

## Chapter 30 The Welcome Banquet

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Ten million?

That was quite the sum!

Madisyn, who hadn't been making money lately and was feeling a bit strapped for cash, seized the opportunity. After all, she couldn't always use her family's money.

Over the next several days, she holed up at home, fully engrossed in her design work.

Just three days later, her creation was ready. She had it crafted and promptly sent it off to the eager buyer.

Madisyn then turned her attention to her upcoming welcome banquet. Glenn, ever supportive, had procured a variety of dresses for her to consider.

After a thoughtful selection process, she chose a long, elegant blue gown that radiated sophistication.

"Madisyn, are there any friends you'd like to invite to the banquet?" Glenn asked.

Madisyn pondered briefly. "I only have two friends I'd like to invite."

"Alright, here are their invitations," Glenn said as he handed two invitations over. "I've kept the guest list limited to some families that are close to us. It'll be intimate, so you can relax."

Glenn's thoughtful arrangement was to ensure Madisyn wouldn't feel overwhelmed.

"Okay," Madisyn said. She appreciated the gesture, but she was actually

indifferent to the scale of the event.

When Kristine returned home, her eyes widened at the array of dresses spread out.

Glenn's choice of the season's latest designs showcased his generosity. Yet, even these paled in comparison to the limited edition dress Kristine had secured for herself—a true gem among gowns.

With a relieved sigh, she anticipated the banquet eagerly.

Madisyn went to see Susan with an invitation.

"Your biological parents must be loaded," Susan said in surprise, seeing the invitation. "They're even throwing a welcome banquet for you!"

"They're doing alright," Madisyn replied modestly.

Susan's happiness for her friend was evident. She had worried about Madisyn's adjustment to her biological parents' home, but it seemed they were quite well-off.

"Have you told Giana about this?"

"Not yet. I'll give her a call now."

Madisyn dialed Giana Hicks's number, but received no response.

"She might be tied up with something. Try reaching out to her a bit later," Susan suggested, reading the situation with a friend's intuition.

True to Susan's prediction, Giana returned the call not long after.

"I've been swamped at work. Can I help you with something?" she inquired, her voice carrying a hint of distance.

Madisyn felt a subtle shift in Giana's tone but still said, "I've been reunited with my biological parents, and they're throwing a welcome banquet for me. Would you like to come?"

"When is it?" Giana asked.

"Tomorrow evening."

Giana's response carried a note of regret. "Oh, I have plans tomorrow night, so I probably can't make it. But I'll definitely send you a gift."

"Got it," Madisyn replied.

Susan's frown deepened as the phone call concluded. She had been close enough to overhear the exchange between Madisyn and Giana, and her displeasure was palpable.

"She spoke to you like that? That's unacceptable. If it weren't for your songwriting for her and your family's company boosting her debut, she wouldn't even be a singer now! And now that she's made it big, she just ignores us!" Susan's voice was tinged with frustration.

Madisyn's lips tightened into a thin line. It was disheartening to witness how success could alter relationships and how the warmth of old friendships could cool with rising fortunes.

Susan wrapped an arm around Madisyn, her stance protective. "Hmph, don't be sad. I'll be there with you!"

"Awesome!" Madisyn responded, a faint smile appearing on her lips.

Meanwhile, after Giana ended her call with Madisyn, her demeanor remained neutral. Her assistant inquired, "Giana, do you have plans for tomorrow night?"

"I've already agreed to attend Jenna's welcome banquet," Giana replied, her attention on her nails.

Giana, Madisyn, and Susan had been a trio since middle school, their bond extending through high school. Giana knew Jenna as well but wasn't particularly close to her.

It was only after Jenna was acknowledged by her biological family and reached out that their acquaintance strengthened.

Jenna had extended an invitation, and Giana accepted.

Given Jenna's confirmed status as the rightful heiress of the Chapman

Group where Giana was employed, it was strategic, perhaps even necessary, to maintain a good rapport with Jenna.

"Well, it's not that I don't want to go to Madisyn's welcome banquet, but she's in the countryside. Is there really a need to hold such a banquet there?" She scoffed lightly. "Has she gotten so used to life with the Chapmans that she thinks she's still Miss Chapman? I bet the place is nothing fancy. Yet, she insists on having a banquet, without considering the financial strain on her parents."

"Exactly," her assistant said, nodding in understanding. "She's not part of a wealthy family anymore. Welcome banquets are typically for those with prestige."

"Just pick out a gift to send her," Giana said dismissively.

"Sure thing," the assistant responded.

As they spoke, Giana's phone buzzed again. It was Jenna calling this time.

Giana answered with a markedly sweeter tone, "Jenna, how's it going?"

"I just wanted to know if you're coming to my banquet," Jenna said.

"Of course, I wouldn't miss it for the world! I've been looking forward to it. I've even picked out a gift for you," Giana replied with feigned enthusiasm.

"That's great. What about Madisyn? Why don't you bring her along?" Jenna asked casually.

Giana's features tightened as she replied, "She has her own welcome banquet to host."

"Really?" Jenna's sharp tone sent a jolt through the phone, prompting Giana to momentarily pull away. Jenna continued, "A welcome banquet? For her? That's ridiculous. Where is she hosting it? At some rural inn?"

"I'm not sure of the specifics, but she really is too concerned about keeping up appearances," Giana added, her voice laced with a hint of disdain.

Jenna fell silent, digesting the information.

The thought of Madisyn's efforts to maintain an image of prestige surprised her.

In her mind, Madisyn's actions were nothing more than a vain attempt to mimic her own standing.

Yet, this realization brought Jenna a twisted sense of satisfaction. It would show to the others that the distinction between her and Madisyn's current statuses was quite clear.

