

## Chapter Seventy-One

After the reporters had read the document they got from an unknown number, the hall became noisy pretty fast.

The flashes from the reporters' cameras kept going off and on, and different journalists from several media didn't waste any time broadcasting the news live.

For a moment Rome's attention was on Catherine. Then his focus got drawn to the television when the news about Chloe's wedding popped on the screen.

It didn't take long for Catherine to focus on the TV too and her brows pulled together in a frown as she mumbled, "Isn't that Chloe's wedding venue? What's going on?"

But Rome kept silent as he watched

with a look of satisfaction in his eyes.

The commotion in the hall intensified, and the first question one of the reporters shouted out was, “Dash Johnson, is it true that your family is struggling from bankruptcy!”

The room immediately grew silent and everyone's eyes were on Dash.

Although he looked shocked, his eyes were clouded with fear as he stared at them, looking at him.

“What is going on!” Mr. Barlow lashed out as he stood to his feet.

Feeling annoyed, Madam Rosey woke from her seat and shouted, “How dare you come to my granddaughter's wedding and try to spread lies about her husband!”

“If it's a lie, then why isn't the groom answering?” A reporter yelled out.

Suddenly everyone's eyes went back to Dash as they waited for him to say something.

"Of course, it's a lie!" Mr. Johnson abruptly said, standing up from his seat.

"Who paid you guys to ruin my son's wedding!" Mrs. Johnson nervously intoned.

But that only increased the reporter's curiosity because they knew within themselves that no one paid them to do anything.

"It can't be a lie! Especially since there are legal evidence and documents that prove that your businesses are in serious debt, and you guys are on the verge of losing it all!" A journalist stated as he stared at his phone screen.

"What documents! What evidence!" Mr. Barlow shouted, feeling so enraged at this point.

Right at that moment, there was a beeping noise coming from each member of the Barlow family phones.

Without wasting a second, all of them clicked on the file that had gotten sent to them, and when they read through the document, they found out that the reporters were right.

“You bastard!” Elijah shouted, getting up from his seat.

Then he marched over to Dash, but before he could get the opportunity to swing a punch, Mr. Barlow grabbed his wrist.

Not knowing who was holding him back, Elijah forcefully yanked his hand out of Mr. Barlow’s grip, causing the old man to lose his balance and drop to the floor.

Then he angrily banged his fist into Dash’s nose before turning around to



see his father on the ground.

“Dad, I'm so-rry...” Elijah cried out as he watched his father getting off the floor.

“Forget it! We need to get out of here!” Mr. Barlow shouted.

The rest of the family members rushed out of their seats, heading for the exit.

But reporters kept shoving mics in their faces, and the lights from cameras continued flashing at them. ①

“This is so humiliating.” Madam Rosey whispered while following her husband out the door.

As Chloe stared at the disaster happening in the hall, she felt speechless and enraged.

Then she turned to Dash, staring hatefully at him as he wept the bloodstain from his nose, and without

holding back, she slapped him hard in the face.

“Is it true that you are just a bankrupt loser? Are you broke!” Chloe lashed out.

“Of course not!” Dash shouted with his hand resting on his cheek.

But from the look of fear in his eyes, Chloe wasn't buying a word that he said, and in tears, she held her dress, lifted it, and started running out of the hall.

“My poor daughter!” Dana cried, hurrying after her.

Consumed by rage, Elijah kept his cold gaze on Dash for a while before turning around and following his wife.

For a moment, Dash stood still. Then his father calmly approached him and mumbled, “It's a shame that Catherine is married. With her connection with Mr. Ford project, she would be a great

option for our situation.”

“True. I can't believe I Had to marry that brat.”

“A desperate man can not be picky.”

Meeting his father's eyes, Dash sighed and mumbled, “What now, dad? The truth is out.”.

“Is it?” Mr. Johnson slyly said.

“What?”

“You have to keep on lying and refuse a divorce. The Barlow family is growing their wings in the business circle, especially Catherine, and we need their name and connection to help our businesses.”

“Will they believe us?”

“We were able to hide the truth about our bankruptcy for months because of our lies. If we keep up the lies, all this will get swept under the rug in a few

days.”

Feeling frustrated, Dash looked at his father and mumbled, “What more lies can we tell. Everything is already out there.”

“All wealthy person has an enemy. This news is just a dirty trick and fake information from that unknown enemy our family has.” Mr. Johnson said with a faint smirk.

“Are you not worried that the person who did this will strike again?”

“If he or she ever makes themselves known, we can sue their ass for this mess.”

Sighing faintly, Mr. Johnson tapped Dash on his shoulder and said, “Follow your wife. I will handle things here.”

After glancing at his father, Dash hurried for the door, pushing his way through the reporters before leaving



the hall.

Once his son had left, Mr. Johnson approached the reporters, eyed his wife for a second, and calmly uttered, “This is all a misunderstanding. None of the information that has gotten released is true.”

“How?” A reporter doubtfully inquired.

Letting out a soft sigh, Mr. Johnson frowned and said with a trace of anger in his tone, “Our family reputation is getting tarnished by our enemies.”

“What?”

“Unfortunately, we all know that a wealthy man is not short of foes, and this news is just a dirty trick to ruin such a precious day for our son! But I can assure you that my family and I are neither bankrupt nor broke!”

Hearing those words, Rome picked up his mug, took a huge sip of his cold

coffee, and thought, 'A dirty little lie. Let's see how long you can use that card?'

Suddenly, Catherine's phone started buzzing, and she took her focus off the TV, placing it on her phone screen.

"It's my dad. We should get back to the house. I'm sure everyone is a wreck right now." Catherine mumbled as she met Rome's eyes.

"Okay, let's go home," Rome said, sitting the mug back on the table.



Comments



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## Chapter Seventy-Two

After Rome drove the vehicle into the yard, it didn't take long for the limousines to enter into the fence.

Once he had brought the car to a stop, he remained seated and so did Catherine as they listened to the loud noise of talking and mumbling from her family.

Both of them didn't leave the vehicle until everyone had gone into the house.

After a few minutes had weny by, Rome reached for the door handle. But Catherine grabbed his arm and mumbled, "Not yet."

So he let go of the handle and both of them sat, listening to the silence in the car.

Then after a minute or two had passed, Catherine took in a deep breath and said, "I'm ready to face the noise."

The living room was in chaos as everyone tried to speak at the same time, and when Mr. Barlow had had enough of it, he screamed, “Everyone shut up!”

It took a few seconds, but the room finally got quiet, and at that moment, Catherine and Rome walked into the living room.

For a second, everyone stared at them. But when Rome and Catherine greeted the family, they got silence in return.

“I want a divorce!” Chloe abruptly shouted.

“What?” Madam Rosey mumbled as she fixed her eyes on her granddaughter.

“I can’t stay married to a broke man whose family is about to go bankrupt!”

“You just got married!”



“Yeah, and I married him because of his wealth! What use does he have to me, if he's not even in my league anymore!”

In an effort to comfort her cousin, Catherine faintly smiled and said, “When it comes to a relationship, a man's love for you or your feelings for him shouldn't be measured off both of you guys' pockets.”

Smiling at his wife, Rome entangled his fingers with hers and thought, ‘Marrying you was the best coincidence of my life.’

“Shut up, Catherine! Just because you were stupid enough to stay with that loser doesn't mean that I have to be like you!” Chloe shouted in a fit of rage.

Looking at his granddaughter, Mr. Barlow frowned and lashed out, “Don't speak in such a loose manner towards your cousin!”

“But, grandpa, it's because of her bad luck that I suffered the same fate as her,” Chloe said as tears rushed down her face.

With his gaze focused on the tiles, Charles chuckled and mumbled, “Is it because of bad luck, or is it that karma is just a vengeful bitch.”

Even though he said it at a low volume, everyone heard him, and the room got quiet.

Curious about the silence, Charles lifted his head and saw that everyone was staring at him.

Then he nervously cleared his throat and said, “Well, what I meant to say is Chloe has been teasing Catherine for the longest about marrying Rome, and now the family have two good for nothing sons-in-law.”

“Are you saying that I am at fault here!”

“Umm, who else could be?”

Consumed by rage, Chloe shouted, “It's all grandmother's fault that I'm married to such... such a failure!”

Suddenly the realization of what she had said settled in, and she turned to her grandmother to apologize.

But before she could get the chance to utter a word, Madam Rosey smacked her in the cheek and firmly said, “How dare you speak of me in such a manner! If you weren't messing around, I wouldn't be forced to marry you off!”

“Grandma!” Chloe shouted.

When Madam Rosey raised her hand again, Elijah frowned at the fingerprints mark on his daughter's cheek and said, “Mother, please forgive her. She's just a naive child.”

After getting ahold of her anger,

Madam Rosey lowered her hand and sigh.

“I can't believe the Johnsons made this big of a fool out of us.” William sadly said, shaking his head slightly, yet he felt happy about everything that was going on.

“They know that they are bankrupt, yet they fake to be rich and cheat my dear niece into marrying their son. It makes me wonder what their agenda is for our family?” Anthony said as he stared at his father.

There was a brief pause. Then William sighed and said, “Do they plan to use Chloe to access our family wealth?”

Even though his brother sounded like they were sympathizing with his daughter, he knew they were trying to ruin her chance to be the top inheritor.

But he wasn't really to let them win, so he frowned and said, “Catherine



married a worthless husband, and none of you cared about him interfering in the family wealth. So why are you both worried about Dash?”

“Because Rome was born a loser with no value to his name. But Dash is the opposite since he is from a wealthy family who's about to go bankrupt. He's more of a danger to this family.” Anthony boldly said.

“Fact! What harm could Rome possibly cause to our family when he is just a ‘Nobody’ with no wealth, no connection, and no power.” William slyly uttered.

“True, even if he wants to exploit our wealth or take advantage of our money, he's too useless to do so. But Dash can definitely be a threat to us.”

“Exactly.”

While listening to them belittling him, he sighed and slightly shook his head as he

e thought, 'Ignorant truly gives birth to stupidity. Will you both be saying the same thing if I pull you two down to the dust?' ①

Staring at his mother, then at his father, Anthony looked devastated as he said, "Father, it's really tragic that both sons-in-law of this family are useless. But Rome is more of a fool than Dash, so we can not overlook the Johnson family."

"Can you all stop disrespecting my husband!" Catherine lashed out, feeling enraged.

Frowning, William looked at his niece and said, "No one is trying to downgrade your husband since his status has already belittled him. We are simply speaking facts."

A look of anger clouded Catherine's eyes. But as she was about to speak, Rome squeezed her hand and calmly

said, "Let it go. I'm not offended."

Swaying her gaze away from her uncle, Catherine looked up at him, pouted, and whispered, "But I am."

"I know. But arguing with your uncles would only give them leverage to hurt you, and I don't want that." Rome said as he stared into her eyes.

"But how about your feelings? It matters too to me as much as mine do."

"Don't bother about my feelings because the things your family says about me don't move me or hurt me."

"Even if that's the case, it doesn't make it right that they are saying these things."

Noticing the sadness in her eyes, Rome let out a soft breath and thought, 'I know. That's why they are going to eat their words in the end.'

Putting his focus back on Mr. Barlow, William said, "As I was saying, father, we have to take precaution when it comes to Dash."

"What nonsense precaution are you talking about, Will! If anything, we should be discussing how to get Chloe divorce from that fool!" Elijah lashed out, knowing exactly what his brothers were up to, and he was infuriated.

"Divorce?" Madam Rosey blurted out.

Staring away from William, Elijah gazed at her and said, "Yes, mother, a divorce."

"That's not happening. Chloe just got married today. She can't get a divorce the next day!" Madam Rosey said with a frown.

A sly smirk crept on Jeff's lips as he stared at Chloe. Then he lost the smug smile, gazed at his grandmother, and



said, "I can just see the headline, 'The Barlow family's first granddaughter divorce her husband after finding out her husband is bankrupt.'"

Realizing what his brother was up to, Richard sighed and said, "They might think our dear cousin is a golddigger who only married the Johnsons' son for his wealth, and she now wants a divorce because he's broke."

"But that's the truth! I'm not staying married to a broke man, and if that makes me a golddigger then so be it!" Chloe said with not the tiniest bit of remorse in her tone.

"Chloe! Don't say such nonsense!" Elijah lashed out when he saw the way Mr. Barlow gazed at her.

A look of disappointment settled on Madam Barlow's face as she stared at Chloe and said, "You must not care about your reputation, but our family

name is to be respected. So you are not divorcing Dash! At least not now.”

“With that said, your name is going to be taken off the inheritance list for the time being until we can figure out the agenda of the Johnson family.” Mr. Barlow said with a deadpan expression.

Immediately, the entire room fell silent as everyone gazed at Mr. Barlow, and right at that moment, Dax walked into the living room. 1

‘Well, this just got way more interesting.’ Rome thought as he stared at Dash. 1



Comments



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## Chapter Seventy-Three

Even though Madam Rosey had made it clear to Chloe, she took one look at Dash and said, “I want a divorce.”

The warning look her grandmother gave her had Chloe feeling scared for a moment, but she wasn't planning on backing down.

“Why?” Dash asked as he walked further into the living room.

“Because you are broke!”

“Says who?”

“Says the documents that we all got sent!”

“So you are going to believe some files sent by an unknown person!”

Frowning, Dash looked at the faces of everyone in the room and angrily said, “

You all are going to believe a document sent by some random person, instead of my family!”

When no one spoke, Dash felt confident in himself, and boldly uttered, “Don't you find it strange that on such a big day for the Barlows and the Johnson, something like this happens?”

As Rome stared at Dash, he smirked and thought, ‘I can't wait to see how far this lie is going to go.’

After wandering in his head for a while, Mr. Barlow sighed and uttered, “Well, it is strange, but those documents look legit.”

“True. But people are willing to go the extra mile to take someone down, and making legal documents for a lie they want to make look true is nothing impossible.” Dash said with a straight face.

“What are you saying?”



“My family was framed, and I can't believe you all started judging us without knowing the truth. This makes me second guess who the Barlows truly are!”

Suddenly, Madam Rosey's expression softened as she looked at Dash and said, “My dear grand-son-in-law, it's not like that. Everything happened so fast that we assumed wrongly. But now that we know the truth...”

“How can we be sure that it is the truth?” Rome abruptly asked as he gazed at Dash.

“I don't think you should be meddling in a matter that doesn't concern you! After all, you are nothing more than a mere commoner, so I don't think I should be answering to you!” Dash lashed out.

With a touch of anger in her eyes, Catherine scowled at him and firmly

intoned, “I want you to answer my husband's question? Or are you going to tell me that I'm nothing more than the wife of a mere commoner!”

When Dash stared at Catherine, he looked slightly nervous as he said, “Of course not. You are the dear granddaughter of this family. How can I downgrade you to your husband's status?”

It was another insult, and Catherine had had enough of them.

But as she was about to speak, Charles interrupted her and said, “My brother-in-law is right. There are two sides to this story, one has legal evidence and the other is just empty words. How do we know that you are not lying to us?”

The fact that Charles mentioned Rome as his brother-in-law made Elijah consumed with rage because he knew they were using Rome's words to make

sure that Chloe stays off the inheritance list.

“The Johnsons is a reputable family. I mean, mother was the one who thought it would be good for Chloe and Dash to get wed. I'm sure she won't think of him as a good suitor if they weren't a decent family.” Elijah stated.

“Reputable family or not, we can't just overlook the documents,” William replied with his gaze fixed on his brother.

“I agree.” Mr. Barlow abruptly said.

Immediately, the room became silent and everyone's gaze was on him.

“What proof do you need from me to show that my family is still as reputable as before?” Dash asked, feeling desperate.

At first, Chloe wasn't completely sure that he was telling the truth. But his

question suddenly gave her the idea to get what she had always wanted.

“Get me a position on Mr. Ford's project, and I will believe you.” Chloe straightforwardly said as she stared directly into Dash's eyes.

“What?” Dash asked, feeling anxious.

“You once said that you had done business with Mr. Ford, and he doesn't do business with just anyone. So you must have a close connection with him.”

“Well...”

At this point, Dash realized that he had hit a wall and it was time to come clean.

But right at the moment, he was about to speak the truth, his father's word came rushing back to his mind, and without taking a minute to think, he blurted out, “Sure.”



His response came as a shock to everyone except Rome.

Although he didn't know how far Dash was willing to take his lie, he wasn't surprised that he used his father's name as an escape route.

'Stupid,' Rome thought as he stared at Dash.

With excitement in her eyes, Chloe smiled widely and asked, "Really?"

"Of course. First thing Monday morning, I will schedule a meeting with Mr. Ford and discuss with him about you." Dash said, striving his hardest not to freak out.

It took a moment for the others to get over their shock. Then Elijah burst into laughter and said, "See, my son-in-law is not a loser. How could you all think to compare him with Rome!"

“Of course, our daughter can not suffer the same fate as Catherine.” Dana calmly uttered with a smile.

Although William and Anthony weren't happy about this news, both brothers fake a smile as Elijah gazed at them with a look of satisfaction in his eyes.

“Dash, I'm sure all this must be hard on you. We are sorry that we judged your family so quickly.” Madam Rosey said.

Then she looked at her husband and mumbled, “Honey,”

With a deadpan expression, Mr. Barlow took a deep breath and said, “Chloe's name will not get put back on the inheritance list until Dash can prove beyond doubt that he and his parents are not bankrupt.”

“But father, he just promise Chloe to get her a position in Mr. Ford's project. Isn't that proof enough!” Elijah said,

striving to keep his rage under control.

“Then until Chloe gets that position, she's not getting back on the list.”

“Father!”

“My decision is final!”

When Mr. Barlow glared at him, Dash felt hot and his palm was sweaty, but he faintly smiled at him before quickly looking the other way.

Suddenly, Madam Rosey's phone buzzed, and she hastily answered the call.

After talking on the phone for a while, she ended the call and laughed nervously.

“I can't believe we forgot that we have a wedding reception to attend.” Madam Rosey said as she looked at her husband.

“Well, now that everything has gotten cleared up, we should show up to the

reception to clarify things with the guests,” Elijah uttered.

For a moment, Mr. Barlow looked hesitant. Then he sighed and said, “Sure. After the way we left the wedding, it is only fair that we apologize for our behavior, or else it might stain our reputation.”

A few minutes after Mr. Barlow had left the living room along with madam Rosey, Edward approached Catherine and said, “You better be at the wedding reception to stand by our family.”

“Father,” Catherine mumbled with a touch of hesitation in her eyes.

“An excuse is not an option in this matter. Go upstairs and get dressed.”

“Fine,”

Feeling angry with her father, Catherine stormed out of the living room.



But Rome didn't follow her since his attention was on Dash.

When Dash finally realized that Rome was staring at him, he walked over to him and aggressively asked, "What the hell are you looking at?"

However, Rome gave him a smug smile and thought, 'You just dug your grave and buried yourself in it.'

"Are you playing deaf!" Dash asked.

"Nah. I'm just thinking about what to do with the shovel in my hand." Rome mumbled before turning away from Dash.

Then he smirked and thought, 'Should I dig you out or keep you buried?'

## Chapter Seventy-Four

It was six o'clock when the Barlows arrived at the venue for the wedding reception.

When their vehicles came to a stop, they were not shocked to see the reporters waiting for them at the front of the building.

“Mr. Barlow, what do you think about the news concerning your new grandson-in-law?” A reporter asked, pointing his mic in Mr. Barlow's face as he tried to walk past him.

At first, Mr. Barlow was hesitant to answer. Then he sighed and said, “We believe that the news about our in-laws are fake, and we are standing by them against this deceitful rumor.”

The reporters looked a bit surprised about Mr. Barlow's reply since they

knew how the family acted during the ceremony.

But they allowed Mr. Barlow to walk past them and head into the building without asking him any further questions.

However, when Chloe and Dash got down from their car and approached the reporters, a journalist pointed his mic in Chloe's face and asked, "Do you also believe that the news is false and your husband is not suffering from bankruptcy?"

"Of course. My husband is a man from a wealthy and reputable background, and so am I. It's only sensible that someone envious will want to ruin our happy moment for us." Chloe loudly said in a boastful tone.

Then she held onto Dash's arm, and he led her into the building.

The last two people to get out of their

car were Catherine and Rome, and the moment the reporters set their sights on her, camera lights started going off and on, and the journalist started throwing questions at her.

But Rome held Catherine by her waist, pulled her into his arm, and walked her into the building.

Although Madam Rosey wasn't sure that guests would turn out, the reception hall seemed surprisingly occupied with people from the wedding ceremony.

The moment Rome and Catherine arrived in the hall, his phone started buzzing.

"I should take this," Rome said as he let go of Catherine.

After she nodded, he faintly smiled at her before walking away.

When Rome reached the left corner of



the hall, he looked around, and once he was sure that no one was nearby, he answered the call.

“Boss, the plan failed. What do you want us to do?” Brook asked from the other end of the line.

“Nothing,” Rome said with his focus on Catherine.

“But...”

“I will take care of things. But I want you guys to do something for me.”

“What is it, boss?”

“Investigate Mr. Barlow's sons. Those three seem like they are involved in a lot of mess. Find out what their messes are.”

“Yes, boss.”

After ending the call, Rome looked away from Catherine. Then he fixed his gaze on William and mumbled, “What

harm could I possibly cause to the Barlow family? Uhh, a lot. You all should count yourself lucky that I love my wife, or else the Barlow family name would be in the dust by now.”

When Rome gazed at Catherine and saw that she was still standing alone, he shoved his phone back into his coat pocket and walked towards her.

But then he stopped, looked to his left, and saw Dash and his father standing a few feet away from him as Mr. Johnson angrily talked to his son.

“You fool! Mr. Ford? How could you use such a man's name!” Mr. Johnson lashed out, and Rome could hear his every word.

But they had their backs turned to him, so they didn't realize he was there.

“You told me to keep on lying, and that's what I did. Dash said with a hint of anger in his tone.

“Yes, I told you to lie, not to crucify our family! I would have rather you offended the Barlows than Mr. Ford. What do you think he will do about your lie if he finds out!” Mr. Johnson said, striving to keep his voice at a low range.

“He can't be that mad over a petite lie?”

“Haha! Petite, petite! Do you know how many business tycoons have lost everything because of Mr. Ford? Once he pulls you down in the mud, you stay there and have no chance of a comeback!”

A smirk surfaced on Rome's lips when he heard those words, and he mumbled, “An identity kept in secret is just as powerful as being well-known.”

“Father, don't worry. I will visit Mr. Ford and plead with him and beg for his mercy.” Dash said, and Rome could hear raw fear in his voice.

“You better. If you have to knee down, kneel, and whatever he asks you to do, do it! Do not leave until he forgives you!” Mr. Johnson firmly intoned.

“What!”

“We are hanging at a cliff, and Mr. Ford has the power to push us off. Remember that!”

When Rome noticed Catherine staring at him, he abandoned listening to Dash and his father's conversation and walked towards her.

At that moment, Chloe and three other ladies approached Catherine, and she scowled at them, recognizing them as Rachael, Eta, and Celina, Chloe's three friends, known as her minions.

“We didn't see you at the wedding ceremony. Why is that?” Celina said with a smirk.



When Catherine didn't answer, Eta mockingly said, "Jealous much that your cousin married a better man than you."

As Catherine stared at Eta, she looked unbothered by her remark, and her expression bore no emotions.

"Even if you are jealous, don't you feel embarrassed making it obvious by staying away from your cousin's wedding," Rachael said, rolling her eyes at Catherine.

Yet Chloe and her friends got no reaction or response from Catherine, and her cousin's behavior annoyed Chloe even more.

"What's going on here?" Rome asked when he reached them.

Suddenly, Chloe's three friends sealed their lips when they remembered how Rome slapped Dash at the welcome

party.

But Chloe was bold enough to say, “We are just talking about how I ended up with a better man than Catherine.”

“Words are free, but the way you use them might cost you. So I will advise you to taste your words before you decide to spit them out!” Rome coldly said as he glared at her.

Although Chloe thought about rude responses she wanted to tell Rome, she couldn't say them out loud because the look in his eyes when he told her those words had her paralyzed by fear.

Taking his focus off Chloe, Rome held Catherine's hand and led her away from the group.

Then he walked her over to the appetizer table, picked up a Mini quiche, and said, “Open up,”

A look of hesitation crossed Catherine's

face for a second as she darted nervous glances around the hall. Then she beamed at him and opened her mouth.

Chuckling softly, Rome fed Catherine with the quiche and adoringly gazed at her as she took a bite into it.

“Chloe was wrong. I ended up with the best man.” Catherine mumbled as she stared into his eyes.

At that moment, Edward approached her and Rome and aggressively cleared his throat.

Then he gazed at Catherine and said, “Your grandfather is asking for you. Apparently, his partners wanted to greet his granddaughter who was capable enough to get such a position in Mr. Ford's project.”

For a moment, Catherine hesitated as she looked over to her grandfather and saw him talking with some elderly and younger men.

Afterward, she stared at Rome. But he smiled and softly said, “Go,”

“Okay,” Catherine mumbled.

Then she followed her father to where her grandfather was, and for a brief while, Rome gazed after her.

But then his ringtone drew his attention to his pocket, and he reached into it and took out his phone.

When he answered the call, he heard Mr. Ford say, “So I saw the news. What's your next step?”

“I need you to grant an audience with Dash,” Rome said as he focused his attention back at Catherine.

“What?”

“Trust me, father. I know what I'm doing.”



## Chapter Seventy-Five

The sunlight poured through the window and beamed on Catherine's face, so she roll over to her left and slowly raised her eyelashes.

“Good morning. Are you going somewhere?” Catherine asked as she watched Rome buttoning his shirt.

“Morning, yeah. I got a meeting with someone.” Rome said, staring at her.

A yawn escaped Catherine's lip as she rubbed her eyelids. Then she got out of bed, picked Rome's coat off the blanket, and approached him.

“With who?” Catherine whispered as she handed his coat to him.

‘Someone you know.’ Rome thought, accepting his coat from her.

Then he wore it and said, “A

workmate.”

A while later, Catherine and Rome came downstairs, and when they entered the dining room, both of them were shocked to see Mr. Barlow and Madam Rosey chatting and laughing happily with Dash.

“Oh my, for real?” Madam Rosey asked as she put a waffle on Dash's plate while smiling at him.

“Thanks. Of course. Mr. Ford and I are scheduled to meet this morning.” Dash boastfully said.

With a faint smile on Elijah's lips, he sat his glass on the table and proudly intoned, “My son-in-law is truly a capable man.”

For a while, Mr. Barlow was silent. Then he took a deep breath and said, “I was worried that you wouldn't be able to get Chloe a position on Mr. Ford's project because Catherine said that she

couldn't do it, but my doubts are relieved now.”

At that moment, Chloe gazed at Catherine. Then she rolled her eyes and said, “Of course she would claim that she can't because she's selfish and wants to be the only successful person in the family.”

With a touch of sadness in her eyes, Catherine frowned and mumbled, “That's not true. I really can't...”

“Oh spare me your excuses and lies because I don't care. After all, what you can't do, my husband can, so I don't have a use for you or your excuses.”

Chloe rudely uttered as she gazed away from her cousin.

Feeling frustrated, Catherine rubbed her eyebrows.

At that moment, she felt Rome's hand on her back, and she looked up at him.

“Are you okay?” Rome mumbled.

“Yeah. Yes!” Catherine said, forcing a smile on her face.

“You should take your seat.”

“Okay,”

The dining hall was quiet for a few minutes as Rome pulled out a chair for her.

After taking a sip of his drink, Mr. Barlow looked at his granddaughter, and said, “Do you remember zayn?”

“Who?” Catherine mumbled, pausing as she was about to take her seat.

For a second, Mr. Barlow met Rome’s eyes. Then he focused on his granddaughter and said, “One of my partner's sons. He was at the wedding reception. The gentleman who was wearing the blue jacket.”



An uncomfortable feeling swept through Catherine as she lowered her brows and said, "Yes, I remember."

"Well, he's inviting you to his thirtieth birthday party." Mr. Barlow said, swaying his gaze away from his granddaughter to Rome.

A look of pure discontent settled on Rome's face as he and Mr. Barlow stared at each other. But he kept silent since he wanted to see where the conversation was heading.

"I don't know him. Why would I want to attend his birthday party?" Catherine asked, feeling annoyed with her grandfather.

"It's just a party. Do not read too much into it and attend." Madam Rosey said as she looked away from Dash and focused on her granddaughter.

At this point, Catherine was furious

with both her grandparents, and she boldly said, “Since it's just a party, I don't need to attend.”

“You have to go.”

“Why?”

Gazing at Rome with a smirk on his lips, Jeff stabbed his fork into his steak and said, “Isn't it obvious? The family already has one competent son-in-law, and it's time to replace the useless one with another better in-law.”

“Jeff!” Catherine lashed out as she gave him an icy stare.

Narrowing his eyes at her, Jeff forcefully pulled his fork out of his steak and asked, “What? Didn't I spit out facts?”

When Catherine looked at her grandparents, and they didn't disclaim Jeff's statement, she hardened her expression and mumbled, “Seriously.”

Without uttering a word, Rome turned away from the family and walked away.

“Rome!” Catherine called out.

But he didn't stop, and with hurt in her eyes, she shouted, “Babe!”

Smiling, Rome stopped in his tracks. Then he lost his smile and turned around to face her.

“I'm not going,” Catherine said as she stared directly into his eyes.

“Catherine, you can't defile your grandparents.” Edward abruptly uttered, scowling at his daughter.

“Don't tell me to go to that party because I will defile you too.”

“You won't dare.”

“We both know that I would.”

Deciding that he had had enough, Mr. Barlow slapped his palm on the table

and said, "I know that you are raising i  
n the business world, but you wouldn't b  
e where you are without our family  
name!"

Unknown to himself, Rome chuckled,  
and the room suddenly grew silent as  
everyone fixed their eyes on him.

Then Mr. Barlow scowled and angrily  
asked, "What's funny?!"

Ignoring the old man's question, Rome  
looked at Catherine, smiled at her, and  
said, "I'm not mad. I have to be  
somewhere, and I'm running late."

"Really," Catherine asked with  
uncertainty in her eyes.

Keeping his gaze fixed on her, Rome  
slightly nodded and said, "Yes."

Then he turned around and walked out o  
f the dining room.

When Catherine was about to take her



seat, her father frowned at her and mumbled, "I'm so disappointed in you right now."

"I couldn't have said it better." Mr. Barlow said, shaking his head in disappointment.

But Catherine didn't say a word as she picked at her egg with tears in her eyes.

Dash was about to take a bite into his toast, then his eyes caught a glimpse of the time on his watch, and he immediately dropped the bread on his plate and stood to his feet.

"I got to go." Dash hastily said before rushing out of the dining room.

A few minutes later, he was sitting in his car, and after driving out of the fence, he saw Rome standing on the side of the road, so he stopped.

Then he whined his windshield down, smirked, and said, "I would give you a

lift. But you are not worth riding in my car.”

“Your vehicle is not worthy of driving me.” Rome casually said as he gave him a smug smile.

As Dash was about to speak, a taxi made a stop right behind his vehicle.

While gazing directly at Dash, Rome faintly smirked and said, “See you soon.”

Then he walked towards the taxi, opened the back door, and got into it.

“Something's off about that guy,” Dash mumbled as he watched the cab drive away.

## Chapter Seventy-Six

Blowing a whistle, Mr. Orlando drummed his fingers on the steering wheel. But then he hastily stopped when Rome got into the backseat of the Mercedes.

“Good morning, young master!” Mr. Orlando hastily said as he sat up straight in his seat.

Then he eyed K when he said, “Good Morning, boss.”

“Morning,” Rome mumbled beneath his breath.

Then he leaned back against the seat and said, “Orlando,”

“Yes, young master!” Mr. Orlando immediately answered.

“Find out which one of Mr. Barlow's partners has a son named 'Zayn.’”

“Okay.”

For a moment, Mr. Orlando waited to see if he had anything else to say, but when Rome didn't speak, he started the car engine and drove off.

“I received a call from Jerry a few minutes back. He called to inform me that your clothes are ready.” Mr. Orlando said, keeping his eyes focused on the road.

“Good. Then we will make a stop at the boutique before heading to my father's office.” Rome uttered with his attention on the car windshield.

The moment Dash brought his car to a stop in the parking lot of Mr. Ford's office, he got down and hurried into the building while staring at his watch every second or two.

Finally, a few minutes later, he reached the top floor, and Mr. Ford's secretary



ushered him into an enormous room.

Then she faintly smiled at him and said, "My boss is not here yet. So, you would have to wait a bit."

"Sure," Dash said as he took a seat on the couch.

Then he waited for the secretary to leave the room before looking down at his watch, and Dash frowned when he realized that he was on time according to the hour he and Mr. Ford settled on.

But knowing that he might be nothing more than an inferior being in Mr. Ford's eyes, he remained seated and waited patiently.

After fifteen minutes had passed, Dash turned his focus to the door, staring at it intensely for a few seconds.

Then he sighed and mumbled, "At least tell your secretary to offer me a tea or something if you knew you were going to

o be showing up late.”

When Rome arrived at Jerry's boutique, he was welcomed at the door by the old man, and then both of them walked further into the store.

“Your suit is in the backroom,” Jerry said when he stopped at the counter.

Then he watched Rome walk towards the back of the store, and after a while, he returned, wearing a white shirt with two buttons open, a black blazer, and black pants along with black shoes without socks.

“You do my clothes justice,” Jerry said, gazing at Rome with a smile on his face.

“A compliment well received,” Rome mumbled as he laid his card on the desk.

After Jerry had swiped the card, he handed it back to him, and Rome accepted it before walking out of the boutique with K following closely

behind him.

When Rome got back into the car, he looked at Mr. Orlando and said, "Take me to 'O'La restaurant."

"But that's a one-hour drive." Mr. Orlando mumbled in confusion.

"I know."

"But you said..."

"I know what I said. But what's the use of confronting an enemy on an empty stomach. It will just make me as miserable as them."

Keeping his silence, Mr. Orlando put the vehicle in gear and drove off.

After another twenty minutes had passed, Dash stood to his feet and started pacing around the room.

Every minute or two, he would stop, gaze at his watch, and frowned before pacing around again.

The frustration he felt was rapidly increasing, and his anger was consuming him from the inside.

But all he could do was be patient, knowing that his father was waiting to hear that Mr. Ford had forgiven him, and Chloe was awaiting him to give her the good news that he got the project for her.

“What have I gotten myself into?” Dash mumbled, feeling mad at himself, Chloe, and his parents.

Suddenly his phone started buzzing, and he gazed at the screen, saw Chloe's name, and scowled.

Finally, after second-guessing several times if he should answer or not, he accepted the call.

“Have you got the contract yet!” Chloe's voice echoed from the speakers, sounding impatient.



“Not yet,” Dash said as he narrowed his eyes.

“What do you mean. It's been hours! How long will it take you to get a simple contract!”

“Well...”

The words that Dash was about to say got stuck in his head when he realized they were foul language. So he took a moment to breathe and said, “Mr. Ford is not here yet.”

“What? Are you sure you schedule a meeting with him!” Chloe's harsh voice echoed into his ear, causing Dash to withdrew the phone a few distances away from him.

Then he pressed it back against his ear and said, “I spoke with his secretary, and she confirmed that Mr. Ford agreed to see me today.”

“Then why isn't he there yet!”

“I don't know! Stop asking me stupid questions, woman!”

In the fate of rage, he hung off the phone and squeezed it tightly in his grip while screaming in his head.

Suddenly the door opened, and a group of men in black suits walked into the office and stood in two separate lines, opposite each other.

Among these men were K, Brook, Scar, and Blaze, and the four of them maintained a defense position as they faced the door.

Fear ceased Dash as he stared at all the built fellows in the room. Then he looked at the door, and his gaze rested on a man walking into the office wearing a face cap, shade, and a mask.

The first thought that crossed his mind

was, 'who is he?'

Then Dash's eyes widened, and his jaw dropped when Rome took off the cap, along with his shade, and removed the mask.

"We meet again, my dear in-law," Rome said with his icy gaze fixed on Dash.

Not knowing what to think or feel, Dash took an unstable step backward and mumbled, "What... Wh-at wh...at ar...e ... What are you do-ing he-re?"

Watching Dash trembled, Rome smirked and walked past him with all his bodyguards following him. Then they stopped as he took a seat behind Mr. Ford's desk.

With his cold gaze fixed on Dash's eyes, Rome said, "Why shouldn't I be here? After all, it's my father's office."

"Yo-ur fath...er," Dash stuttered as his

fear intensified.

“Speak up as you did in the past. Your tone now is kinda pathetic.”

It took Dash a few seconds to get his emotions under control, and then he said, “But I don't understand,”

“What's not to understand? I am Rome Ford, the sole heir to Mr. Ford. Is it clear now?” Rome causally said as he rested back in the chair.



Comments



Vote (16.9K)





## Chapter Seventy-Seven

The room was silent for quite a while as Dash stood still, staring at Rome in disbelief.

Finally, after wandering in his head for quite a while, reality struck him like a bolt of lightning, and terror took over his expression.

“You are Mr. Ford’s son,” Dash mumbled as he subconsciously dropped to his knees.

“Why are you kneeling? There are a lot of chairs in here.” Rome casually said as Dash gazed at him.

Avoiding Rome's cold eyes, Dash stared to the left and mumbled, “I have messed up!”

“Have you?” Rome calmly asked.

As Dash swayed his gaze to the floor, he

hung his head low and said, "Yes!"

"How so?" Rome asked as his index finger caressed against his bottom lip.

The feeling of pride that Dash had once acted on in the presence of Rome, suddenly faded, leaving him feeling belittle and pathetic as he lifted his head.

"I was horrible to you! But I now regret the way that I treated you and I have learned from my mistake!" Dash hastily said, feeling desperate and anxious.

"Ahh, you regret your actions?" Rome asked with a deadpan expression.

"Yes! Yes, I do!"

"Power is a great force, don't you agree?"

"Yes! Yes, I agree."

Frowning, Rome stood to his feet and

left from behind the desk. Then he walked over to Dash, and as he got closer to him, Dash moved backward while still on his knees.

“It's funny how quickly you learn. I wasn't worthy to ride in your car a few hours back and now, you feel terrible for the way you treated me?” Rome coldly uttered while staring down at Dash.

Then he squatted to meet his height and asked, “Would you have become this regretful if you didn't know who I am?”

“I...” Dash mumbled, avoiding Rome's eyes.

“Hm, Cat got your tongue, or you can't figure out what lie you want to say next?”

“I'm really remorseful for my actions!”

Standing to his feet, Rome scowled and

said, "Save that nonsense for someone stupid enough to believe you."

"Please! Please, Rome. Do not destroy my family's hard work! I'm begging you!" Dash shouted.

"What a perfect act. How many times did you rehearse those words in the mirror? Is that the line you plan to use to pursue my father?" Rome calmly asked.

"Uh..."

"I'm not impressed. It's a weak line, and my dad would have ruined your family even if you had cried him a river of blood. He doesn't like people bullying me, you know."

Chills ran down Dash's spine, and he met Rome's eyes and hastily uttered, "Really? Then I'm glad it's you that I'm talking to. You are a good man, Rome. Even with such power to your disposer, you remain humble. That's how I know



you have a kind heart.”

“Spare me the praises. It's not working. Also, Humble? I am my father's son, Dash. His blood pumped through me.” Rome straightforwardly said.

Then he sneered and mumbled, “You think I let the Barlows walk over me because I'm humble! Come on, you must be less stupid than that.” 1

“I...”

It grew silent as Dash wandered into his head for a while. Then he gasped and said, “The news about my family going bankrupt! It was you!”

“Took you long enough,” Rome mumbled as he sat at the edge of the desk.

“But! But, why?”

“I don't like people walking over me. The Barlows, I can allow because of my

personal reasons. But anyone else, I'm not that forgiving.”

Realizing that he had offended the most powerful person that he shouldn't have upset, Dash felt numb as he asked, “What are you going to do to my family and me?”

“Nothing. Like your father said, ‘you guys are at the edge of a cliff.’ One word from me and your family name is going to fade out like you guys never existed. But I'm not going to do that.” Rome casually said.

Shock took over Brook, Scar, and Blaze's faces because they weren't expecting such a response from their boss.

Neither was Dash, and it took him a moment to say, “What do you mean?”

“I am willing to help your family out of you guys' bankruptcy.”

“What! You are willing to do what?” 2

There was a brief pause. Then Rome withdrew from the desk and coldly intoned, “Do you know how my father is able to have so many powerful people in his grip?”

“No,” Dash mumbled, afraid to know the answer.

“He keeps them indebted to him and makes them dependent on him. That's where true power lies when you hold the fate of others in your hands.”

“Why are you telling me all this?”

“Because you are already in my grip. You can either accept my offer or get push off the cliff by my hands. Your choice.” 2

As Dash gazed at Rome, he finally understood why Rome always had a dominant presence, and knowing that h

e had no other option, he sighed and said, "I accept your offer. But what is in it for you?"

"Your silence about who I am, and your obedience. That's it." Rome said with a smirk.

Resting his palms against his thighs, Dash huffed and mumbled, "If that's the case, my lips are sealed about your identity, and your wish is my command."

"Good. Then this meeting is adjourned."

"Thank you."

It took a moment for Dash to gain the courage to stand to his feet, and after he did, a thought crossed his mind.

"How about Chloe?" Dash mumbled out.

"Your so-called wife is not getting a



spot on my project,” Rome said with a touch of annoyance in his eyes.

“I understand.”

“Now that you mention Chloe, there's something I need you to do.”

“What is it?”

“There will be a call tonight, and after Mr. Barlow is done with that call, I need you to confirm the things he's going to say.”

Knowing that he had gotten into a pit that he could not get out of, Dash humbly said, “Okay, I will.”

At that moment, Rome's phone rang, and when he gazed at its screen a smile surfaced on his face before he answered the call.

“Hey, wife,” Rome gently said, widening his smile out of excitement.

With her gaze fixed on her wedding

ring, Catherine grinned and asked, “Is your meeting over?”

“Umm, yes. The meeting is over.”

Rome softly intoned as he stared at Dash.

“Do you want to have lunch with me?”

“Yes! I'm on my way.”

Pausing for a second, Catherine took a moment to breathe, and then said, “I love you.”

Smiling with his eyes, Rome chuckled softly, and his gang members couldn't help staring at him in shock.

“I love you too,” Rome boldly said.

When Dash heard those words, the first thought that crossed his mind was, ‘Cathrine isn't successful because of the Barlows. It's because she is married to a freaking billionaire. I'm glad I went after Chloe instead of her.’

Once Rome had ended the call, his smile faded and his face hardened as he glared at Dash.

“You can leave. We will see at the dining table tonight.”

Confused about what to say or do, Dash slightly bowed before hurrying out of the office.

After the door closed behind him, it didn't take long, then Mr. Orlando walked into the room.

Then he approached Rome and said, “I got the information that you asked for.”

 Comments

 Vote (16.9K)



## Chapter Seventy-Eight

After getting changed into his previous clothes, Rome left his father's office with K, and both of them headed to the bus stop.

It wasn't long before the bus arrived, and Rome and K got on it.

When they took a seat at the back, Rome removed his face cap, mask, and shade, and put it into a back bag. Then he handed it to K.

It took a few minutes, but the bus finally made a stop at DreamTeam's bus stop, and Rome got down, leaving K on the bus.

Then he headed into the building and got into the elevator. But as he was about to press button eight, a fellow entered into the elevator, holding a bouquet, and pressed the button.



There was a long pause as Rome stared at him, then at the flowers before focusing back on his face.

“What are you staring at, freak!” He rudely uttered when he noticed Rome gazing at him.

However, he got no response from Rome, and that played on his ego. So he smirked and said, “Count yourself lucky that I'm here to see a pretty lady, and I don't want to get my hands dirty, or else my fist would have met your face for your disrespect.”

Even after his remark, Rome remained silent, but his expression had hardened, and his eyes had become cold.

Although Rome's behavior was pissing this guy off, he remained silent, and yet he continued eyeing Rome every now and then.

Finally, when the elevator came to a stop a few minutes later, he rushed out of it, and a few distances behind him was Rome.

The fact that they were heading in the same direction was enraging Rome with every step he took.

When the office door opened, Catherine's lips curved into a smile as she lifted her head.

Then her smile quickly faded as she frowned and mumbled, "Zayn,"

"I'm relieved that you recognize me," Zayn said before shutting the door.

But it suddenly opened again, and Rome entered the office.

At first, he gazed at Catherine, then at Zayn before walking over to the couch and taking a seat.

"What are you doing here?" Catherine

asked, feeling annoyed by the mere sight of Zayn.

“Your grandfather said that you were hesitant to come to my birthday party because you are not familiar with me. So I'm here to ask you to have lunch with me.” Zayn boldly said.

Then he walked over to Catherine and handed the bouquet to her.

But Catherine blankly stared at him without saying anything because she was infuriated with the situation.

With an awkward smile on his face, Zayn laid the bouquet on the desk and said, “So, will you have lunch with me, so we can get to know each other better?”

“You know I'm married, right, and that you are not only in my presence, but my husband is here too?” Catherine coldly intoned as she gave him an icy stare.

Swaying his gaze away from Catherine, Zayn stared at Rome, smirked, and said, "Of course. I saw him at the reception. However, this isn't about him, but you and I."

With an unbothered expression, Rome looked directly into Zayn's eyes while keeping his silence.

"There's no you and me! Please get out!" Catherine angrily intoned.

"From what I heard your husband is just a worthless son-in-law to your family. He's not worthy of a woman like you." Zayn boastfully said.

"I didn't ask for your opinion! Now get out!"

"You don't have to defend a man who can't take care of you as a real man should."

"The only real man in this room is my



husband, so get out and take your bouquet with you.”

“That's not what your grandfather thinks.”

“What does my grandfather know?”

A look of embarrassment settled on Zayn's face, but because of how big his ego was, he remained standing as he wondered about what next to say to Catherine.

However, Rome decided that he had had enough of him, and with calmness in his eyes, he stood from the couch, walked over to Zayn, and said, “You heard my wife. She wants you to leave, so get out.”

“Who the hell do you think you are! Do you know who I am? My father is the chairman of Global group, and if you anger me, I will make you wish you were never born!” Zayn harshly uttered with rage beaming in his eyes.

“I told you to leave and didn't ask for your identity.”

“If I don't leave, what are you going to do about it?”

It grew silent as Rome gazed at him. Then without holding back his strength, he grabbed Zayn's arm, turned him around, and locked his hand behind his back.

.

Although Zayn was struggling to break free, Rome grip on his wrist only got tighter.

“Let go of me, or else, I will jail your ass!” Zayn shouted in anger.

But Rome ignored his words and started pushing him towards the office door. Then he opened it and shoved Zayn outside before slamming the door in his face.

“You haven't heard the last of me! How dare a lowlife like yourself touch me. You will be hearing from my lawyer!” Zayn's voice echoed into the office.

Frowning, Rome turned away from the door, approached the desk, grabbed the bouquet, and walked over to the trash bin. Then he opened the lid and tossed it into the bin.

“Are you ready to go out for lunch?” Rome said as he stared at Catherine.

Still feeling shocked about what just happened, she subconsciously mumbled, “Uh,”

Feeling a bit worried that he might have scared her, Rome calmly asked, “Are you good?”

“Yeah, I'm just amazed at how awesome my husband is,” Catherine mumbled as she beamed with admiration.

Suddenly, her ringtone disrupted their moment, and Catherine looked down at the phone.

Then she frowned as she picked it up, stared at the screen for a while, and then dropped it back on the desk.

Afterward, she grabbed her coat and wore it. Then she put her phone into her pocket and said, "I'm ready to leave."

Although Rome wanted to ask about who had called, he smiled and said, "Okay, let's go."



Comments



Vote (16.9K)





## Chapter Seventy-Nine

It was seven o'clock when Catherine and Rome walked through the front door of the Barlow's mansion.

When they arrived into the dining room, they saw that everyone was already seated at the table, except for Dash.

But after Catherine and Rome got seated and a few minutes went by, Dash finally walked into the dining hall.

When Chloe saw him, anger was the only emotion she felt for him because he had been avoiding her calls all day.

However, Dash wasn't paying attention to the dirty looks she was giving him since his attention was on Rome, and his heart literally missed a beat when their eyes locked and Rome frowned.

Swallowing hard, Dash swayed his gaze

away from Rome and placed his attention on Mr. Barlow. Then he walked over to the spare seat at the table and sat down.

The atmosphere became tense immediately as Madam Rosey, Elijah, Chloe, and Mr. Barlow stared at him.

As he gazed back at them, a sense of anxiety overwhelmed him because a situation like this was why he had waited outside of the Barlows mansion for Rome to get home before he decided to come inside.

Swaying his attention off Chloe, Dash glanced at Rome, and for a second, Rome gazed at him.

Then he placed his focus back on his phone screen as he texted his father, “Called now.”

“Are you sure your plan will work?” Mr. Ford texted back.

“I have lived with the Barlow long enough to know what buttons to push to drive them nuts. This plan is solid.”

“Okay.”

The silence in the hall only seemed to increase Mr. Barlow's anger, and when he decided that he was done with Dash quietness, he frowned and said, “So, what did Mr. Ford say?”

It took only a minute after his question for his ringtone to echo in the room, and after staring at his screen for a moment, he decided to accept the call, even though it was an unknown number.

After answering the call, Mr. Barlow scowled and asked, “Who is this?”

There was a brief silence before a cold voice echoed into his ear, “This is Mr. Ford,”

Immediately, Mr. Barlow's expression shifted from anger to excitement. Then he smiled and asked, "Oh, Mr. Ford, it's an honor receiving a call from you."

The moment Chloe heard the name, "Mr. Ford," the corners of her mouth raised as she beamed with excitement.

It was the same for Elijah and Dana. But Dash looked more afraid to hear that name, and the presence of Rome, only made him petrified.

'What is he up to?' Dash thought, glancing at Rome.

"This is not a friendly call. Dash Johnson visited me today." Mr. Ford coldly said from the other end of the line.

"Why is it not a friendly call?" Mr. Barlow asked with fear in his eyes.

Hearing those words, the smile on



Chloe and her parents' lips immediately faded.

The line grew silent for a second. Then Mr. Ford's voice flowed out of the phone speaker, "Because I'm calling you to tell you the exact thing that I told him."

"Please, what did you tell him?" Mr. Barlow asked as he slowly tapped his fingers on the table to calm down his stress.

"Your granddaughter is incompetent for a position on my project, and not even the Johnsons reputation or their relationship with me can change that."

"What?"

"She doesn't have the potential to work with me, and I don't plan to ever work with her."

"Mr. Ford..."

“I'm calling you to say this because I don't want today's meeting to repeat itself. I am a very busy man, and I don't like useless conversations.”

“I'm so-rry. We are truly sorr...”

“If it wasn't for the Johnsons reputation, I would have held the Barlow family accountable for the time that I wasted discussing your ill-bred granddaughter.”

“Thank you! Thank you, Mr. Ford, for your mercy. Today won't repeat itself. I swear on my life.”

After Mr. Ford ended the call, Mr. Barlow slowly withdrew his phone from his ear.

Then he laid it back on the table, gazed at Dash, and said, “Mr. Ford must have been really mad, right?”

Feeling a tightness in his chest, Dash

glanced at Rome before looking at Mr. Barlow and saying, "He was."

"Your family name has really saved mine, and for that I'm thankful." Mr. Barlow said, feeling his stress slowly reducing.

"It's nothing. We are family after all."

"Still, it's good that I have you as a son-in-law."

The room suddenly felt hot for Dash as he stared at Rome and thought, 'What game is he playing here?'

Unable to stand the suspense anymore, Chloe frowned and said, "So, did I get a position in the project."

Rage clouded Mr. Barlow's eyes as he gazed at his granddaughter and coldly uttered, "No!"

"Then why are you praising him? This only proves that his family is bankrupt

and he's broke!"

"No, his family name is the only reason we are not in trouble with Mr. Ford because of your incompetent!"

Surprised by her grandfather's remark, Chloe frowned and rudely intoned, "Incompetent! What are you talking about!"

"Did you know what Mr. Ford said? His exact words were that you are incompetent for a position on his project..."

"What!"

"Don't cut me off! He also said, 'If it wasn't for the Johnsons' reputation, he would have held us accountable for the time that was wasted discussing my ill-bred granddaughter!'"

All Dash felt at that moment was chills as he stared at Rome's unbothered expression while he ate.



“If others find out about what Mr. Ford thinks about you, you will be ghosted in the business world! I can't take such a risk “ Mr. Barlow firmly stated.

In fear, Elijah dropped his fork and mumbled, “Father, what do you mean?”

“Chloe's name is going to stay off the inheritance list for good. I don't trust her with the family wealth if Mr. Ford can't trust her with a position on his project.”

“What!”

Staring blankly at her grandfather, Chloe's face turned pale as she mumbled, “Grandpa, you can't be serious.”

“My word is final.” Mr. Barlow straightforwardly stated.

“Don't do this, please.”

“I already did!”

Feeling desperate, Chloe looked at her grandmother and cried, "Don't let him do this."

"I'm sorry, but your grandfather's decision is wise." Madam Rosey said with a look of pity in her eyes.

"Don't say that!"

"Mr. Ford's words will literally crucify you in the business world, and trusting the family wealth to you, is like burying our family success with your failures."

In frustration, Elijah rose to his feet, banged his hand on the table, and shouted, "No! This can't be happening!"

"Control your rage and let it lose somewhere else, but not at my dining table!" Mr. Barlow lashed out.

Consumed with rage, Elijah glared at his parents before storming out of the

room.

“Say something!” Chloe said as she stared at her husband.

Gazing at her, Dash sighed and thought, 'I'm sorry, but my hands are tied, and even if it wasn't, I can't still help you since you are at the mercy of a man that can ruin us all with just a word.'

“What was the use of marrying you if you are going to be a useless fool like Catherine's husband!” Chloe shouted in a fit of rage after Dash had been silent for a few minutes.

Then she ran out of the dining room with tears rushing down her face.

The dining hall became silent for a moment. But after a few minutes had gone by, Mr. Barlow left his seat and walked out of the room.

It didn't take long for Madam Rosey to

leave her chair and follow him out.

A few seconds later, almost everyone left, and it was only Charles, Richard, Jeff, Catherine, Rome, and Dash seated in the dining room.

Resting back in his chair, Jeff sneered, and said, "So, it's you three who's still on the list."

Those words made Dash's mouth partly open as he thought, ' This is a game of chess. The one playing is Rome, and the only one who's allowed to be king is Catherine. It makes me wonder who he's going to eliminate next.' 1

After biting into his strawberry, Rome faintly smirked as he gazed at the fear in Dash's eyes.

Then he looked at Catherine and softly asked, "Are you ready for bed?"

"Yes," Catherine mumbled.



As he watched both of them leave their seats, Dash sluggishly rested back in his chair and thought, 'The Barlows are screwed. But I'm in no place to warn them, so I'm going to stand on the sideline and watch this play out.'



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## Chapter Eighty

A gentle knock on their bedroom door made Catherine slowly raise her eyelids.

It took her a moment to fully awake. Then she withdrew from Rome's arm, got out of bed, and approached the door.

After opening it, she stared at the maid and mumbled, "What is it, Anna?"

"Good morning, miss. Your grandfather asked for you to meet him in the living room." Anna humbly said.

"Tell him that I will be down soon."

"Okay, miss."

Once Anna had left, Catherine shut the door. Then she walked over to the closet and took out a comfy sweatsuit.

After she got changed, she turned around, and her gaze locked with

Rome's eyes as he stared at her.

"You are awake," Catherine mumbled.

"Mmm," Rome muttered, rubbing his eyelids.

"I should get downstairs. Grandfather is expecting me."

"Okay."

After glancing at Rome for a moment, Catherine left the room, heading downstairs.

When she arrived in the living room, she was met with Mr. Barlow's icy stare.

Feeling nervous, Catherine softly smiled and said, "Good morning, Grandfather."

"Why are you making it difficult for me to decide on you?" Mr. Barlow said with anger in his eyes.

"I'm sorry that I didn't answer your call

yesterday.”

This has nothing to do with that.”

For a moment, Catherine wondered in her head as she tried to figure out what he was talking about. But at last, she mumbled, “I don't understand.”

“Within a heartbeat, I can announce you as the family top inheritor and seal the deal today.” Mr. Barlow firmly uttered.

However, Catherine felt more anxious than excited about those words because she kinda had an idea of where the conversation was heading.

“Okay, then do it,” Catherine mumbled with a touch of hesitation in her eyes.

“I would if you weren't married to Rome.” Mr. Barlow boldly uttered.

Narrowing her eyes, Catherine took a deep breath and thought, ‘There’s the



catch!'

Then she focused on her grandfather's eyes and mumbled, "I don't understand what you are getting at."

"I'm talking about how the man you are married to isn't worthy to stand by you if you are to exceed to such a status!

Behind every successful man, there's a powerful woman, and it should be vice versa in your case." Mr. Barlow stated with certainty in his tone.

"Grandpa..."

"Catherine, This is how it's supposed to be. It was the same for your grandmother and me, and it should be the same for you if you are to be the family's top inheritor."

"When did this become about Rome!"

In confusion, Mr. Barlow frowned and mumbled, "What do you mean?"

“Being the family top inheritor is about who among my cousins and I is capable of managing the family wealth and bringing more fortune to us. So what does my husband have to do in such a matter?” Catherine said as she angrily pushed her hair back.

With his gaze fixed on his granddaughter, Mr. Barlow straightforwardly intoned, “Sure, you are doing amazing right now, that's why you are the best choice to be the family top inheritor.”

Hearing his grandfather's words, Richard stopped in his tracks and folded his fingers into a tight fist. Then he backed away from the living room entrance and thought, ‘I have been low-key for too long and it isn't taking me anywhere. Maybe it's time for me to act.’

Ignoring the fact that he came down for

a reason, Richard went back upstairs.

“Okay, if that's how you feel. Then

Rome shouldn't be an issue here.”

Catherine said as a feeling of annoyance swept through her.

“Sure. You can accomplish a lot for this family on your own, but with a powerful husband, you will be able to multiply your accomplishment and exceed

faster, and that's what I want for the top inheritor of this family.” Mr.

Barlow calmly intoned.

Immediately, Charles stopped when he heard his grandfather remark.

“A powerful partner? Interesting.”

Charles mumbled, staring at the dirty glass in his hand.

Then he hastily walked past the living room, heading for the kitchen.

It took a while for Catherine to get her emotions under control, and once she

did, she said, "I don't need a powerful man, I'm okay with my husband."

"You didn't even want Rome from the beginning! If it wasn't for me, you wouldn't have married him!" Mr. Barlow shouted.

Frowning at his grandfather-in-law's comment, Rome stood still, a few distances away from the living room entrance, and listened attentively.

"Then I have you to thank for giving me an incredible husband." Catherine boldly stated without single remorse in her tone.

"Incredible! That boy is broke! He's all wrong for you! Not to talk about his barbarian attitude! He even had the guts to lay his hand on Zayn!" Mr. Barlow lashed out.

"Grandpa!"

"How can he act rebellious when he's



useless and can't do anything for you or this family!”

“Rome might not be able to give me much, but the way he loves me makes me feel like I have everything!”

Feeling extremely upset, Catherine aggressively sniffed as she tried not to cry. Then when her tears rebelled against her and came rolling down her cheeks, she angrily wept her face with the back of her hand.

“How bad do you want to be the family inheritor?” Mr. Barlow cunningly asked.

“Desperately.”

“Then divorce Rome, and you will have what you deserve.”

“I want to be the family heir so badly, but not badly enough to give up my marriage. If my hard work isn't enough to get me what I want, I'm not sacrificing my husband to get it. I'm

sorry, Grandfather.”

A look of disappointment settled on Mr. Barlow’s face as he stood from the couch. Then he heavily sighed and said, “I’m sorry too that you are this weak-hearted when it comes to love. You are truly your father’s child.”

“Grandpa...” Catherine whispered as she choked back her cry.

“Because of how capable you are, I will give you two months to think this through. But afterward, if you can’t get over your feelings and put this family first, any of your two cousins that prove themselves worthy will get chosen.”

“I...”

“My word is final. It’s up to you now. Also, you will attend Zayn’s party.”

“Grandpa, but I don’t want to!”

“That’s not a request! It’s a command!”



After staring into his granddaughter's teary eyes for a second, Mr. Barlow walked away.

The moment he arrived in the hallway, he stood still when he and Rome's eyes met.

Without losing eye contact with Rome, he walked over to him, stopped two feet away, and said, "I guess you heard it all. So if you truly love her, you wouldn't allow her to be the one to make the hard decision and you will leave." 3

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