

Chapter 18

Clayton Sampson was so shaken that he nearly wet his pants, realizing that Matthew was trying to get him killed by telling Stanley Carlson about what he did at this juncture. Stanley shot Clayton a baleful glance knowing well that he was one of his subordinates.

“President Carlson, it’s just a misunderstanding...” Sounding like he was about to break into tears, Clayton pleaded, “I didn’t mean it that way...”

Looking impassive, Stanley flung his arm suddenly and ordered, “Drag him outside and break his limbs!” Immediately, a few burly men lunged forward from all directions to haul Clayton away, during the process which Clayton squealed miserably for his life.

“Hold on!” Stanley yelled at the top of his lungs out of the blue.

Clayton, who saw it as an opportunity to excuse himself, quickly implored, “President Carlson, I promise I won’t do the same thing again in the future! Please forgive me...”

Stanley grabbed a random beer bottle from somewhere beside him and smashed it down on Clayton’s head. “Your voice is so annoying, Clayton! You guys, haul him outside, break his limbs and then throw him to Lake Eastcliff!” he rebuked.

Everyone present at the ballroom was left in utter consternation when they realized that Stanley was going to get Clayton killed. As for the Cunninghams, their faces went as pale as sheets of paper. Prior to this, they thought Clayton was a big shot himself. However, it was ever so clear now who the real big shot was!

At the same time, Stanley was just an insignificant character who worked for Billy Newman. For all of them, it was hard to imagine how scary Billy could be, who was now at the ninth floor. Matthew and Sasha really had a great honor to be invited there by such an influential figure.

When no one was noticing him, Eric secretly edged closer to James and whispered, “James, I’ll head upstairs with you guys later. As the master of the Cunningham Family, if I am absent, people might assume that we don’t know the proper etiquette!”

James could understand what his father meant even if he was a fool. Thinking of all those sufferings he had been through all these years, James was overwhelmed with a feeling of exaltation all at once. He gave Eric a contemplative glance and said, “Dad, you’ve forgotten something—my family and I are only allowed to be seated with the hotel staff and we can’t even sit with the employees of the Cunningham Group. Are we still your family in your eyes?”

Eric looked stump with embarrassment written all over his face. In the end, Matthew and Sasha as well as her family followed Stanley to the ninth floor.

“What’s going on?” Jason muttered under his breath, “Why would Mr. Newman invite them upstairs? What makes them so special?”

“Is there any other possible reason? That b*tch, Sasha, must be having a fling with Mr. Newman...” Charlie remarked.

“Keep your mouth shut!” Eric looked incensed when he criticized, “Charlie, you’d better watch your words. Do you want to get yourself killed?!”

Charlie broke out in cold sweat at once, realizing that anyone who badmouthed Billy behind his back would end up very badly.

“I think there’s more to this matter than what meets the eye...” Eric commanded through gritted teeth, “Send someone to get to the bottom of it; I need to find out the truth behind all of these...”

...

When James and the rest arrived at the ninth floor, they were blown away by its lavish and extravagant interior. Everyone in Eastcliff had heard of the ninth floor of the Times Hotel, but only a few could step foot in it. Just by showing one’s presence at this level was a symbol of a highly respectable social status in the city.

Not many seats were arranged at the ballroom of the ninth floor, in the middle of which stood a magnificent stage where a bunch of popular movie stars and celebrities were offering their performances dedicatedly. The place appeared unusually large and spacious as only around twenty to thirty guests were seated around the stage.

However, the twenty to thirty guests present could basically represent the city. The masters of all the Ten Greatest Families, the top ten richest persons as well as the most powerful and influential figures of the city all gathered at the ballroom. Any one of them was powerful enough to make decisions that could affect the entire city anytime! And now, those guests were all staring at Matthew, Sasha as well as her family who were standing at the entrance.

Billy, who had a stout figure, was standing among the guests in the ballroom. Under the respectful gazes of all the others, he strode off in their direction with his head held high. “Welcome, Mr. Larson and Miss Cunningham!”

The rest of the guests all rose to their feet to show their respect, despite not knowing Matthew and Sasha at all. However, they dared not treat anyone whose arrival was welcomed by Billy personally with any less esteem.

Matthew nodded at him with a faint smile while Sasha and her family went wide-eyed and open-mouthed in shock. Never had they imagined that one day, they would get to witness such a scene!

“Mr. Newman, i-it’s an honor to m-meet you...” James stuttered while he offered his hand. “My name is James Cunningham and I-I’m Sasha’s father...”

Billy held the hand he offered casually, and it was almost enough to make James jump in excitement. Did Billy just hold his hand? That was an experience he could brag about for the rest of his life!

Billy then said with a smile, “Mr. Larson, Miss Cunningham, the birthday celebration is now ready. Please head to the stage now.”

Matthew nodded and made a hand gesture at Sasha invitingly, “Darling, let’s go!”

Sasha, who had yet to register the turn of events, asked bewilderedly, “I-Is this my birthday celebration?”

“Of course!” Billy said with a smile, “Miss Cunningham, please take a look at what is written on the cake!”

It was only then did Sasha notice that the crystal accessories attached on the cake were arranged to form a sentence: ‘Happy Birthday, Sasha!’

Was this really her birthday celebration? Surprised and overjoyed, Sasha’s hand was held by Matthew when they walked toward the stage one step at a time.

While they were on their way up, all the guests around them and the celebrities on stage started a round of applause to offer their sincerest wishes to them. James and his family, who were standing offstage, felt exhilarated when they caught sight of all the big shots who were present. Any one of those big shots was way out of Eric’s league, and he could never in his life meet them personally. However, those big shots actually showed so much respect to Sasha by attending her birthday celebration.

Everything that transpired had been too good to be true, so much so that they started to have a feeling that it was all just a figment of their imagination. The two of them kept pinching their arms so that the pain could remind them that it was not just a dream.

It was after a while did Sasha manage to pull her mind back to reality. Looking at the dreamlike celebration that was unfolding in front of her, her eyes went red-rimmed again. Every girl had a dream to become a princess and she was no exception. Ever since she was little, no one had ever cared about her birthday. However, deep down inside, she still yearned to become the center of everyone’s attention one day. At that moment, everything looked so surreal and the celebration was actually way more perfect than the one she had pictured in her dream. In her opinion, having such a wonderful experience made her life all worthwhile at once.

“Make a wish!” With a faint grin, Matthew said, “After that, let’s cut the cake together!”

James and his family were taken aback by what he said. Demi couldn’t resist but ask, “Shouldn’t we light up the candles while she makes her wish?”

Yet, no one bothered to respond to her suggestion. After taking a deep breath, Sasha put her hands together, closed her eyes and started making her wishes solemnly. At this moment, an ear-splitting sound came from outside. A ray of colorful lights was seen shooting up toward the sky where it then blossomed into a huge, spectacular pattern that brightened up the atmosphere before it slowly made its descent.

Everyone was floored to see the fireworks display and Demi widened her eyes in shock as she wondered who let it off. However, that was not all. Following the brief display earlier, countless fireworks were then let off suddenly in different places all over the city which lit up the entire Eastcliff.

Sasha opened her eyes wide in pleasant surprise when she spotted the sparklers in the sky. It was only then did she realize why there were no candles on her cake. It was because the fireworks were the candles for her birthday!

“Sasha, we got married too hastily back then, and I owed you a great deal because of that.” In a gentle tone, he said, “Please let me make it up to you bit by bit from this moment on!” He then picked up the diamond ring from the cake and got down on one knee. Staring at her affectionately, he asked, “Sasha, will you marry me?”

Finally, Sasha could no longer stop the tears from streaming down her face. On that very day, Matthew set off fireworks in the entire city just for Sasha alone!

