

## Forging Ahead

Johnathon's POV

By the time we managed to leave the club, Charlotte was a mess and still seething from the slap. "I can't believe that little b\*\*\*h touched me like that" she spat out, as we headed out the door, Charlotte staggering slightly in her heels.

I made a move to steady her and she glared at me, while I clenched my jaw. Was she blaming me for what happened? It was Charlotte's temper that had gotten Flair to slap her in the first place! If she had left well enough alone, or just kept quiet, she would have been fine. She didn't need to interfere like she had.

"Never mind Charlotte," I said tightly and she gasped, swinging her head to stare at me outraged.

"Never mind," she said shrilly, her high-pitched tone piercing my ears and making me wince "your ex-wife just assaulted me and that's all you can say?" she shrieked "is never mind?"

"What exactly do you want me to say?" I asked coolly "you stepped in and provoked her. I had everything under control."

I was vehemently aware of the reporters coming out of the club and so was Charlotte, because although her eyes were blazing, I saw her bite her lip and keep silent, stomping towards the limousine as the driver hastily opened the door for her.

I hurried to help her inside and then got in myself, breathing a sigh of relief as the driver shut the door, preventing the reporters from seeing or hearing anything else. Charlotte was still pouting, her ruby-red lips pursed in a most unbecoming manner. "Do you have any idea how humiliated I am?" she hissed.

I had a fairly good idea. I gazed at her with a small degree of sympathy, even as I fought the ash of admiration washing over me in regards to Flair. Our whole marriage Flair had come across as meek and subservient and now, she had just shown a side of her I had never seen before. Had all of her submissive side been an act? Why? I frowned and Charlotte reached over and grabbed me by the hand.

"Johnathon, don't you understand? Grandfather is going to be pissed when the papers hit the stands tomorrow" she cried pitifully.

I blinked and focussed on her. "Will your brother help you?" I asked again and she looked mutinous and gave a bitter laugh.

"Grayson, help" she sneered "he hates me. He would rather see me suffer than step in and help me. As if it's my fault that my father divorced his mother and married mine."

I viewed her skeptically. I felt there was more to the story than just that but Charlotte avoided my eyes.

"I don't know what you want me to do then Charlotte. I hardly have the power to demand the newspapers don't run the story. Why don't you try using your name to get them to stop?"

She deated. "Grandfather and Grayson are the only ones who have the authority to prevent the newspapers from running the story. If I involve my grandfather then he's going to be even more furious than he is with me already."

I sighed. "Maybe the papers will focus more on Flair who hit you then on you" I suggested with optimism, making Charlotte perk up and smile.

"Of course, why didn't I think of that? Flair is a nobody, so she's bound to draw more interest than me. Plus I'm certain they didn't hear the reason as to why she slapped me" she said with hope "I bet they villainise her instead!"

She settled back against the seats, looking far more cheerful. I wanted to shake my head at her. She was like a child sometimes. I couldn't help comparing her to Flair, who was so even tempered and sweet. It made me scowl. Why was I thinking of my soon to be ex-wife, when I had a gorgeous heiress in front of me, with a fortune at her fingertips, ready to grant me my every wish as soon as I married her? I needed to stop being so damn nostalgic. Flair understood my ambitions to be a powerful lawyer and make it up in the world. It had never been a secret, but even I had to admit that she could have found out about Charlotte in a different way that was less hurtful. I had owed her that at least, but Charlotte was vicious, wanting Flair to end out in the most embarrassing way she could envision. She had grown tired of waiting for me to ask for a divorce and had engineered a way for it to happen.

"Where are we going?" I asked evenly, as the limousine drove through the large city, staring out the window, lost in contemplation.

Charlotte drew her brows together. "We're going back to the family home of course" she said a little annoyed "you can hardly expect me to deal with grandfather myself can you? At least with you there, he's going to have to reign in his temper somewhat" she said with a grimace "although I doubt it's going to be much."

Great. But Charlotte wasn't finished yet "when are you going to send the divorce papers to Flair?" she demanded icily "and get them signed? I want to be able to inform grandfather that we plan on getting married and soon. Besides" she added meaningfully "it's been over six months since we've gotten together Johnathon and I've waited long enough."

"Six months is not a long time Charlotte, by any stretch" I countered back, smoothing my shirt "and I will send the divorce papers out in due time" I added, causing her to glower at me.

"I want them sent out Johnathon" she snapped "I refuse to be kept waiting. I want a ring on my finger and I want to be wed. The sooner you and that b\*\*\*h Flair get divorced, the better. Then I can finally get my hands on the company my grandfather refuses to hand over."

I stared at her "that's what this is about isn't it? The company? Your grandfather has a stipulation on it doesn't he?"

Charlotte gave a smug grin "he does. In order to inherit the damn company, either I or Grayson have to be married first and provide an heir. But the heir has to be provided in wedlock. So the sooner we are married, the sooner we can get started on providing the heir" she blurted out "and then I get the company, not my bastard brother Grayson."

She patted my knee condescendingly "and it's not as though there aren't perks for you" she said with a grin "not only will you own half the company with me, but I'll be able to direct the clients to your law firm. You'll get tons of business and so many clients you won't be able to keep up. All of them wealthy. You'll be a billionaire in your own right. It's a win win and we'll have children to pass on the business to."

"You failed to mention all of this to me before Charlotte" I said a little taken aback but also secretly thrilled.

A fifty percent share in the world's largest company that had billions in profits year after year? What man was going to pass up such an opportunity? All I had to do was marry Charlotte and have a baby with her? In retrospect it didn't seem all that much and I could spend my life in luxury, while building a prestigious law firm that would rival anybody's in the country. I could feel my heart racing at the thought, my hands turning clammy. Charlotte gave me a knowing look.

"I couldn't risk telling you before" she said nonchalantly "but I trust you now Johnathon. There's no other man I would rather be married to than you" she added,ipping her hair over her shoulder, her eyes gleaming at me.

"But Charlotte, I don't exactly see you looking after a child" I said frowning.

She didn't seem like the maternal type. Charlotte laughed, throwing her head back. "Johnathon you're hilarious" she said "naturally our child will be brought up by nannies. I don't intend on being a hands on mother" she shuddered at the thought "the thought of changing diapers and late night feeds, urch" she inched "its so repulsive" she complained.

I felt a pang at that. I had always wanted children and had never thought of palming them off. I convinced myself that it was a small price to pay for what I would receive in return. Our child would still be loved, be well cared for. I ignored the small voice in my head that was protesting and smiled lovingly at Charlotte. "Very well, I will take care of the divorce papers, now that I know there is a reason for the urgency my love" I told her loyally, making her face light up "and then we can announce our engagement to the media, which should make your family happy."