

Chapter Twenty-One

The bathroom door opened and Rome walked into the room.

His lips curved into a soft smile as he stared at Catherine's sleeping face.

Then he walked over to the closet, took out his clothes, and got dressed.

As he was about to wear his shoes, his phone buzzed on the nightstand. So he grabbed it, sat on the edge of the bed, and answered the call.

“Good morning, boss. What is it?”

Rome asked, eyeing Catherine for a moment.

“Good morning, young master. We have been watching the team members for weeks, and we have discovered three traitors, and they are responsible for purchasing the raw material for the winery.” Mr. Orlando's voice flowed

into his ear.

“Really? Go on.”

“We discovered that they have been pre-ordering cheaper materials with third-rate quality from the Whitewater Construction store, instead, of the first class materials your wife requested.”

“I'm on my way.”

After ending the call, Rome stared down at Catherine, and her eyelids slowly raised.

Then she sleepily stared at him and mumbled, “Where are you going this early?”

“I got to get to the constitution site. My boss needs me at work.” Rome said, gently pushing her hair behind her ear.

“Umm... Okay, take care.” Catherine mumbled, slowly shutting her eyes.

Smiling faintly, Rome leaned forward

and kissed her on the forehead. Then he stood from the bed and left the room.

“Where are you going so early, loser?” Charles asked, when he saw Rome walking from the opposite direction.

When Rome didn't say a word, Charles waited for him to come closer. Then he hit him in the shoulder.

But Rome ignored his cousin-in-law and walked past him with only one answer on his mind, ‘I'm heading out to ruin your plans.’

After the uber stopped at the old railway on lane street, Rome got out of the car and paid the driver.

Then he waited for the vehicle to drive off before he walked over to the Bugatti La Voiture Noire and got in.

“Where to, young master?” Mr. Orlando said, gazing at Rome through the V-mirror.

“We have a meeting with the CEO of the Whitewater Construction store,” Rome said, relaxing back on the seat.

It took a forty minutes drive. Then Mr. Orlando finally drove the car in the parking lot of the Whitewater INC.

Afterward, he gazed behind and said, “We are here, young master.”

For a moment, Rome gazed at the blue skyscraper. Then he picked up the black cap on the car seat and wore it.

After that, he grabbed a dark shade and put it on his face before wearing a knee-length jacket.

“Let's go,” Rome said, pushing the car door open.

When he and Mr. Orlando had got down from the car, they walked into the building and headed straight for the front desk in the lobby.

“Hello, what can I do for you?” The receptionist asked with her focus on the computer screen.

“Tell Jerome that I'm here to see him.” Mr. Orlando said, gazing at her.

Swaying her focus away from the keyboard, she lifted her head and met his eyes. Then her expression quickly softened.

“Yes, sir.” She hastily said, grabbing the telephone.

After talking on the phone for a few minutes, she drew it away from her ear, and said, “My boss is expecting you guys. Please proceed to the sixth floor.”

“Thanks,” Mr. Orlando said, faintly smiling at her.

Then he and Rome walked away and headed into the elevator.

A few minutes later, Mr. Orlando and

Rome entered an oval-shaped office.

“Mr. Orlando, it's great to see you again. How may I be of service to Mr. Ford.” Jerome said, smiling happily.

Ignoring him for a second, Mr. Orlando escorted Rome to a chair and waited for him to sit down before focusing back on Jerome.

“My master doesn't need you, but his son does.” Mr. Orlando said with a calm expression.

“I have been hearing rumors within the inner circle that Mr. Ford lost son has returned. I can't believe it's true.” Jerome said, beaming with excitement.

Then his gaze swayed towards Rome, and a look of confusion swept across his face.

“You can take off the disguise. I have heard that you don't want people to know who you are. But I swear to keep

your identity as a secret.” Jerome said with a trace of curiosity in his eyes.

“I know the people that I trust with my Identity, and you are not one of them,” Rome said in annoyance.

“I owe your father a billion dollars in debt, so trust me when I tell you that my lips are sealed.”

“Fine.”

Feeling a bit hesitant, Rome took off the glasses, then the cap and Jerome's face went blank. Then he sluggishly leaned back in his seat and mumbled, “Y-ou a-re... You are!”

“The Barlow family’s useless son-in-law? I know.” Rome sarcastically said.

“But no one knows how rich your father is or the limits to his power. He got this entire country in the palm of his hands! H-ow could you... How could you be worthless!”

“Well, that's a story I don't have time to tell. Not a single word about who I am should escape from this room or my father might end up collecting his debt sooner than you expected.”

“I understand.”

After pausing for a moment, Jerome glanced at Mr. Orlando, then stared at Rome, and asked, “So what do you need me for?”

“The material my wife's employees are purchasing from your store isn't the quality she requested,” Rome said with a hint of anger in his tone.

“Someone is trying to sabotage Mrs. Ford?”

“Yes. What I need from you is to replace their purchases with your most expensive quality of materials without letting them know. I will pay whatever amount is needed.”

“So what I'm hearing is that you need my workers to give them first-class materials even though they are purchasing third-class, and they shouldn't be in the know about it.”

“Correct.”

“Okay. I understand, and consider it done. Just send me the details about the purchasers, and I will alert my workers on your orders.”

A few minutes later, Mr. Orlando and Rome were back in the car, and he took out the cap, then the shade.

“What now, young master?” Mr. Orlando asked, staring at the V-mirror.

“We watch and wait for Charles' next move,” Rome said, smiling slyly.

“Where to next?”

“Take me to my father. It's been a while since I shared breakfast with him.”

Chapter Twenty-Two

The sound of her ringtone drew Catherine's attention from her computer screen and onto her phone.

“Unknown number,” She mumbled, picking it up.

When she answered the call, a male voice echoed into her ear, “Good day, Miss Catherine. I'm an agent from CMTA, and our agency was informed that the products you are purchasing for the Winery are not quality construction materials.”

“What! Every pre-ordered material that my team has made is for first-class products.” Catherine said with a frown.

“That's not what the report said. Just to be on the safe side, we are sending some construction Supervisors over to your company. Please cooperate with

them.”

“Of course.”

“Oh, and Miss Catherine, if the materials are truly not up to the national standards for building a winery, we are shutting down the project.”

After the call had ended, Catherine tossed her phone on a file and rested her head on the desk.

“Hey, wife, I got your coffee,” Rome mumbled, walking into the office.

Then a frown settled on his face as he listened to her softly moan out her frustration.

“What is it?” Rome asked, walking around her desk.

Gazing into her teary eyes, he set the mug down and squatted, fixing his gaze on her.

“The project is going to get stopped,” Catherine whispered, striving to hold back her tears.

“Why? You have been working so hard for the past month to make sure that it goes smoothly.” Rome said, resting his palm on the back of her hand.

“Apparently, someone reported that the materials I was purchasing were low-graded materials, and that's not true.”

“Oh,”

“And the crazy thing about this is that this project is worth a hundred million dollars, why would I purchase third-class materials!”

After striving to be strong for such a long time, Catherine finally allowed her tears to pour.

Pitifully staring at her, Rome used his sleeve to dry her cheeks. Then he softly

smiled and said, “You know the quality of products that you purchase, so who cares what some crazy weirdo reported to CMTA.”

“The problem is, I think the crazy weirdo is one of my cousins. It's not the first time they have sabotaged my hard work. But this time, it really hurt because I had so much hope.” Catherine said, choking on her sob.

“Then don't give up that hope just yet. You worked hard on this project, so believe that your hard work will pay off, okay?”

“Alright. I'm going to keep the faith.”

“That's the spirit.”

Suddenly, Catherine's phone began to ring again, and when she took a look at the screen, a sense of panic coursed through her.

“It's the chairman of ‘Fine Wine.’ What

should I do!” Catherine cried, tearing up again.

“First you need to breathe. Breathe slowly, and take a moment to pull yourself together. Then answer the call and tell him the truth.” Rome mumbled, caressing his fingertip against her tear-soaked cheek.

After aggressively sniffing for a while, Catherine picked up the phone and answered the call.

“I just got off a call with the Construction Materials Testing Agency, and they said that someone reported that you were purchasing cheap materials for the winery project. What's going on?” Benjamin's voice echoed from the phone speakers, sounding a bit mad.

“I got the same call, but I can assure you that all the purchases my team made were for high-class materials.

CMTA is sending a few construction Supervisors over to test the materials.”

“Okay. If that's the case, I want to be there when they are doing the testing. I'm on my way to your office.”

“Okay.”

After the call, Catherine tried to bang her head against the desk, but Rome rested the back of his hand against its wooden surface and her forehead landed on his palm.

Then she pitifully gazed at him and said, “Thank you for taking a day off to be here with me. I don't think I would be able to handle this without you.”

“It's the very least I can do.”

Two minutes had not passed when Catherine's office door suddenly flew open.

Feeling reluctant to see who had

entered, Catherine stared into Rome's calm eyes for a while, finding a sense of comfort in them.

Then she lifted her head and met her grandfather's angry eyes as he scowled at her.

“Is there something wrong?” Catherine mumbled, staring at Charles, standing beside their grandfather.

“I was informed by your cousin that ‘Dreamteam’ got a report from CMTA about you purchasing raw materials that are not up to the standard for building a Winery! Is that true?” Mr. Barlow harshly said, barely able to hide his anger.

“Yes, but...”

“Shut up! How could you ruin the company image in such a manner and disgrace our family name! Do you have to be such a failure to this family!”

A wave of anxiety coursed through Catherine as she stared at her grandfather and mumbled, “Grandpa, I'm...”

“You are nothing but a disgrace to our family name. You and your worthless husband! All both of you know how to do is shame this family.” Mr. Balow shouted, feeling consumed by pure rage.

“But, grandfather...”

“Don't cut me off when I'm speaking. You are just as useless to this family as your father. He couldn't measure up to his brothers, and now, you can't even compete with your cousins.”

“I'm trying to tell you that...”

“I said, ‘Don't interrupt me!’ When you finally succeed in getting these four contracts, I had hoped that you were one of the Barlow, but it turned out that you are nothing but a black sheep for

this family!”

Unable to hold in her emotions any longer, Catherine burst into tears, and her soft cry finally snapped her grandfather out of his rage.

“After so many years, this is the first time our company is getting an inspection from CMTA, and it's all because of you. I have been overlooking your mistakes in the past. But this, this is unacceptable.” Mr. Barlow said, softening his tone a bit.

“I didn't purchase third-class materials. The pre-orders we made were for A-graded materials. I don't have any reason to cheat Benjamin and ruin our family reputation.” Catherine softly intoned, feeling enraged and heartbroken.

After hearing those words, Mr. Barlow didn't know what to say, so he maintained his silence, and the room

became awfully quiet.

When Rome noticed the faint smile on Charles' lips, he frowned and said, "The chairman for 'Fine Wine' is on his way here and so are a few construction Supervisors from CMTA."

Then he stared at Mr. Barlow and mumbled, "How about we all wait for them to get here before criticizing my wife on a stranger report."

There was a long pause. Then Mr. Barlow walked over to the couch and sat down, avoiding his granddaughter's teary eyes.

"Cousin, I hope that you are not mad at me. I was just trying to be a good grandson and report to grandfather something that may cause the company its reputation." Charles slyly said, staring at Catherine with a look of satisfaction on his face.

Those words trigger another rise of

anger in Mr. Barlow, but he said nothing as he frowned at his granddaughter.

For a moment, Catherine stared at her grandfather's angry eyes.

Then she gazed at her cousin and thought, 'I guess you are the crazy weirdo who made the report to CMTA. If that's true, then I have been betrayed and the materials might actually be third-class.'

Noticing that his wife was about to have another emotional breakdown, Rome clutched onto her hand and thought, 'The only person who deserves to feel miserable is Charles, and I promise you that I will make sure he does.'

Chapter Twenty-Three

It was silent for a while, and after waiting for almost an hour, Catherine's office door finally opened and The construction Supervisors from CMTA entered the room.

“Good day to all. We were told that this is Miss Catherine’s office.” One of the supervisors said.

“Yes, I'm she,” Catherine mumbled, panicking a bit.

“We were sent by CMTA concerning the report file to our head office.”

“I know.”

Suddenly the door opened again, and the chairman of ‘Fine Wine’ walked into the room.

When Benjamin saw Rome, the anger in his eyes faded quickly, and he was left

with a humble expression.

“Good day, Mr. Barlow, Charles, Catherine...” Benjamin said, pausing when he noticed Rome slightly shook his head.

“Benjamin, a pleasant day to you.” Mr. Barlow intoned with a straight face.

Then he frowned as he gazed at Catherine and said, “Ahh, after what my granddaughter has done, I don't know if I should be greeting you in such a manner.”

Upon hearing those words, a look of confusion settled on Benjamin's face.

“Have the materials been tested?” He asked, gazing at everyone with his brows pulled together in a frown.

“Not yet.” One of the supervisors said.

Staring at Mr. Barlow, Benjamin scowled and asked, “Why would you

“speak in such a manner if the materials haven't been tested yet?”

There was an awkward pause. Then Mr. Barlow sighed and said, “Well, because of how severe the situation is.”

“But the testing has not been done yet, so we can't tell if the situation is severe or not,” Benjamin stated, knowing who side he should take.

Feeling embarrassed, Mr. Barlow kept his silence and gazed away from Benjamin.

“Well, the sooner we get this done, the quicker we can know. Miss Catherine, can you please escort us to where the materials are being kept?” Another supervisor casually said.

For a second, Catherine gazed at Rome, and when he softly smiled at her, she felt a bit of comfort and confidence.

“Sure. They are a few drives away from

here, in one of our warehouses. ‘Whitewater construction store,’ had been delivering them there for the past week.” Catherine said, standing from her seat.

Then she walked ahead, and the rest of the group followed her out.

A few minutes later, she and Rome were in her car, riding to the warehouse, and the others’ vehicles were driving closely behind her.

Pulling his phone out of his pocket, Rome gazed at Catherine. Then he focused on his phone screen and started typing. “We are on our way to check out the materials.”

Afterward, he pressed send and waited patiently for a reply.

When a few seconds passed, his phone buzzed, and Rome gazed at the screen, reading silently, “What do you need me to do, young master?”

“Within the next ten minutes, I need you to call and find out from the CEO of CMTA if Charles was the one who sent in the report himself or he made someone do it for him.”

In less than a second, another text came from Mr. Orlando, “Okay, young master.”

With a look of concern on her face, Catherine stared away from the road for a second and glanced at Rome.

Then she softly sighed and asked, “Is everything okay?”

“Uh? Oh, yeah. It's just my boss texting me.” Rome mumbled, rubbing the tip of his nose as he sniffed.

“Oh, does he need you to go back to work? Because if he is, you don't have to be here. It is my mess. I can sort it out.”

Staring at her adorably, Rome softly smile and said, “Our mess,”

“What?” Catherine mumbled, eyeing him from the corner of her eyes.

“We are married, so it's our mess.”

“Really?”

“Yes. My boss isn't texting me to go back to work. Instead, he just needs me to answer some work-related questions.”

“Oh,”

“But even if he needs me at work, I have nowhere else to be ordered then here. Right by your side.”

Even though Catherine tried to hide her happiness, she couldn't stop her lips from curving into a wide smile.

After eight minutes had passed, he got another message from Mr. Orlando,

and he gazed at his phone screen.

“It was one of the traitors named ‘Jaime’ that made the report.”

After glancing at Catherine for a second, Rome focused on the keyboard and type, “I need CMTA to make a call to Mr. Barlow, Benjamin, and my wife, apologizing and exposing who made the report. But not now. Tell them to wait on my signal.”

Then he sent it before typing another text, “As for the traitor, find whatever dirt you can get on him and use it to get him to confess.”

After sending the second message, Rome put his phone back into his pocket and relaxed in his seat with a slight smile on his lip.

After a thirty-minute drive, the vehicles came to a stop in front of an enormous warehouse and everyone got out.

The security at the entrance of the warehouse rushed towards Mr. Barlow and said, “Good day, Boss. Is there a problem?”

“Open the door.” Mr. Barlow said in annoyance.

Nodding slightly, the security ran back to the warehouse door, unlocked it, and pushed open both sides.

Without uttering a word to each other, they all walked into the warehouse.

The entire time, Catherine's heart kept racing because she didn't know what to expect, nor was she sure about how to feel at the moment.

The three construction Supervisors from CMTA split out and headed further into the warehouse to carry out their inspection.

After a few minutes had passed, they

met with Catherine, Rome, Charles, Mr. Barlow, and Benjamin.

Seeing the anger in their expression, Catherine forgot how to breathe, and without thinking, she grabbed onto Rome's hand, entangling her fingers with his.

“I'm so mad right now because whoever wrote that report wasn't in their right minds because all these materials are of high standard quality. The best of the best!” One of the supervisors said with a frown.

“That can't be right?” Charles mumbled out loud, even though he intended to say it in his head.

Anger took over the expression of one of the supervisors. Then he walked over to Charles and asked, “Are you a construction supervisor?”

“No,” Charles said, feeling a bit offended by the question.

“Then take it when I tell you that those materials are all first class.”

“But...”

A look of disbelief swept across Charles's face as he hung his head, wondering in his thought about what could have gone wrong.

Out of pure excitement, Catherine rushed into Rome's arm and softly sob, hugging onto his body tightly.

Then he patted her on her back gently while frowning at Mr. Barlow.

But the old man was too shocked and embarrassed to notice what was going on around him.

“Well, this was a waste of time. Who could have been so stupid to write a report that is not true.” One supervisor said, putting his hand into his pocket.

“I don't know. But whoever he or she is,

that person is a fool. We should get back and make our report.” Another supervisor stated, gazing at the other two.

A few minutes after they had left, Benjamin gazed at Rome and thought, ‘ Well, whoever is behind this scheme, they choose the wrong man to temper with.’

Then he turned to Mr. Barlow and said, “We should head back to the office. It seems like the situation wasn't severe after all.”

Finally abandoning his thoughts, Mr. Barlow frowned and harshly said, “How dare some idiot attempted to ruin my family and company reputation! If I ever find out who made that false report, they will have hell to pay!”

His grandfather’s words send a wave of fear in Charles' heart. Yet he kept a calm expression and uttered no word.

When Rome gazed at Charles, a cunning smile appeared on his lip, then his phone buzzed in his pocket. So he looked away from Charles and stared at Catherine.

For a moment, she remained in his arms even though she could feel the phone vibrating. Then she slowly withdrew her arms from around him.

“This will only take a second,” Rome mumbled, wiping her face dry with his palm.

Then he took out his phone and gazed at the text on the screen.

“I found his dirty little secret. He is living with his wife's family while having an affair with her sister. Well, I got a confession out of him, using the information, and he's willing to repeat everything he said to me to Mr. Barlow.”

As Rome put his phone back into his pocket, he couldn't stop himself from faintly smiling, knowing the disaster that awaited Charles back at the office. ¹

 Comments

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Chapter Twenty-Four

The moment everyone arrived in Catherine's office, her, Mr. Barlow, and Benjamin's phone started ringing.

The three of them answered the calls almost at the same time, and the room fell silent as they listened attentively.

Throughout the entire call, their faces bore several emotions. But after the call ended, Catherine looked shocked, Benjamin appeared annoyed, and Mr. Barlow's expression was filled with rage.

“How dare he! That! That weasel. Someone get Jamie into this office!” Mr. Barlow screamed, clutching his fist.

Although Rome's face bore no expression, he was smiling on the inside, knowing that his plan had fallen into place.

When Benjamin gazed at him, he smirked and thought, 'This is your doing. Like father, like son. But I'm not complaining. I'm here to enjoy the show.'

Fear ceased Charles as he gazed into Mr. Barlow's mad eyes and asked, "Grandfather, is there a problem? Why are you looking for Jaime? Did he do something wrong?"

"Because that fool was the one that tried to sabotage this company's reputation and our family name. He was the one that wrote those false reports." Mr. Barlow shouted, tossing his phone on the table.

"But how can we be sure that it was him?"

"The CEO of Whitewater construction INC. just called me, apologizing for the misunderstanding and claiming that Jaime was the one that filed the report."

Seeing the trace of fear in her cousin's eyes, Catherine strolled through her call log and dialed her secretary line.

When he answered, Catherine, gazed directly into Charles' eyes, giving a smug smile, and said, "Please tell Jamie to come to my office."

The room became quiet as everyone waited. Then after a few minutes, the office door opened and Jaime walked inside with his head bowed.

When Mr. Barlow gazed at him, he stood from the chair, walked over to him, and coldly said, "Lift your head!"

The moment Jaime did as he was told, Mr. Barlow swung his hand and smacked him hard across the cheek.

"Forgive me! I never meant to hurt the company's reputation! I was just doing what I got told because I was offered a lot of money!" Jaime cried, tasting the

saltiness of blood on his tongue.

A frown flickered across Mr. Barlow's forehead as he gazed at the cut on Jaime's bottom lip and asked, "So you are not working alone? Who's the other fool?"

"Charles, your grandson. He paid me to ruin Miss Catherine's project."

"What?"

The room fell silent as Mr. Barlow stared away from Jaime and gazed wide-eyed at his grandson.

"How dare you tried to pin this on me!" Charles shouted, rushing toward Jaime.

Then he punched him in the stomach before striking him in the jaw.

"It was you! You were the one who made me write the false report!" Jaime shouted, hugging his stomach.

"You are a liar!" Charles yelled, balling

his hand into a fist.

Then he tried to punch Jamie again, but Mr. Barlow coldly said, “Stop!”

“Grandfather, he is lying. I will never try to sabotage the company and disgraced our family.” Charles cried, nervously staring at Mr. Barlow.

“I always knew that there was a competition between you cousins. But I never expected you to take it this far, Charles.”

“Grandfather, it's all a lie! Believe me, please!”

“Jaime has nothing to gain by writing that report, but you do.”

“I... I... I didn't mean it! I wasn't thinking straight back then! It was envy. But I know I'm wrong! I'm sorry, grandfather!”

Without any hesitation, Charles

dropped to his knees, rested his forehead on the floor, and cried out, “Your grandson has sinned against you. I deserve to get punished!”

His eyes shining with fury, Mr. Barlow sighed in disappointment and said, “Your punishment will be given at home.”

For a moment, he slightly shook his head as he gazed at his grandson. Then he walked out of the office, closing the door behind him.

“Well, now that the matter has been settled. I should take my leave. I can't wait to see your final result of the winery.” Benjamin said with a faint smile.

“Does this mean that you are not going to cancel the contract, even after what happened today?” Catherine asked, feeling a bit anxious.

Looking her directly in her eyes,

Benjamin smiled and said, “Why would I end our contract? Your ideas are brilliant, and I don't see anyone topping the work that you have done, so no, I'm not canceling the contract.”

“Thank you! You won't regret it, trust me!” Catherine happily intoned, barely able to contain her excitement.

As his gaze swayed away from her and focused on Charles, Benjamin frowned and said, “I know, and I can't wait to work with you in the future, but I can't say the same for your cousin. I can never work with someone like him.”

Afterward, he glanced at Rome before walking out of the office.

“Jaime,” Catherine said with a hint of sadness in her voice.

Feeling embarrassed, he avoided staring Catherine in her eyes and said, “Yes, boss.”

“You are fired. Go to your office, pack your stuff, and leave the company.”

“I'm sorry.”

“I trusted you, and you stabbed me in the back. That's something I can't forgive just yet, and I don't see myself working with you, so please leave.”

“I understand.”

Once Jaime had left the room, Charles finally lifted his head. Then he stood to his feet, glared at Rome and Catherine before storming out of the office.

“I won,” Catherine mumbled beneath her breath.

Then she stared at Rome, smiled with tears in her eyes, and said, “We won!”

With admiration in his eyes, he grabbed her wrist, pulled her toward him, and gently kissed her on the lips. Then he hugged her tightly and whispered into

her ear, “You are amazing.”

It felt like her heart was trying to fill a thousand beats at once as Catherine clutched onto Rome’s shirt and mumbled, “I couldn't have done it without you. Thanks for not leaving my side today, even though your boss needed you.”

Smiling softly, he brushed his palm against her hair and thought, ‘I’m never leaving your side. I will stick by you, and make your enemies fall before your very eyes. That's a promise.’

At eight o’clock, Catherine and Rome arrived at the Barlow mansion, and when they entered the living room, half of the family members were already there.

They casually walked over to one of the couches and sat down without uttering a word.

After a few minutes had gone by,

Charles walked into the living room. Then he froze as he stared at his grandparents' mad expression.

“Son, what were you thinking, attempting to sabotage your cousin's project!” William lashed out, frowning at his child.

“We get that you are striving to become the family top inheritor, but destroying our family name and ruining your cousin's hard work is no way to go about it!” Elijah harshly said, scowling at his nephew.

Those words shocked Catherine, knowing that her uncle had never in her entire life, stood up for her until now.

‘Using Catherine's situation to take down Charles, how sly and annoying.’ Rome thought, frowning at Elijah.

Realizing what his brother was up to, William glared at him and said, “Well, my son might have learned it from your

daughter since she is such a bad influence.”

“What are you talking about!”

“The last time I checked, she was the one trying to ruin Catherine’s project with Mr. Jeffery, and even tried to damage Catherine’s reputation!”

Sensing a feeling of intense rage, Elijah clutched his fist and shouted, “How dare you!”

“No, how dare you! Your child is no different from mine! Don't try to paint him as the black sheep!” William harshly said, balling his fingers into a fist.

“My daughter admitted she was wrong, accepted her punishment, and learned from it!”

“Learn from it, Ha! She was the one spilling drinks on Rome at the party! Do you know who he was standing beside,

Catherine! Don't think for a second that she didn't spill that drink on purpose!”

The argument between William and Elijah lasted for quite some time, and the other family members maintained their silence.

Finally, when Mr. Barlow had had enough, he slammed the table and shouted, “Enough of this nonsense!”

The entire room instantly became quiet. Then after a few more minutes of silence, he sighed, gazed at his grandson, and asked, “Do you know what you have done wrong?”

“Yes, grandfather,” Charles said, lowering his head.

“Good because your punishment is that Catherine is taking over your position as the executive vice president of the company, and you, you are taking her position as a director.”

“Grandfather,”

“My word is final!”

His lips curved into a faint smile as Rome thought, ‘I like this new tactic. Divide and conquer. It's time to split up the family and turn them on each other.’

 Comments

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Chapter Twenty-Five

The first light of dawn met Rome laying in bed, wide awake as he spaced out in his thoughts.

“What is it?” Catherine softly asked, staring at him with a hint of worry in her eyes.

I’m thinking of ways to turn your family on each other,’ Rome thought with a faded smile.

Then he laid on his side, placed his hands gently on Catherine’s right cheek, and said, “It's nothing for you to worry about.”

Even though she wasn't satisfied with his reply, she said nothing and let out a soft sighed.

After a moment of silence, Catherine pressed her lips together, and then said, “Do you have work today?”

“Why do you ask?” Rome gently intoned, noticing the hesitation in her eyes.

“Well, today is my first day as the executive vice president of the ' DreamTeam', and... and I was hoping you could go to the company with me.”

“Sure. I would love to stand by you, wife.”

“Oh, but your part-time job.”

“I don't have any shift today.”

Doubting his words, Catherine lowered her brows and asked, “Are you sure?”

“Yes,” Rome said with a reassuring smile.

At seven o'clock, they were both dressed, out of the Barlow mansion, and driving to the company.

When Catherine and Rome arrived in

the parking lot of the “DreamTeam” building, she stepped on the break, relaxed in her seat, and let out a harsh breath.

“What is it?” Rome asked, noticing the stress in her expression.

“Those people have been working for Charles for so long and suddenly they have to answer to me. I'm afraid that they won't accept my leadership.”

Catherine said with a hint of fear in her eyes.

“The first step of making people listen to you is being confident even if you don't feel like it.”

“Okay, look confident and not nervous. I can do that, I think.”

“That's the spirit. Now walk into that building, and be the self-assured boss that I know you are.”

With a smile on her lips, Catherine

pushed the car door open and got out. Then Rome stepped out of the vehicle and they both headed into the company.

When they got into the elevator, Catherine hesitated as she was about to press button four. Then she slightly moved her hand upward and hit button five.

‘When I'm done, you will be pressing button thirteen.’ Rome thought, gazing at her.

After the elevator door opened, Rome and Catherine walked into the corridor, heading towards her new office.

The moment they entered the exclusive vice president office, both of them stared wide-eyed at her cousin sitting behind the desk.

“See who's here to claim what doesn't belong to her!” Charles said, sitting up straight as he rested his elbows on the desk.

“I didn't do anything. You are at fault for everything that led to this moment.” Catherine mumbled as she stared away from his mad eyes and focused on the nameplate on the desk with Charles' name on it.

“It's the self-righteous act and holier-than-thou" attitude that disgusts me. You act like the saint of this family. That's why you have never risen to the top!”

“What?”

“Pretending to be innocent is the reason you and your disappointment of a father are still at the bottom.”

In a fit of anger, Bella scowled at her cousin and said, “Can you clear your things and leave my office!” 4

“Your office? Ha! You are hilarious. Don't get too comfortable because it wouldn't be long before I take back

what rightfully belongs to me.”

“Fine! When that day comes, I will gladly give it back to you. But now, this is my office and you need to get out!”

His eyes flaming with rage, Charles stood from the chair. Then his gaze rested on Rome and he narrowed his eyes.

“All this is to your liking, right, freeloader! Now that your wife is in a higher position, you can feed off her more just like the parasite that you are!” Charles said, clutching his fists.

But he got a smirk as a response from Rome, and it had him speechless from anger.

Keeping his silence, Charles set the box down on the desk and began stuffing things into it. Then he held the box in his hand.

“Good luck handling this position. If

you need any help, don't feel ashamed to ask me. After all, you are just a substitute.” Charles said, walking from behind the desk.

Then he walked past Catherine and Rome and walked out the door, banging it shut.

“He's not wrong. I don't know what I'm doing. I can't do this. I'm not cut out for this position.” Catherine mumbled, feeling her hand slightly shaking.

‘How long have they been preying on your mind to make you feel so insecure even though you are the best among them?’ Rome said, watching the panic in her eyes.

Then he walked over to Catherine, pulled her closer to his chest, and she became a bit at ease as she felt his heartbeat slowly accelerate.

“How about we hold a brief meeting so you can get to know the team, then we

can move on from there,” Rome said, gently squeezing her in his arm.

“That's a great idea.” Catherine excitedly intoned, hugging onto his body tightly.

A few minutes later, Catherine was able to get Charles' secretary to arrange a meeting between her and his team.

At night o'clock, Catherine and Rome arrived in the conference room, and they were greeted by icy stares and mad expressions.

“Good morning, guys,” Catherine said as she took a seat at the head of the table, but all she got was silence.

After a long pause, she softly exhaled and said, “I know that this is all new to you guys, answering to a different boss and all, but this is also new for me too. So how about we all work together and help each other out.”

“We know our job, but you are the inexperienced one here. Therefore, if this is you asking us to teach you how to do your work, our answer is ‘no.’” One of the team members said with arrogance in his tone.

“What?”

“You heard me. We don't get extra money to show someone who gets paid higher than us on how to do their job.”

A look of annoyance settled on Catherine's face as she gazed at him, knowing that her cousin could be the one behind his attitude towards her.

“I'm not asking you all to do my work. What I need is for you guys to cooperate with me for a healthy working environment.” Catherine said, gently tapping her hand on the desk to ignore her anger.

“If it is a healthy work environment

that you want, we can give you that.” Another team member stated, blankly staring at her.

"That's not all. I need you to also update me on where Charles stopped, so I can pick up from there since I am still new to the role as an Executive vice president.”

“Maybe you should have stuck to your old role then, instead of making it everyone's problem that you got promoted.”

Angry as she was, Catherine maintained a calm expression and asked, “What's your name?”

“Does it matter? Will it do the company any help if you knew an employee's name instead of knowing the role of your position?” A different team member asked.

The first angry thought that crossed Catherine's mind was to fire them. But i

f she did, she would be left with no one since they were all attacking her with their stares and words.

Also, she was worried about the image that it was going to set for her if she fired all Charles team members on the first day of taking over from him.

“If you guys have a problem with me, then let it out, so we can start off fresh,” Catherine said, hiding her frustration behind her numb expression.

“How about for starters, you give back the position you stole and is not qualified for to its rightful owner.” One of the team members said aggressively.

The room was silent for a few minutes as Catherine stared at their faces, striving her best to hold back the vexation she felt.

“We are very busy people, so if you called us here just to look at us, we like t

o be excused so we can return to our offices and busy ourselves with something useful.” A team member rudely intoned, sounding annoyed.

Without uttering a word, she gave a dismissive wave of her hand and blew out her cheeks. Then she gazed at Rome, and when his eyes met hers, he sadly smiled, and she couldn't help, faintly smiling back at him.

Without the slightest bit of hesitation, they all stood to their feet and marched out of the room, Mumbling angrily to themselves.

Once the door shut, Rome gave a smug smile and slyly thought, ‘I guess I had to teach a bunch of old douchebags some manners and how not to disrespect my wife, especially not before my very eyes.

’ ¹

Chapter Twenty-Six

When Catherine and Rome got back to her office, she sluggishly sat in her seat and rested her head on the desk.

Then she shut her eyes closed and mumbled, “I've been trying my best to act in an upright, moral way, but why do I end up getting hurt for doing the right thing?”

‘Because your heart is pure gold, and people with good hearts get step on by those who are self-centered and selfish.’ Rome thought with darkness in his expression.

After a moment of silence, Catherine lifted her head, and when she met his eyes, he looked calm and naive as he gently smiled at her and thought, ‘Theres a saying that goes, ‘good always wins over evil,’ I'm going to make that true for you.’

“Don't you want to sit down? Your legs will hurt if you keep standing like that.” Catherine gently intoned, staring at him with concern in her eyes.

“Actually, I need to drink,” Rome said, focusing away from her gaze.

Then he took one last glance at her before walking out of the office and leaving the building.

As he stood outside staring at the busy traffic with his right hand in his pocket and his phone pressed against his ear, Rome waited patiently.

After a few minutes, his call got answered and Mr. Orlando's voice echoed into his ear, “Good day, young master. What can I do for you?”

“I need you to round up some old fools and take them to the warehouse. I want everyone on Charles' team captured. Find out their information and don't

leave anyone out.” Rome said with a trace of hate in his eyes.

“Okay, young master. When do you want this to go down?”

“Do it after they are off work and on their way home.”

After ending the call, Rome walked back into the building and headed back to Catherine’s office.

When he opened the door, she looked up at him and asked, “Did you quench your thirst?”

“Yes,” Rome said, closing the door behind him.

Then he walked over to Catherine, gazed at her with a naive facial expression, and said, “Wife, can I go back to work? My boss just called, and he needs me at the site. I know you are not in a good mood, so if you want me to stay...”

“No, go to work. You need the extra cash since you stopped accepting money from me.”

“Did I hurt your feelings when I refused your money?”

“No, I felt proud that my husband could stand on his own two feet without my help. I'm happy about your growth.”

Widening the smile on his lips, his eyes sparkled as he stared into her gaze and said, “Okay, wife. I'm going to do my best to make you proud!”

Then he swayed his focus off her and turned around, walking out of the office.

When he got on the bus, he took out his phone and made another call.

“Dad, are you home?” Rome asked, staring out the window.

“Yes,” Mr. Ford's voice echoed out of the speakers.

“Great. I'm on my way to you.”

“Really! Oh! Why didn't you tell me sooner! I-I need to get Rosetta to cook ...”

“Bye, dad.”

Twenty minutes later, Rome got down at his designated bus stop and got out of the vehicle.

Then he placed his hands into his coat pocket and started walking.

After strolling for a mile, he reached a gigantic fence and rang the bell.

The cameras turned towards him and focused on his face for a second. Then the gate opened and he walked inside.

A few distances into the yard, he saw a golf cart approaching his way and he stopped and waited for it to reach him.

When it did, he looked inside, faintly

smiled, and said, “Butler Hobson, how are you?”

“I'm doing well, young master. Thank you for asking. Master asked me to take you to the garden.” Butler Hobson said, starting the golf cart engine.

Without a hesitation, Rome got inside, and Hobson drove away.

After a brief ride, the golf cart stopped at the entrance of a luxurious garden with all kinds of exotic plants.

Staring at his father's back turned towards him, Rome got off the cart and walked towards the courtyard.

When he arrived on the patio, he tapped his dad on his shoulder and softly said, “Father.”

The moment Mr. Ford turned and gazed at his son, he wore an intense frown on his face.

Then it quickly faded to excitement as he let out a happy cry and shouted, “You ungrateful child. Abandoning your old aging father and dooming him to this empty mansion!”

“You literally have hundreds of servants. Stop being dramatic.” Rome said, faintly chuckling as he took a seat.

“Dramatic! How dare you compare the company of employees to that of the warmth of having my only heir around me all the time.”

“Father,”

“Take my daughter-in-law from those ungrateful Barlows and bring her here. Then you both can give me grandbabies that will bring this mansion back to life.”

A hint of pity settled in Rome's expression, hearing the trace of sadness in his father's voice. Then he

smiled and said, “How many grandkids are we talking about?”

“Just ten,” Mr. Ford mumbled with innocence in his expression.

“Ten, dad!”

“What! I have all the money in the world to raise ten grandkids and spoil them!”

Even though he tried, Rome couldn't stop himself from bursting into a pearl of laughter.

After a few seconds of chuckling, his face became straight as he stared at his father and said, “We will think about it. But Catherine and I can't be with you just yet until I have given her what she needs.”

“Say the word, and I will take the Barlows' companies, riches, and fortune from them and make it all hers.” Mr. Ford angrily said.

“What's the glory in that? There's no honor in robbing your enemies. But there's a greatness in defeating them and watching them crumble to nothing before your very eyes.”

“Why did you take after me, you brat! If your mother was here, she would be scolding me for the way you turned out.”

“Haha! Also, Catherine wouldn't accept my help if she knows who I am and the means that I'm using to help her out.”

With a touch of sadness in his eyes, Rome huffed and mumbled, “I love my wife, but she is too blind to the cruelty of this world to understand that I gotta do what I got to do to protect her and help her.” ¹

“What do you need me to do?” Mr. Ford said, smiling at his son.

“Uh?”

“You didn't call me for nothing, right? So what do you need me for?”

After a moment of hesitation, Rome clenched his fist and said, “Catherine just got promoted as the executive vice president, but since the position once belonged to her cousin, Charles, his people wouldn't respect her authority.”

“Someone dare look down and disrespect my daughter-in-law!” Mr. Ford intoned in a fit of rage.

“Yes.”

“What's the plan? Tear them into pieces? Make them lose everything and become beggars!”

Staring at the burning rage in his father's eyes, Rome faintly laughed and said, “Tone it down a bit, dad. We just have to make them know who their boss is.”

“Oh. Well, it's not as exciting as my plan, but we can go along with yours.” Mr. Ford said, sounding a bit disappointed.

At that moment, Rosetta and four other maids entered the patio, rolling a food trolley.

“Father,” Rome mumbled, shaking his head slightly as he stared at the numerous dishes.

“What? We need to defeat your wife's enemies on full stomachs and not empty ones, or else, we will feel as miserable as them.”

By eight o'clock, Rome and his father were playing an intense game of chess when his phone rang.

“Checkmate,” Rome said with a bold smile as he gazed at the look of defeat on his father's face.

Then he took his phone out of his pocket, and the moment he answered the call, he heard, “Young master, we got them all tied up in the warehouse.”

“Good. We are on our way.” Rome said, staring at the chess board with a cunning smile on his lips.

“We?”

“My father and I.”

“Yes, young master!!”

At nine on the dot, a black SUV arrived at the warehouse, and Mr. Ford along with his son got out of the vehicle.

Then Rome and his dad walked inside, but he stopped a few distances away and allowed his father to approach the team members.

“M-r... Mr. Fo-rd? Oh my, what have we done to earn your wrath.” One of the team members cried, shaking in fear

with his hands tied behind his back.

Frowning, Mr. Ford dragged a chair in front of them, sat down, and fixed his icy gaze on their terrific eyes. ¹

Then he pulled out a knife from his coat pocket, smirked with darkness in his eyes, and coldly said, “A little bird told his daddy bird that you guys were bullying his wife? How do you all plead?”

 Comments

 Vote (15.2K) 

Chapter Twenty-Seven

After wandering in their thoughts, none of the team members knew what Mr. Ford was talking about, so they all maintained their silence, afraid that the wrong word would get them in trouble.

“What should I do to get a damn answer from you guys! Cut a finger?” Mr. Ford shouted, slightly waving the knife.

Horror took off the faces of the team members, and finally, one of them gained the courage and mumbled, “Mr ... Ford, please forgive our simple-minded minds, but we don't know what you are talking about.”

Scowling, Mr. Ford leaned forward, rested his elbows on his jeans, and asked in annoyance, “Did you or did you not bully my daughter-in-law?”

A look of confusion crossed their faces as they stared wide-eyed at each other.

“Excuse my boldness for saying this, but you don't have a daughter-in-law.” One of them said, staring nervously at the floor.

Gazing to the right, Mr. Ford smirked and asked, “Is it true that you are not married, son?”

At first, the team members thought that he was losing a few screws upstairs, but when their eyes landed on Rome as he approached them, their jaws dropped.

“From what my marriage certificate says, I'm legally married to Catherine Barlow,” Rome said as he drew closer.

The room got awfully silent as they stared at Mr. Ford, then back at Rome, and after a moment, looked at Mr. Ford again.

“He... i-s... H-e is... He's your son!” A team member stuttered, suddenly feeling hot and sweaty.

“Yes. Now, let's start this over shall we! Which one of you knuckleheads bullied my daughter-in-law!” Mr. Ford coldly asked, fixing his icy gaze on them.

Suddenly a beard of sweat started rolling down their faces as they stared at Rome's deadly gaze, then at his father's soulless eyes.

“We would never bulldoze, Miss. Catherine. After all, she's our chairman's daughter.” One of the team members said. ¹

However, before he could get the chance to react, Mr. Ford smacked him hard across the cheek and shouted, “Are you old fools calling my son a liar!”

Without any hesitation, they all leaned forward and rested their forehead on

the cold concrete floor.

“We are sorry! We did browbeat Mrs. Catherine, but it's only because Charles instructed us to do so! Please don't crop off our fingers!” A team member shouted, sniffing aggressively.

“It's true. If we knew that Rome was your son and Catherine is your daughter-in-law, we would have never been so bold to go against her order.” Another team member cried, pressing his forehead flat on the ground.

There was a long pause. Then Mr. Ford glanced at Rome, winked, and coldly said, “So now that you guys know the truth...”

“I swear on my late parents' grave that I will serve Miss Catherine wholeheartedly!”

“I pledge to dedicate my working and extra hours to serve Miss Catherine to the best of my ability.”

“I will work with a smile and a humble attitude when it comes to my boss, Miss Catherine.”

Three of the team members shouted one after the other without any hesitation. Then the rest shouted in unison, “We agreed with our fellow colleagues and vow to do exactly what they said!”

“If that's the case. Then my job here is done.” Mr. Ford said, standing from the chair.

“Thank you for sparing us.” They all mumbled together as they lifted their heads.

Then when their gazes met Rome's cold eyes, they dropped back on the floor and shouted, “Forgive us for our stupidity, Master Rome.”

“We will be your followers and listen to our boss!” A fellow with a bald head

shouted.

“I don't need some old dudes as my followers. What I want from you guys is to obey my wife and shut your mouth about my identity. Clear?” Rome said, glaring at them.

None of them spoke as they eyed each other with a hint of hesitation in their expression.

With mad eyes, Mr. Ford picked the chair up and smashed it on the floor, shattering it into pieces, and shouted, “What! Do you fools want to announce that I have a son, when I, his father, haven't done it yet!”

“No! No, we will never speak of who master Rome is! We swear! Our lips are super-glued together!”

For a moment, Mr. Ford stared at their sweaty faces. Then he gazed at Hunter and said, “Release them, and you guys make sure that they get home safely.”

“Thank you, Mr. Ford! Thank you so much!” They all yelled one after the other while bowing.

Afterward scowling at the deceptive attitudes, he walked up to his son, held him by the shoulder and both of them walked out of the warehouse.

“Should I drop you home?” Mr. Ford asked with hope beaming in his eyes.

“Nah, I will take the bus,” Rome said, avoiding his father's suddenly angry gaze.

“You ungrateful brat. Making me do your dirty deeds and abandoning me in the end.” ¹

“Thank you for your help.”

“I will accept no such gratitude.”

Staring at his father's cunning expression, Rome sighed and said, “How about having breakfast with me

every weekend?”

“That's a deal. Haha, I got to get more experience and foreign chiefs.” Mr. Ford said, beaming with joy. ¹

When he and Rome reached the SUV, he opened the driver's door, smirked, and said, “Don't let those Barlows walk over you too much. Also, don't be late for breakfast on Saturday.”

Smiling with his eyes, Rome nodded his head. Then he watched his father get into his car and drove off.

Afterward, he shoved his hands into his coat pocket and walked away.

When Rome got to the Barlow's mansion and walked into the dining room, the family was already seated at the table, having supper.

“You are home! Come and sit!”

Catherine said, barely able to hide her happiness as she patted on the seat

beside her.

Suddenly madame Rosey dropped her spoon on the plate, glared at Rome, and coldly asked, “How much did you make from your so-called part-time job today?”

Scratching the back of his hair, Rome smiled and said, “Hundred dollars and my boss gave me extra twenty-five for my hard work, so my total income for today is one hundred and twenty-five dollars.”

“And you say that proudly! What a shameless man! How long do you plan on feeding off our family generosity?”

“I...”

“Well since you are so satisfied with your hundred dollars. Then use it to feed yourself. These dishes are too expensive to fill the belly of a junky.”

With a touch of annoyance in her eyes,

Catherine gently laid her fork and knife down, and mumbled, “Can I be excused? I suddenly don't feel hungry anymore.”

“Why? Are you protesting against me because of your husband?” Madam Rosey asked, tightened her grip on the spoon.

“No, grandmother.”

“Good. Then sit down and eat. Having breakfast and dinner together is our family tradition, and I wouldn't allow you to break it for a nobody.”

Sadness clouded her eyes as she stared at Rome. But he faintly smiled and nodded slightly, standing still with his hands resting in his coat pocket as he watched them eat.

A few minutes into their meal, Mr. Barlow picked up a napkin and politely wiped his mouth.

Then he stared at Catherine and asked, “Why didn't you report the files to the president's office?”

“What files, grandfather?”

“There were some important files that needed to be signed by Charles and handed over to Chloe.”

“Uh?”

“Since you have his position, you should have placed your signature on those files and sent them in today.”

Frowning, Chloe set her glass on the table and pitifully said, “I promise you, grandfather, that I didn't receive any file from your cousin.”

A look of confusion swept across Catherine's face as she glanced at Chloe. Then she stared at Mr. Barlow and said, “I'm sorry, grandfather. I wasn't updated on the files.”

“Get it to Chloe early tomorrow.”

“Yes, grandfather,”

“If you can't handle the pressure of being the executive vice president, tell me sooner so I can give it back to someone who's capable.”

Feeling embarrassed, Catherine lowered her head and mumbled, “Grandfather, I...”

“Don't take this the wrong way. I just don't want to regret a hasty decision that I made in a fit of anger.” Mr. Barlow said, reaching for the glass of water.

“Sure, grandfather. If I can't get things in order and figure out my work by tomorrow, I will step down.”

Every word Catherine uttered ached her heart as she tried to avoid any of her family members' eyes.

But intentionally, Catherine glanced at Charles, noticing the slight smirk on his lips, and she finally understood why he was so sure about getting his position back.

‘Let's see how you are going to run things tomorrow when I have all the team members in my pocket?’ Charles mumbled, biting a piece of steak off his fork.

 Comments

 Vote (15.2K) 

Chapter Twenty-Eight

The touch of a tender finger caressing against the skin of his face caused Rome to slowly raise his eyelids. Then he gazed into Catherine's eyes and faintly smiled.

“Morning, wife.” Rome said, holding onto her hand.

“Sorry that I woke you,” Catherine mumbled with a hint of worry in her eyes.

“It's nothing. Is everything okay?”

“I've been thinking, should I just save myself the trouble for later and give Charles' position to him this morning?”

Pulling her onto his chest, Rome hugged her tightly and asked, “Is that what you want?”

“Well no. But wouldn't it be best to give

up when the situation is less disgraceful?” Catherine mumbled, wrapping her hand around his waist.

“What do you plan on gaining from giving up?”

“Nothing.”

“Exactly, you get nothing from giving up, so if that's your plan to gain nothing then go ahead.”

There was a long pause. Then Catherine let out a soft breath and mumbled, “Do you think I stand a chance to get today right?”

“You will never know if you don't give it try. Who knows, maybe the universe took pity on you and slapped some senses into the team members' heads.” Rome mumbled with a faint smirk.

“I'm sold. Today, you and I are going to put our foot down and give it our all, so even if I end up losing, we know that we

tried our best.”

“We?”

“Yeah, you are my husband. I need your backing, especially since you are the only one who does have my back at the company.”

A feeling of pure joy wave through Rome as he smiled to himself, realizing that he had fallen for a woman he barely knew or cared for a year ago.

When Rome didn't utter a word, Catherine lifted her head, gazed at him, and mumbled, “If you have work...”

“No, I don't. You have me all to yourself today!” Rome hastily said.

“Good, the first thing we need to do is to dress to impress.”

“I agree.”

At seven o'clock, Catherine and Rome stepped out of her bedroom with her

dressed in a classic business suit and him wearing the suit he wore from his birthday party.

“Is that the only suit you got?”

Catherine mumbled, feeling a bit terrible.

“I still have my wedding clothes.”

Rome casually said.

“What next?”

“Oh, my regular coat?”

“That's not okay. We're going shopping after work.”

When they got into the dining room, Bella met with Charles at the entrance, and he took one look at her and smirked.

“Dress for failure, that a stupid choice. And oh look, you even made your good-for-nothing husband play dress-up with you. Even if he dresses smart, he's

still a washout.” Charles mumbled, giving Rome a dirty look.

“Catherine, Charles, come sit down, we are about to eat.” Madam Rosey called out.

At eight fifty, Catherine and Rome arrived at the company. They both headed up to her new office.

The moment they arrived in the room, she reached into her bag, took out her phone, and made a call.

“What would you be having?” Catherine mumbled, gazing at Rome.

Although he had several black cards at his disposal, he smiled and said, “Jamba Juice and Egg and Cheese Sandwich.”

After placing in her order, Catherine ended the call, fixed her gaze on Rome, and said, “I'm sorry.”

“Why?” Rome asked, resting his hands in his pocket.

“You are being treated badly because you married me.”

“None of this is your fault.”

Focusing on her gentle eyes, Rome wore a relaxed expression as he thought, ‘It's not like I'm trapped, but I chose to stay, so it's not on you.’

His response made Catherine's chest feel a bit tight. But she ignored the feeling, smiled softly, and asked, “How about after you eat, we hold another meeting?”

“Okay,” Rome replied, sitting down on the couch.

At ten o'clock, he was done with breakfast, and Catherine scheduled another meeting.

A few minutes later, she got a call from

Charles's old secretary that all the team members were waiting on her in the conference room.

After ending the call, Catherine gazed at Rome and said, "They are ready for us."

With his eyes fixed on hers, he stood from the couch and asked, "Are you ready for them?"

"I think so..."

"Come on, wife. Give me more than that!"

"I'm ready to face them!"

"Good! Let's go."

All the team members sat in the conference room, mumbling to each other. But when the door opened and Catherine walked in with Rome beside her, everyone became completely silent.

The loud beat of her heart grew louder a

s she walked towards the head of the table with Rome following closely behind her.

Then both of them sat down, and Catherine glanced at him, swallowed before gazing at the faces of the elderly men seated around the table.

“Yesterday was not the greatest, but today we all have the chance to start fresh,” Catherine said, pausing for a moment to catch her breath.

Then she lightly inhaled and said, “We're all on the same team, and I may not be your ideal boss, but I'm still the boss. So, how about we stop making each other's jobs harder and work together?” ¹

Silence followed her statement, and Catherine held back her breath, waiting for them to say something, anything.

Suddenly every team member stood up and began clapping with a bright smile

on their faces as they nodded happily.

Swaying her gaze from them, Catherine stared at Rome and mumbled, “Is this for real?”

“You better believe it. Your speech worked.” Rome said, eyeing the team members with a slight smirk.

“Seriously, I guess all they wanted was for us to come to a mutual understanding.”

“Exactly.”

Within a matter of minutes, Catherine was getting filled in on everything about the job and work that were at hand to complete.

Even after she and Rome left the conference room and headed back to her office, people kept marching in and out with documents and files.

“All done,” Catherine mumbled,

writing her signature on the paper.

“Is that the last one?” Rome asked, watching the excitement in her eyes.

Gathering the sheets in her hand, Catherine stared at him for a second and mumbled, “Yes. Now, all I gotta do is take them to Chloe's office.”

When she got done organizing them, she placed the document into a folder and held it in her hand. Then she grinned at Rome before leaving the office.

For a while, Chloe's attention was solely on her computer screen. Then she heard a knock on her door and her gaze swayed upward.

“Come in,” Chloe said, resting back in her chair.

The door opened and when Catherine walked in, a frown settled on Chloe's face. Then she rolled her eyes and

asked, “Why are you here?”

“To hand these over to you as grandfather requested,” Catherine said, approaching the desk.

Then she laid the papers on the desk with her gaze focused on Chloe's wide eyes.

“Are you okay? You look a little pale.” Catherine mumbled, staring at her cousin's mouth slightly opened.

“Get out,” Chloe mumbled in annoyance.

“What?”

“I said, ‘Get out!’”

Listening to her cousin's shallow breath, Bella frowned. Then she walked off the office, shutting the door behind her.

Several thoughts were spinning in Chloe's head, and they were sending

her anger off the chart.

Drunk with rage, she grabbed her phone, hastily scrolled through her call log, and dialed her cousin's number.

The sound of his ringtone pulled Charles's attention away from the document and onto his phone. Then he picked it up and answered the call.

“Guess what I have on my desk!” Chloe firmly asked, tapping her nails on the table.

“I'm not in the mood for stupid guessing games,” Charles said, hardening his face.

“Well, this one is not stupid because I have the documents on my desk with Catherine's signature signed on them!”

“What!”

“You said that you had it handled!”

Feeling a sense of anger coursing

through him, Charles scowled and said,
“I did!”

“Well, it doesn't look like you do!”

Chloe sarcastically said.

Frowning, he abruptly ended the call
and made another one.

“Morton! Tell me why my cousin was
able to submit the document when I
was pretty clear that she wasn't
supposed to do so!” Charles screamed,
squeezing his fist.

“Well, we all had a change of heart.”

“You better go back to my original plan,
or your wife will end up finding out
about your secret daughter.”

“That's not the worst thing that could
happen to me, and I'm speaking from
experience. Miss Catherine is my boss
now.”

“You double-crosser old piece of...!”

“Also if you tell my wife about my child, your grandfather might end up learning about your plans for your cousin. What do you think he will do to you this time?”

In a fit of rage, Charles threw his phone at the wall and shouted, “Do you think this is going to stop me! I'm going to drag you in the mud, Catherine! No matter what it takes! The top inheritor position is mine!”



Rever  Author

“
I wasn't expecting so much people to enough this novel. You all are amazing, and thanks a lot for the reviews, gems, and for paying to unlock the chapters. I appreciate you all a lot.
”

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Chapter Twenty-Nine

The loud music from his ringtone caused Rome to moan in his sleep as he slightly rolled over to his side, then his hand patted against the nightstand until he got a hold of his phone.

“One more minute,” Rome whispered, raising his eyelid before opening his other eye.

When he caught a glimpse of the name on the screen, he immediately got off the bed and headed into the bathroom.

He then rubbed his eyelids and let out a yawn before answering the call.

“Dad, it's six o'clock. What is this about?” Rome mumbled, clearing his throat.

“It's the weekend. You and I have a breakfast plan.” Mr. Ford's voice echoed from the speakers, sounding a

bit excited and a little annoyed.

“I know. But it's six.”

“How long does the morning last for?”

“From twelve a.m. to eleven fifty-nine a.m.”

“Good. Those entire hours are breakfast hours, so get your butt down here. I want to make use of the time I have to my advantage.”

“What?”

“Mr. Orlando is waiting for you. Meet him at your usual spot.”

Staring at the reflection of his tired face, Rome pulled his brows together in a frown and said, “This is what I get for promising a crook. I'm on my way.”

After he ended the call, the bathroom door suddenly opened, and Catherine walked in.

When their gaze met, she toyed with her hair and mumbled, “Was that Mr. Miller?”

“Uh? Yeah. It was my dad. He wants to have breakfast with me.” Rome said, avoiding her eyes.

“At six?”

“That was my exact question to him. But the older they get, the more problematic they become.”

“Do you want me to accompany you?”

“Umm... With your new position and the projects, don't you have a lot of work on your plate?”

For a moment Catherine wondered in her thoughts. Then she slightly frowned and mumbled, “True. But I can take some things off my schedule and catch up on them later.”

“I don't want you, multitasking and

stressing yourself up because of me,” Rome said, scratching his cheek.

“But...”

“How about we plan a visit to him when your schedule is actually free.”

“Sounds not exhausting, so yes. But extend my greeting to him, and tell him about our plan to visit him together.”

Chuckling softly, Rome gazed directly into her eyes and said, “Yes, I will do.” 1

“Don't forget. I don't want him to think that I'm a terrible daughter-in-law, and wear one of the clothes we got yesterday.” Catherine mumbled with a touch of shyness in her expression.

“Yes, wife.”

“Okay.”

At six-thirty Rome was seated in the backseat of a black Ferrari with Mr. Orlando sitting behind the steering

wheel. ①

The ride to Mr. Ford's mansion was a silent one, and once the vehicle came to a stop, Rome got down and headed inside.

The first person he met in the hallway was Mr. Ford, and when his father saw him, he shouted, “Butler Hobson, tell Harris to fire up the jet. My son is here.”

“Father, what's this about?” Rome asked, giving Mr. Ford a questionable look.

“Isn't it clear?”

“No, it's not.”

“We are having breakfast in the outskirts of the country! We can enjoy delicate food and beautiful sights.”

For a moment, Rome was lost for words. Then he shrugged and mumbled, “O-kay.”

A few minutes later, Mr. Ford and his son were seated in his private jet.

“Where are you going!” Rome shouted when he felt them lifting from the ground.

“To one of my ranches. The one I got your mother as a gift after she gave birth to you.” Mr. Ford yelled with a smile.

Within two hours and fifteen minutes, the jet landed on the plain field.

After the door opened, Rome walked down the steps, and a second later, Mr. Ford stepped out.

A car was already awaiting them, and as they walked towards the vehicle, the security opened the door. Then Mr. Ford got in followed by Rome.

Once the door got shut. The driver drove off, only to stop ten minutes later

in front of an enormous mansion.

The vehicle door opened, and Rome stepped out with a look of disbelief on his face as he stared at the multiple staff, standing outside.

“Dad, what is all this?” Rome mumbled, watching them bow and greeted, "Welcome master and young master."

“You live like a peasant at the Balows, but when you are with me, you will wine and dine like royalty.” Mr. Ford said, standing by his son's side. ¹

Then the both of them walked into the mansion and entered the dining hall.

After getting seated at the table, the doors opened and maids began walking from every direction, filling the table with dishes.

When they got done, it felt more like a feast than breakfast to Rome, and when

Mr. Ford stared at him, he mumbled, “Who else is joining us?”

“It's just you and I, son.” Mr. Ford casually said, picking up his knife and fork.

Then he paused as he gazed at Rome and asked, “How about you take the 2.5 billion resort project off this old man's hand? The work is becoming too much for my aging brain to handle.”

“You are fifty-six,” Rome mumbled, narrowing his eyes.

“That's still old. Look, before you denied my request. Listen to what I have to say first and if you don't agree with it, then you can refuse.”

“I'm listening.”

“This project is worth 2.5 billion dollars, and every top-notch businessman wants a slice of that money and to suck up to me.”

“O-kay,”

“Here's the fun part. The one who controls that project, wheels the mind of most of the powerful business tycoons in this country.”

A look of hesitation crossed Rome's face as he watched a sly smile crept onto his father's lips.

“You can hold that power if you agree to my proposal. Imagine the damage you can do to anyone that crossed your wife or you.” Mr. Ford said, cutting into his chicken before taking a bit of it.

“Fine. I can't rely on your name forever. It's time to build my network of power.” Rome said with a straight face.

The old-fashioned chamber in the east wing was occupied with the four cousins, and the atmosphere in the room was deadly.

“Why did you call this meeting?”

Richard asked, staring skeptically at Charles.

“Yeah, I got a date with a pretty thing later on, so can we speed this up,” Jeff mumbled with a frown.

Scowling at his two cousins, Charles took a moment to breathe, and then he said, “It's no secret that Catherine is becoming an obstacle for us.”

“Well, it's just you. So...” Jeff mumbled, trying his hardest not to laugh.

“And how long do you think it will take before her growth in the company starts to affect you all.”

“Well...”

“That's what I thought. You are scared, ain't you? Both of you are. And maybe this time it's Chloe and me, but who knows how many steps it takes for

Catherine to reach you two positions.” ¹

There was a long pause as Jeff and Richard glanced at each other. Then they stared at Charles.

“What are you suggesting?” Richard asked, feeling a bit reluctant.

“I say, we get her vote out of the vice president seat.” Chloe boldly said, taking a sip of her drink.

“But how?”

“Bribe or threaten every shareholder to vote her out.” ¹

 Comments

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Chapter Thirty

As the Barlow family had breakfast the atmosphere around the table was calm until Catherine and Rome walked into the dining room.

The sense of hostility was all the couple felt from some of the relatives.

But Catherine took her seat, pretending like she didn't see her cousins' hateful stares, her uncles' angry eyes, and their wives' cold expressions.

“Good morning,” Catherine mumbled, staring at her plate.

An echo of half-hearted responses from her uncles and aunts circled the table. Then she got a heartedly greeting from her parents, and a normal reply from both of her grandparents.

However, Chloe and the rest of the cousins maintained their silence and

continued to stare hatefully at Catherine.

“A pleasant morning to all,” Rome said, smiling at the family.

All he got as a response was total silence and icy stares.

“It would be a pleasant morning without you here. You are ruining others appetites.” Elijah mumbled, but loud enough for everyone to hear.

A faint sound of giggling echoed around the table, but Madam Rosey and Mr. Barlow played deaf ears to them.

“I got work early this morning at the construction site, so I begged to take my leave,” Rome said with calmness in his eyes.

“What's the use of announcing your leave when it's clear that no one wants you here!” William said, sounding annoyed.

Scowling at Rome, Chloe rolled her eyes and mumbled, “Except for Catherine. She seems to have fallen head over heels for this loser. Isn't that right, cousin?”

“Shouldn't I? After all, he's my husband.” Catherine mumbled, feeling not offended by her cousin's remark.

“Being proud to be the wife of a part-time construction worker is not cute, Catherine, it's humiliating since our entire family has to bear the shame along with you.”

“But he's doing his best. Shouldn't that count as something.”

A frown crossed Madam Rosey's face as she stared at Catherine and said, “Stop encouraging your husband especially since all he does for this family is nothing!”

“Sorry, grandmother.”

Sadness clouded Madam Rosey's eyes as she stared at her husband and mumbled, "Sometimes, I can't help, but blame us for marrying her off to him, knowing the disgrace it will bring to our family."

After coughing slightly, Mr. Barlow tugged at his collar and said, "We had to do what we had to do to keep my father's promise."

At that moment, his eyes met with Rome's calm face, and he scowled and coldly asked, "What are you still doing here?"

Without uttering a word, Rome walked away, striving not to laugh.

A few minutes later, he arrived at the old railway on lane street and got into a Mercedes-Benz packed on the side of the road. ¹

Then he stares at Mr. Orlando,

watching him from the V-mirror before gazing at the robust man sitting in the front seat.

“Who is he?” Rome asked, already having a guess.

“Your new bodyguard. He goes by the name, ‘K.’” Mr. Orlando said, turning the key.

“I don't need one.”

“Your father begged to differ.”

Feeling lost for words, Rome let the matter go, leaned back in his seat, and asked, “What's the agenda for today?”

“Your father is hosting a board meeting, involving the 2.5 billion dollar resort project. I'm to drive you to Hotel Deluxe for you to get changed, then our next stop is Crystal hotel.” Mr. Orlando said, stepping on the accelerator.

“Will there be reporters?”

“No. The meeting is secret, and the entire hotel has been cleared up. Only those who were invited by your father will be there.”

“Good.”

About forty-five minutes later, Mr. Orlando stopped the vehicle into the Hotel Deluxe parking lot and he and K escorted Rome into the 492 ft skyscraper.

Then he led him into the elevator, and at that moment, a lady tried to get in after them, but K blocked her way and said, “This elevator has been reserved, madam. Please use the other.”

Shock took over her expression as she tried to gaze past K to see Rome, but his cap and shade hid his face.

However, she kept staring until the elevator door slammed shut in her face.

When the elevator came to a stopped and its door opened again, Mr. Orlando along with Rome and K walked into the corridor.

Then they led Rome into an executive suite and came outside, giving him privacy to get dressed.

After waiting by the door for a while, it finally opened and Rome stepped out, wearing a blue slim-fit three-piece suit with his hair styled in a classic quiff, designer shoes, and a blue diamond watch.

“You ready, young master?” Mr. Orlando asked, staring down at the tile.

“Yeah, let's go,” Rome said, putting his cap on before wearing his shade.

A few minutes later, when he, Mr. Orlando, and K walked back into the elevator bay, they saw the same woman standing a few distances away from

them.

As they walked past her, Rome heard her mumbled, “Who could be so important that Mr. Ford allowed his right-hand man to escort him?”

Ignoring her remark, he slightly drew his cap downward and continued walking.

Finally, at ten o'clock, Mr. Orlando drove the car into the “Crystal Hotel” parking lot, and the three of them got down from the car.

When they arrived in the lobby of the hotel, Mr. Ford was already waiting for his son with numerous bodyguards standing guard everywhere.

A frown settled on Rome's face as he approached his father. Then he stopped a step away from him and mumbled, “What's with the securities?”

“I know before you got found by me,

you lived the life of a normal man. But now that you stand beside me as my heir, you are no ordinary man. This is your new life by my side.” Mr. Ford said, patting him on the shoulder.

Then he removed the cap off Rome's head and handed it over to one of the bodyguards before taking off the shade and passing it over to another guard.

Afterward, he brushed his palm against his son's hair and said, “Are you ready to own your spot beside me.”

A feeling of hesitation took over Rome for a second. Then he shook it off and said, “As ready as I'll ever be.”

The entire boardroom was silent as the board members gazed at Charles, Chloe, Jeff, and Richard.

After sitting in the quietness for a while, one of the board members slightly frowned and asked, “We gathered as you all requested. So what i

s this meeting about?

 Comments

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