

## Dating 69

### Chapter 69

When the doors swung open, it was like stepping into another world. My eyes couldn't believe what they were taking in. The banquet hall was even more extravagant than the rest of the mansion. More extravagant than what my imagination could have ever come up with.

My breath caught in my throat

Crystal chandeliers hung from the high ceilings, casting a warm, golden glow over the massive room. As we walked in, I could hear our steps echo throughout the cavernous room.

The walls were adorned with amazing tapestries, and even more art that clearly looked expensive. I was sure that I saw some original work from the early 1900s by artists that I had learned about in art class and museums.

A long table in the center was covered with an array of the most decadent food I had ever seen. The food looked too good to eat. It was almost as if the food looked fake, like if I touched it, I would find out that it was plastic put there specifically as a form of staging,

The entire place seemed to sparkle, it was all just so unreal.

My jaw dropped "Wow," I whispered, unable to hide my amazement, I knew that I should probably try to contain my amazement. I was sure that Aaron was looking at me, trying to figure me out. Figuring out a way that he could use this little excitement of mine as a way to control me later on, *www.nóvélwóřm.Com*

But I couldn't help it. I had never seen anything like the Winslow mansion in real life,

Liam, however, looked totally unimpressed. His grip on my hand was still tight as he led me to our seats. Aaron gestured for us to sit at a small table set apart from the main spread. It was intimate, like this was a private family dinner rather than a grand banquet.

Liam pulled my seat out for me like a true gentleman, and I sat down. Liam then took a seat in the chair right next to me.

Aaron took his seat across from us, his eyes never leaving Liam, Please, make yourselves comfortable," he said, his tone almost cordial. "This is a chance for us to get to know each other.

Liam shifted in the seat stiffly, his posture rigid. "You should have thought about getting to know me years ago, he said coldly. "I don't owe you anything"

Aaron sighed, a look of regret passing over his Lace Tunderstand your anger, Liam. Believe me, wish that I hadn't waited so long to make this introduction. To bring you here."

"Oh, sure." Liam said.

Tm not lying to you. And I'm not trying to make excuses. But, I just want you to know that there were me to be in your life sooner. For that I am sorry and I will not ever forgive myself for this." *wwW.nóvélwóřm.čr@*

circumstances that made it impossible for *ww@.nó(é)élwóřM.Co(m)*

Liam's eyes narrowed. "Circumstances? What kind of circumstances could possibly justify abandoning your own child?"

Aaron hesitated, and for a moment, I saw a flicker of vulnerability in his eyes. Then his eyes went impassive again. I could tell that Aaron was used to controlling his emotions like this. He was clearly a king of maintaining composure.

"There are things I can't talk about right now. But you have to believe me, Liam. If I could have been there, I would have

Liam scoffed. "Sure. Whatever helps you sleep at night"

Aaron leaned forward, his expression earnest. Liam, you are the undeniable heir to the Winslow family. Our legacy, our fortune—it's all yours. But with that comes responsibility and danger. There are factions within the family who will not be happy about your return. They will come after you.

Liam's eyes flashed with anger. "That's your problem, not mine. And trust me, I can take care of myself. I haven't agreed to join your family, and 1 don't want any part of your fortune. My dream is to become a professional hockey player, and I don't need your money for that,

I looked at Liam, so proud of him for standing up to Aaron like that. I knew that Aaron was going to try to trap Liam with money. Because, really, hadn't he always done that? He had been supplying Liam with money for years secretly. It was his way of doing things *wwww.n(ó)vélwóř(m).(ó)ôm*

But finally, Liam was showing Aaron that just because he came with money, that didn't matter. Liam couldn't be bought. Aaron's expression turned serious. "Trust ine, Liam, you will need the family's power to protect yourself and those you care about. Whether y like it or not, you're a Winslow, and that comes with certain obligations."

"Fuck you," Liam spat. "Don't act like you! matter, you aren't my dad"

or you know me or what's best for me. You may technically be my father, but in reality, in all the ways

Aaron held up his hands in a placating gesture. "Tii sorry if I overstepped. I just want you to understand the stakes. And that includes understanding the role Ella will play in this."

vs that

you

Until now, Aaron had barely acknowledged my presence, and it was starting to make me feel like an accessory rather than a person. Liam seemed to pick up on this, his eyes narrowing at Aaron. "You dragged Ella here and now you're ignoring her. If you think for a second that I'm going to let you disrespect her, you're sorely mistaken.

Aaron turned to me, a polite smile on his lips." Please Ella, forgive me for being rude. It wasn't my intention to ignore you. You seem like a lovely young woman. I can see why my son is so taken with you. And while you may not realize it, you're already a part of this fight."

My heart raced. "What do you mean?"

Aaron leaned back, his gaze piercing "Liam's association with you makes you a target. The fact that he cares for you means that my enemies will see you as a way to get to him. That's why I wanted to meet you, to see if you have the strength to stand by his side in what's to come."

I swallowed hard, the weight of his words settling over me. "1... I don't know if I'm strong enough."

Liam immediately squeezed my hand. "You are. Ella. Don't let him scare you."

I want y

Aaron's eyes softened slightly. "I'm not trying to scare you. I just comes danger. You need to be ready for that."

you to be prepared. The Winslow family is powerful, but with that power

The room fell silent, the tension thickening the air. I glanced at Liam, his face set in a determined frown. Aaron was right about one thing: this was a fight, and I was already a part of it, whether I liked it or not.

Aaron's voice broke the silence. "Liam. I know you don't trust me, but you have to believe that I want what's best for you. For both of you. I want to protect you."

Liam shook his head. "You had your chance, Aaron. And you showed that you didn't give a fuck my entire life. What makes you think that I should believe you now?! You know what, fuck this shit. Ella, he's just going to keep playing games with us. Let's get the hell out of here"

Liam stood there and walked right out of the hall without a barkward glance.

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