

Chapter 106

NOAH

TWO WEEKS LATER

I had a headache, one that grew in intensity every second I spent poring over my company's financial records. The figures on the screen seemed to blur and run together the longer I stared at them.

Despite all these, I could still tell I was in financial trouble. My finances had never looked this bad, even in years when I encountered some business challenges.

My world was crashing down on me, and I didn't know what to do.

I had spent so much, especially in the court case with Monique. Now, I was left with next to nothing. With a company to run and little finances coming in, it was safe to say that bankruptcy was knocking. How did I get myself to this point?

I thought back to a week ago during the whole case with Monique. It had taken a team of excellent lawyers to prove in court that I had no connection to Monique. But then the lawyers had charged me a hefty sum of money for their services, money I had been willing to part with to avoid being charged and probably jail time if I was found guilty.

I remembered the lies I was forced to recite over and over again. As my lawyer suggested, I had to claim to be one of Monique's victims. That was the only way I would not be charged to court or stand trial.

And like they predicted, it worked. The judge found it pretty easy to believe that I was trying to protect Lucy and my unborn child, which was why I agreed to Monique's schemes.

And with the FBI on Monique's neck, she really didn't have a case. She was going to jail, and the only thing up for debate was how long her term would be.

Now, I was back to square one, to the very beginning. It was like a fresh start without any moral or financial boost. Just me, alone, against the whole fucking world.

I scrolled further and saw more debts I was yet to clear. I leaned back against my chair with a sigh.

All of this was worrying, to say the least. I didn't want to think about it, but I wondered if I could ever recover from this loss.

Things had not gotten better since I exonerated myself from Monique's activities. Many of my shareholders had left and were still leaving, and my protestations of innocence did not move them one bit. I supposed they all still thought I was guilty and had gotten off on a technicality.

The most important consideration for me now was how to get my company up and running again. I drew my laptop closer and painstakingly went through it, hoping to figure out how to salvage the situation.

My phone rang, shattering the silence of my office. Why was Peter calling me?

The man managed one of my company's extensions at Milkirk Avenue, and I wondered what he was calling for.

"Hello, Peter. What is it?"

"Sir, there is a problem at the branch," he said, sounding agitated. "I need you to help me sort it out. I don't know what else to do or say."

"What is the problem?" I asked, sitting up suddenly.

But the line went dead. I hoped that whatever he called me for wasn't serious. I couldn't afford to deal with another problem.

I called for my secretary, and she arrived swiftly. "Find out what's going on at Milkirk Avenue. And handle it if you can."

"Yes, Sir."

She left, and I sighed. Just as I was about to relax again, she knocked on my door and entered my office, looking worried.

"Sir, I just got off the phone with the manager, and he insisted that he needs your help urgently."

"Why?!"

"I have no idea. He was shouting, and it was quite noisy."

"Get out." She scurried away, and I rose to my feet in anger. Whatever this was, it had better be really important.

I left my office and headed to the parking lot at once. My driver, who was wandering around the place, appeared at my side.

"We're going to Milkirk Avenue," I told him. "Take the fastest route and get me there as soon as possible."

He nodded, and in no time at all, we were on our way there. When we arrived, I was surprised to see a small crowd of about ten men standing in front of the building. By the looks on their faces and their hand gestures, they seemed to be engaged in an argument with my staff and the manager, who looked harassed.

"Gentlemen," I said boldly as I walked up to them. "What is going on here?"

The conversation broke off, and as one, they all turned to face me.

"I am Noah Allen," I said, addressing the man who seemed to be in charge of the others. "I am the CEO of this place, and I want to know what is happening."

The other men looked to the man I guessed was their leader. He took a step forward.

"Mr Allen," he said. "I'm a demolition contractor working for the city."

"Yes?"

"I have orders to demolish this branch of your company. I am here to tell you that you have twenty-four hours to vacate the premises before that demolition begins."

I stared at him for some seconds. Then I chuckled. I pressed my hand against my side to keep me from doubling over in laughter. It was a joke. Of course, it was. What a very funny man.

First of all, with all my connections, a company building of mine could never be demolished. And then, who ever heard of only twenty-four notice given to someone to clear out?

"You're kidding me, right?" I asked. "Of course you are! This is an elaborate joke, and I'm amused. I must confess, for a second, you got me there. Funny."

The man's face remained stony. "I'm afraid it isn't a joke, sir." He paused to glance at his wristwatch. "Time is ticking by. Now you have less than twenty-four hours to leave this place. I strongly suggest you get a move on, or else I will be forced to bring down the building and everything in it."

It was then it began to dawn on me that he was actually serious about this. I took a step forward, and with one finger, I jabbed the man on the shoulder.

"Do you know who I am?" I growled. He stood his ground and gazed up at me fearlessly. "If you actually know who I am, you wouldn't be standing there, talking absolute nonsense. Now take my advice, Mr demolition Contractor or whatever your name is, because it may be the last one you ever get." I made a sweeping gesture to include all the other men he had come with. "Take your men and get the hell out of here, or you will regret ever coming here. I promise you that."

The man didn't move an inch. "With all due respect, Mr Allen, I do not take orders from you. My orders are gotten directly from my contract supervisor, not you."

I fumed but did my best to keep my cool. It wouldn't do to completely lose it and punch him in the mouth.

"I demand to know who this so-called contract supervisor is," I said. "Tell me, who is that person who wants to mess with me?"

"I heard you're looking for me," a familiar voice said from the distance, and I froze.

As I turned slowly, I prayed it wasn't who I thought it was, but it was.

My gaze fell on Amelia, and she started to walk toward me with a cold smile on her face. No fucking way.

AMELIA

The look on his face the moment he saw me was priceless. He gulped and became temporarily speechless. I slowly and deliberately walked up to him.

"Unfortunately, your company is in the path of the new infrastructural project I'm working on." I paused, then continued. "You are aware of the infrastructural project, right? The amusement park contract... remember that?"

Colour flooded his cheeks the same way it had at the board's office, and I knew he remembered that day all too well. "So, since your company will hinder my project from continuing, it must be demolished. I hope that explains it all in case you didn't understand what my demolition contractor said."

"You don't have the bloody right to demolish my company," he said through his teeth.

"Oh. But I have every right," I said with a chuckle. "Want me to show you my permit? That would be time-wasting, don't you think? And besides, you have won this city's award several times, so you know how this project works."

"That is not how-"

I snapped my fingers. "Don't be emotional, Noah. When you handled the building project last year, you demolished a shopping mall so you could erect a business consulting firm. Well, now I'm handling it. It's unfortunate, though, that I chose to build the park close to your company, but it is what it is."

"You have to stop this madness at once, Amelia. The land you are planning to build on belongs to me and a few others. You cannot take it from me or demolish this building."

"I don't see how that is a problem." She turned to the demolition contractor. "Do you?"

He shook his head. "No, I don't."

"See? You will all be compensated one million dollars each for the land, but this building will be brought down in 24 hours. There is no debate, nor will you receive compensation for your loss."

"What?" He bellowed in outrage. "That is preposterous. That's not even worth half of what we used to purchase the lands, and we haven't even started talking about the worth of the structures to be erected on it."

I cocked my head to one side and pretended to ponder on this. "Well... in that case, there are only two options. You can either accept the money, or you can go to hell." There were sniggers from my workers. Noah flushed again.

"You're crossing your boundaries." He was as red as a tomato this time, and I had to force back a laugh.

"Now listen and listen carefully. I want to be very clear on what I want to say next so everyone will understand that I gave you a fair warning." I looked around at everyone gathered, listening to every word of our exchange. "If I return in the next twenty-four hours and find anyone, I mean anyone in the building, I will bring the roof down on them, whoever they are."

"How dare you!" He took steps toward me, but one of my contractors shoved him back.

"Noah, your time is ticking. I'll see you in twenty-four hours." I turned on my heels and walked away.