

## Chapter 8

Just then, Lauren's phone rang. After answering, she turned to Andrew and said, "Dr. Lloyd, feel free to look around. I need to take care of something. See you in a bit!"

Andrew nodded. "Of course, Ms. Rhodes. Don't let me keep you."

There was still some time before the fundraiser officially began. More influential figures, all eyeing the orphanage's valuable property, continued to arrive. Before long, the parking lot was already filled with luxury cars.

A sleek black Rolls-Royce pulled up, drawing everyone's attention. As the door opened, a stunning woman in a pure white cocktail dress stepped out, her legs as fair as snow. Her appearance drew gasps of admiration from the crowd.

"What a beauty! Her grace is truly unparalleled!"

"I'd risk jail time just for a moment with a woman like that!"

"That's the famous CEO of Stevens Corporation. Not only is she gorgeous, but her business insight is extraordinary. She'll probably snag this prime real estate tonight."

Another luxury car pulled up behind the Rolls-Royce. Shawn eagerly jumped out and approached the center of attention, Christina.

"Christie, you really know how to make an entrance. I bet you'd be a top celebrity even if you weren't the CEO of Stevens Corporation!"

Shawn's eyes could not hide his admiration as he gazed at the radiant Christina. Christina, however, seemed uncomfortable with his closeness.

"Let's focus on business. And I think it's best we maintain some distance in public."

Shawn brushed off her concern. "What's there to worry about? Everyone knows how I feel about you, Christie. Besides, you're single now. You kicked that loser to the curb, so no one can say anything."

Irene chimed in, supporting Shawn. "That's right, Christie. Andrew's out of the picture now. Plus, Shawn's our ally. We'll need his support for Stevens Corporation tonight."

From a distance, Andrew watched Christina and Shawn chatting and laughing, surrounded by other guests. He had not expected to run into the woman who had almost become his wife in such a place. He turned away, intending to leave.

However, Christina spotted him and called out, "Andrew... is that you? Wait right there!"

The click of high heels echoed as Christina approached, uncertainty in her steps.

Andrew cursed his luck silently before turning to face her with a cold expression. "What can I do for you, Ms. Stevens?"

Christina's smile faltered. "Andrew, it really is you. A-Are you still angry with me?"

Andrew took a deep breath, quickly suppressing his emotions. "You must be joking, Ms. Stevens. A nobody like me has no right to be angry. If there's nothing else, I'll leave you in peace."

"Wait, don't go!" Christina stepped forward, her tone serious. "Even though our relationship is over, I've always thought you were a good person, Andrew. So please, listen to me one last time—why don't you turn yourself in?"

Andrew let out a cold laugh, amused by how Christina was still as clueless as ever. Even until then, she was unaware of the true situation.

"Why don't you call the police right now and have them arrest me, Ms. Stevens?"

Christina was taken aback, then her face flushed with anger. "Andrew, why are you being so stubborn? Even if I wronged you, that's no excuse to break the law! Listen to me. Return the King of Diamonds and face the consequences of your actions."

Irene and Shawn approached, their faces unfriendly.

"Christie, why are you even bothering with him?" Shawn sneered as he turned to Andrew. "A shameless thief daring to show up at a high-class event like this. Where do you get the nerve?"

Irene chimed in, her voice dripping with sarcasm. "Andrew, did you follow Christie here like a lost puppy? I just don't get why you keep hanging around. It's pathetic."

Andrew glanced at the arrogant Shawn. "Didn't that slap teach you how to behave?"

Shawn's face instantly darkened with rage. "Christie's not here to protect you anymore. I'll cripple you in a heartbeat!"

He signaled, and the Fields family's bodyguards started moving toward Andrew.

Just then, a cold voice cut through the tension. "My, what a temper. What an impressive show of force. How dare you threaten my man."

Lauren approached with an imposing presence, wearing an exquisite red gown. She was accompanied by Eunice and the Rhodes family's top bodyguards. Her hair was elegantly styled in an updo, accentuating her long neck and flawlessly beautiful face.

She was breathtakingly stunning.

Shawn stared at Lauren, almost drooling. Another gorgeous woman had entered the scene, and he was mesmerized.

"Miss, w-what did you say?" he stammered.

Lauren linked her arm with Andrew's and smiled sweetly. "I said, he's my man. Is that clear enough for you?"

Shawn snapped out of his trance, burning with jealousy. This loser seemed to have incredible luck with women. He could not believe Andrew had already snagged such beauty right after breaking up with Christina.

It just seemed so unfair.

"Beautiful lady, here's some advice—this guy's a deadbeat, a gold-digger. With your looks, he's not even fit to run errands for you!"

Irene chimed in, "Sweetie, I don't know who you are, but be careful. This guy's a loser. He used to mooch off my daughter. You'd better stay away from him before he tricks you too!"

Lauren ignored them both and turned her gaze to Christina, flashing a seductive smile. Her sharp intuition immediately sensed that Andrew had a history with this woman.

Christina met Lauren's gaze with an icy stare. The tension between the two women was palpable.

"Andy, aren't you going to introduce me to this lovely lady who seems to know you so well?" Lauren asked Andrew teasingly, her tone deliberately provocative.

Andrew felt a headache coming on. He had not expected these two women to meet, let alone for Lauren to start calling him "Andy" so casually. This woman was clearly stirring up trouble.

"This is the famous Ice Queen of Stevens Corporation," Andrew said with a hint of sarcasm. "Also known as Ms. Christina Stevens, the one everyone's talking about—the woman who dumped me."

Lauren laughed dramatically. "Oh, so you're Ms. Stevens! No wonder you're so beautiful. I must thank you, Ms. Stevens. If you hadn't let Andy go, he and I might never have found happiness together!"

Her words ignited Christina's fury.