

## Master 151

### Chapter 151

Brielle couldn't help but find it amusing, the act they were putting on so late in the game.

"The Haywoods have footed the bill for my upkeep all these years," she said, a wry smile touching her lips. "I've tallied up the

costs, with interest, and paid you back in full. Let's not have any more of these inconvenient calls, shall we?"

This was not the scenario Miranda had expected. Shouldn't Brielle be the one unable to bear parting with them, begging to stay

with the Haywoods? Without their intervention, Brielle might be out on some street corner begging for change right now.

A surge of irritation flashed through Miranda, her temper flaring. "Brielle, what do you mean 'don't disturb you'?" Miranda spat.

"The Haywood family has supported you for so many years, and you've occupied Lillian's identity for so long. Now, you almost

ruined her reputation, and you have the audacity to say not to disturb you. You really are ungrateful. Tomorrow night, we are

organizing a banquet for Lillian, and you have to come and apologize in person. You owe Lillian, and you'll never be able to

repay it in this lifetime."

Her self-righteousness was grating. Brielle's smile widened, "Well, I shall not repay it then."

"Brielle, you-"

Brielle was done with the nonsense. She had to admit, after being taken in by the Haywoods. she'd had access to some

educational resources. But whether it was moving up from middle to high school, or from high school to college, it was all on her

own merit. The money the Haywoods spent on her couldn't compare to a fraction of what they showered on Lillian.

Ten million should more than cover it.

"Mrs. Haywood, I've got work to do, so I'll be hanging up now." Without hesitation, she ended the call, feeling the irony of it all.

Aubree was fuming beside her, then burst out laughing at the absurdity, “Do they think you’re clinging to the Haywoods for dear

life?”

“Seems like it. So, my generous payout must’ve wounded their pride.”

Brielle sat back nonchalantly, her stomach rumbling with hunger.

Aubree was at a loss for words concerning the Haywoods, thinking about the life Brielle had endured, her anger palpable, “And

they expect you to attend the party tomorrow night?”

“Yeah, they want a personal apology to Lillian.”

“The nerve! They’re shameless!” Aubree cursed, letting out her frustration. “How much did you send them?”

“Ten million.”

“Bri. I know you just got thirty million, but did the Haywoods ever spend two million on you? Did

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she take it?”

A snide laugh escaped Brielle, “Oh, she snapped it up quick enough.”

Aubree was at a loss for words, “So, are you going tomorrow?”

As Aubree asked, she glanced at her phone, her frown deepening. “The haters are piling on now. All those idle gossips in the

circle are slamming you one-sidedly, elevating Lillian to sainthood.”

Brielle didn’t want to hear any more about the Haywoods and was content to rest on the couch, but Aubree’s next words

snapped her to attention. “Bri, you’ve been donating to the Sunflower Children’s Home all this time, right? You only kept enough

to live on each month, but now the charity is listing Lillian as the donor.”

Brielle’s expression darkened, her eyes sharpening. “What do you mean?”

Aubree’s own anger was palpable. “I don’t know, but everyone’s praising her now, saying she’s got a heart of gold, always

donating to the orphanage. It’s all over the social circles, and the charity’s released the donor details—it’s definitely Lillian.”

Brielle's fingers clenched, a bitter memory flashing through her mind. She had trusted Lillian too much, allowing her to handle the

beneficiary details for her donations. Lillian had played a cunning game, switching the donor name to her own.

Before this revelation, the public opinion hadn't been entirely against Brielle, but once the charity released the donor details,

everyone seemed to side with Lillian.

A girl who had stayed with the Haywoods, working hard from a young age, growing up to give back to the home that had taken

her in, leaving herself just enough to get by and donating the rest—such a benevolent person who had been replaced as the

heiress from the start and believed she was living on borrowed time.

That was the persona Lillian had crafted.

It was effective, and with the undeniable proof of the donor's name, Brielle was subject to much vitriol

Brielle scoffed, "I'll be attending the party tomorrow night."

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After finishing her thought, she glanced over at Max, who seemed entirely unfazed by all the petty scheming, as if such trivial

plots were beneath him.

Today, he was without his usual tie, his shirt undone at the top two buttons, revealing a rare glimpse of casualness,

The doorbell rang again, and Brielle went to answer it, discovering Patrick on the doorstep. Patrick was holding a large bag,

which appeared to be packed with groceries, including some exotic fruits that had to be flown in from overseas.

"Ms. Brielle," Patrick said respectfully, gesturing for the chef to carry the bags into the kitchen,

"Ms. Brielle, many of these items have been prepped at the hotel's kitchen. I've brought the head chef over to prepare lunch for

you and Mr. Dorsey,"

Brielle looked toward the chef, now bustling in the kitchen with his toque blanche standing tall. This, she mused, must be the

lifestyle of the wealthy.

She chuckled to herself, thanking him and reaching for the fruit to wash it. Patrick, however, stepped back, looking somewhat

panic-stricken. "Please, allow me, Ms. Brielle. You should sit."

Patrick, who had been by Max's side for years, had never seen him dash out in the middle of the night for a woman. Before, only

his work commanded such urgency from him. However, that rule had now been shattered, whether he was aware of it or not.

Indeed, Brielle was something special.

Brielle stood at the dining table, feeling as if the apartment had never shone so brightly.

Meanwhile, Aubree had already started smiling, arms folded, eyebrow raised in Max's direction. Max maintained his usual cool

demeanor. Unable to resist, Aubree edged closer, sliding a stack of unreviewed documents toward him, "Mr. Dorsey, did you

enjoy your sleepover last night?" Max lifted his gaze briefly, "So?"

"So, about tomorrow night's dinner party, are you going to accompany Bri?"

Neither Max nor Brielle had expected Aubree to make such a request. Brielle hurried forward to intervene, but saw Max already

looking her way. "Do you want me to go?"

From a rational standpoint, his presence wouldn't change much. After all, there was nothing between them. But if Brielle wanted

it, he couldn't find a reason to refuse.

Before Brielle could speak, Aubree jumped in, "The Haywoods won't let Bri off easy, and neither will the Spencer. There is

Sophia from the Rowlands, and Emily, who's been in trouble with the law. I bet the Hatfields will also come after her."

Considering this, Brielle's situation seemed precarious.

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But just as Aubree finished, Patrick emerged with the fruit, chiming in, "The Hatfields won't trouble Ms. Brielle. Emily was flown

out of the country last night, unlikely to return. The president has spoken with the Hatfields. They won't bother Ms. Brielle."

Realizing he had said too much, Patrick hurriedly placed the fruit platter on the coffee table. "Ms. Brielle, Miss Aubree, please

enjoy the fruit."

The fruit, washed by Patrick, had been artfully carved by the chef, making it instantly more appealing. However, both women

were now more curious about Patrick's revelation.

Brielle turned to Max, inquiring. "Mr. Dorsey spoke with the Hatfields?"

Max's lips tightened, a flash of annoyance crossing his face. He'd always preferred action over words. Being so blatantly

exposed made him feel uncomfortable.

"Hmm."

Brielle hadn't expected that a mere word from Max could eliminate a potential enemy. Her heart suddenly felt warm.

Max's aloofness could be hurtful, but his occasional tenderness was touching. He was different from the others, and she knew

she shouldn't expect anything more.

It was then that Aubree shook her skirt, "Bri, Mr. Dorsey is far more reliable than Andrew. And even if things don't work out in the

future, I'm sure Mr. Dorsey won't be stingy, right?"

The last question was aimed at Max.

Max frowned reflexively, "Don't compare me to Andrew."

A shadow passed through Aubree's eyes before she smirked sarcastically. "So Mr. Dorsey acknowledges that Andrew is scum?"

Well, that scum was quite generous last night, giving Bri thirty million."

As soon as she finished, Max produced a card, placing it on the table and solemnly sliding it toward Brielle.

Aubree blinked in confusion.

Brielle was doubly puzzled.

Wasn't he not comparing himself to Andrew?

Patrick couldn't help but chuckle to himself as he silently poured everyone some steaming coffee and took a seat on the

sidelines, waiting for Max's cue.

Max had skipped the office that morning, opting instead to hammer out three meetings at the crack of dawn followed by a bout of

paperwork. The decision regarding the Book deal still needed a round-table with the senior executives.

The room was tense, with only the sumptuous aroma of shrimp and steak wafting from the kitchen.

Aubree was the first to snap, feeling like she was being forced to watch a public display of affection. She didn't buy the idea of a

future between those two, but at least for the moment. Max wasn't just stringing Brielle along.

Aubree might have been a mess in her own love life, but she was surprisingly lucid about others'. She'd seen through Spencer's

unreliability a long time ago and had always advised. Brielle to break it off, but Brielle was tethered by the so-called

engagement, willingly playing the pawn for the Dorsey family.

Given such precedents, Aubree figured she should advise Brielle to play her cards right with Max. After all, even the crumbs from

Max's table could, furnish a lifetime of splendor for an ordinary person.

However, she could tell Brielle was genuinely invested, albeit only a fraction. Not much, yet not to be trampled upon.

So instead of intervening, Aubree stood up, yawning. "Looks like Mr. Dorsey will escort Bri to the party. With you there, I can

breathe easy. Bri, you're in good hands."

She arrived swiftly and departed just as quickly.

At the elevator, Aubree stared blankly at the changing numbers before mocking herself, "Turns out, only Andrew is a real

scumbag."

Andrew had a person he loved, yet he shamelessly indulged in the affections of a woman who adored him, and humiliated her

when he was in a foul mood.

Max might not understand love, but he was willing to break his rules for a woman he'd been intimate with, even if just once. That

alone was enough to make someone fall hard.

The difference was clear.

Back in the apartment, Brielle pushed the card back towards Max.

Max, with downcast eyes, gazed at his computer screen, "Is it so wrong to want to give a canary a more splendid cage?" He had

his own unique way of speaking romance.

Brielle looked at the card but didn't reach for it. A splendid, sturdy cage could trap a canary forever, couldn't it?

She was indeed drawn to Max but knew they came from different worlds. A bitter taste spread through her heart. "A mansion

worth over twenty million is enough, Mr. Dorsey. You've been a most generous benefactor."

"I have money," he said, his tone indifferent, his brow furrowing as he puzzled over the rejected offer. It was the first time his

money had been declined.

Brielle couldn't help but laugh at his reaction, "I know you're not short on cash, Mr. Dorsey. But Andrew cut me that check out of

respect for you. If I took your card as well, it would seem rather greedy."

She picked up a document from the table, "The restaurant Kenzo recommended last time was great. Are you free tonight, Mr.

Dorsey? My treat."

"Free after ten."

Brielle rolled her eyes internally. At ten at night, they'd be lucky to get dishwater. She eyed the hand he'd casually placed on the

table and edged closer. "If you're only free at ten, should I be waiting in the bedroom?"

Max looked up, his gaze colliding with hers. "That's an option, certainly more sincere than a dinner invitation."

Pervert.

Brielle's face flushed, her heart racing. Conscious of Patrick's presence, she couldn't continue the banter and felt parched and

flustered.

Patrick, ever tactful, seemed engrossed in his own thoughts, pretending not to hear the flirtatious exchange..

Brielle, having veered the conversation off track, now had to steer it back, “Are we heading to a meeting this afternoon?”

But Max, fixated on her face, didn’t reply.

Brielle’s cheeks had been swollen from the slaps she’d received, and even after a quick fix at the hospital the previous night,

they were still slightly puffed when she came to see Max. By morning, the bruises had faded significantly.

Checking her reflection in the restroom, she had been concerned about frightening Max with her appearance. Thankfully, she

looked much better now, and recalling last night’s tangle with him, she realized he hadn’t been put off by her swollen face.

“Who hit you last night?” Max wasn’t indifferent; he had simply noticed her off-kilter emotions the previous evening. Now that she

seemed better, he wanted to know.

Was it someone from the Haywood family, or the Dorsey family?

Was she so easily bullied?

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Brielle’s nose tingled with an unspoken sorrow. Her heart bore secret scars, teeming with pride and self-esteem in excess. To be

humiliated or to ask favors of others was to her a shame most profound. So, when Max probed her with that question, her

cheeks, which shouldn’t have hurt, blazed anew. The wounds Faith and Ryan had inflicted were not just of the flesh.

Max, seeing her silent, reached out and took her chin in his hand, locking eyes with her. His eyelids, thin and imposing, seemed

to tighten the air around them when drawn together.

Heat rose in waves across Brielle’s face, and with Patrick standing by, her embarrassment. surged.

Patrick, ever perceptive, rose and feigned a trip to the kitchen to lend a hand, but through the glass door, he watched the pair

surreptitiously.



With Patrick gone, Brielle felt a measure of relief wash over her. Her eyes reddened slightly, lending her a pitiable air. Max had

no fondness for pity. In a dog-eat-dog world, weakness was an invitation to be trampled.

“What are you crying for?” His voice softened, and he let go of her chin. “Who hit you? Hit them back. If there’s trouble, I’ve got

you covered. What are you scared of?”

As his canary, there was no reason she should suffer at another’s hand. Moreover, after last night’s debacle, it irked him that

Brielle hadn’t called.

Just now, in his presence, she and Aubree had subtly praised Andrew for his generosity. Max began to wonder if he was falling

short. He had never cared for a delicate creature like a woman before and didn’t know how to handle her.

Brielle, for her part, never sought help. Used to solitude, she tackled everything alone. This realization sat uncomfortably with

Max. He even resolved to go home later and look up how to properly care for a canary.

Brielle sat silently, her mind a blank slate. After a long moment, she looked up at the man still coldly immersed in his paperwork.

His hair caught the light from the window, casting a cool golden sheen, his skin pale, his lashes long, his wristbones sharp as

blades. Was such a man truly behind her?

She pursed her lips, then finally asked, “What if I cause a scene at tomorrow night’s party?”

Before she could finish, Max interjected, “If you’re wronged, it reflects on me.”

Brielle found it amusing, chuckled to herself for a moment, and then said. “Thank you. As for the files on the Book Group, I can

compile a more detailed report for you, or I could even go abroad myself to scout for potential investment opportunities. Mr.

Dorsey, I have nothing to repay your kindness with, so I’ll dedicate my all to Dorsey International.”

After her speech, she reached for a nearby teacup. “Mr. Dorsey, are you thirsty?”

Amusement flickered in Max’s eyes as he took the cup, a faint smile playing at his lips. “Trying to curry favor?”

Internally, Brielle rolled her eyes. Wasn’t that obvious?

Max found this side of Brielle rather refreshing. Flattery, subservience, no pretenses. She was disarmingly candid, and it pleased

him.

So when Patrick came out with the tray, what he saw was the scene of Max's frosty demeanor melting away, with Brielle sitting

by his side. They were talking about something. Her eyes were slowly showing hints of smile, and the pressure of her bite on her

lip was deepening.

Patrick didn't linger, signaling the chef to bring out the rest of the meal before excusing himself. For Brielle, it was a first to enjoy

the privilege of a star-rated chef's personal service. After a satisfying meal and a call to check on Mark, she turned her attention

to the charity.

The charity had always treated her with reverence, "Ms. Haywood, you've already made this month's donation."

"I know," she replied. "You keep calling me 'Ms. Haywood.' Do you know my first name?"

There was a pause on the line. "Isn't it Miss Lillian?"

Brielle scoffed coldly. It wasn't the charity's fault. With both women sharing the same surname and the charity only knowing her

as 'Ms. Haywood,' they were unaware of her true identity.

"My name is Brielle. I was too busy with work back then, so I had Lillian handle the paperwork. You do have security cameras

there, right?"

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The charity had never experienced anything quite like it. Someone actually changed the donor's name to their own.

"Ms. Brielle, we're recording everything here. If you need it, I can get a transcript prepared for you now."

"Sure, send it over."

After hanging up the phone, she rubbed her temples and dialed the hospital.

The news that Mark had regained consciousness was a relief, but his spirits had plummeted upon learning he'd be bound to a

wheelchair.

In Brielle's account, there were still tens of millions, just enough to find a new location for the orphanage. Faith was probably not

going to give up that piece of land, but Brielle had a contract to protect her interests.

Before she could even speak, Max inquired, "Need a lawyer?"

Brielle nodded.

"Poke around the legal department at Dorsey International, and pick whoever you fancy." His tone was casual as he gathered all

the documents. "As for the orphanage relocation, ask Patrick."

The legal department at Dorsey International was known as the Invincibles. It was said that since their very first case, they had

never lost. With their help, even the toughest cases could be won, and they raked in hundreds of millions in compensation for

Dorsey International each year. With them in her corner, Faith didn't stand a chance.

Brielle thought it over and decided not to refuse the help. "Thanks."

They walked side by side to the door. As they pulled it open, they ran into the neighbor from the night before.

The neighbor, holding a bag of groceries, couldn't help but offer some advice upon seeing them leave together. "Young man,

what kind of future can you have with this girl? How much can she pay you in a month? My niece owns five properties, and she's

willing to give you two if you're interested – prime real estate. You wouldn't have to worry about a thing. Think it over, with your

looks, you could have anyone?" Everyone loves a beautiful face, and Max was just the type her high-and-mighty niece would

fall for.

Brielle found it amusing and hurried to keep pace with Max, who had quickened his steps. The neighbor's nagging followed

them, "Why are you so stubborn?"

In the elevator, Brielle stifled a laugh and sneaked a peek at Max's stern expression. His jaw was clenched, lips thin, and his

eyes were sharp. The temperature seemed to drop several degrees.

She was about to say something to lighten the mood when the doors opened, and there stood Spencer. Spencer's pupils contracted sharply at the sight of them, his brain freezing, unsure of how to react.

The elevator, plastered with local ads, was an odd backdrop for Max, but his presence filled the space with an incongruous

allure. Spencer's heart skipped a beat, disbelieving. "Uncle Max, what are you doing here?"

How could he be at Brielle's apartment, descending together no less?

He knew Max was a clean freak, usually only Patrick got that close to him. Yet there Brielle stood, her arm nearly brushing Max's

suit – an intimate proximity.

Spencer's face paled, his mind racing with thoughts he dared not fully entertain.

Max remained impassive, stepping forward, "Came to see Brielle." He didn't lie, nor did he see the need to.

Spencer felt a chill, his lips trembling, as he incredulously turned to Brielle.

Brielle smiled, "I took a day off. Dorsey International is considering an investment in a book project, and I was preparing the data.

There was an issue, so Mr. Dorsey came to see me. Patrick was here too. Did you need something?" It was a clarification for

Max.

A wave of unease tightened Spencer's chest as he took in the sight of her turtleneck. Normally, he would have accepted the

explanation without question. However, Max rarely frequented the family estate, much less the residences of other execs. So,

what other reason could there be for this unexpected visit?

It couldn't possibly be that his proud and reserved Uncle Max had descended to favor a mortal woman. Impossible. Max would

never do such a thing for a woman.

Spencer scoffed at himself for even thinking it. Brielle might be somewhat attractive, but she wasn't the type to dazzle—Max.

"Brielle, you transferred ten million to the Haywood family. That's quite a generous move. Are you that eager to cut ties?

Remember, without the Haywood family, you'll have no backup. Anyone could step on you."

Brielle pushed past him, not sparing another glance, "When I was with the Haywood family. I never used them as backup. As for

being stepped on, anyone is welcome to try."

Spencer felt a pang in his chest, his voice hoarse as he grasped her wrist. "Brielle, did you ever care for me, even the slightest

bit?"

He didn't know why he asked; he just couldn't let it go. In his mind, Brielle had always been an outsider, someone easy to

dismiss. Yet with the annulment of their engagement imminent, he found himself flustered.

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He began to meticulously recall every moment, every nuance of his years with Brielle.

Why had he gotten entangled with Lillian in the first place? Perhaps it was because Brielle always seemed so distant, her

laughter devoid of warmth, as if she were trampling on his pride.

Brielle never needed tutoring, so when he showed up at her doorstep, brimming with

enthusiasm and homework in hand, she would simply cross her arms and coolly ask him where he was struggling.

Her independence didn't quite fit the traditional mold of femininity. In contrast, Lillian clung to him daily with questions and would

then look up at him with adoration, inflating his ego to soaring heights.

Everything he couldn't get from Brielle, he received from Lillian. What was so wrong about liking Lillian? Brielle's body had been

sullied by others.

Spencer felt a mix of disgust and anger. Seeing Brielle walk away without a backward glance only intensified the surge of

resentment within him.

He would make Brielle regret this; he would make those men who had tempted her behind his back pay.

In a fit of rage, he punched the wall.

Meanwhile, Brielle quickly slipped into Max's car, her gaze fixed irritably outside the window.

Spencer hadn't come out. He was probably still inside, fuming with rage. She had planned to take the day off, but with Spencer

there, she was itching to go to the office just to pass the

time.

As the car was about to start, Spencer emerged, predictably with a scowl. He looked around, likely searching for Brielle. Then he

approached Max's car and shouted through the window. \*Uncle Max, I stopped by the family estate last night, and grandpa

asked me to pass on a message to you."

"What is it?"

Max's eyes were on his papers, but through the crack in the window, Spencer's voice continued.

"Grandpa's wondering when

you plan to meet with the Barnes family. Both sides are keen on arranging a dinner. He tried calling you, couldn't get through,

and Patrick's line was busy. Knowing you're busy, he sent me to deliver the message."

The reason Spencer had been at the estate, of course, had to do with that video. Fortunately. Tiffanie, the one who spread the

video, had been grounded. Who knew how she was faring now, probably going mad in confinement.

A sneer crossed his eyes. "I hope this time, Uncle Max, you won't plead for Tiffanie. Aunt Victoria is quite furious this time."

Brielle's heart skipped a beat upon hearing this. Tiffanie was being punished? Didn't she claim no one dared lay a hand on her?

She anxiously looked at Max, only to hear him ask indifferently. "Locked up in the attic again? Can't they come up with something

new besides this old trick?"

His tone was mocking, and Spencer didn't dare to respond.

Max, looking straight ahead, said coldly, "Drive."

Patrick nodded and promptly hit the gas.

Brielle's palms were sweating. She couldn't help but ask, "Is the situation with Tiffanie that serious? It was my lack of foresight. I

should have released the video myself.”

“If you had, you’d be the one in Michael’s clutches right now.” Max closed his eyes, tapping his fingers lightly on the documents.

“The Dorsey family will always protect their own. No matter how Spencer fails or betrays, Michael will always see it as your fault.”

That was reality.

With Tiffanie taking the heat, Michael wouldn’t notice her for the time being, but if Brielle had been the one to release the video,

she wouldn’t live to see another sunrise. Michael’s methods were not something Ryan could ever match.

Brielle’s face darkened, and she looked up. “I know, but I only wanted Tiffanie to watch the show, not drag her down with me.”

She felt guilty.

“It’s fine; she’s probably used to being grounded by now.”

It seemed Victoria had no soft spot for Tiffanie, but why? Weren’t they mother and daughter?

Brielle had heard of Victoria’s husband, handsome and refined, a pianist who rarely made public appearances but toured the

world giving concerts.

Victoria herself came from a distinguished background. How could such parents not treat their own child well?

Max lifted his hand and pulled her closer, wrapping an arm around her waist. “Victoria chased Everett like a woman possessed.

She attended every piano concert of his, but he always rejected her.”

Everett was Victoria’s husband now. They ended up together, didn’t they?

Sensing her confusion, Max pinched her chin. “One year, while abroad at one of his concerts, Victoria was cornered by thugs

and tormented for three days, resulting in Tiffanie. To cover up the scandal, the Dorsey family forced Everett to marry Victoria,

claiming it was a premarital pregnancy. In my father’s eyes, nothing and no one could tarnish the Dorsey name, and no one

could let the Dorseys suffer any loss, even if Victoria was in the wrong. As long as she wanted something, my father would make

it happen for her.”

Such bias had reached the extent of disregarding the wishes of others.

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To Brielle, the pianist seemed like the innocent party, constantly rebuffing Victoria's advances from start to finish.

Victoria, regardless of everything, attended every performance, encountered a sudden disaster herself, and in the end, she

married the man she admired while carrying a baby.

While Victoria's plight could stir sympathy for any woman, the most innocent of them all was Everett, who'd been rejecting her all

along. But alas, the Dorsey clan wielded too much power.

No wonder Victoria had no love for Tiffanie: her birth held such a tainted tale.

Brielle felt a pang in her heart, thinking of Tiffanie's current temperament, undoubtedly shaped by a sustained lack of affection.

Max, probably tired of squinting, rested his chin on her shoulder, "Everett had someone he was fond of, and was about to get

engaged, but the Dorseys forced him to break it off. Next thing, he's hitched to Victoria. He resents the Dorseys, you know. And

Victoria, she's so love-crazed that even a marriage trapping him seems satisfying to her."

"He resents the Dorseys?"

"Yeah, Michael decreed they must share a bed once a week."

Brielle pursed her lips. It was no wonder he harbored such hatred when even the most private facets of his life were being

dictated and his pride ruthlessly crushed.

If Max hadn't spelled it out, Brielle would never have believed it. The common folk seemed so powerless and insignificant in the

face of a dynasty like the Dorseys. She didn't know what to say, feeling the subtle nudge from Max.

Should Michael intervene, she'd be just as helpless.

A hand squeezed her palm, and she lifted her gaze to meet his, hearing him say, "Don't worry."

"When will Tiffanie get out?"

"In a fortnight."



“That long? Won’t that mess with her head?”

Just a few hours locked up by Faith had almost broken her, but Tiffanie had been enduring this since childhood. Was her spirit

still intact?

“She’s not as fragile as you think.”

Brielle fell silent, resolved to treat Tiffanie to a proper meal once she was free.

They soon arrived at the Dorsey International underground parking lot. Brielle went to her department to collect some

documents.

The atmosphere felt different today. Rumors had spread that Brielle was the daughter of the

Haywood family. Before anyone could digest that, another rumor claimed she had stolen that identity. The following evening, the

Haywoods were set to clarify this at a banquet and demand a public apology from Brielle.

The video had spread wide, but this juicier gossip had everyone’s attention fixed on the upcoming Haywood soirée.

Brielle ignored their judgements, grabbed the necessary paperwork, and headed to the top floor.

In the executive office, Patrick laid a report before Max. “Mr. Dorsey, a few board members are liaising with Ryan, discussing an

investment in Alpha Company. Ryan seems unwilling to give up on that project.”

Ryan had hoped to turn his fortunes around with this venture, but Max’s sudden return had thrown a wrench in his plans. Plus,

with the scandal of his son’s affair becoming common knowledge, Ryan got a few raps on the knuckles from Michael.

“Let them reach out. After all these years at Dorsey International, Ryan’s bound to have some loyalists.”

Drawing the snake from its hole was the best way to catch it.

Patrick placed the document on the desk, “William and Ryan have been in touch too. They met last night, though what about is

unclear.”

Max cracked a smile, flipping open the file, “William’s position is solid. Unless he slips up, there’s not much I can do about him.

He's not foolish enough to make a move unless he's sure it's a fatal blow."

But perhaps he might push a scapegoat forward first.

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As for who the fall guy was, it was still too early to tell.

The clock struck the hour for the meeting, and the executives settled into their seats one by one. The meeting was a smaller

affair this time, taking place in Max's office.

The HR Director and the Finance Director, having witnessed that episode in the office earlier, were quick to their feet when they

saw Brielle walk in, oozing flattery from every pore. "Ms. Brielle, how are you."

They had long since picked up on the dynamic between these two and were eager to curry favor.

Meanwhile, the other two in the office were taken aback by the deference shown to Brielle. They wanted to throw a snide remark

or two, but with Max present, they bit their tongues.

Brielle nodded without betraying any sign of surprise or discomfort and took a seat off to the side.

The meeting was still about the investment in the Book company, and one eager beaver volunteered to personally go and win

over the founder of Book.

Brielle gave the man who stood up a few extra glances—his name was Noah, a director not yet thirty.

Max's approach to management was different from other companies. Take Hatfield Inc., for instance, where all shares were held

within the family. But at Dorsey International, the Dorsey family didn't hold all the shares.

One of the biggest bones of contention Max had with the Dorsey family was bringing in non-family board members, which could

inject fresh perspectives and ensure stable governance structures, but it also stepped on the toes of other family members'

interests.

Noah's father had been one of those brought in back in the day, and now it was Noah's turn. At twenty-eight, Noah had been

with Dorsey International for five years.

“Mr. Dorsey, I believe I can persuade the founder of Book,” he said, standing in his sleek black suit. Brielle couldn’t shake the

feeling that when Noah rose, he had shot a glance her way.

Max remained silent, his expression frosty.

Brielle pondered for a moment before standing up herself, “Mr. Dorsey, Book is indeed a fine company, but I’d like to request a

business trip abroad. I might bump into even more promising prospects.”

The room fell silent after her words.

Noah looked at Brielle with a sneer, “A better prospect than Book? Ms. Brielle, do you have any idea what you are talking about?

A billion-dollar valuation in half a year – do you think such

people are just lying around on the street? Could you maybe engage your brain before speaking?”

Brielle was now certain of her intuition; Noah was hostile toward her.

“Mr. Noah, the founder of Book isn’t going to change his mind overnight.”

“Ms. Haywood, how do you know I can’t change his mind? Besides, we have Ms. Alivia on our side.”

Brielle frowned. Alivia wasn’t a Dorsey International employee. Why would she be involved in their investments?

She looked at Max, who was just sitting there impassively. Feeling somewhat frustrated but recalling his promise from earlier at

her apartment, she made up her mind.

Regardless, she was ready to go to the mat for Dorsey International, “Mr. Dorsey, after tomorrow night, I can head abroad. Ms.

Alivia’s institute is well-known, but I’ve heard that her friend is not the only one from her class starting a business. I have some

ideas already. Just give me a little time to do some field research, and I’ll get back to you with a solid answer.”

Noah opened his mouth to retort, but Max simply responded, “Hmm.” That was an assent.

Noah’s face darkened, and he shot Brielle a glance before quickly looking away.

Max looked up. “If you want to try and persuade the founder, you’re free to leave whenever.”

A glint of satisfaction passed through Noah's eyes, and he nodded, "Alright."

After the meeting, Brielle didn't linger. She returned to her office downstairs. No sooner had she sat down than a call from an

unfamiliar number came through.

Without thinking. Brielle knew it was Lillian, probably calling to gloat about how much the Haywood family was fawning over her

now. Brielle blocked the number without giving her the satisfaction.

Lillian tried several different numbers, none of which Brielle answered, infuriating her to the point of nearly smashing her phone.

The Haywood family had, overnight, redone Brielle's old room to suit her and presented her with several luxury cars worth

millions. Wardrobes and jewelry boxes were filled and sent to her.

Though the Haywood family had always treated her well, their current efforts seemed to be aimed at spoiling her rotten.

Compared to Brielle's treatment, Brielle seemed worse off than a servant.

Lillian was in high spirits, feeling utterly triumphant. Moreover, her own reputation had been restored. When dealing with Brielle's

paperwork years ago, she had been cunning enough to cover her bases, which now proved useful.

Tomorrow night, the Haywood family would announce her engagement to Spencer, and in front of all their guests, they would

acknowledge her identity. Just the thought of it made Lillian almost giddy with excitement.

While the Haywood family might not be as prestigious as some mysterious international dynasty, they were still a household

name in Beaconsfield.

As long as Brielle wasn't the lady of that illustrious family, Lillian would have won completely.

## Chapter 159

She was hell-bent on bringing Brielle down a peg or two, but Brielle had other plans. She'd booked a flight out of the country for

the day after tomorrow and had started to research emerging social media companies.

Book was indeed the brightest star in the constellation of startups—next to it, every other contender seemed to fade into

obscurity.

While replying to messages from the charity foundation, Brielle couldn't help but smile at the findings of her investigation. It

seemed there was one company that stood out.

Reassured, she engaged in a relaxed conversation with the charity. All the recordings and surveillance she had handed over,

along with the transaction records of her donations to the charity, were enough to prove that the money was indeed given by her.

Brielle didn't want to squabble over this at the party, so she had reached out to the police department she'd been in touch with

before.

The charity was willing to vouch for her, and with all the evidence, Lillian's guilt was as good as nailed down.

Brielle deliberately set the arrest for the following evening. She had said before that the more Lillian cared about something, the

more Brielle wanted to destroy it. And she had an ace up her sleeve, something she planned to reveal at the party. It all

depended on how far the Haywood family would push her.

The Haywoods were bent on throwing a lavish gala, sending out a flood of invitations and making it known that someone from

the Dorsey family was expected to attend.

Who in Beaconsfield wouldn't want to rub shoulders with the Dorseys? All the invitations that had been sent out were accepted,

and the social circles were abuzz with speculation about what might unfold at the party.

"Will Brielle even have the nerve to show up? I bet Spencer would think she's bad luck," someone gossiped.

"Never mind Spencer, the Haywoods must be livid to find out they've been raising a bastard all these years," another added.

"The magic drama of the year. I heard her personal life is a hot mess. She admitted to Spencer's face that she's been keeping a

toy boy on the side."

The chat about Brielle grew more fervent, but she herself slept soundly.

Everyone thought she wouldn't dare to show up, but on the contrary, she started getting ready. with Aubree from the afternoon.

Aubree sat on the black salon chair, amused by Brielle's rare serious effort to doll up. "You're looking for trouble, aren't you?" she

teased.

Brielle squinted her eyes as the makeup brush swept across her face, "If I don't go, they'll only say worse things about me."

Aubree chuckled, then her gaze dropped, "Do you think Max will really come?"

"I don't know."

Brielle hadn't gone to the office that day. She had taken the day off instead.

Patrick had called her to ask about the orphanage location, and Brielle simply laid out her requirements. Patrick assured her he

would handle the rest.

"Probably not," she replied, closing her eyes to let the stylist finish their work.

Aubree, admiring her freshly manicured nails, said with a sardonic tone. "I think he will. Max seems to have a soft spot for you."

"He said he'd consider marrying Alivia."

Aubree's hands paused, then she swore, "Men really are all the same, aren't they?"

Brielle found it funny, but the laughter faded when she saw the faint bruise around Aubree's neck.

Aubree seemed to feel Brielle's gaze and pulled her collar up a bit, "He got a bit rough last. night."

Was it just an accident, or had it been intentional? Brielle didn't dare to ask.

The Haywood family mansion was ablaze with lights. Almost all the guests had arrived.

From the entrance to the garden, everything was decorated festively. The banquet tables were filled with pastries and red wine,

and there was a fragrance of perfume in the air.

Lillian was still upstairs, surrounded by a swarm of stylists. She was wearing a dress that glittered with tiny diamonds, shining

brilliantly with every step. Rumor had it that it was handcrafted by an Italian designer, and just the dress alone was worth a

fortune. Her vanity was supremely satisfied, and she couldn't resist posting in the group from before.

[You're all coming tonight, right?]

The last encounter at Tequila Sunset had been unpleasant, and now Lillian had seemingly changed her stripes overnight. Not

only had she become a true lady of the Haywood family, but she might even oust Brielle and become Spencer's fiancée. So the

group chat was a bit awkward at the moment.

It was Sophia who broke the ice. [Lillian, congratulations. You've really had it hard these years. Don't worry, we'll definitely be

there.]

Lillian read the message and felt the irony of it. [Then I'll be waiting.]

The rest of the group remained silent, each remembering how they had humiliated Lillian last time. Who knew if she was one to

hold a grudge?

In the end, only Sophia showed up. She went straight upstairs to see Lillian and upon seeing the dress, a surge of envy flashed

through her. A dress worth millions was not something just anyone could wear.

Lillian caught the emotion in her eyes and approached her with feigned warmth, "Sophia, thanks for your support last time."

Sophia was taken aback, as she hadn't really stood up for Lillian. Even when Aubree threw the drink, Sophia hadn't stepped

forward.

"By the way, Sophia, do you know Aubree and Andrew slept together?"

## Chapter 160

Sophia felt like she'd been struck by lightning. Her voice trembled with disbelief. "What did you say?"

Lillian's face was etched with contempt. Aubree had dared to throw wine in her face, and now she was going to pay the price.

Tonight was not only about bringing Brielle to her knees but also about exposing Aubree and Andrew's secret relationship to the

public eye. However, wary of upsetting the influential Clements family, Lillian knew this task had to be Sophia's doing. Sophia

detested Brielle and Aubree, and being Tessa's lackey, she was more than willing to take on the charge.

“My brother told me he saw Andrew and Aubree checking into a hotel together, and I’ve seen them myself,” Lillian sneered.

Sophia’s scalp tingled with rage, her fists clenched. “Are you serious?”

“Absolutely. Why else would these so-called siblings, who aren’t blood-related, share a room when traveling? Are the Clements

on a budget or something?”

Sophia’s hands shook, her eyes red with fury. “Lillian, thanks for sharing this. I won’t let Aubree get away with this. Birds of a

feather, she and Brielle are both trash.”

Lillian watched as Sophia’s emotions peaked, then she began to set the stage. “Brielle and Aubree will be here tonight. Try not to

seem too angry, okay? We can handle this privately.”

But this hit a nerve with Sophia. “No, I want to use this opportunity. To reveal what Aubree has done, and Andrew, how could he!”

Anger often clouds judgment, and Sophia felt a fire raging within her. She had to relay this information to Tessa immediately.

That bitch Aubree hooked up with Andrew!

Lillian, feigning concern, took Sophia’s arm. “Sophia, calm down. Let’s head downstairs.”

Sophia, bereft of reason, shook off her hand and stormed down.

Lillian watched her go, a slight smirk on her lips, then gracefully made her way to the staircase. The hall was resplendent, the

guests mingling in earnest conversation. Basking in the glory of her expensive gown, Lillian descended the grand staircase,

feeling like the belle of the ball, all eyes on her. Then she spotted Spencer, looking dapper yet impatient, ignoring her presence,

which irked her.

Then she thought, if she played her cards right and caught Max’s eye, she wouldn’t need to cling to Spencer – she could aim

higher.

With each elegant step, Lillian felt like a fairy-tale princess, the music adding to her grandeur. But before she could soak up the



adoration, the doors swung open, and in walked Brielle.

draped in a white lace dress, her grace slow and deliberate. And the man standing by her side was elegant as the moon, with the

rosary on his wrist particularly conspicuous.

It was Max!

The hall fell into a hushed reverence. Max rarely attended such events, and his presence alone was enough to steal the

spotlight.

Though Max and Brielle didn't exhibit overt intimacy, not even linking arms, their mere proximity seemed to complement each

other perfectly.

No one knew what Max's presence signified, as it was his first time attending with a female companion.

No one knew if Brielle

was indeed his date. At least he didn't push her away.

The room seemed to hit mute. And there was Lillian, halfway down the stairs, now ignored by all, her grand entrance dissolving

into awkwardness.

She had hoped to overshadow Brielle tonight, but there stood Brielle, not at all diminished by Max's imposing aura. Brielle herself

exuded a transcendental charisma, and her white lace dress only accentuated her allure.

How was she fit to stand before Max?