

Illusions 221

Chapter 221

Hogan returned the smile with a laid-back air.

“Thaddeus is my patient, and whether I quit or not, I’ve got his back. Liz is also a buddy

and my junior, so it’s only right for me to stick around and lend a hand.”

He didn’t budge an inch, his gaze settling on Remington’s big hand draped around Lizetta, and with a grin, he added.

“Mr. Dashiell, since you and Liz are officially divorced, you’d think keeping your distance would be the way to go, right?”

Remington tightened his grip on Lizetta’s shoulder, but his expression was cool as a cucumber, and he raised an eyebrow.

“Just paperwork for now. Nothing’s set in stone until the dust settles, am I right, Mrs.

Dashiell?”

He leaned in close to whisper in Lizetta’s ear.

Lizetta caught the threatening undertone in his words; he was practically a hair’s breadth away from saying he’d cancel the divorce if she stepped out of line.

Lizetta pursed her lips, shot him a glare, and then turned to Hogan with an apologetic smile.

“Thanks for stepping in just now, Hogan. You must be swamped, and I can handle my own stuff, so I won’t keep you any longer.”

Hogan looked at Lizetta with a tender gaze, nodded with a smile, and said, “If you need anything, just holler.”

After he left, Lizetta turned to Remington, “Like Hogan said, we’re divorced. I’d appreciate it, Mr. Dashiell, if you’d keep your distance. Can you let go now?”

The softness that had appeared in Remington’s eyes at the departure of his rival quickly sharpened again at her frosty words.

Evelina was green with envy at their continued close interaction.

She nudged Jolin..

Jolin approached Remington with a gloomy face, “Remington, Liz is such a homebird, hardly ever been far from home, and now she’s suddenly planning to jet off abroad with her brother. How can I rest easy? Better to leave Thaddeus for me to care for, so Liz can have a breather overseas.”

Jolin couldn’t outright ask for the one million in front of Remington, so she played the

card of wanting to keep Thaddeus behind.

If she had Thaddeus under her thumb, Lizetta would have no choice but to keep the money flowing back, right?

Apollo and his wife wanted to chime in, but Remington’s frosty glance shut them up.

His presence was so commanding that the trio instantly fizzled out.

Lizetta couldn't help but scoff at their cowardice.

But before she could say anything, Remington nodded, "I think that makes sense. It's best for Thaddeus to stay here."

The trio lit up with joy, clearly not expecting Remington to take their side.

Lizetta, on the other hand, felt a chill run through her body, her blood seemingly running cold.

Evelina frowned, her mind racing.

Remington couldn't possibly be so petty as to side with Jolin's lot out of jealousy from the divorce, just to torment Lizetta.

Thaddeus was someone Lizetta cared about deeply. Could it be that Remington didn't truly want a divorce and was planning to keep Thaddeus as leverage to hold on to

Lizetta?

This couldn't be happening!

Right then, Evelina deeply regretted not urging Lizetta to leave the country smoothly and swiftly.

"What gives you the right to decide for me!"

Lizetta shoved Remington hard, and though he released her shoulder, he grabbed her

wrist.

He shot a look to Cedric, who stepped forward to escort Jolin's trio.

“Mr. Dashiell and his wife need to talk. Why don’t you three come with me? We’ll make sure you’re satisfied with the outcome.”

Knowing that Remington was on their side, the trio didn’t ask any questions and cheerfully followed Cedric.

Evelina felt something was off and took a couple of steps to follow, only to be blocked by Cedric.

“Ms. Hawthorne, better not to meddle, right? After all, you’re no longer part of the

Gardenia family.”

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Cedric was all polite but distant, which made Evelina stop dead in her tracks.

She turned around, only to find Remington already walking off with Lizetta by the hand, leaving her stranded like a wallflower.

Evelina gritted her teeth in frustration and was about to give chase when the hospital room door opened and out came Yolanda, drying her hair.

Yolanda had just shielded Lizetta from a drive-by egging and had cleaned up in the restroom.

Spotting Evelina at the door, she marched right up and grabbed her.

“Listen up, Evelina, what’s with the sneaky lurking? Spill it—are you the snitch cozying up to Jolin, the one who got eggs chucked at Liz, trying to air her dirty laundry live online? Was that your doing?”

Evelina shook off her grip, “What the heck are you blabbering about? I don’t have a clue!! just came to check on Thaddeus and stumbled upon this hot mess. Don’t pin this on me! If you’ve got proof, go

ahead and call the cops. Quit this vigilante act. Got a few screws loose, huh? Or perhaps you haven't forgotten your little time-out in the slammer last time?"

The tables had turned. The tall guy live-streaming had bolted without so much as grabbing his phone, clutching his stomach as he made a run for it.

Those who had thrown the eggs were long gone.

Evelina figured Yolanda and Lizetta were clueless without any evidence, which is why she was all cool as a cucumber, sarcasm on full blast.

But Yolanda's eyes lit up, and she nodded vigorously, "Right on, I'm calling the cops now. After all, that man left his phone in my hands. Wonder if the cops can follow the breadcrumbs to the prankster behind this."

Evelina's face stiffened, cursing under her breath at such incompetence.

How could someone screw up a live stream and let a woman snatch his phone?

Yolanda took one look at Evelina's sour face and actually whipped out the phone to call the cops, right then and there.

Meanwhile, in the parking lot.

Lizetta was dragged into the car by Remington, fuming with rage.

"Remington, what's it to you what happens with my family? I'm dead set on getting my

brother abroad for treatment, and you better stay out of it! And as for the Gardenia family's leeches, don't think you can make me bleed just to polish your image. I'm not having it!"

Lizetta thought Remington was taking Jolin's side just to avoid gossip about being heartless and not helping out his ex-mother-in-law.

He cared about his rep more than her well-being, but she'd see if she was okay with that. Her eyes red with anger, she glared at the man beside her, almost ready to lash out at him.

Compared to her outburst, he was as cool as a cucumber, simply saying.

"Who said I was gonna let them bleed you dry? I only mentioned your brother should stay in the country."

Lizetta frowned. "What are you getting at?"

Remington's eyes were icy, "Lizetta, seems like you didn't take my words to heart. I've told you I'd get a better specialist for your brother. I've also said Hogan isn't as innocent as you think. I warned you to steer clear of him! Defying me, looking for trouble, are you?" His grip on her wrist tightened, and she stumbled uncontrollably into his embrace.

Her nose bumped against his firm chest, a wave of pain and tears welling up in her eyes. She looked up at him with fiery eyes, seething,

"Arrogant jerk, lousy ex-husband, who are you to dictate who I'm with! I am indeed with Hogan, we're going abroad and I'll..."

Before Lizetta could finish her reckless words, his large hand clamped over her cheeks, silencing her.

Her eyes glared at him while his seemed to hold a brewing storm, he coldly said,

"Keep talking if you're not afraid I'll end him!"

His possessiveness was too much like a jealous husband catching his wife cheating. Lizetta just stared at him, her eyes flickering, and then she fell silent From

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Lizetta racked her brain a bit and furrowed her brows.

Seeing her simmer down, Remington let go, and noticing the faint red mark his pinch left on her delicate cheek, he scowled and said in a deep voice,

“Did you toss your good girl act to the dogs?”

Lizetta pouted, “Exactly, fed it right to you.”

She wasn’t wrong; her former sweetness had indeed all been given to Remington.

Remington, being called a dog, shockingly found he was getting used to it.

This realization sent a chill across his handsome features. As he was nursing a headache, Lizetta suddenly piped up.

“Are you jealous?”

Remington’s eyes flickered, and when he looked at Lizetta, he curled his thin lips into a mocking smile and said,

“We’re just not officially divorced yet, that’s all.”

Lizetta, not willing to give in, retorted, “So, in a month’s time, I can be with Hogan, is that. what you mean?”

Remington, barely keeping his temper in check, replied coolly,

“Lizetta, any woman of mine, even if I don’t want her anymore, nobody else better dare touch. If they do, they gotta be ready to face the consequences.”

In other words, if Lizetta wasn’t afraid of Hogan getting into trouble, she might as well go ahead and provoke him.

“So basically, you still don’t approve of me being with him, isn’t that just jealousy?”

Lizetta stared at Remington, her heart betraying her with its pounding.

Remington’s lips pressed together tightly, “Think whatever you want, but Hogan is out of the question.”

There was no sign of anger or panic for being found out.

His demeanor was calm and indifferent; he simply didn’t allow her to be with Hogan, and it might just be because he had a beef with the guy.

Lizetta thought back to how Remington had indeed warned her several times to stay away from Hogan, her heartbeat gradually settled.

She laughed self-deprecatingly, looking down, “Hogan is really a good person.”

Remington scoffed coldly, “You don’t even know what his family does for a living, what his status is. He’s all cloak and dagger. Can’t you see what he’s scheming? It wouldn’t be surprising if he whisked you away and sold you abroad.”

Lizetta countered, “I’m just friends with Hogan, why would he need to tell me about his family background?”

It’s not like they were matchmaking or dating.

Seeing Lizetta brush it off, Remington chuckled again.

“The medical research institute he’s getting your brother into is actually one he invested in and created himself. Still think he’s a saint with no ulterior motives?”

“What? How is that possible?”

Lizetta was shocked. Hogan had clearly said that the medical institution was a joint venture by several Astoria hospitals.

Seeing her only trust Hogan and constantly doubt his own words, Remington felt as if his chest was blocked by a boulder.

He tossed a file in front of Lizetta.

Frowning, Lizetta pulled it out and took a look. It was the complete dossier on the Astoria research institute, investigated by Remington, and Hogan’s name was clearly listed as

the sole investor.

“To get this medical research institute up and running, to maintain operations, to develop pharmaceutical achievements, it costs at least several billion a year. Lizetta, can you still say he’s a good guy now?”

Holding the dossier, Lizetta felt a heavy weight in her heart, her breathing erratic.

She hadn’t expected this.

Seeing her head down, silent, Remington softened his tone and said,

“I’ll handle the Gardenia family matters. You listen to me about your brother; just keep him in the hospital here. I’m around; what’s there to worry about? And with his physical condition, have you thought about whether he can endure a long flight? What if something happens; can you bear that?”

Long-distance flights could be too much for sick people; they might not be able to withstand it, not to mention adapting to a new environment abroad.

It wasn’t out of the question that Thaddeus might not be able to handle all that.

Before. Lizetta was just too trusting of Hogan’s words and too eager for Thaddeus to

receive advanced medical treatment, hoping Thaddeus would wake up.

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So when Hogan said it was all good, Lizetta bought it hook, line, and sinker.

But now that she’s started to question Hogan, she’s getting the heebie-jeebies thinking about it.

Head down, she was blushing from the back of her neck to her ears.

She realized she had gotten Remington all wrong before; he was just being thoughtful and looking out for her.

Remington’s gaze fell on the woman’s soft, delicate nape, and the frost around him started to melt away.

This girl had always been like this; when she felt guilty about screwing up, she hung her head low like a little quail, cheeks burning red.

He lifted his hand and lightly grazed Lizetta’s neck with his knuckles.

A tingle spread from her spine all the way up her neck.

Lizetta shivered, covered her neck with her hand, and looked up to meet Remington's eyes, which held a fleeting smile.

She caught that momentary smirk and suddenly felt all awkward and fidgety, like she'd been zapped with electricity.

"Look, even though it's like this, now that we're divorced, I can't let you take care of my brother. How about this, have Cedric send me a breakdown of my brother's medical costs every month, and I'll transfer the money to you."

Lizetta spoke up timidly, but Remington's face, which had softened a bit, frosted over

again.

"You think I'm short on cash for medical bills?" he scoffed.

Remington obviously wasn't short on cash, but Lizetta didn't want to be in his debt

anymore.

She insisted, "My brother is my responsibility. It's not right to push it off on you."

"Ask Cedric if that medical money is enough to cover his overtime pay."

Lizetta was stumped.

She wanted to say that if Cedric didn't have time, any old secretary could do it, but then she heard Remington add.

"Thaddeus is Evelina's brother too."

Lizetta felt her blood run cold, realizing how ridiculous she was being.

That's right, Evelina always put on a show, acting all caring and not forgetting her poor family even after returning to the Hawthorne family.

Over the years, the mother-daughter bond between Jolin and Evelina had grown even stronger than the bond between her and Jolin.

Once Evelina marries Remington, wouldn't Thaddeus still be Mrs. Dashiell's relative?

Thinking about how Remington had just appeared at the hospital with Evelina, Lizetta felt a tightness in her chest.

It hit her that she'd been delusional; Remington's actions were for Evelina.

If that was the case, why was she still being polite?

She didn't say another word and turned her gaze out the car window.

It was only then that Lizetta realized the car had already left the hospital parking lot and was speeding down the road.

She frowned, "Where are you taking me?"

"You'll know when we get there."

The car stopped at an unfamiliar villa.

Lizetta got out and was led by Remington towards the porch, where two black-clad bodyguards stood, seemingly guarding the place.

They stepped aside when they saw Remington.

He gestured for Lizetta to go in first, and without questioning, she walked in, only to see Shirley sitting on the living room sofa, looking panicked and pale.

When Shirley saw Lizetta, her wooden expression instantly turned frantic. She stood up and rushed at Lizetta, shrieking.

“Lizetta, you wretch, how dare you show your face here! Four years ago, you were the one who ditched Hogan, turning down the White family’s proposal and even plotting against Remi to get out of it. Now that you’re getting the cold shoulder from Remi and Hogan’s back on his feet, you regret it and want to pick Hogan again. How shameless can you be!”

Emotions running high, Shirley lunged to choke Lizetta.

But Lizetta just stood there, stunned, her mind unable to process.

What in the world was Shirley talking about?

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Shirley’s words left Lizetta so gobsmacked that her reaction was delayed by a split second, just long enough for Shirley’s hands to nearly throttle her.

Out of the blue, Remington swooped in from behind, grabbed Shirley’s hands, and chucked her away.

“Locked up for a full day and night and still no clue what you did wrong?”

Remington pulled Lizetta close, giving Shirley an icy stare as she lay crumpled on the floor.

Shirley hadn't realized Remington was in the mix. After clashing with Lizetta at the café, Cedric had hauled her off here with bodyguards to keep watch.

They'd kept her cooped up for over 24 hours without so much as a drop of water.

Now, Shirley was pale as a ghost, looking all worn out, her lips cracked and peeling from dryness.

No wonder she was spitting mad the second she laid eyes on Lizetta.

But with Remington's gaze on her, fear crept back in, and tears started to fall.

“Remi, Lizetta's already kicked you to the curb, and I'm your blood cousin, for crying out loud. How can you be so blind, taking her side like that? My parents and my brother are in the dark about me being locked up on the down-low. If they get wind of this, they'll surely stir up a storm with Grandma and Uncle to get me some justice.

“Done wrong and still got the nerve to pull rank with Grandma and Uncle? Shirley, I'm thinking maybe you're itching for a few more days in the slammer.”

Remington's voice was dripping with disdain as he wrapped his arm around Lizetta, ready to walk away.

Shirley was in panic mode now, well aware that in the Dashiell family, not even her parents playing second fiddle, let alone Fiona and Nathan, could lay a finger on Remington.

She was desperate not to be locked up again; she was practically starving.

Scrambling up from the floor, Shirley rushed forward, crying, "Remi, what do you want. from me? If I have to apologize to Lizetta, I'll do it, just say the word, please, I'm sorry."

But Lizetta hadn't expected Remington to bring her here to get an apology from Shirley.

Nor had she anticipated Shirley being locked up by Remington.

Recalling the insults flung at her in the café, Lizetta spoke up calmly.

"Don't bother! I don't need an apology, and I'm not in the forgiving mood. Apologies are easy, and Ms. Shirley, you've played this tune before."

What's the point, really? Just the other day, Shirley was strong-armed by Fiona into making amends with her at the family estate.

And what did it amount to? The very next moment, she was there at the café, cussing Lizetta out in front of a crowd with the foulest language.

Hearing Lizetta's response, Shirley thought she was playing it cool.

She faced Remington, all bold and brash, "Remi, you heard her, right? She doesn't want my apology. I'm truly remorseful. Since that's settled, I'll be on my way."

Thinking the ordeal was over, she made a beeline for the door, worried any delay might mean she wouldn't get out.

But the bodyguard at the door pushed her back inside.

Shirley's face went white as a sheet again, tears streaming down.

"Remi, what do you really want from me?"

Remington didn't even look at her, just cast his eyes down to Lizetta and asked, "You sure you don't want an apology?"

Lizetta let out a self-deprecating laugh, "What good would apologies do with someone like Shirley? They're utterly meaningless, only embolden her, and leave her holding a grudge, waiting to lash out even worse next time."

Remington's expression turned frostier at Lizetta's words. He shot a glance at Shirley.

"Apologies time and again? Shirley, seems like you've been up to more than I knew about."

Shirley trembled, her face turning ghostly pale, wishing she could tear Lizetta's mouth for speaking.

Then it hit her. Lizetta wasn't being kind by refusing the apology. It was a tactical retreat, and now Remi seemed even more peeved.

Shirley shook her head, a picture of injustice.

"It's not like that. If Lizetta were a decent sister-in-law, if her conduct was clean and she treated Remi right, why would I have an issue with her? It's clear as day she's been bewitching, scheming for your heart, hogging Eve's rightful place as your wife, and still stringing Hogan along."

"Zip it!" Remington cut her off with a thunderous voice.

It was rare for him to snap like that, and Shirley immediately shivered, breaking out in a

cold sweat.

The video of Shirley's tirade against Lizetta at the café had been recorded and sent to Remington by Cedric. Having seen the video, Remington had decided to lock Shirley up for some self-reflection.

Clearly, though, Shirley had missed her chance for a lenient outcome.

Lizetta, frowning, then asked, "I've always been on the up and up with Hogan. What's this about the White family proposing marriage, and something about me not being into Hogan four years ago? What's that all about?"

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Lizetta was eyeballing Shirley, but she didn't notice Remington at her side also casting a glance her way, his expression unusually tinged with surprise.

Shirley, meanwhile, was frowning and grinding her teeth as she stared at Lizetta, her face a mix of sarcasm and astonishment.

The way Lizetta asked the question, it was as if she had zero clue about the whole thing. No way, Lizetta had to be faking it.

Shirley let out a scoff, dripping with sarcasm: "Cut the act, will ya? Hogan's the new hotshot in Zion City. Four years back, Hogan got into a car wreck, ended up

his legs.

all messed up. Mrs. White came knocking at the Dashiell family's door, wanted to set you up with Hogan. You're telling me you didn't drug Remi to dodge that bullet?"

"Enough!" Remington's voice cut through, heavy and firm, as he signaled his bodyguards to step forward.

As the bodyguards dragged Shirley towards the villa, Remington wrapped an arm around Lizetta's shoulder and said, "Since you don't need her apology, let's bounce."

Lizetta's mind was a hot mess. Frowning, she followed Remington out on autopilot.

Back in the living room, Shirley, being hauled away by the bodyguards, was freaking out, yelling at the top of her lungs.

"Remi, you gonna keep me locked up? Don't leave me! Lizetta, come back! Isn't my apology enough? Let go of me! How long do you plan to keep me here? Trying to starve me to death or what? Even if you lock me up, at least feed me, for heaven's sake!"

One of the bodyguards sat Shirley down on the couch and dryly asked, "Ms. Shirley, you want something to eat?"

"No kidding. I've been starving for a whole day and night, I'm dizzy and seeing stars! If you still recognize me as Ms. Shirley, then show some respect. Even if Remi's mad and wants to punish me, he's just grounding me for some reflection. He'll let me out eventually. I want an exquisite meal. Go get it now!"

Shirley rattled off a list of dishes from several different joints, ordering the bodyguards to fetch them.

The bodyguard gave a thin smile. "Ms. Shirley, please hold on."

After they left, Shirley sat there with her legs crossed, shaking her foot, clutching her growling stomach.

So what if Remington had her cooped up? She was the only heiress among the Dashiell

grandkids, what did Lizetta count for?

She didn't buy for a second that Remi would really do anything to her over Lizetta.

The bodyguards were just scared something might happen to her, prepared to cater to her needs. And Remi, after hearing all those nasty things from Lizetta, must be giving her a piece of his mind right now,

and would surely come to let Shirley out soon.

However, just as Shirley was daydreaming about the feast and drooling over it, the two bodyguards came back in.

They set down ten bottles of fiery red liquid in front of Shirley and said, “Ms. Shirley, here’s the drink Mr. Remington has prepared for you. He says you gotta finish these today, or don’t even think about leaving this place.”

“What the heck is this?” Shirley shot up, staring at the ten bottles of liquid, her face turning pale.

If she wasn’t seeing things, that looked like...

“Pure chili water,” came the bodyguard’s confirmation of Shirley’s guess.

“Has Remi lost his mind? I’ll get a stomach ulcer if I drink these!” she protested.

She’d been starved for a whole day and night, her stomach empty. Ten bottles of chili water would do her in, wouldn’t they?

“Mr. Remington says you’ll learn what it’s like to speak without thinking once you’ve had these. Don’t worry, Ms. Shirley, the ambulance will be here any minute. Do you want to drink it yourself, or do you need us to assist you?”

“I don’t want it!” Shirley’s face went white with fear, and she tried to run but was caught by a bodyguard and pushed back onto the sofa.

The other bodyguard approached with the first bottle of chili water.

One held Shirley down, the other pried open her mouth and poured the chili water down

her throat.

In no time, Shirley felt a burning pain from her lips to her stomach, coughing and gagging, tears streaming down her face.

Remington was torturing her just to avenge Lizetta!

Shirley was filled with hatred, but also a deep fear.

In the car, the atmosphere was tense.

Remington didn't tell the driver to get in. Lizetta sat there stiffly, fiddling with her fingers, Shirley's words still echoing in her head.

She turned to the man beside her, "Did the White family really come to the Dashiell family with a marriage proposal four years ago?"

Remington's gaze was dark and deep as he looked back at Lizetta, "Yes. Did you truly not know anything about it?"

Chapter 227

Remington's words hit Lizetta like a punch to the gut, making her eyes well up with tears as she glared at him.

"What are you trying to say? You think I'm just like Shirley, that I drugged your drink to dodge marrying Hogan?"

Remington clammed up, a slight frown creasing his forehead.

His silence was as good as an admission—he really did believe those things about her.

Lizetta knew she couldn't clear the air about the night four when he was

years an drugged, and the misunderstanding had festered ever since.

But she hadn't expected him to think even lower of her.

Her eyes were red-rimmed, but she refused to let the tears fall, just biting her lip so hard. it started to bleed.

Noticing this, Remington reached out to touch her cheek, his voice deep and commanding.

"Let go."

But Lizetta wouldn't budge, stubbornly glaring daggers at Remington.

She was about to chew through her lips. A flash of intensity crossed his eyes as he pulled her into his arms, lowering his head to pry her lips apart with his own.

At that moment, Lizetta let go and chomped down on his chiseled jawline.

"Yikes!"

She bit down hard. Remington grunted, trying to shake her off.

Sensing his resistance, Lizetta wrapped her arms around his neck, kneeling up in his embrace to bite even harder.

Remington pinched the back of her neck, applying pressure until she finally let go.

By then, his jaw was sporting a deep bite mark, oozing with blood.

Touching it, his fingers came away red, and he was instantly at his wit's end.

"Lizetta! Go ahead, keep acting out!"

He wouldn't have gotten mad if she'd bitten anywhere else, but she just had to leave a big honking bite mark on his face, clearly made by a woman, no less. How was he supposed to show his face around town now?

His expression turned icy, but Lizetta just mocked him with red eyes and a scornful laugh.

"Mr. Dashiell, are you worried about saving face? After getting drugged by someone like me, you've already been the talk of Zion City. You lost face a long time ago!"

With that, Lizetta turned to yank open the car door to leave.

But Remington's arm reached out from behind, pulling her back and plopping her down on his lap.

"Let me go, I want out!"

"Let's get things straight first," Remington said firmly.

Hearing his deep voice, Lizetta couldn't hold back her tears any longer.

She choked up. "What's there to talk about? You've already pegged me as that kind of person. I've explained more than once, but no matter what I say, you never believe me! If I explain now, you'll believe me?"

She had told him more than once that the drugs weren't her doing, but he never believed

her.

Remington stiffened for a moment before responding in a slow, deep voice, "This time you say it, I'll believe you."

He hadn't believed her before because he thought she really was trying to escape the White family's proposal, afraid to leave the Dashiell family, so she drugged him.

But if four years ago, Lizetta genuinely didn't know about the White family's proposal, then it didn't make sense anymore.

Hearing Remington's promise, Lizetta looked up.

Her tearful eyes searched his, as if to confirm he was for real.

Remington sighed and leaned in to kiss her reddened eyes, "Let's both calm down and talk this through."

Soothed by his gentle voice, Lizetta nodded and asked, "When did the White family propose? Who did they speak to? I really had no clue."

"Helen came to talk to Grandma a week before your 18th birthday. At that time, Hogan had been in a car accident and was quite down. Helen came asking for your hand. saying her son was your classmate and had always liked you. Now with her son feeling so low, she wanted to ask for an engagement so you could come over to the White family and take care of Hogan until you both came of age to marry. She admitted it was selfish, but pleaded with Grandma to understand a mother's heart, promising a sizable dowry in exchange."

Chapter 228

"Grandma never mentioned this to me, she didn't even ask me!" Lizetta tugged at Remington's sleeve, hoping he'd believe her this time.

Remington nodded, "Grandma turned down the White family."

It made sense to Lizetta. Her grandma truly loved her and at that time, she was just eighteen, and Hogan was disabled from a car accident.

Grandma felt sorry for her, turned down Helen, and didn't tell her about it, which was understandable.

"If Grandma already said no, why would you think I'd drug you over this?"

"Because a couple of days after Grandma refused, Hogan's father, Lester White, came to my dad. The White family offered more chips on the table, and my father agreed. My mother said she had asked for your opinion."

Remington thought back to four years ago, when Lizetta was about to turn eighteen and he was twenty-four.

He took over the Dashiell family at twenty and founded the Starlight Group in the first year. Only he knew the effort it took to grow the Starlight Group into a behemoth in just a

few years.

At that time, he was busy with his career, mostly traveling, and didn't have the energy to pay attention to many things at home, nor was he the first to know.

He remembered rushing to make time to come back the day before Lizetta's eighteenth birthday after working overtime for half a month straight.

That night, it was Hanna who told him about the White family's marriage proposal.

She said Nathan had agreed, and she had informed Lizetta, who said she'd think about it.

was furious at the time, blew up at Hanna, and had a nasty fight with Nathan, but he flat-out refused the marriage proposal.

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He planned to tell Lizetta the next day, so she wouldn't worry, that her brother wouldn't let her marry just anyone or get bullied.

But then the company had another crisis, and he rushed off to deal with it, not returning home until late.

Before he could tell Lizetta, that incident happened that night.

Later, he checked – the drinks he had that night were all given to him by Lizetta, and only she had access to his room.

Plus, the torn paper packet with drug residue was found in the trash bag from Lizetta's

room.

He felt an unprecedented sense of betrayal and sadness, thinking Lizetta was so scared that she drugged him to avoid the White family's proposal, to avoid marrying a disabled

man.

Now it seemed, Hanna had lied.

Hanna never really talked to Lizetta about it.

“No one ever asked me about it,” Lizetta said coldly, wiping away her tears.

She stared at Remington and said once more.

“Believe it or not, I only heard about this today! And for the last time, I definitely didn’t drug you that night.”

Remington looked into her teary eyes and rubbed her head.

“I’ll look into that day’s events again.”

“Mhm.” Lizetta hummed, her head lowered, not saying anything more.

Just then, Remington suddenly lifted her chin, forcing her to look at him. His deep eyes were filled with intense, unresolved emotions.

He looked at her and asked in a hoarse voice, “These four years, they’ve been tough on you, haven’t they?”

When he asked that, Lizetta’s tears, which she had just stopped, threatened to flow again. Unlike the angry tears from before, these were sadder, as if his gentle question had touched all the pain and grievances she’d held inside.

Chapter 229

Feeling wronged?

How could she not feel wronged? She was framed for four years.

That night, she didn’t do a thing, yet overnight, she became the laughing stock of Zion City’s high society.

She was labeled as the slut who slept with her own brother, loathed and spat on by everyone for four years.

She was turned into someone who's been pointed at by thousands, labeled as ungrateful, scheming, and insatiably greedy.

Back then, she thought she could handle being misunderstood and badmouthed by everyone, as long as her brother believed her.

But he didn't. He looked at her the same way, and cast her into hell, never to return.

She had no one to share these grievances with.

Now he was ready to believe her, but she didn't need it anymore.

Lizetta looked up, her eyes clear and completely tear-free, leaving only a void of desolate sadness.

She cracked a smile and said, "It doesn't matter anymore. I've been slandered for four years, seen as the stain on your reputation, Remington. Now that we're divorced, I don't have to play the villain anymore."

Remington felt like her words froze his blood; his face went pale.

He would have preferred her to scream, hit, or cry hysterically at him, rather than her calm declaration that it's all in the past.

His lips parted, wanting to explain why he couldn't believe her back then.

But those words were like rolling on razor blades, too painful to speak.

No matter what, it was his failure to trust her, his cruelty in pushing her away when she needed his protection the most.

His heart twisted in agony, but he was beyond defense.

“I’ll find out the truth, Liz.”

After a moment, Remington spoke with a tremble in his voice, wanting to say sorry, with a thousand words left unsaid.

But Lizetta didn’t give him the chance to speak. She nodded, cutting him off calmly.

“Do as you wish. The truth doesn’t matter to me anymore.”

After all, she’d endured everything, deserved or not.

She had already gotten through it and didn’t want to reopen old wounds for others to

gawk at.

Lizetta pushed away from Remington, gracefully sliding off his lap, and said with a smile. “Still, thank you. After all, you chose to believe me before finding out the truth. That’s some consolation, I guess.”

Remington felt a sharp pang in his heart and grabbed Lizetta’s hand, his brow furrowed.

“I’m sorry. I should’ve cleared this up sooner. If only I had stayed back then to listen to you more, it wouldn’t have...”

After the incident, he didn’t know how to face her and chose to escape.

By the time he saw her again, almost a year had passed.

The wound had festered by then, and nobody wanted to bring it up again. Even when Lizetta tried to explain later, he didn't want to delve deeper or think too hard about it.

"It's okay, you were a victim too. No need to apologize to me."

Lizetta shook her head, her smile serene.

Remington looked into her eyes, clear and pure, without a trace of resentment.

At that moment, she was as sweet and soft as the girl he remembered, standing behind him tenderly, as if she could never be mad at him, always ready to admire and forgive him unconditionally.

But this did nothing to ease Remington's conscience; instead, it filled him with an overwhelming sense of helplessness and defeat.

His expression remained cool, but his lips had lost their warmth+

His grip on Lizetta's wrist was tight, as if trying to hold on to her, yet slowly, Lizetta pulled her hand away, still smiling.

"Remi, if you really feel sorry, could you do me one favor?"

Chapter 230

"Alright, I promise," Remington said, not even bothering to ask before he agreed.

He was so eager it was like he feared that if he hesitated even a second, Lizetta—would take back this sliver of a chance to make amends.

Lizetta nodded, "Then you've got to start being a good ex-husband, starting now."

Remington felt a heavy weight on his chest, so much so that he yanked at his tie in frustration.

"A good ex-husband? But we're not officially divorced yet!"

"That's why I'm begging you, Remi. I don't care. You just agreed to it anyway."

Lizetta frowned with a little huff, her slight temper a vast improvement over the indifferent, numb facade from before.

Remington's stern expression softened, "What does being a good ex-husband entail?"

"It means stop popping up in front of me all the time, let me go, fulfill my wish to leave."

Stop shaking her resolve, she couldn't take this tug-of-war anymore. She was afraid to look back, only to find herself falling into an abyss once again.

Suddenly, Remington clenched his fists, his eyes brimming with bitterness.

He hadn't expected her final request to be simply letting her go.

His sweet girl looked all innocent while delivering the cruelest words.

He didn't want to, but she had been innocent these four years.

Innocent and trapped in the Dashiell family, trapped in a marriage.

Neglected by him, scorned by others.

After four years of cold neglect, what right did he have to hold onto her?

“Fine. I’ll set you free.”

After a long pause, Remington’s Adam’s apple bobbed, his voice rough as he finally spoke.

“Thanks, Remi.”

Lizetta’s lips curled into a smile, and with those words, she turned, opened the car door, and got out.

Remington watched her resolute figure walking away, the darkness in his eyes slowly filling with bloodshot lines like spiderweb cracks.

He closed his eyes sharply.

He had set her free, but who would soothe his own heart, filled with reluctance and a myriad of emotions?

What Remington didn’t know was that the moment Lizetta stepped out of the car, the calm and collected facade she had been holding onto shattered.

How could she possibly let go so easily?

She remembered lying in the hospital bed, in physical pain but clutching a secret, shameful sweetness in her heart.

She thought maybe it was for the best, a bizarre twist of fate made her Remington’s woman – perhaps it was destiny.

A blessing from the heavens, giving her the chance to confess her feelings, which she'd kept buried deep in her heart, to the man she truly loved..

She hoped for Remington to visit her; she was ready to bravely confess her love, to tell him she wasn't sad at all, to reveal she had liked him for a long time.

Not the way a sister loves a brother, but the way a girl loves her beau.

But she never got to see Remington; instead, she heard he had left the country after Fiona had whipped him till he bled.

By then, her physical wounds had healed, but it was only then that she truly felt torn apart.

Later, she mustered the courage to call him, but couldn't get through.

When he finally answered one of her calls, her explanation of that night was met with his icy sarcasm.

His tone was just like those who mocked and spat upon her.

He refused to believe her, saying her affection disgusted him, accusing her of putting on an act.

Despite all that, she shamelessly clung to him for four years.

All the injustice, pain, and disappointment flooded back, and her tears fell to the ground.

Each drop warned her: she must not look back!