

Chapter 14 The Prey with Nowhere to Hide

The frantic kicking on the door had stopped, only to be replaced by a more maddening sound.

Kevin was furiously pressing the doorbell. The piercing chime echoed relentlessly through the spacious living room, each ring a hammer blow against Isidora's frayed nerves. She scurried around the room like a headless chicken, her wide eyes darting from one wall to the next, desperately searching for a closet to cram herself into or a curtain to hide behind.

But the suite's minimalist decor offered no sanctuary. The clean lines and open spaces left everything exposed, with no corner or shadow large enough to conceal an adult. It was a pristine, elegant trap.

In desperation, she followed Cedrick as he strode into the inner bedroom, only to find it just as hopelessly bare. In the center of the vast room stood a single, enormous King-size bed, draped in deep gray, high-end silk bedding that looked as cold and immaculate as a slab of polished stone.

Cedrick walked to the side of the bed, then turned. He watched her, a leisurely and amused expression on his face as if he were enjoying a private, comical play starring the sweat-drenched, panicking woman before him.

Just then, Kevin's muffled roar seeped through the door, ordering his bodyguards to fetch breaching tools. The situation had reached its breaking point.

Isidora bit her lip, hard. In the crucible of extreme panic, her rationality



finally snapped. She made an utterly insane decision.

With a strangled cry, she lunged toward the massive bed. She threw back the heavy, deep gray down duvet and, without even pausing to take off her shoes, tumbled inside. She curled herself into the smallest possible ball, clutching the edge of the duvet and pulling it tight, burying herself completely in the darkness beneath.

Cedrick watched the lump on his bed, which trembled faintly with her terror. A flicker of astonishment crossed his eyes, quickly morphing into a dark, profoundly dangerous glint.

He didn't stop her. Instead, he calmly and deliberately strolled back into the living room and pressed the electronic lock switch on the wall.

With a soft *click*, the heavy oak door was unlocked.

Kevin, who had just hefted a fire extinguisher to smash the lock, was caught off guard as the door was suddenly pulled open from within. His forward momentum sent him stumbling clumsily into the suite.

When he finally regained his footing and looked up to see the man standing before him, the arrogant fury on his face instantly froze into a mask of pure, unadulterated horror.

Cedrick was still wearing nothing but the white bath towel knotted at his waist. With his arms crossed over his bare chest, he looked down, his gaze cold and imperious, at his foolish, trespassing nephew.

The very air in the room seemed to have been sucked out. "Un... Uncle," Kevin stammered, his voice trembling so violently it was barely a whisper.

"Who," Cedrick's voice was as cold and sharp as a Siberian wind, "gave you the audacity to try and break down a door in the North Wing?"

Kevin's legs felt like jelly. But then he remembered Stella's confident assurances, the certainty that this was his one and only chance to

finally ruin Isidora. He forced himself to stand straighter. "Someone saw Isidora sneak in here," he said, trying to sound concerned. "I was worried for your safety, Uncle."

Cedrick let out a soft, utterly contemptuous sneer. "Are you suggesting," he asked, his voice dripping with disdain, "that I am blind enough to take an interest in that kind of trash?"

The insult choked the words in Kevin's throat. But just as his resolve began to crumble, his eyes darted past Cedrick's shoulder and fixed on something on the plush carpet.

It was a single black hairpin, dropped by Isidora in her frantic scramble. Like a drowning man grasping a life-saving straw, Kevin pointed a shaking finger at it. "There!" he shouted, his voice cracking with a mix of fear and triumph. "That's the proof! She's here! She must be hiding somewhere inside!"

Cedrick's gaze flickered to the hairpin on the floor. His expression remained utterly impassive. Then, he did something unexpected. He stepped aside, clearing a path into the suite.

"Since you're so certain," he said, his tone chillingly calm, "go find her yourself."

Kevin swallowed hard. He was terrified, but the burning acid of jealousy and the lust for revenge had overwhelmed his reason. He took a deep breath and strode past his uncle, into the lion's den.

Cedrick followed silently behind him, a patient hunter watching his prey walk step by step into the perfectly laid trap.

In the bedroom, buried under the heavy duvet, Isidora heard the footsteps growing closer. Her heart hammered against her ribs, threatening to burst from her chest. She clamped a hand over her own mouth, stifling the sob that was trying to escape, not daring to even

breathe as she waited in the suffocating darkness for judgment to fall.

