

Chapter 81 Leverage Over Chris

Thirty minutes later, a Rolls-Royce smoothly arrived outside the building of the Howard Group.

"Miss Holden, we've reached our destination."

The driver looked through the rearview mirror at the woman in the back seat, deeply focused on her laptop. After a brief pause, he softly interrupted her concentration.

Kimberly was putting the finishing touches on a project proposal, her attention fixed on the screen. As she pressed the final key, she sighed deeply and glanced out the window, taken aback by the impressive sight.

The Howard Group was located in a sought-after, wealthy district, featuring towering skyscrapers that seemed to reach for the sky, giving off an air of technological progress. Security was strict, with patrols making sure that no unauthorized personnel could get inside.

This was Kimberly's first visit to the Howard Group, and it was the first time she really understood its majesty and scale.

Compared to the Walsh Group's modest thirty-story building the Howard Group was in a league of its own.

Kimberly was momentarily stunned. How could the mighty Howard Group have ever lost significant projects and clients to Declan in her previous life?

An absurd idea crossed her mind — had Chris deliberately let Declan win before?

But why would he do that?

Why would Chris allow someone like Declan to get the upper hand over the Howard Group?

Could Declan possibly hold leverage over Chris?

That seemed highly unlikely.

The Howard family's influence was not only substantial at home but also ranked among the top internationally. Additionally, Chris had built a reputation for himself abroad without depending on his family. His cleverness, methods, and skills clearly surpassed Declan's, overwhelming him in every way.

How could someone like Chris be vulnerable to any manipulation by Declan?

Kimberly couldn't make sense of it, but as the security team approached the car authoritatively, she had no more time to ponder. She swiftly closed her laptop, slipped it into her bag, and stepped out of the car.

She told the driver, "Cullen, no need to wait. I'm not sure how long this will take."

Kimberly's tone was calm, though she lied casually. She had already planned to finish the meeting with two hours and then confront Declan.

If she could divorce Declan in the simplest and most straightforward way, she definitely didn't want to waste time and energy on legal proceedings. Furthermore, she had spoken to a lawyer through her aunt, and in today's society, such divorce cases were both complicated and time-consuming.

Her grandfather, Archie, wasn't fond of Declan, and she preferred to keep her ongoing dealings with Declan from him until everything was settled.

Cullen, Archie's dedicated driver, responded with a friendly nod, "Understood, Miss Holden. If you need me, just call, and I'll come straight away."

Kimberly nodded, waved goodbye to Cullen, and headed towards the Howard Group's entrance. She was immediately stopped by the security team.

"This is the Howard Group. No unauthorized entry allowed," the lead security guard said sternly.

"I'm here to meet Mr. Howard."

Kimberly didn't care about their attitude. With a warm smile and calm demeanor, she naturally won them over.

The guard examined her closely, taking note of her exceptional appearance and grace. Although her attire seemed ordinary, it was all designer, indicating that she was a well-groomed woman from a prestigious family.

"Do you have an appointment?"

Kimberly's smile wavered a little. "Well..."

She didn't have an appointment. She had only made a verbal arrangement with Chris and hadn't expected the Howard Group's extensive premises and strict security.

Just then, a woman's voice called from a distance, "Ms. Holden?"

The security team looked over, immediately clearing a path for the approaching woman, their faces shifting from stern to a mix of respect and admiration.

The guard who had initially stopped Kimberly now stood straight and addressed the approaching woman with respect, "Ms. Dominguez"

Noticing their reaction, Kimberly understood the newcomer's importance. She looked at the young woman approaching her, who wore professional attire and had a striking appearance with long, wavy hair that radiated a sensual charm.

"I'm Kimberly Holden. And you are?"

The woman stopped before Kimberly, offering a composed smile. She assessed Kimberly discreetly and introduced herself, "Hello, Ms. Holden. I'm Sandra Dominguez, Mr. Howard's secretary. He sent me to escort you."

Sandra added, "I hope our security didn't upset you."

The security team appeared tense, glancing at Kimberly with a mix of curiosity and concern.

Clearly, anyone Sandra personally welcomed was of considerable

importance.

Kimberly maintained a light smile, clutching her laptop bag. "Not at all."

"That's good to hear," Sandra responded with a slight smile, then gestured for Kimberly to follow. "Please, Ms. Holden. Mr. Howard has arranged for us to have lunch together."

Lunch?

Kimberly was taken aback but quickly composed herself and nodded. She had planned to meet Chris at noon, so lunch didn't seem out of the ordinary.

The Howard Group was impressively large. Sandra had arrived in a golf cart, and it took them twenty minutes to reach another building.

Kimberly noticed the absence of security guards at each building, puzzled by the apparent lack of security until she observed Sandra using facial recognition to open the building's doors. She immediately understood.

The Howard Group was leading in global technological innovation, utilizing technology over manpower wherever feasible.

Following Sandra into the high-tech building, they took an exclusive elevator to the ninety-ninth floor.

This entire floor was the CEO's office, with a black desk and computer at the entrance, likely Sandra's station.

Sandra approached a door, pressed a button on the electronic panel, and after a few moments, a deep, raspy male voice responded, "Have you brought her?"

"Yes, Mr. Howard."

The door clicked open a moment later. Sandra paused before reaching out to push open the door when Chris's detached voice instructed, "Make a cup of coffee and a fresh orange juice. Have the robot deliver them."

Sandra nodded and replied, "Understood."

After disconnecting, she turned to Kimberly with a smile. "Please go in, Ms. Holden. I have other preparations to make."