

Chapter 866 Marry Me

Rowena came to an abrupt halt in front of Allan, her gaze fixed on him as though she might leap into his embrace. Rather than doing so, she shifted her stance awkwardly, putting on an act of bashfulness. Anyone who glanced her way could easily see how smitten she was.

Both Westley and Kimberly tried to warn Rowena that Allan's presence had nothing to do with her, but she dove right into her act before they could get a word out.

"Allan, Adah is so mean and completely uncivilized," Rowena whimpered, turning her face just enough for him to notice the puffiness of her cheek. "She didn't just argue with Grandma. She actually got physical and hit me... Just look!"

Inside her mind, Rowena clung to the hope that Allan had come to the Norris home because he cared about her. If that was the case, she was ready to weaponize his affection so she could punish Adah and finally vent all the bitterness she had bottled up. She put on an unforgettable act, crying without restraint and appearing every bit the innocent victim.

Adah rolled her eyes. Unable to stomach the theatrics any longer, she turned on her heel and headed upstairs.

"Allan, did you see that? Adah is so rude!" Rowena pressed on, determined to provoke Allan into confronting Adah. "I'm speaking to you, and she just leaves. It's not just me she's ignoring; she's ignoring you as well, Allan."

Still, Allan hadn't looked at Rowena once. Only after she finished did he lift his eyes to hers, releasing a quiet sigh. "She really hit you pretty hard."

Rowena froze, uncertain if he was angry for her sake. Wanting to keep the momentum, she quickly tried to garner more sympathy. "Allan, you didn't see how ruthless she was. That slap nearly broke my nose and dislocated my chin..."

She cut herself off mid-sentence. In her haste to play the victim, she had

almost blurted out the truth about her cosmetic surgery.

"My nose and chin are aching from her slap." Rowena quickly revised, trying to recover. "Look at my face—I don't know how many days it'll take for the swelling to go down."

Allan rose from his seat, his height making Rowena seem even smaller by comparison. "You want me to get back at her for you?"

Rowena stared up at him, searching for some hint of concern. Even though his expression remained unreadable, she nodded. "Yes... I was hoping you'd defend me."

A deep, humorless laugh escaped Allan. "Adah might have a hot temper, but she never lashes out without a reason. If she hit you, I'm sure you deserved it."

Rowena stood rooted to the spot. Hadn't Allan come here for her? Why was he siding with Adah?

Before she could wrap her head around it, Allan had already started upstairs.

When Allan walked past Rowena, he purposefully moved to avoid touching her, as though she were something unpleasant.

Despite it being Allan's first time in the Norris house, he went straight up the staircase without waiting for permission. It was a blatant disregard for social customs, but nobody dared say a word. There was no question about his goal—he was going after Adah.

Once Allan vanished from sight, Rowena finally snapped out of her daze. A wild, frustrated scream tore from her throat. "Ah!"

Rowena couldn't accept it. Why did Allan care about Adah so much? Wasn't he supposed to hate her? He had even broken off their engagement in the coldest way possible. What had changed to make him treat her so kindly now?

Images from the banquet flashed through Rowena's mind. Everything made sense now. Allan had been the one chasing after Adah, not the other way around.

Westley and Kimberly could hardly hide their horror. Adah alone was

already a force to be reckoned with. Now that Allan stood behind her, how could they possibly defend themselves against her?

Gia's eyes followed Allan as he left. Then, she turned to see Rowena slumped on the floor, completely defeated and uncertain what to do.

Meanwhile, Adah had made her way back to her room upstairs and begun packing. There were two reasons for her return today. The first was to pressure the Norris family into giving back what belonged to her mother. The second was to collect her mother's photographs. Staying in this house held no appeal for her. Simply being around the Norrices made her sick. She had already decided that she would only come back if she managed to drive every last one of them out of this place for good.

With the door already open, Allan entered the room without asking.

"What are you doing here?" Adah asked.

A grin played across Allan's face. "I'm here to back you up."

Adah shot him a look of annoyance. "I don't want your help!"

As she reached for her mother's photo to pack it away, Allan suddenly stopped her. "Hold on."

He walked over and pointed at the woman in the picture. "Who is this?"

Confused, Adah answered, "That's my mom. What's the matter?"

Allan's expression shifted to one of genuine surprise. He studied the photograph for a moment, and a faint smile broke through.

"What's so funny?" Adah eyed him suspiciously.

His gaze lingered on her, and for a moment, he seemed unsure whether to say anything. Eventually, he just replied, "It's nothing."

Without saying more, Adah took the photo back and carefully placed it in her bag.

"Your birthday is coming up next month," Allan remarked. "I want to give you a present, something I know you'll really appreciate."

Adah turned him down immediately. "No matter what you give me, I don't



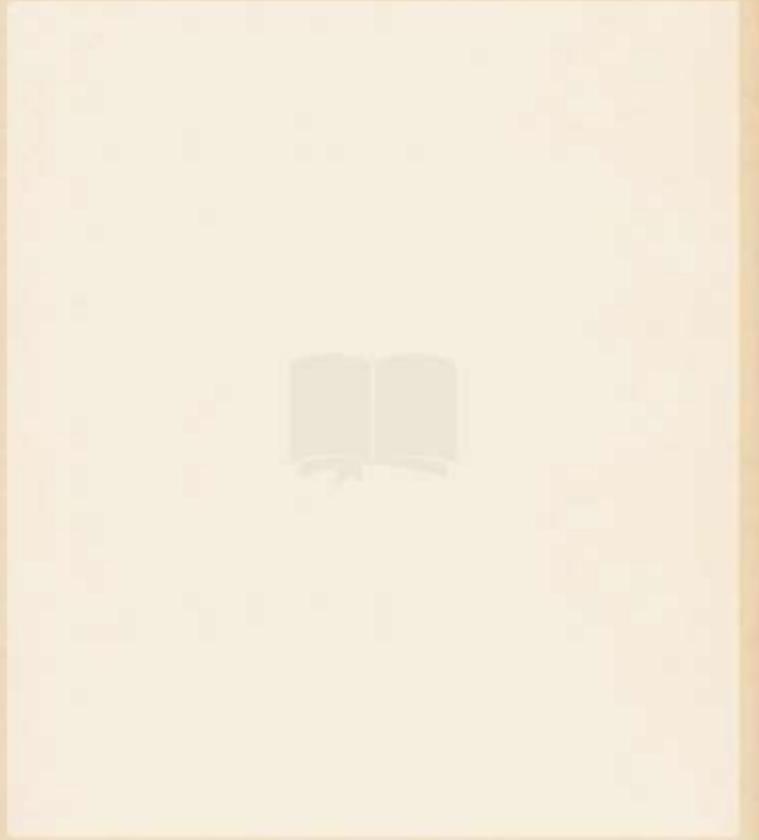
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want it! Allan, quit bothering me. There's no chance for us, so stop holding on to that hope!"

Instead of looking upset, Allan regarded her with a gentle expression. "Let's make a deal. If the birthday gift I choose actually makes you happy, you agree to marry me. How does that sound?"

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