

Master 621

Chapter 621

Brielle was a great listener, sometimes an excellent one when the moment called for it. Last night, she had been wrapped in the embrace of such a deep sleep. It felt like she was under some kind of enchantment, dreaming away in the soft comfort of her bed.

Aubree had gone through a rough patch, something that should have left Brielle tossing and turning with insomnia, steeped in sorrow. Yet upon waking, Brielle felt energized, her body buzzing with strength as if some guardian angel had watched over her through the night.

She grew more determined to stand up for Aubree and make sure everyone responsible paid a steep price.

"My grandma's getting on in years," Dustin began with a wry smile at the corner of his mouth. "Last night, she woke up all of a sudden and told us she'd been to visit my sister."

"Over two decades ago, my sister got left behind by accident when my parents were fleeing from some bad blood back home. It's been a thorn in my mom's side ever since, a regret that my grandma carries with her. Their health has been declining, day after day. Mom can put on a brave face, but grandma, well, age has made her heart heavy. She gets so melancholy thinking about it. It's taken a toll on her. We even built a quaint little chapel on the Lynch family estate. She's been praying there for my aunt's safety ever since. Lately, she's been bedridden, hardly awake. We've been searching for my sister, but there's been a lot of resistance, especially once word got out. Various powers that be are trying to stop us."

Dustin's long fingers spun his glass, his eyelashes casting shadows on his cheeks. "We've never found her. Last night, after my grandma woke from one of her deep sleep, she told us she'd been to see my aunt in a grand house somewhere. But her sight isn't what it used to be, and he couldn't tell where it

was. She said my sister wasn't happy, that her new family wasn't treating her well, and that we must find her. We're scared it might be my grandma's last hurrah, you know? The doctor said she had a year, but at this rate, she might not

make it that long. Grandma's always been fiercely independent. If it weren't for my aunt going missing, she wouldn't be in this state."

"Mr. Lynch, maybe your grandma did indeed visit your sister in person." Brielle looked at the glass in front of her, feeling a tug at her heartstrings. After all, she had never experienced what they call family ties. "Souls are eternal, and love transcends time and space. They just haven't realized it yet."

Eternal souls. Love that crosses the

Dustin savored those words, a faint smile tracing his lips. "I hope Brielle couldn't bring herself to ask Dustin for help. Instead, she poured him another drink.

The meal started with a somber atmosphere but gradually became more relaxed.

Brielle never got drunk in public. Even when she met with business partners, she'd carefully monitor her intake, but tonight, her conversation with Dustin flowed more freely.

They both drank a bit more than usual and by the end, their eyes were glazed with the haze of alcohol.

As closing time approached, the waiter fretted over the two tipsy patrons slumped over the table. The bill was not yet settled.

Just as she pondered whether to wake one of them, a hand extended a card.

"Check, please."

The waiter followed the hand to a face that took his breath away. Her cheeks flushed as he hurriedly processed the payment.

The two had polished off three bottles of the strongest liquor.

"Sir, your total comes to twenty—seven thousand. It's been taken care of. Please keep your card safe."

Max pocketed the card and approached Brielle while Patrick stood by Dustin.

Max scooped Brielle up in his arms and instructed Patrick, "Take him to the hotel."

After all, Dustin was the president of Infinity Brilliance, and he had lent a hand during Max's feigned amnesia episode.

Chapter 622

Brielle needed an outlet, but she hadn't chosen Max.

Max settled her into the car, fastening the seatbelt with a click that sounded like commitment. Her eyes, clouded with confusion from the alcohol, fluttered open and met his. For a moment, she thought she was dreaming.

Trying to balance her woozy frame, she leaned in for a kiss, but Max deftly placed a hand in front of her lips. The scent of liquor was overwhelming.

Brielle blinked and, resigning to the barrier, pressed her lips to his palm instead.

That simple act sent a ticklish sensation coursing through Max, a feeling that burrowed into his pores and settled deep within him. He withdrew his hand, hiding it behind his back as if to capture that fleeting moment forever.

Slumped in her seat, Brielle seemed on the edge of slumber. But then, a warm kiss brushed her lips. "This one's on the house," he said, his voice a casual note as he secured the seatbelt properly and stood up to leave.

Brielle caught him. Her mind was a foggy swirl, and her eyes gathered a misty haze. "Where's Mr. Lynch?"

Max stiffened, a cocktail of irritation and annoyance brewing inside him. He gripped her chin and, with the sleeve of his suit, wiped her lips, erasing the kiss as if it never happened.

She was drunk and still thinking of someone else.

His touch was too rough, and Brielle's lips felt raw. A frown creased her brow, and she murmured, "Ouch."

Softening his grip, Max stormed off to the driver's seat.

Patrick had left to drop off Dustin, leaving Max to drive. The ride was anything but peaceful, with Brielle's hands wandering and her head bobbing close to him. Max

tried to contain his temper, but the thought of her being alone with Dustin soured his mood.

Once back at Premier Palace, he carried her straight to the master bedroom.

After filling the bathtub, he stripped Brielle down without ceremony and placed her in the water. Drunk as she was, her cheeks flushed a deep crimson, and she showed no signs of waking.

Max watched her peaceful face, the petty jealousy ebbing away. He leaned in for a kiss but was met with resistance and a sudden rush of nausea from Brielle.

She vomited, the contents unpleasantly adorning Max's suit pants.

His frustration was palpable, but he simply massaged his temples in resignation.

Even in her inebriated state, Brielle managed a polite smile and a slurred, "Sorry."

"Sorry? Mr. Dorsey?" she said, her words laced with alcohol.

Sober, she called him Max. Drunk, he was Mr. Dorsey.

Max's expression darkened. He showered and changed into his pajamas, then, with unpracticed hands, began to wash her hair. His clumsy movements drew winces. "Gentle," she protested.

"I've never done this before, so deal with it," Max snapped back.

Brielle's mind was a blur, and she suggested, "Maybe you need more practice."

Max's pride stung; he just barely managed not to scowl. "Duly noted, Ms. Haywood."

Brielle mumbled an acknowledgment before falling back into a deep sleep.

Before Max could reply, Brielle stirred and opened her eyes, still disoriented by her unexpected return to Premier Palace.

Hearing Wesley's concern, she interjected with a simple request. "Soup."

Wesley looked to Max, who continued drying Brielle's hair and went with the flow.

"Bring a bowl of soup," Max said.

Chapter 623

Wesley's face lit up with a smile as he saw the relief in Max's demeanor. The man had been run ragged these past few days, scarcely taking time to eat a proper meal. If he kept going like that, Wesley feared an ulcer was on the horizon. Fortunately, Max was finally showing some appetite.

When Wesley brought over the chicken soup, Max had already stowed away the hairdryer.

He gently tapped Brielle's cheek. "Weren't you going to have some soup?"

Brielle frowned, slowly opening her eyes to a drowsy world, and mumbled, "It's for you; don't forget to eat."

Max stiffened, a softness melting his irritation. He knew all too well that Aubree's situation had become a knot in Brielle's heart.

So many people were trying to stand in their way, and her friend had been hurt because of it. Her heart wasn't made of stone. Subconsciously, she wanted to distance herself from him.

Max consoled himself-it didn't matter, as long as she hadn't thought about giving
1. up.

After finishing the soup and brushing his teeth, Max was about to settle into bed when he received a call from the sanatorium.

Irritation flickered across his face as he stepped onto the balcony and accepted the
call.

"Max, Ms. Martha is resisting fiercely. Unless we administer other medications, sedatives alone are insufficient, and they're harming her health," the voice on the other end said.

Ever since Martha suspected her food had been tampered with, she had been in a constant state of agitation. Even the doctor's stricter measures only brought temporary relief. Once the effects wore off, Martha would refuse food altogether.

“Max, maybe you should come and talk to Ms. Martha in person. After all, you're family.”

Max's expression softened with a touch of resignation. His hand was resting on Brielle's head, giving it a gentle rub before sighing. “I'll be there in an hour.”

The doctor seemed to breathe a sigh of relief. “That's good, Max. If this carries on, it's tough for us too.”

After all, Martha's status was unique, and if something went seriously wrong, no one wanted to bear the responsibility.

Max set the alarm for an hour later, then climbed into bed, pulling Brielle close as he drifted off to sleep.

By the time Brielle awoke, Max was gone. The hangover had her head pounding, and her stomach felt hollow. She glanced around, realizing she was at Premier Palace and her clothes had been changed.

After freshening up, she called Dustin, who was also nursing a hangover.

Brielle surmised that Max must have brought her back.

She checked the study but found no sign of Max, so she settled there herself.

However, as she saw the media frenzy, her face darkened.

The Clements and the Rowland families were discussing a marriage alliance.

The photos showed the two families meeting, smiling and joyful.

Brielle found it ironic—Aubree was still in the hospital, and the Clements seemed to have forgotten her existence. They were even discussing Andrew's marriage, and hadn't considered bringing Aubree back.

Brielle's lips pressed tightly together as she watched a video of reporters interviewing Tessa, asking about the impending good news.

Tessa beamed, her lips curving up at the corners. “Yes, Andrew and I grew up together. It was only a matter of time.”

Tessa's sweet smile at the mention of childhood sweethearts made Brielle want to smash the screen. She grabbed her car keys and headed straight for the

hospital.

Aubree was still admitted, and Brielle had previously instructed the hospital to block all external news and hide all information about Aubree's stay.

When she arrived, Aubree was staring out the window at the blue sky, white clouds, and distant skyscrapers.

She needed to leave something behind in this world. She didn't want to reach life's final moment, only to realize she had never truly lived.

Chapter 624

Aubree approached slowly and wrapped her arms around Brielle. "They say acting is living a different life, and right now, if you asked me to shoot a tearjerker, I could burst into tears this second. John's a great director, and working with him beats hanging around a hospital any day."

Brielle closed her eyes, mustering all her strength to keep from shaking. "Alright, I'll fill John in on everything."

Aubree wanted to laugh, but the cracks on her lips would split open with even the slightest smile, leaving her mouth stained with blood.

Brielle thought Aubree would ask about Andrew, but she didn't. She just talked about wanting to act. So, Brielle didn't press the issue. Instead, she quickly got in touch with John and Ricardo. As for the rest — the crew and the staff — they were all willing volunteers from Stellar Stage Entertainment.

The film required a lockdown. Everyone except John had to hand in their cell phones, and they all signed NDAs promising not to breathe a word of the project until the film's release.

The controversial John, and Aubree, needed a place that was utterly quiet and safe.

Brielle worked fast, and by dusk, she had Aubree and Ricardo on their way. A caravan of cars left the bustle of the city behind, heading for a quaint town on the outskirts to start filming.

A movie could take two to three months to shoot, during which no one would

hassle Aubree with gossip.

Brielle breathed a sigh of relief, then pulled out her phone, which was still buzzing with news about the Clements and the Rowland families. They were due to meet that evening at the Harmony Haven Hotel.

Looking at the address, Brielle's lips curled into a cold smirk. Going by her gut, she should take the gun Max had given her and send that cheating couple

straight to hell. But that'd be letting them off too easy. She wanted to plan carefully, to ensure Tessa and Andrew lived in agony for the rest of their lives.

Tessa cared about her social standing and Andrew's affection. Did Andrew care about Aubree even the slightest bit? If he did, he was already losing. Brielle would turn that sliver of care into a sword and plunge it into his heart.

Her eyes churned with emotion as she took a deep breath to calm the storm within. She would make Andrew realize what he had missed, what he had lost.

She dialed Patrick and instructed him to spread the news about the Rowland family's 30—billion deficit, making sure it overshadowed the wedding news. The Rowland family wanted to use the merger as a smokescreen for fundraising — wishful thinking.

After setting this in motion, Brielle opened her chat with Sophia. The last messages were from

1/2

12.05

before she visited Dustin.

Grem Sophia's years by Tessa's side, she must've known some dirt on the Rowland family.

As the Rowland family was about to be thrust into a media storm, Brielle planned to hit them

with more scandals.

Sophia provided just a name, Zaiden.

Briele quickly looked up Zaiden — Tessa's cousin, a respected oncologist at Beaconsfield's top hospital. Sophia's hint meant she had heard something incriminating about Zaiden within the Rowland family.

Briele raised an eyebrow and had someone dig into Zaiden's past. Feedback came swiftly, Zaiden had been reported by patients within the hospital, but with the Rowland family's clout, no action was taken.

Andrew.

Andrew sat in a sleek black car, his fingers clutching his phone, staring at Aubree's text from the evening. [So tired. Let's end this.] With it, a necklace was delivered by courier, the same one that had made Aubree happy for nights on end.

Chapter 625

The necklace was a one-of-a-kind piece, the only thoughtful gift Aubree had ever received from him. Usually, it was just cash, with instructions to go out and buy whatever she fancied.

Hidden within the intricate design of the necklace were their names, subtly engraved. He couldn't quite explain why he'd done it at the time; he just thought it might bring a smile to Aubree's face.

But now, Aubree had returned the gift, and in such an impersonal manner, via a delivery guy, no less.

It wasn't just about the necklace's worth, which was in the millions. The fact that Aubree had entrusted such a valuable item to a complete stranger, not to mention the insultingly cheap delivery fee, seemed to mock the sentiment with which he'd given it.

Andrew stared at the text message for a long time, wondering how long it would take for Aubree to cool off this time.

Even at her angriest, she had never spoken of ending things with him. And this time, he was at a loss to understand what had set her off.

Fuming, Andrew tossed the necklace onto the passenger seat just as Tessa walked in. She opened the car door and immediately spotted the necklace, a flicker of delight crossing her face.

“Andrew, is this for me?” she asked, her voice sugary with hope.

Deep down, she knew it belonged to Aubree. She'd seen it around Aubree's neck before, and Aubree was wearing it when those thugs had raped her.

Tessa's smile never wavered as she picked up the necklace. “It's gorgeous, and it must have cost a pretty penny. I'll treasure it. Thank you, Andrew.”

She leaned in and pecked his cheek, making him stiffen involuntarily. His instinct

was to say it wasn't meant for her but was Aubree's, but he saw Tessa's joy and hesitated. Besides, Tessa had already sniffed out his affair with Aubree, and bursting her bubble now would only make things awkward.

It was just a necklace, after all. If Tessa wanted it, she could have it. He'd simply buy another for Aubree. The names were engraved so discreetly that Tessa would never notice.

His response was noncommittal, his hands resting casually on the steering wheel. “If you like it, wear it,” he said flatly.

Victory shone in Tessa's eyes. For her, it was a trophy, a reminder of Aubree's defeat and how she had been broken in body and spirit.

“I love it. Let's hit the road. We've got to get to the venue. They're about to set the wedding date, Andrew. I'm so happy. This is what I've dreamed of for years.”

Andrew was momentarily lost in thought, then nodded and flipped on the car radio.

The smile vanished from Tessa's face as the words echoed in the car. Even Andrew's brow furrowed. His phone buzzed — it was his mother, Marissa.

Chapter 626

“Hey, Andrew, what's your take on this? You know I listen to you. As long as you drop this thing with Aubree, I'm behind you all the way. But if you're thinking of bailing out the Rowlands with thirty billion—come on, think about your family. That kind of cash, even for us, it's a stretch.”

The Clements could cough up the money, sure, but it would definitely put a dent in their own affairs.

And why should they? The Rowlands made their move against them first, and they weren't even tied by marriage yet. Why should they shell out a fortune to help those ingrates? They all played in the same sandbox. They knew what's up. Marissa's expression was grim as she gave him another piece of her mind. “I want you to marry her, just to keep your fling with Aubree under wraps. We don't need that kind of gossip. We didn't even tell Aubree about your engagement, and she spent this Christmas alone. We took her in and did our part. It's high time we find her a decent match, or your secret will be out sooner or later.”

“Mom, Aubree's still young.”

“Young? If she hadn't been on birth control all these years, who knows how many kids she'd have popped out by now. You can fool others, Andrew, but don't forget who caught you two. If it weren't for your dad taking pity on her, she wouldn't be living this good life.”

Andrew fell silent, his grip on his phone tightening.

He had almost forgotten about the wedding discussions at tonight's dinner. But hearing Marissa speak about Aubree made him uncomfortable.

Sure, Aubree was Daddy's little princess, and she didn't have the temper of a spoilt brat—just a bit more fiery than most. She was obedient in the sheets and always willing to play along.

Andrew never felt like Aubree owed the Clements anything. It was his dad's

choice to take her in, and if you took someone in, you were responsible for them, right?

“Andrew, the bottom line is, are you really going to marry Tessa? If yes, are we truly going to cover this massive debt?”

Andrew's mind was a whirlwind. Catching a glimpse of Tessa's pale face, his heart softened. “Tessa's right here. We'll talk when we get there.”

After hanging up, he tossed his phone aside and turned to Tessa. “Did you know about the Rowland's debt crisis beforehand?”

It was a rhetorical question. Tessa was the Rowland's linchpin; nothing went without her say—so. So, naturally, Austin's moves to use the marriage to the Clements as a chance for a bailout were at her behest.

Panic flashed across Tessa's face as she clutched his hand, “Andrew, I didn't want this. But if the Rowlands go under, I fear I won't be worthy of you,” she coughed. Her body was still weak

1/2

12:05

from her recent illness; her face turned deathly pale.

Andrew patted her back gently. “Tessa, I'm not blaming you.”

Tears welled up in her eyes as she buried her face in his shoulder, comforted that Andrew would always be there for her. “Andrew, when I heard about the thirty billion going down the drain, I was scared. You know how this world works. It's all about climbing up or being stepped down. If the Rowlands fall and I cling to you, everyone will think I'm out of my league.”

With tears streaming down her face, she continued, “I'm already frail, and without my family's status, won't I become the laughingstock when we're seen together?”

Seeing her tears, Andrew's heart instinctively softened, his tone gentle. “The rest of the Clements might take issue, but make sure you explain yourself well when we arrive. As for the debt, I'll think of something.”

Chapter 627

In a corner unseen by Andrew, Tessa's lips curled into a smug grin.

The car pulled up in front of the Harmony Haven Hotel, and as Tessa got out and steadied herself on her feet, she noticed another vehicle parked nearby. The door swung open, and out stepped Brielle. That had to be Max's car, judging by the vanity plate with its string of identical numbers and the unmistakable silhouette of a Bentley.

Tessa caught sight of her and was about to strut over and have a good go at her, but remembering Andrew was still around, she figured she had to play it cool for a bit longer. So, without a word, she simply flaunted the necklace around her throat, arching an eyebrow at Brielle in a silent challenge.

The provocation was clear.

What Tessa hadn't expected was for Brielle to stride forward, grab the necklace, and yank it off with such force that Tessa felt like her neck might snap. Her face registered utter disbelief. "Brielle?! What the hell are you doing?"

Before the words had fully left her mouth, Brielle's hand was in the air and then came the sharp crack of a slap.

"Smack!"

Tessa's cheek instantly swelled, the force of the slap nearly sending her to the ground, the taste of iron flooding her mouth.

The necklace now dangled from Brielle's fingers, wrapped in a tissue. Her expression was dark as a storm cloud. "Tessa, did you ever think you were worthy of wearing this?" Brielle snapped.

Tessa clutched her cheek, her heart pounding. Onlookers were gathering around them. The Harmony Haven Hotel wasn't your average star-rated establishment. Much like the exclusive Tequila Sunset club, it was members-only and accessible with a card, so journalists were strictly off-limits. The Rowland and Clements families had chosen this place for their dinner, as much a statement of status as anything else.

Tessa had sent that message to Brielle just to rile her up, to knock her down a peg. She hadn't anticipated Brielle to actually show up, corner her, and slap her without a second thought.

How dare she?

That bitch, how dare she?!

However, Tessa was too frail to retaliate. Her eyes were red with rage, but she could not utter a single word.

Brielle tucked the necklace into her purse and, watching Tessa's weakened face, pulled her close for another slap, this time not stopping until ten more had landed. With full force, Tessa's face was so swollen it was unrecognizable, blood trickling from her mouth.

Andrew parked and approached the scene, his scalp tingling with anger at the sight.

"Brielle!" He strode forward, grabbing her arm, his brow knotted with fury. "Brielle, have you lost your mind?!"

But Brielle bitched free and, with a

swift motion, slapped him across the

face as well. "Get lost!" Andrew's com

head snapped to the side, and as he felt the sting on his cheek, he

wondered if this was some sick

dream. Once the shock passed, a vicious light crossed his eyes, and he raised his hand to grab Brielle's throat. The content is on

No one, except for the cheeky Aubree, had ever dared to lay a hand on him like that. Was Brielle high tonight to have the audacity to do this to him?

However, before his hand could reach her throat, another intercepted him. Max pulled Brielle into his arms, shielding her and blocking Andrew's hand with his own, his gaze as calm as it was commanding.

Andrew's eyes narrowed, the din of Tessa's hysterical crying and the gasps of the

onlookers only intensifying the moment.

Everything pointed to a point of no return.

With a cold laugh, Andrew's eyes gleamed with malice. "Max, step aside."

Tonight, he would end Brielle, that treacherous bitch.

Chapter 628

Max glanced at Tessa, who was on the verge of passing out, his voice soft yet firm. "I think you'd better get her to the hospital."

But Andrew lashed out with a kick towards Max, his face contorted with rage. No one dared to slap him and get away with it. Tonight, Brielle had to pay with her life.

Max dodged the kick and pulled Brielle behind him for protection.

Meanwhile, Patrick, still in the Bentley, witnessed the scene and quickly directed his people to disperse the gathering crowd.

The onlookers were shrewd enough to know when to stay out of the way. This was a clash between two powerful families, and knowing too much was a recipe for trouble.

Soon, only a handful of them remained, and an eerie silence enveloped the area.

Brielle chuckled and locked eyes with Andrew. "Andrew, Aubree has left Beaconsfield. You probably won't be able to find her again."

All of Andrew's fury seemed to deflate like a punctured balloon, the red in his eyes intensifying. "What did you say?"

Brielle raised an eyebrow. "Oh, it seems she didn't tell you. She's leaving Beaconsfield for good."

Andrew felt as if a thunderbolt had struck his head, and he strode toward Brielle with

determination. "Say that again!"

Max stood between them, trying to keep the peace.

A confrontation seemed inevitable, but just then, members of the Rowland and Clements families arrived on the scene. Both families were scared witless, especially at the sight of Andrew and Max squared off, with Tessa standing to one side, her face bruised and looking like she might faint at any moment.

"Andrew! What on earth is going on?!" Marissa was the first to speak up, rushing to Andrew's side to restrain him.

Andrew shook off Marissa's hand with a fierce glare fixed on Brielle. "Brielle, do you know something?" His voice was dark and menacing, his whole being aflame with anger.

How could Aubree think of leaving Beaconsfield? It was impossible. Sure, she had thrown tantrums in the past, but at most, she'd find somewhere to stay for a few days before returning to his side, sweet and docile as ever.

The furthest she had ever gone during one of her fits was abroad, and that was because he had gotten engaged to Tessa. But she had come back, and she was as compliant in bed as she had always been.

07.07

This time, she was surely just playing up again.

Andrew was already livid that Aubree had handed over the necklace carelessly to some random delivery guy, sending it to him with a cheap express delivery fee. And now, hearing Brielle talk like this, he felt a fire raging in his chest, threatening to consume him!

Brielle didn't answer him, her gaze drifting past him and settling on Tessa with a nonchalant tone. "The Rowland family is in the hole for thirty billion. They hope to sneak in some financing. with this marriage. Tessa hasn't even married you yet, and she's already stirring others to contact venture capital firms, trying to drum up sponsorship for the Rowlands. Ms. Tessa may look delicate, but her mind is sharp as a tack."

Compared to Tessa's disheveled

state, Brielle was the picture of poise, her eyes sweeping over the Clements family members with a slight smile. "Before even joining the family, she's thinking about using the Clements name to make a profit. I've heard that the Rowlands' business success owed a lot to the Clements' support in the past. Some people," Brielle said, her smile thin, "are never satisfied, and are always biting off

more than they can chew."

The Rowlands were seething. Brielle

had already upstaged them once m

during the negotiations about Sophia's marriage with the Dorsey family. And now, as they were about to discuss matrimonial ties with the Clements, here she was again.

What in the world was this woman after?

Austin stepped forward, ready to

unleash his anger on Brielle. But then

he remembered that Max had openly admitted that Brielle was his

girlfriend at the lounge. Insulting Brielle in front of him was

tantamount to a death wish.

However, they couldn't let Brielle get away with trampling over them like this. Where would the Rowland family's pride go?

"Brielle, you better stop spouting nonsense right here!" he barked.

Just then, a commotion broke out in the distance. A wave of angry shouts filled

the air, and soon, a crowd of hundreds of people surged forward, overwhelming

the guards.

What was happening?

Chapter 629

"The Rowlands! Get out of Beaconsfield!"

"The Rowland Hospital is corrupt! Zaiden has blood on his hands!"

"Rowlands, go to hell! Justice will be served!"

The crowd had encircled the

embers of the Rowland and the Clements families, hurling rotten

eggs with such precision it was clear they had practice.

Just moments ago, a group of cancer patients' family members had gone public with a damning accusation against Zaiden. The details were horrifying..

Despite Zaiden's errors, the Rowlands were shamelessly covering for him. Finding no recourse through official channels, the common folk seized the moment to expose Zaiden's misdeeds as the Rowland family's scandal erupted.

The live stream had exploded, and the recorded video detailing the tearful testimonials of suffering families had gone viral.

"My granddad was seventy. He was diagnosed with late-stage liver cancer with metastasis. There was no hope for treatment, they said. But Zaiden promised a cure if we sold our house and pulled together over a million dollars for top-notch medical care. We spent every penny, and then my granddad passed. They have no medical ethics. We demand justice from the public!"

"I overheard Zaiden telling doctors to cycle cancer patients through surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. They milked money from each department until there was nothing left, then left them to alternative medicine to die. My spouse had early-stage lung cancer and suffered this torture for three months before passing. The Rowlands have blood on their hands! I have recordings of Zaiden. I demand accountability!"

"The Rowland Hospital saves no one! It only harms. We demand justice!"

The ten-minute video spread like wildfire online, and coupled with Zaiden's own incriminating audio, it was the nail in the coffin for the Rowlands.

Public outrage was immense. Education, healthcare, and law are society's pillars. As long as education remained fair, there was hope for the underprivileged to rise. With ethical healthcare, life was respected. If the law upheld justice, societal ills would be minimized. When these pillars crumbled, society would descend into hell.

Zaiden's actions trampled on the dignity of ordinary people, exploiting desperate families in their darkest hours. The Rowlands' complicity still allowed him to climb the ranks within the hospital. Appalling!

The crowd now swarming the scene was fueled by righteous anger after watching the video. News of the Rowlands' impending marriage with the Clements had spread, and now the protesters had tracked them down to the Harmony Haven Hotel.

07:07

The hotel security was overwhelmed, and the Rowlands were pelted with rotten eggs and spoiled lettuce. In a desperate attempt to protect Tessa, Andrew was also a mess, reeking of decay.

Though initially bystanders, the Clements were now tainted by association and accused of collusion.

"A despicable lot, all deserving of hell!"

"You don't value our lives! To hell with you!"

Tessa felt the world crumbling around her, and her cheeks stung not just from the physical blows but from the chaos of it all. She looked into the angry faces; In

their eyes, she saw the desire to tear her apart.

What had happened? What had gone wrong?

She couldn't think straight. The Rowlands were finished.

Everything was ruined.

The Clements, already on edge that evening, were now smeared with the fallout

from the Rowland debacle and were fuming.

Marissa's expensive dress was

ruined with vile egg slime, and she

was close to vomiting with disgust as she pointed an accusing finger at the Rowlands. "This engagement is off! My son will have no more dealings with the Rowlands!"

The Clements left the scene in disgust.

Before she left. Marissa turned to

Andrew, who was still shielding Tessa and said angrily come with me, son. Look at the mess the

Rowlands have made. What a disgrace!"

Tears streamed down Tessa's face

as she clung to Andrew, her last lifeline. Don't leave. Andrew. Please don't go."

Seeing her in such a state, Andrew draped his jacket over her and escorted her

to the Clements'

Chapter 630

The rest of the Rowlands were hemmed in by an irate crowd, unable to make their way out.

Marissa caught sight of Tessa and felt her blood boiling. "What a mess!" she spat, her face a mask of displeasure.

Tessa, for her part, felt as if the sky had come crashing down. She clung

desperately to Andrew. Her body was on the verge of collapse. She should have passed out, and she cursed her lucidity, all too aware that the Rowlands were teetering on the brink of ruin.

It wasn't just the loss of hundreds of millions in capital-it was their reputation on the line!

Tears streamed down her face, and she couldn't fathom how things had come to this.

The radio droned on with reporters' live updates and public opinion of the

Rowlands sinking to rock bottom. The Rowlands' shares had halved in less than two hours, and billions in market value had evaporated.

Tessa was a wreck, clutching Andrew like a lifeline, too afraid to show her pain and vulnerability lest she draw the ire of the other Clements in the car.

Her teeth bit into her lip so hard she tasted blood. Her eyes were bloodshot as if she might faint at any moment. Still, she was too aware. Tears were falling nonstop, and her lips were raw with wounds.

Andrew took her back to the Clements' home, and after they both showered, Tessa sat on his bed weeping. "Andrew, what do we do? Is this the end for us? Who did this? Who could have-"

She was torn between crying and fear, terrified of losing Andrew, too. What would she do if even he turned his back on her?

Her family couldn't be saved, not even if the Clements were willing to donate thirty billion. The Rowlands were beyond salvation.

Andrew reached for a towel to wipe her hair, knowing full well that this was the result of the Rowlands' own inaction. Zaiden's mistakes were forever etched in shame, and now the public loathed the Rowlands to the bone. Come morning, their stocks would likely plummet to a halt.

The Rowlands' name would probably be stricken in the annals of Beaconsfield's elite.

A company that crossed the public's red line was not one to rise again. By nightfall, the government would probably send police to thoroughly investigate the Rowlands' hospitals.

Andrew reached out, intending to comfort Tessa. She trembled in his arms, never having imagined the Rowlands' fall, especially not at such a dizzying pace.

All she had left was Andrew. She had to hold on to him. This thought spurred her to action. She pulled Andrew's collar down and kissed him.

Somehow, she found the strength to push him onto the bed, climbing on top herself. "Andrew,

you won't abandon me, right? Will you still marry me?"

Before Andrew could react, Tessa was ready to undress.

Breathless, Andrew pushed her away. "Tessa, calm down for a second."

"How can I calm down? The

Rowlands are gone, Marissa is disgusted with me, the therm er

Clements have turned against me, and I've lost everything. You're all I have, Andrew. Please don't leave me, okay?"

Once, she had held her head high, expecting Andrew to woo her, but now, she couldn't afford to be proud. If Andrew would marry her, she'd do anything he asked.

If she couldn't be the respected Ms.

Rowland, at least she'd be the wife of the Clements Corporation's CEO. She couldn't bear the thought of life

among the lower classes, of facing

disdain wherever she went.

She had to marry Andrew.

"Please, I'll have your child, Andrew.

Please, just say yes," she begged, her

voice hoarse with tears. She had

NO

thought she had it all-love, career, a

bountiful life-only for it to be cruelly

snatched away.

Everything was over.

Trembling, she undid her clothes, baring herself, her eyes pleading with Andrew.