

## 4. "What did I miss?"

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"Think like a queen. A queen is not afraid to fail. Failure is another steppingstone to greatness." - Oprah Winfrey

### Chapter 4

#### Elena's POV

I barely closed my eyes when I heard the loud ringing of the doorbell. I groaned rolling on my bed ignoring it, hoping that whoever it was would go away. Probably one of our neighbors, bringing some of their leftovers from last night's dinner. But the doorbell kept on ringing, making my head throbbed.

I got out of bed slowly, like a zombie and checked the time at the digital clock on the bedside table. I sighed when I saw it was still six thirty in the morning.

After my grandpa called last night, my temper flared up at the thought of meeting Adonis Stavrakos. I tossed and turned on the bed. I found it hard to sleep anymore. I had to get out of the house and release my anger somewhere or I would go crazy.

I called my best friend/business partner, Camella, who lived just a block away from our house. I was hoping we could hang out in the nearest coffee shop, to keep my mind off my problems.

But she was in a bar with her cousin. Her cousin got some tickets in an exclusive bar, where all the mega rich and famous people in New York would go. I ended up joining them, and we had so much fun.

I never had fun with my friends for ages. Since Mom got sick, life was tougher, that I had to work double, triple, quadruple... to sustain our daily expenses and a load of her medical expenses. I worked in our online shopping business, did a part time job in a cafe, worked in a gas station in the evenings and groomed dogs on weekends.

The doorbell rang again, making me walk faster and open the door.

A woman wearing a two-piece gray business suit stood on my doorstep. She was wearing makeup, her dark hair was pulled tight at the back of her head in a tight bun.

"Good morning, Miss Pallis. I'm Sheila, the personal assistant of your grandfather. He sent me here to ask you to join him for breakfast," she said so lightly with a very charming smile.

My anger suddenly made me wide awake, "no thanks, I don't eat breakfast."

"Mr. Pallis would like to discuss something with you also..." she continued, but I cut her off.

"Tell him we'll discuss it later. I'm sure it can wait. If you don't mind, I'm going back to bed. I'm very sleepy," I said, then closed the door.

I was thankful that Bella... Well... whoever she was, respected what I've said and let me alone. I was able to sleep for six hours straight and had a cold shower.

I was eating brunch, toying with the broccoli on my plate, when everything started to sink in.

My temper rose again. Seemed like getting angry was becoming a habit.

It felt like walking to a dead end. I was left with no choice by my callous cold hearted grandfather, but to agree on the arranged marriage with Adonis Stavrakos.

Now, I have to sacrifice my own future and fulfill that promise.

My thoughts shifted to Adonis Stavrakos. I wondered, why would an extremely rich man agree to a marriage of convenience? The only thing I could think of was to get wealthier and powerful.

As the saying goes, Greed is a fat demon with a small mouth. Whatever you feed, it is never enough.

Adonis Stavrakos obviously was not content with what he had. He wanted everything! No doubt aiming to be the most powerful man on the whole planet.

The thought of marrying that kind of man disgusted me. A selfish arrogant spoiled bastard was not the kind of man I dreamed of marrying and fathering my kids.

The doorbell rang at five in the afternoon, it was Grandpa's personal assistant again. This time, she brought three people with her.

"Sorry to bother you Miss Pallis, but your Grandpa sent us to give you a makeover for your dinner tonight."

Like a sacrificial lamb, offered to the demon.

"Okay, fine," I agreed, letting them do whatever they had to do.

I was not planning anything for that evening's meeting. The thought of it dreaded me. I would go there wearing my usual outfit. Ripped jeans, loose shirt and worn out sneakers.

Grandpa probably knew that I would embarrass him, so he sent these expert beauticians to do me a makeover.

I was very disappointed with the outcome, because they did so great. They made me look so stunning, like a billion dollar girl.

The makeup emphasized every feature of my face, my brown eyes looked dramatic and my lips pouted. My red hair looked bright, cascading on my back in soft waves.

The dress. A very beautiful white off-shoulder dress that emphasized every curve of my body, and with matching white stilettos that showed my slim legs.

"You look so beautiful, Miss Pallis," Grandpa's personal assistant said, her eyes gleaming with satisfaction.

"Thank you, Bella."

"It's Sheila," she answered politely.

A limousine pulled outside my apartment at six thirty. I was escorted by two men as I went towards the car. I was disappointed to see my grandfather inside.

Why do I have to deal with him right away? I was planning to have fun inside the limo. It was my first time to ride such a car - I would listen to music, put my feet up on the seat, and try all the wine in the fridge, until I got drunk.

"Hey, what's up, Constantine!" I greeted him, then grabbed the bottle of champagne he was holding, and took a big gulp of the sparkling liquid, "or should I call you, Cons... Tan... or Tin?"

I was planning to spite Grandpa, to act very unsophisticated, but he neither complained nor scolded me, instead he offered me a flute glass.

"I like grandpa better," he answered with a satisfied smile.

"Ugh!" I rolled my eyes.

Suddenly, I was suspicious of him, and I was right.

"Starting tomorrow, you're going to live with me in the mansion. People, especially the Stavrakos would wonder why you're living in a shabby apartment, when you're my granddaughter."

I laughed, "still concerned about your reputation, huh? What else do you want me to do, pretend that you never abandoned us? That I live in luxury outside the country, squandering the Pallis' wealth in luxury clothes and bags?"

He took a big gulp of his champagne, then nodded, "exactly. Not only that... you grew up in the UK, studied in a boarding school during high school. You went to a university in Singapore and finished a business degree."

"What the hell! I haven't been outside the country before! I don't have a British accent."

"You don't have to. Your mother grew up in the US so it's understandable."

"I haven't attended university. I don't even know where Singapore is. Is it near China?"

"No, that's Hongkong," he sighed, shaking his head.

"Whatever. I don't want to lie, and pretend to be a socialite. I don't even know how to act like one," my lips twisted with distaste.

"If you want me to continue your mom's rehab, then you have to do what I want. Lie if you must," his voice was low but firm, "Sheila will get someone to teach you to become a sophisticated woman."

I was angry again, like a dynamite, ready to explode. I hated that he was holding the card, controlling my life.

"Be nice to the Stavrakos, or else, you'll continue not to receive a single dime from me," he threatened and that stopped our conversation.

We arrived at the Stavrakos mansion. The electronic iron gates were massive with a huge bold letter S in the center. The limo drove through the gates and sped along a wide road leading to the beautiful mansion.

The door was opened by an older butler and he ushered us to the living room, where a beautiful middle-aged couple - Mr. and Mrs. Stavrakos were waiting. Immediately, greetings, introductions and pleasantries were exchanged.

I was suddenly shy, meeting Mr. and Mrs. Stavrakos. I was intimidated. They looked like very professional and well-educated people. I was relieved when they welcomed me warmly. Actually, they were really nice and accommodating. I wondered if their son shared the same attributes.

"Adonis just arrived from the office, he'll be down in a while," Pia Stavrakos said, making me feel at home, "I heard you've just arrived from Singapore. How's your flight?"

"Um... very well. The... food was great. You know... sushi, sashimi..." I answered.

"Oh, you love Japanese food. I'll take note of that," she smiled brightly, "tonight, we're having French dishes. Do you have any particular favorite?"

"Um... french fries?" I could not think of any French dishes, and ended up giving stupid answer.

"Same," she answered, "with sour cream powder, it's heaven."

She was so nice, I liked her. She made me feel at ease.

"Elena just earned her business degree. She did it with flying colors," Grandpa said proudly.

"That's amazing!" Kristov Stavrakos said, then asked, "what's your major?"

Oh no... I don't know any major in business courses.

My eyes grew big, trying to formulate an answer, "Um... my major?"

"Yes," he nodded, waiting for my answer.

"It's... it's business," I answered, looking at Grandpa to rescue me. But he never did.

"Ah - you mean, Business Management and Administration," Kristov Stavrakos nodded, smiling at me, "nice choice."

Pia gave me a glass of wine, and we settled on a couch talking about Singapore, which I did not have any knowledge about, I just kept on nodding to everything she said. She was telling me about Merlion history, when the person that I was not excited to meet finally arrived.

"What did I miss?" I heard a younger man's voice.

My heart pounded instantly. I turned around and instantly, I came eye to eye with Adonis Stavrakos.

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**AN:** Hey Dreamers! How are you?

Sorry for the late update. A lot of things going on today, that I could not control. Still, I'm hoping that you enjoyed reading the chapter.

See you on Thursday!

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