

Chapter 64

"What?" Tonet frowned. She looked around at the empty tables and chairs. "What's going on?"

"Where is everybody?" Fredrick asked, and even her friend, Lucy, expressed the same.

"Tonet! Where have you been?" Anthony's voice cut through the silence on the right side of the ballroom. Tonet's eyes darted to the small gathering and identified Adrian, Riley, Abner, Clint, two board members, and a few unfamiliar faces. "I have been calling you!"

Tonet's eyes landed on the used empty plates. When she realized the gathering was over, she asked furiously, "How can the dinner be over?"

"You were late, stepmother," Adrian curtly said from afar.

Tonet knew they were late. That was the plan, but how could everyone be already gone? She expected to humiliate Riley in front of fifty guests, not a mere group of ten people!

"The engagement dinner started at five in the afternoon. So, of course, the celebration is over!" Anthony pointed out. "Some guests were asking about your presence, and I said you were coming late, but you ended up showing up when dinner was literally over!"

"The dinner was at five?!" Tonet screamed. She fished from her phone and looked at the invitation that Clint sent her. She said, "It says here that dinner is at seven!"

Clint quickly approached them and said, "Mrs. King, you might be mistaken. It's 1700 hours. So, it's five."

"It is 1700 hours," Anthony pointed out. He frowned and scolded Clint, "But whoever made this digital invitation could have made it clearer."

That was because the number 1 had a glyph design. Anyone looking at it may not notice it was part of the time. Tonet yelled, "Who sends an invite using military time?" 

Clint shrugged and said, "The planner did everything, Sir. I can only blame it on the last-minute planning." Clint bowed at Tonet and apologized, "I'm sorry, Mrs. King. It was an honest mistake."

Tonet gritted her teeth. She may be late, but she could still bring Riley down. She said, "Okay, we are late, but like they say, better late than never."

Shifting to her friend, she introduced, "Anthony, this is my friend, Lucy Smith. Lucy, this is my stepson's engagement party. That's Adrian and his soon-to-be wife, Riley."

She winked at Lucy, giving her friend the cue. Deep inside, Tonet was burning in rage. She had always had difficulty reading military time. 'Could Adrian have done this on purpose? Was this all a scheme for me to miss the engagement party?'

"Riley?" Lucy began. "She sounds familiar. Could she be -"

"Lucy, Lucy Smith, right?" Adrian cut her off. He moved his wheelchair closer to Tonet's friend and said, "I'd like to introduce you to someone."

He called a younger man in his early twenties and said, "This is Blake. He is part of the team arranging our wedding. He says you know each other? He is your ballroom instructor?"

Instantly, Lucy choked. She covered her mouth and quivered, "Um - um -"

"

"A word, Mrs. Smith," Adrian said, directing Lucy to another table.

"What's going on, Adrian?" Anthony asked.

"Nothing you should be concerned about, Father," Adrian replied.

Everyone watched as the woman, Lucy Smith, followed Adrian to the distant table. The next thing Tonet saw, Lucy was rushing out the door with the ballroom dancer.

Far from the crowd, Adrian singled out Lucy Smith, his stepmother's friend. Blake followed behind them.

"You are here to shame my fiancée? I can do the same to you," Adrian claimed. "Is there any shame in being a divorcee?"

"What?" Lucy was stunned.

"You know the Martins, right? So you know very well that Brian left Riley for another woman," Adrian said with clenched jaws. "So, let me ask you again, is there any shame of being a divorcee?"

"No - no," Lucy responded.

"You know what's more shameful, Mrs. Smith? Having an affair with a younger man. Should I call your husband?" Adrian coldly asked.

Lucy gasped, and she snapped at Blake. She stuttered, "How -"

"I'll always be two steps ahead of anyone who wants to hurt my woman," Adrian declared angrily. "My advice is, don't meddle in other people's

affairs because you might dig a hole you can't get out of."

"Oh, my god!" Lucy got up hurriedly and left. Blake followed after her.

"Adrian! What did you do?" Tonet charged at him this time. Her face reddened as she questioned, "Did you insult my friend?"

"Ah, stepmother. I also have a friend to introduce you." Adrian turned to the group of people who lingered in the ballroom and pointed at a woman with red hair.

"That is Felicity Georg. She is an insurance agent," Adrian enunciated. "Did you forget her? She was the same agent who facilitated your husband's insurance policy. Remember how you got five million dollars after your healthy husband mysteriously died of a heart attack?"

Instantly, Tonet gagged. Her face turned white as snow. She gazed back at Adrian in shock. She asked, "What are you trying to imply, Adrian?"

"I'm not implying anything, but your reaction wants me to look further," Adrian said.

Yet again, Tonet huffed. Her nose flared as she reacted, "How dare -"

"How dare you ask around about Riley? Clearly, you are up to no good," Adrian said. "What were you trying to do? Dig dirt on my fiancée? Riley has none. And even if she had flaws, would it compare to yours? If I dig dirt on you, what would I find, Tonet?"

When Adrian was younger, he made the mistake of not keeping tabs on his stepfamily and not looking into them. However, since he suspected Fredrick had something to do with his accident, he now had men occasionally follow them. That was how Clint found out that Tonet had been investigating Riley.

"Back off," Adrian warned his stepmother.

"What?" Tonet asked.

"I said back off," Adrian repeated. "Don't even think of hurting a strand of Riley's hair. I don't care what you say about me to my father, but trying to insult Riley is another story."

"You want to tell my father that Riley had recently divorced? Don't make a big drama out of it," Adrian reprimanded. "Are we clear?"

"C-clear. No drama," Tonet said. She retreated but came back to declare, "And my conscience is clear about my husband's death. He died of a heart attack, and that's it!"

"Again, your reaction says otherwise," Adrian said while squinting.

"Adrian, what's going on? I'm getting tired of the two of you fighting," Anthony said, walking towards them.

"There is something you need to know about Riley," Tonet said.

"Tonet," Adrian spoke, his teeth set firmly.

"You said no drama, so I'm going to tell your father outright," Tonet said daringly. She turned to Anthony and revealed, "I just found out that Riley is a divorcee, and it has not been long."

"I'm just worried, Anthony, that they are quickly jumping into this marriage without properly evaluating their feelings. So, I just had to tell you," Tonet said. She rested her hand on her chest and added, "I only have Adrian's best interest at heart."

Adrian watched as his father raised his chin. Anthony heaved a sigh and

said, "I - I already know."

Earlier, when the engagement party started...



LiLhyz



Author

*June 14, 2024. Chapter 2-2. Thank you for waiting.
As always, thank you for the love and support. The
next chapter is tomorrow.*

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