

Chapter 897 Hailee Was Assaulted

Side by side, Cole and Allan made their way down the staircase.

Before they could step onto the landing, Cole suddenly reached out and seized Allan's arm. "Hide. Do not let them notice us," he whispered urgently.

A question was already forming on Allan's lips, but the sound of three women talking downstairs made him freeze.

The tone alone made it clear that the topic was not meant to be overheard by men.

Without another word, Cole pulled Allan into the shadowed corner, and both of them stayed perfectly still as they listened.

In the living room below, three women sat crowded together on the sofa. Tears had left Hailee's eyes swollen and red, and she clung tightly to Elliana as if she might fall apart without Elliana. "Elliana, what am I supposed to do?" she repeated.

Tension radiated from Elliana as her worry grew with every second. Hailee begged for help over and over, yet whenever Elliana tried to ask for specifics, Hailee faltered and could not bring herself to explain.

"Hailee, I cannot help you unless you tell me what happened," Elliana said, her voice heavy with frustration and concern.

Seated on Elliana's other side, Adah studied Hailee carefully, her eyes scanning every detail.

Hailee looked like a complete mess. Her hair was tangled and unkempt, her clothes were ripped, and her neck showed marks in shades of pink

and red. Even her lips were swollen enough to look painful.

The truth did not take much effort to piece together. Something had happened between Hailee and a man the night before. Judging by the way she cried, it was not something she had chosen. She had been assaulted.

Elliana was afraid of pushing too hard, worried she might make things worse. Still, after several minutes of getting nowhere, Adah finally lost her patience. "Hailee, just tell us who did this to you. I swear I will make him regret ever touching you."

Slowly, Hailee lifted her head to look at Adah. Her mouth moved as if she wanted to answer, but no sound came out. In the end, she lowered her head again, and her sobs returned, raw and uncontrollable.

Noticing Adah's rising anger, Elliana reached out and gently patted her hand, urging her to calm down. Turning back to Hailee, she softened her tone. "Hailee... after the party last night, did you leave with Merlin?"

After a brief pause, Hailee finally dipped her head in a small, reluctant nod.

Elliana's expression shifted as she analyzed the situation. Merlin had always been overly protective of Hailee. If she had gone with him, he would have stayed glued to her side or made sure she got home safely. Letting another man touch her would have been unthinkable.

That realization led Elliana down a darker path. If it was not someone else, then could Merlin himself be responsible?

The thought refused to leave Elliana's mind. She knew how deeply Merlin cared for Hailee. He was polite, controlled, and careful when sober, but alcohol had a way of stripping people down to their worst impulses.

Acting on instinct, Elliana pulled out her phone and opened the security

footage from Rosewood Villa. She needed to know whether Merlin had been drunk when he left the party.

Finding the clip did not take long.

The video showed Merlin walking out with Hailee, and the truth was painfully obvious. He was not the only one intoxicated. Hailee could barely stay on her feet.

Elliana pressed her lips together as she felt her hunch had been right all along. Merlin had taken things too far while both he and Hailee were too drunk to think straight. That bastard.

Anger burned through Elliana as she lifted her gaze toward Hailee, her voice firm and unforgiving. "It was Merlin, right?"

Hailee's shoulders jerked, and she lowered her head even further.

That reaction said everything.

The sound of a hand slamming against the table shattered the silence. Adah stood abruptly, fury written all over her face. "That monster! How dare he take advantage of Hailee when she was wasted?" she shouted. "I swear I will cut him apart myself!"

Adah spun around, ready to charge straight out the door.

At that exact moment, Cole and Allan rushed down the stairs without hesitation.

Allan caught Adah by the arm and tried to calm her down. "Adah, wait—let's get the full story first before jumping to conclusions. There might be some kind of misunderstanding here."

Adah's anger didn't let up for a second. She whirled around to face him and snapped, "Misunderstanding? What kind of excuse is that supposed to be? Are you actually trying to say Hailee forced herself on Merlin?"

Allan was at a loss for words. Even if loyalty urged him to defend Merlin, the reality was impossible to ignore. Hailee was petty and

fragile, while Merlin was far stronger. If she hadn't consented, then Merlin must have forced himself on her. No amount of friendship could erase that truth.

Still, Allan forced himself to speak. "I have known Merlin for years. He has always carried himself well. I cannot believe he would deliberately do something like that."

Cole stepped in as well, his voice tense but measured. "If anything happened, I think he was completely wasted. He might not even understand how serious this is."

"Bullshit!" Adah cursed, her anger boiling over. "Do not insult us. Acting decent when sober and turning vicious after drinking does not excuse anything. Who is to say he did not use alcohol as a shield to show his real nature?"

Cole opened his mouth to say more, but Elliana shut him down immediately, her tone cold and decisive. "Cole, your opinion of Merlin is irrelevant right now. What matters is that Hailee was hurt. I will make sure she gets justice, no matter who is responsible."

Cole exhaled slowly before nodding. "You are right. I will call him. He needs to come here and explain himself."

Without delay, Cole pulled out his phone, dialed Merlin's number, and demanded that he come over immediately.

Turning toward Allan, Adah's eyes hardened. "When Merlin shows up, if his explanation is not good enough, your friendship will not protect him. I will make him pay, and I will not show mercy!"

Elliana looked at Cole, her resolve just as firm. "Same here, Cole."