

Chapter 5

Robin sneered, didn’t even blink.

Then—

The door swung open.

A wave of cold authority crashed into the room.

Katherine walked in, unbothered and unreadable, her sharp gaze sweeping across the faces in the room.

Ryder stiffened instantly.

“M-Miss Katherine?” His voice trembled.

Katherine’s icy gaze locked onto him. “Yes. Is there a problem here?”

Robin leaned against the counter, arms crossed, watching as Ryder Flynn, who had been full of arrogance just seconds ago, now trembled.

“M- Miss Katherine,” he stammered, his throat bobbing as he swallowed nervously.

He knew exactly who Katherine was-the CEO of Eagle Industries, the largest conglomerate in the city. She wasn't just powerful; she was untouchable. Rumors swirled about her influence, not just in the business world but in the military as well. She was second only to the chairman of Eagle Industries, and just a word from her could make or break anyone in this city.

One wrong move, and she could shut down his store-or worse, ruin his life.

Katherine barely spared him a glance before turning to Robin. “What happened?”

Robin sighed dramatically, rubbing his chin.

“Well,” he drawled, shooting a look at Madeline and Samantha, “according to them, I’m a stray mutt who picked up a fake black card in the trash. Apparently, I’m also playing pretend and don’t deserve the Voidfire Crystal.”

Katherine’s expression didn’t change, but the air around her did.

“Is that so?” she asked, voice soft.

Ryder's face turned the color of curdled milk. “N-no! This is a misunderstanding! I... It's just that I didn't know he was your driver.”

My driver?

Katherine's face turned frosty, the air around her so cold that it sent shivers down everyone's spine. Then, without warning—

SLAP!

The crisp impact of her palm against Ryder's face rippled through the store like a gunshot.

Gasps echoed. The clerk recoiled in horror. Ryder staggered, clutching his face, eyes wide with shock. A red imprint bloomed across his cheek.

“S-Katherine, I—”

“You had one job,” Katherine said icily. “And you messed it up by siding with clowns.”

Madeline’s face twisted in disbelief. “H-How dare you?! This is outrageous!”

Katherine turned to her, looking bored, almost disappointed. “How dare I?” She chuckled. “Sweetheart, I don’t dare—I decide. And I’ve decided that both of you need to shut up.”

Madeline opened her mouth to protest, but before she could—

The store doors slammed open.

A wave of tension rolled in as an older man in a tailored suit rushed inside like a hurricane. His breathing was uneven, as if he had run the entire way.

“S-Katherine!” he practically screamed. “I didn’t know you were here!”

Ryder flinched like he had been struck again. The color drained from his face.

The store’s boss turned on him like a wolf who just smelled blood.

“What have you done?”

Ryder visibly shrank. “B-Boss, I—”

“Shut it,” the boss snapped. “You’re fired. Get out.”

“No... no, sir, please! I-I didn’t mean—”

“Do I need to repeat myself?”

The boss didn’t wait for an answer. He simply motioned to security, who grabbed Ryder like he was nothing more than a sack of garbage and dragged him out the door.

Madeline and Samantha stared, frozen in disbelief.

“You bitch!” Madeline suddenly blurted. “That crystal was meant for the president of the Tozer Group! My to-be son-in-law! He’ll make you pay the price!”

Katherine tilted her head. “Oh? Make me pay the price?” Then, she smirked, slow and sharp like a blade. “That's hilarious.”

Samantha stomped her foot. “You’ll regret this! You think you’re untouchable? I bet you’re just another new rich woman who—”

"ENOUGH."

The store owner's roar silenced the room. His face had gone purple with rage, veins bulging at his temples. “Guards!

Get these harpies out!"

Two burly security guards materialized, yanking the women's arms backward in painful holds.

"Your whole family are banned from all of our eighty-six global subsidiaries from now on. Try buying so much as a handkerchief from any of them!"

"You can't do this!"Madeline shrieked, her Valentino blouse tearing as a guard dragged her toward the exit.

Samantha's Prada bag hit the marble floor with a sickening crunch of broken crystal as they were shoved into the rain-soaked alley.

Madeline staggered against a dumpster, her platinum blonde hair extensions coming loose in the security cameras' harsh floodlights.

"That low-born gutter snipe!" she hissed,"Sarah must fix this!"

Then she yanked out her phone with shaking hands, the cracked screen mirroring her disintegrating composure.

The call connected.

“What, Mom?”

"Your worthless ex is ruining us!" Madeline screeched, "Robin's new whore just got us banned from the entire Emerald Vault network! And he stole the Voidfire Crystal!"

“Robin?” Sarah's voice turned sharp as a knife.