

## Master 51

### Chapter 51

The innocence on Tiffanie's face had vanished, and within a few minutes, she broke into laughter.

"Turns out Maxie has met his match. How about I buy you a drink? I've really found some great guys, all of them are quite the

catch." She adeptly changed the subject, her gaze sparkling once more.

Brielle was itching to leave, but it was clear that now wasn't the right time. Stepping out of the car, her eyes fell upon Andrew,

leaning casually against another vehicle.

Andrew was dressed down, but his presence was still commanding, in stark contrast to the man standing opposite him, who

looked like he stepped out of a GQ magazine, especially his cigarette-holding hand, which seemed more suited to wielding a pen

or painting masterpieces.

Tiffanie noticed as well, her smile widening. "Brielle, what do you think of the guy next to Andrew?"

Brielle's lips twitched, struggling to suppress a chuckle, "If I'm not mistaken, that's Kenzo, the most talented screenwriter around,

heir to the Barnes family legacy."

Kenzo was nearly as tall as Andrew, but their auras couldn't be more different.

Andrew's presence was always crackling with a dangerous spark, as if he was a lit fuse. ready to ignite and burn everything to

ashes. Kenzo, on the other hand, exuded a gentle demeanor, his hand that held the cigarette was distractingly attractive, and his

smile had a mischievous curl at the corners.

"You know him? You hardly ever show up to these gatherings. And Kenzo doesn't seem the social butterfly either. But no

worries, if you fancy him, I'll go drug him for now. We can talk after you've slept with him."

Brielle rubbed her forehead, "Are you sure you won't get killed trying?"

you right

"Maybe, but I'd have to survive because Maxie wouldn't let anyone finish the job. To snag a night with the most talented

screenwriter of our time, I'd say it's worth the risk."

"There's got to be a better use for that energy of yours."

Tiffanie paused, then burst out laughing, "I'm finding you more interesting than I thought."

She had no intention of greeting the two men and was about to pull Brielle inside, but Brielle walked over to Kenzo, standing with

a poised yet approachable air. "Hey there, Kenzo, long time no see."

Kenzo put his cigarette down and tossed it in the nearby trash can before looking at her warmly.

1/2

"Brielle?"

"That's me."

Tiffanie didn't expect these two to strike up a conversation, her curiosity bouncing from one to the other, finally settling on

Andrew.

Andrew was idly flipping a lighter in his hand, the lid opening and closing with the flick of his fingers, the flame igniting and

extinguishing intermittently. Noticing someone watching him, he didn't look up.

Tiffanie nudged Brielle's shoulder, "So, are you still up for meeting that movie star with me?"

Brielle wasn't keen on going, and this was a good opportunity to decline, but before she could speak, Andrew's mocking gaze

landed on her.

She felt a chill run down her spine, and then she saw Andrew pull out his phone and dial a number. After about ten seconds, the

call connected.

"Max, your Little Canary wants to fly away to another forest. Should I just snuff her out for you?" His tone was sinister, the last

few words ground out between clenched teeth.

Brielle was somewhat afraid of Andrew; he was unpredictable, there was nothing he wouldn't dare to do. She had a feeling that if

Max on the other end gave the go-ahead, Andrew wouldn't hesitate to choke the life out of her. A canary that didn't know how to

endear itself to others wasn't worth keeping alive.

Her heart felt squeezed, the air around her growing thin, barely able to breathe. She didn't know what Max said on the other end,

but the next second Andrew pressed the phone to her ear.

## Chapter 52

"Got the jitters?"

Max's voice came through the phone with a chill that was like an invisible hand, steadying a racing heart

"Nah, I just know he's joking."

Max's eyebrow arched, his lips curling into a slight smirk, "Andrew never jokes"

Brielle's breathing hitched a bit as she felt Kenzo's gaze turn more meaningful. She just wanted to end the call as soon as

possible "Uncle Max, you needed me for something?"

"Yeah, get ready. You're joining me on a business trip tonight."

Brielle thought she'd misheard, but when it came to work, she straightened up, all business. "What time tonight?"

"Flight's at ten. Patrick will pick you up."

That settled it for Brielle, she couldn't say no to Max. She handed the phone back to Andrew with a thanks and then turned to

Tiffanie. "Something's come up with work-I've got to head out."

years ago. I

Then she looked at Kenzo, "Kenzo, I never got to thank you for that thing three yea owe you dinner."

Kenzo's gaze deepened, his smile fading a little, "Sure, add me on Messenger."

Without any fuss, Brielle whipped out her phone, added him, exchanged a few polite words, and left.

After she was gone, Kenzo put his phone down and turned to Andrew.

"Little Canary?"

The gentle smile was gone, replaced by an unreadable expression.

Andrew flipped his lighter open and lit a cigarette with practiced ease, "What, scouting info for your little sister again?"

"Alivia has been nagging too much. I can't just sit back and do nothing."

“Nothing special. Max will keep her close for a few days.”

Kenzo’s eyes narrowed slightly, a spark of interest flickering in them. Max, keeping a woman close?

Whatever the reason, Brielle was now a threat to Alivia’s future. Kenzo smirked at the thought of the drama that would unfold.

Tiffanie, on the side, really didn’t want to stand with two men like this. It would affect her upcoming hunting. She made a quick

excuse and slipped into the dance floor, eyes peeled for her target: a top-tier celebrity rumored to be there tonight.

Meanwhile, Brielle returned to her apartment, clueless about where the business trip would take her or for how long.

She packed a couple of outfits and, after a moment’s thought, applied a touch of makeup. Then she grabbed all the documents

she could carry, and by seven, Patrick’s car pulled up downstairs.

Brielle slid into the car and immediately noticed Max, sitting quietly with his eyes closed, head resting against a custom headrest,

looking every bit the picture of weary nobility.

She moved more gently, not wanting to disturb him, then leaned forward to ask Patrick in a low voice.

“Where are we headed?”

“Ms. Brielle, you’ll see when we get there.”

Reading the room, Brielle fell silent.

Before boarding the plane, her phone rang-it was the Haywood family. The Haywood household was in an uproar because Faith

had shown up in person to scorn them and call off the engagement.

“Brielle, get back here now!”

“Do you have any idea how vital the business ties between the Haywoods and the Dorseys are? Since Spencer still wants this

engagement, keep your mouth shut. Bri, don’t disappoint me. You’ve been stepping out of line too much lately.”

That night, Brielle confessed to having an affair, making Miranda feel both Combined with the thoughts from Lillian’s diary,

Miranda suddenly felt past years. Actually, Brielle's nature was just so deceptive and fickle!

Regret washed over her for not having Lillian as her own daughter-at least have been such an embarrassment.

anger and pain.

by these

"Mom, Spencer cheated on me first. His thing with Lillian, it's like a thorn in my

Impatience flickered in Miranda's eyes. She felt she knew Brielle's true nature and believe a word she said.

"Just get back here and apologize to Ms. Faith, And don't bring up that night again. As long as Spencer is willing, you must marry

into the Dorsey family."

Brielle had never felt so insignificant in her position within the Haywood family

## Chapter 53

She didn't think twice before hanging up the phone.

Minutes later, Robert called again. Brielle simply turned off her phone, unwilling to be disturbed on her business trip.

She grabbed her boarding pass and entered first class. Whether by Patrick's design or pure happenstance, her seat was right

next to Max's. As the plane took off, Max was engrossed in a presentation video on his tablet.

He was quiet, his gaze intense and focused, a refreshing coolness about him that seemed to soothe the soul.

Brielle, eyes closed, tried to calm her emotions, but thoughts of the Haywood family stirred

annoyance within her. When she finally opened her eyes and caught a glimpse of the content on the tablet, she couldn't help but

interject. "Michael Porter? Uncle Max, you're into his talks too?"

Max was significantly taller, he tilted his head slightly, his face holding a clean-cut sharpness. "You know of him?"

Brielle nodded. Given this was a business trip, she didn't feel the need to butter him up as she would in a more private setting.

"A professor at Harvard Business School, famous for his Five Forces framework," she commented.

She reached out to help steady the tablet, her fingertips brushing against his rosary bracelet. Suddenly, he withdrew his wrist

slightly, capturing her fingertips in his palm.

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A flutter coursed through Brielle's heart, and she struggled to focus on the presentation. "His framework is quite renowned. It

even led Peter Drucker to introduce the concept into the field of corporate management for the first time. I thought someone of

your stature wouldn't bother with these anymore."

It wasn't flattery; after all, these theories were common talk in the financial circles. Max had made a name for himself on Wall

Street by the age of sixteen. He had to be well-versed in such matters.

The warmth of his palm sent her thoughts racing, her breathing quickening. He seemed at ease, as if her fingertips were merely

an amusing trinket.

"Professor Porter was my mentor." His tone was casual as he held onto her delicate fingertips, just holding them, nothing more,

nothing less. His presence was calm, cool.

After a moment of hesitation, Brielle gently clamped down on his fingertips.

High above the earth, every secret of the human body felt incredibly romantic and profound. Life was indeed a spectacular event.

However, she was well aware that their encounter was nothing more than a play of circumstance.

Behind the romance was the biting chill of reality.

Several hours later, the plane touched down in the United States. Even as Brielle was escorted to a manor house, the purpose of

the trip was still a mystery. She was trying to adjust to the time difference when she heard Patrick's voice from the garden

outside her

window.

"President, Mr. Hatfield from Hatfield Inc. is also here, for the auction as well."

An auction? Was there a famous auction happening abroad? But if it was just an auction, why would Max have brought her

along?

Soon enough, she got her answer. Patrick brought her a file, placing it directly before her. "Ms. Brielle, this contains all the

research on the Hartley Group."

The Hartley Group?

Brielle had been keeping up with international news since landing and hadn't heard any updates on the Hartley Group.

"Tomorrow night's auction will be attended by all of North America's tycoons, and the President of the Hartley Group might bring

up a partnership."

Brielle felt a shiver run down her spine at the thought of all the North American tycoons in one place. What sort of auction would

draw such a lavish assembly?

Suppressing her surprise, she took the documents and began to study them intently.

Max and Patrick left the manor, only returning around ten, carrying hints of alcohol on their breath. By then, Brielle had gone over

the documents several times, not daring to set them aside even for a moment.

Her room was dark except for a single lamp by the window. When Max stepped in, he saw her poring over the pages, her hair

cascading over her shoulders, her features illuminated beautifully.

There was something captivating about anyone, man or woman, when they were fully immersed in their work.

## Chapter 54

“Uncle Max, with the Hartley Group and Infinity Brilliance being the two most formidable financial powerhouses in North America,

they’re both set to make a splash at the auction. Now that Infinity Brilliance is teaming up with the Clements Corporation, does

that mean someone from the Clements clan will show?”

The room was dimly lit, the air tinged with the scent of whiskey.

Max approached, noticing the Infinity Brilliance dossier displayed on the laptop screen. beside her.

“Andrew will be there.”

He sat down, wrapping his arms gently around her from behind, “Scared of him?”

Indeed she was, but because of Aubree, she wanted to understand what kind of Andrew was.

person

“The Clements family is cooperating with Infinity Brilliance, and with that, no one can replace Andrew’s position in the Clements

family, right?”

If the Clements family ever came after Aubree, she hoped Andrew would keep her safe.

Max didn’t respond, just held her on the window-side daybed.

Brielle tried to ignore the warmth spreading through her heart. This was not a good sign.

She hadn’t touched a drop of alcohol, yet her skin tingled as if fingertips danced upon it, slightly intoxicating. Her mind went

blank for a moment until she felt a tickle on her neck. His lips grazed her skin, not painful, almost tender. He must be tipsy.

Brielle’s eyelashes fluttered, and she instinctively pulled away, “Uncle Max, the Hartley Group’s dealings with Dorsey

International don’t overlap. Dorsey International broke into international markets the year you took over. Logically, this

partnership seems unnecessary. Is it because of Mr. Hartley? I saw he’s also a Harvard grad, a friend of yours, Uncle Max?

Mmm, be gentle.”

A low chuckle came from the man as he lifted her in his arms, heading for the bathroom.



“Brielle, are you sure you want to keep talking business?”

Brielle bit her lip, fearful of this seductive dance he was leading. It was disorienting, intoxicating.

“Mr. Dorsey, you provided the info, so of course, I have to do my due diligence. Among the Hartley Group’s core businesses, the

only one that seems to connect with Dorsey International is MarketPlace. Is Dorsey International planning to list its subsidiaries’

products there? If so, it could leverage the Hartley Group’s logistics network, saving a pretty penny.”

1/2

She was now seated on the vanity, facing a mirror a meter in diameter that reflected both of them. Brielle closed her eyes,

unable to bear the provocative image.

“Or maybe I’m wrong, and Dorsey International isn’t aiming to integrate with MarketPlace. The latest data suggests the Hartley

Group intends to develop a state-of-the-art. automated grocery chain. The crux of such stores is the ceiling sensors that cover

the entire space, necessitating AI technology, which Dorsey International happens to excel in. Mr. Dorsey, your foresight had you

fund sensor research two years ago. Now, you could potentially sell this tech to the Hartley Group, with its extensive North

American storage and logistics system, though they lack AI research.

The sounds in the bathroom made her blush, her eyelids squeezed shut, forcing her to tilt her head back.

Just then, the icily composed man paused, pinching her chin. “Go on.”

Brielle w

was drained of strength, trying to stay lucid, but her voice faltered.

“As for the upfront costs for an automated grocery, be it AI, machine learning, or big data, Dorsey International has more

expertise than the Hartley Group. If Dorsey International sells this entire suite of tech to them, then they could-”

“Could what?”

She couldn’t speak anymore. Overwhelmed, yet he pressed on, seemingly reveling in her confusion.

How wicked.

But ultimately, Brielle succumbed, her eyes reddening as she clawed at his back in frustration and surrender.

If there were two kinds of sin in this world, Max clothed was one, Max unclothed was another. Brielle watched herself fall with

crystal clarity. She remembered Tiffanie's words

one night to win Max, a lifetime to love him.

Such agony. But then again, he was Max.

## Chapter 55

The next morning, Brielle turned on her phone, which had been turned off. There were many missed calls inside, not only from

the Haywood family but also from Spencer and Faith. As for the messages filling the screen, she didn't even bother to look at

them. She just pressed delete.

After tidying up a bit, she made her way to the estate's living room. Max was out, likely not to return until the evening. Brielle had

committed the information she'd uncovered to memory, but she was eager to get a real feel for the work environment at the

North American conglomerate's towering headquarters. She knew all too well that limited experience narrowed one's vision, and

only by immersing herself in the thick of it could she truly grasp the allure of these financial powerhouses.

Wall Street, for instance, just a stone's throw away, was the stuff of dreams for any finance professional. The hub of the business

world, where within a mere square kilometer, over two thousand financial institutions and nearly four hundred thousand finance

professionals converged.

The very thought had Brielle's blood pumping with excitement.

However, her outing faced a rocky start as a sudden downpour caught her mid-journey. She took shelter under a bus stop

awning, watching as dark clouds amassed ominously above. Horns blared in the distance, visibility dropping by the second.

Brielle checked her route on her phone and decided on a shortcut down a less-traveled alley.

“Bang! Bang!” No sooner had she stepped into the deserted lane than the sound of gunfire echoed. A nearby sign clattered

violently in the wind.

Under the veil of rain, all discord seemed well concealed.

Brielle halted, not daring to move forward. In a foreign land, especially in carrying firearms was common, running up like that was

seeking death.

As she was about to retreat, a rough hand clamped around her wrist. The gr enough to make her bones ache, and in moments

she found herself pinned ag mold-streaked wall.

ry where

“Aussie?” The man’s tone carried a tinge of confusion, his breath hot against her ne

Brielle stiffened, swallowing hard. The cold barrel of a gun pressed against her side m it clear that any sudden moves could be

her last.

Several men lay in the depths of the alley, their blood mingling with the rainwater in the gutters. She had stumbled upon a

murder.

She didn’t recognize the man, but there was something vaguely familiar about him. Then,

1/2

In the flash of a synapse, a photograph came to mind.

The young son of Infinity Brilliance, the diamond industry’s most favored and enigmatic figure.

Twenty-some years ago, Infinity Brilliance lost a daughter. Neither the chairman nor this young man had ever ceased their

search.

Brielle’s eyelashes fluttered as she managed to speak, “Mr. Lynch, I didn’t see anything.”

It was no secret that Infinity Brilliance had amassed a multitude of enemies. Their domineering rules and sharp practices had

nearly cornered the entire diamond market.

Dustin, taken aback that this woman knew of him, scrutinized her before pocketing his gun. 'Which Aussie family's daughter are

you?

"I'm just an employee at Dorsey International."

Dustin was not in his usual suit, dressed simply in a white shirt and black pants, looking quite young. He reached out, fingers

wrapping around her throat. "Dorsey International? You know Max?"

Brielle, having researched Infinity Brilliance before, was familiar with Dustin's profile. It seemed Dustin and Max were not on the

best of terms.

She regretted her quick tongue. "I don't know him."

The wise know when to yield.

Dustin's grip tightened, a flicker of irritation crossing his face.

An employee of Dorsey International not knowing Max was like telling tall tales with eyes wide open. His hand formed into a claw, intending to frighten her, but in the next instant, the scene before him shifted dramatically.

"Thud!"

With a swift judo move, Brielle had him on the ground and pinned his arm with an efficient twist.

Dustin was stunned, his mind racing to catch up. Instead of resisting, he looked up at her. "What the hell?"

## Chapter 56

Brielle's face was pale as she pulled out her smartphone, aiming it at Dustin's face to start recording.

"Mr. Lynch, I wouldn't be doing this if I wasn't desperate to stay alive. A man of your stature surely wouldn't stoop to quarrel with

the likes of me, right? Just promise you won't come after me again, and I won't release this video of a woman flipping you over

her shoulder."

Dustin couldn't help but laugh, still pondering the strength of her move, "You've trained?"

Brielle nodded, "Fourth-degree black belt."

"Not bad."

Brielle was taken aback, unable to fathom what was going through this man's mind. Was he actually complimenting her?

She saved the video, no longer pinning Dustin down with her knee. Dustin's shirt was drenched, and just then his phone started

buzzing.

Standing aside, Brielle watched as his fingers deftly played with the gun, his whole demeanor casual and detached. In his eyes,

human lives seemed as insignificant as dust. "Andrew, you've arrived?"

Whatever the response was, Dustin, after hanging up, began to walk out of the alley. Halfway through, he paused and turned

back to glance at Brielle, "You know him?"

Brielle didn't reply, hearing him continue, "Your eyes reacted when I mentioned Andrew's name."

She wanted to deny knowing him. After all, both Andrew and Dustin were after her life. But Dustin didn't wait for her refusal,

abruptly grabbing her wrist and heading straight for the black car parked nearby.

A black stretch Bugatti shimmered through the rain.

Inside the spacious car, Andrew flipped his phone in his palm after ending the call. Across from him, a man exuding an aura of

austerity pinched a piece of paper between his fingertips – it was the auction catalogue.

"Max, what's Michael after this time?"

"The Ten Divine Panes."

Max set the catalogue aside. The scroll was the auction's showstopper, its price yet to be revealed.

"No wonder you needed to come personally."

This scroll had never appeared in auctions before. It was the work of a court painter from the 17th century. Michael had always

liked collecting such pieces.

Max glanced outside. Two blurred figures approached through the rain. "You didn't get into a tussle with Dustin?"

Dustin wasn't a regular in the social circles of Beaconsfield and was unfamiliar to them. It was unexpected that he would join

Andrew at the auction.

The North American elite were even more intricate than the Beaconsfield set, and Dustin, notorious in those circles as a playboy,

had a reputation as tarnished as that of a male Tiffanie.

"Why would I fight him?"

"You're both after Lot 8, right?"

Lot 8 was a one-of-a-kind timepiece. Andrew would certainly fight for Tessa, as in the past/most of these valuable items would

end up being sent to the Rowland family.

Yeah, I'm after Lot 8. Dustin's generous with women, but not every woman is worth splurging on to woo her."

The timepiece, by conservative estimates, would fetch around eighty million.

Max's gaze returned to the window, the figures in the rain becoming clearer.

Brielle tried to shake off Dustin's grip, but he seemed intent on holding on tightly. Once they were seated in the more subdued

Mulsanne, Dustin called Andrew in the car ahead.

with

The stretched Bugatti was not far in front, and naturally, he wouldn't share a ride Andrew. They weren't that close.

They had originally agreed to meet at the auction, but now, soaked to the skin, Dustin would be delayed.

"Andrew, head on in. We'll meet at the auction and then you can fill me in on any you've got."

news

Being of similar age and with the Clements family and Infinity Brilliance confirming a partnership, the men had met before and

dispensed with formalities.

After hanging up and ensuring Brielle wasn't going to bolt, Dustin finally released her to start another conversation with the

person on the other end of the screen.

"A philosophy student? You think I'd like someone so stiff? All she talks about are cultural paradigms and shifts in

consciousness. If she goes on, I might have to get a primer on Rousseau. At dinner last time, she even said that the highest

value is being ready to die for an internal ideal. I want her to surrender to me, not to some lofty cause. Look, we're

not on the same page. Don't bother me about her anymore."

Dustin's brow furrowed, tossing his phone aside in irritation.

For Brielle, it was her first encounter with this privileged son of fortune. Surprisingly, she felt he wouldn't harm her. There was an

inexplicable sense of familiarity.

"Mr. Lynch goes on dates arranged by others?"

It sounded like he was coerced into it.

Dustin gave a lazy smile, the hostility draining away, "It's more like a selection of consorts."

## Chapter 57

Choking on his words, Brielle shifted her gaze to the road ahead, swiftly changing the subject, "I've got plans later tonight, can

you drop me off somewhere?"

Dustin, eyes closed, didn't respond.

Only when the car came to a stop did Brielle realize they were at Dustin's private villa, a retreat he used for entertaining his

ladies.

She stood hesitantly at the spacious entrance, feeling a strong resistance to stepping inside. The peculiar chair placed amid the

flower stands seemed to her like some kind of kinky accessory.

This guy had a reputation as questionable as Tiffanie's. Brielle thought Tiffanie was outrageous, but Dustin was proving to be a

whole new level of scandalous.

An array of exotic professional gadgets was on display, complete with a swing that seemed to cater to every conceivable fantasy.

Brielle's expression grew more bizarre by the second, finally settling on a grand piano near the entrance that looked incredibly valuable.

She breathed a sigh of relief, deliberately avoiding the other gadgets and instead, her fingers couldn't resist playing a key on the piano. "Is there some reason for the piano being here?"

"Of course." Dustin answered seriously, then walked further inside to change his clothes.

Brielle figured the guy wasn't completely unreliable.

Minutes later, Dustin emerged in a tailored suit, his demeanor instantly transformed to one of composed elegance.

The door opened to admit a flurry of people – a professional styling team had arrived.

"Go get changed."

"Me?"

Brielle, thinking she was just a spur-of-the-moment interest for him, was now being instructed to change. It couldn't possibly

mean he was planning to take her to an auction. But she was indeed ushered into a dressing room by the entourage.

Stepping out in a flowing aquamarine gown, Dustin raised an eyebrow. "Not bad, you look much better than that philosopher."

It seemed he was out of female company and had premeditatedly snatched her up for the occasion. Brielle was curious about

the degree of trauma this so-called philosopher had inflicted on him.

1/2

She sat down as stylists swarmed her, closing her eyes to let them work on her face. Feeling the need to break the odd silence,

she picked up on the earlier topic. "That piano, what's the significance? I remember at Mr. Lynch's eighteenth birthday gala, your

family hired a handwriting expert to assess your script."

That ceremony was a grand affair, with every young socialite from North America in attendance. Dustin's handwriting fetched an



astonishing five million at auction. Whether it was worth that sum was another matter entirely.

A smirk played on Dustin's lips, amused that she knew even this. Clearly, she kept up with corporate news.

"I just find it quite intriguing to use the piano as a stage. Everyone's body can play a different symphony. Sometimes, with a glass

of wine in hand, watching the piano keys stained red, don't you think it's quite sophisticated?"

Brielle had never been so speechless in her life. Her breath grew heavier, and her face nearly cracked.

No wonder he was the most infamous playboy in the North American social circles. Taking a deep breath, she managed to

maintain her composure with great effort.

"Mr. Lynch, you're certainly blunt."

Dustin turned to look at her and chuckled. He rarely enjoyed himself so much. Seeing her struggle to stay calm was entertaining.

Wisely, Brielle refrained from starting another conversation, fearful of what 'sophisticated activity' he might describe next.

The styling team quickly finished preparing the two of them. She looked down at the aquamarine dress, thinking anything Dustin

had to offer was certainly not run-of-the-mill.

"Mr. Lynch, how much is this dress?"

"What, you think I'm short on cash?"

Just as Dustin finished his retort, his phone rang. Glancing at the flashing name on the screen, a sneer crossed his face. While

gesturing for Brielle to head out, he answered the call. "I made it clear, I'm not interested in Scott's novels, Schubert's ballads,

Delacroix, or the rise of national romanticism. Stop calling me. I've already got a date for tonight. Sweetheart, we're just not cut

from the same cloth."

## Chapter 58

Brielle trailed behind him quietly, a sense of surreal disbelief clinging to her. The auction was only a couple of hours away, and

she was sure Max would be looking for her soon.

“Mr. Lynch, I came here with a colleague, and I should probably get back to him. If you’re short of a date, how about we touch

base at the entrance of the auction?” she suggested, convinced Max wouldn’t need her as his so-called date.

Ever since Dustin hung up the phone, a frown had taken residence between his brows. “Call your colleague. Tonight you’re with

me,” he commanded.

Swallowing nervously, Brielle realized she didn’t have Max’s number.

Dustin raised an eyebrow and chuckled lightly. “Colleague? Are you really an employee of Dorsey International?”

“Yes,” she replied, her voice barely above a whisper.

Dustin nodded and, without hesitation, whipped out his phone, calling Andrew. “Tell Mr. Dorsey I’m borrowing one of his

employees for the evening.”

After delivering the message, he turned to Brielle. “What’s your name?”

Caught off guard by his assertiveness, she struggled to maintain her composure. “Lucinda,” she lied without missing a beat.

Without any suspicion, Dustin relayed to Andrew, “Her name’s Lucinda. She’ll be my for tonight. Tell Mr. Dorsey I’ll make it up to

him with dinner when I visit Australia.”

date

On the other end of the line, Andrew stared at his disconnected call, racking his brain for the name.

No recollection..

Dustin had a taste for striking beauty, so this ‘Lucinda’ must be exceptional. But did Dorsey International even employ such a

woman?

Frowning, he glanced at Max, who sat with his eyes closed, “Dustin just called. He wants to borrow one of your employees for

the night, someone named Lucinda.”

Max’s eyelashes fluttered as he slowly opened his eyes. “Who?”

“Lucinda,” Andrew repeated, scoffing. “Since when does Dorsey International harbor such a temptress that Dustin personally

calls to request her company?”

Max’s jaw clenched, a mist of emotion swirling in his eyes before settling back into an inscrutable smile. “Lucinda,” he echoed.

He looked up and instructed Patrick with a casual command. “We won’t be heading back to the manor,”

Patrick was surprised, as they were originally set to pick up Ms. Brielle. But without further questioning, he adjusted the steering

wheel accordingly.

The car fell into a tense silence. Andrew sensed a shift in Max’s demeanor ever since that phone call – a chilling coldness now

laced with a hint of frost in his gaze. “Max, didn’t you bring Brielle along? Where is she now?”

Max chuckled lightly, idly tapping his long fingers on his knee. “She’s at the venue.”

“You’re letting her wander around in the chaotic North American scene? If she flies into someone else’s cage, dazzled by the

glitz, she might never find her way back.”

“Would she not be dazzled by the glitz at my side?”

Max closed his eyes again, his voice husky as he recalled the previous night. “She’s not that shallow.’

Andrew had his biases against Brielle. She had boldly schemed against Max at their first meeting and shamelessly admitted to

being his mistress.

He knew she wasn’t, of course. Many in Beaconsfield longed to share Max’s bed but could only watch from afar – except Brielle,

who actually took action.

He wondered if Max would have ended her if her seduction had succeeded.

Their second encounter at Tequila Sunset surprised him. Not only had she survived, but she thrived.

Max harbored a faint interest in Brielle, just a flicker, but enough to put Andrew on alert. So when Tiffanie took Brielle to meet a

male star, he felt compelled to inform Max. At least until Max was bored of her, she should stay obediently.

“A woman who schemes to sleep with you isn’t shallow enough? In my opinion, she’s just got a pretty face. You haven’t tired of

her yet, so you’re still looking through rose-colored glasses.”

“And you’re tired of Aubree?”

Max’s mention of Aubree caught Andrew off guard. Their relationship was meant to rot away in silence.

“She’s just a pastime. Easy to call, easy to dismiss, saves me a lot of trouble.”

After all, Tessa didn’t appreciate his dalliances, Sleeping with a hundred different people or a hundred times with one person

made no difference to him.

“Brielle said Aubree loves you.

Max’s words were a reminder to Andrew not to do something he might regret, but the very mention of love contorted Andrew’s

face in disgust. He knew Aubree fancied him, loved him, but men could be more cruel to women who loved them but whom they

didn’t bother

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to love in return. Andrew wasn’t just indifferent; he went so far as to cruelly humiliate them.

## Chapter 59

He didn’t really want to discuss it in front of Max. Max wasn’t keen on prying either. Sensing his reluctance, he just went back to

perusing his documents.

The car swiftly pulled up in front of the grand building, where numerous media outlets had already gathered.

However, they were kept at bay behind barricades, with not a single reporter allowed near. Only the relentless flashing of

cameras lit up the scene.

Neither Max nor Andrew enjoyed making appearances at such events, so the car took a detour on the red carpet and eventually

parked in a private lot.

Inside the lobby, a crowd had already formed, flanked by waist-high partitions. Consultants in sharp suits were on their phones, updating their far-flung employers about the auction's live bids. At auctions of this magnitude, collectors who couldn't make it in via live person would send trusted consultants to bid on their behalf, keeping in touch feeds.

Andrew and Max were seated next to each other, and after scanning the room full of suited consultants, Andrew chuckled, "This bidding war is insane. It'll take at least 300 million for Michael to get his hands on what he wants."

The auction of Eternal Whispers was bound to attract covetous glances, but there was something even more significant on the roster tonight, although the organizers were keeping it under wraps.

"Max, any idea what the big secret item the organizers haven't disclosed might be?"

It was usually a disadvantage for the organizers to delay revealing an item, but this time, no matter who you asked, no one could get the details.

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Waiters in white gloves respectfully ushered guests into the hall, and just then, Dustin's car arrived at the entrance. He was always a high-profile figure in the North American circuit, but after a glance at Brielle, he chose not to stop in front of the paparazzi's lenses. Once inside the venue, many greeted him, and then their gaze fell on Brielle. She didn't seem intimidated, but as she passed through the last doorway, she felt a piercing gaze upon her.

Looking up, her eyes met Max's from the front row. Her pupils shrank, and she quickly tried to lower her hand.

Max's gaze was indifferent, with a slight curve at his lips. His eyes trailed over her waist. before he subtly gestured to the seat beside him. He was indicating for her to come over. Brielle couldn't defy him.

Dustin noticed the exchange and frowned, but then, with a casual air, he walked over and sat down with one seat separating him from Max.

Brielle was sandwiched between them, feeling like she was on pins and needles. "Uncle Max." She called out quietly, nervously

trying to explain in a hushed tone.

Dustin, however, turned his head in surprise, "What did you call him? I thought you said you didn't know him?"

Brielle really wished she could silence him. She managed to keep a straight face, all survival instincts on high alert, "You must

have misheard, Mr. Lynch."

Just then, Max's fingertips landed on her powder blue sleeve. Her dress was conservatively designed, with gathered lace

sleeves that exuded elegance. With each step she took, the fishtail hem of her dress fluttered, adorned with sequins. Among a

sea of strapless gowns, it stood out.

However, Brielle felt like she was standing there naked, as if the fingertips on her wrist. could reach through the fabric and touch

her skin. The warmth spread, making her heart tremble with a scalding sensation

Andrew, sitting on the other side of Max, cold and serpentine.

hadn't uttered a word from the start, his eyes

The domineering presence of the three men silenced Brielle, who sat with a rigid back, trying not to show any signs of weakness.

Her silence didn't prevent Dustin from speaking up. "Mr. Dorsey, I've long admired you. It seems I've intercepted your companion

by mistake. My apologies."

His presence was no less commanding than Max's, and he leaned in toward Brielle with a lazy smile. "It appears Mr. Dorsey and

I have similar taste."

At that, Max looked up, "Similar?"

Dustin nodded, but he didn't play the same high-stakes game of innuendo as Max. If truly wanted to pursue something with this

woman, his tactics would be second to no Yet, his feelings towards Brielle were odd.

Her face was undeniably beautiful, a prize he typically wouldn't pass up, but all he felt w an inexplicable closeness, especially

under the scrutiny of her gaze, which made him want to soften.

"Isn't it? Mr. Dorsey must also find her quite endearing, right?"

Brielle felt a tingling sensation at the back of her head. If not for the fear of Dustin's potential revenge, she would have retorted.

Endearing? For a playboy like Dustin, the number of women who've tugged at his heartstrings was countless.

Max raised an eyebrow, his fingertip tracing gently over the back of Brielle's hand, "Yes,

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she does seem quite endearing."

Despite knowing this was a game between two men, Brielle's heart fluttered at his words,

a mix of exhilaration and bitterness, indescribably complex.

Chapter 60

Max was blissfully unaware of the havoc his words wreaked, lounging on cloud nine with

the ease of a Sunday morning. It wasn't fair, not in the leasting on cloud nine with

Brielle's emotions churned like a tempest inside her, and it took all her willpower to stay anchored in reality.

She wanted to retract her hand, but it was impossible. His touch was feather-light, barely there. Yet to her, it felt as heavy as a

lead weight.

Logic and romance tugged at her in a fierce tug-of-war. At last, she tilted her head slightly towards Max, her voice softening.

"Uncle Max, I didn't mean to."

Her plan had been simple: visit the Hartley Group to soak in the atmosphere. But then Dustin happened. Dustin, the man who

played by no rules, had led to this very moment.

Max turned to glance at her, and something about the tenderness in her eyes, soft as a pool of still water, struck a chord in him.

Indeed, Dustin had hit the nail on the head; when she looked vulnerable, it was truly endearing.

The frustration in his chest dissipated unbidden.

“I’m not blaming you.”

Brielle exhaled in relief, then pushed her luck a bit further. “I wanted to call you, Uncle Max, but I didn’t have your number-or your assistant’s.”

She apologized first, then slyly shifted the onus onto Max. He saw through her little ploy, feeling a curious emotion bubble up inside.

Before he could respond, Dustin turned Brielle to face him. “What are you two whispering about?”

His voice carried a note of displeasure, his frown deepening at the sight of their hands together. Years of socializing had honed

his ability to sense the subtleties of such interactions, and he felt distinctly uncomfortable.

“So, Mr. Dorsey’s kink is pretty special. Addicted to role-playing?”

Brielle’s lips pursed. If it weren’t for Dustin’s interruption, she was sure Max would’ve given her his private number by now.

Feeling a touch vexed, she couldn’t resist a retort. “Mr. Lynch, if you fancy it, you can call him Uncle Max, too.”

Dustin’s perfect façade nearly cracked, but Max had to add fuel to the fire. “I would mind that.”

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They were in cahoots.

Dustin took a few deep breaths to keep from erupting in anger. He straightened up and noticed the seats behind them filling up,

which prompted him to warn Brielle.

“Some media outlets have been invited to live-stream the auction.” His implication was clear-if she didn’t want her connection to

Max exposed, she’d better keep a low profile.

Brielle understood his hint and murmured a thanks. Standing beside men like Max or Dustin meant passing public scrutiny. A

misstep could spell trouble. And her relationship with Max was definitely not one for the spotlight.

She straightened up and shifted her focus to the stage.



Three hosts had taken their places, and the consultants in the commission seats were busy on their phones, relaying the events

unfolding here.

As the first item was unveiled, a cascade of bids erupted, each outdoing the last.

Brielle had once had the privilege of attending a local auction with her professors from Beaconsfield College, but she had never

witnessed one of this magnitude. Nearly every face here was a fixture in financial newspapers. There were even a few familiar

faces, individuals who had been invited to participate in the graduation speeches at Beaconsfield College in the past.

Brielle herself had no means to participate in such auctions. Her gaze drifted to a nearby seat.

The president of the Hartley Group, a man with blond hair and blue eyes, was seated there. He sat with his arms crossed,

noticing her gaze and meeting it with a nod-a basic courtesy.

Brielle returned the gesture, acknowledging the greeting while her mind replayed the news about the Hartley Group.

Dorsey International's collaboration with them likely meant selling off the unmanned supermarket venture.

In her opinion, Hartley Group should be willing to cooperate with Dorsey International, but after all, she did not understand the

business strategy of this president. Therefore, the specific negotiation still depended on the evening party after the auction ends.