

Chapter 890 Allan Finally Arrived

Ruben's abrupt prod gave Lance a jolt of resolve. He summoned his nerve, ready to kneel, when suddenly, a tall and commanding presence entered the ballroom.

The distinct click of polished black shoes echoed sharply against the marble, immediately drawing every head in the room.

Lance froze, caught halfway down. The jewelry box stayed closed in his trembling grip.

Allan had arrived. He seemed to bring the very atmosphere to heel. Wherever he went, the air shifted; his bearing demanded deference. Even his refined features couldn't soften the sheer authority he radiated. ②

Both Elliana and Cole exchanged knowing looks; at last, the cunning player had shown up.

Across the room, Merlin and Manley perked up with interest. Cole's hints about Allan's trump card had set their curiosity ablaze, and now they waited to see Allan reveal it.

Raymond shot Allan a look of pure disapproval. If not for the surroundings, he would have stormed over and confronted him. How could Allan let Adah go and then turn up now as if nothing had happened?

Eleanor's breath caught in her throat; six weeks without seeing her son had felt like a lifetime. For a moment, she nearly rushed over to fuss over him, but the stern warning in Raymond's glare forced her to stay put.

Lance was already on edge. Now, his nerves were frayed to the breaking point. The prospect of battling Allan for Adah's hand made his scalp prickle with fluster.

A thick silence settled over the room, every gaze fixed on Allan's striking silhouette.

Adah shot him a frosty, dismissive look, barely more than a glance, and then turned away, pointedly refusing to acknowledge him. She was still seething. Six weeks earlier, Allan had goaded her into a reckless bet. She had kept her end of the bargain, only for him to quit halfway through, apparently abandoning her to pursue someone else. No concrete proof existed, but her instincts told her she was right.

Just one look at him now, so vibrant and glowing, suggested he had been enjoying himself all this time. Had he been smitten with someone else this whole time? How could he walk away from their bet so casually? Did he think she was just some trivial afterthought?

With every passing thought, Adah's anger simmered hotter. Even as she looked away, she couldn't help sneaking one last burning, accusing glare in his direction.

Other guests might have missed it, but Allan had been watching Adah intently; he caught every nuance in her expression. Was that anger? She looked absolutely livid. But why? Was it his late arrival? Fair enough—he had cut it close. Another thirty seconds, and Lance would have been down on one knee proposing. Yeah, that was definitely on him.

Since Adah was angry, Allan resolved to placate her fury. Even if he hadn't done anything wrong, he would still find a way to lift her spirits. She was his to treasure, and that meant keeping her happy.

Allan made his way to Adah. For a man usually so polished and mannerly, he abandoned all pretense of courtesy now. He positioned himself squarely between Adah and Lance, turning his back on his love

rival and focusing all his attention on her, shutting Lance out with a single bold move.

Not a single word passed his lips yet, but the possessive energy radiated from him in waves. It was plain to see that he intended to claim what was his.

There was nothing like facing off with a rival in love to ignite a man's competitive fire.

Embarrassed and outmaneuvered, Lance edged away, retreating a few steps to the side.

Allan didn't so much as glance over his shoulder, but he heard the shuffle of footsteps and sensed the growing distance between Lance and Adah. With his rival successfully sidelined, his mood ticked up another notch.

Allan fixed his gaze on Adah, a look of pure affection in his eyes. "You do remember our bet, don't you?"

Puzzlement flickered across Adah's features. She couldn't understand why he was bringing up their bet, especially when he'd seemed to have tossed it aside himself. She didn't want to give him the upper hand, so she replied coolly, "Did you?"

"I never forgot." Allan's voice was soft, overflowing with warmth. "It never leaves my mind. I've replayed it in my mind, night after night. I've spent these six weeks yearning for this moment, just to see you again."

The sheer tenderness in his words sent a ripple of discomfort through the crowd. No one there had ever witnessed Allan get so sentimental before; it was a shocking revelation.

Ruben looked from Lance, who now stood awkwardly on the sidelines, to Allan, who had seized command of the moment. Frustration welled up within him. He wished he could scold Lance for caving so easily, but

he held his tongue.

Meanwhile, Raymond's feelings ran in the opposite direction from Ruben's. He had nearly given up hope, but seeing Allan sweep in and stake his claim so boldly lifted a massive weight off his chest.

If social etiquette hadn't restrained him, Raymond might have broken into cheers. Allan had shown real courage.

It would have surprised anyone to know that, in that very instant, these two elders were waging a private war of their own.

Every gaze remained fixed on the couple at the center of the room, curiosity mounting. What kind of bet had passed between Allan and Adah?