

## Impulsive Vow to an Enigmatic Husband Chapter 1611

### Chapter 1611

Steven never had to apologize for that actor.

The actor should thank his lucky stars. If Steven had really apologized, the poor guy would've been living in his shadow for the rest of his days.

Having helped Hannah remove her makeup so many times, Steven had gotten quite skilled at it. In no time at all, he said, "There you go, Hannah. Let me just wash your face and slap on some moisturizer."

He was a man who never cared much for makeup, but lately, in his quest to win back his wife, he was learning everything there was to know.

Hannah was less than impressed. "You're the CEO of Dixon Group, for crying out loud. You spend your days trailing after me like a lovesick puppy. Aren't you worried the company will go belly up?"

Steven replied with a soft chuckle, "To me, pursuing you is the only business that matters."

Frustrated but finding herself without a real argument, Hannah let it slide.e2

Suddenly, Steven leaned in close, his breath warm against her ear. "The biggest threat to Dixon Group used to be the Salazar family. But after their internal strife, with Wesley behind bars and Donny lacking the chops to step up, they're not a concern anymore."

Even after all this time, the mere mention of the Salazar family sent a chill down Hannah's spine. She was just an actress, shielded from the world's darkest corners by Steven's protection. But lurking beyond the limelight, she knew there were shadows she had never encountered.

A year ago, after Daniela's suicide, evidence of Wesley's crimes had surfaced online, each revelation shaking Hannah to her core. She was acutely aware that if it weren't for Steven, she might have ended up as nothing but bones at the mercy of a vengeful Daniella.

The most chilling part was the evidence linking Wesley to his crimes, released posthumously as per Daniela's instructions, ensuring her vendetta lived on even after her death.

Daniela left behind a video that sent shivers down the spine of anyone who watched it. Clad in black, with wild, untamed hair, she looked like a vengeful wraith from the depths of hell. "Whoever dares abandon me, I'll drag them down to the depths with me. Hannah, if I die and you're still alive, I'll come back as a ghost to claim your life."

That video haunted Hannah so deeply that for a long time, she couldn't sleep alone.

Steven sensed her fear and wrapped his arms around her from behind, holding her tight. "Don't worry, Hannah. As long as I'm here, nothing will happen to you."

With Steven's reassurance, Hannah calmed down, though a thought lingered. "Throughout history, there's been nothing more cruel than a father and son turning on each other."

Steven nodded solemnly. "It's all about cause and effect. Your parents cherish you, and you love them in return. Daniela's father adored her, and she relished his affection. But she knew when push came to shove, in the face of great power or wealth, her father would discard her."

In the end, Daniela's twisted nature was her undoing. The Salazar family had indulged her every whim, providing for her materially but failing to nurture her spirit with kindness. It was this lack that led her to take her father down with her in such a final, desperate act.

Seeking to change the subject, Hannah asked, "What do you feel like for dinner tonight?"

Steven replied with a smile, "Whatever you're in the mood for, I'm game."

Hannah patted her stomach thoughtfully. "I've been trying to keep in shape. Maybe something light?"

"Sounds good to me," Steven agreed

As she continued to touch her belly, a sudden question struck her. "Steven, is there something

The word "wrong" struck a nerve. No man could stand to be questioned in such a way.

wrong with you?"

Steven's response was immediate and flustered. "Hannah, you're being unfair. After all the tender care I've given you, you know better than anyone whether I'm 'capable' or

not."

"I didn't mean it like that," she said, her hand still on her belly. "But it's been over a year since last spring. We've always been careful with the timing, yet I'm not pregnant. Why?"

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Chapter 1612

Steven chuckled, "Don't you already have a godson? We're in no rush, let's just take it easy."

Hannah shot him a deadpan look. "I'm serious about having a little girl, so my godson could one day be my son-in-law. If he grows up and I still don't have a daughter, well, someone else will get lucky."

With a playful smirk, Steven reached out and gently tapped her nose. "You, my dear, are quite the schemer. Your man is already a catch and now you want to monopolize all the good guys for yourself?"

"Stop joking around, Steven. I'm trying to have a serious conversation here," Hannah retorted.

"Alright, how about we make some time to visit the clinic for a check-up?" Steven suggested.

"Sounds good."

A weight lifted off Steven's chest. He was certain there was nothing wrong with Hannah's health, and he was confident in his own. The real issue had always been with him because he had rigged this.e2

But now, it seemed there was no need for deception. Hannah's heart was softening, slowly warming up to his presence.

Come dinner time, Hannah was careful not to overeat. She was in the middle of filming and dreaded the thought of looking bloated on camera.

Thus, she wasn't feeling particularly energetic that evening. "Steven, I have to wear short sleeves on set tomorrow. Please don't leave any noticeable marks on me."

Yet, mischievously, Steven left a trail of kisses along her neck, each leaving a faint blush of red. Hannah nudged him, half-joking, "What are you, a puppy?"

"I might be a puppy that only have eyes for you," Steven teased back.

"Great, now Penny will have her work cut out for her again tomorrow," Hannah sighed.

Penny was Hannah's go-to makeup artist, the one who had to cover up the evidence of Steven's affection.

"Tonight, it's me who's going to have a tough time," Steven quipped.

"Steven..."

"What's wrong?"

Hannah suddenly lost her spark. "What if it's me... What if I can never have children of my own?"

Her voice trailed off, and her eyes began to glisten with unshed tears, causing Steven's heart to clench at the sight. "Hannah, there's nothing wrong with you, and there's nothing wrong with me either. Trust me, maybe this time we've made it happen."

"But what if we haven't? What if it really is my fault?" Hannah fretted.

Steven was well aware of her deep longing for a child, someone as adorable as little Hope. Now that Hannah was doubting herself, her pain would only deepen.

“Hannah, believe me, we’ll have children,” Steven reassured her.

“But it’s been so long...”

Unable to bear her tears, Steven pulled her close. “Hannah, it’s not your fault, and there’s nothing wrong with me. The reason you haven’t gotten pregnant is because I... I did something to prevent it...”

The words were out before Steven realized the shift in Hannah’s expression. He looked at her anxiously. “Hannah...”

Hannah’s gaze was fixed on him, and she said, “Steven, I had a feeling it was you. I never thought I’d actually catch you out. Let me tell you, if I don’t get pregnant soon, I’ll find another man to start a family with.”

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Chapter 1613

Steven called out to her, “Hannah, not in your wildest dreams!”

Hannah shot back, “Well, what are you waiting for?”

Steven was taken aback for a moment but quickly caught on. “You little brat, I’m not gonna let you get away with this.”

That night was filled with passion.

The next day, Hannah had an early call time for filming. Despite being exhausted from the night before and having things on her mind, Hannah woke up early. She moved slightly and felt Steven’s arm wrapped around her waist. “Steven, let go of me, I need to get up.”

Steven held her tighter, not moving or making a sound, deep in sleep.e2

Hannah raised her hand and pinched him hard on the waist. It was a sharp pinch that finally made Steven slowly open his eyes. “Babe, what’s wrong?”

Hannah insisted, “I need to get up. Let go.”

Steven glanced at his phone and then pulled her closer. "It's only just after six. We've got time. Sleep a little more."

"I have an early scene to shoot." Hannah pushed him again. She managed to break free this time, and turned to get out of bed.

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Steven stretched out his arm and pulled her back into his embrace. "Hannah, you're exhausted from last night. How are you going to have the energy to film? I'll call the director and ask to push your scenes back. Someone else can shoot first."

Hannah glared at him. "Filming isn't a one-person show. It involves all sorts of departments – sets, props, lighting, and more. If I don't shoot, it holds up everyone's work."

That was just the way Hannah was if she was going to do something, she was going to do it right. After years of acting, she knew very well that a film was the result of many people's hard work, both in front and behind the camera. It wasn't just about her.

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As an actress, she had to cooperate with everyone's schedule and could not let her own whims delay the whole production.

Steven conceded, "Then I'll get up and come with you to the set."

Hannah replied, "You don't need to. You had a rough night; you should rest a bit longer."

Steven chuckled. "An hour or two won't tire me out."

Hannah rolled her eyes at him, pushed him away, and swung her legs out of bed, heading for the bathroom. "You shouldn't skip work just to keep me company. I don't want to be blamed someday for being a femme fatale, do you understand?"

"Nobody would dare!" It was only then that Steven caught the implication of Hannah's words.

When she mentioned “someday,” it meant she was planning on him being in her future. Some things were better understood than spoken aloud. Steven was elated, feeling every cell in his body dancing with joy. He got out of bed and followed her to the bathroom. “Alright, I’ll head back to Harbor City today. Once I wrap up my work there, I’ll come back to keep you company.”

Hannah grabbed a hair tie to quickly put up her hair, picked up her toothbrush, applied toothpaste, and started brushing. Then, she caught sight of Steven in the bathroom mirror behind her.

She watched him through the mirror and he watched her back. Soon, he wrapped his arms around her waist from behind, “Hannah, I still want to stay with you.”

Hannah didn’t struggle; she just kept brushing her teeth. When she was done, she patted his hand. “I’ll be done shooting in a month. No more running back and forth, wasting

time.”

Steven replied, “It’s not a waste of time at all.”

Hannah sighed, “If everything goes well, and I get pregnant this time, I won’t be on set for a while afterward. Then, I’ll move to Harbor City.”

Moving to Harbor City meant living together with him. Steven understood and leaned in to give her a kiss. “Okay.”

After getting ready, Hannah was set to leave. Steven walked her to the door. “I’ve arranged for breakfast to be sent to the set for you. Make sure to eat; you can’t starve yourself.”

Hannah responded, “I know.”

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Chapter 1614

As the door swung open, there stood Casey, the assistant, straight as a rod at the entrance. Her eyes lit up when she saw Hannah, and she hurried forward with a welcoming smile. But as soon as she caught sight of Steven behind Hannah, she instinctively took a couple of steps back.

“Why aren’t you coming in? It’s freezing out here. You’ll freeze to death,” Hannah chided gently.

Casey shrugged off the concern. “I’m tough as nails. A little cold won’t bother me.”

Hannah didn’t press further. She turned back to Steven. “I’m off then.”

Steven pulled Hannah close for a quick kiss on her cheek. “Alright, love. I’ll head straight to the airport later. Won’t be able to send you off.”

With a nod, Hannah ushered Casey along. In the elevator, Casey whispered, “I didn’t dare come in with Mr. Dixon there.”

“What was that?” Hannah asked, not quite catching her words.

Casey said, “I mean, knowing Mr. Dixon was in your room... I didn’t want to interrupt anything important.”

Hannah playfully flicked Casey’s forehead. “What are you thinking, you little rascal?”

Casey pointed out, “Look at the marks on your neck. They weren’t there when we wrapped up last night.”

Hastily, Hannah adjusted her scarf, covering up more thoroughly. “Listen here, I’m the boss, the one who signs your checks. You’re not afraid of me but you’re scared of Mr. Dixon. Believe me, I can dock your pay.”

“You wouldn’t,” Casey protested. “You’re too nice to do that.”

“This time I will. We’ll see how you like it,” Hannah threatened.

Casey replied, “You were so generous with the bonus last year, I won’t miss a month’s pay.”

“Still sassing me, huh? Think I won’t follow through?” Hannah teased.

“Okay, okay, I’m scared now. Happy?” Casey surrendered. What a boss she had – treating her almost like a sister and pretending to be the bad guy just to get a rise out of

her.



They stepped out of the hotel lobby into the dawn's early light, and the streets deserted. Casey felt a pang of sympathy, thinking of Hannah working late into the night, and probably getting no rest from Steven's pleasurable teases, "Hannah, it's early still. You've got a long day ahead. It'll probably be exhausting. You could sleep in a bit more."

Hannah walked towards the waiting minivan. "The crew works their tails off, sometimes even overnight to set up. All I do is act in front of the camera. Compared to them, my job's a breeze."

Casey hurried to keep pace with Hannah's stride. If the star wasn't tired, then she, as the assistant, had no right to be.

Hannah's current project was a period drama set in the 70s in a rural mountain area. To achieve authenticity, the production had chosen a remote location for filming.

Today's scenes were to be shot in a local village school. Upon arrival, Hannah was struck by how underdeveloped the village was it was the 21st century, yet the school only had three classrooms.

Each classroom doubled up for two grades, taught by a single teacher who covered both language, arts, and math.

The beloved teacher, Ms. Skye, was unfortunately sick at home, depriving Hannah of a chance to meet her.

The villagers, unaccustomed to film crews, gathered around in droves, crowding even the restrooms. After shooting a few scenes, Hannah needed to use the restroom, but couldn't navigate through the crowd.

Reluctantly, she and Casey sought out a nearby villager's home to use their facilities. On their way back, Hannah spotted a young woman picking vegetables in a field not

too far off.

Dressed simply, the woman nonetheless struck a chord of familiarity in Hannah.

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## Chapter 1615

In Hannah's mind, a figure materialized so suddenly that it sent a shiver of excitement through her trembling hands.

Could it really be the one, the person who might have perished in a raging inferno, the same person Xavier had failed to find for two long years?

She yearned to step closer for a better look, but the fear of facing a disappointing outcome froze her in place. Rooted to the spot, she stared at the slender, familiar

silhouette.

Casey followed Hannah's gaze and also noticed the delicate figure. "Hey Hannah, what's so fascinating about that person?"

Casey's voice snapped Hannah back to reality. Quickly averting her eyes as if nothing had happened, she said, "Nothing, let's head back."

After a few steps, Hannah couldn't resist glancing back again. She still felt convinced that the silhouette belonged to someone she knew. "Casey, hand me my phone, please."

Casey promptly fished out the phone and passed it to Hannah.e2

Hannah unlocked the device, opened WhatsApp, and scrolled to Cornelia's chat. [Cornelia, I saw someone. Their profile looks so much like Skyler, but I'm scared it's not her. I didn't dare to approach.]

After typing the message, Hannah hesitated before sending it.

Xavier had always suspected that Cornelia and Marcus were hiding Skyler, so there was a good chance he was monitoring Cornelia's phone. Sending this message might tip him off. After a moment's indecision, Hannah deleted the text and wrote something else. [Cornelia, I'm missing you and my godson.]

It was their code. If Cornelia remembered, she would come to confirm.

Soon enough, Cornelia replied, [It's perfect timing, I'm not swamped with work. I'll bring my son over to visit your set.]

Hannah responded, [Great, I'll be waiting for you and my godson.]

After sending the message, Hannah looked back once more, her heart filled with hope that the person was indeed Skyler.

Cornelia moved quickly. She arrived that very evening.

Hannah gave her driver and assistant the slip and drove to the airport herself to pick up Cornelia. "Didn't bring my godson along?"/

Cornelia smiled. "That little guy is super attached to his dad. I couldn't bring him by myself."

Hannah teased, "Look at you, you're the mom who's not close to her son."

Cornelia defended herself. "I've been busy with work, and Marcus spends more time with him. Plus, Marcus worries it's too tiring for me to take care of our son alone. If I insisted on bringing him, Marcus would have come too."

Hannah acknowledged, "Your man really takes good care of you."

Cornelia retorted, "Yours is no different."

Hannah hesitated, "Cornelia..."

Cornelia, sensing what Hannah was about to discuss, tossed her phone onto the car seat and pulled Hannah a few meters away, asking urgently, "Did you get news about Skyler?"

Hannah nodded. "Today, while we were shooting in a village, I saw a woman. Her figure looked so much like Skyler, but I didn't dare to confirm. I was afraid of scaring her away if it wasn't her."

"But I've already asked the village kids around. The timeline of the 'Ms. Skye who came here to teach lines up with when Skyler disappeared. I think it's very likely that Skye is the Skyler we've been looking for..."

Cornelia agreed, "Hannah, you did the right thing. We don't know if Skyler wants to be found, and we can't just barge into her life."

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Hannah couldn't shake the feeling of unease until she had proof that Skyler was safe and sound. "I just need to know that Skyler is still alive and kicking. As long as she's okay, and even if she doesn't want to recognize us, I can rest easy."

After a moment of thought, Cornelia suggested, "You're shooting a movie in their town, stirring up quite the buzz. If the person you saw really is Skyler, and if she wants to reconnect with us, we'll leave a secret sign. She'll come to you. Otherwise, we'll just discreetly confirm it's her without causing any trouble."

"Okay, I'll follow your lead," Hannah agreed.

Before they even had a chance to devise their secret sign, Hannah and Cornelia had just returned to their hotel when a little boy approached them. "Ma'am, this is for you" he said, handing over a letter.

Hannah took the letter from the boy. "Hey, kiddo, did Skye send you with this?"

The boy's eyes widened in surprise. "I didn't say anything. How did you guess?"

With a smile, Hannah playfully pinched his cheek. "Because I'm a goddess, I know these things."e2

His eyes grew even more astonished. "You really are! Everyone in the village said you were as beautiful as a goddess. It's true then."

Flattered by the comparison to a goddess, Hannah beamed with joy and pinched the little boy's rosy cheeks again. "You're a long way from home, little man. How are you getting back?"

He pointed to a nearby young woman who was watching him. "My sister's waiting over there. Bye!" With a smile and a wave, the boy scampered off.

Hannah tore open the envelope and began reading the letter. Her hands shook with excitement. "Nelly, look, it's really..."

She glanced around cautiously before whispering, "Nelly, it's really Skyler. She's not dead; she's alive and well."

Cornelia read the letter and was equally thrilled. “Hannah, that’s incredible...”

“Skyler wants to meet us. Let’s go now,” said Hannah.

Cornelia replied, “Let’s get our stuff from your room first, then we’ll sneak out.”

“Sure.” Hannah quickly checked the address on a map app. “Nelly, the farm Skyler mentioned is about a mile away. We can walk there.”

“Then we’ll walk,” Cornelia decided.

To avoid drawing attention, Hannah and Cornelia disguised themselves and slipped out of the hotel, opting to walk to their rendezvous. The journey took about forty minutes due to the darkness and rough terrain. All around were fields, shrouded in blackness, except for a single lamp glowing at the farm’s entrance.

Approaching the lamp, they saw someone standing by the fence, smiling warmly at them.

Seeing the person they had longed for, Hannah and Cornelia hesitated, afraid that it might be another dream. Skyler walked towards them and took their hands. “What’s the matter? Scared because someone you thought was dead is suddenly in front of you?”

Her hands were warm, alive. In that moment, Hannah and Cornelia finally believed that the woman standing before them was truly Skyler. They hugged her tightly, asking in unison, “Skyler, is it really you?”

Skyler hugged them back. “Yes, it’s me. I’m alive, not dead...”

Letting go of Skyler, they looked at her and touched her again and again, needing to be absolutely sure. Once convinced, they embraced her tightly once more. “You’re alive, and that’s all that matters...”

Skyler simply said, “Yes, I’m alive.”

From the shadows, a man’s eyes fixed on the women under the lamp, burning with an intensity that seemed almost bloody.

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## Chapter 1617

Ten years ago...

Capital.

A young man named Dustin was absentmindedly polishing his pool cue, his gaze not on the billiard balls but fixed on Xavier, who was smoking in the corner. "Hey, bro, I heard the Blue family from down south sent a girl your way. Aren't you curious to check her out? Why are you still hanging around here watching us play pool?"

At the mention of this, Xavier took a deep drag of his cigarette and crushed it into the ashtray with more force than necessary. "If you're so desperate for a woman, why don't you go marry her?"

Dustin chuckled, "I'd marry in a heartbeat, but Grandpa would never agree to it."

Dustin was Xavier's cousin, a year his junior. And it was this one year difference that ensured all the privileges of the Rivera family would never land on Dustin's shoulders.

The Blue family was a prestigious clan from down south, while the Riveras were the wealthiest in the Capital. The marriage between the two families was no small affair; the elders had meticulously chosen the match.e2

After much deliberation, the Rivera family had settled on Xavier, and hence, the Blue family sent their eldest daughter, Skyler, to be his bride.

Xavier remained silent, picked up his cue, and began potting balls with such precision that he left no chance for anyone else to play.

Once the game was over, his restlessness grew. He tugged at his collar irritably. "Let's get out of here. I need a drink."

"Sure thing," Dustin said, grabbing his coat. His phone suddenly rang loudly from his pocket. "Dude, did you switch your phone off again? The butler's looking for you and the call's come through to me."

Xavier didn't respond and strode out.

Dustin quickly answered, "Hey, it's me, Dustin... Yeah, yeah, Xavier's with me... Look, he doesn't even listen to Grandpa. What makes you think he'll listen to me?"

Whatever was said on the other end made Dustin change his tone, "Alright, alright, I'll drag him back if I have to."

After hanging up, Dustin rushed after Xavier. "Big bro, Grandpa's laid down the law. If you don't head back now, he's going to have you brought back in chains."

Xavier didn't break stride, completely unaffected. Dustin followed him into the elevator. "I hear the Blue girl is quite the looker, really pretty. Maybe you should just meet her once. Who knows, you might not want to let go once you see her."

Xavier snapped, "Shut it!"

Dustin clamped his mouth shut.

They reached the underground parking level and as soon as they stepped out of the elevator, stern-faced security guards surrounded them. "Mr. Xavier, Old Mr. Rivera has sent us to escort you back." It was phrased as a polite request, but the setup screamed abduction.

With a slight raise of his eyebrows and a wry smile, Xavier asked, "And what if I refuse to go with you?"

The bodyguard replied with a firm tone, "He has instructed us to ensure your return. Should you resist, we'll have no choice but to forcefully take you."

Knowing when to pick his battles, Xavier was well aware of his grandfather's bodyguards' capabilities. He wasn't foolish enough to resist and so he obediently got into their

car.

About half an hour later, they arrived at the Rivera family mansion. The guards parked the car and were immediately greeted by the anxious butler. "Old Mr. Rivera is furious. Please, try to sweet-talk him, and don't make him any angrier."

Zavier inquired coldly, "Are my parents here too?"

The butler nodded. "Everyone's discussing your marriage today. How could your parents miss it?"

Zavier snorted disdainfully. It's his marriage, yet from start to finish, no one had bothered to ask for his opinion. They were forcing a girl he'd never met upon him to become

his wife.

What an era it was, yet he was still trapped in the sad expectation of obeying his parents wishes, marrying a girl he had never laid eyes on.

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Chapter 1618

Zavier knew all too well that even if he hadn't shown up today, the union between the Riveras and the Blues was a done deal. As soon as the two of them were of legal age, they'd be trotting down to city hall to tie the knot.

He quickened his pace, taking two steps at a time. The yard was sprawling, and it took a minute to navigate his way to the living room.

He hadn't gone far when the elegant strains of a violin reached his ears. "Who's playing?" he wondered aloud.

The butler, his face creased with a smile, replied, "That would be Miss Blue. Before you arrived, she even played the piano for us. They say she's a jack-of-all-trades when it comes to music, and she's as beautiful as she is talented. Next to the eldest grandson, you're the apple of Hudson's eye, no doubt about it. The match he's picked for you? The cream of the crop."

The words "eldest grandson" stung Xavier like a barb to the heart, but his expression remained unchanged as he continued inside.

The living room was crowded, the Rivera elders all present. A few unfamiliar faces must have been the Blues, Xavier guessed.



The girl sat in the center, her violin cradled in her arms, playing with focused intensity. Her hair, soft and long, cascaded over her shoulders. Since she had her back to the door, he couldn't see her face.e2

But he could sense her discomfort. How could she be at ease?

Surrounded by the elders of both families, she was showered with praise for her talent and skill with the violin. It was meant to be complimentary, sure, but it felt more like they were appraising an object rather than celebrating a person's gifts.

Everyone appeared to be listening intently, but they weren't really; they were too busy chatting with their neighbors to notice Xavier's entrance.

He deliberately cleared his throat. "Grandpa, I'm back!"

All heads turned towards him at once, except for the girl with the violin, who only trembled slightly before continuing as if she'd heard nothing.

Hudson, Xavier's grandfather, voiced his displeasure. "So you've decided to grace us with your presence."

"Grandpa, I didn't want to come back. Your goons practically dragged me here," Xavier retorted, not sparing any courtesy for the most authoritative figure in the Rivera family.

As expected, his words turned Hudson's frown into a full-on scowl. Without saying much more, Hudson glanced at Kalene, Xavier's mother, his eyes seeming to say, "Look at the son you've raised, without a hint of discipline. How am I to entrust the future of the Rivera empire to him?"

Kalene, ever the peacemaker, interjected, "Xavier, these are Bernard and Barbara, your future in-laws. Say hello."

Not wanting to put his mother in a tight spot, Xavier stood and turned to the Blues. "Good to meet you."

Bernard and Barbara scrutinized Xavier, clearly pleased with their daughter's match. "Oh, Xavier, we're all family now, no need for formalities."

He nodded, taking their words to heart.

Just then, the girl finished her violin piece. She stood up, bowing to all the elders, and finally turned toward Xavier to offer a bow in his direction as well. Xavier caught a proper look at her then. She was indeed a charmer, with a face as fresh as a daisy and eyes that seemed to brim with innocence.

As he watched her, their eyes met, and she seemed startled, quickly averting her gaze. She reminded him of a frightened bunny – unexpectedly endearing.

Zavier couldn't help but take a second glance as she handed her violin to a servant and then sat down beside Skyler.

She seemed obedient as a porcelain doll, devoid of any spark of life.

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Chapter 1619

Zavier's gaze settled on Skyler, and everyone in the room took note.

Seeing this, Hudson quickly steered the conversation towards Skyler. "Skyler's violin playing is so exquisite, she must have been practicing for years."

Barbara chuckled. "Sir, we really value artistic development in our family. Skyler started learning various instruments at the tender age of three, and now she's mastered them all. Just recently she was accepted into a prestigious international conservatory, but her father and I still prefer that she attends university here in the Capital, so she can spend time cultivating a relationship with Xavier."

Hudson nodded in approval. "The Rivera family indeed needs a lady of such caliber."

Barbara continued, "Skyler being chosen by you from so many girls is indeed a stroke of luck."

The elders discussed back and forth as if they were negotiating over commodities..

Zavier's eyes returned to Skyler's face. She sat upright, her pristine face adorned with an impeccable smile, yet he could tell she longed to attend the music academy.e2

She was probably bowing to family pressure and for the sake of the family's interests, she had no choice but to study in the Capital.

Zavier smirked, thinking that he and she were indeed a pair of sorry souls, neither having any interest in the other, yet being pushed together by their meddling families.

As he was musing, he heard Barbara's tone suddenly shift, "Gramps, why not let the young ones take a stroll in the garden? Let them nurture their affection."

Skyler tugged gently at Barbara's sleeve, but Barbara ignored her. "Skyler's eighteen now, a proper adult."

The implication couldn't be clearer.

Skyler clutched at her own sleeve, her face paling yet still forcing a smile.

Zavier thought cynically, they were indeed eager to throw her into his bed, but he had no intention of letting that happen. He stood up, leading the way outside. "Let's take that walk then."

Skyler didn't move until Barbara pinched her and whispered harshly in her ear, "What are you waiting for? Remember my advice and don't forget why you're joining the Rivera family."

Without a word, Skyler stood and followed Zavier out.

Leaving the living room and its watchful eyes behind, and breathing in the fresh air, Skyler felt much more at ease. But upon looking up, she met Zavier's piercing gaze.

Though he was only two years her senior, his gaze was so intense it made her instinctively step back.

Zavier, amused by her skittishness, teased, "Scaredy-cat, sent to the Rivera family to be my wife. You won't even know what hit you."

Skyler bit her lip, remaining silent. She never imagined herself as his wife.

Zavier commanded, "Come with me."

Skyler obediently followed.

Deep in the garden, Xavier halted and turned to look at her squarely. “Do you not want to marry me?” Instinctively, Skyler nodded, but then, recalling her mother’s admonitions, she shook her head vehemently. Xavier observed the silent girl and the prospect of marrying such a mute infuriated him. “Are you mute?”

His shout was loud, startling Skyler into retreating further.

She looked so pitifully frightened, and Xavier’s disdain was palpable, yet when he spoke again, he softened his tone. “It’s your parents who are throwing you into the fire, not me. I’m not going to devour you. You’re afraid of the wrong person.”

Still, Skyler remained silent.

Zavier ran out of patience and got straight to the point. “You don’t want to marry me, and I don’t want to marry you. But born into families like ours, we don’t have the power to decide our marriages until we come into our own. We have to follow the arrangements of our elders.”

Skyler knew all too well. Ever since she could remember, she was aware that she had no say in her own life. Her family constantly reminded her to bear in mind her duty, to strive for the enduring prosperity of the Blue family.

**"Impulsive Vow to an Enigmatic Husband"** What’s better than a

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She said, “I know.”

Those three simple words escaped her lips sounding soft and tender, sweet as a marshmallow.

Zavier teased, “Got a crush on some guy?”

Skyler shook her head.

“No, really?”

Skyler suddenly looked up at him, her gaze steady. “If you don’t believe me, feel free to check.”

Zavier let out a scoff, "Check? Do I look like I've got nothing better to do? Let me spell it out for you-I don't like you, and whether you've got a crush on some dude is the least of my worries."e2

Skyler replied with a calm certainty, "I know."

You know what?"

"I know you don't like me."

"At least you're aware of that much."

Skyler continued, "Neither of us can change our parents' decision. We're bound for marriage, like it or not."

Zavier laughed at that. "Are you really content with letting others dictate your life? Are you honestly resigned to marrying a man you don't love?"

She wasn't, not one bit. Just as he had said, being born into such families meant they couldn't always follow their hearts. From an early age, she knew her family would arrange her marriage, which was why at eighteen, she dared not even harbor a silent crush.

Zavier eyed her. "I can't lay a finger on a girl I don't fancy, so even if we do get hitched, I won't touch you. You get that?"

Instead of feeling downhearted, Skyler actually breathed a sigh of relief. She looked up at him, her smile radiant. "I understand. And when you're ready, when you can marry the girl you really want, I'll step aside. I won't be in your way."

Her smile was genuinely sweet. It was the sweetest smile Zavier had seen on her that evening, revealing that she was just as opposed to this arranged marriage as he was.

But he didn't want to see her happy. Trapped in his own misery, he couldn't allow her any joy. "Didn't your folks tell you to get a move on and start producing heirs for the Rivera family?"

Skyler's smile vanished, her face draining of color. She didn't know what to say.

Yes, they had. Her parents had repeatedly urged her to secure Xavier's affection and not wait for the marriage certificate; conceiving his child sooner rather than later would be ideal. She knew she was just a tool to them, a means to enhance the family's legacy.

Watching her pallor, Xavier suddenly felt a perverse pleasure. "What's your name?"

Skyler bit her lip, struggling to regain composure. "Skyler."

"Skyler? Pretty name, but too bad the brains don't match."

Skyler remained silent.

"So, school's starting soon. Which college did you manage to get into?"

"Capital College."

Capital College was one of the top universities in the country, notorious for its sky-high entrance requirements. The kids who made it in were the cream of the crop.

Xavier couldn't believe this seemingly dim girl could get into Capital College. "Did you pull some strings?"

Skyler replied, "No. I had extra points for my artistic talent. Even with the cutoff score being outrageous, I was well above it."

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