

THE EX-WIFE'S BURNING ELEGANCE

Chapter 16

Keen looked up, startled, to find Haynes staring at him with piercing eyes that seemed to see through him. Keen was always afraid of his father's cold and severe demeanor.

Before Keen could respond, Haynes' deep, icy voice cut through the air again. "Did Stella teach you that?"

Keen wasn't afraid of his mom, Stella, but his father was a different story. He quickly averted his gaze, muttering, "No, it wasn't Mom who taught me."

But Keen's hesitant demeanor was all the confirmation Haynes needed. In his eyes, it was as if Keen was guilty as charged.

Was Stella teaching their child such things at home?

Haynes scoffed, "If she can't educate our child correctly, maybe she should reflect on herself."

Then he turned to Keen, saying, "Keen, you'll stay at your grandparents' place for a few days."

Keen had been about to protest, but at Haynes' words, his eyes lit up. He recalled his aunt's story about when Stella had pushed Rachel into the pool and refused to apologize. It wasn't until his dad sent him to stay with his grandparents that she finally relented and apologized to his dad and Rachel.

Maybe if he stayed at the grandparents' house again, things would play out similarly.

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Meanwhile, in a cozy apartment in another part of town, Abby incredulously watched Stella delete her group chat and block Haynes and Rachel, her eyes wide in disbelief.

"Star, are you serious this time?" Abby asked.

After she finished tidying up her phone, Stella looked up and replied, "Do I seem like I'm joking?"

Abby sighed, "The last time Rachel ended up in the water, you swore you wouldn't back down. But then, Keen got sick. I worry Haynes will try to use him against you."

Women are often vulnerable, especially when it comes to their children. It's a common belief that having kids gives men leverage over women.

Stella's voice was calm. "Don't worry. It's different this time."

Abby raised an eyebrow, still doubtful, "Really?"

Stella smiled wistfully, "I thought I was being a great mom, sacrificing everything for Keen. But in reality, I was only trying to convince myself."

Abby's eyes sparkled mischievously, "In that case, how about I treat you tonight? Let's plan something fun."

Being single and always up for a good time, Abby loved hitting bars and clubs. "Oh no, that's not necessary..." Stella began.

"No way!" Abby interrupted her, "Back in college at Neo-Vespera University, you were the campus belle everyone admired. Remember that dance you performed during the homecoming? So many guys fell for you."

Pouting a little, Abby continued, "Little Star, you can play the violin and dance so beautifully, looking like a goddess, yet you ended up with Haynes, a scumbag who doesn't appreciate you. Plenty of good men are out there, not just Haynes! Come on, Star, just come with me and unwind a little."

Unable to resist Abby's persistent persuasion, Stella finally agreed.

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By eight o'clock, Stella and Abby stepped into a bar. It wasn't the chaotic scene Stella had feared. Instead, it exuded an upscale vibe.

Abby winked at her. "This place just opened, and the guys here are top-notch. You won't regret it!"

With a smile, Stella replied, "Alright."

Just then, a familiar voice rang out from behind them. "Well, if it isn't Haynes' little shadow. What brings you here? Looking for Haynes again?"