

Mr. Chairman's Devious Wife by Brey Mitchylle

Chapter 31-40

Chapter 31

The mired sound of the car somehow made her feel better. Sofia looked out at the streets of Springfield, Illinois. It was still eight in the morning, and the sun cast a warm glow over the city

August in Springfield meant clear skies and a gentle breeze that rustled the leaves of the trees lining the streets. Sofia noticed fandes strolling on the sidewalks, kids riding their bikes, and neighbors chatting on their front porches. The city had a peaceful charm that she always loved. It felt comforting, warm, and familiar.

“Are you ready?” Alexander asked. “Karina is already waiting with the media..”

His chuckle echoed inside the car. “You truly wanted to make this as huge as possible. I never expected that fiery attitude from you”

“I don't know if I should take that as a compliment,” she looked at his side profile. It was Josef who was driving the car while Alexander sat next to her, reading some documents.

Apparently, his schedule today would be full yet he still chose to drive her to the police station where she would formally file a case against the people who accused her of plagiarism and the ones who spread lies about bullying.

She wanted to make this grand. So, she had already asked Karina to invite some reporters. What about that brother of mine?” he asked. He was currently smiling as he read the documents but she could immediately sense the impatience in his

voice

“I wid take care of him.”

Il me if you need my help, his voice turned softer, warmer.

will, she did not hesitate. The fact that he was able to summon Dr. Hugo Moore was enough proof of his capabilities. This an not only has the money, but he also has connections. However, this fact alone made her wonder why he actually married her. He could take care of his brother even without her.

So, this should not be business-related. She immediately thought of the good-looking blond Hugo standing next to Alexander. Was it possible that the two are... lovers?

He lifted his gaze, and she immediately turned her head away. She tried to hide the panic in her eyes. She was curious but decided not to pry. Their current relationship is good as it is. There is no need to complicate things.

“Soon enough, Sofia arrived a block away from the police station where Karina’s car was waiting for her. She bid Alexander goodbye before getting into Karina’s car. “Who is that?” Karina immediately asked.

“My husband.

“My husband, Sofia said. However, we are not here to talk about-

“Hold on!” Karina frowned. ‘Did I hear it right? You just said husband. As in husband?”

“Yes”

“That long legs... It wasn’t Daniel’s

Sofia smirked. She never thought that Karina would actually see his leg. “It was not Daniel.”

“Then-Karina’s eyes turned even wider. “An old rich man willing to help you with your revenge?

1/4

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Chapter 31

surprise flashed . Sota’s eyes. “What are you talking about? What old man? “No way. Karina’s mouth dropped. “You

didn't say no.

"What?"

"You are always the type of person that would say no. Yet you didn't which means. I got something right. Was it the old part? Or the wealthy part?"

"Can we focus on why we are here? Solia immediately changed the topic. Her agreement with Alexander was confidential. So, she did not want to inform Karina about this matter. At least not right now. She wanted to focus on how to take care of Lawrence and Charlotte.

"Alright..." Karina took a deep breath. I will ignore the fact that you did not inform me... your only best friend about this. matter. I will forgive you this time, but I am going to expect some explanation from you. If that explanation is not going to convince me, then am going to cut off your ass. Do you hear me

"Yes ma'am." Sofia chuckled. Karina glared at her in response. Tam serious

"I know, and I was planning to tell you about him, but the currere situation is just it's chaotic. Besides, my birthday is coming, and he will be there as my escort.

What about Daniel?"

"What about him?" Sofia asked.

"Did you does he know? I am guessing he doesn't

You are right

Then... "Tam going to break up with him once he proposes to me.

"He will propose

"He will do it before my birthday. Solia was pretty certain that Daniel would do this before her birthday as he would want to escort her and show everyone that she already had a huge engagement ring on her fingers. "You are insane Karina said.

"Oh...I am. Sofia responded, a warm smile apparent on her face

“What if he would instead propose on your birthday Karina asked

“Do you really think he would do that in front of Charlotte Sofia retorted Charlotte had always been needy and dramatic She always wanted the spotlight on her, and Daniel knew this. There is simply no reason for Daniel to risk attracting Charlotte’s ire.

“Those two planned everything. What if Charlotte would agree? What if she loved your money more than that man?”

“Then I would not have a choice but to actually show them something special. Solia narrowed her eyes. But w for that. Karina frowned, her expression turning solemn

“I know,” Karina said as she started driving her car. “The reporters are outside waiting for you. Are you sure you wanted to do this?” Karina asked,

“This could attract even more attention to you.” Karina had a worried look on her face. Their firm handles a lot of cases from: well-known personalities so she knew how dangerous this move is especially for someone like Softa

know, Sofia pursed her lips. She looked out of the window and immediately spotted a few reporters outside the police station. For some reason, this made her heart race. She swallowed. As if sensing her thoughts, Karina grabbed her hund. |

Chapter 31

My bossers alocado insade wating for you Trust him. He will help you” Karina said. “And I will be here”

Sofia hoolilat karma. The base that karina was talking about was a tally the partner of their firm and also Alexander’s friend Alexander already told him that this lawyer was as tually one of the best lawyers in Illinors. “Thank you” Solur said. She was honestly very thankful that still had someone like Karina who would always be there for her.

You don’t have to thank me I just need that doughnut and the new boba drink” Sola laughed at that. “Right. Of course, Tam going to ask, Miss Amores to onder that for the next thirty days. Have it delivered to your office?”

“My “Karma lifted her chin. “You are making it sound like thirty days is a long time. Make it two months..?”

Deal. Soha smiled Seeing her smile. Karma chuckled. Now if your chin and stop smiling. You look really silly when you smile like that Make your gaze colder. Think of Daniel and that woman when you talk to the reporters. It would be better if you cry too, karina smiled “People always love a sob story.

3/3

Chapter 32

Mockhart, what can say about the bullying accusations

“Miss Lockhart is it true that you were bullying Caroline all day?”

Miss Lockhart Miss Caroline established her name without Group’s help What can you say about this matter?

“Miss Lockhart”

“Miss Lockhart, just answer one question for us

Soha stopped walking removed the large shades covering more than half of her face, and then smiled “I will be answering

about this matter this afternoon. My secretary already sent you an invitation. Hope to see everyone there. As for me I just file. I apologize but I cannot reveal the evidence. I am confident that the law will be on my side,” Sofia said

“Miss Lockhart, plagiarism is frowned upon in the artistic industry. What are your future plans after this scandal?”

Soha pursed her lips, looked at the reporter, and only smiled.

Miss Lockhart will not answer any more questions, a man suddenly intervened. He stood in front of Sofia, his face cold. “It YOU WANT Answers, you are going to wait for the conference later!”

Seeing the man, all the reporters seemed to have lost their enthusiasm.

They faded from view as abruptly as they had emerged

of Senator

Sofia looked at Karina, who winked at her. The man before Sona was Karina's boss, Adam Harris, the Harms and the partner of Harris and Legacy Law Associates. He was also one of the most ruthless Lawyers in the US, well known for his ability to win unwinnable cases

"Follow me," Adam said as he led them towards his own car, a black SUN waiting nearby. "Just as I told you I will be representing you from now on. Everything you are going to do, the words you are going to speak, and your plans shall be detailed I do not want to be blindsided. I want all the facts I want receipts. I want cooperation, he said the moment the car started moving He sat in the passenger seat with Karina and Soffa at the back of the car.

"I have already prepared answers to their possible questions later. I do not want you to create a sob story. You are the heir of LH Group The last thing the shareholders need is someone who would cry when faced with a problem." Adam said as Karina handed a folder to Sofia.

Sota nodded and accepted it. Then she started reading the tiles. Slowly, her face turned solemn. "You wanted me to fight fire with fire?" she asked.

"Being calm, composed, and professional is not fighting fire with tire. It is showing that you have the emotional intellimm to handle the company. Adam said coldly.

"You wanted me to hand the evidence towards the shareholders Sofia asked.

"Yes"

"Before the media!"

"Yes"

Sofia pursed her lips. So, Adam wanted her to solve everything behind the scenes

13

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Chapter 17

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you are a threat. Those cacutis kojim that” Adam said. “Miss Karina will help you out oring the shareholder’s meeting We have already printed what we currently have

So all the file She immediately understood his plan You wanted them to help me out Right now, Sofia is akin to a John front of laner solves She was alone young and considered weak

All her life Sedia hat whed on her mothes grandmother, and Lawrence Now, it is time for her to learn how to defend herself from the sharks that wanted to devour her whole

Those people rimst have expected her to have a breakdown so they could prove to everyone that she was unstable. Then

nilit be easier for them to kick her out of her very own company.

Thinking bark. Sofia could only blame herself for this weakness. She grew up thinking that the company would belong to her anyway. Her grandmother encouraged her to pursue business to intern in the company but she refused to. She thought she could easily survive if she followed the things that she loved

Of course, the person who encouraged her to do this was her trusted stepfather who also influenced her mother.

“Thank you” Soha said.

“Hmmm. Adam turned his head away and no longer spoke again. His driver then drove Sofia and Karina towards her

office

“You have not been answering my calls.” Daniel’s voice welcomed her the moment she arrived inside her office. She narrowed her eyes at Daniel, who was sitting on her chair. It seems that this man was hell-bent on ruining her mood. Sofa rould only sigh inwardly

*I visited your apartment and it turns out, you are not there Yet it seems that you have forgotten to inform me. You also seem to have forgotten to tell me about the incident involving your car

Sofia removed her coat and handed it to Miss Amores. "Are you here for an explanation? Because both of us know you are not getting one." Sofia said.

"What are you doing?" Daniel got up. He approached her

"Leave us." Sofia turned to Miss Amores and Karina, who complied without saying another word.

Sofia looked at the man standing in front of her. Daniel was a little shorter than Alexander In the past, she actually thought that Daniel led it all

However, compared to his brother, Daniel was considered mediocre. For some reason, seeing him up close immediately made Sofia angry. She wondered why this man was still acting like this in front of her.

"If you told me about the incident. I would have gone back home. I am certain that Alexander would understand." He tried to reach out to touch her cheeks, but she turned her face away know I have been really busy, but that was just because Alexander forces me to travel a lot

"Tam tired" She walked past him, Blaming other people was something that this man was very good at

Sofia was confident that if she confronted Daniel now, the latter would immediately start blaming Charlotte.

"Was it about Aunt?" he asked. "I heard about Dr. Mulach. Sofia, if Lhad known....."

"No. It is not your fault? Sofia said. She then took her seat and stared at Daniel's soft expression. "It was never your f

She could feel Daniel's gaze towards her, yet she chose to ignore him. "How about I take a leave? You have been very stressed the past few days. Why not take a vacation? How about celebrating somewhere warmer? Florida? Or Asia?" Daniel asked. "Bah or the Philippines would be nice

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Chapter 32

"I have been asking you for the past few years to celebrate my birthday in those places You always said you were busy. Sofia

Sof-

"It's fine "Sofia said "I still have things to attend to. You should leave now,"

She heard a sharp sigh Almost immediately, her face turned coli

"Look Sofia, will you just he stared at her then let out another sigh as if he was trying to calm himself. "I did not mean to

"I know," Sofia answered. Right now, she found it almost impossible to act around Daniel. With the poisoning and everything else happening around her. Sofia's tolerance for bullshit is quite low. She only wished that this man would leave

Very S0011

"I know I have been away, but this is for our future. Alexander wanted me to lead a project in Asia. I think.... I think this is my chance to prove myself to the board." Daniel said. "You. of all people, should understand that, right?"

Sofia pursed her lips. "Oh, I do she answered after a few seconds of silence.

He was right. Sofia had witnessed his struggle in the Beaumont Empire. She had seen this man spend sleepless nights for a report.

For years, she stood by his side as he went through everything. She supported him and fought for him. In the end, he betrayed her.

"I do understand everything." Sofia smiled as the memories in her head slowly faded away.

Author's Note: The Sob Story was for Daniel. huehue...

Chapter 33

Daniel sighed. "I apologize for being so busy. I know you need me. However, the things that I am doing now are for our future."

Sofia wanted to tell him that he was only doing things that could benefit his future, not hers. But she chose to keep her mouth shut as she nodded. Seeing this, he suddenly walked around the table, decreasing the distance between them even further. Then he patted her head. "I bought this for you." he said as he placed a small velvet black box in front of her.

Sofia immediately tensed. She looked at him.

"Open it," he smiled and gestured for her to open the box. For a while, she hesitated. Then she slowly opened it and was relieved to see a small necklace instead.

"It's a rare pink diamond. I bought it in Brunei. I thought it would suit you very well."

Sofia stared at the pendant. It was a heart-shaped white gold. In the middle of it was the small pink diamond. "It's beautiful."

H

"Let me put it on you."

"No." Sofia suddenly slapped his hand when he was about to touch the necklace. "I mean-I-1 don't want to wear it right now. I don't think it suits my clothes. Sofia gave an awkward laugh. "It's your gift, and I don't want to tarnish it by wearing something cheap."

Daniel arched his eyebrow but did not ask any more questions. Instead, he lowered his head and kissed her forehead. Goosebumps skittered through her skin as memories of what he did with Charlotte filled her head.

"Mother wanted to finally meet you," Daniel said. "I know I have been delaying this for so long, but I told her I wanted to marry someone. She asked me to meet you"

"Your Your mother?" Daniel's mother? Sofia thought about the past when she wanted to meet Daniel's mother. She asked him multiple times to set up this

meeting, but he never did. This was because he wanted to prove to his mother that he could stand on his own before having a serious relationship with any woman.

In the past, Sofia never doubted that reasoning. In fact, she admired Daniel's determination. However, as time passed by, Sofia wanted to spend some holidays with the Beaumont Family and thought it would be a nice gesture if she met his mother. Moreover, both of them already graduated college and were at the right age to start a serious relationship

Still, Daniel refused.

She was almost certain that this was another ploy. With her upcoming birthday, Daniel would want her to slowly integrate herself into the Beaumont Family.

"How about this weekend?" Daniel asked. "The annual meeting will happen today. Don't you need to at least res mall break?"

Sofia said nothing. Instead, she thought of Mrs. Teresa Pitt Beaumont-Daniel's mother. Mrs. Teresa Beaumont is a well known socialite in New York.

She was famous for hosting grand parties and charity events in the city. Teresa was known to be elegant and graceful, always seen in the most fashionable outfits. Her reputation as a socialite was not just about attending events; she actively participated in various charitable causes, making her a respected figure in high society.

Despite her New York roots. Teresa chose to settle in Chicago when she married into the Beaumont Family. The decision was rooted in love, as she wanted to be with the man she cared for deeply. Living in Chicago, she brought a touch of New York glamour to the Beaumont household.

1/3

He days were flesh gal gatherings fundraisers and managing the Beaumont estate However, beneath the polished experion Peresa was a caring mother who wanted the best ter her son Alexander, and Dantel

Becmise of the influence of the Beaumont Bank, no one actually knew that Alexander's real mother was not Teresa! Even

“”think I am

Come on babe Daniel said “We have been working so much in the past few months, we barely spend time together Can you just spend a day with me?”

Spend a dayt

1. She had been asking him in the past. She was once a nuve woman who would ask him to schedule a dane so they could spend time together!

But what did this:

He was always busy with business traveling, and golting with clients. Then, he would spend his rest days sleeping in her or

Son already asked herself why she settled for this kind of treatment for years. In the end, she could not answer her own questions

Anight Sofa said. “I will tell Miss Amores about it.”

od cancel everything for the weekend. I have a surprise for you, Daniel said

in smiled

opens

scertain that Damel would propose this weekend. Meanwhile, the other half was

ndering if he invited Lawrence and Charlote for his proposal. It would be nice if he did.

Alright. I still have things to prepare for the meeting

You are still going” Daniel asked surprise flashing in his eyes.

“After the scandal Daniel made a deliberate pause. Twas thinking that it would be nice if you simply give the CEO position of LH DESIGN to another candidate for you to take a break. After all-

I have no plans of leaving the company Sona smiled. Daniel must be talking about the fact that the company was currently getting canceled because of Charlotte's fans and that bullying and plagiarism issue

Again he stared at her. From the perspective of business, leaving the company and disappearing in silence might be great choice but this is not something that Sofia was willing to do.

As if on cue, her phone started ringing. Then there was a knock on the door.

"The Director is on the other line" Miss Amores said.

Sofia smiled and looked at Daniel "I am going to take this call was his turn to leave and stop irritating her.

Of course." he tried to lean closer, perhaps for a kiss, but Sofia already turned to the other side to answer the phone.

"Father?" Sofia said. Relief flashed inside her when she saw Daniel leave her office. She wondered why that man was able to come inside her office, even though she told the guards not to allow Daniel or Charlotte inside.

You filed a case without informing our legal team Lawrence's voice was cold. "Sofia, what are you doing?"

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Chapter 23

"I thought it was the right thing to do"

thing

Not being to the legal team is NEVER right. Lawrence emphasized the word never "And I know that you are perfectly

open if you make a single mistake

father: My reputation is at stake. Those to take matters into my own hands. I need to show the board that I am capable know that is what you wanted me to do Soha said. She tried to hide the sarcasm in her voice. Just as she expected. there was a brief silence on the other line "Am I right, father?" she asked.

"Of Of course Lust Lawrence let out a sharp sigh. "I just thought you were too young. If you keep this strong act, the shareholders will devour you like a lamp Sotta, I promised your mother." he made another pause. I promised her that I will protect you

"Yet, you were not able to protect her from that Dr. Mulach "Sogia said.

"That was never my intention.

"I know. Solta said. "I know how much you love Mother, and we are very lucky to have you, Solia added while rolling her eyes. Then her voice softened 1-1 just thought that she let out a dramatic sigh. "Nevermind. I will see you later,"

"Right Lawrence said "About your mother-

Let's tall, about this after the meeting, Sola sad then, she ended the call without waiting for his response.

Chapter 34

Lawrence's hands rightened around his phone right after the call ended. He narrowed his eyes as he thought about Sodia'

winds

I told you, she had been acting weird in the past few days. Charlotte said. She refused to answer any of my calls and is no longer staying in her previous house" Charlone had already told her father about this matter in the past, but he refused to listen to her. As always

Seeing her fathers solemn expression, Charlotte sneered. Since they were younger, Sofia had always been dependent on her So, Sofa's sudden changes immediately caught her attention. She thought it was only because of stress for the annual meeting. It seemed that there were still things that she did not know. However, judging from her father's expression, those things were not anything good.

Charlotte sighed. Then she opened her social media and posted a status Naturally, it was about Sofi

"In the midst of life's storms, our bonds grow stronger."

Hey, beautiful souls.

I hope this message finds you all well. Today, my heart feels heavy, and I want to take a moment to address some recent events involving someone close to my heart. The past few days have been challenging, and I've witnessed the toll it's taken

want to make one thing clear- we all have our struggles, and it's important to remember that appearances can be deceiving. This person has been accused of things that I know in my heart they would never do. As someone who knows them deeply, I stand by their side.

In times like these, it's easy to jump to conclusions and pass judgment, but let's all take a step back and remember the power of understanding. Let's be cautious with our words and avoid making assumptions without knowing the full story.

This person is not just a connection to me they're a friend, a confidante, and a beautiful soul. I believe in their strength, resilience, and integrity. Sometimes, life throws challenges our way, but I'm confident that the truth will prevail.

Let's spread love and understanding. Everyone is fighting their own battles, and kindness goes a long way. Remember, we are all human, and none of us are perfect.

Sending you all love and positivity.

– Caroline

#SupportEachOther #KindnessMatters #Stand By YourPeople

(@Caroline Queen, your heart is as radiant as your talent! Your kindness is a beacon in this sometimes harsh world. We're so lucky to stan a goddess like you! #GoddessCharlotte #KindnessGoals

LoyalToC Charlotte, you're not just an actress, you're a guiding light for us. Your compassion shines through, making the world a better place. Keep spreading those good vibes, queen! #kindnessPersonified #CharlotteFan

@CarolineAdmirer. The way you stand up for others is awe-inspiring! Your soul is pure gold, and we're forever grateful to have you as our role model. CharlotteThe KindnessQueen #Inspirational

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Chapter 34

Reading the events that put her in a good light: Charlotte smiled and closed her phone. However, just as she was about

the face cover she received Sona's call

Tam going to take this call Charlotte said as she rushed out of her father's office "Hey you haven't answered my calls. Are you alright? Do you need me to come

and. "Dannel invited me to join him this weekend, and I-

The mention of Daniel's name immediately made her frown. "And"

Where are you? I don't know if you can come

Leolise, Dell, Charlotte said. The call ended, and Charlotte immediately asked her driver to take her to Sota's office. After a few minutes Charlotte was already walking inside Sona's building. Of course, she made sure to leak this to the press. Right now, it would be nice to show everyone that she would support her sister no matter what her role as the supportive sister despite experiencing bullying has been very good she had already gained almost two hundred thousand followers, and it was growing day by day

"Sister Charlotte's expression immediately morphed into something that showed concern. How are you?" She pulled Sona in a hug. "I have been so worried. I couldn't sleep. Did you see the bags under my eyes?"

"I apologize for making you worry," Sona said. She slowly patted Charlotte's back, hoping that she would not lose her composure and suddenly strangle the woman.

Charlotte finally ended the hug. "I have been calling you, I went to your apartment and you were not there. Look, I know you are worried, but you still have me and Dad. We are always here for you." Again, Charlotte pulled her into a hug. Seeing

gesture, Charlotte smiled inwardly.

She always nothing

changed. It should be easy to guess that this might be because of the Annual Meeting and she had been overwhelmed by responsibilities and wanted some time for herself. Either way, it has Daniel

preparing the thing that you like I especially asked her to order the one with fewer calories” Sofia

ling me fat Charlotte immediately pouted

Sofia answered nonchalantly.

that she was

you gained weight since the last time that I saw you Sofia was never the type to fat-shame someone In reality, Charlotte was never fat. However, this woman had the habit of insisting that she was fat so people would tell

It was always Sofia’s role to say that she weighed more than Charlotte or that she had gained weight to make her feel better about herself

Sofia was not planning on doing that now,

“I thought you were on a diet,” Sofia added. “Your new film needed you to lose ten pounds, right?”

Why are we talking about my weight? Charlotte finally reacted after a few minutes of silence.

Sofia faked a burst of laughter just in time for Miss Amores to come with some iced coffee and the dessert that Charlotte

ked

You seemed different, Charlotte said.

III

Chapter 31

“I think Daniel’s going to propose to me very soon Sofia said. To be honest, I have slowly doubted our relationship in the past few months simply because we have been together for years and I wanted to settle down after my birthday”

“You”

“I wanted a child,” Sofia looked at Charlotte. “I wanted to have one before my mother woke up.”

“You wanted a child? Charlotte frowned. “I mean-that’s good news but have you carefully thought about it?” she asked. Is this the real reason why Sona changed? She thought her mother was going to die? Now, she felt like she needed to have a child and settle down?”

“Carefully thought about what?” Sofia asked.

“About having a child. You know how hard it would be for a working man to raise a child, and I—”

“I plan to stay at home and raise my child...”

Charlotte’s jaw fell. “You what?” She always knew that Sofia had been preparing herself to take over the company. So, hearing her talking about raising her kids was indeed a surprise. What was this woman thinking? Seeing Sofia’s face fall, Charlotte immediately gave an awkward laugh. “I mean... it’s a surprise. I never thought that you would even plan on settling down.”

“Do you

think Daniel would agree?” Sofia asked. “I mean... he just gave me this.” Sofia took the velvet box and handed it to Charlotte. He said his mother wanted to meet me. Char... this is what I have been waiting for, so I really don’t want to mess this up,”

Charlotte said nothing. She simply stared at Sofia. At the end of the day. Sofia must have asked her to meet because Charlotte knew Daniel’s mother, as the two had met before. She likes pastel colors” Charlotte said. “Pink, pastel blues, and yellow. She likes pastel-colored flowers too.

Sofia nodded. “Do you think she will like me?”

“Miss Teresa is such a smart woman. I am sure she will like you, Charlotte smiled.

“Really? Then Sofia bit her lower lip. “I should stop thinking about this now. The meeting will be this afternoon, so.”

Charlotte immediately reached out and held Sofia’s hand. “One step at a time. Don’t worry I will help you pick some clothes and then talk to my florist so she can arrange the best flowers for you.

Sofia immediately beamed. “Thank you. thank you. I really appreciate it.”

Charlotte sneered inwardly. This was the previous Sofia that she knew. Always reasonable and someone that would always listen to her. In the past, it was Charlotte who convinced Sona to follow her heart instead of listening to her grandmother. Naturally, this created a rift between Sofia and Eulanda

“Also.....” Sofia sighed. “Thank you for posting that.”

“My manager refused to let me post it for days. I have been trying to call you because I wanted to let you know about this matter. Earlier, I was able to convince her. Charlotte sighed. “I threatened to fire her if she wouldn’t agree Charlotte lied without batting an eyelid.

Sofia nodded when she heard this. Now that she knew Charlotte and Daniel’s real faces, she asked herself how these two had been able to fool her for so long. Charlotte’s acting is not that good. It was clear that she was lying about the preference of Daniel’s mother.

However, this was the least of Sofia’s concerns. Right now, she was planning to do everything that Charlotte would ask her to do to impress’ Daniel’s mother..

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Chapter 35

itter to you you.” Mr. Lome Lee suudal as he

A Lee seems that you have gotten eten younger Lawtende beamed at the shareholder. After a few pleasantries, the two then estinted walking towards the hallway that would lead then to the main meeting room ofLIGROUP

The sole rette man was located on the topmost floor with were somehow sinprised that there were already a few people isle

“Good Mternoon gentlemen and ladies greeted hum, and for a wlule they enjoyed

Illinois The walked inside the

nom and

Lawrence had a warm smile on his face Everyone inside the room immediately some pleasantries

The conference room at TIGROUP stood tall on the highest theor, overseeing the landscape of us through its glass walls Iowa rectangular space, wilt a long table placed in the midle

Each shareholder has then designated spot around the table, equipped with a microphone for effective communication

At one end of the room, there’s a simple stage elevated slightly are the town, serving as a focal point for the speaker The stage is modest, in line wils the overall sophistication of the mo

Since everyone is already here why don’t we start the meeting One of the shareholders said, just as he finished speaking, the door opened, revealing Sofa with her secretary

“Miss Lockhart, fancy seeing you here a wond

Lace said

ood Aternoon, Miss Paine Solla modded with a smule. As the current Toterim Chc needed. Or did Miss Pame forget to read the emails that we sent weeks ago!”

esign, I believe my presence

iss Brianna Paine immediately pursed her lips.

Brianna, Sona did not mean that.” Lawrence numeshately laughed. “Right, Soll”

Sofia wanted to say something, clap back, and tell Lawrence that the meant what she just said, but she tuntamed a smile on her face. “I was simply curious, father”

“Of course,” Lawrence said. Then without waiting for anyone to another word, he quickly introduced Selta to everyone else before telling Min that they were now g

On the outside, everyone inside the room understood that Lawrence only wanted to maintain peace and avoid any possible problems. To them, Lawrence was doing it for Solia’s sake.

Seeing this, Miss Paine arched an eyebrow but maintained her sense. She was not here to create trouble: appearance really surprised her, she eyed Sona who made herself comfortable next to her.

Inside the room, there were more than fifteen people, yet out often, there were only three women, including Sofa,

Brianna actually welcomed Sola’s involvement in the company, but she was well aware that the accusations against her were devastating, Brianna would never want that to affect LII Group in general.

Right now, the media is already asking why the INTERIM CEO OF LIL Design has yet to submit her resignation. Brianna did not want the media to start asking more questions that could possibly affect LH GROUP

Soon enough, the meeting started with a welcome and introductions by the current Director or CEO of LH GROUP, Lawrence Miles Lockhart. Then they were given an overview of the agenda for the meeting, which included the future of LH DESIGN and its CEO.

13

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the past year and the

rtală about the elegant in the means “” Dee the camera (POMIN 100 unded as “Mokhart, why don to start the reporting of LH Design’s performance

hallenges and the heat the p

Sear Me Lee on her face In the past few years she spent her time creating design, but this did not prevent, that she had stopped reading the reports for each Annual meeting

(her fear of L21 Group, her grandmother taught her how to study the trends and the overall system inside and outside of the company. However, this does not mean that she was already an expert in this matter. It was the actual opposite:

She was all about the theory but had yet to apply anything in real life as Lorence easily convinced her to follow her heart, befriended the man too much so she just let him do all the management while she did the things that she liked best design

101 excuse? Nodia go up. Today, she was specifically wearing an all-black pant suit that hugged her figure She paired this with black heels that accentuated her height. With a smile on her face, she walked towards the platform for the speaker (she) looked at the man sitting around the table

Manuel Aduriz my name is Sofia Lockhart atiel Tam currently the interim CEO and the head designer of LH Design”

سديارة سديارة الامباه و حالات راسه

“Mar”Mr. Jer Anderson one of the Shareholders, the Ind out her attention. The recent allegations have raised concern among the shareholders. Before we delve into the financial report, could you please address the issues surrounding the alleged bribery and plagiarism We need to have a clear understanding of these matters

Mr Anderson right Mas Paine said Transparency is crucial in maintaining the trust of our stakeholders Can you provide more information

the steps being taken to investigate and resolve the issues raised. We need to ensure the integrity of both the company and its leadership Why don't we start this report with the details of the allegations?”

“Mins Lockham, you have to understand that these issues are not simple. They could easily affect LH GROUP Can you please enlighten us about this matter?” Mr. Lee added.

“Ladies and gentlemen Lawrence immediately intervened. “Why not let Mac Lockhart finish her report before making her questions I am certain that Mess Lockhart already prepared the answers, and I am confident that she could satisfy your Lawrerrite saf

Master Lawrence wondering what this guy was trying to do However, she did not object and just smiled at everyone, Lakaly, everyone agreed to have her report the financial situation of the company first.

born cough the reports about the current financial sinton of LH Design started. She started with why LII Design was eater) and its profit over the years and then the profits last year

Ladies at gentlemen: Fme thrlded to share that our profits have experienced an impressive doubling since the anganrontation our new strategy Thy success rathrins our belief in the power of adapting to the evolving landscape, silang through our strategic ine of social media. Moving forward, we are committed to further embracing and Captain on these changes to ensure continued growth and success for EI Design

about the head designer of LI Sign continues. “Mr. Lee untereid,

nice that followed her word. “Theheve our priority right now is the fact that the head designer has been are of pigiar the stock of 11 Deg started to fall and soon enough people will start asking why the CEO had

will not only affect the profits of LII Designs but also the whole LH GROUP”

Dugn

Chapsies as

So please Mi 1 leaned and sled at Sotia Why not tell us about this plagiarism issi?”

boc back

Soha puised her lips She looked at twrence, who did not have jaw intention of helping her out Neeing the kind yes dings look on the man’s lave Soha knew that Lawrence abelply expected her to give up and tell everyone that they were still investigating the matter

Without Alexander Solta would not have had the time to investigate this matter. This would immediately show how incompetent she was

“My lawyer told me not to show anyone the evidence that I have however, he suggested that let everyone in this room sign a confidentiality agreement to safeguard this matter, Sofia said. Then she signaled Miss Amores, who was standing at the back to start giving out the paper that she was holding

“Confidentiality Miss Paine arched an eyebrow

“This accusation could easily kill anyone’s career. It is only right that I take this seriously. Solta said “So let’s start with this agreement Why don’t you sign it so we can start talking about the design issues that plagued III Design/”

Chapter 36

“Here are the facts that I was able to find out. Sofia began after everyone signed the agreement. “Miss Davis was someone! knew in college. However, she failed a class and was not able to graduate. Right now, she is claiming that I plagiarized her designs and wants me to pay both compensation and to cease designing bags.”

Once again. Sofia gestured to Miss Amores, who handed everyone a folder.

These were lies, Sofia stated. “My lawyer already filed a case and submitted the proof that we have. Obviously, I still have more proof that I cannot show you as this might affect the case.

She smiled as everyone started opening the folders. The folders include documents, sketches, drafts, timestamps, or any other relevant materials that can help establish my ownership of the designs and refute the plagiarism accusations.”

“Miss Davis said that you stole everything about the design. Miss Paine mentioned.

Sofia chuckled and shook her head. That’s just not true. Miss Paine. I spent countless hours crafting those designs from scratch. The folders contain all the evidence my lawyer gathered to show that these are my original creations. There are sketches dating back to my college days, drafts that I worked on over the years, and timestamps that prove the timeline of my design process

She continued with confidence. “I understand Miss Davis’s frustration, but I assure you, every element in those folders supports my claim as the true creator. I take pride in my work, and I won’t let false accusations tarnish my reputation. Feel free to go through the folders, and you’ll see the truth for yourselves. I’m just here to set the record straight and continue my passion for designing bags.

es.” Sofia smiled. “All of my bags have a small intricate design and details that only the one who originally designed

uld know. We have already consulted an expert who could identify strokes that were used in sketching the design re prepared to have that expert testify. Over the years, my style has changed, but the expert was able to confirm that used in this sketch still had similarities to my current ones. If Miss Davis would show herself to the court, then I can eryone what I have.

in also do a comparison of our current output. It would be better to show everyone our individual growth,” Sotu d

Sofia took a moment as everyone absorbed her words. She kept it simple and direct

“Now, this brings me to my next point, Sofia said, catching everyone’s attention again. “Whoever was trying to attack me was trying to attack I.H Group. Are we going to let it pass?”

Everyone turned their focus back to Sofia as she continued. They just accused the heir of LH Group of being a plagi and a bully. I believe whoever was responsible wanted the world to think that the Lockharts have been raised like ili

A somber atmosphere settled in the room. Sofia’s straightforward explanation made the stakes clear, and the shareholders expressions shifted to seriousness. The accusation wasn’t just about Sofia: it had broader implications for the reputation of LH Group and the Lockhart family.

She continued. “We’ve built 1.H Group on principles of integrity hard work, and creativity. Accusations like these not only hurt my personal reputation but tarnished the image of our entire company. I’ve dedicated myself to upholding the values that LH Group stands for, and I won’t let baseless claims undermine that.”

"To be honest, I was surprised that LH GROUP seemed to be ignoring the fact that the upcoming chairman of the company was accused of something this serious," Sofia said, looking at the older people inside the room.

Miss Lockhart has a point. Accusations like these can't be taken lightly, especially when they involve the future leader of LH Group. We need some clarity on how this is being handled," Mr. Joe Anderson was the first one who broke the current atmosphere.

1/3

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Chapter 37

"That="Me [ine frowned, but metrially, he did not say anuberword Man

Sofa was still smiling

A part of her research was knowing what these people were doing in secret. The things that she said just now were things shar Airmander had given her and some more things that she learned from her investigation

So Mr. Lee's reaction was already something that the expected What the never expected was the other shareholders reacts to her words

Alexander had told her that her actions would come as a surprise to them but why did she

I

Soon enough all of the other shareholders agreed that this was not good for LH GROUP In the end they immediately told Lawrence to focus on the

somente from

"As for the CEO position. Tam going to give the oor to Mr. Ligence Loochan Sofa beamed Right now they are going to vote for the next CEO of LH Designs. She was almost confident

rence would us

from LH Group However, since she began fighting back. Lawrence would have no choice but to nominate her

“Thank you. “Lawrence smiled Earlier, he never voiced any dissatisfaction towards Sofawords. This created a facade that The supported her and might be the one responsible for all of these pieces of evidence

“You did a good job” Lawrence patted Sofa’s back At the end of the day his role was to play the perfect and supportive

He had no reason to show surprise or even as that excellent per

Along time ago. Lawrence had created that persons and he is not willing to change now

“Thank you” Sofa responded with a smile on her face. She already expected this action from her perfect stepfather. This

man would rather walls

nd die from it? show his real face to eit

Lawrence nodded as he plastered the proud look of a father to his daughter Almost immediately, many of the shareholders were quick to ret this as Lawrence supporting his daughter

need for us to consider

er any nominations sotar.” Lawrence said “Miss Lockhar has been working LH Design You have seen the numbers You heard her speak and now, you saw how she just handed anyone want to nominate a candidate for the CEO position?” he looked around

eholders started shaking their heads, while others simply looked away from him

Then can you raise your hand if you are in favor of making Miss Sofia Lockhart the Chief Executive LH Design Lawrence asked his gaze warm. Almost immediately, all shareholders raised their hands.

She won.

Sofia beamed inwardly

With the voting done, it was immediately decided that she would start her position the week after. Next, the other subsidiaries started their report. Then they talked about corporate governance, strategic initiatives for the upcoming year. and resolutions of the current predicament that the company was facing

“Shall we talk inside my office? Lawrence asked the moment the meeting ended. Contrary to his expectations, the meeting actually ended on a positive note with everyone satisfied with Sotia’s actions. This was something that Lawrence never expected.

1/3

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Chapter 30

“The Sota soled

”

“You did are chased as the two et them walked towards awrence’s office Tnever expected that you would find something about that woman I already sent my team to investigate this matter but they ended up with nothing”

“They perhaps it is time that you tire them Soha said then she smiled “1am kuldin”

“Uma Lawrence nodded “Then would you introduce me to the people who helped you find those pieces of

maawrence’s suspicion that someone was helping Setia in secret was thow confirmed To him, u would be impossible for Solia to acquire these things on her own

“When we have the time. Soha said Daniel imited me to meet hus mother

“His mother Lawrence arched an evebrow. In the past, Sotia would always ask him about things like this. She had long considered hum her father, so hearing him talk about Daniel night now seemed normal. This immediately lightened his mood

This only meant that Soha still trusted him. Then what was that just now! The confidence that she shed, the eloquence, the words that she uttered. What was all that?

"He asked me to marry him"

said

said. "I believe he is going to ask me to marry him"

nothing and I have always liked Daniel. If you are ready, I don't see any reason for you not to marry him" Lawrence

drum... "Sofia nodded as the two arrived inside Lawrence's office. Speaking of your mother. "Lawrence removed his coat and handed it to Min who was standing next to Miss Amores. "Are you going to tell me where she is now?"

"Don't you trust me?" Sona asked

"Of course, I do?"

"I understand that what happened with Dr. Mulach was an eye opener for me who cared so much for my

mother. She said she did not see anything wrong with her words. Coffee please. Lawrence said "Would you like some

thank you. Just a bottle of sparkling water. Sofia actually wanted to decline his offer. She was still waiting for the result of the poison test and did not want to consume anything from the people who wanted her down. However, she did not want to suspect anything

"I am your mother's husband. Perhaps, this was your grandmother's idea, but I am going to swear, Sofia. I would never harm your mother."

Sofia pursed her lips. So, Lawrence was suspecting that the one backing her is currently her grandmother. "I know" Sofia nodded. "I know you would never harm her, but I have read the cases that Dr. Mulach or Dr. Tan had done and I am not risking anything

Lawrence let out another sigh. "I understand," he said. "Between me and Eulanda, it seems that you already made

choice”

Sofia said nothing She did not want to expose Alexander, and right now, her best option is to use her grandmother. Speaking of Eulanda Lockhart, Sofia had not seen her for months now

The last time she heard, she was somewhere in Europe. Her grandmother stopped calling her a long time ago

12

“You know that is not true.” Sofia said, “Grandmother and L. we have a very complicated relationship. However it is still the mother of my mother.”

100%

Chapter 27

Sofia could only ask for her grandmother’s forgiveness in silence Right now then going to use her grandmother to find out the truth about Lawrence

Lawrence sat opposite her his expression grim. “Your grandmother has always hated me I always knew that she was only waiting for a reason to take your mother back. I can only hope that she would not find one to take you away

Sofia immediately wanted to clap her hands. This man was indeed very convincing This man’s acting skill was topnotch!

Chapter 38

cedar.

Lawrence gritted his teeth as he stared at his phone. His lips curled as a steer. He could barely contain his rage. “So it was

its Luada. That scheming woman He always thought Eulanda no longer cared for Eunice after everything that happened in the past

Perhaps the woman was wa

to act But wait until now? He narrowed his eyes Was it Sofia’s birthday Yes. Perhaps Eulanda knew that Sofia would become less once she received

her uberance as she would be very almerable to most people around her. Is that the reason why she chose to act now?

Lawrence always knew that the womans actions in the past were suspicious. He had investigated this t

kad investigated this matter but decided to shop it as he did not want to attract Eulanda's attention. He always knew that Fulanda had been watching him in secret. And when she got too close. Lawrence had no choice but to silence Epice Locken. Now has only concern is Sofa Lockhart

The fact that she revealed that it was Elands who helped her could mean either one of two things. First, Sofa still trusted him and second is that this was another trap orchestrated by Endends

lands herself

Min were you able to track best he sued the

far away from him

The last location was in Europe Although

uttered

phytal sighting of her for the past three days" Min

"How about Soda?" he asked. He already sent his men

ber around

"Well we are trying our best to track ber

I want her location as soon as possible" Lawrence said as he glanced at the untouched sparkling water on the table nearby

this time he had been acting like the father that the needed

Seved

But

Lawrence sneered

Even if Elanda did all the tests on Eunice. Lawrence was certain that they would not find anything. Her body is already too weak: her immune system is falling. The only thing that is keeping her alive is Dr. Malach. She would soon succumb to her death and this would happen even faster now.

"What of Dr. Malach he asked "Why have I yet to hear about his death

"Dr. Mulach has been locked up in a secret facility and until now, we are still doing our best to have access to him"-

"Secret Facility?"

"Highly secured with a new facility. Min added

"You think the CIA is involved? Lawrence frowned. Dr. Tan or Dr. Mulach already attracted too much attention. Hard for them to get access to him now. Right now, Dr. Mulach simply needed to disappear. He is currently a threat to Lawrence and his plans

There was a knock on the door, and one of the secretaries working under Min walked in "Mr. Lockhart someone from the FBI is here to see you."

Lawrence's expression darkened. However, he was quick to compose himself as he got up and said. "Take care of that and call Mr. Thompson?" he uttered, his gaze landed on the sparkling water. Min nodded without saying another word seeing this. Lawrence got out of his office

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To omavady and the low me

somewhere in pre He then

Special Agent Mars Reynolds and brown eyes looking made the beard as if he were

looking for something

NOW LANEY YO Special Agent Parker Law asked

"Nothing: "Thanks"

Lawrence nodded and eyed Nieu

but both backed their heads

on their own. I pinu

angular table. He gENGI

“Are you light speaking to what your lawyer Speal Age Reynolds and

To be honest, I have nothing to hide so I fear nothing However as a
journalist I need the presence of my lawyer

live

ked my secretaries. Am I take care of.” Laverne

face opened.

Kanity Thompson approached

immediately introduced themselves as part of the legal to CROU?

“How did you know

Special Agent, Parket asked, always her tone was (cold almost devoid of:

emotion). Was she trying to

only smiled awkwardly Then Laverne looked at Mr Thompson and she later
quickly handed the two agents folders

Chart & interaction

- Mulach or I should.

him Dr Tan M: Thangsen and cliché, but he named to

of recording everything in his phones and diary thing He had been very
detailed I would of course provide you with his diary and planners if you have a
feeling has been recorded. Their text meeting was discussed. You can look at
the slate Thom

muni who cattle with his hand two clash

Sto the agrils "CCTV SWELGE

Mr. Thompson's point was simple. They are willing to cooperate as long as a warrant is provided

The two agents animedutely read the reports that Mr Thompson presented Just as special Agent Reynolds opened his

Thompson smiled "Again Alpt the questions that needed answ Tanswer Unless of course, you are going to get

We

I not turther giveju

"Then I believe there is no need for us to stay Special Agent Parker smiled "We are leaving"

"Thank you. "Mr Thompson said:

The moment they went out of the room Special Agent Parker's smile disappeared "That man is suspicious Lam telling you

"Shhh.. Let's talk outside" Reynolds responded. The two of there unmediately len LH GROUP

"His wife was in the care of Dr Tan He had a clean reputation Everyone seemed to think that he was the best husband a caring stepfather, and someone who would do everything to keep his family safe" Reynolds said as he started the car

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The la

wing the wages on above the building the let the parking lot Are you certain that we already covered perything Lawnee asked Mos

CCTV and decompositions were already prepared Event D Mulai he will try

1 266

well would be very hard to prove anything

Canceled He had past wash There should be no traces of the moons aside from when he visited Eumce in

odded. pani theme was "Dk Wilm Clave tam to know it he found our something

1. William 1s

That man should be willing to cooperate for his shares Right Walmart's secret weum William should have a network underground that led to the Susses and the Maña According to Lawrettee's research, the man had acquired his wealth because of this network

Gils deal with Fulanda. Aien awhile, he moved away from.

the window and started working on his and that was when he received a call from a familiar number

old you not to call me on this phone Lawren hissed as he insisted Min to leave his office and lock the door

a coquet vice of a wet swed him

Last named his eyes and then he let out a helpless sigh. What do you want

"I need money

ready gave you lies

How ago. Do you want me to die from starvation or something

need Lawrence rolled his eyes as he grinned his teeth

be enough

grand is a hot What are you gonna do with

"I have debts or do you want me to be a Charlotte instead the woman as

am certain she would give me money. That

“Tonight” Lawrence looked at his watch “Meet me at the usual

somach You knowe the woman was not able to complete her words when
Lawren

ended the call

Chapter 39

You have been accompanying me. Mr. Beaumont This makes for water if your
still possess a job waiting for you Sofia

the wonder smiled upon meeting Alexander.

After the meeting, Sofia received a message from Alexander, informing her
about the driver and this celebration Outside of 11 GROUP one of Alexander’s
men awaited her and escorted

restaurant For he was waiting

I believe this deserves a celebration he smiled, already holding a glass of
champagne. He tilted it towards her. Cheers be suggested

Solia looked around the elegant restaurant with wide-eyed appreciation. The
place resonated with old world charm. reminiscent of quaini bistros in Paris.
The soft glow of the chandeliers cast a warm ambiance over cream colored
walls adorned with vintage artwork.

The tables were dressed in crisp white linen, each adorned with small vase of
fresh flowers. The delicate fragrance of roses and lilies watted through the air,
mingling with the inviting aroma of the evening’s culinary delights Polished
silverware. gleamed under the gentle candlelight, giving the entire setting a
touch of sophisti

She smiled and took her glass before she sat down. Cheers Alter taking a sip
of the champagne, she asked, “Please don’t tell me you paid for the whole
restaurant just for today...” No one else was inside the restaurant. She knew
he was wealthy but tra close a restaurant for something like this? She never
thought he would be capable of doing something like that.

“Nope.” he took the napkin and dabbed it at the corner of his lips. “I own it.

oh

“Rather. Beaumont Empire owns it.”

Right she nodded, pursing her lips as she realized how extravagant this gesture was. They are currently in one of the live star hotels in Illinois. She did not even know that the Beaumont Empire already owned this hotel.

“And I am here to do an inspection..

Sorted. An inspection”

She nodded and gestured for the waiter. “This is a Michelin-starred restaurant that specializes in French-inspired. e: Alexander continued, a twinkle in his eye as he gesture at the man who was walking nearby. Impeccably dressed in black and white, the man approached the table with an air of deference.

“Our chef, Alexander explained, “has trained in the culinary arts of Paris, bringing the essence of French gastronomy to Illinois. The menu boasts a delightful array of dishes, from Cogan Vin to Ratatouille, all prepared with meticulous attention to authenticity

Sofia listened with interest, smiling as she met the eyes of the chef

“As part of the inspection, Alexander continued, his gaze scanning the menu. “I make it a point to ensure that the cuisine matches the grandeur of the setting. This place is not just a restaurant; it’s a haven for connoisseurs of fine dining

Soon enough, they started perusing through the menu.

“How about we start with your specialty? Something that captures the essence of this fine establishment, Alexander suggested. He looked at Sofia. “Do you agree with me?”

“Of course. Sofia was never actually what they call a foodie. She liked food but she would simply eat what was there. She was not picky or anything like that.

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Howlve, the anis thing that suror ea

anted a plate adored wadh dielce Esmear-tier is

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Chapter 39

Bourguignonne. Nestled in their shells, the escargot were bathed in a rich garlic and herb butter sauce.

Here we go Alexander announced with a satisfied smile, his eyes gleaming with anticipation. The scent of the escargot mingled with the subtle fragrance of roses and lilies, creating an intriguing mix of aromas that filled the air.

Sona eyed the dish, the plump snails glistening in the golden sauce. She wasn't quite sure about snails, but the presentation was undeniably elegant. "Well, here's to trying new things she remarked, lifting her fork. Alexander followed suit, and together they delved into the culinary adventure before them.

The escargot proved to be a surprising delight, the flavors dancing on Sofia's palate in a harmonious blend of garlic and butter.

Soon enough, the next dish arrived, and it was a sight to behold. The waiter carefully placed a dish of Coq au Vin in front of them. The aroma of the slow-cooked chicken, bathed in a savory red wine sauce, wafted through the air, eliciting a collective appreciation.

Alexander's eyes lit up with approval as he surveyed the perfectly braised chicken. "Coq au Vin," he declared as if presenting a cherished masterpiece. A classic that never fails to impress."

Intrigued by the rich colors and enticing scent. Sofia took a moment to appreciate the culinary artwork before her. The tender chicken, nestled in the flavorful sauce, seemed to promise a journey of taste and satisfaction.

the flavors

"Shall we?" Alexander suggested, lifting his fork as a cue for Sofia to join in. As they indulged in the Coq au unfolded, each bite bringing a burst of warmth and depth. The familiar notes of red wine and herbs melded seamlessly with the tender chicken, creating a comforting and delightful experience.

Finally, the sweet finale arrived in the form of decadent desserts. The waiter skillfully presented a duo of desserts on a gleaming platter. A slice of rich

Chocolate Mousse Cake adorned with a dollop of whipped cream shared the spotlight with a delicate arrangement of Creme Brûlée.

Sofia's eyes widened with anticipation as the desserts were placed before them. The air around them seemed to fill with the tempting scent of chocolate and the sweet aroma of caramelized sugar.

Seeing this dish, Sofia's expression completely changed. Memories of the past when she and her mother visited Paris resurfaced in her mind.

Paris was not the prettiest place that she had been to but... it was the last place that she visited before her mother had fallen

into a coma

On their last day in Paris, her mother took her to a restaurant just to eat this specific dessert.

Seeing the same thing in front of her was quick to bring back memories of her mother and her.

Her mother Eunice Lockhart always loved food. She liked to explore and try out new things. However, her favorite was the simple Crème Brûlée.

"Are you alright?" Alexander asked.

"Of course.." Sofia beamed, showing a dimple as she met his eyes "Thank you."

He gave her a knowing look so she added. "This is the perfect way to wrap up this meal... thank you." Unable to resist the allure of the desserts, eagerly picked up her fork

The velvety richness of the Chocolate Mousse Cake melted in her mouth, while the Creme Brulee offered a delicate contrast with its creamy texture and the satisfying crackle of the caramelized sugar on top.

However, the only thing that surprised her was the fact that it tasted exactly like the one that she had with her mother

Chap

That — after her mother fell,

Apparently, he towel to Asta

He merely shrugged in response thought it would be a godure to lined him as we celebrate something with you

Solia did not know what to say Shenol to fight back

chest deli warm Alomp formed in her throat as tran

threatened to spill. "You really. "For some reason, her

Chapter 40

Sofia was unaware of the reasons behind Alexander's actions, but she felt a profound sense of gratitude. As tears warmed her cheeks. Sofia glanced down in an attempt to regain composure. Sensing her emotions, Alexander reached across the table and gently took her hand.

Sofia struggled to find the right words to express the mix of gratitude and confusion within her. He gave her hand a reassuring squeeze, his eyes meeting hers with understanding. I told you, Sofia," he said softly. Tm already your husband. We're in this together."

Just as the moment seemed to linger, a voice interrupted from across the room. "Oh, darling, don't listen to him," a regal voice declared. Sofia turned to see Eulanda Lockhart-her grandmother, standing near the restaurant entrance.

Eulanda's stern yet playful gaze was fixed on Alexander. "He's not your husband unless I approve of him," Eulanda declared with a mischievous twinkle in her eye.

"Grandmother!" Sofia immediately got up, surprise apparent on her face as she stared at the woman she hadn't seen for months. Seeing her grandmother in person made her more emotional, but she didn't know how to react.

Her grandmother was never the affectionate one-cold, authoritative, and demanding. She always seemed composed with her perfect bun and elegant clothing. Her words were sharp, and her gaze chilly.

However, the woman standing not too far away was different. Eulanda was not wearing her bun. Instead, her shoulder-length hair was down in elegant

curls. Eulanda's green eyes sparkled with a hint of mischief as she surveyed the scene.

The regal posture remained, but there was a warmth in her gaze that Sofia had never witnessed. Her perfectly styled curls framed a face that still held the grace of years past, softened by an unexpected gentleness.

Draped in a flowing emerald dress that matched the color of her eyes, Eulanda seemed to have shed the stern exterior Sofia remembered. The mischievous twinkle in her eye hinted at a playful side that, until now, had been hidden beneath layers of formality

"Are you not going to come and greet your grandmother?" Eulanda's sudden words made Sofia flinch. This tone was the one that Sofia was very familiar with! However, for a moment. Sofia was frozen in surprise, unsure of how to respond to this unexpected transformation in her grandmother.

"Grandmother. Sofia said after a few minutes of silence. "I-1 didn't know that you would come..." she then looked at Alexander, who was acting like a tree. Did he know about this?

"So... he didn't tell you?" Eulanda's gaze turned towards Alexander.

"He didn't. Sofia approached Eulanda and kissed her cheek. In the past, the greeting would have ended right then and there. However, this time, Eulanda suddenly pulled her into a tight hug

Sofia stood there, speechless, unable to react in time. To be honest, she did not even know how to react as this was the first time that her grandmother had given her a hug so tight she could barely breathe!

Just as she felt like she was starting to suffocate, she heard Alexander clear his throat. "As heartwarming as this- my wife might need to breathe at some point. Perhaps we should take a seat and continue our reunion with a bit more oxygen in the air?"

Eulanda? Sofia was surprised to hear him call her by her first name. As far as Sofia knew, no one, not even Eunice-Eulanda's daughter and Sofia's mother-called her by her first name.

Her grandmother only chuckled in response. Still, she let Sofia go, and the two went back to the table. Sofia was still slightly flustered as she looked at

Alexander. She was starting to wonder why this man invited her grandmother here. What was his goal all along?

Chapter 40

“You must be wondering why I came?” Eulanda asked as she gestured for the waiter to bring her wine:

“Mother is safe __ she is under the care of Hugo Moore.” Sofia said

Now, why would you think that I just came here because of your mother?” Eulanda laughed

1- “Soña awkwardly hit her lower lip. She never had one peaceful interaction with her grandmother in the past. It was always, Sofia insisting that they take Charlotte with them or argue with her grandmother as she wanted Eulanda to treat Charlotte as her real granddaughter.

Suffice it say. Sofia did not know how to handle a conversation like this with her grandmother. “Isn’t it because she is your daughter?” Sofia asked after a few minutes of silence. At the end of the day, no mother would like to see their daughter hurt.

“Yet, she never treated me like her mother, Eulanda sneered.

She had always loved you.” Sofia blurted out.

Eulanda sheered. “She loved that man more.

This time. Sofia said nothing. Indeed. Eunice loved Lawrence so much, perhaps even more than she loved her mother.

“Are you going to ask me why I chose to abandon your mother?” Eulanda asked.

“Isn’t it because you thought Lawrence was trying to deceive my mother?” Sofia asked.

Eulanda shook her head. “Eunice cannot move the stocks just like that. She would not be able to move the properties without my knowledge as well.”

Then? If it was not about this, then what was the reason behind her grandmother’s hatred towards Lawrence?

“Lawrence’s father was the reason why your grandfather died. Eulanda said as she accepted the glass of wine that the waiter handed her

“What did you just-Sofia frowned. “What are you talking about?”

“Isn’t it simple! Lawrence is an orphan; his father was once employed by your grandfather. He embezzled money and was

o, but in the end-

andfather died of a heart attack. Sofia uttered.

“Do you really think that we would tell the public something like this? Eulanda smiled. “Sofia as a Lockhart, you should

know better than that.”

“Does mother know about it?” Sofia asked.

“Of course, she does. She knew everything yet she still chose to marry him. She thought love would save us all. What bullshit.” Eulanda sneered. “Look at her now!”

Sofia frowned as she tried to wrap her mind around her grandinother’s words.