

Second Chances Protecting Mrs. Hall by Colby Stanford

Chapter 1 - 10

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

In a remote warehouse, Emma Wilson was engulfed in a raging inferno, drugged and bound, unable to move.

Through the deadly flames, she caught sight of her stepsister and her new husband-whom she had just married earlier that day at city hall- standing safe and sound. In despair, she screamed, "Why the f***k are you doing this to me?"

Standing at a safe distance, her sister Aria Wilson spoke with contempt. "Emma, really? Haven't you figured it out yet? Elijah didn't cheat-he never loved you at all! He only pursued you to get his hands on your shares. Now that he has got them, and you've been his wife for a day, it's

time for you to die!"

Reeling from the betrayal, Emma struggled to grasp that the man she had trusted e years could be so cruel.

Her eyes filled with rage as Aria continued, "You get why we had to set this up, right? So Elijah can ditch you without splitting any assets. The entire Wilson fortune will be all mine! Oh, and that 2 million dollars your dear mom left you? I used it to fund my studies abroad three years ago, thanks to your naivety. She'd be turning in her grave knowing her husband was stolen, her daughter murdered, and her life savings **d by me!" She burst into hideous laughter.

As the fire roared louder, Emma, through her tears, watched Aria and Elijah walk away hand in hand, laughing.

Blinded by grief and fury, Emma's eyes burned with hatred. She was not ready to die-not like this.

Suddenly, an explosion rocked the warehouse, and a concrete beam plummeted towards her. Emma tried to dodge, but her body was drained of strength.

Just then, she heard rapid footsteps. A man rushed towards her and shielded her with his body. A second later, the beam crushed his back.

Amidst the roaring flames, Emma caught sight of the man's face and froze. 'Liam... What is he doing here?'

"Don't be scared, Emma," Liam Hall murmured, his eyes bloodshot from exhaustion.

He had come as soon as he got the news, but it was already too late.

"No-run for it!" Emma screamed as the ceiling threatened to give way.

But Liam stayed, fiercely protecting her as flames and debris fell around him, the smell of burning flesh filling the air.

"Why... Why the hell are you doing this?" Emma cried, tears streaming down her face.

"Don't worry, Emma," Liam's voice was calm, almost serene amid the chaos. "I won't let you face this alone. Not even in death. I'll always be with you..." His handsome face gradually disappeared into the flames.

Despair washed over Emma as she shut her eyes, swearing to herself, 'Elijah! Aria! In another life, I swear I won't let you off!'

"Liam... next time, it's my turn to protect you," she whispered into his ear. Her words were barely out before the fire surged, engulfing the embracing pair in its fierce grasp.

Emma's eyes snapped open. Instead of the inferno she'd expected, she found herself in a warm, cozy room.

She instinctively checked her hands. They were intact, no longer bearing the calluses from her martial arts training and no signs of burns- what was going on?

Scanning the room, Emma realized this place was no ordinary hotel. It was decked out with medical equipment and carried the faint scent of

1/3

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10

Chapter 1

disinfectant, resembling more a luxury hospital suite than anything else. It all felt disturbingly familiar.

Suddenly, it hit her. 'This is the day I was taken back to the Wilsons when I turned 181 I've been reborn on the day I returned to TroIn City!'

Emma held back a wave of ecstatic relief. With this second chance at life, she vowed to utterly destroy the s**m who had wrecked her life before.

"Emma, your blood has been sent off for testing. Now, take off your coat so I can check you over," a voice announced as a man in a white coat entered. He was strikingly handsome, a tear-shaped mole accentuating his eyes

It was Elijah Taylor, Rage boiled within Emma as she faced the man respons
so much of her past agony.

In her past life, she had complied and removed her coat without hesitation, which was exactly when reporters, alerted by Aria and her cruel stepmother Nora Wilson, had stormed in. They had smeared her reputation, painting her as a wanton seductress for supposedly trying to entice a doctor on her very first day back. Her father, grandmother, and the entire Wilson family had shunned her, branding her a disgrace.

'Of course, this was all a setup by Elijah and Aria from the get-go,' Emma realized. Fueled by rage, she grabbed a vase from the bedside and hurled it at Elijah's head, shattering it with a loud crash.

Elijah staggered, his head gushing blood. He never expected the seemingly naive and fragile Emma to lash out.

"What the f**k, Emma?" Elijah bellowed, clutching his wounded head.

"Elijah, you think you can kidnap me and get away with it? I'll beat the c**p out of you!" Emma yelled back, her voice thick with fury.

Elijah was completely taken aback. Just moments before, Emma had meekly followed him to the hospital, and now she was accusing him of abduction. 'Has she figured something out?' he wondered.

"Emma, what the hell are you talking about? Kidnapping? You came here on your own-" His words were cut short as she struck him again with a vase.

Panic set in, and he shouted for help, "Somebody help! Restrain her!"

Seven or eight burly men rushed into the room.

"So you had your goons waiting outside?" Emma sneered, contempt in her eyes. "What, ready to force me if I didn't comply?"

Elijah's face contorted with fury, all traces of his earlier gentlemanly demeanor gone. "I was just trying to give you a medical check-up, and you spin it into a kidnapping! Grab this crazy woman, now!" he ordered.

Emma scoffed, her mind racing. 'Thes**ds,' she thought. 'If I play nice, they'll s**t-s**e me. Fight back, and suddenly I'm the nation's notorious madwoman. Well, if they're gonna call me crazy, I might as well own it.'

"If I'm guilty, let the law punish me, not you bullies!" With that, she cracked her knuckles and charged at them.

Thanks to these s**gs, her return to the Wilson family had been a nightmare. They showered Aria with the best of everything, leaving Emma with crumbs and daily insults.

Driven to desperation, Emma had fled the Wilson family and joined a mysterious organization, dedicating herself to learning how to protect herself. Now, it was finally time for revenge.

The thugs were initially stunned as Emma rushed at them, but her swift kick to one's neck and a ruthless punch to another's eye quickly turned their surprise into screams.

Moments later, all the goons were sprawled out, defeated on the ground.

2/3

12:41 Fri, 5 Jul

Chapter 1

In the hospital's security room, a group of bodyguards watched the monitor in silent match. However, Emma's fierce skills made even these hardened protectors wary

Among them, a man in a wheelchair was glued to the screen, his gaze unwavering.

They had to admit that Elijah's men were no

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Chapter 2

Chapter 2

Liam sat i

n his wheelchair, clad in a custom tailored black suit that highlighted his aristocratic, icy demeanor. His presence exuded an untouchable chill and an air of nobility.

With a cigarette pinched between his fingers, smoke curling around him, his gaze-deep and unfathomable-was locked on the screen, mirroring Emma's every move.

On the display, Emma swiftly and decisively took down several sturdy men with deadly efficiency. Her skills were clearly honed over years of rigorous training.

"Are you sure the info you guys gave me is legit?" Liam asked, his tone cold and questioning.

"Mr. Hall, it's rock solid. We had no clue Mrs. Hall was so..." the bodyguards fumbled for words, finally murmuring, "Wild."

As he watched Emma, Liam's icy demeanor softened slightly. 'She's definitely more interesting now,' he thought, intrigued.

At that moment, Emma's boot was pressed firmly against a bouncer's neck, almost snapping it.

"Mercy, please..." the men whimpered, pleading for their lives.

Elijah stood by, utterly baffled. 'Nora said Emma was just an uneducated country girl. How could she be so skilled?' he pondered.

Suddenly, the door burst open, and reporters swarmed in.

As Emma turned, a camera flash captured her face. "Miss Wilson, rumors say you've been neglecting your duties. What's this about you and Dr. Taylor?" a reporter fired off, diving into the action.

Halted by the sight of the defeated thugs, the reporter faltered, thinking, 'What the hell is this? This isn't at all like the scene Nora described!'

Emma, standing over a defeated man with her arms crossed and her hair wild, scoffed coldly. "What about Dr. Taylor and me? Keep talking. You got some sort of psychic

powers or just a dirty mind? Decided I was screwing around before you even saw me? What's your play? Just sleazy, or someone's puppet?"

The reporter recoiled, wishing to disappear, while other journalists surged forward eagerly.

Seeing the throng, Elijah yelled, "Watch out, everyone-she is losing her mind! Someone, help!"

Then, a group of police officers followed by the Wilson family entered from behind the reporters.

Aria, knowing there would be cameras, wore a delicate white dress and styled her hair in a bun. She touched her lightly made-up face, squeezing out fake tears, and lunged toward Emma. "Sister, my long-lost sister! I'm so happy to find you! Welcome home!"

Nora approached with feigned warmth. "Emma... it's really you! We've searched so hard for you. But what's this? Weren't these men sent to

protect you? Don't you want to come home?"

As Nora finished, Emma saw the barely concealed disdain from her father and grandmother.

True to form, Nora's ostensibly caring words masked a sharp jab.

Emma replied with a cold smile, "Nora, why wouldn't I want to come home? But tell me, do you and Aria actually want me back?"

"What are you even saying, Emma?" Nora retorted, her surprise evident. Internally she marveled, 'Why isn't she grateful and timid? Why the defiance?'

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Chapter 2

Fearing things might spiral, Nora quickly gestured to the police. "Officers, though we've only just found Emma and we all love her dearly, we must abide by the law. Her actions are our failure in upbringing. Please, handle her gently..."

Emma laughed coldly at Nora's performance. "Really laying it on thick, aren't you, Nora? The police haven't even said anything about arresting me, and here you are, calling for my head? It's not even clear who's in the wrong!

She then pulled a syringe and an alcohol swab from a drawer, and in front of everyone, injected

nerself in the arm.

Nora blanched. "Hey, what the hell are you doing?"

Emma remained calm and expertly drew a vial of her own blood.

Handing the vial to the officer, Emma said, "Officer, if I'm right, you'll find hallucinogenic and hypnotic drugs in my blood, drugs that are strictly banned. I'm just a country girl; I shouldn't have access to this stuff. Please find out where it came from, who supplied it, and who drugged me!"

The police immediately sent her blood to the hospital for testing.

After a nerve-wracking wait, the results were promptly returned.

"Miss Emma is right," announced a doctor, report in hand. "Her blood contains a banned hypnotic drug! Further investigation revealed that a reagent went missing from our pharmacy at 12:29 PM today. It looks like someone deliberately injected it into Miss Emma's bloodstream!"

At this, all eyes shifted to Elijah.

Elijah began to panic. The drugging was part of the plot he and Nora had devised, but he never imagined Emma would detect being drugged, much less precisely name the drug. If this was pursued further, it wasn't just about not framing Emma; improperly handling medications

could mean losing his job or even facing prison time.

"Officer, I had nothing to do with this-it must have been a mistake at the pharmacy!" Elijah quickly pointed at a nurse, snapping, "Explain yourself! Why was this drug added to Emma's saline?"

Emma watched the scapegoated nurse, now shaking with fear.

The nurse, Layla Brown, was Nora's niece and Aria's cousin. Previously, Layla often participated in their cruel plots against Emma, likely out of a desire to gain their approval.

'This time, I bet she was involved too, considering she handles the meds, Emma thought.

"What are you waiting for? Write an apology and hand in your resignation!" Elijah, trying to save his skin, lashed out at Layla.

Emma watched them turn on each other, feeling both disdain and satisfaction. She spoke to the police. “Officer, mishandling medications is serious-it can be deadly. Just quitting doesn’t cut it, does it?”

“Absolutely not!” With that, the officers moved to cuff Layla right in front of Nora.

As the police moved to take her niece away, Nora grew desperate. “Officer, please, Layla is just a kid who grabbed the wrong medication by mistake. She shouldn’t be punished so severely. Please, let her go,” she pleaded.

2/3

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Colby Chapter 3

Chapter 3

Emma responded icily, “Sure, Layla is just some twenty–something kid preaching about the law to the cops just now, and now you’re ready to be nd it?”

Her biting words caused her usually silent father, Mateo Wilson, to frown deeply.

ust killed me by messing up my meds. How come you were

Mateo

scolded, “Emma, is that any way to speak to your elders? Where are your manners?”

“One abandoned in the wild since birth should just be thankful for a full belly, let alone m anners. You’re asking if I have any? Did you ever

bother to teach me?” Emma snapped back.

Mateo, infuriated to the point of nearly having a stroke, raised his hand to strike her but was restrained by Emma’s Grandma Zoe Wilson,

because, after all, Emma was still useful to them.

“Enough! Since she’s okay, let’s just go home and stop making a scene,” Zoe commanded harshly, but with a disdainful glance at Emma, she thought, ‘This crude girl still has her uses. Can’t afford to pick fights with money.’

This reminder refocused the Wilsons on the real reason they had brought Emma back.

Soon, they headed back to the villa.

Emma knew exactly what was on their minds. In her previous life, the Wilson family’s finances were a mess at this point, and they hoped to solve it through a marriage alliance with Liam, a man rumored to have a disability and an unpredictable mood.

Mateo and Grandma were gunning for this marriage, but Nora and Aria feared Emma becoming Mrs. Hall might bite them in the ass. So, they schemed to ruin Emma’s reputation, hoping to set Aria up as the bride instead.

But back then, Liam only had eyes for Emma, completely ignoring Aria.

Just thinking “Liam Hall” stabbed at Emma’s heart.

She had rejected the marriage before, seeing it as nothing more than a transaction, particularly after the scandal where she was framed for seducing a doctor.

After Liam’s parents pulled their support for the marriage, she had left the Wilson family to join a mysterious organization, later to be

deceived and manipulated by the relentless Elijah.

Little did she know, Liam was the one who truly cared. Elijah, with all his schemes, turned out to be the real fucking nightmare.

As Emma was caught in her memories, Zoe suddenly switched her approach and started plotting.

“Emma, though we’ve been estranged for years, you’re still a Wilson. Our family is in trouble, and you can’t just turn your back on us, right?” Zoe said, feigning concern.

Emma leaned back on the sofa with a wry smile, already used to her family’s bullshit. She listened quietly, waiting to hear more.

“Ah, Liam Hall, the eldest son of the prestigious Hall family, just lost his legs in an accident. But damn, he’s still a catch—handsome and super capable. Most importantly, he’s the Hall family’s heir!” Zoe’s eyes sparkled as she raved about the Hall family. “The Hall family? They make our Wilsons look like peanuts! You, raised in the sticks and hardly educated—

landing a guy like him would be the break of a lifetime! We'll even give you 40 thousand dollars as a gift. Just imagine how thrilled you'll be!"

Emma tapped the armrest of the sofa and shot back, "Grandma, aren't we forgetting something? Didn't the Halls mention they'd fork over 10

1/2

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Chapter 3

million dollars if I married into their family? And you're offering me just 40

Her words left the entire Wilson family dumbfounded. They had figured as thousand dollars. They never expected her to call them out.

and dollars? You think I'm stupid or what?"

Country girl like Emma would be over the moon about 40

"Emma, so what exactly are you asking for?" Zoe asked, her voice tinged with disbelief.

"I want exactly 2 million dollars—the money Mom left for me. Plus, that 10 million dollars from Liam is going straight into my shares in the company. From today, the Wilson Group is co-owned by me and Liam—nothing to do with the rest of the Wilsons," Emma stated firmly.

Zoe was so enraged she nearly fainted.

Mateo's face turned beet-red as he banged on the table. "2 million dollars? That's supposed to fund your sister's college abroad! What kind of sister are you?"

Nora piped up anxiously, "Emma, Aria has always been top of her class! It'd be a shame if she didn't get to study abroad!"

Aria was clearly distressed, but Emma remained ice-cold.

'Oh, that's funny,' she thought bitterly. 'Selling off the eldest daughter to settle debts while the family's nearly bankrupt, yet somehow there's 2 million dollars to send the younger one abroad to live it up. What a damn hypocritical and biased mess. Why the hell was I ever polite to these assholes in my past life?'

“Don’t screw this up, Dad. That 2 million dollars is my inheritance from Mom,” Emma stated, slow but forceful. “Aria should be using her own parents’ money. If her dad’s broke and her mom can’t make a dime, then she needs to earn her own keep. Why the hell should she live off my mom’s money?”

Nora, feigning shock, interjected, “Emma, how can you talk like that? She’s your family, for god’s sake!”

Emma scoffed coldly. “No, she’s not my family. I’m my mother’s child. Aria? She’s just a bastard.”

Overcome with anger, Mateo raised his hand to strike her face.

However, Emma quickly blocked it, standing tall and firm. “Just because you’re my dad, Mateo, doesn’t give you the right to hit me like I’m some dog! Marriage is my damn choice! If you guys can’t deal with that, then I won’t marry at all! Let’s all just watch the Wilson family go down together. Let’s see how that goes for everyone!”

Emma’s defiant stance caught the entire Wilson family off guard. They had thought that having grown up in the countryside and being summoned to acknowledge her lineage, Emma would obediently comply. They never expected her to stand her ground and demand 2 million dollars.

In her past life, Emma hadn’t discovered the 2 million dollars her mother left until moments before her death in a fire, when Aria finally told her the truth. By then, it was too late to avenge her mother or save herself.

This time around, she swore she wouldn’t let such atrocities slide.

Sensing the tension rising, Nora quickly intervened, “Actually, there are specific conditions in the will to access that money.”

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Chapter 4

Chapter 4

Nora spoke with a smug certainty. “The heir must excel academically and manage effective inheritance is indisputably yours.”

prove more capable than Aria, then the

Emma scoffed. “So, Nora, you’re suggesting a showdown with Aria? If I come out on top, I pocket the 2 million dollars?”

Nora, confident that Emma couldn’t surpass Aria, simply replied, “Exactly.”

Once Nora tipped her hand, Emma knew she had this in the bag.

Back in her previous life, she and Aria had faced a crucial exam at this exact moment. The victor would clinch the trust fund left by Emma’s mother, Stella Rivera.

But back then, Emma, lagging from a rural education, had been clueless about the exam’s stakes, blundering through her paper. She only recalled the joy on Nora and Aria’s faces when the scores were posted.

Nora had patronizingly encouraged her to study harder afterward, and Aria had gifted her a tacky ten-dollar necklace as a “meeting gift.” Looking back, Emma found it more insulting than if she’d been brushed off like a stray dog.

Biting her lip, Emma agreed, “Fine, it’s settled by the test scores then. I win, I take the money. And Aria-” She silently added with a smirk, ‘As

if she stands a chance.’

Puffed up with arrogance, Aria sneered. “I’ve been the top student for three years running! You think you can compete with me? You’re basically signing your death warrant!”

Emma couldn’t suppress a laugh, musing, ‘Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.’ She eyed Aria as though she was already out of the running.

Time zipped by, and soon, it was the day of the entrance exam at Vark College.

Arriving at Vark College, Emma and Aria were immediately recognized.

“Hey, Aria, is this your sister?” someone asked, surprised.

“Aria, she doesn’t really look like you,” another remarked.

“Your sister seems nice though,” a classmate added, smoothing over the awkward moment.

Aria, reveling in the veiled compliments, smugly said, "Sure, my sister grew up in the countryside and wasn't great academically, but she's a pro with farm equipment-tractors, harvesters, the works. Stuff we've never even laid eyes on, she can handle." she laughed heartily, her

classmates joining in.

At that moment, Emma, indeed, didn't share Aria's flair for grooming. Her memories were filled with rolling in the fields: catching fish in the spring, and harvesting wheat in the fall. Now in the summer, her skin was rough, her appearance unrefined.

In her previous life, such comments had crushed her self-esteem. She felt she had let her sister down, with Aria frequently chiding her as an embarrassment and excluding her from activities. Foolishly, Emma had thought it best to be patient with her younger sister, spending nights

alone, secretly crying into her pillow.

Reflecting on it now, Emma thought it bitterly ironic. 'People who don't like you, just don't. You can bend over backward for them, and they'll still be plotting your demise. Why the hell should I care what they think?'

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Chapter 4

With a scoff, Emma crossed her arms and draped her loose jacket over her shoulders, exuding an air of defiance. "If mothers aren't the same, how can their kids be?"

"What did you say?" a classmate exclaimed in surprise.

"Aria, so you and your sister have different moms? We've been classmates for years, and you never told me that!" another chimed in, fanning

the flames.

Emma's mom had died young, and these naive classmates had no clue that Nora was the homewrecker. Of course, Aria wouldn't air that dirty laundry.

Aria's face clouded over, and she clammed up.

Emma looked at her coldly, her words dripping with sarcasm. "She would never tell you. Who would wanna brag about being a love child?"

After her jab, Emma coolly walked towards the exam hall.

Moments later, as Emma sat down, Aria stormed in, her face stormy as she slammed her backpack down next to Emma. "Think you've got

this in the bag, Emma? Just wait until the exam results are out. Everyone will see you're a total loser! Mom said if I ace this test, she's snagging that 2 million dollars for me. Go to hell with your poor mom, you b**h!" Flushed with anger, Aria grabbed her backpack and

stormed out.

Emma's gaze turned icy. 'Insult my mom, curse my family... Aria, you'll get a taste of hell,' she vowed silently.

Half an hour into the exam, Emma was the first to hand in her paper, while Aria was still halfway through, desperate to nail it given the exam's

difficulty.

Seeing Emma submit her paper so early sent a jolt through Aria. 'What the hell? How did she finish so fast?' She quickly comforted herself. 'Emma, a no-name orphan from the sticks, what could she know? She probably just scribbled nonsense to get it over with.'

Reassured, Aria dove back into her test, while Emma strolled out to the school garden.

In her past life, weighed down by her insecurities, Emma had never truly appreciated the beauty of Vark College, especially after enduring bullying on campus. This time, she was determined to take it all in.

Under a pink-flowered tree, Emma was lost in thought, staring at the blossoms,

A deep, rich voice suddenly shattered the quiet. "Like what you see?"

Startled, Emma snapped back to reality and noticed a man in a wheelchair emerging from behind the floral curtain.

Liam, sat in his wheelchair, radiated an aura of aristocratic aloofness. Yet, his deep, tranquil eyes softened as they rested on her.

He noted her silence and, with a graceful flick of his wristwatch, asked, "All by yourself? Skipping class?"

Memories of a past life where they both perished in flames briefly overwhelmed Emma. She regained her composure and responded, "Yeah, I handed in my test early. Are you here to talk business with Vark College, Mr. Hall?"

"No," Liam said, locking eyes with her. "I'm here for you."

Emma was taken aback, falling silent.

"What's wrong? We're practically hitched, Can't I check in on my future wife at school?" Liam's voice carried a hint of challenge.

He was well aware of Emma's hesitance toward their relationship; her pensive and conflicted expression only deepened his understanding

Chapter 4

that she didn't want to see him.

His expression turned stern. "If you're not into this, I'll just leave after I give you this." He handed her a sleek black card. "The PIN is your birthday."

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Chapter 5

Chapter 5

"It's your first time in TroIn City. Anything you need, food or clothes, just swipe this card. And if the Wilsons give you any shit, use it." Liam shot her a serious look. "No cap on spending."

Emma's fingers trembled as she took the card. She wasn't totally up for this interaction, still reeling from her past life's memories. She tried to hand the card back. "Nah, I'm good, thanks."

Liam's expression darkened. "Why?" he asked, puzzled, wondering why she was unwilling to let him cover expenses or if she disliked him that much.

Emma shook her head but flashed him a smile. "Wouldn't it be better to have you with me when I'm shopping, Mr. Hall?"

Her invitation surprised Liam, making him wonder if she remembered him. Her long lashes fluttered, and a faint rose scent filled the air. He gulped nervously.

"Would you like to go shopping with me, Mr. Hall?" she asked.

"I'd love to. But this card's all yours, so keep it," Liam replied.

Though he sounded gentle, Emma felt his insistence. So she took the black card. "Sure, I'll call you then, Mr. Hall."

"Okay," he agreed with a smile.

As Emma turned and walked away with her backpack, her steps became noticeably lighter and more relaxed.

'Liam's really got a soft spot for me. And I'm totally down to marry him,' she thought.

After returning home, Aria told her mom everything that had happened today.

"What? Emma finished her test in just half an hour? Wow, she's really proving her worthlessness. Forget the results; I'll just ask your dad for the money straight away," said Nora.

But Aria still had doubts. "Mom, what if she knew all the answers and turned it in early? You know, the news always says rural kids are really good at studying."

Nora, ever cautious, decided to play it safe. "Alright," she said, glancing at Emma lounging on the villa lawn. "Why don't you go and test her with some questions? See what she really knows."

Aria grabbed a workbook and headed out.

Emma was soaking up the sun on the grass, remembering the endless months she spent underground at Delta-27 Base working on reactors. Now, she savored every moment in the sun. But her peace was shattered by an annoying voice.

Aria strolled over with a workbook. "Hey, Emma, Mom sent me to help you study!"

Emma, wearing sunglasses, rolled her eyes. She couldn't help but find it amusing that Aria thought she could teach her anything. Keeping her cool, she responded, "Oh? How exactly are you going to help me?"

Aria, already irritated, continued, "The teacher said this trigonometry chapter is crucial. Have you mastered it?"

Emma glanced at the book, her expression unchanging. "What's there even to learn?"

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12:43 Fri, 5 Jul

Chapter 5

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Aria fumed, interpreting Emma's attitude as sheer laziness. "Now that you're part of the Wilson family, you better not embarrass us. This isn't your village where goofing off is fine. If you can't handle trigonometry, how are you gonna pass exams?"

"Why does it matter to you whether I know it or not?" Emma shot back.

Aria's face turned bright red with anger. "You handed in your test after just 30 minutes?" She nearly crushed the notebook, shouting, "Don't think I didn't notice! You submitted your test in just 30 minutes!"

With her suspicions "confirmed," Aria stormed off, fuming. She was convinced Emma was utterly useless and that she and her mom had

overestimated Emma.

Meanwhile, Emma continued sipping her coffee, unbothered by the drama. After Aria left, she made a video call. "Did you spread the info like

I asked?"

A girl in sunglasses responded coolly on the screen, "Yeah, it's out. Don't worry, boss. The bigwigs at Vark College will soon suspect you're the

famous Stox."

Stox was a globally renowned computer genius, reputed to have the brainpower of a superhero, and coveted by governments everywhere.

Emma replied calmly, "Good, but let's not rush things." She needed to time everything perfectly while keeping Aria on edge.

At dinner that night, an eerie tension hung in the air. Nora must have tipped off Mateo, because he began to push Emma to give up the 2

million dollars. "The teacher called today and said Aria aced her test."

Nora chimed in, "Emma, the teacher said Aria did a great job. She only slipped up on a couple of the toughest questions. Barring any surprises, she'll top the class again. With grades like hers, it'd be a shame not to go study abroad."

Emma wiped her mouth expressionlessly. "What about my scores?"

"The teacher said they're still grading. Yours probably just hasn't been looked at yet," Nora awkwardly replied, forcing a smile.

That was true, but everyone, including the teacher, assumed Emma was a poor student since she grew up in the countryside and finished the test so early.

Emma stayed cool. "I'll wait for my scores before we talk about it."

But suddenly, Mateo slammed his hand on the table. "That 2 million dollars has to go to Aria for her study abroad," he declared firmly.

"Why?" Emma crashed her fork down in response.

"Because it's part of my and your mom's joint marital assets!" growled Mateo.

Hearing this, Emma suddenly jumped up and flipped the table over. The fancy dishes went flying everywhere, shattering into pieces.

Everyone screamed and dodged the flying shards. Mateo jabbed a finger at her, yelling, "What the hell are you doing? Trying to start a damn revolution?"

Emma shot Mateo a cold smirk. "Seriously, Dad? You cheated on Mom and now you wanna talk about joint assets?"

Mateo was furious at Emma's mocking, looking like he was about to explode. He pointed at Emma, cursing, while she remained completely unfazed.

The meal was a disaster. Emma glanced at the mess on the floor. "Liam wants me now, not Aria. I'm the one saving this business, whether

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Chapter 5

you like it or not. So, you better start begging, even if you can't treat me right. And I'll say it loud and clear—none of my mom's money is going to Nora and Aria." With that, Emma strode upstairs, head held high.

Meanwhile, word got to Liam about the fight in the Wilson family. In the heart of Troin City, a towering skyscraper housed his office. Inside, Liam, sharply dressed in a wheelchair, thought it over. He never imagined the Wilsons would mess with Emma so soon after they split at Vark College. He couldn't let his girl get pushed around like that. "Levi," he called out.

"Yes, Mr. Hall," Levi replied.

"Get ready, I'm proposing to Emma at the Wilson house tomorrow," Liam said, his words carrying both affection and authority.

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Chapter 6

Chapter 6

The next morning, as Emma came downstairs, she caught snippets sipping over breakfast.

“Wow, Aria’s getting all the attention. It’s not even Valentine’s Day, and she’s already drowning in flowers and gifts. Unlike someone who’s ugly, uncultured, and totally psycho.” Zoe finished up, snagging Aria’s diamond bracelet and shooting Emma a nasty glare. “Sleeping in so late, you got no manners. Look at this. This bracelet is from Sebastian, the Gomez family’s second son, all for Aria.”

Emma sneered. “Sebastian’s a total player, probably knocked up half the town. That bracelet is just a cheap trinket worth only several thousand dollars. Only someone as shameless as Aria would show it off.”

Hearing this, Mateo flung his fork at her. “You little brat, what’s with the morning drama? Can’t you let us eat in peace?”

Emma dodged, retorting, “Wrong for calling her shameless? Look who’s ruining my breakfast.” She gestured to her usual seat, now occupied by a dog bowl. Aria’s border collie was munching there, while Emma’s breakfast sat outside on the doghouse.

Struggling to hold back her laughter, Aria pretended to be apologetic. “Oh, Emma, I’m so sorry. After you flipped the table last night, I thought you didn’t want to join us for breakfast. Rocky really wanted your spot this morning, so I moved your breakfast to the doghouse. It’s sunny out there, you know. But if it bothers you, I can fix it right away.”

Feeling bold in her disrespect, thinking Zoe and Mateo had written off Emma, Aria reached for the dog bowl. But Emma kicked it over before she could, sending dog food flying. Panicked, Aria asked, “Emma, what are you doing now?”

Emma grabbed the sunny-side-up egg and chicken breast from Aria’s plate and dumped them into the dog bowl. Then she shoved a handful of dog food into Aria’s mouth. “Dogs are smarter than you, so why bother with dog food? But you can’t even tell people food from dog food. Let me help your pea brain by feeding you some dog food.”

“What are you... Mmph, Emma, you’re insane. Help!” Aria, no match for Emma’s strength, burst into tears, desperately trying to spit it out as her mouth was forced open, more dog food shoved in. She ended up swallowing several pieces.

Zoe looked like she was about to have a heart attack. Nora was horrified too, screeching as she hid behind Mateo. He jumped up, bellowing for someone to stop Emma. But Emma had already quit before the servants could step in.

Seemingly satisfied with her handiwork, Emma menacingly gripped Aria’s jaw, “So, how was Rocky’s food? Tasty?”

Once let go, Aria ran in tears to hide behind Mateo. “Dad, look/what Emma did to me.”

“Emma, you’re completely nuts.” Mateo trembled with anger. “Your sister is the hottest thing in Troln City right now. All these rich dudes are chasing after her. And you, you have the nerve to do this to her? Just you wait, I’m gonna teach you a lesson.”

Emma demanding 2 million dollars to agree to marry shifted Mateo’s investment strategy to Aria.

But there was a key difference. Emma was being forced into marriage, shoved into Liam’s arms whether she wanted to or not. It was like selling off a daughter.

Meanwhile, Aria could take the 2 million dollars, doll herself up, and pick any man she wanted. That was more like marrying off a daughter. Whether selling or marrying off, the Wilson family saw their daughters as commodities, not individuals.

With gifts pouring in for Aria well before Valentine’s Day, the Wilson family’s expectations soared. The higher their hopes, the better Aria was treated, while Emma’s situation just got worse.

As Mateo lifted a heavy stick to strike Emma, a car horn blared outside. A flustered servant rushed in. “Emergency! Vehicles from the Hall family are here.”

When Mateo heard “the Hall family,” He nearly dropped the stick.

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Chapter 6

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Zoe gasped, panicked. “Oh shit, we’re screwed. They’re probably here to settle the score for the broken engagement. What do we do? If we pi** off the Hall family, we’re done in Troln City.”

The Wilson family was now utterly terrified. Aria shot a vicious glare at Emma. “This is all your fault. If you hadn’t stirred up so much trouble, Liam wouldn’t be showing up!”

Zoe gritted her teeth. "Let's just hand over this wretched girl. The Hall family can deal with her however they want. She made this mess, so she'll have to clean it up on her own. We can't afford to get tangled up in this."

The Wilson family trembled at the mere thought of Liam. The Hall family wielded immense power in TroIn City, capable of bringing any city to its knees with a mere snap of their fingers. Their ancestors held prestigious positions since the 14th century and had been wealthy for generations. If even one member of the Hall family decided to act, wiping out the entire Wilson family would be like swatting a fly.

Now even Mateo's face had gone pale, his hand holding the cup shaking violently. Zoe looked like she was on edge, sitting as if on pins and needles.

Seeing their reaction, Emma smirked coldly. In her previous life, Liam came to settle the score for her rejection of his proposal and the scandal with Elijah. But after their encounter at Vark College in this lifetime, Liam should understand her feelings. So he hadn't come today to cause trouble.

"Did Liam come in person?" Mateo's voice wavered.

The servant replied, "I'm not sure, but there are a lot of vehicles outside. Over twenty of them."

"We're screwed." Zoe slumped onto the sofa. "Over twenty vehicles?" With that many people coming, the Wilson family was done for today.

Even Aria couldn't help but glance anxiously at Nora. "Mom, what's the plan now?"

Only Emma calmly walked outside.

At the front of the convoy was a grey BMW. A man in a sharp grey suit stepped out. It was Liam's right-hand man, Levi Carter. He gave Emma a respectful nod. But what he said next left the entire Wilson family stunned.

"Hello, Miss Wilson. On Mr. Hall's orders, I've come to deliver the proposal gifts," Levi said.

Those words hit like a bomb. Emma was stunned to hear there were over twenty vehicles filled with her proposal gifts. And the Wilson family behind her? They were totally speechless.

"What? Proposal gifts? That many?" Aria's jaw almost dropped to the floor.

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Chapter 7

Chapter 7

Nora was blown away too. Those fancy rides, just over 20 of them, were worth over ten million dollars alone.

Emma strolled up and popped open a trunk. Inside, there were some seriously mind-blowing items: antiques from the 18th century and some rare paintings.

Her eyes then locked onto a vibrant azure jewelry box in the middle. When she opened it, a dazzling diamond tiara sat there, understated but dripping in luxury. The diamonds sparkled like crazy, giving off that timeless, majestic vibe.

“A tiara custom-made for Queen Sylvia by the world’s top luxury brand-priceless and damn, it’s gorgeous!” Emma whispered to herself. Even she couldn’t help but be impressed this time.

Aria was fuming with envy. She’d been getting gifts here and there lately, trying to keep up appearances with family and friends. But now her stuff looked like trash in comparison. None of it could hold a candle to Emma’s gear. She couldn’t stand that Emma had what she didn’t.

Emma just shut the trunk without another glance. She knew there was no point in checking further. If one car was packed like that, the rest were probably loaded with equally insane treasures.

Emma turned to Levi, saying, “Please tell Mr. Hall that I really appreciate what he did for me, for all of these.”

Levi grinned. After working under Liam for ages, he could read people like a book. “Mr. Hall’s message is loud and clear: if it makes his future wife happy, he’ll go to the ends of the earth.”

Emma smirked. Levi was definitely fishing for her intentions. She got his message well. Marry Liam, and she would have all the riches in the world, but say no, things wouldn’t be so rosy.

As Emma was about to say something after tapping the rear hatch, Zoe burst out, “Oh my gosh, look at that painting from a century ago. It’s like a rare treasure. Hurry, take them all and thank Mr. Hall and Mr. Carter.”

Even though Zoe hated Emma’s guts, she still wanted to snag that painting for herself. But just as she went for it, Levi stepped in and blocked

her with his hand.

Zoe paused, then glanced up at him. “Mr. Carter, what’s going on here?”

Levi stayed polite, but his smile and words felt rehearsed. “Mr. Hall couldn’t make it today because of his leg, but he left clear instructions. These things are just for Miss Wilson.”

Levi added, “Mr. Hall also made it clear that the Hall family doesn’t expect any gifts in return. But he won’t tolerate any mistreatment of his future wife. That two million dollars from Ms. Rivera’s inheritance? It’s going back to Miss Wilson, no ifs, ands, or buts. Otherwise, the Wilson family won’t be in his good books.”

The Wilson family collectively gasped in shock. Just any one of those proposal gifts in the cars was likely worth over 2 million dollars. Liam wasn’t after the cash for himself. He was totally backing Emma up.

Mateo, feeling the pressure from the blunt truth, had to force himself to step forward stiffly. “We get what Mr. Hall’s driving at. Tell him after the wedding, this 2 million dollars...” He clenched his teeth, continuing, “It will go to Emma.”

“Looks like Mr. Wilson’s on board, that’s great.” Levi grinned, then turned to Emma with respect. “Miss Wilson, what do you think?”

Emma twirled her hair and said, “Sounds good. Let’s seal the deal at my grandma’s 70th birthday next week, with family and friends as witnesses. Mr. Hall can hold onto the gifts for now. Once the inheritance is sorted, I’ll get the marriage license with him.”

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Chapter 7

A week later, at Zoe’s 70th birthday party, the Wilson family’s villa was packed with guests. Among them were some business partners who had come not only to celebrate

Zoe's birthday but also to check out the newly returned Miss Wilson and see what she was all about.

Right now, Aria was holed up upstairs, dead set on staying there. Nora was doing her best to coax her out. "Aria, come on, unlock the door.

Everyone's downstairs waiting for you.

I'm not going anywhere," Aria snapped. "That money was supposed to be mine, but now it's going to that b**h. Why should I go down there

and embarrass myself?"

"Listen, you're overthinking" Nora whispered discreetly. "Your dad adores you, he wouldn't give everything to Emma. Remember her disappearance? Not a coincidence. But forget that. The day Liam set the rules, your dad had to play along for Mr. Carter. He said, 4/5 of that 2 million dollars is still yours in the end. Worst case, you'll split it with her, but that's enough for you to go abroad. Doll up, mingle downstairs, chat up some rich kid about dating. Once you're overseas, snag a loaded hubby. Then, no worries! Hurry, join the party."

Nora's words revived Aria's hopes.

Their voices were hushed, and they thought they were in the clear. But little did they know, Emma had the entire Wilson family's villa under her watchful eye.

Upstairs, Emma lounged in a sleek black gown and heels, keeping a close eye on everything through her monitors. With a chilling smirk, she saved the recording and then strolled off to the hall

Alone in his wheelchair upstairs, Liam kept a close watch on Zoe, Mateo, Nora, and Aria, monitoring their every move and word.

"Mr. Hall, you sure you don't want to head down and make your presence known?" Levi asked.

"Not necessary." Today, Liam had flat-out turned down the Wilson family's invite. But little did they know, he was already at the villa, flying under the radar. His plan? To see for himself how the Wilson family really treated Emma.

As the party hit its stride, Mateo grabbed the mic. "Everyone, I got another piece of good news for you today. I've finally found my long-lost daughter, Emma. Let's give a big welcome to my girl, Emma!"

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Chapter 8

Chapter 8

Hearing Emma was about to make her entrance, the crowd couldn't stop talking.

"I heard Emma, Mateo's eldest daughter, is a complete screw-up. She finished one remarked contemptuously.

in just 30 minutes yesterday. Can you believe that?"

"Come on, think about it. Mateo dumped her mom and married Nora. Then they had Aria. And Aria, wow, she's got it all—looks, grace, you name it. Emma's been out of the Wilson family for years. How could she possibly compete with her?" another replied.

"But rumor has it that Liam is into her, right?" one asked.

"Liam? Into her? Nah, you've got it all wrong. If anything, he'd go for Aria," someone muttered in disbelief.

Before heading downstairs, Emma glanced over the crowd from the top of the stairs. Many faces looked familiar. At a similar party in her past life, Mateo had invited their Vark College teacher to publicly praise Aria's grades, and then they shamelessly handed Aria the entire 2 million dollars inheritance.

Scanning the room, Emma spotted that same teacher and the trust company folks her mom had hired.

The trust company's team stood out, looking sharp and elegant. But among them was one person everyone wanted to cozy up to: Daniel Rivera.

Daniel, the investment genius, a guy who played with billions like pocket change. He was a stock market legend known worldwide.

The crowd went wild again.

"Even though Liam Hall didn't show up, Daniel Rivera is here!"

“The Wilsons must have serious clout to get Daniel here. They say any stock he touches skyrockets. If I could just get a few tips from him, I’d be set for life.”

“There he is, check it out!”

People saw him but were too intimidated to approach. “Yeah, that’s him, but Daniel keeps his distance. If anyone gets too close without permission, his assistant will toss them out in a heartbeat.”

Right then, someone spilled the beans. “I heard Daniel’s here about the inheritance from Mateo’s late ex-wife.”

“Mateo’s late ex-wife? Who’s that?” one asked curiously.

In fact, Daniel was Emma’s uncle, the younger brother of Stella.

In her past life, the moment Emma stepped downstairs, Daniel recognized her instantly. He’d gone all out for her at that party, but the Wilson family had brainwashed Emma into thinking Daniel was just a ruthless capitalist. She fell for their lies, distrusting her uncle who genuinely cared for her, and refused to cooperate. As a result, her mom’s hard-earned money ended up in Aria and Nora’s pockets. Thinking about it now, Emma’s eyes hardened with icy contempt.

As Emma descended the spiral staircase, she made sure Daniel could see the birthmark on her neck. From across the room, Daniel, usually as cool as a cucumber, froze mid-sentence. “Emma!” he blurted out.

The Rivera family had four sons, and only Stella was their daughter. While the brothers were busy with their careers and stayed unmarried, Stella fell for Mateo and had Emma.

Stella’s brothers adored Emma, the only child in the family. After Stella’s tragic end and Emma’s disappearance, they searched the globe but

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Chapter 8

found nothing. Now that Emma was back, they would give her the world.

As Emma reached the bottom of the stairs, she spotted Mateo with the mic, putting on a fake smile. “And here’s my eldest girl, Emma.”

The people present also began to offer insincere compliments.

“Wow, she’s so stunning.”

“Not at all like the rumors say, huh? She’s got this classy vibe that Aria totally lacks.”

“Mr. Wilson, happy for you.”

Emma wore a sleek black gown. In her past life, she’d spent so much time outdoors that her skin was deeply tanned. Now, trying to restore her complexion, she chose black—not the flashiest color, but it made her stand out elegantly among the sea of colorful gowns like a regal black swan, making everyone else seem ordinary in comparison.

Mateo and Nora shared a glance. Seizing the opportunity, Nora turned to Emma and Aria’s homeroom teacher, Maya Baker. “Hey, Maya, why not spread some good vibes on this happy day?”

The Vark College exam results were in, and Nora had invited Maya to publicly announce Emma and Aria’s scores, hoping to show off Aria’s superiority.

But Maya hesitated. “Mrs. Wilson, with all these people, maybe we should skip it.”

“Skip it? Why? It’ll just add to the celebration. Go ahead, Maya, announce it,” Nora insisted.

Maya started to sweat. As the homeroom teacher, she knew Aria well. She warned again, “Making it public might hurt your daughter’s feelings!”

Nora, thinking Maya was talking about Emma, flashed a look of disdain. “Hurt feelings? Please, she’s got a thick skin. Just say it.”

Aria stood nearby, practically quivering with excitement. Finally, a chance to reclaim my pride. I have put up with so much, and now I could crush Emma’s dignity into the ground,’ she thought.

Aria whispered to her classmates, “Watch this. Emma’s a total idiot. Poor, dumb, and ugly. I’m the real Miss Wilson here.”

“Yeah, you’re the bomb.” one of her classmates chimed in.

“Emma seems braindead. What good’s a pretty face if there’s no brains behind it?” another added.

“Who does she think she is, trying to keep up with Aria?” a third exclaimed.

Just then, Maya pulled out the report cards. “Aria scored 1570,” she announced, leaving everyone in shock.

“1570 out of 1600? With that score, she can get into any top university in the country!” someone marveled.

“Mateo, your daughter’s grades are exceptional!” another guest praised.

“Congratulations! Having such an outstanding daughter is a true blessing,” someone else added.

“Aria is absolutely remarkable,” echoed around the room.

Even though it was Zoe’s birthday party, with all the fuss about Emma making her big comeback after disappearing for so long, everyone could see that Aria was Mateo’s top pick for a daughter.

People began showering Aria with attention left and right, while Daniel’s look toward Aria and Nora had turned ice cold.

Zoe couldn’t contain her excitement. “Wow, Aria is just amazing! Having her in the Wilson family is a real godsend. Emma, check out how awesome your sister is. We gotta send her to a top-notch university abroad.”

And there it was. The Wilson family was all set to show off Aria’s superiority to the world and then squeeze that 2 million dollars out of Emma for Aria’s overseas education.

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Chapter 9

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“Emma, amlight Zoe pushed, getting more aggressive

In light of everyone, the Wilsons figured Emma would cave. But then, Maya whipped out another piece of paper “Well, here’s Emma’s score

report”

Without even looking, Aria burst out laughing. “Emma, I told you. It’s no surprise you can’t keep up after coming straight from the boonies. But seriously, you gotta get your head in the game. Turning it in after just 30 minutes? You won’t ace anything with that attitude.”

Ana’s confidence had the crowd nodding along in agreement.

“She turned it in just 30 minutes? She’s totally worthless.”

“Can’t answer? Fine, but at least finish the whole thing. Handing it in early, where’s that arrogance coming from?”

“Why bring her back? She’s totally an embarrassment.”

But Maya cut them off. “Hold on, you’ve got it wrong.” She raised the report. “Check it out, in just half an hour, Emma scored 1592.”

Just 8 points off in writing. Everything else was a perfect score. 1592 points! Over 22 points higher than Aria, who usually topped the charts.

Aria staggered, thinking she must be hallucinating. “No way, that’s impossible. Nobody at Vark College has ever hit 1592. She must’ve cheated.”

Emma, previously silent, now stepped forward with a smile. “Seriously, Aria? You just said nobody at this school ever hit 1592. Then you accuse me of cheating? Cheating off who? You think I’d copy your measly 1570?”

Aria was so flustered, she was on the verge of tears. “I don’t buy it. You must’ve Googled the answers. You must’ve used your phone.”

Even Maya chimed in. “Vark College exam questions are all teacher-made. No online answers to Google.”

After all those years of studying, how could Aria not know this? She was clearly panicking, lashing out desperately. Emma’s scores shocked everyone, but Aria’s extreme reaction left them even more bewildered.

From his spot upstairs, Liam casually sipped champagne, observing the chaos below. Levi could see trouble brewing for Emma. Judging Liam’s demeanor, he asked, “Mr. Hall, should I head down and help out Mrs. Hall?”

“She seems to have it all under control,” Liam replied with a smirk.

Levi wiped his brow. It seemed Mrs. Hall had everything handled. 1592 points. Even for Levi, a top scorer in the state with 1580 in his time, that was impressive.

Downstairs, Aria insisted, “Dad, Maya, Emma cheated. There’s no way she could score that high. She...”

“Cut it out!” Mateo’s face was flushed with anger. “Do you want to make things worse? Shut up.”

Nora rushed to pull Aria away, but Mateo and Zoe’s expressions toward Emma stayed the same even after hearing her score.

Mateo shot Emma a suspicious look. “Explain it!” His tone hinted at his suspicion that Emma had pulled something shady.

Emma retorted, “What’s there to explain? Maya already confirmed there’s no chance of cheating. Maya, am I right?”

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Chapter 9

“Exactly, Emma couldn’t have cheated,” Maya asserted, halting Mateo’s schemes in their tracks.

“Okay, everyone, looks like there’s been a little hiccup in the family today,” Mateo started, hinting at ending the party early.

“Wait,” Emma interrupted Mateo, “let’s not end it here. Since everyone’s present, let’s settle the inheritance contract today.”

Mateo was seething with anger.

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Emma grinned. “Grandma’s spot-on. Aria’s got great scores and deserves to study abroad. But hey, mine are even better. Would be a waste

not to cash in for my education, right?"

Zoe jumped up, all riled up. "This is totally different," she exclaimed. "Aria's been top dog since forever. We still don't know what your first place is even worth."

"Well, Zoe, you've got it all wrong."

"Yeah, they're both Mateo's daughters. Emma's got a point."

"Come on, Maya already cleared Emma. You are just playing favorites, plain and simple."

The crowd's fiery arguments quickly dragged the Wilson family's reputation through the mud.

In that instant, a man spoke up. "Vark College tests are no joke. Cheating? Absolutely impossible. If a big shot like Mr. Wilson doesn't know that, it's no wonder your bank's run dry, resorting to pimping your own kid for cash."

Those words landed like a bomb, silencing the room instantly. The speaker was none other than Daniel who towered over the crowd with his height over 6 feet.

Mateo frowned. "Mr. Rivera, what are you getting at?"

"Did I miss the mark?" Daniel stepped forward from the crowd. "Wasn't your plan to marry off Emma to Liam for that hefty 10 million dollar investment he promised?"

"Mr. Rivera, this is a private family affair," Mateo retorted, unaware that Daniel was Stella's brother, having been kept in the dark since Stella severed ties with her family to marry him.

"If the trust company is involved, it's not just your family's private affair anymore. Violating the trust's terms will lead to consequences you can't handle," Daniel replied.

Mateo paled, understanding the immense power of global financial giants like Daniel. With enough capital to destroy the Wilson family, Daniel's words were a clear threat after Liam's warning shot.

Under the crushing weight of the situation, Mateo had no option but to publicly sign the contract, granting the entire 2 million dollars to

Emma.

In tears, Aria pleaded, "Dad, you promised that money was for my education. Why should Emma get any of it? She's just a shameless country bumpkin who doesn't deserve a penny!"

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Chapter 10

Chapter 10

“Mr. Rivera, why are you defending her? Got a crush on her or something?” Aria st Emma’s uncle, Daniel was young and strikingly handsome, which fueled her jealousy

“God, that’s just stupid!” Daniel retorted, disgust clear in his voice.

arly misreading the situation. Despite being

Aria lost it. “Stupid? What’s so great about Emma, huh? She’s ready to sell herself for money. She’s nothing but a whore!”

Emma turned to face her. “Watch your mouth, Aria. Spreading lies is a crime, you know.”

Aria screamed, “Lies? You don’t even know Liam, yet you’re marrying a cripple for his money. Tell me you’re not in it for the cash!” Gasps echoed through the room as Aria insulted Liam so openly. People began to wonder if she had completely lost her mind or if she was just that

desperate.

Just then, a glass came flying from the second floor, smashing to pieces inches from Aria’s feet.

Terrified, Aria screamed and looked up, only to lock eyes with a cold, handsome man upstairs. She froze.

“Liam? What’s he doing here? I thought he wasn’t coming today!” the crowd roared.

Seeing Liam’s icy stare, the Wilson family went into a panic. “Mr. Hall, we didn’t expect you. Why didn’t you tell us you were coming?” said Mateo tremulously.

Liam's high-tech wheelchair descended the stairs automatically. Even seated, he radiated authority. "If I'd given you a heads-up, would we

have had such a show?"

His cold gaze zeroed in on Aria. She stepped back, but Nora pushed her forward. "Aria, apologize right now."

Nora, being quick on her feet, jumped in before Aria could make things worse. "Mr. Hall, I'm really sorry. Aria is just having a rough day and said something stupid. She usually looks up to you a lot. Please, don't hold it against her. She didn't mean any harm."

"Exactly," Mateo chimed in, seizing the moment. "We're all going to be family soon. Some bumps in the road are normal, right girls?"

Faced with Liam, Aria was all flustered, avoiding eye contact and mumbling, "Mr. Hall, my bad. I'm sorry."

But Liam stayed cool. "It's not me you should apologize to. It's Emma!"

He couldn't care less about being called a cripple. The Hall family had amassed enough power that he had to fake a disability to keep a low profile. But that didn't mean he was actually disabled. Someone like Aria wasn't even worth his anger. But anyone who dared to insult

Emma? That was crossing the line.

Emma shot a look at the fuming Aria. "You catch that? Apologize, now."

Aria clenched her fists so tightly it felt like her palms might bleed, but she just couldn't bring herself to apologize to Emma. Her hatred for Emma was too intense. She'd rather die than say sorry.

Seeing the standoff, Nora quickly interjected, "Alright. Aria's just being stubborn. She knows she messed up. I'll apologize on her behalf. Emma, I'm really sorry. Please, don't hold it against your sister."

But Emma couldn't forgive that easily. The memory of the flames consuming her, every cell in her body screaming in pain, haunted her. Watching her loved one burn to a crisp, the smell of charred flesh, it was pure despair. A simple apology wouldn't erase her deep-seated

hatred. She knew Aria wouldn't sincerely apologize, and she wasn't ready to forgive. She had come prepared.

At that moment, Emma pressed a button on a remote. The LED screen, which had been displaying “Happy Birthday,” suddenly switched to a

Chapter 10

video of Aria and Nora’s conversation.

“Your dad adores you, he wouldn’t give everything to Emma. Remember her

Nora shouted in the video.

arance? Not a coincidence. But forget that... Doll up...”

“Turn it off, now!” Nora shrieked, but the video kept rolling, capturing her voice continuing.

“Chat up some rich kid about dating. Once you’re overseas, snag a loaded hubby. Then, no worries!”

Nora never thought her words would be recorded and played back by Emma in front of everyone.

Seeing this, the guests began to chatter amongst themselves.

“Wow, those two are messed up,” one guest remarked.

“No way, so Emma going missing was because of them?” another whispered.

“You think Nora did it on purpose? Emma was just a toddler back then. That’s cold,” someone else added.

“This is blowing my mind. My whole perspective is messed up now,” said another astonished guest.

Mateo’s face went pale. He knew he was partly to blame for Emma’s disappearance years ago. This was a secret that could never come to light. He desperately tried to call for help and cut the power, but the video wouldn’t stop playing.

Emma held the remote with the calm authority of a queen. “See that? That’s your so-called ‘family love!’” She scoffed. “I’m done with the past. From now on, I want nothing to do with the Wilson family. Any mess you create is your problem. I’m just taking what’s rightfully mine from my mom’s estate. Marrying Liam? That’s my choice, and he’s not giving you a single cent.”

With that, Emma signed the inheritance papers, grabbed Liam’s hand, and walked out as everyone watched.

Emma and Liam had just stepped out of the villa when someone ran after them, calling, "Emma, wait up!"

It was Daniel.

Daniel's eyes were filled with concern. "Are you really sure about marrying him?"

In the dark, Liam sat silently in his wheelchair, his gaze fixed on Emma, waiting for her response.

Emma squeezed Liam's hand. "Yes, Uncle, I'm sure."

Her words caught Daniel off guard. "So you knew..." He sighed. "When your mom died, we searched everywhere for you but found nothing. As soon as we got word you were in Troin City, I rushed back from Nuverland."

"Thank you, Uncle," Emma said sincerely. In her previous life, brainwashed by the Wilson family, she had distanced herself from her uncles, and she knew she had hurt them deeply. This time, she wasn't going to waste their kindness.

Daniel turned to Liam. "Liam, even though the Rivera family's been abroad for years, my niece is our treasure. You'd better not mess with

her!"

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