

## Master 591

### Chapter 591

Brielle flipped through the dossier laid out before her, her voice carrying a casual nonchalance. “Hmm, I've done my homework on every single one of you. You're an agent, to be precise, the only one who hasn't thrown in the towel so far. You've been grinding away, hustling for gigs for the artists, but with the way things were at Stellar Stage Entertainment, these past few years must have been rough, huh?”

He struggled, only to blow after blow. It's like a stray dog begging for scraps from well-dressed folks, knowing full well that a kick might be the next thing coming, yet still, he had to try.

“Oh no, Stellar Stage Entertainment was under the radar before. The fact that Dorsey International sent you over here makes me think from here on out, things are looking up.”

Brielle couldn't help but smile, a twinkle of amusement in her eyes. Why did he have so much faith in her? This feeling of being trusted was truly something else. She'd thought Stellar Stage Entertainment was rotten to the core, but there were still those like Donny, working tirelessly in the shadows, and there was Ricardo, determined not to be beaten.

Brielle had come here just to tick a box on her to—do list, and now, she genuinely wanted to take these people to a grander stage.

“Donny, I'm keeping you on as an agent. You'll manage my top two talents, Ricardo and my good friend Aubree. With the right packaging, their looks and charisma will surely make them stand out in this industry. Once our first movie earns critical acclaim, the offers will come rolling in. You better start prepping for their meteoric rise. You might have been twiddling your thumbs before, but soon you'll be running off your feet.”

Donny's eyes lit up, and a grin spread across his face. “Ms. Haywood, you can count on me. I'm ready whenever you are.”

Brielle shared his smile, about to add more when the office phone rang. She picked up the handset, and it was Patrick on the line. "Ms. Brielle, Mr. Dorsey wants you to swing by Dorsey International pronto." His voice was tinged with mirth.

Brielle knew the snitches had played their part. "They really made it into Mr. Dorsey's office?"

"Yep, they're in there right now, cataloging your socalled seven deadly sins."

Patrick's words weren't an exaggeration. At that moment, three of Stellar Stage Entertainment's executives stood before Max's desk, their demeanor utterly subservient.

"Mr. Dorsey, this is the mess Brielle's caused at Stellar Stage Entertainment in just a few days. She's admitted to it herself, claiming she's been acting up because she's got bigwigs at Dorsey International backing her."

"Indeed, Mr. Dorsey, if we let Brielle continue unchecked, Stellar Stage Entertainment will crumble under her antics."

"And we need to root out the high—up shielding her. To think someone could be so taken with

such a woman is a clear case of blind folly!"

"Yes! Blind folly!"

As Patrick entered, that was the phrase that greeted him. He glanced at the speakers, mentally praying for their safety.

No wonder Stellar Stage Entertainment had fallen so far with such clueless executives at the helm. They should have known better than to rail against someone with connections without first checking who's backing them. But there they were, standing before the very mountain, tearing into the person it sought to protect, utterly oblivious to their own impending doom.

Max sat serenely in his chair, his features composed. The only giveaway was a slight twitch of his eyelashes when accused of being blind. He sat before a vast

pane of glass, resembling a stark, monochromatic Greek sculpture, his presence captivating, his aura chilling.

Patrick knew this meant trouble. The more incensed Max got, the quieter he became, not given to histrionics like others might be.

After the executives had their say,  
smugness settled in as they bowed  
their heads, each harboring a smirk.  
They had heard Max instruct his  
assistant to summon Brielle  
immediately. Hah, would Brielle still  
hold her ground when facing the top  
brass?

Completely unaware of their boss\* ire, they exchanged looks and settled in to watch Brielle's fall from grace.

They bet Brielle had no idea they'd  
dare come to Dorsey International,  
and that Max had even granted them  
an audience upon learning they were  
from Stellar Stage Entertainment.

One executive couldn't resist  
continuing. "Furthermore, Brielle's  
been cozying up to some young  
upstart lately. She was likely  
two—timing her benefactor, making a  
fool out of him. Mr. Dorsey, you  
punishing Brielle now could save that  
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oblivious benefactor of hers, who's also a part of Dorsey International's upper echelon. We can't let a woman blindside him."

Max's expression shifted subtly, his fingers toying with a sleek black pen. The contrast of his pale skin against the dark pen seemed to underscore his refined nature.

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Brielle had just stepped out of her office when Donny heard that a call from Dorsey International had sent her rushing off. His heart instantly tightened with concern.

At Stellar Stage Entertainment. Brielle's moves had been bold, too bold perhaps, and it seemed the higher-ups couldn't stomach it any longer. They had finally taken their grievances to Dorsey International and sought out Mr. Dorsey himself. What good could possibly come of Brielle's meeting there?

Worry was etched across Donny's face as he spoke up. "Ms. Haywood, if you're no longer with Stellar Stage Entertainment, please, you've got to let me know where you're headed next. I'll follow you, I will."

His voice trailed off as his eyes dropped and his hands twisted together anxiously. "Ms. Haywood, you've got a real knack for looking out for your talent. Having you join Stellar Stage Entertainment was a stroke of luck for us all. If all these changes you've been making get you into hot water with Mr. Dorsey and his crowd, there's not much we can do, really. But we're willing to stick by you. You might not realize it, but the kids in the performance class today were bursting with energy — I've never seen them so bold and alive. They're just twenty—one on average, and they've been living in the doldrums until now. Ms. Haywood, you mean a lot to us." Donny was a man's man, not one for soppy words. Yet from his body language, Brielle could tell how tense, even panicked, he was. She hadn't expected to make such an impact on someone. Her lips curled into a smile. "I'll

be fine. Don't you worry."

She couldn't openly discuss her relationship with Max, but having these people run to her boyfriend to snitch on her practically handed Max a weapon. Besides making him worry about her, there wasn't much else to it.

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Ah, she had to appease him again. She sighed, and Donny, interpreting her expression as worry, grew even more agitated.

Without further discussion, Brielle drove straight to Dorsey International. Even though it had been less than a week since she'd left, returning felt different. She had left reluctantly after finally being recognized for her abilities and securing her place. But Michael had ordered her to go, and she had to leave everything behind.

Now, as she returned, her heart was filled with reflection rather than regret.

Stellar Stage Entertainment needed her more than Dorsey International. A group of eager people awaited her return, so she had to go back.

She made her way to the top floor and entered Max's office without knocking.

This brought immediate disapproval from the three executives of Stellar Stage Entertainment.

"Mr. Dorsey, just look at this woman's lack of manners, barging in without even knocking. She must've gotten too comfortable doing as she pleases over at Stellar Stage Entertainment, thinking no one can touch her!"

"She's been spoiled by the patrons over at Dorsey International, huh? I tell you, she doesn't respect you, Mr. Dorsey."

"Exactly, Mr. Dorsey, you mustn't let this kind of person off the hook."

Brielle arched an eyebrow, meeting Max's gaze. He clearly wasn't happy. When he was upset, his eyes seemed shrouded in mist, dark and brooding.

On the other hand, Patrick was trying his best to be inconspicuous, thinking these fools were digging their own graves with their stupidity. They had no clue

how to read the room.

But on second thought, it seemed that there wasn't much expression on Max's face anyway, which was probably why those people were especially arrogant.

Seeing Brielle, Max slowly put down his pen. Brielle quickly offered a smile,

"Sorry, Mr. Dorsey, the traffic was a nightmare. Sorry to keep you waiting."

Max leaned back, resting a hand on his sleek, black marble desk, "Ms. Haywood, is there something you'd like to say?"

Innocence played across Brielle's face. "I'm not sure what I've done wrong?"

Seeing her feign ignorance, the

executives from Stellar Stage

rejoined

Entertainment cursed in fury. "Don't

play dumb with us! Look at the mess

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you've made over at Stellar Stage

Entertainment! So, now you've come

crawling to Mr. Dorsey, have you?

Thought you were something special,

but you're just another weathercock

Mr. Dorsey, everything we've said is

true. Brielle's misdeeds are too

numerous to count! We hope you

strip her of her position and kick her

out of Stellar Stage Entertainment!

"Yeah! Kick her out of Stellar Stage Entertainment!"

The three continued their tirade, vilifying Brielle once more.

Brielle found it amusing. She stepped

Dorsey, I promise, I've only done

,

what's best for Stellar Stage

Entertainment—cutting dead weight

and saving on expenses. But now I

see I haven't done enough. I made

the mistake of keeping these few

around. When I get back, I'll have HR

send their resignation letters.

The trio's angry faces froze, thinking they must have misheard. What was Brielle saying?

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She had such audacity in Mr. Dorsey's presence!

It seemed like fate was on their side. They half-expected Brielle to come in here, all fire and brimstone, spitting out excuses with her sharp tongue that could probably convince Mr. Dorsey of her innocence. But, to everyone's surprise, Brielle didn't even attempt to spin a yarn in her defense, nor did she dial it back in front of Max.

She was practically asking for trouble! Mr. Dorsey would surely kick her to the curb without a second thought!

A smug smile began to creep across their faces, their eyes gleaming with anticipation of the impending drama. Looking up, they saw Brielle inching closer to Max, even daring to brush against him ever so lightly.

She had the nerve to bump into the CEO of Dorsey International, the heir to the Dorsey empire, a man rumored to keep women at arm's length!

Their faces lit up with twisted joy. Of all people, she chose to flirt with the big boss in plain sight. Absolutely preposterous!

Brielle paid no mind to their inner turmoil. After her gentle collision with Max, she softened her voice and asked, "What do you think, Mr. Dorsey? Am I right?"

Max was usually a cool customer, but as Brielle leaned in and covertly tugged at his sleeve for some support, a flicker of amusement passed through his eyes, his lips curving ever so slightly. “You make a fair point,” he conceded.

Brielle merely glanced at the three stiff executives, who stood frozen, unable to process what they were witnessing. The ever—stoic CEO was actually smiling.

Sure, it was a faint smile, but his gaze on Brielle was undeniably tender.

Impossible! This had to be some kind of trick!

Then, true to his instinct, Max casually placed his hand on Brielle’s waist, his touch light. “You’ve lost weight.”

Brielle was tempted to roll her eyes internally as if they had been apart for ages.

Holding back a laugh, she quipped, “My bad. I should’ve had a heartier lunch before meeting you, Mr. Dorsey.”

Since the two had slipped into their flirtatious banter, Patrick approached the three senior staff members. “Mr. Dorsey is tied up at the moment. Please, show yourselves out.”

It dawned on the executives that Brielle was Mr. Dorsey’s sugar baby. Brielle’s backing was none other than Max himself!

Max stared at her with sheer indulgence, making it crystal clear that no matter what the executives said today, he wouldn’t punish Brielle. Instead, they had only dug themselves deeper into a hole.

They were doomed.

After all their bluster, no wonder Max’s assistant had been giving them those odd looks — he must have thought they were complete idiots!

Stricken with regret, they hardly knew how to make their exit. Their legs felt like jelly, and their heads spun.

Once outside, Patrick gave them a stern warning. “Keep your mouths shut about Ms. Brielle and Mr. Dorsey. If word gets out to the rest of Stellar Stage Entertainment, you can kiss your careers goodbye. And remember, Ms. Brielle



isn't vindictive. If, from now on, you only act in the best interest of Stellar Stage Entertainment, she might not hold a grudge. Don't paint her as petty. She's been doing everything for the good of the company. You've been blinded by self—interest, but she hasn't.”

The executives were speechless, scared out of their wits.

After laying down the law, Patrick watched them shuffle into the elevator and the doors close behind them. He was about to return to the office, but considering the two inside, he decided to give them space.

Mr. Dorset and Ms. Brielle hadn't had a proper moment together in ages, and with everyone busy the night before, snatching some time during work seemed like a good idea.

Inside the office, Max had already swept Brielle into his arms and placed her on the desk. Brielle, taken aback, glanced at the office door.

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Mr. Dorsey, what are you up to?”

Max stared at her, his eyes like whirlpools drawing her in. “You came on an empty stomach. I skipped lunch, too.”

Her cheeks flushed instantly, and she playfully thumped his shoulder. “Who taught you to flirt like that?”

But Max didn't say another word; he simply leaned in and captured her lips in a kiss.

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Brielle was worried that Patrick might walk in on them at any moment. Such a scene could be quite shocking for the poor guy.

Max's hand gently pressed against her waist, his voice a smooth baritone, "Don't get distracted."

"But what if Patrick-"

"Patrick wouldn't be so clueless."

That was all it took for Brielle's resolve to crumble, her head resting against his chest. Who would've thought that the formidable Mr. Dorsey would flirt with a woman in his office, and in such a tender tone, no less?

Her cheeks flushed. Her fiery confidence when challenging the executives earlier was nowhere to be found.

Max's breathing became uneven as he swept her off her feet and carried her into the adjoining lounge.

"Max, are you really gonna—mmph." She couldn't get another word out. It seemed she had been leaving him dry too long—here they were, getting reckless in the office.

The couch in the lounge was soft, and Brielle didn't dare look at him. The orange sunset and clear blue sky were on full display through the floor-to—ceiling windows. On the sunlit floor lay scattered clothes and the unmistakable scent of Sex.

She should stop him, but she lacked the strength to resist. They had both been so busy lately that finding time during the day to be together like this was rare.

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After a couple of hours of thoroughly mollifying the CEO, Brielle sensed he was still hungry for more, and she quickly got up from the couch. "There's a ton of

work waiting for me back at Stellar Stage Entertainment.”

Max watched her go, a light chuckle escaping him. Was he really that terrifying?

“Max, I've gotta head out. There's a lot to do. And I'm sure you're swamped, too.

Did everything go alright with Martha last night?”

Mentioning Martha dimmed the laughter in Max's eyes. “Business as usual.”

They had to resort to sedatives to administer that last injection. Afterward, they

made sure her food was laced with drugs to lower her guard.

Brielle breathed a sigh of relief; no trouble from Martha was good news. She glanced back at him and found Max propped up against the pillows, the epitome of casual elegance. It wasn't the first time they'd sex, yet Brielle still felt a flush of heat on her face.

“So, I'm leaving?”

“Til have Patrick drive you.”

“No need, I drove myself.”

Max raised an eyebrow, his fingertip brushing his lips—a clear invitation.

Brielle thought to herself that this man was far from the saintly image of “The Priest”. He was temptation personified.

Taking a deep breath, she leaned in and quickly pecked his lips. “I'm really off now. I've got my sights set on something big at Stellar Stage Entertainment, and I'm all fired up.”

Max's eyes twinkled like shattered stars, his gaze trailing down her in a long, beautiful arc, chilly and aloof yet irresistibly inviting.

Brielle stepped out of the office to bump into Sydney, who was there to deliver some documents.

Sydney saw Brielle's glowing face. Even her lips looked more luscious. Brielle must have worn only a hint of lipstick earlier, but now, it was all gone—clearly kissed away.

Jealousy surged through Sydney. She wanted nothing more than to slap that

smug look off Brielle's face.

That bitch! Hadn't she left the company? Why was she here during working hours, trying to entice Mr. Dorsey?

What a slut!

Still emulating Brielle's style, Sydney glared at her, grinding her teeth angrily.

Brielle didn't spare her a glance, heading straight for the private elevator.

Sydney, who had taken the regular lift, couldn't help but wonder what right a former employee had to use the executive elevator.

Bubbling with spite, she followed Brielle and couldn't resist taunting her. "Brielle, you really are shameless, coming here during work hours to seduce Mr. Dorsey."

As the elevator doors slid open,

Brielle stepped inside and said with a

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light laugh, "You'd S48) sedacelhim

: J ! D ' :

chr Work wdaldn't you? But has

he even glanced your way? Your

desperation is showing, Sydney.

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How's life in your department?

Rough, I bet?"

Sydney was a poor imitation of

Brielle, lacking in her capabilities.

Most of what she ig ended i? ©

disasteh NAR Wi Spencer not yet

reporting in, her heavy-handed

approach to leadership had brewed

discontent among her colleagues.

Brielle's words hit Sydney where it

hurt most—her lack of com

pared to

CT glare at the closing

elevator doors, Sydney felt a tingling

rage at the top of her head.

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She had no worries; as long as Mr. Spencer showed up at the company, her

situation was bound to improve. After all, she was Mr. Spencer's girl, and

Spencer would surely have her

back.

However, to everyone's surprise, it wasn't Spencer who got the director's chair,

but William's son, Antonio.

Spencer had been doing nothing but drowning his sorrows in booze, neglecting

his work like it was a dirty shirt. Michael had given him a final deadline, but

Spencer had ended up in the hospital just in time.

Seizing the opportunity, William played his cards right in front of Michael, and the

position that should have been Spencer's ended up with his son.

Now, William and his son were both in the corridors of power at Dorsey

International, occupying top positions. Ryan and his family were either kicked out

of Beaconsfield or stripped of their duties, completely out of the game. As for

Victoria, what storm could that lovesick woman possibly stir up?

William's eyes twinkled with mirth, confident that Dorsey International would be

theirs once Max was out of the picture.

He looked at Michael earnestly. "Dad, I think Spencers still hung up on Brielle,

and that's why he's in such distress. You know, Brielle's gotten mixed up with

Max, and, well, if Max ends up like Spencer because of her, then Dorsey

International might just-"

“Max won't.” Michael's tone was cool and ominous as he sat with a few cups of coffee before him. “Spencer has had a silver spoon in his mouth since birth and can't handle adversity. But Max has had a different upbringing. The Dorsey family won't give Spencer another dime. If he wants to self-destruct, he'll have to fend for himself. And you tell Victoria that once the medical bills are paid, she's not to give Spencer anything else. Otherwise, I won't look out for Everett anymore.”

Michael had made up his mind.

William's smile deepened. “I'll pass on the message. And about Max...” He was eager to drive a wedge between the two, especially since Michael was already

thwarting Brielle and Max. If he could just add fuel to the fire, maybe even get Michael to take Brielle out of the equation, Max's fiery temper would surely not let things lie.

“Don't think I don't know what you're up to. Max doesn't need your meddling.”

Michael's voice was heavy, and he sipped his coffee with deliberate calm. “If you're as restless as your exiled brother, you'll meet the same fate.”

William's face turned sour, but he managed to keep his composure, barely. “Dad, I'm just concerned about Max. After all, he's my brother.”

Family ties in the Dorsey family were a joke. In the face of immense profit, everything else was trivial.

Michael's eyes glinted with resolve. “Max is my son. I have ways to deal with him.

No matter how far he goes or how high he flies, I still hold the strings.”

William was taken aback, uncertain about Michael's implication. Did Michael have another ace up his sleeve?

Michael had long ago stepped back from the Dorsey family's dealings, entrusting everything to Max. Max had managed the family's affairs impeccably from abroad, especially Dorsey International, which had soared under his leadership.

Michael seemed to be out of the loop, but who knew if he had other forces at his command?

With Michael's extensive experience in the business world, such a statement forced William to be extra cautious.

Michael's message was clear: if Max lost control, he had a way to handle him. So all William had to do was sit back, occasionally stoke the flames, and avoid drawing their ire.

"Dad, I understand. I'll be on my way then."

After getting Michael's nod, William left the Dorsey family estate. Back at his own place, a young man was waiting for him, his son, Antonio.

Antonio, dressed in a sharp grey suit, meticulously cleaned his fingertips with a handkerchief, wiping away the bits bit by bit. The servants in the villa kept their heads down, careful not to cross either of them.

Both had tempers like a summer storm. One wrong word could get you fired—or worse. To them, solving a problem was just a matter of money, even if it meant someone's life.

"Dad, did you secure it? Can I head over to Dorsey International now?"

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Yep, your grandfather has handed you the position. As for that waste of space,

cards. Michael's made it clear: let him fend for himself from now

Antonio snorted with derision, taking  
a swig of red wine from the table

What skills does to fend for  
learned over the  
years is how to have affairs with

women. He's nothing but a

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Antonio didn't have the dazzling looks like the other members of the Dorsey clan; he was more of the delicate and slender type. However, he was in good health, his only flaw being an unnaturally sickly complexion that made him appear frail at first glance.

"Antonio, when you head to work, try to avoid butting heads with Max, okay? Michael's taking this very seriously this time, and he's got an ace up his sleeve. If you really tick him off, I'm afraid we'll end up in the same boat as Ryan and his family. For now, let's hold our horses, stick to our roles, and just watch how this showdown between the two powers unfolds—who will come out on top."

Antonio set down his beer bottle, a sharp glint crossing his eyes. He was curious to meet Brielle. Did she really possess such allure?

Uncle Max was even willing to pass over Miss Alivia in favor of her. What was it about her? Was her charm in bed that remarkable, or was there some other hidden wealth or background?

These folks were all about self-interest. Nobody believed in so-called love. They were sure that unless there was something more valuable about Brielle, Max wouldn't have been interested.

It seemed that a thorough investigation was in order.

While William and Antonio were strategizing, Brielle had already returned to



Stellar Stage Entertainment.

Donny had been pacing the floor with restless anxiety since her departure, and now that she was back, his eyes lit up. "Ms. Haywood, you're back! Did Mr. Dorsey give you any trouble?" he asked eagerly.

The thought of Max brought a rush of memories, including the husky sounds he made at the height of passion, causing Brielle's cheeks to blush involuntarily. Her eyes shimmered, hinting at vulnerability and stirring protective instincts.

Donny's face went pale. "Ms. Haywood, you weren't... fired, were you?"

Snapping back to reality, Brielle's lips curved into a smile. "Don't worry, I'm fine. Mr. Dorsey is quite reasonable."

As she spoke, the few who had gone to Dorsey International to tattle came sidling over, unable to meet Brielle's gaze.

Brielle raised an eyebrow, curious to see what they were up to now. If they had indeed conjured up more outrageous schemes, she wouldn't mind showing them the door alongside the others.

One of them hung their head, their voice tinged with concern. "Ms. Haywood, I'm willing to donate my entire year's salary to the company for script development."

"Me too, Ms. Haywood."

"We were blind to your abilities before, and we hope you can forgive our shortsightedness."

Donny was taken aback to see such a display of contrition from these usually difficult executives. They were known to be the sort who would swing whichever way the wind blew, always siding with the most influential party at the moment. These three, in particular, had a reputation for sticking together, which often made them a headache to deal with; even Keagan sometimes found them challenging.

Now, here they were, making overtures to Brielle?

Brielle arched an eyebrow. They were certainly quick to catch on.

These were high-level execs under Dorsey International, raking in millions a month. Offering up a year's salary was a significant gesture of goodwill, especially considering their previous endeavors at Stellar Stage Entertainment had been less than scrupulous.

"You're volunteering this, so don't come crying to labor arbitration later, claiming I've withheld wages," she warned them.

"Of course not, Ms. Haywood! We're blessed that you'd even consider our offer."

"Yes. Ms. Haywood. Your youthful leadership at Stellar Stage Entertainment is a stroke of luck for us all."

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Brielle's lips twitched, sensing their true nature as weathercocks. She

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waved them off immediately. Alright, I

"or SE

won't fire you, I'm willing to

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don't, I won't refuse. After all, a

) . .

year's salary is a drop in the ocean

compared to what you've extorted

from Stellar Stage Entertainment in

The men laughed awkwardly, unable to muster a response.

Donny watched in amazement, feeling like he was gaining insight into new realms of possibility. After the executives left, he turned to Brielle. "Ms. Haywood, this is-

"Perhaps they've had a change of heart. Now go on, attend to your work." With that, Brielle entered her office.

Donny remained in the hallway, a surge of excitement welling up within him. Brielle hadn't been Mr. Dorsey, that those ley come off worse after lodging their complaints. Clearly, Brielle had some clout at Dorsey International, which explained her bold reforms at Stellar Stage Entertainment.

Feeling more confident than ever, Donny was determined to work hard. Perhaps Stellar Stage Entertainment was on the verge of a new era!

Once in her office, Brielle leaned back in her chair, massaging her wash with a mace might n been Max's limit, but they had certainly pushed her to her own.

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Max knew they'd both be slammed with work for a while. Even when he got back to the Premier Palace at night, he'd be swamped with meetings. So that's why he was all about indulging to the max at lunchtime.

He used to pause midway through his devouring just to catch her blushing, but today, he didn't stop, not even when she playfully protested. He just shushed her with a bite as if she was a juicy cheeseburger.

Brielle rubbed her forehead, the other hand massaging her lower back. Maybe she should take up kickboxing again? Her stamina just wasn't keeping up.

After work, Aubree texted that she'd meet her downstairs. Fresh from her yoga class, Aubree was the picture of vitality. "I should've joined Stellar Stage Entertainment the minute you did. It's so much fun. I didn't drive today. Mind giving me a lift home?"

Brielle nodded and slid into the driver's seat. They hadn't gone far when Brielle noticed a truck in the rearview mirror driving erratically. She thought she was seeing things and swerved slightly. The truck mimicked her move.

If they collided with the big rigs... The thought barely crossed her mind when the truck gunned its engine, barreling toward her.

Brielle's eyes narrowed. "Aubree, buckle up tight."

Aubree had seen it, too. She quickly fastened her seatbelt and swallowed hard.

"Bri, we're not gonna die, are we?" Such a massive vehicle could flatten them into pancakes.

Brielle was about to reassure her when suddenly, a cement mixer truck came at them head-on. Caught between the two, they had nowhere to go.

"Ahhh!" Aubree couldn't help but scream.

Brielle gritted her teeth and steered the car towards the bridge's edge. Below was a lake. If they got out quick enough after the fall, they'd survive. She knew Aubree was a strong swimmer.

"Windows down! We're going in!" she commanded before crashing through the barrier.

Aubree reacted fast, rolling down the window.

Their car plunged off the bridge while the two trucks, unable to turn in time, smashed into each other. A chain-reaction pile-up ensued, involving over twenty vehicles.

"Boom!"

The sound of their car hitting the water was thunderous.

Brielle wanted to reach for Aubree but saw her already holding her breath,

signaling to head for the surface. They had inhaled deeply before the plunge, so they weren't in distress, but the winter lake was too frigid.

Brielle nodded, and they slowly swam upward.

Breaking the surface, Brielle took a deep breath, wiping the water from her face. Aubree spat out a jet of water, looking like

That was wild!

Did you see that truck? We were this close to getting hit! Your reaction time was insane! Look at the bridge.

It's all smoke. Those idiots crashed into each other. Serves them right!

They wanted us dead, but we're like cats with nine lives!"

Hearing this, Brielle's lips twitched — Aubree was truly one of a kind.

"Aubree, let's get to shore."

After a sneeze, Aubree nodded. They stripped off their heavy coats to avoid sinking from the weight and swam to safety.

Once on shore, they sat, catching their breath, watching the chaos, unfold on the bridge Brielle knew thode re! were meant for her. If

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she hadn't reacted, she'd be a goner by now.

A cement mixer and a big rig were a  
death sentence for her.

Goat planned this  
she was dead set on her demise.

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Aubree and Brielle returned to Aubree's place, shivering so hard their teeth were  
chattering.

Brielle couldn't let Max find out about this; she had a hunch that the person  
behind the attempt on her life was either Michael or Martha. If Max ever got wind  
of it, there would be hell to pay.

After warming up with hot showers, they each held a steaming cup of tea as they  
settled into the living room.

The thermostat was cranked up to the max, and Aubree had even gone the extra  
mile by brewing some ginger tea, a home remedy bound to warm the bones.

The initial adrenaline rush had faded, and the reality of the grave danger Brielle  
was in had set in — someone was out to get her.

They placed their mugs of ginger tea on the table. Aubree downed hers in one go  
before speaking up. "Bri, who do you think is behind this?"

Brielle shook her head. The list of people who wanted her dead was,  
unfortunately, long.

Michael had given her six months, but there was no promise that he wouldn't  
strike during that time. As for Martha, after Max provoked her last night, he had  
mentioned to spike her food with sleeping pills, but what if someone at the  
nursing home had tipped her off and she wasn't really out cold?

Nothing was certain.

Aubree leaned back, staring at the ceiling with a wry smile playing on her lips.

"You know, Bri, I kind of dig this life of yours. Flirting with Max when you can,  
dodging murder attempts while running Stellar Stage Entertainment. Ever think  
about how your potential keeps getting unlocked? I bet your folks were some big

shots. With genetics like yours, there's no way you come from an average Joe family. Have you ever thought about tracking down your birth parents? Maybe their clout outshines anyone in Beaconsfield, and they could shield you. Then we wouldn't have to give a damn about the Dorseys, the Rowlands, or the Barneses."

Aubree's head was also still wrapped in a towel, and both their hair was drying off. Brielle couldn't help but chuckle as she sipped her ginger tea, feeling a little warmth return to her body.

If her parents had loved her, they wouldn't have left her at an orphanage when she was so little. She wished she could believe they gave her up because they were broke — at least then she could comfort herself with the fact that they had no choice. But if they were wealthy, powerful, and still abandoned her, it would mean they didn't want her. Her story was probably not too different from someone like Tiffanie'.

"I've never thought about finding them. I'm happy with my life as it is."

"Bri, have you ever dreamed about your family?"

Brielle's grip on her mug tightened suddenly. Of course, she'd had dreams. As a child, when she

was hungry and cold, she'd dream of her parents coming to take her home, wrapping her in a warm coat.

When hunger led to hallucinations, she'd see her mother appear. Then, when the Haywood family came along, she thought her dream had come true. She'd tried her best to be likable, to excel at everything. It just seemed to make no difference. She was unwelcome in that home. and after the scandal involving Lillian and Spencer broke, she fully understood her place.

If that was what family was, she didn't need it. She could do just fine on her own. She did yearn for someone to love and care for her, but if they didn't love her back, she'd keep her emotions in check.

Now, she had no expectations of family. That was why the frequency of her dreams about them dwindled over the years, and recently, she hadn't dreamed of them at all.

The Haywood family had shattered her illusions of family life. The reality was too harsh.

Glancing at the clock on the wall,

"pr :

Aubree suggested, "I'll give Mr. m0

Dorsey a call, Tell Hae got'

bEsiRedar Stellar Stage

3 ) x

Entertainment, and you're staying

: 5 2

with me tonight."

Brielle nodded. Max and Patrick had

both been swamped lately, with that

overseas

wrap probably wouldn't

have time to catch the evening news.

Plus, her wrist needed a couple of

days to heal properly.

Brielle suspected Michael or Martha was behind the car accident, but what she

didn't know was that someone else was involved — someone she'd never expected.

Sydney sat in her room, glued to the news, pacing with cold sweat on her

forehead. The plan had failed. She had spent a million to take out Brielle. How

could it not have worked?



She thought her plan was foolproof. After all, Brielle was cornered. Yet, somehow, Brielle had found a way out.

Sydney was seething, swallowing hard as she reassured herself that her involvement was undetectable. Then, a gentle knock on her door.

“Sydney, it's so late. Aren't you coming to bed?” It was her boyfriend, Adrian.

Hearing his voice only intensified her irritation. She was bound by years, of obligation to so she up with him now without facing the scorn of her neighbors.

#### Chapter 599

Sydney's friends were all privy to her history with Adrian, and she knew that if they broke up and Adrian blabbed about her infidelity, her reputation would be in tatters.

Lately, she had been sleeping in a separate bed from Adrian. After getting a taste of what a guy like Spencer could offer, she found herself disinterested in her current boyfriend. Spencer could provide what Adrian, with his rigid ways, never could.

As Sydney's mind raced, she considered how she might exploit Adrian. If he committed a crime and ended up behind bars, she could seamlessly initiate a breakup. That way, no one could blame her; Adrian would have brought it upon himself.

With this thought, Sydney doused her eyes with artificial tears and rubbed them until they were red before she opened the door.

Adrian, seeing her in such a state, was consumed with concern. “What's wrong, babe? Is something going wrong at work?”

Sydney cast her eyes down, her voice raspy. “Forget it, you can't help me.”

“How can I help if you won't tell me what's going on? Sydney, we're about to get married. I don't want you to be unhappy.”

Sydney scoffed inwardly. Marry this poor sap? The money she had in her bank account was more than Adrian could ever dream of earning!

“Adrian, you remember the scandal about my previous boss, right? I showed you the article. She was engaged to Spencer, but it was called off after playing the field. Now she's clinging to Spencer, and in a fit of anger, the Dorsey family booted her from Dorsey International. She's taking out all her frustrations on me. My colleagues are all against me. I feel like I can't go on.” Adrian felt a pang of pain. He remembered the woman he'd met that night and thought she didn't seem that bad. But if Sydney was saying this, it must've been true. “Do all your coworkers believe her? She's not at Dorsey International anymore. Why are they targeting you?”

“They blame me for Brielle's departure, claiming I want to take her place. But I never thought that. Now, I'm scared to even go to the office. My desk and chair are always covered in foundation and lipstick. What should I do? I've worked so hard to get to where I am,” Sydney sobbed.

“That's outrageous! Sydney, I'll go to the office tomorrow and sort this out!”

“Adrian, please, it's no use. She had connections at the company. Standing up for me will only make things worse. Let me be!”

With that, she rushed toward the window in her room. “I can't sleep at night, and her face haunts me. Only if she's gone will I have peace. Let me go, Adrian! I want to end this!”

Adrian grabbed her in panic, trembling with fear. “Sydney, don't do anything stupid. If you want her dead, I'll help you.”

A glint of triumph flashed in Sydney's eyes, and the corners of her mouth turned up slightly. “You're aware of Stellar Stage Entertainment, right? She's now the president there, and apparently, she's thriving. How can she be better off while I

suffer from the bullying she incited? Adrian, you'll help me, won't you? If you do, we can get married right away."

The idea of marriage was too tempting for Adrian. He had been dreaming of marrying Sydney for years and was deeply in love with her. Now, the woman he loved was being tortured by someone else.

Sensing his hesitation, Sydney stepped one foot out the window. Adrian desperately pulled her back in. "Sydney!"

"Adrian! Let go of me!"

"I promise you, I'll visit Stellar Stage Entertainment tomorrow. Don't worry. I'll do what you want."

Sydney finally felt relieved, her smile intensified.

The next morning, Adrian woke up at six. He saw Sydney curled and Colic this have caused Sydney to become depressed?

His brow furrowed, he reached out to comfort her, but she flinched away. "Don't touch me! I'm not Brielle, please don't."

Adrian flinched, and woke her up.

Between sobs, Sydney recounted how she had been assaulted by a stranger because pate was! i soared, fearing I wasn't good enough for you. Yesterday, I ran into Brielle at Dorsey International. I felt so dirty, and she humiliated me

for it."

Adrian felt as if he'd been struck on the head with a hammer. The woman he loved had endured &3 much TOL He Grinding his teeth, he grabbed his keys and stormed out the door!

## Chapter 600

Brielle was up at the crack of dawn and joined Aubree on their way to Stellar Stage Entertainment.

They had both taken a dip in the river last night, so today, Brielle bundled up in thick layers. Aubree, forever the fashionista, braved the chill in her usual stylish but scant attire.

Worried about her catching a cold, Brielle couldn't help but say, "I've got a spare jacket in my office. I heard it's going to drop even more come afternoon. Swing by and grab it if you're cold." Aubree sneezed, her eyes glistening with unshed tears. "I'm fine."

Her gaze caught the sight of a familiar car, and she arched an eyebrow. "Doesn't Mr. Dorsey have work? Up and about at Stellar Stage Entertainment to ambush someone this early?"

Brielle chuckled, knowing Aubree was just teasing her. After exchanging pleasantries, she made her way to the car.

Before she could speak, she was pulled into a cool embrace. Brielle found herself in the arms of someone who bore the telltale signs of a sleepless night, no doubt due to work. She wondered why he was here waiting for her.

"There's been a hiccup with the overseas acquisition, so I'll be temporarily living at the office. You should head home more often. I don't like you being out."

His tone was detached, and his lips grazed her neck with feather—light kisses. Brielle couldn't help but tilt her head back, amused. Was he really here just to give her this warning?

She knew he likely hadn't returned to Premier Palace to rest last night and felt a pang of sympathy. Before she could respond, a cool object was pressed into her hand. She looked down to see a custom-made, silver handgun — lightweight and sleek, a perfect fit for her grip.

“I had Jaired tailor this for you. Keep it with you.”

Surprise flickered in her eyes.

“I'll cover for you, always. Just promise me, no matter what, your life comes first.”

She nodded, a mix of fondness and concern in her eyes. “Thank Jaired for me.”

Cool detachment flickered through Max's gaze as his fingers played with her

earlobe. “It's the least he could do.”

The gift was special, and her smile shone brightly, yet the unfinished scarf at home weighed on her conscience. She resolved to finish it tonight back at Premier Palace.

She noticed the shadows beneath his eyes and kissed him gently on the lips.

“Even if you have to sleep at the office, remember to rest. I'll make sure Patrick keeps an eye on you.”

As Max's frosty aura thawed, he chuckled, “After this is over, let's go skiing.”

She agreed, and, conscious of the conspicuous nature of his car, kept their conversation brief.

As they parted, she kissed him again. “Thank you, Mr. Dorsey, for the early morning visit and the gift. It's something I truly appreciate.”

Her tease made his Adam's apple bob and his voice sounded husky, “When I'm done, could you take a few days off too?”

The idea made her think of the previous night's ordeal, wondering if she could even get out of bed after such a break. However, seeing the hope in his eyes,

she couldn't bear to refuse.

“Sure.”

As the car pulled away, Brielle’s heart felt warm, dispelling the lingering chill from last night's accident.

Though Max hadn't said it, she knew he had come to see her, using the gift as a pretext. He wasn't one for declarations of affection.

It seemed he was going to be genuinely busy if he was seizing even these brief moments.

Max's phone rang soon after he left; it was the clinic reporting that Martha had detected something amiss with her food and had started a hunger strike.

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Max's expression hardened, a storm

...“

brewing in his gaze. “Replace

in) fo

everyone at the clinic,

commanded Patrick, his voice icy. It'd

been less than a day, and his mother

had already gotten the news.

Someone must have blabbed.

Patrick nodded, executing the order

immediately. Through the rearview

mirror, he could see Max S

inquired, “What about

Ms. Martha?” If she ion this

hunger strike, she wouldn't last three

days before her health collapsed.

"I'll order the doctors to take necessary measures." Max sat in a silence as deep as the night, his eyes darkening.

Patrick gripped the steering wheel tighter, wondering if Brielle truly was the one who could stay by his side for a lifetime. He had fought that battle against everything—how long could it last? Even a saint would grow weary, wouldn't they?