

Chapter 59

Duncan's hand hovered over the car door handle, ready to pull it open, when Karla's sudden movement caught him off guard. The door swung open swiftly, and before he could react, Karla stumbled forward, her body leaning into his. Instinctively, Duncan's arm shot out, wrapping around her waist to steady her and prevent her from falling.

"Oh, s...sorry," Karla stammered, her cheeks flushing slightly as she quickly regained her balance. She reached up to tuck a strand of hair behind her ear, a gesture that revealed a mix of embarrassment and gratitude.

Breathing a little unevenly, Duncan managed to find his voice amidst the unexpected closeness. "It's...f...fine," he stumbled over his words, his own cheeks turning a faint shade of pink. Both of their gazes shifted momentarily to his arm that remained wrapped around her waist, a silent acknowledgment of the intimate contact. Sensing the electric current that seemed to pass between them, Duncan quickly withdrew his hand, his movements slightly awkward.

Karla, however, met the situation with a warm smile, her eyes twinkling with a hint of playfulness. She understood the brief moment of connection, and her smile conveyed a sense of ease and acceptance. Without dwelling on the slight awkwardness, they resumed their walk towards her door, side by side.

As they moved forward together, the air between them seemed to lighten, the tension dissipating. Duncan's heartbeat gradually returned to a steadier rhythm, and he found himself relaxing in Karla's presence. The shared incident had created a subtle shift in their dynamic, an unspoken understanding that they were both navigating unfamiliar



territory.

Karla's smile remained, radiating a sense of reassurance and openness as if to say that she appreciated Duncan's instinctive reaction and the support he had offered. It was a silent acknowledgment of their growing connection, an unspoken invitation to continue exploring what lay ahead.

As they reached the alley leading to the door entrance, Duncan and Karla came to a stop. Karla spun around, her smile still lingering on her lips as she expressed her gratitude for the drive home. Duncan nodded, returning the smile. "You're welcome," he replied, his tone sincere.

However, as their conversation continued, a hint of tension crept into the air. Duncan handed Karla her car key, his gaze briefly shifting towards the door before returning to meet her eyes. His words carried a touch of frustration as he addressed the events of the previous night.

"I just hope next time you won't act immature to go all the way to Asheville to avoid me and make me feel bothered," Duncan expressed, his voice tinged with a mix of disappointment and annoyance. He couldn't help but voice his concern.

Karla's eyes narrowed, a flicker of defensiveness entering her expression as she sought clarification. "What do you mean by 'immature'?" she questioned, her tone holding a hint of challenge, her desire to understand evident.

Duncan hesitated for a moment, realizing the impact of his words. He took a deep breath, collecting his thoughts before responding. "Yeah, that's what I think you were last night," he began, his voice softening slightly. "I'm sure you just went to your family house without thinking."

The words hung in the air, carrying both his frustration and his attempt

to convey his perspective. Duncan hoped that Karla would understand his point of view, that his concern stemmed from a place of caring rather than judgment.

Karla couldn't help but feel a sense of amusement bubbling within her as Duncan stumbled over his words. His unexpected confession revealed a vulnerability that she hadn't anticipated, and it sparked a mixture of surprise and delight within her.

"And... you were bothered?" she repeated, a teasing glint in her eyes.

Duncan's voice trailed off, his abrupt pause indicating that he had unintentionally revealed more than he had intended. The realization washed over him, and his cheeks flushed with a tinge of embarrassment. Meanwhile, Karla, her eyes averted, felt her own cheeks warm, a blush creeping across her face at the unexpected confession.

Looking back at him, her amusement shifted to a softer expression, a blend of curiosity and tenderness. Duncan's concern had touched her, and she found herself appreciating his honesty and the depth of his emotions.

"Look, I was just worried because I didn't want anything to happen to you," Duncan explained, his voice carrying a mix of earnestness and sincerity. His words resonated with Karla, striking a chord within her.

"Hm," she responded, her tone thoughtful. The hesitation in her voice revealed a flicker of doubt, an echo of past experiences that had shaped her perspective. But Duncan's words had made an impact, challenging her preconceived notions. "I thought you never cared."

"Not like I do now," Duncan stated, trying to sound unbothered, his voice softening. "Though you're my partner, so I guess I need to care about you."



"

Karla's gaze met his, her eyes reflecting a glimmer of understanding. She recognized the shift in his feelings, the growing connection that had taken root between them. Duncan's willingness to open up and express his concerns touched her deeply, and it made her reconsider her own reservations.

Karla's curiosity got the better of her, and she couldn't help but ask Duncan about their relationship. She wanted to know if he finally accepted that they were partners and, perhaps, friends. Duncan, however, seemed taken aback by her question. He furrowed his brow and absentmindedly rubbed his temple with his index finger, struggling to find the right words to respond.

"I don't keep friends," Duncan finally replied, his tone indicating a hint of resignation.

Karla, surprised by his answer, reminded him of Abigail, mentioning that she was his friend. Duncan's expression softened, and he seemed to reflect on her words.

"Yeah, Abigail," he admitted, a touch of nostalgia in his voice. "She was my first friend, and..."

Before Duncan could finish his sentence, Karla interrupted him, blurting out an unexpected proposition. "Forget it and let's have a relationship."

Duncan, taken aback once again, raised an eyebrow in surprise. "What?" he responded, clearly caught off guard by her proposition.

Karla, realizing the suddenness of her words, began to backtrack, her mouth twitching as she looked away, trying to gather her thoughts. She reconsidered her earlier statement and attempted to rephrase it. "Uh, I

mean, we could be friends," she corrected herself, her tone slightly uncertain.

Duncan, still processing the situation, observed Karla's reaction and the shift in her words. He contemplated her suggestion, his own feelings and thoughts swirling within him. The atmosphere became slightly awkward as they both grappled with the new dynamics of their relationship.

Finally, he nodded in affirmation, acknowledging their friendship. "Oh, friends," he confirmed with a smile. The two of them shared a chuckle, enjoying the camaraderie between them. However, their laughter was abruptly interrupted by the sound of the door opening. Rose appeared at the entrance, causing them to stop chuckling.

"Ms. Karla, you're back?" Rose asked, a hint of surprise in her voice.

"Yes, Rose," Karla replied, confirming her return.

Rose smiled warmly, glad to see Karla back. "Welcome, Ms., and..." Her sentence trailed off as she noticed Duncan standing beside Karla. Rolling her eyes in a playful manner, she addressed him. "Oh, Duncan, I wasn't expecting to see you return with my Ms."

Karla raised an eyebrow, curious about Rose's reaction. "What do you mean?" she inquired. "Well, he came over to my family's house and drove me back here."

Rose's words trailed off as she expressed her surprise. "What? But, Mr. Duncan, you said you wouldn't..."

Duncan quickly interrupted her, his laughter tinged with nervousness. "No, no. Don't say," he interjected, clearly wanting to avoid any further discussion. With a wave and a brief goodbye to Karla, he started walking away.



Karla watched him with a bewildered expression, unable to fully comprehend the situation. As Duncan left, her attention was diverted by a voice coming from behind Rose, near the door. The voice captured Karla's curiosity and made her lips part in anticipation. Tilting her head, she smiled widely as she recognized the person standing there. It was her cousin and best friend, Julie.

"Oh my, who was that handsome guy?" Julie exclaimed, her voice filled with excitement and amusement as she observed Duncan's departure.

"Julie!" Karla exclaimed with excitement, immediately pulling her cousin into a tight hug. They entered the house together, and Rose locked the door after them.

Arm in arm, they made their way to a nearby couch and slumped onto it, comfortable in each other's presence. Karla couldn't contain her curiosity and asked, "When did you arrive in the city, Julie?"

Julie grinned, her eyes sparkling with joy. "This morning. I couldn't bear to spend any more time without you there in Paris."

Karla playfully rolled her eyes, knowing that Julie had spent a whole year in Paris while she had been away. "Is that coming from you, who spent a whole year in Paris?" she teased.

Julie bit her lower lip, exchanging a quick glance with Rose before bursting into laughter alongside Karla. "Well, yeah," she admitted, her laughter contagious. "But despite that, I'm genuinely happy to see you again."

"Welcome. I missed you."

"Hm, but I guess the reason why you've never called all this while was

because of the handsome guy who just left."

Playing dumb, Karla lifted her brows. "Who?"

"Spare me the obliviousness. I caught you looking at him like you were enchanted."

"Huh? No, no. It's not me. "

"Karla...?"

"Wait." Karla arose, laughing. "Let me freshen up and we can talk."

"Yeah, we should talk about the handsome guy..."

"No!" Karla said, feeling a bit embarrassed as she headed up to her room.

At The Burton's Mansion

Samuel is seated in the room, lost in thought as he stares at a photograph of Karla in his hands. Ciara walked in, catching a glimpse of the photograph, she sighed.

"Come on, Samuel, why are you dwelling in gloom?"

"It is my fault, Ciara. I was a bit too harsh on Karla and she just left. I'm sure she didn't plan to just leave without us sharing a few good moments."

"You shouldn't blame yourself. You should just learn to control your emotions. If you don't, you'll keep pushing Karla away and..."

"And she might keep getting closer to bad people like the guy she left with earlier?"

"Him? She said he was her man."

"So?"

"He looked responsible."

"What?"

Ciara smiled and nodded. "Yes, and something tells me he is going to be the reason or the special one to rebond you and Karla again."

"He doesn't look like. I will keep an eye on him though."

"You're overprotective, hm."

"Do not tell me not to be. She is my only child."

Ciara nodded, taking a seat next to him, she pulled him into a hug and patted his back lightly.

Meanwhile, in Peterson's living room, he's pacing to and fro, thinking about his life and the sudden drastic change it has taken. He pondered on calling Babette and after a while, he decided to call her.

"Hello?"

"Um, Babette, it is me. Peterson Rogers."

"I thought I asked you not to ever call me again."

"Please don't hang up. I just want to ask you something."

"You have got 20 seconds. Go on."

"Why did I get fired? You said the Waltons were impressed with my work

and I was to get a promotion, so what happened?"

"I will gladly tell you that you stepped on the wrong foot, Peterson."

"What do you mean?"

"Soon, something big is likely to happen to you and you'll pay for stealing from the company."

"Excuse me?"

"Don't pretend. Just know this, you offended someone bigger than you and that follows your destruction. If you know the person, then do what's right."

"Someone bigger than me? Who could..."

Before Peterson could finish inquiring, the call ended and he groaned in frustration.

"Oh God! Who have I offended?!?!"



Gem Lynne author

“Hope you enjoyed the chapter guys. I planned to continue updating from the 1st of the coming month but I have to drop this chapter for my loyal readers despite battling with my health.🥲...”

👍 9