

## Impulsive Vow to an Enigmatic Husband Chapter 1621

### Chapter 1621

Zavier had nearly forgotten how musically gifted the girl was-not just skilled in a variety of instruments, but truly masterful in each one. Such a talent would undoubtedly be courted by the top universities far and wide. Yet, it was a pity; she had no real choice in the marriage matter, not even the liberty to attend the school of her dreams.

Her violin playing, though exquisite, was unappreciated for its true worth. She was merely a bargaining chip for the Blue family.

Just like Zavier. How tragic!

Having said his piece, Zavier turned to leave.

Skyler called out to him in desperation, "Zavier..."

Glancing at his watch, Zavier had a game to get to and no time for idle chit-chat. "Spit it out, then."

Skyler, with earnest clarity, said, "Everything I've told you today comes straight from the heart. I hope we can live together in peace."e2

She was acutely aware of her predicament. Being sent to the Capital by the Blue family meant that she was no longer their daughter. From now on, her fate, for better or worse, was tied to the Rivera family. And within the Rivera family, her destiny was linked to Zavier. Only by getting along with this Mr. Zavier could she hope for better days.

Perhaps one day, she might attain her freedom. Just how far off that freedom was, she couldn't be sure. But she wouldn't miss even the slimmest

chance.

Zavier looked at her with a cold smile. "Are you trying to get on my good side?"

Skyler was frank. "Yes."

Then we'll see how you do," he said, walking away.

Skyler hurried to keep up with his stride.

As if he had eyes in the back of his head, Xavier snapped, "Don't follow me!"

Skyler instantly halted, no longer daring to continue. For a moment, she was lost, just standing there as Xavier's figure moved further away until he disappeared from her sight.

The Rivera family, including Xavier, were all strangers to her. She knew the Riveras were the wealthiest in the Capital, that Xavier was the second-born, and that the family was vast and their relationships complex.

Anything else about the Riveras, she knew only from online rumors, whose truth was anyone's guess.

"Miss Skyler, dinner is served. Madam sent me to invite you and Mr. Xavier to dine," the old butler said, appearing behind her unexpectedly. He looked around, not seeing Xavier. "Miss Skyler, where is Mr. Xavier?"

Skyler replied, "He seemed to have some business to attend to and left already."

The butler frowned slightly at the news but didn't utter any displeasure, "Dinner's ready, and Madam has asked for your presence."

"Alright, Skyler nodded, following the butler back to the house.

After a few steps, the butler's voice reached her again. "Miss Skyler, I'm not sure if I should say this..."

Skyler encouraged him, "Please speak."

The butler shared his concern, "In the future, you'll need to keep an eye on Mr. Xavier; he can't keep on being so willful. Mr. Hudson's getting on in years, and while many are eyeing his position, who succeeds him will depend on the younger generation's conduct. You must be mindful of this."

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Chapter 1622

Skyler nodded obediently.

But ultimately, it was Xavier's decision; if he wanted to leave, there was so little someone as insignificant as her could do to stop him.

The butler was quite pleased with how sensible and well-behaved Skyler was. "But you know how he is; even Mr. Hudson can't control him. You'll have to take it slow with him."

"Yes," Skyler replied softly.

"The family's all waiting for you. Hurry along to dinner," the butler encouraged.

With a gentle hum of acknowledgment, Skyler followed the butler inside.

Both families were seated at the dining table, with two empty chairs beside the patriarch reserved, quite obviously, for Xavier and Skyler.e2

In Xavier's absence, Skyler was unsure where to seat herself, but Hudson beckoned her with a smile. "Kid, come sit here."

"Yes," Skyler said, taking her place beside him. That's when Hudson asked, "Did that rascal Xavier take off again?"

Skyler nodded.

"Xavier just celebrated his twentieth birthday last month. He's young and reckless, and does not think of consequences. But now that he's got someone to look after him, he ought to settle down a bit." He looked at Skyler with a sigh, as if making a significant decision. "Skyler, today I'm officially entrusting him to you."

"Okay," was all Skyler could muster, not knowing what else to say-or if she could say anything else at all.

Xavier was his own person. A very strong-willed young man at that. Everyone expected Skyler to handle him, overestimating her capabilities.

Or perhaps they knew she couldn't handle him and were just adding pressure for the fun of it.

Sierra, Xavier's aunt, with a twinkling laugh, chimed in, "You can rest easy. Skyler's a real catch, pretty as a picture. Even I get a bit jealous, let alone

those young lads. I bet it won't be long before Xavier's eating out of her hand."

Her words sounded like a compliment, but the underlying implication was clear-Skyler was to win Xavier over with her charms.

As the junior at the table, Skyler couldn't speak up. She looked to her parents for support, but Barbara seemingly misunderstood Sierra's insinuation, adding, "You all can relax. Skyler's a sensible girl; she'll serve Xavier well."

Her parents' words stung like barbs, and Skyler clenched her fists at her sides, maintaining a polite smile.

"Clearly, Xavier's in for a treat," Sierra said, while brazenly serving Skyler more food. "Eat up, dear, you'll need your strength tonight."

The insinuation was even more blatant. Regardless of whether Skyler was Xavier's choice, their engagement meant she was now part of the Rivera household, Kalene's future daughter-in-law.

Kalene wouldn't let her family be slighted, "Speaking of which, how's Dustin doing lately? Haven't seen him around for a while."

She deflected the conversation skillfully to Dustin, causing Xavier's aunt to glance nervously at Hudson, who thankfully didn't show any displeasure. "He's been studying hard, making good progress."

"That's great to hear. Maybe we should invite him over for dinner sometime," Kalene suggested.

"He's not the focus today. Let's not talk about him," Sierra conceded, knowing full well Kalene was protecting her own.

The rest of the meal passed without further incident.

The Blue family had business to attend to and had to return to the south overnight. Before leaving, Skyler's mother took her hands, her words laced with urgency, "Skyler, even though you and Xavier are engaged, and you're rightfully his fiancée, that boy is proud and may not follow through with the

marriage. You must find a way to bear his child soon, to secure your place as his wife."

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### Chapter 1623

Skyler was just engaged, and to a man who hardly seemed to welcome her presence. Her mother, of all people, was now pressing her to have a child with him as soon as possible.

Even though Skyler's heart had turned cold long ago, her mother's words still managed to punch a hollow void inside her, sending a chilling breeze through her soul. "Mom, can I ask you a question?"

Barbara replied nonchalantly, "If there's anything you don't understand, just call Ashlyn. She's been coaching you for a while now; she knows where your strengths lie when it comes to... that matter. Though she doesn't rate your skills highly, thankfully you're young and attractive. Men seem to like that innocent cluelessness. Zavier, that boy is full of youthful vigor. He won't be able to resist your charms."

"Am I really your daughter? What kind of mother views her own child as a plaything to be offered up for someone else's amusement?" Skyler wanted to ask. But after hearing her mother's words, she could only muster a hollow laugh, unable to voice her true thoughts.

She knew all too well the nature of the Blue family. If she hadn't stepped up, her younger sister might have been in her place. And her sister was still just a kid.

"Sky, once we get home, make sure you behave, especially around Hudson. He's the helmsman of the Rivera family empire. Get him a great-grandchild soon, and not only will you bask in endless luxury, but the Blue family will shine in the reflected glory," Barbara droned on, seemingly oblivious to Skyler's turmoil or perhaps she sensed it but simply didn't care.

Skyler remained silent.e2

Barbara tugged at her ear. "The Blue family has provided for you for eighteen years, giving you the best of everything-food, clothes, and education. Now it's time to repay your debt to the family. Don't let us down now, understand?"

Skyler said nothing and turned to walk back into the house.

Barbara cursed under her breath, “Ungrateful brat.”

Crossing the yard, Skyler headed towards the main house. As she neared it, a stranger’s voice drifted over from the garden.

“Kalene, I noticed the Blue girl hardly touched her dinner. Could it be she’s unwell?”

After being paraded in front of strangers all day and enduring the evening’s uncomfortable atmosphere, Skyler had lost her appetite. It was no wonder people were concerned.

Curious about what Kalene, who had spoken for her during dinner, would say, Skyler paused to listen.

Soon enough, Kalene’s voice came through, “Young girls always watch their figure and tend to eat less at night. I doubt there’s a serious issue.”

The stranger pressed, “But look at how thin she is, hardly any meat on her bones. A body that frail might struggle with childbirth.”

Skyler almost laughed. Everyone knew being too thin could cause issues with childbirth, yet society still pressured women to stay slim.

Kalene added, “When the driver takes her to Zavier’s, I’ll remind his staff to pay special attention to that girl’s diet and focus on trying to fatten her up a bit.”

The stranger continued, “You know how complex the Rivera family is-father has my second brother and his wife close by, and then there’s my third brother and his wife, all eyeing the family business.”

Skyler guessed this was Zavier’s aunt, Nora. Hudson had three sons and a daughter, and rumor had it his daughter was his darling.

Kalene responded firmly, “The Rivera family’s fortunes were hard-earned by our elders. Whoever he chooses to take over will do so. I have no objections.”

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Chapter 1624

Nora leaned in towards Kalene, her voice laced with urgency. “You can’t be so nonchalant! Look at Sierra. The moment dad finished his dinner and let out a yawn, she was all over him, fussing like attentive waiters.”

Kalene, with her ever-so-gentle voice, replied, “If those two are willing to look after Hudson, it takes a load off our shoulders. Why not be happy about it?”

Nora’s anxiety peaked. “But look at our situation. My oldest nephew’s gone, and my brother’s been hit hard by the tragedy. He’s been sick and homebound, unable to get involved with the company’s affairs. And Zavier, stubborn as a mule, is always butting heads with granddad even when he knows he’s on thin ice. If you keep this laid-back attitude, we’ll end up with nothing.”

At the mention of the eldest son, Kalene’s composed facade wavered, but her voice remained soft. “We’ve got a roof over our heads, a car, and savings. Even if we don’t get a penny more, we won’t starve. As for the inheritance, if it’s not meant to be, so be it. Right now, I just want Zavier to be healthy and safe.

Unconvinced, Nora switched tactics. “Do you want your family line to end, then?”

“What do you mean?” Kalene’s voice carried a hint of confusion.

You’ve got only one son left in Zavier. If he marries a girl who can’t have kids, your family name dies with him.”e2

Kalene paused before replying, “I’ll have the doctor help Skyler with her health immediately. If in two years, when they’re of legal age to marry, there’s still no baby, then I’ll consider other options.”

Nora scoffed. “You’re willing to give the Blue girl two years, but who’s giving you two years?”

Kalene didn’t respond.

Nora persisted, “Listen to me. Give the Blue girl six months max. If there’s no sign of a baby by then, I’ll step in. Dad might not listen much, but he listens to me...”

Before Kalene could reply, the sound of approaching footsteps interrupted them. Skyler hurried towards the source, nearly bumping into the stern-faced butler. He glanced behind Skyler with a frown. "Miss Skyler, your bags are packed. The driver will take you to Mr. Zavier's residence."

Skyler hadn't expected to be sent off to Zavier's place so suddenly. Despite her reluctance, she simply nodded and said, "Okay."

On the ride to Zavier's place, Skyler replayed the conversation between Kalene and Nora in her head. She remembered reading about Kalene's eldest son, Zavier's brother, who had suddenly passed away earlier that year at the age of twenty-four.

Now, with only Zavier left, Kalene would undoubtedly want him to settle down and continue the family line soon. Skyler didn't know how Kalene would respond to Nora, but she was painfully aware that to the Riveras, just like the Blues, she was nothing more than a means to an end. A tool to be used, and if no longer useful, could be easily replaced or discarded.

Being sent back to the Blue household would be a dead end for her. She knew she had to find a way to survive before that day came.

She wanted to live, to live well, and with dignity.

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Chapter 1625

After about thirty minutes of weaving through suburbia, the driver maneuvered the car into an upscale neighborhood, twisting and turning until he pulled up in front of a lavish estate. He got out first, then hurried to open the door for Skyler. "Miss Skyler, we've arrived."

Skyler stepped out of the car, retrieved her luggage and violin from the trunk, and scanned her surroundings. "Does Zavier really live here all by himself?"

The driver nodded. "Yes, ma'am. Mr. Zavier prefers solitude; he doesn't take kindly to disturbances. There's no chauffeur on the premises, just Marissa to look after his needs."



Skyler was relieved to hear that she wouldn't be the only one living with Xavier. The thought of cohabitating with her betrothed—a man she didn't love—promised nothing but awkwardness.

The driver quickly pressed the doorbell, and in no time, a woman in her forties emerged. “Nico, did Madam send you with something for Mr. Xavier?”

The driver stepped aside, gesturing towards Skyler. “I've brought Miss Skyler. She is the fiancée Mr. Hudson has chosen for Mr. Xavier. She'll be staying here from now on.”

Marissa swung the door open wider. “Madam mentioned it over the phone. Miss Skyler, please, come in.”<sup>e2</sup>

Skyler stepped forward with polite gratitude. “Thank you, Marissa. I appreciate it.”

“Not at all! It's no trouble! Usually it's just Mr. Xavier and me here—it'll be nice to have a bit more life around the house. I've been hoping for some company.” Marissa scrutinized Skyler closely. The girl was beautiful, certainly a match for Mr. Xavier in looks.

However, Marissa could tell that Mr. Xavier wasn't thrilled about the arrangement. He had called over a bunch of his rowdy friends to play games as soon as he got back today. Normally, they'd stick to the game room and not bother anyone else. But today, he had deliberately moved the gaming setup to the living room, creating quite a ruckus, quite clearly a show for Skyler.

Skyler just smiled and said nothing more.

“Nico, would you like to come in for a cup of coffee before you head back?” Marissa offered.

“I need to get back to pick up Madam, so I'll pass on the coffee. Miss Skyler is in your hands now. I'll be off,” The driver declined.

“Take care then,” Marissa said as she saw him off.

Then, she led Skyler toward the main house.

The Rivera family was indeed rich. Xavier's mansion was a giant. Approaching the main building, the walk seemed to stretch on and on.

"As you can see, we have guests today, so Mr. Xavier might not be available to greet you. I'll show you to your room where you can rest. Don't mind him too much," Marissa said as they walked.

The thought of Xavier being preoccupied suited Skyler just fine. "That's alright."

As they neared the house, the din of voices spilled out. "Zavier, man, what's up with you today? You've lost every game!"

Zavier's voice cut through the noise. "I'm letting you win."

Someone teased, "Heard your old man set you up with a fiancée. What's she like? Is she up to the mighty your standards?" Zavier flicked his cigarette to the floor and crushed it underfoot with a twist of his boot. "Drop it, man. It's killing my vibe."

Another voice chimed in, "What, is she that ugly? Can't get you excited?"

Zavier swung his hand in a mock slap to the guy's head. "You think I'm that shallow? I don't care for the girl. She could be a goddess for all I care, and I'd still want nothing to do with her."

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Chapter 1626

As Skyler approached the front door, she glanced inside and spotted about half a dozen guys roughly Xavier's age. They were sprawled out on the couch, some clutching beer bottles, others gripping video game controllers, and a few puffing on cigarettes.

Empty beer bottles and cigarette butts littered the floor—it was like they had been raised in a landfill. Skyler crinkled her nose with distaste.

Marissa coughed, "Ahem... ahem..."

The living room was filled with a mix of chatter and video game noise, so Marissa's cough didn't catch anyone's attention. She had no choice but to

raise her voice, “Mr. Xavier, the driver has brought Miss Skyler over as instructed by the Madam.”

It was only when she practically shouted that the room took notice. Heads turned almost simultaneously, and when they saw Skyler standing next to Marissa, some of them were gobsmacked. One of them let out a whistle, “Holy smokes, she’s a knockout!”

Skyler’s face was delicate, and her long dark hair cascaded over her shoulders like a modern-day muse.

Someone shook their head and sighed. “Zavier, with a catch like that right in front of you, how can you not be interested? You sure your taste isn’t off?”e2

Another chimed in, “Zavier, don’t tell me you’ve actually got a thing for our campus queen?”

Zavier had a crush? Skyler’s eyes lit up at the thought. If Zavier really had someone he liked, she could have a proper chat with him. They could set some ground rules and live under the same roof without getting in each other’s way. Once they were both able to break free from their parents’ control, they could call off the engagement and chase after their desired lives.

While Skyler was lost in her hopeful future, Zavier’s cold gaze swept over her, filled with undisguised disdain.

Skyler wasn’t bothered. She gave him a smile as a greeting. But that smile only seemed to make Zavier’s disdain grow stronger. His brows knitted together as he said, “Marissa, be more observant in the future and don’t let irrelevant people dampen my mood.”

He had to admit the girl was easy on the eyes, but what was the use of that? She seemed as fragile as a porcelain doll, likely to break at the slightest touch. Having someone useless around was only going to ruin his plan.

“Yes,” Marissa quickly grabbed Skyler’s carry-on. “Miss Skyler, please come with me.”

Skyler said nothing, took her violin, and followed Marissa upstairs.

Marissa was fairly warm to her. “Miss Skyler, you’ll be staying in this room from now on. If you’re not comfortable, just let me know, and I’ll find you another room. We have plenty to choose from.”

Calling it a guest room didn’t do it justice; it was spacious and inviting. Skyler was quite pleased. “Marissa, I really like this room.”

Marissa smiled back, “I’m glad you like it. I’ve prepared all the toiletries and some clothes for you to change into. You must be exhausted after today, so go ahead and wash up and get some rest. If you need anything, just tell me.”

Skyler returned the smile, “Thank you!”

She had met quite a few people that day, and only Marissa hadn’t looked at her with a strange gaze. That alone made her happy.

“I’ll leave you to it then,” Marissa said as she reached the door, then turned back. “Just so you know, Miss Skyler, Mr. Xavier is just sharp-tongued, not mean-spirited. He resents the elders meddling in his marriage, but he means no harm to you.”

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Chapter 1627

Skyler let out a sigh of relief, her nerves finally unwinding after a day stretched taut like a violin string. She sank into the armchair in the corner of the room, the kind you’d find in a cozy, book-lined study, and pulled out her phone. Tapping on the WhatsApp icon, she scrolled to her chat with Iris. [Hey, Iris, you asleep yet?]

Iris replied almost instantly, [I’m really scared!]

Reading that simple line, Skyler felt a lump forming in her throat. [Don’t be scared, kiddo. I’m just getting hitched in the Capital, not walking into a lion’s den. And hey, your future brother-in-law is a gem. Plus, I’ll be on the lookout, making sure no one ever messes with you again.]

Iris typed back, [Skyler...]

Skyler continued, [Did you finish your homework from the tutor today?]

iris responded, [Yes, I did everything like you told me. I'm working hard so I can get into the same college as you did...]

[That's my girl. I'll settle down here in the Capital, and in a few years, I'll have you join me for college.]e2

Iris excitement was palpable even through text. [Does that mean I can see you every day?]

[Absolutely!]

[Yay! I can't wait to be with you every day.]

Iris was just eleven, and she couldn't fathom what her sister faced in the Capital. She took Skyler's words to heart, believing them without question. Skyler couldn't help but smile at her sister's happiness. [It's late, Iris. Time for bed.]

[Goodnight!] Iris added a kiss emoji.

[Night, Iris...]

After ending the chat, Skyler scrolled through her contacts, seeking someone to confide in, but no name felt right. The ruckus from Zavier and the others playing video games downstairs-gunshots and explosions from their war-themed game-was giving her a headache.

She took a deep breath and exhaled forcefully. "Skyler, you got this. No hurdle too high, right? Just believe in yourself. You're gonna change things, for you and for Iris. You'll get out from under your family's thumb."

Empowered by her own pep talk, Skyler unpacked her suitcase swiftly, hanging a few dresses and neatly storing away her undergarments. Her natural beauty meant she traveled light, bringing only a couple of moisturizing lotions to combat the Capital's dry air.

Dressed in her pajamas after a quick shower, she applied lotion and lay in bed, but sleep eluded her, Back home, she would have played her violin or another instrument to soothe herself to sleep, but that wasn't an option here.

Fortunately, she had brought a book, a travelogue that she cherished. Maybe it was her own lack of freedom that made her so drawn to it. While she felt

caged, confined to live at the whims of others, the author of the book—a woman her age—had journeyed across her homeland and the world, seeing the mountains and rivers that Skyler could only dream of. With the book in her hands, she could escape, at least in her mind, and maybe find the slumber that reality denied her.

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Chapter 1628

As the author penned her whimsical adventure, the sudden urge for a road trip became an irresistible call to the open road. She embarked on a solo journey, her car the trusty steed that carried them through the arid stretches of deserts and the lush vastness of prairies...

Just picturing these wondrous scenes filled Skyler with a deep yearning, her eyes tinged with the green of envy. Oh, how she wished to embark on such an escapade herself one day.

But could she wait for that day to come? She couldn't wait; she had to seize it.

Skyler put the book down and grabbed her phone to scroll through a job portal.

In the Capital, there were plenty of music schools in need of instrument tutors, and they paid a decent wage. Once the semester started and she moved into the dorm, she'd have the time to tutor on the side.

She had to earn some cash, save it up for the day she could leave the Rivera household and start a new life with her little sister.

After browsing for a while, Skyler applied to a couple of promising job listings. With her applications sent, a sense of calm washed over her, and she quickly drifted off to sleep.e2

While Skyler slept upstairs, downstairs was anything but quiet. The guys were restless, each one more riled up than the last.

One teased, "Zavier, man, you've got a knockout fiancée and you're just leaving her to chill? You're one cold dude."

Another chimed in, "Man, we've all had our share of fun, and there's Xavier, still as pure as a greenhorn. Got cold feet or something?" Yet another egged him on, "If I were you, Xavier, I'd head upstairs right now and, you know, take care of business with that little lady." Xavier downed his beer in one go and, with a swing of his arm, smashed the bottle to the floor, "Get the hell out, all of you!"

The drunken bunch sobered up instantly. "Dude, what's your problem? Did we hit a nerve?"

Zavier's cold gaze swept over them as he spat out, "I said get out!"

The guys, used to joking around, had never seen Xavier this fired up. Scared, they stumbled out, leaving as quickly as they could.

Marissa brewed a strong cup of coffee and offered it to Xavier. "Here, drink up. It'll sober you. You should get some rest."

Zavier didn't take the cup. He leaned back on the couch, eyes closed. "Tomorrow, you rent a place outside for her. I don't want to see her around here." "Zavier, do you even hear yourself?" Marissa was incredulous. "That girl was handpicked by Hudson himself as your fiancée. You think you can just send her away?"

"So what if he chose her? I won't marry someone I don't want to. No one can force me," Xavier declared.

Marissa knew all too well how stubborn he could be and tried to reason with him, "Even if the Blue family isn't on par with the Riveras, they hold significant sway in the South. If the Rivera family wants to expand there, the Blues are the perfect bridge. Hudson's plan to unite you and the Blue girl is his way of announcing you as the future head of the Rivera family. A privilege the others would kill for, and you're turning your nose up at it." "If you don't find her a place, she'll be out on the streets by tomorrow," Xavier grunted, pushing away the offered cup and staggering upstairs. The Rivera family intended to leverage his marriage for their business ambitions, but he wouldn't even give them the opportunity. Watching Xavier's resolute departure, Marissa thought of Skyler's fragile silhouette from earlier that night and shook her head in resignation. The poor had their own set of struggles, just as the wealthy grappled with their own. Every household had its own set of challenges to face.

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Chapter 1629

The next day, Skyler was up with the birds.

The living room, which had resembled a war zone the night before, was now spick and span. The doors and windows were flung open, allowing the stale smells of alcohol and smoke to drift away, and be replaced by the fresh scent of flowers scattered about the room.

No one was in sight, but Skyler, could hear Marissa's voice ringing cheerfully, "Miss Skyler, up at the crack of dawn? Is our guest bed not to your liking?"

Turning her head, Skyler spotted Marissa in an apron, clearly having taken a break from her kitchen duties. "I'm an early riser back home too. Need any help with something, Marissa?"

"You're gonna be the lady of the house someday. We can't have you lifting a finger." Marissa chuckled, glancing upstairs as she spoke. "Mr. Xavier usually sleeps in till the sun's high in the sky. Why don't you go ahead and have breakfast? I've got it all ready for you."

"Sounds good," Skyler replied, following Marissa to the dining room. She was taken aback to find a breakfast spread fit for a king: caviar, truffles, and steaming beef broth, among other delicacies.

At home, Skyler's breakfast was usually a modest affair-a single egg, a slice of toast, and a glass of milk.e2

Marissa, as if fearing Skyler might waste away on such fare, had laid out a veritable feast. "Miss Skyler, I made all this especially for you. Please, eat up."

Skyler eyed the array of rich foods, feeling almost full just looking at them. "I usually don't eat much for breakfast."

Marissa smiled warmly. "Mrs. Rivera thinks you're too thin, dear. She told me to fatten you up. I know it's a bit much for the morning, but this is the best time to nourish your body."



Skyler thought back to the conversation between Nora and Kalene from the night before. It seemed the answer to their concern was laid out right here on the breakfast table.

Marissa was just doing as she was paid, so Skyler didn't want to make a scene. She forced herself to eat, to consume the rich foods until she felt nauseous. "Marissa, may I take a walk in the garden?"

"Of course, you can. Mrs. Rivera says from now on, this is your home. Do whatever makes you happy," Marissa replied with a smile.

"Thank you," Skyler said. Though she knew that in this house, it was Xavier who called the shots, not his mother, Kalene.

Xavier's mansion had extensive grounds, a riot of color and fragrance in the full bloom of summer. Skyler's phone rang as she wandered the paths. It was a pleasant male voice. "Miss Skyler, I presume?"

"Yes, this is Skyler. May I ask who's speaking?"

"I'm the HR manager from New Tunes Music. My name's Braiden. I saw your resume on a job site and think you'd be a great fit. Could you come in for an interview at 2 PM today?"

Skyler glanced at her watch-it was only 10 AM now. The company was a mere thirty-minute cab ride away. "Sure, I'll be there."

"Great, see you at two."

Ending the call, Skyler headed back to the house, only to overhear Marissa's voice. "Mr. Xavier, your mother has made herself clear-Skyler must live here.

you drive her out, how will we explain it to your grandfather?"

If

Xavier finished his bite leisurely before replying, "Marissa, in this house, my word is law. I'm telling you the situation, not asking for your opinion."

Marissa, flustered, insisted, "But sir, even if you don't care about what your mother and grandfather think, you should at least consider Miss Skyler. She's been sent away by her family to the Capital, where you are her only support. If you turn her away, how will she survive in the Capital? What will her family

think? How will the Riveras be seen?"

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Chapter 1630

"Girls like her are a dime a dozen. Am I supposed to take every single one under my wing?" Xavier's voice trailed off as his gaze suddenly shot through the room, locking eyes with Skyler. "Why are you eavesdropping out there?"

Skyler hadn't meant to overhear their conversation; she just happened to catch it and hadn't yet managed to slip away before Xavier spotted her. She walked up to Xavier and stood firmly in front of him. "I didn't mean to listen in on your conversation."

Xavier didn't care whether it was intentional or not. Seeing her just reminded him of the strings pulling at his life, irritating him to no end. "You have two choices. One, have Marissa rent an apartment for you. Two, if you don't like option one, pack your bags and get out on your own."

Marissa was beside herself with worry. "Mr. Xavier..."

Skyler cut in, "I choose option three."

Xavier's eyebrows arched menacingly. "I didn't give you a third option."

Skyler continued, "I know you don't want me around, but we don't have much of a choice right now."e2

"Are you

threatening me?" Xavier's voice turned icy.

"Not at all. School starts soon, and I'll move into the dorms. But we have to keep this from the elders back home."

Marissa interjected, "Miss Skyler, please reconsider."

Xavier scoffed, "You don't like me, but you can't let go of the title of my wife."

Skyler wanted to roll her eyes. Who in the world would want that title? She had come to terms with reality. "Right now, if we clash with the family, we will have no chance of winning. Think about it. I'll stay here for two nights, and first

thing after tomorrow, I'll pack up and move to the school. I won't be any trouble to you."

With that, Skyler headed upstairs.

"Skyler, stop right there!" Xavier called after her.

She turned around. "Anything else, Mr. Xavier?"

Faced with her big doe-like eyes, the harsh words died on Xavier's lips. "Just... two more days. If you're not out by then, I'll personally see to it."

Thank you!"

Zavier stood silently, stupefied. The girl who seemed like a vulnerable bunny last night had turned into a feisty one.

From the sidelines, Marissa sighed, "Mr. Xavier, she's still a young lady. You're a grown man. Can't you be a bit gentler with her?"

Zavier ignored Marissa and strode out.

Marissa watched his retreating figure, then looked back toward the staircase, her heart heavy for Skyler's uncertain future.

Back in her room, Skyler slipped into a simple white sundress and grabbed her purse before heading downstairs.

Zavier had already left. Marissa was still in the living room. "Miss Skyler, heading out?"

Skyler nodded. "Marissa, I have some errands to run. I'll be back before dusk. I'll grab takeaway for dinner out, so don't wait up for me."

"Got any plans? We don't have a driver, and it's tough to hail a cab around here. Can you drive? If so, Mr. Xavier's garage has some spare cars; feel free to take one, Marissa offered.

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