

## Heiress 421

### Chapter 421

It was a past Justin could not bear to look back on.

With his internal phone ringing. Justin took the call via loudspeaker What is it?"

"Mr. Salvador, Ms. Thompson's secretary wants to see you. He doesn't have an appointment. Should I tell him to go?"

Ian rolled his eyes upon learning Steven was here. They were sworn enemies.

"Tell him to come in," Justin said aloofly..

It was a challenge to score a meeting with the president of Salvador Corporation.

However, Steven was one of Bella's employees, so Justin was happy. to give him the green light.

Minutes later, Steven stepped foot in the office with a stern look.

"Ms. Bella asked me to hand you this, Mr. Salvador."

While talking, Steven put a white box down on Justin's desk.

"What is it?" The man stared at the box without looking up.

"A bomb," Steven replied coldly.

Justin pursed his lips.

“Hey, do you think you’re funny?”

Ian could not stand Bella’s lapdog. He said angrily, “If it was a bomb, you wouldn’t have gotten past Salvador Corporation’s security.”

Steven’s words dripped with sarcasm. “Why bother asking then, Mr.

Salvador? It’s nothing dangerous. Just accept the gift from Ms. Bella.”

Ian gritted his teeth and kept his thoughts to himself. ‘His decent clothes can’t cover the stank of his mouth.”

With pursed lips, Justin opened the box curiously.

It was nothing dangerous, of course. There was a cream cake in the shape of a dog, and it was oddly adorable.

He curled his lips.

“Did Bella make this?” Glee hid behind his composed eyes.

“Ha! Dream on. Ms. Bella instructed me to buy the cake for you.”

Steven said tauntingly with a smile, “Do you think you deserve to enjoy Ms. Bella’s cooking?”

Justin was speechless. His jawline was tense.

“What’s that supposed to mean anyway? Ms. Thompson has cooked. for Mr. Salvador before. If Mr. Salvador didn’t deserve it, why would she endure it for three years?” Ian snapped back.

Steven looked at Justin in disdain. "Anna Brown would even feed dogs, but Ms. Bella won't."

Livid, Ian was ready to pull a punch. "Take that back!"

"Enough, Ian."

Justin stopped him and asked solemnly, "Why did Bella give this to me?"

"Ms. Bella sent me to tell you that she has received the stuff that you delivered anonymously. This is her returning the favor."

Justin was dumbfounded. "So she knew? That was quick."

"She's sending you a reminder not to treat her like a fool. She is intelligent and needs no dogged advice."

Without saying goodbye, Steven turned and walked out of the office.

"Dogged advice? I hope she's not talking about you."

There was no need for Ian to say it out loud.

As Justin grew grimacing, Ian turned pale and backed up to the corner helplessly.

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As night fell in a hotel room, Xena had sacrificed her body for the sake of her career time and again, hoping to secure the position as chief of the news department.

The door to the room burst open.

“Ah!”

Xena shrieked and rolled off the old man to hide under the sheets.

Timothy, the director of “Headlines”, got out of bed in a fluster to put some clothes on. He was stunned with fear the moment he looked up.

“H-Honey?”

“So she’s the whore, Timothy?”

Timothy’s wife, Stacey, stared scornfully at Xena. Standing tall at 1.75 meters, Stacey was more burly than ordinary women.

She took her jacket off and showed Xena her muscular arms. “Hmph!

I thought you would pick a pretty girl. What do you find attractive. about her?”

Stacey then bolted over and pulled Xena out of the covers by her hair.

She slapped Xena multiple times until she bled.

It felt great for Stacey to take her anger out on Xena.

“Ah! Timothy! Help me! Save me!” Xena cried in pain.

Timothy did not want to get involved in the fight. Instead, he shivered in a corner:

Stacey's assistant entered the room with two buff men.

"Come one, come all. Look at the woman who was shameless enough to seduce my boss' husband! My boss caught them in the act. Don't miss it."

The assistant raised her phone to take photos of the couple and live-streamed the whole thing.

Timothy and Xena were dumbfounded.

"Kneel now, Timothy!"

Stacey yelled angrily, and Timothy obeyed her order right away.

"Your investment went wrong because of your bad decision back then. My family provided you with the funds to rebuild your career that you now enjoy."

Stacey grimaced resentfully and kicked her husband in the face. The comments were rolling on the livestream as the public cheered her on.

"Now that you're successful, you cheat on me with another woman. You're nothing without me."

"I'm nothing. I am nothing..." Timothy criticized himself, dropping the ego he had as a superior.

Xena covered her face and kneeled before Stacey in tears. She had no idea how her relationship with her boss got out.

They had been secretly dating for nearly two years. Why were they suddenly caught now?

The two bodyguards took turns beating Timothy up while Stacey had a go at Xena. Xena lost one of her front teeth.

Of course, the assistant was sensible enough to turn off the live stream when that happened.

In the end, Timothy, beaten black and blue, was escorted out of the room without time to get dressed.

Xena curled up in a corner, her face filled with bleeding scratches and her hair a draping mess. She was on the verge of an emotional breakdown.

“Are you confused about how I found out about you and Tim, whore?”

Stacey looked down on her in contempt. “Hmph! You had it coming. Think about what you did and who you crossed.” She spat at Xena before storming off.

Silence befell the room.

Xena trembled as she tried to remember what she had been up to and who she had crossed lately.

A name suddenly came to mind.

“Bella Thompson... Was it Bella?!”

Her phone on the bedside table vibrated a couple of times and stopped.

Xena crawled to grab her phone. She tapped on the new email. It was a voice recording.

After a brief hesitation, she tapped on the file to listen.

It was Henry’s confession about how she seduced and egged him to steal the KS World Hotel’s wedding planning proposal.

Clang!

Chapter 423

Xena dropped her phone.

Feeling weak in the knees, she sank to the ground. Her world had just crumbled.

Late at night, Bethany took a lovely bath and went through her skincare routine in front of her dressing table.

Ever since Ryan gave her an ultimatum, Bethany could not shake off the apprehension. Heck, she could not even sleep well at night.

She thought, 'What was good about the idiot anyway? Why did Bella stand up for Carrie? Why did Ryan have her back?'

"That fake bitch," Bethany muttered.

Bethany grabbed a lipstick and scribbled Carrie's name on the mirror before crossing it out furiously. "I don't have time for you now. Just you wait. Once I become the general manager of the Salvador Hotel-"

Her phone rang.

Seeing that it was Zoe, Bethany scowled in disdain and put on a fake smile. "Oh, Zoe. What's up? Why are you calling at this hour?"

"Shit has hit the fan!"

Zoe sounded serious as she spoke in hushed tones. "I just received word that Bella caught the mole on the planning team. The police. have taken him into custody."

“What? How did that happen?”

Bethany cried, feeling uneasy. “Uh... What about Xena?”

“Don’t you know Xena and her boss were caught in bed on a livestream tonight? The guy’s wife caught him in the act and made. them viral online. They didn’t even have time to get dressed. Talk about embarrassment.”

Bethany’s mind went blank.

Her world shattered in the span of a bath.

“Delete all your communications with Xena before the police track you down,” Zoe said glumly.

“G-Got it.”

Another call came in, and it was from Bethany’s secretary.

“Hang on, Zoe. I need to take this call.”

She put Zoe on hold to take the call from her secretary. “What’s the situation with Xena?”

“It’s bad, Ms. Bethany.”

The secretary responded anxiously, “Ms. Gordon was in a car crash. near Cielrio Road. She’s unresponsive and fighting for her life as we speak.”

“Fuck. That’s good news.” Bethany rejoiced over the news.

“Huh?” The secretary was confused,



“Bella caught the mole, so it’s only a matter of time before she traces it back to Xena and us. Xena’s accident couldn’t have come at a better time. That was a close call.”

Bethany’s eyes flickered dangerously. “Hmph! The woman has done her part by ruining Bella’s partnership with Ada, so it’s time for her curtain call. She should rest at the hospital and stay out of trouble.”

Bella found out about Xena’s car accident right away.

She was picking out wine from the wine cellar Asher had built for her. She planned to enjoy a nice wine before bed.

“I heard that Xena got into an accident because she spaced out. I guess the livestream of her sleeping with the boss did a number on her.” Steven held the ladder steady for Bella.

“Well, she did it to herself. She’s a beautiful woman. Why did she sell herself out?” Bella was aloof about the matter.

“Stacey didn’t hold back, for sure.” Steven clicked his tongue.

“I guess it sends a message out to all the other women out there n to get involved with a married man.”

Bella’s marriage lay in ruins when Rosalind took her husband.

Although Justin felt nothing for Bella in the three years of marriage, there was no reason for Rosalind to trample on Bella’s dignity and come in between the husband and wife.

“Now that the minor players are down, should we focus on the headliner, Ms. Bella?” Steven looked deep into her eyes.

“Decant the bottle of Lafite, Steve.” Furrowing her brows, Bella turned away with her phone.

Steven felt sad because he knew Bella wanted him to give her space.

“I know what you’re thinking, Steve. I hate Justin due to our failed marriage, but we’re not enemies.”

With a smile, Bella patted his shoulder understandingly. “I’m bound to run into him if I want to set up base in Savrow and expand KS Group. I’m just trying to be adaptable.”

“But Ms. Bella-”

“What’s there to fear? Are you scared that he’s going to take advantage of me? Drew will take him out before Ash has a chance to if he tries anything.” Bella scoffed offhandedly.

Steven thought, ‘No, that’s not it. I love and honor you with all my heart. I’m not scared to put my life on the line for you. The only thing I fear is that you’ll fall in love with Justin again. I can’t bear to see you go down that road again.’

He sighed in dejection and left with the red wine in hand.

The phone in Bella’s palm vibrated persistently, which was very much like Justin’s stubbornness.

“What can I do for you, Mr. Salvador?” Bella took the call, her voice aloof as always.

“Thank you for your cake. It was delicious.”

Bella’s breath became shallow, and her lashes cast a shadow below her eyes.

The night was silent.

Justin's husky voice was alluring.

In the past, she had enjoyed calling him on the phone to hear his voice. Despite his indifference, she would roll around in bed excitedly.

Yet now, she felt nothing.

She prided herself on having great discipline and being able to kick any addiction, including love.

"You're welcome. I hope the cake serves as a good reminder to you to keep your advice to yourself and mind your own business." Bella took a deep breath, her eyes chilling.

"I don't think I was interfering."

Justin sounded solemn. "Your business is my business too."

Bella jeered. "I guess you can say that. You need me to take Bethany down a notch. If Bethany succeeds and becomes the general manager of the Salvador Hotel, your stepmother might be at it again, and you could find yourself in a predicament."

Justin scowled.

Before, when Bella was still "Anna Brown", she had put him before anything else, tending to him with great care.

Now, Bella hurt him with cutting remarks and only talked about plots and strategies..

However, he could not forget and move on from the woman who made his heart bleed.

It did not cost him anything to put his ego aside.

“Bella, do you think I care about Shannon and Bethany? They can’t start anything on my watch. Else, I wouldn’t have been president for many years.”

Justin paused for a moment, clearly with more on his mind, but he hesitated.

Bella clenched her fists, her knuckles popping. “I’d suggest you stay. out of my business, Justin. From an ex to an ex, this is my last advice to you. I can be ruthless when I get angry. Things might get messy, and innocents could get involved. You have been warned about getting caught in the crossfire, okay?”

“Don’t let anything stop you from doing what you want to.

Justin’s voice danced around her ear. “I can’t help you much, but one will stand against you with me at the helm of Salvador Corporation.”

Chapter 425

Bella furrowed her brows. It felt like she chewed on a sugar-coated lie, and the sweetly cloaked monstrosity was just awful to swallow.

The air had gone quiet.

The pair said nothing.

Moments later, Justin cleared his throat and ended the conversation abruptly. “I guess that is all. Goodnight.”

“Hey, you-”

The call ended before Bella could finish talking.

“What the hell was that?” Bella stared at the dimmed screen in a daze and shook her head.

Meanwhile, Justin realized after the call that his palms were clammy, his throat was dry, and his heart was thumping out of his chest.

Closing his eyes, he drew a deep breath and murmured, “The ones who walk away aren’t here to stay, but the ones who mess with my head? Heck, that’s a whole ‘nother set of worries.”

Xena fell into a coma after the horrible car crash.

Bethany learned from the doctor that the chances of Xena ever regaining consciousness were slim to none.

God was on her side.

Otherwise, Bethany would have trouble covering her tracks for bribing Xena to get details on the KS World Hotel’s contract.

Even with that taken care of, Bethany did not make any progress with Ada.

Ada made it clear that she would not sign with the Salvador Hotel unless Justin was involved. Besides, Ada’s team had been looking at other hotels, so she was not limiting her choice to the Salvador Hotel and KS World.

That afternoon, Bethany went to the Hoffmans’ residence.

In contrast to Bethany’s anxiety, Zoe remained composed. With a steaming cup in hand, she settled in for a relaxing afternoon tea.

“What’s your plan for sealing the deal with Ada?”

“The woman demanded Salvador Corporation and KS Group sear for the finest gem before. Justin has been trying to seek help fro Alexa, but he didn’t manage to secure one of her pieces despite hi trip abroad.”

Zoe’s eyes flickered.

“For that reason, Bella managed to win Ada over with a brooch during the welcoming party.”

Bethany stamped her foot. “Damn it, I’m fuming just thinking about it. If only I owned one of Alexa’s jewelry pieces. That would save me all the trouble.

“You do. What makes you think you don’t own one?” Zoe made an

Intriguing comment.

Bethany was stunned. “What do you mean, Zoe? Did you manage to get your hands on Alexa’s jewelry pieces?”

“As far as I know, Alexa stays out of the limelight. She never showed her face in public before, so no one knew whether she was alive. No. one had actually seen her masterpiece before.

“Why don’t you get a copy and give one to Ada?” Zoe spoke nonchalantly.

“What? You expect me to give Ada a knockoff?”

Bethany’s eyes widened in surprise. “I would be disgraced when found out.”

“Tsk. How would you be discovered? It’s hard to determine the authenticity of a painting at an auction, much less a gemstone. No one could tell it was a fake except Alexa.”

Zoe leaned forward and whispered, “Besides, I knew a jewelry designer when I was studying in Inalia. You might not believe it, but he was an apprentice to Alexa. I can get him to copy one of Alexa’s pieces for you so that you have something for Ada. I’m sure the woman would be glad to collaborate with you after that.”

Bethany was skeptical.

Nevertheless, she did not have much time left. At this point, she had to throw the dice and fake it until she made it.

## Chapter 426

With Celeste’s birthday around the corner, Bella dove into her white-collar job during the day and locked herself in the room at night to make a birthday gift for Celeste.

She crafted a ring made of 18K gold, aquamarine, and diamonds.

The craftsmanship was not too complex for a top-notch jewelry designer like her, but the aquamarine was huge and high in purity. It was exceptional in quality, and the value rivaled the most precious stones.

Bella never scrimped on gifts for family. She dedicated a lot of time and effort to gifting.

In the past, Justin had been a recipient of her gifts.

However, the man had never given a shit about her kind gestures.

Her phone on the table showed a video call request. Sliva, the chief of her jewelry studio, was calling.

“You must have an emergency if you’re calling at this hour,” Bella said while grinding the gemstone.

“Do you remember Tyler, Alexa?” Sliva asked.

“I do. He was my apprentice for three years and started afresh elsewhere. He’s a talented young man with an eye for craftsmanship. What’s up?”

“Someone contacted him two days ago, requesting that he imitate your jewelry piece. Ha! Isn’t that infuriating? You can expect knockoffs of your work everywhere if you get yourself out in the market.”

Bella did not mind it at all. Without stopping the task at hand, Bella said cheerfully, “It’s nothing to be angry about. I’m amazing. When people can’t acquire my pieces, they have to buy fakes for vanity’s

sake.”

“Tyler couldn’t get in touch with you, so he came to me. He doesn’t want to accept the job. It’s not like he dares to, either. Counterfeits are an insult to the designer. He will be insulting you by copying your work.”

Sliva burned with injustice for Bella.

Bella was curious. “Just a question. Who asked him to forge my work? It must take a lot of resources and connections to find out that he was my apprentice.”

“I don’t know how Tyler met the person. He said that the girl was an heiress from Savrow. I believe she’s a Hoffman.”

Bella was speechless.

“That reminds me. She’s also a student of Christian, the famous pianist.”

Bella blinked wittily.



Oh, so that was what happened.

Since Bethany and Zoe were asking for it, Bella did not mind giving it to them.

“Sliva, tell Tyler that I want him to accept the order from Ms. Hoffman.” Bella’s eyes glistened with cheekiness.

“Huh? Why?” Sliva was confused.

“He better take the job and make it look like my work. Don’t embarrass me.”

Five days later, Justin received news the moment he got off of a corporate meeting.

Ada, who had not budged so far, just said yes.

“What’s going on?” Hiding his emotions behind his eyes, Justin stood behind a window. His presence was intimidating.

Ian said anxiously, “I received word that Ms. Bethany acquired an Alexa-designed jewelry piece and gave it to Ada. That’s the thing that sealed the deal.”

Justin glanced indifferently at him. “Ha. It must be a fake.”

“Um... I don’t know about that, but Ada is a jewelry collector. She should be able to determine the authenticity.”

Ian’s face fell. “Sigh. If Ms. Bethany and Ada put the agreement in writing, the Salvador Hotel will belong to that old witch and Bethany! They are probably going to drain all the resources out of the hotel!”

“Bella should know about this by now,” Justin murmured under his breath, his eyes downcast.

Now that Bethany had the deal in the bag, Justin would find himself in a storm of power struggles and trouble more than Bella.

Still, Bella's situation consumed Justin, while his own troubles were the least of his worries.

Ian sighed. "I have not heard much from the young madam in the last few days. She might have given up."

"Given up? That's impossible."

Justin's eyes were half closed as restlessness washed over him.

Others might have given up by now, but Bella is not a quitter. She's probably lying low. I'm sure she has a plan up her sleeve."

Bethany had nothing on his witty wife.

Correction. It should be his ex-wife now.

Somehow, Justin felt his chest ache.

Chapter 427

That night, the Salvadors gathered for once and headed to Crescent

Bay to have their monthly dinner with Nigel.

They seemed like one big family. Even Bethany poured Carrie a drink. and urged her to eat for a change. It was as if they were close sisters.

Carrie sat next to Justin, burying her head in her food without joining in the conversation.

Although Carrie was not social, she had her pride.

She did not accept the drink from Bethany or respond to her.

“Dad, Shannon and I have been talking, and we have come to a decision, so we wanted to share with you and get your take on the matter.” Gregory sat upright, displaying excellent table manners as expected of a gentleman.

“If you have already made up your mind, why bother telling me?”

Nigel kept his attention on his food “Can’t your wife sort it out? She has always been your advisor, and that’s how you have gotten by over the years.”

Shannon forced a smile as malice alighted in her eyes.

Every month, Shannon dreaded the day she was to have dinner with the old man, who was filled with cynical comments. She would always lose sleep the night before.

She counted the days until the old man would meet his fate.

Gregory cleared his throat with a frown and clutched Shannon’s hand under the table. “Bethany is at the right age to marry. I think we should think about her marriage.”

Bethany pursed her lips, her cheeks rosy.

“Marriage?”

Nigel put down his cutlery and furrowed his brows. "Bethany is only 25. She's too young to consider marriage. I want my granddaughters. to spend more time with me for another two years before they get married. What's the rush anyway?"

Gregory was speechless.

"Besides, our princesses aren't short of suitors. I'm sure men will be all over them even when they are still single at 52."

Suddenly, Nigel looked at Gregory skeptically. "Don't tell me that the company is in financial trouble, and you need to procure help for the business through a marriage alliance."

"Don't get the wrong idea, Dad. The company is fine." Shannon stood up for her husband with a fake smile.

"Let me make this clear, Gregory. I forbid you from selling your daughter to satisfy your vanity. I don't care if Salvador Corporation loses its funds tomorrow or is about to go bankrupt, but the girls can't marry for business. Do you hear me?"

"Oh, Grandpa. You have a wild imagination."

Bethany held Nigel's arm and swung it coyly. "Mom and Dad have my best interests at heart. It has nothing to do with business. I feel that I'm ready for marriage."

"Are you ready for marriage, Bethany?" Nigel was taken aback. Bethany nodded shyly.

The girls were growing up so fast.

"You got the wrong idea, Dad. We didn't force Bethany. Bethany wants to settle down because she has her eye on a man." Shannon looked at her daughter gleefully.

Nigel replied, "Oh? And who is the guy?"

“You know who he is.”

Gregory added with a smile, “It’s Ryan, Dad.”

Justin chewed slowly. Except for a storm behind his eyes, he showed. no emotion.

“Ryan? As in Ryan Hoffman?” With his eyes bulging, Nigel had to be sure.

Shannon responded, “That’s right. It’s Ryan Hoffman.”

Clang.

A noise caught everybody’s attention.

Distracted, Carrie dropped her cutlery.

The behavior was seen as rude in such a privileged and etiquette- following family as the Salvadors.

“I-I’m sorry.”

White in the face, Carrie tried to pick up the cutlery in a fluster, but Justin bent over and grabbed it for her.

“Don’t worry about it. Just get a new set.” Justin smiled tenderly at Carrie to ease her embarrassment.

“T-Thank you, Justin,” Carrie whispered, hanging her head low.

Bethany narrowed her eyes dangerously at Carrie with a smirk.

## Chapter 428

“Carrie, how can you drop your cutlery at dinner with Grandpa? Where are your manners?” Shannon lectured Carrie with a long face.

“That’s enough. It’s just cutlery. Must you yell at the child?”

Nigel had a problem with Shannon because Carrie was his precious granddaughter.

Shannon gripped her fingers under the table. She could be blamed for breathing in the presence of the old man.

“Grandpa, Dad, Mom, I’m finished with dinner.”

With her cheeks burning in shame, Carrie kept her head down and bit her lips as she left the dinner table in a hurry.

Justin stared in contemplation at his sister’s receding figure while falling into thought.

Bethany was delighted to get even with Carrie.

‘You should stay an invisible dummy, Carrie. You didn’t have to endure the humiliation. But that’s what you get for trying to get with my man. Open your eyes and see who is Mom’s and Dad’s favorite and who deserves to stand next to Ryan!’

“Why Ryan?”

Nigel blinked and asked in bewilderment, “I thought Ryan was into Anna.”

Gregory, Shannon, and Bethany made a face.

They were speechless.

Justin was taking a sip of his drink when his grandfather's remark made him choke.

The man clutched the glass, his face grimacing.

"Why would Ryan be interested in Bella, Grandpa?" Bethany turned flushed with rage.

"Doesn't he like Anna? I might be 80, but I can read the room. Ryan was all over Anna at my birthday celebration. He couldn't stay away from Anna. I'm sure he's the type to be loyal to his wife."

While talking, Nigel side-eyed Justin, who scowled. "Since Ryan was interested, I thought about setting Anna and him up since the Hoffmans are in the same social class as Anna's family. Most importantly, Ryan is good to Anna. He cares about her wholeheartedly. I'm sure he can give Anna a better life if they end up together."

'A better life? As if Ryan and Bella would have a better life together.'

Justin thought, his fingers clenched so hard that he could crush the glass he was holding.

Nigel never mentioned Justin's name, but Justin could tell that the comments were directed at him.

Ryan played the field and experienced his first intimacy at the age of 16. He could not even keep his pants on, yet Nigel had the nerve to set Ryan and Bella up together. Talk about reading the room.

Justin had nothing to say.

"Am I your granddaughter, or is Bella your granddaughter, Grandpa?"

Bethany was so angry she could cry. "Ryan loves me, not her. You should be paying attention to me. Why would you pair Ryan with her?"

"You like Ryan, but are the feelings mutual on his part?" Nigel looked at her seriously and asked.

"I... I..." Bethany was at a loss for words.

"I saw how Ryan acted around you at the birthday celebration. You didn't even say a word to each other. Ryan didn't even look at you."

Consumed by rage and embarrassment, Bethany gritted her teeth.

However, Nigel was right. She could not refute the truth.

"We don't need our girls to marry for business, but they can't be throwing themselves at men. You can't force things to happen, or they might turn out badly."

Nigel was not optimistic about the marriage. He shook his head. "Besides, you and Ryan are two very different people. Ryan is hot-tempered. I can imagine the heated arguments when you marry him."

"Grandpa!" Bethany teared up.

"What do you expect Bethany to answer, Dad? She's a girl. Have some consideration for her feelings."

Coming to his daughter's rescue, Gregory said with a smile, "Ryan feels something for Bethany. I know that because he came to the house the other day to have a word with Bethany. Shannon and I were home, so we saw him."

As Bethany's mind wandered back to what Ryan said, her heart sank.



She knew that Ryan could not stand her, but so what?

Bethany believed she could marry Ryan once she got her whole family in on it. With time, Ryan was bound to fall in love with her and be captivated by her charm.

Chapter 429

“Oh? Really?” Nigel stroked his chin.

“Yes.”

Shannon took to Bethany’s defense. “A gentleman like Ryan wouldn’t visit a lady at her house without reason. He must have felt something for Bethany since he went to her. Things might have been different then, but they have changed now. Besides, you might be meaning to set Ms. Thompson and Ryan up, but the last I checked, Ms. Thompson has moved on with another man.”

Justin shot a chilling look at Shannon.

With his lips pressed together, he swallowed hard as if to stop his brewing emotions.

Surprised, Nigel asked, “Anna has a boyfriend? Who?”

“The youngest son of Iverson Group’s chairman. His name is Christopher Iverson,” Shannon replied.

She got her intel from Rosalind.

Bethany later mentioned that Bella kept in touch with Christopher.

Shannon did not care whether it was true, but her priority was to stop the old man from playing matchmaker.

“Bella and Christopher aren’t together.”

Unable to take it anymore, Justin slammed the glass on the table with a thud. He looked menacing.

“I heard that they had been on a date more than once. They would take a stroll at the rose garden and visit the music theater-”

“I said, they are not together.”

His rage-fueled gaze fixated on Shannon. “I hope you don’t spread rumors before verifying the information.

“Bella is a lady, the heiress of KS Group, and the general manager of the KS World Hotel. Your unfounded theory can damage her reputation.”

Left without a comeback, Shannon contorted her face with fury,

“Justin! Is that how you talk to your elders? What do you-”

Before Gregroy could finish, Justin rose to his feet aggressively. “I’m finished with dinner. Enjoy your food.”.

Nigel narrowed his eyes as Justin stormed off.

Annoyed, Justin loosened his tie and wandered off to the garden get some fresh air.

He had been on pins and needles ever since Nigel talked about setting Ryan and Bella up.

Justin could barely breathe when Shannon said Bella was with

Christopher. At that rate, the suffocation would have taken Justin first.

Furrowing his brows, Justin fished out a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and gripped one between his lips.

Anxiety and anger washed over Justin as reality began to set in. He pulled out his phone and gave Ryan a call.

“To what do I owe this call, Justin?”

Ryan sounded listless and pouty. “You haven’t visited me since I had food poisoning. Gasp! Don’t tell me you have another man.”

“I got news for you.”

Justin drew a deep breath. “Gregory and Shannon intend to marry Bethany to you.”

On the other end of the line, Ryan jolted up and ran his mouth. “What the hell?! You can keep the drama in your family. Why did you have to get me involved? As if the drama isn’t big enough.”

Justin narrowed his eyes. “Do you care who you marry? Didn’t you say that it doesn’t matter who you marry? She’s just going to be eye candy.”

“Yes, I said that, but-”

“What’s wrong with marrying Bethany? She likes you, and you won’t go wrong by strengthening your business alliance with the Salvador Corporation through marriage.”

“I mean, you know the type of person Bethany is, bro. Don’t try to play Cupid and throw me to my misery.”

“Well, misery loves company. She can’t outsmart you anyway.” Justin took a puff of the cigarette.

Ryan did not deserve Bella..

Christopher was out of the question too.

Justin gnashed his teeth in resentment.

He longed to constantly be with Bella, shielding her from all potential rivals.

Chapter 430

The fake Alexa jewelry necklace Bethany acquired from Zoe worked wonders.

Bethany braced herself, apprehensive about being discovered when presenting the necklace to Ada as a gift.

Nevertheless, Bethany had figured out a backup plan if she were discovered. She could save her ass by saying that she was scammed by a friend because of her limited knowledge of jewelry.

Alexa’s apprentice must have fine-tuned his craftsmanship because Ada did not suspect that the necklace was a copy. Ada happily wore the necklace right away, reluctant to take it off.

In the end, Ada signed the contract with Bethany.

That was not the only thing. With Shannon putting in the good word about Bethany, Gregory finally pulled her to the core of the business and promoted her to higher management. She could join the meeting with the senior executives at last.

That night, Shannon and Bethany enjoyed a celebratory drink on the balcony.

“Your dad will hand over the management of the hotel to you after Ada’s wedding. Make an impactful first impression, my dear. In time, you will be on the board of directors, and that’s when you and I will get rid of Justin.”

Shannon held her daughter, her eyes sparkling as if bearing glimmering hope. “I can’t count on your sister, but my future is in your Granter 19 hands.”

“Don’t worry, Mom. Once I make it to the top, I will seize control from Justin. The Salvador Group will be ours.”

Beaming with pride, Bethany clinked glasses with Shannon.

The butler’s voice came from the door.

“Madam Shannon, Ms. Bethany, we have received an invitation.”

The mother and daughter exchanged glances before walking out of the balcony.

Bethany asked, “Who is the invitation from?”

“A Mr. Lovett, the secretary of KS World Hotel’s general manager.”

KS World Hotel? Was the invitation from Bella?

“Got it. You’re dismissed.” Shannon took the invitation card and closed the door.

She opened the envelope and pulled out two invites to a charity. jewelry auction.

Shannon pursed her lips, her expression obscure.

“Mom, we haven’t heard anything from Bella in a while. Why did she drop these invites out of the blue? Can it be a trap?” Bethany asked worriedly.

“Ha. We have nothing to be afraid of. Ada has signed the contract. with you, and there’s nothing she can do about it.”

Coincidentally, the TV broadcasted the evening news, and one of the headlines was about the charity jewelry auction.

“The organizer of the event is Mint, Mom!”

Bethany exclaimed, with her finger pointing at the TV. “That’s the iconic fashion magazine. It’s the dream of many celebrities to grace the cover of the magazine. I can’t believe Bella is co-organizing the charity with Mint. That’s unexpected. It’s said on the news that Ada is among the celebrities to attend.”

Bethany assumed that KS World would hit rock bottom after losing Ada, but Bella managed to secure a partnership with Mint. She got her hands on everything.

Jealousy drove Bethany to clench her fist, digging her nails into her palms.

“Hmph. She might be hosting a huge event, but she lost. It’s just. damage control now.”

Shannon gritted her teeth. “We will appear unladylike if we decline the invitation. Nothing is stopping me from going. She doesn’t scare me.

“We can also keep an eye on her, in case she tries something with Ada and ruins things for us.”

Bella enjoyed a nice chat with the editor-in-chief of Mint magazine.

She carried on the conversation in a foreign language with ease.

She changed into tight athletic wear to go kayaking at the back of the villa when Asher dropped by for a visit.

“Ash!”

Bella rushed downstairs excitedly and jumped into Asher’s arms.

The sturdy man wrapped his arms around her. Bella’s fitted outfit hugged her curves, her voluptuous form pressing close to his. There was something sensual about her.