

Master 81

Chapter 81

Miranda thought she was compromising and called over to the nearby officer, "The M&A department director lost the USB drive.

We can pin the blame on Brielle alone for this matter. There must be a backup of that thing. Don't escalate the situation. Call

your people back now, and don't go look for Ms. Rowland at this hour. She's probably already asleep."

The policemen exchanged glances before all eyes turned to Brielle, waiting for her to make the call. Brielle couldn't help but

laugh, pressing her leg down slowly. The unbandaged wound throbbed with pain, but it also sharpened her mind. "Pin the blame

on me alone? A hundred-billion-dollar business secret-what do I have to answer for that?"

Miranda hadn't expected such a firm stance from her. Her face soured, "So what do you propose we do? You really want to stir

up trouble with the Rowland family? How can you be such a troublemaker!"

"Me, a troublemaker? If it wasn't for someone from the Rowland family bribing another to target me, how would the police have

found evidence in her accounts? She brought this upon herself. I will not settle this quietly, no matter what anyone says. Officers,

please proceed as necessary. Mr. Dorsey is awaiting my updates."

Miranda, too angry for words, pointed a trembling finger at Brielle, but couldn't manage to spit out a coherent sentence. "How

could I have raised a daughter like you!"

After a moment, Miranda's lips trembled, and she raised her hand as if to strike Brielle. Lillian, standing behind her, stepped

forward, pretending to intervene. Yet, her fingers reached past Miranda, pulling off Brielle's scarf. As the scarf floated gently

down, marks on Brielle's fair skin were exposed for all to see.

Everyone present was an adult. They all knew what those marks meant. Miranda's mind buzzed, and her reason crumbled in an

instant. Her raised hand changed direction, and in a fit of rage, she seized Brielle by the neck.

“How many men have you been with? How can you have so little respect for yourself! What have you turned yourself into?!”

The burst of strength was formidable, and Brielle couldn't push her away, feeling the imprint of fingers around her neck.

Finally, overwhelmed, Miranda's world went dark, and she fainted.

“Mom!”

“Miranda!”

Cameron hurried to support her, the disgust in his eyes piercing Brielle like daggers.

Brielle touched her neck, aware that Lillian had done it on purpose. Her aim was achieved.

Lillian, too, supporting Miranda, had tears welling up in her eyes, her voice shaky with sobs, “Cameron, what do we do? I didn't

mean for this to happen. I was just scared that Miranda and Brielle would get into a fight, so I intervened. I didn't mean to pull off

the scarf, nor did I expect this. We should get Miranda to the hospital first.” Cameron gave Brielle a dark look, his mind going to

the sleazy man at the police station, and he felt nauseated. Brielle was raised in the Haywood family. How could she stoop to

such men?

He recalled her talk of male prostitutes, the thought making him want to retch. She was indiscriminate.

“Brielle, why are you

acting so cheap? What do you think of yourself? With such an incident again, it seems Grandpa has to come over personally to

beg you before you'll behave.”

Brielle's heart clenched, and she bent slightly in pain, “Grandpa is not in good health. Aren't you afraid of causing him harm by

using this matter to provoke him?”

“The mess is of your making. If grandfather becomes ill, it will be your doing.”

Cameron supported Miranda, no longer sparing Brielle a glance. “You'd better take the chance to get a health check at the

hospital. With all this recklessness, aren't you afraid of catching something? Don't blame us for favoring Lillian. Look at what

you've done, and what she's done.”

Lillian, gripping Miranda's other hand, choked up at Cameron's words, "Cameron, stop it, please. Getting Miranda to the hospital

is what's important now."

"Alright."

Chapter 82

As Lillian turned away, a sly smile curled the corners of her lips. She hadn't anticipated such a lucky break.

The marks on Brielle's neck certainly weren't from Spencer. After all, he had been tied up in his own troubles these past few

days. It seemed Brielle had indeed been rolling in the hay with some unsavory characters.

At this moment, Lillian felt on top of the world, as though even the gods were conspiring in her favor. With Brielle tarnished in

such a way, who would want her now? Especially since she was on the verge of crossing the Rowlands and the Hatfields.

Unable to contain her glee, Lillian stealthily pulled out her phone and texted Sophia. [Sweetie, sorry, I can't help you this time. I

tried to get the Haywoods to come, but Brielle's stubborn as a mule. Now Miranda's fainted from the stress, and I need to dash to

the hospital. What's your game plan?]

Sophia was deeply touched by the message. Compared to the troublemaker Emily, Lillian was practically an angel. [I guess I

have no choice but to turn to Tessa, hoping she can get Andrew to step in. Lillian, you've been a lifesaver. Is Miranda okay?]

Lillian didn't reply immediately, deliberately waiting a good fifteen minutes before responding. [Not sure yet, gotta go. Ugh, Bri's

really not giving an inch this time.]

Seeing Brielle's name, Sophia felt her eyes burn with rage. Indeed, that bitch! Despite everyone's pleas, she hadn't budged an

inch.

Sophia sneered, vowing that once she got through this ordeal, she'd find someone even tougher to take Brielle down a peg. Next

time, it wouldn't just be rumors. She'd have a video of Brielle's escapades spread all over Beaconsfield. Then she'd see how that

hussy would have the gall to stick around.

Although Sophia was seething with plans for revenge, panic was setting in. The police were knocking at her door. As the cold

handcuffs clicked around her wrists, her hatred for Brielle and Emily deepened.

She had already sent word to Tessa. Though not the favorite of the Rowlands, her frequent visits to Tessa would surely pay off.

Tessa would come to her rescue.

Meanwhile, the police station fell into an awkward silence with the departure of the trio.

Brielle leaned against the cold wall, sweat beading on her forehead. Exhausted, she longed for rest, but she heard that Sophia

was on her way.

She didn't know Sophia, which meant someone was pulling strings behind the scenes. This was her chance to expose everyone

involved.

Brielle's lashes fluttered, her fingers weakly curled, then relaxed. Her nose tingled, eyes growing hot.

Footsteps approached the door again, but she had no strength left to look up, resting quietly with her eyes closed. She knew that

many people at the scene were eyeing her neck, thinking she was promiscuous and fickle.

The man who was handcuffed also took the opportunity to mumble a few words. "You sure get around, don't you? Can't blame

folks for wanting to ruin your pretty face."

His words dripped with scorn, his gaze trying to pierce through the fabric covering her, to strip her bare.

Brielle felt cold, a chill rising from her feet and spreading through her body, making her lips quiver.

The footsteps grew closer, and a respectful voice announced, "Mr. Dorsey."

"Mr. Dorsey, to what do we owe the honor of your personal visit?"

Brielle forced her eyes open, but could only make out a blurry silhouette.

He was like a beacon of light, radiating warmth as he approached. His warm palm rested on her forehead, and

she couldn't help but nuzzle into it. Then her body swayed, and she was enveloped in his arms.

"Uncle Max?"

Her voice was hoarse, filled with yearning as she nestled into his chest.

Max didn't respond, his expression as cold as ice. The temperature in the room plummeted, and everyone was too intimidated to

meet his gaze.

He carried Brielle out to the waiting car.

Brielle curled into his embrace, wincing in pain. His warm palm seemed to touch her very soul, and fearing she'd dirty his hands,

she quickly recoiled. "It's dirty."

She didn't know if this was reality or a dream.

Chapter 83

He was supposed to be away on business tonight, not here. Deep down, she prayed he wouldn't show up. She feared that the

protective walls she had painstakingly built would crumble to ruins in his presence.

People mustn't harbor expectations, for expectations breed vulnerability.

The warmth under her feet hadn't faded, and as she wanted to curl up, she felt herself forcibly unraveled. She struggled to open

her eyes, only to be met with a taut jawline, his breath cool as the frost, threatening to freeze one to the core. Yet, in his

presence, she found a strange sense of peace.

Outside the police station, Sophia had already been brought in. She had rehearsed countless excuses in her mind, plotting how

she would tear into Brielle upon seeing her. How could that bitch refused settle things privately? How could she drag her, a

member of the Rowland family, into this mess?

She was determined to teach Brielle a lesson this time.

Getting out of the car, she saw a tall figure cradling someone into a vehicle at a distance. She was too far away to see who the

man was.

“Where’s Brielle? I need to speak with her personally,” Sophia said impatiently as she strode into the lobby, casting a disdainful

look at the man also in cuffs, incompetent in every endeavor, a liability at best.

On the way back to Premier Palace, Patrick, seated in the front, hardly dared to breathe.

An hour ago, the car had nearly left Beaconsfield when it turned back. Max had personally gone to the police

station.

It was the first time Max had missed such an important meeting to deal with a woman’s affairs.

Curiosity was killing Patrick, who kept stealing glances through the rearview mirror, but Max’s expression was icy, his hold on

Brielle protective and possessive.

The private doctor was already waiting in the foyer. It was the second time in a short span that Brielle had been injured. After

tending to her foot injury, the doctor handed a tube of ointment to Max. It was a bruise–healing ointment, necessary for the stark

red mark around Brielle’s neck, as if someone had strangled her with considerable force.

The atmosphere in the foyer was tense, everyone on edge. The doctor, noticing Max’s reluctance, carefully placed the ointment

on the coffee table. “Apply it morning and night, and the bruising should fade in three days.” He didn’t linger, almost bolting from

the oppressive presence of Max.

Max glanced at the ointment on the table and finally relented. He washed and disinfected his hands thoroughly in the bathroom.

Upon returning, he tucked the ointment inside his suit and carried Brielle upstairs.

Brielle was restless in her sleep, her forehead beaded with sweat. Max gently placed her on the bed and squeezed some

ointment onto his fingertip.

As he spread the cool cream, her skin goosebumped, and she instinctively reached to wipe it away, only to have her wrist

caught.

“Don’t move.”

He pressed her hand to the bed while his other hand skillfully continued to apply the ointment. Once finished, he grabbed a wet

wipe to clean his fingers and looked up to see Brielle's eyes open, gazing at him with a mix of confusion and childlike innocence.

"Uncle Max, weren't you supposed to be on a business trip?"

Max tossed the wipe into the trash and closed his eyes lightly, still visibly upset, and thus didn't respond.

Brielle tugged gently at his sleeve, perhaps aware that he was angry but not understanding why. She was the one in pain, with a

sore neck, sore feet, and aching heart. Her eyes warmed, as if tears were struggling to break free.

Max watched her, his gaze softening slightly, "Why are you crying?"

Brielle shook her head, trying to explain but unable to utter a word.

Looking at her reddened nose and damp lashes, Max saw for the first time her vulnerability. The Brielle he knew was cunning,

resolute, and seductive. She had never cried like this before.

In his twenty-six years of life, Max had seen his fair share of women's tears, but Brielle's tears were different. They effortlessly

seized his heart.

Chapter 84

He took a handkerchief and gently wiped her cheek.

Her skin was soft as petals, not just on her cheeks but all over. A girl like her deserved to be nurtured by power

and wealth.

Outside, a thunderclap broke the silence, and lightning split the sky. The rain began to pour down, quickly drenching the city.

Max sat on the edge of the bed, and as dawn approached, he slowly walked over to the floor-to-ceiling window. The raindrops

hit the glass like a cascade of shattered diamonds, seemingly trying to capture the neon lights from outside.

At ten in the morning, Patrick gently pushed the door open. "President, the video conference is all set up."

Max nodded, rubbing his temples as he stepped out of the bedroom. There would be three meetings today, ones he was

supposed to attend in person. Instead, he had stood up all the executives last night.

A shadow passed through Max's eyes, and his lips tightened just slightly. That kind of mistake was inexcusable.

Meanwhile, at the Rowland estate, Tessa hadn't acted immediately upon receiving the news last night. She glanced at the hearty

breakfast spread out on the table before sitting down.

In another ten minutes, Andrew's courier would arrive with the season's must-have item, a tradition that had become almost

ceremonial over the years. Yesterday, Andrew had sent over a designer watch, and the envy it sparked was palpable. Ever since

her engagement to the Clements clan, Andrew's gifting had become habitual. Tessa, frail since childhood, relished Andrew's

attentions but couldn't help feeling resentful. Why must it be her, with a constitution so delicate that even a night of passion was

too much to bear?

After a few coughs and dabbing her mouth with a napkin, she sipped some warm broth and then asked, "Is it Brielle? The young

lady from the Haywood family? I haven't been to a social event in years. Is she well-known? Why would Sophia go after her?"

The maid shook his head, "Miss Sophia is impulsive. Rumor has it she's avenging Miss Emily. They're quite

close."

Tessa had no interest in getting involved in such messes, finding them tedious and the women's tactics distasteful. But then she

thought, if she could resolve this, everyone would see just how much Andrew heeded

her words.

"Miss Sophia was taken to the police station last night."

Tessa nodded, her fingertips lightly gripping the spoon, "Let the other Rowlands beg for my help first, then I'll call Andrew."

She knew her standing wasn't enough to involve Max. It had to be Andrew who intervened.

Her pallor was evident, and she frowned again, "Do you know why Emily is targeting Brielle? Is there a history between them?"

The maid considered for a moment and replied honestly, "Both are with Dorsey International. It's probably a professional dispute."

Tessa nodded, not particularly concerned.

Half an hour later, as expected, Sophia's parents called, their voices tinged with desperation. Before her engagement to Andrew,

Tessa had suffered their disdain because of her frail health, but ever since Andrew had doted on her, insisting she was the only

one for him, those who once scorned her changed their tune. Even her status within the Rowland family had soared. Otherwise,

with her health, she'd have likely been shunted aside.

Tessa deliberately ignored the calls, feigning busyness. Only on the eighth call did she answer, speaking softly, with an air of

gentleness. "Yes, I'll speak to Andrew. Since it's Brielle who lost something, she should be responsible. As for Sophia, a financial

settlement should suffice."

The caller complimented her before hanging up, and Tessa felt a surge of satisfaction. Yet, always cautious, she asked the maid

a few more questions.

"Why did Emily go to Dorsey International?"

The more she thought about it, the less it made sense. Why would Emily go to Dorsey International out of the blue and clash with

Brielle?

"Does Brielle have another identity?"

Tessa had kept a low profile for years, rarely venturing out. She wasn't aware that Brielle was engaged to Spencer.

"Ms. Tessa, Brielle is engaged to Spencer," the servant informed her.

Hearing this, Tessa knew things were complicated. If Brielle was engaged to Spencer, he would surely get involved.

"But Ms. Tessa, you needn't worry about that. Few know of her engagement to Spencer. Besides, Sophia made it clear that

Spencer publicly stated at Dorsey International that he doesn't favor Brielle and plans to call off the engagement."

Tessa breathed a sigh of relief. If it didn't involve the Dorsey family and was just an issue with a lady from the Haywood family,

the situation was manageable.

She took a sip of tea, planning to time her call to Andrew perfectly. She didn't think her decision would cause much trouble for

the victim, Brielle. In Beaconsfield, it was a survival of the fittest. Brielle could only blame her misfortune for crossing the wrong

people.

Chapter 85

Brielle woke up at eleven, the familiar ceiling above her coaxing her into reality. It wasn't a dream. Max hadn't left on a business

trip—he had shown up at the police station last night. Was it because of her?

She swung her legs out of bed, wincing as her feet touched the cold floor. The sting from her cuts reminded her of the night's

events. She spotted a cane nearby, left there just for her, and gratefully grabbed it to support her unsteady steps.

The house was quiet as she hobbled to the study. Max was there, as she knew he would be, deep in a virtual meeting.

Brielle gently pushed the door open and heard a voice from the meeting.

"The new documents have been sent down. We've incorporated Ms. Haywood's 8120 principle and the 2N rule into our

management system. The first draft has been emailed to you, sir."

Max was silent, his microphone off. Sensing her presence, he paused but didn't turn around, as if he knew it was her.

Brielle limped closer. "Uncle Max, were you planning to discuss a takeover deal last night?"

"Mhm."

Max skimmed through the emails, nodding in approval at the content before typing a response.

"So why did you come back? I could have handled the stuff at the police station on my own." She tried to sound casual, settling

herself onto a nearby couch.

“And by handling it, you mean letting your wounds bleed without bandaging them?” Max’s voice was laced with concern. If he

hadn’t arrived when he did, the injury could have become infected.

Brielle felt a warmth in her chest and avoided his gaze. “I didn’t feel the pain.”

Because what hurt and frightened her more was the inner turmoil, the loneliness of being abandoned by the whole world,

grinding at the heart like serrated edges.

“Was last night your way of ‘defending a lady’s honor’?” she asked, her long lashes fluttering like the wings of a bird, too fragile

and touching.

Max tried to ignore the unusual stirrings in his heart, keeping his eyes on the screen as he wrapped up the

meeting.

Defending a lady’s honor? His emotions had peaked last night, but not to that extent.

Before he could respond, there was a knock on the door. Andrew had arrived.

Brielle raised an eyebrow, almost instantly guessing why Andrew was here. She got up, using the cane and the wall for support,

and started towards the door. Máx, seeing she didn’t intend to lean on him, left the room with a quick stride, leaving her behind.

Oblivious to his irritation, Brielle finally made it downstairs to find Andrew nursing a cup of coffee.

“Little Canary, what happened to your leg?” he teased as Brielle settled into a chair beside him.

“Are you here about the Rowland family issue?”

“Yes. Sophia is involved. She’s close to Tessa, who asked me to come see you.”

Brielle looked down, focusing on her toes. “I heard it’s not just the Rowland family involved, but the Hatfield family too.”

The police station had made it clear last night that the Hatfield family played a part. Yet, Brielle had never crossed either family.

Why do they target her now?

Andrew leaned back, nodding lazily. “You must know her—Emily, the Hatfield family’s daughter who works at

Dorsey International.”

Realization dawned on Brielle. She had sensed Emily's hostility these past days but hadn't dwelt on it. "I've hardly interacted with

them. There must be someone else behind this."

Andrew chuckled, casting a glance at Max silently sipping his coffee. It seemed Max was leaving the decision-making to Brielle.

"How should I know? I'm just here because of Tessa."

His certainty struck Brielle. Not for herself, but for Aubree.

Chapter 86

"I'm curious, what exactly did Miss Tessa tell you? This whole ordeal with Dorsey International involves some really hush-hush

corporate secrets. If I just let this slide, I'm the one who's gonna have to shoulder the blame. Did it ever cross Miss Tessa's mind

what I, as the victim here, am supposed to do?"

Brielle's tone was cool, the corners of her mouth twitching with a mocking smile. She had never met Tessa, but judging

someone's fate with a light phone call? That didn't sound like the actions of a good Samaritan. Was this the type of woman

Andrew fell for?

Andrew's brow furrowed. He wasn't a fool. He could read between the lines of Brielle's insinuation.

"Brielle, I don't know you, but I do know Max. He wouldn't just leave so-called billion-dollar trade secrets in his jacket pocket.

Sure, I believe Sophia hired someone to come after you, but the rest? Sounds like a tall tale to me."

"And what if it is a tall tale? If I hadn't known how to protect myself, my face would have been ruined. You do know what looks

mean to a woman, right?"

Andrew's eyes narrowed. "What will it take for you not to pursue this?"

"Well, that depends on how far you're willing to go for Tessa."

"Brielle." A chill passed through Andrew's gaze. If Max wasn't there, he might have already drawn his gun. "Don't be so

ungrateful.”

Brielle chuckled lightly, “I’m the only victim here, and my refusal to settle makes me ungrateful?”

Andrew had been outmaneuvered by Brielle before, and it made his blood boil. Turning to Max, he snapped, “Aren’t you going to

do something about this?”

She was getting a bit too cocky. She was just a pampered pet, after all.

Max, fingers absentmindedly tracing the rim of his glass, felt Andrew’s stare and looked up slowly.

“What would you do if

someone tried to ruin Tessa’s face?”

“I’d annihilate them. Their whole family would pay for it.” The fierceness in Andrew’s eyes was unmistakable, and he frowned in

disgust at his own reaction. “How can you compare Brielle to Tessa? Tessa is my fiancée, the woman I’m marrying. Brielle is just

your fleeting fancy.”

In front of Brielle, Andrew spoke without a filter. It wasn’t a secret, after all. Brielle was aware, too. Max was just having his fun.

She hadn’t bored him yet.

A sting of hurt flashed through Brielle’s heart, and her fingers clenched at her side. “Andrew, this has nothing to do with my place

in Uncle Max’s heart. It’s a matter of a man’s pride.”

She couldn’t admit she was afraid to hear Max’s response, afraid it would fall short of her hopes, so she cleverly shifted the focus

to a matter of dignity. It was better not to harbor too many hopes on certain people and things.

Their finite nature couldn’t bear the weight of such expectations. Best to let go.

Max looked up, his gaze falling on her, as if assessing her.

Brielle stiffened, forcing a casual smile. “If Uncle Max can’t even protect me, a pet of his, wouldn’t that tarnish his grand image?”

Andrew hadn’t expected such a response, his brows knitting together. “Brielle, what are you really after?”

Brielle looked down, pushing aside the discomfort, “I want Sophia and Emily to come and apologize to me, face to face. I’ve got

questions for them. And that thug from the police station? He needs to be behind bars, or he'll come after me again."

Her demands were modest. She didn't mention the so-called corporate secrets. A non-existent issue can't

withstand scrutiny. Besides, Andrew and Max had a good rapport. She couldn't really blow things up irreparably.

Andrew lit a cigarette, his expression defiant. "Fine, I'll make sure they come to you."

He said more, but Brielle wasn't really listening. Once he was gone, she turned to Max. He seemed unaffected by Andrew's

words, detached.

Brielle's lips twitched in self-derision. To him, feelings must be too cheap to consider, cheap enough not to waste time

pondering.

Whether it was a business opportunity or a life chance, to a prodigy like Max, only a thirty percent shot was worth taking for a big

win; anything less was likely a loss. A fifty percent chance was a minor victory. And with an eighty percent certainty, the market

was saturated. If you waited for a hundred percent certainty, you might never find such a deal in the world.

And in the game of chances, feelings might be less than the trash by the roadside. They held no sense of achievement when

they were too easily won.

Chapter 87

Brielle pushed herself to her feet, grabbing the cane that rested beside her chair. "Uncle Max, maybe Patrick could take me

home?" She wanted to clear her head, to regain control before everything spiraled beyond repair.

Max looked up at her, stood, and pulled her into a comforting embrace. "I'll take you." It wasn't an offer to stay, but a promise to

escort her.

A wave of disappointment washed over Brielle, but she mustered a smile nonetheless. "Thanks, Uncle Max. I appreciate it."

The drive back to her apartment was silent. Once there, Brielle leaned on her cane as she made her way inside. Noticing Max

hadn't left immediately, she fumbled her way to the kitchen and put a kettle on the stove. "I've only got black tea here."

Max settled onto the couch, not offering to help, watching her manage with her cane, as she washed some fruit and brought it

out.

Brielle couldn't deny her irritation. After all, she was the one who was injured. Sitting down, she tossed her cane aside with a huff

and caught her breath. "There's nothing much at home. Hope you don't mind."

Max's gaze softened as he noticed the sweat on the tip of her nose and the flush of her cheeks. He looked away. "Dorsey

International has incorporated your two principles into our management system. You should talk to finance about doubling your

year-end bonus."

The abrupt change in topic caught Brielle off guard. "What?"

Once the realization hit her, she almost choked. All this time she had been stewing in her own frustrations, and there was Max,

still pondering over business matters? True to The Priest's form, he never let women distract

him from work.

Biting her lip in annoyance, she also considered that this was exactly what she had hoped for. His professional detachment gave

her room to breathe.

"Alright, thanks, Mr. Dorsey." She stood up, leaning on her cane, and re-presented the washed fruit. "I won't keep you any

longer, Mr. Dorsey. You probably have meetings to attend. Take care."

As she spoke, Max reached out and took hold of her wrist. Brielle's eyes were drawn to the black rosary he wore, making him

seem even more ethereal, as though he truly belonged in the heavens.

"Are you upset?"

It was rare for him to notice her mood. Brielle looked down at the fruit in her hands. The act of serving it only to take it back

seemed childish and foolish.

Taking a deep breath, she placed the fruit back on the table. "No, Uncle Max. You're probably used to exotic fruits, flown in from

abroad. I didn't want to disappoint."

"If you like, I can have Brent arrange for daily deliveries." His tone was casual, as if puzzled by her preoccupation with such

trivialities.

Brielle's heart sank. Her concerns were far from being about the fruit. Her gaze returned to the rosary beads on his wrist, and

she couldn't help but think of Alivia, who had a similar string, likely a gift from him. Giving such a gift to a woman, no wonder they

found it hard to forget him.

She extended her pale finger and toyed with the beads. "Uncle Max, could you give me this rosary?"

The question surprised even her. Realizing what she had said, she panicked, disregarding the pain in her leg. and hastily

pressed her lips to his.

Max wrapped his arms around her waist, tilting his head slightly. "In such a hurry? Are you sure your leg can handle it?"

Her heart raced as she kissed him again. Why had she asked for the rosary? Why did she want it? She must be losing her mind.

She lowered her head and bit gently into his neck.

Max grasped her chin, his eyes dark and intense, "You had a fever last night. It's best not to play with fire now

Just as he finished speaking, a loud banging erupted from the door.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!"

Spencer could hardly contain the urge to smash the door down. The fact that Brielle had been to the police station and he was

the last to know infuriated him.

Spencer, always prideful, checked his phone multiple times. Surely, in her time of need, Brielle should have called him for help,

but there were no missed calls from her.

Since when had Brielle stopped reaching out to him with messages and calls? The realization stoked a fire within him. He was

angry that he cared even the slightest.

What right did she have, a woman who did nothing but seduce men, to occupy his thoughts? Was it wrong for him to have slept

with Lillian? Perhaps Brielle had already been with other men, keeping it a secret all along. It wasn't that he had cheated on her.

Brielle had betrayed him first.

Chapter 88

"Brielle! Open up right now!" Anger and humiliation churned within, a tempest raging in his chest.

Brielle lounged on the couch, making no move toward the door, her arms instead wrapped around Max's neck.

Max glanced down at her, easing her hands away, "Not going to answer the door?"

Brielle snorted with amusement, pointing first at him, then back to herself, "So that he can find out that the almighty Mr. Dorsey

has graced us mere mortals with his presence to personally attend to an employee?"

"Wouldn't be the end of the world."

"Bang! Bang!"

The pounding on the door persisted, a clear sign that if the door wasn't opened, the knocking would become a permanent fixture.

Cleverly, Brielle grabbed her phone and quickly powered it down. Outside, Spencer indeed began to call.

"Sorry, the number you have dialed is switched off." Frustration nearly drove him to crush his phone, but then Lillian called.

Spencer paused, irritation flickering in his eyes. In truth, the specific reason he had ended up in Lillian's arms was now a blur. He

only remembered drinking and feeling irritated by Brielle, unable to resist pouring out his grievances to Lillian.

His mind, muddled by booze, remembered only the softness of her embrace, and her whispering, "If it were me, I wouldn't let you

suffer like this.”

Indeed, being in his favor was a blessing, yet Brielle seemed clueless about treasuring it.

“Lillian, what’s up?” His tone was clipped, leaning casually against the door, devoid of his usual warmth.

Sizing up his mood, Lillian tread lightly, “Spencer, have you gone to see Bri?”

At the mention of Brielle, Spencer felt a blockage in his heart. He didn’t feel loved with her, but with Lillian, he felt everything.

Lillian was understanding, considerate, and even after knowing he was unwilling to break off the engagement, she didn’t express

her grievances. She remained gentle, not forcing fate, and throughout, he was the only man in her life. Compared to the fickle

Brielle, Lillian was perfection.

Guilt pricked at Spencer, prompting a swift denial. “No, I’m at the Dorsey estate. Max needed to discuss some business.”

The apartment’s poor soundproofing meant his words were crystal clear to the pair inside.

Brielle’s eyebrow arched, her fingers idly twirling Max’s tie. “Uncle Max, you needed him for something?”

Max gently pressed her hand down, careful not to disturb her injured leg.

Outside, Spencer’s clumsy lies continued. “Just some work stuff. Max can be quite serious in private.”

Lillian’s heart raced. She had never had the chance to see Max’s private side or to gaze up close at that face, which must be a

happiness in itself. She felt her mouth dry out, suspecting every woman probably dreamed of conquering him. Yet, here she was,

without even a chance to speak to him. Maybe Spencer was her opportunity.

“Spencer, do you dine privately with Max? Does he know about Brielle’s situation?”

At the first question, Spencer almost responded, but the second question made him explode. “Why should he know about

Brielle’s affairs? They hardly speak, maybe cross paths at work, but his world revolves around his job. When has he ever looked

at a woman? Let alone one who’s engaged.”

Lillian exhaled in relief. Although she had intentionally leaked Brielle’s attempt to seduce Max to Emily, and she had edited the

video, she was always unsettled about why they appeared together at the auction. It was her lingering concern. She feared

losing control of the situation.

Spencer's response was the reassurance she needed. Indeed, Max had been devoted to his career for years, his only gossip

involving with one Miss Barnes, and no other woman came close.

Brielle had merely taken advantage of her work position.

Lillian's lips curved into a smile, her thoughts crystallizing. She longed to see Max, to speak softly to him. To lock gazes, even if

only for a few seconds, would be enough to savor for a lifetime.

Chapter 89

"Spencer, you go ahead and have a good chat with Max. I won't intrude," she said with a considerate tone.

Spencer nodded, ending the call and feeling all the more appreciative of Lillian's sensibility.

Spencer looked up at the firmly shut door with a flicker of disdain in his eyes. He must be out of his mind to come all this way for

a woman like that.

Brielle? She was worth this hassle?

His face darkened, and without hesitation, he turned on his heel and strode away, unaware that on the other side of the door, the

workaholic 'Uncle Max' had a woman sitting on his lap.

Brielle's hands were still looped around Max's neck, her head resting against his chest. Max's palm gently caressed her back

before he firmly grasped her chin, forcing her to look up. "You've been crying?"

He didn't know the ins and outs of Brielle's entanglement with Spencer, only that they were once engaged. As for their past

affection, he couldn't care less.

Brielle, with top honors from Beaconsfield College, a stunning face, and formidable work skills, was certainly more than a match

for Spencer.

“Still hung up on him?”

Brielle almost retched at the thought. Her, liking Spencer? Impossible.

Her distress was only due to the shock of seeing someone she had known for over a decade change so drastically, as if her

entire past life were a facade now cracked to reveal its true nature.

But Max’s misunderstanding wasn’t such a bad thing. After all, compared to the minor discomfort she felt toward Spencer, her

emotions for Max were a tumultuous wave.

It may be better to let the misunderstanding continue. It was better than letting others know about those budding delusions.

“Yes, we were engaged for over a decade. How could I not have feelings for him?”

The pressure on her chin increased, and she winced in pain. Max’s eyes darkened, not understanding why he felt a pang of

anger.

“You seduced me while still harboring feelings for him. Brielle, are your affections that cheap?”

The fleeting emotion vanished, and he lifted her in his arms, positioning her so as not to hurt her legs.

Getting angry over a caged canary, especially one with someone else in her heart, was pointless. He was to enjoy the moment

and nothing more.

Max couldn’t help but repeat this mantra, yet seeing the hurt in her eyes softened him. “Find someone new to fancy. He’s not

worth it.”

It was the first time anyone had told Brielle that someone else was unworthy, rather than questioning what she deserved. Her

spirits lifted, and she couldn’t resist starting to unbutton his shirt.

“Uncle Max, I think we shouldn’t talk about other men at a time like this.”

Max chuckled, leaning in to capture her lips with his, “Just don’t think about him in your heart.”

“How could I? Ask any woman out there as long as she’s not blind, she’d know who to choose between you and Spencer.

Besides, you’re far better in bed than he is.”

The moment the words left her lips, the warmth in the air vanished. His eyes grew cold.

Brielle knew she was pushing her luck. He had never asked how far she and Spencer had gone – had they kissed? Embraced?

Slept together?

Most people would assume that after so many years of engagement, she and Spencer must have shared a bed. She deliberately

clarified this to gauge his reaction. However, his gaze was unfathomable, deep as an abyss.

The kissing resumed, along her lips, her jaw, her neck. His touch was fiercer than usual – he had always been passionate, but

never quite like this, as if he wanted to shatter her.

“How much better than him?”

He paused at the peak of their passion, his question a deliberate provocation.

Brielle’s mind was hazy, fireworks exploding before her eyes. She didn’t understand what he was asking. The world seemed to

swirl into an impressionist painting. She reached out to grasp him, but her hands were caught and pinned above her head.

“Just a little better, or much better?”

Tears sprang to Brielle’s eyes. She bit her lip, refusing to speak. He was being cruel, punishing her like this.

“Brielle, answer me.”

Chapter 90

Brielle shook her head, tears cascading down her cheeks with increased fervor. In the hours that followed, it seemed he tortured

her on purpose.

“Have you done this position with him?”

“Could he make you cry like this?”

“If we’re comparing, we should do it position by position. Did you do it in the bathroom too?”

Brielle felt like she was losing her mind, torn between humiliation and the primal stirrings within her body. She never should have

taunted a man in bed.

“Uncle Max, I’m so sorry.”

Her cheeks were slick with sweat as she pitifully clutched at his sleeve.

His suit jacket lay discarded at the foot of the bed, but his shirt remained on—though it was a rumpled mess

from their encounter.

Brielle had always known how he was in bed, a stark contrast to The Priest. When he interrogated someone, his cruelty seemed

to know no bounds.

Opposite The Priest, he was like a dazzlingly colorful poison butterfly, an entangling siren, a being one should rightly fear and

revere, yet irresistibly fall into his seductive snare.

Brielle regretted her actions so deeply it hurt, and after many sweet nothings and tears, she finally managed to

soothe the man to a stop.

Max brushed the tears from her cheeks with a chuckle, “Is that all you’ve got?” His voice was raspy with a hint of post—passion,

echoing close to her ear.

The anger in her heart dissipated instantly—this was Max, with just a few words he could make one long to live for him, or die for

him.

The apartment was filled with sounds of passion.

Meanwhile, at the police station, thanks to Andrew’s intervention, Sophia was quickly released. As for the thug who started the

fight, he was sentenced, and the so—called trade secrets? Andrew had said he wouldn’t pursue it, so naturally, the police

wouldn’t either.

Sophia walked out behind Andrew, her face beaming with relief. “Andrew, don’t worry, I’ll definitely put in a good word for you

with my cousin.”

Everyone knew how much Andrew cared for Tessa—whatever Tessa wanted, Andrew would do.

Andrew was impatient with these female squabbles, but he still had to follow through on his promise to Brielle. “Get in touch with

Emily from the Hatfield family. I want you two to personally apologize to Brielle, and don’t you dare half—ass it.”

Max had given him respect, and he had to do the same for Max.

Sophia's face stiffened, her lips pursing in reluctance. "She doesn't have any real status in the Dorsey family. What's there to

fear? Besides, you said yourself there was no trade secret issue. I should be the one to sue her for slander."

With the Rowland family and Andrew backing her, what did she have to fear from Brielle?

"Andrew, Brielle and Spencer's relationship is just for show. Spencer doesn't even want to keep up appearances."

Andrew lit a cigarette, his sharp gaze pinning her down. Sophia's smugness vanished as if someone had, choked her.

Andrew scoffed, "I'm willing to talk to you out of respect for Tessa. If you and Emily don't go, it's not just Brielle I won't let off."

Sophia felt a chill run down her spine, unable to move a muscle. How could she forget how unapproachable Andrew could be?

Apart from Tessa, he had never shown favor to any other woman.

She quickly lowered her head, avoiding his piercing eyes. "Andrew, I understand. I'll contact Emily right away."

Andrew didn't bother giving her another glance, stepping into his car and driving away.

Watching the car disappear, Sophia gritted her teeth in frustration. She couldn't fathom why Andrew insisted on the apology.

What was he wary of? Spencer? Impossible. Spencer, a playboy with no real power, was nothing in Andrew's eyes.

The Haywood family? Although their business had improved over the years due to their connection with the Dorsey family, it

wasn't enough for Andrew to show them favor.

Sophia racked her brain but couldn't come up with an answer. In the end, she decided to call Tessa. "Tessa, Andrew wants me to

apologize to Brielle at her doorstep. Do you think he's taking Brielle's side?"

Sophia was well-liked by Tessa. She always sweet-talked her and spent a lot of time keeping her company. She knew Tessa

enjoyed Andrew's favors and wouldn't tolerate any other woman having a special place with him.

Sure enough, upon hearing this, Tessa sat up straight. "Did he tell you that himself?"