

Chapter 91

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Karla had installed the spyware app on Duncan's phone, a decision she had made out of concern for his well-being. The app allowed her to monitor his activities discreetly.

The revelation left Julie speechless for a moment as she processed the information. The realization that Karla had taken such a drastic step to monitor Duncan's activities filled her with a mix of shock and concern.

"Oh my," Julie finally managed to utter, her voice a whisper filled with a mixture of disbelief and worry. She tried to comprehend the implications of Karla's actions and the potential consequences they could have.

Karla, aware of the gravity of the situation, reached out to Julie, placing a hand on her arm. "I know it's extreme, Julie, but I had my reasons."

"I don't know your reasons, Karla, but all I can say is you're going too far. He's not even your boyfriend, and you're already spying on him. It's somewhat ridiculous," Julie said, her tone reflecting a mix of concern and disbelief.

Karla felt a pang of guilt as Julie's words hit home. She knew deep down that her actions might have been excessive, driven by a combination of fear and insecurity. "Well, he keeps his plans from me, so I have no other option than to do that," Karla responded, her voice tinged with defensiveness. "But I didn't do it because I'm suspecting he has something to do with Abigail."

Julie raised an eyebrow, her curiosity piqued. "Okay, but what plans does he keep from you? Why is it so important for you to know his every move?"

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Karla hesitated, realizing that revealing too much might complicate matters further. She knew it would be best to keep certain details about Duncan a secret.

With a wave, Karla said, "Just forget it, Julie. See ya." Frustrated and overwhelmed by the situation, Karla hastily left, leaving Julie behind.

When Karla arrived at the hotel, she approached the reception desk to inquire about Duncan and Abigail. To her surprise, she learned that neither of them was present at the moment.

As she turned to make her exit, her gaze caught sight of Duncan and Abigail emerging from a nearby hallway. Startled by their sudden appearance, Duncan's face contorted with surprise as he locked eyes with Karla.

"What are you doing here?" Duncan asked, his voice laced with confusion and a hint of apprehension.

Karla's heart raced as she glanced at Abigail, who seemed equally taken aback by her presence. The tension in the air was palpable as Karla struggled to find the right words. With a nervous chuckle, she replied, "I felt you guys would be here, so I came over."

Duncan raised an eyebrow, clearly skeptical of her explanation. Abigail's gaze shifted between the two, her expression reflecting a mix of surprise and suspicion. "Hm, strange," Abigail said, her voice tinged with skepticism.

Not doubting her, Duncan said, "Karla, why did you come over? Because I and Abigail will be here..."

"And because you both will devise another plan to bundle Peterson and

will leave me in the dark."

"Why do you need to know my every move?"

"I thought you said I'm your partner and we..." Karla glanced at Abigail who narrowed her eyes staring at her. "We are friends."

"Fine, I acknowledge that. But I know you don't really care," Duncan said.

Karla locked her gaze on him, her eyes filled with a mixture of frustration and concern. She couldn't understand why Duncan seemed so distant, why he was pushing her away when all she wanted was to support him. Her voice trembled slightly as she retorted, "I care about you even if you don't even care a bit about me."

Duncan's expression remained impassive as he absorbed Karla's words. He had built walls around himself, shielding his emotions from anyone who tried to get close. He couldn't deny the truth and lie in Karla's statement, but he wasn't ready to confront it just yet. With a calm tone, he asked, "Is that what you think?"

Karla hesitated, her initial response catching in her throat. She wanted to explain herself, to tell him that her feelings ran deep despite his apparent indifference. "No, I..." she started, but Duncan interrupted her, his voice firm and resolute.

"Forget it," he said, his tone final. "I don't want you to get involved in my business."

Confusion clouded Karla's features as she searched for understanding. She couldn't fathom why he would shut her out when all she wanted was to help. "But I want to help you out," she insisted, her voice tinged with frustration. "Peterson seems like a crooked man, and I know you want to crush him once and for all."

Duncan's eyes flickered with a mix of gratitude and defiance. He admired Karla's determination and her unwavering support, but he was accustomed to fighting his battles alone. "I don't need anyone's assistance for that," he asserted, his voice laced with a hint of pride. He glanced over at Abigail, a brief but meaningful exchange passing between them. "Absolutely no one."

Abigail, who had been silently observing the tense interaction, felt a pang of disappointment. She had hoped that her relationship with Duncan was special, that he would confide in her and lean on her for support. But his words made it clear that he was determined to keep everyone at arm's length, including her. She swallowed hard, knowing that she wasn't the only one who would be excluded from his inner circle.

"But, I..." Karla's voice trailed off, her sentence left unfinished as Duncan abruptly turned to face Abigail. The sudden shift in his attention stung, leaving Karla feeling rejected and ignored.

"See you some other time, Abigail." With that, he left, feigning annoyance.

Karla took a step forward, her instinct urging her to go after him, to try and mend the rift that had formed between them.

However, before Karla could make a move, Abigail reached out and gently placed a hand on her arm, halting her in her tracks. Karla turned to look at Abigail, her eyes filled with a mix of confusion and frustration.

"Instead of running after him to offer assistance," Abigail began, her voice steady and composed, "why don't you just take the matter into your own hands?"

Karla furrowed her brows, trying to comprehend Abigail's suggestion. It

seemed counterintuitive to abandon her pursuit of helping Duncan directly. However, there was an underlying wisdom in Abigail's words, a different perspective that Karla hadn't considered before.

"What do you mean?" Karla asked, her curiosity piqued.

With a confident yet empathetic gaze, Abigail continued, "Forget everything that just happened between you and Duncan. Let's focus on that same goal we have - to help Duncan. Instead of relying on him to accept our assistance, let's take the initiative ourselves. We can find a way to tackle the situation without waiting for his permission or involvement. What do you say?" 1

Karla's mind whirled with conflicting thoughts and emotions. She had been so fixated on Duncan and her desire to support him that she had neglected the possibility of taking control of the situation independently. Looking away, Karla pondered the idea, weighing the risks and potential rewards.

Abigail's smile of confidence wavered as Karla's obstinacy kicked in. Her attempt to rally them together, to find a common ground and work towards their shared goal, was met with unexpected resistance. Karla's response was blunt and resolute, leaving no room for negotiation.

"We? Never," Karla stated firmly, her voice carrying a hint of defiance. The smile faded from Abigail's lips as she tried to process Karla's refusal. She reached out, attempting to reason with her once more. "What? Look, we can work out things together, you know. Let's put our differences aside for the meantime and..."

But before Abigail could finish her sentence, Karla interrupted her, her voice cutting through the air with finality. "I said no." With a swift motion, Karla removed Abigail's hand from her arm, a physical act of

severing any connection between them. Without another word, Karla put on her glasses and turned to leave, her departure leaving an undeniable sense of finality in the air.

Abigail stood there, taken aback by Karla's response. She rolled her eyes in frustration, a mix of disappointment and annoyance washing over her. "What sort of woman is she? Gosh," Abigail muttered under her breath, her frustration escaping in a soft exhalation. With a resigned shake of her head, she turned and made her way toward the elevator, her path branching away from Karla's.

At that moment, it became clear that their paths would not intertwine, at least not for the time being. The divide between them, fueled by stubbornness and conflicting perspectives, seemed insurmountable.

As the elevator doors closed while she pressed the floor number of her office, Abigail couldn't help but feel a tinge of regret. She had hoped for solidarity, for a united front in their quest to help Duncan. But sometimes, despite the best intentions, alliances crumbled, revealing the inherent complexities of human relationships.

"That silly Karla. I want to see how far she can go alone. Nonsense," Abigail gruffed as she folded her hands and sighed.

Duncan decided to honor his grandfather's request to have lunch with them and headed to the Walton Domicile. As they sat down for lunch, the atmosphere was tinged with a mix of formality and familiarity.

While enjoying their meal, a question suddenly struck Duncan, causing him to break the silence. He turned his gaze to his grandfather, Sir Logan, and asked, "Grandfather, do we have any enemies?"

Sir Logan's eyes met Lady Zelda's for a brief moment, a subtle exchange

passing between them. It was a silent acknowledgment of their shared understanding of the intricate dynamics of their family's business empire. Sir Logan then turned his attention back to Duncan, his expression thoughtful. "Not really," he replied, his voice carrying a hint of reservation.

Lady Zelda, ever graceful in her manners, delicately wiped her mouth with a napkin before adding her perspective to the conversation. "We have long-standing business rivals," she chimed in, her tone measured and composed. "Though it seems quiet at the moment, it's only a matter of time before they start competing with us again."

Duncan nodded, absorbing the information. The weight of his family's legacy and the potential challenges ahead settled upon his shoulders. He understood the nature of their business and the inherent rivalries that came with it. While there might not be direct enemies, there were certainly competitors who would seek to undermine their success.

Taking a moment to reflect, Duncan acknowledged the reality of their situation. "Alright," he replied, his voice steady and determined. He recognized the need to be vigilant and prepared for the resurgence of rivalries.

"Why do you ask?" Lady Zelda inquired, her curiosity evident in her tone. She was genuinely interested in understanding the reason behind Duncan's question about their potential enemies.

Sir Logan, ever perceptive, chimed in to offer his perspective. "I'm sure it's simply because he wants to be prepared to face them and get over them like you and Dunstan did," he said, his voice carrying a touch of pride. It was a testament to the resilience and fortitude that Lady Zelda and her late husband, Dunstan, had displayed in overcoming their business rivals.

Duncan observed the slight change in his mother's expression, realizing that the mention of his late father had struck a chord within her. Understanding the weight of the moment, he quickly interjected, seeking to reassure her. "You're right, grandfather," he affirmed, his voice filled with determination. "I want to handle our business well, just as you and Father did." His gaze shifted to Lady Zelda, a mix of gratitude and determination shining in his eyes. "Thank you for trusting me with such a huge responsibility, mother."

Lady Zelda's smile blossomed, a mixture of pride and affection. She nodded, her confidence in Duncan evident in her response.

As they ate on, Duncan's mind became consumed by an overwhelming curiosity and a sense of urgency. Something deep within him pushed him to act, to uncover the secrets held within his father's diary.

Excusing himself under the pretense of needing to use the toilet, he rose from his seat, a mixture of anticipation and nervousness fluttering in his chest.

Silently, Duncan made his way up the stairs towards Lady Zelda's room, careful not to draw attention to himself. The door creaked softly as he closed it behind him, enveloping the room in a cocoon of privacy. The room held an air of elegance, filled with delicate furnishings and a subtle scent of lavender.

Without hesitation, Duncan's eyes fixated on the cupboard, his gaze locking onto the specific drawer where Lady Zelda had placed his father's diary. It held a magnetic pull as if the secrets contained within its pages were calling out to him.