

Chapter 899 We're Tying The Knot Right Now

After Adah and Allan left, Elliana placed a hand on Hailee's shoulder and spoke. "You started this, Hailee, so you have to deal with the consequences. This time, I can't save you."

With that, Elliana got up and made her way upstairs as well.

A short while earlier, both Elliana and Adah were ready to unleash their anger on Merlin because of their assumption that he had assaulted Hailee. Now that they realized the truth wasn't what they expected, sticking up for Hailee would only make them look unreasonable. Walking away seemed like the best option.

Cole grinned, gave Merlin's shoulder a friendly pat, and then followed Elliana upstairs.

In the end, only Merlin and Hailee were left sitting in the living room.

While it appeared that the four had left to give them a moment alone, the truth was very different. They huddled near the top of the stairs, peering back down to watch what happened next.

Hailee curled into the farthest corner of the sofa, her hands covering her face. She resembled a tiny, frightened animal trapped in a storm, her unease plain for anyone to see.

Meanwhile, Merlin seemed completely at ease, the hint of a smile tugging at his lips and lighting up his eyes.

Not long ago, he'd been wracking his brain, trying to figure out how to pursue Hailee without scaring her off. Then, Hailee had surprised him in a way he never expected. At this point, he was finished worrying; he only wanted her to own up to what she'd done to him.

"Hailee, how long do you plan on keeping silent?" Merlin asked, his words slow and almost playful. "Are you just going to spend your life with your face hidden in your hands, or are you planning to pretend none of this ever happened last night?"

Heat flooded Hailee's whole body, and her cheeks were so red that they nearly glowed. She needed several moments before finally mumbling a reply. "I... I don't have any money!"

Throughout, she refused to lower her hands, unable to look at Merlin even once.

Thoughts whirled in her head. Merlin was fabulously wealthy; he might want her to compensate him with billions for what had happened last night. Yet, she didn't even have a million, let alone anything more.

Merlin burst out laughing, clearly entertained. "I've guarded my virginity for twenty-seven years, saving it for my wedding night with the woman I'd marry. But you—you barged in and turned all my dreams to dust. Do you honestly think this is something you can fix with money?"

Twenty-seven years, and he had never been with any woman until last night with her? That admission felt like a punch to the gut, making Hailee's panic even worse. Not once had she imagined that last night had been Merlin's first time. She thought of mentioning that she, too, had never been with anyone before, but embarrassment silenced her.

"Then... what do you want me to do?" Hailee managed to ask, still shaken.

Merlin studied her flustered reaction, amused and intent on teasing her a little more. "My family has always followed the same rule—if a woman shares a bed with a man from our family, she has to stay with him for life."

"What?" Hailee's head snapped up, her eyes wide as she gaped at Merlin.

The instant their eyes met, Hailee felt as if a jolt of electricity shot through her. She immediately turned away, hiding her face behind her hands once more.

Watching her reaction, Merlin could barely contain his amusement. "Hailee, there's only one path for you. Marry me. Right now."

The idea of marrying him left Hailee completely stunned. She had imagined the worst, thinking he might punish her out of anger or make her life unbearable. Instead, he was asking her to become his wife.

The Blakely family stood at the top of the social ladder. Countless women would do anything for the chance to become Mrs. Blakely. Merlin had no reason to offer that role to the very woman who had assaulted him.

After what felt like an eternity, Hailee managed to speak, her voice unsteady, "Are you sure you're somber now? This doesn't sound like revenge at all; it sounds like you're offering me the jackpot."

"Hailee, quit toying with me. My patience wears thin," Merlin warned, his words growing sharp. "You get one shot at this, accept or refuse. If you say yes, everything works out for everyone. If you turn me down, I'll ship your father off to work overseas and ensure you never meet him again."

Hailee hunched her shoulders instinctively.

Meanwhile, the four onlookers by the stairs all pulled faces, barely believing what they were hearing.

"Merlin is completely hopeless. He can't manage a single romantic word!" Adah whispered, rolling her eyes.

Elliana agreed, nodding emphatically. "Exactly! He could have tried a little tenderness, but here he is, throwing out threats. Romance just isn't in his nature!"

Hearing the women's comments, Cole and Allan could only wish the

ground would swallow them whole. Merlin's antics were nothing short of mortifying.

Merlin, however, paid no attention to how anyone else thought of him. His focus stayed locked on making Hailee his wife as quickly as possible. He fired off a question. "Do you have any identification with you? An ID or passport?"

Still caught off guard, Hailee replied without thinking, "Y-yes, I have it."

At that moment, a sharply dressed man, clearly from the civil registry, approached the pair.

Merlin looked to Hailee, adopting a businesslike tone. "I've contacted the registrar. We're tying the knot right now. Hand over your documents."

Adah could only gape, shocked beyond words. "Merlin's mind is on a whole different planet! Who does this?"

Elliana doubled over, laughing until her sides hurt.

