

handed the crisp new bills to her. He already knew her well enough to be certain this would placate her. She loved shopping and fine dining.

Deleted: already that he **was**

Deleted: buying clothes and going to top restaurants.

“Thanks, Chase, baby.” She stood up to take the money and kissed him, but he turned his head and her mouth brushed his jaw. Her expression told him the money had placated her. “I can have the limo tonight?”

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Deleted: she **said** softly as she

Deleted: could tell from her expression that

“No, I need the limo later for... business.” He noticed disappointment flash across her face. At least she didn’t seem curious about precisely why he needed the limo. “You can have one of the Mercedes. If you wait in the outer office, Alicia will arrange it all for you.”

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Deleted: on Brooke’s

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“Fine,” Brooke huffed, and he knew she took as a personal slight to be downgraded. He gave her enough of a hug and kiss to get her to smile—she could be dangerous if she **was** unhappy, that much he already knew. Chase didn't need Brooke to turn on him. He’d make sure she didn't get any ammunition to use against him in the future.

Deleted: The last thing Chase wanted now **was** for

Deleted: need to

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Brooke walked toward the door and turned to flash Chase a coy smile before she sashayed out of the office, but he could see her giving Alicia an unpleasant sneer as she sat down near the secretary’s desk.

Chase shut his door behind Brooke, then went to his phone and asked Alicia to arrange the car. He hung up and **thought** about what had happened between him and Mathias, and what he could do to fix it.

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Mathias went back to his office after he left RichardsCorp headquarters. He walked past Pam’s empty desk and went into his office, slamming the door behind him. His open-door policy **was** over for the foreseeable future. He needed privacy and a quiet place to think.

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At least Pam had already gone for the day. Mathias couldn't face her, or explain his state of mind; she **was** far too sharp for his mood to go unnoticed. As he approached his desk, he noticed that someone—most likely Pam—had cleaned up the pieces of the broken telephone and replaced it with a new one. Yes, she definitely knew something far beyond ordinary had happened.

Deleted: **was** gone

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Sitting down at his desk, Mathias glanced at the monitor that for the past several weeks