

Master 381

Chapter 381

Brielle couldn't help but doubt the sincerity of the woman before her. After years of blind devotion, how could she suddenly see

the light?

Was Sue just probing her?

Before Brielle could respond, Sue continued to mutter to herself.

"It's all my fault. I've ruined everything, my parents, Sarah... I kept thinking Simon would change. for the better. I've invested so

much. Quitting now would be like abandoning everything I've worked for, right?"

A flicker of understanding crossed Brielle's eyes. Staying with a guy like Simon was like playing the slots in Vegas. Once you

started, you couldn't pull yourself away because you were convinced that the next pull might be the jackpot. That tantalizing taste

of victory was addictive, and the rollercoaster ride of highs and lows was overwhelmingly disorienting.

So, of course, Sue wouldn't snap out of it that quickly. Others must have warned her about Simon before.

Her current confession was nothing more than a test for Brielle. But at least, Brielle thought, Sue was starting to think for herself.

"Sue, after you leave the precinct, check this place out," Brielle said, handing her a scrap of

paper.

Sue instinctively stepped back, her guard up. She clearly didn't trust Brielle.

Brielle had no patience for further talk. She tossed the note and walked away.

The address on the paper made Sue's pupils shrink. It was the house she had sold off long ago, a place she hadn't returned to

since.

What was Brielle implying?

Seeing the confusion etched on Sue's face, Brielle offered a reminder, "Aren't you curious to see who ended up with the house

you sold for a song?"

Sue clutched the paper, her heart pounding. Brielle wouldn't share this address without reason. "The cousin who introduced you

to Simon, wasn't she the one who came from the countryside. seeking your help? She got your house for a steal and now has

found herself a decent guy. She's living the dream with a perfect little family."

That cousin, just like Simon, was uneducated. In her cousin's eyes, Sue didn't deserve her city life or her college degree. She

wanted to ruin Sue, so she set her up with Simon.

And Sue played right into her hands. Her life was shattered by Simon.

Sue collapsed, her mind buzzing, tears flowing like a faucet left open. Sue's face turned pale,

her mind buzzing. Her legs gave out, and she knelt on the ground.

She didn't have the heart to ponder over Brielle's intentions now. The fact that Brielle got the guts to give her this address

showed that it had been verified.

The happier her cousin led her life, the more it proved how successful her scheme was back. then, and how much of a failure

Sue was.

She collapsed on the ground, trembling all over. This was ten thousand times more painful than losing Simon.

After several minutes of silent weeping, she took a deep breath. She had planned to feign trust in Brielle, to see what this

smooth-talking woman was up to. She hadn't expected Brielle to drop such a bombshell.

"Brielle, you see me crying. Do you think I'm putting on an act? Do you find me disgusting?"

"Not at all. But maybe you should cry at your parents' graves. They'd find peace knowing you cared," Brielle said coolly, having

done her part regardless of Sue's trust.

Brielle never believed in Sue anyway. Just like Max said, someone who didn't care about their own life was capable of anything.

Despair etched Sue's face. "I still can't let go of Simon. I know it's my fault, my just deserts. I loathe myself for it, yet I can't stop

arranging everything for him. I can't visit my parents' grave. The last thing I want is to make those who plotted everything pay, to

at least avenge Sarah.”

She was no qualified mother.

Brielle raised an eyebrow, gauging the truth in her words. Whether true or false, it was no longer Brielle’s concern. She was no

saint.

“That person is too powerful for you to touch,” Brielle said.

Sue looked up, determination in her eyes. “Just tell me who it is.”

Chapter 382

“William Dorsey, a board member at Dorsey International.”

The name etched itself into Sue’s memory before she bowed her head.

“I’m sorry, I can’t stand up for you online. The court of public opinion is fierce. Even if I spoke up now and said none of this mess

has anything to do with you, people would only think I’m under your thumb and that I’m speaking out because you coerced me.”

Brielle could finally breathe a sigh of relief. When Sue wasn’t being headstrong, at least her intellect was on point.

“I never expected you to clear my name. You speaking up for me would only make people more suspicious. But aren’t you

worried that I might have bullied your daughter?”

Sue looked down, her gaze empty and hollow.

“The first time I met you, I didn’t think you were capable of that. In fact, I regret going to Dorsey International with Simon. If he

hadn’t been so greedy, he wouldn’t have ended up dead.”

She took a deep breath, her eyelashes quivering. “Someone has been sending texts, instructing us what to do. But whoever it is,

they’re high up and untouchable. That number can’t be traced.” “Sue, I don’t need you to do anything. Just don’t harm yourself

and pin it all on me.”

Brielle cut her off, not wanting to linger.

Sue was stunned, then a wave of fear washed over her, and she gave a bitter smile.

“That’s exactly what they told me to do. My life is worthless anyway.”

“No one on this earth has the right to determine our worth, whether we think we’re valuable or not.”

After those words, Brielle walked away.

She was frustrated with Sue’s state over the years. As a fellow woman, it pained her to see another suffer so.

But who was to blame?

Society always preached a lesson to women—that being compliant and undervalued would earn them praise or reward, like being

the perfect daughter-in-law or the exemplary wife.

However, the very education that taught women to be gentle and understanding was the root of their suffering.

Sue was indeed unfortunate, a misfortune seeded by her parents’ insistence that she be sensible and always heed her partner’s

word.

Exhausted, Brielle got in her car and headed home.

By the time she arrived at Pearl Estate, it was eleven at night.

Max was gone, but he’d left a note at the entrance—called away to a meeting, get some rest.

She felt a wave of loneliness but was too tired to dwell on it. After freshening up, she collapsed into bed.

She slept soundly until one in the morning, when her phone pinged with a new message.

[Ms. Brielle, we’ve located the young master of Kingston Enterprises at an underground casino.]

Brielle recalled Simon mentioning such a place. Could it be the same one?

But Patrick only said the young man was found, implying he couldn’t be taken out.

The enigma behind the casino was too great for William to navigate, and Brielle couldn’t get Daniel out.

Daniel was Catherine’s son, the young heir to Kingston Enterprises.

It seemed the little lord had stirred up trouble at the tables, but as long as William couldn’t find him, it was fine.

Brielle finally relaxed, closed her eyes, and fell back asleep.

When she woke, she immediately checked the news.

The scandal continued to brew, and her colleagues had messaged her advising her not to come to work. Reporters swarmed the

place, waiting for a scoop on Brielle, the person of interest.

With work off the table, she considered visiting this so-called casino.

Before she could settle on a plan, Tiffanie called.

“Brielle, that casino where Simon racked up his debts is quite the hotspot. A bunch of my friends hang out there. Want to check it

out?”

“Sure, let’s do it.”

Brielle and Tiffanie arranged to meet that evening, and in the meantime, Brielle kept a close eye on the online narrative.

Without Sue fanning the flames, the one-sided attacks weren’t as prevalent. People were more focused on the car crash.

The police had taken over the investigation and promised to disclose their findings as soon as they had answers.

Two hours later, Sarah’s death certificate was released. It was ruled a suicide.

Brielle wasn’t surprised. With William’s influence, there was no chance he’d leave behind evidence of foul play.

Only if Sarah’s death was deemed a suicide would the public pressure crush Brielle.

The “help me” message left in the group chat was William’s most significant blunder.

Rubbing her temples, Brielle realized that now the police had announced Sarah’s cause of death, she had to brace herself for

the public’s scrutiny.

The online world erupted in an instant.

Chapter 383

“It was suicide, so she really was driven to it by her boss.”

“Brielle’s got some explaining to do now. If it wasn’t for her treatment of Sarah, Sarah wouldn’t have died, Simon wouldn’t have

ended up at Dorsey International, wouldn’t have gone to the hospital, and wouldn’t have died.”

“Brielle is truly a piece of work.”

But then some folks started wondering about the current state of a certain Sue. After all, she was the only one left alive in this

whole mess.

Especially since Sue wasn't looking too hot when she stormed out of the hospital yesterday, ranting about getting back at Brielle.

Where was she now?

Right now, Sue was still at the police station, shell-shocked from Brielle's words the day before, and still struggling to snap out of

it.

She didn't want to believe Brielle, not for a second, even going so far as to have the cops.

confirm the current owner of that house.

Turned out, it was indeed owned by her cousin.

What a

a laughable world this was, and what had she been doing all these years?

Her family had taken in her cousin and others from the countryside, hoping to give them a better life.

But those people turned out

to be wolves in sheep's clothing.

Sue was young back then, with not much sense to speak of. She always thought her cousin was looking out for her best

interests.

—

So, when her cousin introduced her to Simon — a man Sue thought was beneath her she still agreed to give it a shot.

Her first time with Simon was a blur, a drunken mistake, and her cousin was right there, feeding her lines.

“Once you've lost your purity, you're cheap, and you're damaged goods. If anyone finds out, not a decent man will have you.”

“Sue, you sure don't want your parents to know you've been fooling around with a man, especially one who's not your boyfriend.”

Simon's actually a decent guy: you should focus on his good attributes."

And so, she

was persuaded.

After that, Sue couldn't understand why her mental state was declining and why she became so forgetful.

Sitting in the police station lobby, she watched a cop approach slowly, handing her a new note.

"Ms. Brielle left this for you before she left," the officer said. "Hopes it might help you. somehow."

Sue had no love lost for Brielle, but she took the note anyway.

The message was simple:

"Sue, your cousin and Simon were an item back in the countryside. All the money you spent on Simon was actually for her. I

think I figured out how Simon's been manipulating you. Ever heard of gaslighting? A man hides his woman's jewelry to make her

think she's lost it or removes something from the house and blames her. These acts make the woman doubt her sanity. gradually

destroying her mind."

Sue felt like she'd been struck by lightning, the last bit of color draining from her face.

After getting together with Simon, she felt like she was losing her memory and growing more and more insecure.

But now Brielle was suggesting it was all Simon's ploy to control her.

Her lips trembled as she looked up, pleading with the police to investigate her cousin and Simon's past in the countryside.

As a key person of interest, the police had to stabilize Sue's emotions, so they actually did look into it.

The results confirmed Brielle's words. Sue's cousin and Simon were a pair in the countryside.

After all the twists and turns, it turned out Sue was the biggest fool of them all.

All sense of reason collapsed in an instant, and Sue wanted to smash everything, to slice Simon's corpse piece by piece to

satiate her vengeance.

What had she done?

For this man, she had caused her parents' death and alienated her daughter. What had she done?

She was desperate for revenge, wishing to destroy everything, b

ut the shock was so great that she soon calmed down.

If Simon's body was before her, could she really bring herself to destroy it?

She was thoroughly tamed, instinctively considering everything for Simon.

Sue blinked away her despair, at least wanting to avenge her daughter.

She quickly formulated a plan.

If those behind the scenes wanted her to go after Brielle, her not doing so would surely make them anxious.

With the public against Brielle now, taking a stand to condemn her would serve their purpose, b

ut if Sue held back, surely, they would try to provoke her further.

Her gaze clouded, and she lifted her head to the officer beside her. "I'd like Brielle's phone number."

The cop sighed, thinking she still wanted revenge on Brielle.

"I hope you can keep a cool head. Don't end up throwing away your life, too."

Sue dropped her gaze. "I'm not after trouble. I just want to discuss something with her."

She might not have cared for her own life, but she couldn't let the real villains go free.

The officer passed Brielle's contact number to her.

Chapter 384

Sue sat stiffly in the police station all afternoon. Her cell phone suddenly rang to life. She turned to the officer beside her and

said, "I wish someone would tap my phone."

Currently, she was a victim, so the police obliged.

Once Sue was certain her call was being monitored, she pressed the answer button.

A sinister voice came from the other end.

"Now's the time to crush Brielle with public opinion. What are you up to? Don't you want to avenge your husband?"

The officer listening to the call looked up at Sue in surprise, b

ut Sue appeared indifferent, replying with vulnerability in her voice.

“Even if Brielle dies, my husband won’t come back.”

“At least you can make the person responsible pay, right? I’ve already given you my advice. If you commit suicide and blame

everything on Brielle, she won’t be able to shake this off. Now is the best time.”

There seemed to be some noise in the background of the man’s location, and then the call was abruptly cut off.

The man, visibly annoyed, turned to look at the calm William seated nearby.

“Dad, if Sue doesn’t pin this on Brielle at this critical moment, are all our efforts for nothing?”

William held a mug of coffee, appearing confident.

“Don’t worry. I’ve sent someone to retrieve the hospital security footage. As long as Brielle was near Simon during the time of his

death, even if she didn’t hit him, she won’t escape public association with the incident.”

A smirk of self-satisfaction crossed William’s face, confident the investigator would return soon with the footage.

Just as he thought this, the living room door opened, and his bodyguard walked in respectfully.

Seeing the bodyguard’s grim expression, William’s brow furrowed. “Where’s the footage?”

The bodyguard hastily bowed his head. “We’ve reviewed the surveillance, sir. We found no evidence of Ms. Brielle being in the

hospital at the time or even around the vicinity.”

“How is that possible!”

William crushed the coffee mug in his hand.

Someone had tipped him off this morning that Brielle was at the hospital. It was just bad luck that she happened upon the scene

of Simon’s death. Publicizing the footage would have made

it impossible for Brielle to clear her name; she would be branded with shame for life.

But now, the bodyguard was telling him there was no sign of Brielle.

Could the tip have been a mistake?

Cold fury flashed in William’s eyes. “Are you certain the surveillance wasn’t tampered with?”

The bodyguard, trained professionally for such tasks, shook his head. "The footage has been deliberately edited."

William's face turned pale with anger. Someone had beaten him to the punch.

Could it have been Max?

William felt a wave of humiliation as if his every move was controlled by his adversary.

He took a deep breath and turned to the young man beside him.

"Keep pressuring Sue. I want her to drag Dorsey International through the mud!"

Damn it, he had to outmaneuver Max!

Meanwhile, Sue, looking at her disconnected phone, slowly looked up.

"I suspect my daughter was murdered, and it was made to look like a suicide. I want the police to reopen the investigation and

check on the person who's been calling me. From the start, this person has been manipulating my husband and gave us ten

million dollars. The transfer is recorded, though it might be from an overseas account. All signs indicate this isn't an ordinary

incident."

Ten million was not an amount a regular person could produce.

The police officer, taking no chances, quickly inquired, "Is there a record of the transaction on your husband's phone?"

Sue nodded. "I can provide that."

The officer acted swiftly and, with the transaction evidence in hand, released a new statement to the public.

It suggested that Sue, the family member of the deceased, was asking for a fresh investigation, claiming she had been

threatened. She and her late husband, Simon, had initially targeted Dorsey International because Simon was in debt. He owed

eight million to a loan shark. The person behind the scenes gave them ten million, aiming to implicate Dorsey International

The detailed transfer records were made available by the authorities.

Since Simon's conversation with Sue in the hospital had been broadcasted live, everyone knew about his eight-million-dollar

debt. However, the ten million was overlooked.

Who gave ten million to Simon? What were their intentions?

Could it be a competitor of Dorsey International?

Public rage towards Brielle began to subside, and the focus shifted instantly. This was no ordinary case of a superior causing the

death of a subordinate—it was possibly a ploy by a business rival of Dorsey International.

Which average

family could just transfer ten million dollars? Not to mention, Sue herself claimed she faced a death threat, with the perpetrator

wanting to bring down Dorsey International, or else they wouldn't let her off.

Speculations arose that Sue must have sought police protection to dare to speak the truth.

And the police delivered on public expectations by releasing the audio of the recent phone call, confirming the authenticity of its

content.

Chapter 385

A storm was brewing, and public opinion had reached a new crescendo.

"So it's all been orchestrated by someone else, someone who just wants to stir the pot and drag Dorsey International through the

mud."

"Must be a business rival. A wire transfer record for ten million can't be faked. Whoever is behind this has deep pockets, clearly

not your average Joe."

"Looks like Brielle's caught a bad break. There were already people from Dorsey International stepping forward, claiming that the

video was edited, that Sarah herself had been repeatedly hassling her boss."

"Just wait and see. The police will uncover the truth."

Brielle thought she'd be plagued by rumors for a while longer, but Sue had brought the mastermind into the spotlight in an unexpected way.

William looked down on these pawns, thinking he could play god with their fates.

However, those who underestimated the human spirit would ultimately be defeated by it. Sue's counterstrike was bound to throw

William into a panic.

William probably never expected Sue to do this, considering how much she cared for Simon. If she let slip about the ten million

dollar issue, even if Simon were dead, he'd be scorned posthumously.

Sue loved Simon dearly: how could she bear to see the man she loved maligned?

William underestimated a woman's resolve.

The most loving could also be the most ruthless.

Human nature was forever a mystery, inscrutable, impenetrable, and unverifiable.

Now that the whole affair had been linked to a corporate conspiracy, to a puppeteer pulling the strings, Brielle was also just a

pawn used to take down Dorsey International. Harassing her was pointless.

Moreover, Brielle had to admit that once Sue had her epiphany, her smarts were impressive. She had managed to elevate the

situation with the police, not pointing to the puppeteer as someone trying to destroy Brielle but as someone trying to sink Dorsey

International. Thus, Brielle's role in the affair was diminished, and the public saw her merely as a pawn.

Her phone buzzed with a text from Sue..

[I still despise you, but I will fight this shadowy figure to the bitter end.]

Brielle was reflective. Until yesterday, she thought Sue was beyond help.

Turned out, once a woman broke free from the so-called bonds of love, she could become quite astute.

It's too bad Sue had her awakening a bit too late..

Brielle was genuinely grateful though. Sue's actions had finally shifted the online vitriol away from her.

She no longer had to worry about being mobbed when she stepped outside, or about the judgment in others' eyes.

A colleague called her, saying the reporters swarming Dorsey International had dispersed, now hot on Sue's trail.

But Sue was safe and sound in the police station, beyond the reach of the press, who were left pacing anxiously outside.

Brielle's lips curled into a smile. After a moment's thought, she texted Sue back.

[Thanks.]

Sue didn't respond, and Brielle didn't expect her to. Instead, Brielle set her sights on the underground gambling dens.

With public opinion now diverted, what would William do next?

Would he continue to involve the heir of Kingston Enterprises, or simply eliminate Sue?

But Sue had made the manipulation accusations so public that the entire nation was watching her, and the police wouldn't let

anything happen to her. She was under their protection, and any move by William would be nigh impossible.

Since Sue had caused trouble for William, Brielle didn't want to sit idle either. She called Ryan.

Ryan didn't expect Brielle to reach out to him and sneered internally.

"Brielle, you've got some nerve."

Knowing Ryan to be suspicious and impulsive, Brielle

understood that beating around the bush

would only make him more paranoid. Best to be straightforward.

"Ryan, you want to get back into Dorsey International, right? Well, there's a window of opportunity right now."

Of course, Ryan didn't trust Brielle. She'd deceived him more than once.

And the unresolved matter of Spencer's kidnapping somehow felt like her machinations.

But if Brielle had the power to do that, why would she have suffered under the Haywood family's thumb for so long? So, he was

momentarily puzzled.

"You think I'm going to believe you?"

"I don't need you to believe me. Just do a little digging, and you'll see. William has been sitting on Kingston Enterprises' contract

without finalizing it. The company went through a lot to get

11:06

this opportunity, and William's been stringing them along for ages."

"Heh, as if Kingston Enterprises would let him. If things don't work out with Dorsey International, they'd just go to another

company. Brielle, don't try to fool me."

Chapter 386

Brielle massaged her temples and let out a half-smile.

"Ryan, it's not that Kingston Enterprises isn't looking for other companies, but you know their golden boy, Daniel who's gone

missing. Bradley and Catherine are out of their minds trying to find their son—he's the apple of their eye. Until Daniel is found,

they're too preoccupied to focus on business. William's been sniffing around in the shadows for Daniel. Imagine if he finds Daniel

and uses him to force Kingston into signing a lopsided deal. His stock with Michael would skyrocket, don't you think?"

Ryan felt a knot tighten in his gut, and his fists clenched.

He had no standing with Michael and couldn't even set foot in Dorsey International, while William's position seemed

unshakeable.

If William managed to bully Kingston Enterprises into an unfair deal, Dorsey International would bleed Kingston dry, and all that

credit would go to William.

Ryan's breath quickened. If William continued to gain favor, Ryan's standing would only diminish until he became invisible within

the Dorsey clan.

He couldn't let William find Daniel.

"Brielle, where are you getting your intel? And why tell me—what's your angle?"

"Ryan, I've handed you an opportunity. Whether you grab it is your call. Just tip off Michael about William's pressure on the

Kingston deal. I doubt Michael would let anyone in the Dorsey family smother competitors with such tactics."

The business world wasn't about good guys and bad guys, but William's play was the dirtiest of them all.

A real businessman, someone like Max, would drive a company to ruin using legitimate business strategies, not by threatening

family members like some street thug..

All Ryan had to do was drop some hints to the old man, and William's days would be numbered. Once the seeds of doubt were

planted in Michael's mind, they were bound to sprout.

Being the middle child, overshadowed by William and outmaneuvered by Max, Ryan knew the bitterness he felt over the years

all too well.

Brielle's words spelled crisis, and Ryan wouldn't stand idly by.

After hanging up, Brielle exhaled slowly.

Now, she just had to wait.

Returning to her computer, she saw that Dorsey International's official website had released a statement.

They committed to cooperating fully with law enforcement and offered a compensation of five million dollars to Sue's family.

This statement from Dorsey International was timely, as the police had just concluded that a business rival was behind

everything. Although Dorsey International was an innocent party. out of humanitarian concern, they had to offer compensation to

their employee.

Five million was a hefty sum, showcasing the stature of a major corporation.

For Brielle, it helped to minimize her role in the incident. No one was talking about her anymore: the focus had shifted to the

puppet master behind the scenes.

In a clash between capital giants, everyone involved could be seen as a victim.

Once Brielle was out of the public eye, she could be forgotten.

She was finally free from this mess.

Taking a deep breath of relief, she took out her phone and sent Max a kissing emoji.

Max, sitting in his high-rise office, froze mid-sip of his coffee upon seeing the emoji. A couple of drops spilled, and the executives around him thought he'd come up with a new billion-dollar strategy. They collectively held their breath in anticipation.

After a long pause, the head of HR cautiously asked, "Mr. Dorsey, is there something wrong with the proposal we discussed?"

Max looked away, feigning composure as he took a sip of coffee. "We're targeting the wrong market."

After saying that, he set down his coffee cup and shot Brielle a message in return.

[Send more of those emojis in the future.]

After sending the message, he put his phone down with a stern expression. The executives around him, witnessing his demeanor, thought he had just wrapped up a billion-dollar deal.

Chapter 387

Brielle couldn't help but chuckle at the message she received, but she resisted the urge to reply and turned her attention back to the online world.

The issue had escalated into a high-stakes game between two financial titans, with the police now involved. Brielle realized she no longer needed to worry.

What nagged at her, however, was the video released by Sarah herself. Without complete surveillance footage from the restaurant, it just lingered out there, unresolved.

Even though everyone seemed to have moved past their scrutiny of Brielle, it remained a thorn in her side.

However, dwelling on it was pointless now. She had extricated herself from the mess.

As the evening settled in, Tiffanie rang her doorbell.

Brielle opened the door to find Tiffanie, her arms still a canvas of dense rose tattoos and several dreadlocks woven into her wild mane. Brielle was long accustomed to her friend's unique style.

Tiffanie had a lollipop jammed in her mouth.

Once they were in the car, Tiffanie's grip tightened on the steering wheel, her tone light.

“How did you get tangled up in such a mess this time?”

With a wry smile and a shrug. Brielle replied, “Just bad luck, I guess.

Tiffanie glanced over, her attempt at consolation half-hearted. “Hey, chill out. The online mob’s off your back now. You’re out of

the woods. Just... worry about other stuff, okay?”

Brielle, sensing an undercurrent in Tiffanie’s words, raised an eyebrow inquisitively.

Tiffanie coughed subtly.

“Looks like you haven’t heard yet. Uncle Max’s biological mom is being transferred back from her fancy overseas retreat to a

local facility. Guess I’ll have to start calling her ‘grandma. huh?”

“And that means?”

“Oh, come on, Brielle, don’t be dense. Grandma’s a big fan of Alivia and has been pushing for her to marry into the family. Once

she’s back, Alivia will surely follow suit. Word is she’s already sorting the paperwork. You have no idea how high Alivia’s stock

has risen. There’s this world-class research institute setting up a branch right here in Beaconsfield, and she’s going to be the

head honcho.”

The prestige of that position was enough to eclipse any local socialite or heir.

Alivia had the clout to command respect.

The more accomplished she became, the greater threat she posed to Brielle, especially with Alivia already having set her sights

on her.

Tiffanie prattled on, eventually letting out a sigh.

“Look, if she comes back, avoid a head-on clash with her. Just a heads-up. As long as Uncle Max doesn’t pop the question to

you, you’ll never outrank Alivia.”

After her spiel, perhaps realizing the blow to Brielle’s morale, Tiffanie hurried to bolster her friend’s spirits.

“Don’t get down. You’re plenty impressive yourself. It’s just your background that’s holding your back. If you were top–tier rich,

Alivia would be nothing. You could squash her with a flick of your finger.”

But life was not always fair, and Brielle knew it well.

Her eyes fell, not in defeat, but acknowledging the looming crisis.

The car pulled up to the largest estate in the suburbs, and Tiffanie hopped out of the convertible with a carefree grace, handing

Brielle a card.

This was a high–roller’s ticket into the exclusive casino, accessible only to those who could front the steep two–million–dollar

membership fee.

Such a price tag weeded out the merely affluent, highlighting the true wealth of its clientele and the recklessness of someone like

Simon who had ventured there.

Tiffanie turned and nodded at Brielle. “She’s with me.”

Each cardholder could bring just one guest, and as the gates of the estate swung open, a network of cameras blanketed every

inch of space.

This countryside casino, sprawling across a hillside, offered no place to hide.

Once they were inside, the doors shut swiftly. Brielle’s and Tiffanie’s faces popped up on the security monitors. Their features

were scrutinized, and their personal financial data was displayed–credit scores, debt ratios, and how much they could afford to

lose.

In the grandest hall, with its opulent decor, even the most inconspicuous potted plant appeared worth a lifetime of work for the

average Joe.

Finding Daniel here felt like searching for a needle in a haystack.

Brielle sighed and watched as Tiffanie eagerly exchanged cash for chips, itching to try her luck. Gambling held no appeal for

Brielle, so she hung back by the bar and dessert table.

She overheard—a nearby conversation, the voices loud enough to carry.

“When’s the ‘Lucky Lad’ gonna show up? Heard there’s a crowd waiting for him tonight.”

“Some of these nearly bankrupt big shots made a fortune off him, and came back from the brink with billions.”

“He’s from one of North America’s elite families, a prince of the diamond trade. What’s a few billion to him?”

“He hasn’t been home in ages. You know Mr. Connor from Apex Dynamics Ltd., right? He’s here waiting to win big.”

Connor?

Brielle’s brow furrowed at the mention of that name, the last thing she wanted to hear.

Chapter 388

“Who’s targeting Apex Dynamics? After the Haywood family hit a streak of bad luck, it seems they’re next in line. Word on the

street is they’re still short of a cool eight billion.”

“There he is! Money Burner’s in the house tonight!”

Brielle craned her neck, trying to spot the infamous Money Burner in the throng, but the place was swarming. She knew they

were talking about Infinity Brilliance’s lone heir, Dustin Lynch.

Just thinking about Dustin brought back memories of their chance meeting abroad. She couldn’t help but suppress a smile. For

some reason, she found his company effortlessly comforting.

Deciding to ditch her dessert, she figured it was worth taking a stroll to see if she could dig up any news on Daniel.

As she rounded the corner, Dustin’s voice floated towards her. “Darling, are we really going to debate the origin of love right

now? I’m far more interested in the color of your dress tonight.”

Brielle froze. The voice came from the balcony, a place she had to pass by. Walking through would mean interrupting, wouldn’t

it?

The woman’s breathy sighs grew louder. “Mr. Lynch, you’re such a tease. It’s been ages since you’ve been around. Didn’t any of

those foreign girls satisfy your appetite?"

Brielle couldn't bear to listen any longer and turned to leave, but in doing so, her foot knocked against a potted plant. The noise

startled the woman on Dustin's lap, who let out a shriek and hastily retreated, clutching her undergarments.

Embarrassed, Brielle tried to hurry away but found her collar caught in a firm grip.

"Brielle?" Dustin was tall, and lifting her by the back of her neck seemed effortless.

Standing on tiptoes, helpless, Brielle explained, "I was just passing by."

He raised an eyebrow and let her go, then idly twirled a finger. "What a shame. You have no idea how delightful she felt."

Brielle mentally insisted she didn't want to know.

Dustin's eyes twinkled mischievously, his thin lips giving him a look of both passion and indifference.

Straightening her clothes, Brielle asked as politely as possible, "Mr. Lynch, when did you arrive?"

"Hmm, landed about an hour ago."

Fresh off the plane and already at the casino, his life seemed quite indulgent. Brielle was at a loss for words.

Dustin surveyed her from head to toe and chuckled. "You've lost weight."

His familiar tone touched her, albeit slightly.

His gaze then shifted indoors, lighting up at the sight of a woman dressed as a Playboy bunny. "After all the looking around, it's

clear the ladies here are top-notch. Soft and delicate, and they sound so sweet in bed."

Brielle took a deep breath, wishing she hadn't heard that.

Noticing her discomfort, Dustin found it amusing and pulled her by the wrist. "Come on, let's play a round."

"Mr. Lynch, let's not. I don't have any chips."

Dustin wrapped an arm around her shoulder, sighing, "Brielle, it seems Max hasn't been treating you well. Why don't you come

with me? Pick any property you fancy in Beaconsfield, stay with me for a few days, and it's yours. How about that?"

His offer of 'play' was different from what he proposed to other women. It was more about taking a vacation and experiencing the

beauty of another place.

Brielle thought about his Money Burner nickname and pressed her hand to her forehead. "Let's not. If you frequent this place too

much, you might actually go bankrupt."

No one had ever worried about Dustin going bankrupt. Infinity Brilliance was a powerhouse in North America, with connections

even to high-ranking officials abroad. No one believed they could fall, not when they dominated the diamond market. As long as

there were women in the world, diamonds would be in demand. So, to Dustin, Brielle's concern was endearing.

He laughed softly, his eyes warming with amusement.

Women passing by couldn't help but steal glances, their cheeks flushing at his smile. Brielle was used to Max's handsome face;

even Dustin's striking looks couldn't cause much of a stir

in her.

Dustin drew her closer. "I won't go broke, sis. Come on, let's have some real fun."

The term 'sis' cast a shadow in Dustin's eyes, but Brielle missed it, assuming he was just being brotherly as he was with every

other woman.

Chapter 389

The moment Dustin swaggered up to the central poker table, a collective gasp washed through the crowd. Brielle faintly heard

the murmurs of "Money Burner" bouncing around the room. Seemed like the guy was quite the legend in this joint.

She tried to wiggle free from his grasp, but Dustin nonchalantly pulled up a chair, plopping her down next to him.

Dustin was known for his revolving door of arm candy, so no one paid much mind to Brielle's identity. Those who relished in the

local gossip recognized her in an instant—wasn't she the latest buzz on the net?

But here, nobody gave a hoot about online chitchat. Once you stepped through these doors, the only thing that earned you

respect was cold, hard cash.

Overpowered by Dustin, Brielle resigned herself to the seat.

Another voice cut through the air as a figure approached, taking a seat directly across from Brielle.

Connor was late to the party and clueless about Dustin's setup, so when he spotted Brielle, a sneer curled his lips. "Well, well, if

it isn't Ms. Brielle. You've been quite the sensation online, I hear."

Connor had once fancied the idea of marrying Brielle, but after being dressed down by her, he harbored a grudge that just

wouldn't quit.

He'd gleefully shared a juicy rumor from the Hatfield family grapevine with Catherine, thinking Brielle had snagged Max. But

Catherine had laughed in his face just days before, claiming Brielle was throwing herself at Max, who didn't even give her a

second glance.

The thought of Brielle demeaning him while groveling to another man boiled his blood. And with his business hitting the skids, his

words were all the more venomous. "So what's the plan, bedded and bored by your last sugar daddy, and now trawling for a new

one? But after Dorsey's had his fill, I doubt you'll find many takers."

Connor's chip stack was modest—fifty million at best. He'd been biding his time, waiting for Dustin's appearance.

The moniker "Money Burner" was well-earned with Dustin. Sitting at a table with him meant you could easily rake in a few

hundred million. There was that one CEO, nearly bankrupt and on the verge of a skydive without a parachute, who turned his

fortune around with a ten billion win from Dustin.

Nobody dared cross Dustin unless they were looking to make an enemy of wealth itself. And Dustin was much more than just

money.

As Connor's words hung in the air, a shadow passed over Dustin's eyes. He was about to retort when Brielle beat him to the

punch. "Word on the street is your company is going under, Mr.

Connor. Is that because you've been bad-mouthed karma?"

"You!" Connor was livid, his scalp tingling with rage. He'd been living high for years, but now, he didn't who he had offended.

Deals crumbled one after the other. His once flush company was now drowning in debt, and the banks were cutting him loose.

With no other options, the casino was his last resort, and thank goodness Dustin was there.

A chuckle rippled through the onlookers. Apex Dynamics's troubles were an open secret, but nobody spoke of it outright—

business etiquette and all. Brielle didn't care for such niceties, and Connor was left smarting from the blow.

However, making a scene over Brielle here would only paint him as a bully. He scoffed, throwing a glance at Dustin, then offered

a 'friendly' warning. "Mr. Lynch, you'd do well to steer clear of this one."

Pitying glances shot Connor's way from the other patrons; they knew Brielle was Dustin's guest, and their rapport seemed...

intimate. Connor was fishing for a windfall from Dustin. oblivious to the fact that he'd just made a formidable enemy.

Expecting Dustin to erupt, the crowd was surprised when he didn't. Instead, he propped his head on one hand and, with a room

full of onlookers, slid a stack of chips towards Brielle. His eyes crinkled as he surveyed the room, then he chuckled. "Texas

Hold'em, no limit—any takers?"

No limit—those words were enough to send shivers down a gambler's spine. Overnight. fortunes could soar into the billions or

plummet to ruin. Only the true heavyweights, those worth several billions themselves, dared to play.

The seats hadn't filled up right away, but with Dustin, the infamous "Money Burner," in the mix, Connor had already claimed his

spot.

Dustin had only played no-limit a couple of times, but one game was legendary and revived a dying corporation. This time, it

looked like Connor was about to cash in on some of that luck.

A greedy grin stretched across Connor's pudgy, flushed face.

Chapter 390

The crowd's gaze wasn't on Connor; instead, it was fixated on Brielle.

Seated around the table were faces regularly splashed across the finance sections of newspapers, scions of the top ten magnate

families of Beaconsfield, and North American blue bloods like Dustin.

And Brielle? She was none of these things. Yet here she was, taking her seat at this thrilling, eye-opening poker game, her

posture poised with a confidence that belied her status.

Typically, the women accompanying the high rollers to a casino like this clung to their benefactors, playing the role of arm candy

with a practiced grace. They would barely dare to breathe too loudly while their patrons studied their cards, fearing to provoke

any displeasure.

This casino epitomized luxury, and many guests often brought along the top ladies of the entertainment industry as their dates,

ranging from award-winning actresses to adored ingénues. Even the most seasoned celebrities would find themselves

awestruck upon their first visit to this establishment, but Brielle's eyes betrayed no such wonder, sparking curiosity in those

around her.

However, the people here weren't as gossipy as the online trolls, who threw around vicious comments without a second thought.

Most of those critics weren't worth a million, while the ones standing in this room were at least millionaires.

Experience limits one's perspective, perspective limits ability, and ability dictates the playing field—it's a vicious cycle. That was

why most of the crowd wouldn't stoop to vulgar insults about a woman.

But Connor was the exception. Seeing Brielle ready to join the game, he couldn't help but laugh outright. "Brielle, come on, are

you serious? Borrowing money from Mr. Lynch to bet at this table? Can you handle the loss if your luck runs out? Do you have

any idea how much money goes into the pot in a no-limit game?"

Even if Brielle was once a miss of the Haywood family, they hadn't provided her with a life of luxury. Her car wasn't even worth

two hundred thousand. Could she possibly have any experience with Texas Hold'em?

Unperturbed, Brielle simply placed her chips in front of her and spoke with nonchalance. "So, I just won't lose, right?"

Her matter-of-fact tone left Connor speechless. His body was shaking with silent rage, thought he couldn't do anything as

everyone had taken their seats. He scoffed and muttered under his breath.

"We'll just see you crying all the way home tonight. Then you'll realize that there are places that just aren't meant for lowly people

like you."

Brielle ignored him, instead scanning the other players at the table. Apart from Dustin and Connor, she recognized everyone

else, though only by sight. What puzzled her the most was

the heir to the Hatfield family, Sammuell, who offered her a warm smile. She could only return the gesture with a small smile of

her own before the dealer appeared, and the room fell into

silence.

Though Texas Hold'em was a common sight in casinos, playing no-limit was another league entirely, especially with a wild card

like Dustin in the mix. The pot could swell to an astronomical sum in the blink of an eye.

The attendees, all wealthy in their own right, couldn't help but steal glances at Brielle, whose composure seemed to surpass

even the most seasoned veterans of high-stakes games.

As the first round of dealing commenced, the players to the dealer's left placed their bets, six million and three million,

respectively.

Without watching the others' reactions, Brielle glanced at her own two cards once they were dealt. Sitting next to her, Dustin also

checked his hand. Being to the left of the big blind, Brielle was the first to act. She raised an eyebrow. "Raise."

Her raise was twelve million, bringing the pot to twenty-one million.

Spectators were taken aback, some even snickering at the bold move. No-limit games typically saw cautious plays, and such

early raises were either the mark of a seasoned pro or a 'Money Burner' like Dustin.

Connor's face twisted into a sneer. "Brielle, maybe you should just go stand prettily in the corner. Maybe if you're lucky, you'll find

a man tonight who doesn't mind your company."

At his words, Brielle lifted her gaze to meet his. "Mr. Connor, all your talk seems to revolve around what's in your pants. Now I

understand why your company's tanking."

Each word struck a nerve, and Connor, chest heaving with fury, realized he was no match for Brielle in a verbal spar.

That bitch!

Fine, he thought, tonight he'd make her see that this kind of game was no place for a woman. Women belonged in bed, legs

spread, pleasing men—that was all they were good for.

He bit back any further comment and cautiously opted to call the bet.