

Chapter Forty-one

For almost fifteen minutes, Rome and his father didn't utter a word to each other.

“You seem disturbed.” Mr. Orlando finally said without staring at his son. 3

“I got a lot on my mind,” Rome mumbled, keeping his eyes focus on the windshield.

“Burden me with some, and don't keep it all inside. I'm your father, and there's nothing I wouldn't do for you.”

“Now that you mention it, there's something I need you to do for me.”

Feeling his anger subsiding, Mr. Ford gazed at his son and asked, “What is it?”

“I need to keep tabs on Chloe,” Rome said, swaying his gaze towards his

father.

“Isn't Mr. Orlando already doing that?”

“Yes, but he is limited unlike you. There's no happening in this country that you don't know about. That's why I need you to do this for me.”

“You can do it yourself.”

“What do you mean.”

For a second, Mr. Ford looked hesitant. Then he sighed and said, “It's time to introduce you to the other side of my life.”

“What?” Rome absentmindedly asked.

“You know that your old man is in a gang. But do you know how powerful it is?”

“Well, no.”

“Then let's find out?”

Even though he was confused, Rome

asked no questions when he heard Mr. Ford said to the driver, “Take us to ‘ Bluemoon Casino.”

After an hour's drive, the car came to a stop in front of a blue skyscraper a couple of miles away from the city.

Within a matter of seconds, a group of men, wearing black suits came rushing out of the building and position themselves into two straight lines.

Then one of them pulled the car door opened and Mr. Ford stepped out, followed by Rome.

“Welcome big boss.” The men in black said in unison as they bowed.

With a look of satisfaction in his eyes, Mr. Ford smiled. Then he marched into the building, and Rome kept his steps closely behind his father.

Afterward walking a few distances into the corridor, they entered a room, and

instantly, the place fell silent.

“Scar, Blaze, Brook, followed me!” Mr. Ford coldly said with an aloof expression.

Immediately, three men dropped their cards on the table and stood to their feet.

Then they followed Mr. Ford as he headed upstairs with Rome by his side.

When Mr. Ford and Rome entered a room, they went in after him and shut the door behind them.

“Scar, Blaze, Brook, meet my son, ‘Rome.’” Mr. Ford said as he sat down on the couch.

“Big boss, you found him?” Brook asked, sounding shocked.

“We found each other.”

“I'm sorry that we couldn't find him all those years, big boss. But I am glad that

you from him.”

Although Rome didn't understand a thing they were saying, he kept his questions to himself and sat down.

Then he raised brows as the three men turned to him, bowed, and said in unison, “Welcome back, boss.”

Without saying a word to them, Rome gazed at his father and threw him a what's-going-on look.

“Meet my eyes and ears in the underground world. The nothing illegal that's goes on in the darkness that they don't know about.” Mr. Ford said as he stood from the couch. ①

Then he headed over to the bar, took a bottle of whisker and popped it opened.

“A life of great wealth gives you a lifetime of dangerous enemies, and you always have to be one step ahead of them. I learned that the hard way when

your mother died.” Mr. Ford said, taking two glasses of the shelf.

After filling them halfway, he walked over to Rome and give him a glass.

Then he took a sip of his drink and said, “Power is a great, but deadly thing. It can make a man lose his sanity within a flash, and the Barlow family is filled with power greed people.”

“I understand,” Rome said, staring into his wine glass.

“No, you don't. A monster is made from the thirst for power, Rome, so you have to be extremely careful how you handle the members of that family.”

“I promise that I would.”

“Good.”

Raising his glass, Mr. Ford smiled at Rome before drinking till the glass was empty.

Then he gazed at Brook and said, “Keep an eye out for Chloe Barlow and report back to my son her every move. Nothing she does should get past him.”

“Yes, big boss.” Brook humbly intoned.

With his gaze focus on Brook, Scar, and Blaze, Mr. Ford firmly uttered, “From today onwards, let your men know that they don't only answer me, but my son and his command carry the same weight as mine.”

“Yes, big boss!” The three of them said one after the other.

A few hours after spending his time at the casino with his father, Rome arrived at the Barlow mansion at nine o'clock.

When he entered the dining room, everyone's eyes got drawn to him.

Then Chloe smirked and said, “Did you

leave to avoid doing other chores? You barely do a thing for this family, but the moment you did a simple task, you vanished for a half-day.”

“I completed what needed to get done before I left,” Rome said, striving to sound calm as possible.

With a mischievous look in her eyes, Chloe sneered and asked, “Who said that's was the only work you had to do?”

“Well, that was the only work grandmother asked him to do. I think, if she needed him to do more than that, she was going to say it, right, grandma?” Catherine softly said with a humble tone.

Even though Madam Rosey wasn't happy about being put on the spot by her granddaughter, she scowled and said, “I wouldn't indulge myself in a discussion about a worthless person.

I'm going to bed.”

Afterward, she left the table and walked past Rome without looking his way. Then Mr. Barlow silently stood to his feet and followed after her.

As Catherine was about to leave the table, Edward got up from his seat, glared at her, and said, “Follow me.”

For a second, Catherine stared at the look of sadness on her mother's face. Then she woke for the chair and walked after her father as he led her out of the dining room.

It felt uncomfortable being in the midst of people who kept staring at him hatefully, so Rome left, heading in the direction that Catherine and her father went.

When he was about to walk past the study, he heard Edward shouted, and Rome stopped, took three steps towards the door, and listened.

Unable to bear the anger in her father's eyes, Catherine hunged her head low and focused her gaze on her toes.

“You love him? You much be kidding me, Catherine! You can't fall for a nobody, especially since your grandmother seems to despise him.” Edward said, striving to get his anger under control. ①

“But I'm only answering your question sincerely. That's how I feel about Rome.” Catherine mumbled.

“A man like Rome will not make win you favor with your grandparents, and he can't help you become the top inheritor of this family. Can't you see that?”

“But he's a good man with a kind heart. Isn't that what you saw in my mother.”

Resting his hands on hips, Edward sighed heavily and said, “And I'm still

suffering the coincidences of marrying a woman from a humble background unlike what your grandmother wanted for me.”

“Dad!” Catherine cried, feeling tears rolled down her cheek.

As he grabbed onto his daughter’s hands, Edward pleadingly stared at her and said, “Don’t be like your father, um ... Please, nothing good is going to come out of you being like me.”

Frowning, Rome turned away from the door and mumbled, “Not if I have a saying in it.”

 Comments

 Vote (16.5K)



Chapter Forty-Two

The sound of his ringtone forced Rome to raise his eyelids, and his gaze rested on Catherine, sleeping peacefully on his arm.

Then he slowly pulled his hand from under her, picked his phone from the nightstand, and got out of bed.

Afterward, he left the room, stood by the door, and answered the call.

“Boss.” Brook’s voice echoed into his ear.

“Speak,” Rome said, leaning against the wall.

“It has happened.”

“I will meet you guys at the casino.”

After ending the call, Rome was about to go back into the room when he saw

Jeff, hurrying down the hallway with his phone pressed against his ear.

“What? Faulty wiring! I'm on my way.” Jeff said as he marched past Rome without looking his way.

Taking in a deep breath, Rome pushed the door open and headed inside.

By seven, he and Catherine came downstairs and met everyone seated in the living room.

“What's going on?” Catherine mumbled, noticing the distress on everyone's faces.

No one spoke for a while. Then she met her father's gaze, and he said, “Warehouse 2091 is on fire.”

“What? How?”

“Well, the warehouse had a power outage yesterday. The electricians did some work on the wires by noon. But

this morning, the warehouse is in flames.”

For a moment, Catherine said nothing, then her gaze swayed towards Chloe, and she felt her heart miss a beat.

“Can you all just say out loud what you guys are already thinking!” Chloe abruptly said, glaring at the faces in the room.

With his icy gaze fixed on her, Anthony frowned and coldly asked, “Are you the one behind this?” ①

“Why will my daughter do such a thing!” Elijah shouted, scowling at his brother.

“To sabotage my son's hard work! That warehouse was filled with construction materials for Mr. Richmond's project.”

“But that warehouse also belongs to us, ‘Barlows’, and is worth two million dollars! Why would my daughter hurt

this family just to get at your son!”

“Because she is spiteful just like her father!”

“Spiteful!”

In a fit of rage, Mr. Barlow glared at Elijah and coldly intoned, “Chloe is not two, is she?”

“But father, Anthony is spilling nonsense about my child,” Elijah said with a hint of nervousness in his eyes.

“I don't expect such a ridiculous attitude from you, Eli! Let Chloe speak on her behalf!”

“Sorry, father.”

Watching everyone's gaze swayed towards her, Chloe pulled her brow together in a frown and said, “I'm not behind the fire.”

“Like you are fooling anyone by saying that.” Richard mockingly said.

“I swear. This isn't my doing!”

“You seem so set on getting revenge on my brother. You even told me three weeks ago to warn him to back down or you will strike.”

When Chloe looked her grandmother away, tears began rolling from the corners of her eyes as she pitifully said, “Grandmother, I'm innocent. The warehouse fire is not my doing.”

For a moment, Madam Rosey kept her silence. But as she watched the tears fall from her granddaughter's chin, her heart softened.

“Chloe wouldn't be this reckless to do something this damaging to the family.” Madam Rosey said, gazing at her husband.

“Well, it might be the cause of faulty wiring after all.” Mr. Barlow half-heartedly mumbled, knowing not to go

against his wife before the family.

Even though the others maintained their silence, no one believed that the warehouse getting burned down was a coincidence. But since Madam Rosey and Mr. Barlow had deemed it as such, they all kept their thoughts to themselves.

“Ma’am, sir, breakfast has been served.” Susanna, their head maid said when she entered the living room.

Staring at Catherine’s worried expression, Rome took her hand in his and mumbled, “What’s on your mind?”

As she gazed at him, she faintly smiled and said, “I’m not sure. My thoughts are all fussy.”

“You should eat something.”

“Mhm.”

A few minutes later, they were are in

the dining room, and the Barlow family took their seats at the table.

Breakfast went on peacefully, even though there was tension in the room.

After a few minutes had gone by quietly, the sound of footsteps approaching the dining hall echoed into the room, and everyone's attention got drawn to the entrance.

A few seconds later, a group of officers, led by Jeff entered the dining room, and the place fell silent for a moment.

“What's going on?” Mr. Barlow said, standing from his seat.

“We are sorry for bashing in, but your grandson has filed a case with our station.” One of the officers said.

Leaving the table, Mr. Barlow approached the policemen and then scowled at his grandson as he walked past him.

“We presently have a suspect in custody from the Darklight gang that claimed that your granddaughter paid them to touch the warehouse to ashes, and we have a warrant for her arrest.” An officer said, taking out a paper from his pocket.

The fork in Chloe's hand dropped onto her plate as she stared at the officers, then at her father before gazing at her grandfather.

Suddenly, an officer approached her, took out a handcuff, and reached for her wrists. ①

But she pulled away and shouted, “Get your filthy hands off me. I didn't do this!”

“Miss Chloe, you are under arrest, and anything you say will be used against you in the court of law. Please cooperate with the law.” The officer said, gently grabbing her hands before snapping the

cuffs on them.

“But...But...”

“Let's go, Miss Chloe. You can explain yourself at the station.”

With her head hung, Chloe stood to her feet. Then she obediently walked along with the officers.

When they reached Mr. Barlow, Chloe lifted her head, gazed into his cold eyes, and said, “Grandfather, I...”

“Don't lie to me.” Mr. Barlow said with a look of disappointment on his face.

“I did hire the Darklight gang to touch the warehouse, but it was already on fire when they got there. I swear that I didn't do this.”

“You brat!”

Without holding back his anger, Mr. Barlow raised his hand and smacked Chloe hard on her cheek.

Her teary eyes widened as she gazed at the rage in grandfather's expression. Then she stared down at the tile.

"Franco!" Madam Rosey cried, glaring at her husband.

"Take her away. No one is allowed to bill her out until tomorrow." Mr. Barlow said as he turned away from Chloe.

"But father!" Elijah said, hastily standing to his feet.

Fixing his angry eyes on everyone, Mr. Barlow scowled and said, "This is my final decision on this matter."

A frown crossed Rome's face as he watched Chloe getting escorted out of the dining room by the police.

Then he stared at Charles, then at Richard, before focusing on Jeff, and his frown deepened to a scowl.

Chapter Forty-Three

When the BMW door opened, Mr. Orlando gazed back at Rome, entering the car.

Then he waited for him to shut the door before saying, "Good morning, young master."

"Morning," Rome absentmindedly mumbled with his head crowned with thoughts.

"Where to?"

"To the casino."

Nodding slightly, Mr. Orlando focused on the road, start the car engine, and drove off.

After an hour's drive, he brought the car to a stop in front of the skyscraper, and Rome got out followed by K.

Then both men marched into the building, heading for the main hall.

Once they entered the room, the music stopped, the gambling ceased, and everyone's gazes center on Rome.

Suddenly, they all stood to their feet, bowed slightly, and shouted in unison, "Morning, boss!"

"Brook, Blaze, Scar, meet me upstairs," Rome said, shoving his hands into his pockets.

Then he walked away with K two steps behind him, and Brook, Blaze, Scar, following after him.

When they all arrived in the private room, Scar shut the door behind him. Then he stood humbly along with Brook and Blaze, and they waited patiently for Rome to say something.

With his gaze fixed on theirs, Rome

leaned back on the couch, crossed his leg over the other, and coldly uttered, “There was a filial play yesterday.”

“Yes, boss. The Darklight Gang didn't carry through with Chloe's order since the warehouse was already on fire when they got there.” Blaze said, eyeing Brook.

“Sorry, boss, for the late update. We got the information this morning.” Scar mumbled, gazing at his shoes.

With a calm expression, Rome smirked and said, “Well, this still falls right in line with my plans. What I need to know now is, ‘why did a member of the Darklight gang lie.’”

“We plan to visit their headquarters and get the answers.” Brook hastily intoned.

Standing to his feet, Rome stared at their faces one after the other and said, “Let's go.”

A few minutes later, two black SUVs arrived in the yard of an abandoned warehouse, and the five men standing guard at the door tightened their grip around the iron pumps in their hands.

“Let me handle this. Darklight is involved with my wife's cousin, and if you guys intervene, it will raise suspicion since you all work for my father.” Rome said on the phone.

“But, boss,” Brook mumbled, sounding nervous as he stared at Scar and Blaze.

“I can take care of myself.”

“I know... but...”

With his gaze focus on the phone screen, Blaze hesitated for a moment before saying, “Big boss isn't going to be happy if you get wounded.”

“Then I won't,” Rome said as he noticed K eyeing from the V-mirror.

“Okay, boss. We trust that you are capable of handling this.”

“Good. Stay in the car and don't get out no matter what.”

After ending the call, Scar stared at the tinted glass. Then he gazed at Brook and said, “Should we watch him from the cam monitor.”

“Of course. Turn it on.” Blaze hastily said.

Frowning, Rome stepped down from the car, wearing a black coat with a dark shade on his face, a black cap, and a mask.

“I don't care who you are, but take another step closer, and you will get hurt.” One of the men said with a creepy smile on his lips.

With not a care to spare, Rome matched for the warehouse door, and in a fit of

rage, a guy rushed to him, raising the iron pump.

But when he swung it, Rome grabbed his wrist, slightly smirked, and viciously stepped him into his stomach, sending him back five steps before he hit the ground.

“I'm here to see your boss and not to fight you guys. But if you force my hands, I will hurt you. Is that clear?” Rome calmly said, yet his tone bore aggression.

As they watched the men hit the irons in their palms while surrounding their boss, Brook was about to push the car door open.

But he froze when he watched Rome's foot slammed against a guy's cheek as he tried to strike him with a pump. ①

“I simply want to talk,” Rome said, sniffing as he rubbed his nose.

“Nonsense, you enter our territory and attack us! Are you counting death!” One of the men screamed with mad eyes.

“Technically, you guys attack me.”

“Haha! He got jokes! Let's see if you will find this funny after I, scorpion, make you lose a tooth or all of them.”

Letting out a sigh, Rome slightly drew his left foot behind, balanced himself, and said, “Let's dance.”

While gazing at the monitor, Brook's jaw hung loose, Scar's eyes widened, and Blaze stared blankly at the screen as they watched Rome beat up all five men without getting hit once.

Spitting his teeth on the ground, Scorpion stared at all four of them, laying in the bloody dirty before gazing at Rome with fear in his eyes.

“Who are you?” Scorpion cried out.

“I'm just a man who wants to have a word with your boss. So, are you going to take me to him, or do we need to do this entire dance over?” Rome causally intoned.

The warehouse door flew open, and Scorpion rushed inside with Rome walking behind him.

Trembling in fear, he led Rome to a room in the back and pushed the door opened. Then he entered and Rome stepped in after him.

“Boss, this guy wants to speak with you,” Scorpion mumbled, avoiding the cold eyes of the man seated behind the desk.

“What happened to your face, and why are you missing four teeth?” His boss asked with his gaze focused on Rome.

“There was a fight.”

“He did this to you?”

“Yes.”

In a rush, the leader of the Darklight gang pulled out a gun from his side, pointed it at Rome, and said, “You woke up and chose to die today!”

With calmness in his eyes, Rome walked over to the desk, took a seat in the spare chair, and said, “Put aside the weapon. I'm here to buy information.”

After a brief moment of hesitation, the leader of the Darklight gang rested the gun on the desk and asked, “How much are you willing to pay? Information doesn't come cheap.”

“Name your price?”

“A million bucks.”

“Deal.”

The room fell silent as Scorpion and his

boss doubtfully gazed at Rome.

Then his boss cleared his throat and asked, “What kind of information do you need?”

“Who paid you to double-cross Chloe Barlow?” Rome asked, gazing directly into his eyes.

 Comments

 Vote (16.5K) 

Chapter Forty-Four

For a moment, the leader of the Darklight gang maintained his silence as he tapped his fingers on the desk and coldly stared at Rome.

Then he sat up straight and said, "1.5 million."

"Fine," Rome said with less patience in his tone.

"Paper before info."

"I will wire the money to you, but if the information you give me isn't solid, you will pay me back with more than just cash."

"Is that a threat!"

"See it as such because it is! Now give me an account number."

For a moment, there was a flicker of

fear in the leader of the Darklight gang's eyes. Then he pulled himself together and called out the account number.

It took a few minutes, then his phone buzzed on the desk, and he picked it up, staring at the screen in disbelief.

“1.5 million. Sender, ‘anonymous.’” He read out loud before gazing at Rome and asking, “Who are you?”

“Where's my information?” Rome coldly intoned, striving to hold on to the last shred of patience he had left.

“Right. Umm... Well, we didn't double-cross her.”

“I don't take kindly to being made a fool of.”

Hearing the seriousness in Rome's tone, the leader of the Darklight gang eyed his gun and said, “We didn't do it, but one of us did. That bastard lied on u

s, forcing the gang to split up and go into hiding because of the authorities.”

“Do you at least know who hired him?” Rome asked, feeling his frustration growing.

“No. But, I know he did it to pay his son's hospital bill.”

“So, whoever paid his son's medical fees is responsible for setting Chloe up?”

“Haha! You just hit the nail right on the head!”

Struggling against his anger, Rome picked up a sheet and pen off the desk. Then he rested it in front of the leader of the Darklight gang and said, “Write down every information about him and his son.”

For a moment, the leader of the Darklight gang did nothing as he blankly stared at the sheet. Then he

exhaled, picked up the pen, and started writing.

After he got done and laid the pen down, Rome took it off the desk, stood to his feet, and said, “For your sake, I hope this gives me the information that I need.”

Then he walked out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

“Who's that rich jerk!” the leader of the Darklight gang shouted.

“I don't know. But whoever he is, he's not simple.” Scorpion mumbled, feeling a shiver run down his spine.

When Rome came out of the warehouse, he stepped past the four wounded men, still laying on the ground, and walked to the SUV.

Then he got into the front seat and gazed back at Brook, Scar, and Blaze staring wide-eyed at him.

“I'm just going to say it, ‘Our boss is awesome!’” Scar shouted, beaming at Rome.

But when he saw Brook eyeing him, he coughed and put on a serious expression.

“Get someone to find out who recently made a payment on the medical bill of Leo Dash at Redemption hospital,” Rome said, handing the paper over to Blaze.

“Yes, boss. I will get my tech guys working on it right now.” Blaze said with his gaze focused on the sheet.

After faintly smiling at them, Rome pushed the car door open and got down. Then he walked over to the other vehicle and got into the backseat.

“Where to next, young master.” Mr. Orlando asked, staring in the V-mirror.

“Call Hanson. Tell him to meet me at the clubhouse.” Rome said as he took off his cap.

A few hours later, the SUV made a stop in the parking lot of “White Clubhouse,” and Rome got out of the car along with Mr. Orlando and K. Then the three of them walked inside.

The place looked deserted since Mr. Orlando booked the entire area for the meet-up.

Mr. Richmond was seated at the last table in the right corner of the room.

When he and Rome’s gaze met, he stood to his feet, and he didn't sit down until Rome reached the table and took a seat.

“Is this meeting about the warehouse fire?” Hanson nervously uttered.

“Yes and no,” Rome said, taking off his

shade.

“What?”

“I need you to withdraw the project from Jeff.”

“Uh?”

Fixing his gaze on Hanson’s confused expression, Rome frowned and said, “Cancel the contract with Jeff.”

“But... b-ut... The only reason I haven't made noise about the warehouse fire is that you recommended Jeff to me and I thought he had your favor.” Hanson mumbled, lowering his brows.

“I favor no one in that household, but my wife.”

“So you want me to give the project to Miss Catherine?”

“No, I need you to give it to DBA INC.”

“Uh! W-ell... But... Um, you want me to

give the project to DreamTeam rival company?”

As Rome watched Hanson stare at him with a mixture of confusion and anxiety in his expression, Rome leaned back in his seat and said, “Yes.”

“I don't understand,” Hanson mumbled out loud.

“You don't have to. You just need to cancel the contract, get your compensation, and hand the project over to DBA INC. Is that clear?”

“Yes, it is.”

“Good,”

After wearing his shade, Rome stood from the chair, and walked away, leaving Mr. Richmond staring behind him in fear.

When they got to the car, Blaze rushed over to Rome and said, “Boss, Wreck

wants to speak with you. He found out the identity of the Barlow behind the payment.”

Taking the phone from Blaze, Rome rested it against his ear and listened. Then after a few minutes into the call, he calmly intoned, “Thanks for the information.”

Afterward, he ended the call, he smirked, and said, “I guess another Barlow is about to visit a cell.”

“Does this mean Chloe is getting out?” Mr. Orlando asked, feeling a bit lost.

“Well, Mr. Barlow said that no one is allowed to bill her out until tomorrow. Who am I to go against the old man's wish? We just have to wait for tomorrow.” ①

“That's true. So where are we heading next?”

“Take me to my wife. I miss her

already.” ¹

 Comments

 Vote (16.5K)



Chapter Forty-Five

The car was quiet as Mr. Orlando drove Rome to the DreamTeam company.

After a while of sitting in silence, Rome pulled his phone from his coat pocket and dialed his father.

Once Mr. Ford answered the call, Rome stared away from the windshield and mumbled, "Hello, father."

"You got a favor to ask. What is it?" Mr. Ford's voice echoed into his ear.

"Hey! You are painting me like a terrible child. Can't a son call his father to say 'Hi' without it involving a flavor?"

"So you don't want me to do something for you?"

"Actually, I do. I need you to call the chief of police, inform him that I'm

about to call him, and then send his number to me.”

“Other people get caring sons and I'm stuck with a child who only calls me when he needs a favor.” 2

Holding in his laugh, Rome rested back on the seat and asked, “What do you need from me, dad?”

The line was silent for a few seconds. Then Mr. Ford's voice echoed from the speaker. “Can't a father guilt his son without having a hidden agenda?”

“If that's the case, I'm hanging off.”

“Wait! I need you by my side for an important meeting next week.”

“Okay.”

After Rome ended the call, it took a few minutes before his phone buzzed.

“That was quick,” Rome mumbled, staring at the screen.

Then he clicked on the number in his inbox and called it.

“Good day, Chief,” Rome said when his call got answered.

“Haha! How can I allow the young Ford to call me by such a title? Derek or Mr. Brown will be just fine.” Derek said, gazing at the flag on his desk.

“Okay, Mr. Brown. I need to speak with the member of the Darklight gang that you arrested today.”

“Of course. Give me a few minutes to get him on the phone.”

When the call got canceled, Rome gazed at the V-mirror and said, “Stop me at the nearest flower shop.”

“Yes, young master.” Mr. Orlando calmly intoned, gazing away from the V-mirror and focusing on the road.

When the car came to a stop a few

minutes later, the sound from his ringtone drew Rome's attention toward his screen. Then he answered the call and rested the phone against his ear.

“The COP said that you wanted to speak with me. Who are you?” A deep man's voice flowed from the speaker.

“Congenital heart disease (CHD) is a deadly and expensive sickness. I can get Leo the treatment he needs at any hospital of your choice and pay every expense.” Rome calmly stated.

“How do you know about my son and his sickness!”

“I don't plan to explain that, but I know that the money you got for double-crossing your gang isn't still enough to take care of Leo's situation. Let me help you with him.”

“What's the catch?”

“Tell the truth about who paid you to

betray your gang and lie on Chloe Barlow's name.”

“That's it?”

“Yes. That's the only catch.”

After a moment of silence, Rome heard him say, “I will do it.”

“Just like that?” Rome doubtfully intoned.

“Even though I don't know who you are, the fact that you can bend the chief of police to your will means that you are not a simple person and isn't someone I should go against.”

“Smart, put in your confession tomorrow morning, and you will get released. A man of mine will contact you concerning your son after you get out.”

“Okay, I will.”

“Good.”

After ending the call, Rome smiled brightly and mumbled, "Let's get my wife some flower."

A cute smile crept on Catherine's lip when her office door opened, and Rome walked inside, holding a bouquet in his hand.

After closing the door behind him, he walked over to her and mumbled, "Hey, wife."

"What's the occasion?" Catherine softly said, beaming at him.

"There's none. I saw these, and thought to buy something pretty for someone beautiful."

"How cheesy."

"But it's true. I couldn't find a flower that matches your beauty, so I chose the prettiest one, but it's still nothing compared to the gorgeous woman

seated before me.”

Even though she tried her hardest not to, Catherine's smile kept widening as she chuckled softly.

Then she stood from her seat, walked over to Rome, and accepted the bouquet.

“Thank you. They are pretty.”

Catherine whispered, gazing into his eyes.

“Do you want to have lunch with me?” Rome said, not taking his eyes off hers.

“Umm, yes!”

“Okay, should we leave now?”

“Yeah,”

Putting his hand around her shoulder, Rome pulled her into his arm and guarded her out of the office.

A few minutes later, Catherine drove her car toward the food truck and

parked a few distances away from it.

“Are you sure you don't want to go to a restaurant? I have been saving up, and I can afford decent meals.” Rome said, gazing at her as she turned off the car engine.

“But I want to eat here,” Catherine mumbled, meeting his eyes.

As he gazed at her adorable face, Rome couldn't help, but smiled and said, “Okay.”

After they got down from the car, he and Catherine walked over to the food truck, and the moment the chief saw her, he smiled brightly and said, “Hey, my regular customer.”

“Do you eat here often?” Rome asked, gazing at her in shock.

“Ummm... Yes.” Catherine mumbled as she avoided his eyes.

Feeling a bit confused, Rome paused for a second and then asked, “Why?”

“Because it's my new favorite place,” Catherine mumbled, darting her eyes around.

“Okay, is there a reason?”

“No!”

A look of shyness crossed Catherine face as she stared away from Rome and focused on the chef. Then she started placing in her order.

After their food got handed to them, Rome and Catherine walked over to the bench and sat down.

“Do you want me to bring you here often?” Rome slyly said, watching her pick up a french fry.

“Yes,” Catherine absentmindedly said before biting her fries.

After allowing her to eat a few more of them, Rome smirked and asked, “Why?”

“Because it's the place we had our first kiss.” Catherine subconsciously mumbled.

Then she paused as she gazed up at him and pressed her lips together.

“I guess it's my new favorite place too. I will definitely be taking you here more often.” Rome mumbled with satisfaction in his eyes as he put his hand into her bowl and ate a fry out of it. ①

By eight-fifteen, Catherine and Rome arrived at the Barlow mansion, and the entire atmosphere in the dining room was depressing.

After Catherine had sat down, Jeff entered a few minutes later, and the tension in the room became extremely

uncomfortable.

“Mr. Hanson called me this afternoon to tell me that he wants you off his project and is canceling the contract with DreamTeam.” Mr. Barlow said, scowling at his grandson as he took his seat.

“But, I worked my butt off for this project! He can’t just take it from me!” Jeff harshly intoned.

“He can, if he's the client, and now we are stuck with a three million dollars compensation to him.”

“This is all Chloe’s fault.”

Glaring at Jeff, Elijah tightened his grip on the fork and coldly said, “Take my child's name out of your hypocrisy mouth! You are the reason she is sleeping in such a filthy place tonight!”

“The only one who should get blamed for Chloe sleeping in jail is herself for

causing this family so much loss!”

Anthony harshly said.

“If we should be putting people from this family in jail for their bad actions, Chloe wouldn't be the only one in there!”

“You should watch your tongue before you bite it and cause yourself to bleed!”

The room fell silent as Rome studied the faces of Anthony, William, and Elijah. Then he slightly smirked.

“Can we not have a moment of peace in this house! It's like nowadays, it's one issue to another.” Madam Rosey said, standing to her feet. ①

“Are you not going to eat?” Mr. Barlow asked with his gaze on his wife.

Staring at the faces of her family, Madam Rosey frowned and said, “I have lost my appetite.”

Then she left the table and walked out of the dining hall.

“Look what you all have done! You guys have caused the family tradition to get broken. I'm disappointed with what this family has become!” Mr. Barlow lashed out before following his wife.

It was silent for a second. Then a noise arose with everyone except Catherine, her parents, and Rome, throwing despicable words at each other.

When Catherine decided that she had had enough, she woke from her seat, grabbed Rome by his hand, and pulled him along with her as she left the dining hall. ②

After they got to the room, she rushed into his arms, hugged onto him tightly, and sobbed in silent.

‘I’m sorry that you are getting hurt because of all this. But I promise that

once I'm done, your cousins will be beneath you.' Rome thought, as he patted her back gently.

 Comments

 Vote (16.5K)



Chapter Forty-Six

The first light of dawn met Rome already awake in bed.

After blankly staring at the ceiling for a while, his ringtone drew his attention from the chandelier and onto his phone.

Then he threw the sheet off him and sat up, resting his feet on the cold tiles before picking up his phone from the nightstand.

Afterward, he headed into the bathroom, drew his pattern, unlocked the screen, and answered the call.

“Good morning, young Ford.” Derek's voice flowed from the speaker.

“What is it, Mr. Brown?” Rome asked with his focus on his reflection in the mirror.

“I just want you to know that a member

of the Darklight gang has got released, and we will be visiting the Barlow mansion this morning.”

“Thanks for the heads up.”

“My pleasure.”

After canceling the call, he walked back into the room, stared at Catherine, sleeping peacefully, and thought, ‘Today is not going to be pretty. I hope you can handle it.’

The maid had just finished setting up breakfast when members of the Barlow family started walking into the dining hall.

As they took their seats around the table, Catherine and Rome walked into the room.

When Edward’s eyes caught a glimpse of Catherine holding onto Rome’s hand, he scowled at his daughter and ignored her when she smiled at him.

But Catherine paid no mind to his behavior as she let go of Rome's hand and joined the family at the table.

After they had all gotten seated, the dining room felt like a reading room because no one uttered a word to each other.

Suddenly, the sound of footsteps in the corridor shattered the silence, causing everyone to focus on the entrance.

The first person to walk into the room was Chloe.

With rage burning in her eyes, she marched straight to Charles and slapped him hard across his left cheek.

“You prick! I slept in that disgusting place because of you!” Chloe shouted, raising her hand.

But as she swung it at Charles, he grabbed her wrist and shouted, “That's

enough! I don't know what you are talking about.”

At that moment, five officers walked into the room and stopped a few distances away from the table.

Then one of them glared at Charles and said, “I beg to differ. We got a confession this morning from a member of the Darklight gang stating that you paid him to lie on Miss Chloe.”

For a while, it became silent as the grave as everyone stared at Charles.

“What are you saying?” Mr. Barlow finally asked, sounding aggravated.

The officer took her attention off Charles's anxious face, focused on his grandfather, and said, “The warehouse wasn't burned by the gang your granddaughter hired.”

“What!” Madam Rosey unintentionally shouted.

“We did some follow-up on the gang member’s confession and checked the CCTV footage of buildings around the warehouse. It turns out that the fire was already happening when they got there.”

“So she got arrested for nothing!”

“Well, technically, she did hire a gang to burn down the warehouse, but with the newfound evidence and confession, yes, she shouldn't have slept in jail.”

The look of hostility and anger he was getting from his grandparents had Charles feeling a bit sweaty in his palm, and when his gaze met Elijah’s icy stare, he hastily looked down at his plate.

“You are truly your father’s son!” Elijah coldly said.

“Oh, stop preaching like a saint. You’ve done your fair share of bad deeds, so

don't paint my son black, when you are muddier than him!" William coldly intoned, glaring at his brother.

In a fit of rage, Mr. Barlow banged his hands on the table, stood to his feet, and shouted, "I have heard enough rubbish! We have strangers in our home, how could you two act in such a manner! What is this family turning into!"

The room fell silent immediately, and Mr. Barlow slowly sat back down.

Then he stared at Charles, striving to still calm, and asked, "Why did you set your cousin up?"

"I have been keeping tabs on Chloe since she threatened Jeff." Charles mumbled with his head bowed.

"That doesn't answer my question!"

"When I heard that the warehouse accidentally caught on fire and got

informed that Darklight wasn't behind it, I still wanted Chloe to take the fall. That why.”

“How could you be hateful towards your blood!”

“Just because the warehouse accidentally caught on fire, it does mean that she wasn't going to go through with it!”

Scowling at her cousin, Chloe folded her arms and lashed out, “Can you stop saying ‘accidentally.’ That warehouse fire wasn't a coincidence!”

“Wait! Don't put your mess on me! I only wanted to teach you a lesson by letting you take the fall, but I wasn't behind the fire!” Charles angrily toned.

Then he gazed at an officer, and she frowned at him and said, “I'm sorry, but you will still have to come to the station with us. You are our only leading suspect right now.”

“I'm telling you all that the fire was an accident and that I wasn't involved in!”

“Well, you can explain that at the station. Afterward, we can set a bill for you, and your family can bill you out.” ①

“I'm not going into that place! It will tarnish my reputation!”

A bitter laugh escaped Chloe's lips as she stared at her cousin and aggressively said, “What a selfish jerk! You worry about your dignity but had no problem ruining mine!”

“You deserve what you got!” Charles lashed out in annoyance.

“So do you!”

Letting out a heavy sigh, Mr. Barlow stood to his feet and said, “Charles will suffer the same fate as Chloe and spend tonight in prison! No one is going to bill him out.”

“Grandpa, I swear to you that I'm not the one behind this!”

“Whether it was an accident or not, my words remained the same. Officer arrested him!”

With fear beaming in his eyes, Charles pleadingly gazed at his grandfather and cried out, “Grandpa, you have to believe me.”

“I'm ashamed of you Charles. My heartbreak by the sight of you.”

Uttering no further word, Charles stood to his feet and obediently followed the officer with anger welling up inside of him.

After watching Charles and the officers walk out of the living room, Rome stared back at the faces at the table and thought, ‘I don't believe in coincidence. Someone cause that fire.’

At that moment he noticed Catherine staring at him, and when he fixed his gaze on her, she sadly smiled.

‘For your sake, I need to know who did this before moving on to my next plan.’ Rome thought, faintly smiling at her.

 Comments

 Vote (16.5K)



Chapter Forty-Seven

When Catherine and Rome came out of the mansion, she gazed into his eyes, and he saw sadness in hers, even though she tried to mask it with a smile.

“I should get going,” Catherine mumbled, keeping the fake smile on her lips.

Without waiting for him to say something, she turned to leave, but Rome held her arm and gently turned her around to face him.

Although he had his plans for the day, he looked at her with a pleading expression and said, “Do you want to skip work today and hang out with me today?”

“Yes, but...” Catherine said, hesitating for a second.

“Forget about everything else and

answer me sincerely, okay?”

“Okay, I want to hang out with you.”

“Great. What kind of home-cooked meal do you like?”

A smile crept on Catherine's lips as she chuckled and asked, “Why?”

“Because we are spending the day at my dad's, and he likes my cooking better than takeout,” Rome mumbled, feeling proud when he noticed admiration in Catherine's eyes.

“You can cook?”

“Well, growing up, it was just my dad and me. He did the cooking for quite a while until I made him teach me his recipe and then forced him to quit since he was getting older.”

Although Catherine felt shy to say it, she smiled and thought, ‘You are one impressive guy, and here I thought that

I was marrying a loser. It turned out, I got married to the right man.'

After a few minutes had gone by with them staring in silence at each other, Catherine snapped out of her thoughts, smiled, and said, "I'm not a picky eater."

"Okay then. We can get some ingredients from the supermarket."

A while later, Catherine and Rome arrived at Mr. Miller's shop. Then he got out of the driver's seat, walked over to her door, and opened it for her.

"You should go inside. I will get the bags." Rome said as he watched her get down from the car.

"Let me help you with them."
Catherine softly uttered.

When Rome was about to reply, his phone buzzed, and he gave her a brief smile before walking away.

“Hey, boss. I, along with his dad, have settled the arrangement for Leo’s medical procedures. He will get flown out of the country by two o’clock.”

Scar’s voice flowed out of the speakers after he answered the call.

“Good. I have another task for you guys.” Rome said, eyeing Catherine as she walked towards the car trunk.

“What is it?”

“Charles didn't cause the fire. Someone else is involved. I need you guys to dig deeper into the warehouse accident and leave no stone turned.”

“Are you coming to the casino?”

“No, I'm taking a day off to spend time with my wife. That's why I need you guys to be careful and investigate undercover.”

“Okay, boss. We got this and won't let

you down.”

After ending the car, Rome paused for a second as he watched Catherine walking towards the door with four bags in her hands. ①

Then she stopped, stared at him, and said, “Yours are in the trunk.”

Afterward, she headed into the building, and Rome couldn't help but laugh faintly.

A few minutes later, he came into the shop, and he got met with Mr. Miller's angry expression.

“Good morning, Father,” Rome mumbled, pretending like he didn't see the anger in his eyes.

“You troublesome child! Is this how I raised you, allowing my daughter-in-law to carry such heavy bags.” Mr. Miller lashed out.

Smiling with her eyes, Catherine gently held onto Mr. Miller's arm and said, "Father-in-law, I wanted to carry those bags. It's not Rome's fault!"

Immediately, Mr. Miller's expression softened as he beamed at Catherine and gently intoned, "Is that so? My daughter-in-law is such an admirable woman."

Shocked by his father's sudden change of tone, Rome shook his head and mumbled, "I guess we now know who you favor the most here, and is not your son."

Playing deaf to Rome's words, Mr. Miller escorted Catherine to the couch and gently uttered, "You can sit down, and I will get you a glass of water."

Even though Catherine wore a smile on her lips, she felt sad about how she's getting treated by Rome's father and how he gets treated by her family. But

she also felt appreciative that his father liked her.

When Mr. Miller left the room, Rome hurried behind him with the bags in his hands and entered the kitchen a few seconds after him.

“I feel terrible seeing you still living in this place,” Rome mumbled, setting the bags on the counter.

“I'm a simple man, Rome. A life of wealth is not something that I feel comfortable with.” Mr. Miller said as he reached for the glass.

“But...”

“Rome, you are not a terrible son, I'm just a headstrong and old-fashioned man.”

“You can't continue to stay here. You are getting older, and you need a life of comfort.”

“I am comfortable. This shop and this place is a part of me, and I don't want to part with it even though you offer me a mansion.”

Although he and Mr. Miller had had this conversation numerous times, Rome was hoping that he would get a different response today.

However, he decided to respect his father's wish, even though he wanted to give him a better life.

For a while, there was silence in the kitchen as Rome unpacked the groceries. Then he noticed that Mr. Miller was gazing at him, so he stopped what he was doing and faced his father.

“When do you plan on telling her your identity? You can't keep her in the dark forever.” Mr. Miller said with concern in his eyes.

“I know, father. I will, but not now. Not

when she is still at the mercy of her family.”

“Rome,”

“Don't worry, father. When I put them all beneath her and she's at the top, then I can feel comfortable letting go of my disguise and take on my true identity.”

For a moment, Mr. Miller gazed at his son with worry in his eyes. Then he sighed, filled the glass with water, and walked out of the kitchen.

A few minutes after Mr. Miller left, Rome was about to start the stove when his phone began vibrating on the counter.

Walking away from the stove, he approached the counter, picked up his phone, and answered the call.

“What is it?” Rome asked, staring directly at the kitchen entrance.

“The reason we couldn't find any leads before is that no one from the underground world wasn't involved in the warehouse fire.” Brook's voice echoed from the speakers. ①

“What do you mean?”

“It was an ordinary citizen who carried out the deed, and he's one of the electricians that worked on the power outages at the warehouse before it caught up in flames.”


A look of hesitation crossed Rome's face as he paused for a moment before saying, “How sure are you about this assumption because we can't afford to arrest the wrong person again.”

“I know. That's why we dug out everything about this guy...” Brook's voice flowed into his ear.

“And,”

“It turns out that he is just a poor electrician from a humble background, but he suddenly got a sum of fifty thousand into his account a day before the fire.”

“Who wire the money?”

“We haven't figured that out yet. Our hackers are tracing the account, and three hours from now, you will have a name.” 

“Good.”

 Comments

 Vote (16.5K) 

Chapter Forty-Eight

Finally, after preparing multiple dishes, Rome set the table and left the kitchen.

When he arrived into the shop, he met Catherine and Mr. Miller, chatting happily, and the corners of his lips rose.

At that moment, Catherine's gaze swayed towards him, and she bore worry in her eyes as she watched sweats dripping down his skin.

“Are you okay?” Catherine asked, standing to her feet.

“Yes, the table is set. You and dad should come and eat.” Rome said as his cheeks dimple.

A few minutes later, they were all seated around the table in the kitchen, and Mr. Miller's eyes twinkled while he inhaled deeply and then mumbled, “I missed the smell of food cooked by

you.”

“Is his cooking that good?” Catherine asked, gazing at Mr. Miller.

“Yeah. You should give it a try.”

“Okay,”

After a brief pause, Catherine picked up her fork, wrapped spaghetti around it, and took a bite.

“This is really good!” Catherine mumbled as her face glowed with excitement.

“He learned from the best.” Mr. Miller proudly stated.

Fixing her eyes on Rome, Catherine's face radiated with joy as she said, “You raised an amazing son.”

“I can't take all the credit. Others impacted him more than I did.” Mr. Miller said, eyeing Rome for a moment before focusing on his food.

A few seconds after his father's remark, Rome's phone started buzzing, and when he took a look at it, he saw "Dad" blinking on the screen.

"Excuse me," Rome mumbled, standing from his seat.

Then he left the kitchen and walked out of the building before answering the call.

"Dad, what's up?" Rome mumbled, eyeing the shop door.

"Asher is having his company's twenty-anniversary party this evening and he wants to see you." Mr. Ford said from the other end of the line.

"Asher? That name sounds familiar."

"That's because he and I go a long way back when he was nothing and you were just five. He's like an uncle to you."

Hesitating for a second, Rome took a

moment to think before saying, “How big is this party?”

After a few seconds had passed, Mr. Ford finally said, “Asher is known for living lavishly, so only the wealthiest of the wealthy are going to be there.”

“Does that include the Barlows?”

“They haven’t reached the social ladder to attend such a party, and the fact that two of their grandkids got arrested wouldn’t help them climb that ladder faster.”

“Invite them. The family attending such an event will increase their reputation.”

“Rome,”

“For Catherine’s sake. I don’t want the family name going down the drainage.” 1

“Fine!”

“Tell uncle Asher that we will have a

more decent conversation another time. But for this evening, he and I are strangers.”

“Okay, because of my daughter-in-law, I will grant your request.”

“Thanks,”

“Oh, say ‘hi’ to Miller for me.”

Before Rome could respond, Mr. Ford canceled the call, and he was left in a state of shock for a second.

“Is that old crook keeping tabs on me?” Rome mumbled, shoving his phone into his pocket.

Then he headed back into the building, and when he got into the kitchen, Mr. Miller's gaze swayed towards him.

“Is everything okay?” Catherine asked with a trace of worry in her expression.

“Yeah. We should continue eating before the food gets cold.” Rome said as

he took his seat at the table.

The moment he picked up his fork, his ringtone caused him to pause and gazed at his phone.

Then he glanced at Catherine and Mr. Miller before answering the call.

“Boss, we tracked the account and found out who deposited the money.” Blaze excited voices echoed from the phone speakers.

“Oh, really. Thank you for telling me. I will be at the site tomorrow.” Rome said, keeping his cool.

Then he ended the call before Blaze could utter another word.

“It was work,” Rome mumbled, staring down at his plate.

The morning naturally shifted into the afternoon, and before Catherine and Rome could realize it, it was six o'clock.

“Dad, enough of the embarrassing photos. I think my wife knows from all the sixty pictures that I was a troubled child.” Rome mumbled, sounding a bit annoyed.

Yet, two minutes later, he was laughing at another photo from the album.

“This is from the time he got into a fight with the neighbor’s eighteen years old son and ended up spraining his arm. I took the photo to remind him about the consequences of his actions.” Mr. Miller said, giggling faintly.

“That's a lot of bandages on your face and arm. How often were you in a fight?” Catherine mumbled as she struggled to hold in her laughter.

“Well, I was made fun of a lot for being poor, so I got into fights often. I couldn't just let them call my dad and me awful names without teaching them a lesson.” Rome said, sounding a bit

angry, but with a touch of sadness in his expression.

Striving to change the subject, Catherine smiled and said, "Where's your baby picture? I want to see how cute you were as a child."

The room fell silent as Mr. Miller gazed at Rome.

Suddenly, Catherine's phone rang, and both of them let out a soft breath as they watched her stand up and walk a few distances away from them.

"Dad," Catherine mumbled, keeping her voice low.

"Where are you?" Edward's voice echoed into her ear, sounding angry.

"I'm with Rome at his father's place."

"How could you abandon work to hang out with that loser! Don't you understand that now that your

grandparents are mad at your cousins, it is time for you to please them!”

“Dad, stop please.”

“Catherine, you need to forget something as stupid as love, and focus more on getting your grandparents' favor.”

“Can you stop?”

It was taking Catherine every bit of her strength to keep calm and ignore the pain her father's words were causing her.

“We have been the underdogs in this family...” Edward said, pausing as Catherine cut him off and said, “Why are you saying these things? It's not like you.”

“Things are working in our favor, Catherine, you should take this advantage and stop hanging out with a man who got nothing for him!”

“I'm going to hang off.”

The line grew silent for a while, and even though Catherine wanted to end the call, she couldn't bring herself to do so.

Finally, Edward said, “The entire family got invited to a party that only the elite can attend.”

“Okay, Rome and I are coming home.”

“No, You and Rome should meet us at the Classic Hotel. We are already on our way.”

“Fine.”

“Catherine, make sure to dress to impress and your husband should do so too. This party is important for our family statue. We don't need him embarrassing us.”

“We will.”

“Catherine, your grandmother is pretty upset with you for skipping work. Make certain to be on your best behavior when you get here.”

“Bye, dad.”

After the call got canceled, Catherine walked over to Rome and Mr. Miller with a forced smile on her face.

“Is everything okay?” Rome asked, noticing that she was faking her smile.

“Yeah. There's a party and grandmother wants us to attend.” Catherine mumbled.

Keeping his silence, Rome gazed at the time on his watch and thought, ‘It’s already time for uncle Asher party?’

 Comments

 Vote (16.5K) 

Chapter Forty-Nine

After saying their goodbyes to Mr. Miller, Rome and Catherine got into her car, and Rome drove off.

Five minutes into the drive, he stared at Catherine and mumbled, "So, what's the plan?"

"I don't know. Maybe we can find the nearest boutique and get something to wear." Catherine said, still feeling depressed about the conversation that she had with a father.

Knowing that she was in a bad mood, Rome kept silent, giving her the space she needed.

After driving for a while, he stopped in front of a boutique that he knew very well.

"We are here." Rome said, unbuckling his seat belt.

Then he looked at Catherine, struggling with hers, and he leaned in towards her and unfastened her belt.

"Thanks," Catherine whispered.

"Are you okay?" Rome asked with concern in his eyes.

"Yes... Well, no. But I will be."

"Okay, we should head in."

A look of excitement crossed Jerry's face when his boutique door opened, and his gaze rested on Rome alongside Catherine walking into the store.

It took him a minute to pull himself together. Then he darted towards them with a pleasant smile on his face.

"A good evening to you, ma'am and sir. What can I do for you two lovely couples." Jerry said, eyeing Catherine before focusing on Rome.

"Can you direct me to your ladies' room?" Catherine softly asked.

"Oh, walk straight down the corridor and stop at the last door on your right," Jerry said, pointing in the direction of the hallway.

With a soft smile, Catherine mumbled, "Thanks." Then she walked away, heading in the direction he gave her.

"Show her your best dresses and whatever she picks, bill it to my card, not hers," Rome said, taking his black card from his pocket.

"Yes, sir," Jerry said as he accepted the card.

A few minutes later, Catherine returned to the shop, and when Rome looked into her eyes, it was clear to him that she had been crying.

But he didn't ask any questions, not

wanting to make her more uncomfortable.

"Have you picked a suit?" Catherine asked without looking at him.

"I was waiting on you." Rome calmly intoned.

Swaying his gaze towards Catherine, Jerry grinned and asked, "What kind of dress do you prefer?"

"Anything elegant, but not suffocating," Catherine gently stated.

Nodding slightly, Jerry focused on Rome and asked, "And you, sir?"

"Whatever matches with hers," Rome mumbled, feeling a bit bothered that Catherine had not looked his way since she came back.

With a look of excitement on his face, Jerry turned around and said, "Please follow me."

Finally, Catherine gazed at Rome, and he took her hand in his without saying a word and walked after Jerry with her close by his side.

When they arrived at a room in the back, Jerry ushered them to the leather couch, and Rome and Catherine sat down.

“I will be back,” Jerry uttered before leaving the room.

Then he returned a few minutes later with two garment bags and handed one to Catherine and the other to Rome.

A while later, Catherine and Rome got changed in the dressing room, and then, they met Jerry at his desk

“I love this dress,” Catherine said, smiling as she rested her card on the desk.

“I'm glad you do,” Jerry said, picking u

p the card.

Then he swiped the card in the payment terminal, knowing that the machine was off.

Afterward, he gave the card back to Catherine and happily intoned, “Thanks for shopping with us.”

A few minutes later, Catherine and Rome left the boutique, got into the vehicle, and Rome drove them to “Classic hotel.”

After driving for fifteen minutes, he brought the car to a stop in the parking lot, got out of the vehicle, and walked over to Catherine.

"Are you ready?" Rome asked, noticing that she looked a lot more stress.

"Yes," Catherine said as she held onto his arms.

Then Rome escorted her into the

building and led her into the main hall, where the party was.

The first person that caught Rome's attention was his father as he and an elderly fellow with dark hair talked.

'That should be uncle Asher.' Rome thought, swaying his gaze at them.

Then he noticed the members of the Barlow family, standing a few distances away from Catherine and him, so he guarded her through the crowd and towards the Barlows.

The moment they came closer, Rome could see the rage burning in Madame Rosey's eyes.

“Look who bothered to show up at the last minute?” Chloe mockingly said, giving Catherine a cold stare.

But she ignored Chloe's words and approached her grandmother.

“Rome and I apologize for coming late,” Catherine said with her head bow.

“You know the trouble this family has been facing lately, and you dare leave work to mingle with this flop.” Madam Rosey lashed out.

“We are sorry.”

“Seeing the progress you had made so far, I thought you were finally getting back on the right track and becoming useful to this family. But I guess it takes a fool to poison the mind of another fool!”

As Madam Rosey scolded her granddaughter, she wasn't watching the volume of her voice, and people's attention was slowly getting drawn to them.

“Mother, please don't be mad anymore. I have already scolded Catherine over the phone. I'm sure that she knows

what she has done wrong.” Edward said, pleadingly staring at Madam Rosey.

Then he turned to Catherine and mumbled, “Say 'sorry' sincerely to your grandmother so her anger can subside.”

“I'm sorry, grandma.” Catherine humbly said, bowing deeply.

It was finally clear to Rome why his wife had been in a depressing mood all this while, and he felt rage welling up in him.

Without giving it a second thought, he walked up to Catherine, grabbed her arm, and pulled her up.

“What are you doing?” Catherine whispered, fixing her teary eyes on his.

“I should be the one apologizing since I was the one who convinced you to skip work,” Rome said with a smile.

Then he faced Madam Rosey, bowed slightly, and said, "I'm sorry that my wife offended you because of me."

At this point, everyone's gazes were on them, and Mr. Ford nor Asher looked happy about what was going on.

But respecting Rome's decision, they stood by and watched him bow before the Barlows.

"Stand up," Madam Rosey commanded with her cold gaze on Rome.

When he lifted his head and faced her, she scowled at him with hate in her eyes.

"How dare you interrupt me when I'm scolding my granddaughter." Madam Rosey lashed out, raising her hand and swinging towards Rome.

But Catherine rushed between her husband and her grandmother, and the

slap hit against her cheek.

“We are sorry for making grandma this mad. It won't happen again.” Catherine said, fighting back her tears.

The entire hall went silent as the guest stared in shock, knowing that the daughter-in-law of the Ford family had been humiliated before their very eyes.

Anger rolled through Rome as he stared at the mocking smiles on Catherine's cousin's lips, the pleased expression on her uncle's and wife's faces, and the anger in her grandmother's eyes.

‘Enough is enough!’ Rome thought, clutching his fist.

 Comments

 Vote (16.5K) 

Chapter Fifty

Within a matter of second, the hall got busy with noise, and things were getting out of control.

The whispering got louder, and people kept mumbling or turning to the next person standing by them to gossip.

In anger, Rome grabbed Catherine's hand and pulled her along as he headed for the door.

“Rome, what are you doing? Grandma will be even more upset if we leave here in this manner.” Catherine whispered while obediently following him.

As Chloe stared at Rome and Catherine, her mouth curved into a smirk. Then she folded her arms and mumbled, “How pathetic.”

“Grandma, your useless son-in-law has become daring and ignorant. Don't

he know his place in our family?”

Richard mockingly said out loud, intending to humiliate Rome.

Following his brother's lead, Jeff laughed and rudely intoned, “What a bad dog! How dare him try to bite the hands that feeds him.”

When Rome heard those words, he stopped for a second before leading Catherine out the door.

Feeling overwhelmed by his anger, Mr. Ford was about to walk over to the Barlows, but Asher grabbed his arm and said, “Let Rome fight his own battle. He's your son, after all, so there's no way he can lose face in this country.”

Although Catherine wanted to talk Rome out of not leaving the party in such a manner, she kept silent and continued walking behind him, knowing that he was mad.

When they reached the parking lot,

Rome led Catherine to the car and unlocked the door.

Then he opened it, gazed at her, and said, "Get in."

Without uttering a word, Catherine got into the front seat and shut the door.

"I'm going to the restroom. Wait for me, and don't leave the car." Rome calmly intoned.

"Okay," Catherine mumbled while staring into his eyes.

For a moment, Rome gaze at her. Then he turned away and headed back into the building.

After walking a few distances into the hallway, he stopped, pulled out his phone, and made a call.

"Send me all the evidence that you gathered about the warehouse fire," Rome said,

“Yes, boss.” Blaze's voice flowed into his ear.

After ending the call, a few seconds passed, then Rome's phone buzzed.

There were a lot of suspects Rome had in mind about the fire. But when he clicked on the file Blaze sent him and read through it, he smirked and mumbled, “This is perfect.”

Afterward, he sent the file to Mr. Brown before dialing his number.

When the chief of police answered his call, Rome commanded, “I need you to make an arrest tonight based on the document that I sent you.”

“Okay,” Mr. Brown's voice echoed from the speakers.

Once Rome had canceled the call with the COP, he made another call.

A line appeared between his brows as M

r. Ford watched his son's name blinking on his screen.

It took him a minute to quench his anger before answering the call.

“What is it?” Mr. Ford asked in annoyance.

“Tell uncle Asher that he should kick every Barlow out of the venue after the police have made their arrest.”

“What did you do?”

“Nothing illegal. Oh, and tell uncle Asher that I'm sorry about ruining his party.”

After Rome ended the call, Mr. Ford gazed at Asher and said, “Police are going to crash your party.”

“What? After growing up without you, how did he become just like you?”

Asher said as the corners of his mouth turned up. ①

“Beats me. Oh, and Rome apologized for ruining your party.”

“That's nice of him. But this party is lame anyways. Police crashing it is more exciting than the party itself.” ①

When Catherine saw Rome coming out of the building, she kept staring at him, even after Rome got into the car.

“Why did you stay long?” Catherine mumbled when Rome started the engine.

Then he gazed at her, beamed, and said, “I was doing number two.”

Holding back her laughter, Catherine looked the other way and mumbled, “I didn't need to know that.”

“Then why did you ask?” Rome calmly uttered.

“Well, I thought you went back to the party to confront my family.”

“That would have put you in an awkward spot, and I don't want to do that to you.”

“Thank you. I know how hard it was for you to take it all in.”

A corner of Rome's lips lifted when Catherine gazed into his eyes. Then he stepped on the accelerator pedal and drove the car out of the parking lot.

“Where are we going?” Catherine asked when they got on the main road.

“Our favorite spot,” Rome said.

A look of excitement crossed Catherine's face as the smile on her lips widened.

A few minutes into the drive, the sound of sirens grabbed their attention.

Then Catherine gazed at the numerous police vehicles, driving past the car, and mumbled, “I wonder where they

are going?”

“I'm wondering the same,” Rome said when she looked at him.

After driving for a few more minutes, Rome brought the car to a stop a few distances from the food truck.

Then he and Catherine got out and approached the truck.

“How nice! it's you two.” The chef said with a friendly grin.

Swaying his gaze off the chef, Rome stared at Catherine, and the bright smile on her lips made his heart flutter.

“Two hot dogs please,” Catherine said in excitement.

“Two hot dogs coming right up.” The chef cheerfully replied.

After a few minutes had gone by, they got served their hot dogs and with two bottles of soda in a plastic bag.

“Thanks,” Rome said, taking the bags.

Then he and Catherine walked over to the bench and sat down.

Feeling hesitant, Catherine watched as Rome reached into the bag, and she softly bit her lip.

When he pulled out a soda and placed it in front of her, Catherine met his eyes and said, “I haven't said it to you yet, but I feel ready to.”

“Say what?” Rome absentmindedly asked, putting his hand back into the bag.

“I love you!”

“Uh?”

Pausing for a second, Rome swallowed. Then he focused his eyes on hers and smiled.

Without thinking for a second, Rome

said, "That's exactly how I feel about you too. I love you."

Classical music was playing, people were chatting happily and dancing.

But the Barlows felt like an outcast since no one spoke to them or looked their way, yet they didn't leave since a party like this was good for their reputation.

When the musician changed to another classic tone, the hall doors suddenly opened, and the police stormed in and marched towards the Barlows.

"Jeff Barlow, you are under arrest for the crime of burning down your family warehouse." An officer said, pulling a handcuff from his side. ¹

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