

## **No Chance 1861**

### [Chapter 1861 Opening Dance](#)

The surrounding gazes converged on the two of them. Gareth saw the dejected young man leaving, and a satisfactory smile tugged at his lips.

"Ms. Benett, may I have the honor of inviting you to this opening dance?" He asked Elisa in a chivalrous manner.

The latter smiled. A blend of helplessness and a touch of sentiment was evident in her expression. Slowly, Elisa placed her hand on Gareth's, prompting the room to erupt in cheers.

The music started playing, and everyone paused to watch Elisa and Gareth take the floor for their first dance.

Under the collective gaze of the onlooking crowd, they exuded confidence without a hint of nervousness.

They moved in perfect synchrony, gliding effortlessly forward and backward. Their steps flowed gracefully and harmoniously.

Elisa projected an aura of elegance and grace reminiscent of a princess with each movement.

Especially when her red dress fluttered in the air with her fluid movements, it held a captivating enchantment.

The lights traced their every motion, casting a luminous glow upon them.

Despite Gareth's typically reserved demeanor, at that very moment, his eyes radiated warmth and affection. It was as if the barriers that had once kept them distant had dissolved away.

From Elisa's perspective, it was a unique moment, as if she contained an entire cosmos of galaxies within her eyes.

To onlookers, seeing them dancing hand-in-hand and the chemistry between them created a captivating and picturesque scene, like a treat for the eyes.

However, unbeknownst to them, Gareth and Elisa would engage in whispered conversations as they shared the intimate dance.

Elisa playfully quipped, "What made you ask me to dance all of a sudden? It's not like you..."

Gareth playfully tightened his hold on her waist. He retorted, "Wasn't really my intention initially because I noticed Ms. Benett sitting there alone as if not keen..."

Gareth gently guided Elisa's waist as the music flowed to its rhythm, allowing her to sway. She gracefully followed his lead, bringing the dance to a splendid close.

Applause erupted from the audience.

Moments later, as Elisa stood upright again, Gareth's voice murmured by her ear, "Then, I saw that you wanted to dance again, so I hurried over. You might have taken the first dance with someone else if I had been a second slower."

He finished with a teasing click of his tongue as if the thought of that scenario upset him.

Initially, Elisa didn't understand his meaning.

Later, the realization struck her, and she playfully inquired, "Mr. Gareth, you're not actually feeling jealous, are you?"

Her tone was mostly jest, fully aware of his usual demeanor—he would never admit to being envious.

However, she hadn't anticipated that, as the music paused and their movements froze mid-bend, Gareth gradually closed the gap between them, his expression sincere.

"Yes, I'm jealous," he admitted. "I've fallen for you. What do I do with you now?"

His warm breath, tinged with the fragrance of wine, brushed her neck, creating an electric atmosphere.

Elisa stared at him, taken aback by his honesty, momentarily stunned.

Gareth's gentle squeeze of her hand snapped her back, and they took a bow together.

The dance came to a close amid a cascade of applause, the room alive with cheers and accolades.

Gareth handed the microphone to Elisa, who accepted it graciously, sharing a few words to motivate the vibrant atmosphere.

She expressed heartfelt thanks for everyone's effort and implored all to relish the moment.

The crowd chanted, "Hail Ms. Benett, the fairest of them all!"

Elisa seemed to emit a radiant glow in the bustling crowd's heart. Gareth's gaze lingered on her, a smile unconsciously tugging at his lips.

Around the same time, a disheveled Paul and Rochelle made their entrance. Despite their initial elegant attire, they appeared somewhat tousled, as if they had gone through some 'adventure.'

This was especially evident in Rochelle's case; her once meticulous and pretty hairdo now clung haphazardly to her scalp.

### [Chapter 1862 Getting Hit On?](#)

Her intricate makeup had smudged beyond recognition, and the once-impeccable dress was now a crumpled and stained disappointment, a cringe-worthy disaster.

The pair planned quietly slipping away to their room and salvaging their disheveled appearances. In fact, with the party in full swing, everyone was lost in the revelry and paying no attention to Paul and Rochelle. However, with her sharp eyes, Bella caught a glimpse of them.

Following customary routine, it was Bella's moment to take the stage right after Elisa's introductory speech.

Wearing her signature smile, she stepped forward, exchanging pleasantries and paying homage to her mentor, Elisa.

Then, with a playful glint in her eye, she looked at a nondescript corner of the room and exclaimed, "Uh... Is that Mr. Mazel and Ms. Matterson? Oh, dear! What happened?! How did you end up like this?"

Bella's cue prompted everyone to turn their heads in the indicated direction, exposing the unkempt duo. Rochelle couldn't help but wish the ground would instantly swallow her.

Unfortunately, their discomfort escalated when the lighting technician mistook them for VIPs and directed the spotlight at them.

This only intensified Paul and Rochelle's embarrassment, making them wish to vanish—much like ostriches burying their heads.

Luckily, Bella 'graciously' spared them further embarrassment and had her assistant guide them to their room for a quick touch-up.

At first, the onlookers held back their laughter. Still, their hilarity burst out uncontrollably when the duo left the hall.

What could be more satisfying than witnessing the downfall of people you held a grudge against? Nothing could match the thrill of seeing two despised individuals brought low in a single, glorious moment!

Paul and Rochelle hadn't gone too far when Rochelle overheard the hushed snickers and teasing remarks about them. She couldn't help it; she clenched her fist, and her resentment boiled over.

She vowed to exact revenge on Elisa and Bella for their heinous acts!

After sprucing up, Rochelle and Paul made a reappearance.

They looked sharp and confident, but no one seemed to give a second thought to Paul and Rochelle.

Everyone was engrossed in their circles or clustered around Elisa and Bella.

Well, that didn't come about until the course shifted. Subsequently, several folks strolled over and started conversations with Paul.

So, of course, Paul got right into the social groove, too, leaving Rochelle standing there, feeling out of place and resentful.

She sipped from the wine glass, acting all cool and unfazed, but her heart raced beneath that calm exterior. To Rochelle's surprise, a deep and manly voice startled her.

"Excuse me?"

She assumed someone might be asking her to dance. Her eyes lit up as she turned to see who it was.

Lo and behold, it was Gareth!

Rochelle had a moment of surprise before she playfully flicked her hair, pulling off a coy look.

In fact, Gareth had been on her radar since the beginning. The minute she saw him, she couldn't help but feel envious that Elisa had landed such a good-looking and charming man.

Meanwhile, she was stuck with Paul, that never-do-good and disgusting old man.

And it wasn't just that; she'd also looked into Gareth's background and found he was leagues ahead of Paul in accomplishments.

Rochelle had, in fact, plotted to steal Gareth from under Elisa's nose.

Unfortunately, the universe never conspired to give her that chance.

Was this finally the moment she'd been hoping for?

Honestly, she'd have gladly dropped Paul ages ago if she could!

Just then, Gareth's voice cut in, "Excuse me..."

Before he could finish his sentence, Rochelle jumped in, giving a shy nod and saying, "Of course, sure!"

Gareth looked a bit puzzled. Sure, about what exactly?

Observing Rochelle's coquettish behavior, he raised an eyebrow in confusion.

He couldn't help but think, "Really, she's not starting the flirtation right now, is she?"

Getting a tad severe, Gareth said, "Hello, could you kindly step aside? You're blocking the way."

Gareth's words were like a bucket of ice water, putting a damper on Rochelle's excitement and rosy daydreams.

His brow furrowed, a hint of irritation flashing across his face. He couldn't wrap his head around why the woman thought it was a good idea to plant herself at the entrance and cause a jam.

### [Chapter 1863 Executing the Plan](#)

Gareth emerged from his bathroom break, realizing he had two options: find a different entrance or navigate the crowd to get back inside.

And then there was this woman taking it upon herself to block the entrance aisle.

Seriously, the nerve!

Rochelle's face turned beet red—not because she was shy, but because she felt utterly mortified.

She wished she could melt into the floor as she revisited her fleeting fantasies from a moment ago.

She lowered her head in a feeble attempt to hide her awkwardness and mumbled, "Sorry," before stepping aside.

Gareth didn't utter a word, but the disdain in his eyes cut like a knife.

Rochelle watched as he made a beeline straight for Elisa.

Even though Elisa wasn't even interacting with him, he stood by her side, silent as a statue.

Seeing that, Rochelle couldn't help but tighten her grip on her wine glass, her eyes smoldering with frustration.

Perhaps her intense resentment was written all over her face, and it traveled across the room; somehow, Paul managed to catch that vibe.

By the time Rochelle shook off her daze, Paul was shooting daggers at her, his gaze a mix of probing and anger.

Rochelle cursed silently, swiftly averting her gaze.

However, Paul had no intention of letting her off the hook that easily.

He smiled at a few company bigwigs, excused himself, red wine glass in hand, and headed for Rochelle.

Once he got near, he groped her, causing Rochelle to let out a shocked exclamation.

Paul's expression stayed unchanged; he chuckled and remarked, "You sly little thing just can't keep your hands to yourself when I'm away. Am I not satisfying enough for your appetite?"

Rochelle acted coyly, quickly shaking her head before nodding in agreement.

She hurriedly explained, "Mr. Mazel is so powerful as a bulldozer."

Paul laughed; the next second, his expression turned severe, and he admonished, "Then why did you flirt with another man when I wasn't looking?"

Rochelle frantically shook her head.

Paul reached out, pinching her chin and tilting her head back, making her down the rest of the red wine in one gulp—his way of asserting control and disciplining Rochelle.

Rochelle obliged, swallowing everything and projecting an air of allure.

Afterward, Paul gently wiped off the wine stain from her lips and whispered, "Good girl, don't forget our mission for tonight."

Rochelle nodded enthusiastically, her eyes shining with anticipation.

Throughout the night, Elisa was occupied with networking and giving a toast, leaving little time for Gareth.

However, he didn't seem bothered. He sat by himself, observing Elisa and occasionally reminding her to pace herself with the drinks.

Both Paul and Rochelle were well aware of the threat posed by Gareth.

Besides the fact that any bold moves in his presence would likely fail, his resolute defense of Elisa prevented anyone from steering her away from his watchful gaze.

So, as the night unfolded, their options were constrained to waiting for an opportunity— for Gareth to exit the scene.

The passage of time had slipped their notice until a phone call broke the lull. Gareth glanced at his device, uttered something to Elisa, and exited the scene.

It was a calculated step in Paul's playbook.

Right after Gareth left, Paul and Rochelle made their way over to Elisa.

At that very moment, Elisa had just concluded a business chat and focused on Paul and Rochelle. She shifted her focus to Paul and Rochelle, and her cheeks tinged with a faint flush. Her gaze held a touch of frostiness, her tone polite but distant.

"Can I help you?"

Paul erupted into a guffaw, playfully nudging Rochelle forward.

Rochelle held two wine glasses; her unspoken intention was explanatory.

Paul broke the ice, "Ms. Benett, Rochelle mentioned there might have been a misunderstanding between you two earlier. She's here to offer her apology. And concerning her tenure with the company... would you be open to considering her return? She's held this role for a considerable time, and even if her impact might not have been revolutionary, she has consistently put in the effort, don't you agree?"

#### [Chapter 1864 Cunning Tactics](#)

Elisa's lips curled into a wry smile as she mused, "Ah, I knew these sneaky two must be up to something. So, it turns out this is their little scheme, huh?"

Rochelle timely lifted her wine glass, finding it difficult to articulate her apology. However, she comforted herself with the thought that everything would return to normal after today.

She said, "Ms. Benett, I admit I was immature and foolish back then. Here's to making amends and hoping we can move past our disagreements. I know you do not hold grudges, so I ask for your forgiveness."

A faint smile played on Rochelle's lips as she anticipated Elisa's impending ordeal tonight. This softened her demeanor, adding a touch of authenticity to her somewhat feigned apology.

Elisa responded with a grin, "Why not? I'm open to it. If you're keen to return to your previous role at the company, you'd have to go through the hiring process. However, whether you're rehired relies on your qualifications and abilities—there's no shortcut."

Paul and Rochelle's faces turned long in an instant.

Elisa was well aware they were discussing Rochelle's reinstatement. However, Elisa made it clear that Rochelle would need to undergo the conventional hiring process.

Did she mean that I have to start from scratch as a junior employee? Would that mean Bella would hold the reins over me? Ridiculous! I won't stand for their oppression!

As Rochelle teetered on the brink of losing her cool, Paul shot her a warning glance.

Gradually, she reined in her frustration and regained her composure. Taking a deep breath, she mustered a somewhat strained smile at Elisa.

“Alright, Ms. Benett. I appreciate the opportunity. How about a toast?”

Elisa sneered at Rochelle, brushing off the offer.

Rochelle clutched her glass awkwardly as people strolled past, throwing curious glances and leaving her embarrassed.

The evening had been a lot of fun for Elisa, but she made sure not to lose control by moderating her drinking pace.

She took measured sips or feigned sipping. If her wine glass left her line of sight, she wouldn't touch it again; she'd fetch a new one.

With all these safeguards, why would she even consider accepting a glass from Rochelle?

Rochelle took a sip from both glasses and turned to Elisa. “Is this enough to demonstrate my sincerity and convince you that I mean no harm?”

Elisa smiled and remained silent. Then, she reached for one of the glasses.

Bringing the glass to her nose, she caught a whiff of the drug's faint scent. Elisa mused. Well-played, but you didn't anticipate my detective skills!

Rochelle had the gut to ingest the drugged wine, meaning she had the antidote.

Elisa didn't rush to expose their tactics; instead, she took a drink with a smile.

Rochelle and Paul watched with bated breath as Elisa sipped, her expression becoming contentment.

Especially Rochelle, who grinned and said, “Here's to embracing harmony and starting a new friendship!”

Elisa's smile stretched across her face, though her eyes didn't share the same warmth. Following this, Paul and Rochelle excused themselves. Elisa's eyes followed their departure, her smile taking a malicious twist. Although Glacier Isle was a prized property, with no homes built there, they would have to head back to the hotel near the pier for the night.

The Harbor View Hotel wasn't too shabby either.

Thanks to Elisa's considerate planning, departure times were staggered at ten, eleven, and twelve o'clock to accommodate varying resting times.

Elisa herself was part of the last group leaving Glacier Isle, along with others like Bella, Gareth, Rochelle, and several others setting sail at midnight.

Prior to their departure, Elisa preemptively consumed the antidote, eager to see what schemes Rochelle had cooked up.

As they stepped onto the ship, Elisa's steps faltered a little. Gareth was quick to offer support, his concern evident in his eyes.

Elisa declined his assistance with a slight shake of her head, assuring him she was okay.

The aftermath of the antidote, combined with the residual effects of the two drugs in her system, left her feeling light-headed.

Gareth gently pressed his lips together. "Stick close to me later. The ship might sway, and we wouldn't want you accidentally slipping overboard."

Elisa grinned, conveying her resilience.

While physically weakened, she wasn't so delicate that a gust of wind could sweep her away.

### [Chapter 1865 Exposed?](#)

Once aboard the ship, Elisa rarely stayed alone; instead, she gravitated towards the deck amidst the company of others.

Actively avoiding isolation, she mingled with fellow attendees, intently monitoring Rochelle's potential secretive strategy.

Furthermore, anyone daring to conspire against her should brace for countermeasures.

Beneath the moon's glow, Elisa raised her wine glass and downed it swiftly, a subtle smile forming on her lips, hinting at veiled intentions.

With Elisa refusing to retreat to her room, Rochelle's nerves went into overdrive. It was plain as day: if Elisa didn't bunk down in her quarters, her scheming would crumble like a house of cards! What would happen to the painstakingly set-up 'surprise' she had tucked away?

Rochelle turned to Paul, "Do you think she's catching on? What if she figures it out? What do we do then?"

Rochelle's tension was almost tangible, as though Elisa's presence had cast a foreboding shadow upon her, leaving an indelible mark of fear.

Paul picked up on Rochelle's restlessness and pat her shoulder reassuringly, accompanied by a light chuckle.

"C'mon. Relax okay. We've been careful. It's unlikely she'd pick up on anything! And even if she does, she has no evidence against us."

Given Elisa's penchant for vengeance, discovering the truth would undoubtedly trigger her retaliation.

Rochelle nervously stole a glance at Elisa, who was still merrily mingling. Seeing no red flags, she eased up a little.

Paul said, "It doesn't matter if she decides to crash in her room; the drug is already in her body. Sooner or later, the effects will kick in. If she heads back to her room, it's a gotcha moment, her image in the gutter. If she keeps partying, her true colors get laid bare. It's a knockout blow, either way."

Rochelle nodded as if weighing Elisa's impending predicament and then smirked. "Man, if only I had more of those pills, I'd also slip one to Bella."



A hint of remorse lingered in her voice. Sigh... Too bad!

Little did she know, Bella was within earshot and caught every word.

So, this was their plot – drug Elisa and make her dance to their tune. Hmph! Quite the game plan.

Keeping her urge to pounce in check, Bella pinged Elisa a message. As mad as she was, Bella realized she had to rein it in and not torpedo Elisa's masterstroke.

Lucky for them, Elisa saw this coming. She wasn't going to let these two mischief-makers prevail.

So, buckle up – the real showdown was on its way.

Out on the deck, soaking in the breeze, Elisa's phone buzzed with a message from Bella, filling her in on Rochelle's little plot.

A wry grin tugged at Elisa's lips. After all this time, their tactics were still painfully lowbrow. Apparently, some people never learn.

After a brief pause, Elisa dialed Bella to share a plan she had concocted.

Bella's voice buzzed with excitement. Who wouldn't be thrilled? This was a golden chance for payback!

Elisa's plan was nothing short of genius. It was high time Rochelle reaped what she had sown.

Armed with Elisa's instructions, Bella sprang into action.

Tucking her phone away, Elisa leaned back, poised for the spectacle about to unravel.

Sitting across from her, Gareth raised his wine glass, his gaze steadfastly locked onto Elisa's. He got a real kick out of watching her outsmart her adversaries. That taste for revenge she had? It was definitely growing on him.

Who could blame him for finding this cunning and undeniably charming Elisa so intriguing?

Meanwhile, Rochelle was still riding high on the thrill of impending victory when a waiter broke the news that there might be a hiccup in her plan.

Without a moment to lose, she hurried toward her room.

Yet, right in the middle of her rush, a door creaked open. An arm extended, cloth in hand, swiftly covering Rochelle's nose.

#### [Chapter 1866 Reaping What Was Sown](#)

In a heartbeat, Rochelle blacked out, slumping to the floor. When she regained her senses, she was sprawled in an unfamiliar room, wait a minute, wasn't this the same man she had dispatched to Elisa's room?

She knew she hadn't been violated, but the optics of sharing a room with a naked man were a catastrophe waiting to happen if anyone stumbled upon them. Suppressing the urge to throttle the guy, Rochelle tried to shake him awake.

But the man was out cold from drugs. No amount of shaking seemed to work.

Beads of sweat formed on Rochelle's forehead, tracing a path down her face. And then, footsteps sounded outside, spurring her into action like a deer in headlights.

The steps were closing in, offering Rochelle zero time to think. She ducked into a nearby closet, and that's when Paul's voice and a female stranger's voice drifted in.

Paul's voice was tinged with eagerness as he said, "Oh, baby, how I missed you."

The woman played the coquette, responding with a saccharine-sweet, "You naughty boy."

The sheer sweetness might give anyone cavities.

They entered the room, wrapped up in their little reunion, blissfully unaware of the man passed out on the bed.

Rochelle's mental gears clicked. This must be Paul's room! D\*mn, I've been played!

"What the heck—!"

The woman shrieked, spotting the guy on the bed. She turned her gaze to Paul, asking, "Why's there a dude here?"

The unwarranted discovery made the woman question Paul's sexual orientation. Paul seemed on edge, ready to intervene, but her angry outburst punctured his confidence.

"How the h\*ll would I know?" Paul grumbled, scratching his head with frustration.

"Probably some id\*ot who can't handle his boozes."

Realizing her overreaction, the woman sheepishly apologized. "Um... shall we continue then?"

Rochelle initially intended to avoid misunderstandings with Paul, so she stayed hidden in the closet. But that didn't matter now.

'Whack!'

Rochelle stormed out from the darkness and violently slapped the woman's face.

Taken aback by the unexpected figure springing from the closet, the woman's scream filled the air.

The woman was a complete stranger to Rochelle – probably a new intern. Who would've guessed that Paul would be all chummy with someone new the second she turned her back? This was flat-out cheating and betrayal!

Anger blazed in Rochelle's eyes as she pointed an accusatory finger at the woman, unleashing a torrent of curses. "B\*tch! You seriously thought you could steal my man?"

With that, she landed another slap on the woman's face.

The woman cradled her stinging cheek, tears flowing as she sobbed, cornered by the thought that Paul's legitimate wife had caught her red-handed. She didn't dare to put up a fight.

Paul's head pounded from the chaos, spiraling into a mess. He yelled, "Shut up, both of you! You're driving me insane."

Catching Rochelle's bewildered expression, he ignored any explanation. Rochelle charged at him, seemingly wanting to slap him as well.

Paul forcefully pushed her aside, his anger boiling over. "Know your place. You're just a mistress."

Rochelle stared at Paul, her eyes wide with shock. He had never spoken to her this way before.

Realizing that Rochelle was also in the same boat as her, a mistress, the woman's anger flared. She stood up, lunging at Rochelle, ready to fight tooth and nail.

### [Chapter 1867 The Opinions](#)

Paul's patience was fraying due to the commotion. He swung the door open to create space to clear his head. There stood Elisa, flanked by a small group of people.

Internally, Paul let out a slew of curses. He had half a mind to slam the door shut. After all, this entire mess had been sparked by him, and if it escalated further, his reputation would take a hit.

Yet, in line with Bella's grand plan, Paul wouldn't have things her way. Just as he was about to shut the door, Bella managed to slip through the gap.

"Oh!" Bella exclaimed, her hand covering her mouth in a well-rehearsed expression of surprise.

Elisa feigned innocence and asked, "What's going on?"

Elisa seemed ready to assess the situation, but Paul swiftly stepped in, his unease evident as he glanced at the group behind Elisa. It would be a catastrophe if they found out what was happening in his room.

So, conjuring a strained smile, Paul remarked, "Nothing serious, really. Just a minor hiccup, Ms. Benett. No need to bother yourself."

His gaze subtly shifted from the crowd to Elisa once again. Paul was determined to keep things under control.

Paul smiled, "Besides, don't you have more pressing matters to attend to?"

Elisa stood her ground, her tone resolute as she stated, "This event is under my hosting. It's my responsibility to ensure everyone's safety."

She then turned her attention to the crowd behind her, asking, "Would you prefer waiting for me to address this, or should the staff give you a tour in the meantime?"

Paul's frustration simmered, his teeth grinding, but Elisa's words left no room for argument.

He approached Elisa, keeping his voice low for their ears only, his teeth clenched. "Is this your motive? Are you trying to get back at me?"

Elisa gave him an innocent look and flashed a smile. "Mr. Mazel, I'm not sure what you mean. I'm just here to do my part."

Paul's seething hatred for Elisa made him wish he could lash out, but he forced a smile, concealing his true feelings. He cautioned, "You better not play games with me. You'll regret it."

Stepping back, Elisa remained composed as she replied, "Mr. Mazel, kindly step aside. My role here is official. If you continue to obstruct me, it might raise suspicions about your own intentions."

Paul was determined to block her way, but his attempt at shoving her was thwarted mid-action as Gareth intercepted, gripping his hands.

Gareth remained stoic.

Applying pressure to Paul's hand, Gareth elicited a yelp of pain.

In that fleeting opening, Elisa deftly maneuvered past and entered the room.

Paul intended to obstruct her, but she had already darted towards the entrance.

There was no stopping for Elisa now.

His efforts were futile in preventing Elisa's entry and halting the group trailing behind her.

They burst in to find Rochelle and the new intern locked in an intimate embrace. Both seemed rumpled, and a disheveled man lay sprawled on the bed...

No matter the perspective, the scene was unquestionably inappropriate and scandalous.

Elisa let out an audible 'tsk' of disapproval and dismay. She addressed the group, "I suppose we should continue and find somewhere to unwind together..."

With that, she led the group away.

Paul couldn't miss the trace of sarcasm in Elisa's smile. He knew she had orchestrated this scenario, manipulating the situation to her advantage. Yet, he felt incapacitated to counteract her tactics.

"D\*mn it!" Paul vented his frustration toward the sea.

As Rochelle finally caught on to what was happening, it was too late for her to intervene. The situation had escalated beyond her control. The office was filled with rumors, each version of the story more exaggerated than the previous one.

In some accounts, Rochelle and the new intern participated in a threesome with a third person, leading to a disagreement about the sequence of events.

In one of the narratives, Paul was said to be the cuckold.

### [Chapter 1868 Retaliation](#)

Another version making the rounds, possibly the one closest to the truth, suggested that Rochelle and the random guy were involved in a secret affair in Paul's room.

Meanwhile, Paul had become entangled with his new intern.

Fate took an unforeseen turn as the four of them happened to cross paths, triggering clashes and tension.

Rochelle's jealousy led to a physical altercation with the female intern.

Despite Paul's attempts to intervene, they continued to grapple, forcing him to step back for a moment of respite.

Much to their surprise, they were discovered in the act of their abominable relationships.

Elisa's subtle manipulation was naturally woven into this version. She wouldn't let Paul off the hook so easily. Now, he would have a hard time explaining it all to his family.

Rochelle had calmed down inside Paul's room but struggled to wrap her head around what happened.

Immediately, Paul terminated the employment of the female intern. As the dust settled, a grim truth dawned upon them: Elisa had intricately woven a trap they had unknowingly entered.

On the table was Bella's phone, almost like she'd abandoned it when they were in the thick of their rapid-fire planning.

It became evident that Elisa was the mastermind behind this entire scenario from the outset, leaving their facades shattered.

Rochelle slumped in disbelief, unable to comprehend how, despite her careful planning, she had fallen prey to Elisa.

No way. This couldn't be the end of it! She was furious and refused to give in. In this dire situation, there was only one desperate option left...

A strange glint shimmered in Rochelle's eyes; her gaze fixated on the phone.

A sinister smile slowly etched on her face. She shared her plan with Paul, who agreed it was worth a shot.

With the ongoing drama sorted, Elisa was at the bar with Gareth, embracing the gentle breeze.

The ship was set to dock in thirty minutes. The breeze felt calming and serene—perhaps because dealing with these vexing matters had somewhat eased Elisa's thoughts.

"Do you want something to drink?"

Elisa proposed, which she rarely had the mood for the occasion.

Elisa's suggestion was quite unusual, given the circumstances.

Of course, Gareth wouldn't turn down the offer, but no waitperson was in sight. So, he decided to take the initiative and grab the drinks.

At that moment, Elisa's phone buzzed with a message from Bella. "Urgent! Meet me on the deck."

Elisa's brows furrowed as she tried to call back, but the line was busy. A sense of unease crept over her. Yet, Bella's safety was her priority.

Without waiting for Gareth's return, she quickly headed to the deck.

Located on the first floor, the deck had no safety railings – a setup meant for adventurous tourists seeking unobstructed views. However, most visitors would only venture there if secured by safety ropes.

Elisa didn't want to take risks, so she secured herself with a safety rope before edging closer to the deck's edge.

"Bella?" Elisa's voice rang out, but there was no response except for the engine's rumbling.

Growing more concerned, Elisa was about to call out again when a sudden force from behind propelled her forward.

In an instant, Elisa was in the water, the sea swallowing her up!

The cold seawater splashed onto her face as she hit the water with a heavy thud.

Initially, she had intended to use the safety rope to pull herself back up, but even the rope had been tossed into the sea.

Although it wasn't winter, the seawater was chilling, sending shivers through her body and causing her teeth to chatter uncontrollably.

Wave after wave crashed over her, and the ship gradually grew smaller in the distance.

Elisa fought to keep her eyes open and attempted to swim towards the ship.

However, her body felt increasingly heavy, her eyelids drooping, and her feet cramping painfully.

Then came another splash.

Something else had fallen into the water.

Elisa strained to open her eyes, but the effort proved too much, and she slipped into unconsciousness.

Is this the end of me? The thought flashed through Elisa's mind as darkness closed in.

#### [Chapter 1869 Demise](#)

Back on the ship, hidden within the shadows, Rochelle was taken aback, witnessing Gareth's leap into the water.

Driven by an instinct to rescue, she swiftly tossed a lifebuoy into the waves.

The buoy was attached to a rope, giving Rochelle the means to haul Gareth back aboard if she reeled in the line.

Yet, Gareth was on a mission to save Elisa. He secured the lifebuoy around her just as cramps seized her unexpectedly.

Taking in the situation, Rochelle paused for a moment. She recalled Paul mentioning Elisa was a seasoned swimmer, so the plan wasn't to drown her.

Although, there was a part of her that wouldn't have minded if Elisa ended up drowned. Still, Rochelle's intention was to ensure Elisa's survival – not out of concern but to give her a taste of humiliation and a much-needed life lesson.

But then, out of the blue, Elisa was hit by a sudden cramp, giving the appearance that she was struggling to stay afloat.

Rochelle couldn't help but find the situation somewhat amusing, entertaining the thought that fate might be playing a hand in her favor.

Of course, it was precisely then that Gareth chose to intervene.

"Pull!"

Gareth clung to the lifebuoy, hollering towards the ship, his voice a plea for anyone to hear and rescue them.

Amidst all this, Rochelle was caught in a swirl of emotions, torn between conflicting thoughts and decisions.

The commotion had attracted a crowd from all corners of the ship.

As the approaching steps grew louder, the urge for vengeance became all-consuming. Consequences be damned, Rochelle was fixed on making Elisa suffer, no matter what.

She deliberately loosened her grip on the rope, allowing it to slip through her fingers.

The ship distanced itself, carrying Gareth's figure into the horizon.

Rochelle didn't linger; there was no room to relish her vengeful satisfaction.

She swiftly found a hiding spot, fading into the shadows again.

Bella was the first to reach the scene, noticing Elisa's struggle in the water. Her instinctive response was to dive in and help.

However, emerging from the shadows, Rochelle's voice tinged with sorrow and reproach.

"Ms. Wickam, I've never thought you were hiding behind a false front with Ms. Benett. Your pleasant persona was nothing but a cover. How could you betray her like that? Ms. Benett treated you like family, yet you heartlessly pushed her into the sea?"

Their relationship could have been taken at face value from an external perspective. Still, Rochelle had deliberately marred that impression in front of the others.

Rochelle's eyes shimmered with tears as she voiced her words, a genuine hint of sadness etched across her face.

As Rochelle's words hung in the air, Paul arrived on the deck, stepping into the unfolding situation alongside the others.

The impact of her words was evident as heated discussions ignited among the onlookers.

"Could it really be Ms. Wickam? Their relationship seemed rock-solid, and Ms. Benett was incredibly kind to her..."

"Agreed, but Ms. Wickam isn't rushing to clear things up either. What's going on here?"

"I can't believe Ms. Benett had plummeted into the sea. No way. This can't be real!"

Absolutely unbelievable! Elisa was regarded almost like a divine presence, practically worshipped by everyone, given her reputation. And she just vanished like that, swallowed up by the waves, without a trace?

For the majority, the primary focus remained on rescuing Elisa.

Paul was a little smug and was about to step in and pronounce Bella's guilt when someone shouted, "We must turn back immediately."

The others finally snapped into action, racing to reach the ship's captain. Paul's countenance took a swift turn for the grim.

Rochelle planned to stretch out the time before rescue attempts, but an unknowing troublemaker botched her plan.

With a resentful glare, she aimed her frustration at the person who unwittingly screwed up her plan – funnily enough, the same dude who had invited Elisa to dance earlier.

Her teeth clenched, and she refrained from uttering a word.

Rochelle kept her teeth clenched as the ship got into reverse mode, silently hoping for the sea to swallow Elisa whole.

Maybe, by some strange quirk, her plea was answered. But she realized the ship was already miles away as the puzzle pieces clicked.

When they finally got the captain's attention and begged for a course change, all that was on the horizon was the boundless sea.

### [Chapter 1870 Slander](#)

Moonlight kissed the sea, setting its waves aglow, and Elisa was nowhere to be found, entirely off the grid.

Rochelle breathed out a mixture of relief and sorrow. It was a pity that someone as remarkable as Gareth would meet such a tragic end...

Too bad. It had to be that way.

Rochelle's expression turned steely, resolute in removing any obstacles from her path.

Snapping back to reality, the man who had initially invited Elisa to dance was about to dive into the sea, searching for her.

But Paul interjected. He looked at the crowd and announced, "I get that we're all concerned about Ms. Benett, and I am too. However, in her absence, my responsibility is the safety of everyone present. It's wiser to wait until we're on solid ground before seeking assistance."

With Paul's words, the crowd's resistance dwindled.

Bella had been lost in a daze, but now she snapped back to her senses, determined to leap into the sea and rescue Elisa. Her sudden action sent shockwaves through the crowd, leaving them gasping in horror.



However, fate played a double-edged game. Bella's intentions were thwarted.

Rochelle swiftly intervened, halting her in her tracks. Their struggle ended in a tumble onto the deck, with Rochelle managing an unexpected feat—positioning herself astride Bella.

Bella murmured in a daze, "Let me go... let me go down..."

Rochelle's response was a slap that seemed to hush the world.

With a grip on Bella's collar, Rochelle's tone oozed menace, "Don't think dying will clear your guilt. Legal consequences await you!"

The onlookers were bewildered by the dramatic turn of events. Despite the confusion, many had faith that Bella was no culprit.

Eventually, Bella regained her composure. Her conscience reawakened, and her gaze locked onto Rochelle. Briefly, Rochelle caught a glimpse of Elisa's essence in Bella's gaze.

A chill crawled down her spine, compelling her to release her grip on Bella.

Bella regained her footing with a bit of support, and she squarely faced Rochelle. "You're accusing me of pushing Elisa off the ship, but everyone at the company knows how close she and I were. Why on earth would I do something like that? What could my motive possibly be?"

Rochelle was caught off guard. Then, after a moment of realization, she straightened herself and locked eyes with Bella, speaking with newfound confidence, "Who can really know what you were thinking? You've proven you can be pretty extreme, and your motives? Anyone's guess! Maybe you had some sneaky agenda or were gunning to replace her? And heck! You didn't even save your cousin

— I saw you had the chance to rescue Mr. Wickam earlier, but you let him slip away!"

The crowd only just realized that Gareth had also fallen overboard.

Bella stood there, momentarily stunned, shaking her head as she stepped back, a clear sense of devastation on her face. How could this have happened? Both Gareth and Elisa had fallen off the ship. How am I supposed to explain all this to Grandma?

Bella sat there, cradling her head in anguish, lost in silence. In the midst of this, Paul motioned to a nearby waiter.

The waiter hesitated a bit and then stepped forward, saying, "I saw it happen. This lady here pushed Ms. Benett into the water. Even though Ms. Benett cried out for help, she just ignored her. By the time I realized Ms. Benett was gone from the surface. Her last words were, 'So your text message was a trap.'"

Camden, who had asked Elisa to dance, piped up, "Why didn't you speak up earlier?"

Slowly, the crowd started to connect the dots, gazing at the waiter with puzzled expressions. If this story was true, why wasn't she the first on the scene instead of Rochelle?

For a brief moment, the waiter looked panicked, glancing between Paul and Rochelle.

Rochelle stated, "She was too scared, that's why! Who'd dare mess with Ms. Wickam? She didn't even try saving her cousin when he drowned!"