

Chapter 898 The Shocking Truth

Since Cole reached out to Merlin, Hailee's nerves had only worsened. Her face now mirrored raw unease. When Elliana and Adah promised they would hold Merlin accountable, Hailee abruptly sprang to her feet. Everyone in the room immediately looked her way. She stood shaking uncontrollably, her limbs betraying her fluster.

"Um... Actually..." Hailee began, her voice faltering until she could no longer continue.

Adah gently placed her hand on Hailee's shoulder to comfort her. "There's no need to be afraid, Hailee. Elliana and I are right here for you. We'll make sure Merlin pays for what he did."

"I... I..." Hailee tried to speak, but her voice failed her. Just then, Merlin arrived.

As soon as Hailee spotted him, her face went pale. She turned, ready to flee.

Adah's grip fastened around Hailee's wrist, stopping her in place. "Hailee, sit down! Show this man you're stronger than he thinks!"

Hailee could not break Adah's hold. She ended up being pulled back down onto the couch.

Sitting there, Hailee kept her gaze locked on the floor, not daring to glance at Merlin. Her fingers curled tightly, pressing her nails into her palms.

The others turned to stare at Merlin. A collective gasp rippled through the air, and everyone was astonished by what they saw.

Merlin, once a member of an international special forces unit known for his fierce presence, no longer resembled the intimidating figure he had been. Usually, his appearance alone could scare off any threat, but today, he looked as though he'd survived a brutal encounter.

His hair was wild and unkempt, his shirt missing buttons and ripped in spots, with his neck and cheeks streaked by blood. The scratches were fresh and unmistakably left by a woman's nails.

The group could imagine Merlin shrugging off wounds from a blade or dodging gunfire, but seeing him covered in scratch marks was almost unbelievable.

Even fighters as skilled as Elliana and Adah would have trouble landing a blow on Merlin, let alone causing visible damage.

Everyone knew Merlin and Hailee were together the previous night, leaving little room for doubt. Hailee was clearly responsible.

But Hailee was gentle and far from strong. Merlin could have overpowered her with ease. What possible reason did he have for allowing her to hurt him so badly?

While the group struggled to process the scene, Merlin calmly settled into a seat opposite Hailee. "What kind of explanation do you have for me?"

Hearing him speak only made Hailee's trembling worse. She remained silent, shrinking even further behind Elliana.

Adah's anger flared. "Merlin, do you even hear yourself? You assaulted Hailee and then have the nerve to ask her for an explanation? If anyone should be explaining, it's you!"

Merlin responded with an amused laugh, "Maybe you should ask her who really assaulted whom."

Observing Merlin's unflappable demeanor, Cole and Allan exchanged a

look, sensing the truth might not be what they expected. Both men quickly took their seats, prepared to witness the unfolding spectacle.

Elliana watched the tense scene, shifting her gaze between Hailee, who kept her head lowered, and Merlin, her expression thoughtful and contemplative.

Adah's anger showed no sign of fading. She continued tearing into Merlin. "Hailee is delicate and petite. You're a huge, brawny guy. Are you seriously claiming she assaulted you? You crossed a line, and now you're trying to twist the story! The nerve!"

In response, Merlin gestured at the marks left on his skin, challenging Adah with a question. "If I were as ruthless as you believe, would I really stand here covered in scratches like these?"

Adah found herself lost for words. His argument made sense. He could have easily defended himself against Hailee. Allowing her to leave those wounds was completely out of character for someone like him.

Merlin did not stop there. "This has been part of who I am since childhood. When I'm sober, I'm as fierce as a tiger. But after drinking, I become harmless. Cole and Allan can back me up on that."

Immediately, Elliana and Adah shot threatening glances toward Cole and Allan, daring them to lie.

"He's telling the truth." Cole spoke up with sincerity.

Allan confirmed without hesitation. "Absolutely. I swear."

Turning his focus to Hailee, Merlin adopted a straightforward tone. "Hailee is a different story. When she's drunk, she loses all inhibition. She becomes bold and shockingly strong. Not only did she make advances on me, but she also didn't hold back. Don't I deserve an explanation?"

This revelation completely threw Elliana and Adah off guard. The gentle, soft-spoken Hailee they knew was capable of this? Both women

quickly turned to Hailee, searching for answers in her eyes.

Hailee dared not meet their gaze, instead curling herself up as if hoping to disappear.

That alone was all the answer they needed.

Exchanging glances, Elliana and Adah let out sighs. It was hard to believe that the sweet, unassuming Hailee had pulled off something so wild.

Suddenly, the entire situation made sense. Hailee's earlier distress had nothing to do with Merlin assaulting her. She was shaken because she, as a secretary, had attacked her own boss, and now she had no idea how to fix it.

Adah let out a short laugh. "I didn't get any sleep last night. I'm heading upstairs to catch up on some rest."

Without waiting for a response, she turned and left the room.

Allan gave Merlin a look filled with amusement and then decided to follow Adah.