

Chapter 889 She Would Say Yes

The sudden outburst left Eleanor shrinking back. She managed a shaky laugh and snapped, "Raymond, how can you blame me for this? Allan and Adah never got along from the start. And you're the one who approved breaking the engagement. I didn't say a word the whole time!"

Raymond snorted. "Don't try to fool me just because I'm getting on in years. You thought Adah was too ordinary for Allan and worked behind my back to push her away, didn't you? Admit it!"

Eleanor's mouth clamped shut, suddenly unable to defend herself. Though age had slowed Raymond's step, his mind was as keen as ever. Clearly, he'd caught on to her ploy, slipping Adah hush money in hopes she'd call things off herself.

Raymond pressed on, relentless. "Adah didn't leave Allan simply because the boy couldn't see her value. She must have sensed what a terror you'd be as a mother-in-law! Just look at her now, a rising star, about to become part of the Evans family. Feeling any regret? Wishing you hadn't acted so rashly?"

Eleanor's head dropped, shame burning in her cheeks. Of course, she regretted it; she had cursed her own lack of vision over and over. If she had known Adah would become such a remarkable woman, she never would have plotted to split Adah from Allan. But hindsight brought nothing but bitter regret.

Raymond, having vented his anger on Eleanor, didn't stop there. "The rest of you are at fault, too! Your coldness made Adah feel unwelcome; that's why she didn't choose to join our family!"

Every Shaw family member stared at their shoes, not daring to speak. Raymond, still smarting from Ruben's earlier taunt, was on the warpath. Anyone brave enough to protest would be walking straight into the firing line.

While Raymond took his anger out on his kin, Ruben tracked down Elliana. He confronted her, his face flushed with indignation. "Elliana! You owe me

an explanation!"

Elliana knew exactly what he meant. She glanced over at Adah and Lance, their smiles bright, and then turned back to Ruben with an apologetic grin. "Love is like a battlefield; everything can change in a heartbeat. You're a seasoned veteran who emerged victorious from your own romantic campaigns. You, of all people, should understand that!"

A seasoned veteran who emerged victorious? The phrase was music to Ruben's ears. He remembered the days when Diane had suitors lining up, and he had outlasted every one, Raymond included. That victory was a badge of honor he'd worn all his life. Elliana's words hit home. Love, indeed, was a battlefield where fortunes could reverse in a moment.

The anger faded from Ruben's face, though his concern lingered. "Elliana ... are you saying Allan still stands a chance after all?"

Elliana smiled, knowing that it wasn't just a chance—it was a certainty. But she dared not say so outright, knowing it would provoke Ruben into losing his temper right then and there.

Instead, she responded with tact, "Matters of the heart are unpredictable. If you can secure the heart of your loved one, count yourself lucky; if not, that's just the way of things. For your own sake, don't get so worked up. At your age, such mood swings aren't good for the heart."

Right then, Adah and Lance wandered over to join them.

The topic vanished from Ruben's mind, replaced by a dazzling grin. He did his best to look kindly and pleasant, afraid Adah might think of him as just a cranky elder.

Adah flashed a warm smile. "Hello, Mr. Evans."

"Ah, hello! Hello!" Ruben's laughter was bright as he immediately peppered her with cheerful, affectionate questions.

Seizing the opportunity, Elliana slipped away quietly. She intended to keep her distance from Ruben for the moment; she had no desire to get blamed if Lance's romantic plans went sideways.

Elliana rejoined Cole, while Hailee drifted back to Merlin, seamlessly

picking up her work as his secretary.

The birthday banquet rolled on, each segment flowing seamlessly into the next, until it was time for the much-anticipated gift ceremony.

One elaborate present after another appeared, but none rivaled the thoughtful gifts from Rita and Sophie, who made a heartfelt vow to adore Adah just as Sally would have.

Each gift made Adah feel more cherished. Though her mother was still missing and her family incomplete, being surrounded by so much affection filled her with genuine happiness.

As Adah opened the last box, Allan was still nowhere to be found. Whatever hope she'd held onto vanished completely.

She thanked everyone and then turned to Lance. "So, where's your gift? Weren't you planning to show me?"

Lance pulled out a finely crafted jewelry box from his pocket. Despite Adah's warmth all night, nerves took over, his heart thundering in his chest. This was his chance to propose, a defining moment, and he was terrified he'd mess it up.

Words failed him. Face flushed and hands trembling, he stood there, paralyzed.

Every gaze in the room shifted to the jewelry box, and in that instant, the chatter faded into expectant silence.

Adah met his eyes, calm and resolute. She had already decided, if he asked her tonight, she would say yes.

Moments dragged by.

Ruben couldn't take it anymore. Panic over a possible last-minute disaster gnawed at him. He gave Lance a not-so-gentle prod with his cane, barking "What are you waiting for, you coward? Adah is standing right there. Don't make her wait!"