Chapter 13 Do You Fancy Her As Well

Sharon's voice grew louder. "What did you just say?"

From the other end of the line came Jeff's anxious plea as he watched Katelyn being rushed again to the operation room. "Hurry! Return to the hospital."

"OK."

In her haste, Sharon snatched her handbag from the chair and darted out of the cafe, neglecting the lesson she had meant to impart to Lise.

Upon eavesdropping, Lise's eyes gleamed with malice and delight. She silently gave thanks for the swift downfall of her adversary. With that thought, she resolved to visit Katelyn.

Sharon reached the hospital posthaste. She found the doors to the operation room firmly closed, marked by a forbidding red sign.

Jeff paced the hallway, wringing his hands behind him.

As the doctor emerged from the operation room, Jeff approached him urgently.

"Doctor, how is my daughter? Why is she in shock again?"

Adjusting his glasses, the doctor's expression was grave.

"Her mental state has deteriorated sharply of late. Should this recur, I fear she may not awaken."

Jeff trembled and recoiled, struck by the gravity of the situation. Katelyn was his only child. The thought of losing her was unbearable.

Sharon hurried to her husband's side, grasping his arm.

"What has happened? Explain it to me clearly," she implored, her voice tinged with panic.

Jeff's complexion turned pale as he struggled with his words. "Katelyn suddenly fell into a coma. The doctor mentioned excessive stimulation."

Sharon recoiled as if struck, taking a few steps back.

"How is this possible?" she whispered.

At that moment, the operation room doors burst open again, and Katelyn was wheeled out.

"Katelyn!" Sharon exclaimed, moving forward.

Jeff held her back with a gentle sigh. "Let her rest. We mustn't disturb her too much."

Sharon clutched Jeff's sleeve tightly and wept. "Katelyn is my everything. What will I do if something happens to her?"

While Jeff offered a consoling pat on her shoulder, his attention shifted as he noticed Lise sneaking in.

"Who are you?"

Taken aback with eyes wide in alarm, Lise stammered, "I'm a friend of Katelyn's and I came to see her."

Fury ignited within Sharon as she snapped, "How dare you follow me here? You're to blame for my daughter's suffering!"

Spurred by a resurgence of anger, Sharon seized Lise by the hair and struck her across the face.

"Ouch! Release me!" Lise cried out, retreating with her face shielded.

"You seem to have missed the point earlier. How dare you come after me! I'll make you regret this," Sharon threatened menacingly.

Sharon, imposing and quick to anger, yanked clumps of hair from Lise's scalp.

The commotion drew a crowd, whose initially sympathetic looks turned to revulsion as Sharon's insults flew.

Despite her screams, Lise couldn't evade Sharon's blows. She

shielded her face and pleaded for mercy.

Blinded by rage, she blamed Katelyn for her misery and vowed revenge. ⊙

Sharon, enraged, kicked at Lise's legs, cursing, "I will end you!"

Jeff observed Lise intently, a pang of recognition striking him, a feeling he'd never had with Katelyn.

Without a second thought, he stepped in front of Lise to shield her, enduring Sharon's wrath. Wincing, he protested, "Enough! Remember where we are." ⊙

With Jeff's intervention, Lise managed to slip away, her face marred with bruises, her appearance disheveled.

Breathing hard, Sharon seethed, "You're not getting away. Move, Jeff, or you'll regret it!"

Jeff tried to calm Lise, urging, "Why wait? Go now!"

Realizing her peril, Lise clutched her handbag and fled.

The thought of further violence terrified her.

In a rage, Sharon attacked Jeff, scratching at his face. "Jeff Bailey, are you stupid? How could you side with that woman? Do you fancy her as well?"

Pain shot through Jeff as he restrained Sharon.

"What are you talking about?" He scowled, a suspicion forming. "I've merely begun to suspect she might be my own." ⊙