

Chapter 160 Cousin-in-law

"Are you saying that Mr. Howard likes me, aunt Letitia?" Kimberly asked.

Letitia nodded with enthusiasm, her eyes revealing a sense of urgency. "Isn't that clear?"

The instant Kimberly clarified that she and Chris were merely friends, an evident tension gripped Letitia.

Could it be, if they were just friends, that her own daughter might stand a chance with Chris?

The prospect of Chris becoming her son-in-law lit up Letitia's eyes with eager anticipation.

Meanwhile, Kimberly's eyes drifted away, unaware of Letitia's unusual state, and she offered a slight smile.

"You're mistaken. Mr. Howard is simply kind to everyone," she explained.

Despite this, Letitia remained skeptical and asked further, "Then why would he claim you as his?"

"Maybe because we're close, and he doesn't want anyone to harass me," Kimberly replied, her gaze now locking with Letitia's. Even though she was innocent, she couldn't overlook Letitia's keen interest in Chris.

"Does he..." Letitia said, eager to delve deeper.

"Why do you seem so particularly interested in Mr. Howard?" Kimberly interrupted abruptly, holding Letitia's gaze firmly.

Taken aback, Letitia smiled awkwardly and decided to be blunt. She clasped Kimberly's hand, her demeanor becoming earnest.

"Kimberly, be honest with me, do you harbor any feelings for Mr. Howard?"

"No," Kimberly responded immediately, her reply almost reflexive.

She had never entertained romantic thoughts about Chris, much less expressed them.

Observing Kimberly's sincere demeanor, Letitia exhaled in relief, her

anxiety easing as she tenderly squeezed Kimberly's hand, convinced of her niece's indifference towards Chris.

"I'm glad to hear that," Letitia said.

Kimberly appeared confused.

What was there to feel glad about?

"Aunt Letitia, please just speak plainly. We're family; you don't need to tiptoe around the subject."

Letitia cleared her throat, her eyes sharp with a touch of apprehension as she addressed Kimberly, saying, "You know, Kimberly, I've been organizing some introductory meetings for Gia recently..."

Kimberly's expression turned to one of concern. "Introductory meetings? Aunt Letitia, aren't you being a bit hasty? Gia just turned eighteen. She's only just finished her college entrance exams. Shouldn't she have the summer to relax and enjoy herself? Plus, it's the 21st century. Why are we still adhering to these outdated practices?"

Kimberly held a deep affection for her cousin Gia, who was eighteen and five years her junior. Since their cousin Colin had moved abroad right after his birth, it had been just Kimberly and Gia growing up together.

To Kimberly, Gia was more like a sister than a cousin.

She fondly recalled how Gia used to shadow her everywhere, always calling out her name with excitement and running up to greet her whenever they met. Gia's affection was truly heartwarming.

Kimberly's thoughts deepened, her eyes narrowing slightly. She didn't remember Letitia ever arranging such meetings for Gia this early in her previous life.

Was this an unforeseen consequence of her own return to the past?

Letitia exhaled deeply, her tone one of resigned explanation. "I'm just trying to avoid the pitfalls your parents fell into. They protected you so much that you were entirely focused on your studies. You never dated in college.

There were so many remarkable young men interested in you, but you were only interested in that boy from the Walsh family. Now look, you just got divorced, and yet there's a man as decent as Mr. Howard nearby. What does that tell you?"

"What does it tell me?" Kimberly questioned, puzzled.

"It shows that the daughters of the Holden family are truly extraordinary!" Letitia proclaimed firmly, her expression earnest. "That's precisely why I'm setting up these meetings for Gia, to spare her from the mistakes you made. I want her to explore her options while she's young so she doesn't fall for the wrong person."

Kimberly's face reflected a torrent of mixed emotions.

Though Letitia's remarks contained elements of truth, they felt rather sharp.

Reflecting on Kimberly's recent divorce, Letitia's voice softened, filled with emotion. "I think your parents would be devastated to see how unhappy your marriage made you. Sadly, they're not here to see this..."

The conversation was escalating.

Kimberly's gaze grew dimmer, and she interjected, "Aunt Letitia, I see your point, but what does any of this have to do with Mr. Howard?"

She was beginning to lose track of Letitia's intricate reasoning.

Weren't they discussing Chris? How did it turn into arranging set-up meetings for Gia? Was there a connection?

Letitia, feeling her mouth dry after speaking so much, lit up as she approached her main point. She cleared her throat and said with a hopeful smile, "Here's an idea, Kimberly. Since Mr. Howard isn't the one for you, how about you do us all a favor and introduce him to Gia?"

Oblivious to the shift in Kimberly's demeanor, Letitia's enthusiasm grew as she continued, "Mr. Howard is such an exceptional man. Why should we let him slip away to someone else? If Gia and Mr. Howard became an item, he'd be in the family. Just picture it—boasting that the prince of Javille is your cousin-in-law. Wouldn't that be something?"

As Letitia spoke, her face suddenly blanched when she pulled her hand back from Kimberly. "Kimberly, that hurts!"

Her outburst jolted Kimberly from her spiral of thoughts. She quickly muttered an apology. "Oh, sorry, Aunt Letitia, I didn't realize my grip."

The thought of Chris becoming her cousin-in-law instead of a lover made Kimberly's face twist with discomfort, her eyebrows knitting together as she tried to express her emotions.

"It's alright, it's alright. I can handle a bit of pain," Letitia replied, massaging her reddened hand and then looking up at Kimberly with a hopeful expression. "So, what do you think about my idea, Kimberly?"

Kimberly's look was one of confusion and conflict.

While others might misinterpret her connection with Chris, she understood it all too well.

Memories of her time with Chris came flooding back—his kind nature, the jealousy he sometimes showed, and the passion they shared.

As she took a deep breath, preparing to squash Letitia's misguided matchmaking, Letitia's piercing gaze halted her.

"Kimberly, why the sudden frown? Do you perhaps harbor feelings for Mr. Howard that you're not ready to acknowledge?"

