford. The big gun in the business world. It's good to see you.” An elderly-looking man said as he exchanged handshakes with Mr. Ford.

Then he gazed at Rome and asked, “Who's this dashing fellow?”

“He's my son.” Mr. Ford said with pride as he let go of the man's hand.

Afterward, he turned to Rome and said, “Meet Curtis. He's the minister of finance.”

At first, Curtis looked shocked, knowing Rome's statutes in the Barlow household. Then he smiled and said, “It's my pleasure to meet the young Ford. But why have you hidden him

from the world.”

“He's not ready to reveal his identity.”

“Well, if he's not telling, then I'm not telling. No one wants to cross a man like you after all.”

After his statement, Curtis walked to another fellow and greeted him. Then he looked back at Rome and thought, ‘The Barlows don't know the fire they are playing with, and they might get burned badly for their ignorance.’

Once they had greeted a few more influential people, including the president, Rome headed over to a chair and took a seat.

Then a few minutes later, Mr. Ford approached Rome and sat down next to him.

“A few million for your thoughts?” Mr. Ford mumbled, gazing at his son.

“Jeff is out of prison,” Rome said.

“Oh, and you are worried that he's going to become a problem for Catherine.”

“Pretty much.”

“Look at me, Rome.”

Obedying his father's command, Rome shifted his head to the right and stared at him.

“Do you know what happens to a snake when it enters the zoo?” Mr. Ford asked.

“No,” Rome mumbled.

“They remove its venom glands or fangs. In this case, you should take away Jeff's power, so his bite can be nothing than that of a newborn puppy. Do you understand me?” ①

“Clearly.”

Chapter Fifty-Seven

On their way back from the white house, Rome was seated in the backseat of Mr. Ford's car since he suggested that they ride together.

It was quiet for a while. Then Mr. Ford turned to Rome and said, "I got a bottle of Romanee Conti 1945 that I plan to drink today. Do you want to have a glass with me?"

"Of course," Rome said, knowing that he didn't have an option to say, "no" because his father would guilt him into saying, "yes."

When they arrived at Mr. Ford's office, Rome wore a disguise before getting down from the car.

Then he and Mr. Ford head into the building, and once they got into the lobby, the whispering began.

It was not his first time entering his father's office. But every time he did, he wore a cap, glasses, and mask, and it caused the employees to wonder about his identity.

“He's handsome.” A lady whispered to her colleagues as they walked past Rome and Mr. Ford.

“You can barely see his face, Anna.” Her colleague mumbled.

“He looks filthy rich. That's all I need to know about his handsomeness.”

“Well, he seems to be very close with Mr. Ford, so if I were you, I would keep my distance and focus on someone in my league.”

“I don't desire guys in my league. Nor do I want a man that is beneath my status like Mr. Barlow's last granddaughter did.”

“Anna, lower your voice. You are being loud and dragging other's attention to us.”

“What! I'm just saying it's stupid to marry a poor man while being from a rich family.”

When Mr. Ford overheard those words, he stopped, turned around, and glared at the two ladies a few feet away from him.

“You! Who are you?” Mr. Ford asked.

Noticing that he was talking to her, Anna smiled and said, “I'm An...”

“I don't care. You are fire.”

“But, sir...”

“Clear your desk and leave my office.”

There were tears in her eyes as she turned to her colleague and mumbled, “What have I done!”

“Haven't you hear that Mr. Ford just rewarded Miss Catherine a part in his 2.5 billion dollars project. You must have offended him by badmouthing her.” Her colleague whispered.

“I didn't know.”

“Well, that's why you don't judge people out of ignorance. You should leave before Mr. Ford tells the security to drag you out.”

“What!”

“It has happened before, so if I were you, I would get out of here and save myself the humiliation.”

When Mr. Ford and Rome arrived on the fifth floor, he walked over to the bar and grabbed the wine with two glasses.

Then he walked back to the couch where Rome was sitting and sat down beside him, placing the wine bottle on

the table.

After they had had their first glass, Mr. Ford turned to Rome and slyly said, “Do you want to go to a cocktail party with me?”

“Dad,” Rome mumbled, realizing that the wine invitation was a trap.

“I know. I'm old, and you rather hang out with your peers. If your mother was still alive, I would be taking her instead of you, but she's not, and I...”

“Fine, I will go. Just stop the pity party.”

By seven o'clock, Catherine got home, and when she was about to head upstairs, her phone buzzed, so she reached into her purse and answered the call.

“Hey, wife. I'm sorry that I will not be coming home early today.” Rome said, feeling heavy-hearted.

It took a moment for Catherine to process what he said. Then she took a deep breath and asked, “Why? Are you working overtime?”

For a second, Rome gazed at his father seated by him in the vehicle. Then he hesitated for a moment before answering, “Yes.”

“Okay, take care of yourself.”

“I will.”

Once the call ended, Catherine took a step towards the stairs. Then she stopped as she watched Chloe walked downstairs.

When she and her cousin were only a foot apart, Chloe smirked and asked, “Where's your liability?”

“My what?” Catherine asked.

“You know, your so-called husband. Isn't he always by your side at this hour

like glue?”

“Firstly, Rome is not a liability. He got a job and takes care of his expenses.”

“Right... A minimum wage job that pays pocket change, and you are proud of that because...”

In annoyance, Catherine rolled her eyes and walked past her cousin. But Chloe said, “So where is he?”

“He's working overtime, okay!”

Catherine said as she turned around to face her cousin.

“Umm...”

“What does that supposed to mean?”

“You are pretty trusting in a man who only married you because of your family wealth and name.”

“What?”

“You know there are other women who

are wealthier and come from a better background than you?”

For a moment, Catherine found herself falling for Chloe's words. Then she snapped out of it and said, “If you are assuming that Rome is cheating on me, then save your breath. I trust my husband.”

“Well, I didn't say he was. You just did,” Chloe cunningly uttered with a smirk.

As Catherine was about to speak, the sound of a car honk echoed into the hallway.

“That's my date. I got a cocktail party to attend.” Chloe said with a half-smile.

Then she turned around and headed out of the house.

“She's just trying to get under my skin,” Catherine mumbled as she headed upstairs.

Finally, the black limousine arrived at a fancy building, and Rome turned to Mr. Ford with a frown plastered on his face and said, “This place looks swamped with paparazzi.”

“I know. That's why we are using the back entrance.” Mr. Ford calmly intoned.

After a five-minute drive, the limousine arrived at the back of the hotel and then stopped.

The back entrance seemed heavily guarded and had securities everywhere.

“See,” Mr. Ford said when he and Rome got down from the hotel. Then they headed into the building.

A few minutes later, Chloe and her date arrived at the main entrance of the car.

“Luke, are you sure that Mr. Ford is going to be attending this party?” Chloe

asked, staring at her date as he turned off his car engine.

“Why do I get the feeling that you only came with me to this party because of Mr. Ford?” Luke asked, frowning at her.

“What? Why would you think that?”

“Because when I asked you to be my date to this party, you asked me who was on the guest list. The moment that I mentioned Mr. Ford, you agree.”

“What! Nah! I'm here to enjoy myself with my cute celebrity date.”

With a fake smile on Chloe's lips, she stroked Luke's cheek and thought, ‘Who cares about a B list celebrity like you. If I didn't want to meet Mr. Ford and ruin my cousin's name, will I even be here with you!’

“Should we head in?” Luke asked.

“Yeah,” Chloe said, widening her smile.

Chapter Fifty-Eight

The pianist was playing a classic piece, the waiters and waitresses were serving food and drinks, and the attendees were having good conversations.

Upstairs, Rome and Mr. Ford were having a light conversation with a few of Mr. Ford's close business partners and their wives.

A fellow said something funny, and Rome looked the other way to laugh, and at that moment, he saw Chloe entering the hall with Luke.

Immediately, he turned his back to her, hoping that she didn't see him first.

“What is the matter, young Ford.” The host of the party, Mr. Warren, asked, noticing the stress on Rome's face.

“Chloe is here,” Rome mumbled with a frown.

“From your expression, I guess you are not happy about that.”

“Yes,”

“Do you want me to kick her out?”

Without thinking for a second, Rome smirked and said, “Yes.”

Nodding slightly, Mr. Warren gazed at his three bodyguards and said, “Escort Chloe Barlow out of the building.”

As she and Luke walked further into the hall, Chloe kept looking around the room, hoping that she would spot Mr. Ford.

“A Classic Margarita for my lady,” Luke said, handing a glass over to Chloe.

But she was too distracted to hear what he was saying, and he had to tap her on her shoulder to get her attention.

“Your drink,” Luke said, sounding

annoyed.

The moment Chloe accepted the glass from him, she noticed three bodyguards, approaching her.

When they came closer, one of them said, “Miss Barlow, you need to leave the party.”

“What! Do you know who I am!” Chloe shouted in anger.

“Well, I just called you by your last name, so yes I do. Now, will you leave, or do we have to use force?”

“Have you lost your mind! Who gave you fools such a stupid order! Don't they know that I'm the first granddaughter of the Barlow family!”

At this point, others' attention started getting drawn to her because of how loud she was speaking.

With a carefree attitude, Rome took a

sip of his Mulled Red Wine. Then he smirked as he listened to Chloe lashed out at the bodyguards.

“Miss Barlow, we will have to use force if you keep up this act.” One of the guards said.

“I want to speak to the host of this party now! Is this how he treats a reputable guest!” Chloe shouted, yet there was a trace of nervousness in her eyes.

Whispering arose among the guests as they stared awkwardly at Chloe.

“She is so loud and full of herself. Who does she think she is? Her family is not even that powerful.” A lady mumbled, loud enough for Chloe to hear her.

In a fit of rage, she tightened her fingers around the wine glass as she listened to the things others were saying about her.

“How dare she put up an attitude when she's nothing special.” A classically dressed woman said, giving Chloe a dirty look when their eyes met.

Although she had numerous rude replies that she wanted to say to the woman, Chloe couldn't utter any of them because she recognized that the lady was the wife of the chairman of OFC INC.

“Miss Barlow, I don't remember inviting you to my party, so I don't regard you as a reputable guest.” Mr. Warren said as he stared down at Chloe with a frown on his face.

The mumbling in the hall got louder, and one of the guests said out loud, “You didn't get invited, and you are acting like you were, how shameless!”

“Why will you come to a party that you weren't welcome at in the first place. Don't you think it's humiliating?” A

guy mumbled before chuckling.

“Maybe she came to get clients. I heard her top client, Mr. Richmond, canceled his contract with her.” A dashing gentleman mockingly said.

“Who would give her a contract, knowing the rumor about her paying a gang to burn down her family warehouse.” Another fellow stated as he glared at Chloe.

Even though she desperately wanted to counter-attack these comments, Chloe knew she couldn't because the people making these remarks were richer in stature than her family.

Unable to bear the embarrassment anymore, Chloe turned to Luke and mumbled, “Tell them that I didn't crash this party and that you invited me.”

“Don't get me involved in this. I only invited you because you are Chloe

Barlow, and you being my date will get me on the headlines.” Luke mumbled, frowning at her.

“You...!”

“If I knew that your reputation was this messed up, I wouldn't have invited you.”

Without holding back, Chloe raised her hand and swung it at Luke's face. But he grabbed her wrist.

“Miss Barlow, stop creating a scene and leave.” Mr. Warren said with less patience in his tone.

When the waiter passed by him, Rome switched the empty glass for a full one.

Then he casually shoved his hand into his pocket as he took a sip of his wine.

Overwhelmed by shame, Chloe was about to turn and leave when her gaze rested on Mr. Ford.

Without thinking, she rushed past the bodyguards and shouted, “Mr. Ford, I need to speak with you. If you can spare me a moment of your time!”

In a hurry, Chloe walked up the stairs. But she only made it three steps before the two bodyguards grabbed her by her arms and drew her away from the stairs.

“Let go of me! I want to speak with Mr. Ford!” Chloe shouted while being dragged out by the bodyguards.

After they took her out of the hall, Rome finally turned around.

“But she's your sister-in-law. Why would you let her be humiliated in such a manner?” A fellow asked out of curiosity.

“Firstly, she humiliated herself. Secondly, I don't like her.” Rome boldly said.

“How about Jeff? Do you not like him?”

“He's on my hate list.”

The fellow became silent, and he looked afraid when Rome uttered those words.

Suddenly, his wife held him by his arms and said, “Dear, can we talk?”

“Excuse me.” He said, gazing at Rome and Mr. Ford.

Then he followed his wife, and they stopped a few distances away from the group.

“The young Ford hates Jeff. You can not continue working with him.” His wife said with a trace of fear in her tone.

“I know. I don't want to be on the young Ford's hate list. I will go to DreamTeam tomorrow and cancel my contract with him.” He said, looking back at Rome's calm expression.

“Should we warn the others too about this?”

“Of course. Anyone who works with Jeff is doomed since Rome Ford hates him.”

The bodyguards arrived outside with Chloe, and she kept struggling to break free from their grips while screaming, “Get your filthy hands off me!”

Unknown to Chloe, they let go of her, and she tripped and fell.

Without wasting a second, the paparazzi started taking photos of her as she shouted, “Stop! Don't publish those. I will sue anyone who does!”

But the reporters and paparazzi kept recording her and snapping pictures of her.

In a hurry, Chloe stood to her feet and ran towards the parking lot. Then it clicked to her that Luke drove her to the

party.

“What rotten luck! Is the universe against me tonight!” Chloe mumbled as she took out her phone to call an uber.

After finishing his drink, Rome turned to his father and said, “I should get going. It's getting late, and I don't want to stress Catherine by making her worry about me.”

“What a virtuous husband. My daughter would be lucky if she married a man like you.” Warren cunningly said.

But Rome ignored his remark and walked away with his father a few steps behind him.

Chapter Fifty-Nine

It was almost eleven o'clock when Rome got to the Barlow mansion. When he entered the hallway, he assumed that everyone would be sleeping.

But as he walked past the living room, he heard madam Rosey shouted, "Where do you think you are going?"

For a moment, Rome stood still as he tried to pull himself together. Then he walked into the living room and realized that all the family members were there, except Chloe.

"What do you take my house to be! Do you think it's a place where you can walk in and out with your filthy shoes at any time!" Madam Rosey lashed out.

"I am sorry to be home late. I had to work overtime with my boss." Rome mumbled, lowering his head.

Although it was a white lie, it wasn't entirely false since he worked with his father, so it was only reasonable to call him his boss.

“You smell like booze. What kind of work requires you to drink alcohol?” Edward harshly intoned as he narrowed his eyes at his son-in-law.

“We had a team dinner later on, and I couldn't refuse a drink because it would be rude,” Rome mumbled, raising his head.

Then he and Catherine's eyes met. But she didn't utter a word, and it bugged him that she was silent, yet he didn't address her.

“Don't you think it would be rude to come back to this house smelling of alcohol! Or do you have no regard for this family since we have been lenient with you!” Mr. Barlow shouted.

When she finally decided that she had heard enough, Catherine sighed and said, “You all know that Rome is a full-grown man, and he can drink whatever he wants. What did you guys expect him to drink at a team dinner, a juice box?”

In a fit of rage, Edward shouted at his daughter, “Why are you getting more rebellious for a man not worthy of you! Can't you see that if this family abandons you, Rome will not be able to take care of you!”

“Is this family planning to abandon me?” Catherine asked with a straight face.

Knowing that she was the only successful grandchild at this moment, Mr. Barlow swallowed his pride and said, “Edward, why are you talking nonsense! Catherine is our precious granddaughter. How can you talk about us abandoning her.”

At that moment, Chloe walked in with

her hair messy and her dress ripped on the side.

“There's our disgraceful granddaughter! Why are you coming home in such a manner! Have you lost your sense of shame?” Madam Rosey angrily intoned.

"Grandmother, I had a horrible night. I fell and my dress got ruin, and the breeze messed up my hair because I had to wait for an uber. It was awful." Chloe cried, forcing herself to tear up.

“My poor child.” Dana cried as she stood from the chair to approach her daughter.

Feeling enraged by the mere sight of his child, Elijah glared at his wife and shouted, “Will you sit back down!”

Suddenly, Richard faintly giggled as he stared at his phone screen.

Then he gazed at Chloe, burst into

laughter, and said, “You think her looks humiliating, wait until you read this article that got released a few hours ago about her.”

“What article?” Madam Rosey asked as she gazed at Richard.

Holding in his laugh, he handed the phone to his grandmother and said, “This article. It got published by Lady Juliette. The most influential news reporter in the media world.”

“The first granddaughter of the Barlow family entered Mr. Warren's cocktail party with a B list celebrity, Luke, and she got later thrown out of the party, and her date was nowhere in sight.” Madam Rosey said out loud.

As she continued to read further into the article, her expression hardened. Then when she felt too annoyed to read anymore, she angrily dropped the phone on the couch and stood to her

feet.

“Dana and Elijah, I think it's time for Chloe to get married.” Madam Rosey said.

“What!” Chloe subconsciously shouted.

“The first son of the Johnson family will be returning from out of the country next week, and he always expresses interest in Chloe. We should set them up.”

“But grandmother, I have my eyes on the Andersons first son. He just took over his father's companies. He's way richer, and his father is the governor of the state.”

“If you had such a hard standard, then you should have acted properly! Instead of parading yourself around and bring humiliation to this family!”

Feeling disparate, Chloe rushed over to her grandmother, grabbed onto her

arm, and said, “Grandma, please. I don't want to marry a Johnson but an Anderson.”

In a fit of rage, Madam Barlow pulled her hand out of Chloe's grip and smacked her hard across her cheek.

“Why can't you be more like Catherine and bring this family honor instead of disgrace! Do you think Mr. Anderson will want his son to marry you with this article out there!” Madam Rosey lashed out.

“I should be more like Catherine! Haha! She married a loser! A man who doesn't have a cent to his name! He's just low-class filth! Is that who you want me to be like!” Chloe shouted, tightening her fist.

A faint smirk surfaced on Rome's lips when he heard those words. Even though her remarks were offensive, he wasn't angry. Instead, he pitied her for

her ignorance and stupidity.

Scowling at his daughter, Elijah lashed out, “You should be grateful that your grandmother chose such a good man for you! His family is even wealthier than our family, and they have businesses in and out of the country.”

“But, father. He’s not rich like the first son of the Anderson family.” Chloe cried out in frustration.

After keeping his silence for such a long time, Mr. Barlow decided that he had heard enough, so he glowered at his granddaughter and said, “Your grandmother's word is final! Stop acting headstrong, and get prepared to meet the Johnsons next week.”

Then he stood from the couch and left the room.

Afterward, the other family members started walking out of the living room, and at last, it was just Catherine, Chloe,

and Rome.

“We should head to bed,” Catherine mumbled to Rome.

Then she stood from the chair and walked out of the living room.

At this point, it was clear to him that she was mad at him. But he kept silent and followed her out.

As Rome walked past Chloe, she sniffed and mumbled, “Loser.”

At that moment, Rome stopped next to her and said, “There are two people in this room. One is a sorry-ass loser, and the other isn't. The one who isn't is not you.”

Then he walked out of the room, leaving her staring behind him in shock.

“What does he mean?” Chloe mumbled, feeling a bit nervous as his words replayed in her head.

When Rome arrived in the bedroom, he met Catherine laying down with her eyes closed.

“Are you asleep?” Rome asked as he sat down on the other side of the bed.

After waiting for a response from her and he got none, he calmly asked, “Are you mad?”

“No,” Catherine whispered, hugging onto the pillow.

“I'm sorry.”

“For what?”

“For making you mad.”

For a moment, Catherine hesitated. Then she sat up and mumbled, “Were you really at a team dinner with your boss?”

“Yes,” Rome said, staring her in her eyes.

A smile surfaced on Catherine's lips as she looked directly at him and said, "I trust you."

'I should hurry up and get you at the top before our relationship starts to get ruined because of my secret.' Rome thought, returning a smile.

 Comments

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Chapter sixty

Early that morning, as members of the Barlow family and Rome took their seats at the dining table, the atmosphere was peaceful.

Although there was tension, no one uttered a word, and they all ate in peace.

Then a few minutes into breakfast, Mr. Barlow got a call, so he set his glass of water on the table and picked up the phone.

The moment he answered the call, he heard his secretary say, “Boss, there's a problem?”

“Whatever the issue is, it can wait until I get to the office. I'm having breakfast with my family.” Mr. Barlow said in annoyance.

“But, boss, every client that has ever registered with, sir. Jeff is here and

seated in the waiting room.”

“What for?!”

The way Mr. Barlow raised his voice had everyone at the table staring at him. Even Rome was curious as to why he looked so stressed all of sudden.

“They want to terminate their contracts with Sir. Jeff.” His secretary's voice echoed into his ears.

“What!” Mr. Barlow shouted, standing to his feet.

“I'm sorry to give you such news. But they are waiting for you.”

“I'm on my way!”

After ending the call, Mr. Barlow stared at all the faces around the table. Then his sight rested on Jeff, and he frowned.

“Honey, what's going on?” Madam Rosey asked, noticing the anger in her husband's eyes.

“We are about to lose millions of dollars because of your idiotic grandson!” Mr. Barlow shouted, barely able to contain his anger.

A frown settled on Madam Rosey's face as she glared at Jeff, Charles, and Richard and then asked, “Which one?”

“Jeff!” Mr. Barlow said, feeling more enraged just by mentioning his grandson's name.

Pulling his brows together in a frown, Jeff looked at his grandfather and asked, “What's going on?”

“You tell me! Because all of your clients want to cancel their contracts with you!” Mr. Barlow lashed out.

It took a few seconds for Jeff to process what his grandfather had said.

When he finally did, he jumped to his feet and shouted, “What!”

At first, Rome was shocked too. But then he remembered what he had said at the party and it all made sense.

“Don't act shocked! You should have expected something like this to happen when you came up with that dumb idea to burn down the warehouse!” Mr. Barlow aggressively intoned.

Without giving himself a second to think, Jeff angrily blurted out, “Well, I wasn't expecting to get cut!”

“Well, you did, and now the company has to suffer for it! And to think, I had you first on the list for this family top inheritor!” Mr. Barlow lashed out, resting his hands on his hips as he sighed out his frustration.

The truth was out about who was actually going to be the top inheritor of the family wealth, and Elijah was angry at first, knowing that his daughter was not the first on the list.

But the fact that Jeff was about to lose that spot, he had already started making plans to make sure that his daughter takes the space.

However, he wasn't the only one plotting on getting their child at the top of the inheritor list. ①

His brother William also began gathering ideas to push Charles to that position.

Even though Anthony felt devastated that his son had missed such an opportunity, he felt glad that he still has one more child, and he wasn't planning on letting Richard lose such a chance like his brother.

The peaceful energy in the dining room had suddenly shifted into a tense atmosphere.

It only increased Chloe's rage for Jeff after hearing what her grandfather had

said, and she wasn't planning on standing by and allowing any of her cousins to get the chance again of being the first on the family's top inheritor list.

It was the same for Charles and Richard.

But even though Catherine felt bad for not making it to the top of the list, her only plan was to work hard to get there this time around.

“Grandfather, please don't change your mind just yet, I can fix this!” Jeff cried out, knowing that a great opportunity was about to slip right through his fingers.

“Well, you better because if we lose your clients, you can forget about ever becoming this family inheritor!” Mr. Barlow shouted.

The thought of having one less competition to worry about had Chloe pleased, and when Jeff and her eyes

met, she smirked.

“Is this your doing!” Jeff lashed out.

“Don't pin this on me!” Chloe shouted as she narrowed her eyes at him.

“You two, shut up!” Mr. Barlow yelled.

The room immediately fell silent as everyone forgot about their food and focused on him.

Pausing for a second, Rome stared at Jeff and thought, ‘Well, I wasn't expecting such a turn of events. But I'm not stopping it either.’

“Catherine, Jeff, you two should come with me to the office.” Mr. Barlow said, striving to get a grip on his anger.

“Yes, grandfather.” Catherine humbly intoned, standing to her feet.

At that moment, Rome held her hand. Then she looked away from her grandfather and stared at him.

“I should come with you,” Rome mumbled.

“Don't you have work?” Catherine whispered with concern in her eyes.

“No, I don't.”

“Okay.”

A frown crossed Mr. Barlow's face as he stared at them and shouted, “Will you two stop yelping!”

Taking his eyes off Catherine, Rome glared at him and thought, ‘My wife is the only reason the company will keep that accounts. If not for her, I would be dividing those accounts with your rivals.’

Not uttering another word, Mr. Barlow walked away from the dining table, and Catherine and Rome walked after him with Jeff a few steps behind them.

An hour and some minutes later, they

arrived at the DreamTeam building, and the four of them headed inside.

After getting in the elevator, Jeff gazed at Mr. Barlow and asked, “I get that Catherine now has my job, but these are my clients, so why is she here?”

“Because so far, she's the only one who has been doing something right! So if you can't fix this, your clients will be her clients!”

Tightening his fist, Jeff scowled and said, “That's not going to happen!”

A faint smirk surfaced on Rome's lips as he gazed at Jeff and thought, ‘Like you have a saying in this.’