

Master 571

Chapter 571

Hearing the cheer in the joint owner's voice, Patrick couldn't help but chuckle to himself. That guy must felt like he'd truly hit the jackpot.

“No need for anything fancy. Just get a chef from the five-star hotel next door to whip up a ten—course meal. As long as your diner is spotless, we're golden. My boss is a bit of a germaphobe.”

“Sure thing, chief. But are you sure you don’t want a taste of my world-class fries?”

“Still pitching his fries,” Patrick thought. It was all about getting the cash and selling the product — adults never settled for just one when they could have both. Patrick rubbed his forehead. “Just do as I've told you, alright?”

Six o'clock in the evening.

Brielle had just wrapped up her last meeting. She'd talked so much that her voice was starting to go hoarse. She took a sip of lemon water to soothe her throat and was about to dive back into the artists profiles when her phone buzzed with a call from Max. “Have you eaten yet?”

Brielle had been swamped all afternoon; there was no chance for a meal break. Now that Max had reminded her, she realized she was actually starving. “Not yet. I've still got a few profiles to go through.”

“How long will you need?”

“Ten minutes.”

“Alright, I'll wait for you at Bite and Sip Bistro, just around the corner from your office.”

Brielle almost thought she'd misheard. The Bite and Sip Bistro catered to the local office crowd with its convenience and speed, aiming to fill stomachs, not tantalize taste buds. Sure, the hygiene standards were acceptable, but the

ingredients were pretty run—of-the—mill—after all, a full meal only cost thirty bucks. They had to cut costs somewhere.

Max, at the Bite and Sip Bistro?

She stood up immediately. “I'll be right down.”

“No rush. We'll wait for you.”

We? Who else was with Max?

Max hung up and set his phone aside.

Sammuel sat across from him, his mind reeling since stepping into the Bite and Sip Bistro. Considering he and Max had no bad blood between them—in fact, they'd collaborated on a property deal once—it didn't seem like Max was trying to insult him with fast food. Sammuell could keep his cool. He'd already picked up on the vibes between Max and Brielle and

couldn't resist gossiping, “Was it Ms. Brielle?”

The smile in Max's eyes deepened. "She works at Stellar Stage Entertainment."
Sammuel breathed a sigh of relief. So it was for Brielle that they were at Bite and Sip Bistro. Even the high—and-mighty "The Priest" seemed to come down to earth for a woman.

Why Brielle wasn't at Dorsey International was none of Sammuel's business. Both men had been in the game long enough to know when to probe and when to keep quiet.

Meanwhile, Brielle was waiting for the elevator, which seemed to take

forever during the rush hour. The

private lift had been out of order

since yesterday, and today, it was still

not fixed, forcing her to use the

regular staff elevator.

She impatiently kept checking her

phone for the time and was about to

call Max to let him know she'd be late
when an irate female voice cut

through the lobby. "What the hell is

so special about you?!"

Brielle looked up to find the woman from Keagan's office the day before, likely
someone who had been hooking up with Keagan for quite some time.

The woman, probably in her
mid-twenties, seethed with envy at

the sight of Brielle. She heard rumors

that this newcomer had suddenly
become president, and she found it

hard to believe. Now, she got the

news of her own dismissal. She was

a manager, after all, a position she'd
secured by hooking up with Keagan,

and now it was all undone so easily

by this... this bitch.

“Damn it,” she thought, “how could this happened!”

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“Hey, what's your deal, huh? Why does Keagan seem scared of you? Have you been coz 10 to the bigwigs at Dorsey International or something?”

Having been fired, she had nothing left to lose. So what if Brieffe was the president? it was not like they could call the cops just because she hurled a few insults,

Brielle frowned. The elevator had just arrived, and she really wasn't in the mood for this nonsense. She stepped towards the elevator, intending to leave the confrontation behind.

The woman was having none of it. Clutching her purse, she swung it at Brielle with no small amount of venom. “You little tramp! Ignoring me, huh? Don't think I'm scared just because you've charmed your way to the top. I no longer work under Dorsey International, so you can't touch me!

Her purse was made of alligator leather, sharp at the edges. Brielle, in her hurry, could only raise her hand in defense. The sharp edge sliced a five—centimeter gash across Brielle's wrist. and blood flowed freely. The woman herself hadn't expected this turn of events and paled at the sight.

Brielle was shocked that the purse nearly severed an artery. Her forehead throbbed with tension as bystanders began to take notice. Someone swiftly called for an ambulance. With this wound, Brielle was definitely hospital-bound. With a steely gaze, Brielle looked at the panicked woman, her eyes sharp as knives.

Feeling the sting of Brielle's stare, the woman threw a wad of bills at her. “What

are you looking at? Here's enough cash for your hospital trip. And just so you know, you're not the only one with connections at Dorsey International. You've heard of Mr. Dorsey, right? My friend is pretty tight with him and is his girlfriend. One word from me, and you're out on your ear."

Brielle couldn't be bothered with this brainless banter and instructed someone to call the police.

Ricardo had already rushed over with a first-aid kit. The blood was too much; any deeper and it would have hit an artery. To the uninformed, it looked like a botched attempt at self-harm. "Ms. Haywood, let's get you to the hospital."

This whole fiasco had Brielle seething. She'd finally managed to schedule a

dinner with Max. only to have it interrupted by some random woman.

She glanced at Keagan in the crowd, her voice dark. "When the cops get here, show them the surveillance footage. Assault and slander should be enough to lock her up for a while."

The woman's face went ashen, her lips quivering. "Brielle, do you have to do this? I'm so young, and jail would ruin my life. Are you trying to push me over the edge? I swear I'll jump off the Stellar Stage Entertainment building right now! I'll have every media outlet blaming you. Let them see what a second-rate person you really are!" The woman was driven to desperation, wishing she could strangle Brielle.

Brielle let out a cold laugh as Ricardo finished bandaging her wrist. "Go ahead and jump. Just don't land on anyone."

Brielle turned to Keagan. "Director Keagan, I'll leave this to you,"

The woman burst into tears, grabbing at Keagan's sleeve. "Director Keagan, I don't want to go to jail. Please help me."

Keagan shook off her hand, his gaze lingering on Brielle and Ricardo as they

entered the
elevator.

With her wrist bleeding, Brielle wouldn't be able to dine with Max. She tried to call him but noticed blood on her phone and felt a wave of nausea.

Sensing her discomfort, Ricardo quickly wiped the phone clean with a tissue.

"Ms. Haywood, here's your phone. You need to get to the hospital right away; it can't wait."

Brielle took the phone, looking pale. "I know, you don't have to come with me."

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Ms. Haywood, I was going to visit

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my sister at the hospital anyway." His
eyes flickered with sadness, lashes
casting a shadow over his youthful
face.

He was going to see his sister, and what could Brielle say to that?

She tried calling Max, but the
ambulance arrived before she could
speak to him. The paramedic saw her
wrist and ushered her into the

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vehicle. "How deep is the cut? You
need to be more careful. I heard it

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was done with a purse. Don't move
your hand too much. Let's get you to
the hospital to see if you need

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stitches.”

Brielle handed her phone to the paramedic. “Please call my boyfriend.

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He's waiting for me to have dinner with him. But don't tell him I'm hurt.

Just say I got pulled into a last-minute meeting.”

She didn’t want to worry Max.

The paramedic chuckled, “Okay, this number, right? I'll call him right away.”

Brielle couldn't help but add, “Just say you're my assistant, and I had to attend an emergency meeting.”

The paramedic nodded, and the phone had already dialed through.

Chapter 573

At the Bite and Sip Bistro, Max and Samuel had been sitting for a while, discussing a

collaboration between their companies. Max's phone rang, and a faint smile flashed across his eyes. As he answered the call, the smile slowly faded. “Yeah, I know. Let her carry on with her y.”” he said into the phone.

Samuel could tell Max had just been stood up. Frankly, it was rather awkward to see Max in this situation, especially being ditched by a woman.

Max had come all the way from Dorsey International, reserved the whole place, and even arranged for a five-star hotel dinner, yet Brielle didn’t show.

But Max's tone remained casual as he reminded the caller. “Make sure she has dinner tonight.” Before the doctor on the other end could reply, Max asked, “Is that an ambulance I hear?” Max had sharp ears, and his gaze sharpened.

The doctor was taken aback, momentarily lost for words. After a brief pause, he quickly made an excuse. “No, it's just a fire drill in the hallway. We have them twice a year, and today just happens to be the day.”

Max frowned but didn't press further, merely insisting that Brielle should have her dinner.

Once he hung up, Max looked down at the food in front of him. Samuel, the old fox, promptly chimed in, “Is Ms. Brielle even busier than you? She doesn't seem to rely on you at all. I wonder why she's working so hard?”

Samuel speculated that Brielle didn't end up at Stellar Stage Entertainment by chance. The entertainment company's business was quite different from that of Dorsey International, so it was very likely that Michael had found out about their relationship and made some sort of bet with Brielle. His words were meant to remind Max that Brielle's hard work was all about being with him.

Max's expression, which had cooled, brightened slightly at the comment. With a mixture of helplessness and indulgence, he said, “She's trying to make more

money than me.”

A smile played at the corners of his eyes as he spoke.

Samuel laughed along. “There aren't many women in Beaconsfield with Ms. Brielle's grand ambitions.”

The atmosphere warmed, and Samuel smoothly transitioned back to the business discussion.

Meanwhile, Brielle had arrived at the hospital, where she received five stitches for her wound and was advised to keep it dry.

Brielle frowned at the wound. It would be too difficult not to let Max find out. If he knew she had been injured at Stellar Stage Entertainment and forbade her from going there, she would inevitably clash with Michael.

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The doctor, seeing her worried expression, couldn't help but chuckle.

“You are worried about your boyfriend, eh? He has a nice voice, and he really cares about you. He insisted that you eat on time. Quite perceptive, too, to recognize the sound of an ambulance so quickly,”

Naturally. Brielle was pleased to hear someone praise her boyfriend and couldn't resist saying. “He’s the most perfect man I've ever met.”

After finishing the bandaging, the doctor laughed again and teased, “What's that old saying? Love is blind, and every lass is a beauty in the lover's eyes.”

Brielle blushed a little, unaccustomed to the attention.

Just as the doctor was about to add more, someone knocked on the door.

“There's someone next door who's had a heavy bleed from drinking too much. You need to come.”

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For some reason, Brielle’s heart skipped a beat, and she immediately thought of Aubree. She stood up quickly and went to the next room, only to find not Aubree but Spencer reeking of alcohol.

Brielle felt a wave of bad luck, turned on her heel, and made to leave.

Spencer caught sight of her and thought he was hallucinating. Tears streamed down his face instantly.

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Don't go, Brielle, please don't leave

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me,” he sobbed, the taste of blood in his mouth.

The doctors couldn't restrain him, and he fell off the bed, clutching at Brielle's ankles. “Just look at me. You won't even look at me in my dreams.”

Brielle was baffled. How could someone who had once trampled over her, end up in such a state because of her? The blame was too heavy for her to bear, so she quickly withdrew her foot, but Spencer gripped her tightly. “What do I have to do? Just tell me. If you come back, I'll do anything. Please, Brielle, I really like you, no, I love you.”

Chapter 574

Just as Brielle was about to kick Spencer away, a woman's voice echoed from the doorway. “Spencer, haven't you embarrassed yourself enough?”

Startled, Brielle turned to see that it was none other than Victoria.

With a nod to Brielle, Victoria signaled for the doctors to pull Spencer away. It took several doctors and a lot of effort to restrain Spencer on the bed and administer a sedative.

Noticing the bandage on Brielle's wrist, Victoria frowned, “What happened to you?”

“Just a little scratch from my purse.”

Some purse accessories can be sharp. Victoria had seen enough catfights to know women used the corners of their handbags to leave their opponents bloodied.

"Does Max know about this?"

As Max's older sister, Victoria had never interfered with his relationship with Brielle, which meant Brielle had no hard feelings towards her. But thinking of Tiffanie, Brielle felt less warmth towards Victoria. "I haven't told him yet."

"Maybe it's for the best. If Max got involved, he wouldn't care who hurt you or what their background was. Mom always says he doesn't take after anyone in the Dorsey family. In some ways, he's the most reckless of us all."

Brielle didn't quite understand what Victoria meant but remained quietly attentive.

Inside, the doctors had sedated Spencer and wheeled him into the ICU.

Victoria tucked her shoulder-length hair behind her ear, her expression indifferent. "I don't oppose your relationship with Max, but I hope you bring him

positive energy, not negativity. You probably don't know, but as a child, he was so serious that mom had to consult numerous therapists and psychologists because he wouldn't smile."

Brielle was surprised; she had never heard about Max's childhood. She knew being groomed as the heir must have been tough, but she never realized that his life was challenging even before he was in the spotlight.

Victoria's short hair framed her spotless skin, but a perpetual cloud of melancholy seemed to loom over her. "Mom was strict with him, treating him as the successor from the moment he was born. If he couldn't fulfill that role, given her state of mind, she might have done something drastic. So when Max couldn't smile and displeased Dad, Mom was devastated. He's been through hundreds of treatments to become the decisive person he is today. Only he knows what he's endured."

Turning to Brielle, Victoria's tone was calm but chilly. "I hope you don't push him to become someone else."

Brielle frowned. Why would Victoria say that? She had never thought to push Max; all she

wanted was to be good to him, to compensate for all he'd lost.

"Do you love Max?"

Brielle's thoughts shattered at the question. Love? She could admit she liked Max a lot, but what was love?

Growing up, no one had ever taught Brielle the meaning of the word.

Seeing the confusion on Brielle's

face, Victoria chuckled. "Maybe you don't understand now, but when the time comes to part ways, you will.

Love is like that — its depth unknown until separation."

But by then, understanding would be too late.

Brielle was never deeply loved by anyone and had no idea how to begin to experience love. She believed in love, like the tragic passion Aubree had for Andrew or the destructive devotion Victoria had for Everett.

But her feelings for Max? She couldn't think of the right words to describe them.

Chapter 575

Victoria felt she'd said too much, even though she wasn't quite sure what she was trying to communicate.

“Max is my brother, whether we're close or not, and I don't want him getting hurt.”

With those words, she slipped into the hospital room.

Brielle stood there, overhearing Victoria instructing the doctor. “He's been cooped up at home. drinking himself into oblivion. If I hadn't found him today, he'd probably be dead. Please make sure there's always a nurse watching over him while he's admitted. I'll take care of the expenses.”

Spencer's parents had long left Beaconsfield, and the only one in the Dorsey family who might still have had some concern for him was probably Victoria.

Victoria had watched Spencer grow up; she knew about the night he spent on his knees in their ancestral home. That was why she had said those things to Brielle.

Victoria knew all too well the kind of tricks her father could play. If a man as proud as Everett could be broken, then Brielle stood no chance. Brielle and Max were never going to last, especially not with Michael yet to truly exert his influence.

Once he did, Brielle would lose her dignity just as Everett had.

However, Victoria didn't regret a thing. At least she kept Everett by her side. That was where he'd stay for the rest of his life.

The Dorseys never really understood love. What they felt was more like possession. Like now, Victoria couldn't define her feelings for Everett. Was it love or something else? She simply couldn't bear to let go and decided why not keep him close and torment each other? Victoria lowered her eyes, knowing that unless Brielle were completely unattached in this world, everything and everyone connected to her would become a burden, a vulnerability. Victoria's father had used the woman Everett loved most to threaten him, and that woman was pregnant at the time. Everett had been searching for this woman for years, but how could he possibly succeed with Michael's methods? If not for the child still being alive, Everett would've commit suicide by now.

Victoria wanted to knock Everett off his pedestal and turn him into a plaything she could manipulate and desecrate. The love she couldn't have was returned to her in another form that satisfied her.

Not a single Dorsey was normal, including her brother, Max, who simply lacked emotional awareness and buried his feelings deeply.

Some people's madness was external, others internal, and the world had always been that way. Back at the office, Brielle learned that the police had taken away the woman who hurt her. She

couldn't find an excuse to explain her wrist injury to Max, so she said she would stay with Aubree another night. Upon hearing she'd be with Aubree, Max didn't press any further,

Brielle had a key to Aubree's place, made long ago. As she inserted it into the lock, she heard footsteps from inside.

Aubree opened the door, and her slight spark of hope vanished upon seeing Brielle,

A quick glance inside showed that the previous night's mess of clothes and bottles had been cleaned up. The room was refreshed, and the table was neatly laden with delicious food, including a homemade birthday cake.

Brielle knew who Aubree was waiting for, but that person probably wouldn't show up tonight.

Feeling awkward, Aubree fiddled with the doorknob before mumbling. "Caught in a sad scene again, huh? I knew he wouldn't come."

Like a gambler addicted to hope, Aubree clung to the slim possibility until the bitter end.

She quickly pulled Brielle inside. "I made lots of goodies. Eat with me, or it'll all go to waste."

Brielle didn't refuse. Aubree needed company, even if it was just a silent presence.

Midway through their meal, both their phones rang. Max was calling Brielle about an issue with Martha, who'd had three episodes in one day. He needed to visit the sanatorium.

Brielle stood up immediately,
insisting on going with him. "Aubree,
Max's mom is in trouble. I'm heading
to the sanatorium."

Aubree nodded, not letting on who had called her.

Brielle reached the sanatorium quickly. Several doctors were already restraining
Martha when she arrived.

Max, braving the chill of the night, stood by a window in the hallway, peering into
the chaotic
scene.

A doctor approached Max, his tone
sympathetic, "Ms. Martha's been very
unstable lately, and she's been calling
for you. Deep down, she probably
wants you by her side. However, your
work keeps you busy. Visiting every
two weeks isn't enough, and
something about Beaconsfield is
scaring her. That's why she's acting
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out."

Max rubbed his temple, then heard
the doctor suggest, "Max, if you can't
be here often, maybe look into what
happened to Ms. Martha back then.
We need to understand why she's like

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this.”

Upon hearing this, Brielle felt a knot tighten in her stomach, an ominous premonition creeping over her.

Chapter 576

Max's gaze was cast downward. His pale lips were pursed lightly, and his features were seemingly gentle yet edged with a sharp chill.

Ever since his earliest memories, his mother had been strict with him, a level of strictness that would have seemed almost twisted in other households of Beaconsfield. But it was in his nature not to be bothered by it, and he never held any resentment towards Martha.

Martha had utterly neglected her daughter Victoria, leaving Victoria to her own devices to the point that she hadn't once asked for Victoria to visit her at the sanatorium throughout the years.

Victoria had indeed never visited.

Martha cared about whether Max could secure his place as the heir and Max himself. So, what had devastated her back then must have been related to either of these concerns.

When his father had pushed him into the heirs position at the age of ten, Martha's health began to decline, and Max wondered what hidden turmoil had beset her.

Outsiders speculated that Michael was too ruthless, intentionally sending Max, the youngest son, to his doom and causing Martha to collapse under the strain. Max knew the truth was not so simple. He had people investigate covertly, but they unearthed nothing.

“Max, if you have the time, try to visit more often,” the doctor said after discussing the new medication’s side effects and the urgency of stabilizing Martha's mood to avoid negating all previous efforts.

Max stood looking cold and melancholic and nodded slowly after hearing the words.

Once the doctor had left, Brielle glanced through the window at Martha, who had finally calmed down and was lying in bed, attended to by several caregivers.

Brielle was curious if Alivia's weekly visits exacerbated Martha's condition, wondering if the news Alivia brought was part of the cause. Alivia had previously pinned the blame for a lost child on Martha, and if stirring trouble between her and Max served Alivia's purpose, she would do it.

Brielle also knew that telling Max about Alivia's potential manipulations wouldn't convince him right away. After all, Alivia had cared for Martha for many years, dutifully, even from abroad. If she intended to cause harm, she would have done so long ago.

Max was aware of some of Alivia's true colors, but he likely never harbored a doubt regarding Martha.

Moreover, Martha had once told Brielle that if she and Max ended up together, Martha would rather die. She tried to control Max's life, first by wanting him to become the Dorsey family's heir and then by hoping he'd marry a woman the Dorsey family approved of.

Max opened a door and stepped inside. Martha was just coming to, and upon seeing him, her mood became agitated. "What are you doing here?! I'd be better off dead than seeing you!"

"Mother,"

Max called out, only to have Martha throw a bedside cup at him in rage. "Why did you tell me over the phone that you're with Brielle? You clearly don't care about me at all, so there's no need for you to be here. Get out!"

The cup shattered against the doorframe, and the fragments scattered like shrapnel, a sound like the beginning of war.

“Mother, you must take care of yourself.”

Ha! As long as that bitch is on this earth, I'll never have peace.”

Max's expression remained serene, like the cold light of a winter's day. He approached and sat down slowly by the bed. “I'd prefer you didn't speak of Brielle in such a way.”

Martha's face twisted into a sneer, her gaze drifting out the window to catch a glimpse of Brielle's figure. She scoffed, “Oh? That lowly hussy seduced you. If she's not a tramp, what is she? Keep her away from me. She makes me sick!”

“What would you have me do, Mother?”

“Break up with her!”

“That's not possible.” Max's reply was immediate and unwavering.

Martha's gaze darkened, her laugh cold. “Then I might as well die.”

Chapter 577

Max's gaze rested on her with a calm that bordered on indifference as if devoid of any emotion. “Mom, is it because I'm the heir to the Dorsey family?” he asked quietly.

Martha's lips tightened into a thin line, and she let out a derisive snort. “Of course What's the difference between Brielle and a beggar on the street? Are you with her to play the savior now?”

“I could always renounce my inheritance. Antonio's been back in Beaconsfield for a while, hasn't he? He could take over.”

Antonio was William's son.

Martha was suddenly at a loss for words, struggling to believe what she was hearing. He had been declared the successor at just ten years old. He had navigated through tumultuous trials and had some close shaves just to get this prestigious position, and now he was ready to give it all up? It was sheer madness.

In an instant, Martha felt as if her world was crumbling, a seething rage threatening to destroy everything in the room! But she could not act on it. Max's few words held her life's work in the balance.

Her fingertips trembled, and her lips were so tightly pressed together that they began to bleed, the metallic taste of blood filling her mouth.

Brielle must not stay! She had to make that call now!

Outside the door, not too far away, Brielle caught Martha's glance—a look venomous as a viper's hiss, filled with loathsome poison, wishing her dead where she stood.

Brielle couldn't hear what Max was saying, but it was clearly nothing to please Martha. As she stepped back, footsteps approached from behind. Turning, she

saw Alivia.

Noticing Brielle had not entered, Alivia's lips curled in scorn. "Well, well, Brielle, showing some sense for once. You know Martha might have a fit seeing you. Hiding out here is probably for the best. After all, your "relationship* with Max is the kind that's best kept in the dark: Even if Max has defended you before, in Martha's eyes, you're just a plaything for her son, disposable as yesterday's newspaper."

Alivia couldn't hide her smugness. She was alone with Brielle, so why should she?

"I can walk right in and chat with Martha while you can only silently watch through the window. That's the difference between you and me. And this is just the

beginning, darling. You're in for a rough ride."

"Are you done, Ms. Alivia?" Brielle interjected with a frosty glare. "If you don't go in to attend to her, you might miss your chance to see Max. Isn't that why you're here? To sneak a few more seconds with him? It's quite touching, that you care so much about my boyfriend."

Alivia's face flushed with anger and disgust. "Do you actually believe you and Max will last forever?"

That's none of your concern."

Alivia let out a cold laugh. Her lips twisted into a smirk as she stepped closer, her voice a whisper. "You know, on one birthday, it was just me, my brother, and Max. We got drunk, and Max and I almost... He kissed me, from my cheek all the way down to my collarbone, confessing he liked me. That was the first time I saw him like that. But I didn't give in to him. You know how persuasive he can be when he wants a woman to fall for him, especially when he's drunk and says he likes you. So very charming.

She was deliberately using the story to nauseate Brielle. Alivia even pulled at her blouse, revealing an old bite

mark on her shoulder—a testament to the intensity of that long—ago moment.

Chapter 578

“This “little souvenir” is from Max, and if you don’t believe me, go and ask him yourself. He and I connect on a soul level. You? You’re just his fling, a flash in the pan. When you used those cheap tricks to snag him, you sealed the deal on a relationship that’s skin—deep at best. It’s only a matter of time before he gets sick of you.”

After Alivia spat out her venomous words, she wanted to bask in Brielle’s breakdown, but Brielle was way too composed, which made Alivia look like a complete fool. She couldn’t believe Brielle didn’t care at all. She must’ve been pretending, right?

Of course, what she had said was a lie. Max was always guarded around women, so how could he have let her get that close? She made up the whole thing, knowing Brielle wouldn’t bother to check the story with Max. As long as it wasn’t verified, it might as well be true.

“So, he kissed you?” Brielle chuckled lightly. “I can’t be bothered to verify whether that’s true or not. And even if it is, what of it? Anything he hasn’t done with you, he does with me every single night. But I don’t parade it around because it’s just another mundane detail.”

Alivia’s face turned ashen, her chest quivering with rage. She was utterly humiliated!

But the fact was, Max and Brielle indeed has sex!

Brielle even unbuttoned the top button of her blouse, revealing a dusting of pink marks underneath. “Max bit you, Ms. Alivia? That must’ve hurt. He wouldn’t dream of being so rough with me.”

Her words were a low blow. Brielle was repulsed by her own pettiness after saying it. But Alivia had asked for it, barging in like that while Brielle was in a foul

mood, making herself a perfect target. She deserved it.

The marks were faint pink, a testament to tenderness, to how cherished she was.

In stark contrast to the bite, they were like countless slaps across Alivia's face.

Shaking with anger and not knowing how to respond, Alivia was snapped back to reality by Martha's voice from inside the room. "Alivia, if you're here, come on in.

Why waste time talking to nobodies?"

Alivia, struggling to keep her composure and not fall apart on the spot, shot

Brielle a hateful glare, took a deep breath, and walked inside with a forced smile.

Brielle stood still, overhearing Martha's voice again. "Alivia, let me look at you;

have you lost weight? I told the doctors not to worry you about my condition.

You've got your hands full with work. I hear the institute has started to accept applications?"

"Martha, no matter how busy I am, I'll always make time to see you."

Martha's face was all smiles, trying to dispel the gloom Max had brought her. She

glanced out the window, noting that Brielle was no longer there. "Alivia, has someone been giving you trouble?"

Alivia didn't answer right away, instinctively turning to Max.

Max stood unflappable, his voice rich

and deep. "Brielle doesn't start

fights." The implication was clear: if

you got bullied, you were asking for it.

Having been humiliated by Brielle and

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now belittled by Max, Alivia's eyes

reddened instantly.

Martha was livid, nearly fainting with

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frustration. She took Alivia's hand and patted it reassuringly. "Alivia, darling, I heard you asked the cook to prepare some soup. Why don't you check on it? Max and I need to finish

our conversation. Remember, don't waste your time chatting with the riff—raff outside."

Alivia nodded, her eyes still red but her face composed. "Max, I'll step out."

Max gave a noncommittal grunt, clearly not interested in further dialogue.

Alivia clenched her fists at her sides as she left, her eyes seething with resentment.

Chapter 579

Brielle had stealthily retreated fifty meters away from the window, the bone—chilling breeze of the evening slicing through her skin and settling deep into her marrow. She slapped her cheeks in an attempt to stay alert, a movement that sent a jolt of pain through her wrist.

She had covered her wrist with her sleeve when she went to meet Max. It was winter, after all, and no one could spot the abnormality as long as she didn't take off her coat. However, her recent gesture had been a bit too vigorous, and the freshly stitched wound on her hand throbbed with pain.

Thinking that Max would be a while longer, she slipped into the restroom down the hall. The restroom was spotlessly clean, and just as she rolled up her sleeve, footsteps echoed at the doorway it was Alivia.

If she were Alivia, she wouldn't keep putting herself in a position to be humiliated.

After all, Max didn't love Alivia, and that was Brielle's trump card.

Alivia stood at the doorway, her arms crossed, her expression stormy. "Martha sent me out and said she had something to discuss privately with Max. I've got no idea what they're talking about or whether Max can hold out, considering Martha is, quite literally, betting her life on this."

Her gaze fell on Brielle's wrist, her eyebrows lifting slightly, "Oh, did you get hurt?

Max is really careless, not even noticing your injury. Aren't you two supposedly up close and personal every night? How could he overlook something like this?

He isn't treating you like some sort of sex dall after the lights go out, is he?"

For the first time, Brielle realized just how spiteful Alivia could be. As perfect and composed as she seemed to others, that was how petty and terrible she was when it came to Brielle.

Love could bring out the ugliest sides of a woman, not just in clashes with a rival but also in those heart-wrenching cries for a man.

Brielle usually avoided such disgraceful situations. If someone didn't care for her, she wouldn't abandon her dignity to cling to them.

"Ms. Alivia, you seem so intrigued by my intimate life with Max. Perhaps you'd

like me to make a video for you next time?" Brielle quipped as she rolled up her sleeve, a smile on her face. However, seeing the blood—soaked bandage, her brow creased ever so slightly, fearing the wound had reopened.

As she was thinking about whether she should check into the hospital later, she was startled by the sound of high heels approaching.

"You bitch!"

Caught off guard, Alivia yanked Brielle's hand, submerged the injured wrist under the cold tap, and turned the water on full blast. "Deserved! Does it hurt, Brielle?"

The tap water on the wound could easily lead to an infection. Brielle shoved

Alivia away, the pain in her wrist sharp and excruciating.

Alivia let out a soft chuckle, her eyes skimming with feigned innocence. "Oops, my bad. That wasn't intentional."

Brielle's forehead beaded with sweat from the pain. The wound was deep and stitched, and now that the bandage was soaked, the blood was beginning to spread.

Alivia flipped her hair. "Looks like your wound is bleeding. Maybe you should take care of it yourself." With that, she turned to leave.

Brielle lowered her gaze, deliberately peeling off the bandage, her tone indifferent, "Did I say your could leave?"

Alivia's footsteps faltered, her sneer returning. "Oh? And what do you plan to do about it?"

It was just the two of them in this place. Even if Alivia had committed such an outrageous act, what of it? With Brielle's temperament, she surely wouldn't tattle to Max. That confidence emboldened Alivia to act.

Brielle was a stubborn, independent woman. She tended to carry her burdens alone, much like Max. They were both attempting to navigate the complex process of love, a journey that could easily be thrown off course. With Michael's interference and Martha putting pressure on Max, while Brielle was caught up with the

company's business, it was the perfect opening for Alivia to seize her opportunity.

She was certain Brielle wouldn't dare retaliate. After all, in all of Beaconsfield, no one dared cross her. She was Miss Barnes of the Barnes family.

Brielle's eyes remained downcast, unwinding the bandage from her wrist coil by coil and discarding it,

. needy

then lifted her gaze to meet Alivia's.

The icy chill in her eyes was piercing, making Alivia feel uncomfortable all over.

How could Brielle look at her with such eyes?! Alivia's brow furrowed. She usually looked at others in that way.

"Brielle, I'd advise you to watch your gaze, or else I might just tear. that wound right open."

Chapter 580

No sooner had the words left her lips than Brielle advanced, shoving her forcefully toward the sink. Alivia's face drained of color from the pain, her whole being trapped In a mix of shock and fear, "Brielle! What do you think you're doing?!"

Brielle had trained in Taekwondo and was a black belt no less. Even with an injured hand, it didn't stop her from exerting force. Using her uninjured hand, she pressed Alivia's head under the faucet and turned on the cold tap. The shock of the cold water made Alivia want to scream, her mind filled with nothing but

astonishment.

"Thanks, Ms. Alivia, for washing my hands. Tit for tat, I'm just returning the favor with a hair wash- no thanks needed."

Alivia struggled furiously, but all her efforts were as futile as throwing stones into the ocean. She was the youngest head of research, a spoiled lady of the Barnes family. Everyone else treated her with the utmost respect, and here was Brielle, daring to manhandle her into a sink.

This damn bitch!

No matter how angry she was, she couldn't break free from Brielle's grip. The cold was biting. In this weather, having her head doused in cold water leeched away all her strength.

Before slowly letting go, Brielle cranked the water to full blast, ensuring Alivia's entire head was submerged. Her wrist was still bleeding, the blood spreading in the water with a rusty taint.

"Ms. Alivia, an eye for an eye. How's that for a refreshing winter hair wash?"

Brielle's tone was infuriatingly nonchalant. Releasing her grip, Brielle left promptly, avoiding any further madness from Alivia.

The hallway had other servants. Alivia wouldn't dare chase after her, not wanting to tarnish her image as the Barnes family's treasured jewel.

"Ah!" Alivia's rage echoed from inside. Even in this furious state, she was concerned about being seen in such disarray, so she was both restrained and resentful.

She glared at Brielle's retreating back. Her fingertips curled so tightly that her nails nearly pierced her skin. She had never hated someone so much, wishing they would just disappear.

She was determined to make Brielle pay the price! What right did this charity home upstart have to compare herself to her?

Alivia sneezed, her lips turning a pale shade of purple from the chill. She

wrapped her arms around herself, grinding her teeth in anger, tasting the metallic tang of blood.

After leaving, Brielle received a message from Max, indicating he would be delayed and suggesting she head back home. With her wrist in that condition, she couldn't meet him anyway, so after sending a reply, she hailed a cab and headed for the hospital.

The same doctor who had bandaged her earlier frowned upon seeing her return, especially since the bandage was gone and the wound appeared waterlogged.

"Young people these

days... don't you care about your bodies at all? Didn't your boyfriend see you were hurt?" the doctor chastised while rewrapping Brielle's wrist.

Brielle winced, relieved to see the stitches were still intact.

"You must be careful not to get tetanus. That can be deadly," the doctor warned.

"Sure, thanks, Doctor," Brielle responded, feeling utterly drained.

Noticing the weariness in her eyes, the doctor offered some unsolicited advice.

"Did you have a fight with your boyfriend?"

No, we're just both really busy, and his family... they don't exactly warm up to me."

That was putting it mildly. They detested her.

The doctor's expression softened with sympathy, unable to resist a little gossip. "I have a colleague who had the same problem with her in-laws. They made her life miserable, and eventually, the love she had for her husband faded. They

divorced last year. Marriage isn't just
about two people; it's about two
families. If they don't like you now
and you can't resolve the issues, it's
better to break up sooner than suffer
later.”

After the doctor’s words and a sigh, Brielle stood up slow
Aks.” With that, she grabbed
her purse and left.

The doctor shook her head, turning to a nurse, “Did I say something wrong?”

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No, but sometimes the young need
to fall in love and get hurt to
. .”

appreciate old wisdom.”

Everyone knew that love without blessing was destined for hardship.