


## Chapter 56

"My Dad wasn't always around. I told you that already," Adrian said. "The company came first before me and my mom. Even with my grandfather's scolding, my father was addicted to work and the success that came out of it: the money, the lifestyle, and the connections he made."

"As I grew up, my father's absence became a norm," Adrian reflected. "I became accustomed to it, almost like it was a part of our family dynamic. Of course, I was occasionally spiteful about it, but mostly, it left a void in my heart that I couldn't quite fill."

"I'd purposely offend him, saying things like, of course, you are not going. Why did I even ask? Right, you're married to your job," Adrian simulated the words he used to say to Anthony.

"Everything changed when Mom got sick," Adrian described, his voice trembling with the weight of the memory. "I was in high school, leading a sports camp in Dowel. I was the basketball captain, and Mom attended the final competition. She got sick after that. She thought she caught the flu from another parent who watched the game. Little did we know, it was the beginning of a nightmare."

"The flu-like symptoms progressed to pneumonia, and no matter how much money Dad spent on her treatment, she got worse and worse," Adrian recalled. 

"Dad blamed me for bringing Mom to Dowel. To forget my mom, he buried himself with more work and work." Adrian paused before resuming, "Whenever I asked for a parent, he would push me to Grandpa and Aunt Linda."



"I started getting his attention in ways he did not like. I might have caused a little trouble in high school," Adrian revealed.

Riley gasped. Her eyes rounded as she echoed, "A little trouble?"

"Yes," Adrian chuckled. "I skipped school and purposely failed some of my exams. Dad ended up going to the school's office. Finally, we spent time together, father and son."

"In the principal's office?" Riley asked.

"Yes," Adrian acknowledged. "Yes, we argued at the principal's office. It was my most memorable time with my dad. Later, though, he thought of a better solution to get me on track."

"I remember this part," Riley said. "He married Tonet."

"Right," Adrian confirmed. "Tonet was a widow. Fredrick was her son from her departed husband. I never really understood how she met my father, but I know she was also friends with my mom, maybe not close enough because I never knew her prior to getting involved with my dad."

"Anyway, Tonet turned out to be the perfect wife for my dad - the kind that took care of the troubles I caused at home or school," Adrian described. "She paid off our principal and my teachers. She hired many workers at home whenever I decided to throw a party."

"She made sure that my Dad did not have to lift a finger whenever I purposely rebelled," Adrian pointed out. She commanded the workers at home and did all the accounting for the house—like I said, she was a perfect housewife... but she was never my mother."

"While she took care of everything, she reported my willful actions and how I fought with Fredrick to my dad," Adrian said. "And she painted



Fredrick as the good, obedient, respectful boy."

"Fredrick was very good then. He followed my father's every instruction," Adrian added. "When I went to college, I realized my dad would never change. I further distanced myself from him. I no longer cared. I stopped causing trouble. However, by that time, Tonet and Fredrick had already won him over with their lies and phony affection."

"My father finally agreed to adopt Fredrick as his own - give him the name of a King," Adrian said. "They have gotten closer, especially since I left my father's mansion."

"Tonet could have made lies about you," Riley suggested.

"She did," Adrian admitted. "She exaggerated many things, and Dad believed her. He did not want to deal with me; he would rather believe Tonet and let her decide on everything involving me."

"I'm sorry, Adrian," Riley said. She pouted and pointed out, "But why did you have to be rebellious then?"

Adrian chuckled and answered, "I don't know, but that was the only way I thought of to get his attention. I was in high school, Riley. Forgive me for my lack of better judgment." 1

"Well, I'm glad we did not meet in high school," Riley teased.

"Hey," Adrian pinched Riley's cheek. He claimed, "I might have been rebellious towards my father, but I was still a good guy."

"Since Fredrick became the CEO, I think Tonet and her son have been slowly becoming complacent. They are now showing their true colors, and from what I hear, Dad and Tonet are now occasionally fighting," Adrian conveyed. "Dad has been questioning a few of Fredrick's



decisions."

"Why did Fredrick become the CEO in the first place, Adrian? I'm also curious about that," Riley asked.

Adrian told Riley about the company leak, "Our competitors imitated our future projects. So, the board took it against me despite not having solid evidence."

"Then," Adrian narrowed his eyes, saying, "They said that image was everything and having a crippled CEO was going to affect the company's dependability."

"How can they say that?" Riley objected.

"Riley, when the CEO position was decided, I still had a lot of treatments and was still deciding to take another operation. I was absent from work often and missed a few client meetings. I was experiencing long-term side effects from my pain medications. That added to their doubt on whether or not I was capable of being the CEO," Adrian described.

"And let's not forget, whether we like it or not, the stigma and discrimination towards people with disability exist," Adrian stated. "They expect so much from a CEO, and I did not meet their standards."

"With numerous business partners or shareholders who decide on the company, my vote and my grandfather's vote barely gave me an advantage. Even my father voted against me," Adrian said. "So, that's what happened. That was how Fredrick became the CEO... and is now... slowly ruining the company."

"That's just sad, Adrian," Riley said.

"So, I need to take matters into my own hands now," Adrian suggested. "



I need to take back what's rightfully mine. And you will help me."

"Me?" Riley chuckled. "How?"

"By being my strength, supporter, and loyal partner throughout this journey I am about to embark on... Marry, me, Riley," Adrian declared.

"I already said that I would," Riley answered before chuckling. "Adrian, I'll marry you."

"Good." Adrian pecked Riley's nose and said. "I just wanted to hear it again."

"Tomorrow, I have a surprise for you," Adrian declared.

"What is it?" Riley asked.

"It's a surprise," Adrian answered. "So, you will know tomorrow."

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The next day, Adrian reported to work, not as one of the directors but as a stand-in CEO.

He entered the office with Riley on his left and Abner King on his right. The first part of his day involved Adrian meeting the board of directors and the executives.

Adrian brought Riley into the meeting room, confusing everyone, including Riley. The man said, "Everyone, I'd like you all to meet my fiancée, Riley Allen. We are getting married this Wednesday."

While Anthony King was fuming from his seat, one board member asked, "Okay, and why does she need to be here?"





"Because Riley is now a shareholder. She holds five percent of shares, making her a valuable part of this company," Adrian revealed.

Hearing Adrian, Riley's head snapped in his direction. Her eyes rounded as she mouthed, 'I am?'



Lilhyz

Author

*June 11, 2024. Thank you for reading. I hope you love each chapter. Don't forget to send some love for this novel. Leave your review, comments, send gems or gifts. Kisses!*



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