

Master 531

Chapter 531

telle nibbled at a sandwich, her fingers dancing through the yarn as she knitted a scarf into the wee hours of the morning. It

wasn't until then that she finally drifted off into a fitful sleep. her dreams a tangled mix of Max and visions of him with other

women.

When she woke, it was already noon the next day, and Max still hadn't returned. After freshening up, she couldn't resist the urge

to call him, but there was no answer on the other

1. nd. Her heart hung suspended, heavy with worry. She tried Patrick next, but all he said was that they were a bit tied up.

Restlessly. Brielle waited until six in the evening when Max's car finally pulled up to the front of Premier Palace. She hurried

outside and opened the car door to find Max leaning back in his seat, his eyes closed, a picture of exhaustion but, thankfully,

unharmd. She breathed a sigh of relief.

Slipping into the car, she took his hand, intertwining their fingers firmly. Max's eyelashes fluttered, and he turned to look at her,

pulling her into an embrace. They rode in silence.

Brielle wracked her brain, even wondering if she had done anything in the past couple of days. to upset him. After meticulously

dissecting the recent events, she couldn't pinpoint anything. she might've done wrong.

Upon arriving at the Dorsey familt's old mansion, the butler was already waiting at the door. "Sir, Ms. Brielle, Mr. Michael has

been expecting you," he announced.

Brielle instantly gathered her wits, clutching Max's hand a little tighter.

Only then did Max open his eyes, the redness in them evident. Seeing his state only. heightened her concern. What had Max

been up to these past two days?

Max looked down and tousled her hair. "Don't be nervous."

It wasn't nerves she felt, just concern for him., "I told you, I've got to face this," she murmured. She hadn't seen him in over a day

and couldn't help herself; she tiptoed to wrap her arms around his neck. But Max stepped back, nodding towards the house.

"Let's go inside."

Brielle stood frozen for a moment, feeling as if a bucket of icy water had been poured over her heart.

She looked up at him, searching his face for any sign of what was troubling him. But Max. remained untroubled.

She forced a smile. "Alright, let's go in."

The butler watched the two approach and opened the door as they finally moved forward.

Inside the stately Dorsey family ancestral home, Michael sat at the head of the room while others were seated on either side. As

Brielle stepped in, she felt Spencer's piercing gaze upon her. He looked gaunt, as if he'd lost a great deal of weight. His eyes

were fixed on her

Chart

with a mad intensity.

Seated on the couch were William, Victoria, Tiffanie, and a man she didn't recognize. He appeared to be in his forties, dressed

in a sharp black suit, hands folded across his midsection, his expression somewhat indifferent. Victoria's hand rested on his

arm, clearly trying to draw closer, but the man seemed to barely tolerate her touch, even frowning in distaste. Brielle guessed this

man must've been Everett.

Aside from these familiar faces, there were others whose identities she didn't know—likely elders from the broader family

branches. Their eyes were all on her, and the distant relatives chuckled coldly, though they kept silent as it wasn't their place to

speak.

This didn't feel like a family dinner; it felt more like Brielle was on trial.

Michael gestured for the butler to prepare a seat for Brielle. The butler quickly pushed a single chair forward, indicating Max

would have to sit elsewhere.

Max frowned and looked towards Michael, who pointed to the couch. "Max, sit over here," he said, making no effort to hide his

intention to separate them.

Max stood still, about to object, but Michael's cold laugh cut him short. "What, you're not even prepared to face the Dorsey

family?"

Brielle gently tugged at Max's sleeve. "Go ahead, I'll sit here," she whispered.

Causing a scene would not only be an affront to Michael but would also embolden the sideline family members.

She quickly assessed the room. About a dozen relatives seemed to have gathered, indicating the incident at the private box had

caused quite a stir.

Max was the chosen heir of the Dorseys, and no member of the Dorsey family wanted to see him waste his potential on

someone like Brielle.

Almost all the elders who could make it were present. Though they were just from the side branches, they were influential in their

own right, with many serving as CEOs in companies under Dorsey International.

Chapter 532

The air was thick with tension. Brielle felt like a convict being marched to the gallows, undergoing the scrutinizing gaze of those

around her.

She noticed Max hadn't approached yet, and whispered just loud enough for the two of them to hear "Ta okay, Max. Trust me, I

can handle this."

Max's lips tightened for a moment before he reluctantly took a seat on the couch.

Spencer, sitting nearby, couldn't help but let a smirk of irony cross his face. He had thought Max was quite fond of Brielle, but it

seemed that was all it was. When it came down to it, and the senior members of the Dorsey family gathered, Max didn't dare

openly defend Brielle. It was pitiful,

His gaze bore into Brielle, searching her face for a trace of fear. He couldn't let go, even now. Just looking at Brielle made his

heart ache, an ache so severe it felt like death.

His nostrils flared with bitterness, his eyes red and hot with unshed tears. Every day, he pondered on how to break them apart,

even fueling the fire online. He did everything within his power, only to push Brielle further away.

Spencer clenched his fists tightly, his eyes never leaving Brielle as if he wished to devour her whole. Yet, Brielle didn't panic. She

sat quietly, waiting for Michael's next words.

Michael lifted his cup, his tone authoritative. "Do you realize you have no right to cross this threshold?"

At that, Max's expression darkened with defiance, "Father." His tone was firm.

Michael raised an eyebrow, setting down his cup. "I'm just stating the facts. The chatter outside is far harsher than anything I

might say. Or do you plan to live in denial forever, ignoring the world's opinions?"

He knew exactly where to strike. Michael's presence was powerful, not sharp, but it bore a tremendous weight.

The rest of the Dorsey clan nodded in agreement, clearly finding his point valid.

The two calmest people in the room were Brielle and Everett. Brielle had the courage to face the situation, while Everett simply

didn't care about the Dorsey family's affairs. Still, he couldn't help but scrutinize Brielle, sneering internally. He could already

anticipate her downfall—a mere female version of himself.

Brielle sat up straight, her eyes clear upon hearing Michael's words. "Michael, I've always believed that caring too much about

others' opinions turns you into their servant."

"Your disregard doesn't make those opinions vanish. Max's reputation suffers because of you. If you feel no guilt, it proves you

don't love him enough."

Michael's second punch hit Max hard. He spoke sparingly, but every word counted. To

Michael, the young couple's love was like a teetering skyscraper. When it falls, those inside would perish, and he wouldn't allow

his most promising son to be trapped within.

The accusation of insufficient love was designed to create a rift in Max's heart. He might've been certain of his love for Brielle,

but how sure was he of hers? Max trusted himself, but did

he trust Brielle?

In psychological warfare, Michael was as astute as Max. Without uttering a harsh word, every phrase was a needle to their

hearts.

In the face of absolute disparity, Brielle's efforts seemed futile. Her very existence threatened to harm Max. Michael intended to

make this crystal clear to her.

Brielle's hands tensed on her lap, yet her gaze remained lucid. "Michael, I won't deny your words. All I have to offer right now is

my determination, which I'm willing to risk. Max isn't a calculated choice for me; he's a conviction I pursue despite knowing

better. He lacks nothing, and if he chose me, it's because I offer what he most desires—sincerity and loyalty. I will continue to give

him my all, unreservedly."

Brielle's eloquence was no secret to Michael.

Upon her finishing, Max's previously grim expression softened into a faint smile. Spencer, on the sidelines, felt an overwhelming

urge to rise and strangle Brielle.

A conviction pursued despite knowing better?

This was a colossal joke! What did Brielle know about love?

Spencer felt as if he was in a trance, all his love and hate ready to explode. He was

determined to avenge himself on Brielle. If he couldn't have her, he'd ensure no one else could either.

Chapter 533

“What a silver-tongued devil you are!”

“I’m telling you, this lady must’ve pulled some shady tricks to catch Max’s eye in the first place.”

“Sweet talker. Would you have fallen for Max if he wasn’t the CEO of Dorsey International?”

The accusers were distant relatives, their eyes ablaze with indignation as they stared at Brielle.

Brielle chuckled softly, a tinge of exasperation in her voice. “What can I say? When I met him, he was already the CEO of Dorsey

International.”

Her retort was indisputable, and even Max looked down, his lips curving into a subtle smile.

The relative who had spoken was left speechless, huffing in frustration before turning to Michael.

Michael was the picture of composure, setting down his glass of bourbon. “Brielle, now that you’ve been let go by Dorsey

International and other companies aren’t willing to hire you, even if you have the talent, you’ve got no stage to shine on. If you

say you love Max, you’ve got to show some real commitment.”

He shifted the conversation away from personal feelings. Those who had once ruled the business world weren’t to be trifled with

by youngsters. From the moment Brielle and Max had entered, Michael had been plotting how to manipulate the situation to his

advantage.

“I

Can offer you a chance, though. Ever heard of Stellar Stage Entertainment? It’s a subsidiary

of Dorsey International that’s been mismanaged since the new CEO took over three years ago. Dorsey International isn’t too

concerned with this little venture, but what if I were to make you the executive CEO there? Would that interest you?”

Before Brielle could respond, the relatives were in an uproar. Sending Brielle to run another company as the executive CEO?

Why should she get such a lucky break?

“Michael, Brielle isn’t one of us Dorsey folk. Is it really okay to hand her such a sweet deal on a silver platter? Surely we can’t just

do her favors because she’s dating Max.”

“Yeah, she’s an outsider, after all. Why should she get to be an executive CEO?”

“And she claims it’s not about the Dorsey fortune, but I bet she’s already scheming on how to carve up our family assets.”

They dared not criticize Michael’s decision too fiercely, instead casting gloomy glances at Brielle, as if she had stolen their piece

of pie.

But what nobody expected was for Max to outright reject the proposal. “I disagree, Father.”

Michael’s expression remained impassive as he toyed with a piece of mint on his drink, “If you disagree, then you’re free to

leave. There’s no point in discussing this further. She’ll never

enter our doors again with her head held high.”

Max stood up, ready to pull Brielle away with him, but Brielle stayed put, her gaze steady on Michael.

“Michael, if I take the job

as executive CEO of Stellar Stage Entertainment, what level of success do you require before you’re satisfied?”

“A fifty-fold increase in performance.”

He said it casually as if such a monumental increase was as light as a feather. Anyone familiar with finance knew that such a

figure was a Herculean task, reserved only for the titans of business.

“Father!”

Max’s face grew cold, but Brielle continued, “And if I achieve that, you won’t stand in the way of me and Max anymore, correct?”

Michael paused, peering at Brielle as if measuring her courage. “You’ve got guts, taking on Stellar Stage Entertainment without

even knowing the mess it’s in,” he chuckled. “Yes, I won’t object.”

A smile spread across Brielle’s face. “Then I accept.”

“Six months. If you don’t deliver, you and Max are through.”

“Agreed.”

As Brielle uttered that word, she felt Max tense beside her. He looked down at her, a flicker of hurt crossing his eyes.

Brielle couldn't meet his gaze. "Michael is a man of his word. I trust you'll keep your promise." No sooner had she spoken than

Max released her hand and strode towards the door, clearly infuriated.

A smirk crossed Michael's face. Brielle was still too young. No matter how strong or confident she was, her readiness to accept

the challenge so swiftly in Max's eyes translated to taking their relationship lightly. It suggested that she wasn't afraid to lose it,

and that was precisely the problem.

He had always said that once the seed of doubt was planted, it was only a matter of time. before it took root.

Chapter 534

When Michael spoke with much finality the others know better than to argue. After all, he was the leader of the family and Mac's

father His word was law, and no one dared to defy him So, they could only glare at Brielle with even deeper resentment.

The most agitated of them all was Spencer. He knew about Stellar Stage Entertainment, was the company Ryan had taken over.

Given its name, it was obviously an entertainment company filled with C-list celebrities and hopefuls, none of whom had made a

real name for themselves. Ryan had taken it over simply because it was full of pretty faces, and Spencer knew he had bedded

more than a few of them.

Ryan treated Stellar Stage Entertainment like his personal playground, picking and choosing who to take to his hotel room when

bored, and never truly nurturing the business. The whole company was crooked from top to bottom.

The women who were still there either couldn't leave because of binding contracts or had nowhere else to go. The male talent

fared even worse. The company didn't even see them. as artists, using them for any odd job that came up, like dancing for a

room full of seniors in some small town or performing at a local mall. Those performers had long since lost their pride and spark.

Sending Brielle there was like sending her into the lion's den.

With her finance background, Brielle didn't know the first thing about the entertainment industry. Michael giving her the reins of

Stellar Stage Entertainment seemed like an opportunity, but in reality, it was a set-up for despair.

A crooked company, a spiritless roster, and someone completely green to the entertainment scene what chance did she have,

especially with the impossible goal of increasing the company's performance fiftyfold in six months?

Spencer's lips curled up in a cold smile.

Another reason Grandpa had handed over the company to Brielle was to stir up resentment among the Dorsey family's

branches. Most of the extended family members present had not clue about the actual state of Stellar Stage Entertainment.

Dorsey International had hundreds of national and international subsidiaries, and no one could've known the details of each

company's performance. So, to the extended family, it looked like Brielle had taken control of a company from the Dorsey

fortune.

She didn't deserve it!

What the extended family would do to Brielle was now a matter of her luck.

Spencer's heart was racing with the thought that he could be of assistance to her if only she would ask. His gaze turned fervent,

and he felt a famil

arousal, just from seeing her face, hearing her name, and listening to her voice she was like a demon he couldn't exorcise.

Brielle had become his obsession.

Brielle stood from her chair, nodded politely to everyone in the room, and followed Max out. The glares that followed her were

like knives at her back.

Once outside, she saw that Max was gone, and his car with him. Her quick agreement had hurt him. She knew it.

She took out her phone to call him when suddenly, someone grabbed her from behind. "Brielle, if you ask me, I can help you. I

know some people at Stellar Stage Entertainment, and I can pull in some top stars from major entertainment firms in

Beaconsfield," Spencer's voice whispered hotly in her ear.

Brielle's face turned dark, and she threw Spencer over her shoulder onto the ground.

Spencer lay there, grimacing in pain, unable to get up.

Brielle clenched her phone and stepped on his chest. Spencer coughed, almost spitting blood under her foot.

Brielle stood over him, her gaze full of contempt and disgust. "Are you sick? Spencer, ever since that disgusting thing you did,

I've felt nothing but revulsion towards you. Stay away from me."

A flame seemed to light in Spencer's eyes as he stared at her.

Her animated face and disdainful tone thrilled him, and he felt an almost uncontrollable urge. He had realized too late that he

liked Brielle loved her, even. He had turned to Lillian because Brielle was too aloof, too damaging to his pride.

During the years of their engagement, she was kind to him, but it was a distant kindness. Not matter how hard he tried, he

couldn't see himself reflected in her eyes. His attraction turned to resentment, convincing himself not to care, and that's when he

noticed Lillian's allure.

Spencer swallowed hard, reaching for her leg. "Brielle-"

Brielle looked down and saw the bulge in his pants. She felt sick to her stomach, utterly disgusted. Was that all he ever thought

about? She stomped on the offending area, causing Spencer to curl up, his face beaded with sweat.

Chapter 535

"You seriously make me sick."

Brielle's tone was indifferent, she didn't bother with a response as she headed towards the front door.

Spencer was curled up on the ground like a squashed bug, clenching his teeth so hard from the pain he wanted to howl.

When Tiffanie came out, all she saw was Spencer twisted up on the pavement. She jumped back, startled, and couldn't help

asking, "Are you alright?"

"Get lost." Spencer spat out the words, his fists clenched tight, and his eyes fiercely fixed on the direction Brielle had left. He was

determined to get what he wanted.

Tiffanie quickly moved forward and finally caught up with Brielle, not too far from the gate.

"Did you just chase Max off? Let me give you a lift back."

Brielle stood still, looking at the deserted street, her lips twitching into a wry smile. "That would be great. Thanks."

Tiffanie sighed, "Not to rag on you, but if I were Maxie, I'd be pissed too. You agreed to something without even knowing what's

going on at Stellar Stage Entertainment. I seriously wonder if you even like Maxie. Did you see the look in his eyes? It was

heartbreaking."

It was the first time Tiffanie had seen that kind of expression on Max's face, and it tugged at her heartstrings. For a moment, she

even felt a bit resentful towards Brielle. If Max had fallen for any other woman, his life would've been smooth sailing, but loving

Brielle turned the whole world into an obstacle course. And Brielle's attitude didn't help either. Sometimes, Tiffanie felt Maxie

deserved better.

Tiffanie pulled the car around and gave Brielle a run-down of the situation at Stellar Stage Entertainment.

"In a nutshell, it's a hot mess. You know Ryan's reputation; he always messed around, using Stellar Stage as his playground.

Eighty percent of those artists have been passed around to the bigwigs in Beaconsfield. No matter their gender, they're just

currency in the hands of the rich. At Dorsey International, you handled mergers and acquisitions, but over there, it's all about

schmoozing and politics. And increasing performance by fifty times in six months? Brielle, I have faith in you, but even I doubt

you can pull that off."

And even if she did, who knew what her grandfather would do? Would he really stop interfering, or would he pull some other

stunt?

Brielle closed her eyes, leaning back in her seat. Her mind was on the festively decorated streets, thinking of the paired couplets

and lanterns, and the tacky fairy lights at Premier Palace.

It was New Year's, their first together, and it was a total mess. Not even a 'Happy New Year'

Carter 535

was exchanged, and now he had disappeared for over twenty-four hours and walked out on her again.

Brielle felt exhausted, yet she spoke with confidence, "If I hadn't agreed, what do you think I'd be facing tonight?"

Tiffanie's grin on the steering wheel tightened, and she fell silent. Right, if Brielle hadn't agreed, would her grandfather have

really let her walk away?

Brielle watched the streetlights cast flickering shadows on her face through the window.

"Before I got here, I did some digging on Michael. He's got one up on Max – during his time in charge, no one disappeared from

the family, but under Michael's reign, many did, including the Dorsey's third in line, who's never returned to Beaconsfield. Who

knows what really happened to him? Sure, Max drove people to ruin, but that was all in the finance game. You play, you risk

losing. Michael, though, his methods were far more brutal; he could strip away humanity."

So, if he could be ruthless with his own kin, what more could Brielle expect? Her research had shown as much. People mellowed

with age: Otherwise, Ryan would have been long gone from the Dorsey fold, not just sent away from Beaconsfield.

Since Michael had summoned her, there had to be a conclusion: Either comply with his demands within six months or refuse and

be eliminated on the way back. She had not choice.

Hearing her analysis sent a chill through Tiffanie, who suddenly found herself at a loss for words.

Brielle continued. "When I saw Everett sitting there, it felt like a warning from Michael. If I don't play by his rules, I'm next."

Disbelief flickered in Tiffanie's eyes, and sweat beaded on her forehead as she grasped the true purpose of her grandfather

inviting Everett. It wasn't acknowledgment but a stark example for Brielle of what happens to those who disobey.

Silently potent, it struck at the core, draining the will to resist. There, Everett sat, silent as a tombstone, a haunting reminder to

Brielle of what lay ahead if she strayed from the path.

Chapter 536

The threat was more direct than any spoken suppression could ever be

Brielle sat silently in the car the tension palpable, while Tiffanie refrained from further conversation

The car came to a halt outside the Premier Palace, and Brielle was the first to exit. She turned back, bending slightly to address

Tiffanie still inside, "I'm going in then

"You sure Maxie's in the mood to see you now?"

A brief pause flickered across Brielle's face. "I have to explain things to him.

Tiffanie pondered for a moment, then fished out a lollipop from the glove compartment and tossed it out

Catching it deftly. Brielle heard her say, "Alright, go explain."

Brielle stood still for a moment, slipping the lollipop into her bag. Only when the sound of the car driving away faded did she

slowly make her way inside the Premier Palace.

The festive lights were still hanging, the cheerful banners were still plastered on the walls, and even the tacky, colorful fairy lights

were twinkling as ever. But inside, it was eerily quiet.

She rang the doorbell, and Wesley came to open the door. A glance around the hall revealed only Wesley. "Max hasn't come back yet?"

Wesley shook his head, exhaling a weary sigh, "He usually wouldn't come back for the holidays... I thought, with you here, he might-" He trailed off, the words left hanging.

Brielle swapped her shoes at the entrance, heading towards the sofa while dialing Max's number. She was wearing the matching

slippers they'd bought together: hers white, his black.

The mechanical voicemail greeted her from the other end, no answer. She dialed again. It was as if she'd keep calling until he picked up.

Max stared at his continuously ringing phone, rubbing his temples. His computer was still on. and the executives were waiting for

him to speak on an international conference call. All they heard was the incessant ring of his phone, and the CEO, staring at the device, silent.

No one dared to interrupt; they waited in quiet anticipation. Finally, Max faced the screen. "Let's postpone the meeting until after the New Year. Spend some quality time with your families."

The international executives couldn't help but feel that their CEO sounded forlorn when he said those words, but no one argued, quietly packing up their documents as Max shut down the computer.

If he paused, his father's words echoed in his mind. "That just proves you don't love her enough."
ner: 526

Brielle's retort inevitably followed in his head. "Max isn't a calculated choice for me, but a defiant act of certainty despite knowing better."

He touched the coffee next to him, now cold. Drinking it now would certainly keep him awake later, but perhaps the bitterness

could stifle the tang of despair on his tongue.

Did Brielle love him? Of course, he never doubted that.

How much? That he wasn't sure of. How shallow was her love, that she agreed without hesitation to his father's proposition?

Even though it was for them to be together, was she that confident in herself? What if she failed?

It seemed she never considered the possibility or maybe didn't care about it. That was a blow to him. Watching her agree so

readily, he was incredulous and shocked. His heart felt pierced.

Love, it turned out, could wound so effortlessly, more than any physical injury he had endured.

Brielle had opened the door to him loving someone, and he intended to walk that path with her to the bitter end. But now, he was

uncertain. Brielle seemed to love him, but not to the point of being indispensable. It seemed her affection could easily shift to

someone else, not necessarily Max, but any man.

For Max, it was different. From the moment she appeared, he had this subtle premonition that she was the reason to turn

everyone else away.

Max coughed, reaching for his coffee to drink, when the sound of a key in the lock halted his hand. In the dim light, he saw the

figure at the door.

The hope in his eyes slowly crumbled to ashes. It was Spencer.

Spencer turned on the brightest light in the room, and there they were, one standing and one sitting, silently facing each other.

This was Pearl Estate, where Brielle lived. Max didn't want to go to a hotel or any other residence, so when he left in a huff, he

thought of her place, infused with her presence. But now, another man had intruded on this space.

Max's grip on his cup tightened instantly, while Spencer met his gaze without flinching. "Just here to pick up a few things,"

Spencer said.

He hadn't expected to find Max here and was momentarily caught off guard. Then he regained composure, walked over to a

drawer, and retrieved the watch he'd intentionally left behind the last time he was there the same time he'd helped Sydney whisk

Brielle away. He had made a copy of Brielle's keys and left his watch as a deliberate token.

He knew he would need it eventually. And now, the moment had come, and he was discovered by Max.

Chapter 537

Spencer sneered inwardly as he approached Pearl Entate, noticing the lights still on. He had suspected that Brielle wouldn't

return tonight after she and Max left the Dorsey mansion, but to his surprise, it wasn't Brielle who greeted him inside—it was Max

himself, casually sitting on the couch

Weighing his options, Spencer recalled the watch incident from before. Max raised an eyebrow as Spencer confidently retrieved

his belongings from a drawer, clearly belonging to him. How did Spencer have a key to Brielle's place, and why were his things

there?

"Uncle Max, I'll leave you to it," Spencer said, trying to mask the discomfort from the pain Brielle had inflicted earlier, which now

oddly felt like a relief.

He hoped this mix-up would drive a wedge between them and pave the way for his own advance.

Trying to gauge Max's reaction, Spencer only caught a glimpse before Max took a sip from his coffee mug, seemingly

unbothered by his presence.

Feeling a sting of humiliation but respecting the man's status, Spencer's fingers trembled as he closed the door behind him.

Clutching the watch, he fought the urge to smash it against the wall, wary of making noise that Max might hear. Instead, he

pressed the elevator button repeatedly, his frustration growing as the elevator seemed stuck mid-floor.

Meanwhile, Brielle had arrived at the base of Pearl Estate. Impatient, she opted for the stairs, unaware that Max had already

shut down his computer, packed up, and left the apartment.

When the elevator finally arrived, Max shared it with Spencer, who was sweating bullets and frantically hitting the close button.

Max stood there, calm, his lean hand holding the same laptop bag Patrick usually carried. Spencer swallowed hard, feeling a

knot in his throat when Max asked indifferently about his plans to join the company.

The elevator reached the ground floor, and as Max passed by Spencer, he paused and asked, “Nervous?”

Spencer wanted to deny it, but the sweat trickling down his face betrayed him. He stayed silent as Max exited the building, his

silhouette as stoic as an evergreen. Max handed the laptop bag to Patrick, who had arrived to pick him up.

Max had remained indifferent to Spencer’s provocations, taking his actions as trivial as a bad joke.

Upstairs, Brielle stepped into her apartment and immediately sensed another’s presence. Spotting the cold coffee on the coffee

table, she rushed to the window and saw the familiar car driving away.

Her heart pounded at the thought of Max turning to Pearl Estate in anger. Without delay, she dashed to the elevator, dialing Max’s number.

Max heard the ringtone and looked down silently. Patrick sensed the tension and suggested viewing the New Year’s Eve

fireworks with Ms. Brielle.

“I’ve seen them already,” Max replied, reminiscing about a beautiful display he had witnessed with her, one that couldn’t be

topped. But Patrick’s mention of New Year’s Eve struck a chord—Brielle had no one. Her parents rejected her, the Haywood

family despised her, and her ex-husband betrayed her. If he did the same, who would she turn to tonight?

Max recalled Martha’s words from years ago: when you love, you don’t ask if it’s worth it because love doesn’t concern itself with

worth.

At the time, he didn’t understand those foreign emotions or whom Martha referred to. But now, he was beginning to grasp the

selflessness required, or rather, the art of concealing one’s selfishness seamlessly.

Leaning back, he instructed Patrick to head back to Premier Palace.

Brielle stood at the

s of Pearl Estate, alone. She took out her phone, and after realizing

he wasn't answering her calls, she sent a message. [It's New Year's Eve, and I haven't had a bite to eat. I'm about to starve

myself into a stomachache.]

Regardless, she thought, it's best to show vulnerability first.

Chapter 538

If she complained of a stomach ache, claiming she wasn't feeling well, Max would never leave her to suffer alone. And she made

sure to emphasize New Year's Eve, which would naturally remind him that she was all by herself.

Brielle stood quietly waiting for his text, and sure enough, within three minutes, a message popped up. [Why aren't you eating?]

He was finally willing to respond.

When Brielle first got her hooks into him, she did it by being shameless. She had definitely messed up tonight, and if you messed

up, you owned up to it and sweet-talked your way back into favor.

Men and women were the same in that regard.

[Yes, I deserve it. Don't be mad, okay? Stellar Stage Entertainment is tough to handle, but I've got you, right? With Mr. Dorsey on

my side, how could I not succeed?] A little flattery could extinguish even the greatest of rages.

[Cut the crap.]

Staring at the message, Brielle paused for a few seconds. Why did it feel like their roles had been reversed? Max was often easy

to appease, but sometimes, he could be quite the challenge.

[I came looking for you, which means the scarf I'm knitting will have to wait. I could've finished it tonight, watching the fireworks

outside, snuggled up in your arms. How perfect would that have been?]

After sending the message, she realized how brazen she had been when she first started hanging around Max.

When no reply came within a minute, just as Brielle thought he wouldn't respond again, a new message arrived. [Then come back.]

Clearly, he was at Premier Palace.

Brielle breathed a sigh of relief, put down her phone, and headed towards where her car was parked. But as she looked up, she saw Spencer standing not too far away.

His gaze was still sticky and repulsive, enough to make her skin crawl. Her brow furrowed with undisguised disgust as she pretended not to see him and got into her car.

Spencer just stood there, watching her go, struggling with his burgeoning obsession.

Just as Brielle was about to close the car door, Spencer made his move, yanking it open. Brielle's expression darkened, her mood plummeting. "Spencer, can't you take a hint?"

"I'm getting married."

"And what's Hat got to do with me?"

The disdain in her eyes was palpable as she pulled at her car door, but Spencer clung on desperately "Brielle, Uncle Max said

you never really liked me to that true? His eyes, burning like branding irons seemed to scorch her skin. Brielle did not enjoy such gazes.

"Yes, what's there to like about you?"

To question a man's worthiness was the ultimate insult

Spencer writhed in pain, his eyes bloodshot as he glared at her. So, this was what she truly thought

He took a deep breath, his madness intensifying—probably stirred by the words she had spoken in front of his grandfather earlier.

What a joke.

She had known him for over a decade and never cared for him. She had met Max for less than two months, yet she dared to speak such words—hypocrisy!

Women and their deception could be maddening!

Brielle's mind was fixed on Max, who was waiting for her at Premier Palace. Her face bore an eager expression as she tried to

drive away.

Out of nowhere, Spencer produced a cloth and clamped it over her nose. He had come to Pearl Estate tonight with the intent to

abduct Brielle. Only, he ran into Max and received a veiled warning.

Still, he had found her, the woman he both loved and despised.

Brielle held her breath, inhaling only a whiff, but it was enough to make her head reel. Spencer pushed her into the passenger

seat and took the driver's seat himself.

"Spencer, are you trying to kill me?"

Tears instantly streamed down his face; he wasn't even sure what to do next.

Killing Brielle? No, that would be more painful than taking his own life.

He bit his lip hard and floored the gas pedal. "Last time, because of you, I spent days in the ER, but you probably couldn't care

less if I lived or died."

"A man who tried to assault me? Yeah, his life or death really doesn't concern me."

With her eyes half-closed, Brielle tried to fight off the dizziness. Secretly, she reached for her phone and dialed Max's

emergency number.

"Thinking of calling Uncle Max for help? It's no use, Brielle. I've figured out how to deal with you."

He slammed the pedal to the metal with a maniacal grin.

Chapter 539

Bette chuckled lightly when she heard the words. "Really now? What's your grand plan to deal with me? Drag me out to some

godforsaken place and have your way with me before finishing me off?"

Such low grade tactics hardly impressed her.

"Even if you kill me or violate me, my heart still belongs to Max. I love him so much, I'd give up my life" Her voice was nonchalant

as she watched the landscape whizzing by the window, a small smile curving her lips, “I just realized how deeply I feel for him.”

Spencer gripped the steering wheel tight, his palms slick with sweat. “Is that so? Your love is quite noble”

Madness filled his eyes, tears streamed down his face, but he seemed eerily calm now. A calm that was terrifying.

Brielle couldn’t be bothered to argue with him. If this guy wasn’t part of the Dorsey clan, the folks in Beaconsfield would have set

him straight long ago. At the end of the day, Spencer had it too easy his whole life, which is why he turned out this way. After

ruining the best thing he ever had, he started crying and making a fuss, thinking it would bring everything back, like an immature

child.

The car pulled up to an abandoned factory on the outskirts of town, and Brielle felt bone-weary. She just slumped in her seat.

“Get on with whatever you’re going to do. Tonight’s New Year’s Eve. I’d like to get back in time to watch the fireworks with him.”

Spencer’s hands trembled as he opened the door, so weak that he struggled to muster the strength to move. He’d never

imagined that Brielle could be so heartless when she didn’t love someone. His lips trembled, and suddenly, he didn’t have the

strength to get out of the car. All his plans, his madness, disappeared in an instant because of her words.

He began to sob into the steering wheel, starting quietly and escalating into loud wails, his shoulders shaking. Brielle lifted her

eyelids, gave him a detached glance, and closed her eyes again. The car windows were down, and the outside wind kept

blowing in, but nothing mattered against the backdrop of his grief.

A man crying like this was beyond her comprehension, but knowing it was Spencer, she sort of understood.

Brielle sighed softly.

At the sound of her sigh, Spencer felt a surge of pain. He suddenly looked up and, in a fit of despair, ripped open her blouse.

Brielle didn't bother to struggle. The whole situation annoyed her, and she just wanted to cut him loose from her life. Their

entanglement should have ended a decade ago.

However, Spencer only managed to tear a few buttons before resting his head on her

shoulder, sobbing as if his heart would break. His tears soaked her shoulder, and her

irritation grew. She pushed him away, not caring if he continued to cry, and kicked him out of the car with one swift movement.

Spencer tumbled out and rolled into a heap of weeds.

Brielle, regaining some strength, saw him lying in the dirt and mud and felt a wave of discomfort. Her memories of the past were

fading, but she remembered a Spencer who was fearless and proud, not the man weeping before her now.

She shrugged off her tear-stained jacket and threw it out the window.

The scene had become almost comical. He had brought her here, presumably with other intentions, but now he could do nothing

but cry. She sat in the car; he lay beneath it, unable to even lift his head.

What could be more painful for Spencer? The hurt Brielle inflicted on him was worse than death. The words she spoke in the car

shattered all his sanity. He felt as though he had died and come back to life countless times.

Brielle should have wanted revenge for his na

collusion with Alivia, which led her to believe she was pregnant, and for his relentless pursuit of her, but now, she couldn't muster

the desire for vengeance. Perhaps letting him live like this was a hundred times worse than death.

She had never been a merciful person. The thought of what might have happened if she'd truly been pregnant made it

impossible for her to feel pity for Spencer. So she closed the car door and said one last thing.

"Would you fall for a man who cries so hideously? If you weren't born into the Dorsey family, you'd still be left in my dust, even

when I came from an orphanage. Count yourself lucky to be a Dorsey. But it seems, even with that, you haven't managed to live

like a man should."

Chapter 540

Her voice was nonchalant as she stepped on the gas, and the car zoomed away. Spencer didn't chase after her, his tears falling

harder as he bit down on his teeth, refusing to let his sobs be heard.

Glancing at the clothes she had discarded, he walked over with shaky legs, picked them up. and hugged them to his chest as he

continued to cry.

Brielle caught a glimpse of Spencer's silhouette in the rearview mirror and involuntarily hit the brakes. A minute later, she looked

up, letting the chilly breeze from outside whip across her face, stinging her cheeks, before she pressed down on the accelerator

again.

Of all the Dorseys, Spencer was probably the luckiest. He had Faith's undying adoration, and after coming of age, Brielle, the

ever-dutiful fool, shielded him from harm. He never knew real cruelty, never knew despair, and that was why he couldn't handle

even the slightest pain, which shaped his petulant nature.

He could betray others, but heaven forbid they betray him. He could toy with people's feelings, but no one was allowed to play

with his. He was still like a spoiled child, thinking anyone who wasn't on his side deserved to be destroyed.

However, Max and Tiffanie, also of the Dorsey clan, were different.

Max was thrust in front of everyone at the tender age of ten by the ruthless Michael, and only he knew the hardships he faced.

Tiffanie's very existence was a sin. Her mother, Victoria, detested her to the bone, while to Everett, she was the reason for his

downfall.

Out of all the Dorseys, Spencer had it the easiest. But as Brielle said, he certainly didn't live up to being a man.

On her way back, Brielle's phone went off like mad, and a blinding light in the distance seemed to tear through the surrounding

darkness.

She squinted, pulling over to the side of the road, as the other vehicle did the same. It was Max's car.

Max had tracked her down in a hurry, only to find her driving alone back to the city. "Brielle?"

Max frowned, hastening his step towards her. "Are you alright?"

He leaned in slightly, his hands resting on her shoulders, examining her.

Brielle looked up and smiled at him. She wasn't too affected by the substances she'd inhaled, but the cold air did sober her up a

bit. She noticed several cars following Max's, and the passenger in the first car stepped out—it was the man she had seen in

prison.

He stood at a distance, nodding respectfully before turning his gaze away.

"I'm fine."

15:15

"Who was it?"

A flash of murderous intent crossed Max's eyes, his grip on her shoulders tightening. Brielle knew he was worried, but thinking

of Spencer still at the scene, weeping inconsolably, she lost any desire for revenge. Those few words had likely shattered his

remaining pride and self-esteem. Nothing could hurt Spencer more than that.

It's no one. Let's go back. I'm really hungry."

Max relaxed, stroking her head gently. "I'm- The words "I'm sorry" hung unspoken.

Brielle didn't want to drive her car anymore; she was too drained, hungry and cold.

Eventually, she saw an unfamiliar man drive her car away, while she settled comfortably into Max's, using his leg as a pillow. As

the car headed towards the city, she drowsily heard him ask. "Have you decided what you're going to do with Stellar Stage

Entertainment?" He sounded genuinely concerned about her potential failure.

Brielle found it amusing. "Did Michael call you to say something?"

Max averted his gaze, his demeanor turning cold once more as if bracing for another argument. “Yeah, he forbade me from

helping you.”

Well, that made sense. If Max’s capabilities were put to use, achieving fifty times the results would be a piece of cake for him.

Michael naturally wouldn’t allow Max to interfere or step foot in Stellar Stage Entertainment.

“I have a plan. I’ve researched their situation, and it’s quite thorny. I’ll go to the office the day after tomorrow to get a firsthand

look at the talent.”

Half a year was a tight deadline, and navigating the intricacies of personal relationships.

wasn’t her strong suit.

But with these six months, she could dream about what her company might become. With a recent funding round bringing in fifty

billion, given another six months, her net worth might close in on a hundred billion. By then, as the new power player in

Beaconsfield, perhaps she’d be worthy to stand by his side.

She needed to grow, and fast.

Meanwhile, back at the Dorsey estate, Michael had begun practicing his calligraphy in his study.

The butler, after some thought, couldn’t help but ask.

“If Ms. Brielle really does solve Stellar Stage Entertainment’s problems, are you sure you want her to join the Dorsey family?”

A harsh streak crossed Michael’s brow. “If she’s truly capable, then Stellar Stage Entertainment will triple in size. I’ll gift the

company to Alivia as compensation for her troubles.”

The old fox knew how to play the game—using Brielle’s hard-earned success to appease

Alivia’s grievances, thus satisfying both Alivia and the Barnes family.