

Chapter 58

Karla was taken aback by Duncan's unexpected display of concern and affection. It surprised her, and for a moment, she couldn't help but wonder if there was something extraordinary about him that she had overlooked. However, as she looked deep into his eyes, she could see the genuine sincerity reflected in them. It was evident that he genuinely cared about her well-being.

Feeling a surge of gratitude, Karla couldn't help but appreciate Duncan's support. It was a stark contrast to the image she had previously held of him as a conceited jerk she was attracted to. Now, she realized there was so much more to him than she had ever known. He had shown a compassionate side she hadn't expected, and it made her reassess her perception of him.

As Karla glanced at Duncan's hand on her shoulder, she noticed his slight awkwardness. Sensing his discomfort, she didn't want to make him feel uneasy, so she gave him a small smile.

Understanding his unspoken cue, she appreciated his gesture and silently acknowledged the connection they were building. Duncan, in response, took his hand off her shoulder and looked forward.

He quickly apologized, his voice filled with genuine remorse. His swift acknowledgment of his slight awkwardness brought a chuckle to Karla's lips, breaking the tension that had been building between them.

"Sorry," Duncan muttered, his words carrying a hint of embarrassment.

"Thanks," Karla muttered back, appreciating his thoughtfulness. Both of them found themselves feeling a mixture of emotions, a strange combination of vulnerability and lightheartedness.

To ease the intensity that had crept into the moment, Duncan reached for some tissue papers and handed them to Karla. "Clean up your tears," he gently instructed.

Karla nodded, taking the tissue papers and wiping away her tears. As she folded the used tissues and brought them close to her nose, Duncan's expression shifted, realizing what was about to happen. He cringed slightly and instinctively leaned back in his seat as she blew out her nose, shutting his eyes.

Karla, noticing his reaction, couldn't help but find it amusing. She giggled softly, her laughter filling the car.

Duncan opened his eyes, amusement flickering in his gaze as Karla continued to giggle, playfully jerking her head from side to side. He couldn't help but smile in response, enjoying her giggles.

"You're a pig," Duncan uttered, his tone filled with playful teasing.

Karla shrugged, still wearing a mischievous grin. "And you're a grumpy cat," she retorted, continuing the banter.

However, the laughter faded from Karla's face as she noticed Duncan's smile disappear. His eyes seemed to study her intently before he turned his attention back to the road, looking forward.

"I'm sorry, Karla," Duncan suddenly spoke, his voice carrying a hint of sincerity. "I guess I never really understood the sort of person you are, and I still don't."

Karla narrowed her eyes, a mix of curiosity and confusion crossing her features. She tried to comprehend why he was apologizing and expressing his lack of understanding. The unexpected shift in his

demeanor left her wondering about his intentions and what he truly meant by his words.

As the silence threatened to fill the space between them, Duncan mustered the courage to break it. With a hint of remorse in his voice, he turned to Karla and said, "I remember how I spoke to you that day in the hospital. I'm sorry once again for questioning your Mother's upbringing without thinking before speaking. I'm sure it hurt you."

Karla, although caught off guard by his sudden apology, managed a small smile and replied, "It did, but I've forgotten about it."

Appreciation flickered across Duncan's face as he nodded in gratitude. "Thank you," he said sincerely.

"You're welcome," Karla replied, her voice filled with understanding.

Wanting to shift the atmosphere, Duncan took charge and decided to start the car again. With a gentle hum, the engine sprang to life. Looking at Karla with a playful glint in his eyes, he asked, "So, where should I take you?"

Karla pondered for a moment, her gaze fixed on the passing scenery outside the car window. Finally, she replied, "Hmm, my penthouse. And don't stop the car, even if I start crying my eyes out."

Duncan chuckled softly. "Alright, Ms. Karla Burton," he said, his voice tinged with warmth.

Their eyes met, and a shared moment of understanding passed between them. They both burst into laughter, a blend of relief and genuine connection filling the air.

As Duncan navigated the road, a thought struck Karla, and she turned to

him with a quizzical expression. "Hm, why did you come all the way to Ashville?" she asked, her curiosity piqued.

Duncan glanced at her from the corner of his eyes, noticing the playful smile on her face. He cleared his throat and shrugged, trying to compose himself before answering. "Well, obviously to see you," he replied, his voice tinged with a hint of amusement.

Karla's eyebrows raised in surprise, her smile widening. "Really?" she asked, half-teasingly.

Duncan paused for a moment, caught off guard by her response. He realized he couldn't simply dismiss her question with a lighthearted answer. He didn't want to sound strange by being honest about that so he took back his words. "No. I mean, I came to Ashville for some business, and I happened to know that your family house is in this city. Out of a little concern, I thought I should check on you."

Karla nodded, sensing that he was not entirely forthcoming but appreciating his genuine concern. She knew that there was more to his visit than he was letting on, but she decided to let it go for now. "Hmm," she acknowledged, accepting his explanation. She understood that he had his reasons, even if he wasn't ready to share them.

The car continued to glide along the road, the sound of the engine providing a comforting backdrop to their conversation. Karla felt a sense of gratitude for Duncan's presence and the effort he had made to be there for her, even if it was shrouded in secrecy.

Meanwhile, Duncan felt an unusual bout of self-consciousness washed over him. He felt Karla's eyes on him, her smiling gaze making him slightly uneasy. With a sudden burst of nervous energy, he found himself awkwardly leaning against the driver's seat door, desperately attempting

to arrange his perfectly styled hair.

Gulping each time he stole a glance at Karla, Duncan couldn't help but feel a mix of excitement and anxiety. Her smile had a mesmerizing effect on him, causing his heart to flutter and his normally composed demeanor to falter. In his attempts to appear composed, he couldn't help but fumble with his hair, hoping to maintain an air of confidence.

A smile parted his lips as his mind flashed back to two hours earlier.

~~~~Flashback~~~~

Duncan was engaged in a phone conversation with Jack as he halted his car when he was just a minute away from the Walton business estate. The topic at hand was securing a flight to Asheville.

"Sir, the available flight is in economy class," Jack informed him, his voice respectful yet concerned.

Duncan's brows furrowed slightly with appreciation. "Fine then," he replied. "Reserve a seat for me and..."

Before Duncan could complete his sentence, Jack interjected, his voice filled with a mix of caution and loyalty. "Sorry for interrupting, young Master, but I won't dare do that."

Confusion washed over Duncan as he tried to comprehend Jack's resistance. "What do you mean?" he asked, his frustration simmering beneath the surface, suspecting that Jack was defying his instructions.

With utmost respect, Jack explained, "Sir, Lady Zelda won't be happy to know that you took an economy-class flight."

Duncan's anger momentarily flared, his mind jumping to the assumption

that Jack was using his mother's name as an excuse to disobey him. "Don't bother about my mother," he retorted curtly, his voice laced with defiance.

However, Jack's response caught Duncan off guard, softening his stern expression. "Please, sir," Jack implored, his tone sincere and filled with concern. "Take the private jet instead. It would be more suitable for someone of your status."

Duncan's surprise was evident as he stammered, unable to believe what he was hearing. "We have a private jet?" he questioned, his voice tinged with disbelief.

Jack nodded affirmatively, his expression calm and composed. "Yes, three, actually," he replied matter-of-factly. "Lady Zelda had secretly bought one in your name a few weeks back."

Duncan's eyes widened in astonishment. The realization slowly sank in, and he found himself grappling with the magnitude of his mother's gesture. He had never expected such a lavish acquisition, let alone being kept in the dark about it. The revelation left him feeling a mix of gratitude and bewilderment.

Just five minutes later, Jack appeared before Duncan, his presence signaling that there was more to discover. Guiding him with a knowing smile, Jack led Duncan to the location where the private jet was kept, hidden away from prying eyes.

As they approached the impressive aircraft, Jack pointed at it, saying, "You'll get to Asheville in less than an hour with this, sir," he revealed.

Duncan couldn't help but smile, his admiration for the jet evident in his eyes. The sleek design and undeniable luxury left him momentarily

speechless. He marveled at the possibilities that lay before him, knowing that this unexpected mode of transportation would whisk him away to Asheville in unparalleled comfort and speed.

With a renewed sense of wonder, Duncan followed Jack as they boarded the private jet. The quiet hum of the engines indicated the power that lay within, ready to take them to their destination. Duncan settled into his seat, still filled with awe at the extraordinary turn of events.

---End Of Flashback---

Just as he returned to reality, Duncan's phone rang. It was a call from Babette. She asked about his whereabouts.

"I'll be at the company soon, don't worry," he simply said and ended the call, not giving Babette the chance to question him further.

"Do you have an important meeting?" Karla asked.

"No." Just then, Duncan got another call from Abigail. "Hello Abigail... yes, I'm away from Fayetteville. I'm with..." Duncan glanced at Karla who was staring at him. "I'm heading back to Fayetteville with Karla."

A smile appeared on Karla's face as she looked away, happy to know that Duncan told Abigail he was with her.

"Alright, see you later." Abigail ended the call and Duncan dropped his phone.

"You told her you were with me?"

"Yes. So?"

"Nothing. I'm just wondering why you didn't tell me the truth last night

that you were with her."

Duncan inhaled, not able to think of a lie to say to keep the truth of his actual reason. He didn't want to complicate things so he simply shrugged. Understanding that he didn't want to talk about it, Karla nodded and looked away.

Duncan's thoughts raced. He couldn't shake the nagging feeling that lingered within him, the persistent thoughts of Karla that seemed to infiltrate his mind, even when she was right beside him.

As he replayed the events of the previous night, Duncan couldn't help but question his actions. Why had he lied to Karla about being at Abigail's house? Was it to spare her feelings, to protect her from potential hurt? Or was there something else that he couldn't fully grasp? These thoughts swirled around his mind, leaving him in a state of confusion and introspection.

"Maybe you shouldn't have cared about her feelings," he silently mused, his brow furrowing. The question echoed in his head, challenging his motives and stirring a mix of emotions within him. He wondered if his attempts to shield Karla from pain had only led to more confusion and turmoil for himself.


"You shouldn't have thought about her feelings, now you're at the point where you know the answers which are yet clear to you," his subconscious mind taunted him.

Letting out a heavy sigh, Duncan continued to drive, the passing landscape blending into a blur. The highway stretched out ahead, leading him closer to Fayetteville, closer to Karla's penthouse. The anticipation and uncertainty grew with each passing mile.



Finally, about two hours later, after what felt like an eternity, Duncan arrived at Karla's penthouse. He parked the car and turned off the engine, taking a moment to collect himself. Stepping out of the vehicle, he made his way to the other side, contemplating opening the door for Karla, a mixture of nervousness and determination coursing through him. But he didn't expect the scenes that followed up next.

 Gem Lynne author

*“Hello, my dear readers, I hope you enjoyed this chapter. Can you anticipate what's coming next? Do so In the comment section, please. FYI, it will take a hot 🔥 turn from the following chapter, so grab yo* 

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