

## Chapter 676 Taylor Can't Speak

"Cole, Elliana, you're still planning to come to the concert tonight, right?" Taylor asked.

Elliana and Cole shared a quick, meaningful look. This had to be the real purpose behind Taylor's unexpected return. Whoever was pulling the strings behind this had invested serious money in setting up this elaborate trap. If they failed to appear, all that careful planning and expense would be completely wasted.

Elliana offered a subtle smile. "Absolutely. This is your very first major concert, and you chose the Stone Forest Scenic Area in Yasnard—which happens to be one of my favorite places in the world. I'd walk there barefoot if I had to."

Taylor's shoulders visibly relaxed with relief, and he turned his attention to Cole. If Elliana showed up alone, whoever was orchestrating this wouldn't be able to achieve their goal of eliminating both targets at once.

Cole remarked in his usual calm tone, "I wouldn't let her go by herself. I'll definitely be there with her."

Finally, Taylor's tension completely melted away, replaced by a genuine, excited grin. "That's fantastic! Having both of you there is going to make this concert absolutely incredible!"

With the show just hours away, Taylor was drowning in last-minute preparations and arrangements. He never would have taken precious time away from the venue if confirming their attendance hadn't been absolutely crucial. Now that he had the assurance he needed, he was eager to get back to work.

"I really have to get back to Yasnard right now. There are still a million things to handle before showtime. But I'll see both of you tonight!" Taylor said, already moving toward the door with obvious urgency.

Eliana and Cole nodded their understanding as Taylor hurried away.

After breakfast, Eliana arranged a private, confidential meeting with Cole, Jason, Emmanuel, and Lance.

Yadnard had earned its nickname as the "City Above the Clouds" thanks to its breathtaking high-altitude location.

The Stone Forest Scenic Area was renowned for its dramatic, towering rock formations that created an almost otherworldly landscape. The entire region was surrounded by endless mountain ranges and thick, ancient forests that had remained untouched for centuries. This remote, rugged terrain, especially under the cover of darkness, provided the perfect hiding place for dangerous secrets.

The mastermind behind this plot hadn't just chosen this location randomly for the concert. They had specifically marketed it as a "wilderness concert experience," which made their sinister intentions crystal clear from the beginning.

After spending hours analyzing every possible scenario and threat they could think of, the group finally ended their meeting. That same afternoon, they all boarded a luxurious private jet headed straight for Yadnard.

By the time they arrived at the concert venue, darkness had already settled over the mountains, and the show was minutes away from starting.

The event organizers had constructed an enormous stage right in the heart of the wilderness, its impressive structure blazing with brilliant lights that created a stunning rainbow of colors against the night sky.

On the northern side of the venue, they had set up temporary backstage facilities and dressing rooms for the performers. To the south, thousands of seats had been arranged in neat rows to accommodate the massive audience.

Taylor was already a major celebrity with a huge following, but the added excitement of Cole attending the concert with his mysterious girlfriend, Lilah, had created an unprecedented buzz. More than twenty thousand devoted fans had made the journey to this remote location just to witness the spectacle.

The moment their plane touched down, Jason immediately disappeared into the darkness to take up his position as head of security for the Evans family. Emmanuel and Lance made their way backstage, officially to check on Taylor's preparations, but their real mission was to keep constant watch over his every action.

Following their predetermined strategy, Elliana and Cole allowed the event staff to escort them through the crowd to their reserved seats in the front row.

The night air was thick and oppressive, creating perfect cover for whatever dangers might be hiding in the surrounding wilderness.

The concert was scheduled to begin, and as the dramatic opening countdown echoed through the speakers, a wave of electric anticipation swept through the massive crowd. Everyone's eyes were fixed on the stage, waiting for Taylor to make his grand entrance—but the stage remained empty.

"What's happening? Where is he?"

"The countdown's finished! Why isn't Taylor coming out?"

Confused murmurs began rippling through the sea of faces, growing louder with each passing second. The crowd's excitement was rapidly transforming into bewilderment and concern.

Elliana and Cole locked eyes, both feeling the same growing sense of dread. Every instinct they had was screaming that the mastermind's plan was already being set into motion. But something felt wrong about the timing. Clever manipulators usually waited for the crowd's energy to reach its absolute peak before they struck. Why would they create problems before the show had even started?

Just then, the event host walked out onto the brightly lit stage and gave the audience a deep, apologetic bow. "Ladies and gentlemen, we sincerely apologize for this unexpected delay." His amplified voice carried across the venue, strained but professional. "We're currently experiencing some technical difficulties with our audio equipment that need to be resolved before we can proceed. Our technical crew is working as quickly as possible to fix the problem. We ask for just a few more minutes of your patience."



Taylor had an incredibly loyal fan base, and Cole's presence seemed to have a calming effect on the overall mood. The crowd was surprisingly understanding and willing to wait things out.

Suddenly, Lance's message appeared in their private group chat, making Elliana's phone light up. "We have a serious problem. Taylor can't speak."

Cole's fingers flew across his phone screen as he typed back immediately. "What do you mean? What happened to him?"

"He drank a glass of water just minutes before he was supposed to take the stage," Lance typed rapidly. "Immediately afterward, he couldn't produce any sound at all. The venue's medical staff examined him thoroughly but found no obvious physical cause for the sudden onset."

As Elliana read through Lance's message, the full horrifying scope of this conspiracy suddenly became crystal clear to her.

Taylor's concert had been promoted everywhere with incredible intensity—constant advertisements and ridiculously expensive tickets that disappeared within minutes of going on sale. Over twenty thousand devoted fans had traveled from every corner of the world just to be here tonight. If Taylor couldn't perform, their excitement and anticipation would quickly turn into bitter disappointment and anger. All it would take would be a handful of troublemakers planted in the crowd to fan those flames of frustration, and the situation would explode into complete disaster. The biggest danger would be a deadly stampede.

With this many people packed into a remote location with limited exits, a stampede could result in catastrophic loss of life and create exactly the kind of chaos that would provide perfect cover for an assassination attempt. In the midst of such pandemonium, the mastermind would have countless opportunities to eliminate both Elliana and Cole, with their chances of success multiplied exponentially by the confusion.

The terrifying realization sent ice-cold fear racing through Elliana's veins, and her eyes became sharp and dangerous. This mastermind wasn't just some clever schemer playing games. They were a complete sociopath. In order to get to her and Cole, they had deliberately lured twenty thousand completely innocent people into what was essentially a death trap, treating all those lives as nothing more than acceptable losses in their twisted plan.