

Can't Win Me Back Chapter 351 - 360

Chapter 351

Zoe's back was to the entrance, so Jasper's gaze was fixed right on her.

"Jasper ..." she murmured, blushing red as she strode up to him.

Suddenly, a sensual scent, like the smell of roses, wafted in from around her, whispering of danger.

Someone walked past her, their heels clicking loudly against the floor. Zoe felt herself overcome by their force of unwavering confidence.

Jasper stared sternly at Alyssa as she walked over to them. The latter was clad in a woman's suit, and her fiery red lipstick made his heart leap at the sight.

A wave of intense gossip and hushed conversations swept through the crowd. It was impossible for anyone not to have noticed her by this point.

Sophia and Betty were both left in shock by her sudden arrival.

"Hold on, I recognize her-she was featured in a magazine not too long ago. She's the daughter of

Winston Taylor, who happens to be the President of KS Group, and she also manages KS World Hotel!"

"Yeah! Her name is Alyssa Taylor!"

"Was she the one who had been involved with Jasper Beckett? One look at her, and you'd swoon!"

"She's like a modern-day Queen of Sheba. Just look at how regal and elegant she is,"

"I don't know who you're referring to. All I know is that she and Jasper Beckett complement each other very well. They should seriously consider uniting their families through marriage!" Jasper, who had been getting irritated listening to the gossip, relaxed upon hearing that last sentence. It didn't sound too bad.

Zoe was furious from the tips of her toes to the ends of her ears as Alyssa stole everyone's attention

away from herself. What was even more infuriating was the passion and fervor in Jasper's eyes as he gazed at Alyssa.

Zoe couldn't recall him ever looking so alive or eager toward another woman. Was he still in love with Alyssa?

"I hope Mr. Jasper and Madam Ada can pardon my unannounced intrusion," Alyssa greeted the two with a smile.

She had opted to address Ada as "Madam" to show respect, particularly due to their age difference and the formality of the situation.

"Of course not, Ms. Alyssa." Jasper could only nod in her direction. "I would've sent you an invitation if I had known you were joining us tonight."

Alyssa's smile didn't reach her eyes. "No need to trouble yourself with that, Mr. Jasper. I have no intention of participating in your party tonight."

That made Jasper's expression fall just the slightest.

Behind him, Xavier was frantically texting the guards outside the hotel.

"What is going on?"

"We're so sorry, Mr. Xavier! We have no idea where Ms. Alyssa entered from either..."

"What? Were any of you doing your jobs properly? She can't have appeared out of thin air!"

"We will take full responsibility for our mistakes, sir. We'll get Ms. Alyssa out right away!"

Chapter 352

"Don't you even think about it! She is Winston Taylor's daughter. Besides, she's also someone whom Mr. Jasper cares for deeply. Do you want to get fired? Pay more attention to your surroundings and report any discrepancies to me immediately!"

"Oh my goodness!" Ada gasped suddenly. "Is that Alexa's 'Ragnarok' that you're wearing, Ms. Alyssa?"

"Yes, ma'am," Alyssa acknowledged, gesturing toward her brooch. Amid their intense focus on her, the yellow diamond-studded,

internationally award-winning piece in her breast pocket remained entirely overlooked.

“Alexa’s ‘Ragnarok?’ The renowned and elusive jewelry designer, Alexa?”

“Haven’t you seen the news? This brooch is worth hundreds of thousands of dollars! A single ten-carat yellow diamond studded

It is worth over ten thousand. Every jewelry collector wants their hand on this amazing piece!”

“She truly does present herself well as Belbanks’ richest heiress!”

“Not even Sophia Kirkman’s ‘Halcyon’ can compare. Forget it. No jewelry can even hold a candle to

Alexa’s creations!”

Sophia nearly bit her tongue in frustration.

Javier had gotten her this AAA, gem-grade sapphire pendant from an auction. It was the most exquisite

piece in her collection, and they were implying it couldn’t compare?

Sophia cursed and seethed at Liana and her family internally. If it weren’t for her having to help them clear

their debts, she wouldn’t have to endure this embarrassment tonight!

“I’ve been looking for ‘Ragnarok’ everywhere, Ms. Alyssa. I remember seeing it at an exhibition two years

ago. I had no idea it was in your possession!” Ada exclaimed with admiration in her tone.

Zoe felt like she might implode from anger. Her eyes were shooting daggers into Alyssa’s back.

She wasn’t sure what she should be more envious of: Alyssa’s earth-shattering beauty, the priceless and

highly sought-after jewelry piece designed by the internationally renowned jeweler, Alexa, that she was

wearing, or the fact that Jasper’s eyes hadn’t left her once since she arrived.

“I went through a tough time two years ago, so I figured buying a piece of art would better cheer me up,” Alyssa said lightly.

“That’s when I saw this piece at the exhibition. I fell in love with it the moment I laid

eyes on it. It even lifted my spirits at the time. That’s why I decided to buy it.”

She had opted to address Ada as “Madam” to show respect, particularly due to their age difference and the formality of the situation.

“Of course not, Ms. Alyssa.” Jasper could only nod in her direction. “I would’ve sent you an invitation if I had known you were joining us tonight.”

Alyssa’s smile didn’t reach her eyes. “No need to trouble yourself with that, Mr. Jasper. I have no intention of participating in your party tonight.”

That made Jasper’s expression fall just the slightest.

Behind him, Xavier was frantically texting the guards outside the hotel.

“What is going on?”

“We’re so sorry, Mr. Xavier! We have no idea where Ms. Alyssa entered from either...”

“What? Were any of you doing your jobs properly? She can’t have appeared out of thin air!”

“We will take full responsibility for our mistakes, sir. We’ll get Ms. Alyssa out right away!”

Chapter 353

Ada was left stunned. She was rendered speechless by a mixture of gratitude and awe.

For years, she had relentlessly pursued a piece of jewelry from Alexa, but her efforts had always come to naught.

It was no surprise that she now felt an overwhelming sense of joy as Alyssa presented her with this exquisite gift.

“N-no, no, I cannot accept this, Ms. Alyssa. It is far too precious of a gift,” Ada politely declined. She had to keep her appearances up, after all.

“This brooch has been my solace during the darkest times of my life, soothing my wounded soul. I’ve since learned my lesson,”

Alyssa said. “That’s why I want you to have this brooch as a blessing from me, in hopes that your endeavors come to fruition no matter what.”

Jasper winced, as if a bullet had pierced his heart. A shiver ran down his spine at Alyssa's confession.

"Oh! Well then... I graciously accept your gift. Thank you, truly!" Ada carefully cradled the brooch in her hands, her smile stretching wide.

Her image as a stoic, queenly actress was changed in that split second.

"Why?" Betty cried out to her mother. "Why does that bitch have the audacity to steal our spotlight? It's just a stupid brooch. We could easily bestow upon her hundreds, if not more! Hurry and come up with a way to make her leave, Mom!"

"Why bother?" Sophia sneered. "Alyssa jinxes everything she touches. I won't waste my time humiliating her when someone else can do it on my behalf."

Betty grumbled internally, still upset.

In the past, Alyssa had been haunted by the fear that Jasper might not approve of her or react angrily,

which kept her in a constant state of apprehension concerning his moods.

However, following their divorce, it appeared that their dynamics had shifted. Had Alyssa displayed this

level of self-assuredness during their marriage, Liana might never have stood a chance!

"Ms. Alyssa Taylor!" Zoe exclaimed, marching up to her with an air of self-righteousness. "Aren't you being rather rude to the event organizers right now? Of all the evenings to present your gift to Ms. Ada, you chose to crash the party tonight! Do you have no regard for this hotel whatsoever?" Jasper's eyes grew dark.

"Since when did gift-giving become a sign of disrespect?" Alyssa playfully chided.

"You've underestimated Mr. Jasper's prowess, miss.

"Besides, he hasn't uttered a single word of complaint since my arrival, and he's right here by my side. Aren't you the one being a tad self-righteous right now, miss?"

Zoe was on the verge of exploding with anger, but she still had to keep herself in check.

side.

Alyssa sighed and told Ada, “I understand that I might not be the most welcomed presence here tonight, given my hotel’s rivalry with the Berenike Hotel.

“Now that I’ve accomplished my goal for the evening, I’ll take my leave. May you all have a wonderful evening.”

She turned to leave, but Ada quickly cried, “One moment, Ms. Alyssa.”

Ada approached Alyssa. “I’d like to discuss Alexa’s jewelry further with you, miss. Is now a good time?”

“Of course. KS World Hotel has prepared the finest selection of food and drink for your arrival, Madam

Ada. Shall we?”

The crowd was left stunned by the audacity of the act. Alyssa was openly pilfering from the Beckett

Group in full view of everyone!

Jasper was about to stop Ada when the woman turned to him with an apologetic smile. “I have some business to attend to, so

I’m afraid I will have to leave your party earlier than expected. Please do enjoy yourselves.”

What?

Was that all?

Ada truly lived up to her reputation for being upfront!

Alyssa turned to Jasper with a polite smile, although her eyes remained cold and uninviting. “I wouldn’t mind saving a seat for you, Mr. Jasper, if you’d like to join us?”

Jasper’s heart pounded against his chest, but before he could answer, Alyssa cut him off. “Oh, silly me. I should leave you to your guests tonight. Maybe next time, then.”

Chapter 354

Just like that, Alyssa and Ada left the hall, walking closely together as if they were lifelong friends.

An awkward and tense silence settled over the crowd.

Jasper silently watched as Alyssa left, fury slowly building in his chest. She had stolen his project last time, and now she had taken his guest.

Jasper thought that Alyssa Taylor was just like a thief, heiress or not. He instinctively clutched his chest, feeling an ache in his heart.

It seemed like something had also been taken away with Alyssa's departure. The paparazzi were still relentless, camped outside the main entrance of the Berenike Hotel.

They should have dispersed by now, assuming that Ada had checked into the presidential suite and retired for the night.

However, the number of paparazzi showed no sign of diminishing.

Sean had secretly tipped them off, claiming that something big would happen tonight.

"Why on earth are we here freezing our backsides off? What kind of major news could possibly be unfolding?"

"Perhaps KS World Hotel refuses to surrender and is making a last-ditch effort to turn the tide in their favor."

"It's a tough battle. This is Solana City, not Belbanks. They can't expect to win against the Beckett family on their home turf.

Alyssa Taylor could never outsmart Jasper Beckett."

"You might be right about that! That man might be down in luck when it comes to love, but he's always the victor when it comes to business!"

Just then, the blaring of a car horn broke through everyone's speculations.

The paparazzi watched as a dark green Rolls Royce glided to a stop at the hotel entrance, its Spirit of Ecstasy gleaming in the light.

Thinking that it was probably some other influential individual, the paparazzi instantly started taking pictures. When the door opened, Sean stepped out, much to the crowd's dismay. He was hot, but hot wouldn't make the headlines! "It's Ada! Ada Kingsley is coming outside!" someone cried all of a sudden. The crowd's attention immediately shifted back to the hotel entrance.

Sean had already opened the car door, waiting patiently for the two women to come out.

The venue was bathed in blinding white flashes as the paparazzi erupted into a frenzy, capturing every moment as Alyssa and Ada emerged.

"What is going on? Did Ada leave on her own, or did Alyssa persuade her?"

"Jasper Beckett is in for a major humiliation!"

"This is going to make headlines for sure! Hurry up and swap the film!"

Everyone's attention had successfully shifted to Alyssa, including the netizens'.

The hottest hashtag on social media went from #AdaKingsleyatBerenike to #AlyssaTaylorNAdaKingsley.

While Sean helped Alyssa into the car, a reporter asked a question.

"Ms. Alyssa! Are you intentionally provoking the Beckett Group by taking Mr. Jasper Beckett's guest of honor for tonight? Isn't this is unprofessional?"

Alyssa turned slowly to face that reporter, shooting him a look that made him break into a nervous sweat.

"Can't I invite Madam Ada to dinner with me just because she has decided to stay at the Berenike Hotel during her visit to the city?"

She nearly scoffed, adding, "Not even Mr. Jasper said anything about my gesture. Who are you to do so? Doesn't your assumption portrays him as too narrow-minded?"

With that, she entered the car. It left before anyone else could react to what just happened.

Chapter 355

The party at Berenike Hotel continued, though it had lost a significant amount of its enthusiasm with the departure of their guest of honor.

Zoe had longed to show off in front of Ada to feed her unbelievably swollen ego. But now that the celebrity was gone, all her hard work and planning had gone down the drain-all because of that sneaky bitch Alyssa.

Jasper stood in the hallway, watching the green Rolls Royce drive away in the dark of the night. His posture was rigid and stoic, and the air around him seemed to go down a few degrees.

“This might not sound very nice, Mr. Jasper, but I believe we’ve been played the fool again,” Xavier reported shakily.

He continued, “Everyone online is focused on Alyssa and her hotel, leaving ours in the dust. Even Mr. Javier has caught wind of it.

“Berenike Hotel’s reputation is facing serious scrutiny, with some malicious comments questioning whether our standards of hospitality have declined ...”

Xavier was practically drenched in cold sweat by now. They should have known Alyssa would have taken action and prepared for the worst. That had always been her style, after all. She never left any chance for her enemies to make a comeback.

Jasper gazed into the distance, asking hoarsely, “I thought she was ‘Madam?’” Xavier flinched, frightened. “She’s ‘Madam’ when she doesn’t do stuff like this... When she does, well ... ‘Ms. Alyssa’ will do.”

“You can call her whatever you please,” came the response. “I’m not too angry, really. She’s always been

like this, no?"

Xavier was surprised by his boss' relatively calm reaction. He remembered how Jasper used to seethe

with anger and frustration whenever Alyssa managed to outmaneuver him.

Xavier couldn't help but wonder if Jasper had gotten used to it.

"What I'm wondering is how Alyssa managed to bypass the security measures.

Every guest tonight

required a personal invitation to enter, and the security has remained steadfast without fail."

"Well... apparently, there was a CCTV malfunction shortly before her arrival. We suspect it might have

been the work of a hacker or some sort of virus, considering the systems had just undergone

maintenance two days ago."

Upon hearing the word "hacker," Jasper's mind raced with possibilities. Was hacking another skill Alyssa possessed? Or could it

be one of her troublesome brothers at play?

"Jasper," a sickly, sweet voice called out, interrupting Jasper's thoughts. It was Zoe.

Jasper scowled just the slightest. He had no patience for her whatsoever. He didn't even turn to look at

her.

"Alyssa Taylor was too rude! How could she bring Ada Kingsley away just like that? She's practically humiliating you in front of

everyone!" Zoe exclaimed, stomping her feet angrily.

Her assumption was that men cared deeply about their pride and public image, especially someone as esteemed as Jasper.

Therefore, she was doing her best to appeal to him in this manner.

However, what he said next left her pale with trepidation.

"You've never met her, so you wouldn't know. This is how she has always been."

"W-What? What are you s-

"But I don't mind." Jasper glanced coldly at Zoe, a hint of anger in his tone. "But you, Ms. Harper, crossed the line tonight."

How he referred to her as “Ms. Harper” hit Zoe like a bolt of lightning. They... A gap had formed between them, even after all these years...

Was he intent on putting up this unbreakable wall between them now?

“My family’s company had organized this event, and I’m the company’s representative this evening. There was no justification for you to speak up on our behalf before Alyssa.”

“But I was only trying to help you!” Zoe’s voice had gotten so high-pitched that she sounded like a cartoon character.

She clung to Jasper’s arm, exclaiming, “Should I have simply let her have her way? To let her steal your guest of honor and humiliate you in front of everyone? She’s far too conceited and arrogant. You can’t let this stand just because you two used to be married!”

In a split second, Zoe realized her blunder.

Jasper arched an eyebrow, his gaze icy and piercing. “My marital status was no big secret, but I have never revealed who I was married to. Who told you Alyssa was my wife?”

“It... Landon told me!” Zoe quickly lied.

“Betty told you, didn’t she?”

Zoe remained silent, her lip bitten raw.

Chapter 356

“What transpired between Alyssa and me is a private matter and no one else’s concern. She’s already moved on from the past, so please refrain from dredging up old affairs to create a scene,” Jasper stated firmly.

Zoe nearly hissed at that, though fear still quivered in her heart. She couldn’t believe that Jasper was still defending Alyssa.

“Now that Ada has left, you’re free to leave if you’d rather not continue with your charade. I’ll have someone send you back home.” Jasper turned away and left Zoe standing alone in the hallway.

Next to him, Xavier expressed his disapproval with a tsk before departing with his boss. He couldn’t help but wonder if this irate, the seemingly immature individual was truly Landon’s sister. She appeared rather unsophisticated.

“Jasper. Jasper! Jasper Beckett!” Zoe screamed.

Jasper only came to a halt when she called his full name.

“You’re protecting her because you love her, don’t you? She’s all you can think about, isn’t it?” Zoe screeched.

“No,” he replied without hesitation, as if afraid that acknowledging any deeper emotion would be perilous.

Zoe was nearly in hysterics by now. “Then why do you continue to defend her?”

She doesn’t love you. All

she does is humiliate you! Why do you keep taking her side?”

Zoe lacked the cunning of someone like Liana, who always got what she wanted through manipulation.

Hence, she saw no point in beating around the bush.

But this was the first time in her life that she felt utterly defeated. The more she tried to approach Jasper,

the further he would retreat, widening the chasm between them.

Jasper’s gaze turned lethal when he looked at Zoe, sending a shiver of fear through her.

“You have never married another, so I’m sure you wouldn’t understand. We were husband and wife once, so even now, I still

care for her in some way. There is nothing wrong with that at all.”

Zoe recoiled as if she had been struck.

“I don’t love her, but she was my wife once. I still have the privilege to say what I want about her, and this

is a privilege no one else possesses.”

Chapter 357

Like a vulnerable creature finding safety, Lauren instinctively nestled in the person's arms.

Landon looked down in surprise, feeling the front of his shirt soaked through. He could sense the warmth of her skin through the damp fabric of her dress as it made contact with his own. His breathing picked up slightly, and he tightened his grip around her waist.

"Laurie?" he murmured hoarsely.

Lauren clung to his arm, staying mute.

"Are you hurt?" Landon asked, worried.

She weakly shook her head, her vulnerability tugging at Landon's heart.

When the two guards saw Landon there, their attitude took a 360-degree turn. They quickly paid their respects. "Good evening, Mr. Landon!"

"What happened just now?" Landon asked nonchalantly, his arms still wrapped around Lauren.

"N-nothing much, sir," the guard that had snapped at Lauren earlier shot him a courteous smile. "This young lady claimed to be Ms. Ada Kingsley's fan, but we couldn't let her in. She didn't have an invitation. When she insisted, well, we had no choice."

"So you pushed her?" Landon's eyes narrowed dangerously, although that smile still played on his lips.

"Um... Well, sir, we were just doing our jobs. She wouldn't cooperate." They couldn't admit to mistreating a woman, of course.

Landon scoffed and murmured to Lauren, "Why don't I help you get back at these two?"

Lauren didn't dare meet his gaze. She nodded quickly, then shook her head the next second.

Landon smirked and pulled out his phone to call Jasper. “Hey, Jasper. Am I allowed to reprimand your

staff?”

The two security guards exchanged anxious glances.

Landon’s left hand moved slowly to Lauren’s nape, gently stroking her hair.

“Alright. Thanks, man.”

After hanging up, he helped Lauren stand on her own, then made a gesture with his hand.

His bodyguards swiftly gathered around the two security guards from earlier.

Lauren watched in puzzlement as Landon calmly stepped into the circle created by his bodyguards. In no time, he vanished from her view, surrounded by the group of men.

“Ah!”

“Ouch! Help!”

Lauren had no idea what Landon was doing. All she could hear were screams of pain.

After approximately a minute of imparting a lesson to the guards, Landon ceased his actions and squatted before the two men.

He accepted a tissue offered by his bodyguards and wiped the blood off his knuckles. “I should consider gouging your eyes out for failing to recognize Ms. Lauren Beckett here.”

The guards were now utterly terrified. “P-Please, we’re so sorry, sir! We should have recognized her.

Please, show us mercy!”

Everyone in Solana City knew not to mess with the Harper family, as they had connections with both the police force and the underworld.

“Your boss had me step in on his behalf.” Landon grinned, then tossed the tissue in their faces. “Get the hell out right now, and don’t ever let me see you two here in Solana City, or you’ll lose more than just

blood next time.”

“Thank you! Thank you, Mr. Landon! Thank you!”

The two men profusely thanked Landon as his bodyguards dragged them out from the venue.

Lauren felt a lingering fear from the ordeal she had just witnessed.

Landon approached her and crouched down slightly to meet her gaze, a gentle smile gracing his face as

he teased, “You’re quite the enigma, Laurie. They had no idea who you were.”

“Did-Did you really have to do that to them?” Lauren squeaked fearfully, taking a step back.

Chapter 358

“You don’t approve?” Landon’s smile deepened.

Lauren’s eyes were downcast as she nodded.

“I think they deserved far worse, though.”

Landon couldn’t help but stroke her hair. “You’re Jasper’s sister. It’s only right that I stand up for you when they push you around.

I’ve gone easy on them this time. I didn’t want to scare you.”

Lauren could feel the warmth of his palm on her head. She closed her eyes and nestled into it, much like a contented little kitten.

Betty just so happened to stumble upon this scene as she walked out from the main event hall. She was

shocked to find her demure little sister all the way here.

“You bitch! I knew you were seducing my man!” she shrieked, then stormed up to them. But she quickly caught herself.

Landon was here. She couldn’t lose her precious image before him and make him dislike her even more.

Betty had learned some useful things from Liana, so she could restrain herself even more now.

She decided to hide in a corner to observe the two.

Landon felt a pang of sympathy as he observed Lauren’s disheveled appearance.

Her once-white dress

was now marred with mud and dirt. It was clear that she had run all the way in the rain.

He took off his red velvet coat and wrapped it around her shoulders. Betty ground her teeth, her eyes narrowing menacingly as she seethed at the sight. “Did you come all the way here in the rain? No driver sent you?” Landon asked gently.

“No one knows I’m here. It’s a secret,/ Lauren replied truthfully, never one to lie. “A... secret?”

“M-Mr, L-” Lauren didn’t know what to call Landon, nor did she remember how they had kissed fervently all those weeks ago.

“You can call me Landon, Laurie. My name is Landon Harper. I’m your brother’s friend. Calling me Mr.

Landon is kinda old, no?”

Landon ... Landon Harper?

Lauren remembered how her sister had yelled and screamed at her for getting close to this man. She quickly stepped back away from him, fearing for her life.

But Landon didn’t seem to notice her behavior. He held her cold hand and said,

“I’ll have someone help you change into something warmer.”

“No... No need-”

“Don’t be shy. It’s only right that I take care of my friend’s sister. Come on.” He was about to lead her away.

“Landon.” Lauren wasn’t so naive as to readily accept his actions, but she didn’t dare to challenge him.

Do... Do you treat my sister like this too?”

Upon hearing that, Landon couldn’t help but scoff to himself. Betty didn’t merit such treatment from him.

“No.” Landon beamed at her. “Only you.”

Meanwhile, Betty was screaming internally in the distance, glaring fiercely at her sister as they left.

Chapter 359

Landon booked one of the presidential suites upstairs in Berenike Hotel and promptly had his female secretary buy a gown for

Lauren. He then had his secretary help Lauren get dressed while he waited in the suite's living area.

His fingers rhythmically tapped on the sofa's armrest as he waited.

Were he in a black suit, he would have the appearance of a groom awaiting his bride's arrival.

The bedroom door soon opened. His secretary walked out with Lauren, a smile on her face. "Ms. Lauren is ready, Mr. Harper."

Landon's gaze shifted to Lauren, who timidly approached him in a wine-red lace-trimmed gown, her eyes blinking innocently.

He was taken aback for the slightest second.

Landon's world had always been filled with chaos, violence, and women, but he had never met such a pure, sincere woman as Lauren.

He worried that he might tarnish her purity if he gazed at her any longer.

"Why did you get her this color? She's still young. Pink or peach would have been more suitable." Landon scowled at his secretary. "You've been working for me for ages. Haven't your fashion sense improved?"

The woman blushed, knowing how nitpicky her boss actually was. She was about to apologize when Lauren said, "I ... I like this color, Landon. But-But you really shouldn't wear red. It makes you look... dark." The secretary had to bite her lip to keep from giggling.

For a brief moment, Landon's expression darkened. No other woman had ever spoken to him this way, except for Alyssa. In terms of national appeal, he should rank second, with only Jasper ahead of him.

"I'll forgive you this time because you're Jasper's sister," Landon muttered.

"Are you angry?" Lauren asked timidly. "Will you yell at me if I said you looked so dark that you looked like an olive? Will you hit me?"

The secretary teetered on the edge of losing her composure. She couldn't believe her ears when she

heard Lauren comparing Landon to an olive. In that moment, she saw Lauren as her savior.

Landon narrowed his eyes, clearing his throat. He approached Lauren and loomed over her, his presence casting a shadow over her.

As he raised his hand, Lauren closed her eyes and tightened her grip around her teddy bear. To her surprise, Landon gently tapped her forehead. “Yes. Does it hurt?” (1

There was a kind smile on his face when Lauren glanced up at him.

“But don’t make fun of me again, or I won’t go so easy on you.” Landon scrunched his face up like he was talking to a child, making his secretary wonder what the hell had gotten into her usually serious boss. With Jasper taking charge of dealing with the chaos caused by Alyssa, he handed over the party’s management to Xavier before departing from the hotel.

Now that Ada and Jasper were gone, Zoe’s plans went down the drain. She drank two full glasses of wine before angrily marching onstage to the grand piano in the center.

Initially, none of the guests paid her any mind, engrossed in their conversations.

Then, out of nowhere, a deafening bang echoed through the room.

Zoe forcefully slammed her hands onto the piano keys, creating a loud cacophony that instantly captured everyone’s attention.

The room collectively turned toward the stage, with some guests scowling at the disruption.

Chapter 360

“What the hell? She scared the shit out of me.”

“Jeez. Isn’t she from the Harper family? Why was she so rude? Doesn’t she know any manners?”

Zoe had always been accustomed to getting her way, both at home and abroad, whether it involved throwing a tantrum or making outright demands.

She had vented some of her current frustration and anger just like that, especially when thinking about what Jasper had said to her.

Now that she was back in the country, in front of all these guests who were part of Solana City's upper echelon, she realized that she should reconsider how she portrayed herself in public. 1

Zoe cleared her throat, feigning composure. She then began playing Beethoven's 5th Symphony.

Having graduated from the Royal Academy of Music in Yoarkley had its benefits. The music flowed effortlessly with each stroke of her fingers on the keys, allowing her earlier outburst to fade into the background of everyone's minds.

Betty stormed over from the back of the hotel to her mother in the event hall, screeching, "Mom! Lauren is here!"

"What?" Sophia cried, "Where?"

"I saw her with Landon earlier. He touched her head and even gave her his coat!"

Betty's eyes were nearly red with seething resentment.

She continued, "Do you really think she's dumb, Mom? She's a whore, that's what she is! Hiding behind

that fake innocent mask of hers. She's already had her eyes set on Landon, Mom!

That bitch wants to snatch him away from me!"

Sophia squeezed her arm. "Keep those filthy words out of your mouth, Betty Beckett! Where are all the manners and etiquette I taught you?! Lauren is your sister and my daughter. Do not insult her like this ever again!"

Betty gnawed angrily on her lip, suspecting that her mother was likely making excuses to avoid facing the fact that she had given birth to a fool!

"What do I do now, Mom?" she cried, clinging to her mother's arm. "First Alyssa and now Lauren! Landon

never liked me in the first place. I don't have a chance anymore!"

"Don't worry. Lauren won't get in your way. She wouldn't even think of it that way. Tell Xavier to find

Lauren later sent her home."

Sophia honestly didn't think this was a big deal. She had tightly controlled both her daughters throughout the years. In her view, nothing could disrupt her plans.

Lauren's mental state and condition would make it difficult to marry her off, but Sophia would still find a prominent match for her.

All the better if that family could benefit herself in return for all the trouble she had gone through in raising Lauren.

"This Harper girl has quite the temper, hasn't she?" Sophia remarked casually as she watched Zoe perform on stage.

"To be honest, Mom, her temper is pretty awful about 95% of the time!"

Betty's relationship with Zoe was purely transactional, lacking any genuine depth or sincerity, so she saw no reason to conceal her thoughts from her mother.

She added, "Compared to Liana, she's like a whole atomic bomb."

"Good." Sophia's eyes were sharp.

"What? Why ..."

"A fiery temper means she won't hide her motives too deeply, making it easier to manipulate her. She's a straightforward girl, really.

"She's been pampered and spoiled since she was young, never facing any hardship in life. All she wants is to be with Jasper, although she does exhibit a possessive streak ..."

Sophia then scoffed. "Unlike Liana, who wouldn't hesitate to stab you in the back right after professing her sincerity."

Just then, the hall doors swung open.

Zoe continued to play with the symphony, oblivious that everyone's attention had shifted to the newly

arrived guests.

Lauren walked in with Landon by her side, her steps small and afraid.

“Who is that with Mr. Harper? I’ve never seen her before,” some of the more curious guests chirped up.

“Probably a new fling. He goes through women like we go through shoes. I heard the longest he’s dated someone was one month”

“She’s quite pretty, almost innocent-looking. I thought he preferred the sexy, model-esque ones. Has he grown tired of them?”

“I must say, that girl is prettier than both the Harper girl and Betty Beckett. You guys just don’t understand. This new girl is a hidden gem, not one of those snobby, wealthy types you find everywhere.”

“Well, well. It looks like Mr. Harper has better taste in women than Mr. Jasper then. She looks far more trustworthy. She won’t be betraying Mr. Harper anytime soon...”

Betty’s face had turned an ugly shade of red as she watched Landon and Lauren enter together while overhearing the salacious gossip around her.

Meanwhile, Sophia was looking quite sickly.