

The Marvelous Elijah's Return By Rever Chapter 56

Chapter 56

He's escaping

The line was filled with Vlad breathing heavily and the sound of cars whizzing by, and then Dean finally heard "Boss, I got kidnapped and was just released on the side of the road with a bruised face, no shoes, and bloody clothes.."

Snapping his brows in confusion, Dean looked at his mother, who had a serious expression on her face and was glaring at him as he let out, "What are you talking about?!" "Someone has people watching the motel... I don't know, boss... I don't know who it is... I don't know who the men were or how many they are because I was blindfolded, but they didn't like that I had been snooping around the motel!" Vlad explained, sounding frustrated. A sense of worry and anger welled in Dean as he tried to control the emotions rising inside of him, clenching his fists, he hissed, "What?!... What did you tell them then... huh? Did you tell them who asked you to spy on the motel?!" "No! Of course not, boss. I would never betray the Hayes family like that." Vlad protested, his voice full of determination.

But Dean was unconvinced, shaking his head in response as his temper flared, yelling, "Bullshit, Vlad!! Why the hell will they let you go if you didn't rat us out?!" When the line went silent, Dean's eyes darkened as his breathing quickened and his thoughts started racing in his mind. "Fuck!" He shouted when Vlad ended the call abruptly. "That bastard!! All the money I paid him, and for what, to get his ass caught!! I swear if I get my hands on him." "What happened? Why are you angry?" Madam Jewel cut in, her eyes full of curiosity.

Heaving out a deep breath, Dean turned to her and replied, "Vlad got kidnapped. Apparently, someone had eyes on the motel and didn't like him snooping around, and a bunch of men kidnapped him for questioning..."

"Did he mention who hired him to spy on the motel to them?" Madam Jewel inquired, her eyes widening in shock, her hand flying to her chest, where the diamond necklace hung proudly in its place, her eyes filled with fear.

"The bastard ended the call... I don't know how much he said to these strangers."

The atmosphere in the living room grew tense once again and a silence fell upon it for quite some time until madam Jewel asked, "Do you think it's Bryan protecting her again... Peach... the way he did with the media?"

"That's my only sensible thought. Who else will have such power and wealth to hire a gang to protect the motel." Dean responded bitterly, his eyes hardening with hatred. Pacing back and forth, Dean cursed every moment that passed, his anger mounting by the minute, and he whispered, "None of this is making sense... Nothing is adding up?!" "Things don't need to add up for us to know that there's an uprising storm, and even though

it hasn't hit yet, we can not take risks anymore..." Madam Jewel stated calmly, her voice steady and strong

A look of stress clouded her expression as her gaze darted left and right, deep in thought, and then she whispered, "I will have to see him,"

"Huh?" Dean questioned curiously, confused over what she said. Raising her gaze to meet her son's, she shook her head and said, "Nothing. Forget about it." Although Dean was reluctant not knowing what she said, knowing how serious their situation was, he nodded his head and muttered, "If you say so.."

The room was silent as Elijah watched the evening sky, out his window before focusing on his ceiling, allowing his brain to wander from one idea to another, knowing that to take down a family like Hayes you need a plan that is nothing short of perfection.

The sound of his phone ringing snapped him out of his train of thought and he glanced down at his phone before sighing and sitting up. When he saw Jerome's name on his screen, his brows furrowed, then he answered and spoke, "J, what is it?"

"It's Vlad... It seems like he's going on a little trip." Jerome's voice came through his phone, concern lacing his tone. "Rick tracked him to the airport."

Hearing that information, Elijah sat up straighter and narrowed his eyes as a frown tugged on his lips and he let out, "What flight is he taking?"

"I am not sure. We were not expecting him to make such a move... so soon." Jerome responded truthfully, causing Elijah to groan inwardly. "Neither did I... Where is he now?"

"He's already in the waiting area of Terminal B... Do you want Rick to get him out and..." "No. Even though I want to know why he's leaving, it's too risky for Rick. Right now, I bet Vlad is alert, one wrong move from Rick will cause a scene... I can not risk that happening. Tell Rick to stay on his tail and find out which flight he's taking and what country, and report back to me. Nothing else."

The one fear Elijah had in the back of his head is that Dean Hayes had uncovered where he was from and was sending Vlad to find out more, and the thought caused Elijah faint anxiety.

“Yes, boss.” Jerome agreed before hanging up.

The sound of the plane taking off echoed into Rick’s ear as he sat on the bench, a hoodie covering his face, and watching Vlad like a hawk

The buzzing of his phone didn’t make him take his eyes off Vlad as he withdrew the device from his jacket pocket and answered, “), what did the boss say?”

“He wants to know why Vlad is leaving but doesn’t want you to risk it. So your order is to find out the flight he’s taking and report back.” Jerome’s voice filtered into his ear as he took in a breath, letting it out softly. “He cares that much more about me than what he wants?”

“Yeah, so don’t get your ass caught, and don’t let him down. Make sure that you get the right information.”

Watching as Vlad woke from his seat, Rick’s gaze followed him for a second, and then he got up as he mumbled, “Okay, talk to you later.” After shoving his phone back into his pocket, he began following Vlad’s movements, keeping a distance between them in case something went wrong. Finally, Vlad stopped at the male bathroom door and then pushed it open, walking inside, leaving Rick standing outside.

The stake of the thought that crossed his mind was high, but the fact that Elijah put him first before the mission made Rick want to risk it and he slowly walked over to the door, watching his back before he quietly opened it and peeked inside.

Once he was in, he realized that it was just him and Vlad in the restroom, and in a flash, he moved for Vlad, not giving him a warning noise, and quickly put him in a rear naked choke.

A struggle immediately erupted from within Vlad’s body, but then Rick tightened his grip around him as he whispered, “Shhh!!! Shhh!!! I just want to talk, but if you make this hard for us to do, I might just silence you in another way... Is that clear?”

Feeling Rick’s arm slightly loose on his neck, giving him a chance to breathe a bit better, Vlad stopped struggling and asked, “What do you want... Who are you?” “Why are you leaving the country, Vlad?” Rick

asked bluntly, not wasting any time. “How do you know my name?!”

“I know a lot, Vlad. Like how you work for the Hayes-”

“It’s you... You are one of the guys that kidnapped me this morning!”

“Well, since the introduction has been made. All I need from you is to tell me, why are you leaving the country?”

A tense silence filled the small space as Rick paused for his answer. But knowing that he didn't have the patience to wait, his grip tightened until Vlad's face turned red.

Struggling, he tapped Rick's arm, fighting to get air into his lung, and then Rick's hand slightly loosened, allowing him to gasp loudly.

"Dean Hayes!! I am escaping from Dean Hayes... I made a fool-ish mis-take... I told him about the kid-nap, and I know my life is not spear because of my incompetence, and I don't have... I don't have the money he paid me to get the job done!

"Vlad struggled to speak.

"I see," Rick said, his eyebrows raised.

"I swear on my life that that's the truth, so, please... Please don't kill me."

"Hmm,"

Slowly, Rick loosened his grip, causing Vlad to gasp for a breath of air, but, within a split second, he instantly whacked Vlad in the back of the neck, knocking him off onto the floor.

A knock on Elijah's room door made him open his eyes and then he heard, "It's Peach!! May I Come In!!"

A smirk made its way to his lips and he nodded, saying, "Yeah... come in."

Slowly the door opened, and Peach's head popped through, her dark hair falling softly over her shoulders, and she smiled brightly before stepping fully inside, closing the door behind her, and saying, "James has dinner ready."

The smile on his face slowly faded as his eyes rested on her cheeks, and even though the wound was less severe than it had been, the sight of it still made him feel sick inside.

Recognizing the look in his eyes, she widened her smile, not flinching at the pain, and said, "James went all out tonight. The table is filled and if you don't join, I think he's going to feed me to death."

When she giggled at her own words, Elijah's expression softened, and he was about to wake from his bed when his phone rang. Picking it up, Elijah glanced down at the caller ID and then looked back at Peach, saying, "Go ahead. I will be down in a minute." 'Who could it be...' Peach thought as she gave him a big smile and nod before making her way out of the room and shutting the door behind her. Elijah leaned over and pressed the green button before bringing the phone to his ear. "What's up, J?"

“Vlad is escaping to Dinland... Well, Rick and he had a little interaction in the airport bathroom, and he’s leaving only because he’s scared of Dean.” Jerome’s voice came from the other end.

“Did Rick leave the airport?”

“Yes... He’s on his way back.” Holding back his words, Elijah let out a shaky exhale as he rubbed his temple with his fingers and said, “Tell him thanks for me.” “Sure thing, boss,” Jerome said before Elijah ended the call and tossed his phone onto his bed. Sighing deeply, Elijah buried his face into his palm as he thought, ‘Keep your enemies closer than your friends... I need an ear inside the Hayes mansion, and soon.’

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Chapter 57

What did she say?

With messy morning hair, a yawning mouth, and sleepy eyes, Peach walked into the lobby in a large t shirt and shorts, and then smiled, not caring that James and Matt were there.

A month plus with these guys had made her so comfortable with their presence that she didn’t care for her look or to act formally anymore with them.

“James, what is for breakfast,” Peach asked softly, smiling as their eyes locked.

A warm expression graced his face as he grinned at her and said, “Pancake, muffins, toast, bacon, eggs...”

The Sound of the front door opening caused him to glance back and frown as Ryan let out, walking into the lobby. “Did someone say egg... I hope it’s not burnt.”

A wide smile spread against Peach’s face as her eyes widened and she shouted, “Ryan, Rookie!! You guys!!!”

“Peach!” Ryan replied, grinning as he turned away from James and looked at her.

As she was about to head over to hug them, Peach felt a presence behind her and immediately stopped in her tracks.

Turning slightly around, she saw Elijah standing behind her, and her face instantly flushed “Morning,” Peach said quietly, looking down and trying to avoid eye contact with him as she rubbed the nape of her neck.

Watching the two, Ryan gave Matt, who was standing by him, a side glance and whispered, “I wondered what happened between these two during the past month? Did they...”

Shrugging his shoulder, Matt sighed, darting his gaze away from Peach and Elijah and focusing on him, saying, “Seriously,” “Well, I need to know if I will be getting easy cash from you soon,” Ryan teased, patting Matt on the back and winking at him.

Shaking his head, Matt focused back on Elijah when he said, “Ryan, Rookie... Can we talk in my room?”

The two immediately nodded, leaving their suitcase behind and following Elijah, out of the lobby

When they saw Miss Grace, a smile surfaced on Rookie and Ryan’s lips as she grinned at them saying, “You two are back from your business trip?”

A sense of confusion took over them for a moment at the word, “Business trip,” and then Ryan laughed it off and said, “Yeah, and everything went smoothly.” With a soft look in her eyes, Miss Grace shook her head and chuckled, “I’m glad. Good to see the two of you back.” Then she gave a quick smile at Elijah before saying, “I will let you guys be then.. Seems like! am holding up something.” After she walked past them. Elijah headed to his room with Roolde and Ryan, and then shut

the door closed.

“I’m glad you both are back,” Elijah said as he turned around and leaned back against the door, crossing his arms.

Looking directly into his eyes, a sense of disappointment swept over Ryan and Rookie, and Rookie broke the silence and said, “But we didn’t find out why Checks has his father’s side of his family kept a secret and hidden-”

“No, Rookie,” Elijah interrupted, raising an eyebrow at him, “That doesn’t matter right now What I needed was to know if he is worth establishing a business with, and you guys have given me sense of confidence in him... The rest will be figured out later.”

After a brief pause, Ryan eyed Rookie and then stared at Elijah, saying, “So, you have decided To work with him?”

“Yes. A lot happened while you guys were gone, and I think it’s time I start to establish a connection in the business world.” Elijah said, half in his thoughts and half in reality.

Sitting in the back of her Mercedes, Madam Jewel kept her gaze on the front entrance of the parking lot of a twenty-four-story building, annoyed that she had been waiting in her car for two hours now.

The sense of humiliation she felt, just sitting and waiting in the parking lot of Bryan Check head office was almost unbearable for her pride and ego, but it had taken her one week of trying to book an appointment to see him and it was of no use since he was always said to be busy

As the seconds turned into minutes and she still hadn't seen him, anger began to build up inside her, but it wasn't long before a black Bugatti pulled up into the parking lot, and when its door opened, Bryan stepped out.

Getting over her frustration, Madam Jewel pushed her car door open and rushed out of the vehicle, hurrying toward him as she shouted, "Mr. Check, hold on for a second... please."

Her voice caused him to stop dead in his tracks, a look of shock crossing his features as he slowly turned around and watched her approach him.

Immediately, he recognized her, and knowing Elijah's history with Melina, he didn't want any interaction with the Hayes that would ruin his chances with Elijah, so for the past one week, he had been ignoring her request to meet. He thought she would eventually give up, but now that she was in his face, he forced a faint smile and said, "Mrs. Hayes, what an unfortunate surprise... I have a meeting in like." "I would not take up much of your time, Mr. Check," Madam Jewel spoke quickly, cutting him off

"Okay. What is it that you need?" Bryan asked, his tone serious.

A sense of embarrassment crossed Madam Jewel's face and then she glanced away, fidgeting lightly with her fingers, and then she said in a quiet voice, "I have a granddaughter that likes you and she even jokes about marrying you... unum... and I was thinking made you could think about

"That's sweet, and all, but I don't plan to take a wife any time soon and a serious relationship is not something I can get involved with now," Bryan replied calmly, glancing back at his

watch, annoyed that she would even have the audacity to ask such a thing A look of confusion crossed her face, and she blinked a few times before asking, "You are not planning to marry anyone anytime soon?"

"No," Bryan stated firmly, getting irritated now that her persistence was starting to grate on his nerves

"I am sorry, it is just that as a young and successful man settling down with a woman would be on your

list of priorities, I guess..." "Mrs. Hayes, I really must apologize but I do not have time for this conversation now Marriage is not something for me and not important either... I hope your granddaughter can move on from her crush and find a man that's interested in settling down with her..." The sound of his buzzing phone cut him off, and he reached into his pocket and grabbed the phone. Slowly, the frown on his face faded as he gazed at Elijah's name, blinking on his screen, pleased at the fact that this was the first time Elijah had used his number, and he knew it might be something vital. "If that's all you came to say, Mrs. Hayes, I would like to take this important call, so excuse me," Bryan responded as politely as he could, hoping that she wouldn't push her luck

As Madam Jewel watched him walk off, a smile slowly formed on her face and then a small chuckle echoed from her throat as a sense of relief passed through her.

After she stood in silence for a couple of seconds, she turned back and headed to her car, and then got into the backseat before reaching for her phone.

Once he saw his mother's name appear on his screen, Dean dropped his pen, rested back in his office chair, and answered the call, saying, "What is it, mother."

"I can finally breathe... You were right... Bryan is just a rude, rich jerk that doesn't care about a serious relationship with a woman... He's never going to marry Peach or care if she wed someone else." Madam Jewel said, happiness lingering in her voice. A sneer appeared across Dean's face at that statement, replying, "I told you so." "Our plan for your father's memorial celebration remains the same."

"Well, if you say so, mother."

When Bryan got into his office, he walked over to his desk and sat down, and then picked up his phone to call Elijah, but an incoming call caught his attention, and he paused his actions, smiling faintly

After accepting the call, Bryan leaned back in his seat and leered, "Two times in a roll. This might be my lucky day to be graced with your calls, not once, but twice. I thought you were mad at me for ruining your favorite shirt with wine." "Haha, mad. Umm... I wouldn't call it mad." Elijah's voice echoed from the other line, causing Bryan's smirk to fade a little. He cleared his throat, leaning forward and resting his elbows on his desk, as he said, "Then what would you call ghosting me for a month plus?"

The line was silent on the other end of the phone, and then he heard a quiet sigh, "A time I gave myself to think about your offers." "Interesting, and is this called good news or bad news for me.?" Bryan asked, raising an eyebrow at his question.

The line went quiet for a while, which made Bryan shift impatiently as his expression changed into a concerned one, and then Elijah said, "It is good news... You and I are finally moving forward... I would like to work with you, Bryan." "Yes!!" Bryan immediately cried out, elbowing the air excitedly. "Alright! Welcome aboard! You wouldn't regret this." There was a brief pause and then Elijah's voice filled Bryan's ears as he spoke, "I see you as a man of your word... Don't prove me wrong by breaking your promise."

There was a slight reluctance from Checks for a moment before he uttered, "Madam Hayes was at my company, and I know your history with her granddaughter..."

"What did she want?" Elijah asked, with no hesitation at all. "Something about her granddaughter liking me and setting us up."

"Are you..."

"No, of course not."

There was a long pause, during which Bryan shifted nervously on the chair until Elijah said, "Good... you can't be involved with the enemy and be for me, so choose a side."

"There were no sides in the first place, to begin with. If the Hayes family is your enemy, then count them mine." Bryan stated defiantly, his expression changing to a more serious one.

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Chapter 58

AKey

Sweat dripped down her forehead as Peach tossed aggressively and turned on her bed with her eyes closed, digging her hands into the sheet, as her grip tightened on the blankets.

The sound of her father's angry cries haunted her dream as she struggled to wake up, but her eyelids felt heavy like lead in their sockets, tears rolling from the corners of her eyes, and onto her pillow

Dad, The voice of her childhood self was faint, just a whisper, yet it still echoed throughout her mind

'Honey, let father grieve alone. Grandfather has been taking from us...so give him space.' Her mother's words were soft, and her body slowly relaxed on the bed. 'He's hurt... really sad like you and me, so let him be. For now.

"I will miss grandpa." Peach whispered in her sleep the exact words from the voice of her young self that crossed her mind and then her eyelids opened.

Her vision was blurred for a moment, but she blinked slowly and saw her room bathed in sunlight

The sound of her breath caught in her throat for a second as she looked out the window at the blue sky and white clouds

"It was just a dream.. a memory..." Peach muttered softly to herself as she pushed the sheets off her

Pressing her hand against the side of the bed to help support her weight, she stood up and walked to the bathroom, stopped in front of the face basin, and ran her fingers through her long, dark hair

"Okay. You can survive tonight.. you got this, Peach."

The dining table was crowded with Miss Grace, Ryan, James, Rookie, and Matt, and the sound of small chatters and laughter filled the room.

And then Elijah walked through the door and joined the table, sitting beside Rookie, and as he was about to speak, the sound of footsteps raised his gaze, and it rested on Peach

"Morning, guys" She said, her voice sounding drained and exhausted from what happened in her dream, and everyone quieted down as they focused on her

**"You okay?" Rookie asked, looking concerned and worried.

"Yeah, you don't look so good," Ryan agreed as he placed his spoon back down on his plate

When she gave a weak smile, Jaines only became worried and said, "Come sit and have some horlea,"

"Here," Matt said as he pulled out the chair between Elijah and him. Their concerns made her feel less depressed, and she walked over toward the chair, grabbing Elijah's attention as his soft gaze followed her every movement, but he didn't say anything

When Peach ut down, letting out a soft sigh, he finally met ber drowsy eyes and asked, "Are

you good?"

"Yeah... Just had a bad nightmare." Peach answered, running her fingertips along the edge of the table, and then resting them there.

A look of worry spiked in Miss Grace's eyes as she asked, "You had it again?"

Locking eyes with her mother, Peach nodded her head gently before answering quietly, "Yeah, but I am fine."

"What is, 'it?" Elijah asked, his concern for her rising as she placed her eyes on him.

"A memory of the day when Albert, my husband got the death news of his father. It's a reoccurring dream that Peach has around his death anniversary... It didn't happen often this month, so I thought we were in the clear..." Miss Grace told them, keeping her voice low and calm.

The table was awfully quiet after that, and Peach noticed that Elijah's eyes softened as he took in her appearance, his eyes moving down to rest on her hand as she nervously picked at her fingernails a bit aggressively. Shocking to her, he laced his fingers in hers and smiled warmly as his gaze lingered upon her, saying, "I am sorry for your loss." A shaky smile escaped her lips as she stared into his eyes, not knowing how else to respond

For a moment, Miss Grace stared at them, hesitant to make up her mind on what to say, but at last, she simply sighed, knowing Peach needed this and it wasn't the time to remind them about their promise to her.

"What time are you going to the party again?" Miss Grace changed the subject as she picked up her fork with a heavy heart.

Instantly, a look of worry crossed Peach's face, and she let out, "You are not going, mama."

Those words left Miss Grace stunned, and the atmosphere grew tense for Matt, James, Rookie, and Ryan, and their gazes dropped off the mother and daughter to the table, not wanting to make things any more uncomfortable.

"What are you talking about, Peach?!" Miss Grace exclaimed, trying her best to keep herself composed

Snapping her brows together, Peach shook her head at her mother and spoke, "Mama, they are all going to be there! All of the Hayes with a bunch of strangers... some of them who kiss up to that family. You are not risking your health by attending."

“And I am just supposed to feel alright, knowing that you will be going alone... What mother will be at peace when her child is walking into a potentially dangerous situation?!”

“Mama! I am not going if you insist on leaving with me!”

“This is not up for discussion, Peach! I will not allow you to go alone!” Shifting his gaze back and forth between both mother and daughter’s angry expressions, Elijah sighed and said, “I will take her... I will be her escort.”

It grew quiet as Peach and Miss Grace stared at Elijah, shock filling their faces, and as the silence hung thick in the air, he cleared his throat uncomfortably as he continued, “You are right, she needs a protector. But after everything I have seen happen for the past couple of days.”

PASI, Elijah eyed Peach, squeezed her hand lightly, and said, “...You can not be that protection, To be honest... Your daughter is right. Your health will not allow you to be there for her like you want, so let me accompany her.”

His words seemed to affect Miss Grace because her shoulders sagged, a tired expression taking over her face as she sighed, “I understand, Elijah. But I can not risk your safety... I know the history you have with the Hayes and it would be selfish to-”

“Matt will come with me. He’s a skilled fighter.” Elijah interrupted as he glanced at Matt who nodded his head in affirmation, a small smile tugging at his lips.

Miss Grace paused, unsure of what to say next, until finally, her expression showing her indecisiveness and hesitancy, she uttered, “Alright. Thank you, Elijah. Both of you. Please try and stay safe, for her sake, mine, and yours.” Elijah released Peach’s hand with one final squeeze and then nodded, saying, “I promise to bring her home without a scratch.”

A sense of worry overlook Ryan, Rookie, James, and Matt, but their faces remained neutral as their eyes shifted between Elijah and Peach. “Are you sure,” Peach whispered, her heart aching at the memories of how badly his encounter with her family had been. “They will all be there.” “I know. Trust me, I am very aware that all the Hayes will be there,” Elijah spoke, his eyes never leaving hers.

“I just don’t want-”

“Hey, hey... It’ll be fine,” Darting her gaze as her brows squeezed together, a feeling of fear started to settle in Peach’s stomach, and it spread throughout her whole body as she saw the stubbornness in his expression

“Yeah?” Peach whispered, her voice barely audible.

“Yeah..” Elijah murmured, his tone soft.

When breakfast was over, Elijah headed to his room, and soon, James, Ryan, Mall, and Rookie stood at his door, James knocking on it.

The sound of the knock caused Elijah to softly groan, looking at the wooden frame, and hating the thought of leaving his mattress.

“It’s open,” He called out as he sat up in his bed, pushing his messy hair back.

Slowly, the door creaked open, revealing Ryan, James, Matt, and Rooke as they walked into the room, James closing the door behind them.

“What is it?” Elijah asked, turning his full attention to them. “We are concerned about your well-being tonight... you are walking into a territory that will be filled with people that hate and look down on you. It’s going to be dangerous...” James explained, pausing briefly, “We’re worried that you will get hurt.” The other three nodded, and Elijah gazed deeply into their eyes as he said, “I am fully aware of the risks involved... But with Melina, I never got the chance to meet the whole family, never

got to walk into the so-called famous Hayes mansion... Tonight is possibly the one chance I get to finally do so.”

A faint scoff left Elijah’s lips as he lowered his gaze, saying, “A blind man can not go into battle with someone with sight and win easily... Peach is a key, and I hate to use her like this, but some doors need to be opened for me to do what I have to do.”

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Chapter 59

As ready as I will ever be

Shoving his hand into the sleeve of his coat, Elijah adjusted his cold embroidered black suit blazer over his broad chest, deep into his thoughts, his fingers traced down the edge of the button and pushed it through the hole. For a silent minute, he stared at his reflection, the three-piece black suit, shirt, and silk tie giving him an elegant aura, and mumbled, “Let’s do this.”

The lobby’s tense energy surrounding it as Matt waited for Elijah and Peach along with Rookie, Ryan, and James,

“Keep an eye on him. Please.” James finally broke the silence, eyeing Matt.

Looking back at James with a humble nod, Matt replied, "Will do."

Then silence took over as the sound of footsteps approached them, and everyone tensed immediately as Elijah walked into the lobby

For a moment, he stared at Matt's black dress shirt with cold lapel pin, and then the sound of heels slowly hitting the floor caught his attention

When Elijah turned around, his gaze rested softly on Peach in a long, dark black dress that hugged her curves perfectly. Her hair was tied loosely in a high ponytail, with loose strands falling over her shoulders, and the light makeup accentuated her natural beauty

"Ready" Elijah murmured, unable to help himself from smiling tenderly at her

"As ready as I'll ever be," Peach answered with a slight smirk as she slipped her hand into his. The grand hall of the Hayes mansion was packed with guests, all dressed elegantly in black and gold to meet the theme of the party

Their voices echoed throughout the large space, some laughing and chatting animatedly while others conversed politely

"Have you seen Teach?" Madam Jewel asked Dean, and he quickly took a glass of whiskey off the waiter's tray and chugged it down

And he grimaced slightly as the whiskey burned down his throat, and Madam Jewel raised an eyebrow at him, and he said, "No, she is not here yet."

"Should we call her?" Madam Jewel whispered anxiously "Do you have her number?"

"Mother, mother, calm down. We have just gone twenty minutes into the party. Relax. I'm sure that she's just a bit late. Some guests are just turning up as we speak."

**You think #

Walking around the hall, Madam Jewel's gaze rested on Melina Hayes, Jessica, and a few other girls who were chatting happily while holding champagne glasses. Then her eyes turned to Martha, Tommy, and Patricia Hayes at the far end of the large gold and black decorated venue as they conversed before narrowing their gaze toward Josh and Iris, standing with Enns and Rebecca Hayes

Slowly, a smile made its way onto Madam Jewel's lips as she shifted her gaze toward the door and saw Elijah walking into the hall with Peach, hugging onto his arm, and standing beside him

"She's here," Cora Hayes whispered to her sister.

Instantly. Amelia stared at where her sister was gazing, widening her eyes in surprise as her gaze landed upon Elijah's face. "She brought him?! Melina is not going to be pleased."

"Mother warned us before today to treat each with respect tonight, but Melina has always been top arrogant, and now, with all the recent events between the three of them, we should expect her not to follow that rule." Cora stated quietly. Whispering quickly began to fill the hall as people began to mumble among themselves, curious to see Peach with Elijah.

Every soul already knew the rumors Melina had circled through the media and the video of him carrying Peach out of the club only made them believe that sugar might be true, but now that they showed up together, people were believing Melina's lies to be the truth. The number of eyes on them made Peach feel slightly intimidated, her grip on Elijah tightening as she swallowed nervously.

"Gosh, Melina, does your cousin have no shame." Jessica whispered under her breath, scowling at Elijah. "Attending such a sensitive party with your ex-husband. Damn, that's low."

Tightening her grip on the glass, Melina pouted as a look of anger swept across her face before she looked down at the champagne in her glass and drank the rest in one gulp.

At that moment, Elijah made eye contact with Melina, but his gaze was empty of emotions.

He quickly averted his attention away from her.

"That lowlife bastard. Is this his way of humiliating me by showing up in my face with Peach!" Melina seethed, trying to restrain herself from exploding and saying something that would make Madam Jewel mad, remembering the old woman's warning to them.

Drawing his attention away from his wife, Josh looked at his sister's angry expression, and then shifted his gaze to Peach and Elijah, his eyes glowing with rage as he mumbled, "THIS underdog doesn't know how to lay low, huh?"

"Why would she bring him to such a high class event. Even Melina knew to leave home when she would attend such occasions when they were married." Emma muttered, glaring at Peach as if looking at her is like staring at something vile.

A frown left Rebecca's mouth as she stared at Peach before whispering harshly. "What a nuisance she's not gone back into the family yet, and she's causing such a ruckus!"

As Elijah walked past Tommy with Peach and Malt, he snorted as a thought crossed his mind, Why is this idler growing, bilier balls with our family – Wia's his problem? His ignorance is Betting on my damn nerves!

Scrolling Tyvon Hayes crossed his arins, eyed his uncle, and sneered, "What's up with the chucks in this family hanging up on this cheap as dude)

"Good looks." Eli Hayes muttered dryly, sinirking as he darted his gaze around the room

Where's Elmer...? I thought you and your father cinc?" "Drowing his sorrow in a liquor bottle. He is quite pissed at grandma lor taking the company ow.ly from him. I don't blame him though Peach doesn't deserve any inheritance" A faint lauch slipped from Eli's lips asle stared at his step-niece, approaching Madam Jewel, and said, "You don't know how wrong you are, boy."

Sighing heavily, Mathew Hayes withdrew lus wine glass from his lips and said, "I can't believe Morlier is doing this. I have a bad feeling about the whole thing this is going to get messy"

His wife, Evelyn Hayes gave him a weak smile and shook her head slightly, and mumbled," The fact thal Elmer is not liere just proves your words correct, dear. I don't like that Peach is pettine involved with this family again after what your father did..."

"Shut up. Evelyn! Do you not have a grip on your mouth to low what to say and what not to Sly!!" Mathiew whispered, yet his voice was filled with anger and frustration

"Honey, I'm sorr-"

"Sive your apolories and learn to control your lomue before you get us in trouble!"

The smile on Mudam Jewel's face made the hair on Peach's neck stand as goosebumps started to appear on her skin, and she tried her best to ignore the uneasy feeling that grew in the pit olher stomach

"Peach, my granddaughter!! I am glad you came Your grandfather would be glad because he loresaw this day " Madam Jewel said, smiling: widely, extending her arms to hug l'eachi, who hesit.ctly burged the older l kdy back because of the eyes on them

Pushing herself gently out of Madam Jewells embroke, Peachawkwardly rubbed her arms and Clanced up at Elijah and then at the lit candles in front of her grandfather's picture The last thing she wanted was lo misused Elijali's generosity and keep him here for too long. kowing the kind of stares they were receiving from some of the guests, especially from all thyes

** sce, you brought him," Macam Jewel mumbled, unable to liide the disgust and hate in her tone wild slujitly break lierowni nile.

The Sight of Eljali made her annoyed and irritated, but she knew that she shouldn't let the

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Chapter 60

Why is the will?

Seeing how Madam Jewells grip on Peach's hand was not causing her any pain, Elijah held back his desire to interfere, knowing that the situation wasn't that threatening.

"There is more to tonight, so I am hoping that you can stay a bit longer," Madam Jewel said calmly, her hand loosening its grip against Peach's wrist, allowing Peach to pull her hand away as she lowered her head slightly to avoid anyone noticing how uncomfortable she was. A frown settled on Elijah's face because he could tell from Madam Jewel's words that she had something up her sleeve, her tone and expression had him suspicious of what exactly she meant

"But," Peach whispered, darting her gaze to meet Elijah's eyes, feeling hesitant to agree

Trust wasn't something she wanted to give to Madam Jewel and her family, knowing too well the danger of doing so since Madam Jewel had always been crafty and manipulative with whatever she did, and she had never hesitated to use whatever means available to her.

"I would love to_ but we both know after uncle Tommy's last visit, my mother's health has been declining" Peach replied softly, fiddling with her fingers and trying hard not to break character. "I had to leave her home to come to pay my respect to grandpa... but I can't stay long, after all, we only have each other to rely on."

Her words woke faint mumbling among some of the guests. It's not like it was a secret about how Albert Hayes descended from power after his father's death and the way he and his family were treated terribly by the Hayeses over the years.

A nervous look settled on Madam Jewel's face as she tried not to scoff at Peach and say something insensitive in front of so many people when she gave her a half smile.

Becoming a bit of a nuisance to the Hayes so that they would allow her to leave this suffocating party was Peach's first motive because she didn't want to stay for whatever reason Madam Jewel was planning

Suddenly, Madam Jewel gently rested her palms on Peach's cheeks, causing her to stiffen in fear, and said softly in an almost pleading tone, "You poor thing.- Growing up must have been hard on you, hasn't it?"

What the heck is going on?! Matt thought in disbelief as his eyes widened, watching what verted like a scene straight out of the dramas he watched. looling away from Peach and Madam Jewel, Patricia smirked at her husband and whispered." Your mother is such a good actress."

"Mother is going to get what she wants one way or another, and she isn't going to let Peach leave until she gets whatever she wants," Tommy replied, raising the champagne glass to his lipa he vnnd

The look of concern in Madan Jewel's eyes disgust Peach since she knew full well Maulain lewvl was hateful and spitalul towards her for as long as slie could remember, and although Madar wel weted sweet and loving right now, h air tretter

Shakiny trt head, Penh rowired slightly and vald, "I'm glad u finally took you ten years to realu ihal Aller high ing the candle, Elijah and I will be leaving."

Slowly. M.dan Jewel withdrew her hands from Peach's cheekbones and nodded, smiling Warmly, wild then turned hier gaze to the right, calling out, "Mr. Meeks!"

"What is she up to now?' Elijah thought, furrowing his brows in confusion.

His suspicion deepened further when an elderly man entered through the door, a moment later, stopping a few distances away from them "Come closer," Madam level uttered softly. gesturing the old lawyer forward, and Elijah noticed the way the man hesitated and knew something was off about what was happening. yet be kept his mouth shut When the old man finally approached ther, Peach's eyes widened slightly as she met luis gaze and blurred out in a low tone. "You are grandpa's lawyer."

Tears began forming in her eyes and she looked away, wiping them quickly, remembering her Cather's last visit with Mr Mecks, begging him to have access to her grandfather's will, so that liis desire can be fulfilled.

Adrop of tear slowly rolle from her night eye and into the corner of her mouth when the memory of her father's devastating expression when Mr Mreks denied his request surfaced in her mind, causing her to cholo an her sob, not wanting to cry in front of all these people Noticing, her pain, Elijah held in his desire la cantort her as he knew the last thing Peach needed right now was to leel vulnerable before strangers, and if he pushed her right now, her fragile mental state would most likely shalter

So he stowed both hands into his pockets, watching the scene unfold with interest as he wondered what Madam Jewel had planned next.

Within a couple of minutes of silent observation, he had learned way more about the layes than his years of marriage with Melina had given him the people that were involved with them, memorizing the quest's faces with each dart his eyes maxle around the room

Since he was about to enter the business world, he needed to know who to trust and whom to Trgate so that he wouldn't make mistakes and reveal himself to people with ulterior motives

-Stop the music!" Madam Jewel ordered loudly to which the musicians halted and turned their attentions toward the direction where Madam Jewel was standing immediately, she had everyone stop talking and listen carefully, curious about what she Wanted to STY

"I know, after everything that has happened the fall apart with your father and us, you will mal believe a word that I say, so I brought someone that your grandfather trusted wohartedly with every piece of information about his leg.ky and his plans for his

Irundhililren to tell you this,' Madam Jewel said firmly for everyone to hear while her stare Sty rd on Peach who looked shocked and upset Shipping her brows together, Peach looke the lawyer dead in his ryes, angry and hostile as his expression grow numb and she stared unblinkingly Nerv Lrwyer Meeksclared his throul, planding toward Madam Jewel before saying with thak, volte, Your wine is in your grandfather's will, but the reason I couldn't disclose it was that you were young at the time he pued."

Von Wil could have been prandfather's so-called wish that you couldn't even teil mny

latter when he was berging on his knees for it. Teaches eyes narrowed furiously as thought, and it took ler all she had to control herself Ironi noi uttering those words harshly

Eyeing Madam Jewel, Lawyer Meeks shifted his gaze between the two ladies and said softly." To keep this confidential, I couldn't divulge the information regarding his will in the past However, I can provide you with this now. Your grandfather's wedding gift to you is one of his complexes."

Damn, grandma' Tyson thought, scoffing at the words Meeks had said, and then shook his

Mumbling aroused among the guests, many of them whispering amongst themselves while the rest of them started looking at Peach, wondering what her reaktion would be Atense expression settin on Melina's face as she grabbed a glass of red wine from the tray of a servant, drinking it in one go as though she needed its calming effeci, unable to take her cold

"Is your grandmother being Triolis, right now?" Tracy, her other friend, whispered in disbelief

Frowning slightly, Jessica Sheered, crossing her arm over her chest and looking directly at Madam Jerc before Tumbling, "What does your grandma think she's doing, Melina?"

Lowering in her eyes as she glared at Peach, Melina growled, "She's not going to survive a day in that hall dead company anyway, so I don't care or give a damn what she thinks she's

The word "Marriage" caused Elijah to flinch in shock, and he clanded over to see Peach's expression darkening as she clenched her jaw tightly and then shot a glare at Madam Jewel

Your grandfather warned me that only when you were mature enough and married that I could discuss this with you and turn over the company in your hand," Mr Merks explained slowly his eyes flickering from the left to the right

Jewel's expression hardened as Peach glared at him, gritting her teeth tightly, her fists clenching uncontrollably as she struggled to contain herself and said, "I am not here now, am I?! So why are you here, telling me this?!"

"That's the problem, Peach. You are a twenty-four year old man and unmarried. Today is your grandfather's twentieth death anniversary, and when how your other cousins gathered and you have not, I feel guilty and couldn't just sit back anymore," Madam Jewel said quietly, her face pale, and then turning her head away again

Awfully left Peach's lips at the audacity of Madam Jewel's statement, feeling disgusted with herself knowing that it is because of her children that their motel isn't as successful as it should be

Well, your grandfather down a lot over the past years, and I don't want that to continue primarily with the rumors spreading around about you, I think it's time we put an

end to this charade." Madam Jewel told Peach calmly "Get married, take over your inheritance, Noss, and restore the dignity to his last name."

Y

Peach's eyes widened suspiciously as the corner of his mouth twitched "Why would they want Peach to get married so suddenly! His face lowered as his eyes traveled between Madam Jewel and Peach, studying her idea in order to figure out what she was planning, and he finally blurted out. "Where in the hell is this!"

of this will that states this was what Mr. Hates wanted of Peach?"

His words drew everyone's attention as he gazed directly at Madam Jewel, a frown marring his forehead, and Peach's gaze softened as she turned her gaze away, biting her lower lip. "This ass!" Dean inwardly muttered angrily, glaring hard at Elijah. Focusing on him, Madam Jewel pursed her lips and looked hesitant as she scowled at Elijah before asking, "What's your deal with my granddaughter?!" The mumbling around them caught Peach's ears and she pouted when she heard someone say, "Don't he have any shame... forcing himself to stay connected with the Hayes, even after Melina dumped his ass." "I now believe what they say about him... that he is just a lowlife who takes advantage of women and gets what he wants," someone else's whisper got her attention. "If I was him, I would just hide in a rock and never show my face in public." Gently Peach bit the inside of her cheek and tried to calm herself down as the comments made her seethe in anger, feeling sad for Elijah, that he was the victim of so much gossip when they didn't know his true character. "I am sure you have the will that states this fact, huh, lawyer Meeks?" Elijah questioned him, raising his brows, challenging him to deny him answers as he ignored Madam Jewel's question. "Where is the will?"

All members of the Hayes family had a look of anger and frustration written all over their faces as they glared at Elijah, except Peach.

"Who does this fool think he is?! Trying to intimidate us all?" Rebecca whispered to her sister, causing Josh to tighten his fist, and he glared at Elijah in a warning smirk. Jessica looked away from Peach and Elijah and said, "Well Melina, I guess your made-up story is coming to life. Your ex seems clearly interested in your cousin." When a laugh slipped from Jessica's lips, anger instantly lared inside Melina's body, and she said nothing, but her expression darkened as she glared at Elijah. "I don't answer you?!" Lawyer Meeks exclaimed, clearly offended. "But if you want me to believe the words that came out of your mouth, that it's true, then you answer to him." Peach replied in an equally annoyed tone of voice.

what he did to Peach

Why are you giving up such an intimidating aura, huh, dweeb! Dean thought, taken back by Elijah's demeanor.

Asiah was about to leave to light the candle for her grandfather, Madam Jewel suddenly grabbed his wrist, using Peach to flinch to surprise, halting in her steps before looking at Elijah locking eye with hers and frowning slightly at the smile on her lips. Malam's reaction immediately drew the attention of some of the guests, and they began

whispering among each other.

Darting her gaze nervously at the guest, Peach felt her skin begin to tingle uncomfortably under everyone's gazes, and she just wanted to yank her hand out of Madam Hayes's grip and run away.

But Peaches' determination remained strong, and despite the uneasiness that filled her chest as she faced her relatives, she still managed to maintain her composure and hold up her head high with dignity.

"What is it... grandinother?" Peach asked nervously, turning slightly to glance at Elijah, whose expression was filled with concern.