

## Chapter 44 She Is Not Someone You Can Covet

Chris's expression darkened as he felt a wave of anger rising within him.

Had she really disregarded everything he had said before?

Did Kimberly still believe he was merely smitten with married women?

This was ridiculous.

As soon as Kimberly spoke, she regretted it, recalling the scene not long ago when Chris had stormed off in a fit of rage. She sneaked a glance at Chris, noticing his grim expression, and her heart sank.

Oh no!

She had really touched a nerve this time!

What if Chris became so annoyed that he ended their business ties with the Holden family?

That would be disastrous!

Reflecting on the possibility to invalidate all her previous efforts and sacrifices over a single reckless comment, Kimberly was filled with regret.

She looked at Chris with eyes full of apology, trying to rectify the situation. "Mr. Howard, I was just teasing earlier..."

Chris gazed at her sharply, his tongue pressing against his palate, almost finding humor in her "explanation".

Did Kimberly really think he couldn't distinguish between joke and sincerity?

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"Don't worry..." Chris suddenly moved closer, placing his hands on the railing next to her, leaning in.

His deep, enigmatic eyes met hers. "Divorced or not, married or not, I like you. Only you."

A buzzing noise filled Kimberly's head, leaving her momentarily disoriented.

Before she had a chance to respond, Chris straightened, took a few steps back for space, and placed his suit jacket over her shoulders. His intense gaze lingered as he said, "It's getting late. The sea breeze is much stronger here than in the city. Make sure you head back and get some rest soon."

With that, Chris turned away and walked toward the guest rooms.

Kimberly remained motionless for a long while, her eyes following his departing figure. The brisk sea breeze played with her long hair, while the jacket enveloped her in a subtle, refreshing mint aroma mixed with a metallic hint, resembling blood.

But the scent of alcohol clouded the subtler smells, and amidst her confused thoughts, Kimberly failed to pick up on this peculiar detail.

The thought that Chris might have feelings for her seemed unreal, blurry, and indistinct.

Taking a deep breath, Kimberly collected herself and decided to dismiss the idea.

After all, was it possible Chris was merely acting impulsively?

She didn't need anyone's love or admiration anyway. Her primary goal at the moment was to finalize her divorce from Declan and completely free herself from that troublemaker.

In her previous life, Kimberly had made numerous mistakes. Now, granted a second chance, she was determined not to repeat those errors. While seeking revenge against a despicable couple was on her agenda, she also aimed to rectify her past wrongs and make up for the

disappointments she had caused.

With determination in her eyes, Kimberly disregarded the messages from Valerie, swiftly deleting and blocking the latter, and made her way to the banquet hall.

Feeling a bit hungry, she planned to eat something before retiring for the night.

As she walked along the lengthy deck, the vibrant sounds of the banquet hall reached her from a distance. It buzzed with the energy of a youthful crowd, resonating with joy and enthusiasm.

Upon entering, she found the ambiance dimly lit and inviting, with lively foreign tunes setting the mood. Numerous young men and women, having caught each other's attention, gathered to drink and converse, marking a sharp departure from the stiff formalities of the gatherings Kimberly usually attended.

Driven by curiosity, Kimberly slipped into the hall unnoticed, found a quiet corner, and helped herself to a plate of delicious, lavish food, savoring the variety offered.

The event was a grand welcome for Chris, featuring food and drinks that could rival the offerings of a seven-star hotel chef.

After enjoying her meal, Kimberly grabbed a bottle of cola, took a refreshing sip, and closed her eyes in satisfaction.

She spent about half an hour at the event, finding nothing particularly captivating, and was about to leave when a flirty male voice interrupted her solitude.

"Hey there, beautiful. All by yourself? Why settle for cola? How about I join you for a drink?"

Kimberly turned to face the speaker, whose bright smile froze upon seeing her. His pupils narrowed, and his expression turned rigid.

The smartly dressed man recoiled as if he'd seen a specter, stepping back abruptly. Regaining his composure, he blanched. "Oh, it's Ms. Holden... I'm sorry, I just remembered I have something urgent to handle. I must go."

With that, he hurried off, seeming desperate to escape Kimberly's presence. To an onlooker, it might appear as if she was some kind of monster.

Kimberly stood, puzzled.

Did she really appear that frightening?

She glanced around and noticed people subtly moving away, keeping their distance.

A wave of confusion washed over her.

Before her marriage to Declan, just her presence would have men vying for her attention, eagerly trying to impress her. Being the most coveted socialite in Javille was no trivial status.

How had she become so universally avoided?

Feeling deeply frustrated, Kimberly exited the hall, considering the likely cause, the malicious rumors spread by Declan. She mentally tallied another grievance against him.

One day, she vowed, she would ensure Declan lost everything and witnessed his reputation crumble before everyone's eyes.

Unnoticed by most, Felix was leaning against the second-floor railing, observing the entire interaction below.

He chuckled to himself, swirling his wine before taking a sip, and then he pulled out his phone to send a text, saying, "Ms. Holden just showed up at the banquet hall. A guy tried to flirt with her, but ran off the moment he saw her face. So that was your strategy all along, making the local heartthrob someone to be shunned. Impressive!"

Felix greatly appreciated Chris's clever approach. Initially, he had been concerned about Chris, who had never been involved romantically or even held hands with a girl, wondering how Chris would manage to charm Kimberly with no romantic experience.

However, it appeared his concerns were needless.

Chris might not have been on any dates, but he was definitely astute!

With a clever tactic, Chris had effectively deterred all the promising young heirs in Javille from pursuing Kimberly!

Now, unless Kimberly decided to stay single, it seemed her only viable option was Chris!

Chris simply responded with an "Oh."

Felix was accustomed to Chris's brief replies and continued messaging on his own, "You should have seen Ms. Holden's frustrated expression. Hahaha, it was hilarious. If she weren't the woman you were interested in, I might have made a move on her myself. But, I respect the rule about not pursuing a friend's interest."

Chris responded, "Felix, are you looking for trouble? She's off-limits."

Seeing Chris's text, Felix laughed and playfully replied, "What if I decided to go after her anyway?"