

## Second Chances Protecting Mrs. Hall by Colby Stanford

### Chapter 21

#### Chapter 21

Everyone at the gym was on pins and needles for what could happen to Emma, but somehow, Emma dodged Ruby's first attack swiftly.

"What just happened? My eyes can barely keep up."

"What should we do? Ruby wants to kill her!"

"Somebody get Emma out of there! Stop them, or Emma's gonna die!"

Ruby's every move was clean and swift. Her punches and kicks went precisely where she wanted them to go. Another deadly punch was coming to Emma. However, when her fist was halfway to Emma's face, Emma grabbed her wrist and twisted it.

Ruby yowled, then went for Emma like crazy, eyes reddened.

Emma was gonna go easy on Ruby at first. She didn't want to cause panic on the campus, but she changed her mind when she found out that Ruby had actually tried to kill her. Moreover, Ruby didn't tell anyone she was a champion boxer before the combat. If she were fighting against a rookie, she could kill that person easily. This was attempted murder.

"I would respect you if you had played honestly and fairly, but your spitefulness grosses me out. Here's a lesson to learn." Emma crossed her fists, locked both sides of Ruby's neck with them, and twisted it fiercely.

Ruby raised her leg and tried to kick Emma's head, but Emma was faster. She kicked Ruby's leg and punched her neck again and again.

Emma was not in a trance when Ruby was warming up just now. She was observing Ruby's movements, trying to find her weak spot.

Ruby was hit in the vital. Her breathing was stagnant and stifled, and her eyes were blackened! She struggled, but Emma punched her again. and again with clean and destructive moves.

The students in the stands didn't even see what had happened. They saw Ruby being beaten by Emma like a rag doll, and their eyes widened. "What is that? I've never seen anyone fight like that before."

"A boomerang on Ruby."

"Those are some neat moves. I kinda like Emma now."

However, somebody recognized Emma's moves and said in panic. "That's Yaltanian military martial arts!"

"No way! How did Emma know that? I thought they only teach people in the military."

Emma totally took down Ruby with just two killer moves. She didn't show too much of her hand, but some folks were onto her. Emma kept her cool and didn't keep attacking after she got Ruby under control.

Ruby lay on the ground in disbelief, wide-eyed, half-dead. "It's...impossible." She couldn't believe she was taken down so quickly. She was not even sure what had just happened. 'No peers can knock me down so quickly unless... No! Emma can't be the mysterious legend in the martial arts field that my coach had mentioned,' thought Ruby.

Ruby won the fight, and many people stood in the stands and cheered for her. After this fight, they became Emma's fans.

"Awesome, Emma!"

"You're my god!"

"Can I learn martial arts with you, Emmya?"

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## Chapter 21

Emma looked at Ruby, who was lying on the ground, her voice as cold as ice. "Now, go to the cafeteria and apologize to me as we had agreed," Emma said firmly. She didn't want to show any mercy to a bully like Ruby. 'If I hadn't learned military martial arts, I would have been beaten half to death by her. It's bad luck for her to pick on me,' Emma thought. She also saw it as a way to rid other students of a bully.

Reluctant as Ruby might be, she had no choice but to do as Emma said. She stood at the cafeteria entrance in the full glare of the sun and people's inquisitive gaze. Sweats brushed down her face, mixing with the blood at the corners of her lips. She was never so humiliated. She regretted it so much to have messed with Emma, but it was too late.

Ruby raised her hand and slapped herself in the face, saying, "I'm a mouthy b\*\*h." Then again. And again.

Some onlookers shook their heads. "She deserves this. She was a big bully, and now, it's just karma."

"Yeah. She obviously wanted to catch Emma off guard."

Ruby was furious when she heard what they said, but Emma was staring at her by the side, so she couldn't do anything. Seeing Emma, she couldn't help but remember the horror she once felt when fighting with Emma at the gym.

Emma dared not to stop. She kept slapping herself and said, "I'm a mouthy b\*\*h."

After Liam got Emma's message, he had been waiting for the surprise. After about half an hour, he got an email. It was a video. The video had been edited, and only the highlights were left. He could clearly see the girl's spectacular moves. Even a person who knew nothing about martial arts would appreciate Emma's fighting skills, not to mention Liam's having been studying martial arts since childhood.

Emma knew about that, so she sent him this video to put on a talent show. The video ended at the most critical moment when Emma took down Ruby. Despite the video being edited, Liam could still tell Emma was a well-trained fighter, and she fought better in the video than she did at the hospital.

Liam's eyes darkened, thinking, 'Who is she? I could tell myself that she learned how to fight when she was out there before, but what I just saw clearly shows she has been trained for fighting.'

"Emma, you always surprise me, and I love it," he murmured.

Emma completely sparked Liam. He called Levi. "I need to know everything about Emma."

Levi was stunned. "Mr. Hall, you already do." He thought inside, 'I mean, she's your wife, isn't she?'

Liam said word by word, "I said everything."

Levi knew Liam wanted him to look into Emma's hidden information. "Got it, Mr. Hall. I'll have some trustworthy men look into that on the

black market. It could take a while."

Liam hung up, and someone knocked on the study door.

“Mr. Hall?”

Liam frowned. He was thinking about the woman he liked and clearly not happy about being interrupted so abruptly. He just said, “Come in,” sounding indifferent.

A maid pushed the door open and walked. She looked to be in her early twenties, with big eyes and a double ponytail. “The kitchen made bouillon. Have some, Mr. Hall,” she said.

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## Chapter 22

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Luna Reed kept her head down. She had loved Liam for many years, but after Emma moved in, her illusions were utterly shattered.

Liam was buried in business documents, not even bothering to look up. “Take it back, and let the kitchen know to heat up the soup when Emma gets back.”

Luna bitterly gritted her teeth before saying, “Mr. Hall, a healthy diet will help you recover. If Mrs. Hall wants some soup, the kitchen can whip up another batch for her.”

“Luna, how long have you been here?” Liam asked. He didn’t raise his head or look at her.

Luna bit her lip, all excited, thinking, ‘Does he finally notice me?’

“Three years,” she answered.

Liam’s following words hit her like a bucket of cold water. He said, “Go pick up this month’s salary. No need to come in tomorrow.”

Luna was wide-eyed. She couldn’t believe her ear. “Why, Mr. Hall? Does Mrs. Hall tell you to fire me ‘cause she doesn’t like me?”

Liam was a bit annoyed, his patience waning. "She's too busy to care about this kind of stuff, let alone know who you are."

"Then why are you firing me, Mr. Hall?" Luna asked, reluctant to give up. 'I have loved and supported him for three years, waiting for his legs to recover. What did I do to deserve being fired?' she wondered.

Liam looked at her coldly. "No more questions."

Luna was quiet immediately. She knew the consequences of messing with Liam. The last one who did that had gone missing already. Luna desperately bit her own lip and left the room with the bouillon in pain.

Emma had just returned home when she saw a maid staring at her with red eyes. Luna's gaze at Emma was full of hatred. Emma could see it at a glance. "What's wrong? Do you have a problem with me?" she asked.

"Miss Wilson, Mr. Liam saved the bouillon for you. He's so nice to you. Why are you always causing trouble for him outside?" said Luna.

Emma found it a bit funny and laughed out. "Excuse me, who the hell are you? How did you know I was causing trouble?"

Luna said hatefully, "I heard it all just now outside the study. You got into a fight at school today, and Mr. Hall helped you clean up the mess."

Emma raised her brow, 'Good job, Joshua. Finishing the video so fast,' she thought.

Luna looked at Emma's joyful expression, coldness flashing through her eyes. "Mr. Liam also asked Levi to look into you, Miss Wilson. He wondered why you fought so well."

Emma was a little upset that Liam secretly investigated her, but she didn't show it on the surface. She stepped forward and looked at Luna condescendingly. "Are you done? Aren't you afraid of getting fired? Or have you already been fired, so you don't care?"

Luna was slightly shocked. She didn't expect Emma to figure it out so quickly.

"You just want to tell me that Liam is secretly investigating me, right? If you're trying to stir things up between Liam and me, then it's not gonna work This is a bad move. Liam is way out of your league. You know what I mean? If I were you, I would quit and flee the country," said

Emma.

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## Chapter 22

Luna failed at her mischief-making, and her last chance was gone, so she wiped her tears while crying and running out.

Emma's good vibe was sabotaged. She walked upstairs and went to Liam's study. "Liam Hall," she called out at the doorway.

Hearing Emma call his full name, Liam realized something was wrong. He closed his laptop, put down the pen, and stared intently at her, saying, "What's wrong?"

'What's wrong? I sent you the video to appreciate my spectacular fight, but you decided to be suspicious and investigate me behind my back? Why don't you just ask me?' It was just her thinking, though. She didn't say any of that. Instead, she said, "Nothing. I don't like that maid with a double ponytail."

"She's fired already. Did she upset you?" Liam asked.

Emma shook her head, walked up to him, and cuddled him like a kitten.

"I was awesome in the video, don't you think?" Emma said.

"Absolutely," answered Liam.

"Are you a fan of your badass wife?" asked Emma.

Liam's eyelashes fluttered. "Sure. What does my dear wife want as an award?"

"I want a kiss and a hug," Emma said, sticking out one finger.

When Liam saw that sweet smile on her face, he couldn't help but hold her close to him and kiss her deeply. They kissed so long that Emma felt dizzy due to lack of oxygen. She muttered, "I said one. You gave me too many."

"For your good behavior in the future," Liam said in a hoarse voice.

Emma poked on his cheek. "What about you? You should also behave yourself and keep your distance from other women."

"No other females can come near me except you," said Liam.

Emma raised her brow, feeling satisfied. She cupped his face and kissed him again. “Then, this is an award for you.”

They hugged and kissed again. Liam held her waist, and he felt the heat through her blouse. It was getting hot in the study.

Emma thought, ‘I bet Liam thinks I’m connected to that mysterious organization. That’s why he’s investigating me. Joshua’s video was okay, but Liam is a pro at this stuff. Plus, he’s probably suspicious of me. I really should’ve been more careful!’

Videos of Emma knocking out the former national champion, Ruby, quickly made their way online. This time, it was an unedited version shot by Emma’s classmates.

When Liam saw the videos, he immediately told Levi to take them down from the internet. If he could see that Emma was well-trained, then surely some people could, too. In order to keep her safe secretly, he had to get rid of all evidence. Also, when Ruby’s parents came to the college, Liam had some people settle things down. Luckily, it was just a public combat between Emma and Ruby, not a violent bullying incident. Vark College warned other students not to copy the behavior, and that was the end of it.

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## Chapter 23

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Emma knew very little about Brad in her previous life. All she knew was that he was as deep and calculating as Liam. Even now, rumors had it

that the real power of the Hall family had fallen into Brad’s hands.

She dared not let her guard down, stepping forward and greeting him, “Hello, you must be Liam’s younger brother.”

As soon as the words “younger brother” were uttered, Emma clearly saw Brad’s face freeze up.

Brad pursed his lips and regained his composure. “Emma, you’re quite discerning. Yes, since you married my elder brother, we’re a family, and you’ll be my... sister-in-law.”

As Brad said the word “sister-in-law,” he deliberately enunciated those syllables with a certain weight, inexplicably making Emma rather uneasy.

“You’re here for Liam, right? He’s not around?” asked Emma.

“Liam seems to be out.” Brad looked at her and suddenly gave an enigmatic smile. “Have you been adjusting well to life at the Icovine Estate these days, Emma?”

“Why would I possibly be not? I was just a country orphan.” In no mood to chat with him, Emma tidied up her hair in front of the metal reflective decorations in the living room.

“Humph, that was a very humble thing to say.” Brad sneered as he took a sip of the coffee.

Emma shone in the public eye at Aria’s engagement party and the battle against Ruby in Vark College a few days ago, and now all the prominent families in the city were talking about her.

Brad watched that battle as well.

A woman who could knock down the national champion was definitely not simple. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have made a special trip today. He’d like to see for himself what kind of woman she was and what exactly Liam was up to by having such a woman by his side. “Do you enjoy

coffee, Emma?”

“Not interested,” Emma coldly replied.

“That’s a pity,” Brad said gracefully. “Liam used to love coffee the most, but after he became disabled, he lost that refined interest. Don’t you know that, Emma?”

“Really?” Emma responded mechanically, feeling extremely irritated inside.

If it weren’t for the fact that Brad was Liam’s brother, she would have punched him into the next galaxy by now, but for now, she had to wait

for Liam to come back and sort things out.

“Ever since Liam got disabled, his personality has taken a drastic turn. He’s dealt brutally with many who once followed him to the death.” Brad paused here, sizing up Emma’s expression. “There was even one guy who was thrown into a mastiff base and was mauled to death alive... But it’s understandable. Usually, after someone becomes disabled, their psyche is bound to have so



me kind of flaw. If you ever need help in the future, just give me a shout. I'm here for you." Brad smiled, handing Emma a business card.

But right then, Liam's wheelchair silently rolled up to the villa entrance.

"Mr. Ha-

" Levi started, but he immediately shut up upon seeing Liam's suddenly darkened expression.

Upon a casual glimpse, he spotted Brad and Emma in the room, leading he nearly choked on his breath.

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Chapter 23

Juli

'Oh my! Mr.

Brad is here, and he's giving Mrs. Emma his card! To know Brad is Mr. Liam's taboo! And also the person Mr. Liam hates the most! Anyone who dares to associate with Brad will be sentenced to death by him in a heartbeat!' Levi was sweating profusely.

At the same time, Brad also caught a glimpse of Liam at the door, a sinister smile tugging at the corner of his mouth as he said to Emma, "Emma, don't be scared. Even though Liam has a bad temper, I'm on your side. You took my business card, which means we're in agreement,

right?"

Emma was facing away from the door at the moment, unaware that Liam was standing there. She glanced down at the business card in Brad's hand and took it. But the next second, she tore it to shreds. "Thanks for your concern, but... Liam treats me great. This is really

unnecessary."

As Emma finished, Levi finally breathed a sigh of relief. He saw the murderous aura emanating from Liam when Emma took the card earlier. It wasn't until she tore it up that Liam instantly softened, even smiling slightly like everything was coming back to life.

Brad couldn't hide his grimace as he said, "Emma, the Wilson family is gone, and Liam is a powerless, moody cripple. Without a backer in the Hall family, aren't you afraid?"

"My husband is my backer. But would you dare say these things to his face?" Emma retorted.

As she finished, a burst of applause came from the doorway.

Levi followed Liam's wheelchair in, sneering. "Mr. Brad, what exactly are you up to by trespassing into Icovine Estate without Mr. Liam's permission and even disturbing Mrs. Emma?" Having been around Liam for so long, Levi had become adept at speaking and acting with

precision.

Brad's face was already quite grim. Seeing the remnants of the torn-up business card scattered on the floor, he clenched his fists. "I've got business at the company, so I'll take my leave!"

"Good bye." Levi scoffed.

Just as Brad reached the door, a cold, deep voice slowly spoke up. "Hold on."

Brad turned back, gritting his teeth. "Anything else, Liam?"

With some deliberate intent, Liam twirled the wedding band on his ring finger. He was silent just now, but his presence alone exuded a sense

of oppression.

When he spoke up now, the tone was of warning. "Icovine Estate is my territory. If you dare to come to my turf and mess with my people again, you'll face the consequences!"

Brad clenched his teeth, but he had no idea how strong Liam Hall was, nor did he have the resources to challenge him. Helplessly, he let out a

cold humph and left.

After he left, Liam immediately gave Levi an order. "Have our people exert their influence in the black market recently to ensure the security

of Emma's information."

Brad must have developed suspicions about Emma to have tracked her down here. Even though Liam was unsure what other secrets she might be hiding, he couldn't let Brad uncover them and jeopardize her safety.

"Will do!" Levin replied.

Emma bit her lip, hesitating. "You... have connections in the black market?"

"Yes." Liam turned his wheelchair to face her, his eyes burning with intensity as they met hers. "You may choose not to share your affairs with me, and I can respect that by not investigating, but it does not mean I will stand idly by if others pose a threat to you."

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## Chapter 23

Emma was overwhelmed with gratitude. She walked over, crouched down, and rested her head on Liam's chest.

She had been angry with him for secretly looking into her. Now she realized that even if he did, it wouldn't be because he doubted her but worried about her safety.

Emma regretted for being sulking last night. With that thought, she looked up and kissed Liam's chin. "Don't take what Brad just said to heart. Your leg will definitely be cured. Trust me, okay?"

Liam looked at Emma, his large hand gently stroking her head. "Okay."

Emma made a silent vow that no matter the cost, she would do everything in her power to heal Liam. Because she was the one Liam and Levi had been searching for...

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“Mrs. Hall, here’s a letter for you!” At that moment, the butler walked in with a letter in hand.

Emma stood up, took the royal blue envelope from the butler, opened it, and saw “Vark College” at the bottom.

“What’s up?” asked Liam.

Emma replied, “It says there’s a welcome party for Vark College this weekend, inviting all the students.”

“Do you want to go?” Liam asked.

Emma initially didn’t want to, but she still had unfinished business. According to the memories of her past life, there was a significant person at Vark College. If she could get his assistance, many of her future endeavors would become much easier. However, as far as she knew, this person was highly guarded and difficult to approach. Therefore, she must attend this party to have a chance to interact with him.

“I’ll go, but…” Emma felt a bit awkward. “I… I don’t have a suitable dress for the party.”

As she finished, Emma sensed a subtle shift in Liam’s demeanor.

Liam sent her a tiara worth 2 million dollars and a breathtaking pink diamond ring. Her wardrobe was filled with countless high-end clothes perfect for her daily wear, but for a party, she needed a tailored gown. There was no suitable gown for her in the Icovine Estate right now.

“Come on. I’ll take you shopping this afternoon,” Liam said without hesitation.

“Um…” Emma was a bit overwhelmed by the favor. “Um, actually, I can go by myself. You can attend to your own matters. You must be quite busy, right?”

Although Liam rarely went to the company, he often worked in his study all day long, so Emma assumed he was swamped.

But even though he was swamped, Liam always made time for her. “You said it yourself. It’s better to shop with me than to shop alone. Get ready. We’re heading out soon.”

Emma’s heart filled with sweetness as Liam turned to get ready.

Those were what they exchanged during their first encounter at the Vark College.

“If I want to buy something, wouldn’t it be better to have you accompany me, Mr. Hall? If you have time, would you go shopping with me?”

she asked.

“With pleasure,” Liam replied.

Emma was quite surprised that he actually remembered what she said.

An hour later, they arrived at a high-end custom luxury boutique in the top-tier mall, Sees World, an area of prime real estate.

Emma was aware of this brand; even the most basic attire could cost upwards of 8 to 10 thousand dollars, with custom-made gowns going beyond any price ceiling. The clientele here were the wealthiest in the city.

Seated in his wheelchair, Liam drew quite a few glances along the way as he passed through the mall.

While some onlookers whispered among themselves, the couple remained oblivious to it all. Emma kept holding his hand, not feeling the slightest bit of awkwardness but rather proudly holding it tighter.

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As soon as Emma closed the door to the fitting room, she heard two women gossiping in the next room.

“Hey, did you see the woman in the mall just now, tall and gorgeous? Too bad her boyfriend’s in a wheelchair!” one woman started.

“Ah, I saw her, the woman in the black suit with long hair, right?” the other one replied.

“Yeah, her boyfriend probably can’t get up in bed, either.”

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Emma’s face had already darkened by this point while the two kept on, “Though my husband ain’t rolling in cash, at least he’s got all his limbs. I won’t sacrifice my sex life to splurge in a fancy mall like that woman.”

After a burst of laughter, her friend echoed, “Yeah, yeah. Hey, that piece on you looks fab, but it’s a bit steep.”

“Yeah, even a year’s salary wouldn’t cut it. Well, just try it on, snap a few selfies for the ‘gram, and we’re outta here.”

As Emma pulled back the fitting room curtain, the two were decked out in designer gear, snapping selfies in the mirror.

At the sight of Emma, the two froze for a moment before shouting, “What are you doing!”

“Ladies, remember to check your surroundings when you’re badmouthing someone. The more bad deeds you do, the sooner you’ll capsize. Oh, and,” Emma said, pointing at the clothes on one of them, “the signature feature of this brand is the logo on the back. You’ve got it on inside out. Posting a selfie online like that, you’ll have people laughing their heads off!”

Upon hearing this, the woman’s face flushed crimson with embarrassment and anger. “What’s it to you, huh? We’re consumers, too, and we’re on equal footing with you!”

“Is that so?” Emma tilted her head with a smile. “Alright then, the consumer who takes photos in the fitting room without buying anything, which item do you plan to purchase?”

“How dare you!” The two were almost driven to the brink of rage by Emma Wilson’s sharp retorts. They obviously couldn’t afford it, but they never thought that the person they were badmouthing was right next door and caught them right in the act.

In fact, Emma didn’t care what others said about her, but she couldn’t stand them badmouthing Liam.

“Forget it.” One of the two women quickly changed clothes. “Don’t lower yourself to the level of this kind of woman. She’s nothing more than someone’s mistress, a puppy relying on its owner’s mercy.”

“Exactly, as if she could afford it!”

“This gown costs over 200 thousand dollars. Why doesn’t she buy one herself if she is so high and mighty!”

“Humph, how dare she look down on us. What a shameless b\*\*h!”

The two women bantered back and forth, showing no intention of leaving and continuing to take selfies in front of the mirror.

Emma’s face turned cold and stern. Just then, a sales assistant walked in. “Miss Wilson, Mr. Hall has already purchased the few pieces you brought in to try on earlier. Is there anything else I can help you with?”

The sales assistant's words quickly reached the ears of the two women in the fitting room, who looked utterly incredulous.

'No way? She bought them all? If each piece costs hundreds of thousands, then... she brought in at least five pieces just now!' The two women now felt they had messed with a tough nut. Such a wealth big shot was probably one-in-a-million rare across the entire TroIn City, and they had just mocked that woman for not being able to afford it.

After the sales assistant left, one of the two women muttered quietly, "Humph, he's still a cripple. What's the point of spending so much on

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fancy clothes? At night, her man still can't..."

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She thought her voice was already quite low, but little did she know that Emma had exceptional hearing. Emma grabbed her wrist in one swift move and dragged her straight out of the fitting room, causing the woman to scream in pain, "Ah! It hurts! What are you doing?"

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Emma flung her hand away, reprimanding, "Watch your foul mouth. Do you think others can't hear you or what? Just judging by appearances and gossiping all the time, no wonder even such a beautiful outfit looks so hideous on you!"

"What, what do you mean?" the woman stammered in panic.

Emma sneered. "Take a look at your pants. Can't read the size and go for the extra-long version? Your pants are dragging on the ground. Aren't you afraid of tripping and falling to death?" She turned to another one. "And you, if you're not fair-skinned, don't choose fluorescent colors. It's not about wearing expensive stuff that looks good. Models wear it as fashion, but on you, it's like a traffic sign that glows in the dark! Aren't you embarrassed?"

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## Chapter 25

### Chapter 25

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The two women had indeed picked out the most expensive items to wear, completely disregarding whether they suited their figures or not.

“You bitch!” Hearing Emma’s sarcasm, the woman glanced down and saw the horizontal stripes on her clothes, which actually made her look a bit like a traffic sign. She instantly became furious, rushing forward with the intention of scratching Emma’s face.

However, Emma swiftly raised a silk shirt to shield herself. Her move was half intentional, both for self-defense and to teach these women a

harsh lesson.

As Emma expected, the woman’s sharp nails instantly tore a gaping hole in the high-end silk shirt as she grabbed it.

Witnessing the disaster, the two women screamed in horror. That one piece of clothing cost tens of thousands of dollars. If they had to pay for

it, their salaries for half a year would be gone. The woman charged at Emma in a rage, but Emma quickly picked up another garment, threatening, “You still want to make a move, huh? Take a look at the money in your wallet. How many times can you afford to do this?”

The woman immediately wilted, retracting her hand, and stared furiously at Emma in silence.

Emma let out a cold snort and walked out of the fitting room.

As soon as she stepped out, she saw Liam. He had also heard some noise in the room just now, but he didn’t quite catch what it was. “What happened just now?” he asked.

“Nothing much. I just gave some gossiping women a piece of my mind,” Emma said.

“Miss Wilson, are you satisfied with these gowns?” the store manager inquired.



Emma glanced in the direction of the fitting room and remarked, "The clothing from your brand is commendable, but you should pay attention to your customers who try on clothes without purchasing, carelessly dressing up, not only distorting the cut but also smearing lousy makeup on the collars. You really need to check these things carefully."

"Sure..." The store manager was caught off guard, not expecting such an incident to happen in front of a big client like Liam. He quickly turned back to check the clothes, only to discover the damaged silk shirt.

"Did you try on these clothes?" the manager asked the two women.

The women got nervous. "Yeah... so what if we did! Aren't your clothes hung here for people to try on?"

The two women had always come to try on clothes without buying them, occupying the fitting rooms for hours, and now they'd damaged one silk shirt. The manager's face darkened, saying, "Apologies, but our policy clearly states that any damage to garments incurred during try-ons must be compensated at the original price. Please come with me for the payment."

"No way! Why should we? We didn't even buy anything. Why should we pay!" shouted one of the women.

"Exactly! You know what? Forced consumption is illegal! Don't think you're above the law just because you sell luxury goods. I can take you to court!" added the other woman.

The two women were now causing a scene in the mall, but the staff, used to such tantrums, simply called the police.

The cops showed up in a jiffy. After checking the fitting room footage, they confirmed those two women tore up the clothes and had to cough up the cash, which was a whopping 11,200 dollars.

The two women not only paid up but also got taken away by the cops for causing trouble, receiving a stern lecture.

Emma felt a bit more at ease after the two were led away.

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## Chapter 25

Her thoughts returned to the gowns that Liam had bought. She felt both helpless and grateful towards him. "Now I understand why you said you have so much money and you need a woman to help you spend it. Mr. Hall, you really do spend lavishly every time, don't you?"

She had just tried on a few dresses, and to her shock, Liam bought anything she liked and tried on in one go.

"Do you like that?" Liam asked with a low chuckle.

"Hard to say I don't," Emma leaned in to peck his cheek. "Love you, muah."

Even though Emma had been rolling in dough in the black market and mysterious organizations in her past life, this was the first time a man had spent money on her.

It felt different from spending her own money. One was about self-reliance. The other was about being spoiled. And she was being spoiled

rotten.

Although Liam hadn't heard the two women's mockery of Emma in the fitting room, he knew that Emma would be badmouthed when he appeared in a wheelchair. Even if Emma didn't mind, he didn't want his woman to lose face. So, this lavish spending was all about making

sure nobody dared look down on her.

After paying, they passed by a dessert shop. Emma suddenly asked, "Mr. Hall, do you want some dessert?"

Liam frowned slightly and said, "I don't like sweet things."

"Then wait a moment. I'll go buy us two ice creams." The weather was getting a bit hot, and after shopping for so long, Emma was feeling a

bit thirsty. Seeing the long queue at the dessert shop, she couldn't help but feel eager to try.

Shortly, she returned with two ice creams, each in one hand, and handed the dark chocolate one to Liam. "It's not very sweet. Give it a try?"

Liam couldn't recall the last time he had ice cream, but since Emma had bought it for him, he didn't refuse. His long, slender fingers took it.

Looking at the ice cream, he said, "If you like it, I'll have them stock some in the fridge."

Emma licked her ice cream, replying, "I don't love it that much, but it's our first date. We should have something sweet."

Upon hearing that, Liam lowered his head and took a small sip. The cool, refreshing taste, slightly bitter at first, melted into a dense sweetness. It was a unique and irreplaceable richness, just like their love. Setbacks abound, but luckily, she was his.

The gowns arrived at Icovine Estate the day before the welcome party.

Emma chose a deep purple mermaid dress that was both everyday and elegant, paired with semi-transparent, fully-studded high heels. A hair accessory styled her black hair into a graceful arc atop her head. Even the hairband was adorned with sparkling diamonds. Her makeup was flawless, resembling a purple rose blooming on midnight thorns.

As Emma looked at herself in the mirror, spinning around, she suddenly noticed the silhouette of a man in the mirror. "When did you come in?" she stuttered,

"I've been here for a while, but you were so focused on getting dressed and didn't notice," Liam explained.

Emma gave him a smile as she walked over, comforting him, "Just be good and wait for me at home. I'll be back soon."

Liam was indeed worried. After all, she looked so beautiful today, making him want to tear apart her exquisite gown and take her. If he thought this way, others might, too. So Liam wrapped his long arm around her hips from behind, pulling her closer to his body, and whispered, "You need to be good too. I don't want to hear any gossip about Mrs. Hall flirting at the party, okay?"

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Chapter 25

“Don’t worry. I’m a good girl. I promise to come back right after the party ends!” Emma reassured him.

“Go ahead,” Liam said.

Emma bid farewell to him and then set off in his multi-million-dollar car.

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## Chapter 26

### Chapter 26

The annual welcome party for freshmen at Vark College was always a grand affair, and this year, it was taking place on a luxurious cruise ship.

As several girls in evening gowns climbed aboard the cruise, they chatted animatedly, “I heard there’s going to be a ton of delicious food tonight. Even the cakes are made by a Michelin-starred chef! Wow, the college is really going all out this time!”

“All you think about is food. I heard this year’s welcome party is different from the usual!” another girl chimed in.

“Oh? What’s so different?”

“This year’s gala is combined with competitions from many schools, including the Vark Invitational Mathematics Examination!”

“Holy cow! Isn’t that the biggest annual event in Vark College? The participants are all top-tier geniuses!”

“Exactly. Rumor has it that the first prize winner of this year’s competition will receive a 400 thousand dollars scholarship fund from the college’s investors for studying abroad!”

Emma was here today to participate in this competition because she knew the person she was looking for would be there, too. At this moment, she stood in the middle of the luxurious cruise ship’s banquet hall, holding a glass of juice.

She juggled conversations with those approaching her, her eyes wandering through the crowd. Suddenly, she spotted her target. "I've found him," Emma whispered into the invisible microphone by her ear.

A voice crackled in her earpiece. "Boss, I got the info you wanted. Vere's parents passed away last week, and their house was mortgaged. He's in a do-or-die situation, aiming for that scholarship to further his studies."

Hearing this, Emma pursed her crimson lips.

In her previous life, Vere was the student with the smartest genius at Vark College and also the record holder in the school's history. However, when he was 18, his parents tragically passed away in a plane crash. Once from a decent family, he suddenly lost the chance to study abroad. Despite participating in this competition in his past life, aiming for a scholarship, he was defeated due to excessive grief over his parents' death and malicious interference from competitors.

Emma was in dire need of a talent like Vere, and she couldn't stand to see a genius go to waste, so she approached him with a drink in hand.

In the corner, Vere hunched over, staring at his phone. Dressed in a suit and tie, he wasn't too fond of such an event. His amber eyes were glued to the phone screen, which displayed an intricate financial analysis model.

"Hey, are you joining the Vark Invitational Mathematics Examination later?" The sudden voice of a young girl caused Vere to look up.

Upon seeing Emma's face, Vere instantly turned cold. "If you're here to warn me because you're afraid I'll snatch your first place, you can

scram now."

Emma's reputation at Vark College had been weird lately; she just got her half-sister locked up behind bars and took down Ruby Cruz. It was easily misunderstood that she was here to pick a fight.

"Humph, if I want to take the first place, I'll fight for it fair and square, not with shady tricks." With that, Emma looked at Vere. "I'm here just to let you know that I'll be participating in the upcoming competition, too. So, you better bring your A-game, buddy. I'm pretty darn good." Finishing, she gave a graceful little laugh and sashayed off with her juice.

“What a narcissist!” Vere muttered, glancing at his phone with a smirk. In all his years at Vark College, not a single soul had ever bested him. ‘Does she really think she can get me to bring my A–game? In her wildest dreams!’ He sneered.

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## Chapter 26

After the ceremony, the evening’s festivities kicked off one by one. Among them, the most anticipated event was the annual Vark Invitational Mathematics Examination.

“Hey, y’all know that Vere is gonna compete in this year’s Vark Invitational Mathematics Examination, right?” Backstage at the competition, all the contestants were buzzing about it.

Hearing that name, a lot of the competitors were freaking out. “Oh my gosh! Vere Hurlbutt! He’s totally gonna snag first place. We’re all just cannon fodder, aren’t we?”

“Yeah, we’re just fighting for the spots after him... second, third, fourth...”

“My parents said as long as I get any ranking, they’ll buy me a car! I just have to snag a spot this time,” said a blonde girl.

“Wow, you’re loaded!” one girl replied in jealousy.

The blonde girl smirked proudly, and then she spotted Emma. Her eyes widened in shock as if she’d seen an alien. “Isn’t that Emma? What’s she doing here?”

Participants in the Vark Invitational Mathematics Examination usually started training a year in advance. Individuals like Emma, who suddenly signed up for the competition without prior preparation, were unprecedented in history.

“An average student wants to join the Vark Invitational Mathematics Examination? Those are the toughest advanced math problems out there. Is she here to cause trouble or just mess things up?” the blonde girl taunted Emma directly. “Emma, this isn’t a sports field where you can just throw a few punches and win. I suggest you quit while you still can. We’re all international math competition award–winners, and you are gonna suffer when you can’t solve a single problem!”

Emma calmly took out a mirror, straightened her hair, and didn't even glance at the blonde girl.

Witnessing Emma's attitude, the blonde instantly became furious. "We're talking to you. Are you deaf?"

With a click, Emma put the mirror away. She stared at the blonde girl with a cold face. "Sorry, I already signed up for it, and you won't even get the lowest ranking. Get lost!" Her imposing aura made a few girls instinctively take a step back.

Only after watching her leave with her head held high did everyone start to fume. "Damn, how can she be so shameless!"

"Don't think that she can compare with us just because she scored over 1500 on the SAT! The math problems in the Vark Invitational Mathematics Examination are not on the same level as those in regular exams!" another one added.

"Exactly! Let's crush her in the test later and make her finish dead last!"

"She needs to be taught a lesson!"

Finally, the announcement sounded, and the contestants began to enter the competition venue.

When the classmates saw the newly added Emma on the list, they were also surprised.

"Hey, isn't that Emma?"

"Is she going to participate in the Vark Invitational Mathematics Examination too?"

"Are you sure she's not just messing around?"

Emma ignored the chatter around her and sat down in her seat. And right across from her was none other than Vere.

She was dressed in a gown, her hair up in a high-bun, revealing her sexy and creamy neck, her smile poised and elegant. "Hey, Mr. Hurlbutt,

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## Chapter 26

what a coincidence. We meet again.”

Vere was booting up his computer at this time. At the sight of her calm face, he was slightly surprised. After all, this was the biggest competition at Vark College. Many students stayed up all night reviewing and practicing problems in preparation for it. In contrast, Emma

looked so relaxed, even without any preparation.

“Focus on answering the questions later; don’t disturb me!” Vere instantly pegged her as a troublemaker and responded with extreme

coldness.

Asmile left Emma’s lips. “Don’t worry, I won’t disturb you. But that doesn’t mean others won’t,” Emma said, pausing intentionally at this point.

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## Chapter 27

### Chapter 27

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“You’ve gotta step up your game; don’t let yourself get sidetracked by nonsense, or else, whoops, that 400 thousand dollars scholarship might just end up in my pocket.” As Emma finished, her red lips curled into a smile. With a beep, she powered on the computer.

Vere was instantly fuming, cursing inwardly, ‘That scholarship is my last hope to achieve my life’s dream. How dare that woman to belittle me! I definitely won’t show any mercy later.’

He was overwhelmed by rage and threw himself wholeheartedly into the competition, which took place within a system that allocated various questions randomly based on



the contestant's completion speed and accuracy. In other words, the faster and more accurate the

contestant was, the harder the questions got and the higher the score.

Emma was incredibly fast in working out the questions, and on the other side, Vere's prowess was fearsome as well.

But just then, someone in the crowd suddenly shouted, "Hey! Vere! Your parents are gone. Aren't you staying home and mourning? Are you still planning to study abroad? If your parents found out, they'd probably roll over in their graves!" With that, he began to laugh hysterically.

The person was quickly found by the teacher and dragged out. But then someone else shouted, "Vere, forget it! Your parents are gone. What's the point of studying and making all that money?"

"Hey, gentleman, don't disrupt the competition!" the teacher snapped.

But the troublemaker kept yelling, "Are you ever gonna have the guts to fly again in your life? What if you die in a plane crash on your way to study abroad, too?"

Sure enough, Vere couldn't take it anymore and stood up, ready to go down and smash that guy's face. In his past life, he too had acted on impulse, making one wrong move after another. He lost the scholarship, came in last in the competition, and never got up after the fall.

A cold voice suddenly sounded. "Vere, they're doing this on purpose. What you should do now is give it your all and beat me!"

Vere's mind was a mess at the moment. He couldn't even tell if the voice was really from Emma or if he was hearing things. He could only see on Emma's screen that the questions were refreshing terrifyingly fast. And she was ahead of him by over 200 points.

Instantly, Vere regained his sanity and sat back down, calculating frantically. This time, the outside noises no longer disturbed him; all his

thoughts were on the questions.

Upon witnessing his reaction, Emma gave a smile in satisfaction. However, as the competition was about to end, she actually stopped and left the competition venue, leaving the onlooking students instantly shocked.

"Why did Emma leave?"

“What’s going on? Did the computer crash?”

“Haha, maybe she couldn’t solve any and gave up early!” the students chattered on.

Over on the other side, the blonde girl who initially mocked Emma disdainfully whistled, saying, “Who is she? How dare she join the Vark Invitational Mathematics Examination! Humph! To bite off more than she can chew!”

With a sharp alert sound, all the contestants stopped. Time was up.

Almost simultaneously, the giant screen was updated with each player’s score. First place went to Vere Hurlbutt, with a core of 107,233 points! When the crowd saw his score, their mouths dropped open in astonishment, wide enough to fit a fist.

“Holy crap, is Vere a human or a computer? Nol-Even a computer doesn’t have a brain as powerful as his.”

## Chapter 27

“Damn, the second place is actually Emmal” the onlookers went on discussing.

Next, everyone saw the second place, Emma, who had left early. She got 107,232 points, just one point lower than Vere.

Everyone was now looking at Emma with a hint of fear in their eyes.

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Leaving early, she actually came behind Vere just by one point. This made everyone wonder if Emma would have been the champion if she hadn’t left early.

The blonde girl was also stunned when she saw the two’s scores. She and the other contestants all underwent training for the competition, taking mock exams over and over, with the highest score ever being just 9,000 points. While Emma and Vere managed to rack up over one hundred thousand points, and the third place was only 7,009 points, totally demonstrating their intellectual superiority.

After counting back and forth, the blonde girl realized she was dead last. There were no prizes for fifth place and below, and as Emma predicted, she got no prize.

Emma had already taken the second place on the podium.

The blonde girl was so furious that she wanted to confront Emma, but just then, she saw Vere publicly berating Emma.

“What do you mean? Why did you deliberately let me win? Do you look down on me?” Vere’s voice was loud, and quite a few people around

heard it.

However, Emma looked calm and replied, “I couldn’t solve the last question. It was just a waste of time sitting there, so I left early.”

Everyone suddenly got it. But only Vere knew that this couldn’t be true. Emma’s abilities were far beyond his—he had that gut feeling but couldn’t figure out why she would let him win.

After the awards ceremony, Vere got the first-prize scholarship. Emma got the second prize, which was a signed book and some manuscripts from a famous Nobel laureate in literature. She gleefully pocketed them and then went alone to the deck of the cruise to cool off.

Vere followed her out of the cabin.

Under the moonlight, he watched the beautiful curve of her back, elegant and aloof, like a goddess who was above all else, making him lose

focus for a moment. But he regained his composure soon.

He straightened his tie, the sapphire blue suit exuding a deep luster under the moonlight, just like his calm and introverted personality. “Was it you who reminded me during the competition just now?”,

“Yeah.” Emma turned back, staring at him intently.

“You actually knew how to solve that problem, didn’t you? You estimated my final score, so you stopped on purpose,” Vere continued.

“Yes.” Emma didn’t plan to deceive him. They were both smart, and she couldn’t fool Vere anyway. If she deliberately concealed the truth, he

would likely be more suspicious. Besides, she had intended to do him a favor.

“Why did you help me?” Vere questioned.

Emma casually took a sip of juice. “I was helping myself. I’m not short on cash, but I’m really into that author’s manuscript. I only want the second prize.”

“Seriously?” Vere was still skeptical.

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Vere was half-doubting. But one thing was for sure: If Emma hadn't been there today, he would have stormed downstairs to beat the troublemaker up halfway through the test. By then, it would have been too late for regrets. Thanks to Emma's timely reminder, he could have the scholarship. With this thought, he felt much more relieved, taking out a note from his pocket. "I don't like owing people favors. Here's my number. Let me know if you need help."

"I have no reason to lie to you." Emma tried to convince him.

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## Chapter 28

### Chapter 28

In a high-end exotic-style study of Icovine Estate, Liam sat at his desk, staring at the photos in his email on the computer, his expression far from pleased.

"Mr. Hall." Levi's voice sounded cautious. "Mrs. Hall did well on the cruise, even participated in the famous Vark Invitational Mathematics

Examination, and came in second, but..."

"Speak!" Liam urged.

Levi reported to him everything, including how Emma chatted alone with Vere on the deck after the competition and how Vere even gave her his phone number.

As he listened, Liam's large hand crushed the huge glass to pieces. His eyes were bloodshot, the blood from his palm trickling onto the computer desk.

On the screen were pictures of Emma, indecent and unseemly, with no signs of photoshopping.

Rage and malevolence split inch by inch within Liam as he cursed inwardly, 'Emma, how many secrets are you keeping from me?'

At an inconspicuous internet cafe on the outskirts of the city, Aria sent an email at the fastest speed and quickly dashed out.

She just lost her child and her ties with the Taylor family. As Elijah was the primary offender, Sebastian bailed out Aria. But at the same time, she was utterly unable to escape him, a sadistic tormentor. Now, her life was a living hell, and her hatred for Emma was growing.

'Emma! When Liam sees what a cheap and loose woman you are, you will only end a hundred times more tragically than me!' Aria thought

maliciously.

At the same time, Emma returned to Icovine Estate late at night, only to find that Liam was not home.

"Hey, Wilmot, where's Mr. Hall?" Emma inquired of a servant who had yet to retire for the night.

"Mr. Hall had just gone out," the maid named Wilmot Mallin replied. "I'm not sure where he went. Ma'am, would you like to give him a call?"

"I got it," Emma said, taking out her phone to dial his number.

"Ma'am..." Wilmot hesitated.

"Yes?" Emma replied.

Wilmot looked at Emma's face and reminded, "When Mr. Hall came out of the study, he looked really mad, and he was bleeding from his

hand."

Silence reigned for two seconds before Emma replied, "I got it."

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After going upstairs, Emma first went to Liam's study. The computer was already turned off, and there were the remains of crushed glass and blood stains on the table. She pondered for a moment and called Levi.

"Hello, Miss Wilson?" Levi answered.

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## Chapter 28

“Do you know where Mr. Hall went?” Emma went on.

Sensing his hesitation, Emma continued, “With his limited mobility, are you really okay with him being out alone at this hour?”

Based on her understanding of Liam, she knew that he would be alone at such times, not allowing anyone near him. And she was right; after just two seconds of silence on the phone, the response came. “Mr. Hall is currently at Watery Garden.”

Upon catching the two words, Emma’s heart clenched violently. Dark memories instantly flooded back into her mind. In her previous life, it was in the warehouse of Watery Garden where she and Liam met their end. Those charred corpses, the smell of burning, every detail etched into her deepest fears.

Back then, she could only watch helplessly as Liam died, helplessly waiting for her own demise. When faced with death, everyone had an innate fear. Her right hand began to tremble involuntarily, but at that moment, she grabbed her wrist with her other hand, reassuring herself inwardly, ‘Don’t be afraid, Emma! It won’t be a repeat of the past this time.’

She got in her car and drove out of the Icovine Estate. Watery Garden was a famous luxurious standalone villa in Troln City, about a half-hour drive from here.

Until today, Emma had no idea that Watery Garden actually belonged to the Hall family. In her previous life, she received a fire alert at Watery Garden, only to be tricked into the burning building by Elijah and Aria.

As Emma drove, she couldn’t help but recall Liam’s expression as he was burned to death, along with the excruciating pain of being scorched. Somehow, Emma felt a bad feeling just crept up on her. She had been so distracted that she almost crashed her car.

Suddenly, Levi’s call came. “Mrs. Hall, have you left the house?”

“Yes,” Emma replied.

Levi sounded torn. Liam didn't want Emma to know his whereabouts, but she had already left. Helplessly, Levi gave a hesitant answer. "Alright then, be careful on your drive."

Emma didn't think too much and hung up.

About half an hour later, she finally arrived at the Watery Garden. Returning to this strange yet familiar place, Emma could never forget how

much pain and despair she felt that day.

She inched into the courtyard, her nails digging so deep into her palm they were about to draw blood. Looking up at the villa, she noticed a light shining from the second floor. 'Liam must be there,' she wondered.

She took a deep breath and rang the doorbell. "Liam, it's me!"

The door swung open. Emma stared at it, hesitated for half a second, then pushed it open and stepped in.

Inside the villa, the classic opulent exotic style reigned, with no servants around, creating an eerie silence.

Emma took a few steps forward, and suddenly, she sensed something was off. When she finally realized what was happening, it was already too late. Two men on either side had her in a deadly grip.

Emma struggled desperately, only to receive a syringe of anesthesia injected straight into her veins. "Who the hell are you?" she shouted.

"Miss Wilson, we apologize for the offense," replied one man.

Emma suddenly understood everything in an instant. Levi always called her Mrs. Hall, but this group only referred to her as Miss Wilson. So

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worried about Liam and being at the horrible Watery Garden, where she died in her past life, Emma overlooked that Levi had addressed her as Miss Wilson in the first phone call. That dude was anything but Levi.

Emma was aware of a trick that could mess with call signals, redirecting the numbers you dial to another place and then using a voice changer to mix things up.

Her face turned super serious in an instant, the attackers were clearly hostile, harboring intentions to take her life.

Right then, the effects of the anesthetic started kicking in.

Luckily, her body was tougher than most when it came to resisting anesthetics. She pulled out an army knife from her pocket and stabbed it

right into her palm, where the nerves were super sensitive. Pain instantly sharpened her mind considerably.

Emma gritted her teeth and struck back with her elbow, hitting the two men in the vital spots and causing them to crash on the ground.

Seizing the moment, she sprinted toward the villa's exit, only to find the previously empty courtyard now swarming with a dozen black-clad figures.

Emma recognized at a glance that they were top-tier assassins worldwide, far better than amateurs like Ruby. "You sure have a high opinion of me, first using communication tech to lure me here, then setting up this ambush with so many killers. Humph! Are you going one-on-one

or all together?"

As Emma finished, the assassins in the courtyard swarmed toward her in a full-on assault.

Amidst the confrontation, Emma sensed the murderous intention in every step these people took. It wasn't abduction, nor was it

intimidation. They were out to take her life.

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## Chapter 29



## Chapter 29

On the other side, Liam was in his office, which featured a huge floor-to-ceiling window, outside of which hung a bright and solitary full

moon.

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Liam gazed at the moon, his emotions a tangled mess. 'When were those photos taken? Why are there such nasty photos of Emma circulating

outside? Emma...'

Suddenly, his phone rang, interrupting his thoughts. Seeing the caller was Levi, Liam answered with a frown, "What's up?"

"Mr. Hall, Mrs. Hall just drove out. Has she arrived yet?" Levi asked.

"What?" Liam had tasked Levi with keeping tabs on Emma's whereabouts, so as soon as Emma left the Icovine Estate, Levi called Emma.

The person on the phone was the real Levi, who currently had no idea where Emma was. For Emma's safety, he called Liam to confirm. "Mr. Hall... hasn't Mrs. Hall arrived yet? She's been out for over an hour."

"Did you tell her I'm here?" Liam questioned.

"No..." Levi sounded hesitant.

"Then how does she know where I am?" Liam was getting more impatient.

Levi's face was grave, stuttering, "She couldn't be..."

Both of them had a bad feeling brewing in their hearts. Liam immediately hung up and called Emma, only to find that Emma's phone was already turned off. "Find her immediately!" He gave Levi an order.

"Will do." Levi stood up to make arrangements when Liam suddenly added, "Send out Team Thunder. Find her as soon as possible!"

"Mr. Hall..." Levi hesitated. "Team Thunder members are all confidants guarding you. If they are dispatched to search for Mrs. Hall, and someone launches an attack on you during that time, the consequences would be disastrous." Levi couldn't believe that Liam would mobilize Team Thunder to rescue Emma, trying to dissuade him.

But Liam's voice was low and resolute. "My wife's safety is my safety! If anything happens to her, Team Thunder might as well scam!"

"Got it." With Liam's mind made up, Levi immediately made the arrangements.

At the same time, Emma was already badly injured. She took another hit of anesthesia in her right leg.

To force herself to stay awake, she kept tearing open the wound in her palm, blood gushing out. But even so, there was a limit to human endurance. She was about to give out.

Several of the dozen or so black-clad assassins had already fallen. They were all wary of Emma. Without the anesthesia, they wouldn't stand

a chance against her.

Even so, Emma was at the end of her rope. "Come on, let me guess, who's so eager to take my life? Is it the Rossi family from Antgem? Or the Ide family from Nionheim?"

"What do you think!" The leader of the black-clad men, holding a thick rope, approached her.

Emma quickly recognized what it was a brutally thick, hard whip covered in barbs. Being strangled by such a whip around the neck would cause suffocation, extreme pain, and a gruesome death.

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Chapter 29

"Too bad." Emma sneered, "This used to be my most proficient weapon. Trying to kill me with that? Come on, man." Finishing, she leaped into the air and landed a kick squarely on the man's wrist.

The black-clad assassin winced in pain, his grip slightly loosening.

Seizing the moment of his lapse, Emma swiftly snatched his whip away.

The black-clad assassin quickly tightened his grip on the whip as soon as he realized what was happening, trying to trap Emma. However, Emma only let out a cold laugh and used the force to twist the whip around. As a result, the barbs on the whip began to twist along with it, each steel barb piercing into the man's palm. As Emma twisted the whip, it turned into a meat grinder, gouging out the flesh from the man's hand.

The guy was in so much pain that cold sweat was pouring down, white bones beneath the flesh revealing in his palm. Emma took advantage of his momentary lapse and swiftly moved behind him, wrapping the whip around his neck.

“Captain!” Another black-clad assassin rushed over upon seeing this, fiercely kicking toward Emma’s abdomen.

Finally exhausted, Emma had no strength left to dodge. She merely shielded her vital areas with her arms, and she was sent flying the next second. Her head hit the stairs, and she fell into unconsciousness.

A black-clad man hastily removed the whip that had been wrapped around the captain’s neck, but when he went to check the captain’s breath, extreme terror dripped his face. “The captain... is dead!”

“What?”

“Captain!” Instantly, the crowd of black-clad men erupted in fury, yanking out a massive blade and slashing straight at Emma’s abdomen, one slash after another. Blood spurted out, and the woman on the steps quickly ceased to breathe.

“This isn’t right!” Suddenly, someone noticed something off. The person on the ground wasn’t Emma, but one of the female assassins Emma had knocked unconscious before.

The man slashing with the blade growled in agony, disbelieving he had killed his teammate, someone he had worked with day and night. He roared in rage, his mind lost in madness.

The woman on the ground was wearing the same clothes as Emma. No one could have imagined that Emma had stealthily used a diversion tactic and swapped clothes with her in such a short time.

The man wielding the blade had been too excited and didn’t look closely before he hacked the woman to death. Now, Emma was nowhere to be seen around.

“Get her!”

“She’s badly injured. There’s no way she could have gotten far!” The remaining few black-clad men immediately split up to search.

Meanwhile, with her abdomen in excruciating pain, Emma was desperately crawling through the underbrush. In her past life, through fire and water and experienced even more fatal situations.

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gone

But fighting alone today, she knew she couldn't hold on for long. That last kick had damaged her internal organs. And the anesthetic could knock her out at any moment; her vision was already blurring, her limbs barely under control.

"I see her. There she is!" Someone noticed the rustling in the bushes, aiming a dark, ominous object at Emma.

Sensing her cover blown, with no way out, Emma gritted her teeth and leaped, diving toward the valley behind the Watery Garden.

The silence returned in an instant, broken only by the flutter of a few startled birds taking flight from the valley after something fell.

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Chapter 29

"There's actually a cliff here," remarked a black-clad man.

"Come on, let's go down and take a look."

"Let's go." The black-clad men, relentless, linked hands and began their descent toward the cliff's base one by one.

Meanwhile, Emma was curled up, hugging her knees beside a mound of dirt, her body wracked with severe pain.

Drawing on her memories of her past life, she knew of this mound's existence, which allowed her to survive the leap from the cliff.

The fire in her past life had left the pathways in front of the Watery Garden on the verge of collapse, forcing her to detour through the mountains on the back. In her memory, there was indeed a spot that could provide a cushion.

As she was thanking God that she didn't end here, she heard the black-clad men drawing closer and closer.

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## Chapter 30

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“Damn, this path is a nightmare. Forget it, she’s definitely dead!”

“Let’s head back, man. We don’t want to end up dead here before we even find the woman, do we?”

“Let’s go-waah!” Just as the three black-clad guys were about to head back, a tree branch suddenly swung at them from behind.

With

thunderous crack, the trio screamed, lost their footing, and plunged into the abyss, shattered to pieces.

Finally, Emma could hold on no longer; her footing slipped, and she fell toward the bottom of the cliff..

‘Am I dying?’ The thought rushed through her mind when a hand suddenly grasped her wrist.

“Hold on tight to me!” someone shouted.

Emma’s eyes widened in astonishment at the sound. It was the same familiarity and the same person as in her previous life, descending from the heavens like a deity, appearing before her in her moment of utter despair and near death.

She saw Liam, struggling to ask, “Why... why are you here?”

“Don’t be afraid, Emma. I won’t let anything happen to you!” Liam replied.

In that instant, Emma seemed to hear Liam’s voice from her past life. “Emma, don’t be afraid. I won’t let you walk alone on the road to the afterlife. I’ll be with you.” She couldn’t tell if it was a dream or an illusion, but she knew she wouldn’t repeat the same mistakes this time.

With the last bit of her strength, she tightly grasped Liam’s hand. As her consciousness waned, she murmured, “Liam... I won’t miss you again

this time...”

Emma felt like she had woken up from a long dream. When she opened her eyes again, she was still in the car she had driven there. They were bumping along a rugged mountain road, and she noticed the black suit jacket draped over her.

The familiar texture and scent instantly brought back the final moments of the ordeal. It was Liam who had saved her.

“Liam...” She hesitated to call out.

“Emma?” Liam’s previous annoyance vanished at her voice, replaced by a deep concern for her. “It’s okay. The cops have got those guys under control. We’re almost home now,” he said, gently patting her.

“Mm...” Hearing him, Emma let out a small sigh of relief when suddenly someone up front said, “Mr. Hall, we’ve got a tail!”

“Who are they?” Liam’s voice was stern. “The same bunch as before?”

“No, looks like it might be Mr. Brad’s men!” Came the reply.

‘Brad.’ Liam silently read the name, his every cell and breath becoming inexplicably dark and gloomy. Indeed, Brad was always watching him, as he expected. Any slight move from him and Brad’s men would track him down.

Levi’s reminder was not without reason; Sending out Team Thunder to rescue Emma had undoubtedly exposed Liam himself to danger. But for now, Emma’s safety was the best possible outcome. Liam had no regrets. “Call everyone nearby to be ready for it,” he ordered.

“No can do, Mr. Hall. If we expose TeamThunder, all these years of patience would be for nothing! You take the car and go with Mrs. Hall first. I’ll get out and hold them off!” The speaker was a top operative from Team Thunder, fiercely loyal and a trusted right-hand man. In critical

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moments, he was willing to die for Liam.

Liam naturally didn't want his brothers, who had followed him for so many years, to take risks. In the midst of the dilemma, he felt a hand on his waist, gently tugging at his sleeve. "Emma?"

"Liam..." Emma was very weak, but her consciousness was clear. She gritted her teeth and said, "In my car, the drawer in the front passenger seat... There's a small set of gear... just assemble it, it'll be useful against them..." Before she could finish, a fit of cough overwhelmed her.

Being highly security-conscious, Emma always kept a bunch of odd items in her car, and luckily, they were in her car now. Otherwise, it would

have been a dire situation.

As soon as Emma finished, the person driving the car pulled open the drawer Emma mentioned, half believing and half doubting. Upon seeing the contents in the drawer, he couldn't help but exclaim, "Holy crap, flashbangs and tear gas!"

"Mr. Hall, Mrs. Hall's freaking amazing! To have these kinds of weapons in her car!" The joy of being saved was evident in his voice, and he quickly assembled all the devices and opened the window, laughing while driving at high speed. "Just wait; they're done for now!"

With that, he threw out the first flashbang. A blinding flash erupted in the rearview mirror, and sure enough, those cars lost control, swaying from side to side before crashing into each other with a series of bangs.

Liam watched the spectacle with a contemptuous smile. "After all these years, the people of Brad are still so useless. Humph," he mocked.

In the same situation, Liam's men would never be thrown into disarray by a few flashbangs like the group chasing Emma before. No wonder

Brad had always been on guard against him despite his extremely low-key disguise over the years. After all, the past Liam was too terrifying.

Finally, after they got out of danger, Emma could no longer withstand the onslaught of wave after wave of the drug's effects and fell into a

deep sleep.

In a lavish duplex mansion at Starsand Beach, Brad watched coldly as his men returned one by one, defeated and wounded. His once stunningly handsome face turned dark

with anger. “Speak. How did you lose them, and how did you manage to wreck all the cars I gave

you?”

He didn’t rage or roar, but the atmosphere in the study was more terrifying than any outburst.

The leader mustered his courage to reply, “Mr. Hall, it’s not that we’re incompetent, but that person simply couldn’t be Liam!”

“Yeah, Liam is just a cripple in a wheelchair, and how could he possibly have that kind of thing? It must be that woman named Emma Wilson. She’s got some dirty secrets. That’s why she’s got foreign assassins after her!” added another one.

As he listened, Brad got furious, but suddenly, he burst into laughter, coldly staring at the leader. “It couldn’t be Liam? Tell me, what evidence do you have to prove that it couldn’t be him?”

The leader felt a bit creeped out by Brad’s laughter, stammering, “Mr. Hall...”

Brad stood up, hands in his pockets, his smile twisted and chilling. He was dressed in a refined suit, yet he exuded a twisted aura of violence from head to toe. He approached step by step, questioning, “What if that person is Liam? He’s got flashbangs, he can walk, and he’s got the most professional team of killers. Tell me, if that’s the case, how should I deal with you? Should I treat you like the last guy and feed you to my beloved pets in the thunder pool?”

Everyone felt a chill run down their spine at the mention of the thunder pool, which was like a living hell on earth; stepping in meant suffering worse than death. The leader dropped to his knees with a thud, pleading desperately, “I’m sorry, Mr. Hall. Please show mercy...”

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