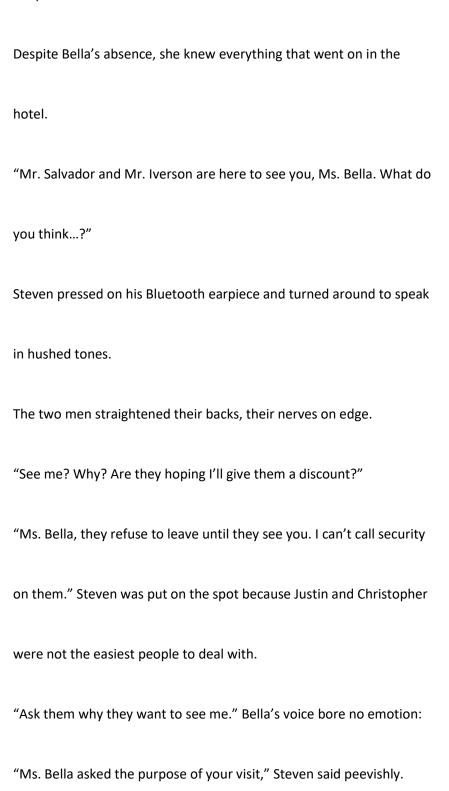
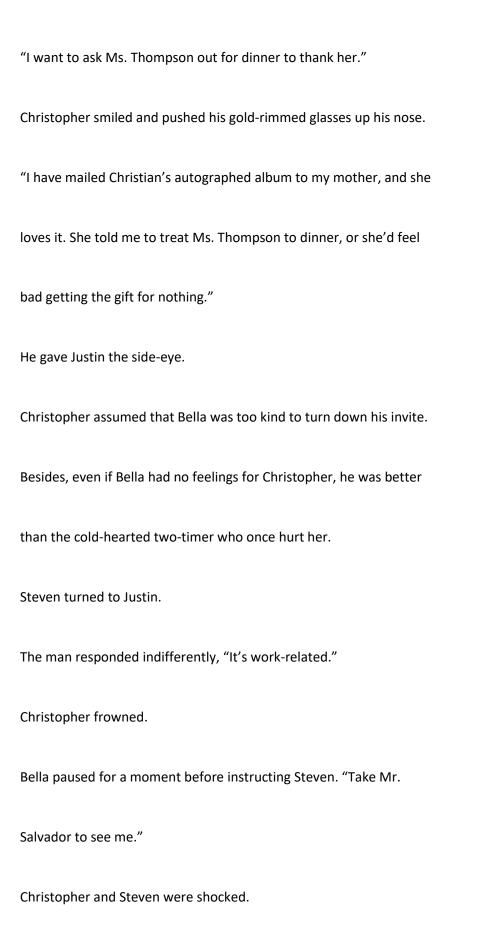
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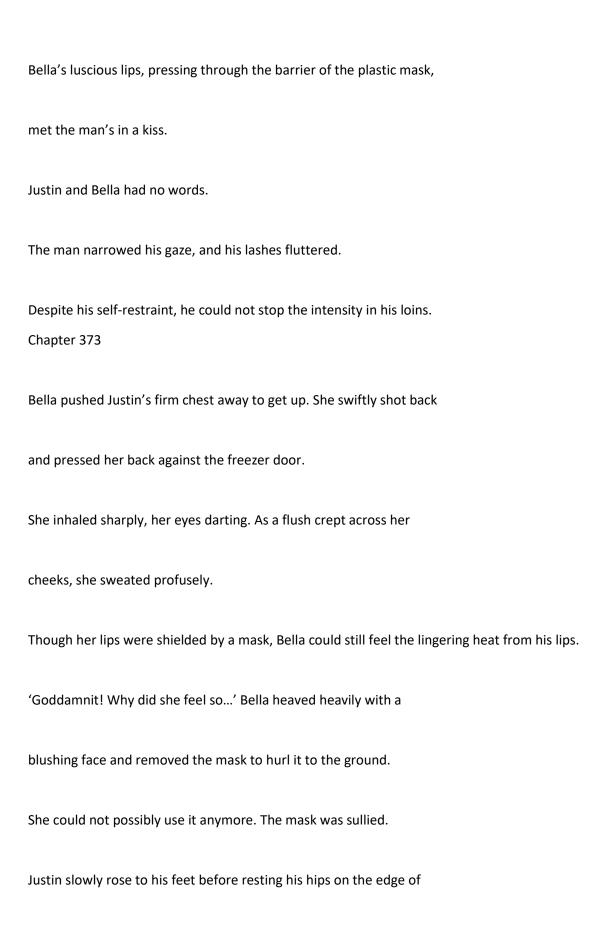
Christopher uttered in a chilling voice, "Did I say you could speak?"
The secretary hung his head low in fright and broke out in a cold
sweat.
It took a while before Christopher opened his eyes. He gripped his fingers until his knuckles popped.
"Investigate Ryan Hoffman's sister and her present relationship with
Justin."
"Does Ryan Hoffman have a sister?"
Christopher's eyes flickered with a cold glint.
"I'll get right to it now." The secretary was scared out of his wits.
Christopher closed his eyes. "Drive to Pivotage."
Pivotage was a private club he established in his secretary's name
five years ago.
The woman managing the club was his key to navigating Savrow's
social circles.
However, she might come in handy now too.

With that in mind, Christopher nudged his glasses up and smirked
sinisterly.
Steven led Justin to the back kitchen of the hotel.
Justin clutched his Windsor knot and glanced to the side to check.
himself out on the reflection of a metal surface.
He had never been so nervous when he was commended in the army. or when he hosted his first organizational meeting as the president of Salvador Corporation. Chapter 372
Chapter 372
"Ms. Bella said you can enter." Steven stepped aside as if he might catch something from Justin if he got too close.
"Thank you."
Steven scowled without hiding his resentment toward Justin. "Don't thank me. Ms. Bella is gracious to you. If it were me, I would beat the
crap out of you."
He opened the door to the back kitchen before walking away.
After taking a long exhale, Justin stepped inside.

The KS World Hotel's kitchen was sparkly clean, like a sterilized surgical theater, gleaming stainless steel and white.
The space was quiet, and the only thing Justin could hear was hist breathing and beating heart.
After a turn, he saw a lithe figure working behind a stainless-steel counter. The wide and tall counter made her frame tiny.
Bella took his breath away once again.
Clad in a pristine chef's uniform with her hair tucked under a hat and her face masked, she sculpted the dough with a pair of scissors.
She was so focused on the task at hand that she did not notice his
presence.
Justin's eyes welled up as he remembered Wilma's words.
"Young Master Justin, the dessert wasn't bought or made by our chef. The young madam made it for you. The chef said that the young madam cooks better than him. You enjoyed it so much, but you have no idea the amount of effort the young madam put into this tiny dessert. She locked herself in the kitchen all day to make the food for you. She didn't complain once about her body aches."
A wave of emotions washed over Justin.
For the first time, he got to witness Bella in the kitchen. So that was how she spent her three years in the Salvador household.
She poured all her love, blood, sweat, and tears into the food, but he



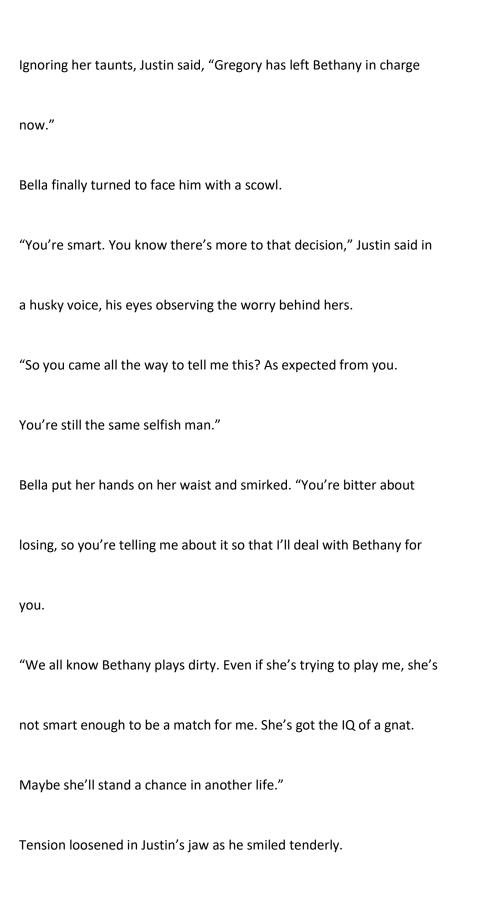








Was the love really gone?
Was there really nothing left?
Leaving Justin rooted to the spot, Bella swiped up the last pastries
with a scowl and tucked them safely away in the cabinet.
She was wary of him.
"It was rude of me. I didn't think the food was important to you. I'm sorry." Justin admitted to his mistake. Since he was in the wrong, he was willing to accept the reproach.
Bella's emotions were apparent in her fluttering lashes. She turned
her back toward Justin and washed her hands in the sink. She asked
curtly, "Didn't you say you're here to talk business? Speak up. You can tell that I am busy, and you're keeping me from my work."
As his throat hitched, Justin calmed himself. "I came to tell you that I
am no longer in charge of Ada's wedding planning."
Bella paused from scrubbing her hands and chuckled. "What's wrong
with that? Ada has already signed the contract with KS World Hotel.
The only thing you can do now is keep tabs on the comments that could give your hotel a name."

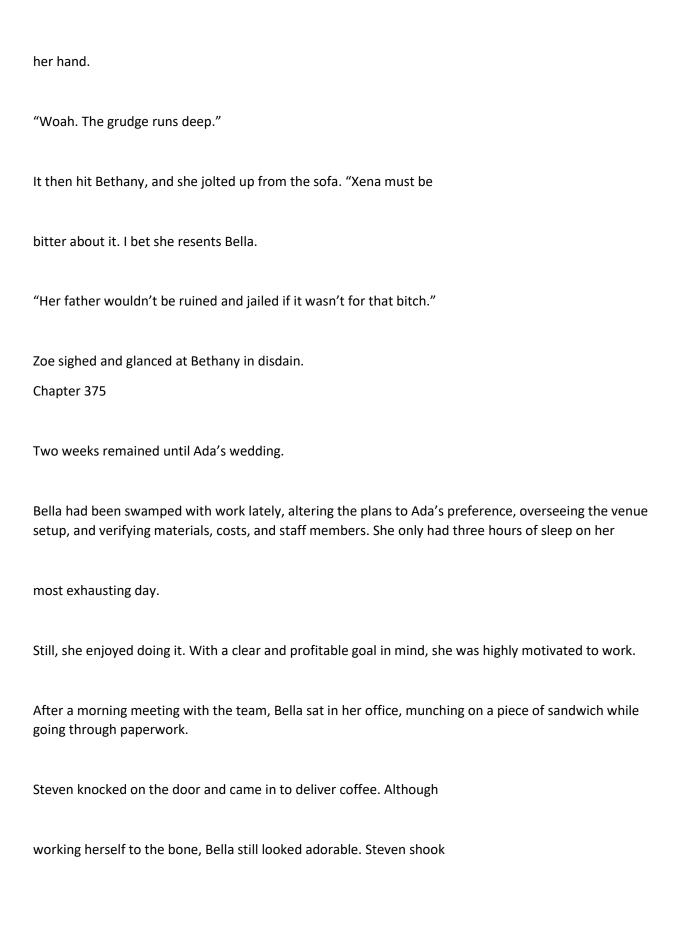




Bella looked at him skeptically. "So why are you doing this now?"
"I want you to win."
Justin stared at Bella with clear and sincere eyes. Having been in the
business for over a decade, the sentiment was a rare sight.
"Why do you want me to win?"
"We were once married, after all."
Bella sneered in disdain. "You weren't nice to me in the three years we
were married, and now that we're divorced, you want to talk about commitment? Are you kidding me, Mr. Salvador? Bye now. Don't hit
your head on the way out."
It still hurt as bad the second time around.
Justin cleared his throat, choking on the piece of dessert stuck there. He could barely breathe.
Night fell at the Hoffmans' residence.
Zoe gave Bethany a call, telling her to come over to her place. She
had an important matter to discuss.

The ladies arrived at Zoe's private piano room and shut the door
béhind them.
"Why did you want to see me so late, Zoe?" Bethany asked curiously.
"It has been five days since KS World Hotel announced their
collaboration with Ada. Have you figured out a way to get the bitch?"
Folding her arms in front of her chest, Zoe asked sternly.
Bethany was a snobby princess. Only Shannon could speak to her with that tone, so she did not take it well when Zoe came at her. She
murmured peevishly, "It's only been five days. I'm not God. Ideas take
time."
"Tsk You're lost without me."
Zoe gave Bethany a contemptuous look, but she loved to be superior intellectually. Clearing her throat, she went to her piano, lifted the cover, and pulled a document from under it. She threw it near
Bethany's feet.
chapura

Though insulted, Bethany dared not show it on her face. She gritted her teeth and picked up the document.
Attached was a picture of a young woman and her personal
information.
"Who is she?" Bethany was confused.
"She's Xena Gordon, a reporter for an online news portal, Headlines." Sitting behind the piano, Zoe pressed the keys absentmindedly.
"Headlines? I never heard of it."
Zoe wagged her finger. "It's just shitty media. That's not the point, -though. Take a closer look at the woman's family information."
Bethany blinked and read the document with a frown.
"Xena Gordon. Her father is Michael Gordon. Michael Gordon That
sounds familiar. Where have I heard the name before?"
"Michael Gordon is the former vice president of KS World Hotel. He
conspired with Zeke Gold to embezzle the hotel's procurement funds, but Bella caught him and sent him to jail. He got less than two years,
but his career is gone," Zoe said with a smile, propping her chin over



his head with a helpless smile. "It's unhealthy to eat while you work." "I don't have time. I have a fashion event to attend later." Bella took another bite of the sandwich, her gaze never leaving the document. "Why is your schedule packed today? I saw that you'd finally have a break this afternoon and wanted to book you a spa treatment to relax." Steven felt bad for her. "Leave that until after Ada's wedding. I can't relax when there's so much on my mind." Bella held the coffee mug up and looked up. "Anything on Bethany and Shannon in the last few days?" "I have been keeping an eye on them, but they have been quiet. I don't see anything.out of the ordinary." Steven uttered in contemplation, "With our planning going full force, they might have just given up since they can't stop us."

Bella reflected on the conversation she had with Justin the other day





lan snickered to himself. Justin always acted on his feelings when
Bella was concerned.
The luxury jewelry brand AX held a show at the Savrow International
Convention Center.
Many influential figures in the fashion industry and A-list celebrities arrived on the scene, gracing the red carpet like it was the Oscars.
The international star, Ada Wang, stood out among the crowd. She was not just the biggest celebrity but also the ambassador of AX in
As the heiresses of Savrow's conglomerates, Bethany and Zoe were on the list that other D-list celebrities cracked their heads to get onto.
Bethany and Zoe walked the red carpet, posing endlessly in front of
the cameras. The press was annoyed with their extended airtime.
If the host had not invited them into the venue time and again, they would probably have rooted themselves on the red carpet.
"Jesus, get a life. Don't they own carpets? It's embarrassing that they keep hanging around and refusing to leave."
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The reporters complained about Zoe and Bethany, who were on the

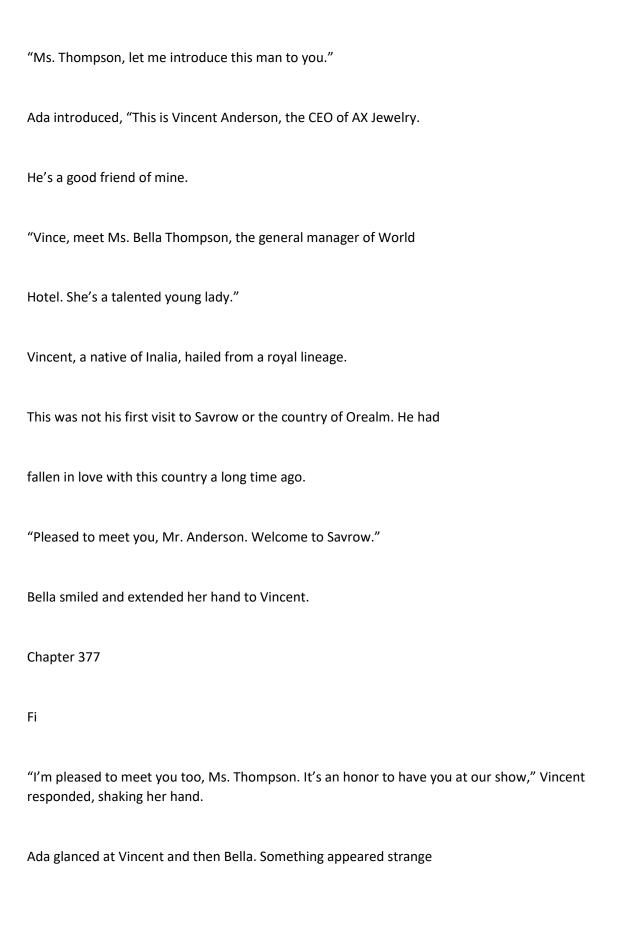


"Those reporters are snobs. They will circle you like sharks if you're famous, capable, and influential."
Furious, Zoe took it out on Bethany by putting her down.
"Yeah. My mom won't let me interact with the media, and it's not al social circle I hang out in. She said it's beneath wealthy people to
associate with the lower class."
Bethany might be working together with Zoe for her own purpose, but she was not going to let Zoe push her around.
Pulling a harmless look, she mocked, "But Zoe, you're a socialite and the apprentice of a top pianist. I can't believe no one came to interview you. That's just rude. I'm angry for your sake. Why don't I pull a few reporters over to interview you, so it won't look
embarrassing?"
"Ha! That isn't necessary. I prefer to keep a low profile. I don't like to be surrounded by reporters like a monkey in a zoo." Zoe scoffed.
The frenemies rolled their eyes and turned away from each other.
A flurry of footsteps came behind them.
"Look! It's Ms. Thompson!"
"Wow! I didn't see her on the red carpet, so I didn't expect her to be

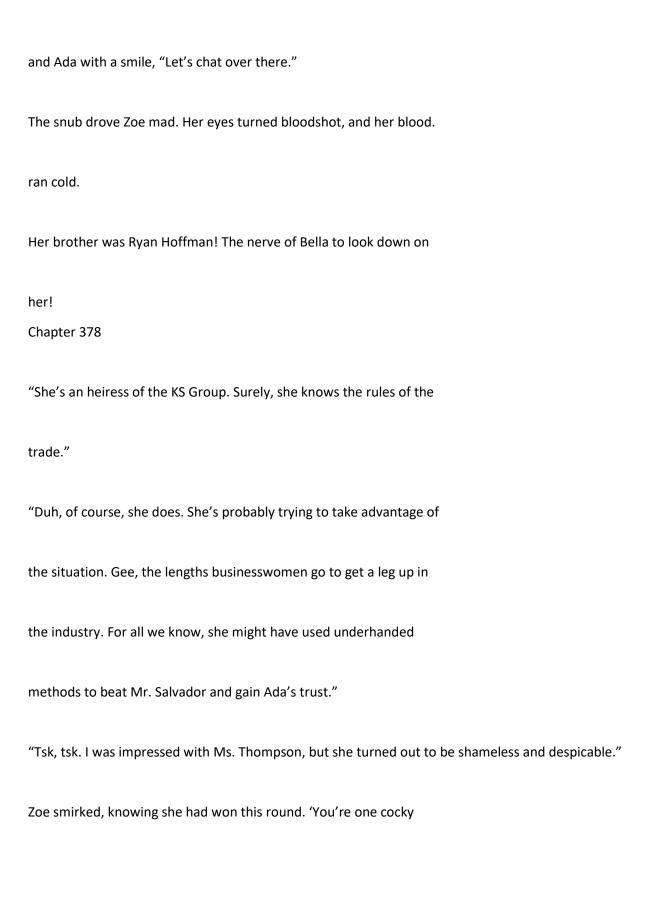
here. She's so elusive!"
"The Thompson heiress is discreet. She's successful at manag hotel and winning Ada Wang over. She's beautiful and capable!
unlike most heiresses, who only spend money and hang around r
carpets."
Even though the press did not name anyone in particular, Bethany and
Zoe felt their cheeks burning.
The press swarmed toward Bella.
Among them, two reporters did not look where they were going and bumped into Bethany and Zoe. They staggered, nearly falling to their
feet.
"Hey! Are you blind?" Bethany shouted angrily once she stopped
herself from falling.
Zoe shook in rage. Her complexion was flushed as the press crowded.
over to Bella.
"Ms. Thompson, you have won the contract to organize Ada Wang's wedding, defeating the Salvador Corporation. What are your

thoughts?" A reporter asked loudly. "It's an honor to work with Ada. I am grateful for her trust in the KS World Hotel. I want to make it clear that KS Group and the Salvador Corporation were competing for the same opportunity, but that doesn't mean the Salvador Corporation is any less because we won the contract. The Salvador Hotel has a longer history in Savrow than the KS World Hotel, setting the standards in the industry. I hope you don't hold the outcome against the Salvador Hotel. It doesn't change. KS Group's business relationship with the Salvador Corporation." Even though Bella had won a major victory, she knew when to be humble. She would never gloat, make enemies, or belittle the Salvador Corporation because it would be an ugly look on her. "Oh, my! Ms. Thompson is so charismatic. I'm falling for her." "Yeah. She's humble even when she has won. She's so nice. I found her underhanded before for swooping in on the project, but I don't think so now." The crowd exprèssed their praise for Bella. Zoe's eyes were bloodshot with resentment, and her clenched fists trembled.

She noticed that Bella wore a pair of golden rose earrings embedded with red gemstones. She matched the earrings with a red gemstone.
necklace.
It was the red beryl, the most valuable gemstone of its kind.
Bethany stared at the huge red beryl hanging around Bella's neck and took a huge gulp enviously.
Zoe was jealous too, but she quickly noticed something.
As she narrowed her eyes, a plan came to mind.
Bella attended the fashion event today, not to show off or flaunt her status as the Thompson heiress but to accomplish two things.
First, she wanted to respond to the accusation of stealing the project. from the Salvador Corporation in an interview with the media. She wanted to set things straight and put an end to the rumors.
Second, Bella wanted to present Ada with a gift, but in truth, she was keeping an eye on Bethany, making sure she had the upper hand in
the situation. Bella refused to allow the scheming woman to ruin
-things for her.
Ada and a dashing middle-aged man in a tailored brown tux walked
toward Bella.







bitch, Bella. I'll show you your place today. The best way to take you down a notch is to make people question your integrity."
Unbeknownst to Zoe, Justin, who came late, had witnessed
everything she had said and done.
The man hung back in the dark, staring indifferently at Zoe, who was pleased with herself.
Standing tall in his tailored suit with fabric that draped smoothly
across his toned chest, Justin scowled.
"Mr. Salvador, that woman is picking on the young madam." lan was
anxious to watch.
Justin pursed his lips.
He leaned in and paused. "Just wait."
"Still" lan widened his eyes in confusion.
"She's Bella Thompson, not a typical woman. She has her way of dealing with it."
Justin narrowed his eyes. Even he did not realize that his smile was

tender and proud. "Even if she doesn't, she has me."
lan's eyes bulged as he stared at Justin's side profile in disbelief. lant
held onto his chest.
Justin added, "She was my woman. No one but me can pick on her.
-No one."
lan thought, 'Good grief! Is he still the ruthless president that I knew?
Has the world turned upside down? Could this tender look on Mr.
Salvador's face melt the Antarctic iceberg? Sigh It's a shame that
Young Madam could not witness it."
Public opinion was swaying on the other end of the room.
Bella's choice of jewelry started a stir, as promoting another business during a brand event was disgraceful and against the rules.
Hiding behind Zoe, Bethany took delight in Bella's unfortunate
situation.
Bella observed with a calm expression as Zoe stirred the pot. Her unperturbed gaze did not sit well with Zoe.



perspective.
He pursed his discolored lips, unable to take the male attention Bella
received.
"Ms. Thompson's jewelry set is Alexa's Rose of Desire. In other
words, without the Rose of Desire, the popular Everlasting Flower
collection would've never existed."
Chapter 379
Everybody's jaw dropped.
Zoe and Bethany were not the only ones shocked. As Vincent's friend and Alexa's die-hard fan, Ada had no idea.
Ada could not believe that Bella's jewelry set was Alexa's
masterpiece. She had heard about the "Rose of Desire" but had never
seen it.
For once, Ada envied the rich.
Bella sneaked Vincent a grateful look.

She knew she did not have to explain herself because Vincent would sort out those troublemakers at his show.

There was no need to waste time on unimportant people.

Justin's eyes never strayed away from Bella. He was fuming.

He was certain that Bella knew the man, and they were close.

"Who is that old man?" Justin asked in a chilling voice.

"Vincent Anderson is the CEO of AX. His grandfather was the last

Duke of Inalia, and his grandmother was the founder of AX. His

family owns the brand, so that's why he's the CEO.

lan added with a wink, "Vincent inherited the dukedom, and the royal

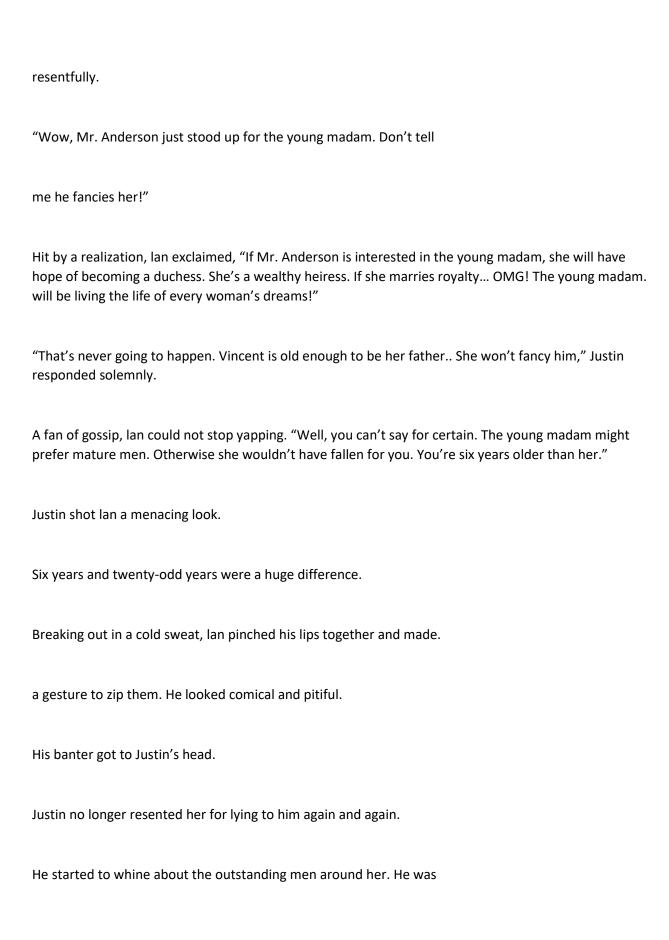
family bestowed him with a huge estate. That's not the only thing. He

is one of the top five richest men in Inalia. His net worth is tens of

billions of dollars. The young madam is awesome. I can't believe she

has royal friends!"

Justin breathed heavily and swallowed hard. He clutched his fingers.



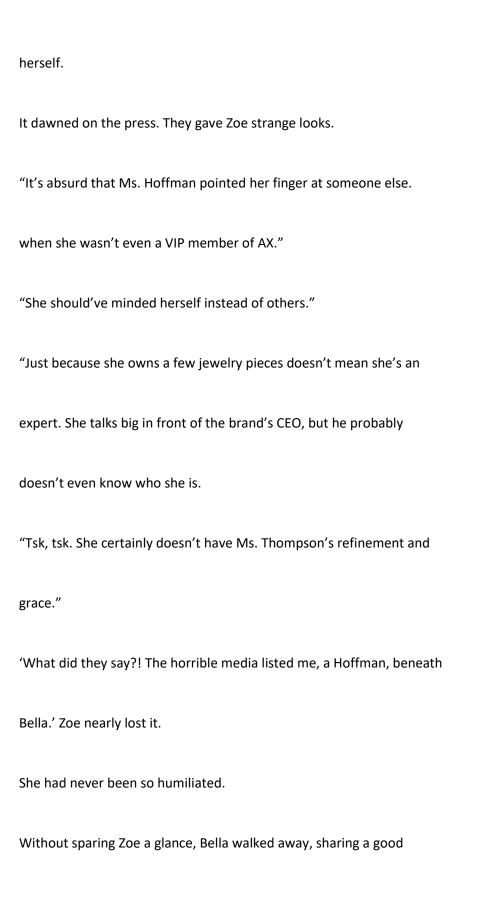


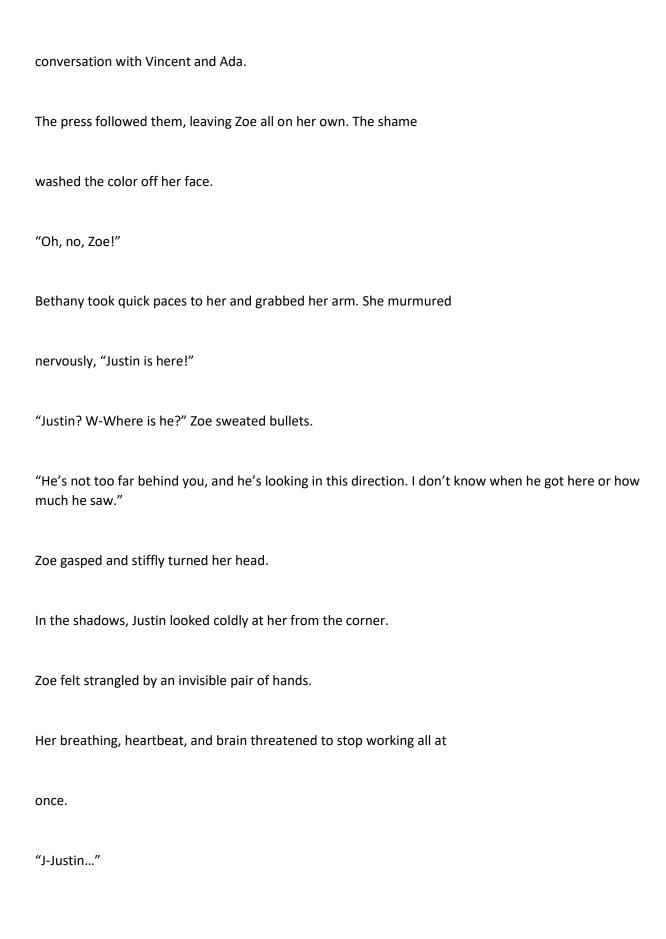
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"They are free to wear Alexa's jewelry pieces to AX's events and will be seated in the VVIP section. If that isn't enough, AX offers free
lifetime maintenance and care for customers who own Alexa's
jewelry pieces. You're a fan of AX jewelry. How come you didn't
know?"
Zoe turned pale. She was speechless.
Although she owned many of AX's jewelry pieces, the membership
threshold was set too high. Not only did it require a significant
amount of spending history, but there was a strict assessment of the
either member's wealth and background. Zoe did not pass
requirement despite being Ryan's sister.

Bethany quietly stepped back, keeping her distance from Zoe. She did. not want to be associated with Zoe now that she had made a fool of

Hence, she did not know about the rule.

Chapter 380





Furrowing his brows, Justin shook his head emotionlessly and walked away without looking back. Ian followed him.
As a cold shiver ran down her spine, Zoe staggered backward.
Justin's gaze cut through her, severing any ties between them.
Zoe cried in the washroom. "Sob, sob, sob Damn it Why can't the
bitch go to hell? I wish a car could run her over."
With her hands over her face, Zoe wailed until her makeup smeared.
Her black eyeliner smudged all over her face.
She cried, not just because Bella ruined her socially.
It was also because Justin caught her giving Bella hell, and Zoe could
not talk her way out of it.
"I know, right? Why can't God strike her with lightning?" Bethany ranted with Zoe, but in secret, she was glad.
"Why did you just stand there and watch? Why didn't you stand up for me?" Zoe took her anger out on Bethany.
"I-I'm slow. I didn't know what to say. You've been the one to give me ideas. What can I do? I wouldn't have waited until now to deal with

Bella if I was smart enough," Bethany explained.
Zoe wept and asked resentfully, "Have you gotten a reply from Xena Gordon yet? Still no update? She's useless."
"Take it easy. Good things come to those who wait. The woman hates Bella with all her heart. She will do everything to help us."
Bethany's phone buzzed.
She pulled it out for a look and smiled wickedly. She waved the phone
Zoe. "Speak of the devil! Xena's calling."
2 Zoe gritted her teeth menacingly. "This time, I must make Bella fall
grace for sure."