

Heiress 481

Chapter 481

“That’s not for you to worry about.”

As the top defense attorney in the city, Hunter’s success couldn’t solely be attributed to his family’s connections in the legal world. He was equally indebted to his meticulous and ruthless approach to his cases.

Sometimes, he had to resort to the necessary means to win a case and get the charges dropped.

Despite Steven’s pleas, Bella refused to withdraw his mandatory leave.

Bella made it clear that the purpose of the week-long break was not to give him rest. He should use the time to reflect on his attitude and how he would see her.

Following Ada’s multiple requests, Bella, also known as Alexa, caved in and graced Ada with her presence.

Ada no longer carried the pride of an international star in front of Bella. She served Bella drinks and catered to her needs like a fangirl.

Bella had no intention of making things any more difficult for Ada. Sure, Bella was Alexa, but her role as a businesswoman was first and foremost. The hotel’s reputation and profit took precedence over her personal feelings.

So, she agreed to host Ada’s wedding at her hotel.

Ada could not be happier.

That was not the only thing. Ada was open to a generous budget and to be an ambassador for the KS Group’s future products. She would do it without a fee to make up for her previous disrespect.

“Ms. Thompson, what is this?” Staring at the document in front of her, Ada asked in surprise.

Bella sipped on her coffee with poise. “It’s a new planning proposal for your wedding.”

Ada and her agent exchanged glances in shock. “That was quick.”

She completed the proposal at record speed.

“I didn’t prepare the proposal in haste. I had this ready a long time ago.”

Bella put down her coffee mug. “I kept a backup ready, just in case, when I planned the first proposal for you. I thought the backup proposal wouldn’t be needed, but it came in handy after all.”

Ada pressed her lips together as an uneasy feeling washed over her.

“The wedding is around the corner, Ms. Thompson. It will take a lot of work to set up the venue. Do we have enough time?” The agent asked worriedly.

“I know Ms. Ada is a fan of the gothic aesthetic. Are you keen on black roses?” Bella asked with a smile.

“Black roses?” Ada squealed excitedly.

“The venue is still decked out with tons of red roses from the previous planning. We are tight on time to remove all the flowers and start over. It would be easier to switch out the red roses for black Ecuadorian roses.

Ada’s face was flushed with thrill.

She was pleased with Bella's first proposal, but Bella just gave her the wedding of her dreams with her second proposal.

The meaning of black roses was mystery, desire, and possession.

It was a romance unlike any other, with a blend of quirk and charm.

"Black roses? Aren't those more suited for funerals?" The agent asked meekly.

She believed the wedding visuals would rock the online community.

Seeing that it was also the wedding of a celebrity, the wedding would be the talk of the town for days to come.

Bella was a business marvel. She might be in it for profit, but her main objective was to propel the hotel to the international scene.

However, the agent suspected it would come at the cost of exploiting Ada.

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"Am I getting married, or are you getting married? I'm talking business with Ms. Thompson. It is rude of you to butt in."

Ada glared at her agent. "I chose to work with Ms. Thompson because I have the utmost trust in her. I'm glad to accept her suggestions, so keep your thoughts to yourself."

Once Bella and Ada signed a new agreement, Bella entrusted her team to see Ada's party off while she passed the assignment details to her employees before leaving for the day.

She saw Asher's Rolls Royce waiting outside the office entrance. The chauffeur opened the door for her with respect.

"Ash! What brings you here to pick me up?" Bella got into the car and sought Asher's attention by clinging to his neck.

"I heard that you gave Steve a week-long vacation." Asher stroked her head.

"Yeah. He's been tired lately. It's a much-needed rest for him."

"Is that so?"

Asher narrowed his eyes, seeing through her. "Trouble seems to follow you lately, and you need help. Why did you dismiss Steve in a time of need? Did you have a lover's squabble?"

Bella furrowed her brows. "What are you trying to say, Ash? We're not dating. What do you mean by a lover's squabble?"

"Ah, I guess the guy doesn't get to bring home the girl, then."

"What are you talking about, Ash?" Bella's eyes widened.

"Steve's feelings for you are clear to us," Asher said with a faint smile.

"Us?"

"Aunt Mila too. She mentioned it to me a few days ago because she couldn't bring herself to tell you."

Bella was speechless. Everybody was aware of Steven's little crush on her.

As if things were not awkward enough as they were.

“Aunt Mila was worried that Steve’s feelings for you might be an inconvenience to your life since you spend every waking minute together. She doesn’t feel comfortable that you are living with him in the Savrow villa,” Asher said while holding his sister’s hand.

Mila’s observation of Bella’s love life was out of concern because

Bella was like a daughter to Mila.

For all Mila knew, Steven could give in to his primal urges and get handsy with Bella.

“I have faith in Steve’s character. He will never overstep his boundaries, but I have to ask why you gave him a long vacation out of the blue.”

“Honestly speaking, I’m giving Steve a chance to reflect on his actions.”

Bella did not need anything from her brother. Her expression turned solemn. “I have noticed his feelings for me, so I told him to take the week off to get into the right mindset. It’s a wake-up call for him.

“If he can’t move on, I can’t keep him by my side anymore.”

Asher scowled. “That’s harsh. Are you really going to drop him if that happens?”

“I’m doing this for his own good.”

Bella sighed miserably. “A man is not in the cards for me anymore. Things will never happen between us. It will hurt and pain him to work alongside me, knowing his feelings will never be reciprocated. I know the heartbreak of having the one that got away. I don’t want the people I care about to ever go through that. Steve is a nice guy. He shouldn’t be wasting his time with me. He deserves better.”

Feeling for Bella, Asher gave her a big hug.

His phone rang.

Without pushing his sister away, Asher answered the phone with a stern voice, "What is it?"

"Mr. Thompson, Bethany was just released without charge. H Lovett got her out."

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Bethany finally tasted freedom after being held for three days in custody.

Hunter Lovett instructed Gregory to contain the news by all means necessary, but Justin caught wind of it right away.

"How did Bethany get off without charges? Don't you have eyes on

Xena? Did Hunter approach her?" Justin pounded the car window with a menacing look.

"Mr. Salvador, the issue isn't Xena. It's Henry."

Ian was fuming. "Our sources revealed that Hunter met with Henry in secret at the detention center with Gregory's help. I don't know what he said to intimidate Henry, but Henry took all of the blame, so Bethany is cleared of suspicion."

"What else could he say? Hunter likely exploited something personal about him and threatened his family's safety."

The top attorney had no qualms about resorting to underhanded tactics.

Justin grimaced, his clenching fists shaking. "Neil's reputation as a fair judge is ruined by his eldest son."

"Now that Henry has become the scapegoat, Xena might be in-"

A phone call interrupted Ian.

"What is it?"

With furrowed brows, Ian reported back to Justin after ending the call.

"I have bad news, Mr. Salvador. The police have arrested Xena for defamation and falsifying evidence.

That was to be expected.

Xena had it coming.

Still, Justin saw red.

Meanwhile, Bethany cried on the way back to Tideview Manor for her new lease on life.

Shannon and Bethany embraced each other in tears, playing out the loving mother and daughter in front of Gregory and Nigel.

Years ago, Shannon could not act to save her life. Now, her acting was the essence of her being.

"Mom! Dad! You must avenge me. Bella and Zoe screwed me over real bad."

Bethany would not miss a chance to put Bella down in front of Nigel. She ran and fell on her knees before Nigel's wheelchair. "Grandpa, Bella is trying to ruin me. She's manipulative and wicked. I'm lucky

Mr. Lovett got me out, or you won't be seeing your lovely granddaughter again."

Nigel did not know what to feel about Bethany's accusation.

He did not believe that Bella, affectionately known to him as Anna, was what Bethany described her to be. But on the other hand, the police mentioned that Anna had filed charges against Bethany.

Nigel was once again caught between a rock and a hard place.

The last time he was in that position was during Salvador Corporation's rapid development over twenty years ago.

In a rapid bid to dominate the market and expand Salvador Corporation, Nigel's two sons, Gregory and Gary, became embroiled in a bribery scandal involving land acquisition. Ultimately, Gary shouldered the blame entirely due to Nigel's bias towards the eldest, Gregory, and Gregory's ill health. Gary was sentenced to four years in prison.

To Nigel's dismay, Gary died of a heart attack in prison six months into his sentencing.

Nigel mourned the loss of his youngest son, but the death drove

Nigel's wife to despair, and her health succumbed to the weight of her sorrows.

"Grandpa, I told you Bella doesn't mean well. She must have ulterior motives to marry into our family."

Bethany leaned against Nigel, bawling her eyes out. "Bella shows kindness to get something out of you. She probably wants to sc you out of the company shares."

"That's right, Nigel."

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Shannon stirred the pot, making a villain out of Bella. “Bella withheld the fact that she was Wyatt’s daughter right from the start. She hung around you to gain your trust so she could marry Justin. Just think about it. That was what she had been planning all along. We were lucky that Justin did not fall for her and divorced her before any damage was done. If Bella had Justin’s love and your trust, she would have penetrated Salvador Corporation and taken control of the company.”

“Enough. Anna isn’t that type of girl.”

Nigel waved his arm frustratedly. “Besides, I know Wyatt. He may be a flirt, but he’s a gentleman with principles. I refuse to believe that he would raise a daughter of poor character.”

“Dad!”

“Grandpa!”

“And another thing. The Thompsons possess resources and wealth, if not more, comparable to ours. Ms. Thompson would not be throwing away her marriage to marry Justin for some company shares. Hmph! I would expect that tasteless behavior from Rosalind, but Ms. Thompson has it all. She couldn’t possibly and wouldn’t stoop so low to engage in such activities.” Nigel was biased toward Bella to begin with. Faced with Shannon’s exaggeration, Nigel felt obliged to stand up for Bella.

Grimacing in fury, Shannon was tempted to knock over the old bastard’s wheelchair with a kick.

“Either way, Ms. Thompson is hostile toward Salvador Corporation.”

Gregory knew that his daughter was the aggressor, but he would not admit his failed parenting to Nigel. Instead, he stated in defiance, “Even if we have an internal dispute, Bella is in no place to tell us what to do. She has leveraged her family’s influence to restrict us on several occasions. She got Shannon in

trouble the last time, and most recently, she tried to put Bethany behind bars over something trivial. She's clearly waging war against us. Ms. Thompson has changed since returning to her family. She will undoubtedly choose her family's gain over her relationship with you."

Nigel heaved heavily while clutching the arms of his wheelchair.

"Matt, get Anna to see me. I need to hear it from her."

Meanwhile, Justin pulled up on the driveway of Tideview Manor. Ian opened the door for him.

As the man stepped out of the vehicle indifferently, a black Maserati parked next to him.

Hunter, looking sharp in his suit, emerged out of the car.

"What a coincidence, Mr. Salvador."

"Ha. Chairman Salvador must have gotten himself into some shady mess for you to come at this hour, Mr. Lovett. Are you cleaning up after him?" Justin scoffed and sneered.

Hunter responded calmly with a smile, "Chairman Salvador hired me to be Ms. Bethany's defense attorney. I have a responsibility to see my job through to the end. I pride myself on integrity as a professional lawyer. I guess you're not well-versed in the legal field, Mr. Salvador. It's okay. We are in different professions after all."

Narrowing his eyes and pursing his lips, Justin approached Hunter aggressively.

Hunter stepped back with a frown.

He lost the moment he backed away. In the face of the man's intimidation, Hunter surrendered in the battle of wills.

“The legal field is shrouded in shades of gray. Sure, we have many lawyers dedicating themselves to fighting for the poor and underprivileged, but we also have others like you who serve the interests of corporations. You’ll just stop at nothing to get what you want.”

Hunter’s smile froze.

“I have no right to interfere with your personal goal, but here’s a warning to you.”

Justin’s piercing gaze filled Hunter with dread. “You are free to be ruthless and dishonest, but Bella Thompson is off-limits. She’s important to me, so if you do anything to her, I might just return the favor in kind.”

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Justin said his piece before taking strides away.

Hunter stood there, rooted to the ground. The humiliation coursed through his veins.

Born into a family of lawyers and judges, Hunter faced high expectations from his parents and admiration from his brothers. Life came easily to him, and he rose to become an elite among his peers.

Even the industry giants had to humble themselves to get his help.

Hunter had never been so insulted.

Hang on.

Furrowing his brows, Hunter stared at the man’s cocky back.

Hunter wondered about Bella’s relationship with Justin. It was hard to believe Justin, who kept his distance from women, lost his temper because of her.

Bella was Wyatt Thompson's daughter, and Hunter knew as much. A fine woman like Bella would not settle for anything less than perfection for a man.

There was only one possibility: Justin had a crush on Bella, who was way out of his league.

So what if Justin was good-looking?

Justin's mother never married his father before her death. His position as president of Salvador Corporation was a mere handout from his father.

"Ha, Despite your privileged upbringing and prestigious title, you're not the rightful heir, Justin. You are delusional to think you are worthy of Ms. Thompson."

Hunter entered the villa with a menacing look.

The group was surprised to see Hunter coming in right behind Justin.

"This is Hunter Lovett, Dad. Mr. Lovett is a valuable attorney. He played a crucial role in getting Bethany out."

Gregory introduced Hunter to Nigel enthusiastically. "I plan to hire Mr. Lovett as the director of our corporate legal team. What do you think?"

"Hello, Old Master Nigel. I have heard many good things about you.

It's an honor to meet you." Hunter nodded at Nigel courteously with a smile.

"Hunter Lovett... Are you Neil Lovett's eldest son?" Nigel observed him and asked in a serious tone.

“Yes. Neil Lovett is my father.”

Hunter looked proud and happy. “Are you an old friend of my father, Mr. Salvador?”

Justin scowled at Hunter’s interaction with Nigel.

He detested a phony gentleman like Hunter. However, Nigel seemed to know Hunter’s father.

“I know him.”

Nigel looked at Hunter with a pretentious smile. “Your father presided over my youngest son’s, Gary’s, case. He’s a fair judge and sentenced my son to four years in jail.”

Everybody was shocked.

Color washed off Hunter’s complexion, and he could not keep a smile on his face.

With the memories of his dark past sweeping over Gregory, he grimaced.

Justin picked up on Gregory’s subtle change of expression.

“My father is competent at his job, but he’s not a flexible man, Old

Master Nigel. I would like to apologize for his behavior on his behalf.”

Following the turn of events, Hunter assumed Nigel carried a grudge from the past and apologized right away.

“Heh. That’s interesting.”

Nigel raised a brow. "Did your father make a wrong judgment? Why are you apologizing for him?"

"I..." Hunter froze.

"It's only right for a judge to be fair and impartial. Seeing that you apologized on his behalf, are you undermining his authority?"

"I... You got the wrong idea, Old Master Nigel. That's not my intention." Hunter chuckled dryly.

"I have heard about you. You are well known for representing the rich and famous."

Nigel scoffed. "I wouldn't have associated you with your father if you hadn't mentioned you're his son. You are the complete opposite of your father."

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Everyone could tell those words were full of sarcasm!

Was this not a question about Hunter's character?

Justin could not help but smile slightly, while Gregory and Shannon's expressions turned ugly.

"Old Master Nigel!"

Right then, Nigel's secretary, Matt Upton, hurried in and said respectfully, "Ms. Thompson has arrived."

Justin's heart thumped, and his eyes widened.

Everyone looked toward the door in unison with complicated gazes,

Click, click, click.

The sharp and crisp sound of high heels clacking on the floor seemed to strike straight into Justin's heart.

Bella entered this place where she had once resided for three years but the dignified and cold aura that she exuded at the moment was as if this was her first time here.

In that instant, Justin went into a daze.

It felt as if they had not divorced.

"Grandpa Nigel, I'm here!"

Bella smiled brightly and walked over to Nigel without looking elsewhere.

When she passed Justin, she did not linger even a little, as if they were complete strangers to each other.

Justin took a deep breath, his fingers slowly clenching into fists out of sight. His heart was pounding hard even as it sank.

Every time he met his ex-wife after the divorce, it felt like he was undergoing excruciating torture and great upheaval.

"Bella Thompson...!"

Bethany glared at Bella's beautiful face. If Shannon had not been holding her back, Bethany would have pounced on Bella and torn her to pieces by now.

“Oh, Hunt! What a coincidence!”

When Bella passed Hunter, she suddenly stopped and looked at him/ with a smile.

Hunter was taken aback.

The rest were very stunned too.

Hunt? It was such a close address that everyone wondered if Bella and Hunter had an intimate relationship.

“Ms. Thompson, it’s been a while since we met.” Hunter forced a smile, responding with a more distant form of address.

“Indeed. It’s been five or six years since you last visited my dad, hasn’t it? He even mentioned you some time ago. Our families have known each other for a very long time. I remember when I was

young, Uncle Neil often brought you and Steve over to our house to visit. It’s a shame the two of us haven’t really kept in contact in recent years and have lost touch now.”

Bella looked at Gregory Salvador’s shocked face with a smile. “Chairman Salvador, you didn’t know, did you? Uncle Neil and his three sons have always been my family friends. Uncle Neil was even the head of KS Group’s legal department for a while after he retired. It’s just that Uncle Neil keeps a low profile, so not many people know about this.”

Hunter forced himself to keep smiling, but his face was burning.

Bella’s words seemed nonchalant, but every word made a rope that wrapped around his throat!

The last thing he was willing to mention to the public was the fact that his family had once enjoyed the Thompsons' favor. He did not even want to admit to himself that he would not have been able to achieve what he had today without the Thompsons' support.

Hunter wanted to become stronger, expand his influence, and increase his family's status. To do that, he had to get out of the Thompsons' shadow.

"Mr. Lovett, I didn't expect you to be so close to the Thompsons," Gregory said meaningfully.

"My father was indeed KS Group's legal advisor for a time, but he stepped down a long time ago. I haven't had any contact with the Thompsons for many years," Hunter hurriedly said, his words explicitly and implicitly distancing himself from the Thompsons.

"Hunt-no, Mr. Lovett."

Bella narrowed her eyes slightly, her smile gradually growing cold and mocking. "I think you still remember how much hardship your family went through when Uncle Neil retired as a judge. If it weren't for my father's help, it would probably have been very difficult for you to overcome it. My father was

kind to your father back then, and your family benefited a lot from mine. We have never wanted repayment for it. But you still shouldn't work with outsiders to try and trip me up."

Ms. Bella's red lips curled in a cold but beautiful sneer. "Is it part of your lawyer's code of ethics to be ungrateful and to burn the bridge once you've crossed it?"

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Bella's forceful questioning seemed to have ripped off Hunter's veil and labeled him ungrateful.

Bella thought to herself; 'Did you not want to distance yourself from the Thompsons? Alright, then. I'll bring up exactly what you didn't want to be mentioned and expose the thoughts you didn't want to see the light of day for everyone to see!'

Hunter's lips were pressed tightly together, and though they still held the semblance of a smile, his gaze toward Bella was not at all friendly.

In fact, his gaze had turned cold.

Hunter thought, 'This was the woman my brother Steven was so smitten with? A sarcastic, willful, sharp-tongued shrew?! If Steven married a troublesome woman like that, would our family have any more peaceful days in the future? Would it not be chaos?!'

The atmosphere became tense and awkward.

Gregory Salvador felt that Bella Thompson was pretty much the bane of his existence. Every time he saw her, she just had to make trouble.

Hunter's capability as a lawyer was unquestionable. Gregory always wanted to take Hunter under his wing, but he had not known Hunter had such a connection to the Thompsons, which made him very uncomfortable.

"So it turns out that Mr. Lovett had such a past with the Thompsons that no one knew about."

Justin's words were directed toward Hunter, but his deep gaze never left Bella. "And it looks like Ms. Thompson is the daughter of your benefactor. Is this how you repay kindness, Mr. Lovett? By butting

heads with Ms. Thompson over and over."

Bella could not help but frown as she digested what Justin said.

Was he standing up for her? Was he taking the side of an outsider, hers, in front of his family?

He had never taken her side, even when they had been husband and wife. Was he doing an about-face and trying to make it up to her?

Bella thought, 'That's not necessary! He must be mad!'

Upon hearing this, Nigel frowned even more deeply.

"Ha! Ms. Thompson, so according to you, I can't be a lawyer just because I, as a Lovett, received the kindness of your family? Is that it?"

Hunter would not just stand there and let himself be mocked. A fake smile appeared on his face. "I am a professional. In my eyes, there are only two kinds of people-clients and non-clients. Ms. Bethany

Salvador is my client, so of course, I have to do my best for her.

There's nothing wrong with that, is there? If you hired me, Ms.

Thompson, I'd fulfill my duties in the same way. This has nothing to do with any repayment of kindness, don't you think so?"

Justin's fist clenched and his eyes darkened at the sight of Hunter's secretly smug expression.

"Oh, my! I wouldn't dare to hire you, O great Mr. Lovett!"

Bella hurriedly waved her hands with a shocked look. "Such an amazing lawyer as you would be a double-edged sword. One day you'd be helping me fight my case, but the next, you'd be helping others sue me, wouldn't you?"

As Bella spoke, she poked her face. "You won't even give my family the slightest bit of consideration even though my father is your father's benefactor, after all. How could a mere girl such as I amount to anything in your esteemed eyes? Once you've changed your allegiance and others want you to attack me, wouldn't you have to do the best you can then? I simply can't afford to hire such a great personage as you!"

Bella felt goosebumps rise all over her own body even as she finished speaking.

Ew!

Even Rosalind Gold at her best had to admit defeat when Bella started being bitchy.

Justin could not stop the corners of his lips from curling up when he saw the innocent look on Bella's face that actually hid malicious intentions.

Hunter stifled a cough, so angry his chest started hurting.

At first, Bethany Salvador wanted to rely on the fact that she was on her home ground and in Hunter Lovett's presence to taunt Bella. Even if she could not actually do anything to her, she would have been able to vent her anger.

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But in the end, even Hunter had to admit defeat to Bella's flurry of barbs. Bethany did not dare cause any trouble and hid behind

Shannon like a turtle that had retreated into its shell.

"Grandpa Nigel!"

Bella walked to Nigel's side and took his dry and wrinkled hand. She had a worried look on her face. They looked closer than Bethany was to Nigel. "Did you call me over so late at night because you're feeling unwell?"

"Don't worry, child. I'm fine."

Nigel looked gently into her clear gaze and patted the back of her hand. "I'm fine. I'm still healthy."

Bella sighed in relief. "That's good, then."

"Anna, I actually called you over this time for nothing serious. The main reason is that I missed you and wanted to see you, but I also wanted to ask... What on earth happened between you and Bethany? How did things get to this point?"

Nigel said earnestly, "Both you and Bethany are my granddaughters, and I hope you guys can get along. I feel very worried every time things are blown out of proportion like this."

But Bella understood that this was Grandpa Nigel's way of speaking up for his biological granddaughter, Bethany.

Inexplicably, her nose soured, and she choked up a little.

No matter how well she treated Grandpa Nigel, blood was thicker than water, even if the "obedient granddaughter" he spoke of was a malicious repeat backstabber.

"The two days Bethany was in custody were unbearable!"

Shannon took this opportunity to cry out, all choked up, as she hugged a sobbing Bethany. "They took turns to interrogate your granddaughter for twenty-four hours non-stop, threatening and scolding her and not letting her sleep! Look—she's been tortured beyond recognition!"

Bethany did look a lot more haggard and looked even more pitiful as she sobbed.

Nigel had doted on his eldest granddaughter since Bethany was young. Although it was true that Bethany was not as talented as Bella was or as good at pleasing him, and she rarely visited him after becoming an adult and living her own life, Bethany was still his biological granddaughter. At his age, elderly people like him only wished for peace within the family and to enjoy life.

When Justin saw Bella's eyes redden slightly and her expression had lost the vitality it had earlier, he felt an indescribable discomfort.

It was obvious she had been hurt.

He suddenly remembered that in the three years she had been married to him, she had always lived like an outsider in this house.

At the time, he had not known how to be considerate of her and even hoped this would make her give up and ask for a divorce of her own accord.

At this current moment, it was like a scene from the past was happening again.

But this time, Justin, who had already missed past opportunities, would not allow himself to miss it a second time.

Thus, he strode up to his grandfather with a cold expression and a hint of anger in his dark eyes.

Everyone was stunned by his next move.

They watched as Justin lifted his arm and casually wrapped it around Bella's shoulders, pulling her closer in a domineering manner, as if she had always been his wife and they had never divorced.

Bella stared at him with wide eyes as she froze.

"Justin, you-!"

"Grandpa."

Justin did not give her the chance to break free. His large palm gripped her rounded shoulders firmly.

"Instead of asking Ms. Thompson what happened, you should ask your good little granddaughter Bethany Salvador what on earth she's done."

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Bella could feel the burning warmth of Justin's palm pulse through her flesh.

Crazy bastard!

What on earth had gotten into him again? She wanted his dirty hands off her.

As if he could tell that she wanted to break free, Justin tightened his grip to the point that he was almost crushing her shoulder. He was forcefully keeping them close.

Everyone was shocked to see the formerly married pair so close to each other.

Only Nigel smiled widely in a surprised but relieved manner. His slightly gloomy mood vanished instantly.

Nigel thought, 'Ah! Was Anna back together with Justin?! Though her expression did not seem too happy, did it not? Oh, whatever! It did matter if Justin was being persistent or overbearing. My wooden block of a grandson has finally been enlightened! This is great ne that there has been progress in their relationship! I might just set fireworks in celebration!'

Bella could no longer bear it and slowly lifted her foot while the others were distracted before stomping on Justin heavily.

"Ugh!" Justin frowned slightly, and he grunted in pain, but only Bella could hear it.

She smiled evilly as she ground the stiletto she was wearing viciously into Justin's high-end, handmade leather loafer.

Phew! Bella felt much better now to see Justin in pain.

However, Justin was in so much pain that his thin lips were trembling.

The intense pain almost made his soul leave his body.

He gritted his teeth as he slowly turned his gaze to the woman in his arms, whose face had satisfaction written all over it.

Unconsciously, his frown slowly smoothed out. 'Ha! Did bullying me make her so happy? If that's the case, I don't mind letting her step on me again.'

"Grandpa! I've been falsely accused!"

Bethany felt that, at this rate, the formerly married pair were going to sentence her to death in front of her grandfather. Thus, she pulled

Hunter along to make herself look innocent. "If I really was guilty, I would not have been acquitted, even if Mr. Lovett was an all-powerful lawyer! The police aren't idiots. Wouldn't real criminals leave behind some evidence? It was all this wicked woman's fault. She made things up to frame me!"

"Old Master Nigel, the police have a strict process for handling cases."

Hunter spoke up for Bethany then. "I am Ms. Bethany's lawyer. All I can do is make sure that things are in my client's favor as much as legally possible. I can't make what's false become true either."

He turned to look at Bella with a sinister gaze. "Ms. Thompson, I don't know what personal grudges you hold against my client, but I still don't think you should use dishonorable means to solve the issue. And besides, considering Chairman Thompson's magnanimity, his daughter should have the grace to be tolerant of others, shouldn't she?"

Bella narrowed her eyes slightly and let out a cold huff. 'Ha! This man must be living in the shadows, since he's so good at throwing shade.'

It looked like he really had forgotten how his father had lowered his head when he led him to our door to thank and show respect to Wyatt.

Hunter had essentially labeled Bella merciless and turned the tides against her.

“Ha.”

Suddenly, Justin let out a chilling laugh.

His laugh was magnetic but intimidating, and even Bella, still in his arms, could not help but feel a slight fear.

“I must have been too nice because you seem to think you’re really something, Mr. Lovett.”

The corners of Justin’s eyes turned slightly bloodshot as he turned his sharp gaze toward Hunter. “Did you forget so quickly what I said to you before we came inside earlier? Is your brain malfunctioning?”

Bella’s eyes widened in shock.

Justin had interacted with Hunter before this?

What had they said to each other?

Shannon and Bethany were both intimidated and took a small step back. They felt that Justin right now was scarier than a monster.

Hunter’s false smile was about to fall apart as his expression gradually distorted in fear and anger

“Justin! Is that how you speak to Mr. Lovett? He’s our guest!” Gregory could not help but rebuke.

After all, he still wanted to put Hunter Lovett to good use in the future and make him his protege. Was Justin not messing things up by acting like that now?

“He’s your guest, not mine.”

Justin’s cold gaze swept toward Gregory’s distended and red face and slowly moved back to Bella’s clear and beautiful eyes.

As their eyes met, his gaze turned tender as if the whole world had vanished, leaving just her in his eyes

“I said before that I would not give whoever dared to cause trouble for Ms. Thompson a good ending.”

Bella took in a shocked breath, her heart faintly trembling. She could not look away from Justin, as if her gaze had been drawn to him like a magnet.

Hunter swallowed heavily, his hands clenching out of sight.

“Do you recall what I said now, Mr. Lovett?”

Chapter 490

The moment Bella Thompson appeared, the Salvadors were bound to be thrown into chaos and dispersed unhappily.

Bella was not in the mood, nor did she feel the need to explain anything to Nigel because she felt the truth would come out eventually.

Besides, she had learned long ago from Wyatt and Mila about Hunter

Lovett's way of dealing with people and things. Since he could get

Bethany Salvador out of the police station, it meant he had already dealt with the hidden dangers. Even if she knew he had threatened

Henry into taking the fall, the police had already closed the case and would not be able to reopen it for the time being.

Hunter was as dangerous as his smile was polite.

Nevertheless, Nigel had no intention of making things difficult for

Bella, since he trusted her character. He had seen for himself how sincere she was.

If he could not trust even Anna, who on this earth could he trust, then?

Bella personally wheeled Nigel back to his room.

Justin followed behind her from start to finish, sticking to her closely.

Bella was very annoyed and unhappy about this.

But tonight, Nigel was overjoyed as he watched the young couple hover around him with a pleased smile on his face. His smile was so wide that both rows of teeth were showing. He was in such great

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spirits, as if he had returned to his youth.

It was not just love that could nourish the spirit. Watching a couple he shipped interact with each other was pretty nourishing too!

“I’m sorry, Grandpa Nigel. I’ve been really busy lately and couldn’t make time to come visit you. You must be mad at me, aren’t you?” Bella looked guilty.

“What are you saying, you silly child? I’ll be very happy as long as you just keep me in mind.”

Nigel clasped her warm hand tightly as he gave Justin a meaningful glance. “You’re so young. You should go out, have fun, and meet good men. I heard Ryan Hoffman and Christopher Iverson are pretty close to you. What do you think of them? Are there any other gentlemen that you’re interested in? If you have one, you ought to bring him to meet me! I’ll help you evaluate him!”

Justin’s eye twitched. He felt suffocated and pained, as if his grandfather had swung a huge hammer straight at his chest.

Justin thought, ‘This old man wanted to play matchmaker even though he’s confined to a wheelchair and tried to match haphazardly!

Was he not afraid that his darling Anna would show up with a wolf in sheep’s clothing?!

Justin’s eyes reddened as his breathing obviously quickened with agitation.

Bella could not help but be surprised. “Grandpa Nigel, how did you know about Christopher?”

“Oh, I’m all-knowing, you see. I know everything without even stepping out of my home.” Nigel boasted while he was at it.

“Ah. I’ve known Christopher since I was young.”

“Are you childhood sweethearts, then?” Nigel felt a little nervous.

“Uh...” Bella hummed with a smile. “I think I was more like a big sister, and he was like a little brother to me. He was so weak when we were young, so he needed me to take care of him!” Bella raised her delicate chin slightly. She had one hand on her waist as she smiled brightly.

The 24-year-old young lady in front of him was still as bright, lively,

Justin stared fixedly at her bright expression. Suddenly, his vision blurred, and a sharp pain stabbed through his brain.

He was afraid that Bella and his grandfather would see this, so he hurriedly turned around and pressed a hand to his throbbing temples as the pain caused a cold sweat to soak his back.

Somewhere in the deep recesses of his memory, her smile slowly overlapped with that of a little girl's blurry face.

He always had a feeling that he met Bella a very, very long time ago.

But why was it that he just could not remember?

"Is that so? I've never heard you mention you were so close to the Iverson boy before, though."

Nigel was not that into gossip, but he paid more attention when it concerned the future of his grandson's love life.

"We lost touch when he moved overseas to Sentania with his mother.

Not long ago, we happened to bump into each other, and we reconnected." Bella was very open about her relationship with

Christopher and was honest with Grandpa Nigel.

"Ah...I heard that he donated an extravagant collector's necklace to help build steam for the charity auction you organized previously. I can see he's very thoughtful toward you." Nigel continued testing her.

Bella smiled faintly. "He probably only helped me out of gratitude for helping him when we were kids and for old times' sake."

"Ah... In that case, Chairman Iverson's youngest son is a kind-hearted person who knows how to repay kindness."

As he said so, Nigel looked disdainfully at Justin, feeling angrier the more he looked at him. "Hmph! He's much better than this wooden block over here!"

Old Master Nigel was not taking an outsider's side. He was just frustrated with Justin for not living up to his expectations and took the opportunity to try to provoke him into stepping up to the plate the moment it arose.

"Grandpa Nigel, please don't blame Mr. Salvador for our divorce. I made it very clear from the beginning that it was mutually decide upon. I don't have any hard feelings for him."

Bella looked back. Her calm gaze made Justin's heart twinge. "Mr. Salvador isn't as cold as you say he is either. He's always known how to repay kindness, how to show affection, and how to dote on someone."

In that instant, Justin felt a stabbing pain in his heart as his throat choked up with remorse, his broad shoulders trembling slightly.

He did know how to repay kindness and how to show affection.

But all of his passion had been directed in the wrong direction. It was only when he had run into a wall and started bleeding from it that he realized he had been so stupid.

But he really did not want to be compared to Christopher Iverson.

In Bella's eyes, he was not as good as Christopher.