

## Chapter 101

"So, Ariana started going crazy on me, demanding to know where I was, picking fights..." Elijah's eyes held a hint of regret.

"I shouldn't have treated her that way. I knew she felt insecure, knew how vulnerable she was in this relationship."

Jocelyn snapped out of her daze, suddenly screaming, "So, what are you trying to tell me? That you've always loved her? And that you don't love me?"

Elijah stared at her with disdain. "Isn't it obvious? You don't love me either. So, why should I love you?"

Jocelyn crumbled. "You don't love me? Then why would you buy me all those things and give me all that money? No, Elijah, you definitely loved me. You have to love me!"

Elijah's voice turned cold. "You kept provoking Ariana, pushing her to the point of desperation, making her run after me, begging me to get back together, only to drive her away again. Wasn't that your goal all along? To push her out of my life?"

"It's not love you're feeling. You just can't stand the thought of another woman having what you want." Elijah pried Jocelyn's hands off him, his voice steady but cutting. "I don't blame you, but you've crossed a line. You've gone too far."

Jocelyn watched him as he got into the car, desperately

clinging to the window. "No, Elijah, I do love you! Why else would I go after Ariana like that? Why would I have tried to—"

She stopped herself abruptly.

Elijah started the engine, his expression colder than she'd ever seen. "The night's chilly, Jocelyn. You crossed a line. Maybe it's time you stayed here and thought about it."

Then he delivered one final blow. "Remember your place. Mrs. Linden will always be Ariana, not you." With that, he floored the gas pedal, speeding off.

Jocelyn tumbled to the ground, too stunned to move for a moment. When she finally staggered up, she stared at the spot where his car had vanished, a twisted smile forming on her lips.

"Fine, Elijah. If you want to play games, don't blame me when I stop playing nice."

...

The car pulled up outside the building, and Logan opened my door as I stepped out. I took a few steps before realizing he hadn't followed.

Curious, I turned back. "Logan, aren't you coming up?"

The question slipped out, and I immediately realized something felt off.

I thought, "Logan doesn't live here. Why would I invite him upstairs?"

Logan chuckled lightly, "I'm not going up."

He stepped up, moving closer to adjust the shawl around my shoulders. His gaze was warm, reflecting my flushed cheeks like a gentle spring breeze. Under the intensity of his eyes, I found myself looking down.

"Did what happened tonight embarrass you?" he asked softly.

I shook my head. "No, not really. I just thought, maybe if I put myself out there more openly, people might stop misunderstanding me."

He nodded thoughtfully, his gaze unreadable behind his glasses.

"Once I knew Elijah was bringing Jocelyn, I thought it best to have you there as well," he said. "You don't need any more baseless rumors."

A wave of warmth flooded over me. So that was it.

Logan must have found out at the last minute that Elijah planned to attend with Jocelyn and quickly arranged for me to go as well. There were just too many benefits for me to attend.

First, it tarnished Elijah's reputation. Second, it gave me credibility with the big players in the room. Third, it set the record straight.

Elijah, who once seemed untouchable, was now shaken by

my appearance, and Jocelyn, eager to ride his coattails into high society, was left with nothing but the label of a mistress.

Elijah hadn't even given her a shred of public acknowledgment at the party. In one night, Jocelyn's path to social climbing was effectively blocked.

The more I thought about it, the more impressed I was with Logan's subtle, masterful strategy.

Without breaking a sweat, he'd managed to knock Elijah off his pedestal, all while taking the moral high ground.

A three-pronged victory. I could hardly keep up with Logan's thinking.

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"What are you thinking about?" Logan murmured, gently brushing a stray lock of hair from my face.

I looked down, feeling a bit self-conscious. "I was just realizing how naive I used to be."

Logan laughed. His laughter was clear and refreshing, like a spring breeze, lifting my spirits. Then, he looked down at me, his eyes behind the glasses so intense I couldn't hold his gaze.

My heart pounded. He leaned in and placed a gentle kiss on my forehead. It was so light it felt like a butterfly's touch, fleeting and delicate.

It was a kiss full of restraint and respect, a brief, chaste

connection.



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