

The Warlord's Lovely Prize

Chapter 16

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“Kaelyn, who are you, really?” he demanded, his eyes searching hers for an answer.

“You know my name, so surely you know who I am,” Kaelyn replied, her voice dripping with irony as she flashed a mocking smile.

Landen inhaled sharply, his tone lowering. “How could you pull off Lilian’s signature move? Are you... could you be Lilian?” His question hung in the air, filled with disbelief.

Despite his skepticism, Landen struggled with the possibility. The Barnett family had meticulously vetted Kaelyn’s past. It seemed impossible that she could be the famed racer known for her prowess on the tracks three years prior. Yet, how else could she have executed the Butterfly Drift so flawlessly?

Kaelyn, unfazed by his confusion, cut him off. “What does it matter to you? I won this race. That’s all you need to concern yourself with.”

“You...”

Landen was left grasping for words as Kaelyn confidently mounted the champion’s platform, his earlier boastful claims now echoing back at him in a humbling reversal.

Frustrated and desperate, Landen caught the referee’s eye and signaled discreetly. Understanding the cue, the referee gave a subtle nod and turned to the ceremony staff, announcing, “Hold on, we have a potential issue. There are suspicions of rule violations by the top two racers. They may face disqualification.”

The crowd was stunned by the referee’s announcement.

Kaelyn, bewildered, responded, “What violation are you accusing me of committing?”

The referee, his expression stoic, replied, “It was clear to all spectators. The car in third was about to pass you when you allegedly colluded with the second-place driver.”

“The driver forced the yellow car off the track, causing a crash. This disqualifies both of your results. The winner is now Mr. Benny Finch.”

“What? Are you blind?” Kaelyn retorted, her laughter edged with frustration. “How could I possibly conspire with another driver while racing? The very driver you’re rewarding tried to ram me multiple times. Under the regulations, he should be disqualified for

aggressive behavior, yet you've ignored his infractions and disqualified me instead. I request an immediate review of the race footage."

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"Very well," the referee replied nonchalantly. Staff quickly queued up the replay for everyone to see.

The footage clearly showed the yellow car's aggressive maneuvers and the subsequent collision between the black and yellow cars. Throughout the ordeal, Kaelyn's driving remained well within the rules.

Despite the evidence, the referee maintained his stance. "The video shows your collusion with the black car to force the yellow car off the track. There's no room for debate. As referee, my decision stands."

Landen watched with smug satisfaction, smirking at Kaelyn. "Hear that? You've lost. Ultimately, I win."

"This is outright cheating!" Kaelyn exclaimed, clenching her fists in anger. She recognized the referee's bias, likely influenced by Landen. The audacity of Landen's underhanded tactics, carried out so openly, only fueled her fury.

As Kaelyn glared at him, Landen reveled in his perceived victory, taunting her. "Kaelyn, no matter your skill, you can't overcome the power I wield. In this world, power dictates the rules. Now you should realize the consequences of deceiving my uncle. I suggest you apologize before this escalates. Perhaps, given our past, I might be persuaded to be lenient."

"Spare me your nonsense," Kaelyn snapped, cutting off his brazen proposition.

Landen's face darkened with irritation. Realizing he couldn't sway her, he turned to the referee. "If she's violated the rules, why hasn't she been removed yet?"

The referee nodded briskly at Landen's prompt and turned to the nearby staff. "Remove her from the podium."

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