

Chapter 68 A Traitor

"Grandpa, I've made my decision," said Kimberly, her expression grave and her gaze firm.

Nobody in the room doubted her seriousness.

Archie blinked, his heart skipping a beat as he tried to process her words. Before he could respond, William's brow furrowed in clear dissatisfaction.

"Why would you want a divorce?"

"Simply put, we're incompatible," Kimberly answered, her voice flat as she briefly met William's eyes. Her response was vague, indicating she wasn't inclined to elaborate.

William's frown deepened, and his expression grew stern as his displeasure became more pronounced. "Incompatible? After the whole year together, you decide this now? Kimberly, I must be honest as your uncle. It seems like you're not taking your marriage seriously.

Remember how you were the one who tearfully insisted on marrying Declan Walsh? You made your infatuation for him known to everyone in the city and it embarrassed your parents to no end. Now that they're gone, I can't stand by and watch you throw everything away."

His voice was firm, leaving no room for rebuttal. "This idea of a divorce is out of the question. You should drop this notion. The responsible action is to remain with Declan and work on your marriage. His wealth and influence have only grown. He is a good husband. You're unlikely to find anyone better. Do you really believe you can find someone superior to Declan after the divorce?"

William's harsh words were meant to shake Kimberly out of what he saw as delusional thoughts.

He was in the midst of critical business collaboration with Declan, and a divorce could undermine it all.

They were on the verge of closing a significant deal, and he couldn't let Kimberly's personal decisions threaten it.

There was too much at risk.

Kimberly raised her head slowly, a sardonic smile playing at the corners of her mouth as she observed William losing his composure. This, then, was what it took to break him.

She chuckled softly. "Why are you so concerned, Uncle William? It's my life, my divorce, not yours."

Her words carried an unspoken challenge. Why was he getting involved?

What right did he have to interfere?

William's face turned red with fury, and he stood up abruptly, the scraping of his chair against the floor echoing loudly in the tense room.

"Kimberly, mind your tone," William scolded sharply. "I'm your uncle, your elder. How dare you treat those who raised you with such disrespect? What kind of upbringing did the Holden family provide you over these past twenty years?"

The others in the room looked at William, taken aback by his outburst.

It was a well-known fact within the family that William had long harbored ambitions for the Holden Group, particularly after the death of Kimberly's parents. Even Gia, Kimberly's cousin, was aware of his intentions. Yet, nobody had ever witnessed William lose his cool to such an extent, especially not in front of Archie.

William had always maintained a facade of a devoted son, managing never to show any cracks in his exterior, not even earlier when he had been disciplining his wife and son in an effort to win Archie's favor.

But as soon as the discussion turned to Kimberly's potential divorce from Declan, William's anger erupted. His composed mask had fallen away.

What drove him to such fury? What did he stand to lose?

Christian furrowed his brow, feeling the tension rise. He stepped in, trying to calm the situation. "William, what's gotten into you? If Kimberly is

considering a divorce, there must be valid reasons behind it. Allow her to speak her piece."

Kimberly met William's furious gaze with defiance, and his frustration only intensified. He was losing his grip on the situation, which could jeopardize his prospects for a lucrative partnership.

The stakes were too high for him to let Kimberly end her marriage. Even Archie seemed to be siding with Kimberly now.

Mabel, who had been silent until now, scoffed coldly. Her voice was laced with sarcasm, her expression mocking. "Have you not figured it out yet, Christian? William is against Kimberly's divorce."

She paused dramatically, giving William a piercing look. Her eyes shone with contempt. "It's rather peculiar, this fervor over someone else's marital affairs. If I didn't know any better, I'd think it was William who wanted a divorce from Theodosia, not Kimberly and Declan."

Theodosia's face darkened as she glared at Mabel, her voice taut with barely contained anger. "Mabel, what are you suggesting? That you expect me to leave William? You'll be disappointed. Our marriage is solid, and we're not getting divorced, not today, not ever."

Mabel let out a biting laugh, her smile cold. She appeared eager to provoke Theodosia further. "Who knows what the future might bring? Perhaps you should spend some time evaluating your own marriage's stability." Mabel paused, her voice dripping with scorn. "Don't you think?"

"You!"

Before Theodosia could continue her response, William, clearly at his limit, interrupted, "Enough! Is this the time for such quarrels? We're discussing Kimberly's divorce, not this nonsense. And you, Mabel."

William narrowed his eyes, sensing an underlying implication in her words, as if she knew something he didn't. "You were as close to Kimberly's parents as we were, watching her grow up alongside us. Are you going to stand by and watch her throw away her marriage? How could you betray them in this way?"

Mabel gradually lifted her head, her gaze meeting William's accusatory look with a cool composure that was almost chilling. She chuckled softly, a laugh without any trace of mirth. "If I were to stop Kimberly from

leaving Declan, that would be the real betrayal of Kimberly's parents," she said, her tone steady.

She stood up, her every word measured and forceful, each one landing with the weight of a hammer. "It's common knowledge in Javille what kind of marriage Kimberly has had to endure. And you, William, having spent many evenings drinking with Declan, are well aware of the kind of man he is."

A noticeable shift occurred in William's demeanor. His face lost color as a flicker of unease passed through his eyes, quickly turning to anger.

"You're lying!" he exclaimed. "The Holdens and the Walshes have always been in conflict. It's common knowledge. Why would I ever get involved with them? Are you suggesting I betrayed you? That's a serious offense, Mabel! Choose your words carefully."

Mabel, having restrained herself for too long, finally reached her limit. Her laughter was quiet, yet it sliced through the air with a sharp tone. "A serious offense, is it?" she echoed, her gaze intensifying.

Kimberly observed the unfolding confrontation with a nearly indifferent demeanor. She could tell her aunt had reached a tipping point.

Mabel had endured far too much, tolerating Declan's scheming and William's deceit solely for Kimberly's benefit. Kimberly was aware that William had conspired with Declan to steal crucial data on the new energy project from the Holden Group. Mabel had been reluctant to dismantle her misconceptions about her marriage.

However, with Kimberly's resolution to sever ties with Declan, there was no longer any need for restraint.

Mabel had been biding her time, waiting for the right moment to confront William, the betrayer within their family.

As Mabel prepared to unleash her full wrath, an abrupt sound shattered the tense silence.