

Chapter 44 It's Millie

The whole room pulsed with restless anticipation.

Millie had already pushed the price higher three separate times, each increase landing with a sense of urgency.

Millie's latest offer shot up from a modest hundred thousand to three hundred thousand, making it painfully clear how badly she wanted to win.

"Is something happening here? Hasn't bidder number 823 realized who she's up against? She's really holding her ground."

"There's no way she's in the dark. Serena arrived tonight with Charles, and the Evans Group is the one running the show. Charles has to be aware of everything that's happening."

"You're right, so what are they trying to pull?"

"Honestly, it's anybody's guess. Brandon might not be bidding himself, but his date is the one raising the paddle. It's almost like number 823 is challenging Brandon head-on."

"The tanzanite itself is only valued at a million. If you ask me, spending anything above 1.2 million just isn't smart. To shoot up to one and a half million, there's got to be a story behind it."

"I couldn't tell you. Are you thinking Brandon will push the price even higher?"

"If Brandon was placing the bids himself, I'd expect him to do it for the sake of his pride. But this time, it's Vivian stepping in, so there's no telling what she'll decide."

"Doesn't Brandon worry about getting embarrassed in front of everyone?"

"You might not realize it, but he wins either way. If he keeps fighting for it, it proves he's determined. If he lets the other bidder take it, he can always say she needed it more, and it makes him look generous in front of everyone."

"Wait, is that really how it works?"

"Why not? Everyone in this room already knows Brandon's wealthy

enough to go the distance. If he backs off, nobody's going to doubt that he lacks the money. They'll just figure he's showing some class."

"Still, it feels a little awkward. He can't even manage to win a tanzanite worth a million?"

"Yeah, but if he really wants to, he could always just buy it later and hand it over as a gift. That takes care of everything."

"Now that's clever. I have to say, I'm impressed." 🗨️

People kept whispering and guessing their attention fixed on the second floor above them.

Upstairs, every guest sat in their seat without so much as a fidget. Outwardly, everything seemed composed, but underneath it all, the tension was sharp enough to cut the air.

Millie sent Charles a worried look. "Is this going to cause problems for you?"

Charles answered with a smile, "You're the one bidding using your own paddle. That has nothing to do with me."

A smile returned to Millie's face as she glanced at the table.

On the tabletop sat two paddles, one meant for Serena and the other for Charles.

Each of them had received an invitation, so both had their own bidding number. 🗨️

Still, going up against Brandon so openly would likely have some consequences.

Charles noticed how uneasy she was. "There's nothing to be afraid of," he said as he tried to reassure her. "I can handle whatever comes out of this."

He gave her another nudge. "Bid however you feel like bidding. I'll cover anything you need."

Millie turned to Charles with a quiet gaze and remarked gently, "I appreciate it."

The money didn't worry her at all. What she really wanted to know was if Brandon would get dragged into trouble because of it. 🗨️

At the moment, Brandon made no move. But would he later? No one

knew for sure.

Vivian, on her part, felt trapped by the situation.

Trying to raise the bid higher would be painful, and she couldn't guess whether her rival would push the price up even further.

Refusing to raise the bid might make both her and Brandon look bad.

She wavered for a moment, and Brandon tapped his finger on the table in response.

"Keep going" said Brandon, his tone firm and direct.

Vivian didn't move right away. Instead, she turned toward him with anxious eyes. "Brandon, we don't need to keep going. The bid is already past the real value."

There was another pause as she looked embarrassed. "And honestly, I don't even have enough left to cover it."

Brandon's eyes went straight to the tanzanite, his expression calm and collected.

In his mind, he felt like the tanzanite belonged to him.

"Don't you worry about the money," he said.

The message was simple. He intended to pay for everything.

Vivian gave a relieved sigh though she still insisted, "No, Brandon. We promised I would cover it on my own."

All the while, a few guests kept to the shadows, quietly observing as they waited for the outcome.

At that very moment, the villa's front doors flung wide open, grabbing everyone's attention.

A wheelchair made its way inside, carrying an elderly man who managed to look dignified and strong, even while seated.

A warm smile lit up the man's face.

"Apologies for arriving late," he said, smiling. "The energy in here is incredible tonight. I could hear all the excitement before I even came in."


As soon as Charles caught sight of the old man, he quickly got up and

hurried down the stairs.

He moved in to help him. "Grandpa, what brought you here yourself?"

Charles had assumed Napier would remain tucked away in a private seat and send for Millie later. Seeing Napier come through the main entrance in his wheelchair had caught him by surprise.

Napier leaned on his cane as he answered, "I simply wanted to see things for myself." At the same moment, two other members of the Evans family arrived and stepped forward to help.

Derek motioned for them to hold back, still smiling as he glanced around at the crowd, pausing when his eyes landed on Brandon, Vivian, and Millie; then he turned his gaze to the item up for auction. 

After that, he said something that tended to go over people's heads. "There's something truly special about being young."

Napier's unexpected appearance caused everything in the room to come to a standstill. The auctioneer prepared to continue, but Napier tapped lightly on a plate beside him.

"It's time for a short break now. We'll pick up with the next round in a little while," he announced.

And with that, the auction came to a pause.

People throughout the room grew more and more restless, eager for what would happen next.

Instead of seeing the final moments of the bidding everyone was asked to wait.

Napier could feel that the crowd was growing impatient, but he stayed silent as his grandsons helped him toward the elevator leading up to the third floor.

Right before the elevator doors slid shut, he spoke to Charles. "Go get her for me. I want to see her."

There was no confusion about whom he meant.

A wave of panic hit Charles. This was definitely the worst time for this.

Everyone present had just witnessed the tense bidding match between bidder 823 and bidder 888. Taking Millie to see his grandfather now would only make things worse.

Had things gone smoothly before, there might have been a chance. Unfortunately, that window had closed.

Charles' oldest brother kept quiet, while his second gave a sly grin. "Go ahead, Charles."

There was nothing Charles could do but obey. He shot Oakley a frustrated look before heading off to find Millie.

Millie already sensed what was about to happen. Before Charles even spoke, she nodded to show she understood.

A heavy sigh escaped Charles. He knew she would have to face this on her own. He helped her to her feet and walked with her toward a private room on the third floor.

"My grandfather is waiting inside," he said quietly. "Be on your guard. If you need anything just call out and I'll be right there."

A gentle smile crossed Millie's lips. "I'm sure it isn't as frightening as you're making it seem."

Charles insisted, his nervousness written all over his face. "But it is! You have no idea how serious this is."

Millie did not push the matter any further. She nodded and said, "Okay, I'm going in now."

Both of Charles' brothers remained close by, keeping an eye on Charles as he paced nervously in front of the door.

Meanwhile, Millie stepped into the room, calmly closing the door behind her before walking toward Napier with measured steps.

She came to a stop and, using her right hand, took off the custom half-mask she had been wearing. She did it with confidence, showing her whole face to Napier without any hesitation.

It became clear in that moment that it wasn't Serena standing before him. It was Millie.