

Master 131

Chapter 131

"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.

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Lillian’s eyes were bloodshot with rage, a tempest brewing behind her tear-stained face.

How could this have happened? Wasn’t it Brielle who was supposed to face this ordeal?

Her vision began to blur as she struggled to focus on Aubree’s features.

Aubree stood confidently, hands on her hips, draped in a figure-hugging red dress that flattered her every curve. She couldn’t

help but erupt when she saw that damn video. Tonight, she was already at Tequila Sunset when she caught sight of Lillian’s

entrance.

“Who was it that plucked you from the orphanage, huh? Have you forgotten that the Haywoods. put food on your table and

clothes on your back? And this is how you repay them? Stealing Bri’s fiancé and encouraging him to break off their engagement?

You’ve really lost all shame. Calling you a tramp is a compliment. Look at yourself in that video, acting so cheap. So that’s what

Spencer is into, huh?”

Those words cut deep, and the onlookers recoiled. They all knew the Clements family’s adopted daughter, and they didn’t dare

to step forward to defend Lillian, since she was clearly in the wrong. If they spoke up and got slapped, what then? Aubree was

clearly out for blood tonight.

So, the crowd did the only thing they could they watched the drama unfold.

Lillian felt like her

—

wanted to retort, uth was full of blood blisters, her eyes red hot and fixed on Aubree. She

wanted to retort, to curse this woman and Andrew for their sordid affair, but her chest shook violently with humiliation, and not a

single word could escape her lips.

She wished she had never set foot in the VIP lounge that night, so she wouldn't have to face. such a public disgrace.

Hatred consumed her, all because of Brielle.

Her lips trembled, her teeth biting into them until they bled. She wanted to dispute the video, but it was too clear-cut. Anyone

with eyes could see it was real. Brielle had destroyed her, utterly and completely.

Lillian felt as if the sky was falling. She needed to get out of there, to stop the assault on her dignity. She fled like a clown,

clutching her purse, almost running from the scene.

The eyes that followed her seemed to strip away her last shred of self-respect. It was over. Everything was over. She couldn't

understand how it had come to this.

Her phone rang, and she was too afraid to see who it was. Wiping her tears, she finally pulled out her trembling phone.

It was Miranda. She must have seen the video too. The phone felt like it was burning her hand,

and she was tempts to throw it away. But it rang persistently, like a death knell. The

Haywoods had been so good to her, providing her with everything. How could she explain herself?

Lillian was at a loss, her teeth chattering.

Hiding was not an option. She had to face them. Her reputation was already in tatters, and she could no longer hold her head

high in their social circles. Maybe, just maybe, the Haywoods' feelings for her would prevail, and they wouldn't turn her away

completely.

Lillian hailed a cab to the Haywood estate, the ride there an agonizing torment, as if she were in a frying pan. Standing outside

the Haywood residence, she hesitated to enter. After a long inner struggle, she pushed through the door, tears streaming down

her face in a sorry cascade. Her reputation in society was beyond saving. She had to make sure her benefactors were on her

side. After all, she wasn't married to Spencer yet. Even with his generous support, a man's favor was fickle and could change

overnight. So, before anything was set in stone with Spencer, she had to hold on tightly to the Haywoods.

"Miranda, I'm so sorry. It was a moment of foolishness. Spencer was so heartbroken that night, and we... we drank too much,"

she sobbed, attempting to pin their indiscretion on the alcohol.

Miranda and Robert remained silent, their faces unreadable. The video had spread like wildfire, and now everyone in the

Beaconsfield social circles was aware of the scandal.

While the society ladies she once mingled with were labeling her as foolish for letting an outsider snatch away her future son-in-

law, Miranda looked at Lillian's tearful face and remembered the diary. There was a flicker of pity within her.

"Lillian, when exactly did this all start?"

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Brielle had mentioned it before, but Miranda had been so trusting of Lillian that she thought Brielle was just spinning tales. Now,

confronted with the undeniable evidence of the video, she couldn't help but wonder if her daughter had been deeply wronged.

Miranda suddenly felt some regret, while at the same time, she blamed Brielle in her heart. Why couldn't she just talk it out? Why

did it have to come to this?

Lillian, seeing the frustration in Miranda's eyes, knew she had to deliver a performance of a lifetime tonight, or she would never

again be welcomed into the Haywood household with open

arms.

The remorse was painted all over her face. “Miranda, remember that night when Bri said she was out looking for guys? That was

the night Spencer got drunk. But that’s no excuse. I betrayed Bri.”

Miranda exhaled, her instinct to trust Lillian proving strong. So their affair had started that night. Bri had confessed to seeking

male company, which must have stung Spencer’s pride. leading him to drink more than usual.

Miranda’s feelings at this moment were very complex. On one hand, she blamed Brielle, and on the other hand, she blamed

Lillian. Then, reconsidering, she thought that if Spencer couldn’t resist straying, at least it was with Lillian, who was practically

family.

“Lillian, even though you’ve been with Spencer, it’s Bri who’s going to marry him in the end.”

Lillian’s hand clenched at her side, a flash of red crossing her eyes.

She felt a burning desire to tear it all down, but she had to apologize and feign sincerity. “I know, Bri is amazing. She deserves

the best.”

Her apologetic demeanor appeased Miranda, who had a soft spot for Lillian. “Alright, stop kneeling. Get up. I was originally

thinking of having you as the daughter-in-law of our Haywood family, but now, this mess between you and Spencer happened. I

guess Brielle is not feeling good either. When she comes back, I’ll try to plead for you in front of her.”

Lillian choked back sobs as she rose, wiping away tears. “Miranda, I’ll apologize to Bri personally. As for Spencer, I won’t contact

him again.”

She had gauged Miranda’s sentiments, so she deliberately made that statement to test the waters. Sure enough, Miranda’s

response was just what she wanted to hear.

“Spencer is young. Young folks like to have their fun. It’s better for him to be with you than some other girl, but remember, Bri

gets to be his wife. Can you accept that and not compete with Bri?”

It was astonishing that there could be such a mother who actively sought mistresses for her own daughter's man.

understand my place."

Miranda nodded, content, but noticed her husband was silent. She nudged him. "What do you think?"

Robert had that look of restrained patience, the rationality of a man. "Don't you think this is terribly unfair to Bri?"

Miranda hadn't expected her husband to react this way and blushed in embarrassment. "I know it's not fair to Bri, but Lillian has

been with us for years. What should we do?"

Robert scrutinized Lillian. If Lillian had been his daughter, it would have been so much better. Her temperament was much better

than Brielle's and she was more suitable for marriage with Spencer.

"Lillian, we'll give you a sum of money. Leave Beaconsfield and stop contacting Spencer." His tone left no room for argument.

Lillian paled, never expecting this. She looked to Miranda for help and saw her discomfort. "Robert, I—" Her words were choked

off. She couldn't continue.

Robert waved her off, unwilling to discuss further.

Lillian panicked, dropping to her knees, her forehead hitting the floor hard and repeatedly. *Robert, Miranda, I'm truly sorry.

Please don't do this to me."

Miranda felt pity and moved to help her, but Robert's decision held her back. She remained seated, tormented.

Lillian was a mess of tears and snot, wishing she could bash her regret into the floor. If the Haywoods turned their backs on her,

what would she do?

Had Cameron seen the video? Would he find her disgusting?

Lillian felt like she was on the brink of a breakdown, both emotionally and physically. She had fought tooth and nail for everything

she had, only to see it crumble to pieces.

If it wasn't for Brielle... If it wasn't for that bitch!.

Her eyes were bloodshot, her nails digging into her palms so hard they drew blood. She wished she could just take Brielle down

with her, right then and there.

Her breath was hot and heavy; her forehead had even left a bloody mark on the hardwood floor. But she couldn't stop. She was

terrified of being cast aside.

She was used to the high life, had had her fill of scraping by, and if the Haywoods cut her off. she'd be worse off than a beggar

on the streets.

She had to hold on tight.

In this moment, Lillian realized the stark difference between herself and Brielle, much as she hated to admit it. Brielle had been

tossed aside by the Haywoods early on, yet she was thriving at Dorsey International. Without the Haywood's backing, Brielle still

managed to shine, drawing a hefty salary, living the life of a polished corporate queen.

Realizing this only deepened Lillian's resentment. Why did Brielle get all the breaks? While she. Lillian, was left to live like a

worm in the dark, desperately hoping someone would spare her a glance.

The overhead lights seemed to grow brighter, casting an unreal glow that seemed to trap her in place. She awaited the

Haywoods' verdict. Like a condemned prisoner, clinging to a sliver of hope for survival.

If only she were queen of the hill, with everyone else under her heel. Her eyes were rimmed with red as she thought this.

The tension in the room was palpable, silence heavy.

The phone rang at this moment, and she almost anxiously looked up at Miranda and Robert. As expected, a hint of

dissatisfaction appeared on both of their faces:

Like a frightened animal, Lillian scrambled to silence her still-ringing phone. Why would the director call her now? Of course, he

must be looking for Brielle, she thought bitterly. He always favored her. She felt sick to her stomach.

“Robert, I know things have come to a head and there’s no easy way out. I just can’t bear to lose you all.”

She was gambling, playing her last card, but before Robert could respond, the doorbell rang.

Who would visit the Haywoods at such a time?

Bewilderment crossed everyone’s faces until they saw Faith come in. Faith was livid, instantly aware of the charged atmosphere as she entered. “Well, isn’t this a merry gathering?”

Miranda and Robert’s faces fell, but given Faith’s status, they had no choice but to receive her with strained politeness.

Faith moved to the side as if she were in her own home. “About that annulment I mentioned last time, what have you decided?

You’ve seen the video. I can’t accept a daughter-in-law like Brielle.” One more scandal like that and her son might never recover.

Miranda and Robert were also critical of Brielle’s role in leaking the video. After all, airing dirty laundry was bad form, and now

the scandal was the talk of Beaconsfield, leaving everyone embarrassed. But to call off the engagement would complicate

business between the Haywoods and the Dorseys.

“Ms. Faith, this incident was certainly Brielle’s fault, and I’ll have does that sound?”

her apologize to you. How

Apologize? A sneer appeared on Faith’s face. Could an apology restore her son’s reputation?

“Her apology is worthless. My son has become the laughingstock of the town, and who’s to blame for that? And Lillian, she’s one of yours too.”

Just moments ago, Miranda and Robert had been acting superior, but in front of Faith, they were like schoolchildren caught

misbehaving.

Faith didn't truly dislike Lillian, but someone had to take the fall. If Lillian had the sense to admit that she was the one who

seduced Spencer, that it was a moment of weakness for him, then the public outrage might shift to her. Spencer could then wash

his hands clean of this

mess.

But clearly, Lillian wasn't ready to make that sacrifice.

Faith sneered, looking at the three before her, "Spencer and Brielle's engagement must be broken. And his new fiancée will not

be Lillian. I won't let a homewrecker into my family."

Hearing this, Lillian's face went ashen. Faith used to show her some favor, but these words were a clear sign she was being

abandoned.

Her hands trembled by her sides. If Robert turned her away and Faith insisted Spencer to cut ties, she'd have no one to turn to.

Could she lean on Cameron? After that video went viral, Cameron hadn't even bothered to call her.

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Any man would feel a punch in the gut seeing a video like that of the woman he's into, especially a man like Cameron, who

always carried himself with a sense of pride and superiority.

Lillian was truly panic-stricken this time, her eyes rimmed red with the pressure. Her gaze met Faith's just as she was about to

speak.

"Lillian, you need to take the fall for this one. Cut ties with Spencer, and after a scandal like this, there's no way Michael will

welcome you into the family."

In a way, her words echoed Robert's sentiments. Tears streamed down Lillian's face as the reality hit her hard. "Faith, I—"

"Don't tell me you can't bear to leave Spencer. Listen, if you don't do what I say, you won't see a dime in the future," Faith said

with clear impatience in her voice.

That statement left Lillian speechless, a look of mortification dawning in her eyes.

Robert and Miranda chimed in, trying to comfort her. "Lillian, don't worry, we'll make sure you get a hefty sum."

With Faith taking the lead, the three of them were now a united front. Lillian felt an unprecedented humiliation engulfing her

heart; years of cunning planning, and it had all come to this.

She couldn't stand it. The injustice was unbearable!

Her phone rang again. It was the orphanage director. Instinct told her it must be urgent. She answered the call with a sense of

dread, only to hear the director's anxious voice on the other end. "Lillian, someone's come looking for our orphanage. There's

talk of a lady who lost her daughter years ago, and there's a slight issue with your file. Come quickly to sort it out. If it's really

you, then Lillian, you might just be the bona fide rich girl you never knew you were."

Lillian thought she had misheard. "Director, are you sure you've got your facts straight?"

"I'm dead serious, Lillian. They're here, and we need to do a DNA test pronto. We can't delay this."

Lillian wasn't particularly interested though. She figured it was some rich family's missing daughter. No matter how wealthy they

were, they surely couldn't hold a candle to the Haywoods or the Dorseys.

A wave of despondency washed over her, her heart heavy with sorrow. Yet the director's next words perked her up. "Lillian,

they've asked me not to reveal their identity, but let me tell you, their family's international standing is quite high, even higher

than the Haywoods', and comparable to the Dorseys'. They also have a son who has been searching for his sister all these

years, which shows how deeply they care for their lost kin. If your records match, you won't have to worry for the rest of your life.

You'll be in a position to help Bri then."

International standing? That caught Lillian's attention, her eyes lighting up with hope. "Mark, you're telling me the truth, right?"

The director couldn't help but chuckle, genuinely hoping for a good outcome for these kids. "Of course, it's the truth. If you can

make it now, hurry over. They're pressing hard for this, and just between us, the Clements family is involved in the search. If the

Clements are stepping in, you can imagine the status of the other party."

Lillian's heart raced with excitement. Meanwhile, the other three in the living room were glaring at her, annoyed that she was still

on the phone.

Lillian couldn't care less. After hanging up, she turned to Miranda with an electrified look in her eyes.

"Miranda, the director says I

need to go back for a DNA test. I have to return to the orphanage right now."

If it turned out she was the lost heiress of a noble lineage, why should she grovel at the feet of the Haywoods any longer?

The Haywoods, and Brielle, soon enough, they would all be looking up to her.

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She snickered inwardly, yet couldn't help but worry that her efforts might all be in vain, resulting in a total washout. So, she

managed not to let her concern show too obviously.

Faith, upon hearing this, couldn't help but wear a look of scorn. "A paternity retest? What's that supposed to mean? You can't

possibly be suggesting that you're the real daughter of the Haywood family. Now, wouldn't that be ridiculous?"

Faith's words were said without much thought, a mere dig at Lillian. Lillian had stirred up a hornet's nest and now was trying to

pass off such a ludicrous excuse; she clearly didn't take Faith seriously at all.

Her words, however, sparked like a match in a powder keg. The first to react was Miranda. When they had found Sunflower

Orphanage years ago, both Lillian and Brielle had undergone DNA testing with Robert.

The results had confirmed that Brielle was the daughter, but now, Lillian was suggesting a retest.

Could it be...

"Lillian, are you implying that-"

With Faith's lead-in, Miranda became agitated, her thoughts racing toward the outcome she most desired, the fulfillment of a long-held wish.

Lillian's eyes brimmed with mockery. Maybe soon the Haywoods wouldn't be fit to tie her shoelaces. Mark had already called her twice in a panic, which meant this whole affair was very likely true.

However, she wanted to lead Miranda on. She had slaved away for the Haywood family for years, only to be discarded like

yesterday's news. She felt bitter and resent

Miranda had always hoped that Lillian would turn out to be the Haywood's daughter, right? So, she'd dangle that hope in front of

her, giving herself an out in the process.

Lillian felt a surge of energy and quickly sorted out the key points. If she wasn't the so-called blue-blooded lady, she'd continue

to face the scorn and ridicule of these people, but until the results were in, the Haywoods would surely treat her with kid gloves

and wouldn't dare pursue the matter with Spencer any further.

And if she turned out to be a rich girl, then she and Spencer would be an ideal match. Faith would probably be over the moon,

and even if the Haywoods wanted revenge, they'd have to think twice. It was a win-win.

In any case, until a new benefactor came along, the Haywoods were still useful, so she deliberately kept her statement

ambiguous. "Miranda, I'm not too sure myself. The director has been calling me, urging me to come over."

Miranda quickly stepped forward, grasping her hand. "I'll come with you to check it out."

Faith was also puzzled. What was the Haywood family playing at?

They had personally reclaimed Brielle as their own, and now they were the first to doubt the truth of the matter. If the Haywoods

themselves were skeptical, it was only natural for Faith, an outsider, to begin to wonder as well. After all, if things were as they

seemed, everything would

make a lot more sense.

The three women exchanged glances, sharing a rare moment of tacit understanding.

“You two go ahead and check it out. I’ll be right there.” Faith spoke impatiently, her mind still on other matters. She had to deal

with the one person who had dared to tarnish her son’s reputation. Brielle would pay a hefty price.

Meanwhile, Brielle was blissfully unaware of the brewing storm. She was still at the countryside mansion, scrutinizing the lavish

interior decorations.

Lillian had always been a hedonist. The mansion was worth over twenty million, with another ten million in valuable paintings and

decor.

Brielle had never found it so easy to come by money. First, she had received thirty million from Andrew, and now with the

mansion’s twenty million plus, she could easily make another ten by selling off the contents. With over sixty million, she’d have

more than enough for the orphanage’s new location.

She smiled, patting Tiffanie on the shoulder. “Do you know how we can liquidate these items?”

She wanted to cash in before Lillian caught on. These were undoubtedly gifts from Spencer to Lillian, with no strings attached.

Even if Lillian went to court, it wouldn’t matter.

Tiffanie’s eyes lit up; not only had they come here tonight for a catfight, but now they were about to play a bit of Robin Hood. She

didn’t have many friends in the socialite circle, but she knew plenty of people who could get the job done. Without hesitation, she

recommended a contact.

Her friend arrived promptly, less than an hour later, with a van to inventory and haul away the goods. It took only thirty minutes to

find a buyer, and the money was transferred at a speed that left Brielle in awe.

Tiffanie pulled out her phone to find several chat groups abuzz with excitement, and she couldn’t help but chuckle. “Brielle, come

take a look. Lillian’s really made a name for herself now.”

Brielle leaned in and saw that Tiffanie was part of over a dozen groups, each bombarded with the same set of videos and

photos. Perhaps to ensure recognition, Tiffanie had even tagged Lillian's name.

Brielle's lips twitched in amusement, suddenly realizing that of all people, Tiffanie was not one to be trifled with.

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The buzz in the chat groups was like wildfire, and it wasn't long before the videos made its way to Andrew and Kenzo.

Andrew, a member of just a couple of groups, paused mid-sip as the video popped up on his screen. He glanced at Kenzo, who

had just settled beside him. "Isn't that Brielle's fiancé?"

The video was crystal clear; even a blind man couldn't miss it.

Kenzo offered a gentle smile. "Yeah, that's him. Did Brielle take this footage?"

Brielle didn't seem the type to stir up drama.

Andrew snorted, his mind darting immediately to Tiffanie. "I bet it was Tiffanie. Spencer's her cousin, and she's really thrown him

under the bus this time."

Twirling his phone with a mischievous grin, Andrew mused, "So, Brielle's fiancé has been playing the field, no wonder she got

cozy with Max. I thought she was just climbing the social ladder for a career boost, but looks like she's playing a much bigger

game—sleeping with her fiancé's uncle for revenge."

Andrew wasn't Brielle's biggest fan, but the video piqued his interest in her scheming ways. He set his phone down and looked

at Kenzo. "You're all over the tabloids with Brielle, and you haven't bothered to clear the air. Any other time there's gossip about

you and some starlet. you set the record straight pronto."

Kenzo just smiled, his demeanor still soft, though Andrew knew the man was cunning as a fox.

"Andrew, don't you find all this intriguing? Alivia's got a thing for Max, while Max is keeping Brielle on the side. I'm rumored to be

with Brielle, and her fiancé is Max's nephew. The waters are muddied, and when all this comes to a head, it's going to be quite

the show.”

Andrew pushed a glass of whiskey toward him with a scoff. “You creative types and your deep games. Have you told Alivia about

Brielle and Max?”

“Tell her what? My sister, proud and arrogant, has always regarded Max as her possession. If she really finds out there’s another

woman by his side, she’ll probably return to the country immediately. Then there will be another round of turmoil at home. Being

caught in the middle of her and Max is not pleasant.”

He was implying that he didn’t want to put himself through this mess.

Andrew nodded, took a sip of his drink, and couldn’t help but ask, “Do you and Tiffanie have something going on?”

Kenzo’s brow furrowed slightly. “Come on, you know how Max dotes on Tiffanie. Even if I did like her, Max would never allow it.

And Tiffanie’s flaky mom has pushed her daughter to the brink. The guy who’d get with Tiffanie is not going to be someone like

me, ready to sacrifice. everything for art.”

The man for Tiffanie would need to provide her with substantial security, to pull her from the abyss, but Kenzo wasn’t that man. In

fact, in their circle, no such man existed.

Tiffanie craved undivided love. While everyone else was sowing wheat, she wanted to grow roses. She sought romance, not

survival.

Andrew stayed silent. They all knew about Tiffanie’s mother, which explained her current state. This was also why Max indulged

her so.

Tiffanie’s origins were tainted with filth, savagery, and contempt. She wasn’t born from hopeful expectations; she began from a

mistake.

The lounge was quiet. The two men had come out for a casual drink. Aubree, who had arrived first, had vanished. Andrew didn’t

bother looking for her; he never cared what Aubree was up to. His phone buzzed. It was Tessa on the line.

Tessa hardly ever called him, and when she did these days, it usually concerned Sophia.

As he answered, he heard Tessa's coughing on the other end.

"Cough, cough."

Tessa was known as the delicate beauty, seldom venturing from the Clements' estate. Even at social gatherings, she'd find a

corner and sit quietly.

"Andrew, did you really give Brielle thirty million?" Tessa's voice was weak.

Andrew uttered a nonchalant "Yeah," then advised. "Take it easy when you talk, look after yourself."

"Did I cause you trouble? If I'd known Brielle would demand so much, I'd have had Sophia apologize. She's impulsive. Just now,

she broke into tears on the phone to me. Sorry about this. I'll transfer the money to you later."

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Andrew rubbed his temples, his gaze softening. "There's no need for formalities between us. If you don't want Sophia to

apologize, I'll let it slide. Thirty million is nothing to fret over."

Tessa was well aware that thirty million was merely pocket change for him, but the thought of Brielle getting such a windfall made

her uneasy. "It's Sophia's mistake, but you shouldn't let others take advantage like that."

She was testing the waters to gauge Andrew's feelings toward Brielle. Something seemed off. and she wondered if it was

because of a few words Sophia had said in his presence. Tessa was growing restless. Any other woman who dared speak to

Andrew like this wouldn't live to see another day, yet Brielle was not only spared but also walked away with a thirty million dollar

check.

"Drop it with her, Tessa. You need to focus on getting better."

Andrew couldn't possibly reveal Brielle's connection to Max. If Michael found out, Brielle would have to vanish from Beaconsfield

in a heartbeat.

“Alright, I’ll drop it.”

Tessa was sharp, not the type to beat a dead horse. She probed into the Hatfield family’s stance on Emily and pondered making

them target Brielle. Much to her surprise, the Hatfields hadn’t lifted a finger to bail out Emily, who remained behind bars.

When Tessa learned that the Hatfields planned to send Emily abroad for studies—a polite euphemism for exile, a common

practice among the elite—she was even more unsettled. Was it all because of Brielle? Who exactly was backing Brielle?

Tessa’s lips pressed into a thin line, realizing it was time for some serious digging.

Unbeknownst to Brielle, she had caught Tessa’s attention. She and Tiffany were already in the car. Tiffany was in high spirits that

evening, her smile never leaving her face. At a red light, she tapped the steering wheel, “Brielle, I really owe you one. My

birthdays are usually such downers, but today was a blast from start to finish. If anything like this comes up again, hit me up on

WhatsApp, okay?”

She whipped out her phone.

After they exchanged contacts, Tiffany saw the familiar profile picture and chuckled. “Alivial was all over the place, asking who

had the snowflake avatar. I had a hunch it was you, and look.

at that. I was right.”

“Alivia?” Brielle was puzzled. How did her avatar catch Alivia’s eye?

“Yeah, she asked around in the group chat. Probably grilled the whole social circle, but no one fessed up.”

Tiffany steered the car, her expression growing serious, “Between Alivia and Tessa, those are. two tough cookies. Don’t mess

with them, or if Maxie ever drops you, they could crush you with

the flick of a finger.”

Having arrived in Beaconsfield at the tender age of ten, Brielle was out of the loop on social intricacies, always an outsider. “How

tough are we talking?"

Tiffany had taken a liking to Brielle and didn't want her to be at a disadvantage, so she couldn't help but break it down for her.

"Let's start with Alivia. You know how famous she is around here. She's been spoiled rotten by the Barnes family since she was

little. Whatever she wants, she gets. Guys her age are lining up to marry her, which is like getting the whole Barnes family on a

silver platter. Even her brother Kenzo dotes on her. With just the two of them and Kenzo lost in his art most of the time, all the

family's affection naturally falls on Alivia."

The phrase 'center of the universe' didn't do her justice. Whatsmore, Alivia excelled in her own right, currently at a research

institute that was top-notch worldwide.

Brielle kept quiet, then asked, "And Tessa?"

When Tiffany got to Tessa, her tone took on a peculiar edge. "In a big family like this, a sickly member like her would normally be

out of the power circle. But she's got clout in the Rowland family. Rumor has it she was once on the outs and nearly got shipped

off from Beaconsfield. But ever since she latched onto Andrew, her stock in the Rowland family has been on the rise. You know

Andrew's reputation. A woman who can keep him on a short leash is no simpleton."

Chapter 139

Brielle wasn't worried for herself; it was Aubree that concerned her.

"And let me tell you," she said with a sigh. "And I have to tell you, these two are very good friends. Tessa is Andrew's girl, and

Alivia almost became Max's fiancée. They can pretty much do whatever they want in Beaconsfield."

That was true.

A tightness formed in Brielle's chest, but Tiffanie's next words soured her mood even more.

"Maxie's doting on you now 'cause he hasn't a clue about marriage yet. Once granddad picks out a fiancée for him, you'll be

history. And my granddad's favorite? Alivia."

Brielle shut her eyes, recalling Max's words about considering an engagement to Alivia.

"Beep beep beep."

Tiffanie honked the horn a few times, and her phone rang. When she saw the number, her expression changed instantly. "Can't

do drinks tonight. Spencer's onto me about those videos and pics. Went complaining to the Dorsey family, no doubt. Gotta go

and eat humble pie. Let's raincheck this one, yeah? It's on me next time."

"You're not gonna get a whipping, are you?"

Brielle frowned, annoyed with herself. She should have sent the videos. It hadn't crossed her mind what the consequences might

be.

"With Maxie around? No one's laying a finger on me. But grounding's a given. Been there, done that as a kid. Don't you worry

about me, Brielle. Better think about how to handle Sophia, that witch had some nasty words tonight."

Brielle chuckled as she stepped out of the car, "She's probably Tessa's sidekick. And Tessa's got Andrew in her corner. Without

his help, they're powerless."

Tiffanie hit the gas, leaving behind only a parting shot. "Thing is, Andrew won't leave Tessa hanging. She's his world, everyone

knows it."

Was Tessa truly Andrew's world? Brielle hadn't heard what really went on between them, only that they were long betrothed. And

from Aubree, she knew Andrew had once been rejected by Tessa.

In their dynamic, Andrew was the one at a disadvantage, always bending over backward to please Tessa. Letting go of Tessa?

Hardly likely.

Brielle saw Aubree as a friend and naturally prioritized her concerns. She's oblivious to the storm brewing for her.

Lost in thought, she walked toward her apartment, only to see another car pull up, clearly having waited for some time. Two burly

bodyguards emerged, and Brielle instinctively stepped

back. She recognized the two bodyguards showing around Faith. These were Falth's people?

Considering tonight's debacle and Falth's protectiveness over her son, she must be livid.

Clad in black suits, the guards had a menacing air about them. Without a word, they lunged for Brielle.

She stepped back, ready to counter, but a syringe plunged into her arm. She hadn't expected a dirty play. Her strength sapped

away, her vision blurred.

"Ms. Brielle, Ms. Faith made it clear, you're due for a lesson." Mentioning Falth, their eyes gleamed with malice – they had their

orders.

Brielle stumped to the ground, propping herself up with trembling hands. Through the haze, Faith emerged from the black

vehicle, striding over with purpose.

Without hesitation, Faith slapped her twice, as if wishing to devour her whole. "Brielle, did your shoot that video on purpose? Do

you have any idea what they're saying about Spencer now?"

Brielle's cheeks swelled, her head buzzing with a thousand bees.

Faith, chest heaving, grabbed her hair, forcing her to look up. "To be betrothed to my son is a fortune you don't deserve. Not only

did you snatch his executive position, now you're dragging his name through the mud. How vile! One is your fiancé; the other, a

sister-like friend. With one move, you've ruined them both."

The thought of Spencer's embarrassment from the release of the videos made Faith's grip tighten. "You bitch! Should've had

Spencer call off your engagement long ago!"

Chapter 140

Brielle felt like her scalp was about to be ripped off, the ludicrousness of the woman's trade was enough to draw out a laugh.

"Ms. Falth, if you think it's no big deal for men to play the field, why on earth are you bending over backwards trying to win Ryan

back? Shouldn't you be grateful? After all, Ryan's only wife has always been you. The others were just flings, mere playthings,

and yet you've spent years green with Jealousy. Now you're preaching generosity to me?"

She flicked her tongue out, tasting the blood at the corner of her mouth, her gaze filled with disdain.

"Besides, you think Spencer

is some kind of prize catch? I suggested calling off the engagement several times, but it was your son who couldn't bear to let

go."

"Slap!" As soon as she finished her sentence, another slap landed on her cheek.

Brielle's face was numb, insensitive to the pain, which showed Just how hard Faith had hit her. This was the first time Brielle had

stood up to Faith like this. Although she had been threatened by Ryan before, at that time Faith had been downstairs and

oblivious to the specifics of Ryan's actions.

Faith seemed like someone had torn off her mask, revealing the madness within. "Shut up! Just shut up!" What right did Brielle

have to criticize her marriage or mock her son?

Faith seemed to be hearing the world's most ridiculous joke, yet deep down, she couldn't help but feel a pathetic sorrow. Indeed,

she had devoted her heart and soul to Ryan over the years, making a fool of herself, all for the sake of winning back that man.

Brielle watched the woman's face contort and silently lowered her eyes, her thoughts drifting to Emily, who had been sent to the

police station. They were both like moths to the flame in love.

Faith released her hair with an impatient wave of her hand. "Lock her up in a room for now."

Brielle's hands were tied, blood dripping from the corner of her mouth, but she didn't plead for mercy or even look at Faith,

instead blinking to clear her stinging eyes. She knew Faith would be unyielding when it came to handling the Spencer matter.

Though she wouldn't lose her life tonight, she was sure to suffer.

As expected, after those few slaps, Faith felt slightly relieved and slowly stood up. "Take her away. I want to have my fun with

her."

The two bodyguards nodded eagerly, dragging the limp Brielle away as if she were a dead dog.

Under the effect of the drugs, Brielle couldn't resist. She braced for physical torment, never expecting Faith to be even crueler

than Ryan.

The car stopped in front of a dingy little shack. With a cold sneer, Faith instructed the bodyguards to drag Brielle inside.

The room was pitch dark, invisible to the naked eye, and no one knew what was inside.

Brielle was dumped on the floor, her face swollen and bloody. Unable to see clearly, she was swallowed up by the encroaching darkness.

Having been with Ryan for so many years, Faith had mastered the art of torment. She pointed to a small speaker set aside,

purposely having someone play eerie sounds outside the door. The shack was designed to punish the disobedient, and

psychologically, it worked far better than physical pain. If someone spent too long in such an environment, their sanity would start

to fray.

Brielle sat down against the wall, her cheek burning with pain. The sounds outside continued. sometimes like a baby's cry,

sometimes like a woman's scream. She covered her ears, trying to block out the noise, but the sound was piercing, as if it was

right beside her.

Leaning against the cold wall, she felt something slither through the door crack, cold and slimy to the touch. Brielle's face went

pale, and she shuffled to the side.

Snakes.

The pitch-dark surrounding, those eerie sounds outside, and more than one snake in the room with her.

She knew Faith loathed her, but she hadn't expected such a vile tactic.

The sound of the snakes' flickering tongues in the darkness was amplified, and the scraping of their scales on the ground was

hair-raising. Less than two hours had passed, and Brielle felt she couldn't hold on much longer. She didn't know how many more

snakes would be let in, and the only thing she could do now was to hold herself and not listen, not think about it.

Outside, the two bodyguards who had released the snakes were smirking vilely. “Ma’am, we’ve got centipedes too. Shall we continue?”

Faith showed no mercy, her only wish was to torment Brielle thoroughly before anyone else found her. “Keep going, as long as

she doesn’t die.” Faith commanded without a hint of compassion.

The bodyguards nodded and released several centipedes into the room.