

A Favor 401

Chapter 401

“Please, Mrs. Sophia, don’t make our job harder than it already is. I can’t afford to lose this position. My wife is pregnant and had to stop working — if I get fired, there’s no way I can take care of them or cover the hospital bills.”

His plea stopped me cold. I drew a slow breath.

“If he fires you because of this, I’ll personally cover every cent your wife and baby need for the hospital. You have my word.”

“But, ma’am—”

“And if you’re still worried about your job, I’ll find you a new one. I have a friend who runs an agency and is always looking for reliable people. You won’t be left without work, Ben. Trust me.”

“I don’t think you fully understand the situation, Mrs. Sophia.”

I narrowed my eyes. “And what exactly is it that I don’t understand, Ben?”

“This time, it isn’t just about losing my job.”

“Then what is it about?”

“If Mr. Kelley finds out we let you leave, he will come after every single one of us. He won’t stop until he’s made our lives very difficult.”

That landed like a punch to the gut. I pressed my fists together and let out a long, frustrated groan, no longer able to hold it in.

“Fine! I’ll stay, all right? Are you all happy now?”

“Thank you, Mrs. Sophia—”

“Don’t thank me, Ben! If I ever get my hands on your boss, I’ll wring his neck myself! And you can tell him I’ll cut off his—” I paused, catching the wide-eyed stares around me. “His eggs and feed them to my cat! That’s right. To Cuchita.”

“Ah... understood.” The four men exchanged an uneasy glance, then nodded in stiff, awkward unison.

“I hate you, Daniel Kelley! You are absolutely impossible!” I yanked at my own hair as I spun around and stormed back toward the house. There was nothing left to do but calm down and wait until I could finally confront him about this ridiculous rule he had imposed on me.

“You’re back already? I thought you were heading out,” Nanay Emily said, surprise written across her face as she looked up to find me marching back into the kitchen.

“I certainly tried, Nanay. But apparently my selfish, impossible husband has given the entire security team very specific instructions. I cannot set foot outside this house without his approval.” I ground my teeth and brought my fist down on the table with a dull thud.

“He really did that?”

“Yes — can you believe it? Nanay, am I a criminal? Is this a prison? I swear I could scream right now!”

“If you’d like, I can call Daniel and sort this out myself.”

“No, Nanay Emily, please don’t worry about it. For now, let him believe he can control me.”

“Are you sure? I thought you had plans to see your mother tonight.”

I nodded, letting out a long sigh. “I’ll call her later. For now, it looks like I’m stuck here waiting for my overbearing husband to finally show his face.”

Six o’clock.

Seven o'clock.

Eight o'clock.

"Sweetheart, would you like me to bring your dinner in here?" Nanay Emily appeared behind the sofa, watching me with gentle eyes.

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"No thank you, Nanay. I'll come to the kitchen in a little while," I replied, shaking my head tiredly.

"All right." She gave my shoulder a soft pat before heading back. I offered her a grateful smile as she went, then stretched out on the sofa and exhaled. All that was left to do was wait. Daniel was supposed to have been home hours ago — between six and seven, he had said. It was nearly eight and still no sign of him.

Eight thirty.

Nine o'clock.

Nine thirty.

Ten o'clock.

"Sophia, why don't you wait in your room?"

"I'm fine here, Nanay."

"You haven't eaten anything. Are you sure you're all right?"

"Truly, I'm fine. I'm still full from the sandwiches earlier, so please don't worry."

Once she and Tatay Berto had gone to bed, I turned the television down low and settled deeper into the sofa. The room felt even emptier with the house gone quiet around me.

Ten fifteen.

Ten thirty.

Eleven o'clock.

“Ugh!” I nearly collapsed back onto the cushions after jolting upright for what had to be the twentieth time, desperately trying to stay awake. I had tried everything — rolling my eyes, pinching my cheeks, any small discomfort to keep myself from drifting off. I couldn’t fall asleep, not when Daniel could walk through that door at any moment. I had to be ready. I was not letting this conversation slip through my fingers again tonight.

Eleven o’clock.

Midnight.

Sleep pressed heavily against my eyelids as the clock above the television showed quarter past twelve. Daniel still hadn’t come home. It was like waiting for a ghost that had never intended to appear.

Twelve thirty.

One in the morning.

“You’re dead to me, Daniel Kelley...”

“Sophia...”

“Hmm?”

A gentle tap fell on my shoulder, but my eyes refused to open.

“Sophia...”

“Mmm?”

“It’s morning, sweetheart. Breakfast is ready.”

Breakfast? Had I actually fallen asleep? Wasn’t I just on the sofa waiting?

“What time is it?” I thought I was speaking to myself, but Nanay Emily’s voice answered before I could even blink.

“It’s already eight in the morning, Sophia.”

Eight in the morning? My eyes flew open and I rolled over, only to realize I was spread out across the living room sofa rather than in bed.

“Ow!”

“Sophia, did you hurt yourself? Are you all right?” Nanay Emily rushed over, concern etched across her face.

“I’m fine, Nanay. What time did you say it was?” I forced a smile and rubbed my aching side as I pushed myself upright.

“Eight in the morning.”

A wave of panic hit me as I grasped how long I had been asleep. Somehow, without noticing a single hour pass, I had slept through the entire night.

“Did Daniel come home while I was sleeping? Where is he now?”

“No, he didn’t come back. But he called a little while ago—”

“What did he say?”

“He said he won’t be home tonight. He has an urgent meeting in San Diego that he has to attend,” Tatay Berto answered, stepping in before Nanay Emily could finish.

“Unbelievable.” I pressed a hand to my forehead as frustration swept through me completely. “And where exactly in San Diego?”

“He didn’t give any details.” Nanay Emily simply shrugged.

Clenching my teeth, I forced myself to breathe. “He planned all of this — I know he did! He promised we would talk, then disappeared before I could find him, gave orders to keep me locked inside, and now he won’t even answer my calls.”

“Perhaps he just has a great deal on his plate.”

“He’s not busy, Tatay. He’s toying with me. I swear, if I ever get my hands on him, he is going to regret it!”

Nanay Emily and Tatay Berto exchanged a glance, though I barely noticed. My mind was already spinning, turning over every possible way to get back at my husband. Then, all at once, a spark of inspiration lit up inside me. My eyes went wide and I turned sharply to Nanay Emily.

“Hey — isn’t today your weekly shopping day?”

She looked at me, puzzled. “Yes, why do you ask?”

A flicker of hope bloomed in my chest as she confirmed it. “Perfect. I think I’ve just found my escape plan. But I’m going to need your help to pull it off!”

“Thank you for everything, Nanay Emily. I’ll call you later, but I have to go now.” I kissed her on the cheek before slipping out.

“All right, Sophia. Take good care of yourself out there.”

“I will, Nanay. Please tell Tatay Berto how grateful I am. I truly mean it.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll speak to him myself.” She gave my hand a gentle pat, then glanced in both directions down the hallway. Seeing no sign of Ben, she urged me on. “Go quickly, Sophia, before he comes back or someone else spots you.”

“But what about you? Won’t they notice I’m gone?”

“We’ll handle it. Leave that part to us — we’ll come up with something.”

I pulled her into one last, firm hug before running toward the supermarket’s back exit, where Damian and Bryan were already waiting.

A memory drifted through my mind...

“Are you absolutely sure about this, Sophia?”

Nanay Emily’s eyes had gone wide with astonishment when I laid out my escape plan. While she tried to take it all in, Tatay Berto simply grinned and gave me two enthusiastic thumbs up.

“It’s my only chance, Nanay. I don’t see another way out.”

She had studied me for a long, searching moment. When she finally nodded, I could barely contain my relief.

“Thank you, Nanay Emily. You have no idea how much this means to me.” I wrapped her in a hug that said everything I couldn’t put into words.

“But Sophia, you have to promise me you’ll be careful.”

“I will, Nanay — I promise.” I even raised my right hand, sealing it the way I used to as a child.

“All right, just let me get my things.”

“Thank you, Nanay. Thank you so much!”

Chapter 404

While they made their way toward the front door, I whispered a quiet prayer under my breath. The plan was simple but risky: I would climb into the car trunk, wait it out, and make my escape once we reached the supermarket parking lot.

I couldn't pull this off alone. I needed both Nanay Emily and Tatay Berto. She would distract Ben — her assigned driver — while Tatay Berto kept the other guards occupied. My job was to slip out the back door, sprint to the garage, and hide in the trunk.

A few minutes later...

My heart felt ready to burst from my chest as I watched Tatay Berto approach the security booth. Nerves nearly got the better of me when Nanay Emily let out a dramatic gasp and stumbled, dropping deliberately to the ground right in front of everyone.

Her performance worked perfectly. Ben and a pair of guards rushed over to help her up, and the moment their attention shifted, I made my move. I dashed to the car and climbed into the trunk, curling myself into as small a shape as I could manage. Just as I reached up to pull the lid down, a sharp voice came from behind me.

"Mrs. Sophia, what exactly do you think you're doing in there?"

I could barely believe my eyes as he walked straight toward me. "What on earth is happening right now?" I muttered under my breath.

“Keep your voice down, will you?” I hissed, pressing a finger to my lips while my heart hammered in my chest.

“What are you up to? Are you seriously trying to sneak out?”

I narrowed my eyes, fixed him with a hard stare, and clenched my fists.

“Do you really want to know? Because if you breathe a single word about this, I swear I will drag you down with me,” I growled, making sure he understood I meant every word. He just stared back at me, blinking in pure shock. Any other day, that expression on his face would have had me doubled over laughing. Right now, however, all I could think about was getting away from Daniel’s guards — even if it meant hiding in a car trunk.

“Bingo, what are you doing there?”

Damn it.

Every muscle in my body tensed and my mouth went dry as the sound of Ben’s footsteps drew closer. What Bingo did next was the last thing I expected.

Without a word, he slammed the trunk shut, sealing me inside before Ben could get a look.

“I was just trying to find my phone. I could have sworn I dropped it somewhere near this car.”

“You think your phone is under the car? Do you hear yourself, or have you completely lost it?”

Pressed flat against the trunk’s floor, I bit down hard on my lip, doing everything in my power not to burst out laughing at their ridiculous exchange.

“No, I’m serious! I saw it right here, under this car!”

“And how exactly did your phone end up under there?”

“I’m not sure... Maybe someone thought it’d be funny to mess with me and kicked it under.”

Chapter 405

“You really expect me to believe that? Who would bother hiding a phone under a car? That’s your problem now, though. At least it’s a creative excuse.”

I mouthed a silent “well done, Bingo” from inside the dark trunk, genuinely grateful for the save.

“So could you give me a second? I need to grab it. And I’m pretty sure Nanay Emily is looking for you.”

“You’re hopeless, you know that?”

“Yeah, I hear that a lot. Wish me luck.”

“Luck for what?”

“Oh, did I say that? Slip of the tongue.”

“You literally just said ‘wish me luck.’”

“Forget it! I just meant take care. That’s all. Watch your step, Mrs. S— er, Nanay Emily!”

“Oh, Bingo, you nearly gave me away,” I muttered through my teeth, wishing I could throttle him for almost letting my name slip.

Half an hour crawled by in that cramped trunk before the car finally came to a stop. Another five minutes passed until my phone buzzed — a message from Nanay Emily letting me know they were inside the supermarket.

Carefully, I lifted the lid just enough to peer out and check for any guards nearby. Once the area was clear, I pushed it all the way open.

My heart shot into my throat when I heard voices near the front of the car. For a moment, all I could do was breathe another desperate prayer under my breath, biting my lip to keep myself steady.

Why did escaping these people feel so much like breaking out of prison?

I stayed hidden, barely breathing, until I heard the guards agree to use the restroom while they waited for Ben and Nanay Emily. The moment their footsteps faded, I climbed out of the trunk, shook out my aching legs, and made a run for the supermarket entrance.

There was no sign of Ben, so I slipped over to Nanay Emily and managed a quick word with her. She didn't waste a second, urging me to go before Ben could spot me.

With one last glance over my shoulder, I hurried through the back door and found Bryan's car idling near the exit, engine running.

End of memory.

"Why didn't you just call me and tell me you were trapped at his place? We could have come to get you in no time," Bryan said the moment I settled into the back seat.

He and Damian were up front, both watching me through the rearview mirror.

“Relax, Bryan. I’m here now, aren’t I? Besides, I got a great story out of the whole thing.” I smiled, replaying Bingo and Ben’s exchange in my head.

“A great story? Sophia, if they had caught you, would you still be calling it that?”

“Oh, come on, you’re exaggerating. Can we just get moving? I have things to do, and this is not the time for a lecture.”

He let out a long, rough sigh and gestured for Damian to pull out.

“So what’s the plan now?” Bryan asked, eyes fixed on the road as we left the parking lot.

“I need a favor, Bryan.”

He glanced back, one eyebrow arched.

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“I need you to find out exactly where Daniel is staying in San Diego.”

“Are you serious? What on earth do you want with Daniel in San Diego? Did you really go through all of that trouble just to beat him at his own game?”

“Come on, Bryan — please? I swear this is the last favor I’ll ask for. At least for today.”

“Sure. That’s what you always say.” He rolled his eyes.

“Bryan, I’m begging you. And just so you know, if you help me, I promise not to tell Aira your most embarrassing secrets.”

He scoffed. “Nice try, but Aira already knows everything about me.”

A slow, wicked smile spread across my face as I leaned back. “Is that so? Want to bet? Because I might just let it slip that every time you drink too much, you murmur your first love’s name.”

“She wouldn’t buy it.”

“All right then — what about the time last week when you completely lost control and left your mark on the bathroom rug instead of making it to the toilet?”

“Sophia Ysabelle!” Bryan spun around, shooting me the most lethal glare I had ever seen, while Damian and I dissolved into laughter at the memory.

Damian had been the first to witness Bryan’s most mortifying morning, and now he was condemned to carry that memory for the rest of his days.

“Are you going to help me, or am I going to have to put your love life at risk?”

“Fine, I’ll help you! Now will you please just stop talking!”

Unlike Damian, I couldn’t stop laughing — not even when Bryan turned around and leveled the most venomous look he had ever directed at me.

“Sophia?”

Andrew’s jaw very nearly dropped when he saw me at the restaurant. An amused smile crossed my face.

“Well, if it isn’t Andrew. Small world,” I murmured, feigning surprise as I stood to greet him.

“Wait — what brings you here?”

“Oh, I’m here for a competition.” He nodded. “You looked at me like you’d seen a ghost.”

“No, no — not at all! I just wasn’t expecting to find you here. So does your husband know you’re staying at this hotel?”

“I haven’t mentioned it to him yet,” I answered, shaking my head. “Why? Is something wrong?”

“He’s tied up in a meeting upstairs.”

“He is?”

“I should clarify — he’s meeting with Miss Enriquez on the executive floor.”

“Wait — Chloe Enriquez? The same Chloe from Enriquez Trading? Didn’t they used to date?”

“Yes, that’s her. But don’t read into it. This meeting is strictly professional.”

A small laugh escaped me as I shook my head. “Andrew, you don’t have to explain all of that to me. He and I are barely married. If he wants to reconnect with old flames, that’s his business, not mine.” Rising from my seat, I left some money on the table. “I’m heading out — I have rehearsal soon. Take care of yourself, Andrew.”

Chapter 407

Without waiting for a response, I turned to leave. My heels struck the floor once, twice, and on the third step, Andrew's voice stopped me.

"Sophia."

I drew a slow breath, paused, and glanced back.

"There's nothing going on between them beyond work. Chloe admitted she still has feelings for him, but he insists he's moved on."

"Andrew, whatever he feels or whatever she wants — none of that concerns me. Daniel and I are getting a divorce."

His mouth fell open, but I didn't give him the chance to speak.

"Goodbye, Andrew. Take care."

I walked quickly toward the exit without daring to look back, afraid he would see the pain written plainly across my face.

How was I supposed to believe any of that? Daniel might have moved on from Chloe, but that didn't change the fact that he felt nothing for me.

And yet, for reasons that made no sense at all, I still wanted to talk to him. His words wounded me every time, but my heart refused to let go.

Andrew's Point of View

"Andrew, what does our next meeting look like?"

Daniel glanced up from the papers in his hand the moment I walked in. "Confirmed for four this afternoon," I replied, settling onto a stool beside the minibar.

"Good." He slid a glass of whisky toward me.

"Thanks," I murmured, taking a sip just as he sat down beside me.

"So... how is Sophia?"

The moment her name left my lips, his attention snapped sharply to me. Something unreadable flickered across his expression — something I couldn't quite place.

“Why are you asking about Sophia?”

I let out a short laugh. “Can’t I ask? It’s just casual conversation.”

“She’s fine. She’s at home,” he answered with a shrug, raising his glass to his lips.

“At your home, then,” I replied, nodding. “Do you remember what we agreed on before you got married?”

“What are you talking about?” He gave me a puzzled look.

For a second, I wondered how he would react when I finally spelled it out.

“The agreement was that after your divorce, I’d have the right to ask her out.”

“What the hell? You can’t be serious.” His face hardened, and his hand gripped the glass so tightly I half-expected it to shatter.

“I’ve said it before and I mean it. I like her,” I replied, unmoved by his glare.

"Forget it," he muttered, barely audible. A sharp click of his tongue and a shake of his head betrayed his frustration. He drained the rest of his whisky in one swallow.

"I beg your pardon?"

"I said forget it."

That was when his composure finally cracked. "Sophia is my wife. I'm not letting her go. So don't even dream about it!"

"Really? That's quite something, considering you never treated your marriage as if it mattered. Weren't you the one who called it all a business move? Who said you'd file for divorce the moment the Giovanni deal was signed?"

Daniel ignored me and poured himself another drink.

Chapter 408

"Didn't you say she meant nothing to you? Are you telling me you've actually fallen in love with her?"

"You're reading far too much into this. I have other reasons for staying married," he snapped, avoiding my eyes.

“Right. I’m not buying that. If you’re not in love with her, what other reason do you have for holding on? Don’t hide behind work or contracts, Daniel. No one’s going to swallow that excuse.”

“Why are we talking about Sophia? Shouldn’t we be focused on work?”

I started to respond, but my words died in my throat when a familiar voice burst into the room.

“Hello, boys!”

We both spun around. Chloe swept in, swinging a bottle of red wine as though she owned the place.

“Miss Enriquez, would you mind telling me how you got in here? And what exactly are you doing in my suite?” Daniel’s patience was visibly thinning.

“Daniel, drop the formalities. It’s just the three of us — there’s no need to be so stiff! Your security let me in, if you’re wondering.” She draped her arms around his neck and pressed a kiss to each of his cheeks.

“Chloe, please — stop. I’m married, and this isn’t appropriate.” He stepped back, his expression one of complete exasperation.

“But your wife isn’t here right now, is she?”

I bit back a sigh and shook my head at her audacity. This was my opening — what I had been about to say before she barged in. “Actually, Chloe, I ran into Sophia at breakfast this morning.”

“I’ve warned you enough. Stop playing games. I’m married now, and this entire arrangement only exists because your father asked me to help you. If you keep this up, I’ll call your father myself and walk away from every agreement with your company.”

“I can’t help it. You know I haven’t gotten over you, Daniel. My feelings haven’t changed.”

“This is getting intense. Let’s just hope Sophia never walks in and sees you two like this. You’re going to need all the luck you can get, Daniel.”

When I turned, I realized he was watching the woman on the stage, caught in the spotlight.

“That’s my girlfriend,” he said, his face lighting up with genuine pride.

“You’re serious?”

“Yes. We’re actually getting married next month.”

“That’s wonderful. Congratulations.”

“Thank you so much!” He slid another shot of tequila toward me. “And you? Is there someone special in your life?”

The question wiped the smile from my face.

“I’m married,” I admitted, exhaling slowly and holding up my ring.

“Really? Forgive me for saying so, but you don’t look very happy about it.”

“If you want the truth — we’re about to get divorced.”

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to pry.”

“It’s all right. Honestly, our marriage was never real to begin with.” I tossed back the tequila in one swallow, skipping the salt and lime entirely.

The burn was immediate — sharp and sweet at the same time. Even after four shots, my throat still felt like it was on fire.

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“That burn is because you skipped the salt and lime. You’re supposed to lick the salt, take the shot, then drink the lime juice. It softens the whole thing.”

I stared at him for a moment before a laugh burst out of me.

“You really think I don’t know how to drink tequila? Sometimes I want the full experience — the raw hit, the bitterness, the touch of sweetness that comes after. That’s honestly just my life. Does that make sense?”

I laughed again and knocked back another shot, savoring the heat.

“Whoever invented tequila deserves a medal. I could toast to that genius all night.”

“I have to say, it looks like you’re well on your way, sweetheart.”

“Tipsy? Who said I’m tipsy? Just pour me another, will you?”

“Are you sure—?”

“Don’t ruin my night, handsome. Another round, please!”

I laughed, drumming my fingers on the bar, indifferent to the curious glances drifting over from across the room. If rum made you wicked and whisky lifted your spirits, tequila simply set you free.

“Are you sure you can—?”

“Relax, I’m nowhere near drunk,” I replied, raising my eyebrows. “At least, not yet!” I laughed and leaned forward. “Now let me ask you something, and I want an honest answer.”

He looked at me with a baffled expression as he filled my glass again.

“Imagine you fall for someone you know you shouldn’t. What do you do? Do you walk away, knowing it will only end in heartbreak, or do you keep loving them even when you know that love will never be returned?”

Lost in my own thoughts, I didn’t catch his expression — and I didn’t notice someone slipping quietly into the bar and stopping just behind me.

“Hold on — are you telling me you’re leaving your husband because you fell for someone else? Did you cheat on him?”

His question almost made me laugh. “No, nothing like that. Even if our marriage was a sham, I would never betray him. That’s just not who I am.”

“Your marriage was a sham? What do you mean?”

“It was arranged — nothing real at the start. We only had to keep up the act for a year. Then things changed. Something happened that I never saw coming.”

“You mean... you fell in love with him?”

A sigh slipped from my lips, sadness threading through the warmth of the alcohol. For a moment I thought it was him asking — the only person who could make that question hurt. What I didn’t realize was that the voice was coming from directly behind me.

Silence fell as I finished my drink, unaware of the eyes following my every move. Only when someone settled into the empty seat beside me did the atmosphere shift.

“Yes — do you think it’s so terrible, falling for him, even when this was all supposed to be a lie... Andrew?” My heart nearly stopped when I realized who was sitting beside me, and his name escaped me in pure shock.

“Hello, Sophia.” Andrew smiled warmly and signaled the bartender for a whisky.

Chapter 410

Heat crept up my neck and into my cheeks, and I turned away quickly, hoping he hadn’t noticed.

“But what are you doing here?”

“Shouldn’t I be asking you that? I thought you said you were here for a dance competition.”

“That’s true, but I’m also making the most of my free time. San Diego is not bad at all for a little break.”

“So when are you planning to tell your husband you’re here?”

“You didn’t tell him?” I looked at him, surprised.

“I was about to, but I never got the chance. Someone else showed up and hijacked the entire conversation.”

“Who exactly interrupted you?”

“Chloe Enriquez walked in with a bottle of wine and derailed everything.”

Wordless, I let the silence settle between us, waiting for Andrew to speak first.

“So you’ve been pouring your heart out to the bartender about your marriage.”

“You were listening?”

“I caught most of it.” He nodded. “So is it true — you fell in love with him?”

A tired sigh slipped out before I could stop it. “It’s ridiculous, I know. Loving someone who can’t love you back never ends well.”

“Why don’t you tell him how you feel, Sophia?”

My smile was fragile as I glanced sideways at him.

“We’re in the middle of a divorce, Andrew. There’s no point confessing anything now.”

“But what if he feels the same way and just hasn’t told you?”

“If there were anything there, I would have seen it by now.” Turning back to the bar, I shook my head.
“Bartender, another round, please.”

Andrew gave a quiet laugh but quickly slid the glass out of my reach. “That’s enough for tonight, Sophia. Come on, I’ll walk you to your room.”

“No — I’m not ready to call it a night! One more, handsome, just one more!”

“Absolutely not, Sophia. You’ve had plenty. You’re definitely drunk.”

“I am not drunk, Andrew!”

“You’ve had more than enough. I’m taking you upstairs.”

“For the last time, I am perfectly fine—”

“Unless you’d like me to call your husband and tell him exactly where you are?”

That was enough. I shot him a withering look, frustration flaring up — but in the end, I knew I was beaten. As much as I wanted to stay and drown my sorrows at the bar, there was no getting around it.

With a sigh, I let him help me to my feet. He waved off my protests about the bill and settled it himself, then guided me gently toward the exit, one hand steady on my arm and the other on my shoulder as we made our way through the crowded room.

We were nearly out when a voice cut through the noise behind us — a voice I recognized instantly.

“So this was your plan all along, Andrew.”

We both turned. There was Daniel, just a few meters away. The dim light of the bar did nothing to soften the storm gathering on his face. One hand gripped his glass; the other was thrust deep into his pocket.