

Master 501

Chapter 501

Brielle was oblivious to Alivia's scheming, her gaze resting on Max with a hint of amusement in her voice. "What's up? I'm

actually curious about what she has to say."

"Stay away from her."

Brielle's eyes relaxed, realizing Max had seen through Alivia's facade. At least, if trouble arose, he wouldn't shield Alivia. That

was enough for Brielle.

She didn't bring up the prison incident; after all, what was done was done. Could she expect Max to go after Alivia? Max's

actions the previous night had already shattered Alivia's pride.

Of course, if Alivia continued to target Brielle, she wouldn't just stand by idly.

She noticed the fatigue in Max's eyes, realizing he must have been relentlessly investigating since he woke up.

"Your injury..." "I'm fine."

Max reclined in the leather seat, playfully touching her fingertips. "Let's get you home to rest."

Brielle's lips curved into a smile. "Yeah."

She was about to offer to massage his temples when he said, "We should use protection in the future."

Even though Brielle's body wasn't naturally prone to conception, a pregnancy would only hurt her still-recovering health.

Brielle didn't respond, just nodded slowly. Then she remembered her position had been stripped away. Was she no longer going

to set foot in Dorsey International?

A flicker of loss crossed her eyes, but before the emotion could take hold, she received a document from Patrick in the front seat.

"Ms. Brielle, this is from Mr. Dorsey for you."

Brielle was stunned. As she flipped through it, her expression changed dramatically. "I can't accept this."

They had removed her from her position and offered her something far more valuable, so precious that the weight of the

document seemed to press down upon her.

Ten percent of Dorsey International's shares—valued in the billions—meant hundreds of millions for her.

Max was giving her an empire that could only grow.

A man who stood so tall yet chose to share his power must truly care for you.

Max had never spoken the words 'I love you,' his most emotional admission being a surrender to dopamine, but every action of

his proved his deep affection for her.

Still, she couldn't take the ten percent. Max owned fifty—one percent of Dorsey International, the

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absolute power holder. By offering her ten percent, he was giving others a chance to conspire against him. Should someone

secretly amass more than forty—one percent. Max would lose his seat at the head of the empire.

Brielle didn't need him to prove his love with Dorsey International shares.

Seeing her own signature at the bottom, she realized the man in uniform at the prison had indeed given her a document. She

had thought it routine and signed without a second thought, not knowing it was a share transfer.

"Max, I really can't accept this."

Her face was earnest as she pushed the document back, her gaze lifting to his. "Give me some time, and I will work hard to meet

you on equal ground."

Not by sharing his power but by her own merit.

Max looked at her, tucking a stray lock of hair behind her ear with a tenderness reserved for her alone.

"I'm willing to do this, but

only for you, Brielle."

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Brielle's heart swelled with emotion, a familiar warmth blooming in her chest. Only Max could stir her so deeply with just a few

words.

She had always detested how intimate relationships could turn language into a weapon. It was the understanding of each other

that could be twisted into a hurtful barb, but that wasn't any sort of skill. It was merely taking advantage of the other's open heart,

their vulnerabilities laid bare in trust, which shouldn't be used as a target for attack.

Throughout the time she'd known Max, he had never used words to wound her. He had enveloped her in a cocoon of safety, truly

fulfilling his initial promise. Every word he uttered was with intent and was not tossed carelessly into the wind.

Max studied her with earnest, trying to decipher the emotions swirling in her eyes. The thought of rejecting a gift worth billions

would have seemed absurd to anyone else, but Brielle had done just that.

The sensation that washed over him was hard to place—it was the first day of confirming their romantic relationship, and his

present was being returned.

His mood soured, a brooding silence falling over him as he gathered the documents, placing them aside as if they were nothing

more than scrap paper.

"Max, what would you like for a New Year's gift? How about a scarf? Hand-knitted by yours truly," Brielle ventured, hoping to lift

his spirits with a skill from her past.

In the orphanage, she'd knitted scarves and mittens for the other kids to save money, honing her craft with dedication.

A smile tugged at Max's lips, barely contained joy threatening to break through his usually composed demeanor. It seemed like

he was charmed by the idea.

That was all Brielle needed to hear to breathe a sigh of relief. "Let's hit the mall now. You can pick out the yarn, and I'll aim to

have it done by New Year's Day."

"Alright."

With that, Patrick, who was sitting in the front seat, set the navigation for the nearest craft store.

This was probably Max's first excursion to such a place in years. His life was meticulously planned by assistants—every meal,

every outfit, decided the day before. So when they entered the vast space of the shopping mall, he paused, momentarily

overwhelmed.

Brielle beelined for the yarn aisle, taking his hand. "What color do you fancy?"

Max considered his choice with the gravity of a major business deal. After a lengthy deliberation, he settled on a dignified grey.

He looped the selected yarn with his finger and handed it to Brielle.

She wasn't worried about picking the wrong color. Max had the kind of face that could make even the tackiest neon look regal.

After bagging the yarn, Brielle's gaze drifted to a display of slippers nearby, and she couldn't help but point them out. "Look,

couple's sets."

Indulging in a rare moment of whimsy, Max took the bag from her. "Should we get them?"

Without hesitation, Brielle grabbed a matching black and white pair and tossed them into the cart.

She rarely went shopping, and doing it together with Max was an even rarer treat. She simply grabbed anything that seemed

practical, especially if it came in a his-and-hers version.

They shopped for items from head to toe until the carts were brimming. Realizing she might have gotten carried away, Brielle felt

a tad embarrassed. But as if by magic, Patrick emerged, silently directing the staff to transfer their haul to the car.

Once in the car, Brielle was too exhausted to lift a finger.

When they returned to Premier Palace, Wesley was already waiting by the door, as if he knew they'd arrive together. "Sir, Ms.

Brielle."

Wesley directed the staff to unload the car and unpack the items.

Suddenly, Brielle recalled the couple's theme of their purKenzos and felt a twinge of embarrassment with so many eyes on her.

"I'll help," she offered, moving to tackle the unpacking herself, but Wesley stopped her.

"Ms. Brielle, please, have a seat."

She settled on the couch, though not for long. Among the pile, she spotted several boxes of condoms, and her cheeks flushed

with heat.

Two staff members were still unwrapping items, Wesley was supervising, and even Patrick was bustling about, arranging their

other purKenzos.

Brielle shot up from her seat, covering the boxes with her hands. She hadn't bought those; it must have been Max's doing.

She turned to find Max, who was nonchalantly perusing a document, unaffected by the unfolding scene. Who would have

guessed that with his austere and distant demeanor, Max had slyly slipped a few boxes of condoms into their shopping just half

an hour earlier?

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Brielle's cheeks burned with a rush of heat as she hastily snatched the box from the pile.

"I got this one. You guys take care of the rest," she said, cutting off any potential response from the others as she quickly

whisked the box away to the master bedroom.

With the door securely locked behind her, the feverish tension that had gripped her began to dissipate as if she had narrowly

escaped disaster. Tentatively, she touched her still-flushed cheeks, alarmed by their heat.

In a flurry, she pulled out the contents of the box—a few assorted items from the alleyway market—and carefully stowed them into

her bedside drawer.

Her eyes couldn't help but dart to the assortment of item. Max did have a knack for shopping. A fresh wave of heat colored

Brielle's face as she made sure there were no other bizarre surprises within the box. Breathing a sigh of relief, she felt as if she

had narrowly avoided a social catastrophe in front of so many.

When Brielle returned downstairs a half-hour later, Max was nowhere to be seen, so she decided to break out the yarn she had

bought. After all, Christmas was just around the corner, and she had to work overtime to get her projects done in time.

She glanced out at the backyard where a lush greenhouse garden bloomed, a riot of color even in the dead of winter, tended to

by a top-notch horticulturist.

Settling down, Brielle turned to Wesley, who was nearby. “Wesley, could you please pass me some paper and a pen?”

Wesley obliged, a smile playing at the corners of his eyes as he saw the yarn by her side. He instructed the chef to prepare

some pastries and coffee, setting them down on the table beside her.

Brielle sketched the rough shape of a scarf on the paper, intending to embroider Max’s name on one end. But considering his

stature as a CEO, flaunting his name around his neck seemed a bit tacky. After revising several times and designing a variety of

fonts, she finally scrapped them all in favor of drawing a delicate iris in the corner of the scarf. This small detail pleased her

immensely, and she began to knit immediately.

Meanwhile, Max had arrived at the nursing home after a call from Martha herself.

“Mother.”

He entered to find Alivia spoon-feeding Martha some soup.

Alivia’s second task was to redeem her image in Max’s heart. So, after parting ways with the others, she had rushed over.

Martha was not in the best of health today. She could sense Alivia’s mood was low, and after inquiring, she discovered the

relationship between Max and Brielle had become public.

Martha felt uneasy, but knowing that even Michael had no sway over Max, she tried to contain her frustration for the time being.

It had been a long while since she had seen Michael. They didn’t resemble a couple as much as they did business partners.

“Max, you’ve come,” Martha said, easing a bit when she noticed Brielle wasn’t with him.

A doctor followed Max, needing to administer an injection to Martha, who had fainted that morning due to excessive emotion and

had only recently regained consciousness.

The side effects of the new medication were becoming apparent, and every fainting spell was cause for alarm, fearing it could be

the last.

Max sat on the other side of Martha’s bed, expression neutral as he adjusted the blanket over her. At this gesture, Martha’s heart

softened. “You are always so busy with work. You visit me less often than Alivia does.”

Max’s gaze didn’t meet Alivia’s, who kept her eyes lowered; her body was tense with anticipation. But she couldn’t avoid Max

forever. She needed to act swiftly on her plan.

Martha’s health was fragile, and any mishap due to Max and Brielle could change their relationship. Would Max be able to

remain at peace with Brielle then?

It was unlikely.

As Martha had said, a relationship mired in guilt was an unbearable path to tread—every step was like a blade to the leg, and

every moment was torture.

Alivia’s lips curled into a cold smirk. If she could bear it a little longer, she could strike Brielle a fatal blow from which she’d never

recover. Every bit of patience now would pay off. She intended to dismantle their relationship, bit by bit, until they were utterly

apart.

“Mother, what caused the fainting?”

Max had instructed everyone at the facility not to burden Martha with any external news. She needed peace to recover. Having

just gone public with Brielle, Martha’s fainting spell seemed more than just a coincidence to him.

Martha massaged her forehead. “Just a nightmare, I suppose. I keep feeling as though my time is running short. I wish to see

you more. If you and Alivia were to have a child..."

Chapter 504

Max could be honest with anyone about his relationship with Brielle, but with Martha, it was a different story.

Martha was on new medication, and the doctors had warned that she couldn't handle any shocks. Spilling the beans now could

exacerbate her condition and render all their efforts futile.

She looked pale, her grip on Alivia's hand gentle but firm. "I called Alivia over to keep me company," she said, patting her hand.

"She asked if you'd be coming by. Max. Have you two had a falling out?"

Max frowned but kept his temper in check. "You've had your shot, Mom. You should rest."

Martha lay in bed, her thoughts wandering. If things kept going this way, Brielle and Max might even have a child before she

knew it. And she would never allow such an illegitimate child to exist.

"Max, promise me," she said, her eyes betraying a hint of madness. "My grandchild can only be born to Alivia. No one else is

worthy."

Max saw her on the brink of an episode and gently patted her back. "Mom, rest now. We'll talk about this later."

Martha was not easily placated, but the meds were overpowering, and drowsiness swept her. Her fingers still clung to a corner of

Max's shirt.

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Once she was asleep, Max looked up at Alivia, who appeared calm but was actually clutching her fingers tightly. The nail marks

from the night before were still visible on her palm, throbbing with pain, but it was this pain that kept her alert.

"Max, I'm sorry." Alivia said, her eyes reddening as she looked up at him. "Have my actions lately disgusted you?"

Max remained silent, curious about what she was trying to convey.

Alivia took a deep breath, her gaze earnest. "I'm not a good person. We've grown grown up in this circle, knowing that if we want something, we fight for it. My goal since childhood was to marry you. So, for

Brielle, who came out of nowhere, I can't welcome her."

"I heard she was pregnant, and you didn't even know about the child. This makes me despise her even more. To me, she's no

different from those women trying to rise through social classes using their children. That's why I've been looking for ways to

push her out, and I've done some foolish things."

As she spoke, her voice choked up. "We've known each other for over a decade. I've been chasing your shadow since we were

kids. Even if I can't be with you, I've always treated you like family. I believe Brielle isn't good enough for you, which is why I went

to such lengths to drive her away. But now I understand that someone like you has never cared about status or

position. So, I want to apologize to you. If possible, I'll apologize to Brielle, too. I called her today. I don't know if she told you, but

I invited her for afternoon tea, wanting to apologize in person, but she hung up on me."

Her eyes fell, her demeanor sincere. "From now on, I will genuinely wish you the best, and I should try to move on myself. Jairod

is coming back soon, right? I promised to consider him, so you don't have to avoid me."

Her words were full of humility, and she expressed concern that Max might've been making a mistake with Brielle and had

resorted to unsavory tactics out of worry.

As for Alivia calling Brielle, Max was right there when it happened, and he was the one who ended the call, so he knew Alivia

wasn't lying. Whether she had really seen the light or was playing a calculated game, Max couldn't tell.