

Mr. Kane Got Blacklisted by Eleven Jewell

Chapter 20-51

Chapter 20

Everyone looked at him. Keegan only managed to stop coughing after a long time. He looked unhappy.

No one dared to speak. They thought Keegan was unsatisfied with the statement made just now. Keegan turned his head and softly said something to Aldor with a gloomy face. He then turned back and coldly said, "Go on."

Everyone was relieved. Aldor then quietly left the conference room.

In the lobby downstairs, Stella was sitting on the couch listlessly going through the magazine on the table. Someone hurriedly approached her from behind, and Aldor's voice could then be heard. "Mrs. Kane, why didn't you give me a call before you came?"

The receptionist who led the way was so shocked that his pupils dilated!

'She's really the wife of Mr. Kane! Why did Mr. Kane say that he didn't know her?! No. None of these matters. The problem is that I took those kinds of pictures of Mrs. Kane just now!'

His face turned ashen. He suddenly felt like all the top five hundred companies would no longer hire him. 'What kind of game were they playing?'

Stella put down the magazine. "I called you. But it looks like you were very busy, and you didn't hear my phone call."

Obviously, Aldor knew that Stella had called him. But Keegan ordered him not to pick up her call. So, he could only ignore it.

Aldor acted as if he could not tell that Stella was being sarcastic. He then said, "I'm so sorry. I was in a meeting just now. My phone was in my office. This is on me for not communicating properly with the receptionist of the secretary's office before I left. He's a newly hired employee. So, it's inevitable that he missed something. Sorry for the trouble, Mrs. Kane. Please follow me."

'He explained so flawlessly. I would've believed him if I didn't hear Keegan say that he didn't know me.'

'They're both terrible people!'

Just when they got off the elevator, Aldor asked, "Mrs. Kane, why did you come to the office?"

Stella lifted up the bag she was holding, "I have something that I need Keegan to help me to pass to his mother."

Aldor said, "Is that it?"

She did not have anything else that she wanted to give him. But she still wanted to divorce Keegan. And she had to tell him that personally. So, she said, "I still have something that I want to discuss with Keegan."

But Aldor said, "Mr. Kane still hasn't had his breakfast."

Stella was confused.

"What does this have to do with that?"

Aldor saw the confusion in her eyes. He then said, "Mr. Kane would be in a bad mood if he doesn't have his breakfast. So, things wouldn't go well if you discuss something with him now."

Stella was speechless.

"I've heard of people waking up on the wrong side of the bed. But, I've never heard of someone being in a

bad mood if they don't have their breakfast. What's wrong with him?"

"Is there nothing to eat in your company cafeteria?"

"Mr. Kane is quite picky. He doesn't eat in the company cafeteria"

Stella believed that.

"Keegan's known for being a picky eater. He doesn't like it if the food is too oily, too salty, too saucy, too sour, or too spicy. He won't eat the grilled eggplant if he notices there's a tiny bit of the eggplant's skin. He won't eat the vegetables if they aren't cooked just right. He'll get diarrhea if he eats leftover food. And, although he doesn't like parsley, he'll request the chef to add parsley to the noodle soup. But, he'll then pick out all the parsley"

"Sometimes, I can't help but complain about him. Luckily, he was born into a rich family. If he was born into an average family, I guess he'd be beaten to death before he could grow up!"

As she thought that, Stella said, "There are a few high-end eateries downstairs, right? Go and buy some food for him from those restaurants."

Aldor smiled, "Mr. Kane doesn't like to eat that kind of food. He likes to eat home-cooked meals. For example, the lunchbox that he brought in the past. He liked it a lot."

Chapter 21

It was clear to Stella that Aldor was telling her that Keegan had not eaten yet and that him not in the

mood to discuss anything was just another way to get back at her. It had been more than a year since she last cooked for him.

When Stella first married into the Kane family, she was infatuated with Keegan. She had not gotten into voice acting back then, so she spent all her time following him around. Stella used to believe in the saying, "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach," and she practiced her culinary skills hard just to get Keegan's attention. However, she did not have any talent for cooking. Her dishes were barely edible even after a month of practice.

But, even so, she enthusiastically made lunch boxes for Keegan to bring to work, and she still remembered what Keegan said when he first tasted her most satisfied creation- "This is horrible." Despite his words, Stella did not give up. She made another lunch box the next day and gave it to him when he was at work. "I guarantee it'll taste delicious this time," she cheekily said, but Keegan did not bother to respond.

She wondered all day as to what he would think of her food. When Keegan returned home that night, she eagerly asked him, "Well? How was it? Was it better than yesterday?"

"Stop making food for me. It tasted gross," he replied. However, Stella saw that his lunch box was empty, so she was happy. She worked harder to cook lunch for him, and Keegan returned with an empty lunch box every time.

Stella naively thought that their marriage was going well and that he also had feelings for her. That was until she saw him dumping all the food she had prepared into the trash. She then realized that their love was one-sided and that Keegan did not expose that fact because he wanted to save both their faces. From that day onward, Stella never cooked for Keegan again, and he never asked her to do so either. That was probably what he wanted all along. After all, pretending to finish the food was tiring.

'Is he trying to humiliate me by asking Aldor to mention my cooking when I'm here to discuss the divorce?' she thought. Stella tried to come up with an excuse and said, "Oh, the

‘I’ll make things difficult. He’ll be off from work when I get back with the food. Where can I find him, then?’ But, Aldor was prepared.

“There’s a private kitchen in the cafeteria with all sorts of ingredients there. You can use whatever you want, Mrs. Kane.”

Stella was speechless.

‘They obviously planned this and were waiting for me to take the bait,’ she thought. ‘But, I can’t escape now. Otherwise, this matter will never come to an end.’

A few minutes later, she and Aldor arrived at the private kitchen. ‘This place is much bigger than I thought. It’s so tidy, and there are so many ingredients to use.

Stella could not wait to discuss the divorce. So much so that she could not focus on cooking, nor did she know what to cook. She stared at the ingredients for a long time and suddenly had an idea. After more than 20 minutes, her dish was done. It looked presentable. She untied her apron, turned her gaze toward Aldor, and said, “Lead the way, Aldor.”

Keegan’s office was on the twelfth floor of the building. Aldor knocked on the door and said in a low voice, “Mr. Kane, Mrs. Kane is here with some lunch.”

‘Wasn’t he the one who asked for it?’ Stella thought.

“Let her in.” Keegan’s cold voice came from inside. Aldor led Stella into the office, put the food on the office desk, and went out of the room, closing the door behind him. Stella clenched her hands and stood there awkwardly.

Keegan’s office was massive. The room’s interior design was simple, and with the window walls installed, the lighting was great. Sunlight shined onto the desk through the blinds, casting dark shadows on Keegan’s face. He had dark brows and almond eyes. His sharp jawline and luscious lips were what Stella found attractive in a man. Her heart could not stop throbbing no matter how many times she stared at him.

“Are you just going to stand there?”

Chapter 22

Stella’s throbbing heart stopped when she heard the cold voice. ‘Alas, the pretty image I have of that jerk gets destroyed whenever he opens his mouth.’

Stella went up to Keegan reluctantly and whispered, “That’s the white truffle. You promised me.” When Keegan heard that, his gaze shifted from the documents to her face. She looked plain and beautiful, which was pleasing to the eyes; the same as she had always

ys been. However, Keegan knew that it was all an act. She was no longer the obedient little bunny she was before. Instead, she was a wildcat with her claws out, and she was not afraid to bite back at the slightest provocation.

Keegan leaned back and narrowed his eyes. He looked a little bored as he raised his eyebrows and said, "Oh? Did I promise you anything?"

Stella was taken aback for a moment. She could not believe that he had forgotten. "You promised to help me deliver this if I went with you to meet your sister!" She gritted her teeth and said.

"Hmm. I did say that, didn't I?" Keegan replied as if he recalled the matter. Stella was about to let out a sigh of relief when he continued,

"But, after some careful consideration, I think there's no reason for me to accept such a valuable gift from the Jewell family since we are getting divorced. We should just forget it."

Stella was speechless. "It's not THAT valuable," she tried to convince him.

"Besides, we're breaking up on good terms. Our family can still get along and occasionally give each other gifts, right?"

"Are we really breaking up on good terms, though? Didn't you want a divorce because you weren't satisfied with MY infertility?" Keegan sneered.

Stella was at a loss for words once again. I guess there's no moving past this. This asshole's self-

esteem is so sensitive. I just said it out of spite, but he's being so petty. Just as she was about to try and defend herself, Keegan spoke. "The hospital called me this morning and asked what kind of dysfunction I was experiencing. Why didn't you tell them?"

Stella stayed silent. 'I totally forgot I called the hospital for a checkup on Keegan's behalf when I was mad. Of all the days they could've called him, why today? How am I going to explain myself?' She thought.

"Can we talk about something else first, Mr. Kane?" Stella chuckled. Keegan got up and walked around his desk. He sat on the desk, looked up at her with a half-smile, and said, "What is it that makes my wife so dissatisfied that she had to help me consult an expert?"

"We're getting divorced anyway, Mr. Kane. There's no need for us to discuss this anymore, right?"

"Oh, but there is," Keegan glanced at her and said.

"How could I agree with your reason for our divorce if we don't talk about it?"

"He's doing this on purpose!" she thought.

'He's holding a grudge against me for the divorce!' Stella took a deep breath and tried to

be the bigger person. “If you disagree with the reason for our divorce, we can change it to another one. Incompatibility? Lack of partnership? Maybe we can say we fell out of love. Your pick.”

Keegan looked up at her and said, “Would you be making lunch for me if we fell out of love? That’s not convincing enough, Stella!”

Stella was puzzled. “Mr. Kane, the lunch was-”

“Oh, not to mention the private pictures you sent me.” Keegan pulled out his phone and waved it in front of her eyes, showing her the pictures she had just asked the receptionist to take when she was downstairs. She knew that Keegan would not allow her to see him, so she took off her jacket to reveal her strapless dress. She then took a close-up and sent it to him, asking if she could post it on Facebook. The

purpose

of this was to threaten Keegan that if he did not allow her to go up and see him, she would post the picture on Facebook and ruin his reputation as well as the reputation of the Vinci Rivera Group. However, she did not expect him to take it as sending him provocative photos.

“Mr. Kane, those aren’t private pictures...”

Keegan did not put much thought into her words. “Yeah, you’re right. You edited it way too much. Aren’t your boobs just A-cups?” Stella’s face darkened. “I’m a C-cup, you jerk!”

“Mr. Kane, can we discuss something more serious like when will we get the divorce?” She gritted her teeth and said.

“Stella, I gave you a chance, but you didn’t show up,” Keegan glanced at her and said.

“Something came up,” Stella replied.

“What was it?” He asked.

Stella pursed her lips tightly. She did not want to tell Keegan that she did not show up because her mother was in critical condition. After all, he was not there when she needed him. Thus, she did not want to show him any vulnerability. Even if I tell him, there’s a possibility that he will just see it as an excuse to postpone the divorce.’

She stayed quiet for a few seconds and said, “Let’s set another appointment. *You* can pick the date and time. Anything’s fine.”

Keegan stared at her for a moment. “I’ll have to remind you that everything you have as Mrs. Kane will cease to exist after the divorce. All the branded seasonal jewelry, clothes

, limited edition bags from Hermès, and even your favorite gift boxes from your annual membership at the jockey club would all be taken away. Are you still willing to go through the divorce after knowing that?" He said calmly.

Stella's heart ached at each thing he mentioned. She could not bear the thought of losing her luxury items. However, it was scarier to think of the time she would have to spend in a dead marriage with Keegan just for some non-essentials.

"Yes," she reluctantly uttered. 'It's better to have a little loss than a long sorrow,' she thought. 'After all, these items could be earned back with a little hard work and some money. Keegan's eyes darkened when

he heard that.

"When are we going to go through the formalities?" Stella asked enthusiastically.

"When I have the time," he glanced at her and replied.

"Well, when is that?" she asked again.

Keegan sat back in his chair, *not* bothering to look at her, and coldly said, "I'll let you know when the time comes."

Stella was speechless. 'What kind of an answer is that? Will we have to postpone the divorce again if he

never has the time?'

"And, when will that be?"

Keegan glanced up at her, feeling annoyed. "Why are you in such a hurry to get divorced? Are you afraid that I won't sign the papers? You clearly think too highly of yourself, Stella."

'Did I say anything like that? Why is this asshole getting mad?' she thought.

After Keegan finished speaking, he ignored her, opened the lunch box, and started eating. Stella had prepared a full breakfast for him, which included some liver and onions, a heart-shaped omelet because that was the only egg mold they had in the kitchen, and some sugar-glazed potatoes on the side. Keegan paused for a moment when he saw that, and the look on his face changed.

Stella noticed the change in his facial expression. ‘Was what Aldor said true? Would this discussion become much easier after he eats his breakfast?’

“How did it taste, Mr. Kane?”

With one of the sugar-glazed potatoes on his fork, Keegan gave her a sideways glance and said, “It’s too sweet. Do you think sugar is free?”

Chapter 23

Stella was dumbfounded. ‘Why didn’t the sugar seal your mouth shut then, if I put too much sugar? Ugh, whatever. I should just put up with him since I’m the one who is asking him for something.’

She smiled apologetically, and with a good attitude, she said, “Noted. I haven’t been in the kitchen for a long time, so I must be getting rusty. Sure enough, Keegan’s facial expression looked better after that. Stella then took the opportunity to say, “Mr. Kane, us having this divorce is like us getting married. We have to choose a date. You see, we got married on an unlucky day. As a result, our marriage didn’t go well, and we couldn’t make it to the end. So, we have to pick a good day to get divorced so that our previous marriage won’t fetter us, and we will be able to find new love. I’ve checked the dates, the 21st, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, and 31st of this month are all good days to get divorced. Should we just pick one from all the days I just mentioned?”

“Every day is a good day except for weekends, huh?” Keegan sneered, seeing right through her little scheme.

“There are just more auspicious days in this month,” said Stella cheekily, but he ignored her. She was not going to give up without getting an answer, so she continued, “Which day do you think is the most suitable, Mr. Kane?”

In the end, Keegan was so annoyed by her muttering that he said with a dark face, “Say another word, and you’ll have to give this gift yourself.” Stella was speechless. All the soft words she had in her had run out. “Those are two different things, Keegan! I’ve kept my end of the deal, so why can’t you?!” She said annoyedly.

Keegan’s brows relaxed a little when he saw her wild side. He tapped the lunch box with his fork and said, “Stella, you’re the one who wants a divorce and not tell your father about it. How could we ever keep this up?” Stella did not know what to say. She did not want to let Albert know about her divorce.

Before Rainee’s accident, problems arose in her marriage with Albert. Not long after her injury, Albert wanted a divorce. However, Rainee had trained some of their company’s most important employees at that time. She also had nearly half of the company’s share

s. Albert knew that people in the company would not be happy if they had a divorce. So, he decided not to pursue it under his lawyer's advice. Three years after Rainee's accident, Albert had slowly taken the shares into his own hands. He also cleared out the staff and replaced them with his own set of people. Not long after, the idea of divorce began to form in his mind once again. However, it was that year that Keegan chose to marry Stella.

Albert was shocked when the Kane family came and proposed a marriage between the two. The Kane family was the top family in Rivera. His reputation would surely increase if his daughter were to marry into the family. 'Who would ever turn down such an offer?' Albert thought. Naturally, he agreed to marry Stella off to Keegan.

In order for Stella to willingly marry into the family and bring him business, Albert promised her not to divorce Rainee for ten years. However, if Rainee was still unconscious after those ten years, Albert would use her shares to pay for her expenses in the hospital for the rest of her life.

Now that Stella's marriage with Keegan ended after only three years, Albert would stop all the payments if he found out. With the little amount of money she had, Stella had no way to pay for her mother's hospital bills. She was planning to buy a house to take care of her mother on the premise. That way, she could get a part of the property after the divorce and a stable income. However, her voiceover gig for Honor of the Deities, which she was sure she would get, was now given to someone else.

Stella had also rejected many job offers because she had never thought that she would divorce Keegan,

which left a bad impression. Hence, she only got a few job offers from big companies in the last six

months. This also meant that she could not make much money in that short while, which was more of the reason why she could not let Albert know about her divorce. Plus, Keegan obviously would not help her keep this secret after they go their separate ways.

For a while, Stella was feeling irritated by the situation. 'Should I just not get the divorce? But Keegan would definitely think that I'm a joke after everything I said.'

Chapter 24

'Do I want to lose face?' Stella thought. 'Besides, it was obvious that Keegan had been cheating on me. If I stay, and a child just comes up to him and calls him "Daddy" one day, I would be the joke of Rivera.'

'I must go through this divorce no matter what!' Her face changed again when she thought of that. "Look, Mr. Kane, you getting a divorce would be a huge deal for Rivera, no? If we just get a divorce without any advance notice, it will have an impact on the company's stocks and so on. That's not good now, is it?"

Keegan glanced at her and said, "What are you trying to say?"

"I'm saying we should announce the divorce after one year to avoid those fallouts. What do you think?" She said. Keegan stared at her sullenly without saying a word. Stella's heart was beating fast. "Is that too long? How about we announce it after eight months?" She whispered. Keegan's gaze was already cold. "I-I think... Half a year is too short, but it's fine if you want to announce it..."

Keegan gritted his teeth and said, "Stella, if you say one more word, I'll throw you out of here!" Stella immediately shut her mouth.

"Do you think we can get divorced this month?" She asked again in a low voice after staying quiet for some time.

A few minutes later, the security guards brought her out of Keegan's office. She was cursing and swearing to herself all the way, 'That Keegan Kane is such a jerk! He was plainly trying to delay my time and play me! I should've just given his lunch to the stray dogs out there!'

As soon as the elevator door opened, she bumped into Aurora, who was about to get on the elevator. 'What are you doing here?' Aurora asked with a sour face and obviously not glad to see her. "Who let you in here?" She continued.

Of course, Stella was also not happy to see Aurora. "My husband works here. Why can't I be here?" She replied with indifference.

"Do you actually think of yourself as part of our family? Do you really think that half of Rivera would be yours after marrying my brother? Who the hell do you think you are?" Aurora sneered.

Stella pursed her lips and said, "Yeah, you're right. I don't know my place. Maybe you should look in the mirror and tell me what you see."

Aurora was taken aback, probably because she did not expect Stella, who had always been weak and cowardly, to fight back. Soon, her face darkened.

"What? After pretending for so many years, you finally can't bear it anymore? I guess people from low-income families are generally low in class."

Stella's expression became cold as she said, "I'm warning you, Aurora. You don't want to provoke me." Aurora dismissed her threat. "So what if I provoke you? What are you going to do? Tell my brother? Hah. Do you think he'd be on your side?"

Stella stared at her coldly and said, "He would when he finds out about what happened on that night of the wedding." Aurora's face dropped when she heard that.

"You better keep your mouth shut. Otherwise, you'd be a goner if that incident accidentally slipped out of my mouth. I mean, grandma values the Kane family's reputation so much. What kind of punishment do you think she would come up with if she knew what you did?"

Chapter 25

Keegan was looking down from the window of his office on the twelfth floor when Aldor knocked on the door. "Is she gone?" Keegan turned his head and asked when he saw him coming in. Aldor nodded. "Did she say anything?" he asked again. Aldor hesitated, not knowing what to say. Keegan shot him a glance and said, "Well? Don't dilly-dally. Tell me, did she say anything?"

Aldor swallowed and said in a low voice, "Mrs. Kane asked me to apologize for not rinsing the beef liver earlier." Keegan froze. Although Stella actually did clean the liver before cooking it, she purposely told Aldor that to get back at Keegan for not keeping his promise.

Her mood improved when she thought of how disgusted Keegan would be for eating the "unwashed" liver she had prepared. 'He probably wants to down some bleach right now,' she said to herself. However, her happiness did not last long, as joy turned into sadness when her Uber was rear-ended from behind.

Stella was a little scared of driving after being rear-ended on the overpass last time. So, she had been calling Uber rides recently. But, she did not expect to get into a car crash again while riding an Uber. However, the accident was not too serious, and insurance would cover it after they lodged a report.

But, the other party did not have a good attitude. He started to throw his hands as soon as he got out of the car. At the same time, the Uber driver did not back down and fought back. What was originally to be handled on the road by the traffic police quickly escalated to the police station.

Stella was also brought to the station as a witness of the incident. She truthfully explained what she saw and proved that the other party was the one who mad

e the first move, while the Uber driver fought back out of self-defense after taking multiple punches.

Stella finished

signing the report and came out of the police station. Felicity was having an off day from work. She rang Stella and told

her to get home earlier because she had something important to tell her. Stella hung up the phone and called an Uber. It was rush hour and people

were getting off work, so it would take a long time before someone accepted her request. She lowered her head, wondering if there was any public transportation that would bring her to the area of her apartment. Suddenly, someone grabbed her

hair from behind and slapped her with a purse.

“You bitch! What did you tell the police?!” A woman’s voice was heard. Stella wanted to elbow the woman as her *head* hurt from the hair pull. However, she stopped when she saw that the woman had a big belly. Instead, she just held her wrists and said in a deep voice, “Let go!”

The woman was not afraid of her threat. She continued to pull her hair from behind and said, “You’re with that Uber driver, aren’t you? You deliberately lied to the police and caused my husband to get arrested! He had just been promoted to be a director, but it’s all ruined now! How could you be such a vicious person, you bitch?!”

Stella did not understand why the woman was being so unreasonable. However, she did not dare push her since she was pregnant. Thus, she only gritted her teeth and said, “Didn’t you see what your husband did when you were in the car with him? If you didn’t want this to happen, you should have advised him not to start a fight. With his level of road rage, you should be thankful that it was just a scratch. Otherwise, it could have been your life.”

“Shut up!” The woman shouted, obviously irritated by her words. She raised her purse and wanted to hit Stella in the head. Stella closed her eyes and thought, ‘What an unlucky day to have met such a lunatic.’

However, the expected blow did not happen. A familiar male voice sounded above her head, “I think it’s still considered illegal to hit someone even when you’re pregnant. So, let go.”

“This is none of your business. Who the fuck are you?”

Marshall chuckled and said, “A citizen who is brave enough to do what is right.” The woman felt a sharp pain in her wrists after she heard him say that and let go of Stella’s hand.

Marshall grabbed Stella’s shoulders and gently pulled her behind him. “Are you alright?” He asked.

Chapter 26

Only then did Stella recognize the man she had met on the rooftop of Rotona Pinnacle Hospital. She shook her head in response to his question. The pregnant woman's eyes turned red with anger. "You bitch! Do you think I'm scared of you now that someone has come to your rescue? Try me!" Stella wanted to respond, but Marshall stopped her.

He took his phone out and said, "I have proof of you hitting her on my phone. Although you'll only be sentenced to a minimal crime punishment because you're pregnant and you have nothing to fear, what *do* you think would happen if I put this on the internet? Do you think people would let you go just because you have a baby in you? Your child is going to be criticized before they're even born. Do *you* think they could live safely after that?"

The woman's face changed, as she was scared. Marshall handed her a business card and said, "Oh, I forgot to introduce myself. I'm a journalist, which also means I have the power to spread this news around." The woman did not dare to retaliate, so she just bit the bullet and said, "You got lucky." She walked away while holding her belly after saying that.

Marshall turned around, and his dominating manner dissipated in an instant. His gaze turned somewhat warm. "You're hurt," he said, pointing at Stella's neck. She opened the camera app on her phone to look at it and saw that there were bloody scratches on her neck.

"Let's take care of that. I have a first aid kit in my car." Stella felt like she could not reject his kindness, so she said in a low voice, "Alright. Sorry for the trouble." Marshall smiled and said, "It's nothing." After the both of them got into his car, Marshall dug out some disinfectant to clean her wound.

"I'll do it," Stella softly said, unnaturally avoiding his help as Marshall handed her the kit.

When she treated her wound, she asked, "So, you're a journalist."

Marshall was taken aback for a moment. He then laughed and shook his head as he said, "No, someone else gave me that business card. I didn't even have a video of what happened. I just wanted to scare her so that she'd stop."

"Well, that makes sense. He doesn't look like a reporter. I mean, what kind of reporter drives a Bentley?" Stella thought.

"Wow, I almost fell for it," she chuckled. Marshall was stunned for a second when he heard that.

He then smiled and said, "I'll take that as a compliment." Just as he was talking, his phone rang. Marshall excused himself and answered the call.

"Marshall, where are you?"

Keegan was rinsing his mouth when Aurora entered his office. "Keegan! Why did Stella come here?" Keegan frowned. "Don't you know how to knock?"

"The door wasn't shut," Aurora murmured in a low voice. "Keegan, are you okay?" she asked in surprise when she saw that he did not look too well. Keegan's tummy began to churn once again when he heard

that.

"What brings you here?" He glanced at Aurora impatiently and asked.

Aurora pursed her lips and said, "I want to borrow your phone. Marshall is not answering my calls."

"Get lost!"

"Please? If Marshall and I get together, our family will become in-laws with the Moore family, and you wouldn't have to worry about our uncle's family."

"Marshall would never fall for you." Keegan ruthlessly ruined her dream.

Chapter 27

Aurora gritted her teeth and said, "How would you know if he'd like me or not? His parents like me! You just don't want to help your sister out!"

Keegan nodded, "Then, go look for him yourself."

Aurora was stunned for a moment.

'Would I be here begging you to contact Marshall if I could do it myself?' Marshall seemed to have deliberately avoided Aurora since he returned to the country. Whenever she found out where he was, he would be nowhere in sight when she arrived. He also never picked up when Aurora called.

"Please, Keegan. Help me out here. Don't you want me to be happily married in the future?" Keegan glanced at her and said, "You two are not suitable for each other. He's seven years older than you."

"Stella was the same age as me when you married her. Why didn't you think she was too young? Why do you men have such double standards?" Keegan was reminded of wh

at Stella did when Aurora mentioned her name. Initially, he had a headache from quarreling with Aurora, but now his tummy was aching too. He tossed the phone to Aurora and said, "Get out of here after you finish."

Aurora grabbed the phone with joy and immediately called Marshall. "Hello?" Marshall's gentle voice sounded as he picked up the phone. "Marshall, where are you? Why aren't you answering my texts or calls?"

It was Marshall's turn to have a headache. 'Not only did Keegan ignore what I said, but he even lent his phone to his sister?!

"I probably missed them. I've been busy. What's up?"

"Nothing much... It's just... Can you take me to the charity event this weekend? I didn't get an invitation." "Your brother has an invitation. You can ask him to take you there," Marshall politely declined.

"He already has a date," Aurora said as Keegan glanced at her contemptuously. Marshall did not believe her. With Keegan's status, it would not be a big deal for him to bring an extra guest to the charity event. Marshall knew what she was thinking. He knew that if he did not state his feelings clearly, Aurora would believe that she'd still have a chance.

"Sorry, Aurora, I can't take you to the event. I already have a girlfriend." Aurora froze. "Are you lying to me on purpose? That's impossible! You just returned to the country. Your mom hasn't even had the time to set up a blind date for you. How could you already have a girlfriend? Stop bluffing!"

Marshall felt a little frustrated. "You'll see when the day comes. Anyway, I have matters to attend to. Bye." He hung up before Aurora could reply. "Where are you heading to? I'll drive you there," he then said to Stella.

"It's okay. I've already called an Uber. It'll be here soon," Stella quickly shut down his offer. "It's rush hour. I happen to be going to the city for some business. I can drop you off on the way. Trust me. It's no big deal." Stella thought it would be ignorant to reject him after what he said, so she replied, "Alright, Bambusa Street, please."

Marshall occasionally talked to her but knew to avoid crossing the line. For example, he did not act overly concerned

about what happened at the police station, nor did he ask her why she was at the hospital the last time they met. Instead, he focused on other light-hearted details like where she got her unique phone charm. After learning that she made it herself, Marshall's gaze showed shock and admiration.

The conversation made Stella feel comfortable. For a moment, she imagined that if Keegan were the one next to her, he would have glanced at her in disdain and said, "It's so ugly."

'The day he praises me is the day pigs fly,' she thought. Keegan did not love her, so he never knew how to appreciate her.

Chapter 28

"Here?" Marshall slowed down and asked. Stella finally returned to her senses, looked outside the window, and nodded, "Yeah, just drop me over there."

"Wait here," she said when the car stopped. Marshall did not know why she asked him to wait. Before he was about to ask her, Stella had already gotten out of the car and walked toward the opposite side of the road. A few cars passed by, and she was nowhere to be seen.

About ten minutes later, she showed up again. This time, she was standing at the other end of the crosswalk with two cups of coffee in her hands, looking both ways, waiting for the traffic to pass. Marshall could not look away when he saw her. Only when he heard a knock on his car window did he recover. He lowered the window, and Stella handed him a cup of coffee.

Marshall took the coffee and said in a low voice, "My name is Marshall. What's yours?" Stella was stunned for a moment. She then smiled and said, "Celeste."

Aurora was on the verge of going crazy when she heard that Marshall had a girlfriend. "Keegan! Marshall told me he has a girlfriend. Who is she?"

Keegan still had an upset stomach and was not in the mood to talk. "How would I know?" He said in anger.

"Aren't you guys best friends? How could you not know who his girlfriend is?"

Keegan grabbed his phone away from her and coldly said, "Aurora, if you're going to act crazy, then get out!" Aurora kept her mouth shut. She only dared to act like that when her brother was in a good mood because she was actually scared of him to the bones.

'Maybe Stella said something to make him this mad,' Aurora thought. She was a little apprehensive when she tentatively asked, "Keegan, why did that woman come in here just now?"

"What did *you* just call her?" Keegan glared at her and asked.

"Uh... Why did Stella come to see you?" Aurora reluctantly replied.

"It's *none* of your business. Go ask Aldor to come in here."

Aurora did not dare to talk back at him, so she went out of the office with an annoyed look on her face and called

for Aldor. She wanted to be in the room after that, but Keegan kicked her out. 'That's odd. What are they talking about?'

A few minutes after Aldor entered the office, he came out with two boxes in his hands. Aurora had seen them in Keegan's office earlier, but she did not know what they contained. 'Interesting,' she thought.

Aldor did not notice her and drove away with the two boxes. Aurora tailed him out of curiosity and soon arrived at their family home. She saw Aldor handing over the two boxes to the caretaker and drove off after he said a few words.

After Aldor left, Aurora rushed into her home, took the boxes away from the caretaker, and frowned. "Why did Keegan send these home?"

"Those are for Mrs. Kane. They're from Mr. Jewell."

'So this is why Stella was at the company! What a family of suck-ups!' She thought as she threw the boxes to the ground and stomped on them several times.

Chapter 29

By the time the caretaker could react and stop Aurora, it was *too* late. The caretaker panicked when she saw the boxes stomped into pieces. "How could you do this, Ms. Kane?!" She asked.

"My mother wouldn't want those things from the Jewell family anyway," Aurora snorted coldly.

"That doesn't mean you should stomp on it! How am I supposed to give it to Mrs. Kane now? Your brother specifically asked me to hand it over to your mom. How will I explain myself when he sees it destroyed?" "Just tell him you gave it to her. He wouldn't know if you didn't."

"But..."

"No buts! I'll take the blame if anything happens. Hurry up and throw out this garbage. It's so annoying to look at!" Aurora glared at her and said. The caretaker did not dare to say anything further, so she kept her mouth shut and cleaned up the floor.

As soon as Stella entered the house, Felicity saw the band-aid on her neck. After some questioning, she was caught up with everything that had happened.

"That crazy woman wouldn't know karma if it hit her baby," Felicity said indignantly. "But, I can't believe you gave that handsome Bentley guy a coffee."

“What else could I have done to repay him?”

Felicity slapped her thigh and said,
“You should have had him come up here for a meal! Coffee sounds disingenuous.

“I’ve only met him twice. Wouldn’t it be too abrupt to invite someone to have dinner with us?”

“No, it’s not. Times are different, Stella. People have dinner after they meet for the first time. Isn’t it considered fate that you guys met twice in three days? How old is this Bentley dude? Is he handsome?”

Stella felt like Felicity was hinting at something else. “What are you hinting at?” She narrowed her eyes and asked.

“Nothing,” Felicity replied.
“I just think that he’s not a bad guy. Maybe you can get together with him, you know?”

“What are you talking about?! I’m married!” Stella threw a pillow toward her face and exclaimed. Felicity caught the pillow and said, “Aren’t you getting divorced soon? What’s the matter with searching for a new partner in advance? By the way, didn’t you talk to Keegan about the divorce today? What did he say? When can you guys get everything done?”

Stella’s face dropped when she heard that. “I don’t want to talk about it. Keegan kicked me out of the building just now.”

“What? What happened?”

Stella told Felicity everything that happened in the Vinci Rivera Group in detail, except for the medical checkup she booked for Keegan. Felicity was a little confused after listening to her. “Why do I feel like Keegan isn’t happy with you talking about the divorce?”

“He’s always been like this with everything I do,” Stella shrugged in reply.

“Really? Then, why doesn’t he just settle the divorce once and for all if he’s so unhappy? Why do I feel like he doesn’t want a divorce?”

Stella was stunned for a moment. She then shook her head and said, “You don’t know him. It’s not that he’s unhappy about the divorce, he’s just mad because I was the one who proposed the idea first.” Keegan could not tolerate the thought of someone whom he had control over wanting to be free.

“Wasn’t there something important you wanted to tell me?” Stella asked.

Chapter 30

“Oh, didn’t you ask me to help you sell your bag online? Many people have asked about it,” said Felicity. Stella was surprised.

“What do you mean by ‘many’? Are people really that rich these days?”

“What are you talking about? People are just excited because they’ve never seen someone with that bag before. Only a few internet celebrities want to rent your bag for some pictures.”

“It’s only for sale, not for rent,” Stella waved her hand and said.

“Yeah, that’s what I told them. After some screening, I finally found someone who actually wants to buy it. We’ve been texting for three consecutive days now. She asked me for many detailed pictures of the bag and asked if she should inspect the product in person to negotiate the price. I told her yes on your behalf.” “Do you know her background?” Felicity thought for a while and said, “She doesn’t seem like someone from your group. She wants to meet up at a second-hand luxury store. The store is only in the second or third tier at best. Only small celebrities who don’t receive sponsorships and people who think they’re celebrities go there.

“Okay. I’ll go have a look tomorrow.”

Felicity then put her hands over her shoulders and said, “The most important thing I want to tell you today is the new show *The Palace*, directed by Daniel Wood, is looking for actors! Although the female lead has already been chosen, you know how Wood’s works are always women-centric. It doesn’t matter if you play a supporting role. You’ll still get famous as long as you know how to act. They’re holding an audition at the Hilton Hotel this Friday. I’ve given them your information.”

“I’ve never worked in film before. How did you manage to give my name?” Stella asked in surprise. “I’ve been in this circle for a long time, Stella.

I have my ways. I wrote myself down as your agent, but you can change it later when a company signs you under their name. Are you going to go?” Felicity asked. 1

“Of course I’m going! How could I not after you’ve given me such an amazing opportunity?” Felicity cleared her throat and said, “But, there are two things I want to make clear to you. First, they are looking for an actor for the fourth female role, and there won’t be many scenes for that character. Secondly, Bella Young is playing the female lead.”

Stella was speechless. Felicity observed the facial expression on Stella’s face carefully and said, “

We can just stay home if *you* don't want to do it. There are many other auditions every year. I'll find something good for you."

Stella stayed silent *for* two seconds before she decided, "No, I want to."

"Are you sure?" Felicity asked. She knew that it would be difficult for anyone to work with a rival. "You don't have to do it, you know?"

Stella smiled and said, "I might as well be kept in a cage by Keegan if I can't do this. Things will be even harder after I leave the Kane family."

The next day, Stella took her bag to the second-hand luxury store according to the agreed time with the buyer. After telling the store owner why she was there, the store owner took her to a private room upstairs, which smelled like fresh pine wood and sage, 1

"What's that scent?" Stella asked. She was interested in the fragrance of the burning candle in the room.

"Oh, it's a candle from my friend. He said he made it himself, so I'm not sure about the fragrance, but do you like it?"

"Yeah, it smells nice." Just as she said that, the store doorbell rang twice downstairs, and the store owner

excused himself. Not long after, a woman, who was wrapped in warm clothes and a pair of sunglasses, opened the door to the private room. The aroma of her perfume filled the room, taking over the fresh scent earlier.

"Are you the one who is selling the bag?"

Chapter 31

The familiar shrill voice with a hint of surprise instantly stirred Stella in disgust. Stella raised her head and gave an impassive look. "It's been a while since we last met, Miss Young."

The store owner who came shortly after surprisingly asked, "Have you two met before?"

Bella fixed her jacket and wandered in front of Stella. She then took a seat facing her with a smirk and said, "More than that. We are familiar with each other."

The store owner did not perceive the deeper intent at the moment and laughed, "So, you are acquaintances. Would the two of you like to discuss this in private?"

Bella glanced at the store owner. "We just know each other, but not to the extent of a friendly relationship."

Bella made the store owner feel awkward by pointing out their relationship with *one* sentence. Stella still had a stoic expression and pushed the case over. "According to the store's rules, let's sample the goods first."

The store owner took the bag and started inspecting it after seeing that Bella had no objections. The end table in the private room was narrow. The distance between Stella and Bella was approximately a meter. The tense atmosphere between the two made the store owner, who was a few meters away, feel pressured.

"Stella, you are quite thick-skinned. How are you not ashamed of selling things from the Kane family?"

"I'm just selling the things I don't want. Why should I feel ashamed? So, do you mean that those who scramble for things others don't want should die from shame?" Stella let out a chuckle. "Well, aren't you living just fine, Miss Young?"

Bella's face became clouded. However, Bella held her rage back out of concern that the store owner would overhear her. After twenty minutes, the store owner finished the inspection. The store owner confirmed the authenticity and asked for Stella's intended price.

"Five million."

Once she made her statement, Bella jumped up before the store owner could evaluate the price.

"Five million? Stella, are you crazy about money? The bag is probably worth two million, but you want to sell it to me for five? Do you think I'm stupid?"

Stella remained expressionless. "If you could buy it for two million, why buy it second-hand? Miss Young, you know this bag is for members only, right? Only premium members with an annual consumption of more than twenty million are eligible to purchase this. It's a completely new bag. I have to include some of the membership fees, right?"

"Membership fee? Stella, did you use your own money to buy this bag? You squandered Keegan's money. You're imposing a membership fee to cash it out now that you don't want it anymore. No wonder Keegan said that you're stingy and insatiably greedy."

Stella clenched her fist, and her expression turned cold. "Miss Young, the Keegan you mentioned is my husband by law. It's reasonable and legal for me to spend his money. There's no need for you to boss me around. If you want this bag, the price is five million with no bargains. Let's not waste each other's time if you can't afford to buy it. I'm quite busy."

"Who said I can't afford it?" Bella was seething with anger. "I'm just questioning the rationality of the price. The value of this bag is probably three million. If you sell it for five million, it's simply... disrupting the market order!"

Stella let out a laugh.

"It looks like you don't understand that we are under the transaction of private goods. And, it has nothing to do with the market order. I only need to pay the value-added tax if this transaction is completed. It's not illegal or against the rules. Besides, values are just references for the buyers, yet it's my choice for the price of the item since it belongs to me. You could call off the deal if you think it's unreasonable."

"Why you-

"Bella's face turned green with anger. She was even more furious when she saw Stella being calm and composed. She sneered after thinking about it. "Stella, you increased the price on purpose and refused to sell the bag to me after realizing that I was the buyer, right?"

Stella did not speak and gave her a cold stare.

Chapter 32

Bella's lips lifted into a grin as she grew confident of her suspicion.

"Why keep on grabbing onto something that is not yours?" Bella thought she could provoke Stella. She could tell that Stella was not a calm person from the few interactions she had with her. Stella could not hide her jealousy whenever she had any close contact with Keegan. Bella thought she would act the same as last time. But, Stella just glanced at her indifferently. "If you insist on thinking that way, so be it. So, are you going to buy it?"

Now, it was Bella's turn to keep a straight face. 'It feels like a scam if I buy it. But, Stella feels so odious as if she's mocking me if I don't buy it.'

Stella seemed to have read her thoughts. She put the bag back into the case, and the moment the cover was about to close, Bella stopped her and said, "I'll buy it!"

Stella paused and looked up at her. "Pay in full."

Bella gritted her teeth and said, "Don't worry. You won't lose a penny." Five million was not a small amount of money. Bella went out to take a call and came back after Stella w

aided in the private room for thirty minutes. Yet, the look on Bella's face when she came in was not pleasant. In the presence of the store owner, the two had a deal. Bella transferred five million to Stella's bank account on the spot.

When Bella signed the deal, she drew out her wrist from her dress. Then, a familiar diamond bracelet on her wrist caught Stella's attention. The model and workmanship were very similar to the one she gave to Keegan in the past. When Bella was done signing, she

noticed Stella's attention on her wrist. She lifted her wrist with a smile and said, "This bracelet was a gift from Keegan

back in the year I debuted. Stella, are your pieces of jewelry from him all diamond too? Do you know what's the reason?"

Stella paused, and her fingers slowly curled up. The look on her face indicated that Bella's guess was correct. Yet, Stella did not want to know the reason behind it. She even had the urge to escape from hearing it. However, Bella did not give her the chance to escape and mocked,

"His knowledge of jewelry all comes from me, and my favorite jewels are diamonds."

Stella's nails dug into her palm. Every word from Bella was a humiliation at her ecstatic response to the gifts. The romance she thought she had was just Keegan projecting the shadow of other women on her.

"Stella, Keegan doesn't love you. If it wasn't for his grandma opposing us being together back then, do you think you'll

have the chance to marry him? But, it's different now, Cordelia is old and has no control anymore. The Kane family will be Keegan's. What do you think will happen to you by then?" Bella raised the corner of her lips. "If I were you, I would leave on my own. At least this way, I could leave with dignity. It's a shame to be kicked out of the house."

"Keegan and I were already married when you debut, right?"

"Huh?" Bella did not get it for a moment when Stella said that out of nowhere.

"Doesn't that mean that every penny he spent on you was our joint property? In that case, I am legally entitled to claim it back."

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Chapter 33

Bella was speechless. ‘After everything I told her, she was only thinking about taking back her property?’ Bella was bewildered. “Stella, are you dense? I just told you that Keegan doesn’t love you, and I have his child now. Don’t you think you are a little brazen for occupying the position of Mrs. Kane?”

Stella chuckled, “Miss Young, you’re a celebrity. Have you ever considered the outcome if I posted the things you said to me online? You know it’s wrong, but you still want to be his mistress. And, you even force the original spouse into a divorce. Do you think it’s worth it to destroy the image you created all these years? And, maybe a sky-high breach of contract?”

Bella was not frightened by her words, as she smugly smiled, “Stella, I’ve been in the industry for so long. I’ve experienced all kinds of news before. Remember the last rear-end accident which caused a whole lot of fuss? In the end, the dispute was resolved. Do you have any idea how I was able to get away with it every time? Who else would have the ability other than Keegan? It was a month’s loss of exposure, but I got the voice-acting role for ‘Honor of the Deities’.”

Stella’s smile turned cold, “What voice-acting role did you say?”

“Honor of the Deities’, a shitty game-” Bella gave her a disdainful look. “Why am I telling you this? Stella, have some sense and leave on your own. You would be kicked out once my stomach gets big! Do you think Cordelia would banish the Kane bloodline from the family when the time comes? Even if she would be reluctant to do so?”

Stella could feel her hand shaking, and a chill ran down her spine. ‘No wonder he appeared at Neon Nebula that day! No wonder Neon Nebula suddenly changed its mind about the guaranteed contract! It was him who took the contract away from me to please another woman! Keegan Kane, have you ever respected me?’

Looking at Stella’s disapproving look, Bella thought that her pregnancy had hit her sore spot. She continued, “To be honest, Dahlia knew about my pregnancy. She promised me if I had a boy, she would make Keegan marry me. When that time comes, who in the Kane family will be on your side?”

Stella’s eyes turned dark. Her face was pale, as she stared Bella dead in the eye and coldly said, “Get lost!”

Bella did not stay since she did what she came here to do. She mocked her a few more times before she took her bag and left.

In the Royalpark Villa, a spring rain was pouring around 10 o’clock at night, which was non-stop in March Rivera. The rain started at two in the afternoon, and there was no sign of stopping. The study’s window was half opened, and the sound of pouring rain lingered in one’s ears. Keegan enjoyed working or reading in quiet environments because it was more efficient. But, it was strange recently. He could not concentrate when his surroundings were too quiet.

When Stella was present, he would warn her to not enter the study when he was working. Yet, she never listened and would send in some fruits or midnight snacks. Besides, she would use excuses such as cleaning the surroundings and massaging him to linger around. Sometimes, he would be ignorant of her presence and warn her to not make a sound when he could not shoo her away.

Stella would always promise him at first, but soon she started making noise until Keegan could not stand it. She would smile very brightly and compliment his handwriting or how he could make sense of the messy data when he asked her what happened. Her praises would make having great handwriting or the ability to read a document seem like a prideful thing.

Keegan used to think that Stella was very noisy. But now, he was not used to it when she was not around.

“Knock Knock!”

The knock on the door interrupted his thoughts, and Keegan came back to his senses and lightly said, “Come in.”

The nanny came in with a cup of tea.

Chapter 34

“Sir, I brought you a cup of earl grey tea.”

Keegan took off his glasses, rubbed his eyes really hard, and said tiredly, “Thank you. Just leave it there.”

The nanny set down the tea and left. Keegan took a sip of it and narrowed his brows. It tasted different from the past and was too sour to drink. He stopped drinking and set the tea aside. Just as he wanted to take his book, his phone beside him rang. He glanced and ignored the phone call as it was an unidentified number. After the ringtone was cut off, he only answered the call when it rang once more.

“Hi, is this Mr. Tard? Could you come and pick up your drunk wife in our bar?”

“You have the wrong number,” Keegan said in a cool manner and hung off. After a moment, the phone call rang again. Keegan’s brow scrunched as he answered the call.

“It’s the correct number. She told us this number. Mr. Tard, is your wife currently at home? How would you know it’s not your wife?”

“My surname isn’t Tard,” Keegan said impatiently and hung up again. The person did not call anymore. A few minutes later, Keegan received a picture through his text messages. The photo was taken in a dimly lit place, but it was clear that the woman lying unconscious at the bar was Stella. Keegan’s gaze turned sharp, and he immediately called back. “Where’s the bar?”

“Where’s my wine?” Stella squinted her eyes, shook the empty glass, and lisped, “Who drank all my wine?” The bartender handed her a glass of water and coaxed, “Here you go.”

Stella chuckled and drank a mouthful from the glass. But, she spewed it all out the next second. She frowned with a displeased face.

“You fooled me with water? Are you scared that I can’t pay for the alcohol? Let me tell you something, my husband is freaking rich! He could buy every bar in River a for me. Do you think he can’t afford to pay for my drinks? Pour me a glass now!”

This was the first time the bartender had ever seen such an alcoholic. The bartender could not say that she was drunk, as she could tell the difference between water and alcohol. But, if she was not drunk, she would waffle on and not tell the bartender where she lived. She would brag at any chance she got. For a moment, she would say that her husband was rich, and the cars in the house could fill the entire parking lot. She would drive out in a Cadillac or Rolls-Royce, or travel to Europe in a private jet. In the other moments, she would cry and complain that she would not be able to enjoy these things anymore since she was going to divorce her husband. She even asked the bartender how she could get more money from the divorce.

The bartender was really jealous of her. After all, it had been a while since he last dreamed of marrying a rich woman. Suddenly, there was a loud, noisy bang at the door. A leaden gray sports car stopped at the edge of the road outside the bar, splashing the water at the side.

A person from somewhere suddenly screamed out, "Oh my god, it's a Bugatti."

The bartender was startled. The next second, a man with an umbrella came out and walked toward the door of the bar.

Chapter 35

The stoic-looking man dressed in a suit pushed his way into the bar, looking out of place compared to the rest of the guests in the tavern. His outfit seemed more likely to appear in high-end places where gentries gather, rather than their bar. But, of course, who would know what the rich were thinking. Maybe they just wanted to have a little taste of the city-style tavern.

The bartender put on his classic smile and greeted, "Welcome to..."

Stella tapped her glass with dissatisfaction, as she said, "Who are you welcoming? You haven't poured me my glass of wine! Hurry up!"

The bartender had no choice but to patiently coax the alcoholic. "Miss, there is *no* wine anymore. We are closing soon."

"Liar! Why don't I have wine when the rest do?"

The alcoholic was not easy to fool, and the bartender had an idea when he saw the owner of the Bugatti coming over. "We are really out of wine. This gentleman over here had bought all the wine. Why don't you come back tomorrow?"

Stella frowned and turned around with shaky motions. She could vaguely see a well-dressed figure swaying in front of her. She propped herself up on the table and staggered to get on her feet. She grabbed the person's collar, poked his chin, and asked, "So, you were the one who bought off all the wine?"

Her cheeks blushed, her appearance was disheveled, and she reeked of alcohol. There was no semblance of her usual self. Keegan furrowed his brows and pushed her finger that was poking his chin.

"Say something! Are you the one who bought all the wine?" Stella took it seriously when the bartender stonewalled her. She grabbed onto Keegan and looked as though she was going to argue with him. "I was here before you. Who gave you the right to buy all the wine? Don't you know first come first served?"

The bartender's heart was in his mouth. Afraid that Keegan would get angry, he hurriedly explained, "Sir, please ignore her. This lady is drunk."

"You're the one who's drunk," Stella turned her head, glaring at him. "You money-grubber. Did you sell him the alcohol since he paid more?"

The bartender was really afraid that Stella would offend the man, seeing that she had already pulled the man's clothes out of shape. He compromised, "Could you let go, miss? I'll give you a bottle for free?"

Stella lifted and shook her index finger. "No!"

The bartender was very wretched, but then the sound of Stella's laughter came. "I—I can't drink for free. I have to pay you."

She let go of Keegan and staggered to her seat to grab her bag. She opened it and looked everywhere, but she could not find any money. She frowned and muttered, "Where's my money?"

"I'll give it to *you* for free. No charges needed."

"No!" Stella was particularly stubborn on this. "I will pay you!"

She then took out a ring from her bag, pinched it with her fingers, and laughed, "I didn't bring any cash, but you can take this for now."

The diamonds on the ring were smaller than gemstones, but they were colorful and bright under the light. As Stella was about to hand the ring to the bartender, Keegan snatched it away.

Stella knitted her brows. "Why did you snatch my ring?"

Keegan gritted his teeth and suppressed his anger. "You're using the wedding ring to exchange for wine?"

"So? Why does it concern you?"

Keegan was in a terrible mood. The bartender was startled, thinking why did Keegan know that it was a wedding ring? His heart jolted when he looked at Keegan's expression. 'Could this be the alcoholics' rich husband that she was talking, about?"

Stella stared at Keegan's face and approached him. "Hey, handsome. Do you want to be my boyfriend?"

The bartender was shocked. Keegan looked frigid, and his gaze was icy cold. "Are you single?" His voice was low and dangerous, but Stella did not sense it as her brain was turning to mush.

Chapter 36

Stella raised Keegan's chin with her finger Her thumb inched downwards from his lips and brushed across his Adam's apple She gave him a tipsy smile and moved closer to him. With only inches from his lips, she spoke in a low voice, "If you're handsome, then I'm single."

Her warm, intoxicated breath was laced with an eerie trace of allure.

Stella caressed Keegan's chest with her slender fingers. Her half-closed eyes were sultry and enticing. "I'll give you three thousand dollars. Would you be my boyfriend?"

Keegan's expression darkened, and his daunting eyes sharpened into an intense gaze.

Stella creased her pretty eyebrows and replied, "Three thousand dollars is not bad compared to the current market price."

"Current market price?" Keegan sneered. "You seem to know a lot about this."

Stella hesitated and finally decided to give in. "Fine! Your good looks deserve a higher price. I will throw in another five hundred dollars for you. That's three thousand and five hundred dollars. I can't go any higher!"

Keegan was tempted to shove her head into the fish tank beside him just to sober her up.

If I wasn't here tonight, would she have slept with a random guy?"

Just the thought of that made him angrier.

Stella was completely unaware of the menacing situation she was in. She whipped out a bank card from her purse, unbuttoned the collar of Keegan's shirt, and dropped the card inside his shirt. She caressed his chest like a seductress and grinned. "You better keep your word."

Keegan took a deep breath and got a hold of the back of Stella's neck. He started to guide her out of the

bar.

Seeing this, the bartender quickly called out to Keegan.

"Mr. Tard! Your wife hasn't paid her bill."

Keegan stopped dead in his tracks and glared at Stella, the drunken culprit who was responsible for the bill. He held onto Stella with one hand and pulled out his wallet with another. Keegan tossed the wallet to the bartender and said, "Use the gold card. No password required."

Keegan looked so impatient that the bartender did not dare to say anything else. The bartender quickly settled the bill, put the card back into the wallet, and returned it to Keegan with both hands.

"Take care, Mr. Tard. please come again soon!"

Keegan glanced at the bartender. "Who told you my surname was Tard?"

The bartender froze, and his mind flashed back to what had happened earlier.

When Stella was getting drunk at the bar, a lot of male customers were attracted by her good looks and approached to flirt with her. The bartender was worried about her safety, so he wanted to contact Stella's family to pick her up.

However, Stella's phone was dead, so he had no choice but to ask her for a number. But, Stella was so woozy that she only managed to spit out a number after ages of asking.

"Is this your family member's number?" The bartender inquired.

Stella nodded. "It's my husband's number."

"How may I address your husband?"

"My husband... Heh, my husband's name is Bas...Tard!"

The bartender gulped and replied to Keegan with a straight face, "This lady here said so herself."

Keegan studied the bartender for a few seconds and proceeded to drag Stella away.

Just as the bartender wanted to open the door for him, Keegan bent over to pick up Stella, swung the door open, and disappeared into the rain with an umbrella in his hand.

Keegan finally got her in the car, but he was drenched thoroughly by the rain in the process.

By the time he got into the driver's seat, Stella's head was leaning against the car window, and her eyes were shut as if she was asleep.

Keegan turned toward her and reached across her chest in an attempt to fasten her seatbelt. But, before he managed to buckle her seatbelt, she hooked her arm around his neck.

He looked up to see Stella, and her eyes were half opened. She smiled at him and whispered, "Where are we sleeping tonight?"

Chapter 37

Stella has big, almond-shaped eyes with long outer corners. When she was sober, her clear eyes brightened up whenever she smiled. However, when she was drunk, her eyes were clouded with intoxication, and she looked exceptionally alluring.

Inadvertently, carelessly alluring.

Keegan gulped as he lowered his gaze to look at her. "That depends on where you want to sleep tonight." His voice was deep and intimidating.

Stella tilted her head and thought for a while. She then smiled and said, "Let's go to your place."

Keegan raised his eyebrow. "Are you sure?"

Stella felt too dizzy to focus on Keegan's blurry figure. She frowned, shook her head, and held his face with her hands. "I gave you three thousand and five hundred dollars. If we went to a hotel room, that would cost me too much. Let's go to your house to save up some money. I might have to go through divorce proceedings."

Keegan could feel the veins popping out of his head.

'Am I supposed to compliment her on her thriftiness?'

Keegan looked stern.

“My place? Aren’t you worried about your husband finding out about this?” His voice was somber.

Stella shook her head. “I don’t have a husband. I’m a widow.”

Keegan gritted his teeth. “Would a widow need to file a divorce?”

Stella frowned. Apparently, she was puzzled by her own unsound statements. Keegan’s interrogation just made her more confused.

“You’re so annoying! You ask way too many questions! I don’t want *you* to be my boyfriend anymore. Give me back my money!”

As she said that, her hands fumbled across Keegan’s body.

Keegan restrained both of her hands and buckled her seatbelt. “Too late,” he replied blankly.

He started the car and drove away.

“Let me out of the car!” Stella protested quietly.

Although she was drunk, she did not risk doing anything dangerous such as reaching to grab the steering wheel. She just stared on like an abandoned stray cat.

She might hiss, but she was too afraid to claw.

Keegan ignored her.

“Are you trying to kidnap me?”

The woman beside him was starting to imagine things. “I’m really broke. Please let me go...”

Keegan gave the drunk girl a side-eye. “You don’t look broke when you generously offered me three thousand and five hundred dollars to be your boyfriend,” he stated flatly.

“I was faking it,” Stella pleaded pitifully. “I’m really broke.”

“Oh.” Keegan went quiet for a while. Just as Stella thought she had successfully persuaded him, Keegan spoke again. “I don’t believe you.”

Stella's expression fell. "How much ransom do you want, then?"

"How much do you think you're worth?" Keegan looked straight ahead.

Stella furrowed her eyebrows in distress. After a while, she replied, "Judging by my looks, I would say at least a hundred million dollars.

Keegan held back his smile.

'How did I not know that she was this shameless?'

"I don't have a hundred million dollars, though. Why don't you ask my husband for it?"

Keegan snorted. 'So, you think of me now?'

His newly regained sense of presence as a husband did not last long, as his wife continued to conspire against him. "You should call him and ask for two hundred million dollars as ransom. Then, *you* can threaten to kill me if you don't get the money. Once you get it, we can split the money in half."

Keegan immediately got mad.

"What makes you so confident that he would pay the ransom?" he mocked.

Chapter 38

Stella was stunned. Her eyes lost their shine, and they gradually reddened. "You're right. He wouldn't take any notice of me..."

'When I almost died in the tracking incident, he was with someone else,' Stella thought.

Keegan frowned. He had a strange feeling in his heart.

"What I meant was," he explained. "Who would fall for a stupid plan like that?"

Stella did not respond again, as if she did not hear what he had just said. She turned her head away and rested it against the car window.

Keegan wanted to say something, but he felt wrong about it.

'No point talking to a drunkard. No matter what I say, I would be pissed off by her illogical responses.' Keegan kept quiet too.

They reached Royalpark Villa not long after that.

Maya heard them from afar and hurried out with an umbrella. When she came out, she saw Keegan carrying someone out of the car.

When she approached them closer with the umbrella, she realized that the person being carried was Stella.

“What happened to Mrs. Kane?”

Keegan did not answer. “Fill up the bathtub,” he ordered.

As he carried Stella up the stairs, Keegan noticed the beads of tears hanging from her eyelashes, and the corners of her eyes were red. She looked like she had just cried.

He tightened his grip on her and pursed his lips.

“Mr. Kane, the bath is ready.”

Maya wanted to lend him a hand, but Keegan avoided her reaching out. “Cook her some soup to get her to sober up.”

Maya’s eyes landed on Stella. Maya hesitated but then obeyed and left.

The bath was bubbling with steam, and the bathroom air was warm and humid.

Keegan laid Stella down. He bowed his head and stared at her for a while. Then, he reached out and unbuttoned her shirt.

Instantly, her skin was shown. It was pale with a hint of crimson blush.

Upon seeing this, he stopped what he was doing and frowned. He threw a towel on her, turned around, and left.

As he swung the bathroom door open, he bumped into Maya. Maya was startled by his sudden motions and stuttered, “Mr., Mr. Kane, I’m here to hand you her clothes.”

Keegan glanced at her. “Clean her up,” he said coldly and left.

Maya peered at Stella, who was lying there fully clothed and untouched.

By the time Maya was done bathing Stella and moved her to the bedroom, an hour had passed.

The light in Keegan's study was still on. Maya knocked on his door, holding a bowl of soup. "Mr. Kane, Mrs. Kane has fallen asleep. Should I still feed her this soup?"

"Hand it over to me. I'll bring it in for her later." Keegan flipped a page of the document he was reading. He looked up and continued, "Go get some rest, Maya."

Maya obeyed, set down the spup, and left the room silently.

Keegan waited until everything was quiet downstairs and set his documents aside.

He glanced at the soup that was set on the table and took it to the window. Then, he pushed the window open and poured the soup out.

Stella did not rest well, as nightmares infested her sleep. She would dream of the car accident back then, and the despair she felt as she was trapped under the car, unable to move at all.

Then, she dreamed of an impregnated Bella marrying Keegan. In her dream, Stella rushed up to Keegan and questioned him. But, Keegan coldly pulled her hand off and told her to stop badgering him.

She took a step back in disbelief. However, the ground beneath her feet went empty, and she fell into the abyss beneath her...

Stella felt a sharp pain in her chest and woke up abruptly with cold sweat glistening on her forehead. She gasped lightly for air when she realized that it was all just a dream.

Her phone rang. Out of habit, Stella tried to reach around for her phone, but her hand did not find it.

She fumbled upon a hard piece of something, frowned, and subconsciously squeezed it. The low voice of a man spoke from beside her ear. "How does it feel?"

Chapter 39

Stella froze as if her body was stuck. Then, she slowly turned her head around.

Keegan was lying on his side next to her, and his eyes were half-closed. One side of his face was buried in his pillow, while the other visible side showed a frown. He was displeased to be woken up out of the blue.

Looking down, Stella's hand was still stately resting on Keegan's chest.

She abruptly took back her hand. Her whole body went numb, her brain felt rusty, and she was not able to get her thoughts straight. Stella then asked an obvious question.

“Why are you here?”

Keegan did not even bother to open his eyes. “I thought you rented me for the night?” he replied lazily.

The memories of her being drunk were suddenly coming back to Stella.

“How much for a night?”

“Your good looks deserve a higher price.”

“I want to sleep with you,” she recalled what she had said.

Stella was so embarrassed that she wanted to dig a hole in the ground and hide.

There’s no way I said that! She thought.

She pretended not to hear what Keegan said. She grabbed her clothes and attempted to get up.

But, suddenly, Keegan’s arm swooped in and pulled her back into bed. “Don’t run. You haven’t paid me.”

“Who, who’s running?” Stella was flustered. She covered herself with the blanket as she blushed. “And, pay *you* for what?”

Keegan propped up his head on his left hand and held onto the blanket with his right. He pulled her closer and said, “Pay me for sleeping with you. Three thousand and five hundred dollars.”

‘I was drunk when I said that! Does he really think he’s a prostitute?’

Stella blushed a deep red.

“We just ‘slept’ together on the same bed! Why should I pay you three thousand and five hundred dollars?” Stella said through gritted teeth.

‘Does he think I’m dumb? Nothing even happened between us!’

“If we weren’t just sleeping together, did you think it would be this low priced?” Keegan asked.

“I was drunk last night. My words don’t count!” Stella replied.

Keegan narrowed his eyes dauntingly. "You were drunk, and that's why you asked a random guy to sleep with you? Is that what a wife should do?"

Stella was annoyed by his words, and she shot back with her reply. "What a wife should do? I was drunk. Is it my fault if I mistake people for others or if I talk nonsense? What about you, then? You're sober, yet you mess around with other women! Is this what a husband should do? If you can't do it, don't ask me to do the same for you!"

Keegan was infuriated by Stella's speech. "I'm talking about you," he said angrily. "Don't force your twisted analogy onto me."

"What twisted analogy? You're the one who has double standards! Besides, I didn't sleep with anyone else, and even if I did, we are getting a divorce soon anyways. Why does it matter?"

'Amazing! This bastard cheated on me so many times, yet he has the nerve to criticize me?'

Stella broke free from Keegan's arm and tried to leave the bed. He abruptly grabbed her shoulders and pulled her back, turning over to pin her under him. He grasped her by her chin and challenged her, "I dare you to say that again." His expression was dark.

'This bastard is so strong. Even my bones hurt from his grip.' Stella was furious, and she glared at him with her almond-shaped eyes. "Was there anything wrong with what I said? Oh, Mr. Kane, we are getting divorced soon. You have no right to control who I want to sleep with! Not letting me sleep with others when you're impotent—mm—"

All of a sudden, Keegan gruffly bit Stella's lips before she could finish her sentence.

Chapter 40

It was a bite and not a kiss.

Stella protested with all her might, but Keegan pinned her down along with the blanket. Her limbs were trapped inside the blanket like a cocoon. He ravished her lips recklessly.

Because of the gendered difference between their strengths, Stella had no chance of resisting him. When she quieted down, Keegan became gentler toward her, and his bites turned into kisses.

As his lips reached her pale collarbone, Stella suddenly spoke. “Keegan, are you mad at me because you’re jealous?”

Keegan stopped to look at her. Stella, who was under him, stared into his eyes and enunciated her question word by word. “Did you fall in love with me?”

Keegan loosened his grip and sat up. He gave her an icy glance. “Don’t flatter yourself. Stella Jewell, before we officially divorce, you’re still a member of the Kane family. Know your place. Don’t mess up and expect others to clean up after you.”

He put on his clothes and left the room. Stella raised her head up and stared at the ceiling. Out of nowhere, she forced a self-deprecating smile.

She knew that she had no place in his heart, but even though she asked that question to anger him, she still had hope for his answer to be affirmative.

I expected that answer,’ she thought.

Stella hated her heart for skipping a beat at his touch. She hated that she foolishly allowed herself to have hope despite knowing what his answer would be.

Her phone rang again. She unplugged it from the charger and answered the call.

“Stella?” Felicity’s voice transmitted through the phone.

“It’s me,” answered Stella.

Felicity let out a relieved sigh. “You scared me to death! Why didn’t you come back last night? Your phone was unreachable. Where have you been? I almost called the cops!”

Stella massaged her temples, trying to ease the headache from her hangover. “I’m fine. Last night... I was with my mom. I forgot to bring my charger along, and my phone ran out of battery and died.”

Stella hid the fact that she got drunk because she did not want Felicity to worry about her.

“Okay, then,” Felicity said. “As long as you’re alright. I was worried that you might forget about the audition today. Are you still at the hospital? I can pick you up later so that we can reach earlier to prepare for the audition.”

“No need for that. Let’s meet up at the hotel,” Stella answered.

“That works too. See you in an hour,” Felicity replied.

After hanging up, Stella wasted no time. She got out of bed and got ready.

The clothes she wore last night reeked of alcohol, so she had no choice but to brazenly pick an outfit from the dressing room.

For the few days that she was gone, Keegan did not remove any of her belongings. The display of the dressing room was still arranged in the way that she used to arrange them. The only difference was the addition of a few outfits from Prada's latest spring collection.

Stella assumed that they were gifts from Cordelia. Cordelia was the only elderly in this family that cared for her.

When Stella first married into the family, she was mocked for her outdated clothes on her first family dinner with Keegan.

Although the Jewells were also businessmen, their wealth and status were nothing compared to the Kanes.

For the daughters of these wealthy families, like Aurora, their clothes were always the latest release of the current seasons. Stella, with her last-season clothes, seemed out of place among them. When she stood beside Keegan, they looked mismatched. 'I should've seen the signs,' thought Stella.

The incident at the family dinner was deescalated by Cordelia's few words. Since then, after each seasonal release, Cordelia would send the latest outfits from various brands over to Stella. Perhaps Cordelia only meant to maintain her family's reputation by doing so, but to Stella, Cordelia's attentiveness made Stella's life in the Kane household easier.

'I wonder if the divorce would affect Mrs. Lawson.' Looking at the clothes, Stella felt guilty.

By the time Stella was ready and came downstairs, Keegan was nowhere to be seen. 'I guess he left,' thought Stella.

As Stella was changing into her shoes, Maya called out to her. "Mrs. Kane, breakfast is ready. Please have some before you leave."

"No thanks, I'm quite busy."

"Just a few bites. It's harmful to take medicine on an empty stomach."

When Stella paused, Maya had already placed a bowl of dark-colored medicine in front of her.

Chapter 41

'What does Dahlia mean by this? They already know that Bella is pregnant, and they still told the nanny to feed me this decoction? Are women just the baby-making tools of the Kane family? They don't care at all whether the baby is born in wedlock or out of wedlock as long as the woman can still give birth,' Stella thought.

Seeing Stella's eyebrows furrow, Maya quickly replied, "Madam Cordelia specifically told me to add some sugar syrup so that it wouldn't taste so bitter."

Stella pursed her lips.

"You saw it yourself, Maya. Keegan and I are getting divorced soon, so there is no need for this decoction."

"What are you saying, Madam? Having some hardships in your married life is unavoidable. *You* can't just keep mentioning divorce every time you get into a fight. It hurts the relationship. If the master did not care about you, he wouldn't have gone out after receiving the call. Besides, how can there be divorced couples still sleeping in the same room?" Maya said.

Stella was speechless. She did not know how to tell Maya that both Keegan and she had merely slept on the same bed. Nothing else had happened.

"Madam Cordelia said that the decoction should be ingested after performing sexual activities to increase the chances of getting pregnant. When you have some good news and are able," Maya continued.

Stella did not know how many times she had heard these words over the years. Initially, she also assumed so. When Stella and Keegan were married, they had *no* foundation in their relationship. If they could have a child together sooner, they would have a connection with each other sooner. Then, their relationship would be able to grow.

However, all of this was just her imagination. Keegan fundamentally did not want to have a child with her. She also slowly grew aware of this. Children are not tools for Stella to bind Keegan to her. That was a living being. They should be born out of the expectation of the parents and not a tool for preserving the parents' marriage. She was not willing to give birth to a child for Keegan. Her value as a person is also not solely tied to her ability to give birth to a child.

"Maya, we currently don't want to have a child, so drinking this decoction would be pointless," Stella said.

"Ma'am, Madam Cordelia told me to make sure that you drink all of it. This is for your own good. Madam Cordelia would see this as my fault if you don't drink it. My son has just started studying at university this year. I can't afford to lose my job..." Maya, the nanny, was so anxious she was about to cry.

Dahlia was so adamant on this issue that she would even fire people just for drinking the decoction. Did she assume that the decoction is as effective as the Nile River and thought that one less dosage would cause them to lose the opportunity to get pregnant? It was absolutely absurd!

However, Stella was a softie, and she could not stand to refuse the request of others. Although she did not want to drink it, she still took the decoction.

Maya's heart skipped a beat when Keegan's voice came from behind just as Stella had already

put the decoction to her lips, "Maya, you should go clean the study room. I accidentally spilled water on the table, and the books were all wet. Help me move them out to get some sunlight."

Stella still had not drunk the decoction. Hence, Maya was a little hesitant. "Master, I'll be there in a

minute..."

"Those books are important." Keegan said calmly, "Sorry for the trouble." Keegan's words had an air of

attitude that could not be refused. The nanny did not dare to refuse him. She responded to his request, turned around, and moved toward the study.

Stella gave Keegan a sidelong glance and thought, 'So, Keegan hasn't left yet. I am so unlucky!' Stella thought.

She was just about to drink the decoction and leave when she heard that bastard say, "Stella, do you really want to get pregnant? Should I be glad that I didn't even touch you last night?"

Stella's face fell." Keegan, is something wrong with you? Who wants to get pregnant?"

Keegan glanced at the decoction in her hands. "Then, why are you drinking that? It doesn't look convincing to me."

Chapter 42

Stella gritted her teeth. "Actually, you remind me of something. As long as I'm healthy and sleep with a regular man, I can get pregnant. The one who needs supplements is you!" After she said that, she stuffed the decoction into his arms, "You can keep the drink to yourself!"

She finished talking and slammed the door before she left. Keegan lowered his gaze and looked at the decoction with a bewildered expression. When Maya had finished cleani

ng up, Keegan had already left. The bowl left on the coffee table was already empty. The nanny took out her phone and took a picture before sending it.

When Stella

rushed to the hotel, she was a few minutes later than the agreed time. Felicity had been waiting for her from much earlier. Once they met, she ridiculed her in a low voice. "So much pressure. I initially thought we would be early if we arrived an hour earlier. Instead, we are the last! Being a middle to lower-class actor is so difficult. People are breaking their skulls just to snatch such a role."

Stella glanced along the corridor, and she saw that there were actually twenty to thirty people standing there. Some of them were artists who came independently, and some had their managers with them. Just by counting some of them, there were close to twenty competitors. Everyone touched up their makeup, warmed up their voices, and even stretched their legs by pressing them on the wall. All of the actresses were very pretty, without exception.

The bit of confidence Stella had in her looks suddenly faltered. She was kept captive by Keegan for too long and assumed that having a beautiful face would allow her to do whatever she wanted. Yet, in actual fact, there were too many beautiful people in this industry. Beauty, instead, was the most normal thing there.

To be able to distinguish oneself from the group of people who already have some professional acting experience in this field was to rely on their own professional competence. The face was, at most, the cherry on top.

Recognizing this point, Stella could not help but feel nervous.

Felicity had also noticed this and comforted her in a low voice.

"There is *no* need to be so nervous. Just treat it as an assignment in university. Just perform steadily and don't overthink. If we can perform this scene smoothly, we are halfway there to success."

Stella relaxed slightly and said softly, "I'll try my best."

In a short while, the

door to the room opened. A woman who could only be described as competent held a stack of resumes and came out of the room. She shouted, "When we call out your names later, just go into the room directly. The duration for memorizing your lines and performing must not exceed eight minutes. You will manage the time yourself."

Then, the first actor

was called in to enter. The atmosphere on site immediately turned anxious. A total of sixteen actors auditioned, and each person had eight minutes. This

would at least require more than two hours. However, in reality, each person's audition time was shorter than eight minutes.

Stella's nerves were tense, and she was prepared to be called out any moment. However, when there were only two people left, she still did not have her name called out. After the last actor had left, she was the only one left at the scene. Yet, after waiting for a long time, she did not see anyone call out her name. Something was wrong. Felicity's heart also started to beat faster. "Let's wait a little longer. I bet they're busy with something else." Yet, she did not believe a single word she said herself.

After another few minutes, the door opened, and both of their hearts stopped. The person who came out was the woman who was calling out names previously, but this time, she did not come out to call any

names. Instead, she went downstairs.

Felicity got up and chased after her to stop her. "Miss, why is there no continued audition for this scene? Did something happen?"

The woman glanced at her and nonchalantly said, "The audition is over."

Felicity was confused. "Miss, you must be kidding me. My group hasn't been called out yet."

Chapter 43

"How would I know? I called people out based on their resumes. Not being called out naturally means that there was no resume," the woman said as she pressed for the elevator.

"That's impossible! I asked someone to deliver it. How could it possibly disappear? Was it left out? Miss, could you go back and take a look?" Felicity begged.

The woman furrowed her brows. "Why are you being such a nuisance? If I said *no* means no. There were only a few resumes there. How could I possibly mess up?"

Felicity let go of her dignity and apologized with a smile. "Miss, I didn't mean it that way. This audition is very important to us. Could you help us and let us have an audition? It won't take up too much of everyone's time"

"I don't have much authority. Besides, the candidate has been chosen. With time left, why not put some effort into other production sets," the woman finished speaking. The elevator door then opened, and she walked in.

“Why was there no resume?” Felicity then hurriedly called her friend, who she had asked for help.

Stella stood at the side, not saying a word. The truth was clear to her; her resume was swapped out by someone else. The competition for the roles in Daniel Woods’ films was always intense. If Felicity could ask someone else to deliver her resume here, others could also find a way to swap out her resume. She was a newbie who was not signed by any company. Even if she was swapped out, she could do nothing to the other person.

After she hung up the phone, Felicity had almost spat all the swears she had learned throughout her life. After she was done swearing, she looked at Stella. She started to feel guilty in her heart since she had promised her this audition with much confidence in the past. In the end, it was all for nothing and was very upsetting.

“Stella, I’m sorry. I didn’t expect that it would turn out this way. I’ll help you keep an eye out for any other roles...” Felicity said.

“As long as the contract is not signed, everything can still be changed, right?” Stella said out of nowhere.

Felicity was stunned. “What are you going to do?”

Stella twitched the corner of her lips and said, “I want to give it a shot. If I get kicked out later, you’ll just need to act like you don’t know me.”

Before Felicity could react, Stella took off her sunglasses and tied her hair. She then put on a suit and knocked on the hotel room door, “Hello, room service.”

The next second, the door opened, and Stella was invited in. Felicity’s eyes were about to pop out, and she thought, ‘How did she do that?’

Stella lowered her head and went in. The suite that was rented for the audition had a vast space. The person who opened the door for her walked and said, “The ventilation in the washroom seems to have some issues. You should clean the washroom first. You brought your deodorant, right?”

After saying that, he noticed that the person had walked in empty-handed. He was about to question her when Stella rushed into the living room and shouted, “Director Woods, I am the seventeenth actor to audition. I am Stella Jewell. Please give me a chance to audition!”

The person in the room noticed something wrong and quickly went to stop her. "Auditions have already ended. You should leave!"

Stella struggled as she screamed out, "If the contract is not signed, then it hasn't ended yet! Didn't you do this open audition so that you could find the most suitable actress? The audition for the actress is not over yet, so how can you be so sure that the one you found is the most suitable!"

"Can you please leave! The audition has already ended. If you keep this on, we will call the cops to handle this!" Stella's strength was enormous. The two grown men almost could not stop her.

Chapter 44

"Director Woods! At least give me a chance. Seven minutes, no, five minutes! Five minutes is fine, Director Daniel Woods!"

The door to the inner room opened when both sides were in a heated dispute. Daniel stuck half of his body out and asked with furrowed brows, "What's with all the ruckus out here?"

The staff was about to explain, but Stella suddenly broke loose from the two men. She got ahead of the men and said, "Director Woods, I am the seventeenth actor to audition, Stella Jewell. Please give me a chance to audition."

Daniel scanned her up and down and asked, "There is no information about you from the resume sent."

"I'm Stella Jewell, 25 years old this year. I'm a graduate of the theater department of Trinity Film Academy's nineteenth session."

"What works have you done?" Daniel asked.

Stella tightened her grip and said in a low voice, "None."

"None." Daniel was slightly surprised. "Did you change careers after graduating?"

"No..." Stella paused and then proceeded to say, "After I graduated, I haven't been working due to personal reasons. I have only acted in a few school plays."

"Then, it means there is no acting experience," Daniel said.

Stella did not speak, which counted as agreeing by default.

“Since your graduation three years ago, you have never pursued this career. So, Why do you want to do it now?”

To speak of nostalgia in front of a director who had seen grander events like Daniel Woods was a joke. The people he had seen were more than the food she had ingested, so Stella spoke truthfully. “I need money.”

Daniel glanced at her, as he was astonished. Stella continued, “I also need a job that could be recognized to prove my worth. Director Woods, I beg you to give me a chance to audition and also give this role a chance to choose its actor.”

Daniel smiled lightly. “You’re a young lady, yet your ego is enormous. Who gave you the confidence even though you don’t have any experience in acting?”

Stella shook her head. “I am merely betting on your cautiousness in choosing roles.”

Daniel did not say anything. A flurry of sound came from inside the room. Then, she saw Daniel enter the room and emerge from inside a moment later.

The instant the door closed, Stella saw the legs of a pair of jeans gleaming in the room. The legs were long and curvy but disappeared in a blink of an eye.

“Alright, I’ll give you this chance. Mr. Sheperd, give her the lines.” Daniel looked at the time and added, “I will give you five minutes to remember your lines which will include your performance. When you’re ready, we will start”

Stella immediately steeled her nerves and quickly dipped her head to read her lines. They were competing for the role of the fourth female main character, a consort who had entered the palace together with the main female lead.

In the beginning, they were very good friends and had always helped each other. However, as both were bestowed titles, a rift occurred in their relationship. In the end, the

best friends turned on each other.

Daniel had given her the scene where the main female lead found out that the one who had poisoned her was actually her best friend. It was the climax of the story where the best friends became enemies. There were three pages of the script, and the emotions switching was extremely quick. Doing it in a single take would test the actor’s skill to the extreme.

The room was silent, with only the sound of Stella flipping through the pages. After two minutes, Stella lifted her head and said, “I can do it now.”

Daniel nodded his head and then said, "Begin."

Stella then lifted her gaze. The calm expression from earlier was *no* more. She immediately changed into a frail state and said, "My Lord, I entered the palace with Delilah at the young age of sixteen, and I have a strong friendship with her. When she was punished by Lady Alcott, it was I who braved the dangers to save her. Due to that, I have suffered from chronic coughing. Every night, I am unable to sleep peacefully. I treated her like a sister, so why would I have the heart to harm her?"

Once her lines were said, everyone present was stunned. Stella's lines were delivered spectacularly to the point of being horrifying. Once she had opened her mouth, her emotions were focused on the character. Her previously hard-edged face was able to make a delicate yet aggrieved expression. Yet, there was no feeling of contradiction. One could even feel that what she had said was the truth, and she was the one who was actually being falsely accused.

Chapter 45

Daniel's expression turned grim as he pursed his lips and continued watching. The way Stella handled her expressions was immaculate. With so many lines, she merely took two minutes to memorize them all. Furthermore, the proficiency of her lines did not seem like someone with *no* acting experience.

Until her performance had ended, no one on set spoke a word. Although Stella was confident in her abilities, she could not handle every expression in every passage appropriately in such a short time. Hence, she could only do her best. Daniel did not comment on whether it was good or not. Instead, the people beside him whispered something into his ears. He then lifted his gaze and said to Stella, "You should try this other scene."

Stella's eyes brightened slightly when she saw a little hope. Otherwise, they would have told her to leave after reading a small passage. Another script was given to her. Stella lowered her head and saw that it was not the previous character. Instead, it was the third female lead in the script, the role of a consort.

This character was different from the generic female supporting character from before. The consort was born in the Prime Minister's household. She was beautiful and willful. She relied on the king's favoritism to dominate the palace to the point that the Queen consort also feared her.

When she faced off against the female lead, she was ruthless and clearly malicious. However, she was a delicate and clingy siren in front of the emperor. She could act coquettish yet have a tantrum. The contrast the character had was strong. If she could handle it appropriately, this character could be very endearing.

'But, was the role of the third female lead set? Why did Daniel let me try this scene?' Stella thought.

Although she had questions deep inside her heart, she did not ask them out loud. After memorizing the lines, she lifted her head. "I can start now." Daniel nodded his head and motioned for her to start.

Stella conjured the correct emotions and then lifted her gaze. An arrogant presence emerged immediately from her nonchalantly. Her face was breathtakingly beautiful, and she completely complemented the words of exquisite beauty. There was no doubt that she had dominated the palace with her beauty.

Everyone was in awe of her charming expression and her soft tone. Whoever saw this would be in awe. Even if the king was here, he would be in awe. After finishing her scene, it was silent again.

Stella now had a little more courage due to auditioning for two different scenes. Personally, she liked the character of the consort. The character settings were well developed, but such an important character was most likely *not* given away willy-nilly. She would still be content if she got the part as the fourth female lead.

"Why didn't you continue acting after you graduated?" Daniel opened his mouth and voiced his confusion after a few minutes. If he wanted to sign her, it was unavoidable for him to check the actress's background. Especially when he was afraid that if something went wrong amidst their filming, their project would be done for before it was even broadcasted.

Stella pondered for a few seconds and told him the truth. "It was because of a marriage."

Daniel was shocked, as he did not expect it to be due to marriage.

Another moment of silence struck. After a while, Daniel spoke, "Leave your contact information. If we have any news, we will inform you."

After walking out of the room, Stella felt her heart rate slowly return to normal. However calm she was when she was in front of Daniel, the same amount of anxiousness was in her heart.

Felicity had never left. When she saw her come out, she quickly ran over to Stella.

"Why did you go in for

such a long time? If you didn't come out any time soon, I would've called the police!"

Stella grabbed Felicity's wrist and said in a low voice, "We'll talk outside."

After getting into the car and hearing Stella talk about what happened inside, Felicity widened her eyes.

"Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god! Daniel let you audition for the role of the beauty? Does he intend to let you play the beauty?"

Stella shook her head. "I don't know. How could he let me play such an important role? Besides, hasn't someone already been cast for this role?"

Felicity winded up the window.

"They're all rumors online. No one is sure if anyone, in particular, has been cast. Besides, Daniel isn't against casting newbies."

Regardless, Stella still was not confident.

On the other hand, Felicity was bursting with confidence. "Did Daniel say anything after your audition?" Stella shook her head, "He told me to leave my number. Maybe letting me audition was a spur-of-the-moment thing."

"It would be great if you could play the beauty's role. But, getting the role of the fourth female lead isn't bad either. After this, let's get a good meal to celebrate," said Felicity.

Stella was amused.

"Nothing is certain yet. Isn't it a little too early to celebrate?"

"Then, let's celebrate you leaving that grave of a marriage. These are all happy events anyway."

There was a newly-opened grilled skewer restaurant on Fellows Street. It's been viral recently, and it constantly appeared on Stella's social media feed. Accordingly, the food there was pretty good.

When Stella and Felicity arrived, it was packed. There was no parking space outside, so they could only park at the underground parking lot in the mall across the street.

Felicity got her driver's license three months ago, so she volunteered to show off her reverse parking skills. Stella got off the car and stood behind to keep watch of obstacles.

Just then, Stella saw Albert and a young woman getting out of a white Audi parked across from their car.

The woman had mid-length hair. She was well-dressed in expensive clothing that was of a young-looking style. After she got off the car, she walked up to Albert and intimately took his arm.

Albert had a smile on his face. It was an expression she rarely saw growing up.

Stella's gaze may have been too intense because Albert abruptly turned to look in her direction. When he saw her, he frowned and pushed the woman's arm off his. Then, he gestured at the woman to leave ahead of him.

Then, he pursed his lips and walked to Stella. "Stella, what are you doing here?"

He spoke in the tone of an elder. He did not seem awkward that his daughter caught him going on a date with his lover.

Stella glanced in the direction the woman had disappeared.

"Since when?" she asked stoically.

"What kind of a tone is that?"

Stella's confrontational tone made Albert incredibly uncomfortable. It sounded very much like Rainee's tone back then; a patronizing attitude that made others feel irritated and suffocated.

"Then, you tell me, what kind of tone should I use when I see my father acting intimate with another woman? You don't have the time to visit my terminally ill mother yet have the time to have a rendezvous with other women?"

Albert was furious.

"Watch your attitude when you're talking! If I hadn't spent money to get your mother on life support, she would've died a long time ago! It's been six years since she got into that accident, and she's been lying down for six years, neither dead nor alive. Am I supposed to spend my life watching over a vegetable who's neither dead nor alive?"

Stella tightened her fists, and her heart grew cold.

Perhaps Albert realized that he had gone overboard, as he softened his tone and continued, "Stella, I was in my forties when your mother got into that accident. No man can watch over their comatose wife for the rest of his life. I can promise you that I won't get a divorce, but I have my needs as a healthy-bodied man. Look at the big bosses in the business world. How many of them don't hav

e a couple of lovers? I only started looking for lovers after your mother's accident, and it was only because I have biological needs."

Chapter 47

Albert spoke sanctimoniously.

'Others have lovers because they seek the thrill, but he's doing it because of his comatose wife. He has no choice but to look for other women since he can't satisfy himself. It's as if his actions can be justified after he changes the reason. Humans are not animals. What does he mean by biological needs? Or, are men this shameless in the face of infidelity and shirk the blame to women?' wondered Stella.

"If your mother was alive and well, I would've never gone to find other women. She and I went through thick and thin together to establish the company. Our relationship can't possibly be replaced by others."

'If he hadn't hastily wanted to divorce my mother soon after her accident, I would have believed his nonsense! Besides, would he care if my mother's dead or alive if I weren't married to Keegan and still useful to the Jewell family? He hasn't divorced my mother only because he's pinning me down in the name of taking care of her,' Stella thought.

Stella had little emotions on her face.

She merely asked, "What's that woman's name?"

Albert froze momentarily.

"What her name is doesn't matter. I won't see her if you don't like her."

He obviously did not want to continue the topic because he quickly changed it and asked, "Did *you* send the things I told you to previously?"

Stella pursed her lips and answered.

"Mhm."

"You came out with Keegan?"

"Nope. With a friend."

Albert frowned, "You're a married person; don't just fool around all day long. You should use the time to think of a way to impress Keegan instead. You've been married for years now, yet you don't even have a child. How will you make the Kane family like you?"

Hearing Albert's words, Stella felt physiologically sick. Every single one of his words reminded her of her marriage's nature.

Keegan and

I have never been on the same footing. I need to please my husband so that he will protect the Jewell family. How could Keegan think highly of me when there are ulterior motives behind our marriage? she thought.

Suddenly, Albert's phone rang just as he was about to continue lecturing Stella. After he answered his phone, he turned to her and said, "I got something going on at the company, so I'll be leaving first. You should go home soon if you don't have anything to do. Keegan's been working all day. You should, at the very least, make him a hot meal."

Felicity, who was hiding in the shadows, ran out after Albert left.

"Your dad really is something. He doesn't care about his daughter but treats his son-in-law like he's his biological son... No, he treats him like he's his biological grandfather! Keegan likes women, but if he liked men, your father might've gone for him himself!" she huffed.

Stella was already used to Albert's behavior. She then turned to Felicity. "Is the dashcam on?"

"It's on. Why?"

Stella got in the car and exported the video from the dashcam.

The angle of the video was not good. It only momentarily captured Albert and the woman's faces. Stella took a screenshot of the image and stared at it.

Felicity did not know what Stella was thinking.

"Is there a problem?" she asked.

Stella was silent for a moment. Then, she said in a low voice, "That woman who was with Albert just now; I keep having the feeling that I've seen her somewhere before."

'Especially when I asked Albert that woman's name. He was being all secretive when he answered. It made me even more certain that I wasn't mistaken,' she thought,

"Where have you seen her before?"

Stella shook her head. "I don't remember."

Chapter 48

“Let’s grab a meal first. You can think while we eat. If you really can’t remember, we’ll hire a private investigator. We’ll avenge your mom.”

Stella laughed.

‘If my mother were conscious, she would’ve fought Albert to the very end and turned the world upside down. She’s someone who can’t tolerate infidelity. I don’t want things to get to that point; I just want to figure out who that woman is and why I find her so familiar,’ she thought.

The following day, Stella was woken up by her phone in the middle of her slumber.

She frowned and picked up the phone. Then, she groggily said, “Hello? Who’s this?”

“You’re not awake yet, Stella?”

Stella was instantly terrified by the woman’s steady voice on the other end. She hastily got up from the bed and cleared her throat before she said in a low voice, “Dahlia? What’s wrong?”

Dahlia responded coolly, “A few of my friends are coming over today. Come over and help me entertain

them.”

Stella was incredibly reluctant.

Dahlia’s friends were all wealthy ladies. Since Dahlia had never been good with handling these people, she naturally did not want to go.

She refused and said, “Isn’t Keegan home? He’s more capable of interacting with older women. I’m not very eloquent, so I’m worried that it’ll be awkward.”

“Keegan went out with his friends. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have asked you to come. You’ll interact with plenty of people in the future when you go out with Keegan. Don’t tell me you’re always going to avoid them? If people hear about this, they would think that the Kane family’s daughter-in-law is undignified.”

Stella stopped talking.

“Come over as soon as you’re ready,” Dahlia said.

Then, she hung up.

Stella had no choice but to get ready and head to Dahlia’s place.

Dahlia used to be a socialite in Rivera in her younger days. After she married into the Kane family, her social circle and status gradually expanded along with the prominence of the Kane family. She often had gatherings with the ladies that were acquainted with the Kane family's business. Rather than catching up, they were actually probing each other and exchanging information.

The things that men could not say directly were best secretly conveyed by women.

The three ladies arrived around 10 o'clock. Stella had met Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Chapman before and sort of knew them. However, she had not seen Mrs. White before, so the woman looked somewhat unfamiliar.

Stella could not tell the difference between Mrs. White and the other two ladies solely from their attire. However, when the few were talking, Stella could evidently tell that Mrs. White was more arrogant. Aside from that, Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Chapman were obviously easing up on her. Dahlia also seemed closer to

Mrs. White than to others.

When Stella brought the fruit platter over, Mrs. White looked up and gave her a once-over. Then, she said slowly, "So, this is your daughter-in-law, Dahlia. She's quite the looker."

Dahlia smiled coolly but did not respond.

After setting down the fruit platter, Stella left.

Mrs. Chapman waited for Stella before she asked, "Dahlia, about the medicine previously, was it

effective? Any news?"

"There's no news yet."

"How many doctors has it been? She should be pregnant by now. Does she have some kind of condition?"

Dahlia lowered her gaze and slowly said, "Her medical checkup showed that she was fine. I, too, don't know why she isn't getting pregnant."

"How sinister. Don't tell me that her and Keegan's horoscopes are incompatible?"

Mrs. Wood said,

"Do we even need to look at their horoscope? None of it was up to par with the Kane family, from her family to her upbringing. I wonder what your mother-in-law likes about her."

"I heard she and her mother got into the car accident together. The passenger seat got the most damage, but she was completely unscathed even though she was in the passenger seat. On the other hand, her mother was left comatose. Tell me, isn't that sinister?"

Chapter 49

"You can't make accusations like that, Mrs. Wood," said Mrs. Chapman.

She intended to remind Mrs. Wood that Stella was still Dahlia's daughter-in-law, no matter what. While it was usually acceptable for them to banter around, going overboard was a little inappropriate.

However, Mrs. Wood thought that Mrs. Chapman did not believe her.

"I'm not making accusations. Back then, one of my nephews worked at the Department of Transportation and took part in this accident's investigation. He said the car was badly damaged, and the two supposedly shouldn't be alive. After they were rescued, it turned out only her mother was badly injured while she only had some cuts."

She continued, "She doesn't die easily. Women like her can easily cause the death of the people around her. They kill their husband, their sons."

"Mrs. Wood!" Mrs. Chapman kicked Mrs. Wood under the table when she saw Dahlia's expression.

Mrs. Wood finally realized that she had inadvertently spoken ill of Dahlia.

Since Dahlia had lost her husband at a young age, bringing up how some women caused the death of their husbands and sons insinuated that Dahlia caused her husband's death.

Mrs. Wood panicked, and she quickly explained, "That's not what I meant..."

Dahlia lifted her gaze coolly. "Then, what did you mean?"

Mrs. Wood's hand froze. She stumbled over her words and could not answer.

Then, Mrs. White smiled and said, "Don't be angry, Dahlia. Mrs. Wood didn't mean what she said. You know how that brain of hers is."

Dahlia took a sip of tea and cynically said, "You're so naive even at this age. Mr. Wood is a fortunate man."

It was not a compliment.

Even if Mrs. Wood was stupid, she could detect Dahlia's sardonicism. Her face turned red in anger, but she did not dare to retort Dahlia.

'Dahlia initially planned to invite Mrs. White only. The two of us were invited to keep them company. But, I ended up publicly humiliating her. I'm lucky she didn't publicly have a fallout with me,' she thought.

Stella stood at the corner of the corridor and listened to their conversation while nibbling on cherries.

'Turns out women

of high society are gossipy too. They went to such lengths to discuss my insignificant little matter; I'm flattered. I'll lead to my husband and son's death? If that's true, I better lead to Keegan's erectile dysfunction! We'll see what woman will dare to take him in!' she thought.

Keegan was absent-mindedly looking through the documents at the Vinci Rivera Group.

'I suspect the boss didn't pay much attention to my report just now. In the past, he rarely spaces out during work. He was so strict with work efficiency that he utilized his time to the very second. He's like a machine with precise calculations. He would clearly organize. If one asked the people around Mr. Kane what came first to him, everyone would unanimously think that it was work,' Aldor thought.

'But, he's been zoning out recently. It makes me feel like this workaholic machine has developed a bug, and this bug is very likely caused by his wife,' he thought again.

Aldor contemplated for a while and said, "Mr. Kane, Mrs. Kane went to your mother's place today."

Keegan glanced at him and did not respond.

Aldor continued, "Your mother invited a few of her friends over today. Mrs. Kane also went to keep them company."

"What kind of company can she give? Her words alone can make someone choke to death. Does my mother find those ladies too chatty, so she asked her over to make things awkward?"

'Mrs. Kane only speaks aggressively in front of you. When she's facing outsiders, she's very polite and refined. But, if I said this to the boss, he'll get angry. An outstanding assistant must know how to read the room,' he thought.

“Those ladies have the reputation within the circle for being crafty. Mrs. Kane is young and naive, so she might be at a disadvantage.”

Chapter 50

Keegan snorted icily, “She doesn’t have what it takes, yet she insisted on going. Letting her get the short end of the stick will teach her a lesson.”

Since Keegan had already made himself clear, Aldor kept quiet.

It seemed like Mrs. White was somebody. When Dahlia spoke to Mrs. White, her tone was evidently more polite than when she was talking with the other two ladies. No matter the food preference or casual conversations, they all centered around Mrs. White’s likings and habits.

Naturally, Stella could not join their conversation. Thankfully, they ignored her most of the time, aside from their discussion about her in the beginning.

Stella played her part as the person who ate and chatted with them, so things were not too difficult for her

After the ladies had their meal, they started Mah–Jongg, a tile–based game. Stella then played the part of the tea lady. She poured them tea and got them desserts.

Once everything was prepared, she sat aside and spectated.

The guests had not left, so she naturally could not leave. Otherwise, Dahlia would be unhappy.

Stella was not interested in Mah–Jongg, so she stopped and sat aside after two rounds.

She had not posted on Dusk Galaxy’s Facebook page for half a month, so she logged in and browsed around.

There were over a thousand comments. While most comments asked her to produce new works, there were also many private messages from her haters. Most of these haters were Bella Young purists.

After all, Stella stole Bella’s thunder too many times when Secret Sweetheart was on air a while ago.

Stella initially did not want to be the voiceover for the drama because she did not want to have too many interactions with

Bella. However, the production team approached her several times and offered a high payment. At the time, she was busy preparing Keegan's birthday present and took a liking to a gemstone. Since she was still short of some money, she accepted the offer.

The drama considerably increased Bella's popularity in the country. If she had not sensationalized the news about her car accident a while back, a single popular drama was enough to make her an A-list celebrity.

However, the popularity a hit drama could bring to an actor was limited. While the actor may have been a hot topic, those that were outside the entertainment circle did not care at all if the drama used voiceovers or the original sound. On the other hand, Bella's fans had bashed Stella for months because she became the hot topic several times.

Among these fans, a few bashed Stella every day as if they were going for a group visit. They would write long essays that bashed her, shamed her looks, and personally attacked her. Some even went to the extent of cursing her to die young.

If this had happened in the past, Stella would have sucked it up and let things pass. However, since she learned that Keegan had snatched her voiceover opportunity for Honor of the Deities and given it to Bella, it was suddenly difficult for her to endure such verbal abuse and attacks.

'Why should I tolerate these people?' she wondered.

Stella pursed her lips and sent the unsightly private message screenshots to Felicity. "I want to sue these

people!"

Felicity said, "I told you to sue them a long time ago, but you were too soft-hearted. These people will

spend the rest of their lives in the dark and attack you indiscriminately if you don't expose them. Exposing a few of them will send a message."

"It's alright to spend a little more money. Help me find the best lawyer," said Stella.

"Leave it to me! I've wanted to rip these scumbags for a long time!"

"Stella, pour Mrs. Wood some tea."

Dahlia's voice cut Stella and Felicity's conversation short. Stella stuffed her phone into her pocket and stood up to pour the tea.

"It's alright. I have some business back home. My husband asked me to go home soon, so I won't be playing anymore."

Mrs. White frowned, "It's only been a few rounds. How will we play after you leave?"

"Isn't there another person here?" asked Mrs. Wood.

She continued, "Dahlia, let your daughter-in-law stand in for me. I really have something to do."

Mrs. White glanced at Stella and asked, "Do you know how to play?"

Chapter 51

Stella turned to Dahlia out of reflex.

Dahlia indifferently said, "Mrs. White is talking to you."

Stella pursed her lips.

"I'm not that good at it," she said.

Mrs. White laughed.

"I like people who aren't good at it."

And so, Stella took over Mrs. Wood's place and played Mah-Jongg with the three women.

Mrs. White discarded a 3 of Bamboo. "I haven't seen Aurora the entire day. Where did that girl go? She's graduating this year, right?"

Mrs. Chapman laughed, "Where else would she be? She must've gone to your nephew's law firm. Why don't you play matchmaker and tell your brother and his wife? After they get engaged, you and Dahlia will be considered in-laws in the future."

"My sister-in-law likes Aurora. Naturally, she'll agree. As for Marshall, it's hard to say. That boy usually seems soft-spoken and easy to talk to, but he's actually very opinionated. I'm afraid we can't make decisions for him," said Mrs. White.

"They can bond after they get married. Didn't we go through the same thing?"

Dahlia responded coolly, "Aurora is still young. There's no need to rush things."

Stella listened to their conversation carefully and discarded a 30 thousand tile.

“Mah–Jongg!”

Mrs. Chapman beamed, “A 30 thousand tile. I thought I would have to wait for a while.”

Mrs. White looked up and clicked her tongue, “You’re really not that good at it. Why would you discard that tile when there aren’t that many tiles from that suit?”

Mrs. Chapman was over the moon because she had won the round. She even defended Stella in her own stead. “It’s just the first round. Maybe she’s still not familiar with it. Let’s continue, let’s continue!”

The last time Stella played Mah–Jongg was when she was still in school. It was one of her housemate’s birthday, so they went out to celebrate and did whatever the housemate wanted for a day.

Her housemate was Chinese, so she brought them to a cardroom and played an entire night of Mah- Jongg. It was then Stella learned how to play Mah–Jongg.

After Stella

graduated and married Keegan, she rarely attended her friends’ invitations and did not even play Mah–

Jongg once. Even now, she could, at most, identify what a winning hand looked like. As for guessing what tiles others had, she had no experience in that at all.

As a result, Stella lost nine out of ten rounds. She eventually lost almost all of the chips in her drawer.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Chapman won countless times. Her makeup–caked face beamed. Then, she finally felt that it was time to stop, “Shall we settle our chips and continue another day?”

Dahlia glanced at Stella, “How many more chips do you have left?”

“Two,” answered Stella.

“460 thousand dollars. You can transfer them to Mrs. Chapman first.”

Stella was dumbfounded.

‘460 thousand dollars? Did I hear it wrong? How much were we playing for me to lose 460 thousand dollars within two hours? What’s the difference between this game and gambling?’ she wondered.

Stella suddenly wanted to cry.

'If

I had known that we'd play such a high value, then I would've said I don't know how to play,' she thought again.

Seeing how Stella remained unmoved for a while, Dahlia called out to her. "I can pay for you first if you don't have the amount."

"I do..."

'If I said I don't, Dahlia might give me trouble after I leave. If she was genuinely willing to pay for me first, then she wouldn't have asked,' Stella thought.

Stella bit the bullet and transferred the money.

Mrs. White said, "You're in luck. Aren't you going to play a little longer?"

Mrs. Chapman collected the money and quipped, "I'm worried that you'll all lose your chips if I continue playing."

Before Mrs. White could speak, a man's husky voice sounded outside. "Judging from Mrs. Chapman's tone, you must've won quite a lot today."

Stella was startled. She lifted her head and saw Keegan in a suit, as he strode toward the Mah-Jongg table.

Mrs. Chapman laughed, "I only won some pocket money. It's not even enough for me to buy a shirt. Why did you have the time to come over today, Keegan? I haven't seen you in a while."

Keegan placed the bag in his hand on the table.

"I just met with a client and passed by, so I swung by and brought over some pear jam. Just as I entered the door, I heard Mrs. Chapman talking. Looks like she won quite a bit."
"

Mrs. White gave Stella a once-over and suddenly smiled, "Right? Mrs. Chapman's really good at this game. She won the most rounds."