

Chapter 885 Birthday Arrived

The call had barely gone through before Elliana's urgent voice rang out. "Cole, take the children and head for Regal Grove right now. We need to stay there for a while. Hurry!"

In his study, buried in paperwork, Cole's brow furrowed as he tried to make sense of it. "Regal Grove? What's with the sudden emergency?"

A strained, humorless laugh slipped from Elliana. "Because if we're even a second late, Ruben might lash out at us."

At that precise moment, the study door banged open, ricocheting off the wall as Ruben barreled inside, his face burning red with anger.

Cole jerked his gaze up. "Grandpa? What happened?"

Without so much as a warning, Ruben lifted his cane and brought it crashing down on Cole's shoulder. "Useless fool!"

There was nothing gentle about it. Cole grimaced and rubbed the fresh ache, forcing a half-hearted, wry grin. "What did I do to make you this angry?"

Ruben's breath came out in short, sharp bursts, and he jabbed a quivering finger close to Cole's face. "Elliana just called to inform me that Adah is definitely marrying into the Shaw family and told me to let go of any hope of her becoming Lance's wife. Then, she had the nerve to hang up and block me! You explain this to me—why?"

Glancing down, Cole noticed the call with Elliana was still active; she'd heard every single word. She blocked Ruben? He was clueless about what was unfolding but had zero intention of selling out his wife. Quickly, he tucked the phone out of view. "I don't have a clue. Did you ask Elliana yourself?"

"She says Allan has some unbeatable trump card, claims we don't stand a chance!" Ruben exploded. "But she refused to explain what it is! The gall!"

Cole's eyebrow ticked upward. Thinking back, Elliana had practically begged him to flee to Regal Grove with the kids. Clearly, something big was brewing and now he was burning to find out the details.

Looking to direct Ruben's anger away, Cole jumped in with fake bravado. "Don't worry, Grandpa. I'll have a word with Elliana right now. I'll get to the bottom of this. Blocking your number? She's gone too far. I'll set her straight today and make her confess. You'll see who really runs things around here!"

Ruben, moments ago steaming with frustration, went utterly still. His eyes grew wide with skepticism. Since when did Cole ever talk this tough? Normally, the man would bend over backward for Elliana without a second thought. Now he was putting on an act as a strict head of the house?

Seizing that brief pause, Cole darted for the door. "Leave it to me, Grandpa!" he called back. "If Elliana refuses to come clean, I'll... I'll handle her myself!"

With that, he dashed out, leaving Ruben gaping in his wake.

For a long moment, Ruben stood there, rooted in disbelief. He was starting to question reality; maybe he'd wandered into a strange dream after all.

Still bewildered, Ruben gave himself a sharp pinch on the arm. The sting made him flinch with a loud yelp. This was all too real. This was no dream. Cole had actually threatened to handle Elliana himself.

But as the pain faded, common sense crept back in. There was absolutely no chance that Cole would ever go through with such a thing. If there were ever a champion for doting husbands, it would be Cole. He'd probably rather snap his own legs than so much as scold Elliana just to satisfy his grandfather.

The realization dawned on Ruben like a slap. Cole had played him for a fool!

Ruben let out a furious snort. "That conniving brat!" Muttering angrily, he stormed out of the study, intent on tracking Cole down and giving him a piece of his mind.

But Cole had vanished. When Ruben finally cornered the butler, the man nervously explained that Cole had whisked the children away and left, saying they'd be "staying elsewhere" for a while.

Ruben's face turned nearly purple with rage. So they were hiding from him! He slammed his cane on the floor with such force that it nearly broke, unleashing a torrent of curses on both Cole and Elliana. "Those two troublemakers!"

A month later, Adah's birthday arrived.

The past month had flown by in a frenzy of events and nonstop commitments, throwing Adah into the whirlwind world of celebrity living.

For Adah, it was all uncharted territory, overwhelming exhausting but electrifying at the same time. She'd spent her childhood yearning for a taste of this glamorous life, and now her dream was real.

Throughout those weeks, she had waited restlessly for Allan to reach out. But not a single message arrived. Now, with her birthday party about to kick off, there was still no sign of him.

Her mind raced for possible reasons. Had he already lost interest in her? Was he so fickle that a new face had stolen his attention, making him drop their wager without a second thought?

Frankly, she wouldn't put it past him. The man was a notorious flirt, always chasing after the next pretty thing. It wouldn't surprise her in the least if he'd tossed their agreement aside the moment he found someone more exciting.

Sitting at her dressing table, Adah pouted at her reflection. "Jerk. What a waste of my time."

If she had known Allan would give up so easily, she wouldn't have bothered keeping her end of the deal. She could have been out dating someone decent, someone uncomplicated.

With a huff, she rose from her seat and made her way toward the ballroom.

Elliana had arranged the entire celebration just for Adah, keeping the guest list limited to relatives and a few close friends, no unfamiliar faces

in sight.

The space was decorated beautifully. Every corner radiated warmth and opulence, with every detail painstakingly arranged. It was the first true birthday party Adah had enjoyed since being separated from her mother so long ago. There might have been only a handful of guests, but every single attendee was a person of extraordinary status.