

43: See Caitlin's Power

At The Vanderbilt Family estate, Beatrice sat in the living room, occasionally glancing toward the door. "Caitlin still hasn't returned. Does anyone know what's going on? Anyone heard from her?"

Grace shook her head. "Mom, I saw Caitlin earlier today and told her to go to The Gray Family, but I don't know if she took it seriously."

Hazel chimed in, "Caitlin's acting all arrogant. It's about time Audrey gave her a good lesson. Otherwise, she won't know her place and will end up causing more trouble."

Beatrice's expression darkened at Hazel's words. Before she could speak, Molly interjected.

"Hazel, what are you talking about? Caitlin was just standing up for Howard! Even if she caused a big fuss, I'd support her. She's the best stepmother Howard could ever have! She treats him like her own son, unlike some people who only care about their own children."

Molly said this on purpose, directing it toward Grace. Grace, irritated, couldn't say much and turned her gaze toward her husband, Raymond.

Raymond spoke up, "Enough. Let's not argue."

Beatrice sighed, still not feeling reassured. "Raymond, go to The Gray Family. Help Caitlin. If it really comes to a fight, The Vanderbilt Family isn't afraid of The Gray Family! Worst case, we can reach out to our contacts..."

"Understood," Raymond said, rising to leave. At that moment, William stormed in, looking enraged. "That woman Caitlin still hasn't gone to apologize! How am I supposed to run the company like this? Our stocks

are tanking!"

He walked into the room, continuing to vent, "Does anyone have contact with her? We need to push her to go and apologize already! She comes in like a whirlwind and causes so much trouble for The Vanderbilt Family!"

Molly rolled her eyes at William's tirade but said nothing. Raymond was about to leave when a servant rushed in to report, "Beatrice, The Gray Family is here!"

"The Gray Family?" Beatrice looked at everyone, clearly surprised.

William fumed, "See? This is exactly what happens when that woman refuses to apologize. Now, The Gray Family is here to make trouble for us. No one's going to get out of this unscathed!"

Beatrice told Marcus to check and bring the guests in. Soon, several members of The Gray Family walked in, including Quade, Audrey, and their son, followed by several bodyguards.

The sight was overwhelming! Quade himself had come.

"Mr. Gray! We weren't expecting you, please forgive the lack of proper greeting!" Raymond quickly greeted them, standing up.

Everyone at The Vanderbilt Family rose, their hearts racing. It seemed like things were about to escalate, but what happened next shocked everyone. Quade's attitude was surprisingly cordial.

"We should have come earlier," Quade said with a warm smile. "This situation arose because of a misunderstanding between my wife and Caitlin. To resolve this, I've come with my wife and son to personally apologize."

Everyone at The Vanderbilt Family was stunned. William and Grace exchanged looks of disbelief. Did they hear that right? Quade had come to apologize?

"Mr. Gray, it's really not that big of a deal, there's no need to be so formal," Raymond said, somewhat baffled.

"No, no, it is our fault," Quade insisted. "My wife indulged our son's behavior. He bullied Howard, and we should have come to apologize."

Quade then turned to Audrey, who reluctantly stepped forward. She had been prepared to face Caitlin, but now that Caitlin was nowhere in sight, she had no choice but to apologize to Beatrice instead.

"I'm sorry, Beatrice, Mr. Vanderbilt," Audrey said with a pained expression. "I didn't properly discipline my son, and I shouldn't have said those things to Howard. I truly regret it and feel guilty. I sincerely apologize to both you and Howard. Please forgive me, and may The Vanderbilt Family show mercy."

Audrey bowed deeply, pulling her son along to apologize as well. Her son, who had been briefed beforehand, also spoke up. "I will never bully Howard again! Tomorrow at school, I will publicly apologize to him."

Both Audrey and her son bowed low, apologizing. Everyone in The Vanderbilt Family was stunned. They had expected a confrontation, but now the tables had turned, with The Gray Family apologizing instead.

Beatrice walked over and said, "We accept your apology. The children are classmates, after all, and they should be friends. Let's consider this matter settled. As The Vanderbilt Family and The Gray Family are long-standing allies, we should continue to support each other and grow together."

"Yes, Beatrice is right," Quade agreed. "Our two families must live in harmony."

With the situation seemingly defused, Beatrice was relieved. "It's almost lunchtime. If Mr. Gray and Audrey aren't in a hurry, would you care to join us for a simple meal?"

"No need to trouble yourselves, Beatrice. We should be heading back now," Quade responded, standing up.

"Right, we'll be leaving now," Audrey added.

Quade, Audrey, and their son left, and The Vanderbilt Family members saw them out, watching as they walked away. Once they were gone, everyone returned to the living room, still processing what had just occurred.

Molly, still confused, said, "The Gray Family came to apologize? I thought they were here to reprimand us!"

"Yeah, weren't they supposed to wait for Caitlin to apologize by noon?" Beatrice wondered aloud.

None of them could quite figure out what had happened. Raymond finally spoke up. "No matter the reason, The Gray Family came to apologize. That's what matters. It's over now, no need to worry."

William was still baffled, though. He was very curious: how did Caitlin manage to get The Gray Family to apologize? How had she done it? Was she really capable of handling them?

Meanwhile, Grace, who had been waiting to see some drama unfold, was equally baffled. She had been hoping for a spectacle, but now it seemed all was calm, and she had nothing to show for it.

Molly, still excited by the unexpected turn of events, said, "Grandma, I bet Caitlin went to The Gray Family to explain things, and Mr. Gray, being reasonable, realized he'd been wrong. Otherwise, why would they come here to apologize? I told you, Caitlin is our lucky star! She's the one who could solve this crisis for us."

Beatrice nodded in agreement. "Yes, Sebastian is lucky to have Caitlin. She's a blessing for both him and our family. From now on, you all should be polite to her!"

The others didn't comment, but Marcus entered, asking, "Shall we prepare lunch, madam?"

"Wait for Caitlin," Beatrice said.

Grace, however, was seething with frustration. It had only been a few days, and Beatrice was already taking Caitlin's side. She had done all this work, and now it seemed like Caitlin was getting all the credit. Even lunch was being delayed for her!

Back in The Gray Family estate, after their apology, the pressure on Vanderbilt Enterprises Group began to lift. Quade personally handled the press, assuring the public that the rumors about the 7g chip technology were false and that the project was very much alive and promising.

With the official statement, the stock prices of Vanderbilt Enterprises Group quickly rebounded. The crisis was averted.

Later, Xavi reported to Sebastian, who let out a sigh of relief. But there was something else nagging at him: Caitlin had still not returned.

"Has she come back yet?" he asked, his tone a bit tense.

"No, Mr. Vanderbilt. I can't get through to her on the phone."

Sebastian fell into an uncomfortable silence. He found himself imagining her out with some young man, possibly even on a date. What was she doing now?



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