

## Master 601

### Chapter 601

Brielle stepped into Stellar Stage Entertainment and settled into her office before dialing the traffic police to inquire about the specifics of last night's car accident. As a person involved, she had already been questioned just before she fell asleep the previous night.

One driver had been drinking, the other high on drugs. Both were in a daze. That was the answer from the police and all they could find out for now. She had suspected as much from the beginning and wasn't surprised by the revelation.

Come evening, Aubree popped into her office to borrow a coat. Her cheeks were flushed from the cold. It had indeed gotten chillier, and after a bracing swim in icy waters the day before, Brielle felt her resistance to the cold had significantly diminished. With several coats on standby in her office, she handed over her favorite one to Aubree. "I told you to layer up when we left your place."

As Aubree headed out, she turned back with a smug grin. "My drama instructor praised me again today, but keeping up with all these expressions is exhausting. I feel like my face is going to freeze from all that smile. Anyway, Bri, I'm heading home. You'll be back at Premier Palace tonight, right? I won't wait up."

Brielle nodded. She had to work late. She was working overtime until nine in the evening. Dragging her weary body out of Stellar Stage Entertainment, she into Ricardo in the elevator.

Ricardo's eyes were clear as crystal, pure and innocent. He stood in the elevator, and when he saw Brielle, a beautiful light flickered in his gaze. "Ms. Haywood." "Ricardo? Why are you still here so late?"

A shade of embarrassment colored Ricardo's cheeks. "John is really pushing me on this brother role. I've met his standards with a few scenes, but he insists I can do better. We're close to shooting, and I've got to give it my all. By the way, I saw Aubree earlier; her acting is really coming along."

He said this with a smile, reflecting off the elevator's mirrored walls. "Ms.

Haywood, do you think Aubree and I will really make it?"

"Of course, you're both very talented." Brielle reassured him but then worried about the pressure he might be under. "Just perform naturally, and don't beat yourself up if this film doesn't make a splash. You're new to this; keep your

expectations realistic."

As the elevator reached the lobby, Brielle's phone buzzed with a video call from an unknown number. Her first instinct was to disconnect, but then a message followed. (Want to see what happened to your dear friend because of you?)

Her heart skipped a beat, and her face darkened. On the video, Aubree was indeed tied up, hands and feet bound, surrounded by three men.

Brielle turned pale with fury and stormed out. She hung up the video and was about to contact Patrick, but heard Ricardo next to her saying, "I seem to know this place. Ms. Haywood, do you want me to take you there?"

Brielle's chest was trembling, but she was still trying her best to keep her sanity.

"Let's go now."

After getting on the car, she called Patrick, but no one answered. She then dialed Max's number, and no one answered still.

The overseas acquisition was at a critical point. Everyone in the conference room had switched off their phones and was fixated on the fluctuating numbers on the big screen.

Max felt a nagging unease but pushed it aside, knowing everyone was awaiting his direction.

The night in Beaconsfield was far from peaceful, with undercurrents swirling ominously.

Elsewhere, in the Rowland household, Tessa instructed her associate. "Work with our contact to get the full video tonight. Make sure there are no traces left. I don't

want any backtracking.”

“Ms. Tessa, don't worry. Our crew is well-trained. They wouldn't spill secrets even under duress. Taking down Aubree is a simple task.”

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Tessa's eyes sparkled with malice,

delighted by the unexpected wr of

events with Aubree's capture. Her

Top mates had even managed to

collaborate with the kidnappers. It

was as if luck was on her side.

Tonight, all she had to do was distract Andrew, and Aubree's life would be ruined.

She heard that Brielle was also

notified. If Brielle witnessed Au

downfall, it would be crushing

DEW to NE. Two birds with one

stone, removing the two women

Tessa despised

most!

Her lips curled into a smile. When the sound of footsteps outside came from

outside, she told her associate to leave.

When Andrew entered, only Tessa

was in the room. His phone, which

Aubree called for

help was right there with Tessa, who

had dismissed the call.

Tessa took the next call and lied that Andrew wasn't coming and had agreed to marry her, She then deleted all the messages.

Sensing Tessa's good mood, Andrew approached her tenderly. "Feeling better?"

Tessa nodded with a bashful smile. "You've been here taking care of me; of course, I feel better, Andrew. You're wonderful."

Andrew felt a warmth in his heart and wrapped her in his embrace. Tessa looked up and captured his lips with hers.

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Andrew's body tensed, but then he responded to her passionately. The two of them were locked in an embrace on the bed, their kisses seemingly inseparable, However, he couldn't admit to himself that her lips didn't feel as right as Aubree's. Aubree. It had been ages since he had seen her. With that thought, Andrew's desire waned, and he gently pushed Tessa away. "I think we should get the doctor to check on you again."

Tessa mistook his concern for fear of hurting her and felt a sweet warmth in her heart. "Okay."

Meanwhile, Aubree was left hanging after a disconnected call and seemed to lose all will to live. Tied up, she stared blankly at the ceiling. Tears no longer flowed. Her gaze was fixed on nothingness.

Adrian watched as three men began to unbuckle their belts, and with a camera set up, it seemed they were truly planning to rape Aubree.

A frown creased his brow. Today had been a mistake. He mistook the person for Brielle because they wore the same coat Brielle had worn. He had attacked from behind without properly identifying his target.

The security at Stellar Stage Entertainment was tight, and he hadn't had time to check carefully. After all, this was his first time committing such a crime.

When he arrived here and found he'd been followed, he realized that three men of unknown origin clearly shared a singular purpose.

Adrian had intended to retaliate against Brielle, not drag an innocent woman into this mess. By the time he realized his mistake, it was too late. When he saw the men undressing, his expression darkened. "What do you plan to do with her?"

The men, already unable to restrain themselves at the sight of Aubree's beauty, found Adrian's question amusing. "What's this? You wanna join in? You'll have to wait your turn. After we've had our fun, she's all yours."

Adrian, who had been sitting, stood up abruptly. "Are you here to get back at Brielle, or are you here for this woman?"

The leader smirked. "We're helping you out, man. You saw us call Brielle. She'll be here soon. Didn't you say your girl got messed up because of Brielle? Well, here's your chance to get back at Brielle herself. As for her best friend, we'll take care of her."

Adrian glanced at Aubree, bound at the wrists and ankles, and for some reason, perhaps struck by the despair on her face, he hesitated to agree. He had never been part of something like this. His confrontation at Stellar Stage Entertainment had been a spur-of-the-moment act.

Now, seeing the menacing looks on these three men, he knew they were not to be trifled with. Moreover, even if Brielle deserved a dire fate, her best friend was innocent. He stepped

forward, reaching to untie Aubree's restraints. "Let's call it off. Save this for Brielle. This

woman is innocent. As soon as Brielle arrives, we'll let her go."

The men thought they were hearing a joke, but Adrian seemed serious. He bent over and earnestly began to release Aubree's legs. Before he could stand up, a heavy kick landed on his chest, sending him flying a meter away, coughing up blood.

He looked up at the men, who

seemed annoyed, disdain in their eyes. "Looks like your deserved. How could such a spineless boyfriend protect her. You better go check if she was forced or if she went willingly."

Adrian, already regretting his decision to bring Aubree into this, felt his face flush with rage and humiliation. "Don't you dare talk about Sydney like that!"

Sydney was the kindest girl he'd ever met, and she'd been with him through thick and They to get married, but because of Brielle, Sydney had suffered so much. He would never forgive Brielle.

However, if he let these men treat Aubree this way, how would he be any different from the man who hurt Sydney?

Cough, cough." He wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth slowly stood ground. you treat Brielle like this, I won't stop you. But this woman is truly innocent."

"Fuck! You asking for it?!"

"Lost your mojo? How about we take you out first?!"

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They didn't even care about their own lives, let alone the lives of others. They

approached Adrian swiftly and began to beat him mercilessly with their fists and feet.

Adrian, with no formal combat training, felt his ribs shatter under the onslaught. Aubree stirred at the commotion, her lips twitching into a wry smile as she watched them turn on one of their own. She didn't speak; instead, she continued to stare at the ceiling, her mind echoing with Tessa's words about getting married.

She clung to Andrew as her last hope, but his cellphone was with Tessa.

Tears began to stream down Aubree's face, her whole body aching with a pain that seemed to penetrate her soul. It was odd. The men hadn't even touched her yet, but she felt tainted as if no shower could ever cleanse her. Perhaps she had been marked by an indelible stain since the age of eighteen.

Adrian curled up on the ground, blood spilling continuously from his mouth. The men grabbed his hair and smashed his head against the wall, their voices laden with malice.

"Next time you want to play the hero, weigh your strength first. Screw you!"

"Don't actually kill him. We've got to pin this mess on him."

"Right, the beauty is right here. Let's make it quick."

"Brielle is quite a looker, too. We could have a go with both of them. That would be the life."

Their laughter was lewd and unbridled.

Adrian, hearing this, mustered the last of his strength and looked at Aubree, his heart pierced by the sight of her tears. Maybe Sydney had felt just as helpless.

Somehow finding a burst of energy, he grabbed one of the men's legs. The man stumbled forward, enraged at Adrian's defiance, and kicked him squarely in the face. "Fuck!"

Adrian was sent flying and lay motionless on the ground.

The men approached Aubree and tore off her clothes in a brutal display of

savagery. One of them eagerly and impatiently mounted and slapped her across the face.

“You're so easy! No wonder you could entice your own brother!”

“Did you enjoy it as much when he fucked you?”

Aubree's pupils contracted sharply. Her lips were pressed tightly together, tasting blood in her mouth from the slap. Her head was knocked askew, her cheek swelling visibly.

Her face, which was quite lovely, angered the other men when they saw it being damaged. “Just do it. Don't ruin the face,” one of them snapped.

The man shrugged. “Just a bit of fun.” he muttered, no longer hesitating. But Aubree, having just had her legs freed, delivered a powerful knee to his groin. The man paled from the pain and glared at her furiously.

“You bitch!”

He approached Aubree, prying her mouth open. “I have many ways to

make you don't

experience them all,” he snarled.

He grabbed a dagger from nearby, prying open Aubree's mouth and wrenching her teeth out.

The pain was excruciating! Aubree's mouth filled with the taste of blood, a crimson flow that wouldn't stop.

Tears and blood smeared her face, but she could hardly sound.

She had been  
to a crushed dirt by the  
roadside.

Maybe she was never a rose; perhaps she had always been a wildflower,  
discarded and unwanted.

The man seized her hair, holding her  
down, fucking her mouth  
every moment, capturing  
the gruesome scene in its entirety.

The men's laughter was carefree and loud as they reveled in their control over  
her body.

#### Chapter 604

Every fiber in her being was screaming in agony, from her heart down to the very  
pores on her skin—each one clamoring, howling with pain.

A person grabbed a camera, zooming in closer, wiping the bloodstains from her  
chin, and intentionally gripping her jaw tightly. "Come on, sweetheart, make it  
slutty. This video is a special show for your brother."

When Brielle and Ricardo's car roared onto the scene, what they saw was a  
tableau of violence. A man was on top of Aubree, thrusting wildly, while another  
was recording, capturing her every grimace and tear. There was also a man  
fastening his belt, clearly having finished his turn.

Brielle's pupils shrank to pinpricks, and for a moment, she thought she might go  
blind with rage. Only the ragdoll-like figure of Aubree was seared into her  
bloodshot vision.

Kill them. Kill them all!

Or not just kill them-she wanted to obliterate the entire world.

The men, satisfied with their repulsive deeds, slowed their actions upon hearing

the car, their faces full of smug pleasure.

Brielle's hand slipped into her purse, her sanity slipping away. Ricardo, sitting beside her, sensed a lethal aura. His eyebrows raised slightly as he watched Brielle step out of the car.

Ricardo didn't want to get involved but sighed deeply upon seeing the men zipping up and moving toward Brielle.

"Ms. Haywood, what do you intend to do?"

"Kill them." Brielle paused mid-stride, her voice cold and almost numb with the overwhelming urge to eviscerate these beasts. "I want to kill them."

Ricardo chuckled softly, approaching with feigned innocence in his eyes. "You

want to commit murder? That's against the law, you know."

The law? What was that? She didn't even know anymore. The silver of the gun was already at her fingertips. She wanted their lives.

The men, upon seeing her face, filled their eyes with glee.

"Another one to join the party. As we said, it's going to be a sister act.

"Pity Aubree's already exhausted. She was quite the treat."

"Aubree really is a dirty one, isn't she? She's still so eager after all those times with her brother."

Brielle didn't hear their words—more accurately, she couldn't hear anything. All she felt was a cold coursing through her veins, staring at them as if they were no more than bugs on the sidewalk.

Wouldn't it be alright to squash a couple of bugs? She smiled faintly, her movements smooth as she chambered a round.

Ricardo was right by her side,  
witnessing every move she made.

His dagger was at the ready, by the

Should he  
ab? Or should he let Brielle do it and,  
by doing so, bind her to his world?  
Their hands would both be stained  
with blood and perhaps she wouldn't  
see him as a monster anymore.

As he hesitated, the men were closing in. One of their faces triggered memories  
long suppressed in Ricardo—screams, cries, and a maelstrom of sounds tangling  
in his mind.

His sister, covered in blood, lied before his eyes.

How ironic. He had been searching for years, never finding them, and yet they  
appeared at this moment. Was Brielle perhaps his lucky star?

Ricardo chuckled, his hesitation

gone. As Brielle's bullet was m0  
chambered, Ricargoliad already  
moved Ny, cleanly. All he could  
see was darkness, an endless black  
that seemed to stain his entire vision.

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His inner fury surged wildly. He didn't  
know how many times he age  
only hae exiting ike never  
strike was non—fatal yet  
left them all incapacitated.

One second, these men were on top of the world; the next, they were writhing in  
agony.

Ricardo felt good, so very good. After so many years, he had finally avenged his sister.

## Chapter 605

By the time the chaos had subsided, the scene was beyond recognition, thick with the stench of blood. A few men lay gasping for breath in pools of their own making.

Ricardo gazed down at his dagger, its original color indistinguishable beneath the grime. He wiped his cheek with a finger, smearing the blood that had splattered on his face.

The silence was deafening as if they were sealed in a vacuum.

He nudged the man at his feet with indifference and turned around, reluctantly avoiding Brielle's gaze. Her eyes were so beautiful. It would be a shame if they showed fear. He'd hate to have to gouge them out.

She was probably just like that other woman, terrified of him, regarding him with disbelief and revulsion. Pity. He had wanted Brielle to live a bit longer, but old enemies had a way of revealing one's true nature.

His lips curled into a smile as he turned to look at Brielle.

She stood a few meters away, blood slowly creeping toward the tips of her shoes.

She stepped back, and Ricardo felt the gesture like a knife to his heart. So, the promise of sunlight was a lie after all. It was just a momentary fib he had foolishly believed.

If that were the case, then nobody would be spared tonight. All must die.

His hand was already moving with the dagger when he saw Brielle step forward, pushing him aside and pulling the trigger. The man who was barely hanging on to life was now unmistakably dead.

Frozen, Ricardo watched as Brielle approached the other two men, stepping on one's chest and firing from a position of authority.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!"

After three shots, the faint cries for help were silenced; they were all dead.

Brielle tucked away the gun and turned to Aubree. She lay on the filthy, narrow bed motionless, her body covered in marks—bitten, kissed, a chaotic map of abuse.

Brielle looked on, her heart twisting in agony as she removed her clothing to cover Aubree.

Aubree's pupils, previously dilated, slowly focused, and she managed a weak smile. "Bri..."

Brielle bit her lip to keep from crying.

"Cough, cough, cough." Aubree's cough brought up more blood.

Tears rimmed Brielle's eyes as she picked up a tooth that had been knocked out of Aubree's mouth. Her hand trembled uncontrollably. The simple act of picking up the tooth was nearly impossible.

She dared not recall in detail what had happened to Aubree in the last two hours.

Wiping away her tears, Brielle took a deep breath and tried to clean the blood from the tooth against her clothing.

Aubree watched silently, weakly, as Brielle fumbled and fretted over the blood—stained tooth. It wouldn't come clean. Like her, it would never be clean again.

Aubree should have been feeling sorry for herself, falling apart, but the sight of Brielle, now deprived of all strength, made her feel pain deeper than the abuse she'd endured.

"Stop it." She reached out to grab Brielle's hand.

Brielle finally looked up, embracing Aubree and shaking with sobs. She clung desperately, as if releasing Aubree would make her vanish from this world.

Aubree was in too much pain to speak, each breath searing through her. She wanted to comfort Brielle

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but she had no strength left. She  
 could only offer a weak smile, wrap  
 her arms around Brielle, and let her  
 own tears fall.

All the injustice and despair became silent as mournful tears soaked Brielle's  
 clothes.

Brielle was shaking with cold and  
 fear. She wished it had been her who  
 had suffered all

with the mastermind  
 behind this, for all those who used  
 such acts to humiliate women.

Brielle hated herself, too.

Dark thoughts crossed Brielle's mind as she glanced at the bodies on the floor.

No need to guess—Tessa certainly sent them.

Only Tessa would stoop to that level to use such cruelty on Aubree.

Tessa. If she were here, Brielle would  
 use that gun again without  
 hesitation. But death was too good  
 for the girl who had let that woman  
 take everything, to pay dearly for

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today's actions. "Aubree, she won't

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get away with this. I'll make her

suffer, make her pay for everything

you've been through."

At that moment, Aubree cried out loud, clinging to Brielle.

## Chapter 606

Aubree knew deep down it was Tessa. Only Tessa would do something like this to her, using such cruel tactics to destroy her life.

She wept until her body was wracked with sobs, until exhaustion finally cradled her into Brielle's arms.

Brielle held her close, her gaze drifting to a figure slumped in the corner. Was that Adrian? Sydney's boyfriend?

If Adrian hadn't already passed out, the sight of Ricardo and Brielle's handiwork would have likely scared him to death.

Ricardo stood amid a pool of blood, his back to Brielle, concealing his expression. His tongue peeked out, moistening his parched lips.

The brutality from moments ago had vanished, replaced by a tingling excitement.

Brielle didn't recoil at his monstrous nature; instead, she had embraced her inner beast.

He fought back a laugh, knowing he must restrain himself lest he reveal his true self. Brielle was too intriguing, too precious to let die. He wanted her to live on. Despite trembling with excitement, he turned around, feigning vulnerability. "Ms. Haywood, what should I do? Did I just kill someone? Am I going to jail?"

Brielle comforted him while holding Aubree close. "I'll have someone take care of it."

Ricardo's eyes then settled on Aubree. She looked disheveled. Her clothing barely covered her, and red marks trailed from her mouth down to her chest.

Ricardo offered his shirt, but Aubree, eyes shut and pale against Brielle, didn't take it. Ricardo realized his mistake his shirt was stained with the filth of those

men. He quickly offered an apologetic smile. "Sorry, Aubree, do you want me to carry you? Ms. Haywood probably can't manage. Let's get you to the hospital."

Aubree couldn't utter a word as if she had slipped away entirely.

Ricardo hoisted her onto his back and made for the car outside.

Brielle stood amidst the chaos, glancing at the broken window that framed the

serene moonlight. A sardonic smile crossed her lips, her eyes bloodshot. It felt like a moment straight out of Hugo's depiction of a tragic world.

The heart of man could cast infinite light or create boundless darkness. Light and dark intertwined, clashing — this was the world people longed for yet found utterly inescapable.

It was truly a miserable world.

She wiped her lips with a trembling finger, biting her tongue to maintain composure. Brielle had to be Aubree's pillar, and she couldn't crumble.

Taking a deep breath, she steadied her voice and dialed Patrick. He answered, still in the midst of a meeting. He had merely stepped out to retrieve essential documents.

"Ms. Brielle."

"Patrick, I'm sending you an address. I need you to clean up the scene. There's also someone alive here. Don't ask what happened just yet. I know you and Max are busy, so just tidy up and hide this person. I'll need to borrow some folks from you later."

Patrick's face tensed, his heartbeat racing. Brielle's tone was calm, but her words sent chills down his spine. "Ms. Brielle, are you alright?"

"Patrick, I'm taking Aubree to the hospital. I'm fine. Please arrange everything, will you?"

"Alright, send me the address, and I'll have someone there promptly."

Brielle nodded and followed Ricardo and Aubree into the car. In the backseat, Aubree was truly asleep, curled up on the seat. Her position aggravated her

wounds, and she whimpered in her sleep, calling out Andrew's name.

Andrew awoke with a start from

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Tessa's bed, his chest aching figuraely.

The with the

latest hews, but Tessa was nowhere

in sight.

Wrapped in a coat, Tessa was on the balcony, reviewing videos sent by her accomplices. In the videos, Aubree was raped repeatedly.

Tessa burst into hysterical

laughter but didn't want if

Andrew, so sheds e TV for

Clover and stepped onto the balcony

to laugh quietly.

That slut! Finally, she got what she deserved!

Aubree thought she could get away with seducing her own brother, did she? Bet she enjoyed being ravaged by those men.

Tessa's laughter filled the night, unaware that Andrew had risen from the bed.

Clutching his chest, he listened to the news reporting on the latest scientific studies.

Once particles become entangled,

no matter the distance they Slag!

NLA ether and this

doesn't fade with

distance."

Suddenly irate, Andrew snatched the remote and hurled it at the TV, shattering the screen.

## Chapter 607

On the balcony, Tessa finally heard the commotion from the room. She quickly pocketed her phone. The video was her ace in the hole, not to be shared recklessly. It was to be kept safe.

Whenever she felt down, she'd watch it and enjoy how Aubree was defiled on the bed by several men.

A smirk played on her cheeks as she entered the bedroom. "Sorry, I just couldn't sleep and ended up flipping on the TV. Did I wake you, Andrew?"

Andrew didn't speak, feeling a bitter tang in his chest. The urge to lash out was strong. He rubbed his temples, his voice flat. "Turn off the TV."

For some reason, Tessa didn't dare provoke him now. He was having nightmares, perhaps? He seemed so grim, his pallor ghastly.

She hurriedly shut off the TV and tiptoed to the bed, wrapping her arms around him. "Let's just sleep."

Andrew, fighting a wave of nausea, lay back down.

At the hospital.

Doctors surrounded Aubree, their expressions grim. Everyone knew what she had endured, but no one dared ask for details.

After treating her wounds and assuring her that the missing tooth could be fixed, the doctors left the room.

Brielle, standing by, fought back tears. She would have rather endured all this herself than see Aubree suffer so.

Aubree blinked her stinging eyes. Her body ached, and she was utterly speechless. Her throat felt like it was clogged.

She gestured for Brielle to step out. She craved rest, to lie on this stark white bed

until the end of time. Her voice was weak, and her body was drenched in sweat. Brielle stepped out to handle the hospital admission, leaving Aubree to her solitude.

Once alone, Aubree rushed to the en-suite bathroom to vomit. Her stomach burned as if on fire. Closing her eyes only brought back the vile words. The men were dead, gone for good, but the violation shadowed her still. Her stomach convulsed, spasming. Yet she called for no doctor, almost relishing the revolt of her body. It felt like breaking down, sinking into the mire, into the dark, where redemption was out of reach.

When Brielle returned, she didn't enter the room right away. Aubree had asked for space, probably to process things on her own.

Brielle blinked away the sting in her eyes and wandered to the opposite balcony. That was when she spotted Ricardo in the hallway. He looked shaken, undoubtedly by the events he'd witnessed. After a moment's thought, Brielle offered him some candy from her pocket.

Ricardo froze, staring at the colorful sweets in his palm, his face flushing. "Ms. Haywood, I'm not a kid anymore."

"Take it. You've been through a shock, haven't you?"

Her voice was raw, her eyes red, a clear sign of her own struggle against immense pain. Still, she sought to comfort him.

Ricardo managed a weak smile. "No. Ms. Haywood, am I going to jail?"

"No way, you're Stellar Stage's golden boy. I won't let you go to jail."

Patrick's guys should be handling things by now. After tonight, no one would know what happened there.

"Ricardo, you'll be fine. Trust me."

"Yeah, I trust you."

A small smile tugged at Ricardo's lips. "But Ms. Haywood, aren't you scared of me after what

you saw?"

He had to ask. What was going on inside Brielle's head? She was so different.

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You were just scared. If anyone  
should be afraid, you should be  
scared of me. After all I'm the one  
who wanted a life. She looked down  
at her fingertips. She could smell the  
smell of bloom clinging to them.  
Maybe she was never normal.

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Her gaze fell. "Anyway, don't worry  
about what's next, play  
"

you the rest to me.

"Okay, Ms. Haywood. I'll play my part."

"In your presence, I'll be the obedient and clean Ricardo," He thought.

Brielle nodded. "You must be exhausted and frightened. Go rest." .

Ricardo grinned, revealing sharp canines. "Alright."

He strolled out of the hospital in high  
spirits, when a man emerged from  
behind a tree nearby who fooled her  
a poor act. I wonder if  
Brielle is naive or just missing a  
screw."

Chapter 608

Ricardo arched an eyebrow. The undercurrent of violence that usually ran through his veins had ebbed away. He looked at the man before him, a hint of mirth twinkling in his eyes. "I'm in a good mood tonight, so don't feel like killing you. Quit buzzing around like an annoying fly."

The man didn't speak, casually crossing his arms across his chest. After a long pause, he finally asked, "What about the boss? He wants Brielle gone."

Ricardo looked up, his face the picture of innocence. "So you go back and tell him I've found a new plaything."

Indeed, to Ricardo, everyone was merely a toy. He was intrigued by Brielle — her emotions, her thoughts, and her entire being piqued his curiosity.

Such an interesting toy couldn't just die. The world would be so dull without her.

A violent glint flickered across the man's face. "Do you understand the consequences of your words?"

Ricardo squinted his eyes, his pale fingers twirling a dagger. "When I tire of this new toy, I'll head back."

The implication was clear: try to stop me, and I won't hesitate to eliminate the obstacle right now.

The man caught sight of the dagger, and his expression froze for a moment.

Ricardo was the most ruthless of them all.

His face could easily pass for that of a naive college kid to the outside world, but only those in his inner circle knew he was anything but. He could be anyone.

The boss had said it himself: Ricardo was born for the kill. No technique, no weapon was beyond his mastery. He was the strongest and the freest. He killed simply because he enjoyed

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The man eventually fell silent, huffing with frustration, "I'll report this to him, but you might not have many peaceful days ahead. Enjoy the calm while it lasts."

Ricardo looked up and smiled, looking disarmingly sweet. "I intend to have a blast."

The man left in a huff, powerless and annoyed.

Ricardo didn't usually talk so much. Tonight, his spirits were so high he even hummed a tune as he walked.

Meanwhile, Brielle stood on the balcony upstairs, gazing at the Beaconsfield night without a word. The most luxurious city also harbored the filthiest secrets.

She lowered her gaze and returned to Aubree's hospital room.

Aubree was still in the bathroom. Through the closed door, Brielle heard the sounds of retching

and running water. She stood by the door, wanting to knock, but ultimately refrained.

Her mouth agape, she wanted to speak but couldn't utter a word.

Aubree emerged, locking eyes with her. Both faces flushed.

"Aubree, are you hungry?"

Aubree shook her head, dragging her weary body back to bed with Brielle trailing behind her.

The doctor's knock startled Aubree. Her whole body shivered a reflex from her current state.

Seeing her like this pained Brielle even more. She stepped out to speak with the doctor, who handed her a morning-after pill with an apologetic look. "If she doesn't want a pregnancy, it's best to take this."

Brielle's pupils contracted, her fingers trembling.

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The doctor sighed, "Other test results

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will come in gradually. We don't know

whether those Abide caring

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Gin we don't have their

identities. So, besides the

morning—after pill, Miss Aubree

might need to take some

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prophylactic meds.”

Handing over several bottles of medication, the doctor added, “Please, do your best to convince the patient. If you wish to report this to the police, the hospital will provide all necessary reports.”

Once the doctor left, Brielle leaned against the wall, legs giving way. She slid down to the floor as tears fell

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There Was nothing more powerless than a woman facing such a violation. If the outside world found

1s

out, Aubree's life would be destroyed.

Unbeknownst to Brielle at that moment, those men had already sent the video to Tessa.

The door to the room, opened. Aubree came out and squatted in front of Brielle, swallowing the morning-after pill along with the other medications. She had heard the doctor's words and didn't want to carry the child of those beasts. “Aubree,” Brielle murmured her name but couldn't say more.

Aubree patted her shoulder, knelt

down, and embraced her, voice  
choked with emotion. “The man  
who's still alive  
intended but  
he me by mistake. I overheard  
their conversation; it seems Adrian  
has a girlfriend who must have said  
something to him, so he harbors a  
deep hatred for you and decided on  
revenge. As for the others, I feel like  
they were initially after me and just  
happened to join forces with Adrian.

Despite trembling uncontrollably, Aubree tried her best to endure the pain. The  
incident had happened, and all she could do now was share everything she knew  
with Brielle.

Brielle gripped her hand, trying to convey some strength, but Aubree’s tears fell  
instantly. “I’m sorry, Bri, it hurts a bit. I can’t control my tears.”

#### Chapter 609

As Brielle’s nostrils flared with heat, her eyes burned with unshed tears, and her  
breath steamed in the chilled air of the room. In the midst of her anguish, her  
mind was a whirl of icy logic. “Tessa despises you, and she loathes me too. By  
doing this, she’s hit two birds with one stone,”

Aubree’s lips twitched into a mirthless smile. It had to be Tessa. No one else was  
capable of such malice.

Tessa had hoarded Andrew's affection for far too long, and now, she couldn't hold  
back any longer—she had made her move. There was just an unexpected twist in  
the tale.

Aubree began to shiver uncontrollably, sucking in a deep breath as she hoisted  
Brielle off the cold, unforgiving floor. “Bri, I want Tessa to lose everything,” she

whispered, her voice catching with emotion. "But I'm tired, so tired. I need to sleep, Bri. Just let me rest a while, will you?"

Brielle's heart clenched in agony. She had failed to protect her best friend. She had promised to make her more likable, only to see her torn down.

Tessa and the Rowland family!

Taking a deep breath, Brielle slowly patted Aubree's back. "I've figured out how to deal with the Rowlands. Whatever she owes you, I'll make sure she pays it back a hundredfold."

Mason had done his part well, convincing the Rowlands to splurge thirty billion on that plot of land. For a company to suddenly bleed thirty billion in cash was terrifying. A cash crisis like that could lead to bankruptcy. Even for Dorsey International, thirty billion was a hefty sum.

The Rowlands were already teetering on the edge, especially after their recent land-buying spree. They must've been stretched thin with bank loans and now was the time they were most vulnerable.

Brielle couldn't wait any longer. Her fury was matched only by her icy calm.

She had done nothing wrong by being with Max. Why did everyone resort to such filthy tactics against her, even targeting her friends?

Tessa and Alivia. These two were like daggers constantly dangling over Brielle's head. She would start by taking down the Rowlands.

Her expression darkened, a storm brewing in her eyes as she pondered her next move.

When she returned to Premier Palace, it was late. Wesley caught a glimpse of her somber face and wisely chose not to engage her in conversation.

Brielle skipped dinner, went straight upstairs, and, after freshening up, stood by the bedroom window to dial Tessa's number. Two o'clock in the morning was the perfect time to disrupt Tessa's sweet dreams.

Tessa, still buzzing from the excitement of the video she had received, was too

wired to sleep.

The last thing she expected was a call from Brielle. Had the woman lost her mind, calling her in the middle of the night?

“Tessa,” Brielle called out, her voice light with a soft chuckle. “Seems you're able to sleep just fine.”

There was no bitterness in her tone,  
just a breezy one like Max,  
never angrier but, the calmer she  
became.

Hearing this, a flash of triumph crossed Tessa's eyes. Was Brielle panicking?  
Desperate?

Tessa's lips curled in smug  
victory. “Why would I be sleepless? I'm  
sure you and Aubree are the ones  
tossing and turning tonight.”

Brielle's grip on her phone tightened,  
So  
then she chuckled again

you add it all that

matters. I wouldn't want to accuse

the wrong person.”

A shadow passed through Tessa's eyes. What did Brielle mean by that? Was she  
planning revenge?

But how? Was she relying on Max?

Max was like Andrew's brother, after all. He would never harm Tessa.

## Chapter 610

"Brielle, you must be talking in your sleep," Tessa said with a smug chuckle,

"cause while you toss and turn, I'm out like a light. Nighty—night."

She hung up the phone with a sense of unprecedented satisfaction and a victorious exhale. Brielle had always acted so high and mighty, hadn't she? Now, here she was, calling in a panic in the dead of night. Tessa's smile widened at the thought. When the time was right, she'd release that video and watch Brielle's world crumble.

The decision had come easily to Tessa, especially after noticing Andrew's distracted air these past few days he had been with her. Women had a sixth sense about these things, and Tessa couldn't shake the feeling that Andrew's distraction had something to do with Aubree.

The conversation she'd had with Alivia only cemented her resolve. To break Brielle, Aubree had to be destroyed first. Alivia's words rang in Tessa's ears, spurring Tessa on to think of the operatives the Rowland family had trained. They'd make sure Aubree didn't stand a chance. "Serves her right," Tessa thought. Those two deserved each other's misery.

Although Brielle thought she wouldn't be able to sleep, she surprisingly fell into a deep, restful slumber. However, she could feel a piercing gaze on her, causing her to frown in her sleep, and eventually, she couldn't help but open her eyes. There was Max, sitting at the edge of her bed, his eyes bloodshot and dark circles more pronounced than ever.

Brielle's heart skipped a beat as she sat up quickly, noticing his crumpled suit jacket — such a departure from his usual impeccable self. He always looked sharp, his suits perfectly pressed. Seeing him like this, worn out and disheveled, was entirely new to her.

Max's bloodshot eyes blinked slowly, as if they were rusty gears that were finally

beginning to turn. His whole being seemed to be that of a man who had been through the wringer.

She knew Max had been briefed about the gruesome scene by Patrick, and she wondered what it had been like for him to sit there silently, watching over her. His work was demanding, and the news must have hit him hard.

His voice was hoarse when he finally spoke. "Are you hurt?"

He had rushed back without a moment's hesitation. Without disturbing her sleep, he just watched her resting face.

He'd seen the photos from the scene, never imagining that Brielle would have to experience such a nightmare. Seeing her safe and sound before him, he blinked away the stinging in his eyes. "Thank god you're not hurt," he said, his voice rough with emotion.

Brielle's heart clenched at the sound.

He leaned his head gently against her shoulder, letting out a sigh of relief. "What do you want to do?"

Brielle tensed. He knew she would take action. No one could expect her to let whoever was behind this get away with it.

"Whatever you decide, I'm with you. I've got your back." Then Max saw her wrist.

The wound on her wrist was almost healed, but now it was bleeding profusely again, with even the stitches showing.

He grabbed Brielle's other hand to check it, and sure enough, there were still traces of blood under her nails.

His eyes immediately reddened. "But don't hurt yourself."

He had spotted the wound on her wrist for a while, but had been holding back from asking. He gave her enough freedom to deal with what she wanted to do, but he hoped she would share those things with him.

"I'm here for you."

Max's words were the most romantic she'd ever heard. Her heart felt like it had been punched, tender and raw.

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Patrick's knock came from the door,

his voice cautious — this clearly

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wasn't his first Seq col

es :

sgmmanirig Max. "Sir, the final board

meeting has been going on for thirty

> ) on

minutes. They're waiting for you to

".

speak."

The last meeting with their business

partners was crucial. If Max kept

delaying, the acquisition

secured could Arch. Patrick

Was Anxious. As much as he worried

about Brielle's condition, his role as

Max's assistant meant he was even

more concerned about any potential

damage to Max's career.

Brielle picked up on Patrick's urgency and nudged Max. "You better get to that

meeting. We'll talk when you're done."

Alright." Max's voice was raspy as

he nodded slowly. He splashed cold  
water on his face (the patho,

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dpnpedbs fresh suit, gave her a kiss  
on the forehead, and then strode out  
the door, ready to face the business  
world once again.