

## Chapter 26 Apology Is Not Enough

Bella's emotions swirled, her eyes welling up with tears, lips trembling. Slowly, she bent her knees.

Bella knelt on the ground, her voice shaking, "I'm sorry, Miss Young."

"Be sincere, Miss Bella," Sylvia laughed softly, taking a piece of birthday cake from Mr. Simon and tasting the cream.

Bella felt like a dog with no dignity. She took a deep breath, tears streaming into her mouth, tasting salty and bitter. "Miss Young, I was blind and foolish. I made you suffer at my birthday party. I'm sorry. Please forgive me."

Bella knelt, her clenched fists trembling violently.

"..."

Everyone watched in silence, the room filled only with Bella's heart-wrenching sobs.

"Miss Young, does this satisfy you?" Mr. Simon asked cautiously.

Sylvia savored the cake, then looked up and smiled. "Miss Bella accused me of being a fraud, a thief, and said I escaped from the slums. She even wanted to strip me in public. Do you think an apology is enough?"

What?

Miss Bella did such foolish things? Mr. Simon glared at Bella.

Fabian, realizing how much trouble Bella had caused, was furious and signaled for her to continue apologizing. Couldn't she have waited until he arrived to discreetly abduct and humiliate Sylvia if she suspected her identity?

Bella, overwhelmed with tears, lowered her head to continue apologizing when a beautiful, jeweled high heel appeared in her sight.

She froze.

The next moment, the toe of the shoe pressed against her chin.

Bella shuddered as the tip of Sylvia's shoe lifted her chin, forcing her tear-filled eyes to meet Sylvia's gaze, who looked down at her with a cruel, contemptuous smile.

The scene felt eerily familiar, but Bella couldn't quite place when it had happened before.

Sylvia, sitting there with her shoe under Bella's chin, smirked and said, "Miss Bella, I came to your birthday party with all sincerity, but you humiliated me. Since that's the case, let's just end this party."

She said it so casually.

Mr. Simon immediately understood and instructed the security, "Start tearing down the venue!"

Bella's pupils contracted in horror as she knelt there.

With a loud crash, the large light display in the venue was toppled over, and the sound of shattering glass echoed through the hall.

"No—"

This was her birthday party, one she had anticipated for so long. She had designed and overseen all the arrangements herself.

Bella cried out, trying to stand up.

"Where do you think you're going?" Sylvia quickly grabbed her hair, pulling her back down.

"Let go of me!" Bella yelled, feeling the pain sear through her scalp as she was yanked backward.

"Miss Bella, why are you so agitated? Oh, you haven't had your birthday cake yet. Here, let me serve you some." Sylvia smiled innocently and then smeared the unfinished cake onto Bella's meticulously made-up face, spreading it around.

"No..." Bella screamed hysterically, trying to wipe the cake off her face with her hands.

"Miss Young, aren't you going too far?" Fabian stepped forward, his voice filled with concern.

Sylvia glanced at him and said slowly, "Oops, my hand slipped."

"..." Hand slipped? Fabian's face turned pale with anger, but he had no choice. Determined not to cross the influential Young family, he had to endure this humiliation.

Bella, who had never experienced such disgrace, wept bitterly. Her tears mingled with the cake on her face, ruining her once-radiant appearance.

Sylvia refocused on Bella, gripping her hair tightly and forcing her to look up. "Keep your eyes wide open."

Bella reluctantly opened her eyes, seeing the entire venue being torn apart. All the flowers were trampled and crushed, the food and drinks were thrown to the ground, and the six-tiered cake tower was toppled.

It was utter chaos.

What was supposed to be a luxurious, romantic birthday party was now completely destroyed.

"Do you like what you see?" Sylvia asked, looking down at her.

Bella trembled, her tear-filled eyes looking up at Sylvia. "What... what do you want?"

"I want to see you humiliated. I want to make your life miserable," Sylvia said honestly, forcing her to look at Maggie and the others. "You must have felt like a queen among them. Tell me, do you think you'll ever have such good days again?"

Bella looked around and saw Maggie and the others backing away, too afraid to even look at her, not wanting to be associated with her.

She closed her eyes, refusing to witness her own disgrace.

"Open your eyes and look!" Sylvia's voice was cold and sharp.

Her voice was soft yet bone-chilling, making Bella shudder again. Reluctantly, Bella opened her eyes, forced to witness the most humiliating moment of her life.

With a loud crash, several dresses Bella had planned to wear that evening were thrown in front of her. The dresses were torn to shreds, mingled with spilled food and drink on the floor.

Fabian stood by, feeling a pang of guilt watching his daughter being treated this way. He forced a smile and said to Sylvia, "Miss Young, my daughter indeed acted out of line today. I will personally bring her to apologize with a generous gift another day."

Bella trembled even more, choking back tears as she said, "Mi-Miss, Miss Young. I was wrong. Please forgive me... I'll offer a formal apology and make amends."

Every moment she stayed, her dignity was further shredded.

"Can't take it anymore?" Sylvia chuckled coldly, staring her down. "Do you feel humiliated now?"

"I..." Bella couldn't find her voice.

Sylvia leaned down, her lips close to Bella's ear, and whispered, "Bella, you brought this on yourself. You could've had a nice, smooth birthday party, but you chose to mess with me."

"I'm sorry, Miss Young," Bella apologized through her tears.

"Do you think you're so smart? Let me tell you, I knew that silver-haired guy liked you. I got him to give false testimony on purpose. I wanted you to come at me," Sylvia whispered in her ear.

Bella, still on her knees, looked up at Sylvia in shock, "Wh-What do you mean? Who are you really?"

"Guess," Sylvia replied, smiling sweetly, her eyes sparkling.

Bella was confused, staring blankly at her.

What did she mean? Who was she?

Sylvia Clark? Barbecue Young?

Bella, in desperation, grabbed Sylvia's hand, "You're Sylvia Clark, right? Barbecue Young wouldn't go this far to scheme against me!"

"Sylvia Clark? Who's Sylvia Clark?" Sylvia feigned confusion, looking around at the wealthy onlookers.

Before Bella could respond, Fabian kicked her hard, sending her sprawling.

Stupid girl, Fabian thought. Discussing Sylvia Clark in front of so many wealthy families and the Young family members could expose the whole charade.

Sylvia let go of Bella's hand as she fell. Bella lay on the ground, her hair a mess. She looked up to see Fabian's furious face, and her mind went blank.

She didn't dare speak anymore. Her humiliation was complete.

Sylvia knew that Bella wouldn't dare to speak up again.

The venue was a wreck.

This birthday party would be one Bella would remember for the rest of her life.

"That's enough for today," Sylvia said leisurely as she stood up. Looking at Fabian, she added, "Congressman Fabian, you really need to get a handle on your daughter. If you can't even educate your own child properly, how can you serve as a representative for the people?"

"..." Fabian's face turned various shades of red and white at her words.

Sylvia then looked down at the disheveled Bella and smiled, "But I must say, today's cake was quite good. So, I wish Miss Bella many more birthdays like today."

She delivered the last sentence slowly, each word dripping with sarcasm.

"..." Bella's face turned a deep shade of purple as she listened.

With that, Sylvia turned and walked towards the exit. The group of rich kids who had been standing around hurriedly parted to make way for her.

Sylvia walked down the path they created with a calm and dignified demeanor. All eyes were on her. The pure white dress she wore seemed like a warrior's armor.

Suddenly, a mechanism above was triggered, and a shower of pink petals and balloons rained down. It was like a magical scene.

Petals landed on Sylvia's shoulders, hair, and dress, enhancing her beauty even more. Yet, she didn't pause or even brush them off. She kept walking, stepping on the balloons underfoot, until she disappeared through the venue's doors.

"..."

The entire venue fell into a ten-minute silence.

Fabian, with a grim expression, went to help Bella. She suddenly grabbed his arm, "Dad, who is she? She said something to me..."

"Don't say another word. Sylvia isn't like this," Fabian cut her off, lifting Bella off the ground.

"But Dad, if she's Sylvia and she didn't die far away, it would be me who's dead," Bella said, a bit agitated. "Look at how much I've suffered since she showed up! Sylvia and I were born on the same day, at the same time. She's meant to take the bad luck for me."

Upon hearing this, Fabian's face darkened. After a moment of thought, he turned to his bodyguards, "Follow Miss Young discreetly. Find out where she goes, what she does, and who she meets."

They had to determine if this Miss Young was really Sylvia.

"Understood, Congressman Fabian," the bodyguard responded, quickly leaving to carry out the order.

Only then did Fabian carry Bella away.

Once they had left, Martin, who had been observing from the shadows, stepped out from the crowd. He opened his phone's photo album; in just a short time, he had taken hundreds of photos and recorded several videos.

The lady from Lilac Land... quite impressive.

The manager of the Summer Hotel, a congressman, and his influencer daughter, she had them all wrapped around her finger. This wasn't some bronze-level player from the slums; this was a king from N City.

Martin's mouth hung open in amazement for a while before he remembered he needed to report back.