

## Chapter 42

### Confusions

"What do you mean, they were anonymous, Jared?" Bella planted her hands on the desk and slowly rose to her feet, whispers of her Wolfe slipping past her barriers enough for even this dunce human to perceive. Jared leaned back in his chair; eyes wide as he saw evidence of the predator lurking underneath Bella's skin for the first time. She never lost control of her beast - she was much too disciplined for that. But clearly she'd been too lax, given this human too much of her trust.

If the people she entrusted to keep her business running kept blatantly disregarding the delicate balance of rules she'd spent so long establishing, Bella could lose everything.

"Tell me, Jared. In what world do we let random civilians off the streets have complete anonymity under our roof. We're no better than a common brothel, if we can't keep track of who walks in and out of our doors!"

Jared looked frightened, and rightfully so. Anonymity was a privilege reserved only for the highest tier of the Green Light Club's clientele. Private rooms on the eighth floor could be discreetly reserved as long as the reserving guest disclosed which Alliance Pack they were from. Humans who qualified for a VIP reservation were only allowed membership after being vouched for by a current VIP member, who'd become their sponsor.

Rooms on the seventh and eighth floor were reserved for regular members, and lower floors strictly operated on a one-on-one basis, outside of the public play areas. There was no way some random group of sadists walked off the street and caused this much mayhem. Not unless Jared had royally fucked up.

"What. Did. You. Do?" Bella's voice rattled with barely suppressed rage. Didn't this fool understand that this wasn't just his job he was flouting - this was her life's work. "Did they pay you in cash, with a little extra on top to help expedite their membership."

Jared's head fell into his hands, "They paid upfront. And yes, in cash."

"That seems to be a reoccurring theme with you, and I don't know what the fuck you think it means. We have rules for a reason. Those rules are not optional. They do not become null and void just because someone throws a wad of money in your face, Jared."

"Am I going to lose my job?"

Bella let out a harsh bark of laughter, "You'll be lucky if that's all you lose after this. You don't even understand the breadth of the consequences your carelessness has wrought."

The man began to shake, so Bella took a deep, steadying breath, "How did they end up with Ava?"

He looked up, confused, "Ava? She wasn't supposed to be up there. None of the court were. They didn't even request an escort, that's why I didn't think it would hurt to let them pass."

"Well then, who was assigned to the room?"

Jared shrugged helplessly, "I-I don't keep track of the waitresses like that! Whoever's available usually goes. I don't even remember who was sent up."

Bella zeroed in on him, "But it was one of the waitresses?"

He nodded and Bella stepped around the desk, crowding into his space, "I need you to tell me which one, Jared."

He sputtered and Bella shook her head, shushing him, "You need to calm down, Jared. You've made some very powerful people very angry. If you hope to get out of this intact, I need you to remember which waitress you had sent upstairs."

Jared squeezed his eyes closed, straining to remember events that only took place the night before, "M-m-m...I'm pretty sure her name started with an M. Megan...Marissa?"

His breath left him with a shudder as his eyes flew open, "Madison!"

"Her name was Madison?"

He nodded emphatically. Bella frowned, something suddenly clicking into place within her mind. She looked back toward the office door, where she'd just passed a girl rushing out of what she'd thought had been this room. "Who was just in here with you?"

Jared's eyebrows drew downward, "I was alone until you came in."

Bella huffed out a breath and headed toward the door. "Find Madison and send her to my office. Immediately."

"W-what about me?" Jared called weakly.

"Hang tight. I plan to deal with you later."

The door to Bella's office creaked open, as a slight blonde girl slowly pushed her way through. Bella didn't stand to greet the girl, and she immediately clocked when the waitress saw the inaction as a challenge. Her entire demeanor switched on a dime - her shoulders going back, and her chin going up as she attempted to look down her nose at Bella from where she stood across the room.

"Sit, Madison." Her tone was firm, leaving no room for the girl to remark.

If there was anything Bella Sutton knew, it was how to deal with girls the like of this Madison. After all, she'd been in Madison's shoes once. Mistaking haughtiness for superiority. Nastiness for power. It had taken her years to develop the delicate hand for nuance required to truly sway others with just her presence alone.

This child was fumbling her way through the social stratosphere, desperate to become a big fish in a small pond. No doubt she had plans to leave the pond behind altogether, but all she'd accomplished so far was making a mess. Madison took her time walking across the room and taking a seat across from Bella's desk. When she finally did, Bella only looked at her. While Bella studied her, Madison grew increasingly uncomfortable, making it easier for Bella to determine her tells as the girl began to fidget.

"You're a student, if I remember correctly?"

Bella could tell that the girl usually took great care in attempting to hide her thoughts, but the sudden unassuming question was enough to make cause her to slip up, surprise peeking past her façade. "Mm...yeah." She said noncommittally.

"And you live on property. That must save you a mint on room and board. You have a lot of saving built up?"

Madison shifted, confused by her line of questioning, "Some."

Bella nodded, "What happened last night in Room 701."

All at once, Madison's shifting came to a stop. The abrupt change in topic was enough that she wasn't able to effectively hide how she scrambled for what to say next.

"I was called up there, but the dudes up there were looking for more than drinks, so they let me go."

"They let you go?"

Madison shrugged, "Yeah. Putting out isn't in my job description, so I had no reason to be there."

"And you didn't think to report that clients were making requests outside of their booking agreement?"

One side of Madison's upper lip twitched, a clear sign of her agitation, "Once again, not part of my job description."

"And volunteering other girls is?" Bella's voice became more heated, but she reigned in her simmering fury. "Part of your job description, that is."

Madison started becoming visibly distressed, cracking her knuckles on each hand with her thumb, one by one. "I don't know what you mean."

"Is that so?"

"Look, they said they got my name from somewhere, thought I'd be good for their little game. I-I don't know what that meant, but as far as I'm concerned, I'm here to sling drinks, not play anyone's games. So I left."  
"And that's the end of it?"

"Yeah," Madison practically spat. "That's the end of it."

It was apparent that the girl was lying. She might've liked to play the manipulative sort, but Madison wasn't much of a liar.

She wasn't worried, though. Bella already knew enough of the truth that Madison's shifty behavior all but confirmed the rest. For reasons that were her own, Madison had set up Ava. After being propositioned by the men, she'd declined and offered up Ava in her stead.

It was still a mystery why Madison he felt inclined to take that extra step to sell out another girl. Something that vile far surpassed the usual power plays that were inevitable when such banal things like money and prestige were in play.

It wasn't at all uncommon for court members to get into petty grudge matches over who got the best clients or could amass the most personal wealth. But those were quarrels common amongst the escorts. As a cocktail waitress, Madison ran in completely different circles. She had different motivations and goals compared to her court members...and if her 'putting out' comment said anything, she held no interest in joining their ranks.

Why then, would she feel the need to go out of her way to spite another girl, when she could have simply reported the group? And, even more baffling, how did she specifically end up in such a position? "Madison, you said someone recommended you to these men?"



She nodded testily, "Yeah, they said they'd heard that I was brave or something." She swallowed and shifted her gaze away, staring off into a corner, "W-whatever that means."

The girl was full of shit, but this disaster didn't start with her. They knew who set up Ava. Now the question was, who'd set up Madison?