

Heiress 281

Chapter 281

Bella smiled and said, "You can alter your face or name, but it doesn't change your history, no matter how you try to erase them. There are no secrets that can be hidden forever. There are some things I won't mention, not because I'm kind, but because they have nothing to do with me, and I can't be bothered. However, if you dare provoke me again, don't blame me for unveiling some of your lies."

Rosalind's heart convulsed violently, a shiver coursing down her spine. The thought that Bella knew her secrets left her with an unsettling chill

By the time Justin came out of Rose Manor, Bella and Christopher had departed. After the conversation with Christopher, Justin sat alone in the cold breeze, stunned. By now, it was already late in the evening.

Justin had someone escort Rosalind back to the hospital. He then headed to Observation Tide Manor with Ian, who was visibly distressed.

Ian was so anxious along the way that a cold sweat soaked through his suit. With a red face, he continuously apologized to Justin, "I'm sorry... I'm sorry, Mr. Salvador... Punish me however you see fit! It's all my fault; I should've done better research. I had no idea the person I was dealing with was from the Iverson family! It's all my fault." As he talked, the young man choked on his tears.

Immersed in thought with closed eyes, Justin let out a faint sigh and said mockingly, "It's such a trivial matter. Why are you shedding tears over it?"

Ian stuttered, "But this... doesn't seem trivial."

"Christopher hasn't been seen in the country for over a decade. It's understandable if you can't find information about him," Justin said, closing his eyes once more and taking a deep breath. "Even if you

uncover something, the outcome will likely be the same. He won't cooperate with us. The country has several similar rose gardens; just contact them, and we'll find another supplier."

“Yes, I’ll do that tomorrow.” Ian rubbed his eyes and sighed helplessly. “Mr. Iverson is quite generous with Ms. Thompson. For such a significant project, he readily agreed. A regular businessman would weigh multiple options and carefully consider them, wouldn’t they?”

This remark, like a thorn, dug deep into Justin’s heart. He asked with a solemn tone, “Ian, did I treat Bella poorly before? Did I mess up that badly?”

As Justin posed the question, Ian’s throat tightened. The pressure to respond to his question left him grappling for words. Despite his straightforward nature, he wasn’t a fool. He had just messed up a task, and now his boss presented him with a life-or-death question. He felt like he was sitting on pins and needles.

“It’s okay; I don’t blame you. You can speak your mind,” Justin saw through his cautious thoughts.

Ian coughed and cleared his throat before he continued, “Mr. Salvador, to be honest, your treatment of Ms. Thompson... can’t be considered bad. Everything, from food and clothing to daily expenses, was top-notch, Luxury cars and black cards, you never hesitate to provide

them.”

‘It was a marriage my grandfather had arranged between her and me-more in name than in fact. As long as it’s within my means, I’ve never been stingy,’ thought Justin as he pinched his nose, a melancholy lingering in his heart.

Ian added, “If Ms. Thompson had seen this union as a business opportunity, reaping the benefits for three years and then leaving, you indeed haven’t treated her poorly.”

Ian’s tone grew serious, and his brow furrowed. “It’s a shame, though. Ms. Thompson genuinely cares for you. She once loved you wholeheartedly and cared for you tirelessly, day in and day out. Despite your cold treatment and the Salvador family’s mistreatment, she never uttered a complaint. Treating a woman who regarded you as a husband with such cruelty for those three years was just too ruthless. In the eyes of a woman deeply in love with you, the money was a stark humiliation.”

Justin found himself grappling with emotions. The weight of it sent a shiver down his throat. His chest surged with intense emotions, creating an internal storm he desperately tried to

suppress.

Reflecting on those words, “she loved you”, Justin looked like he was on the verge of collapse.

Chapter 282

Christopher prepared a special Omakase dinner for Bella, indulging her love for surprises. The air-flown bluefin tuna had a smooth and delicious texture. The tempura was perfectly

balanced with a crispy exterior and tender interior, while the sashimi was remarkably fresh and velvety.

Each dish was exceptional and stood out as Bella savored the delicious food and drank some wine. She was re-energized and loosened up to Christopher.

Christopher was highly knowledgeable in various subjects and found a kindred spirit in Bella, who also shared his knowledge. They discussed literature, music, and even games. There was virtually no topic that Mr. Iverson could not engage in.

What surprised Bella the most was their shared interest in an online game. They both preferred the role of the primary attacker. Bella’s enthusiasm soared when discussing games. Her face flushed with excitement, and her delicate hands were gesturing in the air as she spoke, revealing a side of her that was particularly lively.

Christopher smiled indulgently as he let Bella take the lead in the conversation. After a satisfying meal, the two strolled out of the restaurant together. Christopher didn’t bring up collaboration during the enjoyable banquet, and their conversation remained casual, leaving Bella feeling a bit awkward.

As they were getting ready to say goodbye, Christopher seemed to anticipate what she was about to ask and said, “Bella, regarding the collaboration with Rose Manor, you can send me the proposal whenever you’re ready. Once we review it, we can proceed with signing the contract.”

“Christopher,” Bella paused for a moment, speaking in a gentle tone, “You chose to

collaborate with me instead of the Salvadors today. I have a feeling that you did it to help me get back at Justin and make him suffer a little.”

Christopher remained noncommittal, his expression carrying a faint smile as he looked at her. Bella continued, “Remember, the business world isn’t a game. It’s all about looking out for your own interests.”

After a brief pause, she added, “It’s important to consider your own interests. I hope you’ll be careful and not let personal relationships sway your decision when choosing a business partner. While I do have some issues with Justin, I won’t take advantage of anyone. As for the collaboration with Rose Manor, since he’s also interested, I suggest you review both our proposals and choose the better one through fair competition.”

As Bella departed Rose Manor, her mind was filled with contemplation. After much reflection, she still felt that collaborating with Christopher in this way wasn’t quite right. While she considered the possibility of benefiting from Salvador’s actions, Bella found it hard to justify acquiring resources through her relationship with Christopher.

She felt uneasy about achieving success by relying on a man, something that went against her personal values as a young lady who, except for her father and brothers, avoided depending on

men.

As they were discussing, Christopher looked deeply into Bella’s clear eyes and nodded with smile, saying, “Yes, that makes sense.” However, Bella was still unsure about collaborating

Christopher added, “But even if Justin presents a plan to me, I will still choose you.”

Bella was left speechless. It seemed like Christopher didn’t listen to anything she had said earlier!

Christopher smiled playfully and responded, “Bella, I understand your concerns. However, everyone has their own unique approach, and mine is to work together with acquaintances. I am not familiar with Justin, so I will not choose him. Bella, we have known each other for a long time, and it feels like we are old friends. Therefore, I choose you.”

Bella listened as he spoke. His words were not unusual, yet they seemed to convey a deep sense of sincerity, almost like a confession. She blinked, feeling a sudden wave of embarrassment wash over her.

In response, Bella said, “I appreciate the high regard you hold for me, and rest assured, I will do my best to not let you down. However, due to recent matters at my hotel, the proposal may take a little longer than expected. I hope you understand.” Bella spoke with a cooperative and courteous tone, indicating that she no longer had any reservations.

Christopher opened the door to Bella’s car and said, “No worries. Take your time. It’s chilly, so you should head home soon.” Bella waved goodbye and settled into the car, but Christopher leaned in and looked at her through the window. She asked in surprise, “Is there something wrong?”

Christopher replied, “Today at Rose Manor, Justin wanted to talk to me privately. Aren’t you curious about what we discussed?”

Christopher had anticipated that Bella would bring up a certain topic during dinner, but he was mistaken. Bella laughed, exhibiting a confident smile, and stated, “I have no interest in knowing. I am finished with Justin, and whatever he says has no bearing on me.” With that, she bade him farewell and departed.

Chapter 283

The Bugatti drifted off into the night sky. Christopher adjusted his glasses, and a smile spread across his face as his heart swelled with excitement.

The car sped along the road, its engine echoing through the night.

Bella lowered the car window, enjoying the whistling night breeze, looking at the neon scene on the other side of the river, and fell into deep thought.

Steven tightened his grip on the steering wheel and asked sullenly, "Ms. Bella, have you become acquainted with Mr. Iverson so quickly?".

Bella replied, "It's not bad. We hit it off quite well."

Steven Lovett grumbled discontentedly, "Although Christopher saved you, it's a fact that he trailed you to the villa. You should be cautious."

Bella smiled and said, "Maybe he recognized me and was curious, that's all. Having interacted with him twice, I don't think he's a bad person. It's just that sometimes he speaks strangely. Perhaps he's influenced by the bold customs of Sentania?"

Bella's eyes sparkled, "The most important thing is, we both love the same game! We even made plans to team up one day!"

Steven's bitterness grew as he listened. He pressed his lips together, remained silent momentarily, then asked in a hushed tone, "Ms. Bella, you've never been so accommodating and tolerant towards any man you just met. Do you... Perhaps like him a bit?"

Bella

gave

Steven Lovett an exasperated look, "Oh, where did you get that idea from?"

She rolled her eyes and added, "If anything, it's Christopher who likes me. Besides, why would I be interested in a man? I have better things to do! Men will only hinder my money-making speed!"

Steven couldn't help but chuckle, dispelling his worries. Steven silently reassured himself, "Fortunately, Christopher hadn't swayed Ms. Bella."

At that moment, the sports car glided over a speed bump, and a card slipped from the flower basket. "Hmm, what's this?" Bella frowned, bending down to pick it up.

Upon opening it, the elegant and beautiful handwritten note revealed the words left by Christopher: "Don't miss out on the good times in this moment of youth."

Bella narrowed her eyes slightly and thought, 'This Christopher is quite interesting.'

Breaking the silence, Steven asked, "You ran into Rosalind again today. Did she say anything unpleasant?" He asked with concern, remembering the infuriating face of that vile woman.

"What do you think?" Bella responded, raising an eyebrow coldly. "Can an animal stop behaving like one?"

"Ms. Bella, Rosalind had already made a move against you. She's even willing to sacrifice her own life to climb the social ladder." Concerned, Steven asked Bella, "How do you plan to deal with this?"

Bella replied, "Steve, I don't need you to assist me here for the next few days. Instead, go take care of something for me."

Steven replied, "What are your instructions, Ms. Bella?"

"I need you to keep an eye on Jean, Rosalind's mother," Bella said calmly while caressing the roses in the basket. Her expression turned cold as she continued, "After tonight, Rosalind won't be able to control herself anymore. She will make a move soon."

"Did you mention something to her tonight?" Steven frowned in confusion.

"I dropped a hint about her past in the Meridan. She was so shocked." Bella smiled as she recalled the ghostly look on Rosalind's face.

Steven asked with concern, "Isn't that giving the enemy a heads-up?"

Bella shook her finger playfully and said, "I wasn't trying to alert the enemy but rather lure the snake out of its hole. I deliberately said things to Rosalind tonight to provoke her. The closer she gets to being engaged to Justin, the more agitated she becomes. She's completely focused on marrying into the Salvador family and will stop at nothing to eliminate any obstacles."

Steven suddenly realized and exclaimed, "So she will definitely look for that child and hide her again?!"

Bella smiled slyly, nodding. "Rosalind is currently confined to the hospital daily, making it inconvenient for her to scheme. So, she will likely assign this task to her mother. After all, only her mother knows about the girl's location. I've already cast the bait. Now we just wait for the fish to bite."

Chapter 284

Rosalind returned to the hospital, full of panic and confusion. Bella's ominous words echoed in her mind, and she anxiously bit her nails as she paced around the hospital room.

Rosalind was worried. She couldn't let Bella, a Thompson, uncover her past in the Meridan. She knew Bella was very cunning and would likely discover even more soon. Rosalind couldn't just sit around and do nothing. She had to take some measures to prevent this from happening.

Trembling, Rosalind called Memphis with bloodshot eyes and a hoarse throat. She finally heard his voice after a long ring. Memphis finally answered the call, "What's the matter in the middle of the night..."

"Memphis, Bella is investigating me and may soon discover our relationship. I'm anxious and worried," she said, her voice hoarse. "You need to leave Savrow as soon as possible."

Memphis sneered, "Are you trying to get rid of me? I won't let you go without getting my money."

Frustrated and enraged, Rosalind yelled, "If Bella finds out about us, my engagement with Justin will be ruined! You won't get a single penny. Forget about five million!"

Memphis replied, "Fine, fine, fine... I'll trust you just this once. But don't play tricks, or else..."

Rosalind assured him, "I promise you won't be shortchanged on the money! To avoid complications, let's not contact each other during this period."

After saying this, Rosalind hung up the phone, but her hands still trembled. She took a moment to compose herself and then called her mother, Jean.

any

"Mom, please come to the hospital right away. I have something urgent to discuss with you!"

In the basement, Bella held Memphis' phone in her hands. These days, Memphis was kept locked up in the dungeon and was under constant surveillance. He had no chance to escape and was granted the small mercy of being able to sit in a chair instead of being hung upside down.

This slight change almost made him want to bow down and express gratitude to Bella. After all, if he continued to hang upside down, his brain might end up congested, possibly dying.

Bella handed the phone to Steven, playfully raising her eyebrows. "Not bad. I see your acting skills are becoming more exquisite."

Memphis turned pale as he responded, "No. It's only natural that I do this for you, Ms. Bella."

Having recently lost two tendons, leaving him virtually incapacitated, Memphis had no desire to go through the same painful experience once again.

Bella smirked. "It will be Rosalind's birthday in a few days."

She sat elegantly in the chair, crossing her legs. She spoke firmly. "When the time comes, I need you to cooperate in our little drama. You can make amends for your mistakes if you play your part well. I will send you to prison for reform. However, if you do not perform well, your sins will escalate, and I will make sure you end up in hell!"

Memphis was sweating profusely and stuttered, "I... I'll do whatever you tell me, Ms.

Thompson!"

Bella pursed her lips and chuckled. "I heard that you only eat a bun a day. How do you manage that? Steve, please bring some food over."

Steven responded, "Yes, Ms. Bella."

Steven arrived with a tray of food for Memphis, which included four slices of toast, a roasted chicken, and a bottle of beer! Memphis had been surviving on stale bread for days, causing him to become visibly emaciated. At the sight of the roasted chicken, he looked at it longingly, tears and drool streaming down his face simultaneously.

Steven placed the plate of food before Memphis and said, "Go ahead and eat it. This is a reward from Ms. Thompson." He had a cold expression on his face, almost as if he were serving dog food to Memphis.

Memphis swallowed the food, and his eyes glistened with tears. With a pitiful look, he asked, Ms. Thompson, this is so luxurious... Could it be my last meal before execution?"

||

Bella emerged from the dungeon, stretching in a luxurious yawn. She turned to Steven and said, "It's time to head home. Let's go."

Steven quietly asked, "Ms. Bella, why bother preparing a meal for that wretched guy?" He recalled the events of that particular night, his heartache visible and his eyes faintly reddened. He said, "He is a profit-driven and ruthless beast. It is too generous to feed him like this!" Bella responded, "To bring down Rosalind, I need Memphis to lend me a hand."

Chapter 285

Bella yawned tiredly and said, "Memphis must harbor resentment towards me and Rosalind, given his captivity."

She continued, "But if I show him a little kindness while he's on the brink of mental collapse, I'm confident he'll be profoundly grateful to me and channel his hatred towards Rosalind. At that point, he'll put all his energy into seeking revenge against her."

Steven complimented, "Ms. Bella, you're so intelligent." He added, "I can't wait to see them fight!"

A week later.

Bella finished a thorough inspection of the restaurant and returned to her office, feeling satisfied. It had been almost six months since she took over the hotel, and every aspect of the business was thriving with an increase in profits.

During the recent evaluation, the hotel not only successfully retained its star rating but was also awarded the title of "Most Popular Hotel of the Year."

Bella, however, had her sights set higher. She aspired to win the prestigious "Best Hotel of the Year" title, which had been held by the Salvador family for five consecutive years. With Bella on board, the Thompson family had a chance to claim the coveted title and steal the limelight.

Bella surprised Steven by accepting interviews from three well-known media outlets and making public appearances, which was quite different from her usual discreet approach. She had her reasons for taking such bold actions. Bella realized that relying solely on being Wyatt's daughter would not earn the trust of everyone if she wanted to become the CEO of KS Group.

In order to establish herself, she understood that she couldn't remain a silent leader in the shadows. She had to step forward into the limelight and showcase her achievements to the people of KS Group.

When Wyatt entrusted her with the hotel's management, it was akin to handing her a ladder. Bella seized this opportunity and intended to make the most of it.

Bella achieved another significant victory in her pursuits. She was with Steven and about to ask for another cup of coffee when she remembered that Steven had left to handle an important matter. A week had passed, and with Rosalind's birthday banquet approaching in just two days, Steven had not yet returned.

Bella closed her eyes and lightly tapped her fingers on the table. She was confident that her strategy was right on target. Therefore, she remained calm and patient.

Just then, Bella received a phone call. On the screen, she saw that it was her beloved disciple, Roza Walker.

She quickly answered with a smile, "Roza, what delightful news do you have for me this time?"

Roza greeted her on the phone, "Master!"

Roza spoke in a sweet and friendly tone, "I have baked some homemade pastries and have the

finest tea ready for you. Would you like to drop by my place today for a treat?" She had set aside her usual cold demeanor and opted for a gentler approach.

Bella saw through Roza's scheme. "You want me to check out Rozabela's new haute couture designs again, don't you?" she responded.

Roza playfully objected and said, "Come on, Master, don't expose me!"

Bella offered Roza heartfelt encouragement, saying, "Your talents are exceptional! You no longer need my guidance. You've become an inspiration to numerous aspiring designers and have carved out a significant reputation in the fashion industry. Trust your instincts. If I meddle too much, it might overshadow the essence of your work. Believe in yourself, Roza!"

"Thank you, Master. Without you, I would not have achieved what I have today." Roza remained as humble as she was in her unknown days. Deep down inside, Bella remained her inspiring role model.

Roza hesitated for a moment before she continued, "Master, actually, there's something else I need to share, but I'm afraid it might upset you."

She added, "Just an hour ago, that bitch, Rosalind, showed up again, pestering me for clothes. She had her eyes set on the silver off-the-shoulder dress hanging in the design room. Honestly, she has no shame!"

Bella asked casually, "Did you give it to her?"

Roza's voice softened. "Well, that's why I am here to apologize to you, Master.

Bella reassured her, "I completely understand. Much like me, you do everything with a purpose and reason. You have your own goals."

Roza's disdainful snort cut through the air as she recounted the scene. "That dress she borrowed, a high-end design, mind you, is so last year-already out of fashion. And the fit? Oh, it's a disaster. The bust and waist measurements don't suit her figure at all, but she insisted on flaunting the dress anyway!"

A cold laugh escaped Roza's lips. "I made it crystal clear to her that each haute couture piece I create is unique and precious. She's allowed to borrow, but if she dares to alter any of my designs, even with

a safety pin, I'll make her compensate five times the price!"

Bella chuckled, her eyes slightly narrowed. "Won't there be issues with wearing such an ill-fitting dress?"

Roza responded with a shrug. "Whether there's an issue or not is not my concern. After all, it's Rosalind's reputation at stake. Don't you agree, Master?"

Rosalind had channeled all her energy and effort into preparing for her birthday banquet.

She was full of vitality, far from resembling a bedridden soul. Her days were spent coordinating venues and preparing her outfits and makeup. For those unaware, one might think she was preparing for an engagement celebration.

During this time, Justin saw that her condition had improved and stopped visiting her at the hospital.

Despite the underlying discontent in her heart, Rosalind prioritized organizing the birthday banquet. On the eve of the birthday banquet, she found herself in her room, struggling with the dress she had borrowed from Roza.

She had a delicate figure like a willow, but the dress was too loose in the chest area, rendering it impossible for her to wear. Two maids were sweating profusely, but their efforts were in vain as the dress could not fit.

Rosalind pushed the maids away. Her cheeks flushed angrily as she exclaimed in frustration. How did the Golds hire a bunch of useless people like you?"

One of the maids timidly suggested, "Ms. Rosalind, perhaps we could call a tailor to come and make adjustments or use a couple of pins to fix it?"

Rosalind was so irritated that she was sweating, but she didn't want to admit that she was afraid of losing money. The dress was worth seven figures, and she had signed an agreement. If it got dirty, damaged, or altered without permission, even if it was just a pin, she would have to compensate Roza five times the value. Setting aside the pain of parting with money, she couldn't let that woman, Roza, earn a single extra cent from her!

Rosalind was extremely annoyed, so much so that she was sweating profusely. However, she didn't want to acknowledge that her irritation stemmed from her fear of losing money. The dress she had borrowed was worth a fortune, and she had signed an agreement wherein she would have to pay Roza five times the value of the dress if it was damaged, soiled, or altered without permission. Apart from the pain of losing such a large sum of money, she was determined not to let Roza earn even a single extra penny from her! Rosalind screamed, "Get some tape for me right away! Hurry!"

Soon, the maids brought tape and skillfully fixed it to the chest area of the dress. Rosalind attempted to try it on again, and it stayed in place.

The maids praised enthusiastically, "You're so clever, Ms. Rosalind! This trick worked!"

Rosalind breathed a sigh of relief, displaying a triumphant expression.

At that moment, there was a knock on the door. Jean, who appeared tense, walked into the room.

"Mom!" Rosalind was anxiously fidgeting with her dress upon seeing her mother. She quickly instructed the maids to leave the room, ensuring privacy for the impending conversation.

Jean locked the door behind them as the maids swiftly exited the room.

Rosalind rushed forward anxiously while clutching her dress. "Mom, how did things go?!"

((

Jean firmly grasped her daughter's hand, her palm cold, and said, "It's settled."

Rosalind squeezed her mother's hand appreciatively, her expression darkening with the weight of the situation. "Mom, you've worked hard on this trip. I won't forget the kindness you've shown me. I'll take

good care of you and repay you in the future!"

Jean's face turned pale, and she locked her gaze with Rosalind. "What are you saying, Rosalind?"

Jean continued, "You're my flesh and blood. Who else can I stand by if I don't stand by you? Now that you and Justin have reconciled and Gregory supports your marriage, we're just one step away. I won't let anyone or anything stop you from marrying into a wealthy family!"

The much-anticipated birthday banquet unfolded the following day as dusk settled and the lights began to shine. The Gold family spared no expense, reserving the grandest banquet hall at the Salvador Hotel to host the guests.

This choice highlighted the strong family ties between the two families and symbolized unity beyond kinship.

Also, Shannon, acting on behalf of Gregory, extended invitations to many distinguished guests from Savrow and across the country to support her niece. The event's grandeur made people think it was Shannon's second wedding.

The music played melodiously within the lavish banquet hall, and the guests were elegantly dressed. The wealthy and influential figures from Savrow who attended the event did so to celebrate the birthday and as a gesture of respect towards Gregory.

Although Shannon had previously been summoned to the prosecutor's office for an informal investigation, it ultimately revealed that her cousin was responsible for the messy affairs.

Now, she had been revitalized, appearing carefree as she walked arm in arm with her husband, attending the event in splendid attire, and engaging in lively conversations with the other guests.

The guests continue to congratulate both Gregory and Shannon.

Shannon was radiant. Her spirits were remarkably high. "Today is my dear niece's birthday. You should congratulate her."

"Ms. Rosalind is Justin's fiancée, the president of Salvador Corporation. I suppose

congratulations are for you two as well. The Salvador's are on the brink of welcoming a new member!"

Another person laughed and added, "Congratulations to you both!"

Chapter 287

Amidst the celebration, Bethany was chatting with several acquaintances.

"Congratulations, Bethany! You're about to have a sister-in-law soon," Amy teased with a smile.

"Oh, your words aren't accurate. It should be 'another' sister-in-law." Beatrice joked.

"Nevertheless, novelty always trumps the old, right? Besides, Ms. Gold is also the niece of Mrs. Salvador. It's a double kinship. They should get along very well in the future. Don't you think so?"

Bethany smiled with a thin disguise, concealing her true feelings. 'As if we'll get along!'

Amy remarked, "I heard before that Rosalind and Justin were childhood sweethearts. After overcoming numerous obstacles in recent years, they finally found success in their relationship. Right after divorcing his ex-wife, Justin was now welcoming her into the family. It seems like their love is undeniable."

Beatrice added, "Bethany, when will your brother stop attracting so much romantic interest? When will you introduce a boyfriend and let us relish the sweetness of your wedding plans?"

Upon hearing those, Bethany eagerly scanned the crowd, hoping to catch a glimpse of her crush, the wealthy and eligible young master, Ryan Hoffman.

Meanwhile, Ryan and Justin were waiting in the luxurious presidential suite.

The two of them sat by the window, impeccably dressed in stylish suits. They gazed at the dazzling Savrow skyline, lit up by the bustling city.

Ryan wore a white suit with a black shirt tonight. He had a black choker with a golden rose pendant around his neck that added a touch of aristocratic charm and seduction to his overall appearance. As a result, he looked incredibly appealing and irresistible.

Justin, on the other hand, was dressed in his customary outfit, consisting of a black suit, black shirt, and black tie. The only adornment present was the gold dragon design on his collar pin, emphasizing his exquisite sense of style and commanding presence as a person in complete

control.

Ryan exclaimed, "Goodness gracious."

Ryan found it amusing how the man next to him emanated a somber vibe. He couldn't resist playfully teasing Justin. "If someone sees you dressed like that, they might think you're going to a funeral instead of a birthday party."

Justin had a cold expression on his face and replied sarcastically, "Black is usually worn during funerals, but does wearing white change the occasion?"

Ryan was surprised and jokingly said, "Wow, it seems like God really knows how to balance things out. You have an incredibly handsome face, but it's paired with a really rude attitude!"

Ryan shifted his attention to the collar pin on Justin's neck and remarked, "This little thing is quite unique. Can I borrow it for a couple of days?"

Justin responded firmly, "Absolutely not."

Ryan let out a sigh and said, "Back in the day, we used to share each other's underwear. Now I only ask to borrow a collar pin and you act like I'm asking for a leg. Are you becoming stingier as you age?"

Ian entered the room in a hurry and walked straight to them. "Excuse me, sir. Ms. Rosalind

sent me to remind you that the opening speech for the birthday banquet is about to start. She kindly invites you to join her on stage."

Justin coldly refused, "I'm not going."

Ian's eyebrow twitched with satisfaction. "Alright, I'll go inform her that you will not be attending!" He just loved seeing his boss put Ms. Rosalind in her place and felt inexplicably satisfied.

Ryan teased at him from the corner, "After she just recovered from a depressive episode and attempted suicide, you're provoking her again. Aren't you afraid she'll slash her wrists in front of you the next time?"

Justin wore a somber expression. "I can't be on stage with her for the event tonight," he stated, his voice devoid of emotion.

Ryan wondered in bewilderment, "Why not? Aren't you dating her?"

Justin simply responded, "I have decided to break up with her."

Ryan's eyes widened in disbelief at what he had just heard. On the other hand, Ian was so shocked that he almost shouted in excitement!

Justin looked down and spoke in a calm tone, "I haven't told her yet because I want to make sure she's healthy and well before I do so." He continued, "Once she's stable, I plan on breaking up with her. I want to reduce the damage as much as possible. After all, she saved me once."

Ryan blinked his eyes, seemingly enlightened. Suddenly, he leaned towards Justin and asked, "Justin, please tell me the truth. Are you breaking up with Rosalind because you have feelings for Bella?"

Justin felt a sharp pain in his chest, as if his breath had momentar

Chapter 288

At the Salvador Hotel, Rosalind was enjoying her glorious moment under the spotlights. Meanwhile, Bella drove alone in her Bugatti. She cruised along the mountain road, encircling Crescent Bay while enjoying the gentle breeze.

Inside the car, the cheerful tune played, and she sang along while driving, an air of happiness surrounding her.

At this moment, Axel's call came in.

Bella answered the call in a sweet and tender voice, "Hello, Ax!"

"Oh my, how sweet. I'm tempted to record this and send it to Drew just to make him jealous!" Axel laughed. His voice was cheerful and lively.

"Since you

called me, does this mean

Circling back to the serious matter, Bella asked, "Since everything has been sorted?"

Axel answered, "Yes, everything is all prepared, Asher's side included, "Axel said proudly." Your brothers are very capable, so just rest assured."

"I'm on my way to visit Grandpa Nigel now." Bella continued, "I heard that everyone in the Salvador family was coerced by Shannon to attend Rosalind's birthday banquet. Only Grandpa Nigel chose not to go."

Bella sat in silence, lost in her own thoughts. 'Grandpa Nigel enjoys lively moments. He keeps it to himself, not wanting to trouble anyone, but he is really afraid of loneliness. Grandpa Nigel has always cared for me deeply. I should be there by his side now.'

When thinking about Nigel, Bella's eyes held a soft, warm light. She could not help but feel sad

for him.

Back when she was still Justin's wife, she would keep Nigel company whenever she could. They would have the most wonderful conversation. They even wrote poetry and appraised antiques together. She would even serenade him with his favorite opera songs and take long walks by the beach. Their time together was always filled with warmth.

On the last Valentine's Day, there was a heavy snowfall in Savrow. Despite the harsh weather, Bella decided to visit Nigel at his place with handmade snacks. She still clearly remembers the day when Nigel saw her with her red face and nose due to the cold and was surprised to see her

there.

Nigel exclaimed, "Bella, it's Valentine's Day! Why aren't you spending it with Justin? What brings you to this old man's place?" At that moment, Bella was still deeply in love with Justin and quickly made up an excuse for her visit to Nigel's house.

Bella replied, "Justin is the president of Salvador Group. He's always busy with work. Even on Valentine's Day, presidents don't get a day off. Besides, Justin has prepared a gift for me. It's the thought that counts."

Nigel sighed and said, "Young lady, you're too kind and patient. If you want to get through to Justin, you need to be tougher. He's a stubborn mule, just like I used to be when I was young. Your grandmother either gave me an earful or pinched my thigh. That's how she managed to tame me into a good husband."

She merely chuckled in response.

The two admired the falling snow for a while, and Nigel suddenly said, "Bella, are you afraid of the cold?" Without waiting for her to answer, he continued, "Don't be afraid! Let's go visit Grandma."

Nigel's eyes showed the deep affection that Bella could only ask for in her life. "I'm going to sweep away the snow for your grandma. She's afraid of the cold."

Soon, Bella arrived at Nigel's house and called out, "Grandpa! I'm here!"

Just like in the past, Bella's clear and melodious voice echoed throughout every corner of the living room as soon as she entered.

"Annie!" An equally sweet and pleasant voice called out. Carrie walked out while pushing Nigel in a wheelchair.

Bella was surprised. "Carrie?! You're here too!"

Bella was delighted to see Justin's younger sister, Carrie, here. She ran over and gave Carrie a tight embrace.

Responding to Bella's hug, Carrie used her hands to feel around her thin back and asked, "Bella, you're so thin now! You weren't this thin before. Haven't you been eating well lately?"

She replied with a smile, "I've been eating well."

Bella had indeed lost some weight recently. Due to her busy schedule at work, she has been skipping meals.

Nigel called out, "My dear, come over and let Grandpa have a look at you!"

Nigel was so delighted to see Bella that he continued to call her affectionately, just like before. Bella did not mind because she had no lingering attachment to Justin. As long as Nigel was happy, it did not

matter to her.

Bella kneeled next to the wheelchair. "Grandpa, your complexion looks a bit off. Haven't you been resting well lately?" She asked with concern as she looked at Nigel.

Chapter 289

"It's just an old ailment acting up. Nothing serious." Nigel assured Bella as he gently caressed her head. His face was pale with a greyish tint.

Bella held Nigel's left hand and carefully checked his pulse, feeling a heavy sensation in her

heart.

After a while, she said seriously, "Grandpa, I will dedicate a specific time each week to give you acupuncture, and I'll also prepare a new set of medicines for you. You must not neglect this, and Uncle Matt will supervise your medication."

Nigel spoke softly, "My dear, you're not the person you were before. You're now the heiress of the Thompson family, and Wyatt loves and cares for you deeply. How can I let you take on all these responsibilities? I heard from Justin that you're also managing the Thompson Hotel, which must be challenging. Don't go through all this trouble. I have Matt taking care of me, and that's enough."

Although Nigel wanted to see her often, he worried she would exhaust herself.

Upon hearing this, Bella was slightly stunned. She had not expected that Justin would discuss her affairs with Nigel. He seemed to completely disregard her in the past, treating her like an

ornament.

She wondered, 'Now that they were separated, he was reminiscing about her. What was going on?'

Bella raised an eyebrow and said, "So what if I am Wyatt's daughter? Are you saying that I can't be your granddaughter?" She continued confidently, "I have control over my own life. I will do whatever I like!"

Her fiery and cute act made both Nigel and Carrie smile.

At that moment, her phone vibrated. Bella lowered her gaze to the screen and saw a message.

[Steven: Ms. Bella, everything is ready. I will be waiting for your orders.]

A magnificent stage adorned with flowers in the banquet hall took the spotlight.

As the lights gradually dimmed, those on the stage became increasingly dazzling. Justin and Ryan entered the venue fashionably late, arriving later than expected.

Despite their attempt to maintain a low profile, their charming presence instantly captured the audience's attention.

The eyes of the guests swirled around Justin, sparking hushed discussions.

A guest muttered, "I can't believe it. The usually reserved Justin is attending the birthday banquet of the Gold family's heiress. That woman must have quite the influence."

Another guest chimed in, "Did you think this was just a simple birthday banquet? You're too naive! Haven't you noticed? Rosalind's parents, as well as the Salvador family, are all here. This birthday banquet is a cover, and they will likely announce more important news."

Someone else added, "Oh, so that's what is happening. It seems like I came at the right time.

Anything interesting going on?"

A random guest said, "Nothing hurts more than comparison. I have discovered some interesting details through my connections with the Salvadors. When Justin married for the first time, it was a covert affair. There was no grand ceremony, just secrecy. That woman spent three quiet years with Justin. And now,

look at them. They're throwing a grand celebration for the girlfriend's birthday. Can you imagine how extravagant their wedding will be when they tie the knot? If I were the ex-wife, I'd be heartbroken!"

Hearing the whispered words, Justin felt as if someone had slapped him in the face. His heart was riddled with guilt toward Bella.

When he was married, Justin never thought he had wronged Bella. But now, after the divorce, he felt like a sinner. He was scrutinized and scorned by everyone. His personal affairs were exposed and laid bare for everyone to see.

Ryan elbowed Justin and asked, "Justin... Are you okay? Why do you look so pale?"

Justin replied, "I'm fine." He took a deep breath and tried to calm his turbulent emotions.

In the front row of the audience, Gregory and the Gold family sat together, giving the impression that both sides' parents were attending a wedding ceremony.

Suddenly, the lights changed, and delightful music filled the air.

Amidst the enthusiastic applause, Rosalind made her entrance. She wore a silver couture evening gown adorned with jewelry worth millions of dollars. Her dress elegantly showcased her shoulders and wrapped around her bountiful figure. Accompanied by Shannon, she gracefully bowed to the audience, expressing her gratitude for their attendance.

Someone in the audience couldn't help but exclaim, "Wow! Look at her! She's wearing an haute couture gown designed by Roza Walker!"

Another added, "So beautiful... It's just a birthday banquet! And she borrowed a million-dollar dress. Mr. Salvador showers her with affection!"

Hearing the whispers from the audience below, Rosalind was on cloud nine as she basked in the spotlight.

The only regret was that Justin was not standing by her side. Regardless, she was the center of attention tonight. She would not let anything dampen her mood.

Shannon approached the stage and spoke into the microphone, "I want to thank all of you for being here today to celebrate my niece Rosalind's birthday. This moment is extraordinary, and I know Rosalind will forever cherish the memories we create together."

She then took Rosalind's hand and looked at her lovingly, seemingly motherly, conveying the depth of her affection. "Before we continue, there is an important announcement that I would like to share with all of you." A sudden hush fell over the audience.

Gregory maintained a subtle smile, his expression unreadable. Meanwhile, the Gold family couple's eyes gleamed with excitement.

"Rosalind is officially getting engaged to Justin!" Shannon announced.

Chapter 290

"Wow!" The audience gasped, followed by vigorous applause.

Ryan was momentarily stunned before he turned to look at Justin with concern.

Justin stood motionless, like a frozen sculpture. He gave off a cold aura that prevented anyone from getting close.

Unconcerned about his feelings, a beam of light swept through the crowd and shined on Justin, who had turned pale in shock.

Shannon tightly held Rosalind's hand, her face glowing with excitement. "Rosalind and Justin have known each other since they were kids, facing challenges together. Now, they are getting married. The Salvador family is thrilled, and we wanted to share this good news with all the esteemed guests!"

Rosalind's cheeks were rosy, and her eyes were filled with the shy smile of a new bride. She looked affectionately at Justin in the audience, thinking his stiff expression was due to

nervousness.

Bella was busy in the kitchen, preparing soup for Nigel and Carrie.

Suddenly, Carrie rushed in, screaming, "Bella, something's wrong!" Her face was pale, and her hands trembled as she cried, "Grandpa... Grandpa has fainted! He fainted!"

Bella was momentarily stunned as she processed the news. Her pupils contracted, and her heart pounded in her ears. Regaining a sense of clarity, she dropped the spoon in her hand and rushed out of the kitchen.

Nigel lay flat on the floor in the living room, his eyes wide open. His limbs were cold and convulsing like an epileptic seizure. His mouth twisted, and drool flowed uncontrollably.

Bella gasped, realizing that Nigel was having a severe stroke!

Matt was burning with anxiety, nearly on the verge of tears, and cried out, "Old Master Nigel! I've already called for an ambulance! Hold on, Old Master!"

"Uncle Matt, don't panic! I won't let anything happen to Grandpa!" Bella clenched her teeth, quickly kneeling beside Nigel, performing preliminary first aid efficiently.

Both Matt and Carrie were stunned. The only difference between her and a professional doctor was that Bella was not wearing a white coat.

Bella's forehead was covered with sweat by now. She anxiously asked, "Uncle Matt, is the set of acupuncture needles that Grandpa usually uses still here?"

Matt immediately answered, "Yes!"

Bella instructed Matt to bring them over quickly. She took a deep breath, her eyes reddening with intense determination.

She continued, "The ambulance is too slow! I need to give Grandpa acupuncture quickly to buy him some time!"

The joint performance by Rosalind and Shannon at the banquet hall brought the celebration to its peak! The daughters of the social elite looked on with envy and jealousy at the woman on stage, who seemed like a noble princess.

All the socialite daughters present cast jealous looks toward Rosalind on the stage, who resembled a noble princess.

The consensus held by her peer was, 'How much good karma did she accumulate in her previous life? Why is Rosalind so lucky to marry Mr. Salvador? I'm so jealous!'

One guest seemed to take notice and whispered, "Look at her loose-fitting dress. Could it be that she's carrying Justin's child? In upper-class society, isn't this kind of thing common?"

Someone added, "Oh, now that you mention it, I did feel that her dress seemed weird when she came out. It is quite possible!"

- "Pregnancy before marriage? That's not true love. It's just a scheme, so despicable."

- "If scheming can get you married to Mr. Salvador, I'd willingly become a lowly woman for once! This move is truly a jackpot!"