

Chapter 499 Virtuous And Unpretentious

"Oh? You're all that eager to see what I look like?" Elliana let out a dry laugh, her tone light—until it wasn't. "But the mask stays. That's my choice, and none of you get to interfere with that. And as for this ridiculous 'Campus Beauty' nonsense—keep the crown. I want no part of it."

But Elliana's refusal only added fuel to the crowd's suspicions. Surely, no one hid their face so fiercely unless there was something truly awful beneath. In their minds, her defiance confirmed it—disfigurement, perhaps. A face so grotesque that she was so desperate to keep it hidden.

Trinity's gaze sharpened, her mind already calculating her next move. This Lilah wasn't just some shy girl. She was tall and elegant. Her hair flowed like silk. That first impression—the image of a stunner in silhouette—had already seared itself into the crowd's imagination.

Trinity knew the only way to snuff out the threat was to rip away the illusion—to force the mask off and expose the monster they were certain lurked beneath. Only then could she reclaim the spotlight, unchallenged.

With a flick of her eyes, Trinity sent a silent command to Mindy.

Mindy took the cue without hesitation and stepped forward with venom in her voice. "What's that supposed to mean, Lilah?" she sneered. "Are you saying Trinity only won the title 'Campus Beauty' because you let her? Please—Trinity's beauty doesn't need your approval. Quit the drama and take off the mask already. Stop acting like a spoiled child."

"Yeah, take it off!" The crowd's voice surged, swelling into a chant.

Elliana stood calm and composed, but Frieda could no longer hold back. "This is ridiculous!" she snapped. "Lilah doesn't care about your silly title, and wearing a mask isn't hurting anyone. What gives you the right to treat her like this?"

Her voice rang with clarity and conviction, but no one took her words seriously.

"Frieda, did you forget where you stand? Who do you think you are to speak out here?"

"You should really keep your mouth shut if you know what's good for you. You're going to regret this."

Trinity's sycophants turned on Frieda without hesitation, their fake politeness now replaced with open hostility.

But Frieda stood her ground, defiant and unshaken. "This is a school, not a private club for spoiled brats. And this country has laws. You don't get to stomp all over people just because you were born with a silver spoon. You think money gives you the right to bully anyone who isn't one of you?"

Elliana watched Frieda quietly, a flicker of emotion crossing her eyes. In that moment, she saw Hailee's spirit shining through Frieda. Both Frieda and Hailee came from modest backgrounds. Both seemed quiet, even shy, but carried an unshakable core of courage. And both had hearts that were virtuous and unpretentious in a world where kindness was currency no one valued. People like that were hard to come across often.

Elliana felt a quiet surge of gratitude. She had been lucky to meet someone like this again. After a lifetime surrounded by manipulation and masks, she had started to believe that people like Hailee were just a fading memory. But now, here was another.

Trinity and her clique gaped at Frieda as though she had completely lost her mind. Their eyes said it all. Was she really this naive? In their world, knowing when to stay silent and whom to flatter was a survival skill. Aligning with the wrong person could cost one everything. A single word could invite ruin if it offended someone from a more powerful family. It was obvious this bumpkin Frieda had no grasp of the ruthless social game that dictated everything in their world. To them, her outburst wasn't brave—it was suicidal.

Dylan sneered and stepped forward, "You are looking for trouble, you little hick?"

Frieda met Dylan's glare head-on, her voice unwavering. "Watch your language. What gives you the right to threaten me? Tell me, am I wrong?"



What harm has Lilah caused by wearing a mask? How does it offend any of you? Why are you so desperate to tear it off her face?"

Mindy crossed her arms, a mocking smile tugging at her lips. "Oh, you poor, clueless thing," she said with syrupy disdain. "Let me break it down for you." She pointed straight at Elliana. "Her little act and the whole mysterious mask routine make Trinity look weak. Trinity isn't just supposed to win the title 'Campus Beauty'—she's supposed to win undisputed. No whispers, no doubts, no comparisons to some girl hiding behind the mask."

"That's completely insane!" Frieda shot back, chin lifted in defiance. "Lilah already said she doesn't care about your precious title. If this contest means so much to you, go ahead—take it. She wants nothing to do with it. So why are you all so obsessed with her mask?"

"I'm done listening to your trash!" Dylan snarled, fury flashing in his eyes. "You clearly don't get how things work around here. Time to teach you the hard way." He shoved his sleeves up and lunged, lips curled into a snarl. "You little bitch! I'll knock your teeth out so you learn to keep that mouth shut!"

Frieda froze in place. Somewhere deep down, she had believed there were still lines people wouldn't cross. That reason, or at the very least fear of consequences, would stop things before they turned violent. But in this privileged, cruel world, rules meant nothing.

Frieda's heart slammed against her chest as Dylan's fist came flying toward her. She shut her eyes tight, bracing for the sharp crack of pain.

Instead, a sharp cry split the air. "Ah!" Dylan's voice broke with shock and pain.

Frieda gasped and opened her eyes. Lilah stood between them. She hadn't seen Lilah move, hadn't seen the blow blocked, but now Lilah's fingers were wrapped around Dylan's wrist like a steel vice.

Dylan was on his knees, his body shuddering violently. His face, once twisted in rage, was now pale with terror. It looked as if all the strength had been siphoned from his limbs.

Frieda could only stare. There had been no dramatic motion, no brute force—just a simple grip. So why did Dylan look like he was in

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excruciating pain, as if Liliash's touch alone had broken him?



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