



## Chapter 57

"This is the share certificate, and this is a copy of Miss Allen's identification and portfolio," Clint said while passing documents to the chairman of the board, Anthony King. The same set of documents was then passed to the rest of the shareholders and the executives.

"In 20XX, the National Jewelry Awards awarded Miss Allen the best newcomer jewelry designer," Clint proudly presented. "She used to be the jewelry designer at Brey Jewelry & Apparel Co. -"

"Brey? I have a few pieces from Brey Jewelry," one lady said with an exquisite look.

She showed Riley her diamond bangle and said, "This is one of my favorite pieces."

Riley smiled back at the lady and said, "Yes, I designed that, but my work with Brey is done, and I'm starting a new jewelry company with Adrian."

The lady's mouth rounded. She exclaimed, "Oh! No wonder I did not like the new designs at Brey. I was checking their website but could not decide to buy anything."

"Riley, this is Haley Johnson. She is one of our company shareholders and a recent board of directors member," Adrian introduced.

"It's nice to meet you, Riley," Haley greeted.

"Likewise, Miss Johnson," Riley said back. "I actually remember your name in our client list. I truly appreciate your patronization, but now that I am with a new company, I hope you will support me too. It's Adley & Co. We will have our grand opening this Saturday."



"I definitely will," Haley said with a smile. She gave the same regard to Adrian, and the man nodded.

Riley did not meet most of her high-end clients, so meeting one in that conference room was a pleasant surprise. Two executives, Director Gina Gibson and Director Noel West, welcomed Riley. Director Gina greeted, "Welcome to the company, Miss Allen. I also have some jewelry from Brey. It's nice to meet the former designer."

Gina showed her necklace, warming Riley's heart. Some other shareholders mentioned they bought a piece or two from Brey Jewelry, which pretty much lightened the mood around the room—just a little.

The conference room they were in was huge, and it accommodated twenty-five people, including a few assistants. About six or eight individuals seemed receptive toward Riley; the rest were uninterested. Tonet, Adrian's stepmother, was especially glaring at her.

"Now that I have introduced my fiancée, shall we start with the meeting?" Adrian asked, taking his place at the CEO's side of the table.

Abner gestured for Riley to join Adrian, and she complied, her heart pounding with a mix of nerves and determination. She knew she couldn't afford to appear weak. Adrian had made that clear. If she was going to survive in his world, fighting his battles, she needed to be strong.

Riley looked up, met many scrutinizing gazes, and smiled. She didn't cower or look away, maintaining eye contact until she had surveyed everyone.

"Good morning once again," Anthony King welcomed with a hint of displeasure. "As I mentioned in my last communication, Fredrick has been feeling unwell and was required to rest by his physician. That is why



he is not here. A temporary change in leadership is needed, which brings me to our main agenda." 1

Pointing to Adrian, Anthony announced, "My son, Adrian, will be the stand-in CEO in the next three months or until Fredrick can return to work."

"While Fredrick may not be here with us, he will be checking on Adrian's work from home, so rest assured, our CEO is still looking over the company," Anthony said.

With his chin up, Anthony added, "I will give the floor to Adrian."

Adrian took command of the conference room next. He highlighted his achievements as the director of the healthcare entity, "Over the past three years, I have brought The King's Medical Center to new heights. We have patients coming to us from all over the country, availing of premium treatment, and as a result, we are now the biggest revenue earner for the King's Enterprises." 2

"As you all can see, my disability did not hinder the success of The King's Medical Center. In fact, it thrived," Adrian firmly pointed out. "What did I do? I maximized the talents and skills of our employees. Aside from that, I measured and managed all cultural elements that drove performance."

Adrian was sitting in a wheelchair, yet it did not reduce the power he held. He was confident, and his voice was full of conviction. "Our construction company has failed over the years, yet we deny it. It is that denial that is stopping us from taking a more significant leap or an alternative course. As a leader, one should be innovative and open to new ideas."

"So, with me sitting here as your temporary CEO, here are my plans. The

city has many construction needs that only a few know, not even the owners. Who among you here worries about The Star Mall's East Wing?" Adrian pointed out.

Riley saw hands raising. She also thought that part of the mall could use a major renovation.

"It has a design fault, and many other buildings do," Adrian pointed out. "With that, I will assemble a new team to study construction errors and hazards within Halliport. We will present renovation proposals to these companies, keeping our work within our city. Aside from that, we will..."

Adrian spent an hour discussing all his plans, and Riley could slowly see how a few board of directors were impressed. They looked at each other, nodding. The others were enlightened as if they had never encountered such proposals. There were still some who remained indifferent, but that did not bother Riley. She knew Adrian would eventually impress them all.

"Lastly, I plan to collaborate with other construction firms, such as ACE Construction," Adrian added.

Silence suddenly fell upon the room. The director of the construction company, Director Brett Monroe, scoffed and remarked, "Good luck with that. They wouldn't respond to any of our requests. We already tried."

"You tried, but I am a different person." Adrian leaned back in his wheelchair and claimed, "I have a better approach."

\*\*\*

Heartbeats later.

"What were you thinking, Adrian?" Anthony raised. "And why are you getting married so quickly?"

Adrian's announcement of their marriage plans caused a stir in his family. After Adrian was introduced as a stand-in CEO to the board and executives, Anthony requested his presence at the chairman's office. Naturally, Riley was dragged into the room. 1

Thankfully, Abner was there to support Adrian and Riley.

"I love Riley. She loves me, so we want to be a family," Adrian said. "I see nothing wrong with that."

"She only loves your money!" Tonet snapped at Adrian. "Can't you see it?"

"Like you love my father's money?" Adrian shot back, making Tonet redden in anger.

"I'm sorry, but Riley isn't like that," Adrian defended. "Nothing you say or do can make me change my mind."

"How could you not consider me?" Anthony asked. "I am your father?"

"Were you?" Adrian narrowed his eyes. "If you look at the definition of a father, Dad, it means a man in a relationship with his child, but do we even have that? A relationship?"



Lilhyz



Author

June 12, 2024. Chapter 1-2.



33