

## Mr. President You Are The Daddy Of My Triplets Chapter 21

21 21- Mistress?

"Where did you go? You don't usually carry a purse around..." Akari asked Marissa while cutting the carrot into fine sticks. @

Marissa was stitching Ariel's skirt hem. The little girl was sitting on the countertop, stirring the spatula in a bowl that had candies.

She seemed to share her mom's passion for cooking.

"Are you ready, princess?" Citra peeped inside and then waved at Marissa. They all were ready to go to the park along with Flint and were waiting for Ariel.

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Marissa kissed each kid's forehead. "Don't let Abi run around in the park."

She called behind them and closed the door with a smile.

Akari had placed half of the carrot sticks in a steel bowl and was now doing preparations for carrot sauce.

"Are you avoiding my question?" she asked Marissa who was tossing all the aprons in a tub to get them washed.

"No, silly. I was waiting for the kids to leave. And about your question?" she picked a carrot stick and started nibbling on it, "In that office... I felt uneasy and..." she drew in a long breath, "this man... Dean... for a minute, he didn't seem confident enough. Sometime he acts like a manager and then the next minute he sounds like the boss's messenger."

She started filling the huge glass jars with white flour, "I found him. quite confident, and I think he likes me," Akari couldn't seem to

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21 21-Mistress?

hold on to her excitement.

“Yeah,” Marissa started rolling the empty paper bag, “That I can see. It was pretty obvious.”

“By the way, what did that cleaner lady tell you?” Akari took a whiff of the mixture and slowed down the flame of the burner.

Marissa gave her a tightlipped smile and placed the jar carefully in the cabinet, “She was praising the owner. She said that they care for their employees and keep offering different perks to them. The best employee gets a vacation or a good bonus or the best salesman can get a scholarship for their kid. The benefits are endless. To tell you the truth, I was pretty impressed by the details.” Akari curved down her lips and checked the burner again. The sauce needed the perfect temperature for the preparation, “Can you pass me some honey?”

“What are you planning to do with Mr. Amir?” Marissa who was taking out the honey jar, got frozen by the question.

“We won’t tell him anything, Akari. Let’s get that contract first. Once we get enough money, we can dump it on his sorry a\*ss.”

Akari had a thoughtful expression on her face, “I hope he doesn’t come back.”

Marissa took a look at her employee’s scared face who was also her very close friend, “Don’t worry. Next time he is here. Let me deal.

with him.”

Akari nodded and got back to work. She needed to prepare honey soy glazed carrots for one of their old customers.

Marissa kept emptying groceries in their respective jars when both

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21 21–Mistress

of them heard the knock. Akari’s **face** got pale, “It must be him.”

Marissa felt sorry for the poor girl. Something needed to be done against that man, for doing something so inappropriate.

She went to the door and took a sigh of relief when she didn’t find him. on the door.

“Dean?” the MSin assistant cum manager was standing there carrying a dossier in his hand.

“Hello, Ms. Marissa. Sorry for coming unannounced.” He smiled broadly.

“That’s not a problem, Mr. Dean. We did the same yesterday when visited your office. Please come inside,” She moved aside to let him,

1. in.

However, the moment he and Akari saw each other, Marissa could feel sparks in the room.

“Hello,” Akari placed the spatula on the counter and walked up to Dean.

Marissa closed her eyes in frustration. Her employees knew better never to put a dirty spatula directly on the counter surface.

“Marissa. I brought the contract for you. The rest of the nineteen already signed it and you were late due to that misunderstanding,”

That uncertain feeling again settled in the pit of her stomach. He was here to get the contract signed.

Does he do it for every person they do business with? Her eyes landed on Akari’s flushed face. Or was he doing it as an excuse to meet Akari?

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This has to be the latter one. He was here due to Akari.

Marissa offered him a stool by the counter and then brought beer cans from the refrigerator. While they were engaged in the conversation, she took the time to go through the contract details.

They were not only paying well but were also ready to provide some space for her food court in their office. She was allowed to display her brand name too.

This was such a lucrative offer, all Marissa wanted was to grab the opportunity.

She thought for a minute and signed the contract. This was not the final one as they were ready to offer more, once she would pass.

the food trial.

“Here is the file, Mr. Dean.”

“Thank you, Ms. Marissa Aaron.” He bent his head in acknowledgment.

“Please call me, Marissa,” Dean who was casually observing her signatures gave a friendly smile,

‘In that case, please call me Dean.’

There was some commotion outside the kitchen and Marissa quickly opened the door. The kids were back from the park and Dean saw Marissa’s face lit up when she saw the kids.

Damn. She is a mom and looks so young,” *And* beautiful too.

He whispered to Akari when he saw the small girls with fascination

but kept the last part to himself. However, nothing in

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21 21–Mistress?

his wildest dreams prepared him for what he saw at that very minute.

The three-year-old guy who entered the kitchen following his sisters looked exactly like the CEO of MSI Industries.

“*What the hell is going on here?*” he thought to himself. And then he started thinking about Rafael’s desperation to get the contract signed by Marissa.

How he asked Dean to use Joseph’s name in every meeting

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Wasn’t he already married to Valerie Sinclair?

Was Marissa his mistress?

Comentario 0

12:4

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Posted by **admind**, ? Views, Released on July 4, 2024

22 22—Joseph

The Xander's kitchen was buzzing with all sorts of noise. They needed to prepare the food so that it could be sent for the trial. "

"Marissa! Akari! For God's sake leave the kitchen and get ready!" Sophia was screaming at the top of her lungs.

Marissa's team was preparing the three—course meal along with Beef Fajita. They had mutually decided on a Vegetarian Mediterranean themed Meal.

Hummus and Pita for an appetizer. Vegetable Moussaka was the main course and for dessert, they had decided on Baklava.

"Citra!" Sophia clapped loudly just like Marissa used to do in the kitchen, "What's the position?"

"It'll be ready in the next fifteen minutes, Sophia," Citra was quickly mixing honey and nuts.

"Amanda!" she called another worker.

"I just need to run the blender before five minutes timeline and then I'll just garnish it with black olives and some olive oil. Hummus needs to be presented fresh... Pita is half-cooked and I'll give final touches at the last minute," Amanda informed busily.

Sophia found Marissa discussing something with her employee and all Sophia wanted to do was shake her friend wildly.

Why couldn't she understand that she was required to represent her venture and needed to get ready on time?

"Marissa Aaron! I will kill you if you don't leave the kitchen right

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<22 22—Joseph

now! This very minute!” Marissa jumped when Sophia screamed at the top of her lungs.

“I just wanted to make sure...” Poor Marissa trailed off when found Sophia glaring at her. With a nod, she hurriedly left the kitchen. However, she was Marissa, and anything could be expected of her.

“Citra! Make sure to cover the aluminum foil properly! Make it airtight!” she was still giving orders when Sophia slapped her ass before slamming the kitchen door in her face.

Marissa took a long sigh and then turned to get to her room. Today she needed to look her best because this might be the biggest

contract of her life.

A contract that would help her get rid of that dirty insect called Amir and it might also give her business much needed exposure.

She quickly changed into a beige midi dress along with an olive green jacket. Instead of caking her face with makeup, she just went with deep red lip color along with mascara and kohl.

“Wow, Mom!” Alexander who was standing behind her whistled making her spin around in surprise.

“Who taught you to whistle?”

“That doesn’t matter, Mom,” he looked at her in awe, “Your beauty.

made me do it!”

Marissa who was initially freaked out due to the competition, threw back her head and laughed hard.

She kneeled before her son and cupped his cheek, “From where, did you learn these cheesy lines, Alexander? Is Flint teaching you

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22 22—Joseph

to romance?”

Alex shook his head with a smile, “Forget that, Mom. Just.

remember. You are too good... as a human, as a mom, and as a chef. A successful businesswoman indeed and I’m proud of you.” He

kissed her cheek making her teary-eyed.

But the next words that came out of his mouth took her by surprise, “Mom. I know this is not the time to talk. I just needed to tell you that I won’t judge you... Ever. I’m not only your son but also your friend. If you find it in your heart, do tell me about the man who hurt you and gave you pain. I would like to get even with him.”

Her mouth was hung open at the words and the way he brushed her cheeks with his chubby hand, “I’ll always love you. Go and blast the place. Today they’ll come to know how tough the competition

is.”

“Oh, God, Alex!” she hugged him and tried her best to control her tears.

He had always been an extraordinary genius. A long time back, Flint did predict once that he was exceptionally intelligent.

“Mom,” his voice muffled against her chest, “I know you’re beautiful but please don’t spoil your makeup.”

A teary laughter escaped her lips.

“You three are the best things ever happened to me!” he kissed her cheek with a smile.

When she got to her feet there was a proud grin on her face, “Just watch me, Rafael.” She thought, “See how blessed I am. Sometimes I feel sorry for you, honey.”

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22 22—Joseph

She quickly fixed her mascara and examined herself.

“Mom. You look lovely,” she beamed when saw Abi and Ariel push the door and come inside.

“Thank you, girls,” she offered her cheek to get kissed by them.

She went down and saw the girls of her team carrying trays covered in aluminum foil to the car!

All of them started whistling and clapping when she entered the kitchen making her blush.

“You people are embarrassing me!” she rolled her eyes and was sure the blush had given a beautiful hue to her cheeks and ear

lobes.

“Best of luck, Marissa!”

“Bye!”

They all kept making noise until the car started moving slowly.

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Sophia dropped her and Akari along with the trays of food. Marissa got out of the car and checked the aluminum foil packing, pressing it from the edges.

“Best of luck, girls!” Sophia said, giving them a thumbs-up before zooming away in the car.

-Trying to balance the trays, they entered the MSin building and

were immediately taken to the conference room where other participants were also there.

“Hello, everyone,” Marissa greeted them good-naturedly and

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22 22–Joseph

placed the food on a table.

“You need to place your food on that desk,” A friendly middle-aged woman told them pointing in the direction.

Marissa nodded and immediately picked up the tray. Akari was busy talking to another participant

“I can easily carry them.” She thought to herself and picked up two trays. However, she didn’t know whose elbow nudged into her ribs, and her trays went almost flying. Marissa was sure the blond girl standing there did this to her.

Several gasps could be heard in the room when the trays landed with a clanking sound, causing all the food to spill out.

There was another shock for Marissa when she saw who had entered through the door. He was the same man who she met in the superstore.

Who was he?

There was something fishy here. This man was not what he was portraying himself to be.

“Mr. Joseph. How are you?” Marissa looked up when a participant spoke behind her.

Joseph? Who was he? She had heard this name before. But where?

5/6

Posted by **admind**, ? Views, Released on July 4, 2024

23 23- Longing

“Please get this mess cleared,” Joseph ordered someone and turned to her, “It’s ok ma’am. Please don’t feel disheartened.”

He took a slow lingering look around the room especially at all the dishes on the long table, “If all your food has fallen on the floor, we can give you a second chance.”

Joseph didn’t give her any choice to speak or to express that she knew him, and they had already met.

“Beef Fajita and Baklava are safe, sir,” She tried to convey to him in a clipped tone and gave a hard stare to the blond responsible for this

mess.

She was blowing on her nails as if trying to blow dry the nail color. She just raised her eyes for a moment to meet Marissa's gaze and then moved away to talk to someone standing close to her.

The rest of the participants were still standing in a shocked state.

"It takes hard work to come up with such amazing dishes and here this precious food is on the floor," A woman who was also a participant remarked with a sad expression on her face.

Marissa felt a hand on her shoulder. Upon turning around she found Akari's worried face,

"Marissa!" she couldn't speak anymore.

"It's OK, Akari. We won't give up so easily. I promise," At last Marissa smiled. She wasn't about to back down just like that just because a jealous dame decided to push her.

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23 23—Longing

She saw the superstore guy tasting the food of all the participants. one by one that was lying on the table. When it was Marissa's turn, he picked up the fork and stuck a beef piece in it.

When he took it in his mouth, Marissa saw his eyes rolling back in bliss. It was Rafael's ever favorite dish and now today this man was literally moaning while chewing it, taking his sweet time.

"Who made this?" his tongue was swiping on his teeth to wipe it.

clean.

Dean was quick to move forward, "This one is by Xander's caterers,

sir."

Joseph took two to three more pieces and then shifted his focus to the baklava glazed with sugar syrup.

He held it between his index finger and thumb and pushed it into his mouth, "Umm. Awe some... Waow..."

Though Marissa was disturbed by the accident and the way her hard work was spoiled, but this time she couldn't stop smiling.

She needed to confront this man about his suspicious presence in the superstore but there was another shock in store for her when Mr. Joseph asked an office worker to take her two dishes to the main office.

Now who sits in the main office? Or this man wanted all the food

for himself?

"Can't other participants try it?" Marissa asked the unexpected question taking everyone by surprise, "I mean we all should taste each other's food. In this way, we'll know that the selections are fair and square."

2/6

23 23—Longing

She said with a shrug and found several participants nodding, agreeing with her opinion. With a forced smile, Joseph didn't have much choice but to go with the suggestion of the majority.

The rest of the participants were handed over disposable plates and spoons and were invited to take the food from the table.

Within a few minutes, it became more like a party where people were chattering to each other.

Most of the participants came to Marissa to show respect, "Ms. Aaron. You have got taste. The two dishes that are part of the entry.

are awesome."

"I agree," another participant spoke, "I wonder those dishes that she dropped, how did they taste,"

"Yeah. It was a waste. But she is welcome to invite all of us for a delicious meal at her place," though it was a joke but it warmed Marissa's heart to hear such compliments.

Marissa took those kind words with a smile when the same blond who poked her elbow in her ribs came to her with a plate, "Beef Fajita was a

common dish for everyone. I don't know what you put in there. However, the one I made is an authentic recipe."

Akari was about to utter something rude when Marissa stopped

her.

"Why did you push me, ma'am? If that was some stunt to win, then that was quite cheap," The blond was not expecting Marissa to speak up and batted her eyelashes dramatically.

She glanced at the people around her and let out a hesitant laugh, "You must be delusional... ha-ha. It was just an accident." She

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23 23—Longing

raised her shoulders casually and all Marissa wanted to do was to strangle her neck.

She was sure that it was an intentional move.

They had one hour until the results would be announced.

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Rafael was pacing around in his office like a restless lion. He watched everything on the LED screen of his office.

The door burst open, and Joseph came inside closing the door behind him. Rafael at once got to him, "Man! How did it happen? You should have taken some action. One minute she was bringing her dishes to the table, quite confidently and the next minute all of it was on the floor."

"Cool down. Everything is under control. Beef Fajita and Baklava were safe, and we all tasted it. Oh. My. God! It was heavenly! We all

loved it!"

Rafael had a deep frown on his face, "What do you mean you ALL loved it? Where is my cut, man?" Joseph got quiet for a minute.

ИТ



“Joseph!” there was a warning in his eyes, but Joseph just gulped down his saliva to face his friend, “Y...your wife was the one... who suggested to... let everyone taste the dishes... for fair and square

results.”

Rafael gave a death stare to his friend while Joseph was looking at the carpet, trying to hide his sheepish smile.

They both turned when the door got knocked and Dean came inside holding a plate. He extended his hand to hand over it to

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23 23- Longing

Rafael, who was standing there like a statue.

“Umm... I... no thanks...” Rafael gave a subtle look to the food and turned away.

“Please, Mr. Sinclair. Take it. Among the three winners, we are considering handing one of the contracts to Ms. Aaron. Her food was unmatched.” He might be serious but there was a knowing” twinkle in his eyes.

Rafael didn’t know what Dean was up to.

With hesitancy, he held the plate and picked up the beef piece. dipped in sauce and so wet, to push into his mouth. The moment it touched his tongue, all Rafael wanted to do was run to his wife and kiss her hard.

Like a kid, he took a nearby seat instead of taking his head seat and started eating it, without looking here or there.

Dean’s eyes were on his boss who usually seemed like a Godzilla.

Rude, arrogant, and domineering.

Right now, there was softness on his face.

Boss was certainly in love with his mistress. But what would. happen to his wife? Though she was a brat but still...

“Dean!” Dean straightened when Joseph waved his hand before his eyes, “What are you thinking?”

Dean shook his head and eyed Rafael Sinclair, “Boss! Please take your time, you have got at least one hour to yourself. I hope you remember. When the contracts will be given, the winners will come to your office to meet you. It’s a custom to meet the CEO

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23 23—Longing

after getting a contract.”

Rafael who was chewing the crunchy baklava, stopped moving his mouth for a minute and raised his face to look into Dean’s eyes.

For the first time, Dean saw something alien in those orbs... longing!

Posted by **admind**, ? Views, Released on July 4, 2024

24 24- Daddy Of Her Triplets

“Excuse me!” Marissa got to her feet when she noticed Sophia’s incoming call. Her friend must be dying to know the details.

“Where are you going? To bribe Mr. Joseph?” The lady who made her fall followed her boldly outside the room.

What? Is she crazy?

Marissa looked at the blond woman still wearing the MSin’s apron above her mini dress, showing off her long legs.

“Yes, you are right,” Marissa passed her a fake smile, “Don’t you know?” She batted her eyelashes just like the blond woman did a few minutes ago, “I’m planning to become a billionaire by bribing people. Not by my cooking business...” Marissa was about to step away when the next statement from the blonde’s mouth made her

freeze.

“That’s what Amir told me,” She smirked, and Marissa didn’t know

what to do. So, Amir sent her?

He sent her after Marissa to keep an eye **on** her? How dare he?

She asked her in a breathless whisper, "You know Amir?"

"Yes, I do," There was a proud grin on the blonde's face, "I'm his fiancée," she waved her left hand before Marissa's eyes, showing off her diamond ring.

Marissa was tongue tied for a moment. The cheap man was

engaged, and still, he not only attempted to invite Marissa on a date but also tried to abuse Akari.

12:42

24 24—Daddy Of Her Triplets

**That** shameless prick!

"What a low—  
life fiancé you have got!" Marissa hissed at the woman whose grin vanished when heard Marissa speaking through clenched teeth, "No wonder. You two are suitable for each other. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to take this call."

Without waiting for her response, she received the call, "Yes, Sophie. Just give me a minute," she quickly put some distance between herself and that vile woman.

She would teach this woman and her good-for—  
nothing fiancé a good lesson. Gritting her teeth, she glued the phone against her

ear,

"Sophie!"

"How was it girl? Everyone here is getting crazy. I'm putting you on speaker. What's the result?" Sophie asked her impatiently.

"They haven't announced it yet, Sophie. But something bad happened," she could hear gasps from the other side.

"Why? What happened?"

"Due to a woman's jealousy, I dropped my dishes on the floor."

"What!" there were now loud chattering sounds in the background. Everyone gathered in her kitchen was concerned.

"Yeah. The good thing is Fajita and Baklava stayed safe. The judges tasted it and decided to judge me on those two dishes. They are ready to give me a fair chance."

“Oh, Marissa. Fingers crossed. We are waiting for the results impatiently.”

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<24 24–Daddy Of Her Triplets.

“I know, honey. Ask everyone to pray hard. I need this contract to teach a lesson to Amir.”

There was surprise in Sophia’s voice, “Now what has Amir got to do with these contracts?”

“I’ll tell you later, Sophie,” she looked over her shoulder, “I think I need to go back,” after quick goodbyes, she disconnected the call and walked back to the room where other participants were waiting for the results.

Sophia could feel her heart racing in her chest. Though the chances of her selection were almost slim. 2

She found the blonde’s eyes on herself, but she chose to ignore. her.

When the door opened to the conference room, all the participants straightened in their seats.

Joseph looked at all of them and then gave a reassuring smile, “We have got the results, and the good thing is ... we loved your food so much that we chose four participants for our event instead of three.”

A loud cheer erupted and all of them clapped excitedly.

“Those who couldn’t make it, let me tell you. We liked your food. So maybe next time you people can join us for our next event.”

He then turned to Dean who was standing behind him and took some large envelopes from him, “We are offering certificates to those who won’t make it today. Showing these certificates will give you more lucrative opportunities in the market. So, it’s a win–win

situation.”

2:42

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24 24- Daddy Of Her Triplets

Another round of clap made him quiet.

“So, the winners are,” Joseph paused for a moment, “Delish Delights!”

The blonde who was standing in the corner jumped with joy.

“Woohoo!” she threw her fist in the air when everybody clapped.

“The next is... Eggs and Sandwiches...” he then spoke again, “And here comes, Xander’s Homestyle caterers!”

Marissa stood up with uncertainty on her face. She thought that they gave her a fair chance just for the sake of it. However, she wasn’t expecting this win.

“Mr. Joseph!” the blonde whose name was Kate raised her hand, “How come she is selected? Her dishes fell on the floor, and you judged her based on two dishes?”

“Wasn’t it an accident?” Joseph raised a challenging eyebrow in her direction.

“Yeah. It might be. Or...” Kate rolled her eyes meaningfully, “it might be intentional too.” She shrugged taking everyone by surprise including Marissa.

“What do you mean?” One of the participants spoke while Marissa was busy suppressing her rage.

“What I mean to say is... what If those dishes were dropped. intentionally so that nobody could taste them. She brought them here, showed them to everyone, and dropped them just like that. Being a chef, can’t make her this clumsy.”

There was a deafening silence in the room.

24 24- Daddy Of Her Triplets

Joseph cleared his throat and nodded at Kate, “You are right. First thing is first. We judged you fairly and you all tasted her food. I don’t think anyone who can prepare Fajita and Baklava so perfectly can’t cook the other two dishes...”

“Secondly, to be fair and square we chose four participants, not three. Last but not least,” he smiled, “we have a camera installed in

this room. If you are challenging us, then we would happily check the recording and see if she dropped them, or she was pushed.”

That made Kate’s face go pale.

“Umm. I mean...”

“Ms. Kate. Tell us. Do you still want to be fair and square? Because

after looking at the CCTV clips if we’ll find anyone involved in it then he or she will not only be blacklisted but also this person won’t get a job anywhere else in Kanderton. So, the choice is

yours.”

After the announcement, Joseph left, leaving behind a happy crowd and a panicked Kate.

Marissa didn’t show her any side smirks, and tried to be down to earth. She just got a chance to prove herself and she was willing to use all her strength to make her impression.

It was a stepping stone for building her reputation.

After saying congratulations, everyone left except the four participants. Dean was distributing the contracts to get them signed, meanwhile, Marissa sent a quick message to her friend.

“We have got the contract! Yayyy!”

12

517

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24 24- Daddy Of Her Triplets

After the contract signing, they were waiting to meet the CEO.

“I have never seen the CEO of MSin Industries,” a man whose name was Shangchi said with a tired smile.

“You look exhausted!” Marissa inquired and he nodded with a sheepish smile.

“Yeah. First time dad to a one-week-old newly born. It was hard to cook food after staying awake throughout the night... But I did it.”

Marissa felt proud of him.

“I have a hunch,” Kate said in a suspicious tone, “The CEO must be drop-dead gorgeous. That’s the reason he rarely shows himself.”

All the others chuckled at the absurd explanation.

“Come on, folks,” Dean’s head appeared in the doorway, “Our CEO is waiting for you.”

They all stood up chattering to each other and entered the VIP elevator. Once they stepped on the floor that was reserved for only high-designation people, they all gasped in shock.

“Oh, my my. This is classy!” Kate whispered more to herself. They all walked up to the door and waited when Dean opened the door for them and moved aside, gesturing all of them to enter.

The moment they went inside, Marissa froze and felt her breath hitch in her throat.

No! No! This can’t be possible. It is all a dream. This is not him.

She was chanting the words in her head again and again because

67

24 24- Daddy Of Her Triplets

the man who was sitting in the CEO seat, busy **in** reading a file was none other than Rafael Sinclair.

The daddy of her triplets.

Comentario

Posted by **admind**, ? Views, Released on July 4, 2024

25 25- Here I Come!

cry. Ok... don’t

“No, Marissa... don’t... don’t panic... don’t you dare or show your

weakness to this heartless man.” She was consoling herself, repeatedly telling herself that the cold-hearted human who was sitting on the seat of the president was her husband.

The same husband, who kicked her out of his life like garbage. Who couldn’t keep her safe from the politics of his own mother and her sister.

As a husband, how he couldn't sense that all this time the woman. he had been expressing his love to, was not Valerie?

Now today he was here as her soon-to-be boss. At least Amir was better than him. He showed his true colors without wasting much time.

Unlike Rafael who wasted two years of her precious life.

"Congratulations to all of you. Joseph told me how incredible your cooking was. However, the café will only go to one person," he was speaking, and Marissa raised her eyelids to have a look at him.

The scoundrel had become more handsome and wasn't even

glancing at her. Kate, the blond was looking at him as if she wanted to undress him that very minute.

Marissa tried to keep her eyes focused on the edge of the desk while other participants were nodding their heads now and then.

"*You taste like strawberry...*" someone from the past whispered in

her ear.

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25 25-Here I Come!

"*Keep making Beef Fajita for me. I'm sure in future we can sell your Beef Fajitas and it will be enough to get rich. I swear...*

H

He was the one who used to pour those words into her ears, and she believed him.

She could not hear a single word, he was saying to the participants. The only things she could hear right now were from the past.

She jerked when someone placed a coffee cup before her. Snacks were being placed on the desk because the president of MSin Industries was welcoming the winning participants with an open heart.

She tried to wipe the sweat that trickled down her forehead. It was getting difficult for her to sit there in his presence and listen to his mindless talk. At least, to her, it was mindless indeed.



“Excuse me,” she stood abruptly causing the chair to fall behind. All the pairs of eyes were on her now.

“I’m... I think... I’m not well...”

“Marissa...” Dean tried to talk to her, but she just raised her hand to stop him and went out of the door.

The poor Akari apologized to the people in the room and ran after her.

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“Congratulations!” Most of her employees hadn’t left and were waiting for her in the kitchen while drinking coffee.

Marissa smiled and freed her hair from the silk scrunchie giving it

12:42

C

25 25-Here I Come!

a wild shake.

“Thanks...” she brushed her fingers through her hair and looked around in the kitchen.

“You don’t look good to me,” Citra narrowed her eyes to have a better look at her, “You must be exhausted. Why don’t you go and take a rest?”

Marissa was not liking it. All these women, gathered here to celebrate her success. She owed them a little bit of her time.

“Ah! I know that look,” another employee said, “No need to feel guilty, Marissa. You have been working a lot lately and it’s natural if you feel tired. Citra is right. You should take some rest.”

Marissa thanked them and came upstairs to meet her kids. When she went to their bedroom, they had already taken the bath and Flint was reading them a story.

Sitting on a bean bag relaxer, Sophia was nearby, busy on her laptop.

“Hey. You are back!” she exclaimed and hugged her friend tight.

Her kids ran to her in excitement.

“Did you get the contract?” Abi asked her innocently and Marissa picked her up and got to their bed.

She settled her babies near her, with Abi still on her chest.

“Yeah. I did,” she told them softly, “However, I don’t know if I’ll accept it or not.”

Only Alexander was the one who had a knowing look on his face. Abi and Ariel just hid their faces inside her chest.

1. 12.

317

25 25-Here | Come!

She kept brushing their hair one by one until they slipped into a peaceful sleep. For a crazy moment, she didn’t want to leave the room and wanted to stay hidden there along with her kids.

She didn’t know what impression she must have made **on** those corporate employees by fleeing away without giving them any excuse but right now she wasn’t in the right state of mind.

Once she came out of the room, she didn’t even bother to take off her eye makeup and sat by the kitchen counter engrossed in her thoughts.

“What is it, Mar?” her heart raced when she heard Sophia’s voice. She was under the impression that she had gone to sleep.

“You are still awake!” Marissa chuckled which lacked humor.

“The moment I saw your face when you entered the kids’ room.... knew something was not right,” Sophia placed the wine bottle on the counter along with two glasses.

I

Marissa gave her a questioning look.

“This is not only for celebrations but also to unwind yourself,” She slid a glass towards her and nodded at her encouragingly.

“Now shoot!” Sophia started pouring wine into the glasses. Her hand shook a little when she heard Marissa’s words..

"MSin belongs to him. He is the president of the firm. I didn't know he had changed the name of Sinclair Industries..."

"Wh... what? Rafael?" Marissa nodded and took a big chug of the drink from her glass.

For a few minutes, there was nothing but silence in the room.

12:42

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25 25- Here | Comel

"By the sound of it, he already knows about you and his kids. Did he ever try to take them or meet them?" Marissa took another sip and

shook her head.

"He knows you are living here. Yet he didn't show any surprise. He didn't try to scare you off. What if he is here to take a middle ground with you?"

Marissa still didn't remark.

"What are you planning to do, love?" Flint asked observing deep thinking lines on her forehead.

"I'm planning to stay and fight..." When she raised her eyes, there was an odd twinkle, "I'm done running, Flint."

This time Sophia asked her, "What about the catering contract?"

Marissa chuckled and this time a smile appeared on her lips, "I'm not ending my contract. This is my job and I'm not going to sabotage anything for the sake of some Tom, Dick, and Harry."

Flint's face was beaming when he heard that, "That's like my girl." He ruffled her hair fondly, "Now show me that contract. Let me see

how it feels to hold it."

Marrisa gave a confused look to Flint, "What?" poor Flint didn't know, what it was about.

"I... I ... think I forgot my contract file in the office... On Rafael Sinclair's desk..." She then gave her best smile to Flint, "Don't worry, Flint. I'll go tomorrow myself to pick that up!"

Rafael Sinclair! Here I come!

12:42

Posted by **admind**, ? Views, Released on July 4, 2024

26 26- Little Greene

Today when the car stopped, Marissa looked sideways at her friend sitting on the driving seat.

“Are you sure about this, Mar?” Sophia asked her and she nodded at her with a smile.

“I never felt this confident, Sophie. I need to tell him that I’m not scared of him. Wish me luck!”

Sophia hugged her friend and squeezed her eyes, “I’m so proud of you, girl.” Marissa gave a tightlipped smile to her friend, “And if he tries to talk about custody then just show him this!” Sophia raised her middle finger making Marissa chuckle.

Marissa might be showing her friend, how confident she was when actually her heart was ra

cing in her chest.

She pushed the glass d

and went inside the building to talk to the receptionist. Obviously getting to the CEO’s office wasn’t easy as it required an appointment. She needed to convince the lady to let her meet him, “Excuse me... I need to ...”

“That way, ma’am,” the woman showed her the way with a gracious smile though Marissa was expecting a heated argument.

Nobody was allowed to go to the VIP floor without some investigation from the guards or the receptionist.

“Marissa?” she was heading for the VIP elevator when heard a

familiar voice behind her. She stopped and turned only to find Kate, Shang Chi, and Delinda seated on the couch near the

reception area.

12:43

1/6

26 26–Little Greene

“Hey! What you people are doing here?” she shook hands with her winner friends.

“The President asked us to submit documents, **so** we came here today. How are you feeling now?” Shang Chi asked her in concern.

“Oh, yes, dear. Tell us, how you are. You left so abruptly yesterday,” Delinda inquired about her health.

Kate was chewing gum, not bothering **to** ask anything, she was standing there as if Marissa was nothing but a mere insect.

Marissa also chose to ignore her, “I’m fine, and maybe it was just my low blood pressure. Today I’m good. That’s why I came here to pick up my file that I forgot yesterday.”

“Oh, I saw your file on his desk. I told the president, I could easily deliver it to your place, but he forbade me. He said he could get it delivered by an office boy,” Marissa tried to smile and patted Shang Chi’s shoulder.

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“Thank you. You are a sweetheart,” She then frowned deeply at her new friends, “By the way, why are you all standing here? If it’s submission of your documents, then let’s go to the top floor and get it done. Why wait in the lobby?” She asked them eagerly.

However, their hesitant look made her feel odd, “What? What is it?”

Kate who was standing unbothered up till now, rolled her eyes, “Come on, Marissa. You can’t expect us just to barge in. This is the

HI

president, we are talking about not your caterer business

employee. The CEO of this company is not an ordinary man. Of course, we’ll go, once we get the clearance.”

12:43

2/6

26 26—Little Greene

Marissa also rolled her eyes mimicking the annoying brat, “I know you are talking about the president, of course. Look at me!” she challenged her with a sarcastic smirk, “Do I look like an alien to you? Because nobody fu\*cking asked me if I need clearance,” Marissa held Kate’s hand and gestured for Shang Chi to follow her

to the VIP elevators’ area.

The vile woman was standing behind her observing them with a poker face, “Huh! Fine! Go with her and be prepared for

humiliation,” After snapping at them, she went back to the couch in the reception area and sat on it.

However, nothing prepared her for the shock when Marissa not only reached the VIP elevators but the guard standing there gave her a salute with a courteous smile and stepped back, motioning

her to enter the elevator.

One of the men who was already inside the elevator also saluted, and the elevator doors closed behind them.

By now, Kate was awestruck. Nobody tried to stop them from entering the VIP elevator. How was this fu\*cking possible?

She gulped down and threw a glance towards the dumb receptionist who was busy on her computer screen.

“I should also try to go to the elevators. They might allow me as well. After all, I’m also here for the same purpose,”

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She was now regretting, for not accompanying them.

She ran her fingers through her hair nervously and pasted a confident smile on her face. Walking to the elevators, she could imagine herself being a boss lady and ruling on the throne of MSin

12:43

3/6

26 26—Little Greene

Industries when the guard standing close to the elevator extended his arm to stop her from pressing the call button of the elevator.

“Ma’am. Have you got your clearance with you?” He asked the unexpected question.

What the actual fu\*ck! Didn’t that girl just leave, without any clearance?

She looked at the guard who was above six and could push her off easily.

“I was here... to meet Mr. Sinclair...” she gave him, her best smile, “My friends just left in the elevator. I’m accompanying them.”

The guard not even budged from his position, nor he bothered to look at her. Kate stomped her foot like a bratty child and went back to her seat. She needed to talk to her fiancé.

Yesterday, she thought that Marissa had at last come to her senses and wasn’t coming back when she left that office in a hurry.

Nah! She was wrong.

Marissa was back and she needed to inform Amir about it. The

bit\*ch took some huge amount from Amir and was now acting as if she owned the place.

She took out her phone to send him a message. Something needed to be done about that bossy, good-for-nothing entrepreneur.

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Marissa was at once ushered to the VIP floor along with her friends.

“Ms. Aaron!” Dean was there to welcome her right outside the

12:43

4/6

26 26—Little Greene

elevator doors.

“Hey, Dean. Sorry for yesterday. I... I think I was ...” she tried explaining to him during the handshake.

“It’s OK, Ms. Aaron. We all have our bad days. I hope everything is good now.”

“Well. Everything is good but didn’t we decide on a first-name basis?”

“Sorry, Marissa,” he gave her a sheepish grin, “Umm. Your contract file is not with me,” He told her raising his brows.

She nodded because she was hoping for this.

That jerk would never let it go that easily and now she was here to tackle him.

“Can you inform him that I’m here?”

“He knows. Please feel free to go to his office, Marissa

straightened her sky-blue shirt, which she was wearing with her denim pants, and inhaled a long breath.

When she pushed past the door, Rafael who was busy reading something from a file, raised his face.

Marissa managed a professional smile on her face, “Hello, Mr. Sinclair. Hope you are good. I think I forgot my file yesterday. Can you give it back to me?”

She was expecting a heated argument but never even in her wildest dreams, she was expecting this heart-melting smile from him, “Hello, Marissa,” he leaned back eyeing her with that alien emotion.

12:43

5/6

26 26—Little Greene

The longing she wanted to see in his eyes, four years back was there today.



She heard his whisper, "I was expecting you today, little Greene."

## Comentario

Posted by **admind**, ? Views, Released on July 4, 2024

27 27- Come and Take it

"I was expecting you, little Greene, Marissa passed him a glare when she heard him. O

"Little Greene?" she cocked a brow "Mr. Sinclair. Isn't it a bit unprofessional to call your employee with such cheap pet names?" she stated with a confident smile trying to keep the façade before his eyes.

He was still smiling leaning back in his seat. Her insult couldn't falter it one bit.

"I'm sorry,"

he whispered, "then what should I call you?" his eyes twinkled, "Strawberry?" Marissa felt her face heating up.

Thank God, he was not standing close to her otherwise she could have slapped across his face. Such a shameless man he was!

"If this is how you are planning to do business then I can consider quitting, sir." The small smile on his face vanished on her threat and he was aware it wasn't an empty threat.

He got up from his seat and rounded his desk and walked up to her in the long strides. Marissa observed his panther like grace, the way his broad shoulders were moving with every step.

Though his office was quite enormous but his presence when he stood up, shrank the space of the room.

Oh, no! I can't afford to fall for him again.

During their marriage, he hardly wore a suit as there was no office during that time, except for his meetings on call.

12:43

1/6

27 27-Come and Take it

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But seeing him today in that dark grey suit, she realized that he was more than handsome... like a Greek God.

Not realizing that he had reached near her, she swallowed hard while keeping her chin up and shoulders square. Her body was almost glued to the glass wall.

She wasn't here to back off.

He stood so close to her that her nose was almost brushing his chest. The male scent that used to emit his body was still there.

It had always been intoxicating. Always having this power over her.

"It's good to see that the girl who used to be quite timid, managed to stand tall all by herself." Marissa was taken aback by the compliment. She was expecting him to demand some explanations but here he was praising her for her achievements.

No. I can't trust him? She thought and shook her head.

"I'm not here to get these praises, Mr. Sinclair,"

"Oh!" he made a pout, "sorry. Then why are you here?"

Gosh! His closeness had almost made her forget why she was here. With the panic, slowly building up in the pit of her stomach, she placed her palm on his chest to make him stop from coming

nearer.

"I'm..." again a gulp to wet her throat with her saliva, "I'm here... to do work... with MSin," She congratulated herself when finished it without tripping or stopping.

Her eyes moved down, not able to meet his green gaze anymore, when she felt his index finger under her chin and he raised her

12:43

2/6

27 27—Come and Take it

face gently, "That's very good to know... that you are here for work..." he nodded at her encouragingly and Marissa felt as if the skin on her chin where his finger made the contact might burn.

"Th... thanks... I... I'll look forward to meeting you... Rafe... I mean Mr. Sinclair..." She finished awkwardly and moved away her gaze when witnessed a knowing grin on his face.

She tilted her head a little to get freedom from the magical touch of his finger. Her heart was giving up, but she reminded herself of all the insults and mistrust he gave her.

"I... I... n... need to go..." God! She hated herself for stuttering this badly.

"Can't you stay a little longer?" it didn't sound like a question but more like a caress.

"N...no!" she retorted and turned to leave the room.

"I can provide you with a huge kitchen ... if you want..." she turned and found him standing there leaning against the wall just where

she was standing moments ago.

"I don't want your kitchen!" she snapped at him, but he didn't smile at her uneasiness.

"It's part... of the contract, Marissa... in case you are forgetting," he said solemnly, and all Marissa wanted to do was bang her head on

the wall.

Why was she acting like this? She was being jumpy for no reason just like a teenage girl.

"Oh. Yes..." she nodded like a fool, "now I remember."

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27 27- Come and Take it

No, she still didn't remember.

"It's ok," he said gently and almost raised his hand to hold the black hair strand on her glowing face but then changed his mind and dropped back his hand.

She stepped sideways a few times and then spun around to get out of the office. She felt like she would turn to stone if she stayed there.

Taking a deep breath, Rafael chuckled. Leaning back against the glass wall, he looked at the file in his hands. He wanted to laugh and go after her to tease her because she had again forgotten her file with him.

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Marissa's face was heating up due to the encounter. He didn't ask her about her kids. Nor he tried to threaten her. It almost seemed like he was the same Rafael whose eyes used to twinkle in her presence.

There was again the same friendliness for her when he thought she was Valerie. Now she had grown up and would never trust this man again in her life.

"You are back, Marissa!" she heard Delinda who came to her with a friendly smile, "We have submitted our documents and Shang-chi is discussing the menu with Dean."

"Oh, the menu? Right!" Marissa laughed and threw one arm around the short-heighted girl who sounded too enthusiastic for this event.

"Have you discussed yours?" she asked Delinda looking back at the

12:43

4/6

27 27—Come and Take it

office door of Rafael.

"Yes, I have. He is waiting for you too," just then door to another room opened and Dean came out of it, with Shang-chi behind him.

"You want to discuss the menu with me. I know," Marissa scratched her forehead, "I'll soon bring my documents to submit so that we

can have this discussion."

“There is no need for these documents, Marissa,” he blurted and then realized his mistake when Delinda and Shang-chi passed him

curious look.

“I mean... you can submit them later. Just let me know about your best dishes and we can mutually come up with something common,” he gave a little nod to his head and then frowned, “Where is your contract file? Haven’t you brought it from Mr.

Sinclair’s office?”

File? What file?

Marissa gave him a confused look and then wanted to die.

*Hell with my memory. What am I doing?*

“I’m ... sorry,” she mumbled and turned on his heels in embarrassment. In her haste, she didn’t even knock at the door and got in, only to find Rafael still standing in the same position leaning against the wall with her file clutched to his chest.

“I... I was...” she was fishing for some suitable words.

“Yes, Marissa.”

“I...I ... want ...my file back.”

“Umm hmm,” He smirked, and that caressing was back in his tone,

12:43

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27 27–Come and Take it

“then come and take it.”

Posted by **admind**, ? Views, Released on July 4, 2024

28 28- Fraud

“Umm hmm,” He smirked, “then come and take it.”

Marissa pinned him with a confident glance and got close to him.

She smirked with a slight shake of her head, "Just because you are the President of multinational, you think that gives you rights to play games with me?" She took her face too close to him, "I have got news for you, Mr. Sinclair. I'm not a toy that you want to play with... any time you desire and then discard it." Tightening her lips into a thin line, she gave a good look to his handsome face that had turned serious.

She whispered near his face, "Just let it sink into your head. I'll never beg you for anything, Mr. Sinclair. Better place it on my hand if you want the best caterer in Kanderton City to make your event memorable for you." With that, she spread her palms in front of his eyes.

His eyes kept their focus on her face. She could see the pain in there, but she didn't know if this was legit or just another stunt to gain her attention.

Marissa gestured towards her palm with her eyes, "My file, Mr. Sinclair." She reminded him and he quietly placed it on her hand.

With a poker face, she was about to turn around when he stopped her putting his arm ahead just an inch away from her chest,

"I'm NOT here to snatch anything from you, Ms. Aaron. But if you find it in your heart, I want just a few minutes of your time. Any day you want. Any time you say. Just a few minutes. That's what I

12:44

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28 28—Fraud

ask you."

For Marissa, it was an unexpected demand.

Damn! She was expecting him to ask for explanations and to order her to let him meet the kids. Flint had a point when he said Rafael wasn't a fool who didn't know a thing about his kids.

He knew about their existence now.

Marissa kept looking into his eyes to see if he was telling the truth but... it proved to be a mistake.

All those feelings and the betrayal returned with vengeance.

Holding the file, she turned around to leave, "If I'm expected to work here then I'll expect a hundred percent professional environment."

She said without glancing over her shoulder while all he wanted to do was pull her into his arms and kiss her senselessly.

"Sure," he said in a hoarse whisper and cleared his throat, "it... will be ... professional."

She nodded and left his office leaving behind a desperate husband who wanted to follow her outside his office.

"Oh, God! She said yes! She is ready to work here," his first call was to his friend Joseph.

"Hey, Marissa is working for us," he expressed with excitement, "now please be careful about a few things. Nobody knows it but she deserves a VIP treatment here. Please look into her pick-and-drop arrangements. I want to make sure she doesn't face any problem... her account needs to be filled with lots of money so

12:44

2/6

28 28–Fraud

that..."

"Woah. Woah. Relax. Just give me a minute," Joseph who was coming out of a building after a meeting took off his dark glasses. and cleared the sweat off his forehead.

"W...why? Did I say something wrong?" Rafael looked towards the door that was used by her to exit the room.

"Rafael. Here we are talking about four participants...FOUR! Do you know what that means? Everything you'll offer Marissa has to be offered to the rest of the three as well. Are you understanding my friend?"

Rafael frowned at the phone, he was holding and then shifted it to his other ear while walking to his seat, "Then let's offer it to each one of them!" he shrugged carelessly.

"Are you crazy? Rafael we..." Joseph quickly walked to his car and switched on the air conditioner.

"Hey, Joseph. Listen. She has kids, man. She is the mother of MY kids. If we offer her all those luxuries, she will never accept them. So, it's best if we offer the perks to each one of them ..."

"Oh, Rafael..."

"Joseph. Once I declare her as my wife, then this won't continue of course. But... but I need to win her over... you are the only one who knows what happened in the past... I need to win her over if I want her in my life and this...this... this is the only way."

"Fine... I'll come and then we'll discuss more. Don't worry. We'll come out with something feasible. And yes... she is yours to spoil. Just wait a little more and you both will be living like a couple in no

12:44

3/6

28 28–Frau

time. I'm sure of **that**..."

When Joseph disconnected the call, Rafael leaned back in his seat and tried to remember what he was doing just before she barged into his office.

The best thing was, she didn't even bother to knock on the door.

"Miss Marissa Sinclair. Has anyone told you, how beautiful you are? And see? You already know this office belongs to you... because of the way you entered here. Your heart also knows, strawberry."

He punched his chest twice tightening his lips.

"Soon, Marissa. Soon..."

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Marissa was giving the names of the dishes to Dean when an annoying Kate came inside and slammed the documents on the

desk.

“Why was I stopped at the reception when they were all allowed to come straight up!” she demanded and then screamed, “I need water ... now!”

Dean quickly spoke on the intercom and asked someone to bring iced water.

“This is too much,” then she straight away looked into Marissa’s eyes, “I’ll tell my fiancé about this treatment. You just wait and watch.”

Marissa didn’t like it. It was an open threat.

Before Marissa could say something, several lines appeared on Dean’s forehead, “What do you mean? Who is your fiancé, Ms.

12:44

4/6

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28 28—Fraud

Kate? The President of MSin?” Marissa thought of him as some gullible man but the way he took a stand on Kate’s behavior was commendable.

He was calling her out for her bratty behavior.

Shan—Chi and Delinda who were sitting behind them had also stopped talking.

Kate wasn’t expecting this situation and the initial anger had left her face within a few moments.

“My fiancé is... a constructor...” She finished it lamely. Amir had asked her specifically not to tell anyone in the office about him or his profession. He was already blacklisted there.

“Constructor?” Marissa faked a surprised look on her face, “I had heard he is a supplier. He supplies office stuff such as furniture and all the building material and bathroom stuff like taps and shower nozzles...” she trailed off eyeing Dean meaningfully, “His name is

Amir.”

Dean’s eyes turned into thin slits, “Amir?” he whispered the name,

“Is he the same man who ... was a fraud?”

Delinda and Shang-chi gasped at this.

“Fraud?”

Posted by **AdminH**, ? Views, Released on July 4, 2024

29 29–Hakuna Matata.

29 29- Hakuna Matata.

“You mean Amir? The one who delivered faulty furniture to our office? Kate is his fiancé?” Dean

nodded at Rafael.

“Good, God!” Joseph shuddered, “That man is a scam, but we can’t judge this woman... Kate... based on this jerk’s attitude.”

They all were sitting in Rafael’s office discussing the upcoming meeting when Dean remembered to tell them about the incident that took place last time in his

office.

“But? That was very rude of her,” Joseph scratched his jaw, “staying back at reception didn’t give her this right to attack any other employee.”

“Agree,” Rafael flipped the pen between his fingers, “Except that Marissa isn’t an employee here.”

This might not be new for Joseph, but it certainly was

a shock for Dean./

*The boss doesn't take Marissa as an employee. What's the catch here? Ever since Marissa got called for the*

20:08

1/10

29 29—Hakuna Matata.

event catering, *she has been given top priority in every decision. No doubt, her food had outclassed every*

other participant.

"I did call her out for the rude behavior, Mr. Sinclair," Dean stated.

Rafael shook his head with a smirk, "No, Dean. That's not enough. Next time she bullies anyone in my office let her know that Marissa has the power to kick her out of this building."

"What?" Dean couldn't stop himself.

Joseph's jaw was hung open. He knew Rafael was head over heels for Marissa, but this was intense.

"Are you for real, Rafael? You can't kick everyone out of this office just like that!"

Rafael moved his focus to the file that was opened before him, "Oh, I can, Joseph. Try me!"

\*\*\*

"You did good, Marissa. That silly woman must have learned a lesson," Sophie said while washing the plates.

"Right? The way she tried to insult Dean and then was boasting about that rascal, I couldn't stop myself."

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"And then the audacity of her fiancé to assault Akari," Sophie started rubbing the plate vigorously, "He is such a shameless prick!" Sophie rolled her eyes and placed

the forks in the sink.

It was a Sunday morning when it was usual to have this leisurely chit-chat.

“Why are you not using a dishwasher?” Marissa asked Sophia and started beating the eggs. Today her kids wanted to have a cheese omelette for breakfast.

“Oh. I find the dishwasher a hassle just for two to three plates,” Sophia placed the washed plates aside and then turned to her, “Is this all you want to tell? That’s it?”

She cocked up a brow at her friend who was trying her best to look busy in beating the eggs.

“Come on, Marissa. Drop the act and tell me!” she hurled a few water droplets from her wet hands, her way, “What about HIM! Did you two meet?” she wiggled her eyebrows when she said the word, Him.

Marissa was aware of the person, she was asking about. Rafael’s handsome image popped up in her mind when he challenged her to take the file from his

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hands.

The incident that had been making her angry since yesterday, now for some reason seemed quite funny.

“You are blushing, girl!” Sophia chuckled and placed the pan on the burner, “Did he kiss you?” Sophia asked her in a whisper.

“What?” Marissa blinked several times to let her mind register what Sophia said.

“Are you nuts? Kissed by him?” she rolled her eyes and gulped hard. The way they were standing so close yesterday, now she thought she could easily touch his face just like she used to do when she was his wife.

He often used to turn his head into her palm and kiss

1. it.

She jerked back from her daydreaming and started glazing the pan with ghee. Sophia’s eyes were still on

her.

“So, when is the event?” poor Sophia changed the subject when she didn’t get any response. Her friend seemed to be in a tight spot.

“After two months. Hopefully, each of us will get one

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05

long table where we can serve our masterpieces,” she winked at Sophie and started pouring the batter into

the pan.

Sophia came closer and placed three cartoon

character printed plates on the counter, “There is one thing I’m not understanding, Mar.”

“And what is that?”

“Don’t you think it’s odd? Who keeps caterers this busy for two months for their event? Come to think of it. They are a big name, and they are paying you handsomely. I do give them this much credit. But what will you get after going to them for two full months? Start cooking in their office?”

Marissa again got quiet.

“Maybe... Maybe they need to stay in touch with us for such a high-end party? I mean... they are trying new caterers... giving them a chance to prove themselves,” Marissa shrugged while trying to convince her friend.

“Stay in touch? What kind of touch is that, Mar? Nobody can expect you to start cooking months prior so that you can serve stale dishes at the party. Planning requires one or two days... or maybe one

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week...” she trailed off and switched on the coffee

machine.

“They are paying me good, Sophie. I just don’t want to give them the impression that I’m not a hard worker.”

“I understand,” Sophie patted her shoulder, “Just don’t get manipulated by them, my friend. Getting paid doesn’t mean you are their slave.”

Sophie had left the kitchen and Marissa was thinking the same thing.

This point did cross her mind several times but every time she used to tell herself that they must be paying her handsomely because they expected extra tasks

from her.

\*\*\*

Marissa was watching Lion King with her kids and every time they all used to cry on the death of

Mufassa.

Marissa kept telling them how they should not give up on anything in their lives as life doesn’t offer its perks on a silver platter.

When the movie ended, Alex slid down to place his

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head on the pillow.

“Alex. Go to your bed, honey,” she slapped his bum to make him stand.

“Mommy. What if we all sleep here tonight? All of us together like a happy family,” He gave the idea a little eagerly.

Before Marissa could say anything, Abi also plopped on her mom’s lap, “Yes, mommy. Let’s sleep here tonight.”

Marissa squeezed the little girl to her and kissed her forehead, “ok, fine. Let’s sleep here, all of us!”

“Yay!” they all whooped in excitement, Alex and Ariel started arranging pillows on the floor or mattress.

The plan was to let Mommy sleep in between Ariel and Abigail.

“Mommy. What if Alex also wants to sleep with you,” Abi asked innocently wiggling in between Marissa and

Ariel.

“Don’t worry, Abi,” Alex calmed his sister and started pulling his quilt on his face.

“Mommy,” Marissa eyed Ariel taking interest in whatever they were sharing with her.

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“Yes, love.”

“Like Simba lost his dad. Did we also lose our dad the

same way? Did he die when we were little?” Marissa’s heart started sinking at the mention of their father in this weird sense.

“N...no... he didn’t...” She didn’t know how to tell this to

her kids. Once they know that their dad was very much alive, they might demand her to meet him or might ask her for some kind of explanation.

“Mommy. Where is my Daddy?” Abigail asked her and she felt herself in a tight spot. This was the first time they asked her these unexpected questions that weren’t that unexpected.

“Mommy. When we go to the park, we often see our friends with their dads...” Ariel told her with a small

pout.

every

Abigail also sat up to have a better look at her siblings, "My friends' dads buy them lollipops, candies of flavor. They watch movies with them. Why can't our father do the same?"

Marissa didn't know what to say.

It seemed like **nature** had told her kids or **not** it in

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their hearts that their father was somewhere close.

"Mommy!" Abi spoke again.

"Hmm?"

"Can you give a message to Daddy when you meet him next?" instead of responding to that Marissa looked down on her lap.

"Please tell him that we miss him a lot and he should come back to bring those things just like our friends' dads. Will you do it, mommy?"

Abigail asked so innocently that Marissa's heart went

out to her.

"Abi," Alex's voice came from under the quilt, "Go to sleep. Don't you want to learn Lego tomorrow?"

Abigail was quick to hit her head back on the pillow.

Ariel also laid back and closed her eyes, "Alex don't forget to teach me the tricks."

Marissa observed Alex whose face was still under the

quilt. All she wanted to do was hug him and thank him for saving her.

However, this was high time to tell the kids about their

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father.

Sophie and Flint were right. If Rafael was not planning to interfere in Marissa's life and wanted to keep it cordial, then maybe she might allow him to meet the

kids.

Tonight, the discussion had taken a toll on her mental health. They were growing up and knew they needed a father figure in their lives.

"Mom. Why don't you go to sleep," she heard Alexander's voice and a wobbly smile graced her lips.

"Yeah, sure, Alex. Thank you."

She didn't need to tell him why she was thanking him. And he never asked her the reason. Instead, the only thing he said was,

"Don't worry, Mommy. Hakuna Matata."

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Posted by **AdminH**, ? Views, Released on July 4, 2024

30 30—Stopped

"Don't worry, Mommy. Hakuna Matata."

This sentence kept playing in Marissa's mind when Alex told her last night. Though she spent the Sunday enjoying herself with kids, but Hakuna Matata kept disturbing the peace of her mind.

The next day, when she reached the office to submit the final menu list, her caterer friends were already there near the reception counter.

"If they pay us well, that doesn't mean we must wait here every morning. Either they let us decide the menu at our homes and if they want us to arrive here daily then we should be given proper employee cards." Marissa stated. She didn't want to throw a tantrum, but this attitude was not justified.

"Listen, lady," a woman who was wearing a pencil skirt along with three-inch pencil heels approached them, "You are standing inside the prestigious building of MSin and here we don't encourage bullying."

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30 30—Stopped

She eyed Marissa with a sarcastic smirk as if Marissa was just a mere insect. Marissa might not be dressed formally but looked beautiful in her beige pants and a

black button-down shirt.

"And may I know, who is bullying here? I'm just asking you to issue us some kind of card that can allow us to enter the VIP elevator," Marissa kept her calm.

"Are you out of your mind?" the woman took off her branded glasses and observed the participants, "Cards are only issued to the employees. We don't issue cards to any contractors. Secondly," She placed her index finger on her lips, "nobody is allowed to get to the VIP elevators," She then looked behind Marissa where the

receptionist was trying to tell her something.

"What!" she snapped.

All of them turned around to face the receptionist who dropped her hands by her sides, "They are indeed right. All of them are reporting directly to Mr. Joseph," an apologetic smile touched the receptionist's lips, "I'm sorry for giving you all the trouble. I left my seat for a few minutes, and this happened."

Kate turned to the rude lady and snapped her fingers,

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30 30—Stopped

"Now you listen, lady! See? I don't know who you are. But you know nothing and still decided to poke your nose in our business."

For the first time, Marissa liked Kate. Being fierce for such reasons was never a problem for her. At least she was raising her voice against wrong.

Several lines appeared on the rude woman's forehead, "Stop calling me lady. My name is Mala and I'm from the HR department. A recruitment coordinator."

Funny! Because just a few moments back she called Marissa 'lady'.

She turned to the receptionist and tapped her finger on the counter, "You need to check it. A contractor is not allowed to approach the VIP floor," She then looked over her shoulder and spoke to Shan Chin, "What is the nature of your job? Is it something construction related to the offices? Because I don't have anything in my file," She started flipping pages her dossier.

Shang Chi nodded with an embarrassing smile, "Ms. Mala. We all are caterers and are supposed to participate in the main event that's taking place in

of

30 30—Stopped

honor of the CEO."

This time Mala's smile deepened, "Caterers!" she started laughing, "Caterers on the VIP floor? Ha-ha." She wanted to roll on the floor with mirth.

"What's so funny about it?" Marissa demanded the woman.

"The funny thing is..." she hiccupped in between, "the event is for our president. Do you think we'll want to involve him as a host when he is the chief guest?"

Her point carried weight, but now it was making

Marissa exhausted.

"If the VIP floor is not for us then maybe take us to our floor where we can work," Kate passed her a glare, but Marissa was not here to be a VIP but to work.

For her, it didn't matter what place it was. But respect mattered to her.

Mala nodded, "You all just sit on that couch. I'll ask the concerned department to issue you contractor cards. That can give you immediate access to YOUR floor."

Marissa held Shan Chi's hand to walk to the said couch. Delinda and Kate followed them silently.

20:10

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**C 30 30—Stopped**

The woman whose name was Mala was making funny faces and was still giving them eye rolls.

She was having some secret argument with the receptionist.

"This is quite insulting for me," Delinda said with a sigh, "Like you people, I joined this profession because I loved cooking and had a passion for arranging events. MSin was paying good, and that was the reason I

agreed to work with them. I don't know why they want us to sit here and chat when we can submit the

required menus within a few days."

This was the same point Sophia tried to convey to Marissa yesterday.

"If that's the case," Shang Chi spoke in a hushed tone, "then I think we should talk to them."

"Oh, please," Kate bobbed her head in annoyance, "Better speak for yourself. I'm happy to come here daily and get a chance to sit with Dean or Mr. Joseph. I might get a chance to talk to the pants dropping president. The pay is good! You, see?"

Mala had left the reception area and now they were sitting on the couch trying to suppress their yawns for

20:10

6/7

**30 30—Stopped**

God knew how long.

“Am I allowed to lie here?” Delinda asked no one in particular but everyone started laughing including Marissa.

“Guys,” Marissa whispered while eyeing the receptionist who was busy taking calls and typing on her computer, “what if we race to the VIP elevator?”

The rest of them straightened with their eyes darting between the reception and the elevator.

“Why?” Kate hissed, “Are you forgetting the guard who is standing in front of that elevator?” she couldn’t forget the insult she had to face from the tall man.

“What if we try? Like... let’s not run... but... walk a little casually to the elevator and see if the guard will stop us. If he does, then we’ll say sorry and turn around to ass here!”

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Delinda started laughing at her idea, “You people are naughty...” She chewed her lower lip between her teeth and blinked her eyes,

“OK. Let’s try that.” She was the first one to stand from the couch. Others followed her and all of them looked

at the busy receptionist.

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30 30–Stopped

Nobody was even looking their way.

“Come. Let’s go. Paste a smile on your face,” Marissa said through her gritted teeth, and they all started walking to the elevator.

“Talk to each other. Make it look natural,” Marissa said

good naturedly and turned to Shan Chi to say something.

They all were almost near the elevator when they heard a loud male voice, “Stop! Where do you think you are going?”

They not only stopped walking but also stopped breathing too...

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