

Chapter 9 She's Talented

Surprise flickered across Charles' face, though he quickly masked it.

Deep down, this was the exact outcome he'd been hoping for.

Millie's presence today was no accident; he'd invited her with a specific purpose in mind.

His position as the Evans family's third son contrasted sharply with Brandon's role as head of the Watson Group.

Avoiding direct confrontation with someone as influential as Brandon was always preferable, if possible.

Still, Millie's easy agreement caught him off guard.

Convincing her in private was something he'd actually prepared for.

Brows knitted in thought, Charles studied Millie's expression, searching for any clue about her true feelings.

Oversized sunglasses shielded every hint of her emotion, leaving him no closer to an answer.

A single, clear sentence broke the silence. "Let's get the paperwork underway," Millie said.

She had no plans to explain herself with Brandon and Vivian standing there, so she kept her eyes on the polished wooden desk in the office, its fine grain etched with delicate patterns. Even so, her heart stayed steady and calm.

Her voice rang with quiet resolve. "Evans Entertainment will represent me. We'll handle everything according to the usual process." A pointed glance at Charles made her intent unmistakable.

No hesitation from him—he quickly motioned to the staff, signaling them to

assist Vivian with the arrangements.

A flash of scorn crossed Vivian's eyes as she looked Millie up and down.

"Well, that's quite the turnaround," said Vivian, her tone laced with quiet sarcasm as she threw shade at Millie for backing down after standing her ground on not selling the song.

Millie answered with nothing more than a calm smile. She rose from her seat and headed out of the office without a word.

As she made her way through the corridor, she paused to pour herself a cup of coffee.

Not long after, Charles caught up to her.

"Millie," he said, his voice cutting through the quiet.

She turned and gave him a small nod. "Mr. Evans."

His face shifted with emotion, unreadable at first. Then, after a moment of silence, he finally asked, "Why?"

The only answer Millie offered was a knowing smile.

A searching look settled on Charles as Millie spoke. "Didn't you hear her? Vivian's planning to compete on 'Heavenly Melody.'"

Puzzlement flickered in his gaze, but he nodded, sharing what he knew.

"From what I've heard, Vivian's not really entering as a contestant—she'll be more of a guest judge, there to shower praise."

That deepened Millie's smile, a glint of amusement lighting her eyes.

Coffee set gently aside, she leaned forward. "Tell me, Mr. Evans—doesn't this whole thing strike you as just a bit entertaining?"

His confusion lingered, but he listened.

Millie explained everything in a calm, measured tone, "Brandon and I have already filed for divorce. It'll be finalized in thirty days. He told me Vivian's the reason—he wants to marry her. And now she's using my song as her big breakthrough. Sooner or later, people are going to find out I'm the one who

wrote it. Funny, isn't it?"

Recognition dawned on Charles, a flicker of understanding brightening his face.

A small, secretive smile touched Millie's lips. "I'm looking forward to their faces when the truth comes out."

Curiosity tugged at him. "So this is your way of getting even?"

Rather than answer right away, Millie wrapped her hands around the coffee cup.

Bitterness rose with the steam, swirling quietly inside her.

Her voice, when it came, was soft but clear. "No, not at all."

Peace was all she wanted—just a clean break. "My only wish was to sever all ties, start over, and focus on what I love," she said, gaze drifting toward the trees swaying in the wind outside. "But they've insisted on playing games. If that's the case, I might as well play along."

A thoughtful silence settled between them, and Charles' features grew more complicated with every word.

Once, the Bennett family had been the toast of Crobert, and these rich kids—Charles and Millie included—ran in the same circles.

Their friendship had roots stretching all the way back to childhood.

In those days, Millie was the dazzling heiress, the unreachable dream for half the city's eligible bachelors.

Fortunes changed swiftly, though, and after the Bennett family's downfall, most people had all but forgotten Millie ever existed.

Society never promised fairness.

Reminders of the past often slipped into Charles' thoughts. He turned away, making sure Millie could not read his expression.

He finally broke the silence, saying, "Sometimes a divorce is the best

outcome."

A quiet look of relief appeared in Millie's eyes as she faced him. "I appreciate your honesty, and everything else."

Charles answered with a knowing smile, "It works out for both sides."

Those words rang true.

Power struggles had become the Evans family's daily routine. All three Evans brothers set their sights on the Evans Group, each one determined to seize control.

Only the one with the sharpest edge would claim victory in the end.

Their conversation drifted on a little longer. Charles promised he would keep Millie and Brandon's soon-to-be divorce a secret, and then he excused himself to return to his business calls.

They would discuss details of her joining the show Heavenly Melody in another time.

For a while, Millie stayed behind. The warmth of her coffee lingered in her hands as she watched the wind dance through the leaves outside.

Time slipped by until she heard footsteps drawing near.

First came the familiar outline. Brandon's presence seemed to fill the room even before he spoke.

She recognized him instantly, so she slipped her mask back on and turned away, hoping to shield herself.

"Why did you go through with this?" Brandon's voice broke the quiet before she could step away. His tone carried an unmistakable weight—the sort of confidence built through years of influence.

His cologne, Tom Ford Oud Wood, drifted over to her, mingling with a hint of smoke.

It was a scent she had come to associate with him alone.

He continued, "You have a gift for writing music. Your songs reveal real depth. Why put up obstacles for someone who's running out of time?"

A hint of sadness welled up inside Millie when she heard his words.

With deliberate slowness, Millie faced Brandon. She noticed the subtle crease between his brows as he watched her.

A small question lingered on her lips. "You think I have talent?" She searched his eyes, barely above a whisper.

An uncertain look flickered in Brandon's gaze.

"Of course you do," said Brandon.

No one could argue with that.

Yet a soft laugh escaped Millie.

Talent? Was that what he saw in her?

Memories of their wedding night surfaced.

That evening, Brandon had struck a match, lit a cigarette, and let the smoke drift through their fresh, unfamiliar new house.

"Millie, I'm worried about Grandpa," he said. "Your little hobby of songwriting will have to wait. Right now, I want you to help take care of my grandparents."

His words had floated in the air, detached and light, much like the cigarette smoke curling toward the ceiling.

She had offered a compromise. Balancing family and work seemed possible.

Brandon had only frowned. "You don't need to keep working where everyone can see you."

She eventually gave in to his wishes.

Convincing herself that Derek's declining health truly required her attention, she tried to set aside her doubts.

Even so, a nagging thought stayed with her.

Was Brandon trying to keep her away from the public eye now that she was married? Or had he never believed in her abilities at all?

Any explanation, if there was one, remained unspoken between them, no matter how close they'd once been.

Brandon's attention returned to the woman standing before him.

There was always something about her that felt oddly familiar to him, like a face he couldn't quite place but was certain he'd seen before.

Yet, when he took in her glossy hair, the sharp lines of her designer outfit, and the heels that made her legs stand out, he struggled to find any genuine connection.

Irritation crept in. A strange notion settled in his mind—this woman reminded him of Millie, though he couldn't explain why. 

