

## Desires DH 161

### Chapter 161

It was noon. The sun was a bright blinding glare in the sky shining down on Orchid Vale Country Club, an exclusive country club and golf course for the rich and famous.

Anya had been compelled to join Evan for a game of golf at the country club.

They stepped into the lavishly decorated establishment.

Instantly, uniformed staff and caddies rushed forward to receive Evan with a warm welcome.

Anya had arrived at the country club alongside Evan.

Hence, it didn't matter who she was.

She received the same cordial reception. The staff of the country club treated her with such friendliness that she found herself slightly overwhelmed by their enthusiasm.

Luckily, Evan did not require her to do anything after they had arrived at the country club. All she had to do was get on the golf cart, take a seat and be driven to a vast stretch of leveled, green lawn.

Evan got out of the golf cart as soon as they arrived at the golf course.

The caddie, with the bag of golf clubs and golf balls slung over his shoulder, trailed the young man closely like a second

shadow

Anya didn't know how to play golf. She ended up trailing after them slowly.

It was a really warm day.

The glaring harsh sunlight spilled across the golf course and cast a harsh brightness across the green lawn. Anya's forehead was beaded with sweat.

Evan had already begun his first game.

Anya stood a distance away as she observed the game. After some time, she couldn't take the heat any longer. It was simply too warm outside. She desperately needed a break and some shade.

As the young woman was walking away, a white golf cart sped past her and nearly knocked her down. Anya steadied herself before continuing her way towards the shade. The white golf cart stopped without any warning.

A young man got out of the golf cart.

The man froze momentarily at the sight of Anya. A smug look appeared on his face the next second. It had been a year. He had not expected to see the woman who had cuckolded him.

What a coincidence.

Zachary stared frostily at Anya before moving right into her path. Malice dripped from his every word. "Anya, what are you

doing in a place like this?"

"This is where rich folks hang out. I heard you were driven out of the MacMillan family. You've lost the right to be here."

Anya hadn't realized whom it was who was standing in her way when she had looked up. Surprise rippled across her eyes. She had not expected to run into her ex-fiancé here. They had broken off the engagement.

She wasn't interested in talking to the man.

She threw him a cool look before walking away wordlessly.

Zachary wasn't having any of that. His family had forced him into a marriage of convenience with Anya a year ago. But what had come of it?

Nothing but a humiliating affair. His fiancée had fallen into bed with another man.

It had humiliated Zachary

Luckily, he had broken off the engagement quickly. The thought of being married to such a loose woman turned his stomach.

But that didn't mean that he was over the fact that she had cuckolded him! He still wanted payback for what she had done

to him.

"Anya, have you hooked up with some rich guy?" Zachary caught Anya's wrist and eyed the woman's pretty face. Beautiful women were nothing but trouble. "Is that what you're up to now? Prostitution?"

"You're the prostitute, not me!" Anya detested insults to her character. Zachary's words infuriated her instantly. She tried to tug her wrist free.

"How dare you insult me? Who do you think you are? The Virgin Mary?" Zachary was seized by the impulse to humiliate the woman in public. "Who knows how many men you've fallen into bed with? Stop that virginal act of yours!"

“Let me go, Zachary.” Anya wasn’t interested in starting an argument with the man. “I’m going to yell for help if you don’t let

me go.”

“Go on and scream for help. Let me see which rich guy you’ve hooked up with now.” Zachary was from a rich family too. He wasn’t afraid at all. But he hadn’t expected to hear a loud thud as soon as he had spoken.

Nor did he expect a golf ball to hit him squarely in the leg.

Zachary howled in pain and released his grip on Anya instantly. The young man clutched his leg, fell to the ground, and began wriggling in pain.

Amidst Zachary’s pained yowls, Evan appeared with a golf club in his hand. He stared down at the other young man. His voice was as harsh as winter. “Don’t let me see you put your hands on Ms. MacMillan again. You’re going to get hit by something a lot harder than a golf ball.”

The promise of pain was clear in Evan’s eyes. The man was threatening to hit Zachary with the golf club next.

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Evan’s voice was cold and intimidating.

Zachary clutched his injured leg. The spot that had been hit throbbed with pain. He was reeling in shock and agony alike. “Mr. Welton... how could you...”

Had Anya somehow earned Evan’s favor?

But he knew what had happened a year ago. He knew that Evan hadn’t cared for her at all.

In fact, he had hated Anya for what she had done to him.

He had no idea what was going on right now.

Zachary was bewildered. He was of the firm impression that Evan would detest Anya for tricking him into bed. But that didn't seem to be the case. It seemed impossible.

Had Anya tried to win Evan's favor after that incident?

Had her beauty caught Evan's eye? Perhaps the young man was simply looking for a good time.

After all, Anya had been known for her beauty in their circle.

Zachary couldn't stop wondering. What would make a powerful man like Evan step in and come to Anya's rescue? Why would Anya, a young woman who had fallen from grace, turn up at a golf club frequented exclusively by the rich and famous? There was only one answer that could explain everything.

Despite the year that had passed, Evan had never forgotten how beautiful Anya had been.

Anya for hi

The man had decided to keep Anya for himself.

Waves of disgust and abhorrence threatened to pull Zachary under. He couldn't believe it. The woman had tried to put up an act earlier and pretended to be some chaste saint like the Joan of Arc.

How dare she deny that she was a prostitute selling her services?

Just look at what was going on here. The truth spoke for itself.

How dare she lie to him... she should be proud of herself. Not every prostitute had the opportunity to render their services to a rich and powerful man like Evan Welton.

Honestly, she was quite the actor.

While Zachary was sprawled on the ground and clutching his leg in pain, a young woman who looked like a student still in college hopped out of the golf cart ahead of them. She had seen Zachary fall.

She came running immediately. The young woman tried to help Zachary up. "Are you alright, Zach?"

"Get away from me," the man growled as he shoved the young woman away. Zachary was a proud man. He didn't enjoy looking bad in front of women.

struggled as he clambered to his feet.

As soon as he got to his feet, Evan was speaking again in a voice as cold as winter. "Mr. Marshall, you were talking about me a moment ago. Do you have anything you would like to tell me?"

The man pulled Anya to his side and then put himself between the young woman and Zachary. His towering form shielded Anya from the latter.

It was as if he was trying to stop her from giving the other man a second look.

Anya was his.

The streak of possessiveness deep in his bones compelled the man to drive away any man who shared the barest relation with Anya.

That included the man whom she had been formerly engaged to.

Evan's protective streak was as stark as day. It cleared whatever suspicions that had been clouding Zachary's mind. He had been right

Anya, that loose woman, had gotten romantically entangled with Evan.

She was really something. She had put on such an act when they had been engaged and feigned virginal innocence. Look at what she was doing now! She was putting herself up for sale.

What an accomplished actress the woman was.

Zachary muttered a string of vicious, malicious curses under his breath. None of that showed on his face though. He had a plastic smile plastered on his face. "It's a misunderstanding, Mr. Welton. Just a misunderstanding."

He wasn't a match for Evan. He wasn't going to make an enemy of the man.

But he wasn't going to let Anya off that easily for cuckolding him.

It didn't help that the man whom she had fallen into bed with had just humiliated him in public.

There would come a day when Evan tired of Anya.

When that day came, he would drag her back to his mansion and have his way with her.

Then, he would cast her aside when he tired of her as well.

He swore he would do it. That was the only way to make Anya pay for being unfaithful to him.

see you in this country club ever again, do

“I’m glad it’s just a misunderstanding. Get out of the way then. I don’t want to you hear me?” Evan couldn’t be bothered to waste his time on a small fry like Zachary.

His voice was as cold and as unyielding as a glacier.

The air the man young exuded was of distance and overbearing authority.

Anya felt it. The young college student whom Zachary had brought to the country club found herself drawn towards the other young man too.

Her bright eyes stared dreamily at Evan.

She couldn’t help but think him handsome and powerful.

Zachary couldn’t compare to the man at all. He was just a loser.

Zachary was a brute as well. She hadn’t forgotten that the man had shoved her aside a moment ago.

The college student couldn’t help herself as she compared the two men. They were worlds apart. Evan seemed like such a hunk. Her eyes were bright with adoration as she gazed at Evan.

She was a step away from asking Evan for his number.

While the college student was busy making eyes at Evan, Zachary was looking at her. He could tell that his companion was staring at Evan like the latter hung the moon. Anger churned in his gut. He reached out, wrapped his fingers around the young woman’s wrist and dragged her away forcefully.

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Zachary and his escort left in their golf cart.



Evan turned around and eyed the woman whom he had been shielding. The look in his eyes darkened.

The sky was bright and the sun shined hotly on them all.

Its blinding light cascading from the skies cast a golden glow on the woman's beautiful face.

It was akin to a thin golden veil that shimmered as it kissed her cherry pink lips.

Her beauty seemed more radiant under the sunlight.

Evan found himself momentarily lost in her beauty. His eyes were dark and unfathomable like the abyss.

Damnit

The young man cursed inwardly.

He couldn't believe. He wanted to kiss her again.

He wasn't going to force a kiss on the woman in broad daylight though. He turned his dark eyes away and murmured softly. "Let's go. I'll teach you how to play golf."

Anya's head snapped up. Surprise and disbelief rippled across her eyes. The man had gotten her out of a spot earlier. She was grateful for what he had done. But it was an awfully warm day. Why was he trying to force her into playing golf with

him?

She got warm easily and when she got warm, she started sweating buckets. Anya's mouth opened. A refusal was ready at her lips.

Before she could voice her refusal, Evan was grabbing her wrist and tugging her away as if they were a couple and there was nothing wrong with him dragging her towards the spot where his golf ball had landed.

“I’ll teach you a few tricks. You can take a break after that.”

Anya found herself at a loss for words again.

Evan really enjoyed having his way. He didn’t seem to spare a thought for others at all. Look at him dragging her onto the golf course.

Perhaps he was suffering some form of visual impairment.

He obviously didn’t see the beads of sweat soaking her forehead wet.

Men like him must not have much experience courting women.

It made sense that he didn’t know how to treat a lady well.

Forget it. Anya wasn’t interested in getting involved with the man. It wasn’t any of her business. She decided to steel herself and bear with the man for the rest of the day. After the day was done, she

would leave.

She couldn’t stand how bullish the man was.

His thoughtlessness made things worse.

Evan led her to the stretch of the golf course that they had passed earlier. Then, he pulled his fingers away and turned towards the caddie. "Get a golf club for Ms. MacMillan."

The caddie nodded before pulling a silver golf club from the golf bag he was carrying and handing the club to Anya.

Anya took the golf club from the caddie. She had no idea where to place herself. She decided to fry her hand at the game and figure things out on her own.

She wasn't interested in getting any instruction from Evan.

Evan took his place behind Anya without a word. Both looming shadow and towering wall, he circled the young woman. with his arms and placed his hands gently on hers. Then, he tightened his hands, leaned in and dipped his head. His voice was a whisper in her ear. "Remember to put your weight behind your swing. The ball won't go far unless you do."

Anya hummed softly and leaned her face away instinctively. She would like to put as much distance between the both of

them.

The man's aura was overwhelming.

She might pretend that she wasn't bothered but she couldn't deny the fact that the man had a strong presence.

She couldn't simply pretend that he wasn't there.

She bit her lips and did exactly what Evan had told her.

Her first shot wasn't that bad..

She didn't get the ball in the hole though.

However, she had a great swing. Her second shot was markedly better than her first.

After the first two swings, Anya set her club down. "I feel warm, Mr. Welton. I would like to take a break."

"Do you?" The oblivious man finally realized that Anya was sweating in the heat. His response to her comment was swift. "Let's go. We should get you back in the shade."

Anya was speechless.

She had been right. The man had grown used to women falling at his feet and taking care of his every need.

Consideration and reciprocation were beyond him.

Compared to the blazing heat out on the golf course, the lounge was significantly cooler. Anya felt a lot better when she

Wax

stepped into the shade. The air conditioning was on full blast and the humidity outdoors was thankfully absent indoors.

Evan led Anya to the VIP lounge where she took a seat and rested.

While they were taking a break, Evan got a call. They had to leave soon.

Anya was ready to go. She couldn't wait to hurry back to Ellie's place when she heard Evan tell her that they had to go. Even though he had something to attend to, he still gave her a ride back.

The address that Anya gave him was the same address that she had fabricated the last time.

Anya was ready to dart out of Evan's car when the man suddenly caught her wrist and leaned towards her. "Won't you go on another date with me again?"

Anya froze. She wasn't crazy. Why would she go on a date with him?

She shoved the man away forcefully, then bit her lips. "Mr. Welton, you should respect a woman's wishes. My wish is to never see you again and I'll see to that."

Before Evan could say anything, she fled the car and raced into the building. It was as if she had hellhounds snapping at

her heels.

Evan didn't seem upset by Anya's blunt rejection at all.

Instead, he eyed the doors to the apartment building quietly. A ghost of a smile played on his lips.

The lady seemed to have thrown down the gauntlet.

Challenge accepted..

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Evan didn't linger for long. The young man had other important matters to attend to.

Without any hesitation, he instructed the driver to start the car immediately.

Anya finally stepped out of the building after Evan had driven off. She stared as the car headed into the setting sun. Waves of exasperation and powerlessness threatened to overwhelm her as she pinched the bridge of her nose.

She was going to finish her design for Lola's bridal gown and then, she was going to quit her job at JK Couture. She swore she would do it.

Meanwhile, back at Ellie's apartment, the twins, Nathaniel and Eudora were having their afternoon nap.

When Anya got back to the apartment, she had to tiptoe around the house so as not to wake her precious darlings. The young woman decided to take a shower.

The hours spent playing golf with Evan had left her sticky with sweat. It wasn't a pleasant experience at all.

In fact, she felt terrible.

Anya had her shower, then changed into something comfortable. After that, she began pumping breast milk for the kids.

While she was pumping breast milk, Ellie brought a plate of freshly sliced watermelon over to her. "Anya, have some fruit. It must be warm outside. This should make you feel better."

Anya nodded at her aunt. "Thanks. I'll have some after I'm done."

"You know... I've been thinking about selling this apartment. I think we should move into a new place, somewhere nice," Ellie said as she placed the plate of sliced watermelon on the table and sat down next to Anya.

Her aunt's comment caught Anya by surprise. That seemed to have come out of nowhere. The young woman wasn't sure why her aunt was considering selling her apartment. "Ellie, the location of your apartment's great. Why would you want to

sell it?"

Besides, apartments in Nordeny cost a fortune.

They might not be able to afford another apartment that had a location that was as good as Ellie's current place.

The location of Ellie's current apartment wasn't the best but it was good.

"Nathaniel and Eudora will be in kindergarten soon. We have to start thinking about their future. The schools in this neighborhood aren't very good. If we want to place them in a good kindergarten, we'll have to move to a neighborhood with better schools." Ellie was clearly still the more mature woman.

She had thought of everything even before the kids' mother had.

If she hadn't said a word, Anya wouldn't have realized why Ellie wanted to sell the place.

"Let's not sell the apartment first, Ellie," Anya said. "I'll work hard at my job and in a few years, I should have enough savings to pay the down payment for a new apartment. We don't have to worry about getting Nathaniel and Eudora into a good kindergarten for another few years. There's still time."

Ellie simply smiled softly at her niece. "Anya, I'm not trying to put you down. But the apartments in Nordeny cost a bomb. A tiny apartment with a good school in the neighborhood could cost a million dollars. You're talking about setting aside savings of approximately four to five hundred grand within two years. What if you don't manage to set aside that amount of money? The kids won't be able to get into a good kindergarten. We can't let that happen."

Ellie had no children of her own. Anya was her sister's daughter. With her dear sister gone, Anya became a daughter to

Ellie.

She was willing to give up anything for her daughter.

“Ellie, I don’t want you to sell your apartment. I’ve got Cindy. She can help me out. She’s introduced a great lawyer to me. I’ll be meeting the lawyer in a few days. I’ll get my mom’s Inheritance back. We won’t have to worry about getting a new apartment or placing Nathaniel and Eudora into a good kindergarten then.”

She swore that she was going to get the inheritance that the MacMillans owed her mother.

“I know you would be able to afford a decent apartment with your mother’s inheritance. But we have no idea whether you might be able to claim the inheritance successfully. You know how the MacMillans are... they’re vicious and petty. They’re not going to go down without a fight.” Ellie patted the back of Anya’s hand gently. “Anya, listen to your aunt. We’ll sell this apartment. We’ll be able to afford the down payment with the money from selling the apartment and whatever savings you’ve set aside.”

“Ellie...” Anya was adamant not to let her aunt sell her place. “I’ll manage on my own. Don’t worry.”

“I’ve made up my mind. It’s decided,” Ellie said softly. “You should focus on your work and on taking care of the kids. Make sure Evan doesn’t steal your children from you.”

Anya wasn’t ready to end the conversation but Ellie appeared to have made up her mind. She decided to keep her silence.

She had to speak to the lawyer that Cindy had recommended to her about the house.

He’s Cindy’s cousin,

She should be able to trust the guy.

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While Anya was contemplating whether she should approach Cindy’s cousin, Zachary was on his way to meet Sydney



Evan had hit him with a golf ball and had embarrassed him in public

Zachary had to make the man pay for what he had done

He wasn't going to confront Ivan in public though He wasn't an idiot he had no interest in opposing Ivan openly and incurring the man's wrath That meant that he had to find someone else to help him carry out his dirty deeds A scapegoat to shoulder the blame someone like Sydney

He knew that Sydney was secretly in love with Evan

Unfortunately, so were many other women, which meant that she hadn't any chance to get closer to the man

She was going to go crazy with jealousy if she knew that Anya had been seen with Evan

That was why Zachary had invited Sydney out for a meal

"Sydney, it's been a while. You're looking prettier by the day!" Zachary wasn't in a hurry to talk about Anya instead, he filled Sydney's glass with red wine and began a round of compliments "Just look at you! You could be a movie star"

Sydney knew she was pretty She flipped her hair coquettishly as Zachary showered praises on her and twisted her lips into a smug smile "Stop teasing me, Zach I'm nowhere as beautiful as the celebrities you see in Hollywood"

"Not to a man if you ask any man on the street, he's going to tell you that you're prettier than any female celebrity in Hollywood Zachary said smoothly

The smile on Sydney's face was blinding She lifted the glass of red wine on the table and swirled it gracefully "Look those praises falling from your lips. What do you want, Zachary?"

They hardly met the other. In fact, a month could pass without them seeing each other at all

But the man had asked her out for a meal out of the blue and had plied her with compliments with unexpected vigor

Something was up

“Sydney as always, you’re a genius! There’s no fooling you” Zachary burst out into laughter His narrow long face looked almost beastly as it contorted and twisted from the exaggerated laughter

For a moment, he looked more animal than man

“Come on, spill. What do you want?” Sydney said after taking a sip from her glass of red wine

“I bumped into your sister a few days ago Zachary finally spilled the beans after taking a sip from his glass of wine as well “Guess who she was hanging out with?”

“Who?” Anya’s name sent Sydney bristling instinctively She could feel her entire body trembling with tension. It was as if

she was getting ready to break out into a fight with Anya right now.

“Evan Welton, that’s who! The most sought–after bachelor in Nordeny. The man every woman in the city wants to marry.”

Evan? Sydney froze instantly. Her face twisted with rage the next moment. “Are you sure?”

“Yes. They hardly left each other’s side.” Zachary didn’t dare to share too many details. He didn’t want Sydney to let slip that he was the one who had told her about Anya and Evan. He would find himself in deeper trouble than he wanted then. He wanted the young woman to arrive at her own conclusions.

She was a smart woman. She knew what he was trying to tell her.

“Are you sure? You’re not lying to me, are you?” A deep crease furrowed Sydney’s brow. Her eyes were burning with sheer

rage

Anya had sworn that she would stay away from Evan.

Yet here she was, hanging out with Evan despite the oath she had made.

“Cross my heart and hope to die. I won’t lie to you,” Zachary raised his hand and swore.

Sydney took the man’s word for it. She bit her lips angrily. The fury in her eyes burned brightly.

The young woman slammed the glass onto the table heavily. She was going to speak to Anya tomorrow. Her stepsister

owed her an explanation.

Meanwhile, in the CEO’s office at Welton Group Tower:

A handsome looking man was draped lazily on his chair, A black pen twirled easily between the man’s fingers while a phone was pressed to his cheek. It was Dan. “Clear your calendar next week. We’re spending a few days at a historic town. It’s a pre–wedding party for my cousin.”

“It’s your cousin’s pre–wedding vacation. Why would you invite me along?” Evan replied coolly. He didn’t seem very interested.

“Don’t you want to get to know some new people? A few pretty ladies?” Dan chuckled on the other end of the line. “This is a great chance! Think about it. A historic town. A beautiful scenic town that’s built for romance. It’s going to be great. The ladies will love it!”

Evan thought of something then. A light smile appeared on his lips. He didn’t say a word.

\*Come on,” Dan pressed on. “Are you coming or not?”

“Sure: Why not?”

“That’s great! I’ll book the plane tickets, Dan said before hanging up.

Evan started considering inviting Anya along and began contemplating the idea of spending a few days in a beautiful

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Evan spent some time thinking about Lola’s pre–wedding vacation spot. Then, he finally pulled his thoughts back to work.

He spent the next 30 minutes buried in work

Comwall, his lawyer, called. “Mr. Welton, Deep–Water Harbor’s almost in our pocket. I think we can start commencing work on the land. Let me know your availability.”

“Let’s not rush into things so quickly. Shane won’t give up that easily. Make sure the legal paperwork for Deep–Water Harbor is all done up and ready.”

Comwall understood what Evan was trying to tell him. His reply showed an equal measure of caution. “Don’t worry, Mr. Welton. I’ll make sure everything is taken care of.”

“That’s great. Keep working on it,” Evan said. He trusted his lawyer.

“Don’t worry. I know what to do,” Cornwall replied.

Evan hung up. He started twirling the pen he was holding casually. It was obviously an expensive pen – finely made which allowed a smooth and easy grip. The young man stroked his chin thoughtfully. The image of Nathaniel popped up in his head.

He remembered how upset the boy had looked. There had been tears welling in the boy’s eyes.

Eudora had looked equally miserable despite her quiet and reserved demeanor.

Evan narrowed his eyes. He was convinced that they were his kids but he didn’t have any evidence to prove that.

There was no way Evan was going to steal someone’s children from them based on a conjecture. He set his thoughts aside. for the moment. There would be time later to think of a way to find out if they were his children.

Meanwhile, back at JK Couture.

Anya had a draft in her hand as she called Lola. She had done the first draft of her design for Lola’s bridal gown.

The gown was a long flowing dress that resembled the interplay of light and water in a clear stream. Simple and long dresses were fashionable now.

The topmost layer of chiffon shimmered like water in sunlight and was beaded with countless tiny pearls.

Anya wondered if Lola would like the design.

The call got through within seconds. Anya greeted the young woman cheerfully. "Hi, Ms. Mars. Are you busy at the

moment?"

"I have some time to spare," Lola replied. She was currently in her dressing room. The makeup artist was doing her makeup.

"I've come up with the first draft of my design for your gown. Do you have time to take a look at the draft today?" Anya asked cautiously as she clutched her phone nervously.

After that incident with the mango cake, Anya couldn't help but feel cautious and nervous every time she spoke to Lola.

She didn't want another incident, after all.

"You're done with the first draft?" Lola hadn't expected Anya to come up with the first draft that quickly. Her engagement

mony was fast approaching though. They had to get the dress done soon. "Why don't you come over now? I don't have anything lined up for the morning"

"I'll text you the address. You can't share it with anyone though. It's sensitive information. Alright?"

Anya nodded profusely even though Lola couldn't possibly see what she was doing. "Don't worry, Ms. Mars. Protecting our client's privacy is part of our job."

"I'm glad to hear that I have to go now. Call me when you arrive," Lola said before hanging up. The makeup artist continued doing her makeup.

After some time, Dan called.

Lola picked up the call like she usually would. Before she could say a word, Dan started talking. "Ask Anya to join you for your vacation at the historic town the next time you see her."

The young woman froze momentarily. "Are you asking me to invite Anya to my pre-wedding vacation?"

Dan nodded. "You know what to tell her, don't you?"

Lola knew what was going on as soon as Dan said that. She fluttered her pretty almond-shaped eyes, then smiled brightly. "Are you trying to help Evan out here, my dear cousin?"

"Who else? That man's been single since forever," Dan said with a laugh. "I have to go. Make sure to ask her."

"Sure. I know what to do," Lola said with a giggle before ending the call. She looked up and stared at her reflection in the

mirror.

Her glossy pink lips quirked into smile.

Was Evan serious about Anya? Or was he simply looking for a good time?

Lola had a feeling that it was the latter. The woman that Evan was going to marry had to be someone from an equally respectable family.

But Anya wasn't going to come out on the losing end of the deal even if Evan didn't end up marrying her.

Evan was well known for his generosity.

Anya should count herself lucky for catching his eye.

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Meanwhile, Anya started packing her bag after she ended her call with Lola. She grabbed the draft that she had prepared and got ready to head down to the studio to meet Lola.

She made her way to the reception with the draft in her hands.

Sydney stormed furiously out of the elevator at that exact moment. She saw Anya at the reception and made a beeline for her stepsister immediately. As soon as she walked up to the young woman, she lifted her hand and got ready to give her a tight slap on the face.

Anya had seen that coming. She caught Sydney's wrist before Sydney could swing her arm down. The look on Anya's face could freeze lava. "What do you think you're doing?"

"What do you think I'm doing?" Her foiled attempt at giving Anya a hard slap on her cheek made angered her more. Fury colored her cheeks red. She looked like a volcano that was ready to erupt any moment. Her eyes glared murderously at Anya while her teeth started grinding loudly. "Haven't I warned you to stay away from Evan? Why can't you just stay away

from him!"

Anya felt a wave of nausea and helplessness threaten to pull her under when she heard that name. Evan Welton. It was about Evan again.

If Sydney really liked the guy, she should try and catch his eye.

What was she doing here with her instead?

Besides, after the incident that had happened a year ago, Anya had given up on the man.

"Why are you yelling at me? Shouldn't you be looking for Mr. Welton?" Anya wasn't going to back down. She still had a grudge to settle with Sydney and her mother.



Did they think they could push her around?

Well, they should think again. She wasn't the same pushover they had bullied and abused in the past.

Anya shoved down the waves of abhorrence and fury inside her. Her voice could freeze hell all over. "We're both employees. at the Welton Group. You work for the media department and I work for JK Couture. Aren't you worried that Mr. Welton might hear of our argument and get annoyed with you?"

"I heard the man doesn't like employees who get into trouble. Would you like to find out if that's true?"

"I can't believe this! How dare you threaten me, Anya!" Sydney had not expected her stepsister to have the gall to hurl threats at her. Fury boiled inside the young woman. Her eyes were wide and glaring. She looked as if she wanted to throw herself at Anya and devour her whole. "Look at that smug look on your face. Zachary was right. You did throw yourself at Evan and hook up with him!"

"I'm warning you. Stay away from Evan!"

Zachary?

Anya wasn't particularly bothered by Sydney's threats. But the mention of Zachary brought a frown to her face. What had Sydney brought Zachary up? It didn't take the young woman long to realize why. Zachary had caught her and Evan playing golf that day.

Evan had issued a stern warning to the man as well.

He must have spoken to Sydney and told her. That was why her dear stepsister was here in the morning, yelling at her like a

woman gone mad.

Anya simply scoffed. "What's the point of harassing me? This is pointless. You should speak to Mr. Welton instead. Talk to him and ask him if I'm throwing myself at him. You'll get your answer then and you can finally stop harassing me. I would appreciate that very much."

Having said that, the young woman tightened her fingers on her draft and marched away from the reception.

Anya's utter disregard for her drove Sydney mad. Fury churned in her gut. She felt her blood burn with rage. All she saw was

red.

There was no way she could speak to Evan and demand answers from the man.

Was An

Was Anya mocking her?

Anger continued to boil inside Sydney. She turned towards the reception and stormed over. "Hi, can I have a cup of hot water. Make it boiling hot."

The receptionist hadn't noticed the fight that Sydney and Anya had been having a moment ago. She caught Sydney's staff pass hanging from her neck. It clearly showed that she was from the media department.

Without saying another word, she filled a cup with freshly boiled water.

Sydney grabbed the cup and stormed towards Anya, who was on her way to the elevator.

Sydney walked up to Anya. She clenched her jaw tightly. "You're not going to look so smug now. I'm going to teach you a good lesson. Let's see you try and seduce Mr. Welton after that!"

Then, she raised her arm and began to throw a cup of steaming hot water at Anya.

Anya whirled around when she heard what Sydney had said. The elevator doors slid open behind her. Anya stumbled backwards instinctively at the sight of the cup of hot water and found herself inside the elevator.

Sydney missed. The water didn't hit Anya at all. Instead, it splashed onto the tiled floor of the elevator.

The doors to the elevator slid shut with an emotionless ding.

Anya stared at the pool of water on the tiled floor. Steam rose from the boiling water.

Blood drained from her face. She had always known how vicious Sydney and her mother could be. But she had not expected such violence from either of them.

If the doors to the elevator had slid open a second later, boiling water would be melting her face right now instead of lying

in a puddle on the floor.

Fear and shock had Anya staggering away from the puddle on the floor. She bit her lips and curled her fingers into tight fists.

She swore she was going to make Sydney pay. They would pay for everything that they had done.

Chapter 168

Sydney had not expected Anya to be undeterred in her advances on Evan. The desire to ruin her stepsister's pretty face burned inside Sydney. In fact, she wished fervently that the woman would simply disappear from the face of the earth.

That would mean less competition for Evan's attention.

But Anya was safe and unharmed while she had no idea whether her stepsister was currently romantically involved with

Evan.

If they were, Sydney was sure that Anya would call Evan and tell her what Sydney had just done.

Anya hadn't said anything about dating Evan though. She hadn't threatened Sydney that she would tell on her as well.

Did that mean that there wasn't anything going on between Anya and Evan at all?

Zachary had seemed really confident when he had spoken to her though. Like he knew exactly what was going on.

was

Sydney found herself stuck in a predicament. She didn't know whom to believe. Who was telling her the truth? Lying to her?

She bit her lips and glared at the elevator murderously. All this while, the gears in her head spun furiously.

It didn't matter if Anya and Evan weren't dating now.

She was a thorn in her side. Anya couldn't stay. Who knew what she was up to? She might be conspiring secretly and plotting to steal Sydney's inheritance.

Anya was the elder sister. They might not share the same mother, but they shared the same father. He was the one who was of MacMillan blood.

The more Sydney thought about it, the firmer her conviction grew. She couldn't let this go on.

She collected herself, pressed the button to the elevator and returned to her office.

She was going to speak to Mdm. MacMillan after she knocked off work today. The old lady would help her deal with Anya.

Her grandmother adored her.

All she had to do was tell her grandmother what she wanted. The old lady would have it wrapped in a bow and present it to her like a gift.

Meanwhile, at Starlight Entertainment Agency.

Anya was still trying to recover from the shock of having scalding water thrown at her face. It had been a close call. It took some time for the young woman to collect herself. After she finally calmed down, she headed into the agency, looking for Lola.

She had made up her mind. She was going to get Lola's bridal gown and Mdm. Welton's coat done. Then, she was going to

quit. She had to.

She has been having second thoughts about quitting her job, but not anymore. Her mind was made this time.

clutched the draft to her chest tightly and took a deep breath. She walked up to the studio and knocked lightly Anya glass door.

It didn't take long before someone came and opened the door for her. It was a young woman dressed in a uniform. She must be the receptionist

There was a look of wariness in the young woman's eyes as she studied Anya. "Hi, may I ask who you're looking for? Do you have an appointment?"

"I'm a designer from JK Couture. I have an appointment with Ms. Mars. Please let her know that I'm here," Anya said politely.

The look of caution on the receptionist's face vanished as soon as she heard that Anya was a designer from JK Couture. In its place was a warm smile. "You must be Ms. MacMillan. Please step inside. Ms. Mars is waiting for you."

She hadn't expected that Had Lola been waiting for her arrival?

Anya froze momentarily. A sheepish look flickered across her eyes. Her voice sounded slightly subdued. "I'm sorry. I was caught in a jam. I hope I didn't keep her waiting for too long."

"Don't worry about it. She doesn't have anything lined up in the morning," the receptionist said brightly. She knew that Anya was an important guest and was especially friendly with the other woman.

Her friendliness helped. Anya stopped feeling so bad about having kept Lola waiting for her.

She hurried after the receptionist as they headed to the dressing room, where Lola was.

When they arrived at the dressing room, the receptionist pushed the door open. Lola was seated on the couch, dressed in a long, flowing dress. She seemed to be waiting for Anya.

Anya stepped into the room immediately. "I'm sorry for keeping you waiting, Ms. Mars."

Lola didn't mind the wait at all. She looked up and smiled warmly at the young woman. "Come on, take a seat. Then show me what you've got for me."

“Of course.” Anya sat down on the couch and handed her draft to Lola. “The design’s inspired by the recent trend of long flowing dresses that try to replicate the interplay of light and water in a river. Take a look, let me know if you want anything changed.”

Lola hummed softly before she began studying the draft.

It didn’t take long before Lola decided that she was in love with Anya’s design.

She loved the concept and how Anya had tried to put concept down on paper. It looked different from the ordinary bridal gown that she had come across. It was perfectly exemplified her sartorial taste.

Anya’s design could rival the designs of some of the best designers in the industry

Lola was impressed and also secretly glad that she had given Anya the chance to prove herself. Otherwise, she might be missing a gorgeous bridal gown.

The young woman couldn’t seem to take her eyes off the draft. “Ms. MacMillan, this looks great. I love it. You can go ahead and get the dress made. I’ll be holding my engagement ceremony soon.”

“Don’t worry. I’ll put in overtime so that I can get the dress ready in time,” Anya promised earnestly. The young woman was delighted that Lola had no complaints about her design.

Lola nodded. “Thanks.”

“Well, if there’s nothing else, I’ll head back to work now.” Now that they had decided on the design of Lola’s bridal gown, Anya had to speak to the factory so that the tailors could help her get the dress out

within the next two days.

As she rose to

her feet, Lola spoke again. “Anya, I’m going to hold a pre-wedding trip in a few days’ time. Won’t you join us?”

Chapter 169

Anya stopped in her tracks. Surprise rippled across her face as she stared at the young woman. “You’re inviting me to the trip as well?”

After that incident with the mango cake, her relationship with Lola had remained distant. They weren’t friends at all. In fact, she would describe her relationship with Lola as that of a professional one between a designer and her client.

It wasn’t the sort of relationship that warranted invitations to pre-wedding vacations that were typically reserved for friends. That explained why Anya had been shocked by the invitation.

It didn’t matter though. She couldn’t accept the invitation. She had kids to look after. Besides, the company wasn’t going to let her take a few days off just like that.

The young woman quickly collected herself after her moment of surprise.

“That’s right!” Lola smiled. Her lovely painted nails looked like miniature paintings splayed across fine porcelain as she lifted her cup and took a sip of tea. “I love the bridal gown that you’ve designed. It’s exactly what I imagined my gown should look like. In fact, it’s the gown of my dreams! As a show of my thanks, I would like to invite you to join me on my pre-wedding vacation.”

“Ms. Mars, that’s very kind of you. I’m happy that you’re pleased with my design,” Anya said softly to the other young woman. “Unfortunately, I’m swamped with work. I won’t be able to take time out of work to join you on your pre-wedding party. Thank you so much for the invitation though.”

“There’s always work that needs to be done. Reschedule them. You’ll only be gone for three days,” Lola said insistently. She had to help Evan get a chance to spend more time with Anya. “It means a lot to me. Please don’t turn me down.”

Anya shook her head firmly. “I would love to go but...I really can’t.”



The young woman wasn't lying. Now that the design for the bridal gown had been decided, she had to make arrangements with the factory to have the dress made. She would still have to work on perfecting the gown after that.

She didn't exactly have the luxury of time.

Besides, she had promised to design a coat for Mdm. Welton too. She had not started on the first draft of the design yet.

She was honestly overwhelmed with work. She didn't have time for a vacation.

"Are you honestly that swamped with work?" Lola eyed the look of reluctance on Anya's face. The woman didn't look like she was lying. Lola smiled. "Why don't you think about it and let me know tomorrow? Honestly, it would mean so much to me if you join us."

"Alright. I'll think about it." Anya nodded. "I have to make a move now, Ms. Mars."

"Sure. See you around." Lola smiled at Anya before lifting her hand and gesturing at her agent. The agent knew Lola wanted her to walk Anya out.

The agent nodded immediately and escorted Anya out of the room.

It was eleven when Anya left Lola's dressing room and stepped out of the studio. It was nearly time for lunch.

Anya stared at her watch. If she were to head back to the office, she would only have time to grab lunch from the staff canteen. That meant long queues and crowded tables.

She considered the idea and then decided against it.

She hardly had the opportunity to step out of the office. Besides, it had turned out to be a fruitful day. Lola had been extremely pleased with her design.

Anya decided to find a diner in the vicinity and treat herself to something decent.

She knew she couldn't afford to spend too much on lunch though. Nothing that cost more than twenty bucks anyway.

With that thought in mind, Anya decided to head towards the bus stop that was located a few steps away from the studio.

She was about to stride towards the bus stop when a black Bentley sped past her, then screeched to a stop ahead of her.

It was a familiar, forbidding black. The car had clearly stopped because the driver had seen her.

Anya e

open.

eyed the Bentley curiously. Before she could catch a good look at the license plate, the door to the Bentley swung

A familiar looking young man swung his long legs out of the car.

Evan?

A deep crease wrinkled Anya's brow instantly. What was he doing here?

Had he known about her meeting with Lola?

Before Anya could give that thought further consideration, Evan had walked up to her. He reached forward and grabbed her wrist in a firm vice-like grip. "Come on. Have lunch with me."

Chapter 170

Anya found herself shoved forcefully into Evan's black Bentley by the man himself. The young woman reached for the handle instantly. But the door was locked before she could get out.

Anya yanked hard at the door handle to no avail. Finally, she whipped around and glared at the man seated next to her. The hint of impatience on her face was as stark as day. "Mr. Welton, what do you think you're doing?"

"It's time for lunch, isn't it? Let me buy you lunch," Evan said before snapping his fingers at his driver

Upon hearing the loud crack in the air, the driver started the engine. Within seconds, the Bentley was speeding down the

streets.

"Thanks for the offer, Mr. Welton. But I don't think it's appropriate for us to have lunch alone," Anya said. She had given up on trying to get out of the car now that the vehicle was moving.

The young woman decided to abandon any attempts of escaping. Instead, she clutched her draft to her chest fiercely. The hostility in her voice was as stark as day when she spoke.

Anyone else who spoke in such a manner to Evan would have been told to get out of his sight. But Anya wasn't anyone.

She was a woman who had caught his eye. As long as she had his interest, any form of resistance that she put up continue to slide off him like water off a duck's back. He didn't mind her displays of aggression or hostility. He was confident of his ability to make her yield to him eventually.

“Lola’s an extremely important client to the Welton Group. You’re the reason she’s our client. Shouldn’t I reward a competent employee for a job well done?” Evan raised an eyebrow playfully. “Ms. MacMillan, are you intent on embarrassing me? The CEO of Welton Group and your boss?”

would

Evan’s voice sounded husky and deep when he spoke. It was akin to the song played by a bass. Low melodious notes filled the small interior of the Bentley.

Anya couldn’t stop her heart from skipping a beat.

If Evan weren’t such a bully who always wanted his way, he would be perfect. He was good-looking. He had influence and wealth. He worked out and it showed. He also had a great voice to boot.

Yet, no matter how close to perfection the man was, she had to stay away from him.

He was Nathaniel’s and Eudora’s father.

If she only needed one reason to keep her distance from him, that would be enough.

“Thanks for the kind offer, Mr. Welton,” Anya said as she shook off the momentary daze that she had fallen into after hearing Evan’s mesmerizing voice. “I have a lunch appointment. Besides, I was just doing my job. You don’t have to buy me lunch.”

Evan gave Anya a good hard look. His eyes flashed dangerously as he stared at her. As something rippled in his dark eyes,

young man leaned in and whispered. “Stop playing a fool. You know what I want.”

the

There was no way she didn't know.

didn't know.

She was still fighting him.

"Mr. Welton, I've made myself very clear on many occasions," Anya said as she turned away from Evan and tried to lean away. His breath was scathing.

Yet her attempts were futile. They simply provoked the man into leaning forward further.

Anya smelled sweet and fresh. Like milk. He couldn't get enough of it.

Evan's eyes darkened. He was consumed by his desire for the woman before him. His desire and his need to possess the woman filled every corner of his mind. It was the voice of the devil whispering in his ear.

He was seized by the sudden urge to kiss the woman who wouldn't stop resisting his advances. It was an urge that grew more intense in the dead silence in the car. Like sharp hooks, it sank deep into the most primal part of his brain. Evan felt warm and tense. Finally, he couldn't take it anymore. The young man drew the screen down.

As soon as the black screen came shuttering down, dividing the car into two halves again, Evan reached forward and grabbed Anya's chin.

He tugged her towards him, then leaned in and pressed a hard kiss on the young woman's soft glossy lips.

He was a 28-year-old young man. Men his age had urges that they needed to satisfy. Besides, he had been practicing abstinence and staying away from women all this while.

That one time he had sex with Anya had been the only exception. He had never had slept with another woman.

The forceful and passionate kiss left Anya no room to breathe. She felt her head going dizzy and her body going stock still.

Her mouth was filled with the heady sharp scent of cigarette smoke and the taste of Evan. She tried desperately to flee from the kiss only to have his tongue chase after hers relentlessly and leaving her cornered. Amidst their passionate kiss, Evan's fingers dug hard into Anya's waist. His breath was hot on her skin. "Be my lover. I'll be good to you."

But he wouldn't love her. That was simply an excuse. One that men were inclined to give when they wanted you. Anya knew

that.

That was why she wasn't taken in by the lie.