

Once Cast 174

Chapter 174

Tyrone was far too smart and cautious. If she switched seats now, he'd immediately figure out something was off.

Aella had no choice but to keep pushing. "Ms. Caldwell, just do it. Stop being scared of him. Either you secretly get pregnant and use the baby to climb up, or I'll make sure people walk in on you two and force Tyrone to take responsibility. You pick how you want to do this—I'll handle the rest."

She added quickly, "The Winters care a lot about their public image. If Tyrone refuses to admit it, you can accuse him of assault. The Winters won't dare risk their reputation—they'll have no choice but to accept you."

Hearing that, Zera finally started to steady herself.

She didn't really believe she could make Tyrone divorce and marry her right away, but if she could get pregnant with his child, that would prove there was something between them. That alone could get her one foot inside the Winters.

The two women returned to the private room separately, just as the game came back around to Zera's turn.

Brad grinned and said, "Zera, you're up! Come on, roll a seven and make this fun!"

Zera glanced at Aella, then picked up the dice.

Aella settled back in her seat, quietly watching Tyrone's face.

He was slouched on the couch, a glass in one hand, a silver lighter in the other, flicking it open and closed.

His half-lidded eyes

revealed nothing—no hint of what he was really thinking.

Zera's palms were sweaty as she gripped the dice cup tighter, glancing nervously around the room.

Aella had always believed Orson was Tyrone's son and thought Zera and Tyrone had a thing going on.

Zera convinced herself that Tyrone cared for her and Orson because he was rekindling an old flame.

But in reality, Tyrone had drawn a clear line long ago. He did everything now only out of guilt, not love. He'd completely shut her out.

If he ever found out she'd tried to drug him, whether it worked or not, he would destroy her without hesitation.

Since Aella had promised to take the blame, Zera couldn't waste this chance—she had to act first and worry about the rest later.

Zera took a deep breath and rolled the dice. It landed on nine.

Everyone groaned in disappointment. Aella leaned closer and said, "Ms. Caldwell, didn't you take cold medicine earlier? You shouldn't drink."

She kept giving her little signals with her eyes.

Brad jumped in to help. "If she can't drink, then Tyrone can take it for her."

Zera looked at Tyrone and said softly, "Tyrone, can you drink for me?"

When Tyrone didn't refuse, Aella smiled faintly. "I agree on his behalf. Go ahead and pour him a glass."

Zera's hands shook as she reached for the bottle, clutching the small packet she was hiding.

Aella tried to help by handing Tyrone a piece of fruit, but he calmly pushed her hand away.

Then Raine's voice suddenly broke through the noise. "What are you holding in your hand?"

Already on edge, Zera flinched. The tiny packet slipped from her fingers and landed right by Tyrone's feet.

Aella and Zera froze. Then, at the same time, they both lunged for it.

But Tyrone was faster. He bent down and picked it up before either of them could reach it.

Everyone leaned in curiously. "What's that?"

Tyrone's gaze moved from the packet to Aella. His voice was low and calm. "Something good."

Before anyone could react, he slid it into his pocket.

Aella stood there, stunned.

After all that

effort tonight, this is it?

Zera went pale, trembling so hard that her knees nearly gave out.

Raine pointed at her and shouted, "You tramp! What were you about to put in Tyrone's drink?"

Zera froze, looking completely lost, then turned desperately toward Aella for help.

Aella jumped in right away. "Raine, you've got it wrong. That thing was mine."

Tyrone's close friends were all there, and no matter what, Aella had to protect Zera's image.

She couldn't let Tyrone think badly of her.

But Raine wasn't buying it. "Why are you covering for her, Aella?" she demanded.

Her tone was sharp. "I saw it clearly—she tried to slip something into my brother's glass. Just tell him to take it out of his pocket, and we'll all see who's lying."

Brad was the first to react. He quickly pulled Raine aside and muttered, "Zera's still the mother of Tyrone's kid. Let it go. Don't make a scene."

When Aella noticed Brad calming Raine down, she let out a quiet sigh of relief.

But when she turned and saw Zera standing there frozen, her relief vanished.

Aella walked over and whispered, "Didn't you just say you weren't feeling well?"

Zera nodded right away.

She gave Tyrone a timid look and said softly, "Tyrone, I don't feel so good. Can you take me home?"

Asking someone else's husband to take her home right in front of his wife—everyone could see exactly what she was up to.