

Master 371

Chapter 371

By the time Brielle was seated in the back of the police cruiser, her mind was a whirlwind of confusion.

Upon arrival at the station, it was revealed to her that Sarah had drowned, and her time of death was at nine, the previous night.

"Miss Brielle," the officer inquired, tapping away at his keyboard, "where were you last night at nine?"

"At home," she replied.

"Any witnesses to confirm that?"

"There's a security camera at my front door. I didn't leave the house all day."

The officer continued, businesslike, "Who did the victim associate with regularly?"

"I'm sorry. I didn't really know her," Brielle admitted.

He gave her a probing look before diligently noting her response.

Brielle furrowed her brow in thought before asking. "Was Sarah's death a suicide, or was it foul play?"

"We'll have to wait for the autopsy results for that."

Brielle's eyes fell. If Sarah's death were ruled a suicide, things would become incredibly complicated for her. The video of her

pressuring Sarah to sing was still out there, and the public would surely blame her harassment as a direct cause of the tragedy.

Moreover, with no surveillance in the bar from that night and Sarah now gone, no one could corroborate the truth.

She had managed to bluff her way out of Dorsey International earlier that day, mainly because Simon was complicit in something

shady—Brielle was certain he had been bribed. Plus, the mysterious message "help me" sent to the group chat, seemed like a

desperate move by someone behind the scenes to escalate the situation. It was this very act that suggested to the police and the

public that Sarah's death might not have been a mere suicide.

Using this to her advantage, Brielle had confronted Simon, and he had faltered.

But who was pulling the strings from the shadows?

The thought alone was chilling, and a name surfaced in her mind unbidden—William.

William had always lurked in the background and was among the first in the Dorsey clan to learn of her relationship with Max.

Yet, he had remained inactive. His silence was unnerving.

Brielle's palms were clammy with anxiety—it was just a suspicion.

She had already ruled out Spencer and Ryan. Ryan was too impulsive, as evidenced by his previous threat to poison Max, and

his son Spencer was too rash to be behind such a plot.

Victoria, the Dorsey heiress, had her head in the clouds, far from any power struggle.

Only William remained—a Dorsey family member with deep roots in the company. If he had been monitoring Brielle's movements,

he would've been well aware of her recent discord with Sarah.

Leaving the police station, Brielle drove back to the company, only to find a crowd gathered outside Dorsey Tower. In the midst of

it all was Simon, sitting on the ground, wailing with Sue
in a contest of tears.

Simon's eyes locked onto Brielle's car, and he stood up, pointing an accusing finger. "Murderer!"

The crowd's gaze snapped to her, and Brielle's frown deepened. How did Simon know her car
on sight?

It was too late to reverse; the mob was closing in, hurling insults and accusations at her vehicle.

"Get out! You owe this family an explanation!"

"Don't think your money can shield you from justice! How hard it is for an honest farming family to raise a college student?!"

Those who had come for Dorsey International hadn't seen the recent livestream. They all thought Brielle was to blame. Someone

even picked up a stone, intending to smash her car
window.

"Coward! Witch! Come out!"

Crash!"

The stone shattered the car window in an instant.

Brielle stepped out, her gaze settling on the middle-aged man who had thrown the stone. He shrank back under her stare but

then stood his ground, defiant.

“What are you looking at? You killer!”

She couldn’t help but smirk at the absurdity. Her eyes drifted to Simon and Sue, who were hiding behind the crowd with smug

satisfaction on their faces as if they had won a great victory.

But Brielle stood tall, her posture unyielding. Without hesitation, she dialed the police, “Hello, this is Brielle, the one who just left

the station. I’m outside Dorsey Tower, facing a malicious attack. I also intend to press slander charges against Mr. Simon and

others. Their defamation against me is actionable. I need police assistance.”

When reason met brute force, words often failed.

So, it was time for Brielle to take a stand.

Simon, hearing her call, panicked.

“What the hell? Suing me? On what grounds? It was you who killed my daughter, you monster! Everyone, see for yourself. This

is the real face of the Director of Dorsey International. My daughter has barely passed, and she’s already threatened us with

legal action. She’s heartless!”

The crowd’s eyes were like daggers, stripping Brielle of her defenses, but she remained steadfast, ready to confront the storm.

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The crowd was buzzing with excitement, but Brielle just glanced around with a light chuckle.

“I’ve just come back from the police station after giving my statement, and I’m more than willing to cooperate with the

investigation into this incident. The fact that I’m standing here should be enough to clear me as a suspect. But Simon, despite

the police making things crystal clear, you’re still here stirring the pot, trying to twist the narrative. If I don’t sue you, then who

should I sue?"

Her expression was icy, even mocking.

"Just because you lost your daughter, do I have to stand here and take your slander? Is that what you call having a conscience?

Or should the CEO of Dorsey International personally come and apologize to you? Just because you've suffered a loss, does the

whole world have to walk on eggshells around you? Simon, the police have already looked into Sarah's financial records since

college, and you two never sent her a dime for living expenses. She hadn't been gone three hours before you had her obituary

photo ready to go. Even after the police advised you, you still tried to throw mud at me. You and your wife have been spreading

rumors and slandering me, and exploiting the sympathy of these people who are here on your behalf."

"If I kept silent, that would be a real disgrace to Dorsey International.

Her words silenced the onlookers.

Nobody was a fool. They'd all rushed over in the heat of the moment, seeking justice.

But the fact that Brielle had been released so quickly from the police station without being detained as a suspect spoke volumes.

And from her tone, it seemed the police had already advised this couple.

So why were they still clinging to Brielle?

Instantly, all eyes turned to Simon and his wife, Sue. Simon turned pale with fear, his lips quivering.

What could he do?

How could he handle this?

He desperately tried to signal to Sue with his eyes, and she, getting the hint, promptly fainted.

Simon began to cry again, cradling the 'unconscious' Sue.

"Oh God! Wake up, honey. We haven't gotten justice for our daughter yet. It's all because we're not educated and not as slick—

talking as them. Help! Murder!"

As the situation escalated, it became clear to everyone that Simon was putting on an act...

Just as the crowd began to murmur, Brielle was the first to dial 911. After hanging up, her tone remained calm.

"Simon, I'm deeply sorry about what happened to Sarah, but that doesn't give you the right to hurt me. I've called for an

ambulance, and I hope your wife will be alright. After all, you still have to take care of Sarah's affairs."

Her voice was detached as she put her phone away and walked towards the building.

The crowd that had been surrounding her parted, giving her a clear path.

Brielle's demeanor was poised and confident, her tone and bearing commanding respect.

No one else approached her, and they instead gathered around Simon, suggesting he wait for the police investigation results.

Simon gritted his teeth, glaring at Brielle's retreating figure. "Damn her!"

Meanwhile, in a black car not too far away, Max watched the scene unfold with a detached gaze.

Patrick sat in the driver's seat. Max was on the verge of intervening when someone had thrown a rock at Ms. Brielle's car.

The situation would have escalated even further if he had shown his face.

Luckily, Ms. Brielle seemed to notice the car and shook her head, stopping him from getting out and potentially igniting the

media.

Patrick glanced in the rearview mirror, only to see Max's face shrouded in a chill.

As the ambulance arrived to take Simon and Sue away and the onlookers dispersed, Max pursed his lips and quietly said, "To

the underground garage."

Patrick nodded and quickly drove to the designated area.

They took the elevator straight to the top floor.

Body Jewelry

Max, radiating an icy aura, stepped out of the elevator only to be met by Spencer.

Their eyes clashed in the air.

Spencer felt a surge of anger rush to his head.

Max, however, just gave him a look, asking nothing, not questioning why he was on the top floor instead of his usual department.

His attitude was as if he was seeing a stranger.

The blood boiling within Spencer seemed to freeze over; nothing was more humiliating than being completely disregarded by a rival.

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Max slumped into his office chair, the weight of the world seemingly on his shoulders.

Patrick tiptoed behind him. Max was probably steaming mad, fuming at Ms. Brielle for not letting Max get out of the car and at

himself for actually listening to her.

Max wasn't the type to laugh much on a good day, and when he was mad, hysteria was the last thing you'd see. His eyes just

got darker, his presence more hushed.

But the quieter he got, the more danger seemed to linger in the air.

Patrick instinctively tried to make himself as small as possible.

The office fell into a deathly silence, the air thinning with tension.

Buzz.

Max's phone vibrated on the desk. He glanced at it, a text from Brielle.

[Can I try to handle this on my own first?]

The anger in his chest popped like a balloon, but discomfort still simmered. He texted back.

[How long?]

[One week. I can't lean on you for everything.]

He could shield her from the storms, but also smother her from the sunlight.

Brielle's affection had two pillars: submission, where it's intimate, and autonomy, where it's not. Only then could she be a whole

person, and only a whole person could love completely.

Trying to cure with affection was a sure way to worsen the disease.

This was the truth she had grasped in their brief encounters.

[Don't get hurt.]

Max didn't stop her; he knew Brielle was different.

Her heart warmed, a softness flashing in her eyes, but she quickly forced herself to set aside personal matters and focus on the

crisis at hand.

Now that Simon and his wife had gone to the hospital, the online storm hadn't calmed.

If William was orchestrating this from behind the scenes, his real target wasn't her—it was Max.

William wanted to corner her, force Max to act, and then use that as leverage against him.

What she needed to do was to grab a hold of William's weak spots.

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But with William being cautious for so many years, it was unlikely he'd slip up easily.

Brielle leaned back, pinching a pen in her fingers. How would she handle this?

Then it clicked. In business, when you're short on leverage and need to close the gap with a rival you either bulk up your own

chips or dilute theirs.

And right now, William's chips were Simon and his wife. To dilute that, she had to make those pawns useless.

A smirk curled Brielle's lips as she dialed Tiffanie.

Her network wasn't as extensive as Tiffanie's, so digging into Simon's background was best left to Tiffanie.

Tiffanie agreed quickly, and with a promise of a dinner treat, it wasn't long before Simon's dossier was in Brielle's hands.

He was a gambling addict, a materialist, and often abusive to his wife and daughter. And his wife, despite the abuse, clung to this

rotten man. Sue came from a well-off family, but Simon's gambling squandered her inheritance.

Even as her world fell apart, Sue never thought of divorce. Now, with their only daughter gone, she still blindly followed the man,

demanding compensation for their loss.

"Brielle, Simon is drowning in about eight million in debt."

With parents like that, Sarah really was a victim. But Brielle was no saint. The world was full of sorrow, and if you harm others

just because you've been harmed, what then?

Wicked was wicked, and nobody cared about the abuser's backstory.

"Tiffanie, thank you."

Looked like a hospital visit was in order to meet Simon.

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Brielle chose not to drive her own car to the hospital, fearing that her license plate might have been blasted online, turning her vehicle into a target for any fanatic who might take their rage out on the road.

The online world was still abuzz with speculation, and the thought of being rammed by an extremist if they caught wind of her car

made her shudder.

Having learned where Simon was hospitalized, Brielle was ready to confront him. But since Sue's collapse was all an act, the

two sat idly in the hospital room.

Wary of the media circus waiting for an interview outside, Simon had Sue feign a state of utter distress. It seemed they were

trapped in the hospital for the foreseeable future.

Sue sat on the hospital bed, a look of worry crossing her face.

"Honey, do you think we'll really get our hands on a big sum? What if the guy's just pulling our legs?" she voiced her concern.

Simon's response was swift and harsh—a slap across her face.

"We've got ten million in the bank, for heaven's sake! Enough with your nonsense! Get your act together, and don't screw this

up," he snapped.

Sue's cheeks reddened as she touched her face, tears welling up. "I'm just scared we won't get the money. You know how

ruthless those loan sharks can be. If anything happens to you, I don't want to live either."

Simon sneered. "It's just eight million. We've already got ten, and we'll clear that debt in no time. Dorsey International is loaded.

We'll milk them for another ten million easily. Then we can live the high life anywhere."

Sue nodded, her hand instinctively moving to her stomach.

Sarah was gone. At her age, having another child was out of the question.

If Simon left her for a younger woman, what would she do?

She had nothing left but Simon.

Simon saw her deep in thought, and irritation flickered across his face.

"Think I'm going to dump you? You should remember, I didn't turn my nose up at you for having a daughter. Any other man would have divorced you for bringing in a liability like that."

Sue nodded fervently, remembering her own fear of divorce after giving birth to a girl. But Simon had forgiven her, and she

resolved to be unwaveringly loyal to him.

From outside the room, Brielle listened in, and her brow furrowed.

Brielle had thought there might be hope for Sue, but it was clear that even Sue saw having a

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daughter as a grave mistake.

The mindset was too ingrained to change; otherwise, Sue wouldn't have neglected Sarah all those years.

Brielle had considered approaching Sue, but now her focus shifted to Simon.

Sue was nothing but an extension of Simon, a classic case of masochism.

Brielle hated to label unhappy wives that way. Relationships like Simon and Sue's were all too common, and society often

painted these women as masochists who sought and enjoyed pain. Labeling these self-sacrificing, submissive women as

"masochists" was a convenient but damaging shorthand. It excused the abuse, implying that women somehow relished such

treatment.

Simon's verbal abuse continued in the background.

"Now that Sarah, the financial drain, is gone, you've got to make me happy somehow after all these years of nothing to show for

it.

"Honey, I'll do whatever you want. But can you please stay away from the underground casino?" Before she could finish, another

slap landed on her face.

"My business is none of your concern! Even after I pay off the eight million in gambling debts, I'll still have fun there. Stop

nagging and focus on how we can bleed Dorsey International dry. Dealing with that bench Brielle won't be easy.

Sue's cheeks were swollen as she bowed her head submissively.

Brielle, who had arrived prepared, knew about Simon's gambling debts. Her phone was already live-streaming anonymously.

Since Simon wanted to use online opinion against her, her first move was to undermine his and Sue's victim facade.

The live stream, initially quiet, soon surged with over a thousand viewers. The ongoing scandal had piqued public interest, and

they were eager for the latest development.

No one expected Simon to be such a character behind closed doors.

"Now that Brielle is a formidable opponent, shouldn't we take care of Sarah's funeral first?"

"I don't have time for that dead weight now. Pretend to be sick. Our first priority is to drive Brielle to her grave, or both of us will

suffer!"

The live stream's audience grew, and discussions erupted.

"How can such a creature even be considered a father?"

"Poor Sarah, cursed with parents like these. We thought they wanted justice for their daughter, but it was all about the money."

"Now that I think about Brielle's words, they're starting to make a lot of sense!"

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Simon's phone rang with the shrill urgency of a siren in the sterile hush of the hospital ward.

Brielle, quick as a flash, killed the livestream and made her exit through another corridor.

Simon hit the answer button. A voice, cold and detached, seeped through the speaker.

"Idiot, someone's been streaming from your sickbay."

A chill ran through Simon's spine. He frantically searched the room and even peered outside the door but found no one.

Restlessness took him hostage as he recalled his recent words—had they all been broadcasted live?

Damn it, who could it be?!

By that time, Brielle had already left the hospital. Her stream was anonymous and brief, but the captured moments were already

spreading like wildfire online, igniting discussions and debates. Within half an hour, everyone who had been spewing venomous

words saw the video. Simon's true, ugly colors were laid bare for all to see.

Brielle hadn't anticipated stumbling upon such a revealing conversation. She thought disarming these two pawns would take

more effort, but it turned out to be a windfall.

Monitoring the online chatter, she saw the focus of gossip shift to Simon and Sue, giving her a moment to breathe.

Reaching the curbside, Brielle hailed a cab. Just as she was about to give the driver the address, she saw Simon bursting out of

the hospital entrance, speaking frantically on the phone. Too far to hear the words, she simply leaned back and said, "Please

take me to Pearl Estate."

Her request was cut short by a violent crash and the collective screams of onlookers.

Her heart skipped a beat. Sitting upright, she witnessed the horror—Simon, who was just beside the road moments ago, was

now a lifeless, bloodied heap..

Brielle's face drained of color. Nurses poured out of the hospital, but it was clear—Simon was beyond help, reduced to nothing

more than a bloodstain on the pavement.

A pawn, stripped of its use, held no value to the game.

The screams seemed to echo in Brielle's ears, a tormenting reminder of her throbbing head.

She thought disarming William's pawns would buy her time, b

ut William, ruthless in his strategy, had Simon killed.

A life was as insignificant as a piece of paper in his eyes.

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Concerned, glanced at Brielle's pale face. "Miss, are you okay? We're right by a hospital. You look quite pale: maybe you should

get checked out. What a tragedy to have an accident right outside a hospital. Looks like a fatality."

"No, please, just drive to Pearl Estate. Thank you," Brielle's voice was hoarse as she spoke, turning to see Sue emerging from

the hospital, her cries tearing through the air.

Ironically, this time, Sue's tears were genuine, unlike her performance at Dorsey International. A husband lost was a true cause

for grief, but the loss of her daughter Sarah seemed to leave her numb.

Closing her eyes, Brielle had to admit, albeit reluctantly, that she was losing this round.

She wasn't like William, who had been steeped in power since birth, to whom the lives of the ordinary meant nothing.

So, Sarah had to die, and so did Simon once he became useless. Simon's death spelled trouble for Brielle. This was William's

game.

But Brielle couldn't commit such acts.

Simon was disgusting, but she wasn't God, nor the Grim Reaper; she had no right to decide life or death.

That was why she was losing.

The car drove away, but Sue's screams still pierced the air as if threatening to shatter the heavens.

Brielle was overwhelmed by a sense of despair. The plight of being a small player in a grand game was heavy on her heart.

She's fearful of becoming the next Sarah or Simon.

She acutely realized her insignificance.

Arriving at Pearl Estate, she wearily unlocked the door.

Inside, she found Max waiting, a coffee mug in hand. The room was filled with its comforting aroma.

Brielle's eyes reddened as she moved into his embrace, unable to hold back her emotions.

If she hadn't rendered Simon useless, William wouldn't have acted. Her heart wasn't cold enough, and that's why she felt awful.

Max set the coffee down and began to pat her back softly.

She overheard Max's phone call, presumably to Patrick.

"Wipe Brielle's afternoon surveillance."

uns were

After hanging up, he cradled Brielle's face. Her red and on the verge of tears.

Brielle averted her gaze, biting her lip softly. "Simon's dead."

"I know, and you've done all you could," Max reassured her.

Every move Brielle had made was correct, but she had underestimated William's brutality.

A man consumed by power was a madman.

And Brielle, a sane person, could never beat a madman.

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Brielle wasn't in the mood for deep thoughts; it was the first time she had witnessed two lives snuffed out because of her.

She needed a moment to breathe, to think about her next move.

Right now, Max's embrace was her sanctuary, and she longed to surrender to a brief respite.

What should she do next?

Would Sue also end up dead if this continued?

Her mind was a whirlwind of chaos. She closed her eyes, forcing herself to rest first.

Max's hand gently stroked her back, his eyes reflecting a chill as he noticed the weariness on her face.

He rose, carefully cradling Brielle in his arms, and laid her down in the bedroom.

The moment Brielle touched the bed, she stirred awake, sensing his presence in the room, and mumbled, "I want to try again."

Max froze for a second, gazing at her sleeping face, then tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear, murmuring. "Okay."

What Brielle didn't know was that since she left the hospital, the place had been swarming with people.

No one expected Simon to die, and Sue, clutching Simon's mutilated body, wept with a heart-wrenching sorrow.

Those who had condemned Simon online were caught off guard.

One moment, they were decrying Simon as a man unworthy of fatherhood; the next, Simon was dead.

And Sue's grief-stricken wailing tugged at heartstrings.

Public opinion had completely shifted against Simon, but with his death, everyone was at a loss about what to do next, so they

began discussing the accident.

Was it a mishap or something more sinister?

Bereft of her anchor, Sue finally let go of Simon's body after much persuasion from the doctors. Her husband was dead, and she

saw no reason to live on.

They shouldn't have come to claim that money.

Sue sat numbly in the morgue, watching as Simon was zipped into a body bag.

Her phone buzzed with a message.

(Are you content to let your husband die in vain? Brielle killed him. She killed your husband and your daughter. Will you let her

get away with it?)

When hope was lost, grasping at straws became second nature.

For Sue, that message was her lifeline, the only thing keeping her hope alive.

It was Brielle. Brielle had killed her husband!

Sue's eyes blazed with hatred. Wiping away her tears, she clutched her phone and left the morgue.

She would seek justice for her husband! Even if it cost her life, she wouldn't hesitate.

She planned to take her own life, then make it seem as if Brielle had driven her to it.

Using her death to sway public opinion seemed like the best strategy.

If her entire family was dead, why should Brielle live in peace?

A cold smile crossed Sue's face as another message popped up on her phone.

[Tell the public that Brielle started the live stream from the hospital, and that Brielle indirectly killed Simon. And with your husband

dead, what's the point of you living? Aren't you afraid Simon is lonely down there?]

Sue's limbs become. It wasn't until she stepped out of the hospital that she realized a crowd of reporters was waiting to interview

her.

With swollen eyes, she faced the cameras, her mind echoing the text message, and she began to recount.

"It's Brielle's fault, all of it. She wants us all dead."

"Poor Sarah, you died so tragically."

"Even if Simon was at fault, Brielle had no right to play God. Brielle, you bitch, I will never forgive you," she sobbed.

At the end of the day, everything stemmed from the conflict between Brielle and Sarah. It was understandable that Sue blamed

Brielle, especially since she had lost her husband and daughter.

After delivering her speech, Sue stumbled into a nearby taxi.

The reporters didn't follow, but the interview was already live-streaming online.

The internet was ablaze with outrage, calling for Brielle's head.

It was her actions that led to the ruin of Sue's family.

And the unsavory truths about Simon that had been revealed were now conveniently forgotten.

In a nutshell, the man was dead. What more could be done? Surely, it was all Brielle's fault.

Brielle was a light sleeper, and she woke up rubbing her temples.

Once she had gathered her wits, she threw off the covers and got out of bed.

The voices of Max and Patrick conversing drifted from the living room. Max looked up to see her, hair disheveled, her face

delicate but her expression resolute as she turned to Patrick.

"Patrick, can we have Sue taken to the police station? It needs to be done quickly. I fear she might be coaxed into suicide, then

have everything pinned on me."

She had overheard enough at the hospital to know how much Sue idolized her husband.

Sue's sense of self was not intact; she had invested everything in Simon. With Simon gone, she, too, would crumble.

If someone exploited this vulnerability, she would gladly surrender her life.

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Patrick bowed respectfully, "Ms. Brielle, the boss thought the same, so he's already had Sue sent over.

Brielle heaved a sigh of relief and poured herself a glass of water, but as she held the glass, she did not take a sip.

The situation had developed into a seeming impasse.

The tactic of diluting William's leverage was useless.

Everything had to revert to square one. She had to prove that it wasn't her who had oppressed Sarah. Only then could she extricate herself from this web of troubles.

However, there were no security cameras at the restaurant at the time.

Brielle was not just unwilling to accept this. She was even disgusted by William's dirty tactics.

Using the lives of pawns to coerce them to achieve his ends was despicable.

In the face of absolute power, Brielle felt an unprecedented sense of powerlessness.

A pair of cool hands reached out, gently touching her temples..

His voice whispered in her ear, "I'll help you."

Brielle's heart skipped a beat. Truth be told, she didn't know how Max could help.

Being led by the nose by William had frayed her nerves, yet she still wanted to try on her own.

"I want to talk to Sue."

Max frowned, clearly disagreeing with her decision.

Sue was now a madwoman, someone who didn't even care about her own life, let alone someone else's.

If Brielle showed up in front of her, she'd probably want to stab her with all her might.

"I won't allow it."

Max's tone was indifferent, his hand retracting as if he didn't want to discuss it further.

Brielle smiled and quickly offered him a glass of water.

Max didn't take it; such small favors were of no use to him.

"Mr. Dorsey?" –

Brielle softened her voice, and Max glanced at her before reluctantly accepting the glass. "You could be in danger."

"Not at the station. I'll talk to her at the police station."

Max's frown softened slightly.

He knew Brielle wanted to exhaust her own efforts first, but he was still uncomfortable.

Brielle looked at him and finally leaned in, planting a kiss on his lips. "Mr. Dorsey, may I?"

All the pent-up frustration vanished in an instant. Max looked up at her, then averted his gaze, this time answering more readily.

"Mm-hm."

Patrick stood quietly on the side, clutching files, watching as his boss was swayed by a feathery kiss.

Brielle breathed easier, wanting to see Sue right away, but as she stood up, a wave of dizziness hit her.

She hadn't eaten much and was feeling a bit hypoglycemic.

Patrick tactfully looked down. "Ms. Brielle, sir, dinner is just outside the door. I'll bring it in now."

Brielle had been asleep earlier, and Max hadn't eaten either. Patrick hurriedly pushed in the dinner cart.

Brielle nodded, reaching into a drawer for a white bottle and downing two pills before attempting to put them in her mouth, b

ut Max grasped her wrist, his eyes darkening as he looked at the white bottle in her hand.

He was all too familiar with that bottle, so much so that the memory still stung like a venomous bite.

Brielle paused, looking down at him in confusion. "What's wrong?"

She was unaware that Max had learned of her dealings with Ryan, even witnessing her replace the contents of the bottle with

vitamins.

That bottle was something Max knew all too well.

"Brielle, you—"

Brielle smiled, "I've been feeling a bit off these past few days, just taking some vitamins to boost my health."

She had intended to throw away the bottle but thought it was just vitamins, so there was no harm in keeping it.

Vitamins?

Max's grip slowly relaxed, watching as Brielle swallowed the pills.

She tucked the bottle back into the far corner of the drawer, her tone casual.

"You know, there's something I never told you. Ryan had come to me with a proposition, asking me to poison you. I switched out the contents of the bottle with vitamins. Be careful of him. He and William would love nothing more than to see you in trouble."

As soon as she finished speaking, Max pulled her into his arms.

"Vitamins?"

His voice carried a hint of relief, his chin resting on her shoulder, his eyes reflecting a soft glimmer.

"Yeah, what else could it be?"

Brielle didn't dwell on it, and she certainly didn't imagine that Max had seen that moment.

Max leaned his forehead against her shoulder, chuckling softly, "I thought—"

It doesn't matter now. Even if it were something else, it would be fine.

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Brielle popped the last of her vitamins and chuckled to herself as she saw that Patrick had already made himself scarce, like a

good little ghost..

Patrick was like a shadowy guardian straight out of medieval times, always there but never seen.

She reached for a couple of bowls, eyes widening a bit as she took in the spread of five dishes. on the dinner table. She

swallowed hard in anticipation.

Max was in a good mood, and it only got better when he noticed Brielle serving him a bowl of soup. A smile curled at the edge of his lips.

Brielle sat down across from him and, struck by a sudden thought, looked up to ask, "So, what's the deal with William and Ryan?

Are they tight?"

"In the Dorsey clan, no one's really buddy-buddy with anyone."

"I was thinking, if both Ryan and William are gunning for you, maybe we could play Ryan to trip up William?"

Just to throw William off his game for a bit and shift his focus

Munching thoughtfully, Brielle quickly sorted through the options in her mind. After a moment, she looked up again.

"Didn't William get saddled with that Kingston Enterprises project? It's a decent-sized deal, right? Has the contract been signed already?"

Max, ever the attentive partner, served her some more food, piling her plate high. "Eat first."

With no other choice, Brielle bent her head and took a few bites, though her mind was elsewhere.

Max chuckled, knowing she wouldn't be at peace until this was sorted out. "The contract's still up in the air, but the paperwork with Book is all done."

Brielle nodded, her earlier words to Noah apparently having an effect. With the Kingston heir stirring up trouble, any partnership with Kingston Enterprises was bound to bring headaches to Dorsey International.

William hadn't sealed the deal yet, and Ryan had always been itching to get back into the Dorsey fold. Maybe it was time for

Ryan to take this chance to sabotage William in front of Michael.

After all, what William feared most after years of treading carefully in the Dorsey family was Michael's disappointment.

William playing hardball with the Kingston deal was already taking a toll on Dorsey International's reputation.

11:03

Brielle frowned, feeling that it wasn't William's usual style. If he knew partnering with Kingston Enterprises was risky, why keep them on the hook?

Maybe Kingston had something he could exploit.

What mattered most to Bradley and Catherine? Their beloved son.

Controlling their son meant controlling Kingston Enterprises.

Setting down her bowl, Brielle quickly called Tiffanie, only to find out the Kingston heir had been missing for days.

No wonder Kingston Enterprises hadn't made a fuss over the stalled contract—they were too busy looking for their missing son.

William was probably on the hunt, too. He wanted Kingston Enterprises for himself!

While stirring trouble for Max to keep him in check, William was also expanding his own influence.

Brielle's eyes turned icy. Besides needing to talk to Sue soon, she had to find the Kingston heir before William did.

If William got to him first, he'd be able to manipulate Kingston Enterprises at will.

Although she wasn't fond of Bradley or Catherine, Kingston Enterprises was a power player, having carved out its own path to

partner with Dorsey International.

If William got control, it would be a latent threat to Max.

She couldn't help but glance over at Max, who was calmly reviewing some documents on the couch as if the world's troubles

didn't concern him

The dinner remnants had been cleared, the room now belonging to just the two of them.

Sensing her gaze, Max patted the space beside him with a quiet. "Come here."

Like a magnet, Brielle found herself drawn to his side.

She never denied the pull she felt towards Max, nor the desire that crackled between them.

Initially, her entanglement with Max wasn't just about revenge against the Dorseys—it was the lure of Max himself. His voice, his

touch, every inch of him was perfection.

In his presence, even the strongest resolve melted into a bashful blush.

Brielle was forthright. Once she knew this wasn't a one-woman show, she hid none of her thoughts or feelings.

Now, as the room lights dimmed, and the night grew bold and inviting, she was free from the worries of public scrutiny, forgetting

all else.

Freed from the constraints of daylight decorum, the taboos she diligently observed were the very ones she yearned to break in the dark.

In this intimate space, she could safely indulge in the forbidden pleasures that Max offered.

Chapter 379

Max laid the documents aside, turned Brielle's head towards him, and planted a tender kiss on her lips. Brielle couldn't help but blush, smitten with the way Max took control at times like this.

Even his passionate kisses and embraces, laden with desire, made her feel irresistibly sexy and ratcheted up her nervous

excitement. It was as if he was so eager for her that he couldn't keep himself in check.

She delighted in his loss of control, so she reveled in the sense of abandonment that came with being dominated.

Max pulled her into his arms, seeing the fleeting haze in her eyes, a stark contrast to her usual sharp analysis.

He adored this submissive side of Brielle before him. It made him all the more reckless.

It seemed he was leading this flirtatious dance, but in reality, he was firmly in her grasp.

Max held her close, letting her sit on his lap as his fingers deftly unfastened a few buttons of her shirt.

Brielle's heart pounded, yet she didn't stop him.

The emotion on Max's face and the heat in his eyes gave her immense satisfaction.

She had known from the start that, in some ways, she and Max were alike; they both had strong exteriors, with Max being

stronger than most.

However, if one were to apply all the strict modern social concepts, like the desire for equality, seeking consensus, compromise,

fairness, and mutual tolerance, to the intimacy of the bedroom, it would make such closeness dreadfully dull.

He excelled at being in control, and she willingly surrendered it, only to see him unravel.

His obsession with her, his addiction, was more effective than any sweet talk..

Max was mindful of her recent fatigue and didn't go further. After more kisses, he finally released her.

Brielle, catching her breath on his shoulder, felt their breath intertwine in the dimly lit room, fostering an intimate entanglement.

After a while, as her breath steadied, she swallowed and reached for her coat.

"I'm heading to the police station."

Max closed his eyes, her bewitching expression still etched in his mind.

"Don't get hurt."

1/3

11:03

Brielle's lips curled slightly, nodding. "Don't bother sending Patrick with me. Everyone's eyes are on me now. If they drag you into

this, William will have succeeded."

Max didn't care about William; no one was a match for Max.

Brielle took a few steps, then turned back. "But you could help me find out where that young master of Kingston Enterprises is,"

Hearing there was something he could do, Max's mood visibly improved.

Good, she was at least trying to rely on him.

After Brielle left Pearl Estate, she made her way directly to the police station.

There, Sue was already detained. Her late-night purchase of a carving knife had been discovered, and the officers didn't dare let

their guard down.

Sue was ranting incessantly, cursing Brielle.

"Bitch go to hell. It's all because of you. It's all your fault."

“My love, my heart breaks for you.”

“Brielle, why doesn’t heaven take you instead?”

As she railed, Sue began to bang her head against the wall.

When Brielle was led in, this was the scene that greeted her.

“Sue?”

At the sound of her name, Sue stiffened, turning incredulously to see Brielle at the doorway. She screamed and lunged at her.

With a deft move. Brielle pinned her to the ground.

Sue struggled briefly. Her eyes were bloodshot, and her mouth was smeared with blood.

“Brielle, you’ve destroyed everything for me! You ruined it all!!”

Brielle held her down until she was sure Sue had no fight left, then slowly let her up.

Sue lay on the ground, gasping, then covered her face with her hands and began to sob loudly.

She was clearly venting, and Brielle said nothing. She just watched Sue cry.

After half an hour, Sue looked up with swollen eyes. “I will kill you!”

“And then what?” Brielle sat on a nearby chair, her expression cool.

“Sue, I’ve seen your file. You graduated from a prestigious university, while Simon didn’t even finish elementary school. Your

parents strongly opposed your relationship to the point of falling ill. Not only did you not break up with Simon, but you also sold

your family’s property behind their backs to support his gambling addiction. Was it really me who ruined you, or did you ruin

yourself? Or perhaps it was the person who introduced you to Simon?”

2/3

11:03

“Brielle! Shut up! You’re just trying to confuse me.”

Brielle raised an eyebrow, amused.

“Sue. I just want to talk. I hope you can put aside your bias for a moment and think about who you were doing when your parents

passed away?”

Sue didn't want to think, or rather, forced herself not to.

After selling her family's possessions, her parents' conditions worsened, and they died of grief.

As an only child, she was left an orphan in an instant, and relatives shunned her as bad luck, severing ties.

Only Simon didn't despise her.

Chapter 380

Brielle approached the silent woman, crouching down to meet her gaze eye-to-eye.

"Let's not beat around the bush. Have you ever genuinely cared about your daughter?"

Sue's pupils shrank sharply as she stumbled backward.

"Why should I care about that trash?! Don't you know she was fooling around with boys outside of school when she was just in

middle school? She's younger than me, prettier than me. What if she fell for Simon? Several times, I've felt Simon's gaze on her

was just not right."

Brielle could no longer contain her anger, and her hand flew across Sue's face in a swift slap.

She hated resorting to violence against another woman, but Sue's morals were rotten to the core.

How could someone who had attended a proper university turn into what she was now?

Sue was stunned by the slap, and after regaining her senses, she began to scream towards the door.

"Murder! Brielle's committing murder! Help, someone! Brielle is trying to kill someone at the police station!"

The police arrived promptly, their brows furrowed in question. "What's going on here?"

Sue's hair was disheveled as she pointed accusingly at Brielle.

"She's trying to kill me! Arrest her, that bitch! She even hit me right in front of you, showing no respect for the law."

The imprint of Brielle's fingers was still visible on Sue's cheek from the force of the slap, b

ut her frantic behavior made it almost seem as if Sue could have slapped herself.

Brielle smiled at the officers. "I'll be done in ten minutes."

"Ms. Brielle, please refrain from violence. Such actions are illegal within the precinct."

Brielle remained silent, noticing Sue's smug look.

When the police had left, Brielle took a deep breath.

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"Sue, I'm only going to say this and after that, I won't bother with you again. Whether you live or die is of no concern to me."

"You think it was me who ruined you, but your miserable life began when you met Simon. Right from the start, he was planning to

control you by belittling you in every aspect – your family. your education, your job. And you, amidst all this belittling, began to

doubt yourself. Simon took advantage of this, elevating his status in your heart. The more you depended on him, the higher. his

pedestal became, and the more willing you were to sacrifice everything for him. It's a vicious cycle. Without him, you feel you

have nothing.

"When you first met Simon, you must have sensed something off about him. He had no decent job, no education, enjoyed

gambling, and was full of lies. The thrill you felt with him wasn't love; after all, you never fell for any of the well-bred, eligible

bachelors at university. Your

feelings for Simon were born from a savior complex, believing that your care could heal all his life's wounds, thinking that your willingness to give would inspire him to reach his potential and become a successful, responsible man.

"You even thought your love could change Simon, and that belief acted like a drug, making you feel like a goddess, a nurturing

mother earth, a miraculous healer. Whether Simon's issue was poverty or gambling, with your support, help, and sacrifice, you

created a powerful illusion for yourself. Plus, there was a sense of heroism, that by saving a man, you appeared nobler. To put it

bluntly, you are selfish. Is all this sacrifice really worth it?

"Sue, that's all I'm going to say to you."

Brielle picked up her bag, casting a final indifferent glance at the woman sitting dazed on the floor.

"Simon wasn't killed by me; he was killed by the same person who's been pulling the strings behind the scenes, making you

come after me. Even Sarah was a victim of his designs. You continue to target me, but to him, you're just a disposable pawn, a

means to an end."

Brielle had no interest in saving someone beyond hope.

The addiction to love, like alcoholism or gambling, offered Sue an unparalleled high. For that high, she'd endure any abuse, a

dependency that left her a shell of her former self.

And what of Simon? A man like him who no girls would fall for was undeserving of a girl who had been so well-protected. Her

seeing him as the be-all and end-all of her life was ludicrous.

Brielle had no desire to play savior to a stranger.

Just as she was about to step through the door, Sue's voice stopped her, "Who is it?"

Brielle turned to see Sue standing up, her cheek still marked by the slap, hoarsely asking. "Who's behind all of this?"