

## Chapter 7 I've Done A Decent Job Being A...

"Helena, you look absolutely stunning today," a voice with an Evrach accent drifted out from the crowd.

A poised woman with captivating eyes gracefully approached. As she moved, the guests naturally cleared a path for her.

"Wait, isn't that Mrs. Astor—the richest woman in Priksas, Evreya? How in the world did Stacey pull off inviting her to the wedding?"

"She must be here because of the Marshall family. Rumor has it their vineyard nearly went under last year until Terry landed her as a key client, rescuing the business."

Without a flicker of emotion, Helena stayed composed. She moved forward to greet the woman, embracing her and exchanging cheek kisses.

Odette Astor, casting a quick glance at Terry and Stacey behind Helena, inquired in Evrach, "Isn't today supposed to be your wedding with Terry?"

Shaking her head, Helena responded in the same language, "No, we ended things last month."

Odette's expression turned concerned. "I've heard troubling things—that Terry has been unfaithful. It's disappointing, Helena. I chose to invest in his business because I believed he was as loyal in business as in love. It seems I was wrong. I might need to rethink our agreement."

Terry couldn't remain silent any longer. He tried to step forward but was held back by Stacey.

"What are they talking about over there?" Stacey asked with visible annoyance. "Wait, isn't Mrs. Astor your business partner?"

Wiping his sweat nervously, Terry muttered, "Back then, Helena did all the translating for me. Mrs. Astor only trusts her."

Having taught herself Evrach, Helena had once encouraged Terry to

"Helena, you look absolutely stunning today," a voice with an Evrach accent drifted out from the crowd.

A poised woman with captivating eyes gracefully approached. As she moved, the guests naturally cleared a path for her.

"Wait, isn't that Mrs. Astor—the richest woman in Priksas, Evreya? How in the world did Stacey pull off inviting her to the wedding?"

"She must be here because of the Marshall family. Rumor has it their vineyard nearly went under last year until Terry landed her as a key client, rescuing the business."

Without a flicker of emotion, Helena stayed composed. She moved forward to greet the woman, embracing her and exchanging cheek kisses.

Odette Astor, casting a quick glance at Terry and Stacey behind Helena, inquired in Evrach, "Isn't today supposed to be your wedding with Terry?"

Shaking her head, Helena responded in the same language, "No, we ended things last month."

Odette's expression turned concerned. "I've heard troubling things—that Terry has been unfaithful. It's disappointing, Helena. I chose to invest in his business because I believed he was as loyal in business as in love. It seems I was wrong. I might need to rethink our agreement."

Terry couldn't remain silent any longer. He tried to step forward but was held back by Stacey.

"What are they talking about over there?" Stacey asked with visible annoyance. "Wait, isn't Mrs. Astor your business partner?"

Wiping his sweat nervously, Terry muttered, "Back then, Helena did all the translating for me. Mrs. Astor only trusts her."

Having taught herself Evrach, Helena had once encouraged Terry to learn it as well, hoping he'd use it to connect better with international clients for their vineyard. Terry, on the other hand, had always been too lazy to make the effort.

Now, even if he didn't grasp the two women's conversation, the worry written all over Odette's face made it clear—the Marshalls'

learn it as well, hoping he'd use it to connect better with international clients for their vineyard. Terry, on the other hand, had always been too lazy to make the effort.

Now, even if he didn't grasp the two women's conversation, the worry written all over Odette's face made it clear—the Marshalls' key business partnership was probably slipping through their fingers.

While Odette's interactions with the bride and groom were cool and formal, her warmth did not wane when she talked to Helena, the bridesmaid.

The room buzzed with whispers and murmurs, seeing the exchange.

Conversations buzzed with energy among those who knew Evrach well, their excitement hard to miss.

"Can you believe Helena secured the deal with Mrs. Astor for the Marshall family, and Terry still betrayed her? That's so ungrateful."

"Stacey's actions are even more shameful—making Helena a bridesmaid just to humiliate her."

Clearly rattled, Terry and Stacey quickly rushed off to find someone who could explain what was going on. However, when they returned with an Evrach interpreter, they only caught the tail end of Odette commending Helena's husband as a commendable man.

Odette didn't bother with even a sip of wine. She simply turned and walked off.

Stacey was fuming, barely able to stay on her feet, while Helena flashed a smile that carried just enough fake sweetness to sting.

"I've done a decent job being a bridesmaid, right?" Helena asked.

With eyes on her from every direction, Stacey held herself back, though every inch of her wanted to lash out.

"Just go. You're an eyesore," Stacey spat out bitterly.

With calm poise, Helena walked away.

Stepping out of the banquet hall, she headed toward a quiet lounge and released a slow, heavy breath.



Her hands shook just a little. Honestly, getting back at Terry and Stacey hadn't brought the satisfaction she'd expected. But staying silent was no longer an option. For four long years, she had carried the weight of not being able to be intimate with Terry. She had tried everything to make up for it. But now, that burden was finally lifting.

Time seemed to blur as she sat alone, until her phone lit up with a message from Alden. "Where are you?"

She had only just tapped the screen when the door creaked open with a jolt.

Terry stumbled inside. The stench of alcohol clung to him. "Helena. I've been looking all over for you..."

A chill crept up Helena's spine. "What are you doing, Terry?"

Then Terry's eyes dropped to the ring on her hand. That was all it took for jealousy to crash over him like a tide.

The sting cut deeper than losing the partnership with Odette ever had.

Helena—soft-spoken, stunning, once his without question—now wore someone else's ring. How had he let her slip through his fingers?

"You still have feelings for me, don't you?" Terry's eyes glistened with a desperate sort of hope. "That's why you showed up today. You stirred the pot because you wanted me back. Come be with me again. I'll take care of your father's hospital bills—"

A loud smack rang out. Helena's hand struck his face, cutting off Terry's words.

"I don't need your money. I can pay for my father's medical bills myself," Helena said, her voice trembling with anger. "I'm married now. Show some respect."

Even if the vows she took with Alden were part of a deal, loyalty still meant something to her. She wouldn't trade her dignity, not for anyone.

As Helena began to walk away, Terry grabbed her and pressed her against the table.

The nauseating stench of alcohol filled her nostrils as Terry pressed down on her, roughly tugging at her dress.

"That wedding ring's just for show. Quit pretending. I'll treat you better than I ever did before."

"Let me go, Terry! Stop!" Helena cried out, her voice tight with fear. She wanted to fight back, but her limbs wouldn't cooperate.

This wasn't weakness. It was the familiar, cruel grip of panic.

Helena begged her body to move, but it ignored her. The world around her became a frozen sea, swallowing her whole. Sound dimmed into a low hum. Shapes lost their edges. Breathing felt impossible.

Out of nowhere, the lounge door flew open with a bang.

A swift kick sent Terry flying off her. He crashed into the wall and yelped.

Warmth wrapped around Helena as someone pulled her into an embrace.

Through the haze in her mind, a beam of light cut through the dark, pulling her from the cold that had nearly taken hold.

"You don't have to be scared anymore. I've got you." The voice rang familiar. When Helena looked up, there was Alden—calm and impossible to forget.



Rate the book using the stars!