

Master 121

Chapter 121

Max hesitated when he saw the founder relinquish control, that was why he made those remarks to Alivia.

During the meeting, his proposal to invest in the company called Book wasn't about playing the waiting game; he was biding his

time for the founder to reach out first. If the founder decided to keep a firm grip on the company's reins, there was no need to fret

about Book's future. After all, no one understood its trajectory better than the person who started it all.

But clearly, the founder hadn't grasped this issue, because according to the intel from Alivia, the founder was still in talks with

several other venture capital firms.

Brielle, with only three years of professional experience under her belt, had been devouring financial knowledge since her

college days. In four years of undergrad, she'd amassed more wisdom than some grad students do in seven.

The office was dead silent, the few people present barely dared to breathe. And there was Max, sitting in the quiet glow of the

room, who after a long pause, finally gave a gentle nod, "Early next month, you'll accompany me abroad."

It was the second time he'd be taking Brielle on a business trip in a short span.

Brielle froze. The last auction event was common knowledge at the company, and many were speculating about his opinion of

her. Now he was taking her on another trip, seemingly unfazed by the risk of sparking rumors.

"Mr. Dorsey, if it's about Book, you really needn't bother. As long as the founder doesn't change his mind, you're definitely not

going to invest."

"Brielle, what's got you so twisted up?"

The subject changed so abruptly that Brielle was momentarily lost. She even thought she'd heard him wrong and, mindful of the

two executives sitting nearby, she quickly composed herself, "What are you implying, Mr. Dorsey?"

“Are you trying to avoid the appearance of impropriety?”

The two executives sneaked a glance at Max, then shifted their eyes to Brielle, sensing something off in the president’s

demeanor towards her.

Patrick coughed softly, signalling the two executives with a gesture that it was time to leave. Feeling like they were sitting on hot

coals, the executives couldn’t wait to scurry out.

Before the door even closed, Max’s icy voice cut through. “Do you really think you can avoid this?”

“Bang!” The door shut firmly, and whatever was said next was lost to those outside.

Cold sweat beaded on the foreheads of the two executives, their backs slick with perspiration. They had climbed to their current

positions by knowing which secrets to keep buried. The two

shared a knowing look, aware that Brielle was untouchable, at least until the president decided otherwise.

Once the door was closed, Brielle let out a sigh of relief, “Uncle Max, aren’t you worried they’ll spread gossip?”

“Don’t the people who sit in this chair have a bit of discretion?”

Alright, Brielle was thoroughly convinced.

Max could be unapologetically headstrong. She remembered the random call from him while she was dining with Kenzo, a flicker

of hope stirring within her.

Was he bothered by her dinner with Kenzo? Was that why he kept texting and calling? Had he secretly listened to that long

voicemail?

Still, Brielle was too timid, not daring to joke about whether he was jealous, fearing she might be reading too much into it. So,

she chose a more tactful question.

“Uncle Max, if the Dorsey family wanted you to marry Alivia, would you?”

If Max cared about her even a smidgeon, he’d surely say no, but his response was, “I’m considering it.”

Those words lashed her like a barbed whip. It stung.

“And what if Ms. Alivia asked you to invest in Book?”

“I’d refuse.”

Warmth slowly returned to Brielle’s body, as if the heat that had been drawn out was now coursing back through her veins. Could

one accuse Max of being unfeeling and callous? But from the start, she knew ordinary emotions barely existed for him. To blame

him for lack of feeling was as absurd as condemning a tiger for its ferocity.

Brielle, adept at self-regulation, quickly shook off the brief hurt and analyzed the founder of Book.

“The founder is missing a crucial quality – a mission to serve humanity.”

The difference between wildly successful entrepreneurs and the average ones was significant. Besides the desire to make a

fortune or look cool, the truly successful ones often had additional motivations, such as a deep love for their field or product, or a

sense of responsibility and mission that transcended money itself.

The founder of Book was still above the average entrepreneur, yet unaware that his company could change the world. Such

opportunities were priceless, which was why he could so easily part with control. To put it bluntly, his vision was shortsighted.

Brielle had just finished her analysis when she noticed Max standing close by, looking down at her. Confusion in her eyes, she

hadn’t time to react before he grasped her wrist and led her toward the break room.

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“Mr. Dorsey?”

The room spun as she found herself pinned on the couch in the break room. Brielle’s mind was a blur. What on earth was Max

up to?

Her eyes widened in shock and just as she attempted to rise, she was pulled back into his embrace. His breath tickled her ear,

sending her heartbeat into a frenzy. She couldn’t help but lick her lips nervously.

“Mr. Dorsey, isn’t it work hours?” she managed to say.

Max chuckled, his fingers grazing her side playfully, “What do you think I want to do?”

The irritation bubbled inside Brielle. They were already on the couch, so what else could happen? Were they going to whisper

sweet nothings under a cozy blanket?

Rolling her eyes inwardly, she couldn't help but savoring the private moment.

Her heart was pounding like a drum, and afraid Max would notice, she clumsily changed the subject.

"Mr. Dorsey, I didn't finish what I was saying earlier. Meeting Flynn the other day was quite the revelation. I mean, comparing the

business titan like Flynn to the founder of Book might seem unfair, but I've seriously studied Flynn's speeches. A founder who

transcends the pursuit of money, the simplicity of ambition, the public opinion, and truly wants to do something big – he might

just become invincible. That's probably why Flynn managed to make a dent across North America. The founder of Book, even

though successful for a first-timer, lacks these qualities."

Conversing with a businessman like Flynn or just watching their talks could be profoundly enlightening. She had spent over a

decade with the Haywood family without such opportunities to rub shoulders with these giants, but with less than a month by

Max's side, her thinking had already advanced significantly.

Max's fingers still lingered on her waist. Brielle surprised him quite a bit. He finally understood why Ryan couldn't let her go. She

was indeed talented. Among the Beaconsfield socialites who were versed in arts and culture, she stood out.

Andrew had called her a canary, but she was never one. Canaries were for those delicate socialites. Brielle was an eagle,

yearning to conquer the blue skies. A gilded cage was never meant for her, and the small world could never contain her. An

engagement should not be her shackle. She was meant for her own dreams and horizons.

Max rarely considered a woman's future so earnestly, yet now a faint smile played on his lips.

Sensing his mood, Brielle smoothly made another small request. "By the way, Uncle Max, do you remember the villa worth over

twenty million you gave me?" She spoke without a hint of embarrassment.

Max's eyelashes fluttered, followed by a light laugh, "Hmm?"

Pretending to miss the tease in his tone, she continued, "The one you promised as a ceremonial gift when you first took over the

company. I'd like to sell it, but I guess Spencer hasn't completed the transfer procedures. Could you maybe oversee that for me?

My words don't carry much weight with him as a fiancée."

They lay there on the couch, Max's eyes now closed. His eyelashes were long, his skin perfect, his presence cool like a perfect

sculpture.

Brielle turned to face him, unable to resist reaching out to tug at his sleeve. Her fingers were caught in his, and he asked, "Shall I

make a call now?"

"Aren't you going to ask what I plan to do with the money?" After all, it was over twenty million.

"It's yours. Whatever you do with it is up to you."

Brielle thought herself shameless, only to discover Max could be quite brazen too. Despite the villa being a corporate expense, it

was originally Spencer's gift to Lillian. Now he nonchalantly claimed it was hers.

With a low chuckle, Brielle found she quite liked his audacity, "Alright, make the call. I don't want Lillian spending another day in

that villa."

"Let's sleep first."

His voice was calm, and with that, he closed his eyes again.

Brielle knew what 'sleep' implied and tentatively started undoing his top button. Max had the habit of fastening the buttons all the

way to the top, giving off an appearance of

meticulousness.

Her hands were swiftly caught by his, amusement in his eyes, "What are you doing?"

"Aren't we going to sleep?"

"Brielle, is that all you think about?"

Struck as if by an arrow, she reacted with a hint of annoyance. It was as if she was the one so horny.

Retrieving her hands, she replied with mock seriousness, "I just think it would be very disrespectful to your body, if I didn't want

to have my way with you at a time like this."

Max's laugh was genuine this time, free from the usual aloofness. He pulled her close, resting his forehead on her shoulder, his

hair brushing against her chin.

In this intimate position, the world around them seemed to fade away.

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Brielle couldn't resist. She stealthily lifted her hand and gently ran her fingers through his hair. His strands were slightly coarse, a

bit prickly to the touch, and the coolness slithered from her fingertips like a serpent, unhesitatingly burrowing into her heart.

A man's head, a woman's waist – they were territories marked for intimacy.

A softness crept into Brielle's eyes, and she greedily lingered a few more seconds than she should have, caressing his hair. She

whispered his name in her heart, and with a subtle sigh, she drew her hand back.

The afternoon sun was warm, casting a golden glow throughout the room.

Their breathing slowed, both lulled by the tranquility. Brielle had pulled an all-nighter just the evening before, and after a visit to

the orphanage, drowsiness was claiming her. Her eyelids fluttered shut, instinctively nuzzling closer to Max.

Dark circles barely shadowed her eyes as Max glanced at her, reaching for a throw blanket nearby. If someone had told him that

he'd end up lying in the office break room with a woman, he would've scoffed at the absurdity. The office was for work, the break

room a place for him to recharge in private, strictly off-limits to others. But now, a simple tilt of his head brought Brielle's face into

view.

The experience was novel. He couldn't quite pinpoint his feelings for Brielle.

Michael used to say that Max was smart, but would never learn how to love.

When Brielle woke, Max had already left. She stared at the unfamiliar ceiling, taking a moment to remember she was in Max's

private room.

She rose, listening for any signs of activity outside. If she ran into the executives in a meeting with Max, it would be like being

caught red-handed, impossible to explain away, even though their relationship was already muddled as it was.

Luckily, all was quiet. She stepped out with confidence, only to lock eyes with Tiffanie, who sat on the couch with a lollipop in her

mouth, idly flipping through a finance magazine. Tiffanie's mouth dropped open, the candy hitting the floor.

"Brielle?" Her voice was a mix of shock and disbelief. "You've been sleeping in Maxie's break room?"

Tiffanie rubbed her eyes, questioning the reality before her. Even though she knew Max and Brielle had hooked up, Max had a

serious obsession with cleanliness in certain areas, especially in the office, a place of gravity. Some other rich guys in the circle

might enjoy playing office role-playing at times, but Max was definitely not that kind of person.

It took Tiffanie a moment to recover, bending down to pick up the lollipop and tossing it into the trash.

"Who would've thought

Maxie would ever stash a girl in his office?"

Brielle, caught off-guard, asked, "Tiffanie, what brings you here?"

Tiffanie sized her up, then snorted, "It's my birthday. Came to get a present from Maxie."

Brielle quickly wished her a happy birthday, feeling awkward,

Tiffanie plopped back down, "Birthdays can be such a drag. Remember that actor I fancied? Turned out he was too eager, no

challenge at all. Just sickening how he tried to cling on. Had to dump him with an excuse, and now here I am, all alone. Pity, Isn't

it?"

She ranted with disgust about the actor.

Brielle's mind raced to the gossip linking Tiffanie to Kenzo, but last time at Tequila Sunset, Tiffanie and Kenzo barely interacted.

Was the rumor even true?

Tiffanie's gaze returned to Brielle, loaded with implication. "Last time I wanted to have a drink with you, you bolted. How about

making it up to me for my birthday?"

With the conversation steered to this point, Brielle couldn't refuse and nodded in agreement.

Tiffanie's enthusiasm was palpable as she swiftly booked a private room at Tequila Sunset. "Let me tell you, the male models

there are the hottest in Beaconsfield. You'll see."

Mid-sentence, the door swung open, and Max stepped in with Patrick, catching the tail end of the conversation.

Tiffanie quickly stashed her phone away, beaming up at Max, "Maxie, where's my present?" She was bold, her last extravagant

request still fresh, yet she asked without hesitation.

Max typically wouldn't skimp, but this time he simply dropped a file on the desk and took a seat, "It's deducted."

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Tiffanie's face froze, her steps quickening as she approached. "How could you do that, Maxie? I haven't stirred up any trouble

lately. You know I even gave up on that Hollywood hunk I was after. I've been good, just holed up at home playing video games, I

swear."

Her voice softened, her face a picture of Innocence, "You have no idea how bored I've been. Those posh girls just don't like me,

spreading rumors all over. And the worst is Spencer, claiming it's because of Kenzo that I'm in this mess. I'm super upset, you

know. I've hardly had a real conversation with Kenzo."

She feigned wiping away a tear, while her eyes carefully gauged Max's reaction.

Max furrowed his brows, hesitating for a few seconds before reluctantly pulling out another card. "Stop blowing cash on those

guys. Heck, even if you had a serious relationship, no one would bat an eye."

Tiffanie's lips curled into a sardonic smile as she snatched the card. "A serious relationship? Please, any decent guy would run

for the hills the moment he hears my name.” There was a hint of sadness in her eyes as she spoke.

Brielle listened in on their conversation, piecing together that the whole Tiffanie–Kenzo affair was just smoke and mirrors. Given

Tiffanie’s nature, she wouldn’t fall for someone who’d sacrifice everything for art, especially since she craved security above all.

“Maxie, I’m gonna drag Brielle out for a drink, okay? I promise, no male models this time.” Tiffanie thought it over and figured it

must have been her mention of male models that ticked Max off. Max was a clean freak, probably wouldn’t stand his women

getting tangled up with other men.

With that, she pulled Brielle towards the elevator, only to stroke her chin thoughtfully once they were inside, her next words as

shocking as ever. “Brielle, have you ever slept with Spencer?”

Considering their long–standing engagement and both being adults, it’s hard to believe that nothing happened between them.

Despite Spencer’s questionable character, his good looks were undeniable after all.

“Would you believe me if I said no?” Brielle’s tone was nonchalant, bracing for Tiffanie’s blunt mockery.

“I’d believe you.”

Tiffanie looked serious, tucking Max’s card into her purse, “You’ve never loved Spencer, and he’s not capable enough to win you

over. You’d only sleep with someone like Max because, in a place like Beaconsfield, being with a man like him feels like hitting

the jackpot.”

“How do you know I’ve never loved Spencer?”

“It’s all in the eyes, girl. I’ve seen you before. When you like someone, it shows, and you’ve never looked at him that way. You’re nice to him just because he’s your fiancé, nothing more.”

At times, Tiffanie seemed like a mischievous child, yet she had a knack for seeing through people.

When they reached the underground parking. Tiffanie hopped into a flashy red convertible, the epitome of high–profile.

Brielle buckled up in the passenger seat and found a candy in her hand, a small gesture from Tiffanie. "Thanks," she said,

suddenly remembering it was Tiffanie's birthday, and felt a pang of guilt for not having a gift. "Sorry, I didn't get you anything."

"No need. Don't bother in the future either. My birth isn't exactly something to celebrate. My mom wishes I'd never been born.

Apart from Max, I've never gotten a birthday gift."

Tiffanie spoke casually as she floored the accelerator.

Brielle didn't know much about Tiffanie's mother, but her mother was a lady of the Dorsey family. Even if she wasn't fond of her

daughter, it seemed impossible that she hadn't provided a single decent birthday gift in over twenty years. Tiffanie wasn't one to

lie, which meant there was more to the story. Brielle didn't care to delve into family secrets and wisely kept her mouth

shut.

They arrived at Tequila Sunset, and the valet lit up at the sight of Tiffanie. "You're here, Miss Tiffanie!"

She pulled out a wad of cash from her purse, generously tipping the valet. Her lavish tips had made her a favorite among the

staff, who quickly parked her car and exchanged a few friendly words.

Brielle stood by her side, but her attention was caught by a familiar face nearby – Sophia, flanked by a gaggle of high-society

ladies.

Brielle, standing beside the flamboyant Tiffanie under the bright lights, was too conspicuous to miss.

Sophia's lips pursed into a sneer upon spotting Brielle. "Well, well, if it isn't Brielle. Heard the Dorsey family's cutting you loose.

Shouldn't you be at home crying instead of out drinking?"

The scandalous tale of Brielle and Kenzo had spread like wildfire, and the upper crust loved nothing more than juicy gossip like

this.

"Is that her, munching away with Kenzo at the table?*

"Spencer's fiancée, they say she's a wild one."

"Ha, hanging out with Tiffanie, what else can you expect but trouble?"

The clique wasn't content with bad-mouthing Brielle. They dragged Tiffanie into their gossip as well.

Tiffanie's mood soured instantly. In a swift motion, her hand flew up and smacked Sophia right across the face.

"Damn! Who's this bitch spewing nonsense? Since when is sharing a meal a crime? Are you lot at Tequila Sunset just to sip on

martinis and play saints? Gimme a break."

The sound of the slap cut through the chatter like a knife.

Sophia, gripping her cheek in shock, couldn't believe Tiffanie would lash out so irrationally. The hurtful words had come from the

mouths of her companions, yet it was her face that stung from the strike. Her chest heaved with indignation, and spotting a sneer

in Brielle's eyes, she found her outlet.

"Brielle, what's so funny? Thrilled with being a cast-off?"

Tiffanie was out of Sophia's league, but putting Brielle in her place? That was child's play.

The smirk in Brielle's eyes grew, "Cast-off? Did Lillian fill your heads with that? If a woman engaged to be married is what you

call a cast-off, then what does that make her, the mistress skulking in the shadows? When did this society start putting the other

woman on a pedestal just because she plays the victim so well?"

The crowd bristled with anger at her words. Lillian as a mistress? Impossible!

Sophia sneered, "There's photographic evidence of you dining with Kenzo, and Spencer himself has admitted your indiscretions.

And here you are, slandering Lillian. You've really got no shame."

Brielle frowned. Spencer had confirmed it?

A wave of nausea hit her, and seeing Sophia's arrogant face, she chuckled lightly, "I believe you owe me an apology, don't you?"

At this, Sophia's face turned even more sour, "Dream on. Why would I apologize to you? All Tessa has to do is whisper in

Andrew's ear, and I'm off the hook. Give up on trying to step over me, Brielle."

As if on cue, Andrew's car rolled up to the scene. Sophia straightened up as if bolstered by his arrival.

Andrew stepped out, oblivious to the drama unfolding. Aubree was at his side, arms crossed, clearly agitated from an argument with him. Both paused at the sight of the commotion.

Sophia was quick to act, rushing over, "Andrew!"

Hearing this, Aubree's lip curled in a sneer.

Andrew, paying no heed to her, surveyed the situation. "What's going on here?" Impatience was evident in his tone, his tolerance

at a low.

Sophia didn't dare to trouble him with trivialities, clutching at his sleeve only to be shrugged off. Andrew's gaze was fiery as he

spoke bluntly, "I've told you before, I'm indulging this nonsense only for Tessa's sake."

Sophia blanched at his lack of courtesy. After a moment's hesitation, she murmured, "It's all Brielle's doing, asking me to

apologize again."

Brielle's gaze shifted to Andrew, calm yet firm, "This was a matter Mr. Clements agreed to. Surely you haven't forgotten?"

Andrew's irritation was palpable as he made to walk into the bar, eager to escape the pettiness. Sophia panicked, quickly

following, "Andrew, Tessa must have called you. She said not to pursue this matter any further."

She believed this would earn her some sympathy from the onlookers, perhaps even from Brielle. but Brielle's voice followed

swiftly, "So, just because she says 'let it go,' it's supposed to vanish? Did you hire someone to ruin her face this time? This Ms.

Tessa must carry quite the influence to dismiss everything with a flick of her wrist."

Sophia was livid, "You!" She couldn't outwit Brielle but looked hopefully towards Andrew for support.

Andrew's expression darkened. No one spoke ill of Tessa in his presence. "Brielle, that's enough," he said firmly.

Brielle's attention drifted to Aubree, reflecting on how brutally indifferent men could be – the woman he had shared his bed with

for years was right there, yet he seemed utterly fixated on his supposed 'one true love'.

If she really was the one true love, why then did he sleep with Aubree in the first place?

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Aubree pulled out a cigarette, her fingers deftly flicking a lighter to life as she brought the flame to the tip. A perfect smoke ring

drifted from her lips, her eyes brimming with mocking curiosity to see just how far Andrew would go for Tessa,

Andrew had always looked down on petty catfights, yet now, standing amidst a gaggle of women, he seemed utterly at ease.

Across the crowd, Aubree caught Brielle's gaze. With an unspoken agreement, neither made a move to greet the other. Aubree

nonchalantly gestured towards the inside of the venue, signaling she would head in first.

Brielle nodded in understanding, preferring not to have Aubree witness Andrew's defense of Tessa. With a casual stride, Aubree

walked away, leaving the brewing storm behind her.

Andrew watched her leave without a word or a hint of guilt. After all, a fling could never hold a candle to true love. His lips

pressed together as he thought of Brielle and the looming presence of Max behind her. The apology he had promised was still

pending.

He took a deep breath, rarely speaking with such patience to an arm candy. "Name your price for compensation, as long as it's

not too outrageous, I'll meet it."

His words were clear to all those present, sparking surprise among the crowd who knew Andrew's temper to be quite the foe.

Sophia was puzzled at first but quickly realized Andrew was backing her up. It was clear that Tessa was his priority. Her spine

straightened with pride, a smugness dancing in her eyes.

She couldn't believe Brielle would actually ask for compensation. The woman wasn't truly disfigured, and clinging to the issue

would only provoke Andrew. In Beaconsfield, crossing Andrew was a one-way ticket to ruin.

Even Tiffanie thought Brielle was about to face a losing battle, but then, crisp and clear, Brielle spoke up, "Thirty million,

transferred to my account immediately, and we'll forget the apology."

Her eyes twinkled with defiance, "Mr. Clements, what do you say?"

A tightness gripped Andrew's chest—not over the money, but the indignity of being blatantly extorted. He'd battled through storms

and strife over the years, never suffering such audacity.

As soon as Brielle finished her demand, an eerie silence fell. Phones were sneakily recording, spreading the scene through the

social circles of Beaconsfield.

Everyone anticipated a gruesome end for Brielle. Even Sophia let out a scornful laugh. Yet, against all odds, Andrew pulled out a

checkbook with a surprisingly steady hand, signed a check, and approached Brielle, placing it in her outstretched palm. Leaning

in close, his voice was a chilling whisper, "Remember this. You're getting this because of Max. The day he dumps you, I'll be the

first to come after you."

To onlookers, it was just a private exchange, nothing more.

After delivering his message, Andrew headed inside. Brielle folded the check and slipped it into her purse.

Tiffanie, agog, finally broke into applause. "Wow! Thirty million for an apology! You've got guts, Brielle, and I could swear Andrew

wanted to strangle you. Feel my palm, I'm sweating."

In this world, you might provoke the devil, but never Andrew. This was an unwritten rule, yet Brielle had openly broken it.

The crowd's gaze shifted, wondering what advantage they could possibly seek from someone who didn't fear Andrew himself.

The air was thick with silence. Even Sophia's lips tightened, her face a canvas of ugly emotions. She should've simply

apologized and avoided handing Brielle a windfall.

Sophia felt played, her heart pounding with anger and humiliation. "Brielle, have you completely lost it? Just like Lillian said,

you're low."

Receiving the thirty million, Brielle was in a good mood. Once she sold the mansion, she would have fifty million in hand, enough

for the location of the orphanage. She ignored Sophia's rage, turning to Tiffanie with a proposition, "It's your birthday. How about

I treat you to another show?"

Tiffanie, ever the thrill-seeker, was all ears. "What kind of show?"

Brielle climbed into Tiffanie's cherry-red sports car, leaving the other women behind.

Tiffanie, playing the perfect chauffeur, was eager for the drama. "Come on, spill the beans. What's the plan?"

"We're going to catch someone in the act. Snap some photos, share them in your social groups. Sound fun?"

Brielle spoke with a light-hearted tone, arms casually folded, ready for the next act to unfold.

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The sky was darkening, and the number of cars on the streets was increasing.

Brielle knew Lillian all too well. After the ordeal at the orphanage last night, she must have been clinging onto Spencer, pouring

her woes into his willing ears, and likely showing off her bedroom prowess. This was prime time to catch them in the act.

Tiffanie's eyes were sparkling with determination as she patted Brielle's shoulder with sincere gratitude. "You're a real pal,

Brielle. Let's do this. Lead the way, and I'll drive us there right now."

Brielle set the navigation for the suburban villa while Tiffanie asked if they should call a locksmith.

"No need, the code's definitely Lillian's birthday."

Tiffanie, seeing Brielle's confident reply, realized she must have been there before and felt a pang of sympathy. The sight that

Brielle had seen at the villa wouldn't be easy on her heart.

Flooring the gas pedal, Tiffanie had them parked outside the villa within twenty minutes. Brielle glanced at the lights glowing

inside the villa and let out a cold laugh before heading straight to the front door. She punched in Lillian's birthday, and the door

swung open. Tiffanie, flushed with excitement, had her phone out, ready to start recording.

Upstairs, as suspected, Lillian's voice echoed through the hallway. Pleasure and pain intermingled in her tone, eerily reminiscent

of the first time Brielle stumbled upon their tryst. The difference now was Brielle's mood.

She stopped outside the largest bedroom. The door to the master bedroom was ajar, and Spencer's voice was full of eagerness,

"Lillian, your waist is still so slender."

"Spencer, you promised you'd terminate your engagement to Brielle within two months, didn't you?"

"Of course, she can't hold a candle to you."

Brielle found their conversation amusing. It was far more restrained than what she had heard the first time, which had been a

deliberately orchestrated farce by Lillian, designed to elicit Spencer's criticisms of Brielle – calling her a dull piece of wood, a

robot.

The last line of what she had heard was etched in Brielle's memory and still made her sick.

-Lillian, you're so much more slutty.

Back then, Brielle had cherished Lillian like a sister, never suspecting her true nature.

Shaking off the memories, Brielle pushed the door open. Simultaneously, Tiffanie started recording the scandalous scene while

snapping several photos.

Lillian, sensing the intrusion, let out a near-scream, grabbing the bedsheet to cover herself.

Spencer frowned, his voice tight with discomfort, "Brielle! What are you doing here?"

Then, seeing Tiffanie with her phone, his indignation peaked, "Tiffanie, did you get that on video?"

Tiffanie blinked innocently and hid behind Brielle, whispering, "While he's still undressed and wouldn't dare to chase us, let's run

quickly. The two of us can't beat him alone. I've already posted the video in the group, and there are also their uncensored

photos."

Brielle didn't expect Tiffanie to be so quick. She chuckled. Tiffanie was a waste not being a paparazzo.

Watching the disheveled and embarrassed pair, Brielle said, "Spencer, this villa is mine. Do I need to remind you again? Take

your mistress and get out."

Spencer's scalp tingled with fury. He hadn't expected Brielle to confront him personally. But indeed, the villa was hers, and Max

had already warned him. He dare not say more.

His lips pressed together, a spark of thought crossed his mind. Was Brielle jealous, fighting so hard for the villa?

He was from a good family, attractive, fit, and they'd known each other for years. It made no sense for Brielle not to like him.

Maybe her indifference was all an act. Perhaps she even cried over him.

With this in mind, Spencer's heart softened briefly, "Brielle, stop making a scene. It's normal for a man to have a woman on the

side. The more you fuss, the more you stand to lose."

If only she would beg him, he could reconsider ending the engagement. If she became more approachable and likable and

turned a blind eye to his affairs, he wasn't averse to marrying her.

"Spencer, are you deaf? Move out tonight with Lillian, and transfer the proceeds from the villa sale to my account tomorrow."

Her tone was icy. The look she gave Spencer was one of undisguised disgust, mirroring how he saw her. It was Spencer who

had always hurt her, but now that the tables were turned, he found the pain unbearable.

His heart felt slashed open, which was an odd sensation. Why should he care so much about Brielle's contempt?

Chapter 128

Spencer felt a sharp pang in his chest, a dull ache that made it hard to breathe. His silence was broken by a pitiful hand reaching

out, grabbing his wrist. "Spencer, it's all my fault. I had no idea she was coming over tonight."

The words were shameless, and even Tiffanie couldn't help but snap, "What a tramp! Hooking up with someone else's fiancé

and playing the victim? Disgusting."

She even spat on the ground, her face contorted with revulsion.

Not just Lillian felt the sting, but Spencer's face turned thunderous. Who was Tiffanie to judge? Wasn't she just as flawed?

Lillian, as if frightened by Tiffanie's brashness, pressed her lips together, holding back words as tears pooled in her eyes.

Until now, Tiffanie had been oblivious to Lillian's true colors. Seeing her so brazen in front of Brielle, Tiffanie felt her blood boil.

"Spencer, what do you even see in her? I recall her grades weren't anything to brag about, and she's never held down a real job.

Everything she eats, uses, and wears, it's all thanks to the Haywood family or you. And yet you treat her like some kind of

treasure? You must be blind. Brielle, let's get out of here." She couldn't stand another minute in this toxic atmosphere.

Lillian had no comeback. Tiffanie's words were nothing but the truth. Her college degree was bought, and her work life was a

string of part-time gigs. But did men really care about a woman's ability? Or was it all about charm and obedience?

Lillian sneered. Tiffanie was such a fool. The more Tiffanie belittled her, the more Spencer felt embarrassed. After all, a man

wouldn't admit admit they have poor judgment. And Spencer, with his strong sense of male chauvinism, wouldn't tolerate a

woman stepping on his head.

Sure enough, Tiffanie's words roused Spencer. He wrapped himself in a robe and strode over, his towering presence

overwhelming. "Tiffanie, you're really asking for it today."

But before he could act, Brielle stepped in front of Tiffanie. Spencer's anger faltered under her gaze, the hurt in his heart

resurfacing. "Brielle, who do you think is to blame for this mess? You never loved me."

Admitting such a thing was beyond humiliating. His eyes reddened, but he refused to stay and be embarrassed. With a bitter

clench of his teeth, he said, "I'll wire you the money tomorrow, Brielle. You'll regret this someday."

Turning to Lillian, he said, "Get dressed, Lillian."

Despite her resentment, Lillian had no choice. She had played the obedient lover for so long, only to see the multimillion-dollar

mansion she'd been promised slip into Brielle's hands.

Tasting the bitterness of defeat, she shakily got dressed. As she passed Brielle, she couldn't resist a parting shot. "Without this

house, Spencer will buy me another."

Unaware that her scandal had been leaked in the Beaconsfield socialites' chat groups, she thought she could still play the

perfect victim. Those circles were already abuzz, replaying the incriminating video for laughs.

The groups that included Lillian fell into an eerie silence. They had only known Lillian as innocent, oblivious to her affair with

Spencer, who was publicly engaged to Brielle. The video laid bare their indiscretions, and the context made it clear this wasn't a

recent fling.

Lillian was the other woman.

In the realm of high society, mistresses and illegitimate children were scorned unless you could captivate the man and ascend.

Otherwise, you'd never know how the glittering crowd would speak of you behind closed doors.

Brielle's exposed photos were just a dinner with Kenzo, but Lillian's exposed photos were her bedding Spencer. In contrast, the

evidence of Lillian being a mistress was more than sufficient. Silence reigned in the chat room, and Lillian, oblivious to the

turmoil, felt something was amiss when her message was met with silence. Any other time, her words would spark a chorus of

agreement. To confirm her suspicions, she suggested they all meet for afternoon tea the next day.

Chapter 129

In the chat group, the camaraderie was generally good on any given day. The members loved to flaunt their latest luxury car

purchases or their sprawling mansions and chew the fat over the trivial gossip that bubbled up within their social circle.

Brielle was the hot topic that never ceased to intrigue everyone.

These folks were far removed from the elite inner circle—after all, those high-fliers didn't have the time to indulge in idle chitchat.

Most of the group members were well-off, leading lives of comfort, yet they suffered from a severe drought of meaningful

engagement. Talking smack about Brielle was simply a way for them to feel a tad better about themselves.

Just as one felt the body being lifted when treading water, similarly, in any social hierarchy, those lacking self-confidence tended

to highlight their status by denigrating those they perceived as inferior. And in their eyes, Brielle was the underdog.

After Lillian sent her message, ten long minutes dragged by before anyone bothered to reply.

[Let's drop it. I've got stuff to do tomorrow.]

[Yeah, looks like none of us can make it.]

[What's the deal with you and Spencer? Isn't he Brielle's fiancé? Thought you said he was like a brother to you?]

The question everyone had been skirting around was finally out in the open. After all, the video was crystal clear. Denial wasn't

an option.

Lillian's hand, which had been dangling by her side, clenched. Never before had her relationship with Spencer been questioned.

What in the world was happening tonight?

[Yes, I always saw him as a brother,] she replied.

Seeing her response while recalling the video and vivid photos, an uncomfortable wave washed over everyone. The chat fell

silent once more, and this time, no one engaged with her.

Sweat pooled in Lillian's palms, the evening's events still a puzzle to her. She reached out to one of the more friendly faces in the

group, suggesting they meet for coffee the next day. The reply came back swift and cold-[Find someone else. I'm busy.]

Staring at her phone, Lillian wondered if her eyes were playing tricks on her. In the past, to get cozy with these wealthy second-

generation kids, she'd simply gift them some priceless jewelry.

These kids lacked for nothing, but they always appreciated the gesture, seeing the giver as generous and kind-hearted.

Especially those whose families kept a tight rein on them. They loved hanging with Lillian, who was known for her largesse. For

example, the one who had just turned her down—never before had she rejected Lillian.

Undeterred, Lillian messaged others in the group. After reaching out to four more, she found one of them blocked her outright,

and the rest didn't even bother replying.

Lillian sensed trouble brewing, but first things first: she needed to smooth things over with Spencer, then try to rekindle the bonds

with her fair-weather friends.

She looked up, her eyes brimming with feigned vulnerability. "I'm sorry, Spencer, I never should've got involved with you. It's

made things awkward for everyone. Maybe it's best if we take a break.*

This tactic of retreat to advance was one of her favorites.

Spencer gritted his teeth in frustration. "Sorry, Lillian, that you've been put through this. Tell me, which property do you want? I'll

give you another one."

That was what Lillian was banking on. What did it matter how well a man treated her if she couldn't hold on to something

tangible? That was the real security. She grew up poor and only realized the importance of money when she saw how the

wealthy lived. So, later on, whether it was with Cameron or with Spencer, she would subtly convey a message to them. She had

suffered a lot in the past and did not want to put herself through hardships anymore in the future.

When male pride kicked in, they'd fulfill her every demand. Her wardrobe, shoes, bags, and bracelets were nearly all courtesy of

Cameron, while her posh residence and the flashy cars she drove were gifts from Spencer.

As for Brielle, well, she was just a hapless fool. After years with the Haywood family, she didn't even own a decent villa.

Lillian had always prided herself on her cunning, but tonight was her first defeat. She traced the root of her downfall to one

person—Max, the pinnacle of their social pyramid. As long as Max harbored even a sliver of pity for Brielle, Spencer was putty in

his hands.

A flicker of envy crossed Lillian's eyes. If only Max would take her side.

Word on the street was that he occasionally showed up at Tequila Sunset. It looked like it was time for her to try her luck there.

Chapter 130

"Don't. Just drop me off at the next intersection. I don't want to stay at a hotel tonight; I'm thinking of crashing with a friend."

Her voice, heavy with emotion, barely rose above a whisper as she dabbed at the tears streaking down her face. The villa had

been her only property, and now that it was gone, her only option seemed to be to check into a hotel. And Spencer, being a part

of the Dorsey clan, couldn't possibly bring Lillian back to the Dorsey estate.

Suddenly, Spencer felt utterly useless for letting her be put through such an ordeal. "Lillian, I'll find you a new place soon. Just

bear with a hotel for tonight."

"Spencer, I'm just so tired."

Her words pierced straight through Spencer's heart. His grip on the steering wheel tightened, a wave of guilt washing over him. If

Lillian were his rightful fiancée, she wouldn't have to suffer like this.

"I'm sorry."

"It's not your fault. It's just that I love you too much. I'm willing to lurk in the shadows, but tonight, I really do want to be with a

friend."

Spencer nodded, unable to muster any more words, his resentment towards Brielle growing stronger.

After dropping Lillian off, he reached into his pocket and handed her a card.

“There’s ten million in here, for your trouble.”

“I can’t accept this.”

“Keep it. That villa was rightfully yours, and I’ll make it up to you later.”

Leaving the card with her, Spencer drove off with a heavy heart.

Lillian glanced down, a flicker of satisfaction crossing her eyes before she slipped the card into her pocket.

The friend she was seeking out was Sophia, who was also in that chat group but had been oddly silent to her messages. Lillian

had just seen Sophia’s update at Tequila Sunset. It was time to see what was going on in person.

With a knack for navigating social waters, Lillian quickly found Sophia’s private booth. Sophia herself wasn’t feeling great, still

fuming over that thirty-million-dollar debacle. Most of those surrounding her were from the same social circle, now all hunched

over their phones, whispering amongst themselves.

“Can you believe it? That’s Lillian in the video?”

“It’s so clear, it has to be her. Who knew she had such a thing going with Spencer?”

“That makes her the other woman, doesn’t it? How much of what she tells us is actually true?”

The murmurs grew louder.

Given Sophia’s closer relationship with Lillian, coupled with the incident involving Emily, she believed Lillian to be a very loyal

and righteous person. Now, hearing everyone discussing Lillian, she couldn’t help but inquire. “What’s going on?”

“Sophia, you gotta check the group chat. Spencer and Lillian got caught in the act. The video’s gone viral. It’s all over the

socials.”

Sophia thought she must have misheard. Such a scandal in their circle was social suicide. She opened her phone and, upon

seeing the crystal-clear video, her face turned ashen. The others, sensing an opportunity, began to tear Lillian down.

“I knew she wasn’t all she pretended to be, always playing the victim.”

“She grew up with Brielle, didn’t she? Birds of a feather.”

“She wanted to join me for high tea just now. I turned her down, thank goodness.”

“She tried to chat with me too. Looks like she’s clueless about what happened. How embarrassing! I’d be scolded by everyone if

I were seen with her now.”

In their world, reputation was everything. After that video, Lillian would be seen through a tainted lens, her social standing in

tatters.

They gleefully slapped every derogatory label they could think of on Lillian, enjoying the gossip. In the midst of their cackles, the

door swung open, and Lillian stood at the threshold.

The room turned frigid with discomfort as Lillian, followed by a waiter in pristine white gloves, sauntered in, feigning generosity. “I

heard you were all dining here. I was free, so I thought I’d buy you a round.”

The waiter rolled in a cart laden with expensive bottles, each worth a small fortune. Lillian was splurging, fresh off a ten-million-

dollar consolation and with the promise of a new villa from Spencer. A few million was nothing to her, especially when it usually

bought praise.

Tonight, the room was suffused with a strange silence. Everyone was unusually quiet, deliberately avoiding her gaze.