

Chapter 12: The Will

"What are we waiting for? After all, there's no need for you to read the will. I already know its contents. Sara and Antonio have to leave for their honeymoon in the evening, and there are hundreds of things she has to prepare. She can't wait all day," Mrs. Lara Anderson complained to the paralegal who had been sitting with them in the conference room.

As the door to the room opened, the woman looked at the entrance with an inaudible sigh of relief. However, when William Doughby and Nora Williams walked in, she winced as Lara Anderson's high-pitched voice rang out, "Why is she here?"

Even Antonio and Sara, who had been sitting quietly until now, looked at the older woman with puzzlement. While Sara frowned, Antonio could only stare at her. She looked so different. The Nora he knew was always dressed in loose long-sleeved t-shirts and jeans. Yesterday, she had worn a dress for the reception, and he had been unable to stop himself from staring at her. He had convinced himself that it was because he felt guilty towards her, but this morning... she looked even more breathtaking than yesterday...

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"Mother? Why are you in such a bad mood? Why can't I be here? Sara is here? Even Antonio, who has nothing to do with our late grandparents, is here."

Lara Anderson seemed to realize that her mask of being a loving mother had almost slipped. She quickly stood up and hugged Nora.

Patting Nora's face, Lara spoke, "I am sorry for sounding so abrupt, dear. It's just that I wasn't expecting you here. I've also been so worried. You didn't even return home last night... Were you at your friend Isabella's place?"

"All you had to do was call, and you would know my whereabouts, mother," Nora replied stiffly.

An uncomfortable silence hung in the air as Lara stared at her daughter with narrowed eyes. There was something different about her today, other than the dress.

"Did you borrow Isabella's dress? You look very different... and not in a good way, sweetheart," Lara commented, intently studying her daughter as if trying to read her mind.

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Stepping away from Lara, Nora ignored the comment and instead replied, "Let's not waste Grandpa William's time discussing my fashion choices, Mother. Grandpa, we're all here, so let's begin."

This time, Lara's gaze was sharper as she turned to the man and directly questioned, "Why is Nora's presence needed? Sara is here to claim her inheritance. Nora can claim hers when she is ma... older."

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"Mother, Sara is younger than me, and she can claim her inheritance, but I can only do it when I am older. I want to know the terms of this will that my grandparents have left me."

SMACK

Before anyone could realize what would happen, Lara had already stood up again and slapped Nora across the face. "You rebellious child! When I already told you that there is no need for you to question me, you still do it! I see that you have forgotten your place."

Nora stared at the woman she had strived to please all her life and for the first time acknowledged the hatred in her eyes. She had always done her best so that her mother would look at her with anything other than loathing. The way she did when they were with other people. But she had only seen indifference. And now she saw the hate, and she committed it to her memory. Going forward, she would have to hold onto this memory so that she would not give in to her mother's coaxing.

"Aunty Lara, please step back. She wasn't being rebellious, just curious. Please." While everyone hesitated to move, Antonio stepped between Lara and Nora. He didn't glance her way but addressed the older woman, "It's

alright, Aunt. If... if I hadn't done what I did yesterday, she would have been the one rightfully sitting here, isn't that what you told me? Whether she knows the truth today or a few days later, it won't matter. It's not your or Sara's fault."

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That caused Nora to raise an eyebrow. So it seemed Antonio was also aware of these things, and she was the only one being kept in the dark.

A corner of her mouth twitched, and Nora commented, "What a wonderful moment. So, Mother, you can talk about your parents' will with outsiders, but when your own daughter wants to sit in, you abuse her?"

Lara charged forward again, but this time William Doughby was prepared and spoke up, "Let me remind you of where you are, Lara."

Once again, Lara's complexion changed, and she took a deep breath to compose herself. "Uncle Doughby, this isn't right. You might be the executor of the will, but you had no right to interfere in this. I had expressly made my wishes clear as the guardian of my daughters."

"But Lara, you aren't the guardian anymore. Both the girls are old enough to make their own decisions. The only person who isn't mentioned in the will at the moment and thus not required is... you. So, I suggest you sit down before I ask you to leave."

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Finally, after the admonition from the man, Lara settled down but continued to glare at Nora, whose face was now red and swollen.

William Doughby nodded to the assistant, who then got up with a nod. The next minute, an ice pack was handed to her, and a security guard was brought in to stand.

"Now, we're here today to discuss the execution of the will left by Mr. and Mrs. Anderson, Lara Anderson's parents. Due to their personal differences, they chose not to let their only daughter inherit the wealth but put it in safekeeping with our firm to be executed when their granddaughters turned twenty or got married, whichever came first."

birthday gift and I'll drop chapters as return favours! *Mwah* Love you all!

