

Chapter 860 Reclaim Everything

Hearing Allan's words sent a warm tingle through Adah, but she crushed that fleeting feeling almost immediately. A flaky guy like him was the last person she could ever trust. His interest seemed glued to her appearance alone; if her beauty ever faded, he would definitely not hesitate to discard her. Handing him a chance would be her worst mistake.

Adah jerked her hand away from Allan's grasp, her tone turned frosty. "I appreciate the sentiment, but I don't need your help. Thorn Rose stands with me. Whatever you could offer, Elliana is already capable of providing. My circle is strong. I have no reason to rely on anyone else."

She cast a pointed look in Cole's direction. "Let's not forget, Elliana's ties by marriage carry real influence. And if I ever found myself in a bind, I doubt Cole would just watch from the sidelines. Isn't that right?"

Caught off guard by her mention, Cole weighed his options. Siding with his best friend would mean disputes with Elliana, who stood just a breath away. When it came down to it, he knew whose side to pick. A reputation as a wife-first husband didn't bother him anymore; another tally in that column made little difference.

With a broad, accommodating smile, Cole answered, "Absolutely. Anything you need, just say the word."

Elliana shot him a look of approval and then teased Adah, "Try not to say 'ties by marriage' next time, okay? We're family now!"

With a grateful grin, Adah nodded to Elliana before redirecting her focus to Allan. "You hear that? There's no place for you in my life. An ex-fiancé ought to know his boundaries. Keep your distance."

Without another word, Adah spun around and made her way to the entrance of the villa. She did not want to waste breath arguing with Allan; her thoughts were completely fixed on locating her mother.

Sensing Adah's distress, Elliana rushed to catch up with her.

Rita and Sophie exchanged glances and quickly followed.

Cole and Allan found themselves standing alone.

A look of exasperation flickered across Allan's face. "You really don't bother hiding it anymore, picking your wife over your friends without a second thought. How can you not be embarrassed?"

Cole remained unfazed and replied plainly, "Did you sleep with me? Did you bear my children? What reason would I have to choose you over my wife?"

For a moment, Allan had no words.

A mocking grin spread over Cole's face as he added, "You're a grown adult. It's time you learned where you stand." He offered a playful pat on Allan's shoulder. "If, by some chance, Adah and I were both drowning and you saved her, I wouldn't hold it against you."

That was the final word; he'd always choose his partner, and he wouldn't expect Allan to do any different.

Cole turned and left without another word.

Staring at the ceiling, Allan felt as if the entire situation had been a childish farce.

Everyone had entered Cadena with high hopes, only to leave with empty hands and heavier hearts. Their return to Ublento was weighed down by a sense of defeat.

Tracking down Sally wouldn't be resolved overnight, so Adah decided to change her approach.

Before, Elliana had always been the vanguard, steering their ambitions, forging alliances, and carving out their territory, while Adah worked quietly behind the scenes. Now that Elliana was dedicating herself to family life, content to savor marriage and raise her children, Adah found herself suddenly leaderless, with an unfamiliar abundance of free time.

Sitting around aimlessly was never Adah's style. If she couldn't force

results in the search for her mother, then she'd pour her energy into reclaiming all that was wrongfully taken from her.

Back when Sally had married into the Norris family, they had been at rock bottom. Bankruptcy had loomed, debts had swallowed the family whole, and they had been nearly thrown out of their own home.

It had been Sally, utilizing her talent and wisdom—along with Rita's secret assistance—who had pulled the Norris family back from the edge of collapse. Under Sally's direction, the Norris fortunes had flourished far beyond what they'd ever dreamed. All that wealth and standing, their entire empire, could be traced back to Sally's perseverance.

Gratitude, however, had never taken root among the Norris family. With their fortunes revived, they had scorned her.

Gia had dismissed Sally as nothing but a lowborn outsider. Meanwhile, Adah's uncle and his relatives had fed Gia lies until the entire family had turned against Sally, pressuring Adah's father into a divorce.

After the fire that had supposedly claimed Sally's life, Gia, egged on by Adah's uncle, had handed the entire Norris legacy over to him. Adah's father had been reduced to a mere employee, and Adah herself had been cast out into a backwater town.

For years, the uncle's family had bled Adah's family dry and trampled over those Adah cared for. Adah had finally reached her limit.

The morning after her return to Ublento, Adah marched straight to the Norris residence. Gone was the "awkward pumpkin" disguise. This time, she showed up in her true form. A dress the color of burning coals hugged her frame, her loose waves spilled over her shoulders, and her stiletto heels struck the marble with a queenly authority.

No spark of recognition flickered in the butler's eyes. As soon as he noticed her approach, he rushed forward, blocking her path. "Excuse me, miss. May I ask who you are?"

Without hesitation, Adah delivered a sharp slap to his cheek. This was the same man who had mocked her mercilessly when she was younger and defenseless. Today, she intended to settle the score.

Stunned, the butler could only stand there, reeling from the unexpected blow.

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 +120 Points at most

A faint, chilly laugh escaped Adah as she tipped her chin up and strode through the front doors, every step steady and commanding.

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