

Chapter 86 Debt

Jack didn't expect Rachel to suddenly show up. He was stunned for a moment, a weird expression on his face.

"I... You know nothing. When you were born and your mother was in the hospital, I had to take charge of the Bennet Group. You have no idea how much work that was. I was working around the clock, so I..."

Rachel had enough of his excuses. "You were so busy that you didn't have time to visit my dying mother. Is that what you're saying?" She took a seat on the sofa, crossed her legs and leaned back, looking straight into Jack's eyes.

His face pale visibly. The last thing he wanted to talk about was his ex-wife, Elisa. Just the mention of her name reminded him of his choice to marry into her family and move in her home. He couldn't handle the humiliation.

Even though Elisa had been dead for twenty-four years, no matter how hard he tried to forget, he was still living under the shadow of being a kept man.

"Rachel! Is this how you talk to your father? I thought you were raised better than that! There were several matters that needed my attention at that time, and that's why I wasn't with your mother when she breathed her last. Is that so hard to believe?" Jack snapped at his daughter. 1

"Matters that needed your attention..." Rachel sneered, her eyes flashing with anger. "Perhaps I have been too harsh with you. Running a company is indeed time-consuming! I have a question, though. Since you were so busy at the time, Mr. Jenkins, where did you find the time to go to the Civil Affairs Bureau for a marriage license? You know, to get married to Caroline. And that was less than a week after my mother's death." 1

"I, I..." Jack stammered, looking like a flopping fish.

Rachel looked at him through narrowed eyes. "My mother waited for you three whole days. And you're complaining that you had to wait two hours for me? Trust me, it can never make up to what you have done."

Jack shivered under her hard stare.

Andy poured a glass of water for Rachel and walked forward. "Here. You must be parched after all that talking."

Rachel seemed genuinely confused for a second. She didn't understand what came over Andy, until she saw Jack's livid face.

And it hit her! Andy wanted to back Rachel up after hearing what Jack said. So, he deliberately poured water for her while completely ignoring her father and the empty tea cup before him. 2

Jack had never been treated like this before. He was used to Caroline sweet-talking him and

his servants bending over backwards to please him. Now he was looking at Andy furiously, that insignificant lawyer who would dare ignore him like he was nothing! Jack's face had turned a deep crimson.

"You are an ungrateful little brat. I raised you and supported you..." Jack shouted, spittle flying from his mouth, but Rachel cut in.

"If you came here today just to tell me how much money my upbringing cost you, then be my guest. Perhaps we can also figure out where did all my mother's money go. The Bennet family's fortune, I mean."

Jack's anger was off the charts now, but he couldn't ignore the guilt gnawing on his insides. Every single penny he had spent these last years, had actually belonged to the Bennet family. He didn't have a dime to his name.

"Andy, could you please fetch me a pen, a piece of paper and a calculator? I need to run some numbers," Rachel said, turning to face Andy in an attempt to hide the smile that tugged the corners of her mouth at the sight of the guilty look on Jack's face.

"That's not why I'm here today," Jack hurriedly said, unable to conceal his uneasiness.

Rachel raised her eyebrows but didn't say anything. She just took a sip of water, waiting for her father to continue.

He regained his composure and sat back down, clearing his throat. "You know what happened to your sister, right?"

"My sister?" Rachel shot back casually, "Mr. Jenkins, You must be mistaken. I have no siblings. My mother passed away not long after she gave birth to me, and since I'm her only child... So, you see, I don't have a sister."

At Rachel's sarcastic reply, Jack was enraged, mostly at the sound of the sarcastic words on his daughter's lips. He snapped. "Rachel! I'm your father and I demand that you show some respect! Calling me Mr. Jenkins as if I am a stranger? I raised you better than that! Remember your manners."

Rachel smiled. "My manners? You have such a poor memory, Mr. Jenkins. I never really knew my mother and my father... Well, you were always working! And when you had some time, you chose to spend it with your new wife and her daughter. There was never any time for me. So you see, no one ever taught me manners."

Jack looked like a cornered animal and tried to change the subject, "As I was saying, your sister, Alice, was fired. And you were there when it all happened. That's why I came here today."

"Oh, I see." Rachel pretended to look surprised, blinking innocently. "Indeed, I was there and yet did nothing. Did Alice tell you she lost her job because of me? Is this why you came here today? To blame me?"

"Alice didn't say anything like that. She is not that kind of person," Jack spat back smugly.

Rachel was smiling, but it didn't reach her eyes.

"I'm here because I hope you can persuade Victor to change his mind and hire Alice again," Jack said, as if it was a sure thing that Rachel would help Alice.

Rachel had always known that her father was a useless, pathetic scumbag, but she didn't expect that he could also be so shameless. Rachel burst into laughter, "Help Alice get her job back?"

"Yes. No matter what happened between you two, remember she is your sister. You may not like it, but it's the truth. And now your sister needs your help," Jack said, trying to sound like a good father, breaking up a fight between his naughty children.

"First of all, Victor fired Alice, not me. Second, he and I are divorced, so he won't be doing me any favors. What makes you think I can change his mind? Things have been pretty bad between us lately," Rachel said coldly, her eyes full of disdain. "I can't help Alice. Find someone else. Andy, please, see him out."

Jack frowned at her blunt refusal. "Nonsense!"

Rachel narrowed her eyes and stared at her father silently, which seemed to make him really uncomfortable. He licked his dry lips and went on. "Well, some of it seems about right. Victor won't change his mind easily. But your mother saved his grandmother's life! He owes you a life debt. He agreed to marry you because of it and you were together for two years even after his grandmother died. Such a debt can't be paid so easily. If you beg him to take Alice back for your mother's sake, he will."

Bringing up the debt, that was low, even for Jack.

Looking at his face, Shelia felt disgusted.

She had known clearly what kind of person he was, but still she didn't completely cut ties with him because he was Rachel's biological father.

And now she regretted that decision.

"Alice is a brilliant girl. She graduated from one of the best universities in the country. She worked hard for a long time before she got the chance to join the Sullivan Group. She was fired not because of the quality of her work, but due to personal issues. I think it's really unfair. And if the Sullivan Group announces that they'll never hire her again, her future will be ruined. You can help her; you can't just sit and do nothing..."

"Fatherly love! So touching," Rachel interrupted, not even trying to conceal her sarcasm.

Chapter 87 Bow Before The Tomb To Apologize

Jack felt displeased by Rachel's sarcasm, but he concealed his emotion and continued, "Rachel, if you help Alice get her job at the Sullivan Group back, I truly believe that she'll be able to become one of its senior executives one day. She's talented and competent enough to accomplish that. And by then, I'm sure she won't forget how you helped her."

"Dad," Rachel blurted out.

Upon hearing the word "dad", Jack was stunned. Before he could react, she continued, "I just want to ask you a question."

Silence befell him before he answered, "What is it?"

"If I do ask Victor to change his decision about firing Alice from the Sullivan Group and letting her stay, he might ask me for my life in exchange. Knowing that, would you still want me to plead this case to him?"

Rachel said flatly. Such words were usually spoken with bitterness, but she sounded calm and casual about it.

Upon hearing this, Jack's pupils dilated in shock. After a moment of hesitation, he slowly answered, "But that's impossible. Why would he want your life? There's no point in asking such questions, Rachel! I'm not asking you to trade your life for Alice's job. I'm just asking you to use a debt of gratitude—"

"Let me stop you right there," Rachel interrupted him as she stood up, and walked closer towards him. While staring him dead in the eye, she said, "So, in your eyes, Alice's future is more valuable than my life, isn't it?"

Jack felt uncomfortable to hear her question. To him, this question was so ridiculous that it felt like Rachel was just using it as an excuse not to help Alice. Frowning, he said, "You have the capacity to help your sister. That's something you can do! What's the point in asking such an absurd question?"

A smile appeared on Rachel's face, and her eyes were as cold as ice.

"Very Good." She turned around and sat back down on the sofa, crossing her legs.

After witnessing her non-compliant attitude, Jack was confused about what she meant. His face darkened when he asked, "What are you trying to say, Rachel?"

Slowly, she looked into his eyes and replied, "You want me to ask Victor to change his decision regarding Alice's dismissal from her position in the Sullivan Group, right? That's a piece of cake. I can promise you that."

Upon hearing that, Jack's eyes lit up. "I knew that you're my good daughter. You—"

"Your good daughter?" 'It's so ironic to hear him praise me like that. It's like he has completely forgotten that he calls me an ungrateful daughter whenever he's angry.' Rachel's eyes narrowed. "Mr. Jenkins, don't thank me yet."

Realizing that she addressed him differently again, Jack was caught off-guard again.

This time, Rachel turned to Andy and smiled. "Andy, please be my witness for this matter."

"Gladly." Although he had no idea what she was planning, he knew that Rachel had bright ideas and sensible reasons of her own, so he decided to trust her. Andy nodded and started filming.

Jack was still confused, but when he thought that Alice would have a chance to return to the Sullivan Group, the smile on his face remained. "Rachel, now that you've agreed to my request, and since I'm already here with you today, why don't you call Victor and ask him now?"

"Oh, Mr. Jenkins, you grossly misunderstood me. I said I can promise you I'll do that, but it doesn't mean I've agreed to do it," Rachel responded.

"What... what do you mean?"

"I have three conditions. As long as you accept them, I can plead with Victor to give Alice her job back."

This time, the smile on Jack's face disappeared, and was replaced by a stern expression. "Are you trying to bargain with me?" he asked with displeasure.

Rachel grabbed the glass of water, unhurriedly taking a sip. Upon hearing the displeasure from Jack's voice, she maintained her composure, and said lightly, "Mr. Jenkins, you're a businessman, correct? Then you should know that favors like the one you're asking for right now comes at a price. If you don't find my conditions acceptable, then I won't force you to do business with me. You may leave if you want to, but I'm afraid I can't see you out."

Jack was livid.

If it weren't for the fact that Rachel was Elisa's daughter and that she was the only person who could ask Victor a favor, he wouldn't have waited here for more than two hours and tolerated her arrogance!

Through gritted teeth, Jack said, "Fine. What are your conditions?"

"First, you're going to write down an official document renouncing me as your daughter. In that document, you will declare that from now on, you and I have nothing to do with each other."

Jack's eyes widened with disbelief. "You—"

But Rachel wouldn't give him a chance to speak. Calmly, she continued, "Second, I want you to transfer all of the shares you have in the Bennet Group to me. And third..."

She paused to look at Jack's face, noticing how sullen he looked at the moment. In a tone devoid of emotion, she added, "I want you, Caroline, and your precious daughter Alice, to kneel in front of my mother's tomb, and beg for her forgiveness."

Everyone present was utterly shocked.

Andy was so startled to hear that that he almost dropped the phone he was holding to record the video.

Jack, on the other hand, was livid. His face turned red as he stammered angrily, "Rachel, you ... you!"

"You have one minute to make a decision. If you can't make up your mind, I'll make that decision for you." She then took out her phone and started the countdown.

With every second that passed, the ticking sound of a clock was heard. Beads of sweat formed on Jack's forehead with every tick-tock he heard. While gasping for air, he wiped his sweat using the back of his hand.

Just before the timer could run out, Jack said in a hoarse voice, "I'm willing to accept the first two conditions! But as for the third one—"

"Either you agree to all of my conditions or Alice's future is ruined." Rachel showed him no mercy.

Jack fell into a moment of silence again as he gritted his teeth. "Okay! I accept your terms!"

As soon as Jack agreed, Rachel smiled at Andy and said, "Andy, prepare a pen and a piece of paper for Mr. Jenkins."

When night fell, the afterglow of the setting sun shone down on the porch. Rachel stood at the door, gazing at the front yard of the Bennet family's mansion. As the autumn wind blew by, the swing in the yard gently swayed along.

Once Jack had signed the equity assignment agreement, and had written his renouncement of Rachel, he left in a huff without looking back.

Andy had just come down from the study after making two copies of the documents mentioned when he saw Rachel standing by the door. He paused to look at the papers in his hand, and he couldn't help but feel sorry for her.

'Jack is indeed a scum, but he's still Rachel's biological father. She must be feeling sad that her own father would give up her life in order to make life easier for his mistress and their daughter. Something that horrible would certainly break anyone's heart. Even if she's not very expressive of her emotions, I'm sure she feels sad right now.'

With that in mind, Andy approached Rachel and said, "Miss Bennet, some people don't deserve to be called a father. You have no need to feel sad for him."

She turned her head to look at Andy. Realizing that he had misunderstood her, she smiled and said, "No, I'm not sad. I'm actually happy."

"That's not possible. You don't have to pretend to be strong all the time."

Rachel took the files from his hand. "Nothing is impossible for me. I have solved our troubles, and earned money at the same time."

Andy doubted her words. "If there's anything you'd like to tell me, Miss Bennet, please do so at once."

Rachel nodded, and then he looked at the two bodyguards outside. "Actually, I do have something to tell you. But let's go to the study, shall we?"

"Got it," Andy replied.

Chapter 88 The Maid's Slur

Rachel and Andy headed upstairs to the study. Rachel closed the door behind them once they were inside. As she walked closer to Andy, she pulled a bank card out of her pocket and held it out to him. "There are five million dollars in this account," she said.

Andy's eyes widened when he looked at the card. When he heard what she said, his eyebrows nearly shot up into his hairline. "Miss Bennet, where did you get so much money?" He was so surprised because he knew that Rachel was down on her luck when it came to money. He knew she only had this villa, and 1% shares of the Bennet Group. Apart from this, she had next to nothing. As far as he was concerned, she'd be lucky to have even one hundred thousand dollars in her account at this stage. In the past, when things had been going well, five million dollars would have seemed like a trivial amount. But now, with all that was currently going on, five million dollars felt like a fortune.

Rachel grabbed his quivering hand and shoved the card into his palm. She curled his fingers tightly around it, then let him go. "You don't need to know where I got the money from. All you need to know for now is that I got it legally. Just take it. Use it for emergencies and if something happens to the Bennet Group or your law firm. You don't need to ask my permission to use it; consider this me granting you all the rights to it. I don't know when I'll be able to come back here. So please, take it."

What she said was true. The five million dollars was all legal. She'd asked Quintin to lend her the money; in fact, she had only asked for two million. But Quintin had been only too excited to help his boss. He'd agreed without hesitation and transferred the required amount, plus an extra three million, to Rachel's account.

"I... I don't need all this money... I'm only running a small law firm. But Miss Bennet, you can be rest assured that I will keep an eye on the Bennet Group for you. You don't have to worry about a thing," Andy said, standing up a little straighter and raising his chin.

"There is one last thing," Rachel said.

"Anything."

"I know you used to work in the legal department of the Bennet Group. Do you still have those connections? I know you quit quite a while ago, but I was just wondering," Rachel said slowly.

"In all honesty, I'm not sure. I haven't spoken to anyone from there in a very long time. If I may ask, Miss Bennet, why do you want to get into contact with them?" Andy asked with a frown.

Rachel went to sit at the desk. She leaned back in the chair and comfortably rested her arms on the desk in front of her. "I want to go over all the project contracts that Jack and Caroline handled over the last twenty-four years," she said, pursing her lips and raising her eyebrows.

At that, the two of them entered in a deep, important conversation. Afterwards, Rachel returned to the Sue Garden.

As she got to the door, she heard the sounds of muffled voices talking. She recognized them as two maids. She then stopped to listen.

"I'm really pissed off. After all the shameless things that woman has done, I can't believe Lukas told me not to say anything bad about her. I mean, what has she done to bewitch Lukas?" one maid said angrily.

"What do you think?" the other maid sneered. "It must have been something truly nasty. Lukas was always too soft on her when she was Mr. Sullivan's wife. But even now that they're divorced, he's still protecting her. There must be something going on between them!"

"You mean to say they're...?" The first maid couldn't even finish her sentence. She was too shocked at what her companion had said.

"It makes sense, doesn't it? Why else would he always be so nice to her? It makes me wonder who the real father of her baby is..."

"Don't talk such nonsense!" the first maid cried out. She couldn't believe her friend was saying such scandalous things.

"It's not nonsense! I have my reasons!" the second maid said stubbornly. She fixed her friend with a serious, piercing gaze.

Rachel had stopped to listen to the gossip, hoping it would be something lighthearted and laughable. But the longer she listened, the darker her expression became.

It made sense now why Lukas had suspicions of her having an affair. Obviously, it was because these two maids were gossiping about her. She gritted her jaw and let herself in as quietly as she could. Then she snuck up to stand behind the two maids. With her hands held behind her back and a pleasant smile on her face she said, "Oh? You have reasons? Well, I'd like to hear them."

The two maids didn't realize that it was Rachel standing behind them; they thought she was another maid. They didn't even glance at her to see who she was. The maid that had made such bold claims raised her chin arrogantly and said, "Well, firstly, Mr. Sullivan has always hated Rachel. I'm almost certain she lied and cheated her way into his bed that night. And! They only had sex once! What are the odds of..."

She trailed off as she was suddenly taken by the strangest feeling that something was wrong. Her expression creased thoughtfully. Who'd asked the question?

Simultaneously, the two maids jumped around to face Rachel. Their faces paled when they saw her, and their eyes widened in horror.

"What... What are you doing here?" the second maid said, swallowing heavily as a nervous sweat broke out on her forehead.

"Where else am I supposed to be?" Rachel said in the most innocent voice she could muster.

"Please, don't let me stop you. I want to hear the rest. I'm listening."

The maids looked at each other, terror clearly evident all over their faces. But the more arrogant maid of the two quickly gathered her wits about her and said, "I don't want to discuss it anymore. Who do you think you are? Why should we listen to you? Come on. Let's get to work."

She grabbed the other maid's hand and started dragging her away.

Rachel stepped in front of them and held her hand up to stop them. The innocent, fake curious expression on her face had disappeared, to be replaced by a cold light. "How about you finish what you were about to say?"

"Who do you think you are to demand that of me, Rachel?" the maid said.

"Who do I think I am?" Rachel narrowed her eyes at the maid and stepped closer. As fast as a striking cobra, she reached out and grabbed the maid's chin. "I am the biological mother of the future heir of the Sullivan Group. That is who I know I am. Who do you think you are to tarnish my name behind my back?"

The maid averted her eyes, choosing instead to look down at the floor. "I didn't! That's absolute nonsense!" she whined.

Rachel let go of her chin, roughly shoving her away. "Right. So let's settle this then. You have two choices in this matter, as far as I can see. Either you apologize to me right now, or we go to Lukas and ask him to add some insight into this matter. I'm sure he'll be able to clear up whether I'm talking nonsense or not."

"No!" the maid said in a shrill voice. "Everyone knows that you and Lukas are having an affair-"

The rest of her words were lost as a sharp, solid slap rang through the air.

Rachel's hand stung a little from how hard she'd slapped the maid, but it was worth it. The sound was so loud that it brought Lukas running out to see what was going on. "Miss Bennet, what happened?" he asked as he approached.

"How dare you lay a hand on me?" the maid cried, covering her burning cheek with her hands. She looked absolutely furious. 3

Rachel briefly glanced at Lukas, then back at the maid. "How dare I?" she sneered.

Lukas immediately realized what had happened. He'd already spoken to these two maids about gossiping about Rachel behind her back, but it seemed that they had paid him no heed.

"You two! Apologize to Miss Bennet! Right now!" he said strictly.

The more timid maid instantly went even paler than before. She lowered her eyes to the ground so she wouldn't have to look into Rachel's furious stare anymore. Her lips trembled as she started to form an apology, but before she could say anything, her companion piped up again. The second maid pointed an accusing finger at Rachel and seethed, "Lukas! She's the one who slapped me! Why should we apologize to her?"

"You..." Lukas' face darkened.

"What's going on here?" said a low, cold voice near the door. Rachel felt her skin prickle at

the sound, and she was sure she could feel his eyes boring into her.

"Mr. Sullivan, you're back," Lukas said and turned around to face him. Before he could say anything else, the arrogant maid threw herself to her knees in front of Victor. She gazed up at him with eyes shimmering with tears, making herself look as pathetic as possible.

"Mr. Sullivan, please help me!"

Victor looked down at her with that neutral expression he wore so well. But that changed when he saw the angry red handprint on her cheek. His face darkened as he said, "Who hit you?"

The maid reached up and covered the mark with her hands. Her lips were quivering as though she were struggling to speak, and her body was shaking. But it was all for show, that much was obvious. In a halting voice she said, "I... I..."

"Tell me!" Victor cut in roughly. His icy eyes were glittering with impatience at her show.

Chapter 89 The Sullivan Group's Successor's Mother

For a moment, the maid was silent. Then she blurted out, "It was Miss Bennet!" The maid pressed her face into her hands and forced herself to sob even harder. Then she turned her tear-stained face up to Victor and whimpered, "Recently, whenever I go up to Miss Bennet's room, I always hear a man's voice. She so rarely comes out that I started to get worried... I just asked her if there was something wrong, but she started shouting at me. She didn't even give me a chance to speak or explain. She accused me of being nosy and then..." ①

Rachel cocked an eyebrow as she listened to the maid's nonsense story. But she had to give her credit where it was due; the maid did give a very convincing performance. If she hadn't known that the maid was lying, she would have been inclined to believe her.

Not to mention that the maid had somehow willed herself to be able to sob the way she was. It made her look even more pathetic.

The maid rubbed her palm across her cheek to try and dry off some of the fake tears, then clasped her hands in front of her body. "When Miss Bennet came home just now, I asked her if she'd had any dinner. I knew she'd been out the entire day and I just wanted to make sure she'd had something to eat. I even offered to make her some food. I think Miss Bennet misunderstood what I saying, because she slapped me out of the blue. She... She also said..." Victor's gloomy face pinched in irritation. "What did she say?" he asked coldly.

"She also said that she is the mother of the Sullivan Group's successor. She told me that if she so wanted, she could have me thrown out the Sue Garden, and ensure that I would never be able to find a job or even a place to stay in Apliaria again." The maid turned to Rachel and pathetically kowtowed to her. "Miss Bennet," she started in a trembling voice, "please forgive me! I know I was wrong. I promise I won't interfere again. Forgive me, please..."

Victor's expression had been getting angrier and angrier the longer the maid had been speaking. By now he was gritting his jaw so tightly that the veins in his neck and forehead were bulging. His dark eyes were glinting with malice, and he barely seemed to be holding onto his temper.

"The mother of the Sullivan Group's future successor?" Slowly, he turned his head and sneered at Rachel.

The maid immediately stopped crying once Victor was no longer looking at her. A sly smile curled the corners of her lips.

Lukas could see that the situation was rapidly becoming sour. He couldn't let Victor lose his temper with Rachel because of some story the maid had spun. Rachel was pregnant with Victor's child after all. Lukas felt he had to speak in her defense.

"Mr. Sullivan, there has been a great misunderstanding. Miss Bennet was just-" Before he could finish his sentence, Victor strode forward and grabbed Rachel by the chin.

Rachel did nothing but frown in pain. She stayed quiet, not even bothering to try and explain what had really happened. She knew Victor wouldn't have believed her anyway.

"So, you not only want to be the hostess of the Sullivan Group again, but you also want the entire group for yourself. You truly are ambitious! I was right about you from the very start, Rachel. You are such a greedy woman! Who said that baby would become the successor of the Sullivan Group? The mother of the Sullivan Group's successor? Of its future? No, you're not."

Victor jerked away from Rachel like she was carrying some type of disease.

Rachel took a few steps back, trying to put some distance between herself and him. She shook her head to relieve the pain in her chin from where Victor had been holding her. "From now on," Victor said coldly, "Rachel is a servant of the Sue Garden. Her duties are now those of her fellow servants." 1

Lukas was horrified. He nearly stumbled over his words as he said, "Mr. Sullivan, please consider this carefully. Miss Bennet is pregnant. If she works like a servant, she is going to exhaust herself. What if something happens-"

"If something happens, I will tell the doctor to prioritize the baby," Victor said coldly, staring straight at Rachel's pale face as he said this.

That night, Rachel was moved out the guest bedroom and into the storage room where she used to live.

As she stood in the middle of the room, taking in the familiar sights, sounds and smells, a bitter smile curled over her lips. She sighed softly and whispered to her belly, "I'm sorry, little one. You're having to go through so much because of me."

A knock at the door silenced any further words she might have had.

"Miss Bennet," Lukas called from the door.

Rachel squeezed through the narrow passage to get to the door. She pulled it open. "Lukas, what's wrong?"

"I brought you a heater," Lukas said. "The heating in this room isn't working properly. It gets very cold at night during autumn... I didn't want you to get cold." He held his heater out to her. It was very old. He'd been using it for more than ten years already. "It's a little old, but it works just fine."

Rachel couldn't help but smile. "Oh Lukas, you shouldn't have. This isn't necessary. You keep it. I'll be fine."

"Miss Bennet-" Lukas tried to protest.

"Take a look inside," Rachel cut him off. "Do you really think this room is big enough for me and a heater? Anyway, I'm sure I won't get cold. A pregnant woman's body temperature is higher than normal. I think I'll be alright if I wrap myself in blankets for the night. Don't worry about me. Thank you, though."

Lukas didn't push her any further. He could see it would be fruitless; she'd already made up

her mind. He nodded and said, "Miss Bennet, I'm so sorry about this... I'm going to speak to Mr. Sullivan later this evening and see if I can't get him to change his mind."

Rachel smiled at him again. She didn't try and change his mind. She knew he'd go and speak to Victor anyway, even if she did get him to promise her he wouldn't. She also knew that he wasn't doing this for her, but for her unborn baby.

"I will leave you now. Rest well, Miss Bennet," said Lukas.

Rachel nodded a goodnight to him and watched him leave down the corridor. She remained standing at the door until Lukas had rounded a corner and was gone.

Up in his study, Victor was sitting contemplatively at his desk. He had his eyes narrowed at the wall, and he was leaning back in his chair. His mind kept taking him back to what Carson had said to him earlier.

"I think your best bet would be to start investigating the people around you, instead of trying to figure out the hacker's identity. For example, have you offended anyone recently? I personally don't think the hacker is one of your opponents in the business world. If he was, I'm sure he'd be more interested in the group's commercial secrets, rather than something as trivial as a mistress being slapped. Secondly, I think this hacker is a woman. Only women are interested in this kind of drama."

So, the hacker was a woman with a grudge against him and Alice...

Victor closed his eyes in thought. Suddenly, the image of Rachel's face flashed through his mind. His eyes flew open. It could have been her. It wouldn't be the first time she'd hacked into the Sullivan Group's surveillance cameras though.

The previous time she'd done it, she'd been using Ivan's phone. It would have been easier for her back then because the phone had access to the monitoring system. But after that incident, Victor had demanded that the monitoring systems be upgraded as soon as possible. It had been done overnight. Up until now, it had been a force to be reckoned with. No one in their wildest dreams would have been able to break into the system... It was impossible that a no body like Rachel would be able to get it right.

No matter how hard he tried to convince himself that it was impossible, he couldn't deny the fact that he had a vague feeling that somehow, Rachel was mixed up in this.

Even if she hadn't been the one responsible for actually hacking into the monitoring system, she may have had something to do with the hacker. He just couldn't find any evidence.

Someone knocked on his door at this moment.

The sound interrupted his thoughts and destroyed the careful thought process he'd had. He cleared his throat, sat up straight and said, "Come in."

The door opened to admit the maid Rachel had slapped.

Victor frowned when he saw her. "What's wrong?"

The maid's confidence faltered when she realized just how intimidating Victor was. It didn't help that he was staring at her like she was a bug under a microscope. The self-assured

smile she'd had on her face froze for a moment, and traces of nervousness crawled through her chest. But when she thought back to how Victor had punished Rachel for her sake, she took a deep breath and stepped further into the study. She carefully put the cup of coffee she'd been carrying onto the table.

"Mr. Sullivan, I made you some coffee," the maid said, lowering her eyes to the table. In a sweet voice she said, "Thank you for helping me earlier..."

"It wasn't a problem. You can go now," Victor said dismissively.

The maid bit her lip and nibbled it nervously between her teeth. Then she looked up at Victor and felt her heart squeeze at the sight of him. He was so painfully handsome that she couldn't help but be tempted by him. She took another deep breath and curled her fingers into her palm. Now was not the time to back down. She took a few steps forward and then knelt in front of him. She reached out a hand towards Victor's thigh.

"Mr. Sullivan, actually... I wanted to offer myself to you. I would like to bear a child for you... Nothing more. I..." 1

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Before she could finish talking, Victor kicked her away, causing her to fall flat on the ground. Thanks to her reflexes, the maid managed to protect herself using her palms to soften the fall. But as a result, her wrist was fractured, and her face paled in an instant due to the pain.

"Mr. Sullivan... Sir..."

Victor's eyes were frigid when he glanced down at her. "You want to bear a child for me, you say? How dare you have such a pipe dream?"

The maid was trembling in fear. "Mr. Sullivan, I... I just..."

"Fuck off!" Victor commanded. "You're fired. From now on, you don't work here anymore!"

By now, the maid was panicking. Completely disregarding the pain from her wrist, she knelt on the ground, and crawled to Victor's feet. "Mr. Sullivan, I'm so sorry. I was wrong to suggest something like that. I was completely out of my mind—"

Victor kicked her shoulder again before she could even finish talking.

Bang!

The maid fell heavily on the ground again. Her entire body was trembling with pain and fear.

"I'm giving you three seconds to get the hell out of my house!" Victor commanded.

This time, she didn't cling to any trace of hope. She immediately got up and stumbled out of the study.

Lukas happened to be on his way to the study, so he saw the maid fleeing the room in embarrassment. For a moment, he was surprised by what he witnessed. Afterwards, he knocked on the open door.

"Mr. Sullivan."

Glancing at Lukas, Victor calmed himself down, though the anger on his face was still apparent. Lukas had served his grandmother in the past, and she had asked him to take care of Victor after her death. Thus, Victor regarded him with a certain degree of respect.

"What's the matter?"

Lukas pursed his lips and said, "Sir, I'm afraid that you've misjudged Miss Bennet this time. I've already checked the surveillance footage. The reason Miss Bennet said those words which vexed you was because the maid had insulted her first, and—"

"Lukas, remember who you work for," Victor interrupted him in a commanding voice. Obviously, he was trying to warn him.

Lukas' heart sank. He could tell that Victor was too angry at the moment to listen to him, so he immediately lowered his head and replied, "I remember, sir."

"Oh, you remember, huh? In that case, do not disobey my orders again and again for someone else's sake!"

Lukas fell silent.

Victor's eyes darkened. He got up, and walked to the floor-to-ceiling window. After a moment of silence, he asked, "Lukas, how long have you been working for the Sullivan family?"

Lukas was taken aback. He didn't know why Victor would suddenly ask him that, but he answered the question honestly.

"In two weeks, it'll be my fiftieth year of working for this family. The Sullivan family took me in when I was only fifteen years old. I worked for ten years as a servant, until your grandmother noticed my loyalty and appreciated my hard work. As a result, she promoted me as the family butler."

In all honesty, Lukas had devoted his entire life to the Sullivan family. Time fled by, and he was now sixty-five years old.

"I heard that your daughter, grandson, and granddaughter have been living abroad all this time." Victor turned around to look at him intently.

"That's right, sir."

"You once served my grandmother for so many years, and even after her death, you kept working here in the Sue Garden. Decades have passed, and you're getting old now, Lukas. I think it's time for you to enjoy your remaining time with your family. Since your children and grandchildren are living abroad, you should go find them and live with them. I'll tell Ivan to book a flight ticket for you, and arrange everything necessary for the trip. You're leaving tomorrow."

Upon hearing that, Lukas' face was overcome with shock. He immediately got on his knees.

"Mr. Sullivan, are you sending me away?"

Meanwhile, at Jack's house.

Jack returned home, infuriated. Caroline and Alice had been waiting for him in the living room. When they heard the door open, they immediately stood up to greet him.

"Dad, what did Rachel say? Did she agree to help me?" Alice asked anxiously.

Jack glanced at Alice. It looked like he was about to say something, but in the end, he just let out a sigh. Upon seeing him sigh, Alice frowned and turned to Caroline, indicating her to do something.

Caroline immediately took the hint. She took Alice's hand to calm her down. Afterwards, she said to the housekeeper, "Viola, bring me the herbal tea I made today. People are prone to getting anxious during autumn. Drinking some tea can help calm down." She then turned to Jack and said, "I know that what you did was difficult, considering Rachel has a problem with me and Alice—"

"She agreed," Jack interrupted her.

Alice's eyes lit up. She immediately ran to hold Jack's arm. "Dad, I knew you could do it!"

There was strange look on his face when Jack drew his hand back, and went to the living

room to sit down. After a moment of silence, he said, "She agreed to help us in exchange for three conditions."

Hearing that, Alice and Caroline exchanged confused glances. Afterwards, they looked at Jack together.

"Conditions, seriously? How dare that Rachel bargain with her own father?!" Alice gritted her teeth; her eyes were brimming with anger.

Compared to her, Caroline was calmer. She comforted Alice, and then sat next to Jack. "If there are conditions, it's fine. But I'd like to know what those conditions are."

Jack looked at his wife, and guilt flashed through his eyes. It had been a while, but he still hadn't said a word.

Unable to wait any longer, Alice urged him to speak. "Dad, just tell us! What are the conditions you're talking about?"

"Rachel asked me to renounce her, and demanded me to transfer my shares of the Bennet Group back to her," Jack said in a barely audible voice.

The smile on Caroline's face disappeared. Alice, on the other hand, clenched her fists and shouted, "She asked you to transfer your shares to her? That Rachel is so greedy and shameless!"

Jack fell silent.

Caroline frowned and pretended to scold Alice. "Alice, mind your words. She's still your sister! The Bennet Group originally belonged to her. Now that she wants it, we should just give it to her."

"Mom!"

Ignoring Alice, Caroline turned to Jack and held his hand. It seemed that she was blaming herself. "I didn't expect that Rachel hated Alice and I so much that she would sever her ties with you."

Jack snorted, "That girl is nothing but an ungrateful daughter. Your kindness is wasted on her. If she wants to cut ties with me, then so be it! It's not your fault."

Alice pursed her lips as she exchanged glances with Caroline again.

They really didn't care if Jack renounced Rachel or transferred his Bennet Group shares to her. After all, their equity in that company was insignificant, and the company was already on the verge of bankruptcy. Giving Rachel those shares was no big deal.

"Dad, didn't you say that Rachel demanded three things from you? You've only mentioned two of those conditions. What's the third one?" Alice asked.

Jack wanted to speak up, but then he bit it back. It took him a long time before he managed to tell them the third condition.

When Alice and Caroline heard it, their faces were laden with shock.

"Wait a minute. Are you saying that Rachel wants us to kneel in front of Elisa's tomb and beg for her forgiveness?" Alice's eyes widened in disbelief. Then, in a shrill voice, she cried,

"No way! Are you serious? Why should I bow to Elisa's grave and beg for her forgiveness? There's no way I'm going to do that!"

Caroline didn't expect to hear the third condition. Her face turned pale, and her hands clenched subconsciously.

At this time, Jack lowered his head in silence.

"Dad, did you... agree to her demands?" Alice came to her senses when she saw the look on Jack's face.

Upon hearing her inquisitive tone, he was displeased. Talking to Rachel had already pissed her off, but he dared not lose his temper during their conversation. Now that he was back home, he was being interrogated like a criminal, and it made him lose his patience.

He was so angry that he sprang to his feet and shouted, "So what if I agreed? If you hadn't insisted on going back to the Sullivan Group, I wouldn't have yielded to Rachel's conditions in the first place! Besides, we just need to bow before Elisa's tomb. What's the big deal? If you don't want to do it, then don't!"

Having said that, Jack went upstairs looking angry.