

**In a Love Nest with the Aloof CEO Chapter
339**

Skylar went to the side to answer when her cellphone rang, away from those nosy relatives who were already convinced that she was a blowhard. Eva could not resist taking another potshot at her. "Why are you sneaking off like that? Is that Mr. Ford looking for you?" Unable to stop Miranda from remonstrating fervently on her behalf, Skylar decidedly left her to it. "Why did you hang up just now?" Skylar's tone was not very gracious as she was quite affected by everything that has transpired. "I called instead because your cousin said that you have something that you wanted to talk about. Is something wrong?" Skylar had sealed herself off after being besieged but cooled off quite a bit upon hearing Tobias' passable explanation. "What did you wish to tell me?" After some consideration, Skylar asked, "Are you available right now? Do you want to come over to my place for dinner? My mom insisted that you're my boyfriend and that made things embarrassing for me. Now, everyone thinks that I'm lying." "Well, am I not your boyfriend?" Tobias mused as he countered with a question of his own. "Don't you get it? The point is, no one believes me." Indignant at her treatment by the others, Skylar's inflection raised a notch even if she had not intended to.

Tobias more or less picked up on Skylar's foul mood and asked that she wait for him at home, stating that he would only be done over on his end in half an hour or so. "Forget it then." Skylar was not optimistic that Tobias would be able to make it and hence hung up. The older men in the household were drinking, and the disparaging voices filled her ears once again when Skylar returned to the dining table. One glass after another, the increasingly disinterested woman left her own cutlery well alone. She sat by the side while she idled her time away.

The love-lives of their progeny continued to be the preoccupation of the older women.

Tobias' was the one name that hung often on Eva's lips while she called someone else out for being delusional.

She told them that her pitiable boss was so busy that he often crashed overnight in the office, and was without anyone beside him to warm his heart.

An animated Sylvia said, "How old is Tobias Ford? You should pay more attention to him if he's single. As he must surely think quite highly of your talents, who knows whether you might end up marrying up? Your ex-boyfriend's family background isn't too shabby, but they were never quite the match for someone of your capabilities."

Eva twitched her lips. "No no no. I'm not as audacious as my dear cousin here as to make such outlandish claims, nor to even fantasize about something like that."

When Wesley heard knocking from the outside, he tottered over to answer the door, thinking that it could be the neighbor or some other acquaintance making a courtesy call.

He was positively stunned to see that it was Tobias. Eva, whose seat directly faced the entrance, loosened her grip on her fork which slipped and clanked upon the floor.

The rest of the relatives who did not recognize the newcomer simply stared with eyes transfixed.

Elaine's mouth was agape. "Wow. This kid's so tall that he needs to bow his head when he enters."

His appearance caused Eva to shoot up from her seat, and left her so nerve-wracked that she seemed unsure where to place her own hands.

"What are you doing here, Mr. Ford?" Eva asked, secretly hoping that Tobias might be here expressly to see her.

At the same time, she wondered how he found out where she lived. Did he look it up in the employee form?

An anomalous blush crept across Eva's face.

Tobias did not seem to have heard Eva's squeaks and walked straight toward Skylar instead.

"I hope that I didn't arrive too late."

Skylar could detect the alcohol off his breath when he neared and assumed that he must

have quite a lot to drink.

To her, that was not a good sign, as he could be a real pain in the ass at night whenever he

was under alcohol influence.

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340

Skylar shook her head. "Your timing's perfect, cause I'm afraid I'd be labeled as a liar on

Christmas if you didn't show up."

Skylar caught Eva's shell-shocked expression at the corner of her eye. There was probably

no way the latter could ever conceive that all these could be true.

As much as Skylar disliked the notion of playing a damsel in distress, or instrumentalizing

her man to inflate her own prestige, she felt like she had to make a compelling statement in

response to the years of repression she had endured.

This time, it was Skylar's moment in the sun. She wrapped her hands around Tobias' arm

and proceeded to introduce him. "Everyone, meet my boyfriend, Tobias Ford. He is the CEO

of Ford Group as well as Eva's boss.

Tobias understood Skylar's intended role for him here as a living prop.

Eva smiled awkwardly as her world came crashing down around her, while the relatives who

laughed along earlier all clammed up.

When Tobias settled down next to Skylar, Miranda astutely relocated herself to make way.

Her face was beyond smug. "That's what I've been telling you all along. Believe it or not,

Tobias and Skylar have been together for a long time. And Eva, you have your cousin to

thank for being so well treated by him."

Eva felt a tightness in her own chest and nearly died inside.

Skylar held Tobias' hand and placed it upon her own thigh. "Have you been taking good care

of my cousin? You know, you really don't have to worry too much for her, cause she's

actually very independent and has her entire future planned out and all that."

"What are you suggesting, Skylar?" Eva finally broke her silence as this was driving her nuts.

Skylar looked perplexedly at Eva. "I wasn't saying anything. Just making conversation, that's

all. Isn't that what you said so yourself? That you always have a plan for everything? I was

just reminding my darling here not to be too nosy.”

The manner by which the word “darling” rolled off Skylar’s tongue bordered on shamelessness.

Tobias said staidly, “Not sure how you’d define good, but I treat all my staff equally.”

Eva was rather sheepish in her reply. “Maybe I didn’t quite express myself properly.

What I

meant to say is that Mr. Ford has never made things difficult for his employees.”

“I’d never make things hard on anyone for no reason. Anyway, I’m just here for a friendly visit

as well as to acquaint myself, so let’s not talk about work, shall we?”

His move to wrap up the topic finally saw the mood see some reprieve.

Tobias’ appearance was a significant face-saving gesture for Skylar. Be it liquor or beer, he

did not turn down a single offer from her elders.

Skylar tried umpteenth times to stop him from continuing, but Tobias insisted that he was

fine.

After a few rounds, the clock struck twelve to rapturous cheers, and the glamorously dressed hosts lined up to thank Ford Group for its generosity.

It felt surreal for Skylar to have the biggest sponsor for the televised Christmas Eve Special

sit smack-dab in the middle of the old manor’s living room and drink in the company of her

own family.

Wesley asked, “How much did it cost to sponsor the program, Mr. Ford?”

After a brief pause, Tobias replied, “Not much. Around twelve million, maybe? I’m not exactly

sure.”

There was a unified and audible gasp from those listening in.

Tobias laid slump upon the table with a hand on his abdomen. She had never seen him this

smashed before.

Skylar placed a hand on his shoulder and leaned in softly. “Are you okay? Stop drinking and

let me send you home.”

Only then did Tobias prop himself up right. “I want to go over to your place tonight.”