

Illusions 181

Chapter 181

Lizette gave Yolanda a knowing wink.

You must've thought the same thing, huh?"

Yolanda cracked a smile, grabbed Lizetta's hand, and bubbled with excitement.

"C'mon, what're we waiting for? She's practically asking for a facepalm moment. We're both drop-dead gorgeous with hearts of gold – gotta help a girl out! You go freshen up, and I'll pick out something fab for you to wear."

Half an hour later.

At the Hawthorne family villa, Evelina was clenching her phone so hard that the veins on the back of her hand were popping out in pure fury.

April tried to calm her down, "Eve, maybe you should just stop looking at it; give it to me!"

Evelina was fuming over a live stream Lizetta had started on Twitter.

The netizens had been led by an army of trolls to trash talk and mock under the Twitter post about Maestro Adagio's appearance, demanding Lizetta to respond.

And respond she did, with a live stream, where she played the very piece she had composed, live for everyone.

In the stream, Lizetta was dressed in a sleek, forest green gown, a fox mask covering her face, revealing just a hint of her chin. Her hair cascaded freely down her back as she stood elegantly in the sunlight streaming through the floor-to-ceiling windows, violin in hand.

As sh

coaxed the strings, the music flowed out like dew in the dawn or a gentle stream, emotive and captivating. Both the melody and the graceful scene in the live stream were intoxicatingly beautiful.

[Damn, this is too good.]

[I'm tone-deaf; can someone tell me, is this the same piece Evelina played? Why does it sound different?]

[It is the same piece, so it's not the music that's bad, it's just someone with butterfingers pretending to be a maestro.].

[Didn't Evelina have a few solo concerts abroad? That's the level?]

[Answer from a pro: Evelina's concerts were just pay-to-play, no real prestige, those in the know, know.]

[The one fishing for fame has been caught, folks. Case closed.]

[Does Evelina have no shame? Does Mr. Dashiell know about this? @the Starlight Group official]

It just wanna know if the violinist is the real Maestro Adagio? Just that silhouette in the sunlight and I'm head over heels, wifey check on me!]

[That mask is such a tease! I bet Maestro Adagio's a knockout beauty.]

Why can't us esteemed VIPs see behind the mask C'mon, take it off!]

(I kneel to ask! Maestro Adagio, you've ruined me for life, you owe me!]

[No wonder the woman my Hamilton crushes on is amazing!]

Watching the comments and gushing praise pile up in the live stream chat, Evelina was shaking with rage.

"Ah! That bitch Lizetta!"

Finally, she couldn't take it anymore and hurled her phone away, screaming and pounding the bed like a madwoman.

Her words were muffled, her face still swollen from a beating, and her teeth aching.

The identity of "Maestro Adagio" was a mystery to others, but Evelina knew. The first time she called Maestro Adagio, the voice on the other end sounded familiar, but she didn't think much of it then.

After Maestro Adagio caused her to lose followers and posted lots of donation receipts, Evelina had April trace the donations back to Yolanda.

Yolanda had zero expertise in dance or music, so Evelina figured out that Maestro Adagio was actually Lizetta, whom she had bumped into at Skyward Studios.

Evelin

ell aware that Lizetta landed the Skyward Studios collaboration by hiding behind Maestro Adagio" alias. Jealous and resentful, Evelina had snatched the opportunity from her.

And now, after Lizetta had slapped her and Remington had taken Lizetta's side, to add insult to injury, Evelina was being ridiculed online. She wanted to shift the blame onto Lizetta, to teach her a lesson.

But Lizetta had clapped back so effortlessly, leaving Evelina boiling with anger.

April tried to soothe her, “Alright, stop freaking out; do you want your face to heal or not? I’ll handle the negative buzz online asap. You know, if you’d spent a little more time practicing the violin, it might not have been such a disaster.”

“Even you think I’m worse than her, don’t you?!”

Chapter 182

Evelina shoved April aside, her face a mix of green and red, her features all twisted in a scowl. April hustled to calm her down, and Evelina ally chilled a bit, but her eyes were still stormy.

“Lizetta, you made me suffer this much; I won’t let you off the hook that easy! Just you wait!” The tide turned online, and Lizetta just finished her tune and shut down the livestream. Right on cue, Hamilton’s call came in, and Lizetta picked up.

“Lizetta, I just tipped you during your stream; did you catch that?”

Lizetta was taken aback; she was so into her violin that she definitely didn’t notice any tips. She glanced at Yolanda, who was busy replying to Twitter messages on her laptop.

“Yoli, were there tips during the stream?”

“Totally, and a whole bunch of ‘em.”

Lizetta raised an eyebrow and cracked a smile, “Well, then thank everyone for me, and drop a tweet saying that all the tips from this live session are going to charity.”

Yolanda gestured an “okay”, and then Lizetta turned to Hamilton, “Thanks for the tip.”

Hamilton laughed, "Lizetta, I've got everything sorted with the company. The director said you can just come in for an interview, how about ten o'clock?"

Lizetta glanced at her wristwatch, "Sure thing."

"Then come to pick you up."

"Better not, I'm heading out now; let's meet at the agency later."

After hanging up, Lizetta grabbed her bag and headed out.

Yolanda, clutching her laptop, watched her leave and clicked her tongue,

"Liz, getting down to business and making bank, you're the best; go go,

Lizetta waved back at her and closed the door behind her.

Her interview went super smooth, and after signing with Hamilton's company, Lizetta became the dance instructor for EchoVerse Boys, moving into the boy band's training dorm. arranged by the agency that same day.

The following week, Lizetta was all hustle and hardly saw Remington and Evelina. They seemed to have faded out of her life, leaving her to enjoy some rare peace and fulfillment.

That evening, after finalizing the choreography for a song with Hamilton and the crew, and after a long bout of intense training, they all decided to grab a bite outside to unwind.

Even though Lizetta, who was pregnant, ate more than usual, she couldn't keep up with the big appetite of the guys. Once full, she said goodbye to Hamilton and the others and stepped out of

the private room.

The restaurant boasted a traditional design. As Lizetta passed by another private room, the door swung open with a waiter stepping out.

Instinctively, Lizetta glanced that way and stopped dead in her tracks. Five people sat around the table inside the room, and as luck would have it, Lizetta knew them sti

Remington and Evelina were cozied up together, and next to them sat the Harbome parents and Hanna, with Evelina shyly serving food to Remington

Hanna and Elara seemed to be joking about something, both wearing smiles. Kevin was toasting Remington, the man's long fingers poised over his glass, looking ready to clink glasses with his future father-in-law.

The atmosphere was super cozy, with parents meeting and getting along famously. Lizetta's feet paused only for a moment, then she quickly looked away and continued toward the restroom.

What she didn't expect was to hear Evelina and Elara's voices just as she entered a stall,

"Eve, how are you feeling? Any better?"

"I'm fine now; just got a whiff of fish that made me queasy"

"Fishy smells do trigger morning sickness. That was my bad for even ordering that dish, and damn Remington, insisting you love fish!"

"Mom! It's not Remington's fault. I said I wanted fish, so he ordered it for me."

"You're not even married into the family yet and you're already bending over backwards for him? Looks like I'll have to chat with his mom later about moving up the engagement date, can't have my daughter so eager to tie the knot."

“Mom, stop. Let’s head back; the baby’s getting hungry.

Evelina’s coy voice floated up, and Lizetta stood frozen in the stall for a long while. So, it turned out, today was really the day Remington and Evelina were meeting each other’s parents, talking engagement and wedding dates and all.

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Lizetta just stepped out of the restroom, didn’t head back to the private room, and Instead took a breather by the deserted rockery in the courtyard,

She looked up to find the city’s starry sky smothered by a foggy haze of lights, not a single star in sight after a good long search.

Totally bored out of her skull, she then heard a voice from behind interrupting her solitude.

“Lizetta? What are you doing here?”

She turned around to find Evelina and Hanna arm in arm, standing a couple of steps away like they were as thick as thieves.

Lizetta’s brows furrowed just a tad. She had only stepped out for some fresh air because she heard Evelina and Elara were heading home for dinner.

Had she known she’d bump into them everywhere, she would’ve shot Hamilton a message and bailed early.

She gave Hanna a polite nod, “I was here grabbing a bite with friends; we’re just about to head out.”

She started to walk off, but Hanna’s voice stopped her cold, “Halt right there!”

They were blocking her path, so Lizetta had no choice but to stop and face Hanna, "Something else?"

Hanna frowned, "Don't you know any manners? Can't even greet your elders properly?"

Lizetta found it quite laughable. With Remington and Evelina talking marriage, did Hanna still expect her to play the doormat bride like in the old days?

"Sorry, but how should I address you now?"

"What's with that attitude!"

Hanna was fuming, hand raised to slap Lizetta, who caught Hanna's wrist mid air,

"Your attitude towards me dictates my attitude towards you. Is that so hard to grasp?"

Hanna's face was a thundercloud; Evelina stepped in to pull her back.

"Mrs. Dashiell, please calm down. Sis, Mrs. Dashiell's been worrying over Joseph's health and isn't feeling great herself. Could you maybe not rile her up on purpose? After all, she is our elder. I know you're upset seeing me with her, but if you have any issues, take it out on me."

Hanna pulled her hand back, patting Evelina's.

"Eve's the sweetheart here, always understanding and considerate, the match for Remington, the one qualified to be Mrs. Dashiell."

The look she shot Lizetta was full of disdain. Evelina's cheeks blushed but she shot Lizetta smug look on the sly.

Lizetta watched coolly and let out a laugh, "So all that brown-nosing only got her 'the one qualified'? From the way you two are getting on like a house on fire, I thought for sure and aced it."

Evelina's expression stiffened, while Hanna sneered.

"I'm just keeping Eve humble. There's plenty of room for her to grow, and once she's part of the family, I'll teach her step by step. At least she's not a lost cause like you, after all that teaching and still in the negatives!"

Lizetta couldn't be bothered to argue, and she nodded, "Sure, can I go now?"

She had an air of nonchalance as if she couldn't care less. Hanna and Evelina were even more irked, Hanna with a furrowed brow.

"Remington and Eve are getting engaged, and he's already poured 30 million into the Hawthorne Group as a betrothal gift. I'm here tonight to meet with Eve's parents to discuss the engagement, and I don't care why you're here, but I'm warning you, don't you dare make trouble!"

Hanna's tone suggested she suspected Lizetta of stalking them to cause a scene. Lizetta looked down, a self-deprecating smile on her lips, and when she looked up again, her face was beaming with a bright, sunny smile.

"You've got it all wrong. My friends are waiting for me; you can check if you don't believe me. I've got rest in wrecking anyone's marriage, and I sincerely wish you both get everything you desire tonight."

With that said, Lizetta moved to leave, but Evelina suddenly grabbed her, asking, "Sis, do you really wish me and Remington well?"

Lizetta was beyond annoyed, but without a moment's hesitation, she smiled and nodded,

"Best wishes all around! Hurry up and tie the knot; just don't forget to send me an invite."

Not that she had any intention of going. She'd had her fill of being Mrs. Dashiell. Since Evelina was so keen on it, she could marry into the Dashiell family for all Lizetta cared. She wished Evelina luck in becoming the perfect daughter-in-law under Hanna's tutelage.

Chapter 184

Lizetta was lost in thought when Evelina suddenly let her go and bat her lip, tem, what are you doing out here too?"

Lizetta felt a chill run down her spine, and che instinctively turned her head to see Remington standing tall and distinct under the corridor not too far away

The carousel lights danced on his face, casting changing shadows that obscured his gaze. But Lizetta knew he was staring right at her, her heart gave a sharp twinge of pain, and her throat felt like it was being squeezed, making it hard to breathe.

"Excuse me, I gotta split.

She blurted out, ready to make her escape. But since Evelina and Hanna were blocking the rockery entrance and they hadn't budged, Lizetta was stuck

And just then, Remington had already made his way over

"You've been out here for a while, I got worried and came to check

He approached, addressed Hanna, and then turned his gaze to Evelina, "Got some fresh air still feeling queasy?"

Evelina looked up with a sweet smile, "I'm feeling better now. Remington, you don't find pregnant women too much of a hassle, do you? Can't even stand the smell of fish or booze

Her eyes and brows were flirtatious, and Remington looked down at her, a smile tugging at his lips.

"Not at all I've already told the staff to clear out the alcohol and seafood, so you won't feel anymore. It's chilly out; let's head back."

Evelina nodded obediently, and Hanna smiled with relief, saying to Evelina, “See, my son who’s clueless about romance and doesn’t know how to take care of anyone seems to have finally caught on.”

“Mrs. Dashiell.”

Evelina’s cheeks flushed, and she turned to Lizetta who had been left out in the cold.

“Remi, we just bumped into Lizetta. Why don’t we invite her to join us?”

Remington’s gaze finally shifted coldly to Lizetta, just a fleeting glance, and then it was gone as if he’d merely glanced at an insignificant stranger.

His voice was as cold as shattered ice as he said, “She just said she was leaving, let’s not hold her up. We’ll just remember to send her an invite later.”

Hanna immediately took Evelina with one hand and tugged at Remington with the other.

“Yeah, let’s head back; the food’s getting cold. Eve can’t eat anything cold while she’s pregnant. Remington, we two should accompany Eve to her check-up tomorrow, okay?”

Yeah got it

They chatted as they walked away, leaving Lizetta behind. She leaned on the rockery, unwittingly pressing too hard, and the rough stones left a deep mark on her palm, the pain spreading throughout her body.

Lizetta suddenly pulled her hand back, took a deep breath, whipped out her phone, and started texting Hamilton while heading towards the exit. She wanted to head back first.

The evening lights were just coming on, and it wasn’t easy to hail a cab.

After sending the message and walking out of the restaurant, Lizetta was looking down at her phone to book a ride when she collided with someone, causing the other's phone to drop.

"Watch where you're going!" The person complained first.

Lizetta thought she was at fault for not looking and accidentally running into someone, and she apologized instinctively.

"I'm sorry" she bent down to help pick up the phone but someone suddenly grabbed her arm and yanked her up.

Lizetta frowned, looking up to see a drunken middle-aged man.

"Miss, you smashed my phone and think a quick sorry will cut it? That's not sincere. You gotta make it up to me with a drink. Come on, let's go back in."

Lizetta was taken aback and got dragged a few steps before she started to struggle.

"Let go alling the cops."

"Call the cops for what? It's just a drink for smashing someone's stuff, not a big deal. The cops won't do anything!"

The man's buddies picked up the broken phone from the ground, and a few men started to crowd around, trying to coerce Lizetta into a nearby private room.

Someone snatched the phone from Lizetta's hands, and just as she was about to scream, a hand reached out to cover her mouth. Lizetta turned her head to meet a pair of familiar, cold and deep eyes.

Remington was standing a few steps away, watching the scene with a detached gaze.

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Remington had been standing there for who knew how long, watching her get bullied and comered with a cold, detached gaze.

Lizetta felt a chill in her heart, which quickly nited into a blaze of anger. With a sudden burst of energy, she broke free and slapped the middle-aged man who was harassing her right across his face.

The dude was dazed for a second, but then he flipped his lid, “You dare to hit me? I was being nice to you, you little tramp!”

He swung at Lizetta, who shut her eyes tight. But the slap never landed. Instead, she heard a scream.

When she opened her eyes, there was Remington, towering in front of her. He had the middle-aged man’s arm twisted, his handsome face expressionless, but his presence so intimidating that the troublemakers didn’t dare to breathe.

“Let go of me.”

The man, whose wrist was clutched, face white from the pain, struggled as Remington delivered a kick.

The guy was sent flying into a wall and crumpled to the ground. Remington held out his hand and the guy who had taken Lizetta’s phone cautiously placed it back in his palm, his face drained of color.

“Scram!”

With one cold glance from Remington, it was clear he wasn’t someone to mess with. The others didn’t even try to argue and helped the guy, who was sweating from pain, stumble zetta had been looking down the whole time, but when she felt Remington’s gaze on her, she looked up.

She was about to say something, but then she saw Evelina and Hanna coming up behind him.

Lizetta didn't want to get tangled up with them and frowned as she snatched her phone back from Remington's hand, saying, "Thanks for just now. They're here for you, go to them. Hey, what are you doing?"

Before she could finish, Remington had grabbed her wrist. He started pulling her towards the exit, with Evelina and Hanna's voices trailing behind them.

"Remi!"

*Remington, where are you going? Come back!"

Remington didn't look back. Lizetta thought he didn't see or hear them and tugged her hand, reminding him. They're calling you.

"I'm not deal. Mrs. Dashiell, look."

Evelina watched them disappear, tears wellir up and she leaned on Hanna, devastated,

Hanna, with a stern face, comforted Evelina while eyeing the door, "Eve, don't be upset; it's not good for the baby."

"But Remi doesn't seem to want a divorce, nor does he seem keen to get engaged to me. He still has feelings for Lizetta. He walked away with her without even looking back, and you saw it too.

Evelina's tears fell, and she wiped them away, her face a mix of struggle and resolve.

"Mrs. Dashiell, I don't want to be the other woman. Maybe I should just get rid of the baby." Hanna was counting on Evelina's baby to save Joseph and immediately tightened her grip on Evelina's hand.

"What nonsense! Didn't Remington just agree to the engagement in front of Lizetta? It must be Lizetta up to something again, and that's why Remington was momentarily taken away by her. Eve, you're

carrying Remington's baby. If anyone's the other woman, it's Lizetta who's been interfering with you and Remington."

"But Remi still didn't agree to get engaged to me just now."

Evelina had taken Remington's earlier compliance and his agreement to send Lizetta a wedding invitation as a sign of genuine intent; she was ecstatic.

But as they returned to the private room and Hanna brought up the engagement again, Remington's face turned cold, he said there'd be no engagement, and then left.

It was then Evelina realized he had never intended to get engaged to her, and his earlier actions were just to provoke Lizetta.

Watching as Remington left with Lizetta, Evelina felt nothing but bitterness and jealousy.

"Don't worry, I will make sure Remington divorces Lizetta," Hanna promised.

Meanwhile, Remington had dragged Lizetta to the parking lot and opened the passenger side door for her.

But Lizetta just stood there, looking at him, "I can get back by myself. Isn't it a bit rough to leave your fiancée hanging?"

She really didn't get Remington's deal. He was supposed to be discussing engagement plans with Evelina tonight, yet he ditched Evelina and took her away instead.

Chapter 186

One minute he was this way, the next he was that way, had he gone schizo or what?

"I haven't even divorced yet; where would a 'fiancee' come from?" Remington looked down at Lizetta with a mocking gaze.

"But didn't you just say you were going to send me a wedding invite?" Lizetta was puzzled.

Remington snorted, "Wasn't that your line first?"

"I never said that, she began to retort instinctively, under his icy stare.

Then it hit her that it was indeed her who had first mentioned not forgetting to send her a wedding invite, in conversation with Evelina, and just so happened to be overheard by Remington. She couldn't help but clench her fingers.

Was Remington just trying to get a rise out of her? Lizetta got annoyed, "So, aren't you guys meeting the parents today to talk about engagement?"

Remington let out a chuckle, "Bigamy is jail time, you know."

At his words, Lizetta suddenly felt a sense of relief, and it was only then she realized she couldn't genuinely wish him and Evelina well, nor was she as indifferent as she thought she was.

"OK."

"Are you getting in the car yourself, or do I need to help you?" Remington frowned, clearly running out of patience.

Head bowed, Lizetta got into the car without further objection.

Asing a settled into the driver's seat, Lizetta wrinkled her little nose, "You've been can you even drive?"

There was a faint smell of alcohol on him. Without looking at her, Remington smoothly pulled the car out of the parking space with one hand and simply replied, "Didn't drink."

Lizetta was taken aback again; she had clearly seen Kevin toasting Remington earlier. If Remington was truly planning to marry Evelina, there was no way he could refuse a drink from his future father-in-law.

Seemed like the engagement talk was all smoke and mirrors. Probably Evelina and Elara made up those restroom whispers on purpose after seeing her, and Evelina and Hanna were fooling her too.

Lizetta's expression softened, and she unconsciously let out a long-held sigh of relief. Realizing her own happiness, Lizetta bit her tongue, finding herself ridiculously amusing.

She had said she wanted to let go, to be free and easy, yet here she was, getting all worked up again. Besides, Remington only said he wouldn't get engaged now because she and he weren't officially divorced yet!

It didn't mean he wouldn't get engaged or married to Evelina in the future. It was just a matter of time, so what was there for her to be so excited and hopeful about? Talked about being pathetic.

"Address."

Next to her, Remington's cool voice brought her back to the present, and Lizetta quickly gave

him the address.

It was the address of the new apartment she and Yolanda had rented, a place Remington had never been to.

It was only then that he looked at Lizetta again, "Why aren't you staying at the 'friendly' senior's place anymore?"

His tone was sarcastic. Lizetta shot him a look, "Don't know what you're talking about."

Remington let out a soft chuckle and didn't dwell on it. After all, her moving out from Hogan's apartment was something that made him feel rather pleased.

Because of this, his voice softened a bit as he said, "I don't know the way; set up the navigation."

"Alright."

Leaning forward, Lizetta set the navigation, and the voice prompts started.

The car ride was smooth, and the atmosphere inside was unusually calm, the most peaceful it had been in a while.

Lizetta thought perhaps it was because they had both decided to let go and were working toward which made their interactions less fraught with tension.

She pulled out a wet wipe to clean her phone and hands.

Thinking back to the slap she had given earlier, Lizetta felt the lingering disgust on her hand. and meticulously cleaned herself. Then, recalling that Remington had also grabbed that guy's hand, she offered without thinking, "Do you want to clean it too?"

As she spoke, she pulled out another wet wipe and held it out to Remington. Unexpectedly, Remington didn't take it but instead stretched his hand towards her, "I'm driving."

Clearly, he wanted her to do the honors. Lizetta, looking at his outstretched, long-fingered hand, instantly regretted her offer.

But now, not helping would be awkward and would make her seem ungrateful and pretentious. After a brief pause, Lizetta took Remington's hand and started meticulously wiping his palm and fingers with the wet wipe.

As she wiped his long ring finger, her movements slowed, and her gaze fell on the ring.

“Why are you still wearing your wedding ring?”

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He never used to wear it before, but now that their marriage has hit rock bottom, he was suddenly all about that wedding band, clinging to it like a lifeline.

Thinking about Remington shacking up in the marital home at Oakridge Heights during this time made Lizetta’s heart skip a beat, like someone had chucked a stone into a calm pond out of nowhere.

But then, Remington abruptly pulled his hand away, giving her a frosty look, and said, “Don’t overthink it; I just forgot to take it off.”

Lizetta’s heart, already a mess of emotions, froze over with those words. She forced a smile, stiff and awkward, and said, “Let me help you take it off then.”

As she reached for Remington’s hand again, he frowned, “I’m driving here; stop distracting me.”

Lizetta stared at his stern profile, her mind drifting back to the first time Remington had put on the wedding ring.

By then, they’d been legally married over months. He’d just returned from abroad, and that evening, he was in his study. She’d burst in, giddy with excitement, holding the ring box.

“Remi, guess what I’ve got?” She stood there, ring box in hand behind her back.

Remington, eyes glued to his documents, replied with an indifferent tone, “I don’t know.”

She walked up to him, “Come on, take a guess.”

He frowned, "Lizetta, I'm busy; get out."

"Ok" she felt a sting but refused to back down. Instead, she knelt beside him on one knee, It up with a forced smile, unable to contain herself from revealing the secret she held behind her back.

"Dummy Remi, it's our wedding rings! Let me put it on you; see if it fits, okay?"

She opened the velvet box and reached for his hand with the ring. But he abruptly lifted his hand, his voice grave, "I'm about to start a video conference; leave now."

Feeling both hurt and embarrassed, she still didn't give up. Clinging to his leg, stubborn and wilful, she insisted, "Put it on, and I'll leave. If not, I'm sticking around all night, and you won't be able to do your video conference!"

He must have been fed up with her nagging, so he let her slip the ring onto his finger. She was thrilled, pecked him quickly on the cheek, and skipped out of the study.

That night, she lay in bed, staring at the ring on her finger and grinning like a fool. She even had a beautiful dream about their wedding, where they exchanged rings and took their vows solemnly.

But came morning, she found that he'd taken the ring off again, and from then on, he'd only wear it when they went to visit Fiona at the family house.

Back then, her heart was ablaze with passion, and she was bold. Even if Remington objected, she'd shamelessly pester him until he wore that wedding ring.

But now, her heart had cooled, and even asking him why he still wore it took gathering half a day's courage. She didn't even want to see him with that ring anymore, it was an eyesore.

Lizetta stubbornly fixed her gaze on Remington, saying, "It'll be quick. I promise I won't disturb your driving. Besides, I forced that ring on you in the past, so it's only right I'm the one to take it off now, to bring things full circle."

Right on cue, the traffic light turned red. Remington stopped the car, and Lizetta cracked a smile, "Seems like fate agrees."

She reached for his hand, but he dodged her grasp. Lizetta was taken aback, staring at him in confusion.

Remington looked back at her, "You really don't want me wearing it that much?"

She nodded slightly, and a dark look flashed in Remington's deep eyes. He scoffed, "Fine."

He slipped the ring off himself but, in the next instant, rolled down the window, turned, and flung the ring out with force.

"Remington!"

Lizetta saw his action, her heart jolted, and she almost instinctively reached out of the car window on his side, as if trying to catch something.

Remington turned back, grabbed Lizetta's wrist, and yanked her closer, bridging the gap between them

He ad her down, up close and personal, "You said it was a bother, I tossed it, so why the fuss?"

Chapter 188

Lizetta was getting the death stare from him, and it felt like her heart had just shriveled up into a tight knot.

Her throat was dry as a bone, like it was stuffe with cotton that was slowly soaking up water, making it hard and painful to swallow, lc. alone breathe.

After a beat, she managed a shrug and a smile, “That men’s ring might not have the biggest diamond, but it sure wasn’t cheap. No need to toss it just because you’re not wearing it.”

Remington snorted impassively, “If it bugs you that much, feel free to hop out and look for it now.

For a sec, Lizetta actually considered bailing out of the car. She was gripping her pants so tight to stop herself from making that pathetic move and just shook her head, “As long as you’re not torn up about it.”

Remington glanced at her nonchalant act and let out a self-mocking smirk; then he let go of whatever he was holding on to.

Lizetta eased back into her seat, and the man withdrew his icy gaze, adding, “What do I have to be torn up about? When I remarry, I’ll just buy a better one.”

Lizetta felt stung a bit, but she nodded and kept quiet.

The rest of the ride, neither of them spoke a word. When Remington’s car pulled up to the neighborhood entrance, Lizetta finally broke the silence.

“No need to go any further; I’ll just get out here on the curb. Thanks for bailing me out today and for the ride.”

Remington didn’t respond, but he slowed the car to a stop by the roadside.

Asita reached for the door, she finally heard his voice from behind. He asked, “How’s the compensation going? The 3 million?”

Lizetta turned around, “One month’s time, 19 days left. I remember the agreement.”

“Good, get out!”

She opened the door, stepped out, and the Cullinan didn't waste a second, speeding off right away.

Lizetta stood there on the curb, watching the car disappear into the distance before she finally started walking towards her complex.

The next day, while Lizetta was tweaking some dance moves for Hamilton and the rest, she got a call – Joseph had taken a turn for the worse and was back in the hospital.

She was beside herself with worry, rushing to the hospital only to find that she couldn't see Joseph, but instead ran into Hanna waiting outside his room.

Hanna crossed her arms as she eyed Lizetta, "Gotta admit, you showing up so fast shows you've still got a shred of conscience; seems like you do care about Joseph after all."

Lizetta stepped closer, "How's he doing? Is the relapse for real, or is this just another one of your tricks?"

Hanna's eyes turned frosty, "I would never curs my own son!"

Lizetta figured she had a point and looked concerned, "I want to see him."

She moved to push the door to his room, but Hanna grabbed her hand, uttering, "He just got a shot and is sleeping. Don't disturb him. Come with me for a chat."

Hanna led the way to the emergency exit, and Lizetta took a quick peek through the window into the room, spotted Joseph asleep, and then turned to follow Hanna.

As they entered the emergency exit, Hanna cut straight to the chase, "I heard from Eve that you and Remington have signed the divorce papers; is that true?"

Lizetta nodded, "Yeah, it's done."

“You need to pay back 3 million for the agreement to take effect?”

Lizetta had shown the agreement to Evelina to get the contract with Skyward Studios. Clearly, Evelina had blabbed to Hanna. Lizetta nodded again, “That’s right.”

Hanna sneered inwardly. This wasn’t Remington wanting a divorce. 3 million was chump change to Remington. If he really wanted out, why bring up the money?

He probably figured Lizetta couldn’t cough up the cash, and that was his way of dragging his feet.

But Hanna knew her son too well. Since Remington had signed the papers, if Lizetta actually came sick,

with the 3 million, his pride would force him to keep his word, even if it made him regret.

No turning back then. And her job now was to help Lizetta get that money ASAP. Give her a nudge, and cut off any chance of a reconciliation for good.

Chapter 189

You think you can rake in 3 million? Lizetta, you’re really just putting on a show, aren’t you? You never planned to leave the Dashiell family, did you?”

Hanna was dripping with disdain. Lizetta had never even worked a day in her life, just a leech on the family.

Without the Dashiell family, where would Lizetta come up with 3 million? It was all just playing hard to get.

Hanna never hid her dislike and contempt for Lizetta. In her eyes, Lizetta was like from rags to riches – why would she let go so easily?

Lizetta knew this all too well and tried to stay cool and collected, “Don’t worry. I signed the divorce papers, which means I’m determined to go through with it.”

But Hanna was still skeptical, “Swear on your life.”

Lizetta laughed, “Believe it or not, it’s up to you. I don’t have to make you believe me. I’m here to see Joseph today. If you don’t have anything else, I’ll be on my way.”

As Lizetta turned to leave, Hanna grabbed her, taunting her, “You’re too scared to swear! Showing your true colors now, aren’t you?”

Lizetta frowned, “There’s no need to provoke me. If you don’t believe my makes no difference. The deadline Remington and I agreed upon is just over ten days away. Chill out, you’ll see what happens soon enough.

But if you keep pestering me, and I get all riled up and change my mind, don’t blame me if I decide not to go through with the divorce.”

“You’re threatening me?!” Hanna was furious.

Lize... pulled her hand away, “If that’s what you think, then so be it.”

Hanna watched Lizetta, feeling a lump in her chest. She was nothing like the docile, compromising daughter-in-law from before. She seemed serious this time.

But the Dashiell family could kick her out, turn her into an outcast. Lizetta, a pitiful creature raised by the Dashiell family, acting all high and mighty as if the family was some kind of hellhole?

Hanna was extremely uncomfortable and took a deep breath before nodding, “If that’s the case, then there’s no need to wait another ten days. Here’s the 3 million I’ve prepared. Contact Remington now and go to City Hall to get the paperwork done.”

She pulled out a bank card from her bag and handed it to Lizetta, who glanced at it and shook her head, "I don't need it."

"Oh, you don't need it, or is it that you really don't plan on getting a divorce? Lizetta, if it hadn't been for the Dashiell family taking you in 14 years ago, you'd probably be dead in a ditch

You should be grateful and know your place ainder

You and Remington were never in the same league, and if it wasn't for the disgraceful thing you did four years ago, and the way you charmed and deceived Fiona into taking your side, would you have become Mrs. Dashiell?

Lizetta had always known what Hanna thought and that most people probably shared her opinion

But she didn't realize just how ugly and hurtful those words could sound coming from Hannel's mouth, and how much she couldn't bear them. Her complexion turned pale, her hands clenched, and she reiterated.

I will get a divorce, and I'm not taking your card because Remington and I agreed that I would pay back this money with my own abilities, not by playing tricks to stall for time. Rest assured, even if I have to draw my blood, sell my organs or beg on the streets, I will pay back every penny of those 2 million

Her clear eyes reddened, but they were filled with determination.

Hanna looked at Lizetta, and after a moment, she smirked slightly, tucking the card back into her purse, "Alright, I'll take your word for it this time. Just don't go back to playing the high-and-mighty poor girl

Lizetta smiled, "So once I've paid back this money, will that mean I'm done with the Dashiell family?

No longer having to carry the heavy burden of gratitude, no longer looked down upon by Hanna every day, deprived of self-respect.

Just as long as she paid back those 3 million dollars, she could finally stand up straight and be if her own life.

Chapter 190

Hanna chuckled, “Alright, as long as you make a clean break and divorce Remington lickety-split, you’re square with the Dashiell family. I’m not a heartless elder, after all. You grew up with the Dashiells, and if you ever hit a rough patch and come knocking, I’ll lend a hand for Joseph’s sake.”

Lizetta sure as heck wouldn’t go begging to Hanna. She just gave Hanna a faint smile and turned to swing open the emergency exit door.

What Lizetta hadn’t anticipated was as she barely took a few steps, she bumped into Remington, who was stepping out of the adjacent elevator.

The man’s gaze swept over her, pausing on Lizetta’s pale face and reddened eyes. Lizetta froze, and then quickly ducked her head.

“Remington?” By then, Hanna had also emerged from the emergency exit.

Remington’s eyes flickered thoughtfully between the two women. Hanna hurried over, explaining, “Lizetta came to see Joseph. We just had a chat about his illness, and Lizetta got all teary-eyed because she’s so worried about him.”

“Really?” Remington’s eyes locked onto Lizetta.

Lizetta lifted her head, her eyes now clear and dry, and nodded, “I’ve seen Joseph. Can’t do much more here, so I’m heading out.”

She stepped forward and pressed the elevator button.

Hanna walked over and tugged at Remington, "Remington, come with me to see Dr. James. Isn't he the specialist you brought in for Joseph? Why is Joseph's condition still getting worse?"

Lizetta glanced at the man's retreating figure and stepped into the elevator.

Buemington paused, looking down at Hanna with an intimidating gaze, "What did you just say to her?"

Hanna frowned, "Are you questioning me? What could I have said? Just talked about Joseph's illness."

Remington stared at Hanna, his lips curling slightly, "Do you need to sneak into an emergency exit to discuss Joseph's illness?"

Seeing she couldn't bluff her way out, Hanna snapped, "I didn't say much. I heard you. signed the divorce papers, so I was just checking if it's true."

"Who told you we signed divorce papers?" Remington's eyes turned icy.

He had told no one about the divorce agreement with Lizetta. As far as he was concerned, that agreement was meant to be voided sooner or later.

told me her would know Hanna scowled.

added with a ser, Remington, she's got her wings now and she's dead set on divorce en sold me she'd draw her blood, self her organs or beg on the streets to pay back the 3 million and be done with our family. I've already agreed to it."

Remington's fists clenched suddenly, storm ck is brewing in his eyes. Great, she'd rather bleed dry than be clear of him. That woman truly couldn't wait to broadcast their divorce to the whole world.

"Pennington, she's heartless now, don't you go soft on her again. The Dashiell family raised her for years, treating her like a pampered lady. After owing so much to the Dashiells, not only is she ungrateful, but now she harbors a grudge."

Hanna's mockery was cut short by Remington's cold interruption.

"She never owed the Dashiell family anything!"

"How can she not owe us?"

"She saved grandma's life, that alone makes it our duty to provide for her. And since she married me, she's my rightful wife. Doesn't