

## Chapter 1729 Prince Charming

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"I didn't expect that the Hamilton family would throw Locke's welcome party."

"The Hamilton family and the Avila family are always close..."

Janet caught snippets of conversation from a group of wealthy ladies nearby.

Sitting amidst the gathering, Janet was fighting off boredom, barely keeping herself awake.

She yawned, restless, and finally made an excuse to slip away from the front yard.

In the moonlit night, she wandered alone through the sprawling villa.

Stepping away from the lively party, Janet found herself in a quaint garden. She headed towards a bench, but just as she was about to sit down, she spotted two familiar figures approaching.

Mandy's elegant shawl was in disarray, her carefully done makeup failing to hide her distress, hinting at recent tears.

Janet's brow creased in concern, debating whether to approach Mandy.

But then, she noticed the man with Mandy. His back seemed familiar, yet the dim garden light veiled his features.

"Why did you refuse to announce our engagement tonight?" the man asked in a cold, hard tone, his low voice carrying a hint of displeasure that sent shivers down one's spine.

Janet's eyes widened in realization. It was Locke's voice, a man she'd only encountered twice before.

Locke reached out to hold Mandy's hand, but she swiftly evaded his touch.

With her head bowed, Mandy's body language screamed resistance, something Locke couldn't ignore.

Then, breaking the silence, she looked up into Locke's deep-set eyes and said firmly, "I'm not ready to get engaged just yet."

Locke's eyes snapped open, a chilling gleam flickering in them. Mandy inhaled sharply at his intense gaze. "What's wrong?" she asked, a hint of panic in her voice.

Locke's expression softened. He tenderly brushed a stray lock of her hair behind her ear and asked softly, "So, when do you think you'll be ready for engagement? You must have a timeline, right?"

Feeling slightly guilty yet maintaining her composure, Mandy met his gaze defiantly. "I haven't decided yet. I need more time to think. I'll let you know when I'm ready."

Understanding the evasion in her words, Locke felt his mood darken.

"If you're unsure, then we'll go with my plan," he declared, his spirits lifting slightly. "I've had the dates calculated, and

there's a perfect day coming up. An engagement on that day promises a lasting bond."

As Mandy was about to reply, the sound of footsteps and a distant phone conversation interrupted her.

"Regarding the design, if it's not to your liking, feel free to speak up..."

A voice both Mandy and Janet recognized reached their ears, halting them in their tracks.

Regaining her composure, Janet quickly ducked behind a flower bed.

Mandy, in a rush, reached for Locke's hand, trying to make a quick exit.

Aware of Mandy's usual avoidance of him, Locke was puzzled by her sudden grasp upon hearing the man's voice.

His instincts hinted that this wasn't just any man on the phone.

A sharp glint flashed in Locke's eyes. He stood firm, preventing Mandy from leaving, and asked in a low, displeased tone, "Is he the guy you love secretly?"

