

Second Chances Protecting Mrs. Hall by Colby Stanford

Chapter 31

Chapter 31

"It's my fault. I won't let it happen again. I'm sorry I'm so sorry. The leader pleaded with sobbing

"Useless trash!" As he spoke, Brad landed a solid kick into the man's chest, sending him sprawling onto the ground in pain

he were nothing more than

Brad was dressed in a fancy suit, his expression icy, looking down at the man writhing in pain on the ground as a pile of trash. "I'll spare your damn life this time, but if you're still so useless next time, you'll die a horrible death!"

At Icovine Estate, Liam's private doctor and nurses gave Emma a thorough check-up from head to toe and treated her wounds. The doctor said, "Mrs. Hall has a strong body, but the anesthetic dosage is a bit high, so she might sleep for two or three days.

"Thanks, I got it." Liam replied.

After the doctor left, only Liam and Emma were left in the room. Liam sat by Emma's bedside, his gaze unwavering as he stared at her, his doubts about her still unresolved. Why was there that kind of thing in her car! And what about those photos? And... what did she mean by that sentence she said at the cliff?"

Emma woke up faster than the doctor had anticipated at dawn the next day. As she glanced at Liam beside her, memories of the last night gradually flooded her mind.

She recalled it was Liam who suddenly appeared and grabbed her hand when she was on the verge of falling off the abyss. And Liam wasn't in a wheelchair at the time. And that driver, who could assemble her device in such a short time, must have been trained in special skills, too.

For the first time, Emma realized that she had vastly underestimated Liam's capabilities. She had many secrets, and so did he. Abruptly, deep voice sounded softly, "What are you thinking about?"

Emma snapped back to reality, only to find the man beside her pillow had already opened his eyes. "Mr. Hall."

'Do you know who attacked you yesterday?' Liam asked.

Emma shook her head. She had no idea who they were, but judging by their audacious tactics, she guessed they were likely from an international assassin organization and probably one of her enemies.

Jam had a lot of questions for her, but he couldn't bring himself to ask anything at the sight of her frail face. Instead, he gently slid his fingers into her hair, tenderly stroking it. "Rest a bit more. The doctor said the anesthesia hasn't worn off yet."

'Emma didn't want to sleep in bed anymore. She'd burned too much energy last night and urgently needed to refuel. "Got any grub? I'm starving

Nope, you can't eat anything for six hours after anesthesia." Liam refused her request.

Emma was left speechless. Running low on energy, her mood was taking a hit, and the thought of waiting six more hours left her utterly hopeless. She leaned against the big bed, her mind racing about what to eat in six hours.

Before long, Liam wheeled himself in with something in hand.

Emma's eyes lit up with curiosity. "What's that? For me?"

Yeah, you'll definitely like it!" Liam said.

Is it food? Emma was drooling

"Not food, you little glutton!" Liam tapped her nose lightly with the DVD in his hand. "Gaming console

and I don't want her to be too bored, so I brought

As she saw the gaming console, Emma's face immediately scrunched up with disinterest. Having played at the FPS games countless times, such a childish gaming console excited little interest in her. "Won't play. Just put it here?"

Liam opened one of the packages and said, "There's a cooking game inside, very realistic. After a pause, he added, "You can quench your thirst with it"

As soon as he finished, the television screen flickered to life. A series of mouthwatering dishes, each no less tantalizing than those from Michelin-starred restaurants, flashed one after another on the television screen.

“Liam, you did that on purpose Emma suddenly felt even hungrier. She lunged to snatch the controller from his hand, but as soon as hand extended, Liam effortlessly caught both her wrists. His towering figure leaned down, oppressively trapping her against the bed his prominent nose pressed against hers, their eyes locked in a stare

“Yeah, I did. Liam replied.

“Get away, hmm-” in a complete surprise to Emma, Liam’s large, well-boned hand cupped the back of her head as he bent down to kiss her Lips.

Emma’s gaze froze instantly. Liam was so close to her, dominating as if to steal her breath away. Emma sat there, dazed, completely oblivious That Liam had meticulously prepared for this, with the ultimate goal of a forceful kiss

The next second, she pushed him away.

teach her a lesson, and make her behave. But seeing her

Ever since last night, when he saw the photos, Liam had been itching to possess her, tea injured, he felt a pang of heartache and endured until now.

“What are you doing?” Emma asked.

“Is there anything else here besides you?” Liam teased

“What?” Emma took a second to react, then realized he was answering her question about what he was doing. Her cheeks instantly turned

beet red. “You rascal ”

The gloomy and reserved Liam in public turned out to be such a flirtatious man. With this thought, Emma pursed her lips and suddenly leaned forward, gripping Liam’s chin, She forcefully kissed him

Emma tasted briefly before backing down, her gaze seductive, “You’re not allowed to force a kiss on me. Only I can do so to you.”

Hearing her, Liam couldn’t help but chuckle, his lips curving into an utterly captivating smile. “Is there a difference?”

“A huge difference!” Emma couldn’t quite put her finger on what it s

it was, but there was something about Liam that gave her a strong sense of pressure. Even though he usually hid it well, appearing gentle and refined, she still sensed it a powerful wave of anger emanating from him just now. That was why she became extremely nervous when he forced her into a kiss.

“What now? I just forced a kiss on you,” Liam joked on.

“Well, you can’t do that again...hmm...” Emma couldn’t believe it, as Liam once more disregarded her consent, one hand propping up the bed beside her, directly pinning her down on the bed.

This time, it was no longer the fleeting kisses as before. Liam easily pried open her lips and teeth, kissing her deeply. At the same time, he was staring at her, observing her reactions.

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Emma’s face soon turned even redder due to mild oxygen deprivation. She gripped Liam’s shoulders with all ten fingers forcefully. Feeling her nails, Liam said while kissing, “Relax a bit, It’s a little hurt.”

Emma suddenly got the wrong idea, Feeling embarrassed, she quickly let go of her grip, only to be met with an even more domineering kiss from Liam.

She couldn’t dodge, feeling like her lips were about to be kissed swollen and moaning. “It hurts...” Yet, Liam showed no sign of stopping at

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It wasn’t until Emma fought back with all her might for quite a while that Liam reluctantly let go of her. “Liam, I **told** you not to force a kiss on **me** it hurts!”

“Where?” **Li**

Liam asked

Emma complained, “Don’t you know how to kiss? How could you be so rough?”

Liam was indeed very excited just now, only focusing on taking her, **unaware** that a woman's lips could be easily hurt.

His rough fingers pinched her chin, his gaze falling on her tender red lips, examining them seriously like he was examining an injury

With a frown, he started, "It's a bit swollen. Why didn't you say so earlier?"

"I had to have the chance to, didn't I..." Emma retorted. Moments ago, Liam didn't even give her a chance to breathe, let alone to speak,

On the other side, Aria glared at the screen showing Liam and Emma in a passionate embrace, her teeth gritting with anger.

'Damn it! Why? After I sent Liam Hall those nasty photos of Emma, he didn't divorce her. Instead, their relationship seems even stronger now. I refused to accept it!'

She turned on her computer, intent on sending Liam more "dirt" on Emma. However, the **images** on the screen vanished suddenly at that

moment

In the bedroom of Covine Estate.

When Emma was pinned down on the bed by Liam, she felt an uncomfortable bulge on her back. She reached out to rummage and found a plush rabbit toy made of rabbit fur. "Mr. Hall, I didn't expect there's such a girly thing in your room."

When she lived in the countryside. Emma didn't get to play with fancy toys. She got hand-me-downs from

from the older kids who didn't want them anymore.

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Now that she had grown up, she naturally lost interest in such trinkets. But seeing something like this in the room of a tough guy like Liam felt quite novel

thinking you might like

"Oh, you mean this little bunny? A little girl gave it to me when I was out yesterday. I felt sorry for her, so I bought it, think it, Liam explained.

"Yesterday?" Emma's vigilance didn't allow her to be careless. She recalled that Liam went out yesterday right after he got all steamed up in the study

“When I came **back** yesterday, I saw blood on the floor of your study” Emma got straight to the point. “Did something happen?”

“Nothing” Liam didn’t elaborate, and Emma didn’t pry; she just looked at him for two seconds before shifting her attention back to the little

rabbit

Icovine Estate was a standalone villa with no neighbors nearby. Late at night, a little girl appeared here all by herself, and the timing was just too perfect—right after Liam Hall’s anger subsided. Emma couldn’t help but be suspicious of all this.

She

e stared into the rabbit’s eyes, then picked up a knife. With a swift cut, she gouged out the little rabbit’s eyes.

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Chapter 32

Seeing her actions, Liam immediately understood something. Is there something wrong with this rabbit!”

“Look,” Emma remained expressionless, using the knife’s tip to pick out a black round pellet from the toy rabbit’s transparent eyeball

“Someone’s spying on us.” Emma’s tone was terrifyingly calm.

When Liam saw the miniature camera, his face turned icy cold. Yesterday, he was so furious that he let his guard down. Fortunately, Emma immediately sensed something was off. Otherwise, they would have lived under surveillance for who knew how long

“I’ll nab this person right away,” Liam snapped. The cause and effect were strung together: first the emails and then the surveillance; the other party was clearly targeting him and Emma. ‘How despicable!’ he cursed inwardly.

“No rush,” Emma said. “Now that we’ve found her **camera**, she should make a new move soon. We might as well sit back and watch.” Deep down, she had a pretty good idea of who it was. Such sneaky and clumsy tricks were definitely not the work of the mysterious

us organization, and most likely not Brad, but rather the Wilson family or the Taylor family.

Aria found herself in a state of extreme anxiety after the camera she **had** set up was out of control. "Have I been exposed again? Or were the cameras malfunctioning?"

She was terrified that Liam would come after her and couldn't sleep a wink for several days. To her delight, Liam still didn't act after three days:

Aria felt a bit more at ease, thinking it was most likely a camera malfunction and that she was not at immediate risk of exposure. She soon launched a second wave of action. Since Liam did not care about the photos of Emma, she decided to target Emma directly.

Emma's wounds were mostly healed after three days. When she returned to school, her classmates all came to check on her upon hearing

she **was** sick

"Emma, this is the best wound medicine from my mom's pharmacy. Remember to apply it as per the instructions, and you won't have any

scarst one of her classmates said.

"Yeah, Emma, let us grab lunch for you at the cafeteria today. You don't have to run around." Another classmates volunteered

The world of students was ultimately simple. Knowing Emma was academically strong and physically capable, everyone wanted to be her

friend,

Emma didn't stand on ceremony. After a few cory days of "resting" at school, she made a bunch of new friends.

One day after class, her classmates couldn't resist their curiosity any longer and approached Emma for some gossip. "**Hey**, Emma, there's been talk around school that you and the eldest son of that famous Hall family are... you know... is it true?"

"Are what?" Emma **was** bewildered.

"You know... like, a romantic relationship!"

“Guess.” Emma neither denied nor admitted it. The incident with the assassins had only made her confirm that the time had not yet come to make her relationship with Liam public.

A **few** girls went on with the **gossip**, “Since you didn’t say yes, we’ll just assume it’s all rumors.”

“Exactly. With Queen Emma’s bold and straightforward personality, what wouldn’t she dare to admit?”

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“it’s best if it’s not true. I **heard** we’re getting a new teacher!”

“Huh? A new teacher? Could this teacher have something to do with Liam?”

Emma seemed to be casually flipping through a book, but in reality, her ears were perked up.

32%

The person who first got the scoop chimed in, “You guys don’t know this. So there’s this new teacher. Rumor has it she’s the fiancée of the current head of the Hall family, Brad Hall, who has never been on good terms with Liam and has been suppressing Liam all these years. If Emma is Liam’s girlfriend, the new teacher is bound to target her!”

Upon hearing this, Emma smirked dismissively, thinking, ‘Does a nameless woman think she can bully me? How naive!’

However, her smirk was interpreted by her classmates as a relief after escaping a disaster.

imate, your

“Emma, see? I told you it’s best not to be Liam’s girlfriend. This new teacher is here to teach **us** art. If she’s out to get you on purpose, annual scholarship and art grades are gonna take a hit!” a girl explained..

Emma seemed intrigued, squeezing her fingers. “What’s the name of the teacher you’re talking about?”

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Emma's classmate replied, "She does have a nice name. It's Kate Johnson!"

"Kate, Emma murmured the name in her mind. Soon, she remembered who this person was

in her previous life, she had often seen the name Kate Johnson appear in major media papers and social occasions after coming to Troin City

The Johnson family and the Hall family were friends. Emma had heard that the Johnson family's three generations had long since emigrated abroad, and that among the young generation, their only daughter Kate had grown up with a silver spoon in her mouth, and was a famous

rich beauty in Tron City.

"How could such a person, who had never been a teacher of any kind and had never do ne anything similar in my previous life at all, want to

come and teach at our school?' wondered Emma,

"it's her." Emma gave a mysterious smile.

#youk

know her?" Someone in the class was shocked.

"I've seen her, but I don't know her." Emma's tone was light and her classmates didn't th ink much of it.

And at that moment, Liam in the Icovine Estate received a piece of news.

Levi said, "Mr. Hall, we found something"

“Speak up.” In the wooden retro study, the afternoon sunshine was bright and warm, and Liam sat there, quiet and cool like a sculpture.

The woman in those photos is indeed Mrs. Hall. But, it's not as we guessed. Those photos were from a kidnapping Mrs. Hall experienced in the countryside a few years ago. At that time, the security in Mrs. Hall's village was not good, and the dark forces were rampant. Fortunately, Mrs. Hall escaped by herself in the end, and nothing happened to her.”

“Who did it?” Liam hadn't expected Emma to have such a bad experience, and any suspicion he'd originally had of her turned into a subtle pity and anger at those who did it.

“It's been too long since we could find the original perpetrators. The police station hasn't filed a record, so the villagers themselves should have resolved it,” Levi said. “But it's strange. These photos should have been destroyed long ago, but now they've suddenly been sent out. It's obvious that someone has been deliberately keeping them for so many years to plan against Mrs. Hall”

From photos to cameras, Liam, like Emma, thought of the same person—Aria, “Go and find out what Emma's half-sister has been up to lately and what's going on with the Wilson family”

“Mr. Hall, you suspect...”

“Levi asked tentatively

“yes” He affirmed Levi's doubt.

“Okay, I'll look into this matter carefully,” Levi replied.

ery sad emotion to

The thought of Emma, who was a few years younger than she was now, experiencing a kidnapping like that brought a very Liam. “Destroy all negative news about Emma when you figure it out.”

“Yes, Mr. Hall”

Emma was changing in the locker room after gym class when she heard a group of people screaming and running quickly down the hallway:

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Another stinke

years. Em super into her

lass in the morning, in red life, the doesn't look as good as her anline photos, but ther

has smooth skin, kestusalt that her whole body is seemingly flawless ”

bei

“Yes, yes, yes, and her 60 thousand dollar hull diamond bracelet is really sparkling”

“Wow, the life of a rich lacy is really different. The price of one bracelet for her is equival
ent to our salary for two years working at school,

night

After the group of people ran away, Emma glanced at the class schedule on the wall. Th
eir next class was art class.

Humph, Kate, let me see what purpose you, a rich lady, has, in coming to our school for
class, thought Emma.

THE

“I've gone over all the homework from the last class, and you all completed it
very carefully, but... Kate looked meaningfully toward Emma.

Emma was sitting in the middle seat, some distance away from Kate

pretty much as Emma had imagined, looking four or five years older than her, around 25
. In a crowd of students, Kate was wearing a well tailored pure white
suit, with luxury jewelry around her neck and wrists. She looked mature and intellectual
with a hidden hint of showing off. She had brown, wavy, curly hair and looked slim, tall,
and had a bit more temperament than ordinary female internet celebrities, but ultimately
, she still had the same makeup as female internet celebrities. Compared with ordinary f
emale internet celebrities, Kate lockad similar to them.

“Emma, can you share your homework?” Kate continued.

girl in Emma's front seat immediately winded up. “Emma, you're finished! Miss Johnson
does look young and gentle, but in the morning, a girl from another class was dissed by
her and cried directly.”

i student next to her heard her and whispered. "For real?"

Yes, I heard it from my friend"

ry strict on papers, and the questions she asks are all very tricky."

Miss Johnson is very

f you can't answer one of her questions, she'll ask you to rewrite it. She'll even deduct 10 points of your score at the end of the semester"

Jst as everyone was sweating for Emma, Emma calmly walked up to the platform.

can accept that everyone's homework is of a poor standard, but I firmly despise plagiarism and ghostwriting" Kate firmly believed that Emma, as a bumpkin, could not write such excellent articles, especially if they were art related, so she wanted to make a fool of Emma on purpose. "Tell us, why you chose this topic, and what literature you've read to do research it if you can't answer, I'll flunk you straight through

everyone took a deep breath

lo way! She's suspecting that Emma's paper is plagiarized?"

ven if it's really plagiarized, she shouldn't just fall... Wouldn't it be better if she asked Emma to rewrite it?"

eah, if one fails the final in our school, he'll be expelled"

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In fact, Kate did suspect that Emma had carried out plagiarism, but she could not find any evidence after she went to the Internet and searched all the information. So, she suspected that Emma had found someone else to ghostwrite her paper.

The students were discussing in a low voice.

"Is Kate a devil? Our papers were written last week, and everyone has more than thirty reference literature. Who could remember them all?"

"Yeah, she's finding fault on purpose!"

"Could Emma really be Liam's..."

Emma's hearing was superb, and she could hear all of these students's arguments loud and clear.

Coincidentally, Kate had been studying piano since she was a child, and her hearing was good, too.

Kate quickly memorized the names of those students, ready to teach them a lesson one by one later. At this moment, she looked at Emma

with a cold look in her eyes.

Emma met her cold gaze and said calmly, "My paper focuses on the eastern elements of the famous artist Rafael Harmon, with references to core journals such as Art Exploration, Beauty and Time, The Art Newspaper..."

Emma remained calm and mentioned a series of more than ten journal names, as well as the title and author names of the paper. Whether it was foreign literature or domestic literature, she spoke it word for word, just like her paper.

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The students were vaguely shocked "Holy shit, Emma's memory is so good she can remember everything so complicated?"

"yeah, and none of us are art students. This paper can only be considered as extracurricular homework, **and** the even write it so carefully!"

Kate, too, widened her eyes slightly incredulously. Undoubtedly, Emma's performance was beyond her expectations, but she quickly regained her composure. She thought that perhaps Emma had deliberately memorized all of this in advance. "Since you know so much about the academic field of art, you must be very good at painting as well?" Kate asked, with a sinister

gleam in her eyes. "Here, we have all the painting tools. You can show **us one** on the spot."

Emma smiled contemptuously. Painting on the spot wasn't a problem, because she was a mainstay in this field **as** well.

"But, who is Kate? Am I supposed to do whatever she says? thought Emma. She walked over to the group of painting tools, then sneered contemptuously and threw them **away**. "If you want to paint, take your own time."

Kate was a little incredulous. "What do you mean by that?"

"I'm not taking t

this class." After that, Emma picked up her bag with a tug and walked toward the outside of the classroom.

Kate was a bit flustered. "You'll be considered late if you leave Eke that. Aren't **you** afraid you'll fail your mal?"

Emma, carrying her bag on one shoulder, turned around and sneered. "Try it if you dare."

"You

Kate hesitated to speak but finally swallowed it back. 'Sure Enough, Liam's woman is very difficult to mess with, just as Brad said.' She wanted to give Emma a hard time, but she failed.

Emma no longer knew about what happened next in the classroom. After all, she had already left Vark College early and skipped Kate's class directly.

In her headphones, a voice came through. "Emma, that bitch dared to go against you. Does she know you're a big name in the international gallery..."

"Forget it. She's not important." Emma interrupted the man on the phone, then frowned. "Are you having your old habits again?"

The person on the phone was Emma's senior brother, a Chineas Antgen hybrid whose original name was Joshua Jax and Chineas name was Josiah Yale, who often helped Emma with her ersands.

Josiah laughed. His usual hobby was snooping on all sorts of secrets, from big ones like a country's intelligence to small ones like the security camera in Emma's school classro

om. He snooped on Emma's school classroom just now, and that was why he knew about Kate going against Emma just now

"Since you enjoy snooping surveillance videos so much, why not help me find out who installed the cameras in my place?" asked Emma.

Josiah felt troubled. "Well, Emma... It's technically challenging."

"You can peek at me right under my nose yet now you **say** it's technically challenging?" Emma said with an angry tone.

"Okay, I'll check..." Josiah knew Emma's temper all too well. Anyone who dared to spy on her wouldn't even have the chance to apologize before dying. Moreover, he didn't think he could spy on her under her nose unless she intentionally let him.

In fact, when Emma entered the classroom, she felt something was off with the school's central control system. However, she never exposed it; she was waiting for Josiah to fall into the trap by himself.

Π

Chapter 14

ing in fasene I state, Emina faintly saw Liam's figure across the artificial lake in the yard. He was sitting in his whentetuar, his bod Johri, Meningly an a phone call

Is that his

"Okay"

"507. What you're saying now is pointless"

There was a slight breeze on the lake, which interfered with the sound transmission, and Emma couldn't hear everything clearly. But she heard Liam address the other party as "Kate"

Emma reached over and placed her hand on Liam's shoulder from behind, feeling the muscles under his black suit tense for a moment.

He relaxed slowly only after turning back to find it was her, "Hi, finished your school?"

"Yes." Emma glanced at the phone Liam was on

Liam said indifferently, "I have something else to do. I'm hanging up Without waiting for a reply, he hung up the phone.

Emma asked, "Was it Kate?"

"Have **you** seen each other today?" Liam asked.

"Yes" Emma casually pulled up a chair and sat down next to **Liam**, shoulder to shoulder with him, watching the glittering artificial lake.

She crossed her legs casually and got straight to the point. "I don't like her."

"I'll have her leave Vark College," Liam replied.

But she didn't think Kate

"It doesn't really matter to me." Emma truly didn't care. She disliked Kate because Kate had caused trouble for her, but could cause much trouble for her.

Liam suddenly asked, "Who were those people who tricked you into going to Watery Garden last time?"

Emma's expression darkened, and she shook her head. All of her people in the black market were investigating, and so was Josiah, but so far,

there were no leads

"I found it out," Liam said suddenly

Emma looked at him in surprise. "You found it out?"

Liam took out a piece of Nuverlisi printed material, with the top highlighted in black as the leader of a well-known international dark organization "**Can** you tell me what your issue with him is?!"

Emma glanced at the person on the material and suddenly understood. So he was from Moracia

Emma didn't have any personal grudges with these international forces; it was just that in the face of interest, everyone would fight over it. Moreover, some people, simply by living in this world, would pose a significant threat to someone else's life safety. And Emma was the person who posed a threat to them like this.

Emma looked at the photo of that person very calmly: "Who is he? I don't know him. Why would he want to kill me? He must have made a

Seeing that she didn't tell the truth, Liam didn't press further either

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Chapter

Emma raised her eyebrows. “But, I saw a crushed glass in your study that day. Why were you so angry? It should be related to me, right?”

The two had always tacitly avoided mentioning these matters. Now that they were brought up, it might be best for them to make everything

clear

Liam leaned back. “Someone sent me a set of photos. I’ve destroyed them, but that incident happened when you were 17. And it was in a warehouse in the countryside, about a kidnapping. Do you remember?”

Upon hearing these keywords, **Emma’s face** turned pale instantly. Her memories traced back to the year she was 17, and dark images and emotions enveloped her mind.

A damp warehouse, the squeaking of rats, everything came back as if it were something happened yesterday. She would never forget that hellish memory even when she died!

“It was that set of photos,” Emma said with difficulty

“Yes. And also, at your school’s welcome party that day, you were on the deck, interacting **closely** with a boy...” said Liam.

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Emma was spent files: Saljanovas referring to her and Vere

At that time, she wanted to leave a good impression on Vere to win him over later. Unexpectedly, Liam overthought it.

im was just abo

about to tell you about this,” Emma said. “That boy’s name is Vere Hurlbutt, a financial genius. I know you’re in a power struggle with Brast, and you probably don’t lack such people around you, but I assure you, with his abilities and loyalty, he could single handedly outperform Brad’s entire team of hundreds “

Liam

Liam raised his eyebrows. “So, when you gave him your phone number, it was for my sake?” His mood became better. He never thought that Emma would think for him:

was for your sake, but not entirely,” Emma said. “He’s such a genius and I also want to have his help. But no matter what, we’re just a cooperative relationship; you really don’t need to be jealous because of him.”

After that, Emma rubbed the hair beside Liam’s ear: “Still angry?”

Liam’s lips curved into a slight smile. “Mmm.”

“What does Mmm’mean?” asked Emma

up the camera and maliciously sent photos will be found out

“Not angry anymore,” Liam said, then pulled her over. “The person who set up tomorrow ; I won’t let you suffer this loss.”

Emma sighed deeply, hugging Liam’s shoulder. “It’s so good to have you by my side.”

Emma was on a call with Josiah in the room.

“Aren’t you afraid Liam will kill you for deceiving him?” Josiah’s voice came through the other end of the phone.

“What do you mean by deceive?” said Emma. “What I said is all fact, Vere needs a job after returning from Nuverland, and even if he doesn’t come back, Hall Group has industries abroad; it’s the best choice for him to cooperate with Hall Group.”

“Tsk, but you’re clearly winning him over for yourself” Josiah exposed Emma’s real purpose.

The veins on Emma’s forehead bulged as she changed the subject. “Liam’s people will find out who’s been

secretly watching me by tomorrow. Josiah, are you guys so used to living a peaceful life that you've become slower even than Levi?"

Josiah sounded aggrieved. "Liam's people are not ordinary workers; they're actually well-known figures in the black market."

"More well-known than you?" asked Emma

Josiah pouted: "Yes,"

Emma was

was speechless. She had no idea about it. 'Is it because Liam hiding too deep, or have I become too accustomed to peace, **causing** my

abilities to regress?"

Just then, an email popped up on Emma's computer. She clicked it open.

[Dear Emina, the Art Festival at Vark College will officially start next week. During the festival, students can participate in various elective

activities and are encouraged to take part in compulsory ones to enrich their extracurricular experience. Outstanding performers **can** earn bonus points at the end of the term. Have a pleasant Art Festival! The email **was** an invitation to the Art Festival at Vark College.

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1 festival, Emma thought of Kate's performance earlier

school's Art festival this time.

the art class today "Josiah, help

find out who will be

Oh, as Josiah quishy gathered information in his unique way. Seeing the result, he smirked. "Emma, guess who will be mere

"Who

Josiah continued. The great piano master Darell Wallaker, **your** co..."

“Oh, it’s him,” Emma interrupted Josiah, her lips curving in a smile. ‘Things are getting interesting. Let’s wait and see.’”

Kate had troubled her during the day, but she didn’t bother with her because Kate wasn’t worthy enough. However, since the Art Festival was coming, even if Emma didn’t actively provoke Kate, she could only wait to be completely defeated.

The arrival of the Art Festival instantly stirred up excitement at Vark College. Especially among the girls in the school, everyone prepared

enthusiastically to showcase their talents.

Emma’s class was assigned a task they were to participate in a lecture recital by the world-renowned piano master Darell.

In the auditorium, Emma’s class today was led by Kate, who wore a grand dress and high heels, with a specially styled appearance. She was

fully prepared.

Darell was the piano master she had admired since childhood. Previously, the Johnson family had tried hard to get Darell to become Kate’s piano teacher, but they could only manage to have him come over for a meal before he declined, saying he never took students. But that

didn’t affect Kate’s admiration for him.

Today, Kate would go to great lengths to catch Darell’s eye. Even if she couldn’t become his student, a few words of praise from him would be

good for her, Gaining favor with Darell would make her stand out in the entire socialite circle

Kate told the classmates, “When the event starts, stay where you are. Don’t move around and no noise. Don’t let me lose to other teachers, understood?”

Kate was only a few years older than these students and hardly commanded respect. But with the title of a teacher, no one objected to her.

She then looked at Emma. “Emma, especially you. I know this kind of occasion might be unfamiliar to you as you’re just a newcomer to the big city, but you need to adapt quickly. Don’t hold the class back **and** embarrass us.”

At that moment, Emma was casually sitting with her legs crossed, sipping soft drinks and eating chips. She was the most relaxed and carefree among everyone present, even a bit wild,

Seeing her like this, Kate was furious. "Emma, did you hear what I said?"

total

"I heard you. You told us not to talk and perform well so you can catch Darell's attention and get his favor."

Upon hearing Emma's words, the students laughed.

Kate was so angry she wanted to throw a cup at her, but considering the situation at the time, she restrained herself.

"You just wait," Kate said and

left, a female student said.

left. No

one knew where she went. "Emma, you were so cool when you talked back to her just now, after Kate

"Yeah, I saw Miss Johnson's face turned a little pale with anger"

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Chapter 36

Chapter 36

Everyone was quiet Although they were not professional piano students, Vark College had always offered piano classes.

They were

The students present there had at least stated piano for the So why did Emma rebel her?

and they could tell Kate was hi

tat a professional advanced level.

Soon, eve your “understood” Kate was always targeting Eme Emina mocked Kate– everyone expressed their understanding

if it was numura

Emina to feel

And because of jealousy.

However, what they didn’t know was that Kate’s piano playing skills were really poor in Emma’s eyes.

Finally, the piece ended, and the whole venge erupted in warm applaine

Kate stood under the stage lights, her eyes full of expectations, staring intently at the silver haired man sitting in the main seat among the crowd with his eyes closed

It was Darell, who was with a sapphire blue tailcoat that accentuated his noble temperament. His slender fingers had the exclusive length of a pianist’s fingers

What was more shocking was that, as a world-class pianist, he was neither overweight nor showed signs of aging, but was handsome beyond belief

After a long while, Darell finally spoke amid everyone’s anticipation. “As an ordinary non piano major student, you played not bad. You’ve got a lot of room for improvement

Darell’s words left everyone astonished **and** Kate’s mouth opened in disbelief

“I’ve been studying piano for 20 years. I’m a piano teacher at Vark College, not a student” she really wanted to say this, but she held back, if

she said these words, wouldn’t she be slapping her own face!!!

Kate was extremely embarrassed, and the school leaders did not expect such an awkward situation.

The venue was in an awkward atmosphere at the moment

“Tsk, tsk!” Suddenly, from the direction of the **class** Kate taught, a girl in a blue-black long dress laughed.

Kate was instantly furious to the point of distorting her face. She clenched her fists, "It's Emma She's laughing at me! Since she dares to mock

me, I'll make her **make** a fool of herself in front of the whole school."

"Mr. Wallaker, actually, we have another classmate who also plays very well. How about letting her come up and play a piece for you?"

Suggested Kate:

However, Darell was impatient. Kate's level just now had given him a rough assessment of the overall level of students at Vark College.

He knew that the students who could be arranged to perform the opening piece on such an occasion would definitely be at the highest level

in school, and he could tell it seemed that the music education in Vark College was in a mess, students there had no talents at all.

"No need I want to end the lecture earlier today. I'm in a hurry." Darell's words made the leaders of Vark College a little embarrassed.

They invited

Darell to use this art festival **as** an opportunity to increase Vark College's popularity in the field of art. They spent a lot of money to invite Kate and let her perform in front of **Darell**, hoping he would recognize their school's level and cooperate with them. But he actually wanted to leave early.

"Mr. Danell, since you're already here, **how** about listening to the students play one more piece!"

1/3

Chapter 30

"Pyrah, Mi. flawed!" Kate said specifically, "Although I didn't play well, the student I mentioned has always told me she's a winner of many competitions, even these haven't won I believe they'll not disappoint you"

With that, she pointed her finger at Emma. "Emma, come up here!"

Kate's plan was extremely malicious. She had seen Emma's information and watched the surveillance video of her piano class. When everyone was practicing seriously, only Emma never touched the piano keys. Instead, she stared at the music score in a daze.

A girl who grows up in extreme poverty in the countryside, being able to eat well is already good, and how could she have the opportunity to learn the piano? Therefore, Kate was sure that Emma was a bumpkin who couldn't even recognize the music score.

She even lied—Emma had never bragged to her about her piano skills, yet she slandered Emma like this. Obviously, she wanted Emma to be despised by the whole school.

Emma saw through Kate's little tricks very clearly. Now that she was considered "a person who often boasts about being a piano master" she didn't play well, she would not only disgrace herself but also Vark College, and in the future, all the school leaders of Vark College would remember that it was her boasting that caused them to miss this opportunity.

Emma, what should we do? Kate is deliberately against **you!**" a classmate next to Emma said nervously. "How about you just admit that

it your

can't play!"

"Yeah, let her win this time. We admit defeat."

Several people who usually supported Emma persuaded her, **and** suddenly a sneer came from afar. "Tsk, someone just said our Miss

Johnson's **playing** was poor. Yet now you don't even dare to show your playing. It's really ridiculous!"

The speaker was once Aria's good friend, now Kate's fan girl.

Emma glanced at her coldly, then put down the goblet and stood up. "Her playing was indeed poor and even Darell has spoken up."

Her gaze was sharp, shining with coldness. "Only someone like you who doesn't really understand

piano would think she plays well. Have you wasted all these years studying piano? You should spend more time learning instead of blindly echoing others' opinions."

"You... The woman was so angry! that her face turned red. "Bitch, if you have the guts, go play! You think I don't know how foolishly you act during every piano class? You don't even dare to touch the keys. You're a waste, a good-for-nothing

Emma laughed brightly. She didn't play in the piano classes because she didn't want to reveal herself. And she was particular about pianos. Except for her own piano, she wouldn't play other people's piano easily.

"Well, let me enrich your experience today then, you poor thing." With that, Emma walked toward the stage.

She was dressed in a dress with a voluminous design, and her black hair was

black hair was styled into loose waves. She looked grand yet carried an air of languid nobility. As she made her way through the crowd to the stage, Darell saw her and was so surprised that he stood up abruptly. "It's

you h

Emma remained calm, smiling at Darell as she said, "Hi, Mr. Wallaker. My name is Emma, I'm a regular student at Vark College. The one who just played is a teacher in our school who is not very skilled. Please excuse the performance."

After her words,

there was an uproar among the audience. Emma had openly criticized Kate's playing skills, and everyone was taken aback

by her arrogant tone.

However, Darell frowned slightly. He understood that Emma's words were a hint for him not to reveal her identity.

'Strange, with her genius-like talent, why would she be an ordinary student at **Vark** College? And why did she hide her true identity?'

But Darell quickly came to terms with it. There must be her own reasons for doing so, and he should respect her choice.

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"Hello... After such a long time, I finally met you. You make my trip worthwhile," said Darell, leaving the audience wondering if they had heard

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World renowned piano maestro Darell actually showed such deference before **Emma**.

The artistic education director of Vark College, who was present, was the first to recover from the shock. "Mr. Wallaker, do you two know each

"Yes," replied Darell,

The other teachers seized the moment. "This girl is very bright, not only academically excellent but also talented in many areas. Why don't you take her under your wing? Then you could teach her your exquisite piano skills."

Darell frowned. "No."

His response brought a clear flash of disappointment to the eyes of the leaders, while Kate and her followers couldn't help but laugh. They chattered among themselves.

"So what if they know each other? Trash is still trash. Darell would never let Emma be his student."

"Exactly, only Miss Johnson is the best at piano at Vark College"

But Darell's next words completely shocked those who looked down on Emma. "Emma's piano skills are exquisitely unparalleled, certainly not inferior to mine; I wouldn't dare claim her as my student"

"Wh what?" Several school leaders were stunned, thinking to themselves, Is Mr. Wallaker joking? No, no way! Even if he were joking, he wouldn't do it with us. After all, his previous attitude toward us has always been indifferent

Kate couldn't believe that her idol, Darell, had just said that Emma's level was even higher than his? What's going on? Could it be that Emma is really a world class, epic level pianist?

Knowing that Emma didn't want to reveal herself, but eager to hear her play, Darell courteously stepped forward and gestured an invitation. "Emma, may I have the pleasure of performing a duet with you?"

"With the greatest pleasure." Emma agreed readily. Then the two sat at separate pianos and performed a piano duet.

Since his youth, Darell had been known as the "Piano Devil," his style was wild and unrestrained, full of mystery and

change. The bass section he played began with a gentle striking, until reaching the middle where it became rich and powerful, like a sudden thunderstorm on a small island, the rain patterns hitting the eaves, deep and resounding, startling to the heart.

At that moment, the treble section began, Emma's fingers were like the fluttering wings of a butterfly, moving nimbly. A series of crisp high notes slid down, turning all the heavy raindrops into cascading waterfalls of shining pearls, a breathtaking sight.

Hearing her play, Darell instantly became excited, and his own playing grew even more magnificent.

Accompanied by Emma's exquisitely enchanting high notes, everyone in the auditorium was left dumbfounded. Kate couldn't believe it "This... This can't be real. How could Emma have improved so much overnight?"

She tried desperately to find flaws but found none. On the contrary, the more she listened intently, the more she felt Emma's terrifyingly strong foundation in playing. In the end, she actually burst into tears.

She was brought to tears because she felt she was completely defeated.

"Miss Johnson, Miss Johnson?" The student next to her thought she was moved to tears. "**Miss** Johnson is a professional. She's even brought tears by the sheer brilliance of the performance. Here's a tissue"

Chapter 17

Kate was at

loss for words.

After what seemed like an eternity, the duet between Darell and Emma finally ended. Below the stage, applause roared like thunder

"Great, that was amazing"

“Emma, you’re so impressive.

“Emma, my goddess.”

“Darell, Darell, Darell,

Soon, the incident at the venue spread throughout the entire Art Festival at Vark College. Without a doubt, the piano duet performance by Emma and Darell brought the festival to its climax.

After it ended, Darell found Emma backstage. He was finally able to speak with her alone. “Long time no see, my junior sister.”

It turned out Emma was Darell’s junior sister.

Back in the day, Darell’s piano teacher often mentioned that although Darell was his most proud student, he actually had another student whose talent surpassed even Darell’s.

Darell never knew the name of his junior sister, he only knew that his piano teacher called her “Five” and endlessly praised her comprehension and piano skills.

Hearing Emma play today, he felt as if he had been listening to divine music. “Seeing you in person and hearing you play is truly wonderful. Our teacher didn’t deceive me; I really do have a genius junior sister.”

Emma nodded. “You flatter me. Over the years, you’ve pioneered new realms in the piano world, far surpassing my achievements, I wouldn’t dare compare myself to you.

Emma spoke the truth. She hadn’t focused on music over the years. In terms of actual skill, Darell would still have the edge. But Darell didn’t see it that way; in his heart, Emma was a genius, and he admired her greatly,

After parting with Darell, Emma went to the restroom alone.

from a

Inside the ladies restroom, Emma was fixing her makeup in front of the mirror when suddenly, she saw someone step out from a compartment in high heels, with a cold gaze

Kate was utterly confused. Why does Darell know Emma, and why can she play the piano so well? After much thought, she concluded there was only one possibility—Darell must have taken Emma as his student. She looked at Emma with hostility: “What exactly is your relationship with Darell? Why did he teach you to play the piano? Tell me

, did you use some improper means to make him take you as his student?” Emma casually adjusted a lock of her hair with one hand while looking at Kate in the mirror, mocking her with an utterly disdainful smite

Seeing this smile, Kate trembled with anger. “Brad told me Liam’s new girlfriend wasn’t simple. I thought you were someone big but it turn out you’re nothing but just a common gold digger who only knows to seduce men

Slapt

Emma raised her hand. mid-air

and

slapped Kate’s face. Kate was stunned. The next second, as the her hand to slap back, her wrists..

Emma gripped her wrist and pinned her against the restroom wall

“Dan tilte your position as a teacher to bully others, You Kate, are not qualified to be my teacher” Emma said seriously.

Br1tell you at the end of the term. **Ouch!**” Before Kate could finish, she began to scream .

Emma simply gripped Kate lightly, and Kate ciled out in pain. Enima’s smooth-skinned, slender hand held Kate’s head, and she whispered near Kate’s ear. “Kate, don’t forget. You’re just a substitute teacher outsourced by Vark College, not a real educator . And even Darell just said that your decade-long piano learning doesn’t even measure up to a professional student’s. You’re just a spoiled rich kid relying on your Family’s wealth. Don’t try to throw your weight around in front of me.”

With that, she released Kate, who nearly lost her balance. Kate looked at Emma with hatred and said viciously, “Me, throwing my weight around? If you’re so capable, then do you know how Liam’s leg was crippled?”

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Emma seemed to casually pull out a piece of **tissue** to wipe the water stains off her fingers.

“He became like that **because** of me,” Kate said with a cold smile. “A year ago, Liam, **Brad**, and I were on a helicopter survey trip together when we encountered a typhoon. At the critical moment, Liam was injured by a heavy object while saving me, resulting in a lifelong disability. So his feelings for me are not something you, a mere passerby, can compare to.”

Hearing this, Emma suddenly chuckled. “So what?”

“You’re just an insignificant pitiful creature!” Kate became more and more agitated as she spoke, but Emma remained eerily calm.

“Is that so?” Emma turned and threw the tissue into the trash bin, then stepped closer to Kate. “Liam became disabled because he saved you, and yet you immediately fell into a relationship with his brother. Are you proud of that?”

“You...” Kate was momentarily speechless from the rebuke.

In fact, the truth wasn’t quite as she had portrayed it to Emma. There was actually a hidden truth behind Liam’s injury, but Kate said that because she deliberately wanted to upset Emma. Little did she expect Emma’s reaction to be completely beyond her anticipation.

Ding!

Emma’s phone rang. She glanced at it; the caller ID showed Liam. Her lips curled ironically as she pressed the decline button. “Miss Johnson, let me tell you a secret. Didn’t you say I only know how to seduce men?” She paused, staring at Kate. “Well, Liam does carry me to his bed every night for me to seduce him. Do you envy me? Would you like to become a person like me?”

With that, Emma gave Kate a mocking look, picking up her phone and striding **away**.

Despite Emma’s seemingly composed response, a sense of loss was spreading in her heart. She knew, of course, **that** Liam loved her enough that he was even willing to die for her. But had he ever loved someone else that way in his life?

The thought that he might **have** also been willing to risk everything and throwing himself into the fire without a second thought for Kate, caused a delicate pain to spread through Emma's heart...

After the Art Festival ended, it was raining outside the auditorium. The rain was heavy, and many students who hadn't brought umbrellas could only complain and wait for it to stop. Some lucky girls received umbrellas from boys, which made everyone very envious.

Just then, through the rain, a black luxury car drove through the darkness and stopped at the auditorium's entrance. The students taking shelter from the rain were instantly dazzled.

"Oh my, a globally limited edition Rolls-Royce, It's so luxurious!"

"Look at its license plate number; it's so eye-catching!"

"Who's so wealthy? To be picked up by a luxury car in the rain, that's just too blissful."

Everyone was guessing who could be so fortunate.

In such foul weather, it wouldn't matter if it was a luxury car or even a broken car coming to pick someone up; anyone would **be** grateful.

When Emma came out, she heard a group of people discussing something at the entrance. She was somewhat **distracted** and didn't notice **the** Rolls-Royce at the entrance. However, Kate, following closely behind her, saw it, and her eyes instantly filled with intense jealousy.

Chapter 38

Emma was about to push through the crowd and walk into the rain with her umbrella when the Rolls-Royce's window slowly rolled down "Emma, get in."

The familiar voice brought Emma's attention back. The handsome face of the man in the car **was as** usual. If people were just envious when they saw the Rolls-Royce, then seeing Liam's handsome face would simply make them jealous to death.

Emma frowned and asked, "What brings you here?"

"It's raining, and you're wearing a dress and high heels. I came to pick you up." Liam's voice was neither loud nor soft, but it **was** audible to several students and teachers present. His words were overwhelming for them.

Liam was publicly acknowledging his relationship with Emma, confirming the previous speculations among the students. Emma was indeed with Liam; no wonder Kate kept picking on Emma relentlessly.

Everyone instantly understood everything.

Emma, holding her umbrella, **looked** back and indeed saw Kate gritting her teeth in the crowd. She laughed coldly and asked **Liam** with a meaningful tone, "Kate is here too, why not ask her to join us?"

Liam's brow furrowed, and even his expression became cold. "No need, my car is only for you."

As soon as he finished speaking, Levi opened the door and got out of the car, respectfully helping Emma to sit in the back seat. The black Rolls-Royce then disappeared into the rain.

Kate stood there, her lips nearly bitten through with frustration. Humiliated twice in front of so many students today, she was shaking with anger, while from the crowd came waves of envious murmurs about Emma.

Inside the Rolls-Royce, Emma began to rest with her eyes closed as

soon as she got in. Seeing her low spirits, Liam stayed silent.

Suddenly, she said, "Why did you come over suddenly?"

Liam immediately replied, "I knew you wouldn't easily hang up on me, so I came straight here."

Emma slowly opened her eyes to look at him. Indeed, Liam had called earlier when she was in the restroom. She had hung up on impulse, not expecting him to rush over worriedly,

Emma's heart softened, and she pursed her lips, bending over to hug his shoulder.

Feeling her embrace, Liam patted the back of her hand. "What's wrong?"

Emma **said**, "It just bothers me to think that you might have liked someone else before."

Liam's lips curved. "You are unique."

Emma wanted to ask if what Kate had said a year ago was true, but the words wouldn't come out. She abruptly changed the subject. "Are Kate and Brad happy together?"

The atmosphere in the car turned cold suddenly, and Levi, who was driving, glanced worriedly at the rearview mirror.

Liam sneered, “Brad always likes to pick up the trash I threw away. I don’t understand or care about his things

Emma **asked** again, “So... did **you** ever like Kate!”

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Hearing her sudden question, Liam stared at her intently. “Is that what she told you?”

Emma pouted and recounted the incident in the restroom to Liam, omitting only the part about Liam being disabled because of Kate.

After listening, Liam laughed coldly. “This bitchy couple is getting more and more shameless. I never liked Kate, nor could I ever like her.”

For some reason, just hearing his words dispelled all the clouds in Emma’s heart. If Liam said no, then it must **be no**.

Just then, the car arrived at Icovine Estate.

“We’re home,” said Levi.

Liam **took** Emma’s hand gently. “It’s raining today, so I had the maid fill the tub with hot water. Go take a bath to warm up, okay?”

Emma teased with a pout. “You’re so good at taking care of people, did you really have many girlfriends before?”

Liam looked at her, his eyes unfathomably deep, “Mrs. Hall, are you jealous?”

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Emma squinted her eyes, lifting her hand to hook his chin. "Making me jealous is your fault."

Liam grasped her fingers, leading her hand. "It's my bad. I promise I won't make you jealous again."

"Hmph, that's..." Before Emma could finish her words, Liam kissed her lips. With one hand holding the finger she had just hooked his chin, and the other supporting the sensitive back of her neck from behind, he made her feel a faint warmth on her neck skin.

Emma's mind went blank for a moment. Looking at Liam's handsome face close at hand, she could even see his thick eyelashes trembling slightly, her heartbeat accelerating.

After a short, tantalizing kiss, Liam moved his lips away from hers. "Kiss **away** your jealousy. Are you still upset?"

'I can't believe I've gotten used to his sudden intimacy, I really can't get angry with him.' Emma puffed out her cheeks. "What do you think?"

Recent events had left Emma feeling physically and mentally exhausted. She lay in the bathtub, resting with her eyes closed. The steamy atmosphere in the room made her feel a bit light-headed, and she fell asleep without realizing it.

"Knock, knock, knock."

Even when the knocking on the door started, Emma didn't respond. Liam frowned and opened the bathroom door directly.

The warm steam hit him in the face, but the scene inside the bathroom made his blood surge rapidly. There was Emma, lying naked in the luxurious white bathtub, her skin so smooth and seemed flawless, her black hair curled up high, revealing her slender neck with its delicate

curve.

Liam suppressed the desire in his heart and carried her out of the bathtub, wrapping her in a towel. She had actually fallen asleep in the bath.

If he hadn't come in to check, there could have been a risk of suffocation.

That night, Emma had a dream. In her dream, she felt like a soft feather was brushing against her body, tickling her and making her shiver uncontrollably. She tried to stop the feather, but it was incredibly

agile and couldn't be grabbed no matter how hard she tried. It tantalized her more and **more** fiercely.

She struggled, opening her eyes in the dream, only to find the feather had turned into Liam.

He kissed her hair, caressing and guiding her, from her eyes to her cheeks, to her neck, moving further down....

In the dream, Liam's legs were healed, and they enjoyed and felt each other's bodies...

Emma woke up the next morning feeling utterly drained. She frowned, looking at herself lying in bed and thinking, 'I seemed to have fallen asleep in the bathtub last night. Did Liam carry me to bed?'

Just as she was thinking, Liam, dressed in a suit, appeared beside her bed in a wheelch air. "Good morning, Mrs. Hall,"

Liam was dressed to the nines today, his black hair neatly combed back, looking clear and attractive, giving off a radiant vibe. Yet, Emma felt very tired.

'How does he look even more spirited than usual?' Emma was curious, she murmured, "Morning... I seemed to feel someone in bed last night..."

resurse. It was me." Liam immediately answered before she could finish. "What's wrong?"

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Emma wanted to **ask** what exactly he had done, but she swallowed her words back. "Nothing"

Liam looked at her, smiling, "Did you dream of something last night?"

"No..." Emma's face turned blush,

"For real?" Liam's tone was teasing

Recalling the images from last night made Emma blush even more. She even dreamt that the feather was darting around her body. "I didn't dream of anything. You get out now. I need to get up and change clothes."

Liam chuckled softly, his expression unreadable, leaving one unable to **guess** his thoughts.

Only after Liam left the bedroom did Emma support her tired body to go to the bathroom to freshen up. While brushing her teeth, she saw her neck in the mirror and was stunned.

Her neck and the skin under the unbuttoned button were covered with red marks. Even without experience in sex, Emma knew what that meant “Liam?”

She wanted to settle accounts with Liam, but he was not in the room

Emma was fuming in silence.

Josiah said on the other end of the phone, “Don’t be mad. I’ve found all the information you asked me to look up. Why are you still exhausting us?” He didn’t know what was wrong with Emma that made her so irritable

Emma replied, “It’s your slow action’s **fault**. Have you found anything or not? Was it Aria?”

“Yes, only Aria,” Josiah replied immediately, afraid that a slow answer would set Emma off again.

Emma seemed unsatisfied with this answer. “What about the rest of the Wilson family? And Elijah, that jerk?”

“This time, other members of the Wilson family weren’t involved. After Aria got bailed out, she didn’t return to the Wilson family. As for Elijah, his imprisonment is a done deal; he **can’t** be pulling any tricks now, and the Taylor family isn’t involved either, Josiah explained.

“Hmph, Aria still has some tricks up her sleeve. She even managed to track down Kate to use against me.” Emma had been investigating various news about Brad and Kate during this time. She discovered that Kate had met with Aria several times recently. It was likely Aria, having failed to stir Liam with photos, decided to target Emma using Kate.

Emma leaned back in her chair, leisurely massaging her forehead. “Aria, relying on Sebastian’s protection, is still struggling despite being on the brink of death. I’m losing patience with her games. You know **what** to do, right?”

Besides Aria, Emma had many other things to handle and people to confront—Kate, Brad, and the person who last tried to take her life.

Just then, there was a knock at the door.

“Mrs. Hall.” It was the butler’s voice.

“The Wilson family is here. They’re making a ruckus at the entrance of Icovine Estate, insisting on seeing you,” said the butler with concern. “Mr. Hall once instructed that they should not disturb you, and asked us to drive them away when we see them. I’m here to inform you.”

With Liam’s orders, **they** wouldn’t let anyone into Icovine Estate.

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However, this time, Emma changed her mind. “Let them in, it’s been a while, and I happen to have quite a few questions for them.”

Emma barely recognized Mateo and Nora after months apart. From what she knew, after the bankruptcy of the Wilson group, they accumulated a lot of debt, Zoe was now feigning illness in bed daily, and Mateo was taking Nora around, constantly hiding from their

creditors.

“Get to the point. I don’t have much time for you.” Emma cut straight to the chase.

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After exchanging glances, Nora spoke first. “Emma, Liam’s **house** is really luxurious. He treats you well, doesn’t he? You must be very happy now, right?”

Emma glanced at her watch. “You have four minutes and fifty-one seconds left.”

Mateo’s face turned red instantly, “Emma, no matter what, I am still your biological father. With the Wilson family going through tough times, you haven’t shown any sympathy. Even animals aren’t as cold-hearted as you.”

“So, it’s about money after all, isn’t it?” Emma sneered. “Banks won’t lend to you, and you can’t even get a loan from loan sharks? You know what, the interest I ask is even higher than theirs.”

“You...” Mateo was furious but was stopped by Nora. They came to ask Emma for money. When seeking a favor, one must maintain the correct

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“What’s the matter? Doesn’t your baby daughter care about you?” Emma asked.

Mentioning Aria infuriated Mateo to the extreme. After being released from jail, she didn’t even contact them. They tried to contact her, but she wouldn’t answer their calls because she knew their family had gone bankrupt, and to this day, they still didn’t know where she was

Nora could only chuckle nervously to smooth things over. “Aria is younger than you and not like you, who has seen so many ups and downs. She got scared after something happened and neglected us... Emma, we came to you today because we wanted to ask if you have any news of Aria, please tell us as soon as possible.”

“Of course.” Emma’s eyes were icy cold. “I will definitely find her.”

“For real? That’s great!” Nora thought Emma had finally softened and immediately said, “How about the money....”

“After finding her, I will make sure she suffers more than the last time, more miserable!”

As Emma finished speaking, Nora was stunned. “Emma, how can you talk like that? She’s your sister.”

“It’s precisely because she’s my sister that I can’t let her continue to be a scourge on society. I need to teach her lessons myself With that, Emma gave a nod to the butler and said, “Time’s up. They should leave.”

“Emmal Emmal” Mateo and Nora wanted to resist, but they were already being pushed out by the well-trained bodyguards of Icovine Estate.

Peace was finally restored in the room, and Emma sat on the sofa, taking a light sip of coffee.

“Madam, if I may speak frankly, your family is really biased. The butler couldn’t bear to see it anymore.

Emma’s parents had left her, their eldest daughter, out in the cold for so many years without raising her, and now that they needed money, they came to her. Their younger

daughter, Aria, had been spoiled with all their attention and affection, but after the family's misfortune, she was the first to run away, yet they still made excuses for her, saying she was too young. But in reality, Aria was just a few months younger

than Emma.

"Don't bother with them. They've always been like this; now they're just reaping what they've sown. Those who lack virtue will inevitably bring disaster upon themselves," Emma stated.

The butler nodded. "That's true. Fortunately, you now have Mr. Hall. He will treat you well. Mr. Hall said that he would make up for the love and care your parents failed to give you. By marrying him, here is your home, and he will never let you suffer the slightest grievance."

Emma took a sip of coffee and the coldness in her brows slowly dissipated, replaced by a hint of warmth.

After the testing. Emma confirmed that the Wilson family did not know Aria's current situation either. Her men had lost track of Aria two days ago as if Aria had vanished from the world.

"This is too abnormal," Emma said as she pondered in front of the computer, her index finger joint resting against her chin.

"If even we can't find her, it means she has someone more powerful deliberately hiding her whereabouts. We've found several leads, but they've been abruptly cut off, yet there was various false information released continuously. We've been fooled several times," Josiah complained over the phone.

"There's such an expert by Aria's side? I really want to meet him," Emma said, a murderous intent appearing in her eyes as her fingers flew over the keyboard, the computer screen filling with dense code under her control...

At night, Ana didn't know how many days she had been there. Her eyes and mouth were covered; she was tied to a chair in a tiny dark room her spirit on the verge of collapse.

"Water... water..." she desperately longed for water, her throat feeling like it was on fire. But no matter how much she pleaded, no one responded, it seemed like the world had forgotten her, leaving her to die there quietly....

Just then, there was a noise at the entrance of the old villa.

In the dark night, a woman dressed in nocturnal gear appeared. It was Emma. She frowned, surveying the area as if deducing why Aria's last known location would be there.

She was surrounded by ruins and unfinished buildings, long abandoned. Locals of TroIn City whispered that this place was haunted, and even during daylight hours, it remained deserted. Knowing Aria as Emma did, she felt there was no way Aria would come there voluntarily unless someone else, like her, had designs on Aria.

Just then, a gust of wind, closely followed by a fist, barely grazed past Emma's ear, Having learned from past experiences, Emma took extra caution upon arriving, maintaining constant contact with Josiah, with their men stationed for a few miles around.

Emma quickly engaged with her attacker, who was agile and matched her skill but oddly felt familiar.

The attacker attempted to restrain Emma, who deftly evaded the move. She counterattacked, only to have her strength neutralized, leaving her punch to land on nothing

As Emma grew angrier, she tried to grab the attacker's mask, but it was not easily unveiled, leaving her with only grabbing the ear of the

attacker.

In that instant, she recognized the attacker. With a sudden realization, her tactics shifted-no longer aggressive, but more defensive and aimed at escape.

The attacker, sensing Emma's change, also lessened his offensive but didn't let her go.

It was then that Emma took out the tranquilizer gun she had prepared for a long time to shoot from behind. The attacker dodged, but Emma had already seized the opportunity to flee.

Emma hadn't truly intended to shoot the attacker; she somersaulted away from the old villa, and that was when she spotted the familiar

black Rolls-Royce.

A man stood beside the car, leaning against the door, holding a cigarette, his legs long and straight, it was Liam.

"Wanna run away?" Liam sneered, flicking his cigarette butt to the ground and extinguishing it under his leather shoe.

Emma struggled to hide the shock in her eyes-Liam's leg was not at all disabled.

But in the next moment, Emma realized the danger. Liam didn't know her identity, nor did he realize that the person in nocturnal gear confronting him was her.

Knowing Liam's understanding of her, any physical encounter would reveal her identity. So, she leaped onto the open window of a villa. "Emma, what's the situation?" Josiah asked through the walkie-talkie.

"It's complicated. Have everyone stay hidden. Don't come out," Emma instructed.

Josiah reclaimed in surprise. "Damn! Is this really a setup? You met him again?"

Emma's lips twitched. "It was Liam..."

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As she finished speaking, Liam had already followed her onto the windowsill

Sweat beaded on Emma's forehead as she looked at the opposite unfinished villa, its steel bars looking like they could collapse at any

moment...

"Stay put, or you'll just end up being crushed by the steel," Liam warned. In the midnight, he appeared bloodthirsty and sinister.

Emma was shocked to discover that it was him orchestrating this, especially since he had always presented himself as a refined and gentle gentleman before her.

Now, seeing Aria, who had been tormented to a state of mental disarray and wild-haired, as if resembling a corpse, Emma realized the extent of her husband's cruelty far exceeded her expectations.

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