



## 56 The world might not survive.

Arwen's brows furrowed in confusion. "What are you talking about, Anna? What bold step?"

"You don't know?" Gianna asked, clearly surprised. "Girl, have you even checked the internet this morning?"

"Wait a second. I will check" Arwen said, frowning as she put the call on speaker before pulling up the headlines. As she read, shock filled her, but she quickly shook her head, "My mother isn't behind this."

"It's not her, then who? Could it be your father?" Gianna asked, skeptical. For once she hoped Catrina Quinn had finally grown a heart and backed her daughter instead of blaming her for everything. But if it wasn't Catrina, then...

"Dad might consider doing something like this, but it's not him either," Arwen said, knowing full well that her father wouldn't dare without her mother's consent, and her mother wouldn't do anything that would highlight their name negatively. "But I think I know who did."



Gianna sighed on the other side of the call. It was like she already knew what Arwen was going to say next. "Wennie, Don't tell me it's Ryan-the jerk-Foster. He couldn't —" 1

"It's my husband," Arwen interrupted, cutting Gianna short.

"Out of the frying pan into the fire. Not any better." Silence lingered on the other end for a few seconds before Gianna cleared her throat to speak again. "You husband? The one you signed the certificate with two days ago?" 1

Arwen smiled and hummed in confirmation. "Yes, it's him." She sounded confident because she recognized the style —a low key but fast strike, hitting just enough to make an impact. Aiden knew how to land jabs that hit people exactly where it hurt, making them feel like they were suddenly in the depths of the hell.

"Ahem! Arwen, you sound too confident. You might not know him well enough after just a couple of days. Why don't you check with your father first? What if he confirms that it was him?" Gianna suggested, her voice laced with concern.





But Arwen lightly giggled, understanding her friend's worry.

"My husband is a good man, Anna. You don't have to be frantic about him. He would never hurt me or you. Even yesterday, it was him who helped me."

A small smile played on her lips as she remembered how Aiden had pulled her into his arms, shielding her from everyone.

Gianna's voice, though resigned, remained cautious. "You better not say any more, Wennie. It's only been one night, and it already feels like he has cast a spell over you. If you are right, and it really was him behind all this, we can't even fathom his power. He stirred up a quarter of the city without batting an eyelash—as if it only took a flick of his finger."

"Yeah, that's all it took," Arwen sighed. "Gianna, I am sorry I forgot to mention—he is—"

But before Arwen could finish, Gianna interjected, assuming the rest. "—a freaking royal! Arwen, take off your rose-colored glasses! You are utterly bewitched. If your husband told you he is royal, don't believe him. Royal don't



wander into the Civil Affairs office to get trapped in some hasty marriage of convenience."

"Anna, I wasn't—"

"Don't. I don't want to hear you another word about your infatuation. Let's end it here. We will see what your husband is really like when I come back next week. Until then, try not to fall any deeper under his spell." 3

With that Gianna hung up, leaving Arwen staring at her phone while rubbing her forehead. She had been about to say something, but the disconnected beep stopped her. Shaking her head, she set her phone aside, just as the door to the washroom opened.

She turned to see Aiden stepping out with a towel wrapped around his waist.

Her throat went dry, and she lost the track of the time as she stared at him, the moments slipping away unnoticed. She was only snapped out when his teasing voice reached her ears. 1

"Seems like I didn't disappoint you again." 1

Arwen blinked in confusion, not immediately





understanding what he meant. Aiden chuckled.

"Did you like what you see, Moon?" 2

Realization dawned upon her. She pressed her lips together, then stood up and walked toward him. Standing close to him now, she looked into his eyes, her gaze steady, devoid of awkwardness from before. "You cannot afford to disappoint me, Mr. Winslow. Especially after making all those promises last night. So, —" she trailed off, her fingers lightly grazing his chest. His skin felt velvety yet firm under her touch.

Aiden shivered slightly, and her confidence soared. A smirk curved her lips as she continued. "—you would better keep this up because I do like what I see. And I wouldn't appreciate it if I ever had to settle for anything less." 2

Aiden's eyes darkened with desire. Groaning, he swiftly grabbed her hand, pressing it flat against his chest. "You have already settled for me, darling. And I will do whatever it takes to keep you hooked. I definitely can't let my wife go astray," he murmured, pulling her closer until their breaths mingled, both of them equally unsteady.



"Did you do it?" Arwen asked suddenly, her voice soft, not offering much context to her question.

But Aiden didn't need any more explanation to understand what was going on in her heart or mind. Nodding, he accepted, "Yes. You are my wife. I couldn't let them slide away unscathed. They deserve worse, but since I didn't discuss it with you first, I kept it subtle."

"You stirred up almost a quarter of the city, and you call it subtle?" Arwen raised a brow. "I would love to know what your 'crude way' looks like." 1

"Pray that no harm ever comes your way that put me on the edge of using my crude way, Moon. The world might not survive," Aiden replied, and something in his gaze told Arwen he wasn't joking. His gaze was sincere and he meant every word he said. 8