

This Time, I Will Get My Divorce, Mr

Chapter 71

The person outside banged on the door as if Sonia was their enemy. She could even hear the doorframe shaking from her bedroom, as if whoever on the other side of the door might barge in at any moment.

Grumpily, Sonia lifted her blankets and tidied her hair nonchalantly before slipping into her slippers, ready to leave the comfort of her room to check on the commotion that the person was causing outside her house. Before heading to the foyer, she got a sharpened knife from the kitchen. Upon getting there, she heard a conversation outside her door.

“Mom, what are you doing? Stop it!” Vexed, Tyler grabbed Jean’s arm to stop her from banging the door.

Jean gazed at him furiously. “Why are you stopping me? Unhand me! I’m going to teach this b*tch a lesson!”

“This is between your daughter-in—no, between Sonia and Tina. Why are you meddling in their business?” Tyler’s youthful face was scrunched up.

Huffing, Jean retorted, “Why can’t I meddle? Tina is my future daughter-in-law. Shouldn’t I, as Tina’s mother-in-law, stand up for my daughter-in-law when she was bullied?” With that, she cast Tyler’s hand away to resume banging on the door. All the while, she continued to yell, “Sonia, you b*tch! Do you lack the courage to face the consequences after bullying Tina? Open up! I know you’re in there! Open the door—”

Before Jean could finish her sentence, the door in front of her swung open. Jean’s hand missed its intended target, so she toppled forward as she lost her balance. When Sonia saw the huge lump that was Jean’s figure falling her way, she released the doorknob and backed away in disgust.

Thump! Jean wailed as her overweight body flopped on the floor face down in front of Sonia. The sight of it stunned Tyler, who was still standing outside.

All the while, a smile tugged on Sonia's lips as she lowered her head to take in Jean's condition. "Wow, I'm surprised that you greeted me with a bow as soon as we saw each other. You're being overly polite, Madam White. Come on, let me help you up."

"Get away from me! I don't need your help!" Seeing red, Jean swatted Sonia's hand away ill-temperedly. She never expected herself to make a fool out of herself like that in front of Sonia.

Unaffected by Jean's attitude, Sonia smiled as she straightened her body. "Okay, then. You can get up on your own."

Jean snorted as she tried to help herself up with both arms on the floor. However, she had a hard time doing so due to her obese figure, which prompted Sonia to huff a laugh. Jean questioned begrudgingly, "What are you laughing at?"

"It's nothing." Sonia waved her hand dismissively. "I just recalled having seen a toad on television last night. It flipped over after falling from a high place, but it couldn't roll itself over because it's too fat. I laughed because it was pretty amusing."

"H-How dare you compare me to a toad?" Jean was trembling while pointing a finger at Sonia.

With a shrug, Sonia explained innocently, "That's not what I mean. I was talking about the toad, not you. Please don't compare yourself to it. Rather, is it because you felt like one?" She watched Jean smilingly.

Even though Jean was fuming, she didn't have a good comeback for that. I would be admitting that I'm a toad if I say anything! Therefore, she turned away, ignoring Sonia. Upon noticing that her son was still spacing out instead of helping her, she got all riled up. "Why are you still standing there? Come over and help me!"

“Oh.” Tyler snapped back to his senses before stepping into the foyer to help Jean get back on her feet.

“You’ve got some strength, boy,” Sonia praised.

Delighted, Tyler raised his chin unwittingly. “Hmph! Of course! I’m a man after all!” I’ve got to have some strength in me!

At the side, Sonia shook her head after sweeping a glance at him, particularly focusing on his crotch. “You don’t look so on the surface.”

“D-Do you have no shame?!” When Tyler noticed where Sonia was staring at, his innocent and handsome face turned a shade of red before he closed his legs together while pointing at her in exasperation.

On the other hand, Jean was also infuriated, so she raised her hand to give Sonia a slap. “B*tch! I’ll turn a blind eye to the fact that you seduced other men, but you’re not going to seduce my son! This will teach you a lesson!”

“Hey, watch out!” Tyler’s heart skipped a beat. He didn’t expect things to take such a turn, so he dropped his embarrassment to warn Sonia to get out of the way.

Astonished, Sonia glanced at Tyler, taken aback by the worry that was evident on his face. Immediately, a smile bloomed on her face. I see my efforts to help this brat weren’t in vain. At least he knows to warn me. I suppose he’s not too bad.

Instead of ducking like Tyler said, Sonia raised her left hand, allowing the knife that she was hiding in her sleeve to slide into her grip. She placed the knife next to her left cheek with the blade protruding in the air with an intimidating gleam.

Jean’s expression changed drastically as soon as she noticed that. She managed to stop her hand two centimeters away from the blade, which saved her from slashing her hand on the blade.

“Y-You have a knife with you?!” Tyler’s jaw dropped in disbelief, while Jean stared at the blade in shock.

Sonia removed the knife before plucking at the tip of the blade with her finger. There was a smile on her face as she spoke. "You were banging on the door so loudly that I assumed that a robbery was taking place. Considering that, isn't it normal to bring a knife with me for self-defense?"

Tyler grunted a few times before falling silent. Meanwhile, Sonia turned her attention to Jean, who was still terrified. "From what I heard, you came to find me because I bullied Tina?"

Upon hearing that, Jean flipped a switch. The fearful look on her face melted away to give way to a savage expression. "Isn't that the case though? You had that rascal kidnap Tina, which led to her hospitalization. You—"

"Do you have proof?" Sonia cut her short impassively. So I was right. They are suspecting that I am the mastermind.

"Why would I need proof when Tina already told me what you did?" Jean smirked while crossing her arms.

With a calm gaze, Sonia stared right back at her. "Of course. If you fail to present any evidence, I can consider this defamation. I can always call the police to report you."

"Go on, then." Jean rolled her eyes in disdain.

After staring at Jean for a few seconds, Sonia took out her phone from her pocket.

"Are you serious?" Jean's face paled. I was assuming that it's a threat, but she is serious about it!

Meanwhile, Sonia was studying Jean, as if she was looking at an idiot. "Did you think I was kidding?" As she spoke, the call connected. She put the phone to her ear. "Hello, is this the police? I would like to report someone for—"

Before Sonia could finish her sentence, Jean snatched her phone away and then smashed it on the floor. It shattered into pieces with a loud thud. There was a smug grin on Jean's face. "Let's see what you can do now."

Sonia glanced at her phone with a solemn look. After a while, she stated aloofly, "Things are far from over even if you smashed my phone. You must've forgotten where you are right now."

After all, Sonia lived in Bayside Residence, which was a well-known high-end residence in Seafield. Top-notch security measures were put in place, so alarms were installed all over the house. Incidentally, there was one on the shoe rack, on which Sonia pressed without hesitation. As soon as she did, a siren went off, which was audible throughout the entire hallway.

"What's going on?" Startled, Jean glared at Sonia. "What have you done?"

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"You'll know what's going on soon enough." Sonia smirked.

A while later, footsteps could be heard coming from the elevator. Within a few seconds, four uniformed security guards arrived before the three of them. Tyler realized things had gotten out of hand with the turn of events. As he scanned his surroundings, he backed out of the space to make a call on his phone.

Sonia knew who he was calling when she noted his reaction, but she didn't stop him. Instead, she explained the situation to the security guards while pointing at Jean. "She was banging on my door early in the morning with a nasty attitude, posing a threat to my personal safety. Other than that, she even smashed my phone, which constitutes property damage. I want her detained and sent off to the police station."

Upon hearing that, Jean began hurling insults at Sonia. "How dare you filthy b*tch—"

"She even continues insulting me at this moment. I demand that you seize her immediately!" Sonia cut Jean off.

"Yes, Miss Reed." The security guards took their orders to seize Jean and dragged her toward the elevator.

“Mom!” At a loss, Tyler looked at his phone, which had yet to be connected to the recipient, and then to his mother, who was being taken away by the security guards.

At the same time, Jean couldn't escape the death grip of the security guards, so she could only turn her head around to glare at Sonia viciously while throwing around various profanities. Sonia could hardly imagine that a rich woman was capable of such vulgar words. Ding. The elevator doors closed with a chime. Finally, Jean's yelling vanished from the corridor.

On the other hand, Tyler hung up the unanswered call as he glowered at Sonia. “Why did you do that?”

“What have I done?” Sonia lulled as she leaned against the door frame.

Tyler gripped his phone tightly. “You had the security guards take my mother away.”

“Didn't she bring that upon herself though?” Sonia crossed her arms. “As I mentioned, your mother's actions threatened my personal safety. That alone suffices as a reason for me to summon the security guards to take her away, even more so when she crossed the line further by smashing my phone and insulting me.”

Then, Sonia pointed at Tyler's ears. “You heard how she insulted me with vile words. Is it wrong that I want her arrested? You would've done the same if you were in my shoes.”

“I...” Tyler was rendered speechless by her words, which caused him to lower his head. Yeah. I wouldn't let things slide that easily if I am insulted. In fact, I would beat the crap out of whoever that insults me until that person could no longer utter a word.

Upon noticing Tyler's crestfallen expression, Sonia smirked. “Tyler, don't judge when you yourself are incapable of turning the other cheek.”

Tyler's face flushed as he was overcome by emotions. “I wasn't!”

However, Sonia closed the door, for she couldn't be bothered to respond.

"Hey!" Just when Tyler was about to call out to Sonia, the phone in his hand rang. When he lowered his head to check on it, he saw that it was Toby who was calling, so he picked up immediately. "Toby, why did you only pick up now?"

"Have you run out of money?" Despite how uneasy Tyler sounded, Toby merely made a dispassionate inquiry while leaving his phone on the table with the speaker turned on, still focused on reading through the reports on the computer screen in front of him.

Tyler frowned in dismay. "That's not the case. Why would you assume I'm calling to ask for money?"

"Are you not?"

Silence befell as Tyler choked on his own words. After checking the door to Sonia's house, he took a deep breath. "Alright, it's true that I used to call you to ask for money, but it's different this time. Sh*t had hit the fan."

"What's so urgent?"

"Mom got arrested."

"What?" Toby narrowed his eyes before pressing for answers solemnly, "What exactly happened?"

Tyler dared not keep anything from Toby, so he recounted the incident in full detail. "That's about it. After that, Sonia ordered the security guards to bring Mom away."

Feeling the pulse in between his brows, Toby soothed it by pressing a finger on it. While suppressing his anger, he went on, "Understood. I'll head to the police station now. By the way, is she alright?"

"She?" Tyler was startled. "Who do you mean?"

Toby pulled his lips into a grim line. "Sonia."

“Oh, she’s alright. Why do you ask?” Tyler was curious.

Toby’s gaze flickered for a second. “It’s nothing. You told me that Mom had assaulted Sonia. I asked because if Sonia is injured, we will need a memorandum of understanding from her to bail Mom.”

“I see.” Shaking his head, Tyler didn’t doubt Toby’s words. “Don’t you worry, Toby. Sonia’s alright. Mom didn’t hit her.”

“That’s a relief.” Not even Toby was able to name a reason for feeling relieved. After hanging up, he stood to retrieve his black woolen coat on the coat rack beside him before marching out of the office in strides.

Because Jean didn’t injure anybody, Toby was able to bail her relatively easily, but not without first paying a hefty fine. Tyler waited outside, and his eyes lit up as he greeted them when they got out of the police station. “Mom, Toby! You’re finally back!”

Jean’s face contorted with anger as she complained, “Hmph! That b*tch had the audacity to call the cops on me. It’s frustrating how much shame she brought upon me! I’ll make sure to teach her a lesson next time!”

That b*tch? Toby’s face fell while he emitted a suffocating aura. So that’s how she addresses Sonia. Moreover, she’s already used to it, so she must have been using that word often. I never knew about this.

Anger simmered within Toby as he looked at Jean in dismay. “Mom, haven’t I told you to not pester Sonia? Why wouldn’t you listen? And you!” He glanced at Tyler morosely. “Why didn’t you stop Mom?”

Tyler pouted in aggrievedness. “I tried to, Toby, but it didn’t work. After Mom knew Tina’s kidnapping had to do with your wife—I mean Sonia, she insisted on going after Sonia. There was nothing I could do.”

“I was merely feeling sorry for Tina.” Jean was still feeling indignant over what happened. “Tina told me this morning that it was Sonia’s suitor who kidnapped her, so that b*tch must be the one who orchestrated the incident.”

The more Jean slandered Sonia, the more somber Toby looked. "It's true that the one who kidnapped Tina was Sonia's suitor, but Sonia wasn't the mastermind." He knew instinctively that Sonia had nothing to do with it.

Tyler also agreed with a nod. "I think so too."

Frustrated, Jean pulled on Tyler's ears. "Who are you siding with, Tyler Fuller? Why are you standing up for that b*tch?"

Even Toby glanced at Tyler out of surprise, for he was aware of how Tyler had initially treated Sonia. He never expected Tyler's attitude to have a one-eighty.

"Ouch, Mom! Let go! Let me go!" Tyler was hissing in agony as he nearly hopped around in pain.

Ultimately, Jean didn't want to hurt her son, so she released him. "Hmph, this will teach you to not speak up for that b*tch! Don't you forget that Tina is your sister-in-law! You're only allowed to side with her. Got it?"

With a pout, Tyler rubbed his ears as he grumbled, "Got it."

"Alright, Mom. I'll send the both of you back home." Toby pinched the area between his brows before opening the car door. After sending Jean and Tyler back to Fuller Residence, he drove away.

While on his way, he pondered about the situation for some time before finally deciding to give Sonia a call, which would be his first ever call to her after their divorce. After the call got quickly picked up, a gentle voice came through. "Who is this?"

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Toby furrowed his brows. Did she delete my number?

When Sonia noticed that the caller wasn't speaking, she tilted her head in confusion, ready to hang up. It wasn't until then that the caller responded. A man's deep and melodious voice came through. "It's me."

Sonia's pupils contracted, and she stopped writing. When she checked the screen of her phone, and as soon as she saw the familiar string of numbers, she pulled her lips into a thin line. It really is him!

Even after their divorce and having deleted all of Toby's contact details, she could recognize his phone number at first glance. After taking a deep breath, she ignored the sourness within her by putting on a poker face as she spoke. "Do you need something from me, President Fuller?"

Toby's face fell as soon as he noticed the coldness in Sonia's tone. She was being so gentle when she didn't recognize me, but she flipped when she did. Suppressing the feelings of dismay within him, he pulled his lips into a thin line. "I would like to apologize to you."

Sonia leaned back after tossing her pen away. "Apologize? Did you do something that warrants an apology?"

"It's my mother. Sorry for giving you trouble." Toby hung his head low, his tone apologetic.

A derisive smile bloomed on Sonia's face. "I see. You sure have a lot on your plate. Not only do you need to apologize in place of your fiancée, but your mother too. Will you need to apologize for your brother next time?"

Toby swore sternly, "This won't happen again."

"I'm not so sure about that. I know just how capable your family is of wreaking havoc, especially your mother." Sonia rolled her eyes as soon as she mentioned Jean. "President Fuller, can I ask you a question? It's been on my mind for a long time."

Toby pressed on the Bluetooth earphone on his ear, looking skeptical. "What is it?"

"Are you really your mother's son?" Sonia rested her cheek on one hand. Despite Jean's lavish outfit, she was a typical shrew who

had a crude and mean attitude. Sonia could hardly imagine someone like her raising a son like Toby.

Toby's gaze flickered for a moment. "Why do you ask?"

"Just curious." Sonia shrugged.

Toby turned the steering wheel. "Yes, I am."

Seriously? Sonia heaved a disappointed sigh. I bet Toby had undergone a mutation. With that, she picked up her pen again. "Alright, President Fuller, I have nothing else to ask. Let's end the call here. By the way, keep watch over your mother. Make sure that she doesn't come barking at my door again without reason."

Barking at her door? A grim look crept onto Toby's face. "Sonia, can't you be less harsh?"

"Harsh?" Sonia chuckled. "President Fuller, are you expecting me to be nice to you and your family? Why don't you reflect on your treatment of me during the past six years? Why should I be nice to you? Who do you think you are anyway?"

With that, she cut the call. Upon hearing the beep in the earphone, Toby knew the call had ended. He freed a hand from the steering wheel to rub it in between his brows.

'Why don't you reflect on your treatment of me during the past six years?' Her words replayed in Toby's mind incessantly. His heart felt as if a boulder was pressing on it heavily, because he couldn't deny the fact that the Fullers had indeed mistreated her.

When Toby was still lamenting about the situation, he arrived at the hospital. After parking his car, he sat in it for some time before heading to the ward. In a VIP ward, Tina was watching TV while Julia was peeling an apple by her bed.

Upon hearing a knock on the door, Julia raised her head to trace the source of the sound before a smile lit up on her face. "Tina, look who's here!"

When Tina turned to check on the door, she saw Toby coming from outside. Enraptured, her eyes reddened. "Toby..." She lifted her blanket to launch herself into his arms.

Toby had just arrived by her bed, so he was able to catch her. While caressing her hair, he asked, "Why are you crying?"

"I missed you." Tina buried her face in his chest.

Toby held a gentle look in his eyes. "Well, here I am."

Upon noticing the closeness between them, Julia set the cut apple aside before standing up from the chair cheerfully. "Toby, you came just in time. Keep Tina company while I go check on her condition with the doctors."

"Sure." Toby nodded. After Julia left, he touched Tina's forehead to check her temperature. Sensing that her fever had broken, he was feeling relieved. "Do you still feel unwell anywhere?" he inquired in kind after removing his hand.

Tina pouted in aggrievedness. "Yeah. My head is still dizzy."

"Get some more rest." Toby fluffed up the pillow to let her lie on it.

However, she shook her head. "I no longer feel like sleeping. I just need your company."

Toby sat down by the bed without protesting. After that, Tina latched herself to his arm and rested her head on his shoulder. "Toby, your mother came to visit me this morning. After knowing that my kidnap had to do with Miss Reed, she insisted on settling scores with Miss Reed. I couldn't stop her no matter what I did."

"I know."

"You do?" Tina raised her head to look at Toby's immaculate profile. "Did your mother do anything to Miss Reed?"

Do anything to Sonia? Toby lowered his gaze. Although Mom assaulted her, she ended up having Mom arrested while she came out of it unscathed. The thought of it brought a smile to his face, as well as a gentle gaze in his eyes that not even he had noticed.

Aware of the reason behind Toby's smile, Tina was alarmed when she saw that. While clenching her fists, she questioned, "Toby, why are you smiling?"

He didn't only smile as soon as Sonia was mentioned, but his expression looks so loving. No, I need to get rid of Sonia as soon as possible. He will fall for her if things continue like this. Although Toby was unaware of his own feelings, Tina was acutely aware that Sonia had made an impression on him.

Smile? Toby's gaze dimmed as he reverted to his usual aloof expression while turning to look at Tina. "It's nothing. I just thought of something interesting."

"I see." Tina forced a smile, but deep down, she was still shrouded in darkness.

At that moment, Julia returned. "Tina, the doctors told me you can be discharged by tomorrow."

"That's great! I don't want to stay here for any longer! I've been hospitalized for six years, and I'm already bored of it," Tina declared happily.

Toby rubbed her hair, his gesture intimate. When Julia saw that, she asked abruptly, "Toby, have you uncovered the identity of Fox Eyes?"

Upon hearing that, Tina's smile melted away into a terrified look. "Toby—"

Pulling her into his arms, Toby patted her on the back before consoling her gently, "Don't be scared."

Julia was regretting that she brought up the question. "Ah, I'm sorry, Tina. I didn't do it on purpose. You—"

"I'm alright, Mom." With tear-filled eyes, Tina shook her head. "I deserve this. If I hadn't hurt Miss Reed due to my own insecurities, she wouldn't have hired someone to kidnap me. It's all my fault."

"Don't say that." Julia started crying. "It's all because Sonia is being vicious. You might have hurt her, but we already

compensated for the incident. She's abominable for doing this to you even after accepting our apology!"

Tina hung her head low as she continued to sob, seemingly unable to grasp why Sonia would do that to her. Meanwhile, Toby wore a frown. "Mrs. Gray, Tina, Sonia has nothing to do with the kidnapping. Fox Eyes kidnapped Tina of his own accord. Sonia didn't order him to do that."

"Toby, are you standing up for Sonia?" Julia watched him in disbelief.

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Toby shook his head. "I wasn't trying to stand up for her. I was merely stating the truth."

"But—" Julia sounded unconvinced.

However, Tina tugged on her sleeve while putting up a tough front. "It's fine, Mom. I suppose Miss Reed isn't a suspect if Toby doesn't think so."

Toby frowned at Tina's statement. Even though he could sense that something was off, he couldn't put a finger on it. At the side, Julia glared at him in anger, having caught on to the underlying implications in Tina's statement.

Tina already told us that she heard the kidnapper mention that it was Sonia who ordered Fox Eyes to seek revenge against Tina. Yet, he had the audacity to hurt Tina by standing up for Sonia. Tina even ended up defending him!

All of a sudden, someone knocked on the door of the ward. It was Tom standing at the doorway. "President Fuller."

"What is it?" Toby opened his mouth to speak.

After glancing at Tina, Tom said, "Investigations on Carl Lee have yielded results."

Toby narrowed his eyes. "Wait for me outside."

"Yes, sir." Tom left after receiving his instructions.

After that, Toby removed his arm from Tina's grasp. "I need to leave for a moment, Tina."

Tina nodded smilingly. "Okay."

Toby helped her lie down before tucking her in bed. Then, he left the ward. After the door closed behind him, he looked at Tom, who handed him a document. "President Fuller, these are documents detailing Carl's biography. He's an orphan who grew up in Jordain County. He only started going to school in his teenage years after Miss Reed and her father became his sponsor. Upon reaching adulthood, he was scouted into the fashion industry as a model because of his outstanding appearance. Considering the above, he's not Fox Eyes."

"Is he really not?" Toby frowned.

Tom gave him a nod. "Yeah. I already inquired President Gray, who had met Fox Eyes twice. According to his description, Fox Eyes is a top hacker. Carl was never involved in such endeavors. Besides, he's currently attending a photoshoot on a snow mountain, and has caught a cold, whereas Fox Eyes doesn't have a cold. Therefore, we're certain that Carl isn't Fox Eyes. So what should we do now, President Fuller?" Tom looked at Toby.

After brooding over the situation for a bit, Toby pulled his lips into a thin line before giving instructions. "Investigate Sonia's connections. Fox Eyes must be someone she knows. Find out everything about those people."

"Got it!" Tom nodded.

"President Fuller." A reserved voice rang behind them. When Toby turned around, he saw Cynthia and Melody walking toward them with flowers in their hands.

“President Fuller, is Tina in there?” Cynthia couldn’t make eye contact with men, so she hung her head low while explaining timidly, “We heard Tina fell ill, so we came to visit her.”

“She’s in the ward.” Toby pointed at the door.

“Thank you, President Fuller.” Elated, Cynthia turned her head to face Melody. “Miss Stryder, let’s go inside.”

“Sure.” Melody raised her chin arrogantly when she appraised Toby while Cynthia stepped forward to knock on the door.

Back when they were in the private room, she didn’t get a good look at him. Now that she could, she determined that he was an outstanding man. His appearance alone was so gorgeous that not even her husband, Peter, could possibly compare to. Thoughts of the man who wanted to divorce her dampened her spirits as she averted her gaze.

“Miss Stryder, Tina is inviting us to go in.” Having opened the door, Cynthia was waving at Melody.

“Coming,” Melody answered. After nodding at Toby, she joined Cynthia in strides.

“Let’s go.” Toby tucked the documents that he was holding into Tom’s arms before marching toward the elevator.

Tom followed closely behind Toby. “President Fuller, are you not going to keep Miss Gray company?”

“No, I won’t. She’ll be fine with her friends,” Toby replied nonchalantly before sending Tina a text to inform her of his departure.

When Tina saw the text, she bit her bottom lip, feeling somewhat troubled. She then replied, ‘Alright.’

“What’s wrong, Tina?” Noting Tina’s displeasure, Cynthia inquired after putting the flowers aside.

Tina smiled as she tucked her phone away. “I’m fine. Thanks for visiting me.”

"It's nothing. We're friends after all." Cynthia waved her hand to dismiss Tina's concern.

Meanwhile, Melody was sitting on the chair by the bed with her legs elegantly crossed. "I heard you were kidnapped. What happened?"

Even though the news wasn't made public, the Grays didn't keep the fact that Tina was hospitalized a secret. Therefore, their associates knew about it, and could easily find out about the reason behind that if they investigated.

Upon hearing that, Cynthia's jaw dropped. "You were kidnapped, Tina? Who's behind it?"

Tina teared up, but she forced a smile. "It's Miss Reed's suitor. Because I accidentally injured her, so her suitor avenged her by kidnapping me."

"What? This is outrageous! How dare he kidnap you when you didn't do it on purpose?" Cynthia's face flushed with anger as she got all self-righteous.

A wistful smile spread across Tina's face. "It might be because he thought I must have injured Miss Reed deliberately, so..." She trailed off by that point.

Cynthia's chest heaved with rage. "Hmph! I bet Sonia had a hand in this! She might even be the one who instigated her suitor to do it!"

"That's not the case. Toby said Miss Reed has nothing to do with this." Tina waved her hand immediately, seemingly fearing that her friends might misunderstand Sonia.

Caressing her chin, Melody muttered, "How could he be so sure?"

"I don't know. Maybe he asked Miss Reed," Tina replied in dejection after shaking her head.

With her hands on her waist, Cynthia shot back, "President Fuller must've been deceived by Sonia. Tina, we can't let things slide like this."

“But...” Tina bit on her lip while pretending to feel conflicted.

The sight of it made Cynthia feel sorry for her. “You don’t need to hesitate. Not only did Sonia bully you, but she even had someone kidnap you. She must be capable of even more atrocities. Thus, we need to teach her a lesson so that she knows we aren’t pushovers.”

“I can do that,” Melody volunteered aloofly.

Tina looked at her. “What are you planning to do, Miss Stryder?”

Melody flicked her red nails. “From what I gather, Paradigm Co. has been trying to get a loan from banks. I can pull some strings to stop the cash flow from the banks. Without the capital injection from banks, Paradigm Co. won’t be able to carry on with its operations.”

As she spoke, she took out her phone to call the presidents of multiple banks. While Cynthia watched in awe, an almost imperceptible smile tugged on Tina’s lips when she witnessed this.

Meanwhile, Daphne hurried into Sonia’s office in Paradigm Co. “President Reed, I’ve got bad news. Something just happened.”

“What is it?” Sonia raised her head from behind a stack of documents.

“I got a few calls from the banks. All of them claimed that our company doesn’t meet the conditions for their loans, so they refused to lend us any money. A few other banks that already offered us a loan even urged us to return the money, citing an error made during the auditing process,” Daphne reported.

“What?” Sonia’s expression changed drastically as she seized the pen in her grip. “How did it come to this?”

“I don’t know either. Seeing that so many banks are acting up together all of a sudden, I bet someone must be trying to give us a hard time,” Daphne surmised as she stared at Sonia.

Almost immediately, a name popped up in Sonia’s mind. “Titus Gray!”

“You mean Triforce Enterprise is behind this?”

Sonia narrowed her eyes. “I can’t think of anybody else other than them.” If Titus is behind this, it must either be because of that plot of land, or because of Tina. It surely has to do with either of these.

“What should we do now, President Reed?” Daphne asked.

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Sonia pondered for a few seconds. “For now, go negotiate with the presidents of these banks and see if they’re willing to change their minds. Also, use that as an opportunity to get a grasp on whether Titus is the one pulling the strings.”

“Okay,” Daphne answered. Seemingly having thought of something, she asked, “Should I report this to President Lane?”

“No.” Sonia shook her head. “Charles will be busy running his own company. I don’t want to bother him.”

“Alright.”

After Daphne left, Rebecca from the finance department came. “President Reed, what’s going on? I got a few calls from multiple banks. They’re urging us to repay our loans immediately. Haven’t we just gotten them? Why are they telling us to pay when it’s not even time yet?” Rebecca questioned as she walked up to Sonia’s desk.

Sonia pinched the bridge of her nose. “Can’t you see that we’re being targeted?”

“By who?” Rebecca slammed her palm on the desk.

A chilly glint fled across Sonia’s gaze. “I suspect Titus is behind this, but I have no evidence yet.”

“That will have to wait. We need to prioritize solving the crisis regarding our capital. The main funds that are supporting the operation of Paradigm Co. consist of the loans from those banks. The company will fall into bankruptcy the moment we return the money to the banks.” Rebecca sounded irritated.

Sonia pulled her lips into a thin line. Of course I’m aware of the graveness of the situation.

“President Reed.” A knock came from the door again.

When Sonia glanced in its direction, she saw Daphne standing there while shaking her head regretfully. “I already tried negotiating with the banks. Those that have yet to offer a loan refused to do that no matter how I tried to convince them, whereas those that already loaned us money were adamant about us repaying our loans. What should we do, President Reed?”

Sonia clenched her fist before raising yet another question. “Did they tell you if Titus is behind this?”

“Nope. I did ask, but none of them gave a clear response. It was as if they were fearing something,” Daphne replied.

“These are national banks. As the presidents of these banks, they have no reason to fear the owner of a private company.” Rebecca furrowed her brows.

Sonia narrowed her eyes. “Unless it’s not Titus, but a government official who ordered them to do so.”

“President Reed, have you somehow offended any government officials?” Rebecca questioned solemnly.

At a loss, Sonia shook her head. “I have no idea.” She had to deal with an official from a relevant department because of the plot of land. However, she didn’t recall ever offending that official.

“Forget about it. We’ll think about that later. President Reed, we need to solve the crisis regarding our funding right now,” Rebecca reminded.

Sonia shut her eyes in exhaustion. "Daphne, contact the presidents of the banks that already lent us the loans. Tell them I will buy them a meal at Universal Hotel." I'll have to give up on the banks that have yet to offer us a loan. However, I need to convince those that already offered us their loans to change their minds, or else Paradigm Co. will be done for.

"Sure." Daphne nodded.

Then, Sonia glanced at Rebecca. "Arrange the documents for the loans and come with me."

"Okay," Rebecca answered.

An hour later, they arrived at Universal Hotel. Belonging to Fuller Group, it was the only seven-star hotel in Seafield. The simplest meal there could easily cost a normal family a year's worth of their income, not to mention that Sonia had booked a private room to treat the presidents to a lavish meal that consisted of exquisite culinaries.

Since Sonia had shown her sincerity by providing the presidents with such deluxe treatment, they knew they had to at least disclose something to her. Therefore, they finally told her that the person who was targeting her was a Stryder.

"President Reed, from what I gather, there's only one prestigious family with that surname, and it's the Stryder Family in Norfolk," Rebecca whispered into Sonia's ear while leaning close to her.

Sonia tightened her grip on her wine glass with a morose look on her pretty face. "It's Melody Stryder." Although she didn't have a feud with the Stryders, she did have a minor disagreement with Melody before.

"I knew it. But why is she doing this? Could it be because of what happened when you were playing cards last time?" Rebecca surmised.

Sonia took a sip out of her wine, her face devoid of expression. "Perhaps."

"Isn't she being a little too petty if that is the case?" Rebecca smirked. "Besides, Melody is poking her nose where she is

unwelcomed. How dare she, the daughter of a prestigious family in Norfolk, interfere with affairs in Seafield? President Reed, I'll go make a call."

"Yeah." Sonia agreed to it with a nod.

After getting up and leaving the room, Rebecca found a quiet spot to make a call.

"Say whatever you need to say!" A gruff voice came through the line.

Rebecca rolled her eyes. "Old man, I heard that the higher-ups intend to have the Hayes Family crack down on the Stryders because of how cocky they have been as of late. However, they never got to take action because they haven't gotten a suitable excuse to do so. Is this true?"

"Why do you ask?" The man seemed impatient.

"So I guess the rumors are true." Rebecca lit a cigarette that she retrieved from her pocket to puff on it. "I called to bring you some good news, of course. Matthew Stryder's granddaughter, Melody Stryder, is currently in Seafield, and had used her family's influence to interfere with the operations of the banks in Seafield in an attempt to give my boss a hard time. What about you crack down on the Stryders using this as an excuse?"

The man's eyes lit up. "This is good news indeed. Not even Matthew was allowed to interfere with the politics in other regions back when he was still the head of the family. His granddaughter sure has some guts to break the taboo."

"She sure does. She's also stupid enough to give us something that could be used as leverage against her family," Rebecca mocked after puffing out some smoke.

The last time when they were playing cards, Melody had offended her once, so she used the info she had of the Stryders to give them some trouble. This time around, Melody basically dug her own grave by getting her entire family into trouble. Rebecca couldn't help but chuckle at the thought of it.

Meanwhile, the man frowned. "What are you laughing at, you damned brat? How's progress with the search for the young master?"

The smile on Rebecca's face faded as she roared, "How dare you even mention that? You told me that the young master had spent some time in Jordain County, but I found nothing when I got there! How am I supposed to make any progress?"

The man choked on his words. "Alright, stop yelling at me. Just make sure to find the young master as soon as possible. The old master doesn't have much time left."

"I get it," Rebecca replied reluctantly. After ending the call, she snubbed the cigarette and headed back to the private room.

While nearing the entrance, she saw the presidents of the banks coming out from within the room. Sonia saw them off from behind with a smile on her face. However, Rebecca noticed that her smile seemed forced, and there was a hint of melancholy to it.

"President Reed." Rebecca spoke after the others left. "How did the negotiations go?"

Sonia wheeled around to sit down on the chair in the room. "I failed. They refuse to continue with the loan. However, I did get a three-day concession, during which Paradigm Co. is supposed to repay all of its loans."

"Three days..." Rebecca smiled. "That works!"

"What do you mean?" Sonia gazed at her in confusion.

Rebecca answered merrily, "Don't you worry, President Reed. I can guarantee that the banks will stop collecting debt from you after three days, and those that have yet to offer the company a loan will approve of it, because the Stryders will soon be in big trouble."

Upon noticing the cheerful look on Rebecca's face, Sonia had a realization. "You pulled some strings, didn't you?"

Rebecca merely smiled without saying anything.

Still, Sonia was certain that she had to be someone prominent. The phone call she went out to make earlier must be the key to everything. Upon reaching that conclusion, Sonia stood to bow at Rebecca.

Taken aback by Sonia's sudden gesture, Rebecca got up. "What are you doing, President Reed?"