

Heiress 411

Chapter 411

With the curt question hanging heavy in the air, all eyes were on Henry.

Though intimidated by Bella's stern gaze, Henry pulled himself together and replied, "It's an open secret. Ada couldn't decide between us and the Salvador Hotel before, but you managed to impress Ada enough to host her wedding. Now that we lost the contract and Ada's wedding is around the corner, it makes sense that she switches service to the Salvador Hotel."

That was an airtight response.

Sinking her back into her seat, Bella smiled and uttered, "You got a point, but you're neglecting one thing. The Salvador Hotel has yet to sign a formal agreement with Ada."

Everybody was surprised. "What? It's been a week. I can't believe they have not signed a deal yet."

Henry might look unfazed, but his expression froze.

"If they did, the Salvadors would be announcing it to the whole world. I doubt there's any progress since they have been quiet. I believe we still stand a chance."

Putting her feet to the ground, Bella twirled in her leather chair. "I'm a stubborn woman. I'll fight tooth and nail until the very last second. I have come up with a new proposal, and I'll be showing it to Ada within the next two days. Hopefully, I can catch Salvador Corporation off guard."

Everybody cheered. "Yay! We know we can count on you, Ms.

Henry smiled pretentiously while echoing the group's sentiment.

"But we were the ones who violated the contract in the first place, Ms. Thompson. We are probably the last people Ada wants to see. I don't think she would agree to meet you."

“Yeah. Some things can’t be forced.”

Bella smiled cockily, her eyes glistening.

“Things never really go as planned. Even if we can’t force things, I still strive to make a difference.”

The project committee left after the meeting.

Bella and Steven were the only ones in the huge conference room.

Holding the coffee from Steven, Bella stood before the floor-to-ceiling window to enjoy the bird’s-eye view of Savrow while sipping on coffee.

“Ms. Bella, were you baiting when you mentioned the new proposal?” Steven stood next to her and asked probingly.

“That’s right, and someone took the bait.”

Steven widened his eyes excitedly. “Really? Who?”

“It’s only a suspicion of mine. I can’t be sure without evidence.”

Bella hid the emotions behind her eyes. “Steve, monitor Henry once you get off work tonight, and report back to me right away on any meetings or suspicious activity.”

Carrie woke up the next day. Justin had dropped her off at home.

With Justin having Carrie’s back, Shannon dared not express her grievance to Gregory.

Bethany kept her thoughts to herself since she picked on Carrie to begin with. Shannon would not tell her off anyway, but Gregory would lecture her about it.

That evening, Carrie lay in bed sulkily and held her long-lost teddy. As her mind flew back to last night, her heart raced and her cheeks flushed.

In fact, she blacked out last night. She could not remember what happened after and how she got back.

The only memory that lingered was the weight on her lips when the lights went out, not to mention Ryan's smothering gaze that could look into her soul.

Carrie drew a deep breath and got out of bed. She went to sit down by the table.

Pulling out a sketchbook and pencil, she closed her eyes for a moment before sketching on the blank sheet.

Minutes later, the portrait of a deviously handsome face was laid out on the paper.

Carrie managed to capture the essence of his cheekiness.

She stared at her drawing, tracing his beautiful eyes with her fingers.

"Ryan is so good-looking."

Unbeknownst to Carrie, Ryan drove his fiery red Ferrari to Tideview Manor.

"Who did you say was here?"

Shannon was enjoying the fall foliage in the backyard with Gregory when the butler came bearing unexpected news.

“Mr. Ryan Hoffman has arrived.”

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“At this hour?” Gregory looked at the time and frowned. “He should know that Justin isn’t home, and it’s almost dinner. Why did he come at-”

“Oh, Greg. Ryan doesn’t pay us a visit every day. Don’t read too much into it. Ryan could be here for Bethany, for all we know.” Shannon clung to Gregory’s arm.

“Shannon, are you saying that Bethany and Ryan are...” Gregory was surprised.

“You’ve been too busy with work to pay attention to your daughter. Doubt you know what’s going on with Bethany.”

Shannon poked her husband on the arm and said with a pout, Bethany has always had a crush on Ryan.”

Gregory was shocked. “So Bethany likes Ryan? I couldn’t tell at all.”

“Girls can be shy. It’s not something she’ll talk about openly.”

Shannon looked abashed for her daughter.

“It’s not something to tread lightly on. Bethany’s marriage is essential to our family’s future.”

Gregory turned solemn. “Bethany is my first daughter and the apple of my eye. It’s imperative that she marry into the right family. She must pick one of the finest men in all of Savrow.”

Shannon said, "The Hoffmans belong to a handful of the rich and powerful in Savrow. Plus, Ryan is Logan's only grandson. Even though

Ryan has an uncle, the man is too old to have children. It's only a matter of time before the family business is passed down to Ryan."

She had everything figured out. "Besides, Ryan is close with Justin. Our families will be brought closer with Bethany marrying into the Hoffmans."

Gregory eased his frown as Shannon convinced him.

Although Ryan had a reputation for being a playboy, he was just playing the field, just like most guys do, especially when they were used to getting whatever they wanted.

Gregory had been there and done that. Ryan would focus on family life when he had enough of following the teenage playbook. Bethany and Ryan were in the same social class. When they married each other, the Salvador family could keep Ryan in line, away from his wandering eyes.

Ryan sat in the living room.

He had playdates with Justin at Tideview Manor when he was a kid, so he felt very much at home. Ryan went ahead and poured himself a drink instead of waiting for the maids.

"What brings you here today, Ryan?"

Gregory and Shannon came to welcome him, even though Gregory did not usually show his face. However, after a conversation with his wife, Gregory felt he should be there.

"Sorry for the spontaneous visit, Uncle Greg." Ryan appeared close to

Gregory, seeing that they were on a first-name basis.

“We were just getting ready for dinner. Why don’t you join us?” Shannon extended the invitation.

“I won’t be staying for dinner.”

Ryan declined and added, “Is Bethany home? I need a word with her.”

Gregory and Shannon exchanged intriguing looks.

Upon learning of Ryan’s presence, Bethany could not wait to see him.

Nevertheless, her mother once reminded her to play hard to get, so she resisted meeting Ryan recently.

It never occurred to her that the approach worked, and Ryan came to her house to see her.

Bethany walked into the room with her heart pounding out of her chest.

“You wanted to see me, Ryan?”

Ryan clutched his glass and took a sip nonchalantly. “Yeah.”

“What’s the matter?” Bethany sat across from him coyly, looking rather shy.

“Do you have anything to say for yourself about the incident at ACE last night?” Ryan fixated on her coldly and cut straight to the chase.

Bethany’s heart dropped. “What happened last night?”

“Carrie doesn’t leave her home. How did her teddy end up dumped at ACE?”

Ryan slammed his glass, his eyes piercing. "You went too far with your little fun and games. You were out of line yesterday, Bethany."

Bethany turned as white as a sheet, apprehension washing over her.

"I think you got the wrong idea, Ryan." Her eyes welled up in fear. Using tears as a weapon, she played the victim.

"Carrie didn't even shed a tear, even when you played her. What are you crying about?"

Ryan could not even look at Bethany because those were simply crocodile tears. "I came here to tell you two things. One, stop picking on Carrie. I'll have her back from now on. Think twice before you try to pull another stunt on her, Two, stay away from my sister. She's an innocent girl. I don't want you to be a bad influence on her."

The man stood up and walked away without looking back.

Bethany stared vacantly as the door slammed shut, her body sliding to the ground from the sofa..

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Ryan was not in a hurry to leave after walking out of the lounge. Instead, he wandered around the place.

He looked like he was taking a walk, but something was cooking.

Ryan hoped to spot the tiny figure with her always-downcast head.

He was no angel.

However, he always had a soft spot for that delicate girl.

“Young Master Ryan? What are you doing here?” Running to Ryan,

Wilma drew close and asked in shock.

“Uh... Erm... Um...”

Ryan looked awkward as he stumbled for words. Finally, he plucked the courage to ask, “Where is Carrie’s room, Wilma?”

Wilma looked at him in shock.

She could never, in her wildest dreams, associate the man with

“What do you want to do, Young Master Ryan? Ms. Carrie doesn’t comfortable with strangers. Don’t scare her.”

Ryan furrowed her brows. “Wilma, you know me. I grew up with Justin.”

“If you ask me, this is what I think about you and Young Master Justin.” Wilma gave a thumbs up.

“But you with women...” Wilma gave him a thumbs down.

Ryan had a face-palm moment.

It took a lot of persuasion on Ryan’s part to whitewash his image as a playboy before Wilma finally took him to see Carrie.

“I’ll keep watch at the door. Make it quick before others catch your here.” Wilma stood in front of the door and urged him sternly.

Ryan did not know what to say. "We are not doing anything illegal, Wilma. Don't be so uptight about it."

He took strides into the room and closed the door behind him.

Once Wilma snapped out of her thoughts, her eyes bulged in rage. "You little brat! What did you say to me?"

Ryan was surprised upon walking into Carrie's room.

Bethany's room overflowed with princessy opulence, while Carrie's room embraced stark minimalism. Carrie did not have any personal furnishings beyond the manor's bare necessities.

Ryan heard some noise coming from the bedroom, so he tiptoed his way there.

With the door left ajar, he slipped inside.

He could see Carrie's slender back against a wide desk. She was scribbling something.

As his eyes darkened, Ryan crept behind her and craned his neck to see what she was doing.

His heart skipped a beat.

With pursed lips, Carrie sketched a portrait, and the model was him.

"All done." Carrie put down the pencil and admired the portrait with a smile.

"When are you planning on giving it to me?"

“Ah!”

Carrie let out a scream and jumped out of the chair. She tried to cover the drawing, but it was too late.

Acting quickly, Ryan curled his lips and snatched the drawing from her grasp.

“G-Give it back!” Rosy-cheeked, Carrie got on her tiptoes and tried to retrieve it.

Since the man towered over her, Carrie gripped his collar in rage and sneaked around him to snatch it back.

“Cough! Let go! Let go! You’re going to strangle me to death.”

Ryan gasped for air. Left with no choice, he bent over and scooped Carrie up to put her on the table. At least then he could breathe.

“Give it back! That’s my drawing!” A tearful Carrie refused to give up.

“You drew me. Technically, you violated my rights.”

Ryan’s eyes were intense when their gazes met. “As compensation, why don’t you give the drawing to me, Carrie?”

Blushing in the face, Carrie yanked on the man’s collar.

Ryan fell forward with widened eyes and squashed Carrie under him.

Their lips were nearly touching.

“Uh... It tickles.”

Carrie looked away as the man's tobacco-filled breath smothered her.

Her heart was beating fast.

Ryan was in a daze.

It took everything in him to stop the fire in his loins. He straightened his back and got up.

His eyes welled up, and his breathing grew heavy.

Although Carrie was of age, she looked petite and delicate, all curled up on the table.

She hid half her face between her knees and extended her arm to the man. "Give it back."

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"I saved you... I mean, your teddy last night. Can't you let me have the portrait in return?"

Propping his firm hand onto the desk, Ryan leaned forward and continued, "I like the sketch. Can I have it, please?"

"I-I have something else for you." Carrie sounded timid. Her toes curled up.

"What is it?" Ryan's eyes lit up.

Minutes later, Ryan returned to his Ferrari.

A wide grin plastered across his face as he held a cake box and a scrolled portrait. He had never been happier.

In fact, he had seen the portrait Carrie gave to Nigel during his birthday celebration. Since then, Ryan has been yearning to get one himself.

He wanted a drawing that was only made for him.

To his surprise, he had gotten it.

The joy and happiness he felt were indescribable.

Ryan put away the sketch with glee and eagerly opened the cake box.

It was a simple and slightly ugly blueberry mousse cake inside.

He slid his finger on the cream and put it in his mouth for a taste.

Ryan smacked his lips with furrowed brows.

Why does it taste a little sour?

Late at night, Bella sat behind her computer in the study to game with a facial mask on. She did not even take a break.

Truth be told, she was sleepy. However, Bella was worried as Steven had not returned after she sent him out tonight to follow Henry. She waited for his update while gaming to stay awake.

The officials of the game server sent her yet another email, inviting her to compete in the professional league as the top female gamer, but she declined every time.

She only played games to kill time, and she did not want to mix. pleasure with business. It was not as if she needed the money.

Beep.

She received a notification that Christopher was online. His gaming name was “Rose”, while Bella’s was “Lucifer”.

[Rose: How about a game?]

[Lucifer: Alright. Invite me to one.]

As Christopher and Bella communicated via the voice channel, the man’s voice echoed in the room.

“Good evening, Ms. Lucifer.”

“Good evening to you too, Mr. Rose. Bella teased him, “Are you blooming tonight?”

“It looks like you’re handling things well. The incident with Ada hasn’t gotten to you,” Christopher said with a tender smile.

“Duh. I am trained in the dark arts.”

“What do you mean?”

“He can channel his inner Darth Vader, plotting my demise, but trust me, the Force is strong with this one.”

Christopher chuckled. He paused and asked, “Do you need my help?”

“Nah, I’m good. It’s between me and Salvador Corporation. It’s not a huge deal, but I don’t want to get the Iverson Group involved. Thank you for the offer, though.” Bella turned down his help.

“I don’t represent the Iverson Group. I want to help because I want to help you.” His concern was reflected in Christopher’s soft voice.

Bella raised a brow. “So you don’t trust me to handle it on my

“No.”

Christopher laughed helplessly. “I don’t want you to be tired. I w you to spend some time gaming with me. It’s been days since y were online.”

Bellan blinked in a trance.

Had he been waiting for her online?

This man had nothing to do and had no friends since he had just come back from Sentania. It was no wonder he could not leave her alone.

It was sad, really.

There was a knock on a door, and Steven’s voice was heard.

“I’m back, Ms. Bella!”

Now that the man that she was waiting for was back, Bella said. goodbye to Christopher in a hurry. “Right, I need to attend to something now. Goodnight, Mr. Iverson.”

She left the voice channel before he could respond.

Meanwhile, Christopher stared at the channel and murmured to himself affectionately.

“Goodnight, Bella.”

His expression turned into a grimace as he clicked on his mouse.

The gaming page was replaced by information on Steven and his two brothers.

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Steven, well dressed for the fall weather, rushed to Bella’s side. He panted and broke out in a sweat.

Bella was not in a hurry to ask about the outcome. Instead, she approached the coffee table and poured him a drink.

“Take a breather. Drink up. It must be cold outside.”

Steven took the glass. His cold fingers brushed against Bella’s, and he felt a warm spark from her.

“Take a seat and rest.”

Bella turned to sit on the sofa, crossing her legs under her dressing gown. Her pink, fluffy slipper dangled on the tip of her foot.

With flushed cheeks, Steven cupped the glass between his hands. restlessly. “You’re right, Ms. Bella. Henry knows Xena, and they are more than friends.”

Bella curled her lips. “Even if I’m right, I need a capable man like you to make things happen.”

Steven smiled abashedly and handed over his phone.

She took the phone and glanced down at the pictures without showing much emotion.

The photos revealed Henry's and Xena's date at a café. Henry caressed Xena's face while the latter held his hand as they looked sweetly into each other's eyes.

"We have concrete proof, Ms. Bella. We can question Henry." Steven was excited to acquire evidence.

"These are far from enough." Bella put the phone down with a blank face.

"Are they not good enough?"

Steven's eyes bulged. "I reached out to a connection to get Henry's and Xena's hotel stay records. They met up at hotels at least twice a week, but they did not know each other before these two months.

"Can't the photos and hotel stays prove that Henry has been tipping her off?"

"We know it's Henry for sure, but we have insufficient evidence to prove it. You have taken a course in law. You should know the circumstantial evidence can't be pinned on Henry."

Bella closed her eyes listlessly and lay on the sofa. "If they insist that they were just dating, we can't do anything about it."

It dawned on Steven that Bella was not just trying to find out who backstabbed her.

Bella was trying to root them all out from top to bottom and make them pay a painful price.

"We need to get proof of him leaking trade secrets," Steven said dejectedly.

“Henry couldn’t wait to tell Xena after I mentioned that I had a new proposal. I can guess what he’s about to do next. Stop tracking Henry in the next few days so we don’t spook him. Get eyes on Xena and

Bethany. See if they will communicate with each other.

“And one more thing. Look into Xena. We might find a surprise.

“Got it, Ms. Bella.”

Suddenly, he could hear steady breathing.

Steven looked over and noticed Bella had dozed off. Her lips parted, breathing in air as shadows cast under her lashes.

She must be drained from all the thinking.

Steven’s eyes reflected his affection and heartache. Getting down on one knee by the sofa, he reached out to carry her.

However, he had to restrain himself from touching her. In the end, he grabbed a blanket to tuck her in.

He was only a secretary. He should not take advantage of her while she was asleep.

Besides, Steven believed that the man who was worthy to carry Bella was her lover, apart from her father and brothers.

Steven was happy enough to stay by her side and straighten out her train on the day of her wedding.

It was late into the night. Justin sat near the window of his study and poured himself a glass of red wine.

The wine glass was one he rummaged out of the pile of gifts from Bella. It was a Baroque-style crystal glass. The crisp clink was a testament to its fine craftsmanship.

Justin wondered if she wished their relationship would last forever when she gifted him the glass.

Furrowing his brows, Justin suddenly tasted bitterness in the wine.

Following a knock on the door, Ian hurried in with a file.

"I have found everything we need to know about Xena Gordon, Mr. Salvador. Don't you worry! I even know where her grandparents' graves are. I'm sure I didn't miss anything." Ian spoke confidently

Bella's opinion of Justin changed for the worse after Ian's blabbi so Ian put a lot of work into the investigation to make things up Justin.

"Scan the file and send it to Ms. Thompson."

Justin swirled the glass and watched the wine with interest under the light.

Ian was stunned. calling her that?"

Justin gave Ian a chilling look, to which Ian smiled and replied, "Right. Of course, I'll send it to the young madam."

"Just email it to her."

Justin paused and added, "Make it anonymous."

“Huh? Why?” Ian spoke faster than he could think.

The man pursed his lips. “I worry that she might delete the email without reading it if she sees that it’s from the Salvador Corporation.”

Ian was shocked by his boss’s humility.

The phone on the coffee table vibrated.

Justin picked it up to take a look. Ryan was requesting a video call.

Confused, Justin took the call. “What do you want?”

On the screen, Ryan lay on a white bed with a discolored face. Judging by the blue and white walls in the background, Justin inferred that Ryan must be at the hospital.

“Justin... I’m about to die...”

“My condolences.” Justin looked unfazed.

“Justin... Your sister, Carrie... Does she have a knack for poison?”

Ryan waved his arm, which was hooked to an IV drip. His body curled up in pain. “She gave me a blueberry mousse cake, and I ate it all. But I couldn’t stop throwing up and having diarrhea the minute I got home. I had to call an ambulance to get to the hospital. The doctor said I had severe food poisoning. I knew something was wrong when I ate it because it tasted sour. But man, it hurt so bad.”

Ian turned his back and hunched over, laughing silently in tears.

Ryan had food poisoning, but he sounded like he was giving birth.

The stiffness in Justin's lips was evidence that he was holding back

laughter. "If you knew there was a problem, why did you eat it anyway?"

"She made me the cake. How could I refuse? Ouch! Argh..." Ryan grimaced.

Even the toughest man had a breaking point.

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The project team members regained hope after the last meeting. They were filled with motivation once again.

Bella was a great influencer, captivating her employees with her charms to become her fans.

Today, Bella had a cheerful briefing with the team.

She said, "Ada has agreed to meet with me tonight. I'm not going to get ahead of myself on the outcome, but this is the first step in the right direction."-

The team members cheered.

Only Henry sat at the farthest end of the table. Despite his smiling face, he was not the least bit happy.

"We breached the contract, but I believe Ada is the type to

understand. I'm confident that my proposal is more impressive than the Salvadors'. Once she takes a look at it, she will be more satisfied than she was with the first proposal," Bella said with a confident smile.

"Show us, Ms. Thompson!"

"I want to show you, but after the last incident, I have to be careful. It's not that I don't trust you. It's just troubled times. There are too many eyes on the outside watching us.

"As the general manager of KS World Hotel, I can't allow us to fall for the same trick twice. I hope you can understand."

Understanding where Bella was coming from, the group expressed their hope for Bella's triumphant return. They rubbed their palms, waiting to get their hands on the job,

That evening, Bella dined at a restaurant while Steven sorted out

paperwork in her office.

Once that was done, Steven dialed a number and left the office.

The moment he walked out of the office, Henry slipped right in.

Security was not tight tonight, so he managed to get into Bella's -private space.

He knew that his every move would be captured by the cameras all around, but he had to do it anyway because he was running out of time.

If he could not get the new proposal tonight, Bella might just close the deal with Ada again, and his girlfriend would not get her revenge.

Henry was blinded by love and caught up in his feelings for Xena.

He wanted to give her everything she wanted. Heck, he was willing to be a criminal for her.

Henry used the torch function on his phone as he carefully and swiftly searched around Bella's office.

He was confident that the proposal was in the office.

Bella had not left the hotel, and Steven did not take his bag with him, so the proposal must not be with either of them.

He quickly rummaged through the drawers and cabinets, breaking out in a cold sweat from anxiety.

Finally, he pulled out the proposal at the bottom of the pile of documents.

"This is it. Yes!"

Henry gripped the file, hot with emotions. He mumbled to himself, "I can help you get vengeance, Xena. I can finally help you!"

Click!

The office's light suddenly came on.

Steven barged in with a few bodyguards and encircled Henry.

Henry was dumbfounded to be surrounded by a human barricade. He froze in awkwardness but refused to put down the proposal.

He knew that he would be discovered sooner or later.

It just never crossed his mind that it would be so soon.

The security team formed two rows to give way.

Dressed in a sleek black suit, Bella rocked her black stilettos with red bottoms. Her gaze was intense when she strutted into the office.

Her commanding presence rivaled that of a chief commander.

Henry shuddered at the sight of Bella. He would be lying if he said he was not afraid.

“Do you know that commercial theft is classified as stealing? You can rot in jail and lose everything you own just by holding those few pieces of paper.”

Steven scowled, his eyes flickering coldly. “It’s less than three years. imprisonment and possibly a fine for causing massive loss for selling trade secrets. For more severe cases, you can get 3 to 10 years of jail time.”

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Henry staggered backward and nearly stumbled over.

“We have witnesses and proof. Do you have anything to say for yourself?”

Steven’s eyes turned bloodshot at the thought that the mole had caused Bella a lot of pain. He had envisioned several scenarios in his mind about killing Henry.

“I have nothing to say.”

Although Henry was scared, his love for Xena Gordon helped him overcome his fear. He stood tall and faced Bella and Steven. "I stole the proposal and sold it to the media. I did everything, and I will accept the consequences."

By accepting the consequences, he meant he would never rat Xena out.

Henry refused to budge, so Steven was livid and tempted to punch Henry in the face.

"Steven and Henry, please stay back. Everyone else, please wait in the corridor." Bella, who had remained silent thus far, spoke with authority.

The security team swiftly moved out of the office.

"I can be honest with you, Henry."

Bella strolled to a sofa to sit down. She grabbed a piece of chocolate from the plate and unwrapped it before putting the piece in her mouth. "There's no new proposal right from the start. I never asked Ada to meet with me"

"W-What did you say?" Henry was shocked.

Bella chuckled. "Take a look if you don't believe me."

Henry opened the proposal with shaking hands. He sweated profusely.

The first page had words on it, but the next few were blank pages.

Henry just admitted a crime to a group of people. Steven even recorded his testimony.

Bella tricked him, and he fell for it!

“How did you know it was me?!”

After everything that happened, Henry did not have to play nice with Bella anymore, so he got straight to the point. He needed to know why before he was taken away.

“KS World Hotel is impenetrable unless we have a mole among us.

Bella chewed on the chocolate. “I knew we had a rat in the project team once the first proposal was leaked out, so I had eyes on each one of you. You were able to keep it together and stay out of suspicion by keeping your distance from Xena. I believe you would have succeeded if I hadn’t lured you out.”

“You know about Xena? How do you know?” Henry was more concerned about his girlfriend than his current predicament.

“Don’t forget who Ms. Thompson is.” Steven smirked, finding his question silly.

Henry drooped his shoulders in despair,

The heiress of the KS Group was blessed with wealth and resources. There was nowhere Xena could run.

The enemy was far too powerful.

“You’ve worked for KS World for ten years, Henry. You were dedicated to the company, planning many high-value events. You’re a talented man. I was going to promote you to the chief of the planning department at the end of the year.” Bella sighed in regret.

Henry was taken aback.

“You threw your future away because of so-called love, and you’re facing charges. Do you think it’s worth it?”

“Yes! I love her. I’m willing to do anything for her.”

Henry’s eyes turned menacing as he jolted forward.

Bella remained composed.

Startled, Steven jumped out to shield Bella.

“Bella Thompson! Don’t pretend to be the good guy here!”

Henry looked Bella dead in the eye, seeking justice for his lover. “I don’t need your promotion. Everything I did was to help Xena get her revenge! Xena’s dad is in jail because of you! You destroyed Xena’s life! You God-forsaken capitalist! You got off easy by losing one deal. The way I see it, you deserve to die!”

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Henry lashed out at Bella as if she had killed his mother.

Steven turned red, but Bella did not take the remarks to heart. She curled her lips and said with a smile, “Tsk. Interesting.”

“What did you say?” Henry became flustered.

“I meant to say, Xena is interesting.” Bella took another piece of chocolate.

Steven smiled dotingly to himself when he noticed they were running low on sweets.

“You have only known Xena for two months, but she has you wrapped around her little finger. You are willing to risk your future and fight against the rich and powerful for her.

“Tsk. Tsk. I should learn from Ms. Gordon.”

“You have no right to speak ill of Xena! You’re the vile w who thinks you own everybody because you have money. Xena w have her family to lean on if it were not for you. You ruined he

Henry shouted in an outburst. “You people with money are the b of society!”

Steven did not get it. Bella could just turn Henry in to the police instead of wasting her breath with the hopeless romantic..

“I don’t mind you ripping into me. It’s not like I can stop you. My father survived the criticism and more than one assassination because he has power and money.”

Bella’s eyes were cold. “But you gave my family bad business, so don’t blame me for going after you. I’ve always been the type to reward those who are loyal to me. Nothing good ever happens to those

who go against me.”

Fear washed over Henry as he shuddered.

Bella’s presence made his hair stand

“I know you want to make sense of the whole thing, so I’ll tell you.

Xena was never in love with you. She only used you because you work for KS Group.”

“Shut up! Shut up! Don’t try to tear us apart!”

With Bella's words getting to him, Henry screamed like an animal. "I did everything to help with Xena's revenge plan! Don't try to throw mud on her! Don't try to frame her!"

Bella looked at him indifferently and ordered Steven to turn on the TV.

Lewd photos appeared on the screen.

Those were lewd photos of the director of "Headlines" and Xena, who was Henry's alleged girlfriend.

Steven was shocked.

Although he had looked into Xena, that was not the information he provided to Bella.

"That can't be true. It isn't! Those photos must be edited. They are not real!"

Henry hugged his head in agony as he stared at the woman smiling coyly in a middle-aged bespectacled man's arms. The fact that she was not forced into it broke Henry's heart.

Bella remained composed. The photos left little to the imagination. compared to Rosalind's.

Gagging at the photos, Steven looked away.

"Their hotel stays date back to a year ago. If you don't believe me, I can show you videos of their dates. Care to watch?"

"No!"

Henry cried in pain and fell to the ground with a thud.

“W-Where did you get these, Ms. Bella?” Steven whispered in her ear.

Bella kept a blank face. “I’ll tell you later.”

“Why... Why did she do this to me...” As tears streamed down his face Henry simply could not get over it.

“The information you provided her helped with her revenge, and she could get a little something out of it too.” Steven looked askance at Henry.

“A little something?”

“You were used by Xena. Someone else bribed her to do it too.”

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Tilting her head, Bella propped her arm against her cheek and said with a smile, “How else did you think she was able to befriend you so quickly? She somehow knew the loophole in the contract. Do you think she will be able to plan that without anybody’s help?”

Henry burst into tears, feeling sorry for himself.

He did not regret ruining his career. He hated himself for thinking Xena was the one when she had played him all the while.

“Ms. Thompson... I’ll tell you everything I know.”

Faced with Bella’s relentless questioning, Henry spilled the beans on Xena’s instructions to steal the trade secrets.

Steven took notes on the side.

Henry was taken into custody, but his arrest was not mad

As the secretary and legal consultant of KS World Hotel, Steve charges against Henry for stealing trade secrets.

With the pawn apprehended, it was time to handle the larger net behind the operation.

Bella looked at her neat desk and sighed. "He's a thief with manners. should thank him for tidying up my desk after looking around."

Steven replied, "Ms. Bella, you have not told me-

"I got the photos from Justin."

Steven stared at her calm face in surprise. "Justin gave them to you? He is KS Group's competitor. Why would he do that?"

"Maybe he's mad that Shannon and Bethany have taken away his project. He just wants to get back at Bethany through me."

Bella's mind wandered back to the night Justin dried her hair, and her heart fluttered. She sneered. "I'd rather believe that ghosts exist than believe this man wants the best for me. He sent me an anonymous email so as not to expose himself. Pft! Did he think I wouldn't know it was him by going anonymous?"

She was not called the "Hacking Princess" for nothing.

"Now that we have taken care of the mole on the team, how are you planning to deal with Xena Gordon?"

Steven looked worried. "Even with Henry's testimony, we can't file a charge against Xena without concrete proof."

“I’m not filing a charge against her since the law is used against criminals, not bitches.”

Bella narrowed her eyes dangerously at the naked couple on the screen. “Send these photos to the director’s wife.”

“As far as I know, his wife is a black belt in taekwondo, Ms. Bella. Steven appeared intrigued.

“Well, it’s time to work those muscles. She’s got a free partner to spar with now.”

Bella reached into Steven’s pocket to fish for more chocolate. “I sorted her father out, so I’ll leave someone else to deal with her.

Otherwise, I would be the evil capitalist in soap operas.”

Steven put his hand over his pocket, pinning her naughty hand down against the fabric. “Don’t eat too many sweets, Ms. Bella. You might get a toothache

That night, Justin was not in a hurry to head back to Tideview Manor after work. He sat behind his desk in the office, waiting for an update from Ian.

Finally, Ian returned in joy.

“Mr. Salvaor, the young madam has caught the mole in her company. He has been taken into custody.”

“I see,” Justin responded, feeling at ease at last.

“I wonder if the young madam was able to use the stuff you sent her.”

“It’s okay if the information wasn’t of use to her.”

He hid his emotions behind his eyes at the thought of the cheeky girl. "I only provided her with something that was nice to have.

"I believe she can handle things on her own even without my intel."

He had always underestimated his ex-wife.

Justin once thought that Bella was a boring and ignorant housewife who could do nothing but cook.

He now realizes how blind and foolish he was before.