

Becomes 138

Chapter 0138

Bill's POV

Taking a deep breath, I steady myself. "I understand your concern, Martin," I say, keeping my voice calm and confident. "But Max Laurent himself has talked about why I did what I did."

Martin Reed isn't having it. His brows knit together, and he grips the edge of the table. "Bill, it's not just about what Max said or didn't say. The problem is the bad publicity you've brought to the company. You punching a well-known fashion designer went viral. It's not something that just goes away with a few words. How can we be sure this won't keep affecting our credibility?"

The room falls silent, all eyes on me. I take a deep breath. "I should have addressed this sooner, but since you're all here, I want to apologize. I take full accountability for my actions. It was a mistake," I confess.

Some shareholders shift uncomfortably in their seats, others lean in, waiting for my next words. Sarah gives me a subtle nod from the back of the room.

"I shouldn't have let my emotions take over," I continue, my voice steady but remorseful. "I know that my actions have brought negative attention to the company, and for that, I am truly sorry."

I look around the room at the familiar faces. "I know many of you were here when my father ran this company. If there's one thing he taught me, it's to be man enough to make amends."

A few of the older board members nod slightly, their expressions softening. They remember my father's leadership, and I hope to earn their respect like he did.

Martin speaks up again, his tone softer but still firm. "Bill, I understand where you're coming from. Your father, William Sr., was a great man and leader," he says. "But we need to know—how are you going to fix this?"

I steady myself. "I appreciate that, Martin. To fix this, I've already started making changes. We've set up stricter conduct policies and improved transparency throughout the company. I've been talking directly to our partners to address this and assure them it won't happen again."

"I know actions speak louder than words," I continue. "That's why we're also launching new programs to strengthen our company culture and reinforce our

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values. We're committed to learning from our mistakes and becoming a better, stronger company."

The room is quiet, the tension slowly easing. "I'm dedicated to restoring our reputation and earning back your trust," I say, making eye contact with each board member.

"Alright, Bill. I appreciate your honesty and the steps you're taking. You've got my support," Martin says, smiling.

"Thank you, Martin," I reply, feeling a wave of relief. "I won't let you down."

As the meeting concludes, I start gathering my materials, satisfied with how things went. The shareholders file out, chatting among themselves, and the atmosphere feels lighter.

While I'm cleaning up, Frederick approaches me. "Quite a speech you did," he says, his tone neutral.

I look up, meeting his gaze. "I'm glad you think so," I reply, studying his expression for any sign of his thoughts.

"This is what I've been waiting for from you, Bill," Frederick continues. "You always seem to feel like you need to be the alpha, the tough CEO. But sometimes, you forget you're human too."

I nod, taking in his words.

"But today, I saw glimpses of your father in you," Frederick says, his smile growing warmer. "He would have been so proud."

I swallow hard, feeling a lump in my throat. "I hope so, Fred," I say quietly. "I really hope so."

Frederick nods. "And don't worry, I've decided not to sell my shares to your uncle. I believe in what you're doing here." He pauses, his smile widening. "Looks like fatherhood is doing you good, Bill."

I manage a small smile as some of the tension eases. "Thanks," I say. "I hope I can be as great a father as my dad was."

Frederick nods. "You're doing fine, Bill. Keep it up." With that, he turns and walks

away.

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As I finish packing up, Sarah approaches me, her face lit up with excitement. Her eyes are bright, and she's practically bouncing on her feet. [www.NoVelWoman.com](#)

"Bill, that presentation was a banger!" she says, grinning. "You nailed it."

I smile, feeling relieved. "I couldn't have done it without your help, Sarah."

Sarah raises her hand for a high five. "High five, partner!"

I look at her, confused. "I don't do high fives."

Sarah rolls her eyes playfully. "Come on, Bill. You just rocked that presentation. Live a little!" [www.NoVelWoman.com](#)

I sigh and reluctantly raise my hand. As our hands connect, she pulls back at the last second. "Too slow!" she laughs.

I chuckle and try again, this time managing to connect with a loud clap. "There, happy now?"

"Absolutely," Sarah says, still laughing. "Now let's get out of here and celebrate."

We head towards the exit and find Kevin just outside, looking pale as ever. I frown, concerned. "Kevin, where were you? Everything okay?"

He looks up, eyes weary. "Sorry, Mr. Richardson. I had a family emergency."

"Is everything alright?" I ask, my tone softening.

"Yeah, it's under control now. How did the presentation go?" Kevin asks, genuinely

curious.

Sarah jumps in, beaming. "Bill nailed it! Frederick is staying on board."

Kevin nods slightly. "That's great to hear."

"Come on, Kevin," I say, clapping him on the back. "We're heading out to celebrate. Join us at the restaurant?"

Kevin hesitates for a moment before nodding. "Sure, I'd love to."

she's always

With that, we all head out together. I wish Serena were here too encouraged me to do everything I can to keep my position in the company. [www.NoVelWoman.com](#)

I wonder how her interview went.