

My Billionaire Ex-Husband Chase Me Back - Chapter 325 -356

Chapter 325: Finally, Meeting Sean Spencer (2)

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When Bella felt Sean's embrace slowly loosen, she took a step back to see his face more clearly.

He looked handsome as usual, with a smooth and clean face, unlike people who returned from dangerous missions, which she usually saw in action movies where the leads returned with several wounds on their bodies.

Bella felt relieved to see this man still the same as when she last saw him a few months ago.

"Sean, come with me. Let's sit first," Bella said, walking to the sitting area without waiting for him to respond.

However,

Before Bella settled on the sofa, she looked at Sean, who now sat on the single sofa opposite her.

"What would you like to drink, Sean?" She tried to act casual, but her stiff tone clarified her awkwardness.

"As usual, please—"

"Okay." Bella immediately made her way to the minibar to make his favorite Earl Grey tea and a latte for herself.

"Thank you, Bells..." Sean smiled at her, but his smile slowly faded when he saw her back facing him. His hand was slightly clenched as he tried to maintain his calmness.

Sean couldn't understand why, but he sensed an apparent anxiety and unhappiness in Bella's gaze. Her smile also didn't reach her eyes as it usually did when they met in the past.

Or was he overthinking? Yes, he must be. Bella might be nervous, just like him, after they were separated for almost four months without communication.

Before long,

Sean saw Bella walk to the seating area with two cups in her hands. He immediately maintained his expression, smiling at her.

"I'm glad you're finally back, Sean," Bella said as she handed him the cup of tea before sitting across from him.

"Thanks," He accepts the cup.

"There's something I want to tell you," she continued.

Bella couldn't delay this; she had to tell him about her status with Tristan.

"No, please. Let me tell you the good news first." Sean stopped Bella from speaking further.

"Good news?" Bella was slightly surprised to hear that. At the same time, she was also worried about what he wanted to say.

A loving smile now graced his face as he began to explain.

"Bells, I am no longer deployed with my unit and station in North City. I am now an officer at the military base here in the capital. So, from now on, I won't have any more long overseas missions that take me away from you for extended periods," Sean explained. His tone and gaze showed how happy he was now.

Seeing that, Bella felt her heart hurting even more. She slowly placed her empty latte cup on the table and continued to listen to him in silence.

"And I called my mother to tell her about you. She was super happy to know about you, Bells. She invited you to have lunch with her. Can you spare some time this weekend to meet her? We can meet her in a nice restaurant..."

Sean smiled lovingly at her as he waited for her response. He couldn't wait to bring Bella to meet his mother. But his expression slowly changed from happiness to worry when he heard her refusal.

"Sean, I'm sorry. I... I can't," Bella's voice sounded slightly shaky. Her clenched hands in her lap expressed her guilt.

Sean's worry increased when he noticed her strange expression.

"Bells? Is there something I don't know that I need to know? Why are you apologizing? And why don't you want to see my mother?" He asked.

Sean now realizes that Bella's attitude has changed since he saw her earlier.

'Did I leave for too long, making her upset? And now, she no longer wants to continue our plan!?' he wondered.

Suddenly, the scary thoughts that often arose in his mind while he was abroad returned to haunt him; Bella left and married someone else.

"Sorry if I can't keep my promise to you. I can't give you a chance, Sean. I—"

"Wait! Wait... Bells... Wait..." Sean immediately stopped Bella from continuing. "If it's hard for you when I'm missing in action for too long, I apologize...please forgive me."

After calming the hurricane in his heart, he continued speaking, "But as I said, that was my last assignment. From now on, there will be no more long missions. I'll be stationed in this city and can always be with you."

"Sean, that's not why I broke my promise to you..."

A thin line slowly appeared on Sean's forehead. He heard her words, confusing him even more.

"That's not the reason? So what?" Before Bella could respond, Sean spoke again as he realized something. "Bells, is it because of my aunt? Did something happen? Did she meet you?"

Bella silently took a deep sigh.

"Did you speak with your aunt before meeting me?"

"Not yet. Could you please tell me why you suddenly changed your mind? I know I'm at fault here—I didn't keep my promise. I asked for three months, but now I realize I'm too late. I'm sorry."

"It's not because of your aunt but because of Tristan—"

Sean's heart tightened upon hearing Tristan's name.

"Tristan? Did he threaten you?" he asked, worried.

"No, he didn't. But...Tristan never submitted our divorce papers to the court. I'm still his legal wife, Sean. I'm really sorry I couldn't keep my promise to you to give you time to convince your parents."

Even though her words would hurt Sean, Bella didn't want to give him false hope. Her legal status with Tristan remains unchanged, and she cannot deny her feelings because she still loves Tristan.

It would hurt them even more if she forced herself to be with Sean when her heart longed for and belonged to Tristan.

"I'm really sorry, Sean—" No words could come from her lips now as she saw Sean's calm expression slowly turn miserable.

As this kind and humble man showed his lowest and weakest side, sadness and disappointment, Bella could feel the pain seeping into her heart and soul.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 326: Finally, Meeting Sean Spencer (3)

The previously cool room suddenly felt freezing, as if the temperature had dropped below zero.

Neither of them spoke, and the silence hung heavy in the air.

Both were lost in their thoughts.

Bella still blamed herself for hurting Sean's feelings.

Meanwhile, Sean felt like he had suddenly lost his ability to speak; his mind felt blank. It was as if a black hole was sucking away everything he wanted to say.

Sean silently looked at the woman he loved with mixed emotions. He felt mad, but he didn't know who to blame.

Countless questions, now dancing in his mind, tortured him inside because not a single word would leave his lips. All those sentences only danced in his mind, making his head feel like it was about to crack.

How could the woman who was supposed to be his wife have now returned to her ex-husband?

How could that happen again?

Why did Tristan suddenly return to her after he abandoned her?

Is this all real, or is this just a dream?

He pinches his hand just to make sure he is not dreaming; however, the pain he feels shatters all of his hope.

Sean knew how Bella felt about Tristan. She still harbored feelings for him even though she never said so, and her love for Tristan was deep.

He had tried to win her heart for many years but had never succeeded.

Nevertheless, despite working hard to win her heart and getting rejected by her, he still tried because his love for her was also deep enough to make him willing to wait.

'Were her feelings for Tristan the same as my feelings for her? Would they never fade, would they never end?' This question always appeared in Sean's mind whenever he heard her rejection.

Countless times since he entered this room, Sean took another deep breath. His heart ached when he saw her lower her head, avoiding his gaze.

Instantly, Sean wanted to scold himself for allowing her to feel sad and lost like she did now.

Another few minutes passed, and they were both still lost in their thoughts.

Before long,

Finally, Sean found the question he needed to ask her.

After adjusting his nameless emotions, he asked, "Bella, can I ask you something?"

Bella raised her head to meet Sean's gaze. She was surprised to see him more calm now, different from before. He was no longer gloomy, and a warm smile flashed in his eyes.

She nodded in response.

Sean wanted to ask her if she had returned to Tristan because she loved him, but he couldn't bring himself to say the words.

He took a deep breath before finally asking her, "Did you return to him because of Dax?"

"Yes, and you know my other reason, Sean," Bella paused to fill her stuffy heart with fresh air before continuing. "No matter how hard I try to forget him, my heart and mind always return to him. Because I can't lie to myself that when Tristan and I separated, a huge part of me still attached to him—" Her voice stopped as she felt suffocated.

Bella couldn't continue her words; she could only apologize to him when she saw his shaking eyes, which were enough to tell her he was sad.

Once more, silence hung in the air.

For some reason, Bella wanted to escape the awkwardness between them. She longed to return to their old selves when she hadn't given him a chance. She really missed those times when she felt like they were still friends.

Bella thought Sean would no longer discuss this matter. However, she was wrong. His next question stunned her.

"Bells, you know Tristan never loved you, right? If you return to him, you will end up hurting yourself. You will never feel happy with him. Can you please try to forget about him and continue our plan?"

Sean's eyes flickered with intense emotion as he fixed his gaze on her before saying, "I could help you file for a divorce."

Sighing deeply, Bella responded with a sorry tone, "Sean, I'm really sorry. I can't do that. You know, I love him... In the last few months, he showed Dax and me that he also loves me. It's Tristan who chased me back. Maybe the big chunk of me attached to him is something he only felt and realized when we were separated."

Sean gasped in surprise when he heard that. "He chased you back? And he said he loves you? Are you sure Tristan Sinclair loves you?"

"Yes, I can feel Tristan loves me more than ever before," Bella felt terrible telling him this. She knew she would hurt him even more if she continued her words.

Sean's expression became even gloomier. He said nothing else, but his eyes were still fixed on her.

He opened his mouth a few times, wanting to express his thoughts, but he failed to utter anything.

Then, after another few minutes,

They were both still silent, and the room's vibe was getting colder and somber.

"Sean... can we just return to our old selves? Can we become close friends like we used to in the past?"

He was taken aback by her words. Instead of rushing to answer, he stared at her with a complicated gaze before responding, "I'm sorry, I can't, Bells... I just can't—"

Bella's shoulders dropped upon hearing his words.

This is why Bella never wanted to accept Sean's feelings toward her. She always imagined she would lose him as a friend if this kind of situation happened.

And—

What she imagined in the past was now happening. This man no longer wanted to befriend her, which made her even sadder.

"Sean, I will respect your decision. However, I am still the same as before. You are my best friend, even if you hate me now and want to end our friendship."

Bella felt her heartache upon hearing her own words. It really broke her heart; she wanted to cry but held back. She didn't want her tears over the breakup of their friendship to be misinterpreted.

"Oh my God! I'm sorry if you think that, Bells. I never hate you! I will never be able to hate you. But, right now, I want to stay away from you. Because I'm afraid I will hurt you if I stay around you..."

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 327: Finally, Meeting Sean Spencer (4)
Bella frowned, confused by his words.

"Hurt me?" Bella asked.

"Hmm," Sean said calmly, "I might take you with Dax and bring you somewhere that Tristan would never find us!"

Bella was taken aback by his words. She considered whether Sean was joking, attempting to ease the tension between them.

However, her heart raced when she noticed the seriousness of his words.

'Heaven! Is he serious? Does he really plan to kidnap me and Dax?'

She couldn't help but ask, "Sean, are you joking, right?"

"I'm not joking. I'm serious, Bella Donovan! Knowing that you're returning to Tristan and he loves you back is killing me. My mind can't be rational if I see you with him. So, it's better that we're not friends now, or I might do what I'm planning in my mind."

"Sean—" Bella could only call his name; she didn't know how to respond to his words.

She pressed her lips, not wanting to say anything, afraid she might hurt him even more.

"I want to meet Dax for the last time. I hope you will allow me to meet him," Sean suddenly broke the silence. When he saw Bella looking at him, he continued, "Don't worry; I won't kidnap him. I just need to say a proper goodbye to him. Please—"

"There's no last time, Sean. If you want, I won't forbid you from meeting my son, Dax. He already knows you as my best friend; he calls you uncle. I hope you remember that and stop your thoughts about ending our friendship." Bella sincerely said.

Even though Sean wants to cut ties with her as a friend, Bella will not take his word seriously. She can see that what he said didn't come from his heart. He is just disappointed and angry, and she knows he will heal over time.

Sensing his silence, Bella continued, her voice filled with hope and uncertainty, "I'm having a lunch party with friends and family this weekend at my house. I hope you can join us and meet Dax there. I'll send you my home address..."

"Sure, I will definitely come," Sean replied before standing. "I will not take your time any longer, Bells." He excused himself in the most gentle tone possible.

Bella stood up from her seat and followed him to the door, but she only took a few steps before she saw Sean stop and turn to look at her.

"Let me walk you out—"

"No. You don't have to see me out, Bells..." Sean smiled as he gently patted her shoulder. She blinked and looked at him, surprised by his gesture.

Before she could say anything, Sean had left the room, closing the door behind him.

Bella stood motionless in her place, looking at the closed door with mixed emotions.

A few minutes earlier...

Three people stood before Bella's office: Leo, Dana, and the newly arrived Harper Reed.

They all felt tense waiting for the door to open.

Harper Reed had come to meet Sean Spencer in person. She had met Sean twice while visiting Bella's house in Northern Sweden and seemed eager to see him again this time.

"Leo, how long have they been chatting inside?" Harper asked curiously. It had been almost ten minutes since she joined Leo and Dana, but the door in front of them was tightly closed.

"I think it's almost two hours," answered Dana after checking her watch. She and Leo had been standing almost two hours in front of Bella's office, curious to see Sean Spencer in person — luckily, she didn't have much work now.

"Wow, they've talked for so long—" Harper turned her gaze back to Bella's office door.

"Yeah," Leo responds. He glanced at Harper, "Since when did you know Bella knew Sean Spencer?"

"Since I visit Bella in Sweden. I met Sean there. And I met him twice. Oh right... I heard from Bella that she has known Sean since her teens."

Leo and Dana were amazed to hear that.

"Wow. Looks like I'm the only one who didn't know about Sean?" Leo glanced at Harper.

"I think so because I believe Jack and Stefan know him," Harper chuckled when she saw Leo shake his head, his sulky expression clearly framed on his face.

"Boss, Miss Harper, look—" Dana exclaimed when she saw the door swing open after two hours.

Instantly, everyone looked at the door and was stunned to see Sean Spencer's tall figure, with a sturdy posture, sleek black hair, and all-black clothes, step out from inside.

His handsome face looked calm; however, his cold aura made the air around him feel freezing.

As the trio saw him walking towards them, they felt mesmerized and unable to tear their gaze from him or say any words.

Seeing Sean nod slightly as he passed them without saying anything suddenly made Harper react first.

"Sean! Sean Spencer—" Harper Reed called out unexpectedly. She immediately regretted it when she saw Sean stop and turn to look at her.

"Hey...H-Hi..." Harper continued awkwardly while cursing herself in her heart. "It's...it's me. Ummm...do you remember me?" Inwardly, she scolded herself once more for her foolish question.

Sean frowned, trying to remember the woman before him. But after trying to recall, he couldn't be sure if he ever knew this woman's name. But he did remember seeing her before.

Harper felt her face turn hot when she saw Sean evidently struggle to recognize her.

"I'm sorry, who are you?" Sean asked, pretending to have never met her because he couldn't recall her name.

"Pft!" Leo's soft chuckle could be heard from behind, making Harper feel even more ashamed.

'Damn this man! How could he forget me, even though we've met twice!?' Harper couldn't help but vent her frustration inside.

Trying to save face, she could only laugh while clenching her fists. "Hahaha, it's okay if you don't remember me, Sean. I guess it's been a while since the last time I saw you....I...I mean, it's..it's been a while since we met...uhmmm, I'm Harper, by the way," she said awkwardly.

"Oh, Miss Reed?"

Chapter 328: Embarrassing Encounter!

"Oh, Miss Reed?"

"Yes, yes... that's my last name. Glad you remember me. But you may call me Harper; I mean...please call me Harper. There's no need to call my last name." She grinned awkwardly and walked closer to him.

"Apologies, Miss Reed; I have a weakness in remembering people's faces and names," Sean answered casually in a polite tone, but his gaze flashed cold.

Harper, "..."

She was frustrated, seething beneath the surface, and couldn't help but vent it inwardly. 'Sean Spencer, you such a cold man!'

Maintaining Monalisa's smile, she said, "It's fine, Sean Spencer, it's fine... Ugh, are you done speaking to Bella?"

"Yes, we're done talking; that's why I'm here."

Harper, "..."

"I apologize, Miss Reed, but I have to go now." Sean walked toward the elevator without waiting for Harper to say anything.

Harper felt like a cloud of dark smoke was over her head as she faced Sean's icy demeanor, just like last year when she saw him. How embarrassing!

She stood in place, narrowing her eyes and watching Sean's back until he disappeared from her line of sight.

Sean didn't realize he was causing a girl to vent her anger at him. He didn't have time to think about others when his own heart was filled with sadness.

He stopped right before the elevator. His expression revealed little, but inwardly, he felt like a storm was raging inside.

It's hard for him to understand the whole situation. He had longingly wanted to meet the woman he loved and bring her to meet his mother, but his plan ended like this.

He lost her just like that.

He lost her to Tristan Sinclair.

Sean never imagined Bella and Tristan Sinclair would end up together.

How could it be that Tristan Sinclair, who had left his wife, chased her back?

This was too unreasonable for him to understand.

His hands hanging at his sides were clenched tightly.

Sean restrained himself from hitting the innocent elevator door in front of him.

'Sean...calm... don't let your anger overwhelm you!' He tried hard to maintain his composure.

However now...

He felt lost, as if he were at an intersection and didn't know which path to take.

Sigh!

At a time like this...

Sean wanted to leave the building as fast as possible and calm his chaotic mind and heart. He didn't want Bella to know his deep feelings now, or she would blame herself again.

Deep in his heart, he didn't want to see her sad—he just couldn't bear to witness that.

“Ding!”

The elevator arrival sound pulled Sean back from his trance. He slowly lifted his head, looking at the elevator door before him.

Just as Sean was about to enter, he stopped when he noticed someone he knew standing inside, looking shocked to see him.

“Sean Spencer?” the man asked in surprise.

Sean’s jade-like eyes slightly narrowed, his lips breaking into a faint smile. After so many years, he did not expect to meet this man here.

“Samuel Brown! What are you doing here?” Sean responded while accepting Sam’s friendly handshake.

“Damn! I’m so happy to see you again, Sean. I can’t believe I could meet you here, at my office building,” Sam exclaimed as he stepped out of the elevator with a big smile. He was thrilled to meet his old comrade after so many years.

“So, what brings you to our office?” Sam asked again, curious to see him.

“Wait, you work here? I thought you were in New York.” Sean replied, quickly remembering every detail he knew about Samuel Brown.

“Yes. But I must guard my boss, so I returned to our country.” Sam chuckled. “Seriously, man, why are you here?”

“Oh. I see. Hey, I just met your boss.”

Sam was surprised to hear that. “You know my boss?”

Sean nodded.

“I have two bosses here. Which one? Leo Smith or Ms. Donovan?” he asked.

Sam wanted to clarify that some people see Leo as the company’s boss because Bella hasn’t officially announced her position as the real boss. Only the Director, managerial staff, and a few senior secretaries know her role as the CEO of Quantum Capital.

“Ms. Arabella Donovan,” Sean said.

“Damn! That’s the big boss! How do you know my big boss?” Sam gasped in surprise.

“Yeah! But it’s a long story. I’ll tell you some other time. The short story is that she is my only female friend, Sam. And I have known her since her teens.”

Sam was stunned. He had never heard that Bella had a close relationship with Sean Spencer.

Sam wouldn’t have struggled to locate other retired brothers-in-arms from the Black Eagle if he had known from the beginning. He could have just asked Bella to call Sean for their latest database, trace them all, and invite them to join the Sentinel Network.

“Ha ha ha...” Sam laughed heartily. He felt so happy. “You know what, Sean? I can’t believe I ended up working for her now after we were both on the same team.”

Sam began to explain his duty to guard Bella several months ago. He also informed Sean about his new role as the Director of their new company, Sentinel Network, for the Astington branch.

Sean was even more surprised to hear this information. Since returning from his mission abroad, he had heard about Sentinel Network trying to locate and recruit their retired members.

He had already asked his people to investigate this suspicious company but had not heard anything from them.

But hearing from Sam about the company shocked him. He didn’t expect Sentinel Network to be Bella’s company.

How strange! They are now connected even in their circles.

Sean silently sighed deeply before saying, “Well, Sam... the same as you. I’m also surprised to know you work for her.” He was genuinely relieved to know Bella was in Sam’s capable hands.

Sam scratched his head. “Are you done talking with my boss? Do you mind if we talk for a while in my office?”

“Yeah, I’m done talking to Bella...” Sean suddenly felt sour again, remembering his conversation with Bella. “I’m sorry, Sam, I need to go somewhere. Call me if you need anything, including that talk you want. You still have my number, right?”

“Yes.”

“Good! I’ll see you around—” Sean said and entered the elevator.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 329: I Will Kidnap Her!

As Sean arrived at the underground lobby to get his car, a Rolls Royce Phantom suddenly stopped before him, blocking his way.

With alertness, he narrowed his eyes, staring at the car.

'Who the hell has the balls to stop on my way like this?' Sean muttered, annoyed but also admiring the person's audacity.

If this building had not been owned by the company where Bella works as the CEO, he would have given the driver a good beating.

Sean tries to hold his anger; He doesn't want to make a scene and embarrass Bella. He tried to move aside to take another route to avoid the car.

He really didn't want to overreact, let alone react violently, and his head and mind hurt too much to add any more problems.

As Sean took a step, the rear window glass slowly rolled down. He paused, trying to see the passenger. When his eyes met the person's gaze, his heart hardened instantly upon seeing the man sitting inside, staring back at him.

He froze, but his mind was thinking of several options he could react.

"Hello, Sean Spencer. Would you mind getting in my car?" The man's voice is gentle, but his tone is full of a commanding aura, making Sean's hands clench tightly and his mind in alarm mode.

Sean was ready with words to say to the man, but the man spoke again before he could find the words.

"I'm offering you to enter this car of your own accord, but I have no hesitation in taking another option to get you in my car, Sean Spencer." the man said calmly, without a hint of violent tone.

Sean was impressed and felt challenged by his calm but commanding aura.

Knowing his limited options, Sean gritted his teeth, stepped towards the car, and sat beside the man.

He chuckled lightly before saying in annoyance, "Tristan Sinclair, how classy of you to make me ride with you in your car."

Tristan ignored Sean's remark. He casually looked at him. "Don't worry about your car. Give your car keys to my people," he ordered.

Sean felt even more annoyed, but for some unknown reason, he still did what Tristan asked. He immediately took his car keys and gave them to Tristan's man, who was waiting outside.

"Drive," Tristan said lightly to his driver once Sean had handed his car keys.

"What are you doing here, Tristan Sinclair? Are you trying to kidnap me?" Sean asked, amused by Tristan's annoyed expression.

Although he had met Tristan a few times, this was the first time Sean had seen him show emotions like this.

The funny thing is that just like Tristan, Sean also felt annoyed. However, even though he was angry with Tristan, Sean couldn't express it.

Sean respected Tristan because, based on the little details he knew about this man, even though he was young compared to his father, Tristan was a good man who was one of his father's best friends and allies when he ran for president.

He couldn't be impolite or rude to Tristan even though he wanted to.

Tristan frowned slightly at Sean's words. But a second later, he couldn't help but laugh. "Ha ha ha... Kidnap you? Dear God, Sean Spencer, you think too highly of yourself, Kiddo!"

"You—" Sean clenched his hand tightly, glaring at Tristan in annoyance. "I'm only a few years younger than you, Tristan Sinclair." He sulked, hearing Tristan call him Kiddo. Damn!

Tristan ignored Sean's annoyance.

"I will take you to meet your father now and inform him that you attempted to steal my wife," said Tristan, provoking Sean's anger.

"What the hell are you trying to say, Tristan Sinclair?" Sean's outburst shocked the driver and Reid, seated in the front row.

They both felt tense, unable to make sound, and even afraid to glance in the rearview mirror.

Reid quickly pressed the button before his boss could ask, lifting the car divider. The boss's conversation with the young man in the back was something they couldn't hear.

Once the divider completely separated them from the driver and Reid in the front row, Tristan turned to see Sean.

Tristan's gaze was no longer cold but had slowly turned calm, with warmth radiating from his eyes. This made Sean, who was annoyed, suddenly frown in confusion.

"Listen, Tristan. I've loved Bella long before you met her. I've always respected her choices, including marrying you in the past and now choosing to return to you after you dumped her. I will not force her to love me..."

Sean paused to make sure Tristan understood his feelings toward Bella.

When Tristan heard Sean's words, he felt a sharp nail stabbing his heart, but he said nothing. He listened to Sean in silence, maintaining his calm expression.

"I don't want her to live in hell again," Sean's eyes turned sharp, like a sword ready to stab the man beside him with just his gaze. "Tristan Sinclair, you know how miserable her life was when she was your wife in the past, right?"

Before Tristan could respond, Sean continued, "If kidnapping her could free her from her miserable life, from your old self or your toxic parents... I would do it! Because my love for her is as deep as the ocean!"

Sean suddenly felt relaxed, as if the burden on his heart had been lifted after he had expressed his thoughts to Tristan.

Silence hung in the air as the two men said nothing. However, their eyes were still locked on each other.

After a few more seconds, Tristan finally broke the silence. "Sean, thank you so much."

Sean was stunned to hear that. He frowned, noting how soft Tristan's expression was now.

"Thank you for being by Bella's side when she was at the lowest point in her life. From the bottom of my heart, thank you, Sean. I will never forget your kindness to my wife and son," Tristan said sincerely.

Sean gasped. He didn't expect someone like Tristan Sinclair to say those words.

His annoyance with Tristan slowly faded, but he didn't know how to respond. He just stared back at him, a thin line showing on his forehead.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 330: Know Your Place!

"My wife and son told me a lot about you. Hearing what they said made me realize I

owe you a thank you, Sean Spencer..." Tristan said sincerely. "Thank you so much for what you did for them."

Even though Tristan was annoyed with Sean, he couldn't hate him because this man did nothing wrong. What happened to Bella several years ago was solely his own fault.

"Even though I know you love my wife, I can't hate you for that," Tristan continued, clenching his fist. He held his jealousy because this man had fallen in love with his wife long before him.

Sean frowned, listening to what Tristan was trying to say.

"However, you need to understand where you place, Sean. Bella is my wife, the woman I love, and my son's mother. I hope you don't have feelings for her anymore, especially since I am close to your family and your parents. I don't want my friendship with your father weakened or even damaged because of you."

Although Tristan appreciates what Sean did for his family when they settled in Sweden, he has to draw a line so that Sean understands that there is no room for his feelings towards Bella.

"I understand," Sean responded calmly, but inwardly, he could feel his heartache again. However, he clearly understood what Tristan had said. He knew where he stood in this situation. That's why he couldn't befriend Bella, even though his mind told him otherwise.

Torn by his emotions, Sean was at a loss for words. His silence starkly reflected his inner turmoil. He turned his gaze away, looking in the direction of their car.

He was surprised to realize the car was still in the business district, near Bella's company—they were just circling the area.

Knowing this, Sean couldn't help but laugh inwardly. He thought Tristan would drive him straight to his father, but it seemed he was just teasing him. Sigh!

When Tristan saw Sean, he seemed to avoid eye contact with him as if he had been deeply lost in thought. Tristan couldn't help but ask, "Sean, is there something you want to say to me?"

"Yes," Sean turned to face Tristan again. This time, his gaze was sharp enough to surprise Tristan.

"Tristan Sinclair, do you really love her? I mean, why now? Why not before she left? Did you chase her back because of Dax?" He asked.

Sean expressed his thoughts despite Bella's already answering the question. However, he still needed to hear directly from Tristan.

Tristan didn't immediately answer, but a small smile appeared at the edge of his lips upon hearing Sean's question.

He often heard this question from Bella, his grandfather, and even Isaac Donovan. His answer was always the same, but this time, he needed to clarify why he only chased Bella after she left.

"My mind was too slow to realize that I loved her. I only felt the loss when she left. As soon as she vanished from my life—" Tristan's voice trembled, recalling when he chased her at the airport but didn't find her.

Since then, he felt like half of his soul had been lost with her, and his heart had become empty.

He never even thought about glancing at other women because his mind was filled with only her. The memories about her never left his mind, no matter how hard he tried to forget.

Several times, he even considered being a single man for the rest of his life if he couldn't find her again. But it seems God gave him a second chance to meet and unite with her again.

For this second chance, Tristan vows that he will love Bella much more than she loves him. He will never repeat his stupidity of ignoring his love for her.

...

Sean felt his heart shut once more when he heard Tristan's reply. He could see and feel that all the words Tristan had said came from his heart.

He knew Tristan was honest; Tristan truly loved Bella.

'God! So, I have no chance to win Bella's heart? Really?' Sean couldn't help but vent his frustration. 'Why give me this deep love for her if I cannot be with her? Why give me hope if You never allow me to be with her?'

It was hard for Sean to understand why God didn't grant him a happy ending in his love life or why He didn't favor him.

There were so many questions he needed answers to from God, but of course, now, there was no answer for all those questions.

Sean silently sighed deeply and turned his gaze to the street ahead.

However, it didn't take long for Tristan to break the silence.

"That's my answer to your question, Sean..." Tristan's words snapped Sean back from his miserable thoughts. "Is there anything else you want to ask?"

Sean cleared his throat before responding to Tristan.

"Well, man... this is not a question, but I want to inform you that I will meet Dax this weekend."

Tristan frowned at that. Before he could ask Sean what he meant, Sean spoke again.

"There's nothing I want to ask you. You can ask your driver to stop..." Sean said while glancing behind. He could see his car following theirs.

Even though Tristan was confused by Sean's words, he still asked his driver to stop the car.

"What do you mean about meeting Dax!?" Tristan asked before Sean stepped out of the car.

"I will definitely come to the lunch party at your house—" Sean said and stepped out of the car. He didn't bother to glance at Tristan, who was still confused by the sudden mention of a lunch party.

"Lunch party?" Tristan muttered while watching Sean get into his own car. He didn't know there would be a lunch party at his house; Bella hadn't told him about it.

"Sir, where do we go now?" Reid asked, glancing at Tristan through the rearview mirror.

"Office—" Tristan answered as he took out his cell phone. He needed to ask his wife whether she had arranged a party or if Sean just wanted to piss him off.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 331: He Will Heal Over Time

In Bella's office at Quantum Capital, Harper Reed sat opposite Bella.

She stared silently at Bella, who seemed to be in a trance since entering her office a few minutes ago.

Harper had asked Bella several times about her meeting with Sean. Still, Bella only gave her a confused gaze and zero words, making Harper even more curious.

She still remembered seeing Sean looking annoyed when he left Bella's office earlier. From his look, Harper guessed that Bella and Sean's meeting didn't go well for him. And now she knows it didn't go well for Bella, either. Bella looked distressed and unable to say a word to her.

This was the first time Harper had seen Bella look distressed and perplexed.

With a deep sigh, Harper walked to the minibar to make coffee lattes for herself and Bella.

Before long, Harper returned to the seating area. She saw Bella still pensive in her seat, staring at the cloudy sky outside.

Harper shook her head and placed Bella's cup of latte on the table.

After she settled beside her, she said, "Bella, I promise I won't ask again about your meeting with Sean. But you need to return to yourself, huh?"

Harper's voice was filled with genuine concern. But Bella still ignored her.

"Alright, girl. You need to drink your latte. It might help you feel better quickly," Harper continues. She no longer looks at Bella but enjoys her coffee while looking at the scenery outside.

An amusing smile frames Harper's lips. She finds it hard to believe the weather outside seems to mirror Bella's gloomy mood.

"Wow, even the universe feels gloomy just like you, Bella Donovan," Harper said casually, not expecting Bella to respond.

After a few more minutes, the silence still hung in the air.

Harper glanced at Bella a few times to check if she was feeling gloomy, and of course, yes.

However,

It didn't take long; a faint smile appeared on Harper's lips when she saw Bella finally drink her coffee latte.

This was a good chance for her to speak again, hoping that this time, Bella would no longer give her the silent treatment, which she disliked the most.

"Girl, I know something happened between you and Sean earlier. But... can you stop giving me the silent treatment?" Harper said, smiling bitterly at Bella, who still kept her mouth shut.

“Damn Bella Donovan! If you keep your mouth shut, I’d better return to New York now!” Harper said while placing her empty glass on the table, trying to stand up from her seat.

However, before Harper could stand, Bella glanced at her, panicked.

Harper laughed inwardly, happy her trick worked; Bella finally paid attention to her.

“Okay, girl, tell me what happened,” Harper said softly. “Please, don’t torture yourself. Share it with me, like you always do, okay?”

Bella took a deep breath, hearing Harper’s words. Harper was right; she needed to talk to someone to lessen her confusion.

“You know what, Harper,” Bella’s voice sounded hoarse and low. “Sean wants to end our friendship. He said he didn’t want to be friends with me anymore. Why did he do that? Why doesn’t he want to be friends with me?”

Harper was surprised to hear that. But she could understand why Sean decided to do that; the poor man must be heartbroken to know the woman he loves returned to her husband.

Now Harper understands why Sean looked so chilly when they talked earlier; he must be hurt.

“What should I do now, Harper? Do I need to talk to him again?” Bella asked again, causing Harper to look at her with sympathy.

Bella had tried to be strong when talking to Sean before, but she felt like her heart shattered the moment he left the room. This wasn’t the first time she had broken Sean’s heart, and knowing he was hurting again made her feel like she hated herself.

Harper looked concerned at Bella, especially when she saw her eyes slightly red.

“Oh, my dear friend Bella... you don’t have to do anything. Just give him time to heal. He didn’t mean what he said. Sean is a reasonable, kindhearted man of honor fella. Believe me, Sean will return to his usual self over time. So, don’t be too down in sadness like this.”

Bella narrowed her eyes at Harper, her voice slightly raised, and she felt curious about Harper’s words, “Harper... Is it true that Sean didn’t really mean what he said? Are you sure?”

“A gentleman like Sean? Of course...one hundred percent sure!” Harper continued, trying to calm Bella for her confidence.

After a few more minutes of silence, she could see from Bella's eyes and lips that she finally felt much better. It seemed like her friend could now put aside her unreasonable worry about Sean.

To keep Bella from overthinking the meeting with Sean and make her smile, Harper chatted about lighter subjects, such as the recent celebrity's silly gossip, until the clock screamed lunch.

Leo and Sam come knocking on Bella's office as Bella and Harper are about to leave.

"You guys came at the nick of time." Harper stood from her seat, looking at the two men standing near the door. "Do you want to eat here or go outside?" she asked. Then, she looked at Bella. "How about you, Bella!?"

Before Bella could answer, Sam said, "There's no need to go outside. I'll cook for us." He offered, surprising Bella and Harper as they stared at him.

"You cook? You? Cook?" Bella asked. She had never heard anything about Sam's cooking skills.

"Yeah. Sam secretly is a talented chef, Boss—" Leo smiled. Leo had already tasted Sam's incredible cooking in the last few months. He has concluded that he was in love with Sam's cooking. It matched the cooking of professional chefs he had ever tasted, including his favorite French restaurant, Chez Henri.

"Yes, Boss, I can cook. But don't listen to Leo; he's praising me too much..." Sam smiled while rubbing his forehead. "Boss, let's go. I'll grill meat for us."

Bella could see that Sam was very confident about his cooking. So, she nodded and followed them upstairs.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 332: The Blacklist!

Later, they all arrived on the twentieth floor.

At the same time, Stefan emerged from his computer room looking messy, wearing a crumpled white T-shirt and sweatpants.

Stefan was shocked to see Bella and the others appear before him. His hand hung in the air before he could scratch his hair.

"Oh, sister... why are you all here?" He asked, confused.

"Sam will cook for us, so we are all here to wait," Harper said while walking to the living room.

Stefan, also in love with Sam's cook, smiled as he looked at Sam. "Bro, don't forget about me. I'm also hungry now," he grinned. Then he turned to Bella, "Sister, follow me. I need to discuss Donovan Group with you."

Following Stefan to his computer room, Bella felt tense, anticipating news about the Donovan Group.

Furthermore, Bella was also eager to hear about her abusive father.

Since arriving in this city with her mother, she has not received any updates about her father or older brother, Henry—whether they were still searching for her mother.

Bella wanted to call her aunt, but she was holding back. She tried to limit communication with her Aunt Emma, worried her father would put a spy or bugs in her aunt's house.

"What's happening there? Is everything under control?" Bella asked curiously as she settled onto the single sofa, her eyes beaming with anticipation for any news from Stefan.

Stefan was excited to share the good news with Bella.

"Well, congrats, sis... You are now the biggest shareholder of the Donovan Group. We acquired more than fifty percent of the Donovan Group shares, and you can now hold a shareholders meeting if you want to change the company management."

Bella was no longer surprised to hear about Stefan's success in acquiring company shares. But her question was, did they buy them at the lowest price?

She wanted to make them all suffer, especially her uncles and Father, who owned a significant share in the company.

"You bought them at the lowest price, right?"

"Of course, sister. Don't worry, you didn't spend much money to buy them all...only a dime on the dollars!"

"That's perfect, Stefan!"

"The funny thing is that your father and uncles have sold almost all of their company shares, keeping only around five percent. How foolish of them!"

Stefan chuckled, feeling joy in helping his sister seek revenge against her father and uncles.

Bella's smile couldn't hide how happy she was now. Her plan to take over the Donovan Group would soon be achieved.

"You did a great job, Stefan. Thank you—"

Notably, her father and uncles would be left with a small living space and a few dimes for their daily expenses. She would ensure they were penniless the moment she took over the company.

"But sister, you have to clean up the mess in the company faster."

Stefan's words caused Bella to frown slightly, unable to grasp what he was trying to say.

"Bro, can you say it clearly?"

Stefan explained that the company is facing legal issues due to a bribery case involving government officials from several years ago, which caused all business partners to rush to sever their ties with the Donovan Group.

The company is suffering financially because it has lost its source of income and is using its savings to pay employee salaries.

As the company's stability worsened daily, some top employees started to resign, affecting the company's reputation.

If the Donovan Group does not resolve the matter quickly, it will become an empty shell company. It will be hard to recover, and it might go bankrupt and beyond revival.

Stefan sighed deeply, looking concerned at Bella.

"So, Sister... I hope you don't delay solving this matter. I suggest you arrange a shareholder meeting immediately and announce that new management will take over the company."

Bella smiled faintly when she heard Stefan's long explanation. She had already anticipated all of that and had made a plan for the company's future.

Everything she is doing now at the Donovan Group is not merely a way for her to take revenge on her uncles and Father. Of course not. She had thought about the fate of the thousands of employees in the Donovan Group.

She will not allow the company to go bankrupt and make thousands of workers unemployed in a short time. She refused to become a corporate raider.

“Stefan, no worries, I have a clear plan for the company...” Bella said casually.

Stefan frowned but didn’t ask anything, only listening to her continue her words.

“You just need to carry out the plan we discussed. After acquiring a number of shares, wait two weeks to summon them to a shareholder meeting,” Bella reminded Stefan again, worried that he had forgotten about all of her plans.

“I still remember your plans, sis. No worries. Trust me.” Stefan lightly chuckled. “But, Sis... may I ask you something?”

“Sure. What do you want to ask?”

“What exactly is your plan with the company after you take over? Why do you look so calm knowing the company is on the verge of bankruptcy?” Stefan asked curiously, noticing how calm she was.

Bella smiled at Stefan before she responded.

“I just want to find out who our allies are in the future. If they stay with us when the company is having trouble, they are true partners,” she explained but paused when she saw Stefan’s shocked expression.

She continued, “Likewise with employees, from directors to those in the lowest positions, I need to test them all too. Those who stay and work their ass off when the company is in trouble are the people who deserve to be promoted later when I take over the company.”

“But those who decide to abandon their position while the company needs to run normally will be blacklisted. They are traitors or my Uncle’s followers.” Bella said.

“Blacklisted?” Stefan frowned.

“Yes, they will not be able to be hired at the Donovan Group, RDF Group, or Sinclair Group. I will ask Tristan to put them on the blacklist.”

A sinister smile slowly framed her pretty face before continuing, “Ah, this blacklist also applies to all companies that leave or cut ties with Donovan Group. They will not have a chance to get business cooperation with us!”

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 333: Lucas Donovan’s Suspicions

Stefan couldn’t help but clap, satisfied with Bella’s epic plan for the company.

“You know what, sis? Now I really believe what Boss Jack always said...”

“What did he say?” Bella’s eyebrows slowly rose, curious to know what Jack had been saying about her to Stefan.

“Boss Jack said you are so ruthless in business. That’s why he needs you to take care of Quantum Capital in this country.”

Bella was speechless.

“Jeez... what does he mean I’m ruthless? I’m not, alright?” A faint smile framed her face before continuing. “I only try to be nice to my enemies. I give them what they ask for—”

“Hahaha, alright, sis, you are not ruthless; you are only being nice.”

“Yes, that’s the right word.” Bella grinned.

“OK, sis, I will follow your plan.” Stefan gave her an O sign with his fingers, confirming that he understood what she wanted.

After hearing Stefan confirm that he would carry out her plan, Bella was satisfied. She also told him that she could only return to East City after her mother’s surgery. Once she returns, she might stay for a few days to clean up the entire company.

After finishing talking about the Donovan Group, Stefan suddenly remembered Lucas Donovan.

“Sister, do you want to know about your father?”

Instantly, Bella’s eyes beamed with curiosity. She nodded, “Yes, please—”

“Your father is going crazy,” Stefan stifled a laugh. “He’s still trying to find your mother. He sent many people to look for her. Your father seems to want to turn East City upside down.”

Bella could only shake her head slowly while smiling, imagining her father venting his anger and frustration because he couldn’t find any trace of her mother.

“Sister, you need to be careful. It seems your father and brother are starting to suspect that you are the one who helped your mother. Your father asked people to look for you in this city...”

Her smile gradually faded when she heard that. “He sent people looking for me here?”

“Yes, that’s the information I found. Also, they are coming to this city to meet your grandfather. According to my collected data, they will arrive in this city tomorrow.”

Instantly, Bella could feel her blood run cold, knowing her father would visit this city.

“Do they know my grandfather’s house address?” Bella asked, worried. Her mother’s location could be exposed if her father knew her grandfather’s address.

“I’m not sure—” Stefan didn’t have that information. He only knew that Bella’s father and brother had booked plane tickets to the capital tomorrow.

Bella asked if Stefan knew what exactly her father had discussed with her Grandpa over the phone. She was curious and worried because her Grandpa hadn’t mentioned anything to her about this.

It was odd because her Grandpa usually discussed things with her before making any decisions, especially concerning her father.

“Yes, but I didn’t hear their conversation. Because this relates to your Grandpa, you forbade me to do that, right?” Stefan explained. He knew there was communication between Lucas and Isaac Donovan, but he didn’t record or even listen in.

Bella nodded. She said nothing but took her cell phone out of her pocket and called her grandfather.

On the third ring, she was surprised to hear her grandfather’s butler, Nick, greeting her from the other end.

“Hello, Young Miss—”

“Nick, can I talk to Grandpa? There’s something important I need to discuss with him,” Bella’s tone was urgent enough to raise Nick’s concern.

“Pardon me, Young Miss. The master is having lunch with the Young Master and your mother. If I may ask, would you like to talk to him now, or would you prefer to wait until they finish with their lunch? I think they will finish in about twenty minutes...”

Bella sighed slightly. If she talked now, her mother or Dax might get suspicious. But she was also eager to know what exactly her Grandpa had discussed with her father, as it was related to her mother’s safety.

“I will talk to him later. But can I ask you something, Nick?”

“Yes, please, Young Miss...”

“You were there when Grandpa and my father conversed, right? So, have you overheard anything about the conversation between Grandpa and my father?”

"I...I don't really know the details of their conversation. But it seems your father insisted on meeting your grandfather to discuss company matters."

"Did Grandfather give him permission to meet?"

"Yes. They will meet tomorrow."

Instantly, Bella's heart sank. Her concerns were valid, and her fear became even more apparent knowing this.

Bella suspected that her father's reason for meeting her grandfather was merely an excuse to discuss office matters. She believed that her father wanted to check on her whereabouts and see where her grandfather lived, as her family suspected she lived with her grandfather in the capital.

"Why didn't Grandpa tell me?" Bella muttered softly, venting her worries to herself. "Father would know about me, Dax, and Mom..."

Nick immediately responded as if he knew Bella's concerns. He said, "Young Miss, don't worry, the Old Master won't meet your father at this house but somewhere else."

Bella breathed a sigh of relief upon hearing that.

"That's good to hear, Nick. I hope Grandpa will keep my mother's location a secret."

"I am sure he will. Young Miss, I'll tell your grandfather you wish to see and talk to him as soon as he finishes lunch."

"That would be very nice of you, Nick. Thank you very much."

After ending the call, Leo entered the room and told them that lunch was ready.

Bella immediately followed Leo and Stefan, who were walking ahead of her. She was hungry and curious to try Sam's cooking.

When she arrived at the dining area, Bella saw Harper sitting and smiling at her.

"Everything alright?" Harper whispered as soon as Bella sat beside her.

"Yes. Stefan just updated me about my family matters. You know about the Donovan Group, right?"

"Yeah, I heard about it yesterday from them. I feel sorry for you, girl. I hope you can sort things out soon—"

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 334: Lunch Party Invitation

“Yeah, I heard about it yesterday from them. I feel sorry for you, girl. I hope you can sort things out soon—” Harper said in genuine concern.

“We are almost there,” Bella replied bitterly. She felt her problems had doubled since she returned to this country. Both her family and Tristan’s family awaited her around every corner.

“Harper, Bella, would you girls mind to stop talking?” Leo’s voice distracted them as they looked at him. “There are delicious foods before us. Let’s eat—”

They stopped talking, their eyes fixed on the delicious dishes on the table.

Bella’s eyes beamed when she saw steak, stir-fry vegetables, and fried rice served in the middle for them to share.

“Oh, is this Hibachi fried rice and steak?” Bella asked excitedly, looking at Sam, who was sitting opposite. She remembered eating this dish at her favorite Japanese restaurant.

Bella loves fried rice combined with steak. However, even though she likes fried rice, she is very picky about it. If it doesn’t taste good, she won’t eat it.

“Yes, Boss. Stefan said you are fond of steak Hibachi fried rice with veggies on the side, so I made this for you. Try it,” Sam said as he finished arranging all the food on the table. He placed the fried rice, the steak, and the veggies in separate big bowls, with the biggest bowls filled with fried rice.

“Wow! Stefan told you about my weakness! I can’t wait to taste it, Sam,”

Bella’s voice filled with excitement as she began to fill her plate with a few slices of meat and fried rice. She decided to taste the fried rice first, leaving the vegetables untouched.

She hoped the taste would remind her of the small Japanese restaurant she had discovered near her apartment in Central Park.

Bella didn’t rush to put a spoonful of fried rice into her mouth but smiled when she saw all eyes focused on her as if they wanted to hear her opinion.

When she finally tried a spoonful of fried rice, her eyes widened, surprised at how similar it tasted to her favorite Hibachi fried rice.

“Wow! This is good, Sam—”

“Glad you like it, Boss. Now try the steak,” Sam said, his eyes beaming, looking at Bella excitedly and worriedly.

When the piece of meat entered her mouth and melted with the black pepper barbecue sauce, it left her speechless. She stared at Sam incredulously.

After she swallowed, Bella placed her cutlery on the plate and raised her thumbs to praise him.

“Oh my god! This is heavenly delicious, Sam. You are indeed a talented chef...”

“Really? It’s that good?” Harper, who had not yet eaten, immediately followed Bella and tried her steak. Instantly, her expression mirrored Bella’s. She was impressed with the delicious grilled meat.

“Wow! Sam, this is so delicious!! You should open a restaurant, Sam!” Harper also praised him with her thumbs.

“Girl, can you both stop praising Sam? If you continue, he might fly to the moon. Hurry, hurry, eat, or Stefan will finish all the meat before you know it...” Leo chuckled when he saw Stefan’s hand hanging in the air.

Bella and Harper stopped speaking and turned to see Stefan.

Stefan was embarrassed, having almost emptied all the meat and fried rice on the table. Now, all eyes stared at him as if they wanted to say, “Seriously?” with their gaze. He could only grin and let them take the remaining food on the plate.

Not long after, the lively lunch finally ended.

Before everyone returned to their offices, Bella invited them to her house for a weekend lunch party.

“Wow, you are so kind, Bella. After so many months of working for you, you finally invited me to your house,” Leo said sarcastically.

Bella, “...”

A half-smile appeared on his lips before he continued, “Can I bring someone?” Leo asked casually, but his question stunned everyone in the room.

They looked at him with huge questions plastered on their foreheads.

Bella was the first to ask, “Who is the lucky person you would bring to my lunch party?” she asked curiously.

“Wow! You finally found your new love, Leo?” Harper couldn’t help but comment. Her tone couldn’t hide how curious she was about the girl who could tame Leo’s cold heart. “I’m so proud of you, brother—”

Leo’s face slowly turned dark when he heard that.

“What the hell are you both talking about, Harper?” Leo said, looking at Bella and Harper. He scolded them through his gaze, but the two women ignored his sulkiness.

“Oh, you haven’t expressed your feelings to her yet?” Harper asked casually.

“Ah, so you’re only interested in her? But she hasn’t returned your feelings yet?” Bella chimed in, adding fuel to the fire.

“Come on, Leo... You should bring that girl to meet me. I’ll help you make her fall in love with you.” Harper giggled.

Leo, “...”

“Forget it! I won’t bring anyone,” Leo responded. He was now afraid to bring Dana to the party, worried that these two would scare her off if she discovered his feelings.

“Why?” Harper felt disappointed hearing Leo’s refusal. “You should bring her, Leo... I will help you.”

“Yes, bring her.”

“Damn! You both will scare her,” Leo narrowed his eyes, looking at them as if he wanted to ask them to stop meddling in his love life.

“Who the hell is she—”

Bella’s palm landed on Harper’s mouth to stop her from speaking. Harper could only glare at Bella, but eventually, she shut up.

After Bella keeps Harper shut her mouth, she turns her gaze to Leo and smiles at him, “Leo, bring her. I promise you, we won’t ask her anything.”

Leo didn’t respond to that but stood from his seat.

“Alright, girl, I won’t say anything more about it. I will head to my office now. I have so many things to do. Bye—” Leo said and walked like running toward the elevator.

He was too nervous; Bella and Harper could guess the woman she liked.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 335: Know Leo's Love Interests

"Geez, he is so secretly..." Harper chuckled as she saw Leo's back vanish from her line of sight. Then, she glanced at Sam and Stefan.

"Do you guys know who the woman Leo's like!? Spill the tea, guys." Harper asked.

Sam shook his head while continuing to tidy the desk. Try to ignore the question.

Harper chuckled. She looks at Stefan.

"How about you, Stefan?"

Stefan, who had just put down his cutlery, frowned when he saw Harper's curious gaze.

"What is it?" Stefan asked, clueless about Harper's question. Earlier, he was too busy eating and uninterested in their discussion.

"Do you know Leo's girlfriend?"

Stefan's expression clearly showed reluctance. "Leo has a girlfriend? Since when?"

Harper frowned, doubting Stefan didn't know about it. She could see he seemed to be hiding something. She didn't give up; she turned to Bella. "You ask him..."

"Stefan, you know about it, right?"

Stefan took a deep sigh while looking Bella in the eyes. He didn't have a chance to lie to her. He could only be honest, "Yes, I know."

"Who?"

"His secretary," Stefan said, feeling sorry for Leo.

Sam and he were aware of Leo's feelings for Dana, but Leo never had the courage to express his feelings to Dana; he only often talked to them about her.

Bella and Harper were surprised to hear that.

"Which one?" Bella asked curiously. She knew Leo had so few female secretaries who helped him.

"The one with pixie-cut hair..."

Instantly, a faint smile appeared on Bella's lips. She knew who that woman was because only one secretary had a pixie-style haircut.

“Alright, thanks for the info, Stefan,” Bella said while standing from her seat.

“Bella, you know about that?” Harper asked, matching Bella’s step toward the elevator.

“Yes, I know about that.” Bella glanced at the curious Harper. “Let’s go. I will show you who the lucky girl is.”

The next day.

Isaac Donovan decided to meet his son Lucas Donovan and Henry at the Starlight apartment in the city center.

He owned this property and usually stayed there when visiting the city.

When moving to this city, Isaac didn’t choose this place; he preferred his house at Little Heaven to live with Bella and Dax because he knew his great-grandson needed a lot of space to run around.

Isaac Donovan sipped his green tea while looking calmly at his son and grandson sitting across from him. Since they arrived, they only exchanged greetings, making him impatient to wait any longer.

They sat in the spacious living room for about ten minutes. Still, Lucas Donovan had not yet mentioned what he wanted to discuss.

Isaac put his teacup on the table and narrowed his eyes at his foolish son.

“Lucas, this is my nap time. You should talk now, or I will go to sleep,” he said.

Isaac’s sharp gaze was enough to make Lucas snap. However, before Lucas could say anything, Isaac continued, “Talk now, or leave my house—”

Lucas clenched his hand into a tight fist before he spoke.

“Father, we very badly need you in East City. Please, you must return to East City. We have serious problems with the company...”

Lucas began, expressing his thoughts about the Donovan Group. His older brother, Jacob Donovan, had asked him to discuss this with their father.

He informed his father that his younger brother, Thomas Donovan, might face imprisonment or have to pay a hefty fine to the government for bribing officials to secure a business project.

Lucas also mentioned how the value of their company's shares had fallen to the point that several shareholders were selling their shares at the lowest price, but no one wanted to buy.

Isaac listened in silence, trying to maintain his ease and calm to prevent himself from showing interest.

"Father, if you don't return to help us, then I believe there will be no more Donovan Group in a few months."

Lucas's voice sounded shaky. He was too emotional, thinking their family company would end.

When Lucas was about to continue, he noticed his father looked calm. There was no clue he was sad or angry that the company he built was about to go bankrupt.

'Why does Father look so relaxed? Why doesn't he seem to care about what happened to the company?' Lucas thought. Just as he was about to ask, Isaac spoke.

"Why are you telling me about that? Did you forget I no longer have authority in the company?" Isaac said calmly, shocking Lucas and Henry. They didn't expect him to refuse to help this fast.

Henry was utterly stunned. This was the first time he had seen his grandfather refuse to help the company; he didn't even care that his youngest son was facing prison time.

"Grandpa, even though you no longer work at the company, how can you be indifferent to the company you built yourself?" Henry couldn't help but ask.

"Oh, my dear Henry... your grandfather will soon leave this mortal world. So, I no longer care about worldly matters like company, wealth, or whatever. I will let you, young people, handle these matters. Do you understand?"

Henry, "..."

"Grandpa, why do you say that? You...you are still young and healthy..." Henry was speechless.

"Hahaha, thank you for your compliment, Henry. But your Grandpa is no longer useful. Even if I return to East City, I won't be able to help the company..." Isaac said while gazing at Lucas.

Isaac's smile slowly faded before he said, "Don't expect anything from me, Lucas. I won't be able to help you or your brothers..."

Lucas's expression hardened upon hearing that. Just by looking at how serious his father was, Lucas knew seeking help from him was a dead end.

However, he needed to try what his older brother asked him to do.

He sighed deeply before saying, "Father, my older brother mentioned wanting to borrow some of your property to help pay off our debts and help our younger brother..."

No matter how angry he was at hearing his son's words, Isaac Donovan tried to control his emotions and silently took a deep breath before speaking.

"You and your brother are so greedy!"

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 336: Greedy Sons!

"You and your brother are so greedy!" Isaac's sharp gaze locked with Lucas.

He continued, "I already handed over my property and even my company, and now you still want my other assets, too! Are you trying to push me to my grave early, son?"

His heart hurt deeply. He had lost count of how often his sons had disappointed him. He felt he had failed to raise them; their hearts and minds were focused only on money and power. They had become soulless people.

How embarrassing!

When Lucas saw his father's annoyed expression, he immediately clarified his words earlier.

"Father, please accept my apologies. What we meant is that we only intended to borrow your property. We assure you we will return it if the company is no longer in trouble."

Isaac took a deep breath. Lucas's explanation didn't lessen his disappointment. He was suddenly tired of talking to his son and needed to end this conversation.

"I understand what you mean. But, Lucas, go back to East City. Tell your brothers I can't help with the company or Thomas."

"Father, please—"

Isaac raised his hand to stop him from continuing his words.

"I told you never to engage with any dirty business, not even the murky ones, when we are this big! But you and your brothers never listen and never learn." Isaac stood from his seat and asked Nick to see Lucas and Henry out of his apartment.

Lucas's shoulders sank, knowing they could not get anything from their father.

"Father, wait...please... Wait..." Lucas stopped his father before he walked outside. "I know you know about my daughter, Bella. Can you give me her address? I have something important to discuss with her."

Isaac abruptly halted when he heard Lucas mention Bella. He turned to look at Lucas with a dark expression as if a storm cloud loomed over his head.

"Why are you looking for Bella?" Isaac Donovan furrowed his brow, restraining his anger, recalling how foolish his son was to trade his daughter to an older man.

"You want to sell her again? Are you really her father? How could you have such an idea, Lucas Donovan?" Isaac continued scolding his son.

Lucas gritted his teeth. "Of course not, Father. I won't do that again," Lucas said. He was stressed because his friend Bradley blamed him for Bella's refusal and what had happened to his company.

"So, why are you looking for her?" Isaac asked. He was still suspicious that his son had other motives for finding Bella.

"I just want to know where she lives because...you know... she's my daughter," Lucas replied.

Lucas thought Bella would stay with his father in this place. Still, seeing the house, which was not very big and showed no trace of Bella ever having set foot there, he now believed that his father only lived there with Nick, his butler.

"I don't know where she is. But the last time I spoke to her, she said she lived abroad. Be frank with me, and don't insult my intelligence, son. Why do you want to know where she lives?"

"She lives abroad?" Lucas was shocked. He thought Bella lived in this city, so he sent many people to look for her.

The last information he heard was that Bella worked at the Quantum Capital building. However, since the incident when Bradley sent gangsters to capture her, Bella never appeared near that building again, as if she had moved to another company.

After thinking quickly about his family matters, Lucas decided to be honest with his father.

“Alright, Father, I’ll be honest. The reason is that I need to find Natalie. She left our house a few days ago, and somehow, I believe Natalie is now in Bella’s house. That’s why I want to find—”

“Bwa ha ha ha...” Suddenly, Isaac’s booming laughter echoed in the room, stopping Lucas from continuing his words. “Oh, Lucas, I’m so glad Natalie finally left you. She should have done that years ago.”

Lucas’s face hardened instantly as he remembered how Natalie had left him.

Despite feeling a solid surge of anger, he couldn’t express it in front of his father. He could only clench his hand tightly and curse Natalie for what she had done.

“I don’t know where Bella or your wife is! You might go now, Lucas. I feel exhausted and need to take a nap.” Isaac continued to walk and signaled Nick, who stood near the door, to send Lucas and Henry out.

Isaac no longer cared to talk to his son and grandson. He was too mentally and physically exhausted to hear how annoying his kids were.

All his sons were too greedy; money blinded their eyes and ears. His decision to leave the company mattered to them, and it was the right one; he no longer needed to stress about it.

Entering his bedroom, Isaac’s dark expression slowly faded when he saw his granddaughter, Bella, sitting at the work desk at the end of the room, facing the laptop in front of her.

His smile slowly appeared on his lips when he saw Bella looking at him.

Isaac stepped into the sitting area near the work desk and asked her, “Are you satisfied with what you saw and heard?”

Bella closed her laptop and joined her grandfather. After sitting in front of him, she nodded.

“Yes, thank you, Grandpa, for letting me eavesdrop on your conversation with your sons....I mean, my father,” she said, smiling when she saw him chuckle.

“Well, Grandpa, your acting is terrific. My father and Henry didn’t doubt what you said about me. They believed it right away.” Bella continued, complimenting her grandpa with a thumbs-up.

Last night, after chatting with her grandfather, Bella decided to hear their conversation. That's why, since morning, she has been in this apartment setting up the camera to see and hear their meeting.

"Thanks to you, Bella... You've told me what my stupid son wanted to talk about. So, I could pull off my acting skills—"

Isaac laughed happily; however, it didn't last long. His laugh stopped when he remembered how his son asked for more property to sell to cover the company's debts.

What a shame!

Chapter 337: I Need Your Help, Bella

Bella failed to notice her grandfather's sad expression when he thought about how humiliated his sons were.

"Grandpa, so what do you want to do with Uncle Thomas?" Bella asked.

Even though she wanted to punish her uncles and father, Bella was a little worried about her grandfather's feelings about Thomas Donovan being thrown into prison for his past bribery case. So, he needs his opinion about it.

Isaac was silent for a moment, turning his gaze outward, trying to weigh what was best for his sons, especially the youngest.

Only this time did Bella finally see her grandfather's sadness and feel sorry for asking about this matter.

However, she had no choice but to ask her grandfather's opinion to protect his feelings. As for herself, she didn't care about her uncles and father because she didn't have a close and harmonious relationship with them.

When she saw her Grandpa looking confused, she continued, "Well, Grandpa, I can help Uncle Thomas avoid prison. If you want me to stop, I will ask my people—"

"Don't..." Isaac Donovan returned his gaze to Bella, stopping her. "Don't do anything. Let the legal process continue. If he is guilty, let him serve his sentence. Don't help him!"

Bella was slightly surprised to see the seriousness in Grandpa's eyes. She thought her grandfather would plead forgiveness for his youngest son, but the way he spoke now clearly showed he didn't have a plan to do so.

Isaac's voice trembled with regret as he started to share his heartache with Bella.

“You see, Bella, my three sons are where they are now because I failed them. I didn’t teach them the value of hard work or the importance of learning from failure. They were raised in privilege, always seeking instant success, and never understanding the process of failure.”

After trying to calm his anger inwardly, Isaac continued, “My sons have become what they are now. They want to succeed through shortcuts, bribing the authorities, or committing any violations to achieve their goals because I failed to educate them properly.”

“Gr-Grandpa,” Bella faltered, unable to finish her sentence as she saw her grandfather trying to hold back tears and blaming himself. She empathized with his sadness in silence.

“Haah...” Isaac let out a deep breath while trying to smile at Bella, even though his smile failed to reach his eyes.

“This is all because I have pampered them since they were young. Now I regret it too much.” Isaac paused again to take a deep breath before continuing, “Well, my granddaughter, like I said to your father earlier, I won’t do anything about what happened in East City. But I need you to help me with something.” Suddenly, his eyes turned sharp, and he looked at Bella.

“Yes, Grandpa, please say so...”

“Several children of my old friend work at the company. I hope you don’t touch them if they are good, but you can do anything with them if they don’t work properly.”

Bella nodded, agreeing with her grandfather’s request. “Sure, I will—”

“Good! Also, please ensure that no employees are harmed by this matter. If the company is unable to provide ongoing employment, ensure that they receive their retirement funds.”

“Understand, Grandpa.”

“I sincerely hope that you can bring the Donovan Group back to the level of success it had in the past. Good luck, my dear.”

“Definitely. I will make the Donovan Group the number-one company in East City again. Don’t worry about it, Grandpa. I have big plans for the Donovan Group. Right now, I’m just cleaning up and figuring out who is an enemy or a friend deserving cooperation.”

“Good. Good...” Isaac’s gloomy smile slowly changed. His smile returned to his eyes; no deep sadness was left, which relieved Bella.

After several minutes of discussing the Donovan Group matter, Bella finally excused herself. She needed to return to her office; she had a lot of work to finish before the weekend arrived.

However, when Bella left the room, she saw Nick pacing in front of it, looking tense.

“What’s wrong, Nick? Why do you look like a debt collector is chasing you?” Bella asked.

They saw Nick stop in front of them. His expression still looked the same: anxious and worried.

“Sir, Young Miss... I just got information. Your father has placed several people in this building and outside to monitor the situation. It seems like you can’t leave the apartment immediately, or they’ll know you’re here.”

“What the hell, Lucas Donovan! Doesn’t he believe me? I thought he believed me when I said Bella was not here but abroad?” Isaac said, annoyed.

“Grandpa, relax. Don’t be angry. If your high blood pressure flares up, Nick and I will be the ones in trouble.” Bella smiled, trying to calm Grandpa down.

Isaac Donovan took a deep breath, trying to calm his mind and heart and suppress his anger towards his son.

“You’re right, Bella... You are right. It would be annoying if I went to the hospital because of my stupid sons...” Isaac smiled slightly before he continued. “But it looks like you will be stuck here,” he said, leading Bella to sit in the living room. “Alright, let’s sit and talk.”

Bella didn’t answer him. Instead, she turned to Nick, who still looked tense, and followed them.

“Don’t worry about it, Nick. I’ll take care of all those people. They’ll be gone in no time—” she said, taking out her cell phone to call Stefan while settling opposite her Grandpa.

The phone call was picked up on the first ring. She immediately asked Stefan to check on her father’s spies surrounding the building.

“Bro, I need you and the boys to kick all of them out of here as soon as possible. I need to get back to the office without those people coming at me or following me when I exit the building,” Bella said casually.

Isaac and Nick, overhearing her, were surprised to learn she was capable of doing that. They exchanged gazes as if asking through their gaze, “Who did she call?”

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 338: Caught In The Act!

“Don’t worry, Sis. Consider it done! Uhmmm....Give me five or ten minutes, and then consider it done. I’ll take care of them all...”

Stefan answered while his fingers started dancing on the keyboard to check the CCTV near and inside the building. He needed to locate all those people before sending the information to the apartment security.

He could also send the information to the police station near the building, reporting his suspicions about the people carrying bombs or being a group of kidnappers monitoring their targets.

He had so many ideas to kick them out as fast as possible. Just thinking about all his ideas was enough to make Stefan feel excited.

“OK! I’ll wait here while enjoying my latte, then. Good luck, bro...” Bella smiled as she ended the call.

After Bella finished talking on the phone, she was surprised to see her grandfather and Nick’s suspicious gazes directed at her.

“Grandpa? Nick? Why are you both looking at me like that?” Bella asked with a slight chuckle.

“Who did you call?” Isaac asked curiously. Clearly, it wasn’t Tristan because Bella’s voice sounded casual as if she was talking to her younger brother, not her husband, or not with her employee.

“Oh, he’s my friend who’s an expert in computers,” Bella grinned, ignoring her grandfather, who was still looking at her suspiciously.

Bella turned to look at Nick. “Can you make me a coffee latte, please!? I need my caffeine—”

“Sure, young miss,” Nick answered, disappearing into the kitchen.

“You mean he’s a hacker?” Isaac asked again. He still doubted her answer.

Bella chuckled upon hearing his question. She felt amused to recall how her son, Dax, had influenced her grandpa with technology. Recently, her grandpa had picked up many new terms related to computers and coding, like hacker stuff.

“Oh, please, Grandpa... OK, just for your information, not all computer experts are hackers.” Bella stifled a laugh while looking at her grandfather, who was still suspicious of her.

“If he’s not a hacker, how could he get the people downstairs to leave this building? He must have checked the CCTV surrounding this place, right?”

Bella was speechless.

After seeing how curious her grandpa was, she finally nodded but didn’t say much about it.

She immediately changed the conversation so her grandfather would no longer ask about Stefan.

“Oh right, Grandpa, don’t forget we will have a lunch party at my house tomorrow. I invited a few of my office colleagues to lunch with us. You can come too if you want to meet my friends...”

“Sure, sure, dear... I will definitely come.”

Meanwhile, in the basement, in a black sedan, Lucas and Henry sat in the back seat.

Henry was busy scrolling through social media, looking for interesting content. At the same time, Lucas called Jacob Donovan, his older brother, to report to him.

Lucas reported that their father refused to help and lend them the property to sell. He also informed him about their father’s refusal to help their younger brother, Thomas Donovan.

“Bro, stop asking me to talk to Father again. It’s no use; Father rejected me outright. I advise you to meet him yourself or ask Emma to do it,” Lucas said in a desperate tone.

“Damn it! Dad has abandoned us! He is really cruel to us.” Jacob’s anxiety could be heard from the other end, making Lucas shake his head in stress. “Lucas, Father likes you, even favors you, more than me. If he rejected what you said, I’d think whatever I say to him would be rejected, too.”

“Yeah. You know what? That’s why you have to persuade Emma to do it. To talk to Father.” Lucas took another deep breath. “Don’t tell me to talk to Emma too, bro. I already annoyed and angered her when I asked about my wife’s whereabouts.”

“What the hell with your wife, Lucas!? Why did she run away from you, and how the hell can’t you find her? She’s your fucking wife, for god sake!” Jacob Donovan asked in annoyance.

“Bro, stop asking me. I don’t even know the answer. That damn woman is giving me a headache. She’s really pissed me off like I have never been pissed off before!”

“If you find her, you have to teach your damn bitch a lesson. Don’t let something like this happen again. She mocked your authority! Don’t you know that?”

“Yeah, yeah. I know! I’ll lock her at home so she won’t have a chance to run away again. She is so stupid!”

While Lucas angrily talked to Jacob, Henry, who sat beside him, felt worried. He turned his gaze to his father, “We have to move now, Dad...”

Henry’s sudden voice made Lucas stop mid-sentence. Looking at him, he said, “Why do we have to move? We must stay here waiting for your sister or mother to appear.”

“Look over there, Dad...” Henry said while pointing at one of their people’s cars parked near the basement lobby.

“Huh?” Lucas said, confused. When he saw what Henry pointed out, he immediately hung up the phone. “Why did the police approach their car? Do the police know we’re stalking someone?”

“Sir, it seems so,” replied the driver sitting behind the wheel. “We have to move now, sir. If they know we’re in the same group as them, they might take us to the police station for interrogation.”

“What are you waiting for? Come on! Fucking drive the car!” Henry hurriedly ordered the driver. He didn’t want to deal with the police in this city.

“No! No! Stop, don’t drive now! Not yet!” Lucas shouted, confusing the driver and Henry. “Before you drive, you must check if our people on and around the building are still on standby.”

Lucas was determined not to fail this time. He couldn’t shake the feeling that his father was hiding something.

When his father claims that Bella is abroad, Lucas is sure that Bella is actually in the city. There was no way his father didn’t know where Bella was.

The driver quickly contacted other groups. However, after calling several times, no one, not one group, picked up his calls, which frightened him. He called another person; after the fifth ring, the phone finally connected.

“Get out! Get the fuck out of the building! We have been exposed! Everyone above has been arrested. I managed to escape because I was on guard on the farthest side of the building—”

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 339: Arrested

The connection was lost instantly, shocking the driver. He couldn't say anything; he could only throw his phone on the side and start the car engine, preparing to leave the basement.

“What happened?” Lucas was confused when he saw the driver look panicked.

“Sir, someone exposed us. We have to leave this place, or the police will capture us too,” the driver answered, hitting the gas pedal harder, avoiding the basement lobby, and heading to the exit route.

“What the hell! Who exposed us? Does anyone know about this plan? Did anyone betray us??!” Lucas asked; his tone was a mix between annoyed and feared. He checked behind them, relieved when he saw no car or person chasing them.

“Fuck! Fuck! I really don't want to have anything to do with the police in this city. We don't have any support here. This is not our city!” Henry shouted, panicking as he checked their surroundings. “Dad, we have to avoid this...”

Their car suddenly stopped before Lucas could say something to Henry, shocking them both.

“What the hell? Why you—” Lucas's voice trailed off as he saw what was happening.

“Sir, I'm sorry, we're caught too,” the driver said as he turned off the car engine. He couldn't move; two cars were blocking their way out, and a few police officers were standing there as if they were already waiting for them.

“Okay, calm down. We're not doing anything wrong here. Tell them we just met my father. Don't panic! And brush away that panic look from your face! Get it?”

Lucas warned the driver before he rolled down the window as two male police officers approached their car.

“Hello, officer. Good afternoon. Excuse me for asking, but why are you blocking our way? Is something happening in this building?” asked the driver politely, trying to maintain a calm expression.

“Afternoon, sir. I apologize for stopping you here. We need to check your vehicle. We have an incredible reason that your car is suspected of being involved in illegal drug transactions,” the police said casually. Still, his words were enough to shock them all.

“Drugs? What the hell? Who is involved with drug transactions?” Henry couldn’t help but curse, visibly shocked.

Lucas immediately rolled down the window beside him to clarify with the police officer.

“Sir, that’s not true. We just came here to meet my father. He is one of the prominent residents of this building. He lives on the 15th floor; you may contact or talk to him now. He will support me—” Lucas said calmly, but his shaking tone couldn’t hide his anger.

The police officer glanced at Lucas and smiled.

“Sure, Sir. You shouldn’t be too worried. We are here not to make any unreasonable arrests. However, we need to check this car. Please, everyone, step out of the car to allow us to check the car thoroughly...”

While the police questioned Lucas and the others, Bella quietly exited the elevator. She walked quickly toward Bryan’s black SUV, parked near the basement lobby.

Bella knew Stefan wouldn’t quickly send the police to this place. She suspected Bryan, who had dropped her off here and must have known what happened downstairs while her father was talking to her grandpa upstairs.

“Bryan, were you the one who called the police to arrest them all?” she asked. After she sat in the back seat, her eyes stared at the police officers surrounding the car.

She was still amazed when Bryan called her a few minutes ago, telling her that the underground lobby was safe and asking her to come down immediately.

“I’m not the one who did that, ma’am. It was your husband. He knew these people would spy on you in this building, so he planned all this...”

“My husband?” Bella was surprised to learn that. She didn’t know Tristan had been preparing this plan since last night.

Gosh! How sweet he is.

“Yes, ma’am...” Bryan said while slowly driving their car toward the exit.

When their car approached Lucas Donovan’s car, the police directed them to use the other lane to exit the building.

Bella was confused when she saw her father and brother leaving the car. Their faces look tense and pale.

“Bryan, why are the police searching their car?” she asked, glancing at Bryan.

“Boss Tristan reported that they were involved in illegal transactions. I think it’s a drug transaction.”

“WHAT?!” Bella was shocked to hear that. She continued her words while staring at her panicked father and brother. “How could Tristan think that far?”

A faint smile escaped her lips after she could no longer see them. She felt satisfied teaching them both a lesson, especially her father, for hurting her mother.

“Gosh! My husband is so creative. How could he think of that? No wonder the police came so fast to arrest them...” Bella chuckled and texted Tristan.

Bryan glanced at her in the rearview mirror.

“Well, Boss Tristan came up with a wild plan, ma’am...” Bryan wanted to say that, but he held back. He focused on driving out of the building and heading to Quantum Capital.

Bella texted, “Hubby, I know what you did. Thank you for your help (Love Emoji).”

After pressing the send button, she smiled and glanced out the window. The sun shone brightly at noon, and the sky looked clear, just as her mind felt. She was delighted to teach her father and brother a lesson.

She didn’t know how far this situation would involve her father, but she hoped he would leave the city soon.

It didn’t take long; her cell phone vibrated. She saw Tristan reply to her text.

[Tristan] What? Oh, Bryan must have told you about what I did, huh? It’s my duty to protect my pretty wife. No need to say thank you, my dear... (Kiss Emoji) (Grinning Emoji)

[Tristan] So, where are you now?

[Bella] Heading to my office. I will arrive in a few minutes. I'll call you.

[Tristan] I look forward to hearing your lovely voice, darling.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 340: Bella's Decision

Bella arrived at her office.

Just before she turned on her laptop, there was a knock at the door.

"Please come in," she said, her brow slightly raised when she saw Stefan walk in with a tense expression.

"Sister, you won't believe what happened to your father," he said, taking out his cell phone to show her the CCTV footage he had just obtained.

"What happened to my father?"

"The police arrested your father and your brother. They are now being taken custody at the police station—" Stefan looked confused as he held out his cell phone to show Bella the video recording of her father and her brother being led into a police car.

Bella didn't say anything as she accepted Stefan's cell phone. She watched the video footage calmly, witnessing how her father and Henry led to the police car.

A few seconds later, Stefan noticed a thin line slowly appearing on her forehead as if she were deep in thought.

He continued to explain, "Sis, this is so strange. I haven't sent anything to building security, let alone the police, so why has your father been arrested? Who reported it to the authorities? I know you didn't report to the police. Who else could be?"

Stefan scratched his head, utterly confused by the situation. Before sending all the evidence about the stalkers he found to the building guard, he tried to check the CCTV footage.

And,

What he found shocked him. The police had already arrested several people at the location. Still, he was even more shocked when he discovered that Lucas and Henry Donovan had also been arrested.

Bella smiled at him while returning his cell phone. She said, "Thank you, Stefan. You did a great job helping me..."

“Sis, but I did nothing. I didn’t call the police to arrest them...” he replied, confused.

“Yeah, I know. Actually, my husband reported it to the police,” she explained.

Stefan was surprised to hear that. His eyes widened as he said, “Wow! Your husband is so fast. Now, I believe he has a strong hacker behind him. Do you know him?”

He was impressed by the person who worked alongside Tristan Sinclair.

Knowing that a powerful hacker had worked in this city, he was curious to meet that person. He thought that person might be his friend in the hacker community. But who?

Bella felt a wave of anxiety as she noticed the curiosity in Stefan’s eyes. She knew who Tristan’s hacker was but couldn’t bear to expose Max. Despite her trust in Stefan, she couldn’t betray her husband.

She shook her head before confessing, “Well, I don’t know. You can find out yourself if you want to know—” This was the best answer she could find to respond to him.

“I will... I will...” Once more, curiosity flashed through his eyes as he excused himself to go upstairs to find the hacker’s identity.

After Stefan left her office, Bella took out her cell phone and called her husband.

“Hi, wifey... You finally called me. I’ve been waiting for your call.” Tristan’s cheerful tone surprised Bella. “I was about to call you. I thought you forgot about me—”

Bella settled into her seat before responding, “I’m sorry, hubby. I just spoke to my IT guy, and he told me about my father and Henry...”

“Oh, right; I also want to discuss them with you.” Tristan’s voice turned serious.

“Why did the police take them to the station? I thought you only wanted to distract them and help me get out of the building,” Bella asked, confused. She didn’t expect there to be drugs in her father’s car, leading to their arrest.

“Oo, I apologize, dear...” Tristan felt sorry because he hadn’t told her about his plan the previous night.

Bella’s frown deepened as she heard him apologize, but she said nothing, waiting for him to finish his explanation.

“Sorry, because I didn’t discuss my plan with you. In fact, I had someone place something in your father’s car. When the police searched it, they found that item. Even if your father and brother deny knowing about it, the police still need to question them.”

“I see—” Bella was speechless, amazed by his plan to put drugs in her father’s car. How does he know about the car his father would use?

Before Bella could ask, Tristan spoke again.

“Do you want them to stay in prison or not?” Tristan asked. “I can have my people release them immediately or let them stay there for a few more weeks. You decide...” he suggested.

Bella didn’t respond immediately. She felt like she was at a crossroads, unsure of which path to choose. She wanted to throw her father and Henry in jail, but she also didn’t want to.

After thinking for a few more seconds, she found her reason.

She finally decided. “Hubby, please let them out of there—”

Tristan was slightly surprised to hear that.

“Are you serious?” He thought she would gladly imprison her father and brother to teach them a good lesson and take her revenge.

Bella rested her back against the chair, looking at the white ceiling above. She could feel Tristan’s concern in his tone.

“Yes, I’m sure. I need my father and brother to witness how I take over the company. It won’t be fun if they don’t attend the shareholder meeting, right?”

Tristan chuckled, understanding her plan.

“Besides, I also feel slightly nervous with them in this city. What if they find out about us and use your name to escape? I can’t imagine that happening—” This was one of her biggest concerns now: tarnishing Tristan’s reputation.

“Hahaha,” Tristan’s soft laugh rang in her ears, making her heart flutter. “My darling, you don’t have to worry about me. If your father tries anything, I’ll take care of it,” he said, his heart feeling swell at her thought to protect his name. How sweet she was.

She remained silent, but a bitter smile crossed her face as she pondered the possibility of her shameless father resorting to underhanded tactics to achieve his goals.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 341: Weekend Finally Arrived

Bella remained silent, but a bitter smile crossed her face as she pondered the possibility of her shameless father resorting to underhanded tactics to achieve his goals.

“Alright, my darling. I’ll have my people help them out,” Tristan said.

“Thank you, hubby. Please ensure they don’t stay in this city too long. Also, ensure none of the people my father hired to spy on me or my mother stay in the city.” She asked.

She didn’t want her father to know about her and her mother—not until she completed the process of taking over the Donovan Group.

“Sure. I’ll do anything for my woman as long as she’s happy,” Tristan said softly.

Bella laughed at his words. “Oh, come on, Mr. Sinclair, stop flattering me with your sweet words.”

“I’m not trying to flatter you, ma’am. I was just stating my responsibility to make my woman happy. Hahaha...” Tristan laughed happily, continuing, “Ugh, alright, my wife, I’m sorry to end our chat so early. I have a meeting in a minute...”

Tristan’s regretful tone made Bella slap her forehead slightly. She forgot it was office hours; her husband must be busy.

“Ugh, I’m sorry, hubby, if I interrupted your meeting...”

“It’s fine, my darling. My meeting hasn’t started yet,” Tristan said with a smile, looking down at the busy street below. He wanted to go to her office and then go home to play with their son. “I’ll pick you up as usual.”

“Alright. I won’t take up your time. Go work, Mr. Sinclair, and earn a lot of money for our son and me. I love you—”

“I love you more!”

After ending the call, Tristan didn’t leave his place immediately. He smiled while looking at his cellphone screen, but a few seconds later, his smile faded as he remembered he was in the middle of a meeting.

He sighed deeply before putting his cell phone in his pocket and turning back to see several people sitting behind him.

Tristan cleared his throat before casually walking back to his seat.

“You can continue your presentation,” Tristan ordered, sitting in his seat and looking at one of the financial directors to continue his presentation.

Everyone in the room finally took a deep breath after their boss, who had asked them to keep quiet when he suddenly halted the meeting to take a phone call, allowed them to continue.

Earlier, they had heard him talking to a woman. Despite their curiosity about the woman’s identity, no one dared to make any sound or loud sigh; they just froze in their seats and breathed slowly while hearing the other side of their boss speaking so sweetly to someone else, completely opposite to his usual frosty and noble demeanor.

While the finance director was starting his report, Tristan quickly texted Reid to ask him to help his father-in-law out of the police station.

Tristan also gave a few other instructions before returning his focus to his work.

Finally, the weekend arrived. It would be a special weekend for Bella.

Today was the day Bella hosted a lunch party at her house. Since the morning, she had been busy in the kitchen, ensuring all the food they would serve was ready.

Even though the chef responsible for the menu had explained everything to reassure her that everything would be alright, she still felt tense.

Bella was anxious not to disappoint her guests as it was her first time hosting a party for her friends. She was particularly nervous because she wanted to impress Harper and Stefan.

She also hoped Sean would attend this party so Tristan could meet him. She knew that Tristan wanted to ask about her meeting with Sean, but he hadn’t mentioned it since.

This worried her because she was concerned that Tristan’s relationship with Sean or his parents could worsen. So this lunch party would help them meet and talk.

After talking with the chefs in the kitchen, she continued to check the venue.

Today, there will be an outdoor lunch party by the lake in the backyard.

Geoffrey and Noora arranged the venue, and they had been busy setting up a beautiful outdoor dining area décor since morning.

They placed a long table with twelve chairs facing each other and adorned it with fresh flowers and ornaments.

Looking at the beautiful venue that Geoffrey and Noora had set up, Bella suddenly remembered her wedding day.

After exchanging her vows with Tristan, they had a small garden party by the lake at Grandpa Lewis's lake house. Only close family and friends attended the wedding party, and the decor was similar to what she now sees. It makes her feel like going back to that day.

"Young miss, why do you look tense? This is only a lunch party. No need to worry; everything will be alright," Noora said, pulling Bella from her thoughts.

A half-smile framed Bella's face as she glanced at Noora standing by her side.

"I'm not tense. I just want to make sure Harper won't make fun of me. You know her, right? She has a sharp tongue." Bella chuckled, thinking about her sassy best friend.

Noora instantly laughed, recalling Bella's best friend, who used to visit them at their cabin. Although Harper constantly complained about everything, she ultimately accepted whatever they offered her. She is a typical young lady from a super-rich family who visits the countryside despite its limited facilities.

"Miss, don't worry. I am pretty sure Miss Harper will praise you this time. Believe me, the situation here is different from our cabin back then." Noora tried to lessen Bella's worries.

"Yeah, I hope so," Bella said while smiling. "OK, I will head inside first. If you need anything, please call me immediately, Aunty. I'd love to help. I'm excited I could be the host and the lunch organizer simultaneously!"

At Quantum Capital Building.

While Bella is busy preparing a lunch party for her friends, Leo paces in his apartment bedroom.

Leo glances at the cell phone in his hand now and then, feeling nervous, and continues walking.

After a few more minutes of back-and-forth around the room, he finally stops and sits on the sofa, leaning against it. His eyes stare blankly at the ceiling, wondering whether to call Dana and bring her to the lunch party.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 342: Brave Himself

“Should I call her?”

Leo whispers to himself as he looks back at his cell phone.

“Would Dana agree if I asked her out now? Is it too sudden? Would it make it too obvious that I have a crush on her?”

“What the hell, Leo? Calm yourself down! You are smart, rich, and handsome! And this is just a trivial matter, unlike the responsibility you bear at work. This is just a matter of calling...Dana.”

Once again, he took a deep breath while closing his eyes, trying to calm his confused mind.

Leo had never felt anxious and worried like this since he last felt it when his girlfriend back then suddenly asked to break up with him for a trivial reason; she asked for a breakup because she was too busy and didn't have time to date him. She felt selfish if she continued the relationship without giving it the attention it deserved.

At the time, he accepted what she wished for as he realized he also felt the same way—busy in the company and seldom thought about her at work.

However, a few days later, he found out his ex was actually dating another man—and that person was way wealthier than him.

Since that incident a year ago, a betrayed and fooled Leo has decided to stop dating. He's not sure how long it will take, but romantic relationships are not his priority this time.

He's afraid of meeting a woman who might cheat on him and feels traumatized by the experience.

However, everything changes when he meets Dana Collins.

His feelings toward her were unexpected. This woman had stolen his attention and, with that, a sliver of his breath since the day they met. The day he interviewed her to become his secretary.

But Leo was afraid to show his true feelings to Dana. He worried she would think he was unprofessional, which would scare her off, and also because he was her Boss.

As a result, he never openly expressed his attraction to her, and their relationship remained strictly professional as Boss and secretary.

“You’re an idiot, Leo. Didn’t you know that? You must express your feelings while she’s still a single woman. Otherwise, someone will move first and steal her from you! So what if you’re her Boss? Just like her, you’re also single. Most men, single or otherwise, would jump right away without a second thought!”

This is what Harper told him the other day, warning and teasing him about his romantic life. And, of course, those words rang in his mind every minute. Sometimes, Harper’s words scare him, but other times, they encourage him.

To add to his fear and overthinking about making the first move on Dana was when he was told that Dana had been forced to get engaged to a man her parents had chosen.

“Man!! It would be best if you tried now. Or... you will regret it! Fuck Leo! You know regret is more hurtful when it comes to something you didn’t do than something you do!” Leo tried to convince and curse himself while sitting straight and taking his cell phone.

After a deep and long sigh, he finally dialed Dana’s phone number.

The strange sensation he felt now was something he had almost forgotten: his heart was beating faster than usual as he waited for the girl he liked to answer the phone call.

After a few rings, he finally heard her panicked yet alluring voice from the other end.

“Hi. Hello... Boss, Sir. Is there any emergency at the office, Boss? Is there anything I can do, Boss?” Her confused tone was enough to make Leo snap from his nervousness.

Leo silently swallowed, trying to act as calmly as possible. He said, “Dana, we are not in the office. How often have I told you to call me by my name?” Said Leo as gently as possible to avoid sounding like her Boss.

“Sorry, boss, uhmmm—” There was silence for a few seconds, causing Leo to smile when he heard her soft voice scolding herself. “Leo, is there any emergency at the office?”

“What? No. Nothing urgent about work,” said Leo.

“Okay. So, what can I do for you this early this morning on the weekend, Leo?” Asked Dana again. Now, she sounded more casual and confused as she realized the call was not about work.

Leo ignored her question and asked, “Dana, would you mind if I asked you where are you now?”

“Oh, No. Not at all. I... I’m in my apartment.” Her confused tone became more evident after she received his unusual phone call on the weekend.

“Do you have any plans for lunchtime today?” Leo tried to speak as casually as he could.

“Lunchtime? No...” Said Dana, confused.

“Perfect! Dana, I will pick you up around eleven... we will go to the lunch party.” Leo hurriedly said without losing his casual tone. But in his rush and nervousness, he realized he had forgotten to ask Dana first before saying that. But the ball had rolled. And this was the point of no return; his mind encouraged him.

Dana was surprised to hear Leo’s words, “Lunch party? Where?”

She didn’t remember an agenda for him to attend a lunch party. Also, she wondered why he suddenly asked her to follow him. She started to think she might have misheard something.

“Leo, are you asking me to go to the lunch party!? With you!? Just us?” she asked again.

“Yes. Just you and me. Our big Boss invited us to her private lunch party.” Leo continued to explain Bella’s invitation.

After a few seconds of Dana’s silence, Leo finally relaxed and calmed. Then he apologized for forgetting to ask her first and said he should have asked about this earlier. Despite the short notice, he also hoped she could come to the lunch party.

“B-Boss... I...” Before she could finish her words, Leo suddenly spoke in an obviously nervous tone.

“D-Dana, I was worried that Boss Bella would scold me if you didn’t show up because I forgot to tell you about this party yesterday. So please, come with me—”

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 343: Congratulations Bro!

When he heard his own words, Leo suddenly felt like war drums were resounding in his heart.

‘Damn! What’s with the stutter? Calm yourself down, man!’ Leo tried to calm himself, worried that Dana would hear how loudly his heart was beating.

“Okay, Leo. I will come with you,” Dana said hurriedly, not wanting to disappoint their Boss. “Is there a dress code for me to wear?”

A spring-like smile instantly crossed Leo's face when he heard her agree.

"No dress code. You can wear anything you like. I trust your fashion sense."

"Okay."

"I will come to your place at eleven. See you..." Leo said. He ended the call without giving her a chance to say anything because he was too nervous she would change her mind.

"Damn! Why are you so nervous like this is your first time wooing a girl, Leo Smith? Why??" He spoke to himself while standing from his seat.

A wide grin spread across his face as he walked to the bathroom.

He was looking forward to the lunch party and needed to prepare to pick up Dana.

Before long,

Neat in his white slim-fit shirt and pastel trousers, Leo didn't waste any time. He decided to drive to Dana's house despite being one hour early. Better early than late, right?

After ensuring his hair was neatly arranged, he grabbed his cell phone and exited his bedroom.

"Leo, buddy, it is too early to leave now. It's not even ten yet. There's still no one at the Boss's house. I think... we should come fifteen minutes before eleven. Not too early, but still could help prepare the Boss's party—"

Sam's voice came from the living room, stopping Leo.

Leo was speechless to hear his words. Before he could say something, Sam spoke again.

"You want to help Boss Bella prepare the party, right?" Sam slightly raises his brow, confused to see him go out now.

"Yeah, sure. But I must stop somewhere else first. That's why I must head out now—" Leo answered calmly. Try not to raise Sam's suspicions.

"Bro Leo, you want to go early? Why? Are you going to pick up someone?"

Suddenly, Stefan's light and happy voice could be heard from the kitchen. He appeared with a bowl of crackers and walked nonchalantly to the seating area to join Sam on the sofa.

“N-No...” Leo tried even harder to maintain his calmness when responding to Stefan’s sudden questions.

In his mind, Leo cursed and was simultaneously impressed with Stefan.

‘This brat could become a detective if he is curious about something,’ Leo thought.

“Oh, I see. So you will go straight to sister Bella’s house?” Stefan asked again.

“Yeah. Sure.” Leo answered while smiling.

“Wait! What the hell—” Sam suddenly chimed in. “I still remember you saying you wanted to stop by somewhere else earlier. Why now did you say you will go straight to Boss Bella’s house?” he asked, confused.

‘Fuck!’ Leo couldn’t help but curse these two inwardly.

He started worrying because these two numbnuts bombarded him with many intelligent questions, distracting and confusing him, luring him to an honest answer.

After a deep sigh, he responded, “Well, YES, Ugh... I mean, NO. I need to stop by somewhere else before going to Boss’s house,” Leo answered, praying they would not ask him again and just let him go.

He didn’t like it when they started interrogating him because they would not stop until they heard a satisfactory answer.

Leo felt relieved when he saw them exchange glances and then ignore him. Leo quickly turned his body toward the door.

However,

Just before Leo could continue moving his feet, Stefan’s words caught his attention again.

“Aah, I know... I know... I know...you must be heading to pick up sis—”

“No!” Leo stopped him from continuing. He knew this chatty Stefan wanted to mention Dana.

Leo didn’t want anyone to know he was going to Dana’s house. He feared they would tease him early in the morning, and he couldn’t handle it. These two seemed to have ways of making fun of him or acting like clowns when it came to his romantic life. They constantly tested his patience.

“Oh, I see. So you are not going to pick up sister Harper—” Stefan continued with a teasing smile slowly appearing on his lips. It was fun to tease this big bro.

‘Fuck! I should just say yes. Why did I forget about Harper? I could use her name instead, right? I’m an idiot!’ Leo once more, venting his frustration inwardly.

“Yeah, no,” Leo said calmly, clenching his fist. “Guys, I have to go now. Please, just mind your own business. Stefan, keep eating your crackers, and you, mister big guy,” he turned his gaze to Sam, “Keep watching your sports news. See you at the party, guys—”

Leo said while continuing to walk, but with only one step, he almost stumbled upon hearing Stefan’s following words.

“Wow!! I get it! If it’s not Harper, then it must be Dana. So you will pick up Sister Dana!? Seriously, bro?” Stefan narrowed his eyes on Leo.

Leo, “....”

Stefan saw Leo freeze, not saying anything, his wide-open eyes clearly showing how shocked he was.

The way he looked, and his sudden awkwardness made it crystal clear that Leo must have wanted to pick up Dana. He suddenly felt a twinge of jealousy, seeing his fellow housemate now had a girlfriend.

“Uhhmm...Y-Yes?—” Leo answered, his mouth betrayed his mind. He instantly scolded himself for exposing what he wanted to hide so easily. He shrugged while rubbing his eyebrow.

“Wow, Dana will join us for the lunch party?” Sam asked. “I thought you told me you won’t ask her to come?”

Leo had no choice but to admit it, or these two clowns would make him late with so many random and trap questions.

“Yes, yes. I’ve asked her, and she has agreed to join us. Of course, I had to invite her...” Leo said calmly. “You guys heard it too, right? Bella insisted Dana should come. How could I not comply with the boss’ request?”

This was the best excuse he could find in his chaotic mind.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 344: Let’s Date

“Ha ha ha, true...true... Well, congrats, bro. Damn! Why do I feel so envious that you

finally have a new girlfriend? You are so lucky, bro, to have sis Dana as a girlfriend. She is a kind and smart lady...not many women like that,” Stefan said while giving a thumbs up to Leo.

‘What the fuck? Why did this kiddo conclude that I am dating Dana now? Did I say something earlier?’

Leo is both confused and scared about whether his inner thoughts control him. He ends up revealing things to these two men that he doesn’t want to, such as his dream of being in a romantic relationship with Dana.

“Congratulations, Leo!!” Sam gave him sincere praise and a thumbs-up. Before continuing, he said, “Go quickly... don’t keep the girl waiting. We’ll discuss this later at Boss Bella’s house and celebrate your new upgrade status!”

“Ha ha ha, Bro Sam, I agree with you. We need to celebrate Bro Leo’s new and upgraded status. He’s not a single dog like us; he already has a girlfriend,” Stefan said while looking at Leo, adding fuel to confuse him even more. “Congratulations, Bro Leo. We should celebrate with champagne...”

Leo, “...”

He wanted to scold them for jumping to conclusions. Still, he was too exhausted to talk to them, especially this foolish Stefan. That dude’s imagination always runs wild when it comes to romance.

After taking a deep breath, Leo said nothing and left, feeling cornered and with no choice but to ask Dana to be his girlfriend before they arrived at Bella’s house.

He could imagine Sam and Stefan calling everyone they knew about this and spreading the rumor. Later, when he and Dana arrived at Bella’s house, everyone congratulated them. Dana would be confused, and she might get scared and run away.

Oh my God! It would be troublesome.

‘Fine! You guys win. I will express my feelings to her. I will ask her to become my woman—’

Fifteen minutes before eleven, Leo parked his car directly in front of Dana’s apartment. He promptly texted her to inform her of his arrival.

It didn’t take long for Dana to reply to his text.

[Dana] OMG, Leo. I’m sorry I haven’t finished yet. (Cry Emoji) (Sorry Emoji)

[Dana] But I'll be down soon. Please wait a moment. (Smile Emoji)

Leo couldn't help but grin as he read her text, which was full of emojis.

Reading Dana's text now, Leo felt like he had traveled back to his high school days when a few of his classmates had a crush on him. They would spam him with this kind of text full of emojis.

[Leo] No need to rush, Dana. I'm eagerly waiting for you. Take your time. (Smiley Emoji)

After sending the text message, Leo put his cell phone in his pocket and rested his eyes.

He still smiled as he thought about Dana. This was the first time he had used an emoji when texting a woman. He felt his face turning hot, finding the situation quite amusing and sweet.

If Harper or Bella knew what he was doing now, they might make fun of him.

Leo shook his head. He tried to put aside those thoughts and calm his mind while starting to think about how to ask Dana to become his girlfriend.

But the more he thought about it, the more he struggled to find the right words to ask her.

Damn!

Once more, he vented his frustration inwardly because he felt his mind slowly becoming dull. This love-line matter was really challenging.

'Why is handling company matters easier than handling these love things?' he sighed deeply.

It didn't take long. Leo heard a soft knock from the window, surprising him. He opened his eyes and sat straight, only to see Dana trying to peek inside the car.

He didn't roll the window down immediately but instead fed his eyes with her beauty.

"Sorry to make you wait, sir," Dana said when Leo finally rolled down the car window.

A barely noticeable smile framed his face before he replied, "It's fine. Get in..."

After making sure she buckled up her seatbelt, he turned to see her.

“You look beautiful in that knee-length dress, Dana,” Leo said sincerely. He was impressed by how her black dress made her fair skin stand out, and he couldn’t take his eyes off her.

When Leo saw her blush and avoided eye contact with him, his adrenaline kicked in, and his mind suddenly cleared. He wasted no more time asking this girl to be his woman.

“Dana, please look at me...” Leo asked her gently. “Can I ask you something?” he continued when she finally stared back at him. He could see the confusion in her beautiful eyes.

She nodded slightly, “Yes, sure—”

“Do you have a boyfriend?” His question was enough to shock her. He could see her gasp and seem taken aback. Hurriedly, he continued, “I’m sorry if I asked you something personal. You don’t have to answer me if you don’t want—”

“I don’t have...” Dana immediately answered him shyly. “W-Why do you ask?” She was confused when he suddenly asked her about these things.

Dana remembered telling him she was single and refused when her parents tried to match her with someone else.

Suddenly, so many questions danced in her mind. Why did he ask again? Why did he want to know?

Before Dana could ask him, she saw him speak.

“Dana Smith, let’s date...”

“What? Dating? Us?” Dana shouted in shock. She was utterly shocked to hear his words. This man had just casually asked her, “Dating?”

Dana blinked several times to make sure what she saw and heard was real, not just her imagination, which had been tormenting her mind recently. She imagined this man to be her boyfriend, her man.

“B-Boss, S-Sir...” Dana stuttered nervously. She took a deep breath to calm the thrill in her heart. “Leo, did you ask me out? I mean, did you ask me to be your girlfriend?”

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 345: Are We Now A Couple?

“B-Boss, S-Sir...” Dana stuttered nervously. She took a deep breath to calm the thrill in her heart. “Leo, did you ask me out? I mean, did you ask me to be your girlfriend?”

“Yes. Why do you look so shocked?” Leo slightly raised his eyebrow. Her shocked expression scared him. This girl might refuse to date him.

Leo’s nervous hands were tightly clenched in his lap, and he was anxious to know her answer. After waiting a few more seconds, she said nothing, only staring at him with an evidently clueless expression.

“You don’t want to go out with me?” he asked again, with a bitter smile slowly appearing on his lips.

“Uhhmm...No...Yes...” Dana immediately shook her head, confused by her own answer. She hurriedly continued, “I mean...are you serious about asking me on a date? And...and....even become your girlfriend?”

The corner of Leo’s lips lifted into a faint smile when he heard her words.

“Hmm, I’m a hundred percent serious. No doubt,” he said. “Do I look like I’m just trying to prank you now, Dana?”

Dana, “...”

She felt like her mind was moving extremely slowly, like a computer infected by a virus, struggling to process the input of the present moment.

After a few more seconds passed, she finally spoke, “Leo, I just feel like—” However, once more, her voice trailed off, and all the words in her mind vanished. She didn’t know what to say.

Too shy to meet his gaze, Dana lowered her head, looking at her lap while trying to string together the words she needed to say to him. To answer him.

But she still couldn’t utter anything, and her tongue felt stiff.

Dana could feel her face turn warm, but simultaneously, she felt utterly nervous; her boss, the man she had a crush on for a few months, suddenly asked her to be his girlfriend.

‘Did I just win the lottery, getting this man’s attention?’ she wondered, feeling happy. ‘God! Thank you so much for your blessing. You are so kind, answering my prayers this fast...’

She felt her heart swell, her hand clenched tightly in her lap. Her nervousness and embarrassment increased when she felt Leo’s unwavering gaze on her.

“Can you give me your answer, Dana?” Leo’s gentle voice pulled Dana from her trance.

She tried to calm herself before slowly looking up to meet his gaze.

“Leo, I...” Her words were shaking. “I...I love to become your date. But are you really serious about asking me to become your girlfriend because you like me?”

“Of course I like you. Why would I ask someone to date me if I didn’t like that person and didn’t consider her to be a girlfriend?” Leo said, confused by her question.

Dana silently chuckled, looking at his expression; he looked so cute when he showed his confused expression for the first time.

In her eyes, this man was always perfect in every area. When working, he was a responsible and enviable leader. As a friend, he was very caring to all of his friends.

Her face bloomed with redness before she asked him, “What I’m trying to say is, do you really like me from your heart?”

“Absolutely!”

Instantly, she felt warm in her heart as she heard his answer. However, she was still worried that what had happened was just her delusion.

She sighed deeply and said, “Leo, I’m sorry. I just want to make sure I didn’t mishear or misunderstand what you said.”

“It’s fine. I understand. Is there anything else you want to confirm?” he asked gently, smiling at her.

“Do you love me?”

Leo repeated her question, “Do I love you?” while turning his gaze forward, trying to find the answer in his heart. However, without realizing it, Dana’s face changed slightly to a sad expression when she saw he didn’t answer her immediately.

A few seconds later, Leo turned to look at her.

“Dana, I’m not sure if I love you, but ever since I met you, you’ve been on my mind constantly. If I don’t see you for a day, I feel annoyed; it feels like my day is incomplete. When I heard that your parents forced you to marry someone they chose, my heart felt shattered, and I was afraid I would never see you again—”

Leo paused for a moment when he saw her face blushing.

"I don't know if it's love, but that's how I feel about you, Dana," he said. "Yesterday, when Bella asked me to bring you to her lunch party, I realized I like you. So, if you're still single, why not be my girlfriend?"

Dana was at a loss for words. Hearing his confession, she felt flattered.

"So, Dana... Are we a couple now?" he asked softly, nervous about her answer.

She nodded quickly before answering, "Y-Yes..."

Leo's facial expression lifted, and his smile grew wider when he saw her lower her face, avoiding eye contact with him.

He raised his hand to stroke her hair, but his hand stopped, remembering they had spent plenty of time here. They could be late arriving at Bella's house.

"We have to move now, or we will be late."

"Ooo... okay," Dana responded. Her nervousness had not yet faded, realizing their relationship had changed quickly. They were no longer just colleagues but now a couple.

Meanwhile, at Bella's house,

Bella was busy choosing her outfit in her walk-in closet and getting ready to welcome her guests. She decided on a pale blue short-sleeved blouse and navy blue casual culottes.

After putting her hair in a bun, she rushed to look for Tristan. She stopped when she saw him in the living room outside their bedroom, engrossed in reading something on his iPad.

Seeing Tristan's relaxed state relieved her.

Since last night, she has been worried that Tristan will feel uncomfortable because Sean will join them and meet their son.

"Hubby, I'm done. Do you want to go down now?"

Bella asked while walking toward him. She saw him place his iPad on the table and stand up.

"Yes—"

Chapter 346: Lunch Party (1)

Bella felt excited and eager to host all her friends and some of Tristan's colleagues.

"Has your friend arrived?" Tristan asked, placing his hands on her waist and pulling her closer.

Bella smiled at him, letting him fix her hair. "Yes. Noora just informed me that Sam and Gael had already arrived. They're talking with Dylan and Bryan in the living room."

Tristan looked into her eyes lovingly before asking, "What about Sean? Is he coming?" His tone was casual, but Bella could see the tension in his eyes.

"I'm not sure about him," Bella replied. She hadn't heard from Sean since their last meeting and didn't know if he would appear today.

Tristan didn't press further. Instead, his hand rose and released her hair, letting it fall down her back, causing Bella to protest with her gaze.

"Why did you do that? I liked my bun," she asked with a frown.

"Ms. Sinclair, never show your beautiful neck to others. It makes me jealous," Tristan said casually, straightening his beautiful, neatly hung hair.

Bella, "..."

Tristan spoke again before she could say anything. "And you know what, darling? I always get turned on when you show me your neck. It makes me want to make—" His voice trailed off as Bella's palm landed on his mouth, silencing him.

Her eyes widened as if scolding him with her glare. When she saw he had stopped speaking, she slowly pulled her hand away and said, "Mr. Sinclair, seriously? Stop thinking those sultry thoughts. We are about to host a lunch party."

"Yes, ma'am..." He nodded while smiling. His hand now touched her chin, making her look up at him. When he saw her clear, sparkling eyes blink a few times, a faint smile appeared on his lips.

"Okay, let's go down," said Bella. He responded by leaning closer and gently kissing her lips. She was surprised by his sudden kiss but accepted it gladly anyway.

After the short, lovely kiss, Bella's face felt warm. "You didn't ruin my lip gloss, did you!?"

"Wait, let me take a good look. No, you're good. Wow, good choice with the lip gloss color, darling," Tristan said, rubbing her cherry lips with his thumb, casually erasing the traces of her lip gloss at the corners.

“Alright, let’s go down,” he said as he held her hand and walked toward the stairs.

For some unknown reason, Tristan felt tense because this was the first time he would meet Bella’s other friends; so far, he had only met Sam and Leo.

“Hmm,” Bella responded as she walked beside him. However, before they reached the stairs, she suddenly remembered their son. She hadn’t seen him after breakfast.

“Where’s Dax?” She asked while glancing at Tristan.

“He’s with Max in his computer room.”

“Let’s meet Dax first…” Bella stopped and turned to look at him. “I want to introduce him to Gael, my IT guy at the office.”

Bella tried to mention Gael casually, concerned that Tristan might suspect him of being her hacker. When she saw him slightly frown, she continued, “I already see Gael as my brother, so—”

“Oh, the one you told me about, the IT guy who moved from New York?” Tristan asked. He was suspicious of that person, probably the hacker who worked behind her.

“Yeah. He was curious when I told him about Dax’s strong interest in computers and programming. He wanted to see Dax’s coding skills—” Bella’s eyes beamed as she spoke about her son’s ability.

“Darling, is this Gael, your hacker?” Tristan asked casually, but his words instantly surprised Bella.

‘Gosh! He knows?’ Bella silently scolded herself while thinking of a quick response.

She couldn’t expose Stefan’s real identity. But she also couldn’t lie to Tristan. Sigh!

After a quick thought, she decided just to tell him.

“Hubby, he is indeed the same as Max,” Bella had no choice but to admit it; she knew Tristan would eventually find out about Stefan. Well, at least she didn’t reveal his hacker and real names, right!?

Bella continued to warn Tristan, “But please keep it to yourself. Don’t tell anyone about him—”

“Sure, dear...” Tristan smiled when he saw her. She looked so adorable with her expression, especially when he saw her slightly pursed lips as if she were teasing him for a kiss. It made him want to kiss her.

He couldn't stop his desire, so he leaned closer to kiss her. However, before his lips touched hers, Bella stepped back, avoiding him.

“Why?” he smiled, surprised by her refusal.

Bella didn't answer him but continued walking. This time, she didn't just walk but ran down to the first floor toward the living room, causing Tristan to chuckle as he followed her.

When Bella arrived in the living room, she saw Stefan and Sam sitting with Bryan and Dylan. They were earnestly conversing, and no one knew she was there.

She entered the room and asked, “Why just the four of you? Where are Harper and Leo?” It was five minutes before lunchtime, and they hadn't arrived yet.

“Sis, Harper is on her way—” Stefan answered Bella, but his eyes looked at the tall man following her.

Stefan immediately recognized the man as Tristan Sinclair. Just seeing Tristan's intimidating expression was enough to leave Stefan speechless. He felt uncomfortable, as if Tristan's presence was overwhelming. When their eyes met, Stefan quickly looked away and focused on Bella.

“I see...” Bella nodded slowly. “How about Leo?”

“He picked up Dana.”

“Wow! He finally brought Dana...” She was so happy to know that.

“Yeah, he suddenly changed his plan.” Sam chimed in.

“I see—” Her words stopped when she felt Tristan placing his hand on her shoulder. She looked at him.

“Bella, could you introduce me to your friend?” Tristan smiled back at her.

“Ah, my bad. I forgot,” Bella grinned and then looked at Stefan. “Gael, this is Tristan Sinclair, my husband. And, Hubby, this young man is Gael, my old friend who I consider like my own brother.”

“Hello, Gael, nice to meet you,” Tristan said as he stretched out his hand for a handshake.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 347: Lunch Party (2)

"Hello, Gael, nice to meet you," Tristan said as he stretched out his hand for a handshake.

"It's an honor to meet you finally, Sir..." Stefan's voice quivered slightly as he accepted Tristan's warm handshake, a mix of respect and unease clearly showing through his eyes.

"Gael, you can call me 'bro' if you want, or just call me by my first name. No need to use 'Sir,'" Tristan said casually before greeting the others with slight nods.

Stefan nodded in response, feeling pressured to call this man brother. For now, he would avoid talking to him.

Tristan, always a man of few words, settled down beside Bella. He listened to what his wife and her friend talked about while playing with her hair and gazing at the outside scenery.

...

"Wait, there are only two of you. Where is Leo? Why didn't Leo come with one of you guys?" Bella asked, looking at Stefan and Sam in turn.

She was confused about why Sam and Stefan traveled in different cars, but none had Leo in them. If one of them were with Leo, they could have stopped by Dana's house before coming here, right?

"I told you he picked up Dana," Stefan answered.

"I mean, it's such a hassle using a different car. Why not just use one car and stop by Dana's house?"

"Maybe Dana was shy about meeting Sam or me," Stefan answered nonchalantly, crossing his arms in front of his chest and looking around the room. He was curious and wanted to meet Bella's son but didn't see him.

Before Stefan could ask Bella about her son, Sam suddenly said.

"Leo left the house earlier than us this morning, so maybe they had something to do before coming here." Sam paused awkwardly, talking about this. "Well, boss, you should know what I'm trying to say..." he continued.

"Ha ha ha..." Stefan laughed happily. "True... True... they are a new couple and need more intimate moments."

Sam and Bella smile upon hearing Stefan's words.

"Who is the new couple?" Harper's voice suddenly rang from behind, surprising everyone in the room. Instantly, they turn toward Harper's voice.

Bella saw Harper enter the room, with Geoffrey following behind her.

"Harper, you finally arrived, huh?" she said, standing from her seat.

Bella was genuinely surprised by Harper's unusual appearance; She was wearing skinny jeans and a white blouse, with her long hair neatly tied. What surprised Bella even more was seeing Harper in white sneakers.

After giving Harper a warm hug, Bella whispered, "Did you deliberately dress like this to attract someone's attention?" Suddenly, her eyes widened when she thought about something. "My goodness, Harper Reed, are you trying to attract my husband!?"

Harper laughed before flicking Bella's forehead gently. "What the hell are you thinking, girl? Tsk...Tsk... You are so funny..."

Bella rubbed her forehead while narrowing her eyes at Harper, protesting to her best friend with her gaze.

"I'm sorry, girl. Even though I know your husband is freaking handsome, you don't need to worry... Because I never like married men." Harper chuckled, watching Bella roll her eyes.

"By the way, how do you know I'm trying to attract someone?"

"You usually wear branded and glamorous stuff, but today, you look down-to-earth," Bella said, scanning her from head to feet. "I rarely see you like this..."

"Girl, you know me so well..." Harper giggled while looking for someone. However, her expression showed disappointment when she didn't find the person she was looking for, and she turned to Bella, asking, "Why hasn't everyone arrived yet?"

Harper thought everyone had arrived and she would be the last guest, but after checking around, she didn't see Leo and Sean.

"Yeah, a few people haven't arrived yet." Bella shared the same expression as Harper. She started to worry that Sean wouldn't come.

"Damn! They ruined my plan," Harper grumbled. Still, her words slowly faded as soon as her eyes landed on the handsome, tall man she was familiar with—she had seen his picture on the internet; he was Tristan Sinclair.

Tristan was standing not far from her, absentmindedly looking at his cell phone, and didn't notice that someone was looking at him.

Harper immediately turned her gaze back to Bella, leaning closer to her.

"Girl! Now I know why you fell in love with your husband at first sight; it turns out he's so hot—" she whispered. Seeing Tristan in person made Harper understand why Bella couldn't forget this man.

"Stop teasing me!" Bella shook her head.

"Girl, hurry up and introduce me to your husband," Harper whispered again.

Bella led Harper to Tristan and introduced her. However, she was taken aback when Tristan only nodded at Harper without offering a handshake, unlike his greeting to Stefan.

'Why is he sulking? Did he hear what we were talking about?' Bella wondered. She wanted to ask him but put aside her curiosity. Instead, she introduced Harper to Bryan and Dylan.

After a brief and warm introduction, Bella invited them all to move to the backyard, to the lunch party venue.

Even though the sun was shining brightly that afternoon, their table was set under a shady tree, sheltering them. The gentle breeze makes the atmosphere feel enjoyable.

They all sat in their respective chairs. Tristan sat at the head of the table; Dylan and Bryan sat across from him. They are seriously discussing some of their company projects.

Meanwhile, Bella sat next to Tristan while chatting with Harper. Stefan and Sam were seated before them, gossiping about Leo dating Dana.

Shortly after,

Bella called Geoffrey, who was standing not far in the back.

"Geoffrey, could you ask Dax and Max to join us? And please ask the chef to start serving. We can start our lunch now," Bella said. She decided to start their lunch even though Leo and Sean hadn't arrived yet.

“Yes, ma’am...” Geoffrey nodded. But before he went inside, he remembered another guest. “What about your other friends?”

“Just ask someone to wait outside for them; if they arrive, bring them here,” Bella instructed. She didn’t know why Leo hadn’t arrived yet.

Bella also didn’t know whether Sean would come. Well, at least she had invited him.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 348: Lunch Party (3)

Harper, who overheard Bella’s conversation with Geoffrey, suddenly remembered something.

Her expression turned worried as she looked at Bella, “I’m in trouble!” She whispered, grabbing Bella’s hands.

“Huh? What... what happened?” Bella stared at Harper, worried that something had happened to her. “Are you alright, Harper?” She felt Harper’s cold hand, which made her even more concerned.

“I’m so stupid! How could I forget about my little Dax?” Harper paused to take a deep breath, her expression turning dark as she continued. “Gosh! I completely forgot about him... What the hell am I thinking!?”

Harper felt bad because as soon as she arrived at this house, she was distracted by someone she wanted to meet. She couldn’t focus and forgot her priorities, flying to this city only to meet her cute and lovely nephew, Daxton. How foolish she was.

Bella was rendered speechless; she almost fell from her chair hearing her words. This girl successfully made her worry for nothing.

She initially thought Harper was in pain or had forgotten something in New York and needed to return immediately. However, she was in trouble because she had forgotten about Dax.

Sigh!

Bella wanted to scold her for worrying her. However, Stefan’s voice calling her has stopped her. She turned to see him.

“Sis, I thought you would keep Dax from me, not wanting to introduce him—” Stefan protested, sending a sharp gaze. “I have been waiting for this opportunity since I arrived in this city!”

Bella, “...”

“Sorry, bro. I wanted to bring Dax to meet you earlier, but he has a computer class with his teacher,” Bella said.

Stefan didn’t say anything; he just looked at her with a ‘seriously?’ gaze before turning his eyes toward the house.

He was curious about meeting Bella’s son, Dax. He had only heard about the brilliant Dax from Bella and Sam all this time. From them, he learned that Dax was not a typical kid of his age. He had a rare ability for a four-year-old who already understood intermediate coding and other knowledge.

Stefan could understand it since he also had that ability from a young age. But he needed to check Dax’s ability with his own eyes.

In his case, he only became interested in computers and could learn about them at six.

While Dax? He already showed interest at four. How scary is that? If Dax has the ability, he is willing to mentor him.

He will teach and guide him so Dax will not fall to the wrong side. Otherwise, they will get in trouble if someone uses that kid to do something vile and terrible in the future.

However, he needs to meet Dax in person first. Later, when they talk or see him using the computer, he will discover whether this kid is a genius or Bella is just bluffing.

Suddenly, Stefan remembered what Bella said earlier. He glanced at Bella again.

“Sis, you said Dax has a computer teacher?” Stefan asked. He wanted to meet that person and test whether he was qualified to teach his sister’s son.

“Yes. Since we arrived in this city, someone has started teaching him. I will introduce you to my son’s teacher; he will join us for lunch.”

“Perfect! I want to meet his teacher.” Stefan smiled.

“Stef... Gael, behave!” Harper suddenly spoke, surprising Stefan because she almost exposed his real name.

When Harper saw Stefan glare at her, she cleared her throat before continuing. “Dax is different from other kids. He can’t get close to new people easily, so you need time to approach him. Don’t scare him, or he will not talk to you for a long time, well maybe a year later—”

Stefan frowned. He was utterly surprised. But his surprise only lasted a second, and he started to doubt Harper’s words. He turned his gaze back to Bella, “Is that true?” he asked.

Bella smiled and nodded. "Yes, even Jack could only approach and talk to him after they had met a few times."

"Don't worry, bro..." Sam patted Stefan's shoulder. "Little Dax will talk to you, but he needs time. It took me five meetings before he finally talked to me, even though he only responded to my one-sentence greeting."

Sam's words were enough to make Stefan swallow hard. He didn't know Dax would be hard to approach.

"Ha ha ha, don't listen to them," Bella said. She felt sorry when she saw Stefan's pale expression. "My son has changed a lot since we moved here."

"Really? Dax is no longer hard to approach?" Harper was surprised.

"Yeah. His introverted side is slowly changing because, in this place, he has many friends and plenty of activities to meet new people. As a result, he has started to socialize more easily." Bella smiled when she saw Stefan finally relax.

"Well, Gael, don't worry, you'll do great. If you share the same hobby as him, he might like you and appreciate you quicker than common people..." Bella continued.

"Huh!? What hobby?" Harper asked, curious.

"Dax likes computers and software programming, so maybe he could casually chat with him..." Bella answered Harper while smiling warmly at Stefan.

Finally, Stefan breathed a sigh of relief. He could be friends with Dax faster.

Before Stefan could ask another question, he saw a chubby, pale-skinned young boy wearing a black hoodie coming out of the house. He knew it must be Daxton.

Stefan felt elated to see him; he appeared adorable and handsome. However, his smile faded when he noticed the tall, brown-haired man walking alongside Dax. Just a brief look at the man, suddenly, his hand clenched into a tight fist.

'Why is he here?' Stefan wasn't expecting to see this man here. Before he could find the answer, something crossed his mind. 'What the heck! This man is Dax's computer teacher? Seriously? I'm way better than him!'

Not wanting that man to be suspicious of him, Stefan turned his gaze to look at Dax again, trying to appear casual before the little kid, worried about scaring him.

When Stefan thinks he is safe from Max's suspicions, he is wrong because Max has seen him.

Max stared at Stefan briefly and thought the man looked familiar. 'Did I see him before?' he wondered as he approached them.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 349: Lunch Party (4)

"Come here, my dear son..." Bella stood up from her seat and approached Dax.

Harper did the same, excited to see Dax, whom she hadn't seen for almost a year.

"Mommy, this—" Dax, in his usual calm manner, asked while glancing at Harper, who walked behind his mother.

"Little Dax, it's me, Auntie Harper. Oh my, have you already forgotten your beautiful aunt?"

Harper asked in a sad tone, trying to humor the little man. She couldn't take her eyes off him; he was so adorable. He seemed to have lost weight, and his skin wasn't as pale as she remembered from their last meeting in Sweden last year.

"Aunty Harper?"

"Yes, Yes... I'm your beautiful Aunty Harper..." Her smile grew wider, hearing the little guy finally remember her. However, Dax's following words almost made her trip.

"Why do you look more beautiful today, Aunty!?"

Harper's heart swelled warmly when she heard how sweet little Dax was. This was the first time she had heard Dax compliment her like this. She placed her hand on her chest while looking at him gently. She somehow felt like the sun had just appeared from the west—how shocking.

Harper, Bella, and the others were shocked. They were all now looking at Dax in awe.

"Ha ha ha," Harper's blissful laughter echoed through the air. "Thank you, Dax; you also look more handsome and have grown taller. I'm so happy to see you again—"

"Thank you, Aunty Harper. What I'm trying to say is, you are beautiful without your heavy makeup..." Dax said with his deadpan expression.

Harper, "..."

Bella stifled a laugh.

Dax turned his gaze to his mom while holding her hand as if to tell her he needed her to introduce him to the new guy he saw at the table.

As if she knew what Dax was trying to say, Bella led him near the table. She looked at Stefan before turning her gaze back to Dax.

“Dax, this guy is my close friend; you can call him Uncle Gael. He’s the same as Uncle Max. He’s also a computer expert and works at Mom’s company... he said he wanted to see your computer skills...”

Just as Bella thought, Dax’s eyes suddenly lit up when he heard that Stefan was a computer expert.

“Hello, Uncle Gael. Nice to meet you.” Dax nodded slightly, a half-smile framing his face.

“Hi, you must be Dax...” Stefan stood from his seat while smiling back at Dax. He would hug this little man if there were no table between them. He looked so cute, reminding him of his nephew, whom he had not seen in years.

“I’m so happy to meet you in person,” Stefan continued. “I heard from your mother that you have a hobby that might be the same as mine, playing with computers and games. Is that right?”

“Yes, Uncle, I like computers and computer games—”

“Do you mind if we play your recent favorite game later in the afternoon?”

“Sure. I’m looking forward to it...” Dax was curious about this new uncle. He needed to test whether this uncle was more capable of playing a game than his teacher, Max.

“Alright, let’s sit first...” Tristan said as he arranged a chair for Dax to sit between him and Bella.

At the same time, the elders finally joined them. Isaac, Lewis, and Natalie sat at the other end of the table.

After Bella finished introducing her and Tristan’s friends to the elders, lunch finally started. Several servers began serving food that afternoon.

While eating, some of them engaged in lively conversation.

However, it didn’t take long; everyone’s curiosity was piqued when Dax started chatting about games and programming with Stefan. People who already knew Dax were surprised to see him getting along well with someone he had just met.

Even Tristan and Bella were amazed to see their son so close to Stefan. However, they didn't comment; they continued to enjoy their lunch while listening to their conversation.

As Dax exchanged friendly conversation with Stefan, Max, sitting next to Sam, thoughtfully overheard them while trying to remember where he had seen this man before.

The more Max heard them talk and heard Gael talk about coding and programming like a true expert, the more his fog-filled mind suddenly cleared up.

Before long, Max's mind reeled back to a few years ago when he was still a member of the Hacker Community; he had crossed paths with a powerful hacker.

'This man—' Max's heart stiffened when he realized this man was actually that person.

Max tilted his head, wanting to glance at his face once more. At the same time, Stefan glanced at Max, who sat beside Sam.

'What the fuck!! This man... is the Grim Reaper??' Max silently swallowed when he saw Stefan's face more clearly. His heart felt like it would explode, confirming this man's identity as the powerful hacker he encountered back then.

Still clear in his mind, he had broken Grim Reaper's security system and taken his personal picture from there. He thought that picture was not him, but eventually, it was.

But the price for getting the Grim Reaper image was that he could never reaccess the Hacker Community until now. Because that man tortured him and left him unable to do anything for a year, he lost the respect of his community — they kicked him out because he wasn't strong enough to be a member.

Grim Reaper finally let him go in the second year and warned him never to cross paths again. Since then, he has tried hard to match or even beat him.

But because of the agreement in the past, Max never had a chance to know how powerful he was now; he respected the deal and didn't want to break it. He stopped every time he saw the Grim Reaper trail when doing his work—hacking.

Sigh deeply, Max turned his gaze toward Bella. His respect for this woman became stronger. He didn't expect his young madam to have such a powerful hacker protecting her.

No wonder he had trouble a few times when he tried to investigate her more.

Max thought it was a military hacker protecting Bella's identity all this time. Still, it turned out to be the Grim Reaper.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 350: Lunch Party (5)

When Max was lost in thought, trying to figure out how to start a conversation with the Grim Reaper, who turned out to be named Gael, Leo and Dana arrived in the front yard.

Dana couldn't hide her worry because they had shown up so late.

It's hard for Dana to believe there had been an accident on their way to this place. Traffic jams had halted their car for a few minutes, making them almost twenty minutes late.

"Leo, would Ms. Donovan be angry about seeing us late?" Dana whispered as she walked into the house, following the man who led them to the back garden.

"It's okay. I'll explain to Bella. She'll understand," Leo said, smiling at Dana. He tried to calm her down.

Later,

Leo and Dana arrived at the lunch area. They were surprised to see the long table almost packed with people. Everyone was enjoying their lunch while chatting casually.

Leo could see Bella's family; her grandpa and mother were there. What surprised him the most was seeing the figure he had only seen in magazines and on the internet: Lewis Sinclair, sitting with them.

Instantly, he felt terrible and tense, but he tried to calm his heart while approaching them.

"Everyone," Leo greeted them politely, making everyone look at him. He continued, "I'm sorry we arrived so late. There was an accident on the road, and our car was stuck for a while." He said this while following Geoffrey, who guided them to their chairs near Harper.

Leo's eyes fixed on Bella. He saw her smile at him, and instantly, he felt slightly relieved.

"Thank God you're both alright," Bella said while looking at Dana; she smiled when she saw her awkwardly walk beside Leo. "Alright, come here, join us..." She urged them to start enjoying their lunch, too.

“Thank you, Bella,” Leo smiled at her and greeted everyone at the table. After that, they settled next to Harper.

Isaac Donovan looked at his granddaughter.

“Are you still waiting for other guests, Bella?” Isaac asked.

Bella was surprised to hear her grandfather’s question. She no longer thought Sean would come. She knew him well; the man was never late if he promised to come. But it’s been almost thirty minutes, and he hasn’t arrived yet.

“I am, but it looks like he won’t come. So, let’s eat...” Bella said calmly.

The lunch continued, and the conversation warmed up with the arrival of Leo and Dana, who now stole everyone’s attention. Everyone was eager to hear their story.

And not long after, the warm and cheerful lunch ended.

Dax, Max, and Stefan went back to the computer room.

Meanwhile, the elders had returned to their place after chatting with the young people. Bella promised her mother she would visit her with Harper later in her stone house.

Tristan excused himself and his people to continue their discussions in the living room.

Only Bella and her friends remained, chatting by the lake on a patio near the lunch area.

They continued questioning the new couple in front of them, Leo and Dana.

“Tell me, since when did you guys become a couple?” Harper was the one who looked so eager to know about these two lovebirds.

Bella, who sat beside Harper, stifled a laugh, looking at how panicky Leo was now. Leo tried to signal Harper to stop talking about it without prevailing. She ignored him and continued with her question.

“Come on, guys, spill the tea for me. I’m kind of envious of you two. Gosh! You make me want to find my other half...” Harper’s voice was filled with jealousy as she continued her plea for information.

Leo felt like scolding this slow-minded Harper but halted himself because he didn’t want to scare Dana, considering how they usually chatted—the three of them so close and even thought of each other like siblings.

“Miss Reed, your question is unimportant,” Leo finally answered Harper. “What is important is that we love each other, and our love is equal. That is what matters in a

relationship. Is that right, Boss?" he said, glancing at Bella as if asking for help distracting Harper.

Bella narrowed her eyes at Leo as if she wanted to scold him for dragging her into this conversation. But looking at how he pleaded with his gaze and seeing how awkward Dana was now, she couldn't refuse.

Besides, she agreed with Leo that it did not matter when they became a couple. What was important was they both loved each other.

It was like her marriage to Tristan at the beginning. It was not based on equal love but on her love and admiration for Tristan. In the end, when she's the only one holding things together, they separate.

Fortunately, fate and Tristan's realization of his love for her brought them back together, and now, it's not just her who loves him. Their marriage is based on their equal love for one another, and this is what allows them to reunite.

"Agree, equal love is the most important thing. So guys, once again, congratulations to you," Bella sincerely said, feeling happy for Leo, who had finally found his new love.

"Thank you, Bella..." Leo smiled at her.

"Dana, thank you for accepting Leo with all his flaws. You won't regret becoming his woman because he is a loyal man. You are lucky to win his heart..." Bella continued her sincere praise to her best friend.

"I will..." Dana shyly answered Bella before she turned her gaze away again.

Dana still felt awkward and shy speaking to Bella. This was the first time she chatted casually with Bella and Harper. Even though they both asked her to call them by their names, her tongue still felt stiff.

"And Leo," Bella turned her gaze to Leo. This time, her expression was less gentle than when talking to Dana. Slowly, it turned sharp and intense.

Bella continued, "You are old enough to start a family. Stop dating and start building a family. Have a child just like Jack and also me..." Her sentence stopped when she heard Harper take a deep breath.

"Sorry, Harper," Bella felt terrible because she could guess what had made Harper look gloomy; she had none when they already had partners.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 351: Harper's Crush

"It's fine... It's fine," Harper said while patting Bella's hand, which was holding hers and looking worried for her. "No need to worry about me. I'll definitely find my other half. I'm sure about that, but I just don't know when."

Bella slightly nodded while smiling at Harper. She also wanted to see her best friend find happiness in her life.

"Harper, you need to lower your standards. You expect a partner with too high standards," Leo said, expressing deep concern for her. "Also, every man out there is afraid to approach you... you are too high to reach."

Harper took another deep breath.

She agreed with Leo. Numerous men she had encountered in the past were scared when they learned her last name, especially after they knew she was one of the significant shareholders in the RDF Group.

While,

Men with the same status as her are not her cup of tea. When she likes one of them, they are already taken or have someone they love.

Sigh!

Harper smiled bitterly as she looked at Leo for a few more seconds before she commented.

"Well, Leo, when our friends married, I abandoned my high standards and pickiness. Well, I do not abandon them in their entirety. I was just adjusting them so it would be realistic. But trust me! I try to lower them but still fail to meet someone my heart could open with..." She shrugged.

"Seriously, you don't have someone you like? I mean, someone you are interested in?" Bella asked in concern.

Now, Leo and everyone else there, including Sam, who earlier wasn't interested in hearing their chat, focused on Harper and were curious about her answer.

Harper looked at them in return before finally responding to Bella's question.

"I do have someone I like. But the problem is that person is not interested in me. He is so freaking cold to me every time we meet..." Harper paused to take a deep breath before she continued, shaking her head. "Well, I don't have a chance with him. So I will just bury my interest in him."

“What the hell? Who is that person? How dare he look at you coldly?” Leo answered irritably. “Tsk, ts, is there a problem with his eyes? How could he ignore a beautiful and kind woman like you?”

While Leo flared up hearing someone give Harper the cold shoulder, Bella doubted it.

“Harper, you may have misjudged him—”

“Huh!? What do you mean, girl?” Harper asked.

“I mean, maybe the person is worried that you will reject him; that’s why he didn’t make a move on you.”

Harper slightly raised her eyebrow upon hearing Bella’s words.

Before Harper could say something, Bella continued, “You should try to approach him first and give him a sign to let him know that you are interested in him.”

“Should I?” Harper felt puzzled after hearing Bella’s suggestion. But her confusion only lasted a few seconds. She couldn’t approach him without any proper reason.

Harper secretly scolded herself in her heart for daring to like that man. When she thought about forgetting that man, Bella managed to confuse her again.

“Well, my friend... of course, you must do it. Because it’s impossible for someone as beautiful and kind as you not to be noticed by men, right?” Bella smiled when she saw Harper’s confused expression.

Harper almost laughed, hearing Bella’s words.

“Gosh, Bella Donovan, if only you knew who that person was, you might agree with me immediately,” Harper wanted to say. But she held it back. She didn’t dare to admit to everyone that the person she liked was Sean Spencer.

How embarrassing!

She had a crush on Sean from the first moment she saw him at Bella’s house in Sweden. At the time, she buried her feelings for Sean because she knew he only had eyes for Bella.

However, when she heard that Bella had chosen Tristan, her buried crush on Sean slowly resurfaced, prompting her to fly to his city to look at him, even though she clearly understood Sean wouldn’t give her a chance.

“Dana, do you agree with me? Harper should try to express her feelings to that man, right?” Bella spoke again when she didn’t hear anything from Harper.

“Y-Yes...” Dana answered Bella’s question shyly. Then, she looked at Harper and said, “Sister, you should try to express your feelings to him. He might like you too.”

This happens to her when she likes Leo; she is afraid to show and express her feelings and worries that Leo will not like her. She even worries that Leo will fire her from the company. But it turns out her fears were groundless; Leo liked her.

Suddenly, Harper’s laugh echoed, surprising them all with her reaction.

After her laugh subsided, she said, “Bella, Dana, you’re both right. Even though I know I don’t have a chance with him, I will try to speak to him. Thank you, guys, for giving me courage...”

Harper didn’t know if this idea was right for her. She would go all out on Sean Spencer, asking him to give her a chance. It would be a blessing if he accepted, but if he rejected it, it didn’t matter. Better to try than not at all, right?

“Who is he? Do we know him?” Leo suddenly asked.

Instantly, Harper felt her throat go dry, as if she had just been teleported to the desert hearing Leo’s question.

“Harper, you can tell us the man’s identity,” Bella also chimed in. “Maybe we can help you get closer—” her words suddenly stopped when her cell phone vibrated.

She quickly checked the incoming text message, and the name on the screen surprised her.

[Sean] Bells, I’m in front of your house.

Bella quickly stood up from her chair, simultaneously confusing and worrying Leo and the others.

“What happened?” Leo couldn’t help but ask when he saw Bella suddenly stand from her seat after reading something on her cell phone.

“He’s arrived,” Bella halted her step while looking at Leo.

“Who?” Harper asked while standing from her seat and approaching Bella. She was also curious to know.

“Sean—”

Chapter 352: When Sean Comes

“Sean—”

Bella answered as she walked towards the house. She had to meet Sean before Tristan because she worried they might fight if they met without her.

Moreover, if her son were around, it would be hard to explain if he saw his father and uncle fighting.

...

After Bella walked towards the house, Harper still stood where she was, her eyes fixed on Bella until she disappeared behind the door.

Slowly, she felt her head spinning and her heart shaking harder, as if there was a storm in her head and an earthquake in her heart when Bella's words filled her mind.

‘Se-Sean!’ she muttered under her breath. ‘He’s coming... He finally came!’ Her hands clenched into tight fists as nervousness overwhelmed her at the thought of meeting him.

Harper tried to calm her mind and return to her seat, but her knees betrayed her. She stumbled, almost falling if Sam hadn’t held her hand.

“Whoops! Be careful...” Sam said, catching her hand. He frowned, feeling how cold her hand was. He didn’t ask anything but led her to sit on the chair.

After seeing her settled, Sam couldn’t help but ask, “Are you okay, Boss Harper!? Calm yourself down by sitting here.”

Sam’s tone of worry was clear, causing Leo and Dana, who were chatting, to stop and look at Harper curiously.

“Nothing, Sam! I am okay.” Harper answered briefly.

“Why does your expression show otherwise? And why did your hand feel so cold?”

For some reason, Sam doubted Harper’s answer. He looked around, wondering if Harper had seen something they hadn’t, like a snake. They were near the lake and forest; snakes could appear here.

Seeing her face pale, Sam couldn’t help but ask again, “Boss, did you perhaps see a snake or reptile that triggered your phobia? That’s why you look so scared, right?” He still remembered that Harper had a phobia of reptiles.

Harper was rendered speechless. She ignored Sam and grabbed a water bottle on the table, emptying it to wet her dry throat.

Knowing Sean's arrival made her feel like someone had lit flames inside her. She felt hot, and her heartbeat raced. She didn't understand why she suddenly felt like that.

Is it because Bella and Leo gave her the courage to express her feelings to Sean? Or was it because she felt it was pointless to do so and was now willing to give up?

She could no longer tell the difference.

Sigh!

Harper couldn't recall how many times she took a deep breath to inhale the fresh air. But she has to stop doing that. She was worried that Sam and Leo would notice what happened to her.

Harper tried to adjust her expression as if nothing had distraught her, but it was too late because Leo had already guessed what was in her mind.

"Harper, are you feeling alright?" Leo asked, genuinely concerned when he saw Harper's expression become as white as paper. As Sam said earlier, Harper might have seen a snake, which is why her expression clearly showed her fright.

"Harper, I know you might have seen something you didn't want to see; let's go inside. This might not be too comfy for you..with the appearance of a snake or such." Leo expressed his concern.

Harper, "...."

She gritted her teeth while trying hard to maintain her calmness. After a few more seconds, she cast a smile at them.

"Seriously, guys? How could you assume I saw a snake? I do not see any of them. And I'm alright." She rolled her eyes while asking Sam to sit again on his chair.

Harper continued her words after she saw Sam sitting, "I'm completely fine. Don't mind me. I feel hot sitting here for too long. You know me, right? I can't stand hot temperatures..." She answered them casually.

However, Harper's random answer made them even more suspicious of her.

Dana and Leo exchanged glances as if trying to check if they also felt hot. However, they both shook their heads because the current temperature felt excellent and enjoyable.

The temperature near the lake was around 18 degrees Celsius, with a breeze coming from the mountains. Even though the sun was still brightly lit, the temperature was perfect for everyone.

Realizing Harper's anxiety was very personal, they no longer asked Harper anything. Still, they continued discussing the internet's hot gossip about Laura Kiel's trial.

Bella sped her steps toward the living room, praying that Sean had not yet entered the house but was waiting for her outside.

She needed to speak to him first before he met Tristan.

However, her heart tightened when she arrived in the living room. She saw Sean already sitting there with only Tristan, while Dylan and Bryan were nowhere to be found.

Bella didn't rush to approach them but observed them from afar. She saw they didn't say anything, only looking sharply at each other as if they were fighting through their gaze.

She could feel the tension building around them, which worried her a lot; they might fight at any minute.

After adjusting her not-to-worry expression, Bella cleared her throat to inform them about her presence.

Instantly, Tristan and Sean turned to see her.

Bella was speechless when she saw their expressions change. The dark expressions she had seen before suddenly vanished, and their smiles widened as spring came after the cold winter.

'Geez! How could they change their expressions this fast?'

Bella couldn't help but laugh inwardly; she felt amused. As she approached the seating area, she smiled back at them.

"Sean, I thought you didn't come," Bella casually said while settling beside Tristan. However, right after she sat on the couch, she felt Tristan's hand on her waist.

Before she said something, Tristan pulled her so close to him. So close that she could feel his body heat radiating through their touching bodies.

Bella turned to look at him, "What are you doing?" she whispered, frowning, confused by his sudden intimacy.

Tristan lovingly smiled at her and drew closer; he whispered in her ear, “Nothing...” Then, he turned his attention to Sean sitting across from them.

“Thank you, Sean, for coming to our house...” Tristan said politely with a smile, surprising Bella and Sean with how friendly he was.

Before Sean said something, Tristan continued sarcastically, “But you don’t have to force yourself to come if you are busy. This is only a family and friends lunch. It’s only a casual gathering.”

Bella, “...”

Chapter 353: Sean’s Provocative Words

Bella, “...”

She thought Tristan was sincerely friendly to Sean, but he scolded him through his lines.

‘Gosh! How obvious is his jealousy?’ Bella sighed deeply as she turned her gaze to Sean.

“I also thought you were busy, Sean. That’s why I told my Grandpa you wouldn’t come.” She tried to break the tension between the two men.

“Bells, for you... I’m trying not to be busy and set aside everything else.”

Sean smiled at her. His gaze was gentle but only fixed on her. He didn’t even glance at Tristan, though he could feel Tristan’s sharp gaze on him, but he still ignored it.

Bella was unsure how to respond to Sean’s provocative words, especially when she sensed a cold aura radiating from her husband, clearly annoyed by Sean’s remarks.

“There was an accident on the road, so my car got stuck, and you know me, right? I can’t stay still when I know I can help, so I stopped to help the traffic officers on the scene...” Sean continued when he saw Bella not say anything.

However, Sean’s words made Bella even more speechless. This was the first time she witnessed Sean speaking so many words to explain something; this man was actually the same as Tristan. They are stingy with words when there are other people around them.

“Oh, I see. It’s very kind of you, Sean.” Those were the only words she could say now.

“Hahaha, no, not really. I just do what any decent human would do. But still, I have to apologize to you and your family because I can’t join you guys for the lovely lunch...”

Sean's sincere apology was enough to make Bella feel sorry. She had previously been disappointed in him because he didn't show up, thinking he was eager to end their friendship.

Now, Bella remembered what Leo had said earlier about this incident. She thought Leo was making random excuses, but it turned out there had been an accident on his way to her house.

"It's fine, Sean. You don't have to apologize. It's not your fault that there was an accident on your way here."

"You're always sweet, Bells," Sean said casually, but his words made a certain man in the room feel like the giant 'JEALOUSY' word had struck him like a blow to the head.

Somehow, Sean felt in a good mood when he saw Tristan's expression turn dark, like a dark cloud looming behind him. He ignored him and continued to talk with Bella.

"Well, Bells, I won't take up your time. Can I see Dax now?" He didn't want to be in the same room as Tristan, or his calmness would be shattered every time he thought he never had a chance to beat this man, and he hated that fact so much.

"Yes, sure..." Bella turned back to look for someone in the back, but surprisingly, no one was around.

This looked weird because Geoffrey or a few maids always stood in the corner waiting if they needed something.

Bella turned to look at Tristan and whispered, "I'm going to look after Dax. Don't fight with him—" She seriously warned him.

Tristan stifled a laugh. How could he fight with Sean? That's not possible. He never hated Sean, but he just envied Sean because he knew Bella long before him.

"Hahaha... Of course, my dear wife, we won't kill each other. Don't worry about us," Tristan deliberately spoke louder so that Sean could hear what they were talking about.

Bella, "..."

She didn't say anything else but stood from her seat.

"Don't worry, Bells. I really respect Brother Tristan. I don't have a plan to hurt him..." Sean also commented and flashed a gentle smile while looking at Bella.

However, his smile slowly faded after Bella's back disappeared from his sight, and the tension in the living room became tense again. The two of them slowly entered a staring contest, neither willing to avert their eyes.

After a few moments had passed, Tristan finally chuckled, tapping the arm of the sofa with his index finger. His gaze remained fixed on Sean, seated across from him. Had it not been for the occasional blink, Tristan might have mistaken Sean for a mannequin; he looked that stiff.

“Relax, Sean. You don’t need to be that scared in front of me. I won’t hurt you. Trust me,” Tristan said jokingly.

Sean, “...”

He cleared his throat before responding, “Who’s tense? I’m very relaxed now, man.”

Sean sneered while slightly shaking his head, turning his gaze away from Tristan and trying hard to maintain his calm. He would have challenged him to a fight if he hadn’t remembered he was a soldier and this man was Bella’s husband.

“Are you sure?” Tristan leaned back against the sofa, waiting for Sean to respond. However, Sean only gave him a ‘seriously?’ kind of look. Tristan chuckled and continued, “But why are you sitting as if facing your commander?”

Sean gritted his teeth before calmly replying, “Oh, this is how I sit if I’m facing my elder...” He smiled, even though he felt like a hurricane raged in his heart.

His calmness faded when he saw Tristan not responding to his words. Sean continued to annoy him, “You know what, Tristan Sinclair? You should be happy because I respect you like my elder.” He grinned.

No matter how angry he was when he heard Sean’s provocative words, Tristan tried hard to control his emotions. He slowly lowered his gaze while rubbing his eyebrow.

He didn’t rush to reply, but a faint smile appeared on the edge of his lips before he looked back at Sean. He saw him smile happily as if he had just won something.

After letting Sean enjoy his happy moment, Tristan said, “I see. I don’t mind if you think of me as your elder, Sean. Thank you. However, it would be best if you also consider my wife your elder. Stop acting like my wife is your best friend—”

Instantly, Sean’s winning smile faded.

‘Damn it! I’ve never won against this man. He can turn things around like now...’ Sean vented his frustration in his heart, deciding to ignore Tristan Sinclair from now on. Well, at least until Bella returned.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 354: Dax Was Shocked
Meanwhile, in the computer room,

Dax was sitting between two computer experts, Max and Stefan.

After briefly talking with them, Dax decided to play games to test Gael's gaming skills. He couldn't trust what his mother said right away; he needed to check.

"What game are you going to play, Dax? Don't tell me you'll play a game for kids your age?" Stefan said casually, but the little man gave him a stern gaze.

Stefan pretended not to notice his glare. He needed to test Dax's programming skills, but it would be too obvious if he tested him too straightforwardly. So, he just went with the flow, watching how Dax played the game.

"Of course not, Uncle Gael..." Dax smiled at Stefan before he continued. "We will play Survival in the Apocalypse. This is a new game from Soft Tech company. Have you heard about it?"

Stefan was surprised to hear that. "You play Survival in the Apocalypse?" he asked.

"Yes, Uncle. But my mother doesn't let me play alone without adults around me. So, every time I play, Uncle Max becomes my game partner. Because that game isn't in my age category yet, but I can play it well."

Dax's eyes beamed, talking about the game he had played recently.

"Wow! I became curious and wanted to see your gameplay, Little Man," Stefan smiled.

"I think I'm quite skilled; my level and skill are way better than Uncle Max's because I defeated him every single time. Right, Uncle Max?"

Max almost fell from his seat.

'Damn this little boss, how could he expose my poor gaming skills in front of Grim Reaper?' Max vented his frustration in his heart. He lost his words to answer him and just smiled bitterly at his little boss.

Stefan failed to notice Max's miserable expression. He was too busy with his thoughts, thinking that Dax could play a tough game at the hardest or most brutal mode available very well and even beat an adult like Max.

Survival in the Apocalypse is an online game where five people must work together to complete missions in a city full of zombies and monsters. This is a teamwork game, and knowing this toddler could play the game well surprised him.

'Did Bella suggest he play this game? There's an age limit on this game!' Stefan wondered while glancing at the curious Dax beside him.

"Uncle Gael, do you know that game, right!?" Dax asked again.

"Of course, I know," Stefan answered while smiling.

He knew about Survival in the Apocalypse; he and his team created the game for Soft Tech, a subsidiary of the RDF Group. Their company, Soft Tech, is one of the biggest game companies in the world.

"Yay! Let's play, Uncle Gael..." Dax shouted in happiness. He immediately turned on the computer before him and urged Max to log into the game. He asked him to contact two of their gaming friends to play with them.

"Ok," Max said. He opened his Discord server to look for their active friends. But before he could chat with one of them, Stefan stopped him.

"Max, you don't have to contact them. We can play the game with just the three of us." Stefan's words shocked Max and Dax.

Stefan ignored their frowns and continued, "I will add two of my regular bots to play with us..." he said casually while turning on the computer.

"What? Do you want to add bots? Do you mean NPC? Hero?" Max was confused to hear that.

"Yes. But I made these bots myself," Stefan casually answers while turning on the computer.

"Gael, sorry to ask you again. Do you really know the game we are going to play?"

"Yeah, I know," Stefan answered. "Survival in the Apocalypse?"

"Yupe. But why do I feel we didn't talk about the same game? Because in Survival in the Apocalypse, we can't play using heroes or bots. We need real players to play as a team to complete the mission."

Max patiently explained, worried that Gael wouldn't understand or that the game he talked about differed from theirs.

Stefan ignored Max and continued typing quickly on the keyboard. Suddenly, the computer screen went dark, and green and red code lines rapidly appeared.

Dax and Max watched Gael, not asking anything but wondering what exactly he was doing.

Max turned his gaze away and focused on his computer; somehow, he felt exhausted dealing with Gael.

However, Dax, who had been watching Gael's hand movements and the screen, was shocked when he saw the welcoming page of the game they usually played appear.

'So Uncle Gael is playing the same game as us...' Dax thought, his eyes on the player list. He was even more shocked when he saw three players there, and the player ID amazed him.

"Uncle, did you really add those players? How could you do that?" Dax asked, confused. He remembered clearly that this game couldn't be played by bots, heroes, or anything other than humans.

Before Stefan could answer, Dax suddenly jumped from his seat and moved closer to Stefan's computer screen. He wanted to confirm the player ID name. It took him only a few seconds to verify it.

Dax silently swallowed after confirming the name ID and that the three of them were the top players in the global ranking.

"What happened, Dax?" Max stood from his seat to look at Stefan's monitor closely. "Wow! Did you invite the top global players? You know them?"

Just like Dax, Max was shocked beyond words by what he saw. They looked at Stefan, waiting for him to answer, but he just smiled at them.

"Uncle Gael, do you know them? How did you get their IDs?" Dax's voice trailed off as he realized something. "No way... Uncle, don't tell me you own one of these IDs. You are...the top global player? Really? For real? OMG—"

Max was even more shocked when he heard Dax's words. He couldn't help but ask, "Gael, is it true?"

Stefan scratched his head before he answered, "Seriously, you guys don't know about Soft Tech?"

Dax and Max exchanged glances before looking back at Stefan, confused.

"What do you mean?" Max asked.

"Soft Tech is a subsidiary of the RDF Group. You know about it, right? Fear...?"

'Hell! He knows about me?' Max was shocked to hear Gael calling him by his hacker ID.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 355: Do You Know Each Other?

A wry smile appeared on Max's lips, knowing that Grim Reaper recognized his identity. He didn't know whether to be happy or not because so many years had passed, and this man still remembered him.

After calming his surprise, Max couldn't help but scold himself for worrying too much. Grim Reaper would never harm him if he didn't break their agreement.

'Alright! Calm down, man. If this man wanted to hurt you, he would have done it a long time ago.' Max tried several times to convince himself.

"Sure, GR! I know about the RDF Group..." Max smiled when he saw Gael's expression, which wasn't very expressive.

Stefan remained calm and composed after hearing Max's words. He stared at him for a few more seconds before a half-smile slowly formed on the corner of his lips.

"Man, earlier, why did you look shocked? Did you think I wouldn't recognize you?" Stefan asked.

Max chuckled, but he didn't answer the question. Instead, he asked what he needed to know about the game they would play.

"So, you are the one who created this game?" Max was impressed with Grim Reaper's abilities. He was a hacker but also created a top game in the industry. Even he couldn't do that. At Sinclair Group, he was not involved with the gaming division.

"Well, I won't claim that I created it, although all the ideas and programming for the game came from me," Stefan answered casually. "But many people helped me take this game to where it is today. Without my team, my idea and programming would never have come to life."

'Did this man just sarcastically answer my question?' Max was speechless, seeing how confident he was.

Silently venting his frustration in his mind before he said, "I see, you're so talented, man—"

"Yeah, I know!" Stefan said.

Max, "..."

While Max and Stefan were talking, Dax was confused when he saw them suddenly chatting casually as if they were old friends meeting for the first time in a long time.

Unable to hold his curiosity, Dax finally asked, “Uncle Max, Uncle Gael, do you know each other? Are you friends?”

Stefan turned his gaze to Dax. He felt amused when he saw his round blue eyes flash with curiosity. “I know him, but we are not friends. We just encountered each other at work once. Right, Max?” he said before turning to Max.

“Y-Yeah, that’s right; we’re not friends—” Max stammered, surprised to hear Grim Reaper’s answer; it sounded straightforward. Of course, they weren’t friends; they were enemies.

Stefan said nothing else. He focused again on his computer monitor, and his hand started dancing across the keyboard.

After a few minutes, Stefan’s hands slowly stopped moving as he turned to them, “Alright, let’s start playing; you guys can continue chatting later. Quick, accept my invitation. We can start now.”

They both immediately confirmed the invitation from One, the number one player on the global server. Their expressions, seeing that name, remained the same, unreal.

While Dax and Max were amazed and happy to play with these top players, Stefan was busy observing how Dax played.

Stefan was amazed when he saw how fast Dax’s tiny arms and fingers danced across the standard keyboard. This boy’s hand and eye coordination are remarkable; he easily top Max’s speed and skill.

‘Damn! This little man, what a talent!’ Stefan praised Dax silently. He was happy that his sister’s son was a genius boy. Now, Stefan has set his mind. He will offer Dax the opportunity to become his padawan.

...

Bella entered the computer room when Stefan, Max, and Dax were fully immersed in their game and seemed utterly unaware of her presence.

She was speechless when she saw the grown-ups, Stefan and Max, playing so seriously. However, Stefan still had the energy and attention to scold Max if he was making a silly mistake.

She heard Stefan call Max “stupid noobs” a few times, which caused her son to laugh.

Seeing how serious and fun they were right now, Bella didn't have the heart to disturb them in the middle of the game. She waited a few more minutes, but they were not yet finished.

Even though she wanted to let them play, she couldn't let Tristan and Sean be alone. She could imagine they might destroy the living room if they were left alone any longer.

Sigh deeply, Bella decided to approach them. She gently placed her hand on her son's shoulder, "Dax..."

Only then did everyone notice her, leading them to stop playing abruptly.

"Mommy?" Dax was the first to react, seeing Bella already standing behind him.

"I'm sorry for stopping you from playing, baby..." A guilty smile framed her face before she explained to Dax that Sean was coming to see him.

Hearing Sean's name, Dax instantly exited the game and stood up from the chair with an enthusiastic expression.

"Really, Mom? Where is Uncle Sean? Let's meet him..." Dax's little hand immediately grabbed Bella's hand. He couldn't waste more time, afraid his uncle would leave before meeting him.

"In the living room. Your uncle is chatting with Daddy..." Bella faintly smiled, seeing Dax's eyes beam. She left the room with Dax, leaving Stefan to continue talking with Max.

When Bella arrived in the living room, she saw Tristan and Sean looking at each other with icy gazes, arms crossed over their chests.

She could see how tense their expressions were now, as if they were fighting through their gazes.

Bella felt a sense of déjà vu as she gazed upon the same scene she had witnessed earlier.

A relieved sigh escaped her lips. Although there was tension between them, they hadn't harmed each other in her absence, which was a positive sign.

Her adorable son chimed in before Bella could give them a sign of her presence.

"Uncle Sean, I'm so happy to see you..." He shouted, breaking the silence and shocking Tristan and Sean.

Their expressions immediately changed. There was no longer any tension in their gaze, replaced with warm smiles that framed their surprised faces.

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!

Chapter 356: Why Are You Still Jealous Of Him?

“Hi, little Dax. Come here and give your uncle Sean a big hug.”

Sean said as he stood up and opened his arms to embrace Dax. After the warm embrace, he picked him up and carried him in his arms.

“I’m also happy to meet you, little man.” He smiled, but his smile slowly faded when he felt Dax lighter than the last he remembered. “Why do you feel light? Have you lost weight?” he asked worriedly.

“Yes, Uncle Sean, I lost weight after I started practicing martial arts; I do it every day. And I also started a diet because the doctor asked me to. The doctor said this is good for my health...”

Dax started explaining with beaming eyes, overly enthusiastic about finally being able to meet Uncle Sean again. He and Sean were so engaged in their conversation that they forgot Tristan and Bella were still in the room.

Bella felt her heart warm as she watched Sean and Dax talk. She silently smiled and stepped back a few steps to give them time to express their longing.

So far, Tristan has often heard about Dax’s closeness to Sean when Bella or Dax discuss it, but it has never bothered him.

However, witnessing how close they were with his own eyes made his heart hurt. His hands clenched into fists as he tried not to show jealousy at seeing his son get along so well with Sean.

A subtle, bitter smile slowly appeared on Tristan’s lips. No words could describe his feelings at that moment. He turned his gaze to his wife, who seemed visibly moved, making his bitter smile even more obvious.

Tristan walked over to her and placed his hand on her shoulder. “Let them chat together...” he suggested. He felt his heart would hurt even more, and he wouldn’t be strong enough to hold back his emotions if he remained in the room.

Bella was slightly surprised when she heard Tristan’s words. She turned to meet his gaze and became even more surprised to see the sadness in his eyes. As if knowing what was going on in his heart, she nodded and agreed with him.

She smiles at her husband before turning to see Sean and Dax, who still carry Dax in his arms while talking.

“Dax, why don’t you show Sean around the house and the garden? And while at it, you two can talk. Daddy and I will go upstairs,” Bella’s voice made them stop talking and look at her. “If you need anything, you can call Geoffrey,” she said, glancing at Geoffrey standing in the corner.

“Okay, Mommy, Daddy...” Dax nodded and smiled at them.

Sean was surprised that Tristan and Bella allowed him to talk with Dax, just the two of them. He smiled sincerely before nodding, “Sure! Thanks—”

Meanwhile, in the second-floor living room,

Tristan is sitting on a three-seater sofa, looking at his wife beside him. A smile slowly appears on his lips as he sees her watching the Cecilia Blomdahl channel, a YouTuber who records her daily life on Svalbard, an island near the North Pole.

He tries to say something about Sean and Dax meeting downstairs, but every time he opens his mouth, the words seem stuck on the tip of his tongue.

Tristan felt frustrated and curious to know what they were doing. When his mind told him to come down to check what was happening, his legs felt too heavy to move.

How frustrating!

The clock was ticking; ten minutes passed, feeling like two hours for Tristan. This tired his soul and mind.

Sighing deeply, he rested his head on Bella’s shoulder and tried to enjoy what she was watching. A few more minutes passed, but his mind was still filled with thoughts of Sean and Dax. He badly wanted to go downstairs.

Frustrated, he closed his eyes and tried to calm his mind, trying to put aside what was troubling him.

Bella was surprised to see Tristan resting his head on her shoulder. She could also hear him taking several deep breaths.

“Are you okay?” she asked worriedly, stopping the television and focusing on Tristan. “Do you want to take a nap?” She suggested.

Tristan opened his eyes and lifted his head. Sitting straight while looking at her, he smiled.

"I'm fine. No, I don't feel like I want to nap..." he said calmly.

However, Bella clearly sees that his smile fails to reach his eyes. She doubts his calmness and sees that something is bothering him. She could guess that Sean and Dax downstairs were the source of his worry.

Not wanting to upset and worry him further, Bella no longer asked but pulled Tristan into her arms, surprising him.

"Mr. Tristan Sinclair, I'm so... proud of you." Still, Tristan frowned slightly in her arms when he heard her compliment. Bella continued, "Thank you for letting Sean meet our son." She whispered, gently stroking his back.

No words came from Tristan's lips, but Bella felt Tristan's arms wrap around her tightly. A smile appeared on her lips.

They hugged in silence for a while until Tristan's voice finally broke the silence.

"I wouldn't be able to hate him even if I wanted to because he's too good to you and Dax. But, you know what..." He said before pulling away from her and placing his hands on her shoulders, continuing, "I can't stop being jealous of him."

Bella was no longer surprised to hear his confession. She already knew that. She asked, "Why are you still jealous of him?"

She had tried to ask Tristan this question several times. Still, she always failed to get a proper answer because he often answered her ambiguously.

"Don't tell me you're afraid he might steal me away from you?" she casually said, but Tristan's eyes looked serious, staring at her. "No way, Mr. Sinclair? You still think Sean would do that?"

"No. That guy won't have a chance to steal you from me..." Tristan finally spoke after a few seconds of silence. "I just...afraid...I...I couldn't do anything if God let you choose him over me."

Bella, "..."

Tristan put his hand on her face, rubbed her smooth cheek with his thumb, and smiled broadly at her.

“That’s what I’m afraid of—”

Come back and read more tomorrow, everyone!