

Desires DH 81

Chapter 81

Anya's bus ride didn't take long. Jake was seated in his office when she stepped into the office.

The young woman threw a glance at Jake's office as she made her way to her desk. When it appeared that her managing director wasn't going to step out of his office and approach her, Anya's heart fell back into her chest.

Honestly, she should be more careful.

She should keep her distance from the man. She didn't want every designer in JK Couture to hate her guts.

It had taken her a great deal of effort to get rid of Jake. She wasn't expecting trouble from Shane as well.

Anya would really like these men to leave her alone.

What made things worse was Shane's inclination towards grand gestures. He was interested in Anya too. That was why he had sent two of his personal assistants to JK Couture that morning.

One of them turned up with an enormous bouquet of red roses. All 999 stalks of them. The other personal assistant presented Anya with a limited-edition Chanel bag.

Shane had shown himself to be extremely generous even though Anya had not shown any interest in him at all. It was a grand gesture that only Shane was capable of.

Anya wasn't interested in his gifts at all. She stared in alarm as Shane's assistants placed the enormous bouquet of roses on Anya's desk. They nearly towered over her. When Anya told the young

men to take the roses away, they wouldn't. Their boss had told them to deliver the roses to Anya, after all.

One of the assistants placed the limited–edition Chanel bag on Anya’s desk carefully. “Ms. MacMillan, this is a small gift from Mr. Brown. Please accept it.”

“I’m fine with it. Thanks. Please let Mr. Brown know that I appreciate the gesture but I can’t accept his gifts.” Anya waved her hands wildly at the young man and shoved the Chanel bag into his hands. The young man wouldn’t take it. He simply

stood there.

Without any hesitation, Anya placed the Chanel bag next to the young man’s feet. “Please take this back to Mr. Brown. I won’t accept it.”

As soon as Anya had said that, a loud voice came drifting in from outside the office. “Are Chanel bags not to your liking, Ms. MacMillan? I could get you Hermes instead.”

Anya found herself momentarily speechless when she heard that.

Chanel? Hermes? She didn’t want any Chanel or Hermes bags.

She couldn’t tell Shane that straight to his face though. She didn’t want to incur his wrath. The young woman decided to exercise some tact. “Thank you for the kind gesture, Mr. Brown. But the gifts are simply too expensive. I can’t accept them.”

“Expensive? Hardly! A beautiful woman like you deserves the best, Ms. MacMillan!” Shane said as he made his way slowly

towards Anya..

His soft voice drew the attention of every female designer in the vicinity. Jealousy bubbled inside them.

Carol felt strangely vindicated. She knew Anya was a slut. She had charmed both Jake and Shane. She was really something.

How did she manage to get such great men to fall at her feet?

The other female designers looked green with envy. They couldn't stop looking away from the limited-edition Chanel bag. A great many young women would kill to have that bag.

It was a limited-edition bag! Money wouldn't be able to get you the bag.

Shane had given it away just like that. They couldn't believe how generous Shane was.

Anya was really something.

"Mr. Brown, thank you but I really can't accept the gift." Anya could feel the eyes on her. Her colleagues were burning with envy. She knew she had just incurred the wrath of her colleagues. She couldn't help but feel a sudden tightness in her

chest.

"Don't be a stranger, Ms. MacMillan," Shane said as he stroked his chin and eyed her appreciatively. "Let's have lunch together later."

"I can't," Anya shot back and turned Shane down flatly without a moment's hesitation. She added immediately. "I have to meet a client right now, Mr. Brown. Please excuse me."

The young woman pivoted on her heel and marched out of the office.

Shane didn't seem upset by Anya's sudden departure. In fact, he appeared delighted. His mind was made up. He was going to have Anya:

Anya decided to find herself a discreet corner outside the office and hide herself. She would return to the office after Shane left. As she approached the elevator, the doors to the elevator slid open.

Evan's personal assistant, Hayden, walked out of the elevator. His eyes fell on Anya. "Ms. MacMillan, Mr. Welton would like you in his office right now."

Anya widened her eyes.

What was the special occasion today?

She seemed to be drawing a lot of attention today.

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"Mr. Lang, did Mr. Welton tell you why he needs me in his office?" Anya asked calmly. She shouldn't jump to conclusions so easily.

"He didn't tell me why. Why don't you follow me upstairs, Ms. MacMillan?" Hayden smiled polite as the lie flowed from his lips. He eyed the young woman before him and thought privately to himself that there was no way he was telling her the

truth.

Honestly, Anya was very pretty. It explained why Evan had instructed him to draft a contract last night that would make Anya his lover should she sign the papers.

It was obvious that this wouldn't be an ordinary relationship between romantic partners. Hayden had no idea if Anya would agree to such a relationship. He was honestly worried for his superior.

Couldn't the man court the young woman like how the typical young man would a woman he was interested in?

Why was he proposing an illicit relationship that traded sexual services for payment instead?

It was impossible to read Evan's mind. He was but a mere personal assistant. How would he know what Evan was thinking?

"Right now?" Anya asked reluctantly. She really didn't want to go.

She still remembered the kiss that Evan had forced on her last night!

What if he tried it again?

No way. What was she thinking?

Evan could have any woman he wanted.

Why would he try to kiss her again and suffer her rejection? He probably had questions for her.

She was sure of it.

Anya wasn't ready to leave JK Couture yet.

She needed to build her savings because there was no way she could take back what the MacMillans owed her mother

without spending some money.

Anya yanked herself out of her thoughts. She ended up following Hayden upstairs to Evan's office.

She had to keep her job at Welton Group.

It wasn't her lucky day today. Anya bumped into one of her least favorite persons in the elevator. Sydney.

The young woman wore a deep red, skintight dress and a pair of red heels. She looked like a skank. She had a folder in her arms. Her face was caked in makeup. The young woman looked as if she were dressed for a party and not for work.

The two young women exchanged a look with each other in the elevator. Anya twisted her face away and decided to ignore Sydney.

Sydney had given Anya one of her murderous glares when she had seen her. She, too, turned her eyes away.

Hayden remained clueless while the two young women were busy ignoring each other.

His job was to get Anya into Evan's office. He didn't care about anything else.

It didn't take long before the elevator arrived at the lavishly decorated top floor of the Welton Group Tower.

Hayden waited for Anya to step out of the elevator before following her out. The gesture caught Sydney by surprise. Incredulity and hate warred against the other as they colored her eyes.

Didn't Anya swear that she was going to stay away from Evan?

What was she doing here with Hayden?

Sydney curled her fingers into tight, angry fists. Anya had lied to her.

She had lied. She had broken her oath.

The young woman's guts churned with rage and jealousy. She couldn't help it. She was intensely and desperately jealous of her Anya. Her stepsister from a different mother.

Anya was prettier and smarter than she was.

She had always come out top in class when they had been in school.

Sydney's eyes were rimmed with envy. A streak of panic coursed through her head as she watched Anya make her way towards Evan's office.

She rushed out after her. She didn't even care that Hayden was watching.

Sydney seized Anya by the arm, then spat out angrily. "Anya, you promised me. You swore an oath. So, what are you doing here?"

out of her a

Anya simply threw her a frost look before yanking her arm out of her grip. "You should ask Mr. Welton that question. I'm not here because I want to be here. He's the one who asked for me."

"You're lying. Mr. Welton hates your guts. Why would he ask for you?" Sydney spat out viciously.

Her features were twisted with rage.

The look of disdain on Hayden's face seemed to have slipped her notice. Hayden couldn't help but find Sydney a little confrontational.

She shared the same last name as Anya, but they were worlds apart.

"Because we don't mix work and our personal lives," Anya retorted sharply. "Why don't you ask Hayden? He'll tell you if I'm

the one who requested to see Evan or if Evan's the one who demanded my presence in his office."

If she had the means, Anya would make Sydney and Melissa pay for what they had done to her.

But she didn't.

She couldn't have her revenge right now.

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"Fine, I'll ask him." Sydney was losing her mind. She whipped around and leveled a hard look at Hayden. "Mr. Lang, is she speaking the truth?"

Is, Hayden replied firmly. "Are you looking for Mr. Welton, Ms. MacMillan?"

Sydney appeared to harbor an intense hostility towards Anya and Hayden had no idea why.

Did they know each other?

Hayden eyed the two young women before him curiously. They did share a slight resemblance with the other but it was clear that Anya was the prettier woman.

Sydney's eyes burned with rage as she glared at Anya. She turned towards Hayden slightly. "That's right. I'm from the media department. We need Mr. Welton's approval for something."

"You can hand the documents to me," Hayden said as he stretched his hand out towards Sydney. "I'll make sure they reach Mr. Welton."

There was no way Sydney was going to do that. It had taken her a great deal of work before she finally found an excuse to talk to Evan.

She wasn't going to let this opportunity slip through her fingers.

She couldn't raise her voice at Hayden though. Sydney tried to muster a polite smile as she gentled her tone. "Mr. Lang, I would like to hand these documents to Mr. Welton personally. There're some details that will require further explanation."

"Don't worry about it. Just let me have the documents. Mr. Welton is waiting." Hayden kept his hand outstretched as he eyed Sydney. The look in his eyes was clear. He wanted her to hurry up and stop wasting his time.

"Please let me speak to Mr. Welton, Mr. Lang." Sydney tightened her fingers around the folder. There was a hint of anger in

her eyes.

He was just an assistant. What did he think he was doing?

How could he stop Sydney from delivering the folder to Evan personally?

"Ms. MacMillan, please be professional. Mr. Welton is waiting and he's not going to be happy if he's kept waiting any longer," Hayden said sternly.

The hint of threat in his voice was clear.

If Sydney kept this up, Evan was going to lose his patience and get mad.

She would have to suffer his anger then too.

Sydney knew when to make a strategic retreat. Evan's temper was notorious. Everyone in the city knew how terrifying he could be when he was mad.

She was a small fry compared to Evan. In fact, the MacMillans were small fry compared to Evan. He couldn't care less about them.

Sydney

y weighed the pros and cons and finally handed over the folder to Hayden reluctantly. There was a tic in her jaw. she spoke. "I'm terribly sorry for troubling you, Mr. Lang."

She seemed subdued and humbled. It was a distinct difference from her usual obnoxious self.

Anya knew it. Sydney was a bully, Bullies like her would bend to those more powerful than they were.

Anya watched with silent glee as Sydney caved and yielded.

"It's no trouble at all." Hayden gave Sydney a polite smile as he took the folder from the latter. Then, he walked right into Evan's office with Anya and the folder in hand.

Sydney wasn't shameless. She wasn't going to follow them inside.

She could only watch as Anya strolled past and disappear behind the elaborate door of Evan's office.

Jealousy burned inside Sydney and made her guts churn. She stomped her foot and slammed her heel into the marble

tiles.

She had dressed up for Evan. This was absolutely infuriating. Sydney could barely get a lid on her temper. She wouldn't stop glaring at Evan's doors through her elaborate eye makeup..

Anya was such a slut.

But Sydney wasn't going to let her have the last laugh.

The young woman fumed silently on the spot. After a long moment, she headed to a corner and waited.

She had to know what Anya was doing in Evan's office.

Hayden, who had headed into Evan's office with Anya, stepped outside shortly.

The sight of Hayden walking out of Evan's office alone drove her mad with jealousy.

Her heels slammed loudly against the tiled floor as she walked up to Hayden and stopped the man from returning to his desk. "Hold on a moment, Mr. Lang. May I speak to you for a second?"

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"Is there anything else you need, Ms. MacMillan?" Hayden stopped in his tracks and eyed Sydney with indifference.

Whatever he had observed of the young woman had left a bad taste in his mouth. She was rude and crass. However, she was still a colleague at Welton Group. No matter his opinion of Sydney, he would never show it on his face.

"What's Anya doing inside Mr. Welton's office?" Sydney plastered a plastic smile on her face.

The young woman's bluntness had Hayden frowning instantly. He shook his head and replied politely. "I'm not sure."

"Are you sure you don't know anything?" Sydney's smile seemed frozen on her face.

“That’s right. If you don’t mind, I have to get back to work.” Hayden wasn’t interested in continuing the conversation with

her.

He was ready to return to his desk.

Sydney stepped into his path and stopped him. Her voice was soft. “Mr. Lang, please tell me. It’s no big deal. Anya and I are like family to each other. You can tell me.”

Hayden froze. He had not expected that. That had nothing to do with him though. He was just Evan’s personal assistant. He wasn’t going to go around sharing his boss’ secrets. He wanted to keep his job. It had great perks. He wasn’t stupid or

insane.

“I’m sorry, Ms. MacMillan, but I’m not in a position to question the reasons behind Mr. Welton’s instructions.” Hayden took one step to the side and made his way back to his desk.

Sydney

couldn’t get any answers out of Evan’s personal assistant.

She stomped her foot and slammed her heel into the tiled floor angrily.

She was going to wait. She needed answers and she will have them.

Meanwhile, in Evan’s office, Anya’s heart raced as she made her way towards Evan’s desk slowly. She tried to push the memories of last night’s kiss out of her mind and put on a calm voice as she spoke. Right now, she was just a junior staff speaking to her boss. “Mr. Welton, I’m here. Is there a reason you called me into your office?”

Evan lifted his eyes and gazed at her through his dark eyes. He studied the young woman for a moment before finally speaking. "I have a contract here and an offer for Ms. MacMillan. You might be interested in it. Take a look."

The man slid the contract across the desk.

Anya had no idea what the contract was about but it wouldn't hurt to take a look. She reached for the contract and picked it up from the desk. Her eyes scanned the contents of the contract quickly.

She didn't manage to reach the end of the contract. A dark look settled on Anya's face. What was Evan trying to do?

Was he trying to make her his mistress?

Was he out of his mind? What was going on here?

She remembered the hostility he has displayed towards her during their recent interactions. He hated her guts. Why would he offer to make her his mistress now?

Anya honestly had no idea what was going on in Evan's head. But she was certain of one thing. Evan didn't like her at all. He had no love for her.

He wouldn't have insulted her with such a contract if he harbored even the slightest bit of love for her. He wouldn't have offered to pay her to be his lover.

The mere thought of such an idea infuriated Anya.

"I've read the contract, Mr. Welton. I'm not interested," Anya said as she tried to keep her temper under control. She took another step towards the desk, placed the contract down and slid it back towards Evan.

"If there's nothing else, I'll get back to work. I have quite a few matters to attend to."

Anya was ready to turn around and march out of the office right now.

Before she could do that, Evan's arm shot out. He grabbed her by the wrist and stopped her from taking another step away from him. The next moment, he was yanking her towards him and into his arms. The force of his tug sent Anya off her feet.

Anya landed right on Evan's lap

For a moment, they looked like a couple in an intimate embrace, their limbs tangled with the other's..

A flush unfurled across Anya's cheeks instantly. Mortification and alarm colored her eyes as she stared at Evan. "Please let me go, Mr. Welton."

"You're the one who took me to bed a year ago, Anya. You seemed interested then." Evan's fingers caught Anya's in a tight

grip.

Her hand was extremely soft. It was like touching silk. It felt great.

The faint scent of milk surrounded the woman. Evan inhaled sharply and breathed in its sweetness.

He could feel the first signs of arousal.

This was bad.

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Naturally, Anya sensed Evan's arousal as well.

Shock overwhelmed the young woman. Her fingertips trembled. She wasn't a virgin but she had only had sex that one time. Besides, she had no memory of what had happened that night.

This was her first time witnessing such a reaction from a man. Anya flushed instantly. Her cheeks burned.

She began to squirm as she struggled to escape.

Evan grabbed her and tightened his grip. She was trapped. His voice was low and husky when he spoke. "Why are you squirming? Stop struggling. Don't make me do something I'll regret."

Anya froze instantly. But she couldn't stay in his arms forever. She bit her lips. "Mr. Welton, what happened a year ago is now history. It's been a year. I won't make the same mistake again."

Evan studied Anya's face as he listened to her. It was a pretty face. He was beginning to take a liking towards that face.

His eyes darkened as he eyed Anya like a predator would its prey. "Are you sure you won't reconsider my offer?"

"No, thank you. You have plenty of women who would throw themselves at you. They'll come flocking as soon as you snap your fingers." The tone of Anya's voice was firm. She was adamant. She wouldn't resort to being a mistress, no matter how poor she was.

This was such an insult.

She was a mother. She had Nathaniel and Eudora to think of. She had to make sure they could look up to her as their role

model.

Be it working hard to earn a living or exacting her revenge on the MacMillans, she swore she would rely on her own efforts to accomplish both aims. She would never put herself up for sale to achieve those goals.

“I’ll give you a few days to reconsider your decision.” Evan rarely desired a woman.

This particular one might have set him up in the past but he was willing to let bygones be bygones.

“Mr. Welton, I won’t change my mind. I will never agree to your offer.” Anya didn’t understand why Evan seemed so insistent on having her as his mistress

There were plenty of women in Nordeny. Every one of them would be willing to be his lover.

Why was he so fixated on making Anya his lover?

“You should think about it.” Evan was used to having his way. He wasn’t going to take ‘no’ for an answer. His voice sounded low and husky as he persuaded Anya to reconsider his offer. “You’ll get two hundred grand every month. That’s a great offer. You can’t possibly refuse it.”

Anya found herself at an utter loss for words. The man honestly thought she would sell herself if the price was right.

She was completely speechless.

She had been such an idiot. How could she have fallen in love with him in the first place?

What a fool she had been.

Whatever fantasy Anya had once harbored of Evan was torn into shreds.

She would rather kill herself than be his lover!

"I'm not going to think about it." Somehow, the young woman managed to summon a sudden boost of strength and pushed his arms away from her. She got up and took a few cautious steps away from Evan. Her eyes were bright with anger.

This was the first time Evan had seen Anya so mad.

It didn't upset him at all. All it did was make him want her more.

"I always get what I want. Every time," Evan said slowly.

Anya jerked back in shock. Was the man insane? "Mr. Welton, you're not in love with me. Why do you insist on signing the contract with me?"

Evan raised an eyebrow. "It's just sex. What's that got to do with love?"

Realization dawned on Anya then. He was looking for a good time in bed. He wasn't looking for a girlfriend or a partner.

Well, he got the wrong person.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Welton, but I'm not interested in casual relationships." Anya took a deep breath and stuck her chin proudly in the air. For the first time in her life, she wasn't worried about upsetting Evan or incurring his wrath. Her rejection was blunt

and final.

The young woman turned on her heel and marched out of the room.

He could get Jake to fire her. She didn't care anymore. She could always look for another job.

Honestly, she would like to keep her job at JK Couture. But there was a line that shouldn't be crossed.

She would stick by her principles even if they got her kicked out of the company.

Evan stared at the shut door for a long time after Anya had left. His eyes glinted darkly. Anya MacMillan. What an interesting woman.

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Anger churned inside Anya's gut as she stormed out of Evan's office.

She didn't manage to make it to the elevator. Sydney was waiting outside for her.

Her stepsister walked up to her and stood in her path as soon as she saw Anya step out of the office. She stuck her chin in the air. There was a taint of something dark and contemptuous in her voice as she spoke. Anya wanted to slap her so badly. "Anya. We need to talk."

She wasn't a part of the MacMillan family anymore. Sydney had no right to order her around.

"Make it quick. I'm busy," Anya said curtly.

Sydney couldn't believe the attitude that Anya was giving her. Her face darkened with fury. She glared at her sister and clenched her jaw. "I want to know why Evan asked for you."

"It's to do with work, of course. Why else would he ask for me?" Anya said before reaching out and punching the button for

the elevator.

"Work? What kind of work?" Sydney didn't believe Anya at all. There was something fishy going on here. Her sister had stepped into Evan's office empty-handed. What kind of work could they be discussing?

Was this one of her attempts to seduce Evan?

Jealousy reared its ugly head inside Sydney. All reason were cast aside as she started yelling at Anya like a madwoman. She didn't care how badly she might look anymore. "You're such a whore, Anya.

Have you forgotten all about the oath your made? You're dead, do you hear me? You've seen Evan and you're going to die!"

Anya blew up instantly. That was exactly what Sydney and Melissa wanted, wasn't it? The both of them and her grandmother would love to see her dead. Dead like her mother.

What had they ever done to the MacMillans?

Why must the family treat them this way?

Her father had cheated on her mother. Melissa had cheated her mother of her rightful place in the family. Anya's mother had been forced to divorce her father and leave the MacMillan family. They were the ones who had wronged her mother.

Why should Anya and her mother suffer the consequences?

Did they honestly think they could push her around?

She wasn't a pushover.

She was going to make them pay for what they had done.

She was going to avenge her mother!

Anya resisted the intense urge to give Sydney a hard slap. Her voice was as cold as winter when she spoke. "Why are you bothering me? You should be asking Mr. Welton why he called me into his office."

“Stop harassing me and harass him instead!”

Anya let loose her anger in a rush of words. The doors to the elevator slid open then.

She marched right in.

Before Sydney could make a grab for Anya and drag more answers out of the young woman, the doors had slid shut.

She nearly got her fingers caught between the doors.

Sydney pulled her fingers back in alarm. In a burst of uncontrollable rage, the young woman threw her foot forward and

kicked the elevator doors hard.

She ended up the sole victim of her rage.

Her heel nearly snapped into two. Meanwhile, the metal door to the elevator remained unscathed.

Sydney folded herself in half as she squatted down. She could feel tears welling in her eyes.

She hated Anya so much. How she wished her stepsister would drop dead like her mother had!

Shane had left when Anya returned to JK Couture.

But the enormous bouquet comprising 999 roses and the Chanel bag that cost a hundred thousand dollars were still there.

on her desk.

The sight made Anya's head throb painfully.

She didn't want those gifts at all.

She was going to be branded as a loose woman if she accepted those gifts.

She couldn't believe how unlucky she was. She seemed to be surrounded by unwelcomed suitors.

She was adamant to not accept Shane's gifts.

She had to locate a delivery service and have these gifts returned to Shane immediately.

At that thought, Anya headed to the reception. They probably had a list of delivery services and their hotlines somewhere.

Jake emerged from his office then. He had seen everything, including Shane's attempt to woo Anya with roses and an expensive bag.

He knew he wasn't as rich as Shane.

But Jake believed that Anya wasn't the sort of woman you could buy with money. He wanted to know what she really felt

about Shane.

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Jake stepped out of his office and made a beeline for Anya. "Anya, we need to talk."

"Is there anything wrong, Jake?" Anya asked.

"No, what I mean is...it's the middle of the day. We're at work. Your suitors are free to send you gifts but it'd be great if they tone the elaborate gestures down a notch. It might reflect badly on the firm," Jake said gently.

One wouldn't be able to discern the hidden meaning beneath Jake's words.

Anya hadn't. She had no idea what Jake was really trying to say at first.

She thought he was rebuking her for causing a commotion in the office. Her pretty little face fell. "I'm so sorry, Jake. There must have been some kind of misunderstanding. Mr. Brown and I don't know each other personally at all. I promise this won't happen again."

"I won't do anything that will damage the company's reputation."

Profuse apologies flowed from Anya's lips. Jake's heart fell back into his chest. So, she didn't know Shane personally.

From the looks of it, Anya wasn't interested in Shane at all.

Jake felt a lot better. Nevertheless, he kept his face straight as he spoke. "I'm glad to hear that. We're a reputable firm, Anya. We have a reputation to upkeep."

"I understand, Jake," Anya nodded.

"You should get back to work," Jake said with a soft smile before heading back to his office and throwing himself into his

work.

Anya watched as Jake walked back into his office. She held her hand against her forehead and pressed her palm down. hard. What an eventful day.

Honestly, she was ready to break down.

Anya pulled herself together the next moment and requested the receptionist for the hotline to a delivery service. Then, she called the number and requested that they come down to JK Couture to collect the roses and the Chanel bag.

They were to return both gifts to Shane.

Anya had no idea where Shane lived but she managed to locate his office.

After some deliberation, she decided to have the gifts delivered to Shane's office.

Done with the call, Anya headed back to her desk and threw herself back into work. She had to finish the design for Mdm Welton's hat.

She wanted to get this over and done with so that she could move on with her life. She didn't want to have anything to do

with the Weltons.

The young woman started working on the draft.

Meanwhile, the receptionist and a couple of designers had gathered in a group and started gossiping. "Did you see what happened? She's really something, Isn't she? I can't believe she caught the eye of Shane Brown! He's so hot and so rich!"

"Yeah, she's something, that's for sure. Did you see the Chanel bag Mr. Brown got her? The envy is killing me!"

“Mr. Brown isn’t that good looking. He’s rich, I’ll give you that, but he’s not exactly tall, dark and handsome.”

“Who cares? He’s one of the Nordenic Quartet. He could look like the beast himself. Women would throw themselves at him regardless of his looks!”

“How did she manage to have someone like Mr. Brown fall head over heels for her? I don’t get it. She’s just a little prettier than the average young woman.”

“I see you’ve got eyes. That’s how she managed to charm him. She’s pretty! She’s got a pretty face and she used that to seduce the pants off men.”

“That’s disgusting. She did the same to Jake too, didn’t she? Is she planning on dating the both of them at the same time?”

“What a slut. How could she do that? She’s a disgrace to the female sex. All she’s got are her looks. How could she resort to using her charms instead of relying on pure hard work to earn herself her place in the company?”

“Keep it down! Don’t let Carol hear you. She’s going to be so upset if she hears you.”

“What was Anya doing at the reception?”

“She wanted to arrange for a delivery. She’s returning the flowers and the bag to Mr. Brown.”

“Trying to seem like she’s above gifts, is she? She should stop that act of hers. She’s probably trying to trick Mr. Brown into giving her more expensive stuff. She really knows how to get what she wants.”

“That’s right. She’s shameless.”

“Let’s get back to work. Jake’s going to step out of his office any time now.”

Everyone fell silent immediately. The group scattered and everyone got back to work.

Chapter 88

The commotion at work died down.

Anya was nearly done with the design of Mdm Welton's hat.

She had decided to ignore her terrible and ridiculous suitors and, instead, redirect her attention back to work. All she wanted to do was to work hard at her job and, of course, find a way to make the MacMillans pay for what they had done to her and her mother.

Everything else could wait.

While Anya might have shoved everything else aside, her suitors still had her on their minds.

Especially Evan. He had made up his mind that he would have her and that meant she wasn't going to escape his clutches.

Soon, it was time for lunch.

Anya decided she would head to the canteen later for lunch. Right now, she had to pump some milk.

Her breasts had swelled with milk.

She waited until everyone else in the office had left for the canteen for lunch before sneaking into the washroom with her tote bag. Then, she slipped into one of the cubicles.

She kept herself busy with other things while she pumped her milk.

Nathaniel was growing up faster than she had expected and had begun to speak his first sentences. Anya had to make sure Nathaniel and his sister got the best of everything in life.

She was adamant that they not suffer or lose out on anything.

They had no father. All they had were Anya and Ellie.

They were already missing a fatherly figure in their lives.

She couldn't let them miss out on anything else.

Now that she was working, she couldn't afford to spend as much time with them.

Ellie was getting older as well.

Taking care of two children must be exhausting for her.

It would be great if she could have the kids enrolled for morning classes or childcare and have someone professional look after them. That would lift a burden off Ellie's shoulders as well.

Anya began searching online for programs that were available for toddlers.

preschool.

Courses for

The search engine listed a long list of results.

There were programs that emphasized bonding between the parent and child and those that focused on intellectual development.

Everything looked expensive. Anya inhaled sharply when she saw the figures displayed on the screen.

A typical program cost a thousand dollars a month.

That was how much she was bringing home every month right now. She wouldn't be able to afford formula milk, diapers or anything else if she enrolled her children for one of these programs.

This was really going to eat into her paycheck.

She had spent the last year living with Ellie. They had survived on Ellie's savings and her pension.

But she had a job now. She couldn't live off Ellie's pension now that she had a monthly paycheck.

That would be disgraceful.

Anya stared at the figures on her phone before sighing heavily.

She had to work harder.

only way to offe

That was the only way to afford her kids a good life.

Besides, she had no idea if she had a chance of claiming her mother's inheritance.

She had spoken to the lawyer whom Ellie had recommended to her. The lawyer had told her that she needed time to go through the documents. It would take quite a while.

That meant that they weren't going to file a suit in court anytime soon.

The pump sucked up the last drops of milk. Anya pulled herself out of her thoughts and poured the milk into a bag. She sealed the bag tightly, then slipped it into her tote bag. The young woman returned to the office and hid her bags of milk on the last shelf in the fridge.

After that, she headed to the canteen for lunch.

Anya returned to the office after lunch and continued working on Mdm Welton's hat.

She was nearly done with the design. The young woman added the final touches to the draft, then pulled her phone out and called Mdm Welton. The old lady picked up almost immediately.

Hi, Mdm Welton," Anya said politely. "The design for your hat is ready. Do you have some time today? I can deliver the draft o you right now."

She tried to find classes or courses that allowed parents' participation or programs that were preparatory courses for preschool.

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She could return to the office after that.

She could use work as an excuse to leave. She knew how friendly the old lady could be.

But Anya

wanted to avoid running into Evan again. She should spend as little time with Mdm Welton as possible.

“Really? The design is ready?” Mdm Welton truly adored Anya. The sound of the young woman’s voice filled her with delight. The old lady hugged her pet dog tightly. “Why don’t you head to my place now? I’m at home right now.”

“Of course. I’m on my way right now.” Anya ended the call and began tidying her desk. After that, she told Jake where she was going and got his permission to leave the office.

She hurried downstairs. She would have to take the subway to get to Mdm Welton’s place.

Chapter 89

As soon as she appeared at the lobby, the guards called Hayden and informed him that Anya was leaving the building.

The young man delivered the news to Evan as soon as he ended the call.

Evan simply hummed when he heard what Hayden told him. Then, he told Hayden to leave the room.

He reached for the phone on his desk and called Jake.

He wasn't simply going to ask Jake where Anya had gone.

He was going to tell Jake that Anya was now responsible for designing the wedding gown for Dan's cousin.

Jake told him that Anya had headed to his grandmother's place.

After the call, Evan rose to his feet. He decided to pay his grandmother a visit.

It was two in the afternoon. It was warm and bright outside.

Anya made her way to Mdm Welton's place as soon as she could.

The old lady was seated on the couch with her pet dog, waiting for Anya.

She saw Anya as soon as the young woman entered the house. The old lady beamed brightly at the sight of the young woman, "Anya! Come and take a seat."

"Mdm Welton, here's the design for your hat. Please take a look." Anya didn't take a seat. Instead, she simply handed the draft to the old lady.

She was worried that Mdm Welton might try to keep her for dinner.

She had been going home late for the past few days.

Her kids were beginning to get upset.

Mdm Welton placed her beloved pet dog down and took the draft from Anya. Her eyes scanned the draft. Delight rippled across her eyes. The young woman was a great designer. She loved her work

It was perfect.

She approved of both the hat's style and shape.

It was exactly what she wanted for her hat.

"I love your design, Anya. You can go ahead and get the hat made." Mdm Welton handed the draft back to Anya. "I'll be sure

to recommend you to my friends. They need new clothes every month and they're extremely generous clients. You can help them out when you have time."

Anya was overcome with gratitude when she heard Mdm Welton say that she would recommend Anya to new clients. She nodded profusely and thanked the old lady. "Thank you, Mdm Welton."

The old lady simply smiled. "It's no big deal. You're a great designer. That's why I'm recommending you to my friends. I wouldn't do that if you weren't good at your job."

"Well, if there's nothing else, I'll make a move then. I have to get back to the office." Anya was worried that Mdm Welton might ask her to stay for dinner.

That was why she decided to make her excuses now and leave as soon as she could.

She was right. A

soon as those words left her lips, Mdm Welton brought up the subject of dinner. "Why don't you stay for dinner, Ms. MacMillan?"

“Mdm Welton, I’m supposed to be at work.” Anya knew it.

She felt a wave of exasperation surge inside her.

“I know that. You can stick around and talk about work. I’ve been thinking of getting a new coat,” Mdm Welton said smoothly as she made her excuses for Anya.

She probably had plenty more where that came from.

Anya found herself at a sudden loss for words.

“Let’s take a look at the coats in my walk-in wardrobe, shall we?” Mdm Welton grabbed Anya’s wrist and tugged her gently away. She didn’t seem to mind the fact that Anya was just a junior designer working at Welton Group.

She seemed to adore Anya and treated her like her own granddaughter.

Anya didn’t want to take a look at Mdm Welton’s coats.

But she was one of JK Couture’s important clients. She couldn’t say ‘no’ to her.

What were the chances of her running into Evan here? It seemed unlikely.

She could spare a couple of minutes and take a quick look at the old lady’s walk-in wardrobe.

After a few minutes, Mdm Welton had to step outside to take a call from one of her friends.

Anya found herself alone in the huge walk-in wardrobe as she inspected the old lady’s coats.

She lost track of time as she studied the collection of coats around her.

The door slid open then. Anya didn't turn around.

It must be Mdm Welton.

Anya kept her eyes on the rack as she pulled out a tan coat. "Mdm Welton, the color of this coat looks really good. Would you like to have your new coat in this color?"

The young woman felt a sudden wall of heat at her back. It was followed by a heated breath against her neck and a familiar scent of smoke. The voice next to her ear was soft and husky, "You're right. That does look good."

Chapter 90

There was a unique timbre to Evan's voice. Anya knew it was him instantly.

Startled, she whirled around and found herself staring straight into Evan's dark eyes.

It was Evan!

What was he doing here?

He should be at work.

Anya wasn't going to try and find out why Evan was here. He lived here, after all. He had every right to be in this house. She simply hadn't expected him to be here right now.

Anya was beginning to regret her decision to help Mdm Welton design a new coat.

It seemed that she would be seeing more of Evan in the future.

The young woman's thoughts began to wander. She yanked her mind back to the present and pulled herself together. Then, she took a hasty step back and greeted the young man with an utterly professional tone. "Hi, Mr. Welton."

She had every intention of leaving after that.

The young woman shoved Mdm Welton's coat back onto the rack and whirled around.

Evan's hand shot out, caught her wrist and pulled her back. He wasn't a monster. She didn't have to be afraid of him. "Why are you running?"

She hadn't seemed afraid of him when she had lured him into her bed a year ago.

Anya seemed surprised. She hadn't expected him to pull her back. The young woman tried to tug her wrist free. "Is there anything you need, Mr. Welton?"

"Have you reconsidered the contract?" Evan asked patiently.

Anya was ready to go out of her mind. Had she not turned the offer down?

The man didn't seem to understand the concept of a refusal.

Perhaps he did. Perhaps he was simply desperate to have sex with a woman.

Well, she wasn't that kind of woman!

Anya tried to keep her cool as she repeated her refusal. "I've given you my answer. No."

"It's two hundred grand a month. Are you sure you won't reconsider the offer?" Evan stared right into Anya's eyes. It was as

If he were trying to look right into her soul. The young man knew that he was being a tad too forceful.

But he was simply a man trying to pursue a woman he was interested in. He was simply following his most primal instincts.

Besides, he had no experience when it came to courting women.

In Evan's views, women required no courting. He could simply buy them for a price.

Anya didn't share his views. Even if Evan were to offer her a million dollars every month, her answer would still be 'no'.

She would never agree to the terms of the contract. Trying to please Evan was akin to suicide.

Besides, who would put themselves up for sale and offer themselves to this man?

All Anya wanted to do was to stay as far away from this man. He had no idea what love was at all.

"Mr. Welton, I think I've made myself very clear. I'm not interested in the money and I'm not interested in being your lover."

"No one turns me down, Anya MacMillan," Evan said carefully as he narrowed his dark eyes. There was a hint of steel behind his words.

"Do you plan to force me to do something I don't want to do, Mr. Welton?" Anya spat out fearlessly. Her eyes flashed with

anger.

“I won’t make a woman do something she doesn’t want to do. I’ll find a way to make you say ‘yes’.”
Evan released his fingers on Anya’s wrist. His eyes were dark with hunger. “You should reconsider my offer.”

Anya found herself overcome by exasperation. She knew exactly what kind of man Evan was.

He was a man who knew nothing about love.

He had no idea how to court or romance a woman.

Perhaps everything had come too easily to him. He had been blessed with beauty, wealth and power. He was the most sought after bachelor in the capital city.

He had droves of women who would flock to him at the drop of a hat.

The young man had enjoyed the attention and adoration of women since he had been a child.

He would never humble himself to the lowly role of a suitor courting a young woman who had caught his eye.

He was interested in someone now and yet the first thought that had come to his mind was to buy her time and company.

What a pitiful man.

Anya couldn’t believe that she had been in love with such a man.

He knew nothing about love or respect.

A smile appeared on Anya’s lips at that thought. The slight crooked twist to her mouth was tainted with exasperation and

scorn. She would never agree to what he was asking for. If she were going to incur his wrath regardless what she did, why bother trying to spare his feelings? She threw all caution to the wind. “Mr. Welton, you have no idea what it means to love someone, do you? Why don’t you spend some time trying to figure that out on your own? I’m a busy woman. I don’t have time to play games with you.”

“If you insist on trying to pay me for sex, you leave me no choice but to quit.”

Having said her piece, Anya ignored the furious look on Evan’s face and cast her eyes aside. She pivoted on her heels and walked out of the walk-in wardrobe.

Evan stared as Anya left. The look in his eyes hardened. He couldn’t believe it. The woman had told him off!

She was just another woman to him.

He could always get another one easily.