

## Master 191

### Chapter 191

"Aubree, you know, Mr. Lynch is actually a pretty good catch," said the voice at the other end of the line. "If you're interested, the

Clements family and the Lynch family could probably still make this marriage happen. Mr. Lynch has said he doesn't care how

many guys a woman has been with, and well, certain things can be 'restored,' if you know what I mean."

Aubree listened quietly, her fingers gripping her cell phone turning white from the pressure. It took her a while to hang up. "Bri,

let's hit the road."

Brielle hadn't heard the conversation on speakerphone and was unaware of what had been discussed.

She started the car and drove off.

When they arrived at Aubree's place, Brielle intended to walk her up to her apartment, but Aubree was rubbing her temples.

Brielle sensed her desire to be alone and didn't step out of the car. "I remember you mentioned wanting a job, right? Maybe give

it a shot? It could take your mind off Andrew for a while."

She revved the engine, her expression neutral. "Besides, if Andrew really ties the knot with Tessa, or if they have kids, are you

going to keep this thing going with him? If the Clements clan finds out, what's your plan? Tiffanie told me that in Beaconsfield,

there are two women you don't mess with: Alivia and Tessa. If Tessa goes all out to give Andrew a child, he'll probably treasure

her to no end, and you'll be left feeling even worse."

Everyone in Beaconsfield knew about Tessa's frail health; nobody thought she could handle childbirth.

But Brielle had a hunch that Tessa was the type to go all-in.

Right now, she was oblivious to the crisis, but once she sensed Andrew hooked up with another woman, her quickest solution

would be to cling to her broken body and give Andrew a child, binding him to her for life.

And Aubree? She was just a catalyst in this scenario.

After her candid talk, Brielle drove away.

Meanwhile, Tessa had arrived in the hallway and immediately spotted the man leaning against the wall, smoking. "Andrew."

Hearing the sound of high heels, Andrew thought it was Aubree returning. When he looked up and saw Tessa, he quickly

stubbed out his cigarette. "What's up?"

Tessa rarely attended parties, let alone visited places like this, which made Andrew somewhat panicked.

He didn't want to agitate her with the smell of smoke. "Wait here. I'll just tell Max and Mr. Lynch, then I'll take you home."

Tessa was thin, her hand slipping onto his arm. "I took some medicine before coming out. I'm fine. I just ran into Aubree at the

entrance, with Spencer's ex-fiancée. Andrew, you might want to tell your sister to avoid such questionable company."

Sophia had told her about Brielle's scandalous private life.

Plus, Brielle had once conned Andrew out of a hefty sum, a grudge Tessa held as if the money

were her own.

She spoke hastily and then, realizing the urgency in her voice, coughed a few times and leaned closer to Andrew.

"And Aubree's not getting any younger. I heard the Clements family was looking for a suitable match for her years ago. Why is

there still no news?"

Tessa had always been irked by Aubree's status, especially since she wasn't Andrew's biological sister. The mere thought of a

spark between them was revolting.

Andrew held her gently. "This place isn't suitable for you. We can talk more at home. And tonight, I introduced Aubree to a guy,

Mr. Lynch from Infinity Brilliance. You know them, right?"

Of course, Tessa knew about Infinity Brilliance, the leading name in diamonds. She thought she wanted Aubree to get married,

but when she heard the groom-to-be was the young CEO of such a prominent company, she felt incredibly uneasy. It turned out

she was just jealous of Aubree's beauty and health.

She didn't want Aubree to have it too good.

Her face paled. "Really? Let me go in and meet your friends then."

It was the first time Tessa had asked to meet his friends, and Andrew couldn't refuse.

As he escorted Tessa into the booth, Max and Dustin remained as before, silently sipping their drinks. The atmosphere wasn't

awkward; it was just a bit eerie.

Tessa hadn't expected Max to be there. Everyone in the social circles of Beaconsfield knew him. She faltered momentarily, then

nodded politely.

Her gaze moved to Dustin and she realized that his good looks were on par with Max's, though their auras were entirely different.

Dustin appeared to be a playboy, with his flirtatious eyes and thin lips.

Noticing Aubree hadn't entered, he quirked an eyebrow. "Mr. Clements, did your sister bolt?"

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Tessa knew the conversation was about Aubree, and it seemed Andrew hadn't lied. He really had set Aubree up with someone.

She let out a sigh of relief. It looked like there was nothing between Andrew and Aubree after all.

But did Aubree really match up to the CEO of Infinity Brilliance?

She snickered inwardly, took a seat next to Andrew, and spoke for him, "She did leave early, went out with a friend."

"A friend?"

Dustin's interest piqued, recalling the phone call Aubree had made. Could it have been Brielle?

Dustin's reason for prodding Max tonight was because he'd learned Brielle's real name. He'd been duped badly before, and it

wasn't until he met with Andrew back home that he found out the little canary had given him a fake name..

She really had no conscience. Didn't they both gossip about Max when they were abroad?

"Yeah, her name is Brielle. I don't think Mr. Lynch would know her."

"How could I not know her? Brielle and I have had quite delightful conversations."

He deliberately emphasized “delightful conversations,” then watched for Max’s reaction.

The man’s face darkened, not at him, but turning to Tessa. “You said Aubree left with Brielle?”

His tone seemed normal at first, but his lips were tightly pursed.

Brielle wasn’t here for him? But for Aubree?

The air in the booth felt stifling to him.

Tessa hadn’t expected Max to speak with her, and it seemed he was asking about Brielle?

“Yeah.”

She leaned towards Andrew, whispering a question only they could hear, “What’s the deal with Brielle and Max?”

Andrew was almost instinctively going to deny it, since no one yet knew about their relationship. If word got to Michael, no one

would be in for a good time.

But before he could speak, Dustin stood up, raising his glass. “Mr. Dorsey, I’d like to invite Brielle over to Infinity Brilliance for a

tour, business-related, of course. You wouldn’t object, would you?”

A smile played on his lips, his eyes shimmering, but Max remained unflinching, “Dorsey International has no plans to collaborate

with Infinity Brilliance at this time.”

“Mr. Dorsey, she’s just an employee. Why the fuss?”

Dustin leaned in, pouring Max a drink, his demeanor momentarily submissive. “Brielle won’t be at a loss with me. All stores under

Infinity Brilliance will be free for her, as long as she accompanies me on a trip abroad. How about that?”

Max’s grip tightened on his glass, tempted to splash the contents over Dustin’s grinning face.

He began to wonder if he’d been too stingy with Brielle.

He’d offered a card before, but Brielle hadn’t accepted it. So far, it seemed he hadn’t provided. any tangible benefits.

Even Dustin was offering all stores for free right off the bat, making him feel one-upped.

A competitive edge rose within him, and he looked up at Dustin, “Brielle has more important tasks at hand. Mr. Lynch, if you want

to please someone, perhaps you should consider how to help her land this deal. What do you think?”

Dustin’s eyes narrowed, thinking Max was quite cunning.

Brielle was working for Dorsey International, negotiating deals for them. If he helped Brielle, wouldn't that indirectly benefit

Dorsey International?

He failed to wedge himself into the situation but managed to make Max a profit.

Capitalists and their tricks...

The corners of Max's mouth curved into a smile as he stood, "It's getting late. I'll head out. Mr. Lynch, if you make up your mind,

feel free to visit Dorsey International anytime."

The trap was set right before Dustin's eyes – whether he jumped or not was entirely up to him.

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Dustin sat down in frustration, furrowing his brows tightly. He heard a soft, delicate voice from beside him, "Mr. Lynch, you and

Brielle..."

Tessa couldn't help but succumb to another coughing fit, her cheeks flushing with the effort.

Dustin raised an eyebrow and let out a lazy grin, stretching his legs onto the coffee table. "Brielle? Brielle just makes me feel

familiar. It's Aubree I'm really into. Eve got the whole scene planned out in my head. Just the other day, I had a brief chat with

Brielle about art. She seemed to dig my vibe. Wonder if Aubree would feel the same.

His words left nothing to the imagination. Tessa frowned. So, Brielle had snagged another one on her overseas escapades. She

hated to admit it, but Brielle was a looker. Such a shame, though, just another woman men played with.

Dustin stood up, his gaze sweeping past Andrew with a smirk. "Mr. Clements is one lucky guy. having such a pretty sister and an

attractive fiancée."

Tessa felt a pang of discomfort. She and Aubree were nothing alike. If it hadn't been for Aubree's stroke of luck, being taken in

by the Clements family as a foster child, she wouldn't have been in Andrew's league at all.

But to Andrew, Dustin's words seemed to hint that he knew about his relationship with Aubree. He chuckled. "Mr. Lynch, didn't

you just say you didn't mind used goods?"

Dustin's brow furrowed. He always knew he played the field, but Andrew seemed even less principled, blatantly so.

Instantly, he lost interest in Aubree. She would never forget Andrew, and he disliked the thought of a woman's heart occupied by

another while in his bed. Romance and love are nothing compared to the direct pleasure of the body. He never bothered with

them.

And Brielle, she had always felt familiar. They got along well. She wasn't like the others. He didn't want her to stumble over such

trivial matters.

Besides, Brielle and Max? That was going nowhere fast. Ignoring Max's obvious cluelessness in the matter, Michael was a huge

obstacle in itself. Maybe once they split, he could swoop in and score some points with Brielle.

Dustin chuckled to himself, deciding not to fall into the pit Max had dug. "I really don't mind, but Mr. Clements, are you sure she'd

be willing to keep me company?"

"Just send me your room number, and I'll pass it to Aubree. Whether she comes or not is up to her."

Dustin averted his gaze, picking up his coat from nearby. "No need. I'm not one to coerce. These kinds of things are best when

they're mutual."

He stepped out of Tequila Sunset, lighting a cigarette, and slid into his car that had been waiting.

Nearby stood Max.

Dustin couldn't help but smirk as he drove up. "Mr. Dorsey, a man of your stature without a lift? Need a ride?"

It was a deliberate taunt. "Just remembered, my destination and your Premier Palace aren't on the way. Never mind, then. Is the

designated driver Mr. Dorsey called on the way? Take your time. I'll be off."

Dustin may have been the first to mock Max to his face. As he finished, another car pulled up. its window rolling down to reveal

Brielle's face. It was a surprise to both men.

Hadn't she left with Aubree?

Why had she come back?

Brielle honked twice, poking her head out.

Max's stoic features softened with a smile, like a flickering candle in the night. He glanced at Dustin. "No need for your trouble,

Mr. Lynch. My ride's here. Until next time."

Fuming, Dustin rolled down his window, intending to exchange a few words with Brielle, but Max had already shut himself in the

car, preventing her from seeing him.

Clutching the steering wheel, Dustin couldn't fathom why Brielle would entangle herself with such a man.

Unaware of Dustin's presence, Brielle saw Max get into the car and gently reached to fasten his Seatbelt.

Max's eyes were half-closed, his Adam's apple prominent as he leaned back. As Brielle pulled The seatbelt across, she heard

him ask, "Weren't we

supposed to call it quits?" His tone was Indifferent, as if the night's frustration had belonged to someone else.

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Brielle knew he was angry, so she quickly fastened her seatbelt securely. "It's the pain talking. nonsense, that's all."

Max had a bit of booze tonight, a subtle scent of whiskey lingering about him, and after Dustin got under his skin, he felt the rush

of blood making the buzz hit harder. At her words, he just arched an eyebrow slightly.

Gripping the steering wheel Brielle wanted to say something more, to sort of patch things up, but then Max's phone started to

ring. He didn't respond, closing his eyes with a cold and indifferent expression.

"Mr. Dorsey, your phone's ringing." Brielle reminded, breaking the icy silence.

Max's eyelashes fluttered as he took out his phone and pressed the answer button.

Brielle couldn't make out what was said on the other end, but Max's face turned to stone, and the air seemed to freeze over even

more. She felt like she might get frostbite, her lips involuntarily starting to quiver.

She heard Max let out a sardonic chuckle. "He can't sit still, can he?" The sarcasm was thick in his voice.

Just as Brielle was about to take a turn, she saw him end the call, his voice cold as ice. "Forget Premier Palace. Head to the hotel."

Brielle was taken aback, unclear about what had just happened, but then she heard herself ask, "You went to the police station?"

She hadn't planned to bring it up, just mentioned postponing her business trip. Now, with him asking, she simply nodded.

"Yeah, ran into some trouble."

"What kind of trouble?"

"Got a threatening text, and someone broke into my place. The cops were all around my apartment, but I don't dare stay there

alone right now. Thankfully, Patrick's waiting for me downstairs."

followed by the break-in—she couldn't for the life of her piece it all together. Aside from their past grievances, there didn't seem to

be any entanglement between her and Sophia. So what was the game plan of the person behind all this?

First Sophia's disappearance, then the threatening message

"Next time something like this happens, tell me earlier."

There was warmth in Brielle's heart. "Sure, which hotel?"

Before she could finish, she noticed in the rearview mirror some flashes of light. Her brow

furrowed—were they being followed?

Max noticed too, a slight smirk playing on his lips, "Someone's well-prepared."

Brielle didn't grasp his meaning but played along, "So, we're still heading to the hotel?"

Max rubbed his forehead, "I'll have to swing back to Premier Palace later. Can't let the show go on without me."

Brielle frowned, "What's going on?"

"William's probably caught wind of our connection."



Brielle tensed up. She always knew William was no simple character, but how had he found out about this? Even Spencer was in the dark.

Her confusion deepened, but then she heard Max, "I'll have some people keep an eye on you. Stay vigilant these days."

Was she getting entangled in the Dorsey family feud?

"What did William do?"

"My father's waiting at Premier Palace right now."

It clicked for Brielle. If they went to Premier Palace now, it would be walking right into a trap. But how would William know she'd

be heading back there tonight, especially this late? And for what reason would Michael join him in this night-time escapade?

This was Dorsey family drama, and Brielle didn't want to pry further. "I'll just go to the hotel. then."

"I'll take you to a hotel under Dorsey International. I've got a suite there, and you'll be well looked after."

It was the first time Brielle truly sensed the internal strife of Dorsey International, and she wanted no part in it. If William really

knew about her entanglement with Max, she feared her days ahead would be anything but calm.

Max personally dropped her off at the hotel, and just before he left, he suddenly turned to ask. "What's the deal with the photos of you and Spencer?"

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Photos? It must've been the photos that got out.

Brielle's scalp tingled with irritation, desperate to know the extent of their circulation.

Max lingered at the door, pinching the hotel keycard between his fingers, uncertain of Brielle's stance towards Spencer. They

were childhood sweethearts, always together, and though the engagement was broken off decisively, such intimate photos

wouldn't have leaked unless she gave Spencer a chance to be caught in the act. A chill spread through his heart. "If you need

anything, just call the front desk.”

Brielle was at a loss for words. After he left, she glanced at her phone. Someone had sent her those photos, captured perfectly

by the camera. Had she not been one of the subjects, she might have believed they were in a passionate embrace. She

trembled with anger, and just then, Miranda’s call came through.

“Brielle! Didn’t you break off your engagement with Spencer? And here you are, playing us all for fools, I must say you’re quite

the actress.”

Brielle hung up almost instantly, regretting her mishap with the answer button.

Cameron’s message followed, equally confrontational. [You ended things with Spencer publicly. and privately you jump into his

bed. I knew you had a wild side, but I didn’t think you’d be so keen on being the other woman. Brielle, have you completely

tossed aside all the etiquette and values taught by the Haywood family over the years?]

What upbringing did the Haywoods ever have?

Brielle found it laughable. She decided to block all the Haywoods’ contacts. Out of sight, out of mind.

What she didn’t expect was for Spencer to have the gall to reach out, asking to meet her. Seeing him now just irked her. Her

brows furrowed, she tossed her phone aside, ignoring everyone.

But Spencer was in no hurry. With the photos out, there were bound to be rumors, and the story of their broken engagement

became even more tangled.

Spencer set down his phone, catching Faith’s suspicious gaze with a slight smirk. Faith felt conflicted seeing such photos,

especially after the recent video scandal involving her son and Lillian. “Spencer, who took this pictures?”

Spencer had no intention of admitting it was a setup. “Who else but Brielle? She regrets. breaking off the engagement, always

had feelings for me.”

Faith was torn between relief and worry. Brielle was preferable to Lillian, but Faith didn't like her temperament. "She has feelings

for you? She released this photos on purpose?"

It didn't make sense, since Brielle had been so composed during the breakup.

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14:16

Impatience flashed across Spencer's face as he stood up, "Women are fickle, mom. She released that video of me and Lillian to

get my attention. Please do not meddle in my affairs.

Faith felt a pang of discomfort.

After Spencer left the Dorseys', he received a call from his uncle William, a rare occurrence throughout the years at the Dorsey

family.

"Spencer, what's this fuss about you and Brielle?"

Spencer frowned, why was everyone so concerned about him and Brielle? "She's trying to get back together with me.

William went quiet for a moment, his annoyance palpable, "Really? I've heard Brielle's got another man on the side."

"Uncle William, those are just rumors."

William's expression darkened, and before him knelt a haggard woman, bound and gagged, unable to speak. Her eyes were

wide with terror, looking fearfully at the man before her.

This woman was Sophia.

Sophia trembled all over, devoid of her former defiance, wishing she could bury her face in the ground. Her body bore lash marks

and signs of abuse. William knew how to utterly destroy a woman.

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Sophia shivered uncontrollably, her mind replaying the scene that unfolded before her eyes at the Haywood family's floral wall.

Earlier, after Lillian had spilled the beans about Aubree and Andrew's sordid affair, Sophia was fuming with rage, her mind and

heart filled with the fiery desire to confront Aubree, and expose their filthy relationship in front of everyone—avenging Tessa in the

process.

But as she searched the grand Haywood family soiree, Aubree was nowhere to be found. Instead, by the floral wall, she

stumbled upon Max pressing Brielle against the wall, their kiss deep with passion.

Sophia felt as if lightning had struck her, freezing her in place. Then she heard Spencer's voice. He was looking for Brielle. In the

next moment, Max slipped off his jacket, draping it over Brielle as they continued their kissing.

Sophia was engulfed in shock and fear, for she had glimpsed Max's secret. In a panicked reflex, she snapped a photo, her

original intent to find Aubree forgotten as she stumbled along the Haywood estate's cobblestone path, only to collide with several

men, her phone clattering to the ground.

The photo she took was not clear, and one could only vaguely make out a couple kissing. However, anyone familiar with the

attire of Brielle and Max would recognize them.

Before she knew it, she was standing before William. Sophia had met William a few times. before and had only seen him as a

very patient elder.

As he toyed with her phone, he asked her pointed questions.

"First question, who's in this photo?"

Sophia wasn't a fool. She could not speak the truth. If Max found out she had leaked his secret. would she have any chance of

survival? She had taken the photo out of sheer reflex, never intending to share it with anyone..

William was in no rush, as he let his bodyguards bring in a vagrant to violate her. Amidst the insults and threats, her sanity

crumbled.

Now, in William's presence, Sophia had lost all will to resist, wishing instead to cower at his feet like a dog. She knew she had a

problem, probably suffering from Stockholm Syndrome, where the victim develops a psychological dependence on the

perpetrator and unquestioningly follows their commands.

She shook uncontrollably until the gag was removed from her mouth. William tapped her cheek with the phone. "So, you're

saying the people in this photo are Brielle and Max?"

Sophia nodded frantically. "Yes, yes. I saw it with my own eyes."

"If only I could pluck those eyes out," he said with a feigned regret. "The photo's too blurry. Even if it reached the old man's

hands, he wouldn't believe it."

Sophia's head hung low, dripping blood onto the floor.

"I'll let you go." William proposed, "Find a way to get close to Brielle and snap a clearer picture, alright?"

Sophia recoiled, then nodded, "Yes, I'll get you a better picture."

William smirked, lifting her chin. "Remember, all this is because of Brielle. You should be happy to bring her down, right?"

A flicker of resentment flashed in Sophia's eyes as she nodded, "Yes, I wish she were dead."

William was satisfied, "Good to know. It's not a waste to have had you 'trained.' Go on, if you complete your task, I promise to

leave Brielle to your mercy."

Sophia's eyes lit up. She now fully believed William and redirected all her resentment toward Brielle. She must make Brielle

suffer as she had!

William chuckled. If this woman weren't still useful, he wouldn't keep her around. He had inadvertently tipped off Max, who must

have sensed something was amiss.

The photo had already reached Michael, and William had laid the groundwork, yet Michael had gone straight to Premier Palace

instead of summoning Max to the family's mansion.

The implications were significant. Being called to the mansion for mistakes signaled the beginning of lost trust, but Michael's

choice to lie in wait at Premier Palace suggested his tolerance for Max was far greater than for others.

William sneered. Years of patience nearly unraveled, but thankfully Max had no concrete evidence, perhaps only suspecting

William's machinations.

He gazed down, fingering a pair of beads, as the door behind him swung open. A young man. appeared, "Dad, are you

finished?"

William nodded, motioning for Sophia to be unbound. The young man approached her. "Sophia, let me escort you out."

Sophia shrank back, nodding in a fluster. They were not worried about Sophia speaking out. She didn't dare, nor did she want to.

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Inside the grand halls of Premier Palace, Max strode into the living room, his blazer casually draped over his elbow.

The butler took his belongings and hung them on the nearby coat rack.

Michael sat upright on the sofa, his piercing gaze settling on Max, "Why are you home so late?" Max slipped off his cufflinks,

tossing them carelessly to the butler, and made his way to the couch, "Had a few drinks with Andrew."

The scent of liquor clung to him, and on the coffee table lay several photographs—the very ones. William had been holding,

Max wasn't in a rush. He picked up the photos, studied them for a moment before commenting. "Not a bad shot."

"Ridiculous!"

The sharpness in that single word sent the servants scurrying out of the room, heads lowered and faces flushed with panic.

"Is that Brielle in these pictures?"

Max chuckled and took a seat, "What makes you think that's Brielle?"

Michael wasn't so sure now, especially seeing Max's composed demeanor, his brow furrowed with concern. "Then who is it? If

these pictures get to the Barnes family, what are you going to tell Jose, Max? Don't go down the same path as your brother. I

don't care about his escapades, but you don't have that liberty."

“Your future wife is Alivia, and she’s set her heart on you. The Barnes family and the Dorsey family are practically announcing

the engagement. We’ve all but said it out loud. You know what I mean?”

Realizing the woman in the photos wasn’t Brielle, Michael’s tone softened.

“Max, your mother-” He sighed deeply, “Her health hasn’t been good, and she hopes you’ll settle down soon. Alivia calls her

every month. I don’t want any trouble between you two.”

The Dorsey family situation was complex. Max, the youngest son, didn’t share a mother with his siblings. In Michael’s era, the

laws still allowed for multiple wives, following old traditions. Max’s mother was the last lawful wife, but she never stayed in the

mansion, instead, she was abroad receiving treatment for an illness, in a facility not far from Alivia’s research institute.

Michael had been a playboy all his life, but he had poured all his affection into this last wife. Even Max, her son, was his pride

and joy. Unfortunately, after Max’s birth, she fell ill and her mental state was never the same.

“Father, I have always arranged for someone to take care of mother, and as for the woman in

the photos, even if it were Brielle, so what?”

Max had always been decisive, and even if he hadn’t been born into the Dorsey family, he

believed he could have climbed into the elite circles on his own merit. No one could sway his decisions.

Michael’s chest tightened at his words, only Max had the audacity to speak to him like that, and yet he couldn’t argue.

Even if it were Brielle, what then? What did he mean by that?

Michael was harsh to everyone else in the Dorsey family but dared not press too hard on his youngest son.

Now Max controlled fifty-one percent of Dorsey International’s shares and had accumulated a vast amount of foreign capital

over the years. Aside from Dorsey International’s assets. whether he owned other companies was unknown. Michael had used

Dorsey International to pressure Everett but never dared use it against Max.

He felt a metaphorical blow to the head and was silent for a long time.

Max, however, poured him a cup of water, "Father, have some water."

Michael shivered with anger, and after a while, he clenched his teeth, "So, it is you in those pictures, with Brielle? When did

you..."

Max laughed softly, "What I said was, even if it were Brielle, so what? I have the right to choose my wife, don't I? Until I find

someone I like, it doesn't matter who I marry. But if I do find someone I like, then she's the only one for me."

The old man took a deep breath, annoyed, and took the tea, "You truly want to be the death of me."

He took a few sips to cool off and ventured. "So, do you have someone you like now?"

Max paused, a crease forming between his brows, "I don't know what liking someone means."

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Hearing that response, Michael's worries dissipated, and his gaze drifted to the coffee table. "I've no idea who took this picture,

but looking closely, the person in it doesn't even look like you."

The scene was too blurry, and there wasn't a single clear shot of a face, so it could be anyone. But that anonymous text had

planted the seed in his mind that it was Max and Brielle, so the more he looked, the more he saw the resemblance.

Now, with Max's answer, Michael was fully at ease, he chuckled and patted him on the shoulder.

"Better not to know. Just go ahead and marry Alivia. You're young. You'll understand in time."

Max stared at the crystal-clear liquid in Michael's cup, his lips lightly pursed, "Next time there's a photo like this, you don't need

to worry. I don't want to end up like Victoria."

Everyone in the Dorsey clan knew how tough Michael had been on Everett. So controlling that he even dictated how often they

should have sex each month, and if Victoria ever missed her 'quota', she'd come running to Michael, tears in her eyes, to

complain.



“Ha, just make sure you don’t end up embarrassing yourself like Victoria did. I can understand her getting caught up in love.

She’s a woman after all, but Dorsey men can’t allow that to sway them. Look at your older brothers, and that young buck

Spencer. Dorsey men are not known to  
be fools in love.”

Even Michael himself had had his fair share of women, but in his eyes, very few were worth having children with. It was only

when he met Max’s mother that he truly settled down.

Max absentmindedly twirled his rosary, a gesture that made Michael wave it off, “Let’s put an end to tonight’s drama. Whoever

set this up, we’re not pursuing it further.”

Max raised an eyebrow and chuckled lightly. “Looks like Dad’s got the picture.”

After all, the old man had been through wars and storms, how could he not see through these tactics?

Once he left, Max sat alone on the sofa, a frown creasing his forehead, his fingers absently tracing the rim of his cup.

The butler, Wesley, peeked out from the kitchen and approached him, “Sir, if you’re feeling down, shall I invite Ms. Brielle over?”

“No need.”

Max’s tone was flat, his mind obviously on the photograph.

Wesley didn’t want to intrude too much, sensing there might be a misunderstanding between the two. He had heard the

conversation between Max and Michael. Although Max hadn’t admitted it, he had made his stance clear: even if that woman in

the photo turned out to be

Brielle, he would stand by her, refusing to allow her to walk Everett’s tragic path.

In a way, it was a preemptive strike.

From the night Max brought Brielle home, Wesley sensed she could be the future mistress of the house, and so he always

treated her with respect.

He cleared his throat, "I heard Ms. Brielle just got out of the hospital. I'll have the kitchen prepare some soup to send over."

Max didn't verbally object.

Amused, Wesley instructed the kitchen to start the soup in the wee hours.

Max returned to his study, where Patrick presented his findings. "Mr. Dorsey, it turns out William's men were also responsible for

the incident at Ms. Brielle's apartment."

William's move was well calculated, first confining Sophia to break her will, then staging a burglary at Brielle's place to make her

afraid to stay home. If anything happened between her and Max, she'd naturally seek refuge with her lover.

And if Michael saw the photo and called Max to the mansion, it would be a death sentence for Brielle—a no-win situation for the

little fish in a big pond.

Max took the blurry photo, examined it briefly, and as he slid it into a drawer, he remarked, "His son just got back from abroad.

He wants a spot at Dorsey International, right? Block his entry. Secure that executive position for Brielle."

"Right. Ms. Brielle's staying at a hotel tonight. Should I pick her up?"

Max felt irked, why did everyone keep bringing up Brielle? Compared to the photos of Brielle with Spencer, this one was tame,

and Brielle had even admitted to having feelings for Spencer before. He felt an inexplicable annoyance.

"No need."

Perhaps this relationship would be over sooner rather than later.

## Chapter 199

Brielle only found out the next day that Sophia had returned home.

The news came from a direct call from the police station. They had sent an officer to speak with Sophia that morning, hoping to

glean some information about the kidnappers, but Sophia wasn't giving up anything. She insisted she was just out playing.

However, the text message Brielle received told a different story. It warned her she was next.

The text was real. Sophia was lying. However, she was a victim, and with the clout of the Rowland family behind her, the police

couldn't press too hard. They just advised Brielle to stay alert.

Glancing at the number that sent the threatening message. Brielle noticed there were no new texts.

A knock at the door interrupted her thoughts, and she put away her phone to answer it. Standing there was Wesley. He held out

a steaming pot of chicken soup. "Ms. Brielle, I had the kitchen whip this up for you. I heard you're fresh out of the hospital.

Feeling any better?"

Touched by the gesture, Brielle quickly took the pot, "Thanks a lot."

Wesley offered a warm smile. "Mr. Dorsey asked for it to be made. He's still quite concerned about you."

Feeling somewhat awkward, Brielle knew Wesley had misunderstood something from the start. but she wasn't comfortable

correcting him. To Max, she was just a woman he kept around. This relationship could end at any moment.

"Did he have a good night? I heard Michael was at Premier Palace?"

She had dark circles under her eyes, having spent a sleepless night worrying after hearing that Michael was at the Premier

Palace.

She had considered countless possibilities, such as Michael showing up early in the morning and handing her a card, asking her

to stay away from Max. But then she thought, with her current awkward situation, was it worth Michael's intervention? She

couldn't help but feel amused.

"Mr. Michael was at Premier Palace indeed. But I'm not privy to what they discussed."

"Did they get into a fight?"

"Mr. Dorsey never argues with anyone."

Really? He seemed pretty quick to anger around her. She felt her face flush with embarrassment.

Wesley's blunt advice followed, "If there's a misunderstanding with Mr. Dorsey, Best clear it up soon.

"Right, thanks for the heads-up."

After Wesley left, Brielle sipped from the pot of soup, her mind heavy with thoughts. She decided to make a trip to Dorsey

International. She wanted to see what William's next move would be.

But what she didn't expect was to find a large bouquet of red roses on her desk upon entering her office. Frowning, she asked

her colleagues. "Is this a mistake? Were these meant for someone else?"

One of them replied with a hint of envy. "They came first thing in the morning, addressed to you."

Brielle had barely sat down when her phone pinged with a text from an unknown number.

[Do you like them?]

[Who is this?]

[If you like them, that's all that matters.]

Brielle's frown deepened. Could it be Spencer? But knowing Spencer, if he'd sent them, he'd have signed his name boldly, just to make sure she knew.

Was it Max?

The thought made Brielle scoff at herself. Max would never send her such a thing in this lifetime. She asked someone to remove

the roses and went about her day.

She was notified that there was a meeting upstairs and grabbed the necessary files. As she entered the elevator, she bumped

into William, who was also on his way to the meeting.

Dressed in a crisp gray suit, William's smile was genteel, but it sent a shiver down Brielle's spine. She wanted to escape the

elevator but feared showing her anxiety, so she reluctantly pressed the close button instead.

“Brielle, weren’t you supposed to head overseas to handle some business?”

Her smile strained, she replied, “Ran into a bit of trouble, it’s been postponed.”

“I heard Noah’s been in talks with Alivia. How’s that going?”

“That’s a question for Mr. Noah.” She kept it professional, hoping the elevator would speed up.

“Alivia’s involvement should guarantee success. She’s been waiting for Max for years, frequently caring for his mother. You haven’t met Max’s mother yet, have you?”

## Chapter 200

The words struck Brielle like a needle, piercing deep into the core of her heart. Yet she didn’t show a flicker of emotion on her

face, even daring to look up and meet his gaze head-on.

“Spencer’s treatment of me over the years is no secret, Mr. William. You of all people should be well aware. My connection to

him was nothing more than a broken engagement. I never had the privilege of meeting Max’s mother. As for Mr. Dorsey and

Alivia, they’re a match made in heaven, aren’t they? A perfect pair if ever there was one.”

She was so focused on her words that she didn’t even notice the elevator doors opening. Max and several executives stood

there, having caught every word she said.

William raised an eyebrow, glancing behind Brielle with a smirk. “So, Brielle, you’re here to congratulate Max and Alivia too?”

Perfect, you can tell Max yourself.”

A chill seemed to creep up from behind her, cold enough to seep into her very bones. She turned around and, sure enough,

there was Max, his face impassive as if her words hadn’t touched him at all.

It was the executive elevator. Running into them was to be expected.

Brielle’s heart skipped a beat, and she instinctively avoided meeting his gaze. The other executives seemed oblivious to the

tense atmosphere. The head of Human Resources quickly interjected to smooth things over, “Ms. Haywood, the meeting’s been

moved downstairs.”

Brielle's hand at her side twitched slightly. "Alright," she whispered.

Standing to the side, her heart pounding, she heard William chatting with Max, but Max was always a man of few words, hardly

ever responding with more than two.

The meeting room had been moved to her department's floor. She had earlier ordered someone to remove the flowers she

received, but they, thinking it wasteful to throw them away, placed a sign by them instead—"Flowers Free to a Good Home."

One of the executives

commented, "Nice atmosphere on this floor."

Someone from her department was fetching flowers, replying respectfully. "They were originally for Ms. Haywood."

All at once, the executives' gazes turned to Brielle. "Didn't know you were so popular, Ms. Haywood," they teased.

Brielle forced a bitter smile.

Max approached the flowers, his fingers deftly plucking one. His fingers were long and attractive, the red petals stark against his

skin, and to Brielle, it felt as if he was squeezing the life out of her throat.

She swallowed hard, only to see him silently head to the adjacent room, prepared for the meeting.

Throughout the meeting, she was on edge, until an executive asked about her travel plans. Standing, she responded. "There's

been a situation. I've taken a few days off. Once that's sorted, I'll be ready to travel."

"Ms. Haywood, that's where you're wrong. What personal issue could possibly be more important than company business?"

"Mr. Noah is already chatting with Ms. Alivia, and here you are, still in the country. You don't seem to be busy with anything urgent."

Amidst the murmurs, William spoke up. "Brielle, when you say 'a situation,' you don't mean mending fences with Spencer, do

you? If it's a matter of the heart, we might understand. After all, you and Mr. Noah are competitors. Whether you win or Mr. Noah

does, the company benefits. Right, Max?"

Brielle mentally cursed William a thousand times, wishing he'd shut up.

Max played with his pen, his lashes casting cold shadows. "The meeting is not a place for personal matters."

The room went silent, no one daring to tease any further.

Some flattered Alivia, others stated the new investment was bound to succeed, merely steps away from wishing Max and Alivia a

lifelong happiness.

Max remained aloof, and as the meeting ended, he left with the other executives.

Brielle sat still, watching William rise and offer her a warm smile. She clenched her teeth in silent rage, standing to chase after

him, only to see Spencer waiting in the corridor. A hush fell over the department.

Spencer raised an eyebrow at Brielle's approach, his stride confident as he closed the distance. "Lillian's in the hospital. You're

coming with me to see her."