

Can't Win Me Back by Ginger Sue Novel

Chapter 2401

Chapter 2401

Jasper's gaze followed the movement of Justin's finger, landing on the nameplate on the desk.

The nameplate that once read "Jasper Beckett, CEO" had been replaced with "Justin Beckett" without Jasper's knowledge.

Justin had been impatient-erasing all traces of Jasper in the Beckett Group overnight.

"We held an emergency board meeting yesterday morning," Justin said, his tone calm yet cutting. "With an overwhelming majority vote, I've replaced you as the corporation's CEO.

He leaned forward, resting his chin on a triangle formed by his well-defined fingers. "Have your secretary hand work over to mine soon. I've packed your belongings and sent them to Seaview Manor. Thanks for all your hard work these years, Jasper. You can leave the future of the Beckett Group in my hands now."

The room fell into a tense silence.

Jasper's lashes quivered briefly before he broke into a smile. With one hand in his pocket, he sank onto the couch with a calm, almost careless air. Legs slightly apart, his posture exuded a freedom he had never shown before.

It was as if stepping down as CEO had unshackled him.

Justin narrowed his eyes, watching him coldly.

"Justin, you didn't need to go through all that trouble. If you'd told me from the start you wanted this position, I would have stepped down willingly.

"As the eldest son in the family, you were always the rightful heir to Beckett Group-if not for the kidnapping incident that ruined your health. Am I right?"

Jasper had a reputation for being stern and upright during his military days, but now, to Justin, he seemed almost absurdly unrestrained. It was as if this sudden upheaval had unearthed a side of him Justin had never seen before.

"But you shouldn't have stolen the position from me," Jasper continued, his voice hardening. "And you shouldn't have dragged me through the mud, ruined my reputation, and hurt those around me with your underhanded schemes.

A sharp, vicious glint flashed in Jasper's eyes. "If that's how you want to play, I won't just sit back and accept it. Don't think you'll stay secure in this position for long."

Even though Justin smiled back at Jasper, his tone was low and frigid. "I'm afraid that's no longer in your control." "Likewise," Jasper replied coolly. "And for the record, this is the last time I'll treat you as my brother."

Jasper stood, his tall frame exuding quiet strength. Without a hint of defeat, he strode to the door, head held high. Justin's gaze darkened, and a lump rose in his throat, making it difficult for him to breathe.

Jasper had poured his heart and soul into the Beckett Group. He had fought tirelessly to protect his position and reputation. Now, stripped of everything and falsely accused of drug abuse, his name lay in ruins.

Wasn't he furious? Devastated? How could he still smile?

Just as Jasper reached the door, he paused. Without turning around, he spoke in a low, steady voice. "I have a question for you."

Justin raised a brow, his expression unreadable.

"If you've always harbored disdain for me, wanting to take back everything I achieved, why did you risk your life to save me during the kidnapping?" Jasper asked. "By your logic, you should've left me there to die. If you had survived alone, you'd have been the only son-the eldest son-left in the Beckett family. No competition."

Justin sneered. "That's very true."

"So, were you actually trying to save me?" Jasper pressed. "Or was I just collateral damage-dragged into that hellhole because of your involvement?"

Jasper had never felt as clear-headed as at that very moment. Yet, each word drove his heart deeper into doubt and suspicion. He continued, "Or maybe you planned to get rid of me but had to change course at the last minute for some reason I don't yet understand."

The more he spoke, the closer he felt to unraveling the terrifying truth behind Justin's schemes.

Chapter 2402

The atmosphere in the room was oppressive, the air seemingly turning ice cold.

The tension was so thick that it felt as if it could be cut with a knife.

"What do you think?" The smile on Justin's face widened as his roguish gaze fixed on Jasper from behind.

Instead of answering him directly, Jasper delivered a more cutting response. He scoffed. "I get it now."

Tilting his sculpted chin upward, a vicious gleam flashed in his eyes. "Someday in the future, you'll regret the decision you made 20 years ago."

Justin's brows furrowed deeply at the remark.

"That was your one and only chance to get rid of me. Too bad you missed it."

With that, Jasper turned on his heel and strode off, exuding the confidence of a lone ranger.

As the door swung shut, Justin tightened his grip on the pen, the veins on the back of his hand pulsating with tension.

...

After finishing work that morning, Alyssa learned about Jasper's bail through the trending topics on Twitter. At the same time, a shocking announcement from Beckett Group sent the internet into a frenzy.

The announcement read, "Due to issues related to Mr. Jasper Beckett's personal conduct, Beckett Group's board of directors has voted to dismiss him as CEO of the corporation. Further, through another vote, the board has appointed Mr. Justin Beckett as the new CEO of Beckett Group."

The appointment was decisive and final.

Opinions exploded across the internet.

"Did Mr. Jasper really have personal conduct issues, or is this just collateral damage from a family feud? I heard rumors of drug abuse. Is that true?"

"These aristocrats are always living on the edge. Drugs? Not surprising at all."

"Could he have been framed?"

"There's no smoke without fire. He must've done something for them to dig up dirt on him."

"The new CEO is Jasper's half-brother. Did Mr. Justin stab him in the back to steal his position? Sounds like a plot straight out of a drama about rich families!" "Even if Jasper was framed, it's too late. His reputation is in tatters, and he's been ousted. Not even a cat with nine lives could survive this."

A loud crash broke the silence in Alyssa's office. She had hurled her teacup to the ground, shattering it into pieces. Her voice trembled with fury. "You're the ones who won't survive this! Your family is finished-dead meat!"

Sean, standing nearby, was also furious as he scrolled through the comments, but Alyssa's outburst made him chuckle despite himself. He quickly set about cleaning up the shards of glass.

"These trolls are all bark and no bite,"

he said soothingly. "They vent online because they're miserable in real life. Don't let them get to you. People envy the wealthy-it's nothing new."

"But," Alyssa muttered, her breath hitching, "there's one thing they're not wrong about."

She took a deep, steadying breath. "It'll be almost impossible for Jasper to bounce back this time. Even if he didn't do drugs, the damage is done. The public already sees him as an addict. His reputation is ruined. The stain won't wash away even if his name is cleared."

As Alyssa sank into her thoughts, her phone buzzed. It was Cyrus.

"Lyse," he said urgently, "I've uncovered everything about Dr. Bender's background and the situation with his wife and son."

Chapter 2403

"Cyrus, go ahead!" Alyssa leaped to her feet, her anticipation palpable.

"Sebastian Bender himself doesn't have any history of illegal activities, and his income records appear clean. But there's something odd about him." Alyssa pressed, "How so?"

"I looked into Sebastian's assets and income sources. His son is a gambling addict and his wife is gravely ill. Despite being in a high-income bracket, his son has drained the family of nearly everything, leaving Sebastian with just a house and a car.

"Yet, just two days ago, Sebastian managed to pay for his wife's bone marrow transplant surgery and covered her hospitalization fees-over 500,000 dollars in total. On top of that, he cleared his son's debts of more than three million dollars owed to loan sharks." Alyssa had put the call on loudspeaker, so Sean caught every word.

"That son of his is an absolute piece of trash!" Sean exclaimed, his frustration boiling over. "He'd be better off dead!"

Cyrus added, "The most suspicious part is that Sebastian couldn't possibly afford all that with his current financial situation."

A sharp gleam flashed in Alyssa's eyes. "Justin, without a doubt, must have bribed Sebastian in exchange for him to come forward and accuse Jasper. With that much money at stake, of course Sebastian would do Justin's bidding."

Sean frowned, a nagging worry creeping in. "Ms. Alyssa, if we take the legal route, I'm afraid we won't get anywhere. Even if Sebastian accepted Justin's dirty money, it would count as a monetary gift, not a bribe. Without direct evidence of a deal between them, we have nothing."

Cyrus agreed, "That's right, Lyse. Sebastian's finances may look odd, but there's no evidence of misappropriation or abuse of power."

"Indeed." Alyssa nodded, her eyes narrowing. "Who says I'm dealing with him legally? He's a rat, so why should I bother playing nice? That would be foolish."

Her voice turned cold. "Besides, I'm not nice. I'm a shrew, and I'm not above using dirty tricks to handle him."

Sean inhaled sharply and gave Alyssa a thumb-up.

Cyrus coughed awkwardly. "Uh... sorry, but what did you just say? I didn't catch that."

Alyssa ignored him, her tone turning sweet. "Thanks, Cyrus. You've been a great help. Oh, by the way, is Sebastian's son in Solana City right now?"

"He is," Cyrus confirmed. "Wait-Lyse, are you planning to confront Sebastian and his son?"

"Don't go alone!" Cyrus urged, his voice full of concern. "It's dangerous. His son is bad news-a notorious thug. If he gets desperate, he might hurt you. Let me go with you!"

"No," Alyssa replied firmly. "You're an officer. Your presence would complicate things. Don't worry; they couldn't take me down even if I went easy on them."

She tilted her chin confidently. "Since

Sebastian's son is a chronic gambler, his debts must be far higher than three million dollars. His son is also his greatest weakness. We'll use that against him-take him down in one move. Threats and deception, just like Justin did."

...

The next night, after making the necessary preparations, Alyssa and Sean drove toward Sebastian's house under the cover of darkness.

The Benders lived in a run-down

bungalow in a middle-class

neighborhood in Solana City. The courtyard was overgrown with wild

grass and weeds, giving the place a neglected, desolate appearance.

If Sebastian's wife were healthy and his son was responsible, Sebastian could actually have a good quality of life. Alas, Sebastian had ruined his son when he overindulged his ways; the home was now devoid of warmth.

"We're here, Ms. Alyssa," Sean said, his unease evident as he glanced at the darkened house. "Does anyone even live here?"

"With a son like that, Sebastian's probably saving on electricity to pay off more debts," Alyssa quipped.

As she spoke, Sebastian emerged from the gate with a briefcase in hand and a gloomy expression.

"Dr. Bender, hold up!"

Alyssa and Sean leaped out of the car and intercepted him.

"Y-You are... Ms. Alyssa?" Sebastian stammered, startled.

Chapter 2404

Chapter 2404

Sebastian recognized the stunning Alyssa immediately. Alarm bells rang in his head as he stumbled back a step. "W-What are you doing here?"

Everyone in Solana City knew about Alyssa and Jasper's inseparable bond.

Guilt churned in Sebastian's stomach. He couldn't even meet Alyssa's bright, piercing eyes, knowing he had betrayed Jasper.

"Dr. Bender, please step into my car. There's something we need to discuss." Alyssa's slight smile masked the storm brewing beneath her calm exterior.

"There's nothing to talk about," Sebastian stammered, fumbling with his keys in a desperate attempt to escape. Turning on his heel, he headed toward his house.

But Alyssa's voice cut through the tension. She sneered. "When you schemed against Mr. Jasper, you didn't just wrong him. You wronged KS Group-the company that stands behind him. You should've known I'd come for you." Sebastian froze, his back to Alyssa, trembling.

"You stupid bitch! What are you trying to do to my father? How dare you threaten him?"

A furious roar shattered the silence as Sebastian's son, Zayne Bender, stormed out of the house. His bloodshot eyes and disheveled appearance made it clear he hadn't slept in days. He glared at Alyssa with unrestrained hatred.

Alyssa stood her ground, her gaze unwavering as she studied Zayne. Her fists clenched, the veins on her hands visible.

A look of panic flashed across Sebastian's face. He yelled, "Zayne! Go back into your room and lock the door. This is none of your business!"

But Zayne was beyond reason. 'You fucking bitch! I know you're not here for anything good. I'll fucking kill you!' Like a maniac, Zayne grabbed a flowerpot from the wall and hurled it toward Alyssa's head with all his might. "Ms. Alyssa, watch out!" Sean cried out in alarm when he saw the flowerpot hurtling toward Alyssa.

But it was too late for him to intervene; he was a few steps behind Alyssa.

Alyssa was taken by surprise too. She was unprepared for such a vicious attack.

Damn it. Was this how her visit would end? A flowerpot to the head?

Well, she could just take it. It was just a flowerpot. At most, she would end up having her head bashed, but she wouldn't die from it.

This was nothing compared to the adversities that Jasper had been through.

With her heart pounding, Alyssa gritted her teeth and shut her eyes tight.

But instead of pain, she felt herself enveloped in a pair of strong, muscular arms. A familiar, intense scent filled her senses, and her body was pressed against a firm chest.

The man's chest heaved with rapid breaths, his heart a frantic drum against her ear. It was a very familiar sound- one that could make her go weak at her knees.

A loud thud echoed as the flowerpot shattered.

Alyssa's eyes flew open in shock, meeting Jasper's fiery gaze-a fiery intensity that held her captive, her breath catching in her throat.

"Mr. Beckett?" Sean's voice trembled as his face turned pale. He had just witnessed the flowerpot smash against Jasper's back, breaking into pieces. Dirt and clay scattered to the ground, but Jasper stood firm, unfazed.

"Are you alright, Alyssa?" Jasper's voice was steady but filled with worry as he searched her face for any sign of injury.

Thinking that Alyssa was scared out of her wits, he quickly asked again, "Are you hurt? Where does it hurt?" Alyssa's lips parted, but no words came out. Tears welled in her eyes, spilling over before she could stop them.

Jasper's brows furrowed as he pulled her closer. His voice softened, deep and soothing. "Don't be afraid. I'm here. You're safe."

Chapter 2405

Chapter 2405

Alyssa's chest rose and fell. The tip of her nose and her eyes were red. She simply stared blankly at Jasper and couldn't say a word.

Without Jasper around, she never realized that fear was an emotion that she could feel. She wasn't afraid of God or the devil. She had fought the dark and evil forces of the world with bravery. But fear overtook her when Jasper appeared just in time to shield her from danger.

She wanted to cry, her heart softening. The façade of strength she had built crumbled, leaving her feeling like a fragile pebble in Jasper's hands.

She had never known she could feel fear like other women, but it was only with him.

Ignoring the pain in his back, Jasper held Alyssa by her trembling shoulders, his eyes scanning her from head to toe. Once he confirmed she wasn't physically hurt and was likely in shock, he exhaled in relief.

"M-Mister..."

Wide-eyed and mouth agape, Sebastian watched Jasper appear out of nowhere. He was shaking uncontrollably, as if his soul had left his body in shock. But he quickly regained his composure. "Zayne, run!" he shouted. Despite his aggression, Zayne wasn't stupid. He might not have recognized Alyssa, but he knew who Jasper was. Realizing his grave mistake, Zayne broke into a cold sweat and fled.

But as he tried to run, a sharp pain shot through his lower back. He let out a scream and, in the next moment, found himself tumbling down the steps, face-first into the mud of the garden.

Frantically trying to rise, he found himself unable to move, a foot pressed firmly on his tailbone. The pain was unbearable, as if his bones were being crushed. Through gritted teeth, he cursed, "W-Who the hell are you?"

"I am your father," a macking voice replied from above.

"L-Landon?"

Alyssa's heart stirred at the sight of Landon, his bright eyes gleaming as he stood over Zayne. It was moving to see him and Jasper working together again, a feeling beyond words.

Despite the chaos, Landon's black coat remained perfectly draped over his shoulders, as if it were part of him. True to his title as "The Tyrant", Landon always had to appear impeccably put together, no matter the cost.

A look of surprise came across Sean's face. "Mr. Harper!"

"Lyse, Sean!" Landon smiled as he greeted them. At the same time, he pressed the front of his foot harder onto Zayne's back.

With a sickening snap, Zayne's tailbone broke.

"Landon... Harper..." Of course Sebastian had heard of Landon-the man who straddled both the legal and underground worlds. He felt a chill ran through him.

Who was he to have the three major aristocrats gathering at his doorstep?

Sebastian's face drained of color. His legs gave way, and he collapsed to his knees.

Once Landon was done making his presence known, two of his bodyguards rushed to Zayne and held him down.

"Jasper, are you okay?" Landon asked, concern in his voice as he approached.

"I'm fine." Jasper straightened up, unfazed.

Landon's eyes widened. He sighed in exasperation. "You're fine even after a flowerpot smashed right at you? Are you Iron Man or something?"

"You're still full of nonsense." Jasper looked away from him.

With an obscure look in his eyes, he pretended to glance past Alyssa's slightly flushed cheeks.

"Why, you..." Landon stifled a laugh as a surge of warmth filled his heart.

Jasper was bantering with him again. Yes, this felt more like the old Jasper. Could this be a sign that he was starting to feel again? Was he getting better?

Chapter 2406

Chapter 2406

In the living room of the Bender residence, Sebastian clung tightly to Zayne, whose bruised and battered body slumped limply on the floor.

They held onto each other for warmth as they shivered.

Meanwhile, Alyssa and Jasper sat on the couch, but not without leaving a massive gap between them.

Once deeply in love, their current distance was a heartbreaking contrast to the intimacy they had shared. It was heartbreaking to see them like this.

Alyssa took a quick peek at Jasper's cold, expressionless face before turning her dull gaze away. Her hands lightly rested on her shoulders, where his touch still lingered—a ghost of warmth that refused to fade.

"How dare you attack my friend?" Landon sneered, towering over Sebastian and Zayne. His black leather gloves creaked as he clenched his fists. "You wouldn't know fear if it slapped you in the face. Maybe I should teach you a lesson."

"M-Mr. Harper... Everything happened so quickly. Z-Zayne just reacted out of fear and ended up overreacting... Sebastian pleaded, "He was just worried about me and ended up acting rashly. P-Please... Please spare him! You can beat me up instead!"

"Oh? A good son, is he?" Landon smirked, his voice dripping with disdain. "Tell me, Sebastian, does a good son gamble away his parents' money and rack up over ten million dollars in debt overseas? A good son who doesn't even dare return home without hiding? A good son, my foot!"

Zayne shrank further into Sebastian, panic flashing across his face as his dirty secret was laid bare.

"Say what? Ten million dollars?" Sebastian couldn't believe his ears; his bloodshot eyes widened in disbelief. "Zayne, is it true? Are you really owing the gambling house that much money?"

Deep down, Alyssa was surprised.

Landon was right. This useless son of Sebastian's had indeed racked up massive debt in a gambling house overseas and almost lost his limbs because of that.

Subsequently, he had put his family's manor, the one they were in right now, as collateral before he was allowed to return to Solana City.

That being said, it was a pity that realty prices were plummeting. Even if the Bender family sold this manor, they wouldn't be able to pay back Zayne's debt. Not only that, but he would also have interest to pay.

Although Landon and Sebastian had nothing to do with one another, he had gotten such a clear understanding of his background. There was no doubt that he had done so at Jasper's request.

Alyssa smiled slightly. This time, they had the same idea again.

Zayne's silence confirmed the truth. Fury overtook Sebastian as he began striking Zayne in a fit of helpless rage. "You ungrateful brat! Are you trying to drive your mother and me to our graves?"

But it was of no use.

"Tell me, Jasper. What do you plan on doing?" Landon gazed casually at Jasper, who was looking cold and aloof. He smirked and continued, "I am the best in Solana City when it comes to teaching people a lesson."

Without saying a word, Jasper simply watched Sebastian and Zayne with a calm gaze. Even so, that intense intimidation coming from him was chilling enough.

"M-Mr. Beckett, what in the world do you want from us? Pray tell!" Sebastian cried out.

With a cold look in his eyes, Jasper questioned in a frosty tone, "Who was it who instructed you to set me up? It was Justin Beckett, wasn't it?"

"H..." Sebastian's anxious state made him tongue-tied.

Jasper seemed to be in a fairly decent mood today, but that was not the case for Landon. He lifted his leg and kicked Zayne down to the ground once again, causing him to groan in pain.

"Stop it! Stop it! I'll tell you!" At this point, Sebastian's heart ached for Zayne. He stuttered, 'It was... Ms. Gillis. Ms. Gillis came to me and got me to hand in your blood test report.

The moment he said that, Jasper and Alyssa actually looked at one another. Their eyes met.

Their unspoken connection, forged through years of shared experiences, was undeniable. No one could replace the bond they shared.

"Ms. Gillis didn't mention whether Mr. Justin had sent her. She simply told me to hand in the report... She even asked me to step forward as a witness when it was time to do so."

Sebastian wiped the sweat off his face. "I didn't agree to it at first... But she has a hold on my weaknesses. She knows that I'm really short of money. My wife has to undergo surgery, and Zaynie is just a good-for-nothing... She helped me out, so I agreed to do as she said...

"Didn't you think we could also get a hold of your weaknesses just like she did?" Alyssa glared at him mercilessly. "You have signed a contract with the devil the moment you agreed to that deal with her. She will manipulate you, take advantage of you, and even force you into illegal deeds time and time again.

"A moment of misstep out of desperation is all it takes to land yourself in a lifetime of trouble. Moreover, she's treating you as a pawn.

"What do you think will become of you when you end up stuck in between the Beckett brothers? You will only end up dying a horrible death."

Chapter 2407

Chapter 2407

While Alyssa spoke, Jasper remained expressionless next to her. Even so, he still couldn't help but peer at her from the corner of his eye.

Others might feel that she was being too assertive and aggressive with that fierce gaze in her eyes, but for Jasper, that evoked an inexplicable feeling within him.

To him, she looked even more attractive than she normally was. It was as if she gave off a captivating glow.

Sebastian slumped to his knees again. Alyssa's words struck him like a ton of bricks. Still, he had already chosen the wrong side-Sheryl's side. What could he do now? He had no choice but to see it through to the end.

After all, he had seen the news two days ago. Jasper was no longer the CEO of Beckett Group. He held no authority anymore. Aligning with Justin had seemed like the right decision.

If he betrayed Justin and switched sides, he would surely be doomed.

"Mr. Jasper... Ms. Alyssa," Sebastian stammered, desperation etched into his voice. "What's the point of coming here to make things difficult for me? Even if you kill me, Mr. Jasper won't regain his position as CEO!"

"The data from the blood sample was real. Even if I hadn't provided it to the authorities, they would have discovered it sooner or later. The outcome would still be the same!"

"What the heck? Quit babbling!" Landon couldn't bear to listen to Sebastian. He glared at him and was about to strike him when Zayne leaped in front of Sebastian to shield him.

Putting on an act depicting their father-son relationship's closeness, he exclaimed, "Don't hit my father. Hit me instead!"

A gloomy expression came across Alyssa's face. Sebastian was right. He was bribed, but the blood sample was genuine too.

"Dr. Bender, I didn't come here intending to harm you," Jasper said after a tense silence, his voice icy. "If your son hadn't lashed out at Ms. Alyssa, I'd planned to have a civil conversation with you."

Alyssa's eyes glistened for a moment as she pressed her lips together.

A chill went down Sebastian's spine as he stared at the expressionless look on Jasper's charming face. He had wanted to have a civil conversation? What about now?

"But I see no need for that anymore."

At Jasper's signal, Landon grabbed a document from a bodyguard and threw it at Sebastian's face.

"Take a look at how your 'good son repaid you," Landon sneered.

With trembling hands, Sebastian picked up the document. His face paled as he read it—a deed showing his residence had been used as collateral, signed and sealed with Zayne's signature.

Zayne's reddened eyes widened in panic. He lunged to snatch the document, but Sebastian slapped him across the face.

"You bastard! You sold our house? Where will your mother and I live? Are you trying to drive us to our graves?" "H-How did you get your hands on this document?" Zayne stammered, his lips trembling as he stared at Landon. Landon smirked, his expression devilishly arrogant. "Because this house now belongs to me as collateral." Sebastian and Zayne widened their eyes in shock. "What?"

Even Alyssa looked surprised, her eyes darting toward Landon,

"To leave the gambling house in Mosgravia unscathed, your son handed over all your family's assets," Landon explained, his tone mocking. "But here's the twist—you didn't know the Harper family owns that gambling house."

"W-What...?" Zayne almost passed out.

"In other words, I am currently your creditor."

Landon's bodyguard brought a chair over to Landon respectfully. Landon lifted the tail of his coat and sat down with a flourish. "So, your repayment is long overdue. Mr. Zayne, when will you settle your remaining debt of five million dollars?"

Zayne hung his head down low in shame.

A youthful and gleeful smile came across Landon's face. Looking at Jasper, who was surrounded by an air of frigidity, he asked, "Jasper, didn't you say that you wanted to have a civil conversation with them?"

"I have an idea. I'll settle this bastard's debt of five million dollars by chopping off both his arms. Each arm costs 2.5 million dollars, and I'll call it even."

Zayne was scared out of his wits. He fell onto his knees with a loud thud.

"Your son is a hopeless gambling addict," Landon said nonchalantly. "Without his arms, maybe he'll quit. Unless, of course, he starts gambling with his mouth."

At Landon's signal, two bodyguards moved toward Zayne.

After that, with a wave of his hand, two of his bodyguards looked like they were about to get to Zayne.

"Mr. Harper, don't! I'll give you however much it is that you want. Please spare Zayne!" Sebastian pleaded repeatedly. "What is it that you people want me to do? I'll do as you say. Please don't hurt my son!"

Zayne was his final weak spot, and with that, Sebastian's final shred of resistance crumbled.

Breathing a sigh of relief, Alyssa smiled. Truth be told, she had planned to achieve a similar outcome, but Landon's method was far more effective.

"I want you to confess that Sheryl bribed you. Can you do that?" Jasper spoke up with a dim look in his eyes. Sebastian had no choice but to grit his teeth and nod.

Alyssa then added coldly, "Also, you have to prove to the public that the substances found in Mr. Jasper's blood sample might not necessarily be drugs but banned medications instead."

Jasper turned to Alyssa, who had a determined look on her face.

As he stared at her resolute expression, an inexplicable feeling surged within him, enveloping his pounding heart.

#Chapter 2408

Chapter 2408

Sebastian understood what Alyssa wanted.

There wasn't substantial proof to prove that Jasper had abused drugs in the first place. The substance found in his blood was simply supporting evidence.

As long as they found the right opportunity to reveal that, it wouldn't completely exonerate him, but it could at least divert public suspicion.

"Okay, okay... I'll do that. I'll do everything you say!" Sebastian promised.

After emerging from the Bender residence, Landon took Zayne away to keep him under close watch and ensure Sebastian wouldn't retract his statement. Landon planned to release him only after Sebastian fulfilled Jasper and Alyssa's request. "Landon, it's

really nice to see you. How's Lauren doing lately?" Afraid of looking at Jasper, Alyssa had no choice but to speak with Landon.

"She's doing great."

A tender look came across Landon's eyes at the mention of Lauren. Landon blushed and continued, "We're now trying for a baby."

"Really? That's wonderful!" Alyssa was genuinely happy for them.

"Yeah, we'll share the good news with you both when it happens," Landon said, excitement lighting his face.

The mood turned awkward in an instant.

Jasper lowered his eyes, saying nothing.

A lump rose at the back of Alyssa's throat. Forcing a smile, she said, "Landon, Mr. Beckett, I'll take my leave now."

Jasper opened his mouth to thank her, but Alyssa moved too quickly. In the blink of an eye, she was gone, her black car vanishing into the night.

"Jasper, I noticed how worried you were for Lyse earlier when you threw your arms around her without hesitation," Landon remarked, studying Jasper's emotionless face. "Be honest-you're still in love with her, aren't you?"

"If you were in her position, I would've shielded you without hesitation too," Jasper replied, fixing his gaze ahead. "Does that mean I'm in love with you?"

Landon frowned and retorted resentfully, "Aren't you?"

Jasper was speechless. "Mr. Harper, that's disturbing."

Landon clicked his tongue. "You jerk. Don't I know you well enough?"

He gave Jasper a gentle shoulder bump. "You're just being stubborn by refusing to admit it. Beware of turning into a mule!"

"Thanks for tonight. I'll leave you to go home and spend time with Lauren. Good night," Jasper said, turning to leave.

But Landon grabbed his arm, his

tone serious "Jasper, why didn't you come to me earlier with everything that's been happening? I would've helped you sooner if I'd known

Justin was trying to save you!"

"I don't need your help."

In an anxious voice, Landon exclaimed, "Why not?"

"Because it's dangerous to become one of Justin's targets."

"But-"

"Do you want Lauren to face another life-threatening situation? Justin is far more dangerous than your Uncle Preston or Jameson. I can't bear to see anyone close to me get hurt again." After saying that, Jasper got into his car quickly and sped off, leaving Landon alone.

A worried look filled his eyes as sorrow filled his heart.

...

After getting control over Sebastian, Sean was over the moon as he drove himself and Alyssa home. Alyssa, on the other hand, was strangely quiet in the back seat.

"Now that Sebastian is finally willing to side with Mr. Jasper, not only can this turn the public's sentiments around, it will surely also impact Justin's-"

Sean's voice trailed

off as he

gleaned in the rearview mirror. He

saw Alyssa leaning her head against the car window. Much to his surprise, tears were streaming down her cheeks while she sat there in silence.

"Ms. Alyssa? You..."

Sadness welled up in Sean's chest as he recalled the night's events. He looked away, pretending not to notice, and gave her space to compose herself. Just then, Alyssa's phone rang.

Frantically wiping her tears, Alyssa steadied her breath before answering. "Hey, Jonah."

"Lyse, I'm in Mosgravia," Jonah said in an extremely worn voice.

"How did it go? Did you find Jul?"

Jonah fell silent briefly before

answering in a soft and melancholic voice, "I'm sorry, Lyse. I've tried everything, but I still couldn't locate Julien. He might no longer be in Mesgravia."

Alyssa's chest tightened. Even so, she consoled Jonah tenderly, "It's alright. Let's think of something else."

"Lyse, I'm truly afraid... I'm afraid that I will never be able to find him, ever."

Chapter 2409

"Don't be so pessimistic, Jonah," Alyssa said.

Perhaps having just seen Jasper and going through that heart-stopping moment made Alyssa emotional. Tears welled up in her eyes as she continued, "If you truly love someone, you don't need to possess him to find happiness. Isn't it enough to know he's alive, well, and

living freely somewhere in this world?"

"You're right, Lyse." Sorrow filled Jonah's voice as he smiled bitterly. "Julien has already lost and sacrificed too much for my sake. I don't deserve to have such a good man. He'll only find true happiness by leaving me."

...

After Justin took over as CEO of Beckett Group, his first move was to wrest control of the A5 Project bid from Jasper's hands.

Though Jasper had failed as the leader of Beckett Group, as the eldest son, it was only natural for Justin to inherit the position of power.

Justin was aware of lingering opposition within the corporation. Some doubted whether he possessed the decisiveness and singular capability Jasper had demonstrated.

Securing Project A5 would silence those dissenting voices. Even Newton, with all his maneuvering, would no longer pose a threat to Justin's authority.

In the chairman's office of Beckett Group, Javier and Justin sat across from each other.

"The share price has been dropping steadily these past few days," Javier said, his tone measured. "Some have been buying up shares in secret. Thankfully, Justin, you've been able to stabilize the situation."

He placed a hand on Justin's shoulder, his gaze warm with approval. "You've never disappointed me, not even as a child. That gives me great comfort and relief."

"Thank you for your compliment." Justin's lips curled into a faint smile. With elegant precision, he lifted the teapot and poured tea for Javier. "You and Grandpa poured your lives into building Beckett Group. I'll protect it at all costs."

After a pause, Justin's tone grew contemplative. "Still, I have to ask-did you entrust me with this role because of Jasper's downfall, or have you always intended to give me a chance to prove myself?"

Javier was taken slightly aback. He was caught off guard by the question. After a moment's hesitation, he smiled and answered truthfully. "Justin, you're my eldest son. I've watched you grow into the man you are today. How could I not want to give you a chance? "Besides, you've already proven yourself. During the crisis with the Jesseltons from Mosgravia and the prohibited drug scandal, you turned the tide and saved Beckett Group. You're more than capable of leading as CEO."

Although Javier was past his prime, he wasn't dumb. He recognized Justin's question as a subtle test.

With Jasper out of the picture, the corporation's share price in flux, and the critical A5 Project looming, Javier couldn't afford to let Justin doubt his support. Placating him was essential to Beckett Group's stability. "Dad, I'm really glad to hear you say that." Justin chuckled softly, seemingly satisfied with the response. "Don't worry. I'll make sure we secure Project A5."

A knock on the door interrupted their conversation.

After Javier gave his permission, Rory entered with an iPad. He walked urgently to Javier.

"Mr. Javier, even though the PR department of our corporation has tried their best to keep the online comments in control, the three major television stations are still refusing to back down. They are all state-run media stations, so can't pressure them to retract their statements."

"Damn it!" Javier hurled his cup across the room, shattering it. "We've advertised with them for years, and this is how they repay us?"

"Simmer down, Dad. This isn't any major issue." Justin smiled, sipping his tea with an air of nonchalance.

"How is this not a major issue? Negative publicity could directly jeopardize our bid for Project A5!" Javier paced, his hands clasped behind his back. "Even though we have no

local competitors in Solana City KS Group from Belbanks is also eyeing the project. If we don't secure it, they almost certainly will."

Justin's eyes narrowed, a faint, insincere smile playing on his lips. "It wouldn't be the worst thing if Ms. Alyssa won the bid. I wouldn't mind letting her have it."

"Justin, I know you're infatuated with that woman, but don't let your emotions cloud your judgment!" Javier snapped. "Look at what happened to Jasper after he got involved with that Taylor woman!"

Javier's frustration was palpable, though he knew Justin's interest in Alyssa ran deep.

"What's done is done," Justin said calmly. "There's no point trying to clear Jasper's name now. Instead, we should hold a press conference and stream it nationwide. I'll appear as CEO and deliver a heartfelt apology.

"If we can't salvage the situation, we should take responsibility openly. That might help rebuild some trust."

Javier sighed. "Now that it's come to this, that's all we can do. That said, I'm still worried about the project..." "Dad, leave it to me."

...

Just as Justin returned to his office, he found Sheryl sitting on the couch, waiting for him.

Leaning forward, Justin put his icy hand on the back of Javier's hand. In a slightly comforting tone, he assured, "There's nothing you'd need to worry about. All you have to do is to have complete trust in me."

Chapter 2410

Chapter 2410

"Sir." Sheryl immediately stood and greeted Justin respectfully as he entered the room.

"What are you doing here?" Justin's cold gaze swept over her as he strolled leisurely to the couch and sat down.

Sheryl quickly explained, "I received a parcel for you from the administrative secretary half an hour ago. I thought it might be something important, something you wouldn't want too many people to handle. So, I waited for you to return and open it personally."

"A parcel?" Justin frowned.

Why would anyone send him a parcel to Beckett Group, of all places?

How strange.

Sheryl presented the parcel to him with both hands. He took it from her and then opened it right before her. After removing three layers of wrapping, each from outside and inside the box, the parcel turned out to contain only a plain white envelope. His expression darkened. It felt like someone was toying with him.

Then, he looked down and opened the envelope, which contained a stack of photographs. Pinching a corner with his fingers, he pulled the photographs out of the envelope slowly.

In an instant, his eyes widened, and all color drained from his usually composed face.

"Sir, what's wrong? Are you feeling okay?" Sheryl inquired in a concerned voice when she noticed that Justin looked emotionally disturbed.

"Get out," Justin growled through clenched teeth.

"But, you-"

"I said, get out."

Sheryl shuddered in fright and scurried out of Justin's office.

Once outside, she turned to glance at the heavy door, her mind racing. Justin's outburst had been terrifying-and utterly out of character. What could he have seen to provoke such a reaction?

Meanwhile, Justin was looking through the photographs in his office one by one. Every single photo was getting crumpled as rage boiled within him.

The pictures showed a young boy, battered and bloodied, confined in a filthy dog cage. Surrounding the cage were men-laughing, mocking, and mercilessly beating the boy.

Justin recognized them instantly-the five brutal kidnappers who had once followed Gustav's orders. And the boy in the cage? It was him.

The noble, gentlemanly CEO of Beckett Group had once been that broken child.

His vision blurred as his eyes turned bloodshot. His fists clenched, crushing the photographs into a ball.

Right at that moment, his phone vibrated.

The words "Private Number" flashed on the screen. A cold wave of fury coursed through him.

"Hello?" His voice was frigid.

"Jay, congratulations on your promotion. It's such a pity that I wasn't able to be the first to celebrate with you."

Zachary's relaxed voice came from the other end of the call. Sarcastically, he added, "So, the only thing I could do was to give you a present. Do you like it?"

"Thank you. I was really surprised," Justin replied in a low and restrained voice.

"You have always been an opinionated man, and you're now holding a position of high status. It's important to remember where you came from. The gift is a reminder.

Smiling candidly, Zachary continued, "Also, I should remind you that Gustav was only sentenced to life in prison, not death. Also, his younger brother, Kenneth Holm, is still alive. I hear he's recently returned to Solana City after years of wandering."

Through gritted teeth, Justin said, "Uncle Zachary, I know what I need to do. You don't have to remind me like this." "You managed to endure all the humiliation when you were locked up in the dog cage back then. I'm sure you'll be able to take on a small matter like this with no issue. After all, you are one of us Duttons."

Suddenly, Zachary's voice deepened, as if he had become a different person. "I need to invest in Project A5." "This is Solana City, not Kontina.

"Justin, if you can't meet my demands, you should know what I'd do next. I suppose you wouldn't be able to remain steadfast in that position as CEO, would you?"

The call ended.

Justin sat on the couch without moving a muscle. After some time, his eyes had turned bloodshot.

With a sudden outburst, he hurled his phone at the widescreen television mounted on the wall. The screen shattered, sparks flying as the phone and TV broke simultaneously.