

## Chapter 533 How To Choose

Chloe and Mindy kept pushing the crowd, and soon more students started picking Elliana apart.

Meanwhile, Elliana stayed caught up in her performance on stage, oblivious to the growing whispers below. Even if she had noticed, she would not have cared at all. Her focus locked onto every step she took, but inside, her mind would not stop racing. When the show ended, what could she do to get close to Milton? What was the truth about his tie to her mother?

As the music shifted from a quiet hum to a powerful rush, the dance moved faster toward its high point. Movements became bolder, sharper, each beat pushing the team to match the feverish energy of the song.

Elliana soared into a brilliant spin, announcing the moment everyone had waited for. The crowd responded in a heartbeat. Cheers and whistles crashed through the room, proof that the first act had already sent the excitement soaring.

Elliana's every move looked flawless, each turn and step a blend of strength and grace. The rest of the dancers seemed to fade into the background, almost forgotten, while she took command. With every leap and twirl, she seemed to float like a butterfly, enchanting every single person watching.

Nobody could look away, not even Milton. He stared, transfixed, eyes locked on Elliana as if the rest of the world had vanished.

On the other hand, Cole's face grew even darker. That night at Nightfall, he had almost failed to contain himself while Elliana's dancing stole the spotlight at the club. Now, watching her dazzle the crowd—and a tycoon like Milton, no less—his anger burned even hotter. It felt as if a private, precious treasure had been stolen and put on display for the world to covet. A raw, possessive fury burned through him, laced with a sharp, restless anxiety.

Surrounded by wild applause and catching the look on Milton's face,

Cole's jaw tightened until his teeth ached. The anger inside him threatened to break loose.

A wave of heat rushed through Cole. Restlessness gathered in his chest, ready to explode at any second. His hand jerked up and tugged at his tie. Before he could stop himself, a rough, mocking laugh slipped out. "You really are taken with her, aren't you, Mr. Campbell?" he said, his voice clipped.

But Milton didn't register Cole's words. All of his attention stayed fixed on Elliana, shutting out everything else around him.

Cole waited for a response, his taunt hanging unanswered in the air. Milton was still caught up in watching the stage. That stretch of quiet felt like a slap.

A wave of embarrassment crawled up Cole's neck. He had never been so thoroughly brushed aside, but he refused to walk away. Seeing Milton watch Elliana with that kind of intensity made his skin crawl.

Without warning, Cole reached out and clapped a hand on Milton's shoulder.

That sudden contact seemed to snap Milton out of his trance. He blinked a few times and then slowly turned toward Cole. "Do you need something?"

Cole fought to mask his fury, forcing his lips into a tight, humorless smile. "You seem quite taken with the girl on stage."

Milton nodded. "I am."

Yet, the feelings inside Milton had nothing to do with romance or desire, not in the way Cole assumed.

Cole's gaze at Elliana burned with longing, sharp and possessive, but Milton only felt a sense of kinship, free from any hint of attraction.

As Milton followed Elliana's every move, his mind drifted to the past. His mother had once been a dancer, unforgettable in her grace. Now, watching Elliana, he saw echoes of that same poise, especially in the tilt of her head and the sweep of her eyes. That quick look over her shoulder made him pause. Those eyes could have belonged to his mother.

For one breathless second, when Elliana looked out at the crowd, Milton had almost believed he was seeing his mother again. So he kept watching, caught up in a gentle warmth blooming in his chest. The feeling defied words, but it stirred up a deep sense of connection—a quiet urge that told him this girl deserved his protection.

Cole, of course, had no inkling of Milton's thoughts. Milton's admission landed like fuel on a fire, and jealousy flared up inside him. The look in his eyes turned sharp and cold, as though he meant to scorch Milton where he sat.

A sudden shift in the air let Milton know that Cole's mood had turned. A single raised eyebrow and a quiet, mocking laugh signaled his reaction. "Mr. Evans, do you have an issue with that?"

"Yeah," Cole shot back, the words sharp and unfiltered.

Milton's playful edge disappeared, replaced by a cool stillness.

A sense of challenge settled between them, thickening the tension and leaving no doubt about the rising conflict.

While their relationship had never been close, a thin layer of professional politeness and mutual respect had always stood between them. Now, with just a few words, that buffer had evaporated, leaving the air thick and heavy with tension.

Cole's voice came out rough as gravel when he remarked, "Her name's Lilah. I set my sights on her first. She's mine, so don't get any ideas about taking what isn't yours."

There was nothing subtle in Cole's words. He made his stance painfully clear.

A glance from Milton landed on Elliana before he looked straight back at Cole. He let out a dry laugh. "Aren't you supposed to be marrying Wanda? You can't have everything."

The name hit Cole like a splash of cold water. Wanda. He'd momentarily forgotten his own engagement—his duty to marry the Campbell family's daughter. If that marriage went through, Milton would become his brother-in-law. This was not a man he should be challenging.

Even so, the idea of handing Lilah over to Milton filled Cole with rage. Just imagining Milton's hands resting on her felt like a knife turning deep in his stomach. Now, everything narrowed to a single choice. He could honor his mother's final wish, or he could fight for Lilah. He had to decide which one mattered more.

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## Chapter 534 Veil Gone

Milton had always known Cole to be a man of quick decisions—someone who never second-guessed himself once his mind was made up. But now, regarding the girl performing on stage, Cole looked like he was wrestling with something deep inside. What could possibly have him so twisted up? Was he really torn between choosing Wanda or this Lilah girl?

Just when Milton's curiosity was about to get the better of him, Cole broke the silence with a sharp, sudden statement. "I won't be marrying Wanda."

The words hit Milton like a cold splash of water. It wasn't that he cared about Wanda one way or another—he'd never seen her as a sister, much less a true Campbell. Whether she ended up married or completely humiliated made no difference to him. What caught him off guard was how unpredictable Cole was acting. Hadn't Cole been the one who personally flew overseas to propose? And now he was calling it off before they'd even thrown a proper celebration to mark the engagement?

"What's that supposed to mean?" Milton asked, keeping his voice level and his expression blank. He was genuinely puzzled.

Cole's answer was direct and cutting. "I'm saying there was no real engagement between Wanda and me. I have no plans to marry her."

In Cole's mind, he'd always planned to marry the legitimate Campbell heir. Since Wanda was nothing but an adopted girl, the whole arrangement was worthless from the start. Of course, he wouldn't exactly admit that his real target was the actual Campbell daughter, especially when that daughter happened to be Milton's little sister. After practically staking a claim on Lilah right in front of Milton, announcing he planned to marry his sister would be inadequate.

Milton, completely oblivious to the storm of thoughts racing through Cole's head, just found the whole thing bizarre. The world might sing Cole's praises for being brilliant and calculating, but right now, the man sounded like he was losing his grip on reality.

Milton couldn't wrap his mind around it. What did Cole mean to say? He had personally flown to meet with Eva not that long ago to finalize everything. Had he suddenly developed amnesia? Or was he just the type of person who broke promises whenever it suited him?

In the end, whatever drama was brewing between Cole and Wanda wasn't Milton's problem. He figured both Wanda and Eva would eventually end up discarded like yesterday's garbage anyway.

With that thought, Milton let out a short, dismissive chuckle and shifted his focus away from Cole. Trying to make sense of his fog of words was nowhere near as interesting as watching Lilah's mesmerizing performance.

Right at that moment, the fountains on both sides of the stage suddenly burst into action. Massive jets of water exploded upward, creating graceful arcs that rose and fell in perfect sync with the music's beat. The water patterns shifted and changed like living sculptures, each movement more dramatic than the last.

The dance was building toward its grand finale. As the music swelled to thunderous heights, the fountains responded with equal power, their torrents surging with raw energy and beauty.

With the fountains creating a stunning backdrop, the performance transformed into something truly magical. The audience's energy exploded, filling the venue with thunderous applause and excited whistles that seemed to shake the very ground.

"This is absolutely incredible! Who came up with this idea?"

"The choreography is beautiful, and those fountains make it perfect!"

But as Elliana watched the sudden water displays and felt the crowd's wild enthusiasm washing over her, a small crease appeared between her eyebrows. Something felt off. No one had said anything about fountains during any of their rehearsals. Had the organizers simply forgotten to mention this detail? Or had someone made a spontaneous decision to add them at the last second?

Worried now, Elliana quickly looked toward the side of the stage where her dance instructor was stationed. The instructor's face showed the same confusion that Elliana felt churning in her own stomach.

In that moment, everything clicked into place for Elliana. The fountains weren't supposed to be part of their performance at all. So, who had turned them on? Was someone genuinely trying to make their show more spectacular, or was there something darker behind this unexpected surprise? A cold wave of dread began building in her chest.

Meanwhile, in the audience, Trinity's eyes practically glowed with wicked satisfaction. She bent close to Chloe's ear and whispered urgently, "You're absolutely certain this is going to work?"

Chloe puffed up with cocky confidence, tapping her chest. "Relax. I've got everything arranged. This is going to work. We'll drench Lilah until she looks like a drowned rat. No amount of fancy makeup will be able to hide that disgusting scar by then."

A cruel smile spread across Trinity's face like poison. "Excellent. Just stick to what we planned. I can hardly wait to watch her complete and total humiliation."

Mindy was already fumbling with her phone, swiping to open the camera. "I'm going to capture every single second of this and upload it straight to the campus forum. Then everyone will finally see the truth—their so-called Campus Beauty is nothing but a hideous freak."

"I'm recording, too!" Chloe yanked her phone out, pointing the camera directly at the stage with shaking hands. "This is going to be the biggest scandal this school has ever seen! Lilah will have to sink back to whatever dark corner she crawled out of!"

Trinity lifted her own phone, her heart pounding so hard that she could feel it in her throat as she waited for the moment to arrive.

And then, just as the crowd's cheers reached their absolute peak, the water fountains flanking the stage suddenly swiveled with mechanical precision. The graceful streams that had been creating such beautiful moments before now became weapons of destruction, redirecting their full force straight at the dancers.

Massive torrents of water crashed into the dancers like a tidal wave, hitting them with such brutal power that they could barely stay upright. As the lead dancer, Elliana bore the worst of the assault.

In just a few seconds, every dancer was completely drenched. Makeup

began streaming down their faces in colorful rivers, and their carefully styled hair collapsed into wet, tangled messes. The water pressure was so intense that it ripped the delicate veil clean off Elliana's face, carrying it away like a discarded piece of fabric.



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