

## Chapter 123 Retribution

Arielle's reputation was ripped to shreds overnight. The scandalous photos and video had spread all throughout Andeport.

They even appeared on her social media feed. She tried hard to remove comments persecuting her, and also attempted to clear her name on the social media. Arielle released a statement claiming that she had been framed. Sadly, no one was willing to believe her.

Emily fell to her knees and held her daughter as they both wept. She racked her brains for a plausible explanation as to how and why Arielle's indiscretions had been leaked. At this rate, even if Howell used all of their connections to suppress the news, their efforts would only be in vain.

Was it possible that Arielle had offended anyone lately?

"Howell, you know that Arielle has always been an obedient child. There is no way she would have done these horrid things! Besides, you see the unnatural way that the scandal has spread, don't you? Someone must be pulling the strings behind the scene. It's obvious that someone is trying to hurt Arielle!"

Emily clung to her husband's arm and laid out her suspicions. Howell was a devious man himself; it was one of the reasons why she had managed to marry him.

Emily glanced pointedly at Arielle while Howell mulled over her words. Catching the hint, Arielle shuffled over to the man and sobbed in earnest.

Both Emily and Arielle had perfected the art of crying pitifully. As it was, Arielle clutched her father's leg and wailed, saying that she only had dinner with her friend, nothing more. And for good measure, she also suggested that she must have been stalked, and that the photos were fake.

At last, Howell calmed down enough to think the matter through carefully. He tried to look at the situation from every angle, and considered every questionable detail that popped up. It was true that he had dispatched someone to wipe out the news, but it had little to no effect. If anything, the reach of the news seemed to have widened farther.

Obviously, someone powerful was behind the scene.

"Stop that and get up!" he snapped at the two women.

In the haze of his rage, a nagging suspicion began to form in his head.

Aside from Everett, no one else had the power to pull off something like this. But why would he do such a thing? Was it simply because he hated Arielle, or was he perhaps avenging Melissa?

"Don't you dare step out of this house, or I'll break your legs!" Howell barked at Arielle, his face twisted into a menacing scowl.

"Yes, of course."

With her mother's help, Arielle gingerly got back to her feet, though her sobs still kept coming.


The first thing she had done when the news broke out was to call Everett, only to discover that his phone was turned off. She had been teetering over the edge of desperation ever since. It seemed that Everett really wanted to cut her off for good this time.

"Don't be afraid, my darling," Emily crooned. "You will always have me on your side."

They were sitting on Arielle's bed in her room, trying to come to terms with the fiasco that had erupted.

Emily was certain that someone had done this on purpose, and her main suspect was none other than Melissa. But that wench had no power or connections to control the media.

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 +120 Points at most

There was only one other possibility, and that was that Melissa had said something to Vivienne. It must be Vivienne who had used the Mayfield family name to destroy Arielle.

"They are all bitches, every single one of them! How dare they do this to my daughter! Don't worry, Arielle. I won't let you suffer for nothing."

A cruel glint flashed in Emily's eyes as she spoke.

Since Melissa had the gall to humiliate her daughter in public, it was only right that they sought retribution.

Once Arielle had completely calmed down, Emily stormed out of their villa.

It was easy enough to find out Melissa's daily schedule, and even more so to follow her around. Emily had come prepared.

She settled in the restaurant across from the hospital, staring intently at the entrance.

When the phone rang, she practically jumped in excitement.

"Make sure you follow her every step of the way," she instructed the other party. "No one else takes that road at that hour, so it should be easy. You will be paid after it's done."

Emily ended the call and glanced at her watch. It was almost time for the hospital staff to get off work. She guessed that Melissa would also come out.

## Chapter 124 Kidnapped Again

As expected, half an hour later, Melissa sitting in the wheelchair was wheeled out. A car was already waiting at the entrance to pick her up.

Emily saw her leaving through the window of the restaurant and immediately notified her people.

No one could save Melissa today.

\*

Melissa didn't have to pick up her children. She could directly go home after work. Besides, Vivienne had arranged a driver for Melissa, which saved her a lot of trouble.

Melissa's villa was situated in the suburb. Therefore, they had to traverse a section of the mountain road on the way back. For some reason, the driver suddenly stopped on the way.

"Dr. Sherman, it looks like there is an accident ahead. I think we have to wait for a while."

"What? A car accident? Help me get out of the car."

Melissa was a doctor. Therefore, she instinctively wanted to help the injured people. The driver hurriedly got off the car and helped Melissa out of the car.

Then, he wheeled her to the location. Melissa saw that the two cars had collided with each other. Fortunately, no one was injured. They only seemed to be in shock.

"Dr. Sherman, let's get in the car. I think it will take a while for them to leave."

The driver sensed something was wrong but didn't say anything.

"Okay."

Just as Melissa turned around her wheelchair, she suddenly felt someone gripping it. The next moment, she saw the driver falling into the ground.

People in the car behind them got out and rushed toward Melissa.

A ball of anxiety settled in the pit of her stomach. It was obvious they were coming for her. She wondered if they were going to kidnap her.

"Wait! I'm warning you. If you kidnap me, you'll have to spend the rest of your life in jail. Think it over!"

Melissa bellowed at the people running toward her.

The men stopped short for a moment, but then continued to bolt toward her.

Sensing the situation wasn't good, and someone was grabbing the wheelchair, Melissa tried her best to move out of the wheelchair and fell to the ground.

"Run!"

Melissa turned around and saw the driver had broken free from those people. She shouted at the driver and tried holding the leg of the person closest to her, giving the driver a chance to flee.

But Emily had hired more than ten people this time. She had prepared everything in advance.

In less than ten minutes, the men caught them and put them in the car.

The driver let out muffled screams as they stuffed something into his mouth.

Melissa, on the other hand, was calm. She lay on the back seat and watched the car driving quietly.

It looked like the people were well-prepared because they had sealed the windows with black plastic film. She couldn't catch a glimpse of what was happening outside. ①

After Vivienne showed up in the hospital last time, no one dared to openly hurt her. Other than the people of the Sherman family, Melissa couldn't think of anyone else.

But since people of the Sherman family dared to do so, they perhaps would not leave any evidence.

What happened the previous day had infuriated them.

"We've caught her and are about to send her there. Don't worry. We'll do as you say right when we arrive there. But you have to pay fifty percent of the payment," the leader said bluntly to someone, a hint of threat in his voice.

"That's good."

The car sped on the road. Melissa's heart was drumming in her chest. However, no one could get any news this time since they were nowhere near the hospital.

Melissa wondered if she had to accept her fate this time.

\*

Meanwhile, the children were playing happily with Vivienne at home.

"Mrs. Mayfield, when will Mommy come back?"

Lindsey looked at her watch and realized her mother would usually arrive home at this time.

"Maybe there is a traffic jam. Be patient."

Vivienne frowned. She gestured for her husband to call Melissa.

## Chapter 125 Crossed A Line

"Mrs. Mayfield, why is Mommy not answering her phone?"

Lindsey was growing worried. They had been trying to contact Melissa for a while now, to no avail.

Had something happened to her mommy?

"Don't worry, dear. I will figure this out."

Vivienne tried, but she couldn't get in touch with the chauffeur, either. It seemed that both his and Melissa's phones had been turned off.

She then called the hospital, but the staff informed her that Melissa had left on time for the day. The chauffeur had been working for them for several years, so she was fairly certain of the man's loyalty.

The only possibility left was that something must have happened on their way home.

"Take the kids upstairs."

Vivienne usually didn't care for trifles, but the circumstances were too unusual for her to dismiss.

The more she thought about it, the more serious she became, and her entire demeanor turned stern. Even the kids didn't dare to dawdle around her. Although frightened by the elder's sudden shift, they were surprisingly relieved as well.

Vivienne called Everett.

"Melissa is missing. She must have been abducted on her way home. I couldn't get in touch with her or the driver, and the people from the hospital said she clocked out on time."

On the other end of the line, Everett froze in shock. He hadn't received any news from his men yet, so how could his mother already know about it?

Knowing that there was no time to waste, he snapped back to his senses and said, "I'll deal with it right away."

"This time, make sure you find out who is behind this. I never liked to throw around the Blake family name, but they are testing my limits."

Vivienne was staring out the large French windows, her eyes cold and ruthless.

"I understand."

After ending the call, Everett shot to his feet and sprinted out of the office. The last time something like this had happened, he didn't have the heart to punish Arielle. He never thought she would be so reckless as to do it again.

All the while, Everett had been expecting the Sherman family to come to him to settle Arielle's scandal. He was a fool not to have realized that they would try to hurt Melissa again.

"Drive us to the Sherman family's residence."

Originally, he only wanted to know everything that had transpired in the past and lay it all out for everyone to understand. He never had any intention to make an enemy of the Sherman family, but they had truly crossed a line this time.

\*

In an abandoned warehouse in the suburbs, Melissa and the chauffeur were shoved to the ground.


"This one's a pretty little thing, eh?" came a thick, male voice. He reached out and caressed Melissa's face. "What a pity!"

Melissa turned her head away and stifled an expletive.

"And feisty, too," the man added with a sinister grin. "I'm sure



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 +120 Points at most

you've got gorgeous eyes under that blindfold, but I was forbidden from removing it. I bet I would have enjoyed the look in your eyes, little lady."

Unable to speak, Melissa could only twist her body in one direction, then another, to express her outrage.

"Let her talk."

At the man's command, someone pulled out the rag that had been stuffed in her mouth.

"Let us go. I'll pay three times whatever they're offering you."

Melissa had heard the kidnappers speak with someone on the phone when they were still in the car. Since they were only doing this for money, she might as well bargain with them. She didn't lack money.

No one answered her, but she heard some shuffling, followed by a hushed discussion. Even though she couldn't see anything, she could tell that the thugs were tempted.

"You're bluffing, aren't you? Are you sure you're capable of paying us three times the price put on your head?"

Despite the man's words, his joy and excitement was evident in his tone.


"I'll give you my bank card number, the password, and verification code. The money will be transferred to your account in real time."

The men were dumbfounded by Melissa's attitude. She didn't seem the least bit fazed.

One of the men barked out a laugh. "This one is smart! But I'm afraid we'd be the ones getting into trouble if we break our original contract."

"That's why this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. If you take my offer, you will leave with a lot of money. I don't suppose you'd want to spend the rest of your days in fear and

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uncertainty. You want your money, and I want my freedom. Take my offer, and it's a win-win for all of us. There is no such thing as easy money. Wealth always comes with risks. Think about it carefully."

Melissa had become more composed now. She had to be. She wanted these men to know that she was capable of meeting any price they demanded.

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## Chapter 126 Everett's Cruelty

The thugs began to whisper among themselves. As long as one of them was even remotely tempted by the offer, there was bound to be a disagreement in the group. If Melissa could manage to buy some time, she and the chauffeur could escape.

Meanwhile, as Melissa tipped the odds in her favor, the Sherman family's residence was in an uproar.

Everett had brought his men and laid siege to the Sherman family, trapping them all in their villa.

"Don't go too far, Everett. You can't afford to hurt us."

Howell glanced at the dozen or so men surrounding him, all dressed in black and looking like fierce warriors. He was so enraged that his face had turned an alarming shade of red.

Emily cowered behind her husband in fear as she herself stared at their enemy.

"I want Melissa's whereabouts in exchange for your safety."

Everett's patience was rapidly thinning. He was getting more and more worried about Melissa as the minutes ticked by. Her leg was still injured, after all. Even if she found an opportunity, she wouldn't be able to run and escape.

"If you want to know where she is, then you should go and look for her yourself! Why have you come to us with your ridiculous demands?"

Howell was unaware of what Emily had done. He simply thought that Everett had barged into their home to make further trouble with their family.

Emily didn't dare to utter a peep, while Arielle was upstairs in her room, listening to the commotion through the crack in her

door. She wasn't brave enough to go down and face Everett.

How could he treat them like this over that worthless woman, Melissa? It was almost as if their love for the past five years meant nothing to him.

Arielle leaned against the wall and slumped to the floor. She covered her mouth to stifle her sobs as she went.

Downstairs, Emily remained silent. She still hadn't heard from her men. Once they finished their job, Melissa would be completely destroyed.

"Since you refuse to talk while I'm asking nicely, don't blame me for taking the rough way."

As soon as Everett said this, his men rushed to the second floor.

"Everett! Are you still human? Arielle has stayed by your side for five years! How can you bear to hurt her?"

Emily shrieked as she realized that the men were coming for Arielle. She turned toward the stairs and screamed for her daughter to close her door and lock it.

Unfortunately, her warning had come too late.

"Who are you? How dare you touch me! Let go of me!"

Arielle was dragged out of her room and out into the hall. Her vision was blurred with tears as she stared through the banister at the cold man on the first floor.

She couldn't believe that Everett was really doing this to her. Were his affections for her these last five years all fake?

"Everett, how heartless can you be?"

Arielle collapsed on the floor and wept loudly.

Everett only rolled his eyes and turned his attention back to Howell.

"If I don't get Melissa's location in ten minutes, your daughter will be left at the mercy of those five men upstairs."

He settled on an armchair and gently tapped his fingers on the armrest.

Emily's face turned white as a sheet. She scampered over to Everett, screeching, "What a cruel man you are, Everett! You would go so far as to torture Arielle, who has been devoted to you all this time, all for the sake of that bitch, Melissa?"

But she wasn't able to reach Everett at all. Someone had grabbed her by the arm and pulled her back before she could even come close to him.

"There is a limit to my patience."

"Mom, Dad, help me! Give him what he wants! Please!"

All the color had drained from her face, and she was visibly trembling with fear.

Nevertheless, Emily kept berating Everett, even as Howell tried to interfere and speak with him and was subsequently ignored. The minutes ticked by, until Everett finally held up his hand and nodded. With that, the men upstairs began pulling Arielle back into her room.

"Ahhh! Go away! No, don't touch me!"

Arielle could not bear this humiliation. How could she endure being violated in front of the man she loved?

Just when she thought she was done for, Emily yelled out, "I will tell you!"

She couldn't bear to stand by and watch her daughter suffer.

Everett raised an eyebrow. If one looked closely, one would have noticed his subtle sigh of relief.

