

Chapter 4 Don't Dirty the Carpet

After landing at Northerndale Airport, Tom needed to attend to urgent work matters, so he headed straight to the office. Beulah and her daughters took the car back home.

They pulled into the Kane Residence an hour and a half later.

"We're back!" Beulah announced cheerfully, leading Meredith into the house. "Your grandma and brothers are all waiting for you."

Meredith nodded in understanding.

Myra strutted into the living room, declaring, "We're back, Grandma!"

She handed her bag to the servant and made her way towards the living room, acting like the house belonged to her.

"Any souvenirs for me?" A young boy of about six or seven, James, the third Kane child, emerged from the living room, his eyes sparkling with anticipation.

"What could they possibly bring back from that dump?" A raspy voice echoed from the living room.

"Yeah, right. Got me all excited for nothing," James rolled his eyes, plopped back onto the sofa, and continued playing his game console.

Meredith followed Beulah into the living room, decked out in the luxury of European Baroque style.

An elegant old woman with silver hair, dressed in a luxurious outfit, sat gracefully on the sofa, sipping tea.

Myra, always the dutiful granddaughter, settled beside her grandmother and poured her a cup of tea. "Grandma, where's Gary?"

"He flew off to the Amazon at noon," Old Mrs. Kane replied, taking another sip of her tea, "said he was visiting some biological organization."

Beulah's expression darkened upon hearing this.

Before leaving that morning, she had told her eldest son, Gary, that they were picking up Meredith and the family would have a reunion dinner, hoping he would make it.

But Gary always marched to the beat of his drum and was the apple of the Kane family's eye. She couldn't blame him, so she could only suppress the discomfort in her heart.

"Mom, we've brought Meredith back," Beulah said, introducing Meredith to her grandmother. "Meredith, this is Grandma."

"Grandma," Meredith greeted softly.

Old Mrs. Kane ignored her greeting. She put down her cup and summoned the servant. "Courtney, bring the rest of the bone broth to Myra."

"Thank you, Grandma," Myra thanked sweetly and then enjoyed the bone broth, flaunting her special treatment.

"Take your time, no rush. You've been cooped up in the car all day; it must've been tiring. Take care of yourself and keep up your looks so the Hale boy will be completely besotted with you," Old Mrs. Kane advised, affectionately tucking Myra's hair behind her ear.

"Mhmm," Myra nodded sweetly with a smile.

She smiled and glanced at Meredith, who was left aside, her smile becoming even more triumphant.

Observing Old Mrs. Kane deliberately snubbing Meredith, Beulah tried again, "Mom..."

"Oh, looks who's back," Old Mrs. Kane turned her gaze as if she had just noticed someone there and scrutinized Meredith.

Meredith possessed striking facial features that would turn heads, though her hairstyle left much to be desired. However, her icy eyes and pursed lips hinted that she might not be the type to attract a wealthy husband.

Her clothing, a dirty and torn garb paired with a tattered cloth bag, deepened Old Mrs. Kane's disapproval; her mud-stained shoes further reinforced this impression.

"Courtney, get her a new pair of shoes. Don't let the dust from the backwoods stain my wool carpet, air-freighted from Italy," Old Mrs. Kane instructed the servant.

"Yes, ma'am," the servant responded promptly, bringing Meredith a pair of slippers. "Ms. Meredith, please change your shoes."

Meredith remained silent.

From Old Mrs. Kane's actions and words, Beulah understood that Meredith was not welcome.

When Beulah was dating Tom, the Kanes were still country bumpkins. But then they struck gold with a mine they discovered underground.

With their newfound wealth, Old Mrs. Kane developed a snobbish attitude and looked down on people from rural areas. She even forced Beulah to break up with Tom and relocate the entire family to Northerndale.

Desperate to shed their nouveau riche label and enter the upper-class circle, they started a company, bought a villa, and indulged in luxury goods.

If Tom hadn't been so set on marrying Beulah, and if she hadn't been unexpectedly pregnant with Gary, the Kanes' first grandchild, Beulah might never have had the opportunity to become a part of the Kane family.

Remembering her own personal struggles, Beulah felt a knot of anxiety tighten in her stomach.

Knowing Meredith grew up in the remote mountains, Old Mrs. Kane probably disliked her even more.

Beulah tried to mediate. "Mom, life in the mountains is tough, and Meredith's been through a lot since she was a child..."

"Enough already! Take her to get cleaned up and find her something decent to wear," Old Mrs. Kane dismissed Beulah with a wave.

Beulah could only say to Meredith, "Here, Merry, Mom will show you to your room."

Meredith hid her disdain for Old Mrs. Kane and nodded.

Myra watched Beulah's attempt to please Meredith and suddenly felt that the bone broth in her hand had lost its appeal.

That maternal attention was originally hers. Why did Meredith easily snatch it away?

Unwilling to accept it, she turned her attention to James, who was engrossed in his game.

"James, don't you have any homework to do?" Myra reminded him.

After being killed in the game, James cursed and then, upon hearing Myra's words, immediately abandoned the game console and rushed up to the third floor.