

Chapter 98

Mr. McCarthy who sat in the sitting room shook his head, and turned his neck slightly towards the stairs.

"Elizabeth!" he thundered, glaring at the massive clock in the living room as its hour hand hit 9. "It's nine o'clock on the dot! We don't have much time left!"

There was silence for a while, and there was no response.

He waited for a second, his brows pulling together in annoyance. Still no there was no answer, only the low, distant whir of a hairdryer humming faintly from the upper floor.

He muttered something inaudible and turned toward his wife, who was sitting with near royal dress, a delicate china teacup in one hand, the other hand gently stirring in two cubes of sugar.

"This girl," he sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose. "I swear, she will be the end of me someday."

Mrs. McCarthy set the spoon down and took a small sip, raising one finely brow. "She's a grown woman, not a child. But still, someone should tell her that punctuality matters in business. These are investors, not I*****m followers."

Raising her voice, she called out sharply, "Elizabeth! Hurry up! Do you know what time it is? Your father and I are waiting, and so are the 7 investors. These are not just any business partners, they are the people who bought into our empire. This meeting isn't optional."

From upstairs, Elizabeth's voice echoed back, slightly strained. "I'm almost done! Just give me two minutes, I'm fixing my lashes. They're

being stubborn.”

“Her lashes,” Mr. McCarthy repeated in disbelief, throwing his arms in the air. “Her lashes! We are about to have one of the most important meetings in the company’s history, and our daughter is worried about eyelashes.”

“She’s always been like that,” Mrs. McCarthy said calmly, folding her napkin. “But don’t pretend you haven’t spoiled her. Half the reason she’s so confident, bordering on reckless is because she knows her father will always defend her.”

He scoffed, but didn’t argue.

Moments later, sound of heels clicking against floor announced Elizabeth’s arrival. She descended the staircase with all the grace of a runway model.

Her chin was high and her purse was tucked under her arm, and a cream-colored suit tailored to perfection. She was really ready, and wanted to impress, since this was her first time going into her father’s business.

“I’m ready,” she said breathlessly, flashing a dazzling smile. “Sorry for the wait. One of my lashes just refused to cooperate.”

Julian, lounging on the couch with a cup of coffee, stood and approached her. “You look stunning,” he murmured, kissing her cheek. “Go get them. But, please, try not to burn bridges this time.”

Elizabeth’s eyes sparkled with mischief. “When have I ever burned bridges?”

Julian gave her a knowing look. “Maya Cortez? You publicly called her designs derivative in front of five investors.”

"She copied me, and everyone knew it," Elizabeth said, rolling her eyes. "Besides, those investors thanked me afterward for being honest."

"Just... tread lightly. Today isn't about fashion feuds. It's business, okay? And it's important to your father."

She sighed and nodded. "Alright, alright. I'll behave. No scandals, no verbal grenades, I'll be charming..."

As they exited the mansion, the driver opened up the car door of the black Mercedes-Benz S-Class. Mr. McCarthy paused, turning to Elizabeth just before she climbed in.

"There's something I want you to understand, Liz," he said, his voice calmer now but still held a little authority. "The reason I insisted you come with us today isn't for appearances. This isn't some fun trip with us..."

Elizabeth blinked, adjusting her purse strap. "Then what is it, father?"

He opened the car door for her but didn't let her enter just yet. "It's about your future. About what comes next. I'm not going to be around forever."

"Dad..." she started, but he raised a hand.

"No, listen. One day, McCarthy Technologies won't just be something you wear our name for, it will be your responsibility. Every building, every contract, every legacy move I've made, it'll all land on your shoulders."

Elizabeth's expression shifted. The cocky grin faded, replaced with something rare and vulnerable.

"You're... you're saying I'll be in charge?" she asked with a low voice.

From behind them, Mrs. McCarthy stepped forward and placed a gentle hand on her daughter's back. "Your father's not getting any younger, sweetheart. You're our only daughter. Who else would we trust to carry on what we've built? You're smart, bold and capable. Yes, a bit impulsive, but you've got something that can't be taught, you have confidence..."

For a moment, Elizabeth looked like a little girl again, unsure and caught off-guard by what was happening.

"L... I thought you didn't think I was ready," she murmured. "That you thought I was too shallow, too..." she waved a hand vaguely.

"Your lashes are not a personality," Mr. McCarthy said with a chuckle. "But no, I've been watching you. You're learning, slower than I'd like, maybe, but you're learning."

Elizabeth swallowed hard and looked between both her parents. Her voice cracked slightly as she said, "Thank you. Really, I promise I'll make you proud. I'll take this seriously."

"You better," Mr. McCarthy said with sternness, finally letting her slide into the car. "The company needs a business minded person at the table, not a social media celebrity."

They all settled into the seats of the vehicle. The driver adjusted his mirror and nodded at Mr. McCarthy.

"To McCarthy Technologies, sir?"