

Reputation

Johnathon POV

The atmosphere in the Deluca Family home was tense the next morning. I sat at the dining table uncomfortable as Charlotte's grandfather proceeded to rage and reign down his fury at her behavior and her conduct.

"You, you, stupid girl!" he snapped, waving the newspaper with the scandal contained on the front page as Charlotte inched next to me "Are you trying to destroy the Deluca's good name?" he demanded "Do you have no regard for your roots and the hard work that has gone into making the Deluca name one to be proud of?"

"It's not my fault" Charlotte protested weakly and her grandfather's eyes almost bulged out of his head with anger as he slowly unfurled the newspaper to read out the title that was in bold letters.

Spoilt Heiress Has Affair with Married Man. Given Slap by the Woman She Wronged!

"What do you have to say about this?" he hissed, brandishing the paper at Charlotte wildly, from his position at the head of the table.

I kept silent. Charlotte's mother, Karen, attempted to intervene "John, you know that she's young" she soothed "She's bound to make mistakes. This isn't some blatant attempt to bring the Deluca name down."

Grandfather's head whipped around and he glared at his daughter-in-law. "Silence woman" he barked, causing Karen to sit quietly at the table "This is all a reaction of your parenting. You coddle your daughter and spoil her rotten. Not to mention I'm assuming the man you are sitting with, is the man you had an affair with? Have you no shame" he growled, pointing at me as I stiffened.

I smoothed down my coat and gave him my best smile "My name is Johnathon Rourke sir and I'm very much in love with your daughter" I began and he snorted.

"In love, shame you couldn't wait until your divorce was official before you began sleeping with each other," he said icily "A man such as you should have known better. This woman," he said, pointing to the picture of Flair in all her glory, her hand raised from slapping Charlotte "is this your wife?"

I winced. Charlotte dged with her hands, cowed into submission by her angry grandfather. I couldn't afford to anger this man. Not when I had my eyes set on marrying Charlotte and building up my law firm. "Yes Sir," I said apologetically "it is. But I fully intend on sending her the divorce papers" I added as he went bright red, looking like he was about to go apoplexy with rage "And while it's not the best way for the press to find out that Charlotte and I are seeing each other, at least it's out in the open" I added.

"I do not condone your actions" the Grandfather boomed, startling us both "They are the actions of a coward" he added, staring me in the face "A real man would have divorced his woman first and then moved on. Charlotte, you, you disappoint me," he said shaking his head and making Charlotte look down at the table, ghting back tears "if you were in the same situation as this woman, no doubt you would have wanted to slap her too. Quite frankly, you got off lucky" he added darkly as Charlotte's lips parted in indignation "back in my day the woman would have dragged you by the hair and punched you right in the face."

"John" Karen said sounding scandalized.

The man rolled his eyes. "It's true. Now you have to do damage control" he instructed Charlotte with a glower and a meaningful look at me "At least you're not dating a loser musician" he added sighing.

I didn't know whether to take that as a compliment or a subtle dig. Charlotte merely nodded, accustomed to her grandfather's moods. "Grandfather," Charlotte said suddenly "does this still affect my chances to take over the company?"

He looked at her with a great degree of annoyance. "Hmmp" he muttered "Is that all you can think about it that damn company? Are you marrying that man to get your greedy claws into it?" he pointed at me.

Charlotte shook her head "No, I'm in love with Johnathon" she said hastily, a little too hastily for my liking.

The grandfather looked unconvinced. "The terms are as before," he said snidely "It's not just the first to get married but the first to give me an heir that will take over the company. Though the way you are going, I wouldn't be surprised if that goes in reverse order" he muttered under his breath.

"John" Karen said in a shocked tone.

"It's true" the grandfather growled. "Just so you know, a baby born out of wedlock will not inherit anything and neither will its mother" he snapped at Charlotte who quickly nodded, blushing.

"I assure you that won't happen," I said condently.

"Good. Because I'm not one to be taken in by lies. Charlotte here will be disowned if she even tries it" the grandfather said, slamming the newspaper down on the table with a ferocious scowl.

I glanced at Charlotte who turned her head away and avoided my eyes. The grandfather cleared his throat, "Now as for damage control" he said tersely, plonking himself down in his seat and regarding the two of us "You are going to send out those divorce papers" he said coldly "and then, there is going to be an announcement made about the two of you getting engaged. First, you are going to be seen getting the ring" he paused "you will spare no expense" he added "and the media will no doubt catch wind of you ring shopping. You will play the part of a loving couple" he instructed.

This didn't seem too hard. Charlotte's eyes were gleaming "Oh I can't wait until I see that b***h's face when she gets served the divorce papers," she said with a laugh and a ip of her hair.

Her grandfather glared at her "You will not go near her. You are to have nothing to do with her. The woman is entitled to move on with her life and the more time you spend involving yourself in her affairs, the more the media will continue to hash this out. Stop being so petty."

Charlotte looked irritable. I cut in and took her hand, rubbing it gently as she relaxed "Don't worry about it darling" I said as the grandfather listened "you're the only one that I want and that's all that matters. Flair's nothing, a nobody. You shouldn't want to be involved with somebody of such a lower status than you."

"Finally somebody that is speaking sense," her grandfather said agreeably "I am going to look into Flair Rourke's background and see if there is anything that can cause even more harm to our reputation. Is there anything we should know about?" he asked, turning to stare me in the face.

I laughed. "Nothing. Flair is as boring as they come" I told him honestly "I looked into her background before we got married. She comes from a simple home, works as a yoga instructor, and has limited funds. All she knows how to do is work and look after the household. She won't give us any trouble" I assured him lightly, amused at the thought of Flair trying to do such a thing.

Sure she might have hurt Charlotte last night, but I was certain that was a once-off, brought about by her emotions rather than anything else. She was no match against the Deluca's and she would be silly for even trying to stand against them. "You better be right," the grandfather said, standing back up and beginning to turn "because I don't have to tell you what's at stake if this all goes pearshaped Charlotte. Grayson is also entitled to the company" he reminded her and just like that, I saw a vicious expression on her face.

"That company is mine. I am never going to let that bastard take it from me. He's always wanted what he cannot have. This time, I'm going to get what's owed me. Grayson can go to hell for all I care" she said passionately while her mother nodded in agreement next to her.

Her grandfather chuckled. "Be that as it may, Grayson always manages to surprise me. For a man that has very little to do with the family name, he might just decide he wants this company after all."

I saw Charlotte bite down on her lip. "Well the son of a b***h isn't getting it" she hissed to me. "He resents the family name, so he doesn't deserve to have it."

I wondered what this Grayson was like and why his name instantly caused not only Charlotte to look angry, but her mother as well. Such a reaction to one name could only spell trouble in the future. I never knew how much trouble, until I was fully in the thick of things.