

Apocalypse 687

Chapter 687 Family

Kisha assumed that the Evans remained standing because they were waiting for an invitation to join their table.

However, instead of inviting them, she simply procured more seafood to be cooked, ensuring that everyone could have a taste—eliminating any need for the Evans to sit with them. She continued to ignore them, focusing on her meal.

Yet, even as she ate, the Evans did not move. They stood there as if they had something to say, their presence lingering like an unspoken question.

Even Mr. Edward Evans, who had previously seemed to hold a poor impression of her, did not appear angry. Instead, he stood solemnly, his expression unreadable, while supporting his wife, whose red-rimmed eyes suggested she had been holding back her emotions.

Kisha's brows furrowed as she glanced up briefly, sensing the unwavering stares directed at her. Duke, however, gently urged her to keep eating. But how could she, when someone was watching her so intently? Wouldn't she end up with indigestion at this rate?

With a sigh, she exhaled heavily and, instead of continuing her meal, took the large, peeled shrimp she had been holding and stuffed it into Duke's mouth. He was still busy peeling more shrimp for her, seemingly forgetting about his own meal.

"Don't just focus on taking care of me—eat too," Kisha chided, her tone firm yet affectionate. She watched as Duke finally chewed, realizing that aside from the shrimp she had just given him, he hadn't taken a single bite.

"I'll feed my wife first, then I'll eat," Duke said seriously, his hands still busy peeling shrimp.

Kisha rolled her eyes. "What am I, a child that needs to be fed?" she retorted, exasperated.

Duke paused, looking up to meet her gaze. His expression was unreadable for a moment—serious, intense—before he suddenly broke into a confident smile. "Yeah, you are my baby."

The shameless declaration was so unexpected that Keith, who had been silently eating, choked on his food.

"I didn't know the man I thought was a block of ice could actually be this shameless," Keith commented absentmindedly, still coughing.

The Evans family shared the same sentiment but chose to remain silent. Even Emma Evans, who had been quietly weeping just moments ago, momentarily forgot her sorrow.

Her tears stopped as she stared at Duke in astonishment, watching the once cold and indifferent boy she had seen grow from a small ice cube into a solid block of ice... now acting shameless and affectionate in front of her daughter.

Meanwhile, Ethan, Eric, Eliot, and even Edward Evans looked at Duke with varying degrees of disbelief and secondhand embarrassment, visibly cringing at what they had just witnessed.

Kisha was momentarily speechless. Since she knew she couldn't win an argument against Duke, she chose the path of least resistance—silence. She simply focused on eating, pretending not to hear his shameless words.

Duke, satisfied with his "victory," flashed a triumphant smile, pleased that Kisha was eating what he fed her. However, Kisha wasn't one to back down completely. As Duke continued peeling shrimp and preparing more food for her, she silently fed him small bites in return, her subtle way of showing care.

Watching this quiet exchange, the Winters couple gazed at them with warmth and affection. Even the family patriarch's eyes glowed with a knowing smile as a thought crossed his mind— It won't be long before I'm holding my great-grandson.

Content with this idea, he continued eating happily, though he remained mindful of his food intake. At his age, overindulging could easily lead to health issues, and he wasn't about to let anything interfere with witnessing the future he was looking forward to.

But the visibly emotional Emma, who had been standing silently by the side while being ignored by her daughter, could no longer hold back.

"K-Kisha," she finally spoke, her voice unsteady. "Can you please spare me just a moment of your time? There's something important I need to talk to you about."

Kisha, struggling to eat under Emma's intense stare, finally raised an eyebrow before lifting her gaze to meet the older woman's eyes. Emma looked visibly emotional, but in Kisha's mind, the reason was obvious—Emma was still upset over what had happened to her precious, pampered daughter.

Kisha figured Emma couldn't accept the fact that she had struck her so-called princess, especially with such disastrous consequences. It made sense. The Evans had wanted to talk to her and her family from the moment they arrived, likely because of the long-standing engagement between the Evans and Winters families.

And Kisha? She was the one who had disrupted that union. She was the thorn in their side, the outsider, the obstacle standing in the way of their carefully laid plans.

So, naturally, she expected the usual melodramatic scene to unfold—where the heartbroken mother would beg the "third party" to leave and never look back for the sake of her daughter's happiness.

"I'm listening," Kisha said after a brief pause, then casually continued stuffing food into Duke's mouth.

Emma hesitated, glancing at Duke and the others before speaking. "C-Can we talk in private?" she asked, her voice carrying a hint of nervousness.

Kisha leaned back slightly, feigning contemplation. "Hmm, I'm not sure if I have the time," she mused. "I just got back to the base after so long, and I'd really like to spend as much time as possible with my family and my husband." She then tilted her head, her lips curling into a sharp, sarcastic smile. "You're not about to ask me to leave my husband, are you?"

"But we are also your family," Ethan suddenly blurted out.

He had been silent all this time, watching his sister intently from the moment they arrived. There was so much he wanted to say, so much he had prepared—gifts he had collected from every mission outside, all meant for her. But now, his emotions got the best of him, and his voice rang out louder than he intended.

The entire cafeteria fell into stunned silence. Even the Aldens, mid-bite, froze as Ethan's words echoed in their ears.

"What do you mean?" Duke was the first to break the silence, his voice sharp with suspicion.

Kisha, too, was too stunned to speak, her mind racing to process Ethan's words.

Emma took a sharp breath, her eyes locking onto Kisha's shocked expression. She had wanted to handle this delicately, but there was no turning back now. The secret was out, and she made a split-second decision. If the truth had to be told, it might as well be laid bare for everyone to hear.

"I know everyone here is aware that my family has been searching for my daughter all these years after we lost her when she was six," Emma said, her voice steady but filled with emotion.

Her gaze shifted toward Duke and the Winters, her words directed at them specifically. While the public had only heard vague mentions of the missing Evans daughter, the upper class—their circle—knew much more. This should ring a bell for them.

Duke's brows furrowed slightly as he exchanged glances with his parents and grandfather. Recognition flickered across their faces, and one by one, they nodded. Seeing that most had pieced together what she was implying, Emma took a deep breath and continued.

"You all know that someone conspired against our family back then and kidnapped my daughter. No matter what we did or where we searched, all traces of her vanished," Emma said, her voice heavy with the weight of years of searching.

"Even when we spread the news to the public, it was always intercepted, keeping us from finding her. But we never gave up. We searched for her—both openly and in secret—careful not to alert our family's enemies and force them to erase any remaining traces of her existence."

She took a deep breath, her hands trembling slightly. "Still, we never succeeded... not until I met this girl."

Emma turned and pointed directly at Kisha.

She didn't need to say anything more. The room was filled with intelligent people, and the pieces of the puzzle had already fallen into place. The weight of her words sank in, and the realization hit like a thunderclap. Now, everyone understood why she had brought up an old story from the past.

"How can you be so sure that I'm your daughter?" Kisha asked, her lips curling into a self-deprecating smirk. "Didn't you already have your daughter—Melody?"

For a brief moment, her heart had leaped at Mrs. Evans' words, warmth creeping in where she'd never expected it. But reality struck just as quickly.

If they had never stopped searching and were so heartbroken over their missing child, then where did Melody come from? And why was she treated like the center of their world?

Wasn't this just their hypocrisy speaking?

If they had truly searched everywhere, with all their wealth and influence, how had they not found her when she had been hiding in plain sight?

And more than that—why had they gone on to have another daughter after losing her?

Everything they were saying felt hollow, like a carefully crafted attempt to manipulate her emotions, to convince her that they had been devastated by her disappearance. But Kisha couldn't believe it. She had once dreamed of reuniting with her family, of finding the people she had longed for all her life. But the Evans?

Bitterness churned inside her. Who in their country hadn't heard of Melody, the pampered princess of the Evans family? She had been showered with love, given the best life imaginable, surrounded by family and friends who adored her. She had everything.

And Kisha?