

## Chapter 670 A Fan

Taylor's explanation shifted everything for Cole. He finally understood that Taylor hadn't meant to drag Lilah's name through the mud on that university forum. Someone had pulled the strings from behind the scenes, using the chip.

This revelation brought an entirely new angle to light. Until last night, the common belief was that all this manipulation was meant to take Cole down, simply because he stood as the head of the Evans legacy. But there was something deeper at play. It was obvious now that the puppet master bore a grudge against Lilah, too. Whoever was pulling the strings just couldn't stand to see Lilah shining. That person hijacked Taylor's reasonable side, using him to launch attacks on the forum and try to topple her from her spot as Campus Beauty.

A chilly grin formed on Cole's face. What an immature method.

Taylor read that grin the wrong way, worry flashing in his eyes. "Cole, if you're mad, I get it. I'll take whatever you've got for me. Go ahead and punish me."

Looking at Taylor, Cole felt only pity. No part of him could blame the young man. As long as that chip stayed buried in Taylor's mind, he would be nothing but a puppet on someone else's strings.

A deep worry gnawed at Cole—what if the mastermind used Taylor to commit real crimes? Taylor would be the one left to pay the price.

With a quiet sigh, Cole made up his mind to pretend he was angry. It was the easiest way to avoid alerting the mastermind. He slammed his palm on the desk. "You absolute idiot! You're already an acclaimed actor, with so many awards to your name, but you decide to stoop as low as slandering an innocent girl? I guess it's about time you got a real lesson."

Taylor didn't hesitate. He dropped to his knees. "I messed up, Cole. Whatever punishment you've got, I'll take it."

Cole called out, raising his voice, "Is anyone out there?"

The butler appeared at the doorway. Keeping his expression severe, Cole said, "Get the whip. Taylor's blunder can't go unpunished. Twenty lashes."

At that exact moment, Elliana appeared at the doorway. "What's got you shouting, honey?" she asked.

Everyone's attention shifted to Elliana. Pregnancy kept her in the wheelchair, pushed by Paulina, but that never dulled her spirit. She hadn't actually come looking for Cole. She'd heard Taylor was here and wanted a better look at him, hoping for another clue. Unexpectedly, she walked in on quite a scene.

Cole was thinking about how he could let Taylor off the hook without alerting the mastermind. Elliana's timely arrival gave him the perfect excuse. He filled her in quickly and then turned things over to her. "Lilah, you're the one who was hurt. You should decide how to punish Taylor. Whatever you say, we'll all respect it."

Elliana and Cole exchanged a knowing look. She immediately understood his game and realized Taylor hadn't acted of his own free will.

Elliana's eyes sparkled as she let out a playful laugh. "Is that so? I can't bring myself to punish Taylor. I mean, I'm basically his number one fan."

Taylor gaped at her in disbelief. "Are you messing with me, Lilah? You're actually a fan?"

"Absolutely," Elliana lied smoothly. "I became one after catching one of your TV dramas. You really drew me in."

Taylor's curiosity got the better of him. "Which one are you talking about?"

"A King's Heart," she answered, her tone dead serious. "You played that knight who went rogue and toppled the king just to get the woman he loved. You took the crown for yourself. Honestly, your performance and that script? Unforgettable. You killed it in every scene."

At first, Taylor looked pleased, but his confidence faltered when she mentioned "A King's Heart." He remembered spamming the group chat with photos from that drama just the night before, which still made him cringe.

Cole watched the exchange, barely managing to keep a straight face as

Elliana poured on the charm.

Despite his embarrassment, Taylor couldn't help but feel a little honored that Lilah claimed to be a fan. With a sheepish look, he apologized. "I really am sorry, Lilah. I was out of line for what I said about you on that forum. You can punish me however you see fit."

Elliana grinned mischievously. "If you really want to make it up to me, you owe me ten thousand signed photos. That should cover it."

Taylor's jaw dropped. "Did you say ten thousand?"

She crossed her arms, playing up her stern act. "You spent all night dragging my name through the dirt, and I'm only asking for autographs. I could always switch to demanding ten thousand lashes, you know."

Taylor caved instantly. "Autographs it is! Ten thousand, no complaints!"

With a satisfied smile, Elliana nodded. "It's settled then."

Cole's lips curled into a smile, amused by the whole scene.

Right then, Taylor's expression turned oddly blank, as if something flickered inside him, but he quickly forced a smile back onto his face.

Even though the pause was brief, both Elliana and Cole picked up on it instantly.