

Chapter 128 The IOU

"Do you think I'm the one being unreasonable? If anyone is, it's definitely you! Chris, I dare you—try challenging me on this again!"

Levi staggered backward, caught off guard by the sudden force that hit him. He lost his footing, stumbling several steps. If not for his assistant's quick reflexes, steadying him just in time, Levi would have faced the embarrassment of falling in front of everyone.

Frustration flashed in Levi's eyes as he stepped forward to confront Chris, unresolved grievances burning in his gaze.

Chris narrowed his eyes, barely showing a reaction.

Was this really going to escalate?

With a cold chuckle, Chris stepped up to Levi, meeting his challenge head-on. "Yes, I am challenging you. So, what are you going to do about it?"

They both knew this wasn't just about the land they were bidding on—Kimberly was the real issue.

Their argument grew so intense that it completely overpowered the auctioneer's voice. Flustered, the auctioneer glanced nervously at the escalating tension, as if a fight was about to break out. The auctioneer had no choice but to summon the auction staff to intervene before things got out of hand.

The entire room plunged into chaos.

Amid the uproar, Declan impatiently pressed the auctioneer to continue. With little choice, the auctioneer resumed. His voice rose above the noise. "Five billion, eight hundred million, going once. Five billion, eight hundred million, going twice..."

The auctioneer hesitated, casting a helpless glance at the still-arguing men, before gritting his teeth and making the final call. "Five billion, eight hundred million, going three times! Sold! Congratulations to bidder



number 65, Mr. Walsh, for winning Lot Eight!"

A sudden hush fell over the crowd. Shocked faces turned to Declan, as people wondered how he had managed to secure the land while everyone else was so caught up in the spectacle.

Eyes filled with envy, scorn, and frustration were fixed on him, with no one bothering to hide their resentment.

"I'm done wasting time arguing with you," Chris said coolly as he returned to his seat. He pulled out his phone, opened his conversation with Kimberly, and felt the tension ease from his brow.

"How did I do?" Chris texted her, his words carrying a playful hint, as if fishing for approval.

Kimberly felt her phone vibrate. She pulled it out discreetly, casting a quick glance sideways. She wanted to be sure Declan wasn't looking.

"You did great. But tell me—were you two really fighting or just putting on a show?"

"What do you think?"

Kimberly immediately grasped his meaning.

A smile tugged at her lips. The idea of Chris and Levi bickering like schoolboys amused her, while Declan, obviously focused on Lot 8, remained unaware of their ploy.

"Did you tell Mr. Hoffman about my plan?" she asked.

Chris replied almost instantly, "No, I didn't."

Kimberly's smile deepened.

Chris had indeed kept his promise.

"Thanks. Once the auction wraps up, I'll treat you both to dinner."

"You can treat me. Levi doesn't need an invite."

With the sale of the prized Lot Eight, the auction concluded. The auctioneer then invited the guests to head up to the rooftop for the rest

of the evening's festivities.

Most of the older guests opted to leave, while the younger crowd—primarily the children of affluent families—formed small groups, chatting animatedly as they made their way to the rooftop.

Kimberly picked up her purse, ready to go, when Declan's voice stopped her. "Hold on a second!"

She halted and turned to face him, her expression icy. Declan was preoccupied with signing papers. "What do you want?" she asked.

"Where's my billion dollars?" Declan asked, his excitement barely contained as he clutched the contract, glowing with triumph. If not for the insufficient funds alert on the payment screen, he might have completely overlooked the fact that Kimberly still hadn't transferred the money to him.

The staff member assisting Declan glanced at him, eyebrows raised in surprise. Remembering the rumors he'd heard, he looked at Declan with thinly veiled disdain.

So it was true: the CEO of the Walsh Group was indeed financially dependent on his wealthy wife.

When he first heard about it, he thought it was just a joke among colleagues.

Chris and Levi approached Kimberly, one following the other, without acknowledging each other's presence. As they neared, they overheard Declan demanding a billion dollars from Kimberly as if it were perfectly natural.

Chris's expression hardened. He stepped to Kimberly's side, casting a sharp, dismissive look at Declan before turning to Kimberly, his gaze silently seeking an explanation.

"Oh, he didn't have sufficient funds, so he borrowed a billion from me. Here's the IOU," Kimberly said cheerfully. She pulled a small notebook from her purse and handed it to Chris.

Chris took the notebook and examined it closely. Seeing that the handwriting was Kimberly's, he relaxed, handing it back to her.

"This is important. Make sure you keep it safe and don't show it to anyone carelessly."

"I know!"

Kimberly leaned in closer to Chris, lowering her voice to whisper, "But you're not just anyone."

She felt a genuine thrill. Not only had she secured the property she wanted, but she had also successfully passed the ticking time bomb that was Lot 8 onto Declan.

Once the payment was processed and the contract signed, Lot 8 would officially belong to Declan.

In under three months, the hidden ancient tomb would be uncovered, leading to the loss of the five billion eight hundred million dollars Declan had invested.

The Walsh Group would be on the brink of complete collapse.

Regarding the one billion dollars she had lent Declan, she ensured he signed an IOU to secure repayment. If he attempted to evade it, she would pursue legal action to enforce the debt. With this double blow, the likelihood of the Walsh Group facing bankruptcy was nearly assured.

Chris experienced a surge of excitement, his handsome face tinged with a slight flush.

He couldn't deny that Kimberly had him utterly captivated.

Her voice had been so endearing as she smiled and whispered to him, "You're not just anyone."

Those words resonated deeply within him.

Kimberly took out a card from her purse and handed it to the staff member. He swiped it through the payment machine, a frown crossing his face.

"Ms. Holden, the card was declined due to insufficient funds."

Levi observed Kimberly and Chris whispering to each other and felt a

twinge of irritation at the sight of Chris's flushed face.

Without hesitating, Levi produced his own card and lifted his chin slightly. "Go ahead and use mine."

Kimberly blinked and reached out, trying to stop him. "No, you don't have to do that..."

However, Declan, growing increasingly impatient, grabbed Levi's card and handed it to the staff. "Didn't you hear Mr. Hoffman? Hurry up and swipe it!"

Declan was indifferent to whose money was being used; he just wanted to finalize the contract.

"Declan!"

Kimberly felt a surge of genuine anger, but the staff member had already processed the card and returned it to Levi. After offering them a polite nod, the staff member guided Declan to the office to complete the contract.

Assessing the situation, Kimberly sighed and looked at Levi with a serious expression. "Mr. Hoffman, I promise I will repay you the one billion, plus interest."

"No rush," Levi replied, a small smile forming as the tension in his eyes eased. He reached into his pocket, pulled out his phone, and displayed a QR code on WhatsApp for his contact information.

With a playful wink, he said, "Ms. Holden, why not add me on WhatsApp first? You can repay me whenever it works for you."