

## Chapter 57 To See If She Will Really Leave!

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The air between them thickened with tension.

Kimberly responded after a pause, "If that's your interpretation." She knew her questions might appear confrontational. But she believed her actions were fully warranted.

The previous evening, Chris had been intoxicated and injured. It was Felix who had knocked on her door, leaving her no choice but to care for the drunken Chris and his injuries.

Given their past assistance to each other and their current partnership of mutual benefit, Kimberly felt obligated not to ignore Chris in such a state.

Yet, who could have anticipated Chris would lose control after drinking?

The situation had left her in an uncomfortable position, and rumors that she was "seducing Chris" had even reached Declan, complicating her life with additional troubles and annoyances.

Was it not her right to demand an explanation from Chris?

Certainly, nothing was amiss with her request.

Chris watched her intently for a long moment, his emotions evident in his eyes.

Only someone who had experienced what he had could truly grasp the extent of his disappointment.

His grip on the railing eased, and his hands fell to his sides. "So,

if Declan hadn't reached out to you, you wouldn't have been waiting here for me, right?"

Kimberly scowled, puzzled by his question. "Mr. Howard, what relevance does that have to our discussion?"

"None," Chris answered, his look firm and voice subdued. "But I need to know."

Kimberly stared at him, feeling a mix of frustration and helplessness. Noticing Chris's persistent quest for answers, she simply shrugged. "Yes, that's correct."

Her response was direct and clear, leaving no room for Chris to deceive himself.

Chris, feeling a profound sense of despair, chuckled softly, masking his inner turmoil. "So how can you be so certain that Kallie was behind the leaked photos?"

Kimberly's expression darkened, suspecting he was defending Kallie.

His mention of Kallie carried a tone of familiarity.

As Kimberly reflected on Camila's assertive comments from the night before, she couldn't shake the thought that Chris was no different from Declan. In their circles, the woman they referred to as a sister was actually a romantic interest.

Once this idea took hold in Kimberly's mind, a subtle annoyance bubbled up.

"I personally deleted the photos from Camila's phone last night, ensuring there were no backups. The only way they could have gotten out is if Kallie saved them before I deleted them and then gave them to Declan. If you doubt me, Mr. Howard, check the surveillance footage from last night. You'll see whether I'm telling the truth."

Chris's expression remained unreadable. "I had Kallie delete the photos too, so she couldn't have been the source."

His absolute certainty only fueled Kimberly's frustration. "If it wasn't her, then who was it? The photos Declan showed me were unmistakably taken by Camila last night. They're identical. I checked her phone, and she had only sent them to Kallie! Mr. Howard, you assured me you would handle this. So what's going on here? Are you protecting someone special to you?"

Kimberly stressed "someone special" with heavy sarcasm, her mocking glance drawing parallels to the covert relationship between Declan and Valerie.

Chris felt a flare of irritation. How could she compare him to Declan?

The comparison felt like an insult. "You think I resemble Declan?"

"Are you not?" Kimberly was equally agitated. She was striving for a genuine discussion with Chris, given his deep involvement in the debacle with the photographs!

No sooner had she voiced her thoughts than she regretted her impulsiveness, realizing she had let her emotions get the better of her.

She was about to offer Chris an apology when he cut her off, his gaze cold and filled with disappointment. "If that's your belief, then I'm at a loss."

"You..." Kimberly was about to probe further into Chris's statement when Felix's cheerful voice echoed from afar. "Why are you two still up there? Come on, hurry down! Everyone's waiting for you! The main event of the party is about to begin!"

Chris didn't give Kimberly a second look as he moved past her and descended the steps.

His bodyguards, clad in black suits, quickly formed a procession around him, guarding him with solemn diligence.

Kimberly's frustration was evident. She fixed her gaze on Chris's departing figure, convinced he was dismissing the entire situation. Hastily, she pulled out her phone and called Mabel.

The phone connected almost instantly. "Kimberly, what's wrong?"

Kimberly's heart ached at the sound of Mabel's caring voice. She fought back tears, not wanting to worry her. Taking a deep breath, she asked calmly, "Auntie Mabel, could you arrange someone to pick me up?"

Mabel's expression showed concern. She knew Kimberly like no one else, so she instantly picked up on the unusual tone in Kimberly's voice. "Where are you right now?"

"Chris, are you really going to just walk away and leave your beloved on the deck?" Behind Chris, Felix followed, continuously glancing back at Kimberly standing on the deck. The cold vibe from Chris made him recoil slightly, prompting him to gently nudge Chris. "She seems to be making a phone call. Do you think she's requesting the Holden family to come get her?"

This remark made Chris even more annoyed, his face turning frostier. He said impatiently, "She can walk. If she wants to leave, she's free to do so."

Then, he shot a cold look at Felix, who looked like he had more to say. "If you're so worried, why don't you accompany her?"

Felix felt unfairly accused.

It was only a joke he made yesterday. Why couldn't Chris let it go?

"Hey, I'm not the one interested in her. She's been your love for fifteen years. I meant no harm. It was merely a joke!"


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 +120 Points at most

Chris ignored Felix, striding forward, haunted by the thought that Kimberly might actually leave. His cold demeanor forced everyone to give him space, his stern expression warning them not to interfere.

He was prepared to risk it. To find out if Kimberly would truly leave.



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