

Master 141

Chapter 141

Outside the Sunflower Orphanage, the lights shone brightly, a rare sight for a place that usually embraced the quiet of the

evening.

Mark, Mark, stood at the entrance with a look of bewilderment as two sleek limousines pulled up at the gates. Nearby, a doctor

they had brought in was sifting through a pile of tattered records.

These records detailed the lives of the orphanage's children: their arrival dates, the places they were found, and more. Given the

high turnover of kids over the years, each child's file had been meticulously compiled and archived.

Mark had always been deeply committed to the welfare of his charges, even going so far as to save a lock of hair from each child

upon their entry into the system. After all, some were abandoned, while others were simply lost, their parents clinging to a sliver

of hope that they might someday be found through a DNA match.

The orphanage's commitment was to care for the children until they reached adulthood, and once they did, their futures were a

mystery – what professions they took up or which places they might call home. The preserved hair became a vital clue for

potential DNA comparisons.

However, a fire in the records room had damaged some of the files, including those belonging to Lillian and Brielle.

Mark had mentioned that Brielle had been reclaimed by the Haywood family and couldn't possibly be the missing girl they were

searching for, but their response was to leave no stone unturned, an exercise in caution. So he needed to get in touch with

Brielle.

When Mark saw Lillian, his face lit up with a smile. "Lillian, glad you could make it." His gaze then shifted to the two individuals

who had arrived with her. They looked vaguely familiar, but he couldn't quite place them. With a polite nod, he acknowledged

them, a silent greeting.

Lillian watched the doctor with a tremor of excitement, her voice hushed, "Mark, what information do I need to provide?"

The doctor, his forehead glistening with sweat from poring over files, glanced up at her. Everyone in the room was on edge, the

atmosphere taut like a bowstring drawn tight.

The doctor's hands began to tremble as he continued his search, and Lillian's initial hope turned to impatience.

To ease the tension, Mark tried to change the subject. "The doctor's still busy. We need to narrow down the suspects. They are

very thorough, and they can't afford mistakes. But your and Bri were already screened when the Haywood family came looking

for their kin. Your files matched the best, and with Bri being a Haywood, you're the most likely the person they are looking for.

Speaking of which, where's Bri?"

The last thing Lillian wanted to hear about was Brielle. If it weren't for her, Lillian wouldn't be in this mess. But her fortunes were

about to change. It seemed like fate was finally on her side.

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"I don't know where she is, Mark," Lillian replied, her patience waning.

"Both your files were lost in the fire, and I can't reach her. I thought she might be with you,"

Mark's concern was palpable as he pulled out his phone to make another call, only to be met with voicemail once again.

Brielle's phone was currently with Faith, who noticed the flashing "Director" on the screen and guessed it was from the

orphanage. Were there developments?

Switching off Brielle's phone, Faith used her own to call Miranda.

Back at the orphanage, after about an hour, the doctor finally narrowed down the list. It was still just Lian and Brielle. The

directive was clear: every girl must be tested, regardless of status. With both their records damaged, they had to be present for

verification.

Pushing his glasses up, the doctor announced, "It seems we need to redo the paternity tests for both Brielle and Lillian." Mark's

hands shook with excitement. With no other children in the running, the odds were now overwhelmingly in favor of Lillian.

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The kid was going to be reclaimed by her original family, and naturally, he was over the moon. He called Brielle again, but this

time her phone was switched off directly.

Meanwhile, Miranda's phone rang, and she quickly answered it.

"Ms. Faith."

"How's the situation over there?"

Miranda didn't dare hide anything, still clinging to hope. Plus, the doctor said they both needed a new DNA test, which seemed to

confirm her suspicions.

Miranda's mind raced, even more convinced that Lillian was a true Haywood, but what she didn't know was that Lillian couldn't

care less about the Haywoods now.

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"Bri and Lillian both need a new DNA test, but I can't reach Bri at the moment. so..."

"She's with me. I'll bring her over.

Miranda breathed a sigh of relief. As long as

they could find her, they should get the results

soon. "Good, the doctor is on standby. We're Just waiting for Bri."

Faith hung up with a tight-lipped smirk. She had wanted to give Brielle a hard time, but luck was on the girl's side.

With a snort and a dismissive gesture, she ordered, "Bring her. We're going to the orphanage."

The bodyguards didn't dare object and quickly unlocked the door to the dark room.

Brielle was on the verge of a breakdown. When she noticed the sliver of light, she looked up greedily. The cold snakes and

terrifying centipedes had been crawling around her, some even winding around her ankles. She couldn't move, staying still as if

she were lifeless..

"Lucky you, otherwise you'd be in here for days."

"Enough talk, get her out of here."

The bodyguards each took an arm and escorted Brielle out. They too were eager to leave the dark room, feeling the chills even

from a single extra second inside.

Brielle was too exhausted to speak and simply closed her eyes.

The car sped along. Faith eager for the results, and soon they were at the orphanage. When the car stopped, Brielle was shoved

out by the bodyguards.

Her face was swollen, her lips still bleeding, and her eyes were bloodshot, looking utterly miserable. Seeing the long-missed

lights, she squinted, the disgusting sensation of being entwined by cold-blooded creatures finally fading.

However, upon spotting Mark in the distance, her smile faded. She didn't want him to see her in such a sorry state.

Mark had sharp eyes. Seeing her swollen face, he hurried over, "Brielle, what happened? Who did this to you?"

Awkwardly, Brielle wiped the blood from her lips, "Mark, I'm fine."

Mark's eyes reddened, unable to help glancing at Miranda and Robert. He didn't know them well, but he had met them once

when they came to take Brielle from the orphanage. He hadn't recognized them at first, but now he put two and two together.

"Isn't Brielle your child? How could you let her be treated this way?"

Miranda and Robert were uncomfortable. They had promised to give Brielle a good life when they took her away. Miranda spoke

up first, "Bri, you're here. Mark said you both need to do another DNA test." Robert stood by, glancing at the bruise on Brielle's

cheek, silent.

Mark was infuriated by their attitude, almost unable to catch his breath, but what angered him even more was the arrival of Faith.

She had always looked down on the orphanage over property disputes, so her greeting was less than gracious. "Shouldn't she

be used to it? Brielle's nothing but an ant to me. If I want her alive, she lives. If I want her dead, she has to die."

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Mark had always been a straight shooter, the kind of guy who believed in fair play and hard work. So when he came face to face

with arrogance on such a grand scale, it left him reeling. The sight of the luxury car, worth over ten million, made him feel

powerless. It was clear as day that this was someone with clout someone who could make life difficult.

Brielle rushed to his side, her hand patting his back reassuringly, "Mark, please don't get upset."

Mark's body trembled with fury, and when Spencer showed up, his anger reached its boiling point.

Spencer already felt like he owed Lillian so much, so the moment he got her message, he came running. When he arrived.

Lillian's eyes welled up with tears as she called out, "Spencer."

Spencer was clearly uncomfortable, especially with his fiancée's parents standing not too far away. He forced a smile and gave a

curt nod, pretending not to be affected.

Approaching Faith, he asked in a low voice. "Mom, what's going on?"

Faith glared at him with resentment. If only he had been more careful, they wouldn't be in this mess.

Spencer, aware of his own quittance, harbored even more resentment towards Brielle. It was all Brielle's fault.

"We'll just have to wait for the outcome," she said.

Spencer nodded, his gaze shifting to Brielle, turning to disgust in an instant. "Why are you always around, stirring up more

trouble? I heard you sold off the decorations in the villa. Brielle, you're just too greedy. Look, we might be engaged, but we're not

married yet. That's all my property until we tie the knot. Uncle Max promised the house to you, not the stuff inside."

Mark's eyes widened in shock at Spencer's words. What was he hearing? An engagement? Brielle and Spencer were engaged?

But wasn't Spencer Lillian's boyfriend? They even came to the orphanage together.

The blow was too much for Mark. He looked from Lillian to Spencer and then back to the Haywood family, struggling to process it

all

What kind of life had Brielle been leading all these years, and what had Lillian done? She stole Brielle's fiancé!

Mark felt a tightness in his chest, and before he knew it, the world went black as he fainted.

"Mark!" Brielle was startled and quickly helped him sit down, fanning him and trying to revive him.

She couldn't help but glance over at everyone present. Brielle was unaware of the missing

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heiress drama and thought the Haywoods were there for another paternity test. She found it amusing; it seemed the Haywoods

were desperate to claim Lillian as their own.

She thought she would feel heartbroken, but she didn't. In fact, she felt a weight had been lifted. Deep down, she had always

wanted to escape this family, but blood ties had kept her bound. If it turned out to be a huge mix-up, it would be the best surprise

ever.

To the Haywoods, it might seem like they were eager to get rid of Brielle, but she was the one. desperate to be free of them.

The ties to the Haywood family were a shackle on her freedom. Her entanglement with Spencer only spelled danger. If she could

sever these bonds from the root, she would light fireworks in celebration. So, the urgency on their faces seemed ridiculously

amusing to her.

The doctor who was sorting out the files rushed over and performed first aid, stabilizing Mark. Mark couldn't say a word, only

holding Brielle's hand in silence. Brielle didn't know what to say either. The truth was finally out.

The doctor, relieved after the emergency aid, turned to Brielle and Lillian. "Both of your files are damaged. The doctor who

conducted your original tests has left. You both need to do a new one." He took their hair samples and, without hesitation,

followed his team out the door.

Once the doctor had left, the atmosphere became even more strange. Brielle helped Mark up. "Mark, it's chilly outside. Let me

help you inside."

Mark patted her hand and, though pale as a sheet, shook his head slowly. He didn't let anyone else come in and shut the door

behind them. "Bastards," he muttered under his breath.

"A bunch of bastards." He gasped for air as he sat down, his hand shaking as he clutched Brielle's, "Brielle, you've had it rough

all these years. Lillian was an ungrateful girl. You've raised a wolf in sheep's clothing. Does your face hurt? They're bullying you

because you don't have a strong backing. Your parents aren't even on your side. What kind of life have you been living?"

Brielle's face was swollen and hearing his words made her feel a pang of heartache.

A few frightened kids sat nearby, clueless about what had happened outside. One little boy bravely fetched an ice pack from the

fridge and placed it timidly on the table.

Brielle smiled gratefully at the gesture.

in vain in his heart both from the betrayal and the worry for Brielle.

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Brielle feared that if Mark kept letting his emotions get the better of him, he might just work himself into a frenzy. "Mark, I'm fine,

really. Spencer and I might be engaged, but it'll probably be called off soon. I don't like him, so it's not like I'm heartbroken."

“Sweetheart, do you think I don’t know you? When you insisted on taking Lillian with you, it was because you cared too deeply.

What Lillian did was like stabbing you in the heart. How could you not be hurt? Now, I almost wish you weren’t a Haywood, so

you wouldn’t have to put up with their nonsense.”

Brielle fell silent, knowing that a person’s heart can only hold so much disappointment. She was like a sponge that had soaked

up all the water it could; even if an ocean swept over it, not another drop could be absorbed. The process of soaking it all up had

been painful, but now she was numb.

Outside the orphanage, another person arrived. It was Cameron. The atmosphere turned even more awkward. With the

Haywood family scandal, he couldn’t keep playing possum and had to come, albeit reluctantly.

Cameron’s face was grim, and he deliberately avoided looking at Lillian. Heaven knows how devastated he felt seeing that video.

He’d always seen Lillian as someone to walk through life with, and she had never outright rejected him, but then she had a fling

with Spencer.

Cameron felt queasy, yet he couldn’t suppress the flicker of affection he still felt for her, so he’d been deliberately avoiding the

issue. When he got the news, he still couldn’t help coming here. He was still worried about her. Years of affection weren’t

shattered by just one video.

Lillian’s heart was a mess. She deliberately avoided Spencer and gave Cameron a pitiful look. Though Cameron was angry, he

couldn’t help but feel a tug at his heartstrings.

With just a look, Lillian managed to soothe him slightly, but deep down, she was scornful. Once the results came out, these

people would be groveling at her feet. She looked up at the closed doors, sneering inside.

Miranda, unable to stand the tension, asked Robert, “If they’re redoing the DNA test for you and Lillian, why didn’t they take

anything from you just now?” Shouldn’t they have taken a strand of Robert’s hair as well?

It occurred to Robert that perhaps the doctor hadn't needed his samples, maybe because the hospital already had his records

from years ago. Reassured, he looked at Lillian with pride.

However, this was something Cameron couldn't accept. "Mom, do you really think Lillian is one of the Haywoods?"

Just the thought of Lillian possibly being his sister made Cameron recoil. He remembered the sight of them kissing on the couch,

and how awkward future meetings would be if their roles were changed.

Cameron's scalp tingled as he avoided Lillian's gaze.

Not only Cameron, but even Lillian felt uncomfortable. Then she thought, she wasn't really a Haywood daughter, she was just

deceiving these people for now. Otherwise, they would be pointing and shouting at her.

Cameron was still visibly struggling to accept this, "When will the results be out?"

Miranda quickly tried to calm him, "Cameron, don't worry. If Lillian turns out to be one of us, it's the same as if she married you.

We'd all be family."

Miranda thought that since Lillian had been with Spencer, she was clear of any ties with her own son. Little did she know that

Lillian was adept at playing both sides.

Cameron's cheeks burned with humiliation, and he clenched his teeth in anger, "That's not the same at all! I'd rather Brielle be

my sister!"

As his words hung in the air, the sound of a car engine approached. Everyone tensed up, their gazes instinctively turning

towards the sound. It was the doctor's car returning.

Lillian felt her heart in a vice, her breathing quickened.

Her cheeks flushed with excitement, her palms sweaty. It seemed that she might indeed be a rich girl.

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She was determined to take this chance to utterly crush Brielle. Turning on her heel, she strode towards the orphanage's main

door, her eyes brimming with resentment as she flung it open.

“Brielle, the doctor’s back. Don’t you want to know the results?”

What Lillian really wanted to call her was something far less polite, but with the crowd around, she had to keep up appearances.

Brielle, however, was well aware of Lillian’s true colors, and with the recent revelation to Mark, she didn’t mince her words.

“Lillian, I honestly don’t care about the results, but if you really are a Haywood, your future encounters with Cameron are going to

be quite entertaining.”

A flash of pity crossed Lillian’s eyes. It seemed Brielle was still in the dark about who they had conducted the paternity test with.

It wasn’t the Haywoods at all. Lillian no longer cared for the Haywoods; what she craved was the status of a miss from an

international dynasty.

She watched Brielle with mock sympathy, as if gazing upon a pitiful creature. “You know nothing, and that’s truly sad.”

Brielle couldn’t help but chuckle, especially at the sight of Lillian’s feigned pity. “What I mean is, no matter whose daughter I am,

I’m still me. Nothing’s going to change.”

This holier-than-thou attitude was exactly what Lillian loathed the most. “You’re all tough talk now, but why don’t we step outside

and listen to the results together?”

Lillian scoffed, but she felt uneasy under Mark’s gaze and quickly looked away. Mark sighed. and, with Brielle’s support, they

both stepped outside.

The doctor had already come down from his car, eager to deliver the results without delay. As he looked at the report in his

hands, he felt at a loss for words.

His expression only heightened the tension, and Lillian swallowed hard, “Well? Am I or am I not...” She was too nervous to finish

her sentence, her eyes pleading with the doctor,

The doctor frowned, shaking his head one moment and nodding the next.

Lillian was itching to snatch the report and see for herself.

Brielle was the calmest there. Despite her disheveled appearance and swollen cheeks, her gaze was steady and serene as she

looked off into the distance. The others wore their anxiety plainly, including Miranda and Robert.

Spencer and Faith were full of anticipation, and Cameron's face bore the most complex expression.

The doctor sighed, "Miss Lillian, congratulations are in order. You now have parents."

At his words, Lillian let out a sharp scream, her cheeks flushed with excitement.

She really was that mega rich family's daughter! She just wanted to laugh out loud.

Lillian couldn't contain herself any longer, staring at Brielle with blatant scorn, "See, you really are nothing but trash. Even fate

doesn't care for you."

Lillian was so triumphant she even raised her hand, eager to slap Brielle's face, but as her wrist was midair, Brielle raised her

own hand and slapped her without hesitation.

Lillian was stunned, stumbling backward. Everyone else was just as shocked, none expecting Brielle to react that way.

Brielle smiled at them, "Congratulations. Consider that slap a wedding gift for you and Spencer. From here on out, we go our

separate ways."

Heaven knew how relieved she felt, her eyes reddening with joy. For years of grievances had vanished; she wasn't a Haywood

after all.

What right did the Haywoods have to make her suffer? No more would she indulge them!

She couldn't help but lift her head high, her smile radiant as if she'd thrown off some garbage.

Her reaction made the Haywoods feel awkward as if they had swallowed a fly.

Only Mark was confused, unsure of what was happening now. Wasn't Lillian supposed to have a paternity test with that

prominent family? Why did it seem like she had one with Robert?

He suddenly remembered that he might not have explained things properly to Brielle. "Bri, I think there's been a

misunderstanding."

But with such explosive news, who had time to listen to an old man's ramblings?

Miranda was the first to react, wrapping Lillian in an embrace, "Lillian, I knew it! I always felt you were my daughter."

Faith was overjoyed. This confirmed she could tell the world that Brielle had tampered with the records, usurping another's place,

and the blame would fall on Brielle. She never imagined Lillian would indeed be the Haywood daughter.

Faith could barely contain her glee, thinking of clearing her son's name, her voice eager. "Lillian, I was too harsh at the

Haywoods. Now that you're the rightful Haywood daughter, the engagement with Spencer should be yours. As for Brielle, I'm

sure Mr. Haywood has other arrangements for her, doesn't he?"

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Brielle had been freeloading off the Haywood family for so many years, and would the Haywood family have just let her go?

She had to be put to good use, naturally.

Faith tossed the conversation like a hot potato to Robert, her tone edged with a veiled threat. As a mother, she had noticed

Spencer's odd behavior towards Brielle and decided to settle her son's marriage sooner rather than later, to put her own mind at

ease.

Robert nodded; he did indeed have a sultor in mind.

Brielle couldn't believe how shameless the two were. Using her in the past wasn't enough, and now they wanted her to sell out

her marriage too.

She was about to speak up when Mark, shaking, pointed towards the orphanage's front gate. "You people! Get out! Get out of

the orphanage!"

was on

Mark had finally seen the light; not one person present Brielle's side. They were all leeches. His eyes instantly bloodshot, and he

collapsed.

“Mark!” Brielle was startled and rushed to help him up. “Doctor! Doctor, help!”

There was a doctor present, holding a paternity test report, confused by the sudden turn of events. How come everyone seemed

to know the results before he had even spoken a word?

Without a second thought, he helped Mark into the car. An elderly man fainting from anger was a dangerous sign, one wrong

move and he could be bedridden for life.

Brielle’s face was pale, trying to remain calm, but her eyes betrayed her true feelings. “To the hospital, right now.”

The doctor, understanding the gravity of the situation, hurriedly asked a colleague to drive while he stayed behind.

Mixed emotions filled the room; Cameron was the first to leave, feeling out of place. Lillian was the happiest, clutching the

doctor’s sleeve excitedly. “Thank you, doctor, for all your hard work. When will my family come to get me?” She was eager to

know her true identity.

The doctor looked at her, puzzled, thinking she already knew the truth.

Neither DNA test matched, but a colleague, noticing a resemblance between Lillian and Robert, had done an additional test.

Robert’s DNA was on file at the hospital, but the employees who had previously worked on the Haywood’s cases had left, and no

one knew where they were. The doctor didn’t stop his colleague, and it turned out Lillian was indeed a Haywood.

Holding those test results, he couldn’t believe it and internally blamed his colleague for meddling. Now, how was he supposed to

explain this to the Haywood family? What if they blamed the hospital for the years of mistaken identity?

The doctor’s heart was in turmoil. Many families, including celebrities, came to their hospital for private tests, and his colleague

loved gossip. They often did such tests, but he never expected to uncover such a family secret.

Yet, before he could announce it, the Haywoods seemed to already know Lillian was their daughter. How strange.

Hearing Lillian's question, the doctor was even more perplexed. "Miss Lillian, isn't your family right here with you?"

Lillian's smile froze, and her heart filled with panic as her smile faded, "I don't understand what you mean."

The doctor gathered the remaining documents, his expression calm, "I thought you knew since you seemed so happy. My

colleague did some extra tests, and you indeed share blood with Mr. Haywood. As for Brielle, she is not a Haywood."

Lillian's joy vanished at the definitive answer, replaced by fear, as if a hand had seized her throat.

How could this be? After such high hopes, to be told she was a Haywood?

She had been with the Haywoods for so many years, and the novelty had worn off long ago.

And the thought that Brielle might be the real daughter made her eyes redden with rage, her teeth clenched, "Brielle, she's the

one from that family?"

The doctor waved off the matter nonchalantly, "No, it seems the person they're looking for isn't at Sunflower Children's Home.

We'll have to check other orphanages. I apologize for any trouble regarding the Haywood family. My colleague was being nosy."

Relieved that Brielle wasn't the international heiress, Lillian felt safer now. She had almost thought she'd be under someone's

thumb again.

Though a twinge of disappointment lingered, when Miranda came running to hug her, Lillian finally felt true joy.

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"Lillian! Oh, Lillian, this is fantastic! Truly fantastic!"

Even Robert's stern face broke into a rare smile as he nodded in satisfaction.

Lillian, trapped in Miranda's tight embrace, struggled for comfort and looked towards Faith. Faith couldn't contain her excitement

and clutched Spencer's arm. "Spencer, we'll spin the video scandal to say you two were madly in love, that you knew all along

Brielle wasn't a true Haywood, and you kept it a secret because you feared Brielle couldn't handle the truth, right? That's our

story.”

Faith was already plotting not only Brielle’s future but had the whole aftermath sketched out in her mind. First, they’d break off

the engagement. The Dorseys would never accept an illegitimate child of unknown origins.

She failed to notice the troubled look on her son’s face as she made her way over to Lillian. Spencer stood among these jubilant

people, feeling none of their joy.

Brielle was not a Haywood? How could she not be?

With this revelation, their engagement had no grounds to continue. A bitter, numbing pain spread through his heart. He should be

feeling elated because Lillian was his true desire. Why the hollowness?

The revelry around him felt alien as he caught the expression on Brielle’s face when she had left with her escorts. There was a

sigh of relief, a sense of release, and a spark of excitement in her eyes.

This realization was excruciating. After all these years, she felt no attachment and regret. She’s so cold-hearted.

The Haywoods and Faith were busy discussing how to break the news to the public. Robert, aware of Faith’s disdain for Brielle—

after all, the video scandal had embarrassed her son—eagerly proposed a new match to appease his future in-laws.

The candidate was Tanner, a wealthy but rough-edged fifty-something whose last wife had recently passed away, rumored to

have taken her own life due to depression brought on by his infidelity.

Faith was quite pleased, and Miranda, without hesitation, agreed, her expression filled with disgust whenever Brielle’s name was

mentioned.

Brielle was a nobody who had cost their family a fortune. They needed to recoup their losses.

Meanwhile, Brielle had taken Mark to the hospital, where the doctor had offered some consolation before leaving her alone with

her chaotic thoughts.

The Haywoods, eager to distance themselves from the scandal and the circulating video, hastily released the news that Brielle

was not a Haywood, emphasizing that it was Lillian who was the long-lost Haywood daughter, usurped by Brielle's deceit.

The tide of public opinion, once against Lillian for her indiscretions with Spencer, shifted with this revelation. Lillian, as the true

Haywood daughter and Spencer's fiancée, was now seen in the right. Brielle was vilified for stealing both Lillian's identity and

Spencer's affections.

The social circles buzzed with this juicy gossip, but Max was never one for gossip. His WhatsApp was quiet, his contacts few,

and group chats non-existent.

When Andrew sent him the news, Max was in a meeting and didn't bother to check until he caught a glimpse of Brielle's name.

Reluctantly, he opened the message. [The Haywoods were disowning Brielle, planning to formally reintroduce Lillian at a family

dinner that might also serve to announce the cancellation of Brielle and Spencer's engagement. Any thoughts?]

[No thoughts.] Max's reply was nonchalant. As he was about to put his phone away, another message from Andrew popped up.

[Now that she's no longer your nephew's fiancée, does the taboo thrill still hold any sway? She's not going to marry him anyway,

might as well cut her loose now.]

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For Andrew, all women but Tessa were mere objects, disposable commodities, hence the disrespect in his words.

It was past two in the morning, and rain had begun to fall outside. A sudden heaviness settled in Max's chest, which he attributed

to the rain rather than Andrew's distasteful message.

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Andrew had just been swindled out of thirty million, and harboring resentment towards Brielle was a given. He'd never been so

thoroughly duped by a woman before. Thus, when Max didn't reob. Andrew anxiously started sending messages again.

[You're not seriously considering marrying her, are you? With a woman like Brielle, if she actually falls for you, good luck trying to

shake her off.]

Not getting married.]

Max replied to that query pretty swiftly. He had no feelings for Brielle, had never contemplated marriage, and therefore, a future

with her was absolutely out of the question.

After responding, Max stopped paying attention to the conversation and instead focused on the pile of documents in front of him.

It was bedtime, yet he felt not the slightest hint of sleepiness. After all the recent upheaval, he wondered how Brielle was feeling. Was she at her apartment?

With these thoughts in mind, he slowly stood, picking up his suit jacket. Just as he reached the downstairs, he ran into Wesley,

who was warming up some milk. "Sir, you're up late."

Max was usually punctual in his routine, except when working overtime. Seeing him with his suit Wesley assumed Max was

heading to the office for more work.

"Sir, shall I wake Patrick to drive you over?"

"No need."

Max had already reached the foyer, his demeanor as businesslike as ever.

Watching his retreating figure, Wesley thus about how Dorsey International's success was

tightly linked to Max's diligence. It was late, yet here he was, off to handle more company matters. Wesley decided it was time to

brew some hearty soup to help Max sustain his energy. Max headed to the garage and chose a more subdued Mulsanne to drive

to Brielle's apartment. As the car came to a stop, he clenched the steering wheel, a frown creasing his brow.

What was he doing? Why was he out in the dead of night, looking for a woman?

He and Brielle were clear on the nature of their relationship – they clicked, so they played their roles in this charade. There was

no need for seriousness. And certainly no need to lose sleep over her.

While he reasoned there was no need, Max's exit from the car was swift.

Brielle's apartment building was decently located but quite aged, its elevator plastered with colorful eye-catching ads. The first

time he woke up in this building, those ads gave him a moment of discomfort. It wasn't that he looked down on the place; rather,

he thought it odd for the daughter of the Haywood family to be living here.

Exiting the elevator, Max stopped at the familiar door and rang the bell.

With all the chaos, Brielle, however carefree she might be, was likely awake. After ringing the bell three times with no answer, he

remembered WhatsApp and sent her a message.

[Where are you?]

Currently, Brielle sat in a chilly hospital corridor, the air damp and cold.

Mark was still in surgery, and finally, the lights in the operating room went out, and the doctor came out pushing a gurney.

"Ms. Brielle." The doctor removed his mask, his eyes red with fatigue, "Does the patient have other children? We didn't miss the

golden hour for treatment, but his constitution is weak. He'll be wheelchair-dependent from now on."

Some elderly might become paralyzed, even turn into a vegetable from such an episode. Mark had been lucky this time.

Brielle felt as though her heart had been punctured. "Isn't there anything else we can try? Money is not an issue."

"I'm sorry, we've done all we can. If you hadn't brought him in immediately, the patient might have ended up paralyzed."

Brielle blinked back the stinging in her eyes and slowly nodded.

Mark was moved to a room, and Brielle stood at the door, her hand on the frame, uncertain whether to go in.

Her phone rang then, and she saw it was a message from Max. At this moment, she really didn't have the energy to deal with it.

Instead, she raised her hand to rub her forehead, exchanged a few words with the doctor, reduced some swelling on her cheeks,

and planned to return to the apartment.

Max waited at her door, wondering if perhaps she was asleep and hadn't seen the messages. He tentatively rang the bell again,

and suddenly a neighbor opened their door, irate. "What the hell are you doing in the middle of the night?"

Catching sight of Max's stature and demeanor, the tirade cut short, leaving just a stunned. "You—you..."

The door slammed shut.

Seconds later, it cracked open and a head peeked out, "Young man, that girl might be engaged. I've seen her fiancé. If you're in

such a hurry to get hitched, my niece is..."

"No thank you."

Never in Max's life had someone dared to play matchmaker for him like this.

The neighbor, unfazed by the rejection, must have assumed it was a matter of taste. "Well, my niece is overseas, quite the catch. Ivy League graduate, owns five properties, still single because she's picky. If you don't mind, perhaps—"

Before Max's patience wore thin, Brielle finally showed up.

Chapter 149

Brielle never imagined that returning home at the witching hour of 3 A.M. would lead to an encounter with Max right on her

doorstep. Max was even being set up by the neighbor? The world seemed to be spinning its own surreal tale.

She hurriedly stepped forward, fumbling with her keys to unlock the door, while offering a strained smile and thanks to the

neighbor. "Thanks a bunch, really, he's good on his own. He's a celibate, you know.

The neighbor was no fool and seemed eager to follow up. "A celibate at your place? Don't you have a fiancé?"

Cursed be those times Spencer had made a spectacle of himself, making their relationship the talk of the town.

Caught off guard, Brielle managed to chuckle as she shut the door, "This is strictly between us, definitely not for my fiancé's

ears."

Left on the doorstep. The neighbor's face was a complex puzzle of emotions. Max's looks were hard to ignore, and she couldn't

help but mutter, "Handsome lad, but what a shame about his choices. Even if you're just arm candy, at least pick someone with

deep pockets. Not many around here with fat wallets."

Inside, Max sat silently on the sofa, his features clouded with discomfort.

Brielle, though sleepy, couldn't help but find humor in the situation. She fetched a glass of water from the kitchen. "Sorry about

that, Mr. Dorsey. She loves playing matchmaker. Guess she fancied your looks."

Max looked up, squinting as he appraised her. Aside from the fatigue etched on her face, she revealed nothing else.

No sadness, no regret, no anger.

His heart seemed to clench inexplicably.

"Why would Mr. Dorsey come here? Is it related to Book company?"

Brielle certainly wouldn't presume that Max came to see her. The first thing that came to her mind was Book. She had organized

the information at that time. Could there be a problem with

the information?

She glanced at the wall clock; it was already half-past three in the morning. To discuss work at this hour, Max really was hard

working.

A sharp look flashed in Max's eyes, and the cold aura around his eyebrows was so icy that it could turn into white frost..

Mr. Dorsey? In private, she usually preferred to call him Uncle Max. But now, considering she needed to break off her

engagement with Spencer, she couldn't call him Uncle Max anymore?

Or perhaps, she wanted to end this relationship that should never have started.

He glanced down, his gaze falling on the black rosary around his wrist. His fingers delicately played with the beads, a sign his

patience was wearing thin, Oddly enough, his chest felt tight,

He couldn't help but glance at his chest, wondering if something was amiss, but his yearly medical exams always showed he

was in top shape,

This feeling was foreign, tinged with a trace of Irritation.

Andrew had suggested this could be an opportunity to cut ties with Brielle, but Max felt the reality was the opposite. It's as if

Brielle wanted to use this chance to push him away. This realization froze his fingers mid-bead, a shadow crossing his eyes.

"Three in the morning, and I'm here at the home of a woman I've been involved with. Do you really think it's about work?" His

expression showed rare signs of exasperation as he casually loosened his tie, tilting his head back slightly. "What do you take

me for?"

Brielle wasn't listening closely, her mind busily sorting through her next moves.

The Haywood clan sought vengeance, Ryan wouldn't let her off easy, Mark and the kids needed her, and her colleagues at

Dorsey International were not pleased with her. Tessa might be keeping tabs on her too. From every angle, she seemed

surrounded by threats.

Maintaining her relationship with Max could save her a lot of trouble. At least until she could comfortably leave Beaconsfield,

then she could afford to sever ties with him.

Having made up her mind, even in exhaustion, Brielle perched herself on his lap, softly pressing her lips to his. Aubree was

right. Max's lips were too inviting, easy to get lost in, especially when he presented himself as hers for the taking. It was the kind

of temptation that could drive a woman to ruin.

Brielle, tired as she was, took the lead momentarily before resting her forehead against his shoulder.

It was an invitation.

Chapter 150

Max would never refuse. With a swift move, he scooped her up horizontally and carried her into the bedroom.

The apartment was decorated with a cozy touch, and a long, lingering ship's horn echoed from outside the window. The diligent

vendors had already begun to set up shop on the streets, and the savory scent of pancakes filled the city air.

Everything was so idyllic, but they both knew that the intimacy between them was nothing more than a sham, a shadow play of

pretense.

Brielle closed her eyes, her rational mind advising her a thousand times over, but the pleasure seeping from her very bones was

undeniable. Her cheeks were flushed with sweat, as if all acts of rebellion had blossomed into bewitching flowers of allure.

Max had control over her, and as he watched her sleeping face, he suddenly wondered what he would do if she had just said she

wanted to end things. In that moment, the surging bitterness was undeniable. It was unclear whether it was a man's pride at play

or the inability to withstand being kicked to the curb.

"Brielle?" he called out.

She was too exhausted to move even a finger and responded with a groggy "Hmm?"

"It ends when I say it ends."

Brielle had no idea what he was talking about. She was sound asleep.

When morning came, Brielle felt sore all over. She turned over, squinting as the sunlight streamed in, stinging her eyes. It was

indeed her own apartment.

She recalled the events from last night, and at this moment, it felt like she was still in a dream. She got up, still in her pajamas,

and nearly collapsed to her knees.

Her complexion changed, her lips trembled, and she ended up leaning against the wall, gasping for air. Just how long had Max

kept her up last night?

Stepping out of the bedroom, she saw the man still sitting on the couch and wondered if it was the weekend. It was only

Wednesday, and he, being a workaholic, should have been at the office.

"Mr. Dorsey," she called out, then sat down on a single-seater sofa. "I'm taking the day off. Occupational hazard."

The reason for the 'hazard' was something he was well aware of.

"Mhm."

He didn't look up, flipping through the documents in his hand, probably delivered by Patrick earlier that morning.

17:02

Brielle's neck was also sore, and just as she reached up to rub it, the doorbell rang. She glanced instinctively at Max.

Max continued to peruse his documents, engrossed, unbothered by the interruption.

Brielle walked to the door and, upon seeing Aubree, she pressed her lips together, guiltily touching her neck. She went back to

the bedroom to change into a turtleneck, then returned to open the door.

Aubree looked unusually anxious, her gaze shifting past Brielle to the man on the sofa, her expression turning complex. Brielle

also felt a tinge of guilt as she closed the door, "What's happened to bring you over so early?"

*You call this early?" Aubree pointed to the clock on the wall—it was already noon.

Brielle didn't know what to say, trying to brush it off, but then she saw Aubree approach Max, "Well, look at you with a beautiful

girl by your side, and you don't bother to come to the company."

Brielle's face reddened with embarrassment, and she quickly tugged at Aubree's wrist.

Aubree sat down, clearly frustrated, "Did you see the message I sent? The Haywood family has announced they're

acknowledging Lillian as their own, claiming you've been stealing Lillian's identity for years. What's going on? Is Lillian really their

daughter? Was there a mix-up before?" Aubree couldn't believe it and, remembering how smug Lillian must be feeling, she felt

extremely unsettled.

"Yes, there was a mix-up. We did another paternity test, and she's the real Haywood daughter." Brielle spoke without any

inflection, even contemplating whether to order some takeout.

Aubree sighed, "The rumors are wild out there. They're saying you're cunning, that you knew how to tamper with the results at a

young age, and that all the good times you've had these years were stolen. They want you to apologize to Lillian."

Aubree's face was filled with disgust. "The Haywood family is throwing a party for Lillian tomorrow night, officially announcing the

news."

Brielle pursed her lips, not expecting a single scandalous video to stir up so much trouble.

Apologize to Lillian? In her dreams.

The Haywoods had made the mistake themselves. She was just a ten-year-old child then, so why should she bear the burden

of their error?

After some thought, she transferred ten million to Miranda's account. The amount the Haywoods had spent on her over the years

was certainly not that much, and she thoughtfully included the interest as well.

As soon as she made the transfer, Miranda's call came through.

"Bri, what's this all about?"