

Delivery of Fate by Danny Blanchard

Chapter 2

To everyone at the table, this came as a complete surprise. Everyone knew that with the help of the Andersons, the family would soar to the top known families in Swanville, California.

Steve was the young master of the Anderson family; he was to be the next CEO of their real estate company and heir to Anderson's fortune. Who wouldn't want him to be their grandson-in-law? Everyone was whispering to one another, unable to believe what the head of the family had said.

"Grandfather, why? He's competent; he can bring many benefits to the family if this union can be...." Said Claire, almost in tears. She worked hard to pursue this family union, bringing her more benefits into the family's good graces and using this opportunity to get ahead in the company.

A young man sitting opposite Claire smiled. He was jealous of Claire's influence on the family; she and her sister were always his grandfather's favorite. He was Henry Weston, Claire's first cousin, and she and he were always rivals.

"Silence! I have made my decision. You are not to see that man again; do I make myself clear?"

"This can't be, husband. Talk to your father. This has to be a misunderstanding." The woman next to the gentleman next to George whispered in surprise. She is Terrie Weston, and she always valued status over anything.

"Father, is there a misunderstanding? I'm sure if we discussed this union with the Andersons." Replied the gentleman next to George. He is Quinton, the first son of George.

"Yes, father, I'm sure there is a misunderstanding, as Quinton just stated. There has to be a marriage for Claire; she's not getting any younger. How could you be so defiant against this union? Think of the family and its future." Said Julie Weston, almost in tears, the second child of George.

"Enough. If there has to be a marriage, I'll provide a suitable and more capable person for her." George then looked Blake up and down and then smiled.

'What is this, the old Middle Ages? They let the grandfather choose who and who not to get married to? It's a good thing I left my family; it would have been the same for me. To get ahead in the family, I probably would have had to marry into one of the larger families as prestigious as ours, never considering my feelings or the woman's.' Thought

Blake to himself, not paying attention to the rest of the conversation until he finally took interest when he was mentioned.

“Someone more capable? Grandfather, I don’t know who could be more capable than Steve Anderson. Who could you be more interested in, this delivery guy? Please.” Said Claire rolling her eyes with a half-joking tone.

“That’s an excellent idea. Son, what do you think?” Asked George Weston, who was looking at him with interest.

“What, what do you mean? Look, all I want to do is finish our transaction so I can return home.” Blake looked at George and the rest of the family, who looked at him, astonished.

“Have you married already?” Asked George, looking at him more curiously.

“Married? No. There’s no time for dating, much less marriage, and no one wants to date a delivery guy who only amounts to a thousand a week in payment.”

“Okay, then it’s settled. You will marry my granddaughter tomorrow.”

“What? Grandfather, no, I refuse!” shouted Claire looking like she would cry.

“I also refuse!” Yelled Julie Weston slamming her hand onto the table and rising from her chair.

“If you refuse, you and your daughters will be disowned and no more funding for the three of you. I hear Tabitha is doing well in college; how will you pay for her tuition and your expensive lifestyle? I’ll kick you three to the curb tonight!” George yelled back, not letting mother or daughter dispute any longer.

‘This old man, how could he do such a thing? My daughter can bring wealth and power to the family, and he wants to throw it away to this bumkin? No, I can’t allow it.’ Thought Julie Weston as she sat back down.

“Father, be reasonable. Claire has a good relationship with....” Started Julie in a smoother, softer tone, thinking she could get onto her father’s good side, pretending to be girly like she used to do to get her way.

“Another word from you, and your daughters will be thrown out into the streets this instant!” George would not have it; Julie could always sway her father, but he was adamant about his decision this time.

Julie had no choice in the matter but to shut her mouth at that time. Claire was crying next to her with her hands on her face to cover the shame.

"Mom, don't let this happen. I worked so hard to get Steve even to acknowledge me." Cried Claire turning into her mother's bosom.

"I know, but what are we supposed to do? If we upset him, we will be paupers on the street begging, worse off than that delivery man." Replied Julie, all the while trying to comfort her daughter by putting Claire's head deeper onto her chest like she used to do when she was little. "Look, that man still hasn't said anything; maybe he will refuse, and we will survive this night."

'What the hell, this old man wants to give his granddaughter to me? Although she's a beauty, she's a bit of a snob. No, I have to refuse; this will only bring others into the enemies' hands. There is no way that I can burden anyone with my problems.' Thought Blake to himself, astonished over the turn of events.

"Sir, with all due respect, I don't want to marry your granddaughter. I don't even know her; I just met her in the foyer tonight." Said Blake protesting. How could he just up and get married to a woman he hardly even knows?

Hearing this, Claire looked up with tears streaming down her cheeks to the man that was her only hope.

"What do you mean you don't want to marry my granddaughter? She is a gorgeous woman; what is there to not want? She is talented, has money, and comes from a prestigious family. What is there that any man would want?"

"Love. What of her having the right to choose the man she wants to love?"

"Rubbish, when I married my wife, God rest her soul, it was an arranged marriage. We lived together and had three boys and one girl. What did love have to do with it? I'm telling you now, you will be marrying my granddaughter tomorrow morning, or I will make your life a living hell. No one will hire you after I'm finished with you. You will live out the remainder of your life on the streets begging, no matter where you run to." Said George Weston looking at Blake with stern eyes.

Shocked at what he had just heard, Blake had to think of a way out of this but couldn't. He could return to his family, but his enemies are great; maybe he would bring disaster back to his family, but he couldn't do that.

"Sir, these conditions are a bit harsh. I'm being forced into a marriage I don't want and forcing your granddaughter to do the same; there is no room for compromise?" Pleaded Blake one more time.

"I'll tell you what, agree to marry her, and I'll write out a marriage contract. If you two don't fall in love within three years, the marriage will be annulled, and you will be free of all obligations. If you fall in love with each other, you will make this grandfather very happy. What do you say the both of you?"

"After three years of marriage, it will all be annulled? Like it never happened?" asked Claire wiping her tears. "I guess it can be arranged, but with what conditions? I want the final say."

"Yes, yes, what say you, Blake? Do you still protest this arrangement?" Asked George.

'I would be a live-in Son-in-law, living off of my wife and her family. At least she's a beautiful woman, and she needs to be knocked down a few notches with her arrogance and snobby ways.' Thought Blake to himself. 'This could be a blessing in disguise, I can continue being low profile, and no one would be the wiser, and after three years are up, I just up and leave.'

"What benefits do I receive if the marriage fails after the allotted time?" Asked Blake raising his head, being he's going to be the one to live with this snobbish woman, there has to be something for him.