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*The aroma diffuser!*

Yvette was sure the problem laid with the aroma diffuser. Otherwise, she wouldn't have mistaken Mason for Jordan.

*Didn't Matthias say the effect would only last for fifteen minutes? How could I still have been affected by it?*

*Unless... does Arielle have something to do with it?*

After giving it much thought, Yvette eventually shook the idea off. Matthias was the one who obtained the drug from overseas, and even if Arielle had medical expertise, she wouldn't have been able to extend the effects.

*Matthias must have been careless and left the smell lingering in the air. That's why I got affected!*

For a while, Yvette was at a loss for words and overwhelmed by despair.

She had intended to set Arielle up, but alas, the plan backfired on her. What made it worse was that she couldn't tell anyone about it without exposing her malicious

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intent toward Arielle.

*How am I supposed to go on after what happened?*

*Jordan definitely wouldn't want me anymore!*

Despite her mounting anxiety, Yvette had no choice but to suffer in silence.

Russell felt a pang of sympathy when he saw how pale and helpless Yvette looked.

She was his daughter, after all, and he couldn't leave her in the lurch.

Having made up his mind, Russell gritted his teeth.

*Fine. Let's make the best out of a bad situation.*

"Mason!" Russell exclaimed, mixed feelings swirling inside of him. "Do you swear to treat Yvette well for the rest of your life? Will you love her, care for her, and never let her down?"

Mason instinctively straightened his back and raised his right hand. "I promise to

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love Yvette and care for her as long as we both shall live!"

Russell sighed in resignation and nodded. "Okay. I got it."

Stunned by the sudden proclamation, Yvette trembled as she asked, "Got what, Dad? What are you planning to do?"

Try as she might, Yvette couldn't shake off the bad feeling of what was to follow.

"What do you think I plan on doing?" Russell bellowed. "We owe everyone an explanation after your shameful act! Otherwise, how are you going to live with it? How will our family be able to face society again?"

Yvette stared open-mouthed before stuttering in disbelief, "S-So... What are you trying to say?"

"The two of you are going to get married!"

Thrilled by the decision, Mason's eyes lit up. Yvette, on the other hand, was so overwhelmed by rage that she felt her vision blurring.

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"But I don't want to marry him. I want to marry Jordan..." Yvette muttered under her breath before she blacked out.

Unfortunately, Mason had heard her words, and his face immediately fell.

"Yvette, didn't you say you like me?"

Alas, Yvette was already dead to the world, so all Mason got in response was utter silence.

Despite seeing his daughter faint from the shock, Russell remained unfazed, his sympathy for her long gone.

"Clara, get Yvette dressed and have Dr. Jangler check on her!" Russell said coldly. "Mason, come with me. I need to give an explanation to everyone. All you need to do later is to listen, and don't say a word."

As reluctant as he was, Mason put his worry for Yvette aside and followed Russell downstairs.

Unsurprisingly, all the guests were still milling around downstairs. To them, the whole fiasco was a good show that they couldn't afford to miss.

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Even those who initially turned down the party invite had shown up after hearing about the juicy scandal.

As such, guests continued to stream in, making the hall livelier than ever.

After all, to gossip was human nature.

Once they saw Russell come down the stairs with Mason, the male lead in the video, the excitement among the guests got even more intense.



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"What's happening now? Is Russell going to punish Mason right here?"

"Doesn't look like it, though."

"D\*mn. I'm so glad I made it in time for this!"

"Am I the only one who finds it strange that none of the Bakers has turned up for Yvette's birthday party? No matter how busy they are, surely they can afford to come over for a while?"

"Perhaps the Bakers already knew what a shameless and promiscuous woman Yvette is!"

Arielle remained silent even as the guests continued with their fervent discussion and speculations.

She had already guessed Russell's next course of action, but thankfully, she had a backup plan.

Arielle was no saint, and she especially couldn't forgive Yvette for wanting to destroy her reputation. For those who loved her, she loved them fiercely back. But for those who meant her harm, it was

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an eye for an eye. Thus, Arielle was determined to let Yvette have a taste of her own medicine.

*Why isn't Vinson back yet, though? It has been so long. Could he have run into some obstacles?*

Meanwhile, under the watchful eyes of his guests, Russell calmly led Mason onto the stage.

This time, however, Russell was in a different state of mind.

The first time he stood on the stage, he was happily celebrating his daughter's birthday. Now, he was going to have to put on a pretense and lie through his teeth.

Russell accepted the microphone from his housekeeper and took a deep breath.

It was tough having to face a group of guests, who had only swarmed in to watch the show. Russell wanted nothing more than to chase all of them out, but he knew he couldn't do that.

If he did, not only would the Actonwards not be able to live down the

embarrassment, but they would also offend many people in their circle. It might even lead to them spreading the rumor about Yvette being nothing more than a promiscuous woman.

As such, there was nothing else Russell could do other than to offer a reasonable explanation.

Steeling himself, Russell forced a smile and pulled Mason toward him. "Everyone, what happened today was truly shameful, and I sincerely apologize for it. I have prepared a gift for each of you which you can take on your way out. And now, I have two other announcements to make."

The guests craned their necks excitedly, waiting to hear what Russell had to say.

However, no matter what Russell said, they knew he wouldn't be able to hide the fact that Yvette had messed around with Mason while being engaged. There was no way he could explain his way out of that.

After a pause, Russell continued, "The truth is, I had intended to make one of those announcements right from the start. But as you know, I fainted and



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subsequently forgot about it. I guess now's as good a time as any to break the news."

Everyone got even more curious and started chattering among themselves.

"Truth be told, Yvette had broken off her engagement with the Bakers a while back."

After such shocking news, the room was instantly in an uproar.

"So the Actonwards called off the engagement with the Bakers? No wonder the Bakers didn't respond even with what was happening on the internet."

"Exactly! But why would Yvette ditch a perfect man like Jordan Baker to be with Mason Moore?"

Just then, someone shouted, "Even with the engagement called off, it's still inappropriate for Yvette to be involved with Mason, isn't it?"

Russell knew the question was coming and calmly replied, "That's what I was about to announce. Yvette is already engaged to Mason."

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Once again, everyone was taken aback.

Russell added, "My original plan was to announce this tomorrow after they've collected their marriage certificate. But after what happened, I can't delay that anymore. I do believe that you aren't pedantic people, so naturally, you can understand the needs that an engaged couple might have at home."



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Several older guests nodded at Russell's words. "Indeed. That's very understandable."

The younger guests, on the other hand, were dubious about it. "How is it that we haven't heard anything about Ms. Actonward getting married?"

"Mr. Actonward, is this just an excuse to cover up the scandal?"

"That's right! I've also heard that Yvette and Mason are cousins!"

Russell broke into laughter as he explained, "We're distant relatives with the Moores, and it's only out of affection that Yvette calls him her cousin. As a father, do you think I'll let them be together if they were closely related?"

The crowd seemed to have bought into Russell's explanation. Even those who still harbored suspicions decided to hold their tongues.

After all, this was the Actonwards' family matter, and it would be more prudent for outsiders to stay out of it.

Pleased with how everyone seemed to have accepted his clarification, Russell pulled Mason in closer. "From tomorrow onward, Mason will officially become my son-in-law. As such, I'd like to ask you to delete the video recordings you may have taken. If I find anyone circulating the video, I'll have to go through the legal channels."

The guilty parties cleared their throats awkwardly and proceeded to delete the video from their phones.

No one wanted to invite trouble to themselves, especially when the relationship between Yvette and Mason was now legitimate.

Just then, one of Russell's housekeepers suddenly rushed in with a note in his hand.

"Mr. Actonward! I've found everything out!" he shouted excitedly.

Everyone had their attention fixed on the housekeeper, not realizing that Vinson was hiding behind the door.

Arielle, however, saw him.

Vinson gave her a look of assurance, and

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Arielle nodded knowingly with a faint smile.

The final act of the show had begun, and Arielle couldn't have asked for better timing.

Russell barely had time to react to the sudden interruption. "What have you found?"

Unbeknownst to everyone, Vinson had bribed the housekeeper, who was now giving it his all to act out the scene. "I've found out who was responsible for your stroke!"

Russell wanted to hear it in private, but he was too late to stop the housekeeper. "Ms. Yvette was the one who bought the black evening gown! She chose it herself before getting one of the shop assistants to send it to the Southalls. I've even found that shop assistant, and you can verify it with him!"

Everyone gasped.

"So Ms. Yvette planned to frame Arielle Southall, only to end up almost killing her own father!"

"D\*mn, I'm getting goosebumps just by hearing this. What kind of grudge was it that made Yvette do something so heinous?"

"Women can be so vicious when they're mad! My advice to us men is to treasure our life and stay away from women. But more importantly, stay away from Yvette Actonward!"

Russell's hand started to tremble as he felt cold shivers run down his spine.

*If Yvette's the mastermind, does that mean she has been making use of me this whole time?*

*She's this ruthless even though I'm her father. What else can she not do?*

Before Russell could say anything, Mason suddenly yelled, "That's impossible! Yvette isn't like that!"

Arielle, who had been waiting for this moment, finally chimed in, "Mason, one can never judge a book by its cover. There's even evidence to prove it, and yet you still won't believe it?"

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Mason stared daggers at Arielle and snarled. "Shut up! You're the worst of them all, you vile woman!"

Before Arielle could reply, Vinson, who had wanted to stay out of the limelight, decided to show himself.



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