

## **Quadruplets Unite: Mother's Words Are Law! Chapter 11 - 20**

### **Chapter 11**

Emmeline hailed a cab after leaving the hospital.

Helios, Endymion, and Hesperus were still in the Ryker home. She had to pick them up.

Alana claimed Adrien Ryker to be the father to her three children and that revelation was a tough pill to swallow.

She had to know who the father was no matter who he turned out to be.

What if Hesperus's blood disorder relapsed?

Despite her status as the child's biological mother, they were not a match.

The driver found the location of Ryker Mansion through Waze.

"There are two of them listed," the driver started. "Landon or Lewis? Which one are you going to?"

"Lewis," Emmeline answered.

Her assistant, Benjamin, had thoroughly investigated the Ryker family.

Abel had brought Timothy home fairly quickly.

All three children, Helios, Endymion, and Hesperus rushed up to him to greet him.

"Are you okay? You had us worried."

"Your arm's bruised. Does it hurt?"

“If Mommy were here, she would be heartbroken!”

“I met a really pretty lady today,” Timothy explained. “She looks like how I imagined Mommy to be!”

“She’s definitely nothing compared to our Mommy.”

“Our Mommy is pretty. She’s the prettiest woman alive!”

“Yeah! She’s the most beautiful person to walk on land.”

“But she wasn’t just beautiful. She could fight too,” Timothy argued. “She jumped and caught me. She’s a hero!”

“Our Mommy can fight too. She can jump from the second floor to the first like it’s nothing.”

“Are you sure you’re not talking about our Mommy, Timothy?”

“Huh?” Timothy puffed out his cheeks. “How would I know? I’ve never seen your Mommy.”

“Mommy will be here to pick us up soon. You can meet her in a bit.”

“Timmy,” Rosaline called from the stairs. “You gave Granny a scare. Are you okay?”

“Just a scratch,” Abel answered. “He seems fine otherwise.”

“Thank God!” She exclaimed. “He fell from such a high place. If it weren’t for that woman, I would have lost a grandchild!”

“I’m okay,” Timothy attempted to soothe her nerves. “Don’t be sad, Granny.”

“I’m not sad anymore.” She picked him up in her arms. “Granny wants to thank the lady for saving you. Our family owes her!”

“Timothy!” Alana clambered in, complexion pale as a sheet as she shrieked his name.

“What are you doing here?” Rosaline fumed. “It was you who almost killed my grandson!”

“I…”

“What? I now have three other grandchildren. You are going to face my wrath if you hurt Timothy!”

“Madame Ryker!” Alana had tears in her eyes. She was more than aware Timothy was her only leverage in the Ryker family.

“Forget it!” Abel frowned. “All that matters is that Timmy is safe!”

“You should take your grandfather’s advice.” Rosaline rolled her eyes at Alana as she spoke to Abel. “Propose to Wonder Doctor, marry her, and give me some grandchildren. The Lane girl can be sent on her way!”

Alana turned from pale to sallow. She pursed her lips and nearly fainted from exasperation.

“Madame, Mr. Abel,” the butler started. “Ms. Louise has arrived to pick up her children.”

“Mommy’s here!” Helios, Endymion, and Hesperus rushed out.

Timothy also scrambled out of Rosaline’s hold.

He wanted to see for himself just how beautiful their mother was. Was she as pretty as the lady who saved him?

“Mommy!”

The triplets toddled to the automatic gates where Emmeline was waiting.

Timothy was taken aback. “It’s the pretty Miss!”

Emmeline was no less surprised. “Hello? Do you live here?”

“Mmhhh. This is my home. My name is Timothy Ryker!”

“Ryker...” Emmeline’s heart thumped.

This adorable child was Abel and Alana’s son?

Abel might not have been the father of her children, but she couldn’t deny that...

She had fallen in love with him at first sight.

“Mommy!” Helios called through the gates. “I missed you!”

“I missed you too!”

“So did I!”

All three were overjoyed to see her.

“This pretty lady is your Mommy?” Timothy asked.

“Yup! Isn’t she pretty?”

“She is. The most beautiful lady ever.” Timothy also lost himself in their merriment. “It was pretty Mommy that saved me!”

“What did you say, Timmy?” Rosaline was stunned. ” She saved you?”

“Yes, Granny,” he answered, “If the pretty lady didn’t save me, I would be dead!”

“Open the gates!” Rosaline demanded excitedly. “Have Ms. Louise come inside!”

The moment the butler opened the gates, Alana rushed up to her.

“Why are you so stubborn, Emmeline? I told you the children have nothing to do with Abel!”

“I’m here for my sons.” Emmeline shot a glance at Abel before continuing, “Not for him!”

“Take your children and leave.” Alana raised a brow. “This isn’t a place for a bumpkin like you to come and go as you please!”

“Who do you think you are?!” Rosaline angrily reprimanded Alana. “Ms. Louise saved my grandson. Your son! What is wrong with you?!”

Abel caught a glimpse of the wound on Emmeline’s forehead. “You’re still bleeding. Come in. We’ll help you with it.”

“There’s no need,” Emmeline said placidly.

“It’s only right,” he disagreed. “You saved my son.”

“Yeah, Mommy,” Helios said. “There’s blood on the bandage.”

“Miss.” Timothy tugged on her hand. “Please come in. You’ll get a fever if your injury gets infected.”

“Alright.” Emmeline could only give in under the pressure of children’s eyes innocently peering up at her.

Alana’s face darkened.

She purposefully lagged behind Abel.

To Emmeline, the two of them seemed to be very much in love.

Abel, however, suddenly hastened his steps and grabbed her hand.

Shocked, she tried to shake him off before he spoke, “The blood got to your ear!”

He tugged her inside and barked an order, “Get a doctor here now!”

The butler was gone in a flash to call for the family doctor.

Abel’s concern for Emmeline had put a grim expression on Alana’s face.

It hurt much less after her wound was redressed.

Rosaline then ordered her servants to prepare tea for her grandson’s savior and juice for the children.

That was when Hesperus piped up. “Itchy!”

Helios sprang into action. “Mommy, Star’s face is swelling up!”

Endymion was also stunned silly. “Mommy, Star’s having an allergic reaction!”

Allergic reaction?

Everyone was immediately concerned.

Emmeline bent down to check on her son who had rashes forming on his face and his arms.

“Mommy! It hurts!” Hesperus looked close to tears.

“Damn it,” she murmured. “Did you eat kiwi? You know you’re allergic to those!”

“I didn’t.” He wrinkled his nose. “I’m not stupid!”

“Kiwi?” The nanny had a rude awakening. “Is Hesperus allergic to kiwi? The juice had kiwis in them!”

“He’s allergic to kiwi?” Rosaline asked.

“Yes,” Emmeline frowned. “He was born with it.”

Rosaline shot a look at her son.

Abel was no less shocked. He asked his mother under his breath, “Isn’t Adrien also allergic to kiwis?”

## **Chapter 12**

“The one who’s allergic to kiwi is you!” Rosaline tugged at her son’s shirt. “Did you make a mistake? Why does Hesperus seem like your shadow?!”

“How is that possible?” Abel frowned. “I’ve only touched that woman!”

“But Emmeline…”

“This could just be a coincidence.”

Rosaline nodded but her suspicions never went away.

The butler called for the family doctor again and prescribed the child antihistamines.

Hesperus was out like a light after taking the drug.

“We should be going,” Emmeline picked her son up into her arms and called for Helios and Endymion. “Let’s go home.”

“Wait.” Abel suddenly got to his feet. “That would be impolite.”

“Excuse me, Mr. Abel?” Emmeline’s voice was tinged with ice.

“Abel.” Alana looked tense. “Will you be driving them back? My car is...”

“It’s already storming out,” Abel said to Emmeline. “Hesperus shouldn’t be exposed to the cold in his condition. I’ll have the butler prepare a guest room.”

It was only then that Emmeline noticed the muffled sound of rain pattering against the glass window.

She could only acquiesce after taking one look at her son’s red and puffy face.

She didn’t want to stay, but Hesperus was in no condition to go into the rain.

The consequences would be disastrous if he relapsed from his blood disorder.

That was when Abel’s phone rang.

It was his grandfather, Oscar.

Abel picked up the call.

“Have you carried out the task I gave you, brat?”



“Grandad.” There was a furrow between his brows. “It’s only been one day. You need to give me time!”

“And time is my great grandson!” Oscar bellowed. “Call Wonder Doctor’s assistant and have him arrange an appointment for you!”

“But...”

“No buts. I’ll be back in an hour! Don’t pick me up. I have my men for that!”

“What did your grandfather say?” Rosaline asked after Oscar hung up.

“He wants me to propose to Wonder Doctor,” Abel placidly answered. “He also said he would be back soon.”

Huh?!

Everyone in the room was shocked.

Frederick was being incredibly stubborn for a man who had just recovered!

Rosalind immediately instructed the butler, “Search Oscar’s room and see if there’s anything wrong with it.”

Alana’s heart was thumping out of her chest. What was going to happen to her now that Oscar was forcing Abel to propose to Wonder Doctor?

Emmeline was dumbfounded. What is happening? Oscar Ryker wants Abel to propose to me?

What the hell?

Unbeknownst to her turmoil, Abel was back on the sofa to contact Wonder Doctor's assistant.

Oscar always kept his word. It didn't matter what the outcome was going to be. He had to make the call.

"I'm Abel Ryker..."

Benjamin cut in, "Mr. Oscar's health has been restored. Mr. Wonder Doctor has no reason to see him again."

"I know," Abel started. "But I need to see her. Please arrange for an appointment for me and Ms. Wonder Doctor."

Miss?

Benjamin was shocked. The Rykers knew Wonder Doctor was a woman?

Had they found out that she was Emmeline?

"...I'll have to ask Wonder Doctor. I'll get back to you in a bit, Mr. Abel."

"Thank you." Abel put away his phone.

Emmeline, meanwhile, switched her phone to silent mode.

Just as expected, Benjamin called.

She killed it and sent him a text instead. "Type."

Benjamin immediately replied, "Not good, Boss. Mr. Abel Ryker wants to see you. He knows you're a woman!"

“I know.”

“He’s waiting for me to answer him.”

“Tell him I don’t have time!”

Benjamin then called Abel back. “Mr. Wonder Doctor’s schedule is full.”

“When does her schedule free up?” Abel pushed on. “I have one of her needles that I need to return to her.”

“Just toss it.” Emmeline blurted aloud then shut her mouth with eyes wide.

He shot her a cold look, disgusted by her excessive chattering.

“What I’m saying is,” she immediately tried to explain, “It’s just a needle right?”

“Do you think it’s an ordinary sewing needle?” He spat out. “I don’t have that much time on my hands.”

She shrugged in response and took her children upstairs.

“Daddy,” Timothy tried to get his father’s attention. “Are you really going to marry Wonder Doctor?”

“You’re too young to understand.”

“But I think Daddy should just marry Ms. Louise!”

“Timothy!” Alana shrieked. “What are you saying?”

“It’s better than Daddy marrying Wonder Doctor, right?”

“Timmy,” Abel tried to explain it to his son. “Daddy promised great grandfather because he’s ill.”

“Daddy won’t marry Wonder Doctor if great-grandfather stops forcing you?”

“Yes.” He nodded.

“I still think Ms. Louise should be my Mommy.”

Abel smiled in a noncommittal way.

How was he supposed to explain the problem enough for the child to understand?

The person who should be marrying Emmeline was Adrien.

It, however, didn’t change the twang of jealousy he felt.

Alana grimaced. She wasn’t going to let Abel marry either Wonder Doctor or Emmeline!

Oscar returned from the hospital roughly an hour later.

He was still wheelchair-bound but he looked much better.

The moment he set foot inside, he made the gears in Abel’s head turn. Look how well I’m doing. It’s a good thing if you marry Wonder Doctor.

Abel, of course, recognized his grandfather’s attempts at riling him up and could only nod.

Oscar went to rest after dinner.

Emmeline was with her three children in the guest room with Alana right next door.

In the dead of night, Alana went downstairs to Oscar’s bedroom.

There were no bodyguards to be found.

Walking right into his room was as easy as pie.

The old man was sleeping soundly, unaware that someone had covered his mouth and nose with a towel.

All he saw was a shadowy figure of a woman when he awoke.

It took roughly two minutes for him to asphyxiate.

She then took off her gloves and ran up to the third floor.

When she reached Emmeline's door, she called out from the top of her lungs, "Mr. Oscar suddenly died! Help! Someone! Anyone!"

Hearing the cry for help, Emmeline immediately sprang up and raced down to the second floor.

The door was ajar.

She switched on the lights to see the old man lying motionless on the bed.

"Mr. Oscar!" She exclaimed. That was when she noticed his face covered by a towel.

She reached out to take it off when Abel growled from behind her. "What do you think you're doing?!"

Alana followed up with a scream. "Help! Emmeline killed Grandad!"

"I didn't do it!" Emmeline immediately denied the accusation. "I didn't do anything!"

“You’re still pretending not to know what you’ve done?!” Alana jabbed a finger at Oscar.

“You suffocated him with that towel!”

“Emmeline Louise!” Abel grabbed her by her neck and stared at her with cold, stern eyes.

“What grudge do you have against my grandfather?”

“She wants to marry you,” Alana cut in. “That’s why she killed him. It’s to prevent you from marrying Wonder Doctor!”

“Stop with the lies, Alana!” Emmeline wanted to struggle but failed due to Abel’s hold on her.

“Come,” he barked. “Send this wench to the station and have her charged with murder!”

Bodyguards pinned her to the ground.

She would have fought back but the consequences would’ve been worse.

“I had nothing to do with this!” A guard stepped on her face with no mercy. She glared at Abel. “You’ll see that I’m innocent!”

“Take her away!” Abel was furious. “I’ll make sure you get the death penalty, Emmeline!”

## **Chapter 13**

“You’ll see that I’m innocent, Abel!”

“Get out!”

The guards dragged her downstairs like a felon on death row while Alana smirked in satisfaction.

Emergency services quickly arrived on the scene. The paramedics performed CPR on the comatose Oscar before he was whisked away to the hospital.

Emmeline, meanwhile, was placed at a temporary detention center.

Not long after, Benjamin arrived, accompanied by the police chief.

She was then brought into the chief's office.

After the door shut behind them, police chief Derrick Campbell uncuffed her.

“Lady, can you not screw with the Rykers? How am I going to hold them off?”

“I told them I wasn't the culprit.” She drank some tea. “I already guessed who did it.”

“There are no surveillance cameras in the bedroom,” Derrick said. “You also left your fingerprints on the scene. Your guesses don't matter.”

“What's so hard about it?” She crossed her legs. “Send me back to the detention center. They'll come begging soon enough.”

“I know you're little miss amazing but,” Derrick continued with a grimace, “I don't see how the Rykers are going to be the ones to beg you. All I know is that they're seeking legal advice to charge you with murder and make sure you get the death penalty!”

“I told you I was going back to the detention center.” She rolled her eyes. “Are you going to keep rambling?”

“Are you being sulky right now?” He was immediately apprehensive. “I know you're amazing but can you not mess with me all the time?!”

“Do I look like such a petty person?” Her eyelashes fluttered against her cheek. “I said I’m going back to the detention center. Do you understand me?”

“Mr. Benjamin?” Derrick shot Benjamin a look as if to beg for help.

“Just listen to her.” He waved him off. “You worry too much.”

“Fine.” Derrick finally nodded. “I’ll take you there and let them know to treat you well. You’ll be living more comfortably than in a hotel!”

“What’s most important here,” Emmeline suddenly said. “...is to keep watch of my sons and make sure they don’t slip up.”

“Everything has been arranged,” Benjamin assured. “You have nothing to worry about!”

“Good.” She nodded in satisfaction and then held out both her hands to the police chief.

“What is it, Boss?”

“Cuff me!” She was annoyed. “Why do you keep asking nonsensical questions? Do you want the Rykers to know everything about me?”

“Sorry.” He immediately settled the cuffs back on her.

~

Oscar was admitted to the ICU and was resuscitated, but his internal organs continued to bleed due to lack of oxygen.

The hospital tried everything with little success.

It was already the next morning.



“Emmeline!” Abel’s face was dark as he spat through gritted teeth. “I’ll see you pay with your life!”

“Yeah,” Alana said. “How can that woman be so horrible to lay a hand on an old man?”

“But what was her motive for attacking Grandad?” Adrien had also rushed over in the middle of the night.

“Are you trying to absolve her of her crimes, Adrien?” She smiled mirthlessly. “That woman harmed Grandad because she wants Abel to marry her instead of Wonder Doctor!”

“But Emmeline couldn’t possibly be with Abel!” Adrien denied. “She birthed my sons. The one to marry her would be me!”

“I say she’s a bearer of bad luck.” Alana gnashed her teeth together. “You’d better not marry her. She’s just going to plague her partners with her bad luck!”

“She’s right.” Abel frowned. “I was kind enough to allow her to stay. To think he would harm Grandad!”

“Mommy isn’t a bad person!” Child-like voices could be heard coming from the elevator. It was Helios, Endymion, and Hesperus.

“Helios!” Abel shouted. “Who allowed you to come here?!”

“Mr. Butler said something happened last night,” Endymion answered. “So, we came!”

“Mommy can’t be the killer,” Hesperus cried out. “It’s a mistake!”

“What do you brats know?” Alana cut in, furious. “Everyone witnessed Emmeline suffocating Granddad with the towel!”

“Ms. Lane!” Adrien said coldly. “What right do you have to yell at my children?”

Abel felt an indescribable emotion surface in him as he watched his brother gather the triplets into his arms.

“Mr. Adrien! Mr. Abel!” The dean hurried over. “Mr. Oscar is not doing well. Please ask Wonder Doctor for help.”

A furrow formed between Abel’s brows. He had long expected it to be that way.

Both Father and Uncle Landen were at Melvania. He had to be the one to take charge of the matter.

He indeed needed Wonder Doctor’s help.

“Luca.” He called for his assistant. “Contact Mr. Benjamin.”

Benjamin was concurrently giving Emmeline a massage in “solitary” confinement when his phone rang.

Emmeline grinned. “There it is!”

He answered the call and hung up after exchanging a few words. “You were right, Ms. Emmeline!”

“I told you so,” she said, popping an orange into her mouth. “He was hanging by a thread last night. He’s more dead than alive in the hospital right now. They still need me!”

“Just tell me how I can get back to them, will you?”

“Tell them you can’t get into contact with me!”

“...Is Mr. Oscar going to make it?”

“He’ll live!”

“Hell yeah!” Benjamin called Luca back.

Abel was far from pleased when he heard how he couldn’t get in touch with Wonder Doctor.

What was he supposed to do now?

Alana couldn’t help but smile smugly.

Emmeline was done for. Wonder Doctor was gone. The only woman Abel can marry now is me!

“Keep trying to contact her. I will have Wonder Doctor here even if I have to dig three feet into the ground and fork out five million for a consultation!”

By the time the call was made, it was already midnight.

Benjamin finally sighed on the eleventh call.

“What did Wonder Doctor say?” Abel asked in trepidation.

“Wonder Doctor is upset over a small matter.”

“A small matter?” He raised a brow. “Leave it to me. I’ll arrange for someone to take care of it.”

“That would be for the better. Wonder Doctor ran into three little boys crying at the hospital entrance today.”

“...” Abel’s heart nearly stopped. “What do the boys look like?”

## Chapter 14

“Their names seem to be Helios, Endymion, and Hesperus? They say the Rykers had wronged their Mommy and put her in prison. They think they are going to end up becoming orphans.”

Abel frowned. Just as he thought, Benjamin was talking about the triplets.

“Mr. Benjamin,” he started. “I can’t help you with that. Their mother tried to murder my grandfather!”

“Hey now.” Benjamin scoffed. “What motive does she even have for attempting to harm Mr. Oscar? There must be some kind of misunderstanding.”

“...” Abel seemed stunned by his words.

It was indeed far-fetched to claim Emmeline attempted to murder Oscar to marry him.

She already knew her children were Adrien’s and had no reason to pester him.

“What does Wonder Doctor want?” His voice was hoarse.

“The children’s mother is innocent,” Benjamin said. “Wonder Doctor says she’s not going to grace him with a consultation if you don’t free the woman. Let me know how you want to handle the matter!”

Beep!

Benjamin cut the call.

“F\*ck!” Abel cursed.

It didn't matter whether she was guilty or innocent. She wouldn't be able to escape from his grasp.

He had no choice but to do as Benjamin asked to save his grandfather.

His face was dark.

“What's wrong, Mr. Abel?”

Abel didn't bother with her and immediately called for Luca. “We're going to the detention center!”

~

Emmeline was curled up on the wooden bed in the small, dark room.

Her clothes were covered in filth, giving her a disheveled appearance. She looked as if she had been beaten.

Abel's heart inexplicably ached at the sight. He cleared his throat. “They hit you?”

“This woman lies as she breathes,” the watchman said. “You know this, Mr. Ryker. Everyone gets beaten up when they get sent here.”

“She's a woman!”

“It doesn't matter whether she's a man or a woman. She's a criminal all the same.”

“She might be...” Abel shook his head. She was definitely not wrongly accused!

“Emmeline!” The warden stomped on the plank bed and shouted viciously, “Get up. Mr. Ryker is here to see you!”

The woman's eyes fluttered open as she clambered to sit up in a daze.

Seeing her this way felt heart-wrenching.

“What are you doing here?” She asked in an icy tone.

“I've spoken with Mr. Derrick and negotiated for your release!”

“You're releasing me?” She joyfully sprang to her feet. “You believe I'm innocent, Abel?”

“Far from it!” he growled. “But you need to leave this place right now!”

“Well, forget it then!” She flopped back down on the plank. “I'll leave once you find the true culprit and clear my name!”

“No!” The veins on his forehead bulged in his anger. If this farce continued, his grandfather was going to die!

“I refuse to admit to a crime I didn't commit!”

“You need to leave with me!”

“You need to clear my name!”

“I don't have time for this!”

“Scram!” She covered herself with the blanket.

“Tch!” He haphazardly tore it off her then picked her up into his arms and left.

“Put me down.” She struggled to get out of his hold. “I'm not leaving!”

“I’ll clear your name!” He tightly hoisted her in his arms, his expression as dark as the pits of hell itself.

This stupid woman is pissing me off!

Emmeline finally felt a tinge of fear as he sped up and clung onto him in response.

Outside the detention center, Abel turned to Luca. “Tell Wonder Doctor that I’ve gotten the woman out!”

“I’m free?” Emmeline suddenly piped up.

“Free?” He scoffed. “You’re a hundred years too early to see freedom!”

He stuffed her into the car with a cold snort. “We can talk about your freedom once my grandfather regains consciousness!”

Back at the hospital, Abel shoved her into a utility room.

“Stay!” He squeezed her jaw. “I’ll clear your name if my grandfather survives!”

He locked the door and left.

After returning to the ICU, Luca spoke up, “Wonder Doctor has answered, Mr. Abel.”

“What did she say?”

“She says she’ll be here.”

Abel finally relaxed.

Alana turned pale.

I just solved the crisis. How is everything falling apart again?

I should've just killed that old fool!

Abel stood at the ICU door with a five-million-dollar check in hand. At midnight, two people in white protective clothing came out of the elevator.

Everyone held their breaths.

He narrowed his eyes and muttered, "You're finally here, Wonder Doctor."

The duo in protective clothing brushed past him when Wonder Doctor shot him a glance.

It just so happened he was also watching her intently.

Their eyes met, leaving him with a feeling of being struck by lightning.

He had noticed Wonder Doctor's eyes were odd since their last meeting because those were Emmeline's eyes!

Emmeline?!

He reached out to grab her!

## **Chapter 15**

Benjamin, however, purposefully or not, got in his way, leaving Abel grabbing onto nothing but air.

Wonder Doctor had got into the ICU in the time it took to stop her.

"We'll see just who you are once you're out!"

He muttered to himself in a low voice.

An hour flew by.



It was only then that the duo left the ward.

Benjamin waved to the crowd. “Mr. Oscar is stable. He should be awake in ten minutes.”

“Thank you.” Abel handed the five-million-dollar check to him.

Benjamin didn’t bother checking it and stuffed it into his pocket.

When Wonder Doctor left the ICU, Abel halted her in her tracks. “Do you have a moment, Ms. Wonder Doctor?”

Emmeline stopped but did not turn around. “Who do I owe the pleasure, Mr. Abel?”

She lowered her voice, making herself sound different. There was a furrow between his brows at that.

She’s not Emmeline?

He had no choice but to say, “You’ve saved my grandfather twice now. I’d like to ask you out to dinner to express my gratitude.”

“I don’t have time,” she coolly rejected him.

Benjamin chuckled. “Please excuse us, Mr. Abel.”

Abel was at a loss once the elevator doors shut in his face.

Alana could finally heave a sigh of relief. What was I so worried about? Wonder Doctor is not someone the Rykers can afford to cross.

Everyone huddled restlessly at the entrance of the ICU as they waited for Oscar to regain consciousness.

Alana yawned and went to the bathroom, wanting to refresh herself.

She splashed water onto her face to wake herself up.

That was when she noticed someone standing behind her in the mirror's reflection.

A chill ran down her spine. She swiveled around only to find...no one behind her.

I must be more tired than I thought. She thought to herself and went back to washing her face.

Someone was standing right behind her when she looked back up.

Ghost!

The figure behind her clamped her mouth shut before she could scream.

Through the mirror, she realized that the person behind her was none other than one Emmeline Louise.

Emmeline?!

Her eyes widened in horror. Wasn't Emmeline supposed to be locked in the utility room?

What is she doing behind me?

Am I seeing things?

Alana could feel her knees buckling under her weight.

Emmeline didn't hesitate to ruthlessly backhand her twice.

Alana fell onto the wet floor and was about to scream when Emmeline picked up the dirty rag from the sink and stuffed it into her mouth.

“Ack! Blergh!”

The pungent scent of grimy water was poured down her throat. The idea of death now sounded like mercy compared to whatever was happening to her at the moment.

“Scared?”

Emmeline squatted down and cupped the woman’s delicate jaw. “You’re such a horrible person. What a waste of a beautiful face. It would be more fitting for you to look like an ugly old witch.”

As she spoke, she brandished a scalpel.

The blade rested against her chin.

“Oomf!”

Alana nearly peed herself from fright as she met Emmeline’s gaze.

“What’s wrong? You want to beg me?” Emmeline scoffed. “Sure. Prostrate yourself. Or else...”

She put more pressure on the blade. Alana now had no choice and hurriedly got on all fours, and kowtowed to Emmeline.

“Perfect!”

With a flip of her wrist, she retracted the scalpel and disappeared.

Alana immediately spat out the rag and shrieked, “Help! Emmeline is trying to kill me!”

Abel, Adrien, and their team of bodyguards rushed in at her calls.

She was left lying in the middle of the filthy, wet floor of the washroom. Her cheeks were swelling purple and her hair was disheveled. The smell was unbearable.

“Abel!” She leaped into Abel’s arms. “Emmeline was here. She tried to kill me!”

Abel, however, simply pushed her away. “What nonsense. She’s still locked away!”

“He’s right.” Adrien sighed and covered his nose to escape the scent of excrement in the space. “You must be tired. Go home and rest.”

“Abel, please.” Tears rolled down her cheeks. “I’m not lying. She had a scalpel. She tried to cut my face!”

“Just how much do you hate her?” Abel frowned. “You keep trying to frame her for every little thing!”

“That’s true.” Adrien smirked. “Look at yourself. You look like a raving lunatic!”

She turned to look in the mirror only to be greeted by the sight of her tousled appearance.

Her own reflection startled her so much, she immediately rushed out of the washroom to escape from everyone’s sight.

The moment she was outside, she witnessed Emmeline opening the door to the ICU.

“Emmeline!” She shouted at the top of her lungs. “She’s here! She’s trying to hurt Grandad!”

Her desperate cries had everyone rushing into the room.

## **Chapter 16**

Abel rushed in only to see the shadow vanish from the window.

“Seal the hospital!” He roared. “Catch that damn woman!”

“Abel,” Adrien seemed doubtful. “Isn’t Emmeline trapped in the utility room?”

Without saying a word, Abel made a beeline for the elevator.

He was going to the utility room to check for himself whether or not the woman was Emmeline!

The group raced after him.

Alana’s expression was one of grim satisfaction. You’re done for this time, Emmeline!

Abel unlocked the door of the utility room when they reached the dimly lit backyard.

He flicked on the switch only to find Emmeline curled up on a tattered couch sleeping soundly.

That mystery person isn’t her?

She lazily turned over, her eyelids fluttering open at the commotion outside.

She then stretched and smiled at Abel. “You’re finally back.”

It was as if her gaze was pulling him in. He unexpectedly reached out to her and held the petite woman in his arms.

Her demure frame and familiar scent began to dredge up lost memories. Zeke suddenly felt that this woman had been in his arms before!

It wasn’t a recent memory but no matter how hard he tried to remember, nothing came to mind.

“She’s my wife.” Adrien tried to extricate her from his arms.

He, however, had already carried her out of the utility room and set her down.

“Let me ask you.” He remained stoic. “What did you see in my grandfather’s room last night?”

“I…” Emmeline thought about it. “I was sleeping with my kids. And then I heard how Mr. Oscar wasn’t doing well so I rushed downstairs. There was a towel on his face when I arrived. I was just about to remove it when all of you came inside. That’s it.”

Abel frowned and muttered, “I saw the murderer.”

“You did?” Her eyes widened. “Did you manage to track them down?”

“No,” he said. “But you’ve been proven innocent. You’re free to go!”

“But, Mr. Abel.” Alana grew frantic. “That person was Emmeline!”

Abel shot her a disgusted glance and turned away.

She was dumbfounded. How is that possible? That woman was her!

Emmeline smirked. Brandon and she managed to pull off their little act with great success.

Adrien helped her up and asked, concerned, “Are you alright, my dear Em?”

She waved him off. “Who’s your dear Em?!”

“I thought you knew,” Adrien said. “The paternity test has been done. I’m the children’s father, not Abel.”

“Don’t touch me!” She shoved him away and sprinted off.

“Em!” He called out. “I’ll bring a dowry when I come to propose!”

The next day, police chief Derrick Campbell came to report to Abel that the suspect who harmed Oscar was arrested.

“Who was it?” There was a murderous glint in Abel’s eyes.

“It was a man with a small frame,” Derrick explained. “He wanted to rob the home but Mr. Oscar found out. He returned last night to the hospital to find out what was happening.”

“Take good care of him,” Abel said. “Hold him legally responsible!”

“Yes, sir!” Derrick nodded. “Leave it to us. We won’t be showing any mercy!”

“Good!” Abel then sent him away.

After leaving the 89-floor building of the Ryker Group, Derrick immediately contacted Emmeline.

“Everything’s been settled. You’re pretty resourceful, lady!”

“But the true culprit is that woman,” Emmeline said. “It’s just a pity I don’t have any evidence for it but I can keep playing with her if she wants!”

“Anything that makes you happy, Boss,” he said. “Just have Mr. Benjamin let me know if you need me to clean up after you if accidents happen.”

“Sure.” She smiled. “You’ve improved. I’ll pass your message on to him and get you a promotion within the next half of the year.”

“Thank you so much, Ms. Emmeline!” He thanked her graciously by bowing through the phone,

Life was looking up with such a powerful person backing him.

Everything was back to normal the next day.

Emmeline dropped the triplets off at their kindergarten and returned to her cafe to entertain her customers,

“Customers”, but there was usually only one man.

Its location was fairly remote so there was little traffic.

It didn't really matter. She wasn't earning her keep through the cafe,

She hummed as she brewed a cup of coffee when her stepmother, Alondra Lane, stepped inside dressed in a frilled pink dress.

“Oh, a rare visitor.” Emmeline scoffed coldly. “Did you end up at the wrong place, Mrs. Lane? You shouldn't be suffering from Alzheimer's at this age!”

“You're the one with Alzheimer's!”

Alondra smacked an invitation card onto the bar. “I'm here to give you an invitation on behalf of my niece, the future lady of the Ryker family!”

“Invitation?” She snorted. “Is she getting married to Abel? She's inviting me to her wedding party?”

## **Chapter 17**

“No, not that! That will happen sooner or later,” Alondra scoffed.



“Then, what is it?” Emmeline eyed the invitation in Alondra’s hand as she spoke.

“It’s my niece, Alana’s birthday party today,” Alondra explained. “As you know, the Lanes always put on a grand party, and how could we not extend an invitation to you?”

“Oh, is that so?” Emmeline asked rhetorically, figuring there was no way Alana had invited her out of the kindness of her heart.

In fact, she was not far from the truth. Alana was frantic knowing that Adrien was about to propose to Emmeline anytime soon. If Emmeline married Adrien, the real identities of her three children would be exposed sooner or later and Alana would find herself in trouble. Secondly, she had been going after Adrien for more than four years to no avail. If Emmeline won his favor the moment she appeared, she would be utterly humiliated, becoming the laughingstock of the upper echelons of Struyria.

No, Alana could never let that happen! She had something planned out just for Emmeline during her birthday party that would teach Emmeline where she stood. Once everything had been laid out, Alana had asked her Aunt Alondra to deliver the invitation to Emmeline.

“It’s my absolute pleasure!” Emmeline finally put on a smile and replied to Alondra earnestly.

“Wonderful! I’ll see you tonight at eight then, goodbye!” Alondra trilled before she left the premises.

“Emma!” a familiar voice called out. Emmeline peered outside the gate to find her brother, Ethan and sister-in-law, Grace waiting. She quickly invited them into the house and brewed them a cup of coffee.

“Is there some kind of good news?” Emmeline asked curiously, noticing the couple looked particularly cheery today as she observed them.

“Well...” Ethan began a little bashfully. “Since the last time we met, I took on a huge job that gave me a clean profit of more than half a million, and I’ve also recently started a small business. It’s nothing too fancy, but it pays well. I’ve done the calculations and if everything goes well, I’ll earn \$100,000!”

“That’s wonderful news, Ethan!” Emmeline flashed a joyful smile as she served her brother coffee.

“Someone even asked me for an interview last time and paid me good money for it,” Grace butted in. “The director even gave me a segment of my own. Oh, I was the talk of the town!”

“What about the interview this time?” Emmeline asked.

“This time, it’s an interview with a big Struyrian media company. They asked me to do a live interview segment, and they pay quite handsomely too!” Grace said proudly.

“Oh, I’m so happy for the both of you! How should we celebrate?” Emmeline asked.

Ethan let out a wistful sigh. “All these years, I’ve always lived in fear of Alondra. As your older brother, not only did I not protect you, I made you worry about me all the time. It’s always been a big regret of mine.”

“That’s right, Em,” Grace continued. “Your brother and I could only help so much. We could not fully take care of you and your three children as well as we should. The only thing we could do was earn more money to help you.”

Emmeline’s eyes welled up with tears as she listened to her brother and sister-in-law.

“Silly girl, don’t cry now,” Ethan consoled his sister. “We’re siblings after all,” he could not stand to watch his sister cry.

“I know, I know,” Emmeline sniffled. “I won’t say anything more, or all my tears would go into the coffee!”

Once Ethan and Grace left, Emmeline quickly shopped online for a wine-red mermaid cut evening gown for the party later that night. She paid a grand total of 99 dollars inclusive of shipping, which was a great deal in her books! She refused to spend a penny more on someone like Alana anyway. If anything, Alana should be grateful that she decided to attend her party.

Emmeline showed up at the Lane family villa at eight sharp that night. It was a big party, and the family had invited hundreds of guests who filled up every corner of the extravagant residence. Everyone was eagerly awaiting Abel and Adrien Ryker’s arrival, together with their mothers, Rosaline Turner and Julianna Campbell, but there was no sign of them just yet.

Alana could not help but notice Emmeline as she walked in, lighting up the hall with her presence. The woman was truly beautiful, with a captivating quality she could not quite explain with words alone. Her porcelain skin glowed under the dim warm lighting, making it difficult for the men around to keep their eyes off her.

Oh, how Alana wished she could give that face a tight slap! However, she knew that was not a smart move right now. As she observed Emmeline for a little while longer, she finally discovered something she could use against her.

## **Chapter 18**

“Emmeline!” Alana’s smile was saccharine sweet as she made her way toward her cousin. “If you didn’t have a dress to wear tonight, I could have lent you one! I have plenty of better-quality dresses after all!”

“Well, this dress was only 99 dollars, including shipping!” Emmeline chuckled. “It’s perfect for tonight,” she added.

Alana’s expression hardened. “What do you mean? Are you mocking our family with your cheap fashion?” Alana gave Emmeline a hard shove, causing Emmeline to stumble and fall backward. However, she was saved by a pair of strong hands that cushioned her fall from behind. Abel Ryker had just arrived.

With an arm still wrapped protectively around Emmeline’s waist, Abel turned toward Alana with a frosty expression. “What’s wrong with a 99-dollar dress? Emmeline looks better than any other lady here tonight.”

“Mr... Mr. Abel?” Alana stammered. “I... I was just teasing my cousin. You’re right, her dress is beautiful!”

“Don’t you owe her an apology?” Abel insisted, refusing to let Alana off the hook so easily.

“I...” Alana paled visibly. They were surrounded by many guests who had come to check out the commotion.

Adrien Ryker strode over as well. “Did you think you could just push my wife around and get away with it?” his tone was cold and menacing. He extended an arm, trying to get Emmeline over to his side, but she distanced herself away from him.

“Emmeline...” Alana pouted. “I’m sorry, I was just messing around.”

“My daughter-in-law looks amazing in anything, including this dress!” Julianna Campbell announced, trying to diffuse the tension.

“So does Alana!” Rosaline Turner chimed in, feeling the need to protect her grandchild’s mother. “A fine lady indeed!”

“Hmph, she’s not even close to Emmeline. It’s three against one! Isn’t that right, son?” Julianna snickered, referring to Emmeline’s three children.

“That’s right!” Adrien agreed with his mother. “Not everyone can achieve what Emmeline has done!”

Displeasure was clearly written all over Rosaline and Abel’s faces. Emmeline shifted herself to a corner, willing herself to disappear. The families could continue bickering on their own for all she cared!

Alana was still seething over the dress incident, but she told herself to be patient. She had bigger plans in place to take down Emmeline tonight. She shot her Aunt Alondra a look.

Alondra walked to the center of the hall and lifted her wine glass to the crowd. “To express our gratitude for showering us with your presence tonight, Alana will delight us all with a special piano piece!” She claps her hands encouragingly.

Alana lifted the skirt of her gown and waltzed toward the piano as graceful as a swan. She was a talented pianist, having been taught since young, unlike Emmeline who did not care for the arts. She laid her slender fingers on the instrument and began to play confidently. A beautiful melody travelled through the room as Alana’s fingers moved up and down the piano keys, capturing everyone’s attention.

“Truly the daughter of an upper-class family! She could rival any famous piano soloist!” a guest commented.

“That’s true, she’s beautiful but also talented. I suppose that’s the criteria to marry a Ryker,” another friend chimed in.

The praises and admiration did not slip past Alana’s eyes and ears. There was a devious glint in her eyes as she chuckled to herself. Watch out, bitch!

A thunderous round of applause rang out as soon as Alana finished her piece. She stood up to face the crowd and took a graceful bow before turning to her cousin.

“Emmeline,” Alana called out to Emmeline with a smile. “You should play something for the crowd too!”

“Me?” Emmeline pointed a finger to herself.

“Emma? Emma’s not a pianist,” Alondra joined in. “I’ve raised her since she was a teenager and I’ve never seen her touch a piano!” She turned to Emmeline. “Isn’t that so, Emma? Do you even know how to play the piano?”

“I... I know how to play a little,” Emmeline pinched her thumb and index finger together to indicate her level of skill.

“I think you’re being way too modest, Emma!” Alana trilled. “Why don’t you play something for our dear guests then?”

“Trust me, she’s not being modest,” Alondra reiterated. “She can’t even play a simple tune. You’re asking too much from her!”

“Why don’t you play something simple then, Em?” Alana persuaded her cousin. “What about a nursery rhyme?”

## **Chapter 19**

A nursery rhyme?! The crowd roared with laughter.

“Alana, you’re too kind,” Alondra said. “I’m not sure if she could even manage a nursery rhyme...”

“Emmeline, ignore them!” Julianna bellowed. “It’s no big deal if you can’t play the piano! After all, you gave me three grandchildren!”

Rosaline glared at Julianna spitefully. Julianna had indirectly insulted Abel for not being able to have more children than Adrien.

“Hmm, let me give it a go, since it’s a party after all!” Emmeline tried to diffuse the tension.

“Go on! You could try ‘Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star’, or ‘Mary Had a Little Lamb’,” Alana encouraged her cousin.

Emmeline took a seat at the piano. She pushed her luscious locks away from her face before placing her fingers on the piano keys tentatively.

The first few notes she played were indeed the starting notes to ‘Mary Had A Little Lamb’, but they sounded awkward and disjointed. Alana was secretly pleased to note the jeers and jibes from the crowd. However, all of a sudden, Emmeline’s fingers picked up the pace and burst into a smooth, tuneful melody. She was playing ‘A Comme Amour’, a famous piece by Richard Clayderman. The piece started out soft and playful, but Emmeline was building up toward a more melancholic climax.

The crowd was stunned in silence as they watched Emmeline play the piano. Abel Ryker too was completely mesmerized by the woman in front of him. He was used to watching piano performances by world class pianists overseas, but no one held a candle to Emmeline.

As if a spell had been cast on him, Abel found himself walking up to Emmeline and standing by her side. Emmeline looked up at him and smiled while her hands were still deftly maneuvering the piano keys, not breaking melody. Abel’s heart raced as he looked down at her lovely face from this angle. Her doe-eyes and long, fluttery eyelashes were a part of his fantasies at night.

Alana was completely unimpressed and rather upset that things were not going according to her plan. She was just about to stop Emmeline when Abel placed his hand on the

keyboard gently, silently asking Emmeline for permission to duet. Emmeline immediately understood his request and allowed him to pick up the piece from the middle. Together, they finished the piece in perfect harmony.

Alana's rage slowly turned into despair. Not alone did Emmeline beat her at playing the piano, she even got a chance to duet with Abel. The whole of Struyria knew that she was betrothed to Abel Ryker, yet they cheered and supported Emmeline and Abel as they played their duet.

"Emmeline!" Alana lifted her skirt and stomped toward Emmeline, her eyes burning with anger. "How dare you seduce my fiancé?!" She raised a menacing hand, ready to give Emmeline a slap, but Abel caught her hand before she could strike.

He pushed her away from Emmeline forcefully. "Watch your words, we were never engaged to begin with," he growled in a low baritone.

"Abel..." Alana cried out.

"Don't speak to me so casually!" Abel snapped at her.

"Mr... Mr. Ryker," Alana addressed him formally, holding back hot tears. All her party guests were witnesses to her very public humiliation, but she had one more trick up her sleeve.

Alana covered her face and disappeared into the back of the house. A moment later, the chandelier lights dimmed. A violinist began to play 'Happy Birthday' as hundreds of candles lit up the hall. The crowd clapped excitedly as a man dressed up as a clown pushed a trolley with an impressive four-tiered birthday cake toward the center of the hall.

"It's time for the birthday girl, Ms. Alana Lane to make a wish!" Alondra announced. "Then we'll all get to enjoy some delicious cake afterward!"

Alana had reappeared out of nowhere next to her cake. "Thank you all once again for coming tonight! The party will be livestreamed so the entire Struyria can join my birthday celebration as well!" Alana said as she put on her best smile. A camerawoman directed her camera toward Alana.



The clown lit the candles on the cake and made an exaggerated blowing gesture, asking Alana to blow out her candles. As Emmeline eyed the clown, she could not help but notice he looked somewhat familiar.

“Hmm, the candles are too high up,” Alana said in a helpless voice. “Why don’t you get down on the floor and let me climb on you so I can reach them?”

The clown was stunned at such a request, unsure of how to respond.

“Don’t you want to get paid tonight?” Alana chuckled. “I’m not paying you if you ruin this party’s mood tonight!” she threatened.

It was hard to tell any emotion from the clown’s face because of the heavy makeup. After a brief moment’s hesitation, the clown brought his hands and knees to the ground in a crawling position.

“Roll the cameras!” Alana winked at the camerawoman as she stepped on the clown’s back and propped herself up.

The crowd clapped and cheered jubilantly as Alana made her wish and blew out the candles, but Emmeline could not keep her eyes off the clown. Her heart shattered into a thousand pieces as she watched him bend over only to be trampled upon by Alana. Why did the clown remind her of...

## **Chapter 20**

Alana Lane was still stepping on the clown’s back as she began cutting the cake into pieces to be served. When she finally stepped back onto the ground, she pointed at the clown who was still in a crouching position. “Do you guys know who this is?” she asked the crowd.

“Who is it?” the crowd wondered curiously.

“This clown, or footstool... is her...” she pointed an accusatory finger at Emmeline.

“...her brother, Ethan Louise! Ever since he was banished by his family, he could only

make a living doing odd jobs, like being a real-life clown!” Alana chuckled. “How could a family like that ever dream of marrying rich?”

Emmeline felt blood rushing to her head. It was no wonder the clown looked familiar to her now. It was her own brother!

“And this lovely camerawoman over here…” Alana pointed to the lady in a face mask. “...is none other than Ethan’s wife and Emmeline’s sister-in-law, Grace. She was responsible for livestreaming her own clown husband in action as a footstool to the whole of Struyria! Can it get any more embarrassing than that?!” Alana laughed to herself.

“Ethan?!” Grace pulled her face mask off and rushed to where her husband was still crouching on the ground, pulling him up by the shirt. “It’s really you? This was the ‘job’ you were talking about?”

“Grace?” Ethan was equally as shocked. This was the ‘interview’ his wife had mentioned?

Emmeline could no longer bottle her emotions. “Alana Lane, you’re a horrible, deceitful human being!” Emmeline yelled out loud as she charged toward Alana, giving her a flying kick so powerful that it knocked Alana into the cake trolley. The cake wobbled dangerously from the force and finally toppled onto Alana, covering her face and body with cream.

“Go to hell, Alana!” Emmeline spat bitterly.

“Security!!” Alana shrieked. She had not expected Emmeline to be this vicious. “How dare she attack me?! Get this crazy bitch out of here!” she instructed.

“Bring it on!” Emmeline challenged.

Emmeline was surrounded by more than ten big, burly men in a flash, but it only took her less than a minute to disarm all of them with just a chair and her fighting skills. It was utter chaos and madness in the courtyard. Men laid on the floor bloodied and bruised and the party guests were running around in desperate search of the nearest exit.

“Someone, call the cops! Get the cops to catch this crazy woman!” Alana cried out for help as soon as she witnessed Emmeline taking down all of her men.

Emmeline made her over to Alana and gave her two swift kicks in the ribs, before picking her up with her bare hands and forcefully throwing her to the ground again.

“Oh my god! She’s going to kill me!” Alana yelled frantically.

“Emma!!” Ethan and Grace called out as they rushed to Emmeline’s side. Ethan gave her a tight hug, preventing her from attacking Alana any further. “Emma, stop it. You’ll end up in jail if you keep going!” Ethan pleaded with his sister.

“Even if I go to jail, I must teach this woman a lesson, especially since the entire city is watching this live right now!” Emmeline’s eyes blazed with fierce determination.

“Emmeline,” Alondra approached her meekly. “Don’t be stubborn. You’ll end up having to pay for all the damage you caused!”

“Damages?” Emmeline gritted her teeth. “How much are we talking about?”

Alana got up from the ground, still covered in cake as she surveyed the chaos in front of her. “Including all the antiques your broke, I’d say there’s at least 2 million dollars’ worth of damages!”

“2 million dollars?!” Ethan gasped incredulously. “Emma, I could never earn 2 million dollars in my lifetime!”

Grace was equally stunned. She had come here to get paid instead of paying someone else a sum of money she could never afford. “Sis,” she grabbed Emmeline’s hands. “Just suck it up this time and apologize to Alana. We could never afford to pay 2 million dollars!”

“Hmph!” Alana huffed indignantly as she wiped some cream off her face. “As you know, I’m a forgiving person. I’ll forgive you if you kneel at my feet and say ‘sorry’ a hundred times!”

“Kneel at your feet and apologize? Dream on!” Emmeline spat.

“Em, please!” Ethan begged. “You can’t afford to be willful now!”

Emmeline took out her phone, ready to give Benjamin a call and ask him to transfer 2 million dollars in an instant. More importantly, she wanted to witness Lane Corporation’s share price plummet and Alana to beg her for mercy.

However, Abel spoke up before Emmeline could make the call. “The party ends here. I’ll personally pay for all the damages suffered by the Lane family tonight.”

Adrien was about to go over as well, but Julianna held him back sternly.