

Heiress 941

Chapter 941

Justin did not dwell on her words. At this moment, concern and guilt over her smoke allergy consumed his mind.

“You don’t need to cook. I’ll call Ian to deliver breakfast, or maybe have him come over to cook. While his cooking skills may not match Mr. Lovett’s, they’re good enough.”

Justin then noticed that Bella was barefoot, her delicate feet exposed. He furrowed his brows and, without hesitation, grabbed her slender waist and effortlessly lifted her up.

“Hey! What are you doing?!” Bella exclaimed, her hands hurriedly gripping his broad shoulders.

“How can you be so neglectful of yourself? The floor tiles are freezing. Why would you walk around barefoot?”

Justin gently placed Bella on the table, kneeling in front of her. He took both her feet, one by one, in his hands, holding them close to warm them.

So warm... It was the warmth Bella was familiar with.

Bella felt so comfortable that her eyes narrowed slightly in contentment, but she did not dare to display her contentment too overtly.

“Wilma once emphasized the importance of girls keeping their feet warm. Otherwise, health issues may arise later in life.”

Justin lifted his face to look at her, his eyes filled with both tenderness and reproach. “Please don’t walk around barefoot ever again.”

“I only did that because I was in a hurry!” Feeling lectured, Bella pouted out a response.

Justin was slightly surprised, then playfully lifted his lips. "In a hurry? What's the rush? Were you afraid that I'd run away?"

Bella blushed at his words, her fair cheeks turning rosy. Her toes curled slightly in his palm.

"How could I leave while you were still sleeping? I will never leave you here alone."

How could he bear leaving anyway?

In fact, he wished he could just move into her house and sleep by her side every night. He wanted a place in her heart.

Justin's hands roamed up her slender legs, gradually standing up straight, supporting her waist, and bending down to kiss her forehead.

Yet he was not satisfied with just that. He would never have enough of her.

Bella's skin flushed, and a shy blush crept onto her fair face.

Even though they had just been intimate, whenever he drew near, she still felt like a shy bud about to bloom.

Just as Justin's lips were about to touch her tender spot, the doorbell rang.

Ding-dong—Ding-dong—Ding-dong—

Justin had no intention of answering the door, but the doorbell just kept ringing incessantly,

What a mood killer!

Bella felt flustered and coughed lightly, hurriedly pushing Justin aside. “What’s going on? Who’s ringing the doorbell? Only my brothers know about this place, and they all have the passcode to the door.”

“It’s Ian.”

Justin thought of his scatterbrained secretary and felt a surge of frustration. “I told him to come here if he had gathered any new information.”

“What information?”

“Information about Shannon and the perpetrator.”

Bella’s eyes instantly lit up with understanding, impatiently wanting to jump off the table.

The next moment, she found herself lifted off the ground by Justin with one arm!

“You’re not wearing shoes. It’s better to keep your feet off the ground.”

Bella widened her eyes in astonishment, surprised by his strength . The only memory she had of being carried like this was when she was a child. Wyatt used to do it often, but back then, she was much younger and lighter.

Her hormones went into overdrive.

Chapter 942

Justin walked to the entrance amidst Bella’s protest and then opened the door.

“M-Mr. Salvador?”

Ian saw Justin carrying Bella in his arms like he would hold a baby, both still disheveled, looking as if they had just woken up.

Oh gosh!

Ian's perspective on them underwent a complete upheaval. His mind drifted to improper fantasies. His face turned red, and his jaw dropped. 'Could it be?! Did this power couple finally reconcile? Can I finally rest in peace?!'

"Justin, put me down!" Bella's face burned with embarrassment, unable to find a place to hide as she gasped out her protest in his ears.

"Ms. Thompson, may I also come in?"

Another familiar voice chimed in lazily.

Justin and Bella widened their eyes when they saw Ryan standing behind Ian, appearing out of nowhere.

Ryan squinted his charming eyes and grinned as he sized them up.

That grin looked especially mischievous and teasing.

"Congrats, buddy."

"Congrats on what?" Justin stared at him coldly.

"Congrats on not having to stand outside and get struck by lightning," Ryan said, casting a meaningful glance at Bella.

Bella remained silent, feeling awkward.

Justin's frustration was evident on his face. "Well, if you have something to say, spit it out now or leave."

"I do have something to say! I wouldn't have come if I didn't have anything to say. So, will the lovely couple let me in?" Ryan asked with a playful grin.

"Come in," said Justin.

"Who the hell is a couple?!" Bella protested.

Ignoring Bella's protest, Ryan brazenly entered the house.

Justin gently placed Bella down and knelt down to help her put on her home slippers.

Once Bella wore her slippers, she quickly distanced herself from Justin. But her actions made her appear more guilty, as if she were trying to avoid suspicion.

The four of them moved to the living room, with Justin sitting beside Bella, so close that she could not move away. He naturally reached out his arm, wanting to wrap it around her waist, but she instinctively leaned away, refusing his touch.

The man could not help but frown and smile wryly. He had to wait until she was not paying attention to play with her hair cascading down her back.

Justin thought, 'How petty of you, Bella. You're not as passionate as you were last night.'

It was only then that Bella realized Justin had instructed Ian to track and investigate Shannon these past few days.

This was the reason Ryan eagerly followed along. He had also gathered some crucial leads, eager to report back to Justin.

“Did Shannon meet that scumbag named Winston?” Justin asked with a darkened gaze.

“No. Given the current tense situation, Shannon wouldn’t dare to meet Winston. It would be like walking into a trap herself, exposing their crimes to the whole world.”

Ian, thirsty, quickly drank some water before continuing, “I found out that she met up with the President of the Savrow Bank.”

“Is she planning to transfer a huge sum of money?” Bella asked promptly, her mind sharp as ever.

Chapter 943

Ian gave Bella a thumbs up. “Young Madam, you’re as sharp as ever!”

Justin grinned, pleased with the way Ian addressed Bella.

Bella felt a mix of embarrassment and irritation, but her curiosity drove her to ask for more. “Keep going!”

“Then I found out that she has a secret account at Regarton Bank.

The exact amount in the account is unclear. However, I managed to uncover the sum she transferred from that account to Savrow Bank this time. It was a whopping \$200 million!”

“\$200 million? Damn, it seems like this old hag has been saving quite a sum for herself,” Ryan remarked, raising an eyebrow in amusement.

“That’s probably the hush money and escape funds demanded by

Winston,” Justin replied with a cold chuckle, his expression showing contempt.

“What surprises me even more is how easily Shannon could access such a large sum of money. On top of that, it’s from an account from Regarton Bank!” Ian exclaimed, clearly taken aback.

“As far as I know, Shannon has some shares from the Salvador

Corporation and has been receiving dividends over the years. She probably has more than \$200 million now. So, it’s plausible,” Bella stated, her brow furrowing in thought as she tapped her chin.

“Shannon may have a substantial amount of money, but every penny is still under Gregory’s control. Her assets in the Salvador family’s account are completely transparent. Gregory’s management of her

finances is a form of control over her. Therefore, the funds in the

Regarton Bank account must be her secret funds. Besides, the source of these funds is unclear. I’ve always had evidence that Shannon used Bethany’s boutique to attract influential figures to engage in bribery and money laundering. However, no matter how hard they try, it would be difficult for them to earn \$200 million through that boutique,” Justin explained.

“If you’ve always had evidence, why didn’t you use it to take them down?” Bella turned toward him, a tinge of resentment evident in her expression.

Justin’s eyes darkened as he gently released her hair. His palm silently settled on her waist instead.

His touch was so gentle that Bella did not notice a thing.

However, their intimate moment left the “third wheels” gaping in disbelief, their teeth gnashing with envy.

“First of all, targeting a mere boutique wouldn’t cripple Shannon and Bethany. Besides, Gregory would spare no effort to shield them. If I had acted impulsively, it would indirectly harm the Salvador Corporation, leading to stock fluctuations and immeasurable losses,” Justin explained.

Bella nodded slowly, understanding his predicament at the time.

Justin was not Gregory's only son. In fact, to outsiders, he was the illegitimate child who had risen to power. The legitimate heir was also still in the picture.

Bella knew how difficult it was for Justin to rise to his position as president. She was also aware of the precariousness of his situation over the years.

If he lost power in the Salvador Corporation, he would be at the mercy of others. And for the sake of his mother, he had to stand his ground.

As he recalled the tragic loss of his mother, Justin was suddenly overwhelmed with profound sorrow, his breath growing heavy. "At that time, I didn't know that Shannon was the one responsible for my mother's death. So, I chose not to expose this matter for the time being. Bella, you must think that I'm weak and useless, right? I feel like I'm nothing but a useless fool."

As these words left Justin's lips, both Ryan and Ian were shocked to the core, as if struck by lightning.

After all, they had just met up with Justin. Thanks to Bella's presence,

Justin's emotions had calmed considerably. Naturally, there was not an opportunity to share this with them.

Bella's heart ached at the sight of her man's desolate gaze.

Her eyes welled up slightly, wanting to reach out to comfort him.

However, her conflicted emotions held her back. She spoke gently,

"It's not your fault. You were just a child back then, unaware of how cruel people can be. Revenge is a dish best served cold. It's never too late to avenge your mother."

Justin looked up in astonishment, meeting her determined gaze.

If it were not for the two clueless men present, Justin would have wanted to embrace her tightly, kiss her passionately, and shower her with affection. “Besides, you’re right about something. The evidence you have at the

moment won’t do much against Shannon and Bethany. Gregory will spare no effort to protect them. Even if Shannon gets convicted, she won’t serve many years, and Gregory will find top-notch lawyers

like Hunter Lovett to bail her out. Even if she gets sentenced for three to five years, she’ll probably be released early.”

“So, we must make sure that wretched woman faces all her charges and serves her time behind bars!” Ian erupted in anger, standing up indignantly.

“But will that be enough?”

Chapter 944

Bella and Justin were suddenly in perfect sync, both saying, “An eye for an eye, a life for a life. She deserves the death penalty!”

“Exactly! Death penalty!” Ian nodded vigorously, his anger evident.

“No, but seriously, what did Chairman Salvador see in Shannon? She lacks humanity and relies solely on her looks, which are mediocre at best! Grandpa Nigel is a man of integrity, so how did he end up with such a tasteless son like this?”

Ryan’s fists clenched as fury consumed him. “What will it take to make your father see the truth about this wretched woman?”

Ian smoothly responded, "Well, unless Chairman Salvador finds out that Shannon has been unfaithful to him and has an illegitimate child out there, he will prioritize his reputation above all else. Men in high positions, like Chairman Salvador, will not back her up anymore if he learns that his wife has cheated on him. Only a spineless man would tolerate such a thing!"

"Yeah, she had cheated on him not just once but three times." Bella's eyes narrowed with a cold glint.

The three men's expressions mirrored one another.

"I'm aware of Harry Young's affair with her, but who else?" Justin fixed his gaze on Bella.

"Do you remember Dr. Fairchild mentioned by Shannon in the recording we heard at the police station?"

Justin noticed a cunning glint in his woman's eyes and quickly caught on. "He's the one you planted beside Shannon?"

"You're sharp as ever, Justin."

Bella, unusually, praised him, causing Justin to blush. "He's a student sponsored by the KS Group. I've known him since school. He's willing to be part of our revenge team as a way of repaying the favor."

She knew him since school?

Justin's internal alarms blared as he asked solemnly, "Is he a guy?"

"Justin, are you not listening? Shannon's lover can't possibly be a woman, right?" Ryan raised an eyebrow, feeling that the lovestruck

Justin was acting a bit foolish.

Justin's demeanor turned sour.

"What's this? Are you jealous?"

Being his only best friend, Ryan knew him too well and could not resist teasing him. "Hmm, it's natural to be a little jealous. After he's a doctor. He has a good job, and considering how he got sponsored by the KS Group, he must be a top student. Besides, the fact that he was able to attract Shannon means that he's probably quite good-looking. Older women tend to like younger, lively guys.

Who knows, maybe Dr. Fairchild is a younger, more energetic guy that gives out "golden retriever" vibes compared to you."

Justin took a deep breath, his gaze sharp as a knife as it darted toward Ryan's face, which was practically begging for a punch.

"If Dr. Fairchild were to pursue Bella Bella might've considered it. Am I right, Bella?"

Bella 'smiled and nodded. "Yeah, that's possible."

Justin's eyes flashed with anger.

But they got back to the main point.

"So... Young Madam, are you suggesting that it was your plan to have Dr. Fairchild seduce Shannon?" Ian asked, surprised.

"There's more to that."

Bella waved her slender fingers. "Shannon also developed a drug addiction."

The three men were in shock.

“She injected herself with a banned substance, typically used for clinical anesthesia. However, many elites and celebrities also secretly arrange appointments for themselves to receive injections of this drug. Over time, they would become heavily dependent on it. If the dosage is too high, they’d gradually lose mental clarity, lose contro their actions, and even lose control of bodily functions.” Bella’s ey dimmed, flickering with icy determination.

She remembered all the suffering Aunt Celeste had endured becaus of that wicked woman, Shannon. Her fists clenched tightly, and he eyes reddened.

Bella thought, ‘Shannon, how can you atone for your sins? You must suffer a million times more than those you’ve harmed to truly repent!’

Chapter 945

Since Shannon stored her \$200 million in Regarton Bank, it implied that all the funds in her account were the proceeds of corruption.

The effortless access to such a significant sum suggests that her embezzlement amount was astronomical, likely extracted from various parts of the Salvador Corporation, as well as bribes she received leveraging her position as the chairman’s wife.

“Ian, has Shannon transferred the funds to Winston ?” Justin asked with a deep gaze.

“Yes, she transferred it,” Ian replied.

“Has he withdrawn it?”

“Not yet. With such a large sum, he’ll need a truck to transport it.

Using cash would draw him too much attention, and he still needs to make his escape,” Ian explained.

Justin nodded in agreement. "Very well. Contact the authorities immediately to freeze Winston's account."

"Yes, Mr. Salvador!" Ian immediately stood up to carry out the instructions.

Indeed, the police would be of help when it comes to freezing accounts.

"Hah, if that bastard fails to get his hands on the money, he'll probably get anxious and turn against Shannon."

Bella's sharp, penetrating gaze conveyed confidence. "Right now, all we have to do is track down Winston. Once we catch him, he won't hesitate to spill all of Shannon's dirty secrets."

"I have news about that guy." With a hint of mischief in his demeanor, Ryan casually crossed his legs and dropped this bombshell.

Bella and Justin reacted in surprise, "What?!"

"Why else would I suddenly come over to see you guys? For a casual visit? Even if I were to do that, I'd bring my girlfriend along."

Ryan's left arm draped over the back of the sofa, in a manner befitting a mafia boss. "The Hoffmans received a lead when searching the Southbay Pier. Two fishermen spotted Winston sneaking onto a cargo ship bound for Terranova at midnight two days ago. It seems like he's planning to sneak out of the country."

"Terranova ? Do you think he might stop in other countries along the way?" Bella frowned with concern.

"That's possible. But the two countries along the route are desol wastelands. What's he going to do there with \$200 million? Work a laborer?"

Ryan continued, "That's why I've instructed my men to secretly track him down. We'll check all the other ports in other countries along the route, but it's best not to alert anyone prematurely. If he decides to abandon the ship midway or switch to another vessel, like a yacht or dinghy, it'll significantly complicate our efforts to capture him. Bella,

Justin, don't worry. Even if he manages to leave the country and evade immediate capture by the authorities, the Hoffmans will make sure he's brought back to you in one piece."

Smuggling goods across borders was a skill the Hoffmans excelled in. After all, it was the foundation on which they built their empire.

"My eldest brother also has connections in Terranova. I'll contact him soon. We can work with him and catch Winston without him knowing we're having our eyes on him," Bella said eagerly, itching to get involved in the operation itself.

"Ah, it would be even better if Asher could lend a hand!" Ryan grinned.

Justin's sharp gaze turned into darts, piercing Ryan's flattering face with cold disdain. 'When did this guy learn to be so groveling? Who is this pathetic expression he put on for?!

With both Justin and Ryan delivering good news, Bella wore a smile on her face.

As the host, Bella still possessed the most basic manners. She headed to the bar to serve them some drinks.

While Bella was away, Ryan shuffled over to sit beside Justin, leaning in close to him.

"Are you cold or something?" Justin asked in a cool tone.

"Huh? Not at all."

Justin said, "Get away from me! I don't like the scent of your cologne."

"Why are you so fussy? Who cares if you like it or not? Carrie likes it. That's all that matters!"

As he spoke, Ryan examined Justin's face closely. Suddenly, he noticed a mark on Justin's neck and narrowed his eyes. With a lowered voice, Ryan asked, "Justin, did you have sex last night?"

"How did you know?"

Justin blinked in surprise. Despite his attempt to hold back his emotions, a faint smile played on his lips.

Ryan couldn't resist commenting. "Jeez, you've practically got the post-sex look plastered all over your face! Do you even realize how obvious you were earlier? One glance was all it took for me to figure it out."

"Is there a problem with that?" Justin retorted as he met Ryan's gaze.

His voice was soft as he asked, "Can't I do something I enjoy with my future wife?"

"We're all adults here. If you both consented to it, then there's nothing wrong with it. But did you take precautions?"

"Precautions?" Justin was slightly taken aback.

"Did you bring condoms the last time you had sex?" Ryan asked without any hint of embarrassment. After all, Justin has only had sex with Bella without any prior experience.

'The last time..'

Justin replied honestly, "Probably not. I was drunk. I couldn't even remember anything."

"Well, what about this time?" Ryan pressed, waiting for Justin's response.

Justin remained silent.

"There's a high possibility she might get pregnant."

Ryan draped his arm over Justin's shoulder, exhaling heavily with a tone of genuine concern. "Brother, next time, make sure to bring protection. Your relationship has just reached a milestone. You should handle it with care..If you genuinely care for her, don't let her get pregnant before marriage. She's Wyatt Thompson's daughter, showered with endless affection. You should cherish her. If word gets out about a pregnancy before marriage, especially with her ex- husband, it won't sound good at all. A girl's reputation is invaluable."

"Ryan."

Justin slowly turned to look at Ryan. His eyes were filled with affection as he spoke deliberately, "If Bella ends up getting pregnant with my child, I will definitely take responsibility. She means everything to me. Whether she chooses to marry me or not, I still consider her my wife."

He continued, "If she does get pregnant, I'll go to the Thompson family to propose and have a grand wedding. This time, it will be perfect in every way. I'll fulfill everything I couldn't give her before."

Ryan remarked. "Wow, you're thinking really far ahead, but who knows if Bella is willing to marry you again?"

Unable to contain his thoughts about parenthood, Ryan continued, " Buddy, once I marry Carrie, I plan to have five children with her. What about you and Bella? Both of you could definitely build a small nation together! Are you aiming for as many heirs as Wyatt Thompson to carry on the family legacy?"

Justin replied, "If that's what Bella wants, then I'm fine with it." His gaze was filled with excitement for what lay ahead.

“Do you like children? I’ve always had a soft spot for them. I dream of having my own someday.”

Chapter 947

Ryan fantasized about a future with Carrie where they would stroll around the amusement park with their children. He was so thrilled that he couldn’t stop smiling.

Justin slowly closed his eyes, feeling the stir of irresistible emotions in his heart as he pictured Bella’s shy and lovely face.

“Yeah, I do love children as well.”

He adored children, but that was only if he were to have them with Bella.

The two men talked excitedly, unaware that on the other side of the wall, Bella trembled while holding a tray as every word deeply affected her. ‘I love children too... I once dreamed of having children with him too. But if he’s counting on me for his future plans, I’m afraid he might never get what wishes for in this lifetime.’

Bella took a deep breath and leaned against the wall as tears welled up in her eyes. Slowly sinking down, she felt her strength slip away.

Regardless of whether they had children or not, it didn’t matter to her at all.

Ever since she had a miscarriage, she knew she could never conceive again.

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The word about Bella bringing Justin home for the night quickly spread and reached Asher.

He was really concerned about his troublesome little sister. Initially, he intended to rush over and intervene, maybe even confront Justin and beat him for what he had done to his sister in the past.

Unexpectedly, Drew stopped him.

“Ash, what’s the point of rushing over now? The night is already over, and they’re not kids anymore. Can you really stop them from doing what they want?”

“What do you mean?”

Asher looked at him in shock and said, “Are you actually supporting them as a couple?”

Drew said frankly, “At the very least, I don’t support Bella being with Christopher.”

“Even so, you’re just saying she should accept less than what she deserves. Neither Justin nor Christopher is right for Bella,” Asher said as he shook his head with frustration.

“But Justin genuinely cares for Bella. Yes, he’s made mistakes in the past, but he’s shown remorse and has gone out of his way to make amends for hurting her. Christopher, on the other hand, feels off. I haven’t really spent much time with him, but there’s something off about him when it comes to Bella. It feels like he has some kind of ulterior motive.”

Drew continued, “Besides, Wyatt used to be indifferent toward him, but these days, his behavior has changed drastically. Can we really say that guy hasn’t schemed something behind Wyatt’s back?”

Although Drew rarely meddled in family matters, this issue was so important for Bella’s lifelong happiness that he could not disregard it.

Asher’s brows furrowed tightly as he fell into deep contemplation.

Although Drew was the black sheep of the family, he always provided powerful insights at important times.

"I've also had my doubts about everything you mentioned. It's because I discovered that when Dad and our three stepmothers returned to the Savrow, they came to the hospital with Christopher. However, only Dad went upstairs while Christopher remained downstairs, seemingly trying to avoid suspicion. On that day, Dad actually told me he wanted Bella to marry Christopher to form an alliance with the Iversons. At that time, both Axel and I strongly objected to it. But I don't know what got into Dad that he was so adamant about it."

"No, I don't agree with this marriage!"

Chapter 948

Drew's eyebrows furrowed. In a fit of anger, he crushed the glass barehanded.

Asher flinched, instinctively moving back to avoid the shards of glass flying toward him.

"If Wyatt dares to allow Bella to marry into the Iverson family, even if I don't take Christopher's life, I'll even make sure that he won't be able to have kids!"

At that moment, the door swung open. To their surprise, Arnold confidently entered with a serving tray, startling both of them.

"We were in the middle of a conversation, Mr. Larson. Shouldn't you have knocked as a matter of courtesy?" Asher's expression showed a hint of helplessness but no sign of any resentment.

"Can't you see my hands are occupied!" Arnold snapped back as he narrowed his eyes. He walked over and placed the tray on the coffee table with an exasperated huff.

With a sarcastic tone, he added, "I used my butt to push the door open, cousin." Arnold addressed Asher mockingly. "If you think I'm impolite, I can go out and knock again."

Drew smirked as he pulled out a cigarette and placed it between his lips, observing Arnold from head to toe with amusement.

“Is there anything you need?” Asher asked as he lowered his gaze.

“My aunt personally made some chicken soup and asked me to bring it to you two.” Arnold deliberately adopted a passive stance, just to annoy Asher.

“I don’t like soup. Could you grab a beer from the hall? Preferably chilled,” Drew said as he casually crossed his legs on the edge of the coffee table, shaking the cigarette between his lips up and down.

“Got a light? Help me out.”

Arnold snapped, “You! You’re pushing it too far!”

His face turned red with anger as he felt that Drew was pushing his luck. He wished he could pour the hot chicken soup over Drew’s head for his attitude. Did Drew really believe he could command Arnold like a servant?

“Drew, stop fooling around.”

Asher, who had been silent, finally spoke calmly with his deep, captivating voice, which Arnold found seductive.

“Mr. Larson is Aunt Mila’s nephew, and he’s our guest. Let’s not go around without boundaries.”

“Okay, okay! I get it. I have no boundaries, no sense of moderation, manners, and no shame. I’ll leave, so I won’t bother anyone.”

Drew took back his cigarette, stood up gracefully, and casually took a sip from the bowl before smacking his lips.

He remarked, “It’s too bland.”

Arnold's eyes widened in disbelief. Wyatt's children were all excellent individuals. Yet it seemed chaos followed Drew. He seemed like an entirely different person compared to the rest, almost as if his genes were mutated!

Drew left the study as he yawned.

With only Asher and Arnold remaining, the room suddenly became quiet. There was a subtle tension between them.

Asher didn't even glance up at Arnold.

Arnold's breath shook as he approached Asher. "Has anyone ever told you how damn irresistible you look with glasses?"

Asher took a deep breath. He lowered his gaze before suddenly pushing Arnold, making him stumble awkwardly despite his quick reaction.

Chapter 949

With a loud bang, Arnold's back slammed into the bookshelf, sending books tumbling down. A book fell on his head, which made his ears buzz with pain.

Arnold said in shock, "Asher! What are you doing?" "I warned you, but you didn't listen." Asher realized that Arnold was hurt. He felt a surge of emotions, but he quickly regained his composure.

"Arnold, my sister asked for your help, but that doesn't mean you can take advantage of me. The incident from that night ends here. If you behave, we can still consider each other relatives. But if this happens again, I don't even know what I'll do next time."

Asher had always been known for having a fiery temper compared to the other Thompson siblings. If this had happened ten years ago, he would have incapacitated any man who dared to get close to him like this without any hesitation.

Arnold's fingers clenched tightly as he spoke with a trembling voice. "Asher, are you not acknowledging what happened between us that night?"

"We hugged and kissed. So what?"

Asher slowly swiveled the leather chair to face Arnold. He took off his glasses and sneered with a restrained and cold expression. "

Everything ends here. Arnold, deep down, you know what really happened that night. If it weren't for you taking the initiative, nothing would have happened."

"Asher, you could have refused me like you did earlier. But you didn't!"

Arnold shot him an angry glare, like a tousled fox with its fur standing on end. "So you do have feelings for me after all! Even if I stripped naked and threw myself into your arms, nothing would have happened without your consent!"

"Arnold, I've looked into you. Your love life in Meridan was quite diverse. I heard you explored the gay community there extensively and had numerous relationships with men. The number of men you were with is uncountable."

"Asher..."

Arnold was taken aback by Asher's question, feeling incredibly vulnerable at that moment.

"I need to know," Asher continued. "Did you truly have feelings for those men when you slept with them?" Arnold felt a sharp pang in his chest

'Feelings?'

He had never truly had feelings for anyone. Those one-night stands were merely to get through the lonely nights. He was just lonely and craved some company.

“You probably have the answer deep down in your heart. Coincidentally, my feelings for you are the same as what you're thinking.” Asher’s expression remained cold. “We're all adults here, Arnold. Stop playing games.”,

Arnold felt a sudden surge of pain in his heart, but before he could speak, there Mila’s voice followed, “Asher, was a knock on the door.

Arnold, are you in there? Can | come in?” Asher took a deep breath as he stood up and walked to the door, opening it himself. “Aunt Mila,” Asher greeted her, instantly putting on a gentle smile.

“Asher, are you two chatting? | heard something fall in the study... Is everything okay?” Mila asked as she cautiously glanced into the study.

“Everything is okay, Aunt Mila. Are you looking for me or Arnold?” Asher asked calmly. “Mainly you.”

Mila paused for a moment and whispered, “Next week, I'll be attending a grand horse racing event in Savrow with Wyatt. This event is very important for a major project collaboration.”

Then she quickly added, “I've suggested that Wyatt and others go as well. But the Salvador, wilt algg be there py that Yays@sRanrion is bound to be present. Celeste definitely wouldn't attend, while Sasha is interested in the horse racing event. However, if we all go, the media might make a fuss.”

Asher said understandingly, “Aunt Mila, | understand. You don’t have to explain. Over PRooRS om ascampafiiid to many significant events. It’s your composed manner and thoughtful consideration that make Dad feel at ease with you by his side.”

“Wyatt also mentioned that not only the Salvadors will be there on that day, but also the Hoffmans and the Iversons.” Asher responded with a darkened expression, “I understand. I'll make sure Bella doesn’t attend the event.”

Mila sighed, appearing extremely concerned. I had a feeling I was in for a discussion with Wyatt, but your father insisted that Bella go. He said there's something important to discuss."

"Something important?" Asher frowned.

"I pressed Wyatt for details, but he wouldn't budge."