

## Chapter 37 Are You Softened

The crowd collectively shivered, shaking their heads vigorously to express their disagreement, then loudly spoke in unison.

"Mr. Howard was simply teaching Declan a lesson. How is that against the law? Who do you think you are, bold enough to criticize Mr. Howard? You must really want to get yourself in trouble!"

"Mr. Howard has the power to erase the Walsh family with a single word. And here stands the Walsh family's mere adopted daughter, speaking out of turn! Guys, let's teach her a lesson!"

The wealthy heirs, who had been observing the scene, hurried off the cruise ship and walked up to Valerie, eager to demonstrate their loyalty to Chris.

"Ah! Let go of me! Get away from me, all of you!"

"Smack"

Valerie struggled violently, and one of the heirs, annoyed, slapped her. She fell awkwardly onto the sand. The heir then cursed and started ripping at her clothes along with others. "Foolish girl! You should be honored by my touch! Stop acting like you're above us!"

"Take a look at her! She's not much to look at, but her skin is so smooth. How about we have some fun right here?"

With every attempt Valerie made to resist, she was met with blows from the men, eventually leaving her bruised and motionless on the sand, covered in mud. Her clothes were quickly removed, leaving her in just her lace underwear. Hearing their filthy words, her hatred for Kimberly deepened. ①

Yet, she knew only Kimberly could save her and Declan now. "Kimberly, please help me... save me..."

Kimberly caught Valerie's desperate look and her eyes flickered.



Honestly, Kimberly had no desire to watch Valerie's humiliation.

Just then, a large hand gently covered her eyes, and Chris's low, soothing voice said, "It's disgusting. Don't watch."

"Kimberly! I was wrong, I truly realize my mistake! I shouldn't have joined Declan in planning against you and ruining your reputation. Please, have mercy and forgive me..." Valerie's cries carried over from nearby.

Chris's frown deepened as he pondered whether to cover Kimberly's ears or maybe... silence Valerie.

"Mr. Howard..." Kimberly gently took hold of Chris's wrist, pulling it away as she looked up into his strikingly handsome face.

Her expression was serious and solemn, causing Chris's heart to sink. Just as he thought she might plead for Valerie, Kimberly offered a slight smile and whispered, "Isn't tonight's party held especially for you? This kind of disgusting drama shouldn't go on, or it will spoil everyone's view. Don't you agree?"

Chris, caught off guard, responded in a low, raspy voice, "Have you become more compassionate?"

"Not at all, I simply have no interest in watching live pornography," Kimberly explained, smiling.

When she saw Chris looking at her quietly without saying anything, she realized he didn't believe her.

She felt a wave of helplessness and said, "Declan likes her. I just want to get a quick divorce from Declan and be free of the title of Mrs. Walsh. I hope they stay together. Mr. Howard, could you do me this favor?"

Indeed, this reflected her true intent. She had no sympathy for Valerie's distress; she simply believed that this method of ruining her didn't align with her preferred way of seeking revenge.

Revenge was most satisfying when personal!

The plan was to ensure Declan and Valerie stayed together, which would save her the hassle of handling them separately.



If Valerie were violated tonight, Declan's pride would prevent him from marrying someone so dishonored.

Yet Valerie would remain the Walsh family's adopted daughter, well-positioned to marry well and lead a stable life.

Chris, looking intently at Kimberly's radiant face, paused before responding, "Alright."

With a smile, Kimberly took up an umbrella, moving to his side and linking her arm with his. "Shall we head back to the party then?"

Chris gave her a meaningful look, then led the way back to the cruise ship. Ignoring the chaos on the beach, he said without a second glance, "Felix, secure the Walsh siblings and inform their family to retrieve them."

Felix was caught off guard, touched his nose, and hesitantly followed the order with a reluctant "Oh."

The wealthy heirs, who had been tormenting Valerie, immediately let her go like a discarded cloth at Chris's command, straightened their attire, and left without looking back. ①

Even though they were all excited, they remained clear-headed.

There were plenty of women willing to fulfill their desires without risking Chris's anger for someone like Valerie.

The crowd dispersed back to the banquet hall, and the cruise ship resumed its course, humming into the distance.

On the now silent dock, Valerie covered only in her underwear, and the unconscious Declan were left tied up, hanging from the lighthouse, swaying gently in the chilly breeze.

Valerie felt a chilling cold spread through her body. The rough rope had rubbed her skin raw, oozing blood and leaving her in a miserable condition, her mind in a fog.

After some time, a black Bentley drove through the rain, coming to a smooth stop near the lighthouse. A middle-aged man hurried from the car towards them, followed by a driver with an umbrella.



The man was Declan's father, Lenard Walsh.

As he approached, Lenard caught sight of the woman hanging there, covered only in her underwear. His expression shifted, and he quickly looked away, moving forward to speak with the head bodyguard at the lighthouse.

"Hello, I'm Lenard Walsh. Mr. White instructed me to come and collect these two."

The head bodyguard examined Lenard with a cold stare, gestured with his hand, and two bodyguards lowered the hanging individuals. He said sternly, "Mr. Walsh, Mr. Howard has directed me to advise you to properly discipline your children upon your return. If you fail, others will intervene. Had it not been for Ms. Holden's intervention, today's events might not have concluded so peacefully."

Taken aback by the revelation that the bodyguards were under Chris's command, Lenard managed a strained smile and replied respectfully, "You're absolutely right, sir. Please tell Mr. Howard I will ensure they learn their lesson. I'm grateful to Mr. Howard for his mercy towards my son. We'll come to express our thanks to Mr. Howard personally soon."

Seeing Lenard's compliance, the head bodyguard didn't prolong the encounter, merely mocking, "There's no need for a personal visit. Mr. Howard expects your family to swiftly end the marriage with Ms. Holden. Certain issues, if prolonged, could irritate Mr. Howard."

Lenard was briefly puzzled by the bodyguard's comment but quickly nodded in agreement. After sending the bodyguards away, Lenard removed his suit jacket and tossed it over Valerie, his expression dark and serious.

