

Chapter 10 The Tycoon's Banquet

The atmosphere in the baroque diningroom was suffocating.

It was eight o'clock. The ten-meter-long oak table was set with antique silver and crystal, but no one dared to touch their forks.

Cedrick sat at the head of the table. He wore a tailored black suit, leaning back in the chair with the lazy, dangerous grace of a resting panther. He slowly spun a silver steak knife between his long fingers.

Hyman sat to his left, his face gray, staring at his empty plate.

Isidora sat at the very end of the table on the right. She kept her head down, trying to blend into the dark wood of the chair.

The diningroom doors swung open. Kevin strolled in, a smug look on his face, the red scratch marks from Chantelle still visible on his neck.

Kevin walked toward the chair directly next to Hyman—the traditional seat of the heir.

The chair was gone.

Kevin stopped, confused. He looked at Hyman. Hyman squeezed his eyes shut and looked away.

Cedrick stopped spinning the knife. He slowly lifted his eyes and pinned Kevin to the spot.

"Who told you to walk in here?" Cedrick asked. "Stand."

Kevin's face flushed. "Uncle Cedrick, I—"

Thwack.

Cedrick slammed the silver knife blade first into the priceless oak table. The sound cracked through the room like a whip.

"The PR disaster you caused last night wiped two billion dollars off the Garrison market cap this morning" Cedrick stated, his voice devoid of emotion.

The elders at the table collectively shuddered.

"Since you idiots don't know how to run a company, we do things my way now," Cedrick said. He snapped his fingers.

Jarvis stepped out from the shadows, holding a legal document.

"Effective immediately," Jarvis read aloud, "Kevin Garrison is stripped of his title as Vice President. All family credit cards and trust accounts in his name are frozen."

Kevin's jaw dropped. Panic seized his features. "You can't do that! This is my dad's company!"

Cedrick let out a dark, cruel laugh. "Your dad's company? Ask him how many board members still answer his calls."

Hyman kept his head down in utter humiliation. Kevin's legs gave out, and he stumbled backward.

"Furthermore," Cedrick looked down at his nephew, "you will pack your things and move into the servant quarters above the stables. You stay there until you learn how to keep your mouth shut."

Total silence. No one dared to breathe. The golden boy had just been slaughtered in front of everyone.

Cedrick pulled the knife out of the table. His dark eyes slowly dragged down the length of the room, finally locking onto Isidora at the far end.

Isidora's stomach clenched. Her turn.

"As for Miss Wyatt," Cedrick drawled, his voice dropping an octave into a terrifying, smooth purr. "As the victim of this unfortunate scandal, the family owes you compensation."

Jarvis walked the length of the table and stopped next to Isidora. He lowered a black velvet tray.

On the tray sat a thick legal document and a vintage, black leather jewelry box.

Isidora hesitated, then opened the box.

A massive, breathtakingly heavy emerald necklace rested on the velvet.

"That is a vintage Garrison heirloom. A marker of your binding contract to this family," Cedrick said, his eyes burning into hers. "Put it on. Prove that you acknowledge your place as a managed asset under my absolute jurisdiction"

The socialites at the table shifted uncomfortably. Giving such a heavy, restrictive piece to this plain, disgraced girl wasn't an honor; it was a



public branding. It was Cedrick's ultimate insult to Hyman's bloodline, showing that their future daughter-in-law was nothing more than property he could collar at will.

But Isidora felt no joy. She looked down at the document.

It was an addendum to the prenup. If she initiated the breakup, she owed the family five hundred million dollars. But if she wore the necklace, she accepted Cedrick's absolute protection and his absolute surveillance.

It was a collar.

Isidora looked down the long table. She met Cedrick's predatory gaze. He was trapping her in his web, daring her to run.

Her fingers trembled as she picked up the heavy, freezing metal.

Under the hateful stares of the entire family, Isidora slowly fastened the emerald necklace around her throat.

The metal clicked shut. The trap was set.



"Help me, and I'll give you a special reward!"

Check

