

## Chapter 28 What Had Gotten Into Kristine Lately

Kristine was visibly shaken by Madisyn's forthright approach. She couldn't do that!

Kristine lunged in a desperate attempt to snatch the phone away, but Madisyn deftly evaded her grasp, her expression cooling into a disapproving glare that made Kristine feel utterly vulnerable and mortified.

With her pride wounded, Kristine clenched her teeth. "We may not be officially together yet, but it's just a matter of time. Madisyn, can't you just let me have this? I've loved Andre for so many years!"

"If he reciprocates your feelings, I would never stand in your way," Madisyn responded evenly, her voice steady and sincere. "But if he doesn't feel the same, you can't blame me for that."

Leaving the conversation there, Madisyn turned and walked further into the living room, leaving Kristine to contemplate her words.

Inside, Elaine was comfortably settled in front of the TV and brightened up immediately upon seeing Madisyn. She beckoned her over with a warm smile, taking her hand affectionately. "How was your day, dear?"

As Madisyn recounted the events of her day, including the dinner, Elaine's interest was piqued.

"You had dinner together? Andrew is a good person. I'd be so relieved if you two ended up together," she mused, her eyes twinkling.

While Madisyn and Elaine were deep in conversation, Glenn, feeling a bit left out, looked for an opportunity to join in.

He casually mentioned, "Madisyn, I've secured the Hyde Grand Hotel for

your welcome banquet. Do you think it suits the occasion?"

The Hyde Grand Hotel was renowned for its elegance, setting the standard for luxury in the city.

Glenn's choice showcased his flair for selecting only the finest venues.

"That sounds wonderful," Madisyn replied, her smile showing genuine appreciation for Glenn's efforts.

At that moment, Kristine approached. The familial bond she observed between Madisyn and their parents intensified her feelings of isolation. She clenched her fists, fingernails digging into her palms.

Jealousy gnawed at her as she felt increasingly sidelined.

The fear of losing Andrew on top of this only compounded her distress.

"Kristine!" Elaine greeted her warmly, breaking into her thoughts. "Oh, you're back too."

"Yeah," Kristine responded tersely, not stopping as she made her way upstairs, her expression unreadable.

Elaine watched her go, a frown creasing her forehead. What had gotten into Kristine lately?

Lynda entered the scene a short while later.

Unmarried, she still lived at the Johns family's residence. At the sight of the scene in the living room, she asked, "Has Kristine stepped out?"

"No, she has just gone up to her room," Elaine responded.

Feeling compelled to check on Kristine, Lynda made her way to her door and knocked.

Shortly after, the door swung open, revealing Kristine with tears streaming down her face.

"Kristine, are you okay?" Lynda asked, taken aback by her distress.

"Auntie!" Kristine exclaimed, collapsing into Lynda's arms in a burst of sobs.

With a heart heavy with concern, Lynda guided her inside. "Tell me what happened," she urged gently.

Having taught Kristine to dance from a young age, Lynda had come to see her almost as a daughter.

"It's like I don't belong here anymore!" Kristine spoke between sobs. "After Madisyn came back, it's as if Mom and Dad don't even see me. Even Andre... he's so nice to her. I feel so overshadowed by Madisyn. It's like everyone loves her more, and they've forgotten about me."

Lynda's heart ached for Kristine's sense of isolation. She soothingly stroked Kristine's hair, trying to offer comfort. "Sweetheart, you should never think like that. Your parents are probably trying to make up for not being able to care for Madisyn in the past. And Andrew, well... don't forget that no matter what happens, he comes from the Klein family, and Madisyn, she grew up in the countryside. It's improbable that Andrew would seriously consider her. And even if he seems taken with her now, he'll see the differences over time. He's so exceptional, and will surely choose someone as exceptional as you."

Lynda, who had initially sympathized with Madisyn's past hardships, now saw a different side of the coin.

She hadn't anticipated Madisyn to be so scheming. Within just a few days, Madisyn's presence had significantly shaken Kristine's sense of security.

While she recognized that Madisyn, having just returned, naturally craved her parents' affection and perhaps exerted her presence more forcefully, the apparent rift Madisyn was driving between Kristine and the family suggested a more calculating and disruptive character.

Kristine wiped away her tears. "Okay," she murmured, a new determination in her eyes.

She was certain that she and Madisyn were not equals.

In time, Andrew would recognize who truly matched his stature.