

Master 281

Chapter 281

Miranda was on the verge of throwing a fit, but remembering she still needed the old coot, she swallowed her anger.

Such a pain, that old cool!

During the drive, Julian couldn't help but ask about Brielle and Spencer's relationship.

"Are Bri and Spencer getting hitched soon? Spencer's a solid guy, sure to treat his lady right. Bri's tough, but she can be taken

advantage of. That kid's had it rough before."

Sarcasm flickered in Miranda's eyes as she continued to tarnish Brielle's reputation. "Getting married? Please, Brielle's got a

string of men on the side, and it's the talk of Beaconsfield. Plus, she's now cozying up to Spencer's uncle Max. That Max, you've

heard of him, right? With Max backing her, she's out there causing trouble, a real tramp, hopping from one man to the next.

"That shameless slut even admitted to us that she's kept men on the side. Poor Spencer. It's a just shame for our Lillian; she's

genuinely fond of Spencer but can't be with him."

As she finished, heavy breathing could be heard from the side. Julian's face was turning red with the effort to breathe, his hands

spasming and curling up.

That kid Bri, she was a good girl; she wouldn't do these things. He was desperate to object, but felt powerless. "Miranda, stop,

stop the car, I need to go back for my medicine, I need my pills."

Miranda, already irritable, grew more impatient. "Brielle's at the hospital. You can hold on for another half hour, and I can drop

you off there. We can check you in at their medical center. Julian, the Haywood family needs you right now, and Brielle only

listens to you. Hang in there. If we turn back now, we'll lose another half hour."

Julian's lips parted, his cheeks flushed. "No...I forget the meds... Gotta go back..."

“You always make things so complicated. I told you we’re on the way to the hospital, and they have doctors there too. Just bear

with it. Lillian’s lost three fingers, and she’s in a far more critical condition than you. Every minute we delay is another minute of

danger for her.”

Miranda didn’t give Julian another glance but pressed down on the accelerator.

Julian’s fingers twitched for a while before his entire body began to convulse, and his eyes. started to roll back.

“Miranda, I need to see Bri.”

“I need to see Bri...”

He muttered deliriously, his consciousness fading, his voice slowly diminishing. He remembered the little stash he’d set aside for

Bri in a box at the nursing home. It wasn’t much, but just shy of two hundred thousand, meant as a gift for her. When she and

Spencer tied the knot, he could give it to her to buy some jewelry.

Julian had handed over the Haywood family assets to Robert a long time ago, keeping nothing for himself. His mind was

sometimes clear, sometimes foggy. “Miranda, please, let’s go back.”

Miranda couldn’t be bothered to respond and just floored it. An old man, running out of steam, was never going to be as

important as her daughter.

The struggle beside her gradually subsided until it stilled completely.

Miranda’s eyes were fixed straight ahead; every time she thought of Brielle, her eyes filled with resentment. She had lived with

Brielle for years and knew her well. Brielle would never abandon Julian. As long as Julian was around, the Haywood family could

weather this storm.

More than an hour later, the car pulled up at the hospital where Brielle was. Miranda unbuckled her seatbelt and glanced at the

quiet old man beside her, snickering, “Well, you made it. Here we are. Get out. Brielle is upstairs.”

But Julian didn't react.

Out of patience, Miranda shoved him, "We're here. Go talk to Brielle about the Haywood family's issues, then I'll get you a

doctor."

However, Julian, nudged by her push, slowly slid down.

Surprise flickered in Miranda's eyes, followed by panic. She raised her hand and placed her fingertips under Julian's nose. His

breath was faint. If Julian died, the Haywood family would have no chance of recovery.

Startled, Miranda hurriedly called for a doctor.

The doctors rushed out with a stretcher, performing CPR on Julian as they wheeled him into the emergency room.

Miranda's heart was racing as if the CPR was being performed on her. She had to do something. A light flickered in her eyes,

and she promptly asked a nurse to notify Brielle.

She had to make Brielle feel guilty, remorseful, anguished. Yes! Brielle had to know that this was all her fault.

The nurse was quick to inform, and Brielle hurriedly arrived just in time to see the emergency room doors nearly shut. She

paused for a few seconds, then hobbled after them. "Doctor, what happened?"

But the doctors were too preoccupied to explain, simply blocking her from entering. "Family members, please wait outside." With

that, they closed the doors behind them.

Chapter 282

Brielle stood frozen before the closed hospital door, baffled as to why she had run into Julian here of all places. The nurses

hadn't elaborated, but at the mention of Julian's name, Brielle had bolted from the room without a second thought.

It wasn't until she turned that she noticed Miranda huddled in a corner, looking guilty as sin.

Miranda shrank back for a moment but quickly stiffened her spine and retorted with righteous indignation. "What are you staring

at me for? It's his own health that's failing. Who else is there to blame?"

Brielle felt a surge of anger welling within her chest, making her head spin.

Miranda crossed her arms and rolled her eyes dismissively. "Well, you saw it yourself. Julian passed out because of your doings.

It's all on you, Brielle. You better call Max right away."

With a bitter laugh, Brielle leaned against the wall, her leg pain turning her lips pale, "Because of me?"

"Who else? I told him what you did, and he fainted right at the hospital entrance. If he dies, it's on your head."

Brielle closed her eyes for a moment, her hand hanging by her side slowly clenched into a fist. her nails digging into her palm.

"Then you'd better pray he makes it."

Her gaze was dark and unrelenting as she stared at Miranda, who felt a chill run down her spine from the intensity of that stare.

How had she forgotten? Brielle was not one to be trifled with, not just for her own capabilities but also because of Max standing

behind her.

But the thought of Lillian's three severed fingers fueled her hatred for Brielle, wishing this woman would just drop dead.

Faced with the current situation, Miranda could not provoke Brielle further with harsh words.

The fate of the Haywood family was tied to Brielle, and Miranda couldn't risk it, so she clamped her mouth shut.

The resuscitation room light finally came on, casting a somber glow down the hallway. Brielle sat in silence, treating Miranda as if

she was invisible. A chill ran through her eyes, her lips pressed together in a cold, hard line.

The air in the hallway was frigid, the atmosphere heavy with sorrow. Brielle remained seated, waiting for news about Julian.

The light stayed on in the resuscitation room, and it wasn't until half an hour later that a doctor emerged, his mask still on,

forehead beaded with sweat, cheeks marked with exhaustion.

The doctor slowly removed his mask, and the expressions of the medical team behind him were grim. Seeing their faces,

Miranda's heart skipped a beat, her palms slick with sweat.

As feared, the doctor shook his head gravely. "I'm sorry, we missed the critical window. We did everything we could. I believe he

has some last words. The family should come in to say their goodbyes."

It was like a bolt from the blue for Brielle, her knees nearly buckling, her vision blurring with darkness. How could this be

happening?

Meanwhile, Miranda had already stormed up to the doctor, grabbing him by the scrubs, her voice filled with desperate fury.

"What kind of sick joke is this?! He was fine when he arrived, wasn't he? How could he suddenly be on his deathbed? Quacks,

all of you! I'll sue you! You're all murderers! Just wait for the court summons."

She then turned her twisted face to Brielle. "Are you happy now?! If you hadn't made Max move against the Haywood family,

grandpa wouldn't have collapsed. It's all your fault, Brielle. How can you live with yourself? Even as a ghost, he won't let you be.

He should've never been so kind to you. No good deed goes unpunished."

Chapter 283

Brielle felt as if her legs had turned to jelly, and her walking cane clattered to the floor with a sound that seemed to echo through

the sterile silence of the hospital corridor. She could hardly make out what Miranda was babbling about; to her, everyone's lips

seemed to be moving in slow motion, like fish gasping for air on dry land.

Her eyes locked onto Julian as he was wheeled out, his gaunt face was ashen and lifeless. It was as if the scene jolted her back

to reality, and she suddenly found the strength to walk over to the bedside. "Grandpa, can you hear me? It's me, Bri."

Julian clung to life by a thread, his eyes murky, reflecting the dim light like polluted water. At the sound of her voice, a faint spark

of recognition flickered in him. "Bri..."

Tears streamed down Brielle's cheeks as she took his hand, "Yes, it's me."

Julian struggled to sit up, but he was too exhausted. His lips parted with great effort, and after what seemed like an eternity, he
whispered, "Money."

But Brielle couldn't understand. Tears blurred her vision as she leaned closer to catch his words.

"Money in the chest, for Bri."

Hearing the word 'dowry,' Brielle squeezed his hand tighter, "I understand, the money."

A look of relief passed over Julian's face, as if this was the last unfinished business he had. His eyelids were heavy, fighting to

stay open, but he managed a tender smile.

"Live well, Bri."

This was the second time Julian had told her to live well. The first time was years ago when Julian had been rushed to the

hospital after a fall. He had said it with such gravity then.

Live well.

In the blink of an eye, so many years had passed. Julian had survived that trip to the emergency room, and how Brielle wished

this time would be the same. But after those words. Julian gave her a kind smile, and then his eyes slowly closed.

"Grandpa!" Brielle cried out, her eyes wide with shock, gripping his wrist in desperation. Julian's warmth gradually faded, his

eyes shut, his hand growing cold in hers.

Brielle blinked rapidly, unable to accept what was happening. She held Julian's hand to her lips. breathing on it in a futile attempt

to warm it, but the hand just got colder, more rigid, slipping. slowly from her grasp.

Brielle tried again, rubbing her thumbs over the weathered back of his hand. The little warmth she could muster was like breath

on a block of ice, utterly useless.

Julian was gone.

Brielle collapsed to the floor, numb to the pain in her legs. She must be dreaming, a nightmare. she longed to awaken from.

The doctors came to her aid, draping a white sheet over Julian's face.

Brielle stared, lips clenched, unable to cry.

"Ms. Brielle, he's at peace now. Please, take a moment to grieve, but we'll need to make arrangements for the funeral."

The doctor tried to comfort her and then turned to Miranda, who had collapsed on the floor, not out of grief, but out of fear.

It was over. Julian was actually dead. What would become of the Haywood family now?

To the doctor, Miranda's panic seemed like sorrow, and he sighed, "If only we'd gotten him here half an hour earlier, perhaps..."

Miranda's eyes were wide with panic, too scared to break the news to Robert. Her

weak, her breathing difficult. She saw Brielle being helped by the doctor, intending to enter the room, and forced herself to stand.

away

"Brielle, Julian passed because of the stress from the Haywood family affairs. Do you want to keep antagonizing them? Do you

want him to be restless even in death? How can you

be so cruel..."

Chapter 284

Brielle's mind was a tornado of thoughts, her eyes blinking through the sting of fatigue. She couldn't muster the strength to

respond to any messages. She didn't even recall how she got back to her hospital room, just that the world seemed to tremble

before her eyes.

"Ms. Brielle? Ms. Brielle!" The doctor's voice seemed to echo from afar. She tried to snap out of it, but clarity eluded her.

Outside the room, Miranda didn't dare linger. She knew exactly how Julian had died, and her face had drained of color. She

needed to get ahead of the story, to pin everything on Brielle. Otherwise, Robert wouldn't let her off the hook either.

Clutching her fists tightly. Miranda glared at Brielle with a mix of urgency and fear.

With Julian gone, what could possibly stop Max now?

She hurried downstairs, desperate to consult with Robert.

Meanwhile, Cameron had already found Lillian. Her hand, now bandaged, was scrutinized by her cold gaze, her missing fingers

a silent testament to her ordeal.

Cameron had braced himself for a hysterical Lillian, but the woman before him was eerily calm. a brewing storm in her eyes.

“Lillian, who did this?” He gently took her wrist, cradling it with a pained tenderness.

A bitter smirk crossed Lillian’s face. “Who else but Brielle? Cameron, haven’t you figured out a way to get me out yet?”

“I’m sorry, Max has the police in his pocket. The Haywood family is in trouble, and he’s not letting go.”

The fury in Lillian’s eyes was apocalyptic. They say each finger is connected to the heart. No one knew the pain and fear she

had felt the night before. Her grip tightened on her fingers. fresh blood seeping through the bandages.

“I know how to diffuse the crisis at hand.” Her eyes glinted with malice, her lips pursed coldly. “If Max won’t let us be, then why

not just make sure he can’t breathe?”

Those three fingers had snapped her into a sobering clarity. She wanted revenge on Brielle and on Max.

Cameron startled, even glancing around to make sure they were alone before responding in a hushed tone. “Lillian, stop

dreaming. Do you have any idea how many have wanted Max dead over the years? Look at him, still thriving. Mom’s gone to

fetch Grandpa. As long as Grandpa is around, Brielle won’t let Max keep targeting the Haywoods. I’m more worried about you

right

now.

Lillian’s eyes were bloodshot, like a wild animal cornered in desperation. “I know how I can get out. Just lend me a few men.”

Cameron was wary of letting Lillian stir the pot further: Provoking Max might render Brielle’s efforts useless. “Lillian, I-” Before he

could finish, Lillian leaned in, pressing her lips to his.

Cameron's pupils constricted, his body freezing as if struck by paralysis.

Lillian didn't care about the Haywood family at the moment; she wanted Brielle to pay the price. If she couldn't have Max, neither

would Brielle!

As for her own fate, she was indifferent. She wanted Brielle to live in hell forever.

After a brief kiss, she pulled back. "You'll help me, won't you? This is the last time I'll ask.

Cameron's mind was in disarray. Unable to refuse Lillian's plea, especially after that unexpected kiss, he felt his thoughts

entangle into chaos. After what seemed like an eternity, he nodded slowly. "Okay, but don't do anything rash."

A sly smile flickered across Lillian's eyes. After all these years, Cameron was still the same.

She was determined to seize this opportunity!

"Lillian, pretend to faint. I'll have the cops escort you to the hospital, and on the way, my guys. will intercept them. I'll give you

one day. By tomorrow afternoon, you have to be back."

Lillian nodded in agreement. It was a solid plan. She'd collapse in the police station, and the cops would rush her to the hospital.

After a brief exchange of plans, Lillian let herself 'faint'.

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Everything went smoothly after that, with two cops escorting Lillian to the hospital. The handcuffs still clung to Lillian's wrists,

while Cameron followed closely in the squad car.

This was a first for Cameron too, but there was no room for second thoughts now. He had already bent too many rules for Lillian;

one more wouldn't matter.

The police cruiser glided through the quiet streets, the accompanying officers on high alert. scanning the area to ensure there

were no surprises, but what they didn't anticipate was that the moment Cameron had stepped out of the precinct, he had already

arranged for his people to be waiting right here. This was the perfect opportunity to whisk Lillian away.

As they rounded a corner, Cameron's crew came barreling towards them in their vehicle. The two cops in the car were just about

to react when Cameron sprang into action.

In a blur, the officers were subdued, and Cameron seized his chance, taking control of the wheel.

The cruiser eased to a stop by the roadside, and the car Cameron had arranged pulled up alongside.

Cameron leaned over the subdued officers to fish out the keys and unlock the cuffs from Lillian's wrists, his voice filled with

caution. "Lillian, I need to stay and handle these two. Remember what I told you, don't do anything rash."

A twisted smile played at the corner of Lillian's mouth, her eyes brimming with barely contained madness. Her fingers were gone,

and the Haywood family was on the brink. How could she not lash out?

She was determined to drag her cursed life out long enough to make Brielle regret ever crossing her.

While she harbored these thoughts, her lips formed a different message. "I got it."

Her voice was soft, belying the vicious plans for dismantling Brielle piece by piece that churned in her mind.

Once she was seated in the car Cameron had arranged, Lillian intended to head straight for the hospital where Brielle was.

However, the others in the car, following Cameron's stern

instructions, were not to let Lillian anywhere near Brielle's hospital. So, the car initially drove in the opposite direction of the

hospital.

As soon as they were out of Cameron's sight, Lillian's face cracked into a maniacal grin. "You guys know where Brielle is, right?"

The two glanced at each other, neither daring to speak.

Lillian suddenly yanked the steering wheel, her expression contorted, "If you don't take me to Brielle's hospital, I'll just crash into

the next car I see, and we can all die together."

She was extreme, like a vengeful spirit escaped from the depths of hell. The two men had wanted to ignore her, but her strength

was immense, and she was now tampering with the

accelerator.

The car surged towards a tanker truck. If it hit, both vehicles would explode, and indeed they'd all die right there.

These two men didn't want to die. "Miss Lillian, please, don't do anything hasty! I know where Brielle is! I know!" one of them blurted out.

Hearing this, the ferocity in Lillian's eyes intensified, "Good, take me there."

No one dared to defy her. She was like a madwoman.

Brielle had no idea that danger was drawing near, nor did she know the depths to which Lillian had been pushed. A woman who

had lost three fingers could disregard everything.

Evening was setting in, and the hospital corridors grew quiet. A woman dressed in a long coat, wearing a brown hat, entered the

hallway. She moved slowly toward the room where Brielle lay. There were two doctors on duty outside the room, aware of a

message that this patient was of particular importance and that her safety was to be ensured at all costs. So when they saw the

unfamiliar woman approaching, they stopped her, "May I ask who you are?"

Her voice was hoarse, and her hand, hanging at her side, was wrapped in a bandage stained with spots of blood. "I'm Brielle's

sister. I've come to see her."

When she confidently mentioned Brielle's name, the doctors didn't question further. They knew. that come nightfall, the man from

the previous evening would arrive in person, discreetly checking in. His status was even more prestigious, and they had been

instructed to station extra medical staff by the room's entrance to prevent any mishaps.

Since the visitor claimed to be a relative, they assumed there was no danger. Thus, the doctors allowed her to pass, with a

warning not to stay too long.

Lillian sneered inwardly, her heart as cold as ice. She shut the door behind her with a soft click and turned to face her nemesis,

Brielle, lying on the hospital bed.

Brielle's face was flushed with fever, an IV needle piercing the back of her hand, pumping life-saving fluids into her bloodstream.

Fate, it seemed, was on Lillian's side today.

A wicked grin flickered across Lillian's face as she grabbed a pillow from the bedside and pressed it down hard over Brielle's

face. "You bitch! Go to hell!" Her knuckles whitened with the force she applied, every muscle in her arm straining.

Brielle didn't even have time to utter a word; her breathing became more labored by the second. Her nightmare was turning into

a horror show, the dark sky above seemed to drop an unreal shroud devoid of oxygen, and she was suffocating.

"Help," she gasped in her mind.

But Lillian was relentless, her grin twisted as she kept the pressure on.

At this critical moment, someone was knocking at the door, seemingly about to enter at any second. Grinding her teeth in

annoyance, Lillian quickly removed the pillow and tossed it aside. Brielle's cellphone lay on the bedsheet, unguarded. Lillian

snatched it up and, using Brielle's fingerprint, unlocked the device.

Just then, the nurse entered, carrying a tray filled with various medications. She gave Lillian a suspicious glance. "Are you here

to see Ms. Brielle? May I ask who you are?"

Max had entrusted the nurse to be vigilant with his patient, and not for a moment could she let her guard down. No sooner had

she stepped out than someone new had appeared in the room.

Lillian pulled her hat down lower, "I'm her family, just wanted to check in on her. Is she okay?"

Suspicion lurked in the depths of the nurse's eyes, but Lillian's demeanor didn't give away anything out of the ordinary, so she

just shook her head. "Just a bad case of anxiety, some rest and she'll be fine."

The nurse prepared the injection, as Lillian spoke up, “Max asked me to come by and check on her, glad to hear she’s doing

well.”

Lillian’s words were a probe, with the increase in staff at the door, she couldn’t help but suspect they were Max’s people. After

all, who else would care about Brielle?

At the mention of Max, a flicker of surprise crossed the nurse’s face, and her defenses dropped, her lips curving into a smile.

“You’re here on Max’s behalf? He’s not only handsome and wealthy, but he’s also so attentive to his girlfriend. Ms. Brielle is really

lucky. They must’ve had a row. Max couldn’t come by day, so he sneaks in at night to visit Ms. Brielle. She’s truly

blessed.”

The nurse turned her back to administer the medication, unaware of the malignant hatred contorting Lillian’s face.

Lillian gripped the phone so tightly she wished she could crush it. Her mind replayed the nurse’s words on a loop.

Sneaking in at night to see her after a fight...

Was this careful and gentle man really the same Max who had driven her to jump off the building? She remembered how cold

and indifferent he was that night, as if her life meant nothing, and she were a bug to be stepped on.

That bitch! Why did she get everything. Why was it Brielle who had it all, while she, Lillian, had nothing but shame and loss?

“Fuck all of you!.”

The nurse kept murmuring, full of envy, clueless that behind her, someone was poised with a vase, ready to claim her life. The

vase was lifted high, about to be brought down with fatal force, when Lillian’s ears caught the sound of conversation. It was the

night staff at the door. chatting idly.

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The nurse in front of her slowly turned, her eyes just about to land on the vase Lillian was holding.

Lillian snapped back to reality. There were still people at the door. Even if she could silence this nurse, the people outside would

hear the commotion. Reluctantly, she set the vase down without a sound.

Just then, the hospital room door was knocked on, and another nurse walked in. “Has Ms. Brielle been given her medication?

Everyone out now. Let her rest properly.”

The new nurse, noticing the other people in the room, frowned deeply. “Ms. Brielle is not accepting visitors at this time.”

She was more cautious than the rest, her eyes scrutinizing Lillian. A woman with her face hidden—who could tell what she was

up to, sneaking in for a visit in the dead of night?

Lillian abandoned the thought of suffocating Brielle right there and then. A new idea had taken root in her mind. If she

succeeded, Brielle would live, but in far greater agony.

Under the nurse’s watchful eye, Lillian left the room.

The nurse stayed behind, her brow furrowed as she made sure Brielle was alright before she finally exhaled in relief.

Out in the corridor, Lillian’s eyes were ablaze with fury, but she forced herself to cool down. She had to focus on the next phase

of her plan. She walked down the hall, and after gaining some distance, she looked back at Brielle’s hospital room door.

Two people stood guard outside, and inside, a nurse

kept vigilant. Max really cherished that woman down to his bones. The more Lillian realized this, the deeper her hatred grew. She

was the daughter of the Haywood family—this should have been her life.

Pulling out her phone, Lillian scrolled to Max’s number. She had memorized it, once dreaming of a day when they might talk

things over calmly. She had naively thought there might be a

chance for her, but he had been blind to her, choosing Brielle instead.

Lillian looked down, thinking back to the nurse’s words. Apparently, the two were in a cold war. Perfect. It was as if the fate was

conspiring to give her this opportunity.

She smirked, typing out a message. [I'm at my old apartment waiting for you. Can we talk?] "Since you

you care about Brielle, you'll come, won't you?" She thought to herself.

After sending the message, she descended to the ground floor and continued to intimidate the two men who had brought her

there. Relieved to see her safe, the men couldn't help but urge. "Miss Lillian, you should head back. Mr. Cameron told you not to

stir trouble. You--"

Before they could finish. Lillian got into the car, her face frosty. "How much fuel is in the tank?"

The men didn't understand why she would ask such a thing, but recalling her earlier frenzy, fear

con into their hearts. "We just filled it up, and there's spare gasoline in the trunk."

Lillian's mouth twisted into a sinister smile. "Good, take me somewhere."

Neither dared to disobey her, silently praying that she would return safely, just like this time.

Lillian was convinced Max would show up in response to her message. All she needed to do was prepare the trap and wait for

him to step into it.

Meanwhile, Max was still in a meeting, trying to wrap up his day's work so he could sneak in a couple of hours of sleep before

visiting Brielle in the dead of night.

The executives were reporting earnestly, but Max was becoming distracted. He pondered whether his actions were justified.

Brielle didn't seem to care for him and had never expressed a desire to be with him. What was he expecting, chasing after her

like this?

Was a love unreciprocated worth the leap into an abyss?

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No sooner had the thought crossed his mind than the buzz of his cellphone broke the silence. After a surreptitious visit to the

hospital last night, he had removed Brielle's number from the blacklist. He'd spent the entire day with an eye on his phone.

A tiny glimmer of hope flickered in the recesses of his heart. However, when the phone actually rang, he froze, as if struck by a sudden spell.

The executives seemed accustomed to it by now as their gazes instinctively shifted towards him.

Max pulled out his phone, trying to convince himself it wouldn't be Brielle. She probably wouldn't be the first to reach out

anymore. Despite his thoughts, he couldn't help but look at the screen.

And there it was, a text from her.

His eyelashes fluttered once as he turned the screen face down on the table. He looked up at the executive delivering the report

and said, "Continue."

Whether it was the executive's imagination or not, they felt as if the chill that usually surrounded their boss had thawed a bit. The

mood in the conference room subtly shifted from the frost of early spring to the thaw of a stream just beginning to flow.

The executive's report went on for an hour, and once it concluded, Max was the first to leave the room, heading straight for the elevator.

Patrick followed and had guessed who the message might've been from. Was the boss finally going to see Ms. Brielle?

Patrick didn't know about the midnight visit and felt relieved at the prospect. He thought a spark of life had ignited in Max ever

since he had met Brielle. Max no longer seemed so untouchable.

Max was undeniably noble, but also undeniably alone.

Unable to contain his urgency, Max quickened his pace, got into the car, and said to Patrick. "I'll drive tonight. You can head back."

Patrick, initially moving to take the wheel, nodded at Max's words and turned to fetch another car from the garage.

Max settled into the driver's seat and hesitated as he passed a bakery, contemplating.

After a moment, he decided against buying anything and drove directly to the apartment where Brielle used to live. It was where

everything had begun for them, a place filled with significance, so it was not surprising when she chose to meet there.

Perhaps she had something important to say. Maybe she wanted to mend what was between them.

The apartment's elevator was plastered with numerous small ads, a collage of offers and services that made the space feel even

more cramped. As Max exited the elevator, he ran into Brielle's former neighbor, Mrs. Thompson. Her eyes lit up at the sight of

him.

"My, my, Brielle's moved out, didn't she tell you? I always said she was unreliable. She's got a fiance, you know. Maybe you

should give my niece a thought."

Max's lips twitched into a small smile. He was not cold as he usually was, but his presence was so imposing that Mrs. Thompson

dared not say more, sighed, and gave up the match-making attempt.

Max was about to ring the doorbell when he noticed the door ajar. Surprise flickered in his eyes as he pushed it open and called

out, "Brielle?"

The living room was empty, and its setup was unchanged from before. He stepped inside, closing the door behind him. "Brielle?"

After calling out once more, he heard a noise from the bedroom and breathed a sigh of relief as he approached.

The bedroom door was shut, and a faint scent hung in the air. Max stepped back, and his brow furrowed at the smell of gasoline.

What was Brielle planning?

He took out his phone and dialed her number. The ringtone echoed from within the room, but the door was locked.

"Brielle!

Panic began to seep into his heart as he kicked the door open.

The smell of gasoline intensified, and a small lump was visible on the bed. Someone was curled beneath the covers, and the

ringing phone was on the nightstand.

Max strode in quickly, pulling back the blanket. Underneath the blankets was a pillow. Then, a loud “bang” resounded from the living room.

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Max snatched Brielle’s phone and returned to the living room, only to find the door locked from the outside. Flames licked their

way through the cracks, signaling danger. Within two minutes, the living room was a choking haze of thick, black smoke.

Max was coughing and stumbled backward. He fumbled with the phone, dialing 911 as he searched for another way out.

The apartment was in an old part of town, perched on a high floor. The balcony wasn’t an option for escape; the only way out

was through another exit. He soaked a cloth in water and pressed it over his nose and mouth.

The room was a blur. The smoke was so dense he could barely open his eyes, let alone determine which way was which. His

nose was assaulted by the acrid stench of smoke and his lungs were screaming for air.

The fire in the hallway was now a monstrous sheet of flame. The entire floor was aflame. The situation was dire.

Blind to his surroundings, Max groped his way to the opposite side of the bedroom. He could see a glimmer of light through the

window, and the outline of the neighboring building’s rooftop. He grabbed a chair and hurled it at the window.

The glass, weakened by the intense heat, shattered instantly. He took a step back and leaped out without hesitation. The inferno

chased him, its crimson tongues reaching out like they were trying to consume him whole.

Outside the window was a slightly lower rooftop. It was the only chance he had, and any other window would have meant certain

death.

Max landed on the rooftop, and above him, there was the sound of an explosion. The sound of gas canisters detonated one after

another. These canisters were as deadly as bombs.

Debris flew through the air, and Max instinctively ducked for cover. None of the falling pieces hit him, but he felt dizzy from the smoke inhalation and struggled to keep his footing.

As he clutched Brielle's phone tightly, he realized someone had used her to set him up. He'd fallen for it. In the past, he would

never have walked into such a cheap trap.

As he thought of moving further away, a whoosh sounded behind him. Years of honing his danger instincts made him duck, just

as a baseball bat whizzed past his nose.

He looked up to see a woman in a brown hat, who, having missed her swing, stumbled and fell to the ground. As she scrambled

to her feet to take a second swing, Max caught the bat in his hand. His sharp eyes tried to pierce through the disguise to see the

true identity beneath.

Lillian's heart skipped a beat, and her whole body was trembling. She had scoped out the area earlier, knowing that if Max

managed to escape from the fire, this was his only exit. If he perished, even better—Brielle would grieve forever.

Max snatched Brielle's phone and returned to the living room, only to find the door locked from the outside, Flames licked their

way through the cracks, signaling danger. Within two minutes. the living room was a choking haze of thick, black smoke,

Max was coughing and stumbled backward. He fumbled with the phone, dialing 911 as he searched for another way out.

The apartment was in an old part of town, perched on a high floor. The balcony wasn't an option for escape: the only way out

was through another exit. He soaked a cloth in water and pressed it over his nose and mouth.

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managed to escape from the fire, this was his only exit. If he perished, even better—Brielle would grieve forever.

So she waited, hoping he wouldn't appear, yet also hoping he would, so she could be the one to end him.

Max's gaze was icy as he stared through her hat, directly at her. Lillian knew all too well that this was Max, the untouchable man

of Beaconsfield, one whom everyone feared. She had hoped to be cherished by him, and if that were out of reach, she'd ensure

Brielle never had his affection.

They could go to hell together.

Lillian didn't care about her life anymore, not after losing three fingers. What man would look at her now? Everyone would

despise her and look down on her. Rather than endure that, she would drag Max to hell with her!

The thought grew wildly in her mind like unchecked weeds. Her lips pressed into a thin line as she stared at him like a hungry

wolf.

Realizing the bat was useless, she let go and lunged at Max. Just one step back, and Max would be over the

edge, plummeting to his death.

This golden boy would soon fall from grace.

Chapter 290

Max's gaze was cool and detached as Lillian charged at him. The clarity of his thoughts was almost unnerving, even as he

chastised himself for being outwitted by a woman. It was a lapse in judgment, a moment of weakness when he had not

considered the possibility that Brielle's phone could've fallen into the wrong hands. He was emotionally compromised, a phrase

he never thought would find its way into his world.

Lillian had thrown herself at him with abandon; her only desire was to drag them both down to their demise. She had lost the will

to live and was determined to take Max with her. In the afterlife, she fancied them to be united as lovers, eternal and inseparable.

But she hadn't anticipated the explosion that suddenly rocked the rooftop, nor the cacophony of sirens and screams that

followed. She got distracted, stumbled, and fell onto the jagged debris. Her face looked like a canvas of blood..

Max stood motionless. His gaze was icy and disdainful as he watched her struggle on the ground. To him, she was no more

significant than an ant beneath his boot.

Instinctively. Lillian felt reduced to nothing more than a writhing maggot in his eyes. She was like a creature that had never

known the light, and was destined to be scorched by the brilliance that radiated from him.

Meanwhile, Max was indifferent to her internal turmoil. His attention was far removed from the night's events. As a businessman,

he was defined by his acuity, not by the emotions that seemed to desert him.

He dialed Patrick, calmly requesting a pickup. Upon hearing the news, Patrick slammed the pedal to the metal and raced to the

scene.

Max leaned against the rooftop wall. The night sky was now illuminated by the raging fire that had spread two stories high. As

the heir to the Dorsey family and the CEO of Dorsey

International, he was painfully aware of his transgression. The realization that Brielle could be his Achilles' heel was a new and

unwelcome sensation.

Others might have been grateful to escape a fire unscathed, but not Max. He could've met his end in the flames without a flicker

of emotion crossing his features.

The cufflinks on his wrist, once free of imperfections, now bore the grime of the night's chaos. It was a reminder that succumbing

to addiction was a sign of a weak will, and he was

determined not to succumb.

He reasoned that feelings should be as fleeting and inconsequential as the joy of munching on a bag of potato chips during a

moment of happiness. His unannounced visits to the hospital to see Brielle and his care for her was just impulsive and

temporary.

His next step was clear – to create distance between them. Dependence was a sign of frailty, and he refused to be weakened.

A woman's panicked voice echoed from the corner, "My face! My beauty is ruined!"

"Brielle, you bitch, it's all your fault! Go to hell!"

Lillian's ramblings sounded like those of a madwoman.

"Spencer, you heartbreaker, you bastard, I won't let you off the hook!"

"Brielle, ha! You lost to me long ago. Everyone connected to you will pay! I will make you regret this for a lifetime."

"Max is mine and mine alone! I am the daughter of the Haywood family."

Max listened quietly, finally putting a name to the voice—Lillian. He smirked, approaching the cowering figure.

Lillian tensed as she sensed his approach. Her eyes lifted to meet his. In the flickering firelight, his features were sharp and

mesmerizing. She was captivated even as her tears continued flowing freely. If only a man like Max could love her, then she

would sacrifice everything for just one glance from him.

Her sobs filled the air. She couldn't accept her defeat.

"How am I inferior to Brielle? I'm smarter and more charming. Spencer chose me over her after all her years of devotion. I won't

lose."

She refused to believe she could ever be beaten.