

Illusions 521

Chapter 521

Remington froze, turning his head to gaze deeply at Lizetta.

"Can't wait, huh?" His voice was low, tinged with a hint of self-mockery.

Lizetta nodded, "You promised me."

She feared Remington might go back on his word, especially after the recent captivating performance by the West family, which truly scared her. Remington's lips tightened slightly as he glanced at his watch.

"We won't make it today. We need the lawyer to draft a new divorce agreement. The long flight...it's too much for you. Go back and rest for now." Saying this, he directed Ray.

"Back to the mansion."

Ray, understanding his boss's orders, immediately started the car.

But Lizetta was furious, disregarding the setting, she leaned forward, straddling Remington's legs, and grasped his collar fiercely, glaring at him.

"Remington, you're lying to me again, aren't you! All those promises were just tricks to get me back!"

She tugged hard enough to leave red marks on his neck, but he didn't move, allowing her to vent her anger.

He leaned back in his seat, a bitter feeling in his heart.

He suspected that if he didn't properly end this marriage, she might strangle him with the intention of leaving him for dead.

Remington managed a wry smile, gently rubbing Lizetta's hair, struggling to speak.

"We now have Daisy. We need to settle custody issues, hence the need for a new divorce agreement. The old one won't work anymore. You have to give me time to let the lawyer prepare, right?" Lizetta frowned, "How long will that take?"

"I'll instruct the lawyer to deal with it now, and by evening, we can review the divorce agreement together. We'll go to the civil affairs office first thing in the morning."

Seeing his serious demeanor, Lizetta calmed down, realizing he wasn't trying to deceive her.

"Uh, can you let go now? I can hardly breathe."

Only then did Remington gesture downwards.

Lizetta had been tugging at his collar and tie, causing him to turn red from lack of oxygen.

Lizetta let go, "You deserve it!"

Remington adjusted his tie and unbuttoned the top two buttons of his shirt, coughing as he turned his head.

Seeing this, Lizetta felt a bit embarrassed.

She attempted to get off him, but in the next second, Remington wrapped his arms around her waist.

Lizetta, who was just about to lift herself, found herself firmly seated back on his lap.

Only then did Lizetta realize how inappropriate their position was.

She stiffened, "Let go."

Remington, however, looked leisurely at her embarrassed state.

"You climbed up here on your own, getting down won't be that easy."

Lizetta gritted her teeth, struggling a bit, but Remington's hold on her waist tightened.

Even Ray raised the privacy partition discreetly.

Lizetta became thoroughly embarrassed and tense, "Remington!"

The man lightly tugged at his lips, finding her current expression more appealing than when she coldly called him Mr. Dashiell.

He nodded, "Stop moving, you've made my legs numb."

"Then let me get up."

"Give me a moment."

Lizetta's face slowly lost its anger, cooling down as she just stared at him.

"Is this amusing to you?"

The expression on the man's handsome face gradually stiffened, his chest as if torn open and stuffed with ice.

He slowly withdrew his hand from around her waist.

Lizetta quickly got up from him and looked out the window, not turning back.

Remington, however, kept his gaze on her profile, his expression darkening.

He remembered the early days of their marriage when Lizetta was proactive and passionate.

She would send him countless WhatsApp messages daily, regardless of his response.

Every

time she saw him, she'd flutter her trivial stories, ent

like a butterfly, eagerly

running out of things to say

Whenever he returned to Oakridge Heights, she would prepare delicious

meals, take care of everything for

and approach him b

y in light clothing.

But back then, he thought all her efforts were to secure her place

in the Dashiell family, believing bet

true

desire was Lucian Dashiell S

Also, because of his obsession with finding Stella, he trapped himself.

He was extremely cold to her, but only now did he realize how painful indifference could be.

It was more injuring to one's pride than the freshly sharpened edge of a knife.

Thinking about all this, Remington couldn't help but feel he was a complete jerk. To have reached this point was entirely his own doing.

Chapter 522

"Liz..." Remington couldn't help but speak up, feeling the need to offer a sincere apology.

But just then, Lizetta's phone rang, cutting him off.

Without acknowledging Remington's call, she swiftly pulled out her phone, her lips curving into a smile as she answered.

"Yeah, I'm in Zion City now, just left the airport. I'm fine, don't worry about me."

Remington thought it was Yolanda on the line, but Lizetta's next words caught him off guard.

"Dora's in the hospital. I got in touch with her as soon as I landed. Thankfully, her injuries aren't serious, or I'd never forgive myself..."

Remington's expression turned icy, his hand tightening by his side.

It had to be Jerome Madden on the line!

"Really? So, I'll get to see Dora again? Can't wait. I'll play host, make sure she's treated right."

"Alright, I got it. If I need help, I'll definitely reach out to you..."

As Lizetta chatted away, smiling, her phone was suddenly snatched from her hand.

Frowning, she turned to see Remington disconnecting her call.

Lizetta had considered herself quite the emotionally stable pregnant woman these past months, but Remington had a knack for getting under her skin in seconds. "What gives you the right to hang up my call? Give it back!"

She reached for the phone, but Remington shifted it to his other hand.

"To let you keep flirting over the phone with him?"

"What did you say?! Jerk!"

Lizetta felt insulted. A normal phone call, in his eyes, was flirting? Then what was his deal with Stella?

Did wrapping it up in sibling affection make it okay to blur lines?

Furious, Lizetta swung at Remington.

He caught her hand, "Isn't it the truth? Back in Luminesia, you were living under the same roof. Are you planning to be with him after the divorce? Do you like him?" His questions were sharp, his gaze piercing.

Lizetta found it absurd, "Remington, you're not in a position to ask me this. Let go!"

But Remington coldly retorted, "I'll never let another man be Daisy's father!"

"What do you mean?" Lizetta frowned, a sense of dread settling in.

Remington's lips twisted into a mocking smile, stressing each word, "If you want custody, then promise you won't date or remarry."

Lizetta was livid, disbelief written all over her face.

"You're despicable!"

Remington chuckled, "No, just like I promised, I won't let Daisy call any woman other than you, mom. How about I make it official in the divorce agreement? I, Remington, will not remarry, and Daisy will be under my care. Fair, isn't it?"

So, to get Daisy's custody, she had to agree not to date or remarry?

Lizetta's face turned pale with anger, knowing this man wouldn't let her off easily.

"Liz, I'm willing to vow never to remarry for Daisy's sake, but you hesitate. Seems I love Daisy more. Maybe it's better if I keep her so you're free to find your happiness..."

Lizetta snapped, "Fine, I agree!"

Remington's lips curved slightly, releasing her wrist and handing back her phone, saying, "Good. Daisy, your dad just made sure your mom loves you very, very much."

But Lizetta realized she'd been baited!

He'd trapped her again!

Grinding her teeth, unable to swallow her pride, she coldly said, "Five years!"

Remington raised an eyebrow, "What five years?"

"Until Daisy is five, I promise not to date or remarry. Not a day more!"

Without hesitation, Remington agreed.

"Deal."

Five years, he thought, should be enough to win her back.

As for Jerome, Hogan White, and the like, if they could endure five years without commitment, he'd tip his hat to them.

Fuming, Lizetta clenched her phone, turning to gaze out the window.

Remington, on the other hand, was in high spirits when his phone rang with some good news.

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As the car pulled into the grand estate, Remington stepped out and carefully assisted Lizetta from the vehicle.

Fiona Dashiell, having received word of their arrival, couldn't wait and, holding Tina's hand, hastened from the mansion to greet them.

"Liz, is that really you, Liz? Oh, my stars!"

Upon seeing the elderly lady making her way over, Lizetta hurried to meet her.

The sight of her running with a prominent baby bump alarmed the old woman, who turned to Remington with an anxious expression and scolded, "What are you, a statue? Grab her, will you?" Instead of merely grabbing her, Remington bent down and, in one swift motion, scooped Lizetta into his arms and carried her over to the elderly lady before gently setting her down.

Lizetta glared at him, and he simply smirked, "Can't have grandma calling me useless, now can we?"

The old lady, seeing their interaction, couldn't help but beam with joy and eagerly asked, "Liz, have you and Remington made up?" Lizetta, feeling guilty under the old lady's hopeful gaze and blaming Remington for the misunderstanding, hesitated before speaking.

"Grandma..."

Before she could continue, Remington smoothly interjected, "Grandma, it was on the condition of a divorce that she agreed to come back with me."

Lizetta was worried Fiona might be disappointed, but to her surprise, the elderly lady took her hand, rolled her eyes at Remington, and said, "I knew it! You never had the charm to woo anyone, you useless lump."

Feeling like he'd been stabbed in the heart, Remington's pride shattered once more.

With a resigned sigh, he said, "Let her keep you company. I'll come to take her to the city hall in the morning. Got some things to take care of at the office."

With those words, he gave Lizetta a gentle look and added, "I won't be back tonight, so you can stay here comfortably."

He knew Lizetta would feel uneasy if he were around.

As he left, the old lady watched him go, then tightened her grip on Lizetta's hand, "At least he knows he's a bother. Now, Liz, let's go inside and you can tell me all about where you've been these past months..."

Following the elderly lady inside, Lizetta was surprised to find Hanna Evert Dashiell also present.

Hanna's gaze immediately fixed on Lizetta's pregnant belly.

Instinctively, Lizetta tried to shield herself, but Hanna spoke up.

"Don't bother hiding. Joseph has already found a match and is preparing for the surgery next month!"

Lizetta was taken aback. "A match? Found?"

"Yes, you didn't want to save him, but fortune favors him, and he doesn't need you now! And you no longer have to dodge and hide to avoid being tested!"

Hanna's mocking laughter and the disdain in her eyes were cold.

Despite Lizetta carrying Remington's child and thus being Hanna's grandchild, Hanna showed no concern.

The old lady frowned at Hanna's

harsh words and dismissed her, "Enough. If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all. Your bitterness isn't welcome here, off you go."

Hanna, accustomed to the old lady's favoritism towards Lizetta, scoffed and left.

Lizetta reassured the old lady,

"Grandma, I never avoided the tests. I've arranged everything with a hospital abroad, and after the baby is born, we'll save the cord blood and send it back..."

Fiona patted Lizetta's hand, "Grandma knows, dear. You don't have to explain yourself. Your mother-in-law is the one who's wrong, not you."

Meeting the elderly woman's trusting and loving gaze, Lizetta nodded, smiling.

Regardless, Joseph finding a match was a blessing, and Lizetta felt a weight lift off her shoulders.

She spent the afternoon enjoying a meal, taking a walk, and chatting with the old lady, until, true to Remington's word, a lawyer arrived with new divorce papers.

"Mr. Dashiell has already signed. If everything looks in order to you, ma'am, you can sign as well."

The lawyer slid the pen towards Lizetta.

She scanned the document, noting that Remington had indeed agreed to relinquish custody rights, but with one condition: Lizetta was not to enter into any romantic relationships or remarry within five years.

Chapter 524

The divorce settlement was something Lizetta had expected, but she was caught off guard by the extensive list of assets that were now part of the deal. It appeared as if her soon-to-be ex-husband, Remington, was trying to drown her in a sea of wealth-properties, mutual funds, stocks, a string of registered patents, and even cash and jewels. The property values alone seemed to hit the billion-dollar mark, not to mention everything else.

Moreover, Remington had agreed to a monthly alimony of \$500,000. Lizetta was overwhelmed, to say the least.

"I don't need any of this," Lizetta tried to argue, looking across the coffee table at Mr. Barlow, her lawyer. "And the alimony... I..."

"Mrs. Dashiell," Mr. Barlow interrupted, "this is your rightful claim. Why on earth would you refuse? And as for the alimony, it's already less than what's typically expected. Mr. Dashiell insisted on this amount, fearing you might not accept more."

Lizetta was speechless. It was as if Remington thought he could just throw money at her and make everything okay.

She excused herself to make a phone call, stepping toward the floor-to-ceiling windows of the upscale Manhattan lawyer's office. Dialing Remington's number, she didn't have to wait long before he picked up. "Met with Mr. Barlow?" Remington's voice came through, casual as ever.

"What's the meaning of this, Remington? Are you trying to buy my forgiveness? Or do you think throwing all this at me will make everything alright?" Lizetta's frustration was palpable.

Remington's sigh was heavy. "It's not about compensation. I'm just trying to do this divorce the right way."

"And making me pay back \$3 million last time was your idea of a joke? You never intended for us to split, did you?" Lizetta's voice was sharp, accusing.

"You think I care about that \$3 million? Lizetta, you wanted this divorce. This is how it's done," Remington's voice was laced with exasperation.

The idea of suddenly being a wealthy single woman brought Lizetta no joy. "You think I won't use this money to live it up? I agreed not to date, but I never said anything about not enjoying life." "Go ahead and try," came Remington's dark chuckle.

Lizetta knew too well. Accepting Remington's money was accepting his control over her. "I came into the Dashiell family with nothing, and want to leave with nothing. I don't

want any part of your wealth or your

family's."

"Considering you've shared my bed and carry my child, leaving 'with nothing' isn't as simple as you make it sound," Remington's tone was mocking, almost cruel.

Lizetta felt her anger rise. "I've been called every name under the sun for over a decade because of you. I just want to cut ties cleanly! Can't you ever just listen and not be so damn overbearing?"

Taking the wealth felt wrong on so many levels, Not to mention, the moment Nathan Dashiell and Hanna caught wind of her newfound riches, they'd be knocking on her door and Remington's next wife certainly wouldn't be pleased about her share either.

"You're saying you don't want anything from me? Right now, it sounds like what you don't want the most is me and my affection," Remington's voice was low, his words stinging. "Yes! Exactly!" Lizetta's response was immediate and firm.

There was a silence, a heavy pause on the line, before the sound of an office door being pushed open broke the moment.

Stella, Remington's assistant, stepped into the room, unaware of the tension. "Remington, I've brought the documents you need to sign urgently..."

The interruption was a cruel reminder of their reality, a world where personal turmoil was always second to business demands.

Chapter 525

Remington's face turned icy in an instant. With a furrowed brow and sharp eyes, he commanded sternly.

"Get out!"

Stella's face drained of color, her eyes reddening with the sting of humiliation.

"I-I'm sorry, I'll leave now, oh!"

As she turned, her movements were frantic and clumsy, causing her to bump her head against the doorframe.

The documents she was carrying scattered across the floor. She immediately knelt down to pick them up, tears streaming down her face.

Lizetta, of course, could hear Stella's distinctive voice over the phone.

At that moment, she recalled their encounter at the airport, where Stella mentioned she had been working closely with Remington at the Starlight Group for the past two months.

It dawned on Lizetta that Stella had been positioned by Remington's side in the company.

Remington always kept his professional and personal life separate. In the past, to foster a closer relationship between them, Fiona had arranged for Lizetta to work as a junior clerk at the Starlight Group's CEO office.

However, the moment Remington saw her at the company, his displeasure was evident. Later, he summoned her to his office and gave her a thorough scolding.

Had it not been for the insistence of the family matriarch, Lizetta would have been promptly expelled from the Starlight Group by Remington.

But Stella, who hadn't pursued further education over the years, was now working in the president's office at the Starlight Group. It was clear who had arranged this opportunity for her.

Lizetta felt a wave of relief that she hadn't fallen for Remington's smooth talk and ended up hopelessly devoted to him.

She scoffed, "It seems Mr. Dashiell is too busy to discuss matters with me now..."

Hearing her mockery, a vein throbbed on Remington's forehead, but before he could explain, Lizetta had already hung up. Stella, crying while gathering her documents, sported a noticeable bump on her forehead from the collision, looking pitiful. She hoped Remington would come over to assist her, providing an opportunity to speak well of the West family once more. Despite lacking concrete proof, she couldn't believe Remington would be entirely indifferent to past affections.

However, he remained seated behind his desk, showing no intention of helping, his gaze cold and oppressive, making Stella's heart race. Ultimately, Stella dared not do anything further. She collected the documents, wiped her tears, and pushed the door open to leave.

Back at the old mansion, Lizetta,

thinking negotiations with Remington had failed and fearing their marriage was doomed, wanted to storm the Starlight Group wielding a metaphorical broadsword in her agitation.

Unexpectedly as she was about to head upstairs, Mr. Barlow caught up to her, saying, "Ma'am, Mr. Dashiell just called. He said you can refuse everything else, but the child support of \$20,000 a month is mandatory. Additionally, you can choose any property you like.

Mr. Dashiell insists he cannot let his child live in poverty without a proper home. If you agree, I'll amend the agreement right away..." Lizetta paused, then nodded without hesitation.

"I agree."

She was tired of dealing with Remington's antics.

Seeing her agreement, Mr. Barlow breathed a sigh of relief and hurriedly said, "Just a moment, ma'am, I'll prepare the new agreement right away."

Turning to leave, Mr. Barlow was visibly stressed. In his years as a lawyer, he had never seen a divorce where the husband struggled to part with his assets.

He wasn't sure whether to admire Mr. Dashiell for his success or pity him for his failure.

Mr. Barlow quickly returned with the amended agreement, which Lizetta signed. He then left with the documents.

The next day, Cedric came to pick up

Lizella. She got into the car, and Cedric explained, "Ma'am, Mr. Dashiell has been away for almost a week, dealing with a backlog of urgent business. He worked through the night and had an emergency meeting this morning..."

Lizetta cut him off, "There's no need to update me on Mr. Dashiell's schedule. I'm only concerned whether he'll show up at the civil affairs office."

"Mr. Dashiell has already left the office, ma'am. Don't worry."

Lizetta nodded, "Please, call me Ms. Gardenia, thank you."

Cedric, facing Lizetta's resolute gaze, felt a wave of nervousness, "Ms. Gardenia..."

Chapter 526

When Lizetta arrived at the city hall, Remington was already there, surprisingly early.

Dressed in a sleek gunmetal gray suit that hugged his frame perfectly, he looked both handsome and aristocratic, completely belying any signs of a sleepless night.

He was smoking a cigarette, half gone, with wisps of smoke curling from his lips, partially obscuring his expression but leaving his profile looking somber and contemplative. Feeling her approach, he turned, met her gaze, extinguished the cigarette, and tossed it into the nearby bin.

Lizetta walked over, and he mentioned, with a slight furrow of his brow, "Didn't sleep well last night, needed a bit of a pick-me-up. Hope you don't mind."

He stepped aside, waving away the lingering scent of smoke with a gesture of his hand.

Given the day's agenda-filing for divorce-Lizetta found herself treating him with an unusual dose of patience and understanding. She nodded, "It's fine, let's go."

As they entered, their striking looks and evident social standing, compounded by Lizetta's visible pregnancy, drew many curious and speculative glances.

Lizetta overheard a couple whispering nearby, the woman speculating, "They must be here to get married. Looks like she's pulled the classic Cinderella, pregnant and all. He looks like he's got no choice but to marry her, see how gloomy he looks."

The man countered, "No way, this is clearly a divorce in the making. Don't let the guy's looks fool you; he's got that scoundrel vibe. Probably got caught cheating during the pregnancy. Bet on it!"

Lizetta ignored the idle gossip, but Remington, trailing slightly behind, shot the girl a look so icy it silenced her immediately, a clear reminder not to judge what she didn't understand.

The divorce paperwork, signed swiftly and without a request for mediation, was completed in less than ten minutes.

Feeling a weight lifted off her shoulders, Lizetta turned to Remington, smiling slightly, "Mr. Dashiell, goodbye then. I'll reach out next month for the formalities."

Her message was clear: let's keep our distance until then.

Remington, catching her implication, looked at her intently. In the sunlight, she seemed to him like a wild rose, thriving despite the storm, now free from their entanglement.

His heart clenched. He had truly lost her, the one he thought he'd never let go.

Struggling to find his voice, he finally suggested, "Let's head over to the West family's place, sort out that mess with the hit."

Taken aback, Lizetta considered for

a moment before agreeing. The assailants had acted in Luminesia, and with an extradition treaty in place between Luminesia and Seraphine Realm, the legal process to repatriate the criminals back to Zion City was underway, facilitated by Remington's connections.

As a victim, Lizetta wanted closure and followed Remington to his car.

Upon arriving at the West residence, they encountered Martin West pulling in. His confusion was palpable upon seeing them together.

"Remington, what's going on?"

said it was urgent," Martin began only to be interrupted by the arrival of another car. Ray emerged, flanked by two bodyguards dragging a bloodied man between them.

Martin's concern was immediate, "Remington, my mother's health is delicate, and Stella's faint-hearted. What are you planning? Don't scare them."

Chapter 527

Remington fixed Martin with a cool gaze.

"Godfather really has no clue?"

Martin's face twisted in anger, "Clue about what?"

Remington didn't elaborate, simply nodding towards the door, "Let's go inside and have Barbara spell it out."

He reached out, gently grasping Lizetta's wrist through her clothing, leading her towards the villa.

Lizetta glanced down, noting that Remington had finally grasped the concept of personal space, holding her wrist rather than her hand, and she didn't resist. Inside the West family living room, Stella was a bundle of jittery nerves, excitement tinged with unease.

She had overheard a snippet of Remington's conversation in his office yesterday.

Remington had been arguing with Lizetta, and later, Mr. Barlow had dropped by with divorce papers for Remington to sign, on behalf of The Starlight Group.

After Mr. Barlow left, Stella had "accidentally" knocked his briefcase open at the elevator and caught a glimpse of the divorce agreement.

It seemed Remington was set to register his divorce from Lizetta today. After breakfast, as she was about to head to work at The Starlight Group, she got a call from Cedric telling her to wait at home because Remington would be coming over to the West household.

A newly divorced man, rushing over to the Wests, Stella couldn't fathom what it might mean.

But she couldn't help hoping for the best.

Maybe, just maybe, Remington had grown cold towards Lizetta and her divorce drama, finally realizing Stella was a better match for him.

Maybe, to Remington, she was different, his previous detachment merely a consequence of marital chains.

Fresh from registering his divorce, could he be coming to take her on a date?

Perhaps, he was even coming to propose.

Such were her hopes...

To this end, she had picked out an off-shoulder white sweater dress, its fluffy texture accentuated by thin black straps peeking through, complemented by light makeup that made her look youthful and pure.

"Mom, do you think Remington will finally see how good I am for him? If we go on a date, where should we go first? Oh dear, I forgot to p I breath spray. Which flavor did mom say was better, peach or

nov

strawberry..."

Barbara stayed close to Stella, but without her daughter's airy optimism.

She felt a heavy premonition, suspecting trouble was brewing.

Remington's demeanor at the airport the day before didn't hint at a peaceful resolution.

And despite receiving a call last night from the hitman hired to silence Ralap, confirming Ralap's death, Barbara couldn't shake a sense of unease.

Yet, Stella, lost in her sweet anticipations, failed to notice Barbara's mood.

As Stella dashed upstairs, buoyed by her dreams, the sound of a car pulling up and the butler's announcement echoed through the estate.

"Mr. Dashiell has arrived."

In Zion City, few dared to address Remington by his first name.

In the Dashiell household, even the servants referred to him respectfully as Mr. Remington Dashiell.

But having been a fixture in the West family home since childhood, the servants there had always addressed him more familiarly as Mr. Dashiell, a unique honor. Hearing the arrival, Stella halted her dash upstairs, turning and running towards the foyer like a whirlwind.

"Remington, you're here, you..."

Her voice, bright and joyful, froze mid-sentence, her smile stiffening on her lips.

Because she saw Remington pulling along Lizetta.

Clearly, all her hopes were dashed in that moment; Remington couldn't possibly have brought Lizetta along for a date.

"Oh... Liz, you're here too.

Remington, you should have told me

Liz was coming. I would have had

the staff prepare some pregnancy-friendly sweets on something."

Stella forced a smile, but inside, panic was setting in.

Chapter 528

She glanced back at Barbara, sensing that Remington's visit today was unlike any other.

His arrival was stormy, laden with malice towards the West family.

Remington's gaze was icy, his demeanor as still as water, causing Stella's voice to fade into silence as she stepped back, looking somewhat panic-stricken.

However, Remington paid no mind to Stella, his focus fixed solely on Barbara.

After a moment, he spoke up in a deep voice.

"Barbara should be well aware of why I'm here today. Don't you have anything to say?"

Barbara sat on the couch, her hands clasped in front of her, her spine erect, maintaining her composure.

Despite her pale complexion, her voice remained steady.

"Remington, I told you yesterday. If I am innocent, I have nothing to fear. If you have evidence, then go ahead and call the cops. Other than that, I have nothing else to say."

Yet, as soon as she finished speaking, Martin burst in from outside.

One of Martin's hands was covered in blood, his expression anxious and furious as he confronted Remington.

"Remington, you need to let go of Ralap! What the hell did you do to him? Your guys beat him to a pulp!"

He had stayed outside because he recognized the bloodied figure being pushed around by Ray as Ralap. Before Martin could continue, a loud crash was heard.

It was Barbara, accidentally knocking over a teacup on the coffee table, her muscles twitching, hands trembling uncontrollably. Seeing this, Martin rushed over, gripping Barbara's hands with concern.

"Quick, grab a blanket! Your hands are freezing. I know you're worried about Ralap, but you've got to take care of yourself too." Barbara's ears were ringing, disbelieving that Ralap was still alive.

He had returned to Zion City alive?!

Just last night, she had received a call saying Ralap had been "taken care of."

Yet, how did Ralap end up in Remington's hands?

What had Ralap disclosed?

No! Perhaps it was a mistake.

Forcing herself to calm down, Barbara looked up and said.

"What do you mean Ralap is covered in blood? Come on, let's go see him."

"No need for you to come, Barbara. I've brought your dear nephew to you."

As Ray's voice fell, a blood-soaked Ralap was thrown onto the living room floor.

"Ah!"

Barbara couldn't see, but Stella saw everything clearly.

Ralap lay at her feet, his face visible, marred with several deep, bloody wounds.

Seeing Ralap tortured to such an

extent,

ella screamed in terror, stepping back until she fell to her knees, closing her eyes to the horror.

Fear spread through her like a tide.

She was afraid, afraid that Remington would subject her to the same fate.

"Ralap? Tell me, what happened? Weren't you supposed to lead your team to Evercrestia and ensure Lizetta's safety? What exactly did

you do? You had nothing to do with these assassinations, right?"

Barbara stood up, approaching Ralap.

As Ralap struggled with the pain and looked up to speak, Barbara tightly grasped his hand, urging him.

"Ralap, don't worry. If you've made a mistake, I won't abandon you. Just tell me..."

Lizetta, who had been silent, chuckled lightly and said.

"It might be better to tell him he's got no way out and it's in his best interest to take the blame quietly. You won't abandon him.

Otherwise, if it comes back to you

and offends the West family, no

one's getting away with anything

That's what you mean, right, Barbara?"

Lizetta raised an eyebrow, confident in her interpretation.

Chapter 529

Barbara lifted her gaze to meet Lizetta's clouded eyes, which were unfocused and murky, unsettlingly so.

Lizetta, harboring her venomous thoughts, shuddered instinctively.

Remington's hand, initially resting on Lizetta's wrist, slid down to grasp her hand firmly.

At the same time, the man, growing impatient, lifted his foot and slammed his polished Iridia leather shoe onto Ralap's knee.

Ralap twisted in pain, his body shaking. He looked up, reached out desperately to grab Barbara, and cried out with a hoarse voice.

"I was just doing what you told me, bringing people abroad to get rid of Mrs. Dashiell! You're the mastermind! You are!"

Barbara, though blind to the sight, could smell the strong scent of blood and feel its sticky presence.

She could only imagine what Ralap looked like now.

Her face showed a mix of horror and anger as she struggled and vehemently denied the accusations.

"Ralap! Think carefully about what you're saying. If your mom knew you were trying to pin this on Barbara, how could she go on living?"

Martin also stepped forward, his voice grave, "Ralap! Your dad passed away early, and for years the Wests have been taking care of you and your mom. Your uncle has treated you like his own son. This is biting the hand that feeds you! If your mom found out, she'd be too ashamed to face the world."

Both Martin and Barbara were using Cecilia as a means to threaten Ralap.

Ralap, who grew up in a single-parent household, had a strong bond with his mother.

Ralap looked torn, covering his face as he sobbed, filled with regret and hatred.

Remington watched coldly from the sidelines, his eyes mocking, not rushing or interrupting.

He wanted to see just how shameless they could be to escape blame.

Stella, either from shock or something else, had been kneeling quietly, tears rolling down her cheeks.

Suddenly, she looked up, crying out.

"It's all my fault, everything is because of me! I'm the one who deserves to die the most!"

She crawled a few steps towards Ralap, positioning herself in front of everyone, looking up as she grabbed Remington's pant leg.

With a broken plea, she looked up at Remington and said, "Remington everything started because of

Let me be the one to go to I was the one who asked my cousin..."

She was cut off as Barbara rushed over, pulling her away.

"Stella! What nonsense are you spouting? You can't just say things like that! Why are you always so foolish!"

"Mom, I can't just watch as you all go to jail for me. I can't do it! If only I hadn't come back, it's all my fault... I've ruined everything..." Stella and Barbara embraced, Stella weeping bitterly, while Barbara

closed her eyes tightly, her face a picture of utter defeat. Stella's reaction and her words brought Barbara back to reality.

At this point, trying to coerce or bribe Ralap into taking the blame in front of Remington was impossible.

It would only make Remington despise the West family even more.

Barbara let go of Stella and, with trembling hands, wiped away her tears.

Slowly standing up, her legs weak and faltering, Martin supported her.

She pushed Martin away and faced Remington.

"Yes, it was I who orchestrated Ralap's actions. Because as long as that woman was around, Remington, you would never marry Stella, would you?"

I had planned for the woman to be

taken abroad under the care of my people until she gave birth, then to stage a difficult labor leading to bleeding out. We could have brought the child back, especially since Stella can't conceive. Raising this child wouldn't be out of the question.

Ket

But Lizetta, she couldn't stay put, running away! She was too uncontrollable, and with the West family's malice already revealed, feared she might regret her decision and secretly return to Zion City, or even contact you, Remington. So, I decided it was better to be done with it and had Ralap eliminate her..."

Chapter 530

Despite having braved that harrowing night, Liz felt a chill run through her at Barbara's words.

Remington stared at Barbara, his expression stone-cold, yet a hint of crimson seeped into his eyes.

"Luna! Have you lost your mind? How could you do such a thing?"

Martin, his face a mask of shock and sorrow, steadied Barbara's frail form, shaking his head in anguish.

Stella moved closer, wrapping her arms around Barbara, the three huddling together in tears, as if they were the victims.

Suddenly, Stella turned around, fell to her knees with a thud, and bowed deeply twice to Liz.

Tears streaming down her face, she pleaded, "Liz, please, I beg you, can you forgive my mom? She only acted out of confusion for my sake.

My brother's gone, I've been wandering for years, enduring so much suffering. My mom just wanted me to be happy. Look, you're safe, reunited with Remington. This whole mess started because you ran away. Can't we just leave it at that?

If you agree to spare my mom, the West family will accept any form of penance. Liz, I'm begging you!"

Tears fell in droves, and Stella's forehead swelled and bled from her deep bows.

Her pale, bloodless face looked so pitiful and fragile, innocent yet filled with filial piety.

Liz found it absurd and stepped back to avoid Stella's touch.

Remembering how close she came to losing her life, she couldn't possibly feel any sympathy or be moved.

"Attempted murder is a criminal offense, Ms. West. I know you haven't had much education, but even elementary students know that criminal cases can't just be forgiven and forgotten. You have to face the consequences," Liz said.

Stella was visibly shaken and embarrassed.

She crawled forward, clutching Remington's leg.

"Remington, please, you know my mom's battling late-stage cancer. She doesn't have long left. After years of suffering and going blind

from crying for me, we've finally et

reunited. If she can't find peace

because of me, how can I live with myself... Please, as long as you don't call the cops on my mom, I'll do anything!"

Stella tugged desperately at Remington's trouser leg, looking up at him with eyes brimming with sorrow. Remington gazed down at her his eyes dark and brooding, his lips barely moving as he spoke.

"Do you really claim to know nothing?"

A shiver ran through Stella, feeling the icy sharpness in his gaze.

Biting her cheek, she managed to stop herself from trembling.

Tears choked her voice as she replied, "I said, I didn't know about it, but it all started because of me. I'm young; I'm willing to go to jail for my mom."

By then, the faint sound of police sirens could be heard in the distance.

Stella collapsed, sitting on the ground but still desperately clinging to Remington's pant leg.

"Remington, for the sake of the life-and-death situation I once got you out of, for the sake of my severed finger, can't you spare my mom just this once?"

She lifted her deformed right hand, the ugly stub of her finger pointing up, her eyes beseeching Remington.

Barbara gasped for air in Martin's embrace, while he, too, was in tears.

"Remington, the doctors say she has at most two or three months left. What's the point of imprisoning her now?"

I'm willing to transfer 10% of the West family's shares to Ms. Gardenia as compensation. We'll keep your godmother confined to the attic, never to step out until her last breath, just like being in prison. Would that be acceptable?"