

## Chapter 16 The Neighbor

As soon as Declan saw Chris standing at the villa across the street, he made a sudden realization. His expression changed, filled with a strange interest as he looked at Chris. "Does this villa belong to you, Mr. Howard?"

No sooner had he spoken than Declan regretted his words, recalling that the Howard Group was the developer behind the Lakeview Haven Villa complex.

It made perfect sense that Chris, being the heir of the Howard family, would own several properties within his own development.

"Is there an issue?" Chris responded to Declan's question with a calm demeanor. He gave Declan a slight smile, his captivating eyes cold and distant, clearly unbothered by Declan's presence.

Caught off guard but unable to resist making a jab, Declan said, "The Howard family has vast wealth. Naturally, you'd have several homes, Mr. Howard. It's just bizarre. Kimberly and I have lived here so long and never noticed anyone in that villa. It's interesting, but of course, Mr. Howard, with so many properties to your name, you choose to live right across from us. What your intentions are, only you would know."

His words were dripping with suspicion, and even Kimberly caught his hint, giving him a disapproving look. "Mr. Howard can live wherever he wants. Declan, don't you think you're overstepping a bit?"

"Shut up!" Declan snapped, glaring intensely at Kimberly.

His distrust deepened, suspecting a possible affair between Kimberly and Chris.

The notion that Kimberly might have been unfaithful sent a surge of anger through him, his eyes reddening as he clenched his teeth. "Did you know Mr. Howard was our neighbor all this time? I'm starting to see why you dismissed the maids and bodyguards so

abruptly—clearly, you had someone keeping watch!"

Kimberly's expression grew stern. "What's your problem? Are you now out of your mind or what?"

She didn't want to argue with Declan in front of the neighbors early in the morning and she wanted to avoid further disputes with him. "Just sign the divorce papers! If you want to cause a scene, go bother your dear sister!"

Hearing Kimberly mention "problem" only made Declan angrier. He believed she was implying something about his manhood. Fixing his intense gaze on Kimberly, he shouted, "Open the door!"

Kimberly's expression hardened, and she stood her ground. "Absolutely not! Sign the papers quickly, and we can set a date to finalize everything."

"Kimberly!" Declan's face flushed with fury. He propelled himself forward, gripping the bars of the gate and shaking them vigorously, causing the gate to rattle. "This is your last chance. Open the gate and let me in!"

His face was twisted in a fury, his eyes bloodshot and glaring at Kimberly with a haunting intensity.

Maggie, though frightened, bravely stepped in front of Kimberly, grabbing a nearby broom. "Ms. Holden doesn't want you here! If you don't leave, I'm calling the police!"

"This is my home; why can't I come in?!" Declan's fury mixed with humiliation, particularly as he was rejected by Kimberly in front of Chris. To him, Kimberly's refusal was a direct insult, and he was convinced Chris's presence meant there was something secret going on between him and Kimberly. ①

But intimidated by Chris's status, he held back from confronting him directly and instead directed his anger towards Kimberly. "Bryce, take this door down!"

If they wouldn't open the door, he was prepared to have it forcibly removed!



Bryce frowned, watching Declan rage at Kimberly and Maggie like a madman. His eyes then shifted to Chris, who was observing from a distance.

"Bryce!" Not receiving a response, Declan turned his head with a frown to look at Bryce. "Are you deaf or what?"

"Maggie, call the police and report a trespasser." Just as Bryce was feeling the tension rise, Kimberly's command cut through, immediately reigniting Declan's fury.

"Yes, Ms. Holden." Maggie quickly set the broom aside, pulled out her phone, and moved away to make the call.

"Kimberly, you wouldn't dare!"

"Why wouldn't I?" Kimberly threw a dismissive look at Declan in his wheelchair, her eyes then drifting past him to Chris standing nearby. Noticing Chris's distant expression, she apologized, saying, "I'm truly sorry for the disturbance, Mr. Howard. I'll resolve this promptly."

She was eager for the Howard family's investment in her family's new energy project, and genuinely regretted the disruption caused by Declan's outburst.

Hearing her, Chris's expression softened a bit as his eyes met Kimberly's, showing a warmth he did not extend to Declan. "What's your plan?"

Caught off guard by his question, Kimberly took a brief pause before responding earnestly, "The police have been called. I expect they'll arrive shortly."

"Called the police?" Chris chuckled lightly, looking at her with a hint of amusement. "Ms. Holden, do you really think the police will help you get rid of this guy? Family disputes are usually handled privately, which I assumed Ms. Holden would appreciate."

Kimberly was caught off guard, feeling somewhat frustrated. She momentarily forgot that given her relationship with Declan, the



police would likely only mediate, not separate them.

Meanwhile, Declan continued to yell at her to open the door, threatening to break it down if she refused. She found his persistence extremely irritating!

At that moment, Chris's clear voice floated over. "Do you need some help?"

Kimberly sharply looked up at Chris, only to meet his eyes. His smile made her heart flutter. "What do you mean?"

Chris smiled. Already handsome, his smile was truly captivating. He snapped his fingers.

In an instant, a team of bodyguards in black suits appeared from the villa behind him, encircling Declan.

"Damn it! What are you doing!?" Declan watched the tall, tough bodyguards cautiously, barely beginning his protest when Chris's steady voice cut through.

"Escort him out." No sooner had Chris spoken than the bodyguards moved in. Two of them lifted Declan effortlessly and started carrying him out of the villa complex, while another pushed his wheelchair. The others formed a perimeter around Bryce, who was still on his phone.

Bryce looked at them and casually pocketed his phone. "There's no need for that. I can leave on my own."

With that, he turned and walked away, the bodyguards trailing him.

The entire process took less than two minutes!

The efficiency was breathtaking...

Both Kimberly and Maggie were taken aback. Maggie spoke into her phone. "N-No, it's okay. Cancel the call. Thank you, Officer."


Kimberly was impressed. Was this the power of influence?

"Ms. Holden, does this meet your expectations?" Chris asked.



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