

Rewriting Life Chapter 101 – 110

Chapter 101

The sudden appearance of the extra bottles caused i

d the Tennis Club to become uproarious. Accepting them would be a massive embarrassment.

“The game time is over, and now you suddenly pull out ten more bottles! You’re trying to heat our count after seeing if

This **is** what a rule violation looks like!”

We’re not accepting this—those bottles shouldn’t count?”

Vulida stood firm, her hands on her hips. “Why wouldn’t they count? Wallone was also a participant who collected those bottles on campus during the game. If you’ve got extra boules, go ahead and add them. Oh, wait, you don’t? Then stop complaining

Willow, fringing innocence, said quietly. These bottles were collected earlier during the game. I just forgot to add them to the big bag until now. What’s wrong with that?”

Stella shot her a sharp look. Willow, whether you forgot or not, only you know, but we know what’s really going on!

The Tennis Club members erupted in anger. “We protest! Adding boules at the last minute like this is unacceptable!”

The Dance Club fired **back** just as passionately. “Your objections don’t mean a thing! You’re not the student council—it’s their call! Besides, people forget things all the time. What, do you think she magically pulled them out of nowhere!”

The crowd watching eagerly, as always, turned the situation into a chaotic shouting match.

Wendy folded her arms, her tone icy. “The Tennis Club’s vice president is **also** the student council president. It’s pretty clear they’re working together—they’re never going to side with **us**.”

“Exactly! Roman is the Tennis Club’s vice president and the student council president. Everyone knows it

Well

ou have it. Clear as day—this is outright favoritism from the student council

there you

The student council members exchanged uneasy glances, clearly put **on** the spot. Wendy's words had cornered them— if they didn't accept the Dance Club's bottles, rumors of collusion between the student council and the Tennis Club would inevitably spread across campus. Any future decisions made by the **student** council would be scrutinized, **and** they'd likely face criticism and ridicule for playing favorites

After a brief discussion, the student council announced, "Given the situation, we've decided to extend the game time by five minutes. During this time, any remaining bottles may be submitted. After five minutes, the results will be finalized

This was the fairest and most balanced decision they could make, ensuring it wouldn't spark unnecessary criticism.

Willow stepped forward and handed over her ten extra bottles

Elsie watched in dismay, anxiety evident on her face. "What do we do? Do we have **any** more bottles left?"

Stella shook her head "No, everything we collected is already in the big bag. There's nothing left.

They had been so sure of their victory, but no one had anticipated Willow's hidden **stash** of bottles. Now, it seemed

dall was lo

lost.

Salla turned to Eliana, desperation creeping into her voice. "**Eliana**, what do we do now? Only five minutes are left, **and** even Mr. and Mrs. Morri have already packed up their stall. We're completely out of bottles—this time, we've lost."

Thomas suggested, "What if we grab some water and drink it fast? The empty bottles should still count, right?"

Landon sighed deeply. "With only five minutes left, there's no way we'd **have** time to buy water and get back. Even if we managed it, the dance chib would complain that we cheated. Forget it. If we lose, so be it. **Elsie**, I'll take care of your boyfriend's disciplinary issue."

The Mitchell family was among the trustees of Honstrad University. If Landon decided to step in, overturning the disciplinary action would be simple.

Even so, Elie

looked downcast **as** she listened to his offer. President, no Let's forget it. I don't want to trouble you. This game has already taken **up** enough of everyone's time"

Hearing this, the Dance Club members burst out laughing.

"Now that's more **like** it—just admit defeat already"

"**You** were never going to beat us. Why drag it out?"

"The medal was ours from the beginning"

1/2

Chapter 101

Thana glanced at the Dance Clubs and locked eyes with Willow, who wore a self-satisfied smirk as

to say, See! You'll never win against me

The second is kicked by, and the five minute extension

extension was bearing its end the of the student council members turned toward the Tennis Club "Time's almost up. Do you have any more bottles to submit?"

Wabila smirked. "Why even bother **asking** Look at them—they don't have anything left. Stop wasting time"

"Exactly," someone else chimed in "If they had any bottles left, they would've landed the m over long ago. Why wait this long?"

It seemed the Tennis Club had run out of options:

The student council members exchanged a glance and then started the countdown.

Wendy chuckled smugly. "If they win now, we'll be nothing short of a miracle"

Wallow added with a smirk. "Wendy, this is reality—miracles like that don't happen"

ed in, with Roman by their side. Each carried several large bags, the unmistakable sound of water bottles clinking inside.

Cameron and Adam walked i

They arrived just as the clock struck zero, setting the three bags on the table in the final moments.

“President, what are **you** doing here?” one of the council members asked, startled.

Roman smiled calmly. “I just came from the tennis courts.”

Roman had been escorting visitors around Bonstead University earlier that day when he **ran** into Cameron and Adam at the tennis lounge. They explained that they had come to collect the water bottles that Tennis Club members had left behind. Most of the **bins** in the lounge were filled with discarded bottles, with nothing else mixed in. It wasn't until they reminded Roman of the recycling event that he realized what was happening.

So, Roman joined them in bringing the bags back to the table.

No one had expected them to return with so many bottles. **Thomas** stepped forward, relieved. “You two came back! We thought you were lost!”

Adam smirked. “What, you think we're as clueless as you?”

Landon breathed a sigh of relief. “Thank God you're back. Those bottles just saved us!”

The crowd stared in shock, the unexpected twist catching everyone off guard.

“I can't believe I forgot about them, someone muttered. “They came back with bottles! Those bags are full, no need to even count—they've got more than the Dance Club”

“A twist after a twist! There's no way there's another twist coming, right?”

The Dance Club members, who had been so confident in their victory moments ago, were now silent.

Yulia stammered, “B—but the time's already over! Those bottles shouldn't count!”

2/2

Chapter 102

Wendy stepped forward, her si

“Senior, the countdown was already finished, wasn't it?”

One of the student council members held up the stopwatch. The time wasn't over yet. There was still one second left."

"That's impossible" Yulila protested. "The timer hit zero just now"

The student council members exchanged frustrated glances. The game would have been over by now if it hadn't been for the Dance Club's constant pouting and complaining. Even after the five-minute extension, they were still causing a scene. Was the game only over if the Dance Club won?

If you're questioning our timing,

please bring it up with the president. He's right over there"

Yulila

froze, her throat tightening. There was no way she could bring this up with Roman. Not in a million years.

"The game is officially over. Bets start the boat count"

The student council members proceeded to recount the bottles in front of everyone.

The final result was as follows: Yulila's team, even after adding the bottles they grabbed at the last second, finished with 184. Elvie's team, with an impressive boost from the 39 bottles Cameron and his grip brought back in the final moments, totaled 170

"Elvie is the winner" the council member declared. "With 170 bottles, she's officially the champion"

Applause broke out across the room. Only the dance club remained silent, their frustration etched on their faces

Though resentment simmered. Yulila had to swallow her pride and accept the results.

"Elvie, we did it" someone cheered.

"The medal is ours! Come Monday, we can finally apply to have **that** disciplinary action overturned!"

With the medal warm in her hand, Elsie's excitement bubbled over. She turned to Eliana, her eyes shining, and pulled her into a heartfelt hug.

"Thank you, Eliana"

Elsie knew full well that without Elana's steady guidance **and quick** thinking, defeating Yulila would've been impossible. By the end the game had become more about pride than the prize itself. Thanks to Eliana, she could finally stand tall.

Eliana gave her a gentle **pat** on the shoulder. "We're all part of the same team, Elsie. No need to thank me"

Meanwhile, the dance club members, bitter and humiliated, left the scene as quickly **as** possible. Wendy and Willow exchanged glances with Eliana before following their j

group out

The next day, all the junior students from the acting department gathered in the auditorium for casting auditions.

As the production crew passed by the acting department building that morning, **students** flooded the hallways, leaning over to catch a glimpse. Each of them dreamed of the day they'd **have** their chance to be part of an actual production.

At lunchtime, the same group appeared in the cafeteria, accompanied by a few acting professors.

Stella leaned over to Eliana, her voice tinged with curiosity. "Eli, look—it's the production fear. I wonder if they've finished casting already."

Eliana glanced up briefly, her tone calm. "They're probably wrapping it **up** by now"

Meanwhile, Willow and her group, seated behind them, also **noticed** the production team

Wendy leaned in with a confident smile. "Willow, let's find **a** moment to go over and introduce ourselves. I know the assistant director on this crew and Bryson, the screenwriter—I've got connections with him too.

Willow's eyes lit up with excitement. "Is that true, Wendy? That's amazing!"

Wendy smirked "**Oh**, it's nothing"

Sharryl and Charlene, seated with them, immediately **jumped** at the opportunity to flatter Wendy.

"Wendy, you're the **most** well-connected in our year. We're so envious"

Tim
a huge fan of Hannah! Next time, can you get me **an** autographed photo? I'd **treasure** it forever.

1/3

1:05 PM

Chapter 102

Wendy felt a sense of warmth inside as she listened, "Oh, please, don't say that. We're all friends here. I'll make some introductions for you both

later

Sheryl chimed in, "See" Having the right friends leads to the best opportunities. Charlene, it's fate that we're friends with Willow and Wendy

Charlene nodded in agreement "Exactly!"

Their words were laced with a subtle jab as they glanced toward Eliana and Stella sitting at the table ahead. With a mocking tone, Charlene added, "Some people are just cut from the same cloth. They'll probably never get opportunities like this"

Willow quickly interjected, "Come on, don't say things like that. It wouldn't be good if someone overheard?"

Wendy, bolder by nature, smirked. "People born into the right circumstances have a much better shot at success. Some are lucky to be in the same **class** as us. For others, a future like ours! It's not even in the same world"

Their target was clear—

Eliana and Stella. Wendy's voice **wasn't** quiet, and several nearby tables caught every word. The atmosphere grew tense

Eliana set down her fork and stood. "You're right. Wendy. Life is full of surprises. Today, we're classmates—who knows? Tomorrow, I might end up

as your stepmom?"

Stella let out a soft laugh. "Yeah, who can say

Though Eliana's words seemed casual, they carried a more profound implication—she was subtly reminding Wendy of her family's complex background, something only those who knew the whole story would **pick** up on

Wendy's face turned a shade of red as her anger flared. "Eliana, what do you mean by that?"

Eliana raised an eye

and raised an eyebrow "Exactly what I said.

You're **right**—

backgrounds matter. In the old **days**, the true heirs were the princes with noble blood. Those born to servants knew to keep their heads down. Some people don't understand that simple fact" Eliana's words were pointed, and the whole room seemed to feel the sting of her

Wendy's face flushed with rage, her anger rising to the surface. Grabbing her lunch **tray**, she stood abruptly, ready to storm off.

At that moment, their commotion drew the attention of the production **team** and accompanying professors in the cafeteria

"Wendy What's going on here! Can't you eat without **causing** a scene?"

Wendy froze, turning toward them with a forced **smile**. "No, it's nothing, I wasn't—"

"Then sit down!"

Wendy rolled her eyes, the annoyance barely hidden. If it weren't for the fear of her parents being called about a scene at school, she wouldn't have bothered pretending to be the obedient daughter in front of the Hall family. **With** her **usual** temper, she wouldn't **have** listened to a low-ranking teacher at all.

Reluctantly, she sat back down, her pride stung by the public reprimand.

Wendy's gaze shifted toward the group from the production team. Without hesitation, she walked over to them. "Mr. Brooks! Mr. Thompson! It's been so long! The last time we met was in Whartonburg!"

The cafeteria fell silent, and her voice echoed across the room.

A few people around her gasped, whispering in hushed tones.

"Wow, she **knows** people from the

production team! And she even knows **Bryson**

"Who is this freshman? I don't think I've seen her before, but she's pretty"

“I heard she’s a transfer student from the acting department”

Bryson, the screenwriter

“Wow, she’s **fire**—
walking right up to them like that. She must know them pretty well to act so familiar

Wendy made her way over to Bryson, offering a bright, warm smile.

“Mr. Thompson, it’s good to see you. How have you been?”

Bryson studied her for a moment, his mind working. After a brief pause, it clicked—
she **was** Hannah’s daughter

Chapter 103

Before Wendy could respond, Mr. Brooks immediately recognized her. “Ah, so you’re Hannah’s daughter. I should’ve known

Wendy smiled brightly “Yes, that’s right, Mr. Brooks, I’m so glad you remember!”

After all, Hannah was well—
respected in the entertainment industry, having won numerous awards. People were always willing to show her a little

extra courtesy

Mr. Brooks smiled in return. “It’s great to see you’re at Luonstead University. What are you studying?”

Wendy proudly responded, “I’m in the acting department”

Mr. Brooks nodded approvingly. Very impressive. If Hannah is such a great actress, her daughter must be just as talented. If the chance arises, we should collaborate in the future?

The people around them couldn’t help but feel a twinge of envy. Wendy was barely into her first year and already catching the director’s eye—opportunities like that didn’t come to just anyone.

Wendy
smiled, savoring the admiring glances. “Of course, I’d love to collaborate in the future”

She then turned to Bryson. “It would be an honor to collaborate with the crew someday”

Bryson smiled politely and remained silent. He **wasn’t** one to make empty promises preferring to stay understated.

's connections, but they didn't comment further.

The professors who had been quietly observing recognized Wendy's connec

Wendy glanced at the nearby seats and suggested, "There's a table over there. If **you** don't mind, feel free to join us

As they entered the cafeteria, the crew **was still** looking for a place **to** sit. Since Wendy was Hannah's daughter, it was clear she'd likely make her way into the entertainment industry. She could probably secure plenty of sponsorships and investments. Given these connections, why **wouldn't** Mr. Brooks take the opportunity to show Wendy a little **favor**?

"Sure, let's sit over there. Mr. Thompson, would you join us?"

Bryson gave a neutral response. "It's up to you"

Hearing the invitation, Willow and the others quickly cleared their plates, smiling as they waited for the crew to join them.

Ehana and Stella exchanged looks as they watched the group

move toward their table.

Stella whispered. "Eli, this Wendy knows how to flatter—who knows if she's being genuine or just pretending!"

Whatever her intentions, this lunchtime scene would undoubtedly spread around the **school**. Wendy's bold move had achieved its desired effect.

"Alright"

As Eliana **and** Stella were about to leave. Bryson spotted them. He recognized Eliana's **figure** and was about to **call** out, but seeing their direction, he paused and decided against it

Just as they reached the cafeteria **doors**, Roman entered, arriving at the perfect moment.

Seeing them about to leave, he called out, "Eliana, are you finished?"

Roman looked into the cafeteria. "Mr. Thompson's here today. **Did** you see him?"

Eliana nodded. "Yes, I saw them. They're calling inside."

Roman smiled. "Perfect timing Let's go over and say hello"

Elana hesitated. "Is it **okay**?"

There are so many people from the crew"

Roman chuckled. "What's the problem! Mr. Thompson mentioned you to me last time we played chess. He **asked** why he **hadn't** seen you in the park lately. It's the perfect time to chat with him. The **casting** is done for **today**, and who knows when you'll see him at school again. Let's go."

Stella was **surprised** when she heard **Roman's** words. She hadn't realized Eliana knew Bryson so well.

1/2

1:06 PM

Chapter 103

knew Bryson through Hannah

And judging by Roman's tone, it sounded like they had known each other for a while, unlike Wendy, who only knew

was practically bragging about her connections, and **you** didn't say a word.

"Eh, you kept your composure. Wendy said

Come on, hurry up! Say hello to Mr. Thompson, take the edge off Wendy's confidence, and see if she's still so smug!"

Elana just stared.

Eliana was reluctant. She **knew** Bryson, but they weren't close enough for her to feel comfortable approaching him so casually

She was about to let it go

it go, but then, by chance, she ran into Roman

Roman smiled. "Come on. I've got your back

Stella **gave Elana** a gentle push. "Keep up."

Reluctantly, Eliana smiled **and** followed **Roman** toward the crew.

Everyone **had** already taken their seats by the time they reached the table. Wendy eagerly asked. “Mr. Brooks, are the leads finalized? Can you tell us who got the roles? I’m dying to know!”

Mr. Brooks smiled. The leads were decided a while ago. We’re here for the supporting roles. Mr. Thompson himself chose the male lead.”

Wendy turned to Bryson, her eyes wide with curiosity. “Mr. Brooks, who did you pick for the male lead?”

Bryson answered, expressionless, “Roman

Willow, sitting next to Wendy, looked knowingly at the mention of Roman. In Willow’s memories from her previous life, Roman had made his debut in martial arts films and instantly rose to fame.

Ever since her rebirth, Willow has noticed subtle differences, especially with Eliana. The events involving **Eliana** seem to have changed drastically. with Eliana cleverly avoiding **every** attempt Willow makes to manipulate things. Each failed scheme left Willow questioning her certainty about

fate

But now, with Roman starring in a martial arts film, Willow finally understood that, while small details had shifted in Eliana’s life, the more significant forces of destiny remained unchanged. The major turning points of their lives were still unfolding, just **as** she remembered.

Roman’s role in Moonlit River became an overnight sensation, securing his future **as** a three-time Oscar-winning actor.

As Willow was pondering **this**, Roman walked into the room. She looked up, her eyes catching his tall figure as he approached. Her cheeks flushed slightly, and she said, “**Roman**, you’re here”

Everyone turned their heads at her words. Mr. Brooks, spotting Roman, smiled and said . “Roman’s here, our leading man.”

Willow felt a surge of pride. After all, she was destined to marry Roman, the future film emperor. The more successful he became, the more envy she would inspire.

But before her smile could fully bloom, something unexpected happened. **Roman** wasn’t walking alone. He held Eliana’s **wrist**, and they walked toward the group together.

Willow's expression froze in shock, her heart pounding with confusion.

Roman **walked** over and, without acknowledging anyone else, greeted Mr. Brooks

oks and Bryson first. "Mr. Brooks, Mr. Thompson," he said smoothly.

Bryson smiled and glanced at Roman before gazing at **Eliana**, standing by his side. With a **teasing** tone, he said, "**Eliana**, why **haven't** I walking your dog in the **park** lately?"

I seen you

Willow's mind raced. **She** thought. 'Bryson knew Eliana?

The **rest** of the crew seemed unfazed, but Wendy and the others were utterly **taken aback**.

0

1:06 PM c

Chapter 103

And judging by Roman's tone, it sounded like they **had** known each other for a while, unlike Wendy, who only knew Bryson through Hannah.

"Eli, you kept your composure. Wendy was practically bragging about her connections, and **you** didn't say a word!"

"Come on, hurry up! Say hello to Mr. Thompson, **take** the edge off Wendy's confidence, and see if she's still so smug?"

Eliana just stared.

Eliana was reluctant. She knew Bryson, but they weren't close enough for her to feel comfortable approaching him so casually.

She was about to let it go, but then, by **chance**, she ran into Roman.

Roman smiled. "Come on. I've got your back."

Stella **gave** Eliana a gentle push. "Keep up

Reluctantly, Eliana smiled and followed Roman toward the crew,

Everyone had already taken their seats by the time they reached the table. Wendy eagerly asked, “Mr. **Brooks**, are the leads finalized? Can you tell us who got the roles? I’m dying to know!”

Mr. Brooks smiled. “The **leads** were decided a while **ago**. We’re here for the supporting roles. Mr. Thompson himself chose the male lead.”

Wendy turned to Bryson, her eyes wide with curiosity. “Mr. Brooks, who did you **pick** for the **male lead**?”

Bryson answered, expressionless, “Roman”

Willow, sitting next to Wendy, looked knowingly at the **mention** of **Roman**. In Willow’s memories from her previous life, Roman had made his debut in martial arts films and instantly rose to fame.

Ever since her rebirth, Willow has noticed subtle differences, especially with Eliana. The events involving Eliana seem to have changed drastically. with Eliana cleverly avoiding **every** attempt Willow makes to manipulate things. Each failed scheme left Willow questioning her certainty about

fate.

But now, with Roman starring in a martial arts film, Willow finally understood that, while **small** details had shifted in Eliana’s life, the more significant forces of destiny remained unchanged. The major turning points of their lives were still unfolding, **just** as she remembered.

Roman’s role in Moonlit River became an overnight sensation, securing his future as a three-time Oscar-winning actor.

As Willow was pondering this, **Roman** walked **into** the room. She looked up, her eyes catching his tall figure as he approached. Her cheeks flushed slightly, and she said, “Roman, you’re here.”

Everyone turned their heads at her words. Mr. Brooks, spotting Roman, smiled and said, “Roman’s here, our leading man.”

Willow felt a surge of pride. After all, she **was** destined to marry **Roman**, the future film emperor. The more successful he became, the more envy she would **inspire**.

But before her **smile could** fully bloom, something unexpected happened. **Roman** wasn’t walking alone. He held Eliana’s wrist, and they walked toward the group together.

Willow’s expression froze in shock, her **heart** pounding with confusion.

Roman walked **over** and, without acknowledging **anyone** else, greeted Mr. Brooks and Bryson first, "Mr. **Brooks**, Mr. Thompson," he said smoothly.

Bryson smiled **and glanced** at Roman before gazing at Eliana, standing by his side. **With a teasing tone**, he said, "Eliana, why **haven't** I seen you walking your dog in the park lately?"

Willow's mind raced. She thought, 'Bryson knew Eliana?'

The rest of the crew seemed unfazed, but **Wendy and** the others were utterly taken **aback**.

Chapter 104

Wendy had previously intended to approach Bryson, a towering figure in the screenwriting world, who usually didn't waste time with pleasantries. From the beginning, he had been quiet, and the group assumed he wasn't one for conversation. But now, with Roman and Eliana in the picture, they realized it wasn't that Bryson didn't like to talk—he didn't care to speak to them.

Eliana smiled softly. "Mr. Thompson, Tony go in the park on weekend"

Bryson seemed to ponder this for a moment. "I see. Will you be going this weekend"

Eliana nodded. "Yes, I will"

"Well then," Bryson said, his voice steady, "I see you at the park this weekend"

Their conversation, casual and unconcerned with the others, left the rest of the group feeling somewhat at ignored.

Mr. Brooks glanced at Eliana. Her striking appearance grabbed your attention the moment you saw her. She was ideally suited for the big screen. with a remarkable bone structure **and** beauty that made her a natural fit for the industry.

"Mr. Thompson, who is she? Mr. Brooks as asked.

Bryson answered with a smile. "She's a freshman in the acting department at Isonstead University. What do you think. Noah **Brooks**? She's got potential. Insure we'll be working together in the future."

When Wendy mentioned a potential collaboration before. Bryson didn't respond. But now, he was bringing up the idea of working with Eliana himself and it sounded more like a certainty than a possibility.

Wendy's **mind** raced. When did Eliana get to know Bryson! Not only **that**, but she had earned **such** high praise from him. It was clear that their relationship was not as new as it seemed

Mr. Brooks was **also** surprised to hear such praise for a newcomer, Isonstead University's acting department **was** known **for** producing exceptional talent, but to be so highly recommended by **someone** like Bryson? It was clear Eliana had a bright future ahead.

"She certainly seems promising. Mr. Brooks agreed. "But the younger generation often struggles with the demands of martial arts roles. With her looks, she might be better suited for romantic dramas"

Bryson shook his head slightly. "I disagree. Eliana has a real passion for martial arts scripts. It's a shame, though—she's only a freshman. She still has a lot of work to do to refine her skills. Otherwise, I would have seriously considered her for the lead role"

Bryson's words stunned everyone!

The lead male role had been essentially secured for Roman, with Bryson specifically requesting him for the part. As for the female lead, that decision was nearly finalized, though it wasn't Bryson's choice—

Mr. Brooks had made the call. Her name was Chloe Evans. Of course, same connections played a role, but Chloe was still a strong candidate, a talented acting student from the acting department.

Chlor had passed Bryson's strict **standards** but still had a long way to

go before becoming **his** ideal female lead. However, since **Bryson** wasn't writing the script for this project, he wouldn't interfere too much with the casting process. Had it been his scripts, he would have followed his notoriously strict casting rules—and Chloe wouldn't have been the choice. **Bryson's** characters had to meet an exacting standard, and no amount of external pressure could change that.

After bearing such high praise from Bryson, Mr. Brooks looked at Eliana more closely, clearly noting her.

"Mr. Thompson, **anyone** you approve of must be exceptional. I'm eager to work with Eliana in the future" Mr. Brooks said.

Eliana smiled modestly. "Mr. Brooks, you're too kind. I'm still just a student with much to learn"

Mr. Brooks chuckled. “Humility is **never** a bad thing in young people.”

“By the way, have you eaten yet? Why don’t you join us

“Nu need,” Eliana quickly replied. **I’ve** already eaten. I didn’t want to interrupt the flow of things, but Roman insisted I come. I hope I didn’t disturb anyone.”

Bryson nodded. “I saw you earlier. You should’ve just come over—no need to be shy. We’re leaving this afternoon. By the way, the people across from you are also from your acting department. Do you know them!”

Wendy, Willow, and the oars free momentarily and offered awkward smiles,

Wendy cleared her throat. “Mr. Thompson, Eliana is in our class”

Bryson raised an eyebrow. “Ah, so you’re classmutes“:

1/2

Chapter 101

Noticing the change. Wendy fell silent as Bryson’s interest faded slightly.

The conversation began to wind down, and Eliana politely excused herself and left.

Bryson watched her leave, satisfaction evident in his voice as he spoke slowly. “Noah, I’ve started writing the second part of Moonlight City”

Mr. Brooks was taken aback. “Mr. Thompson, you’re finally ready to adapt to Moonlight City That’s a major intellectual property”

Bryson nodded thoughtfully. “I never felt inspired before—something always seemed missing. I hadn’t found the right actors and kept putting it off But now, I think maybe it’s fate. I’ll give it more time to be polished before it’s ready for the world.”

“A gem!” Mr. Brooks asked, intrigued.

Was Bryson referring to the second part of Moonlight City—or someone else entirely!

Although Bryson didn’t clarify, **Noah** had a clue..

One of Bryson’s two most extensive untapped intellectual properties, Moonlight City **was** a martial arts **saga** alongside The Carefree Hero. Years ago, rumors began circulating that Moonlight City was in line for a TV series adaptation, but despite the passing years, there was still no sign of it. It had been five years since Bryson released the

first novel, and many mysteries remained unsolved. Fans had eagerly awaited the next book, but Bryson had yet to begin working on it.

Hearing that Bryson was finally moving forward with the second part, the industry was sure to be excited.

Female stars in martial arts films have become increasingly rare in recent years. The genre **has** fallen out of favor, and many movies have been released only to flop without a trace. But Bryson was different—his adapted scripts had a built-in audience, so Noah invited him to be a credited

However, Bryson's standards for casting were famously high. Few actors could meet his exacting requirements. The older generation of actors **who could** handle the physical demands of martial arts roles was too old. In comparison, the **younger** generation couldn't handle the stunts—many couldn't even wield a sword properly.

But today, Bryson had shown particular interest in Eliana: Was he planning to cast her **as** the female **lead** in *Moonlight City*?

That news would be ground-breaking.

Noah paused, his mind racing, while several professors from Instate University subtly reconsidered their view of Eluna. Meanwhile, Wendy and Willow felt a knot of jealousy tighten in their stomachs.

Wendy had come into the meeting hoping to impress the crew, subtly show off, and stand out. Instead, she found herself entirely overshadowed by

The realization that Eliana had caught Bryson's eye filled Wendy with jealousy. What did Eliana have that made her so **special**? Was it just pure **luck**!

Chapter 105

Eliana exited the cafeteria, and Stella was waiting for her outside. Stella hadn't followed her in, but she had overheard part of the conversation.

The moment she saw Eliana, Stella's eyes lit up with excitement. "Eli, you're incredible!"

"How did you two **meet**?" she asked eagerly.

Eliana smiled casually. "We met while I was **walking** Lunchie in the park."

Stella couldn't hide her grin, clearly entertained by the scene. "Mr. Thompson seems pretty **taken** with you. Did you

notice Wendy's face! She looked like she was about to explode, and Willow **was** practically in shock."

Eliana smiled faintly. "It's not as exciting as you're **making** it sound. Anyway, let's get to class before we're late

On their way to **class**, they spotted someone jogging past the small field. A closer look revealed it was Shane.

Stella nodded knowingly. "He's probably been punished for skipping or **leaving** early again. Since Shane arrived at **konstead** University with Wendy, he's been regularly getting into trouble with the teachers"

Eliana's gaze lingered on Shane as he jogged, her thoughts drifting. It wasn't that Shane had done anything wrong, the others were freezing him.

No matter what he did, it was never enough. If he made a mistake, it only **made** things worse.

It all went back to his family's inheritance battle.

Would he quit if things got too harsh Eliana didn't think so. Shane's ambition were much **bigger** than that.

She broke her gaze and turned to **Stella**. "Let's go."

Stella sighed, her tone softening. "It's sad. It's so hot **today**, and he's running under the sun...."

Later **that** afternoon, the buzz in the cafeteria quickly spread through the acting department, Word was out two freshmen **had** made quite the impression—well-connected with the director and even with Bryson, the **famous** screenwriter.

That was once solely Wendy's moment of glory now had to be shared with Eliana. Wendy **wasn't** pleased about it.

Willow, noticing Wendy's irritation, began to form a **plan** in her mind.

"Wendy," she said, leaning in slightly. "Didn't Mr. Thompson mention he often goes to run **in** the gym?"

to the park? **What**

would you like to go this weekend and see if we can

› raised **an** eyebrow. “You know which park he goes to?”

Wendy r

With her remarkable memory.

Willow nodded. She had pieced it together—
after gathering the clues and doing a quick search online, it was evident that
Bryson regularly visited Central Park in the North District

I’m not

not entirely sure, but I did some research, and I think it’s Central **Park** in the North Distri
ct”

Wendy’s eyes lit up. “Really? Is this information reliable?”

Willow nodded confidently. “I’m pretty sure. Mr. Thompson lives nearby, and Central Pa
rk is the only park in that area. Even if we’re wrong, it’s no big deal. You and Shane don’
t have much time to explore Dratora City, so why not spend the weekend at the park? I
hear they’ve done some **nice**

renovations

Wendy nodded thoughtfully. “True, that works. Let’s go to the **park** this weekend, then”

Seeing that Wendy agreed, Willow’s lips curled into a small, satisfied smile.

In truth, Willow knew more than she let on. She had also discovered that Bryson enjoyed
playing **chess**.

To align herself with his interests, Willow had quietly been honing her **chess skills** for a
while, hoping to one day impress **Bryson** with her abilities and make a lasting impressi
on on him.

But to get closer to Bryson, she needed a bridge—
someone who could connect them. Wendy was the perfect **person** for that role,

1.05 PM.

Chapter 105

pavilion The weekend flew by. Bryson asked Roman to call Eliana, and they waited for h
er at the p

With Lunchie by her side, Eliana made her way to the park.

Meanwhile, at the park's western entrance, Willow, Wendy, and Shane arrived at Central Park. They had no clear destination, so they aimlessly wandered, hoping for a **lucky** encounter with Bryson.

Willow, however, wasn't about to waste the opportunity. As soon as they arrived, she began snapping pictures.

She had recently started building her presence on Twitter by posting a series of carefully edited photos and had already gained a small following.

Her original plan had been to market herself as the campus beauty at Isonstrad University, but Eliana had already claimed that title, which only fueled Willow's resentment.

She **was** determined to debut before Eliana and outshine her in the entertainment world.

Soon, Eliana reached the pavilion and walked over with Lunchie. Roman **was** there, too, holding Cutie Pie. When Cutie Pie saw Eliana, it waddled in tail excitedly and trotted over to sniff at Lunchie. Lunchie, uninterested, lay down without even moving an ear.

"Mr. Thompson, sorry to keep you waiting!" Eliana called **as** she approached.

Bryson and Roman had been playing chess, Bryson looked up with a smile. "Eliana, you're here. We **just** arrived as well. There's a chess competition at the chess club this afternoon, and I asked Roman to play a few rounds with me."

Chana glanced at the chessboard. "Go ahead, keep playing."

Bryson **inquired**. "Do you know how to play?"

Eliana replied, "I know the basic

She sat quietly, observing **as** they played. Roman's chess **skills** were impressive despite his young age, showing a

maturity well beyond his years.

In her past life, Eliana developed a fondness for chess. During lunch breaks, a chess set was set near the studio lot. When she had no scenes to shoot, she would watch the games. Over time, she became more familiar with the game, slowly progressing from a complete beginner to a skilled player, having played through countless matches.

Whether playing or observing, Eliana had developed a reputation for being quiet and **decisive**, never lingering over her moves.

Eventually, she became well-known around the studio lot.

Since most **of** her roles involved period dramas, she frequently played chess in her costume during breaks, earning her the nickname “The Chess **Fairy** among the crew

As Bryson and Roman played chess and chatted, they discussed the upcoming filming of Moonlit River, which **is set** to begin next month. The shoot was scheduled for three months so Roman would join the crew after his final exams.

After finishing the second round, Bryson checked the time. “It’s getting late. Let’s head to the chess hall. Eliana, would you like to come with us!”

Roman stood and began packing **away** the chess set. “If you win the competition today, you **can** join the **Dratora** City Chess Association. If you’re interested, **you** should sign up”

“Chess Association?” Eliana paused, a **sudden** thought **crossing** her mind. In her past life, Willow had been a member. After rising to fame, it was revealed that the association’s president had scouted her during her first year due to her exceptional talent.

Could this be the opportunity Willow had used to secure her place in the association?

Eliana hadn’t **planned** on participating in the competition, but **Roman’s** invitation piqued her curiosity,

“Sure, I’ll come with you. Is it alright to bring pets to the chess hall?”

SIND GUI

Chapter 106

“Normally, **it’s not** allowed Roman said with a grin. “That you can come upstairs with me and leave them on the second floor

Kombat was a regular at the chess **hall** with Bryson, and the staff there knew him well. Cute Pie could be left on the second floor, where Roman would pick it up after the game.

Eliana nodded. “Okay, let’s go then.”

The three of them left the **park and** approached the west entrance. Their path coincided perfectly with Willow, Wendy, and Shane’s route, and before long, they crossed paths.

Wendy was the first to spot Bryson and the others, and a pleased smile spread across her face. She felt lucky—she hadn't expected to run into Bryson here.

but that smile **quickly** faded when she saw who was walking alongside him—Eliana.

Why was Eliana here again? What terrible luck!

Willow, look over there”

Willow's eyes swept over the approaching **group**. At first, her expression lit up with delight, but it quickly darkened when she saw Eliana. “Why is she here, too!!!

Wendy scoffed. “She's playing her cards well. No wonder she's close to Mr. Thompson—clever little schemer, using Roman as her way in

Willow gritted her teeth in frustration.

Willow thought, “Roman was the man I had set my sights on. At school, I had been paying close attention to the interactions between **Eliana** and Roman, but I hadn't seen **any thing** that raised suspicion. **What** I hadn't expected, though, was that Eliana was sneaking around with him on the weekends. It was utterly shameless—I had underestimated her

“Let's go say hello!”

Wendy hesitated. “Mr. Thompson can't stand flattery. If we show up here uninvited, he'll think we're trying to get close on purpose, and it could **easily** backfire.”

Willow suggested. “When I was here earlier, I noticed a chess hall nearby holding a competition today. They're probably heading there. How about we run into them there instead?”

The chess hall tournament presented a perfect chance for Willow to shine. Her skills would surely impress someone as passionate about chess as Bryson. That connection could lead to more opportunities and shared topics of interest.

Wendy, however, wasn't much of a **chess** player and didn't feel strongly about the plan. Then, **an** idea struck her. She turned to Shane **and** smiled. “Hey, Shane, you're good at chess. Why don't you join the tournament! I'll leave a great impression on Bryson!”

Willow froze for a moment. **Wait, what?**

If Shane joined the competition, wouldn't that mean another rival for attention? But Shane nodded. "Alright"

And so, the three of them quickly turned onto a shortcut, heading to the chess hall to register ahead of the others.

Ten minutes later, with pets in tow, Eliana **and** her group arrived at the chess hall. They entered through the **back** door and brought Lunchie **and** Cutie Pie to the second floor before heading to the registration desk on the first floor,

The staff greeted Roman warmly. "Roman, here to compete **today**?"

Roman shook his head. "Not this time.

The staff glanced curiously at Eliana. "And **who's** this lovely young lady? Your girlfriend?"

"No, **I'm** his junior, **Eliana** gave a stiff reply before turning and heading toward the front door to find Bryson.

The staff, taken aback by her tone, chuckled awkwardly. "**Your** junior's got quite **the** attitude."

Roman's expression darkened. "That joke wasn't funny: **Don't** say stuff like that again."

At the front entrance, Eliana registered for the competition. By then, Bryson was caught up in conversation, surrounded by a group of familiar

Chapter 106

While filling out her form, Eliana's eyes fell on the name ahead of hers on the **list**: Willow.

Her gaze swept the room, confirming her suspicion. There, seated on the sofa in the **hall**, were Willow, Wendy, and Shane. She pondered, What a small world. Looks like my guess was right.

Willow had used this opportunity to secure her **place** in the Chess Association, capitalizing on the opportunity to make a favourable impression on Игулон

In her past life, Willow starred in one of Bryson's films, Moonlight City, playing the female lead opposite Roman. Her casting in the role was no accident—it resulted from her stealing **Eliana's** first post-graduation role: a Western danger in the hit TV series Street Jazz. That role launched Willow's career, earning her the Best Newcomer award the same **year**.

Her luck had played a significant **part**, too, as at the time, she was the only actress in the industry who fit the criteria for the lead role in Moonlight City. Having previous experience in historical **dramas and a** solid fanbase, it was no surprise that Bryson chose her for the part.

With a successful TV drama and a movie, Willow's career skyrocketed. Within just one year, she had become one of the industry's most popular and sought-after stars, with her schedule booked solid for the next three years. Meanwhile, despite being the top graduate of her class, **Eliana** had been reduced to doing stunt work, struggling **to** survive.

As the memories flooded her mind. Eliana lowered her gaze to hide the bitterness in her eyes. She continued filling out the form, her determination unshaken.

She thought. Not this time. In **this** life, you won't take what's mine

After registering, Eliana entered the hall and sat off to the side. Willow and her companions noticed her immediately. Wendy whispered to Willow, "She knows how to play chess?"

Willow shook her head emphatically. "She doesn't"

Willow, of all people, knew Eliana's strengths and weaknesses inside and out. She had studied her rival obsessively, driven by envy and resentment. Chess was not in Eliana's skill set. She's no threat.

Wendy sneered. "Then she's pushing her luck. Trying to compete to catch Mr. Thompson's eye! Watch her **embarrass** herself out there.

Willow smirked. "Who knows? Maybe she'll get lucky and win

Wendy sneered "Lucky! What, you **think** she's some fairy blessed by fortune?"

That wasn't necessarily true.

Willow said nothing but frowned slightly. Something about this life felt different. She pondered, 'Ever since the **Fall** Festival, where Eliana had stolen the spotlight with my stunning dance, it sent a chill down my spine. Eliana wasn't the same person she used to be. And so, to ensure my plan went off without a hitch. I had taken a few extra precautions"

"Wendy, I'm going to the restroom," Willow said, rising from her seat.

"Alright."

Willow made her way backstage toward the water station. With a subtle motion, she reached into her bag and pulled out a packet of laxatives, a thicker of dark intent crossing her eyes.

She knew Eliana wasn't any good at chess, but just in **case** Eliana pulled off some unexpected miracle, it was better to ensure she never even **stepped** foot on that stage. **That** would be the most brilliant move

Chapter 107

Each table in the chess **hall** had **an** assigned teapot with a numbered label. Willow found the teapot to be the same as Eliana's number, Glancing around to ensure no one was watching, she poured the powder into the tea and quickly swirled it. Satisfied with her sabotage, she returned in the main hall as if nothing had happened

When she returned. Wendy noticed. "That was quick. Did you even go anywhere?" she asked curiously.

Willow shrugged "Just to wash my hands"

Wendy glanced over at Shane. A shadow of concern flickered in her eyes. "Til you take your medicine today?"

Shane slumped on the sofa, barely speaking since

they a

arrived, looking drained and defeated.

Willow glanced at him briefly before turning to Wendy. "Wendy, is Shane sick?"

Wendy's frustration flared. His declining health wasn't a mystery to her—it was the relentless harassment he faced at Bonstead University. Certain professors tried to target him, pushing him beyond his limits with constant nitpicking and harsh punishments. No one could endure that level of physical and mental strain every day.

Wendy knew that Adam and his group were behind it, purposely pushing Shane to **his** limits. Yet, for all her anger. Wendy's hands were tied. They were at Bonstead University because of the efforts of Hannah, who had worked tirelessly to secure the **same** resources for them that Adam had. In exchange. Hannah **had** made it clear they couldn't quickly return to Dratura City Hannah's sacrifices and hard work would be for nothing if they couldn't hang on

Shane coughed again, wincing. "Til be okay. Just need a drink."

Wendy rose abruptly, her voice firm. Til get you some water. A few moments later, she returned with a glass of water and gently handed it to

Shane.

Meanwhile, Willow **leaned** back, idly scrolling through her phone while watching the room. Her focus sharpened when Roman entered through the front doors. A thrill ran through her, though it quickly soured as she noticed Roman barely glance her way before heading toward Eliana.

Willow forced a bright smile and called out, "Roman What a surprise to see you here."

Roman paused, his expression neutral as he regarded her group, "Are you all here for the tournament?" he asked, faintly surprised.

Willow nodded eagerly. "Of course! I've been practicing for ages. I'm hoping for a good result today

Roman gave her a polite but **dismissive** nod. "Good luck. I'll head over there for a moment." With that, he moved past her, heading directly for Eliana

Roman walked off without a second glance, **heading** toward Eliana. Willow stood frozen for a moment, staring in the direction he had gone, her mind racing

Wendy smirked, crossing her arms. "Looks like Eliana's got some tricks up her sleeve. Maybe they're in the same club! Makes it easier to get his

attention

Willow's heart sank at her words. Her fists clenched, her voice tight. "That's impossible. Roman **would** never fall for someone like Eliana"

Wendy patted Willow's shoulder mockingly. "Well, you never know, I don't know if Roman **likes** Eliana, but it's pretty clear you like Roman."

Willow said nothing, her cheeks burning. It was evident to everyone **that** Willow had feelings for Roman, but **he seemed** completely unaffected. After all, Roman had no shortage of admirers at school, and the rivalry was intense—like **a** storm ready to sweep anyone in its path.

Roman, however, had other priorities. He walked **over** to the sofa where Eliana lounged, scrolling through her phone. "Did you finish **registering?**" he asked, **his** tone **causal**.

Eliana glanced up, her expression calm but confident. "Talid""

Without a **word**, Roman **sat** beside her, reached for the teapot on the **table**, and poured **a cup** of tea. **Eliana's** gaze **flicked** around the hall, starting to fill with competitors preparing for the chess tournament. "Seems like a good turnout," she noted.

Roman set the teacup in front of her. "It's just a **game**. Don't stress about it

Eliana's lips curled into a snug smile. "Do I look **stressed**? Look around—none of them stand a chance against me." She leaned **back**, exuding confidence **as if** she already owned the room.

Her self- assurance was impossible to ignore. **With** a raised brow, she added, "**Everyone here** is **just a** stepping stone?"

1/2

1:08 PM

d

Chapter 107

No wonder Thomas always called Eliana the "queen of a arrogance" in the Davis family if she wasn't, then who else could be Roman couldn't help but chuckle, shaking his head. "You're unbelievable." so funny!" Eliana asked, raising an eyebrow.

"What's so

"Nothing. Just felt like laughing."

"You think you're exempt?" she teased, her tone sharp

He shook his head with a resigned grin **and** returned to pouring his tra

Eliana leaned back, her gaze drifting to Roman's face. Even if she lived a thousand lifetimes, she would still admit that Roman's temperament, and it wasn't just his looks that made him stand out—held the grace of a seasoned actor.

Roman had a remarkable

With that face, he would never want for anything in life,

It was unfortunate that he had his sights set on the wrong person.

Eliana closed her eyes, turning her focus back to the game, waiting for the match to begin.

Willow seated across the room, wasn't nearly as amused. She had been watching the exchange intently, her jealousy simmering. She didn't know what Roman and Eliana were saying to each other, but the mere sight of them sitting together felt like a dagger to her chest. How could Eliana of all people, capture **his** attention!

What kind of trickery was **this**!

Twenty minutes later, the tournament began. Participants gathered their **assigned** placards and made their way to the corresponding chessboards. Willow, assigned to table 17, sat across from a middle-aged man. At table 18. Eliana **faced** an elderly gentleman, while Shane, seated at table 16, was paired with a peer around his age.

The tournament rules were simple: winners would advance to the next round until only one champion remained.

Bryson, an old acquaintance of the chess club's owner, stood on stage with the vice president of the Chess Association, serving **as** an official witness. The chess club director, acting as the referee—announced, "Let the tournament begin!"

As per tradition, senior players played with red pieces and younger players with black. Eliana's elderly opponent made his opening move, and she swiftly countered

Servers moved through the hall, pouring tea for the participants. Eliana took a sip from her cup, her focus undeterred. Across the room, Willow's gaze lingered on her, a triumphant smirk creeping onto her lips. Watching Eliana drink the tea she had sabotaged, Willow silently smirked. She thought, Any moment now, it will **kick** in. She won't even last this game."

Feeling satisfied, she focused on her match and managed to capture two of her opponent's pieces. Yet **as** minutes passed, Willow's eyes darted back to Eliana's table. To her frustration. Eliana remained utterly unaffected, her focus undeterred, her moves sharp and calculated

Instead, **Shane** looked increasingly unwell. **His face** turned pale, sweat **beaded** on his forehead, and he clutched his stomach with **a** pained expression

Noticing Shane's deteriorating condition, his opponent leaned in with concern. "Are you alright?"

Chapter 108

Shane gripped the table for **balance** and, with a grimace, stood and exited the room, leaving his stunned opponent and a murmuring crowd behind. Wendy, alarmed, called out, “Shane!” and quickly followed him

Willow frowned, watching them leave. Her eyes darted in Eliana, who was still seated, focused, and utterly unaffected. A terrible suspicion crept into her mind Willow thought, ‘Could Wendy have accidentally used the teapot I tampered with’

The club director announced. The player has forfeited. The winner of table 16 is decided.” Claps rippled through the room—barely minutes into the tournament, the first victor had been declared

Unbothered by the commotion, Elana calmly chuckled and resumed the game.

addressed her opponent. “Let’s continue, sir,” she said, gesturing to the board. The older man

Shane’s sudden exit left a poor impression on Bryson, one of the tournament’s official witnesses. Wendy’s hopes of creating a favorable impression for Shane were dashed. Meanwhile, Willow’s frustration bubbled under the surface, but she forced herself to focus on her match

An hour later, the winners of the first **round** were finalized. Eliana advanced smoothly, her skill leaving a positive impression on **Bryson**. “I didn’t expect Elana to be good at chess,” Bryson mused aloud.

Roman, seated nearby, laughed. “She’s not just skilled at chess—she’s got a **sharp** tongue to match

Bryson raised an eyebrow, intrigued. “Oh? What did she say?”

Roman repeated her earlier boast: “She said we’re all worthless, myself included”

Bryson paused, then burst into laughter. “She’s got a sharp tongue, but I like it. Young people with that kind of energy are rare these days”

Bryson had grown tired of all the empty compliments **and shallow** gestures. Eliana’s unfiltered confidence was refreshing, and he was curious about her “With such bold claims, I’m eager to see if she can truly back them up

Roman nodded. “She’s got something special. I believe she’s going **to** win.”

“You’ve seen her play before?” Bryson **asked**

“Not chess, Roman admitted. “But she’s got this magnetic confidence. It’s hard not to believe she’ll succeed.” He recalled a tennis match where Eliana had been the center of attention, her energy commanding the court.

Willow advanced to the second round, but her frustration grew when she realized Eliana showed **no** signs of discomfort. It didn’t take long for Willow to conclude that Shane must **have been** the one who drank the tampered tea, allowing Eliana to escape unscathed.

What truly unsealed her, however, was the revelation that Eliana could **play** chess. When **had** she learned? Willow had always believed she knew nothing about the game.

This realization gnawed at Willow, especially after the effort she had **put** into preparing for this moment. She **had** spent countless hours studying tutorials and practicing, all to ensure she could outshine Eliana. And now, here was Eliana, not only playing **but** advancing effortlessly through the

Tournament

Willow clenched her **fists** and thought, ‘Did she secretly start practicing behind my back? This woman is full of tricks. **I can’t** afford to underestimate her ever **again**.’

The second round began. Eliana was assigned to table 2 and Willow to table 7. This time, the competition was stiffer, with only the winners from the first round remaining. Bryson monitored the players on his tablet, focusing on Eliana’s **match**.

Eliana’s age didn’t **give** away her

sharp chess skills. She made each **move** with absolute certainty as if she had already mapped out the entire game.

“Roman, look at how she plays,” Bryson **said**, gesturing toward the **board**

Roman leaned in, watching closely. “She makes her moves decisively, without hesitation, Bryson observed. “She plays **like** someone who’s been through countless games.”

Roman nodded in agreement. “It’s impressive!”

Bryson continued watching, captivated by her **skill**. Eliana’s opponent struggled to defend as she closed in with relentless precision. With no way to counter her, he finally conceded defeat.

She quickly advanced to the next round.

1:08 PM

Chapter 108

1 didn't expect someone so young to be so skilled her opponent said, shaking his head in admiration.

Elana gathered the pieces with a smile. "Thank you, I guess I was **just** lucky".

Her opponent Laughed. "That wasn't lack. Only someone with **real** skill can win in a game like this"

Khana left table 2 and glanced toward table 7 just **as** Willow finished her match. Their eyes met across the room, and Willow's expression was brimming with hostility. Eliana returned a calm, unreadable gaze before resting on a nearby sofa.

Elana knew how this tournament would end. In the Lost life, Willow had been the champion. If not for her interference, history would likely repeat itself. But this time, things would be different. She'd seen this coming—the final match would be between her and Willow.

And Eliana **couldn't** wait to see how Willow would fare against her.

As the rounds progressed, the pool of competitors narrowed. Eliana and Willow continued to win march after match, ultimately meeting each

other in the finals.

Roman was surprised to see Willow make it to the **finals**.

Bryson looked at Willow with a flicker of recognition. "This player—haven't I seen her before at Isonstead **University**?" he asked.

Roman nodded. "Yes, Mr. Thompson. She's in the acting department, in the same class as Eliana. You met her once in the cafeteria with Wendy

Bryson recalled the meeting. "Ah, yes. She's friends with Wendy. I remember now." He smiled faintly. "It's rare to see young people so interested in chess. She's not bad at **all**

Willow overheard their conversation and felt a surge of satisfaction. She had achieved what she wanted—

to leave a lasting impression on Bryson. Winning this competition would solidify her reputation and open doors to endless opportunities. Most importantly, it would prove that she, not Eliana, was the rightful choice for the lead role in Moonlight City.

The club director announced. "Let the final match begin!"

Eliana and Willow **faced** each other across the chessboard. Eliana's calm gaze met Willow's sharp, confident smile. "Good luck, Eliana," Willow **said** sweetly.

Eliana's

tone remained steady. "Don't flatter yourself. You still wouldn't have **beaten me** whether I let you

Willow's **smile** stiffened. "You're that confident, huh?"

Eliana picked up her first piece, placing it firmly on the board. Her voice **was** soft but cutting. "I can't speak for others, but dealing with you! Not much of a challenge.

Willow's nails pressed sharply into her palms as frustration bubbled inside her. She thought, Eliana is unbearably **arrogant**. I'll defeat her and wipe **that smug** look off her face.

She picked up her piece and made her move. The battle had begun.

COMMENT

SEND ONT

Chapter 109

The chess tournament had strict time limits each player had sixty minutes to make their moves, with an additional thirty seconds per turn until the game concluded. Sitting across from Eliana, Willow played carefully, her skill evident—she hadn't reached the finals by sheer luck alone.

However, Willow lacked real—world experience. Her chess training had been limited to online tutorials and playing against AI opponents. The competitors at the chess hall varied widely in skill—some weren't even as challenging as the AI she'd practiced with. Willow's ability to advance to The finals was due to her natural talent and good luck.

But her luck ran out the moment she faced Eliana.

Eliana's chess skills were forged through real—world experience, not just theoretical lessons. She was thrown into live matches against skilled opponents from her first game. The small chess stand near the studio lot was a hidden treasure trove of talent, with seasoned players whose abilities were far beyond the ordinary.

Over time, through countless challenging games, Eliana had honed her craft to perfection

Every move Eliana made was precise and calculated. There was no hesitation, no wasted moves. She was always three steps ahead, predicting Willow's moves before they happened.

At first, Willow kept up, finding Eliana's pace reminiscent of the AI simulations she had practiced against. But once Eliana advanced her piece across the river, **Willow's** composure faltered. Her moves slowed, her calculations taking longer with each turn. **Eliana**, on the other hand, remained calm, even leisurely

As Willow agonized over her next move. Eliana yawned, took a sip of tea, and glanced at Willow's king with a knowing look that bordered on disdain. Her fingers tapped **lightly** on the table **as** she rested her chin in one hand.

"How much longer are you going to take?" she asked, her tone light but edged with impatience.

Willow's i

's **jaw** tightened, her frustration mounting.
"I haven't run out of time yet. Stop rushing me."

Eliana smirked. "You can think as long as you want, but it won't change the outcome. You might **as well** forfeit and save everyone the time"

Willow's face darkened. "What did you just say?"

The entire chess hall **was** focused on their match. Outside, spectators had recreated their game on another board, analyzing every move and whispering **about** the tension.

On the stage. Bryson and Roman, two prominent chess enthusiasts, observed the match closely

"Red has black cornered," Bryson remarked. "It's only a matter of time."

Roman nodded. "Willow's position is too **weak**. Eliana's dominance is clear.

The red pieces, commanded by Eliana, were closing in Willow's loss seemed inevitable.

Bryson's gaze lingered on Eliana. "Eliana **plays** with confidence because she knows she's already won. Her calculations are precise, her strategy impeccable

“**She’s** a natural talent,” Roman agreed. “Far ahead of her peers”

As expected, Willow’s struggle ended in n defeat. T

The referee declared Eliana the winner.

Willow **sat** motionless, her head bowed **as** her hair obscured her face. She couldn’t bring herself to accept the loss. All her preparation and determination had been insufficient. Yet the reality was unchangeable.

The spotlight shifted to **Eliana**. The Chess Association announced her membership, and the club director handed her a pen and some papers to sign. Cameras flashed as Eliana posed with the club leadership. Bryson invited her to stand beside him for the group photo.

On the sidelines, Willow seethed, her fists clenched beneath her sleeves. She had poured endless hours into mastering chess, all for this moment. Instead, Eliana had taken everything. The bitterness burned deep—Willow couldn’t swallow this humiliation.

After the plastos, Eliana glanced at Willow, She didn’t miss the forced smile and simmering anger on Willow’s face. A faint smirk tugged at her lips

Eliana thought, ‘So, Willow, this is what it feels like to **pour** your heart into something only to fall apart. I hope you savor it! She alone could understand Willow’s pain—because in another lifetime, she had lived through it again and again, all thanks to Willow.

As the crowd dispersed, Eliana headed upstairs to fetch Lunchic. On the way up, Roman leaned **casually** against the wall, his tall frame relaxed, and remarked, “You don’t seem particularly happy”

1/2

104 PM

Chapter 109

“Hmm! Really? I feel pretty happy.” Eliana replied with a shrug.

Roman studied her expression. “Not as happy **as** I imagined. It’s different”

Eliana reached the top of the stairs and gently pinched Lunchie’s ear. “If happiness were rated out of five, I’d say I’m at a three right now”

“Why so low?”

Eliana paused and met his gaze. "Imagine someone who lost everything because of an other person. When they finally have the power to take revenge. they feel satisfaction—but there's **always** a lingering bitterness from what they endured"

Roman fell silent, thoughtful. Eliana continued, and her voice was steady but laced with quiet resolve.

Willow deserves to feel that bitterness. The heartbreak of wasted effort, the emptiness of shattered dreams. She should know what it's like to claw her way up, only to **have it** all fall apart

Roman's lips **curved** into a faint smile. "You're only eighteen, you know. Anyone listening would think you're thirty"

Eliana chuckled lightly, but her smile faded **as** she turned to the window. The wind stirred the sheer curtains, her shadow stretching faintly across the wall

"Maybe I am," she murmured, almost to herself.

Willow left the chess hall clutching her second-place certificate. It **was an** achievement but a hollow one. Second place wouldn't grant her access to The Chess Association, the prize she had truly wanted.

After returning home, Wendy messaged Willow on WhatsApp, asking about the match's outcome.

Willow. I came in second

Wendy replied: The water at the chess hall wasn't clean, Shane went to the hospital, and the doctor said it was food poisoning. He only drank the water there, so it must've been that]

Willow stared at the message, her face blank.

The puzzle pieces clicked into place. It all started when Shane drank from that pot of water shed spiked with a laxative. So, that explained it. Shane had been the better player. If he hadn't fallen sick, he would have competed—and Willow wouldn't have even reached the finals.

For a moment. Willow couldn't decide whether to feel triumphant or humbled by the strange twist of luck.

If Shane had participated. Willow probably wouldn't have managed second place!

"Wendy, maybe it's best if Shane **takes** a few days off to rest before returning to school. He can get a medical certificate from the hospital while at it," Willow suggested

色

Chapter 110

“That’s what I was thinking, Wendy replied.

Shane could use the time off to recover and avoid the **hassle** of dealing with those guys targeting him at school. With **that**, he was officially on leave.

As the semester drew to a close, the Sunset Cafe’s second-floor renovations were nearly Unished. The planned to hire **a** new server.

The cafe was set to reopen after finals, and Eliana

When Stella heard about the position, her interest was immediately piqued. “Tick me! I’ll do it!” she said eagerly.

“Eli I want to work a summer job, and the cafe is perfect!”

“You’re looking for **a** summer job?” Eliana asked, raising **an** eyebrow,

Stella nodded enthusiastically. “Yup!”

“Well, no need to look further. Go ahead and talk to Lily about it. You can start as soon as finals are over.”

“Awesome!” Stella cheered.

Meanwhile, many classmates were still scrambling to find summer jobs. Some planned to tutor or work **at** upscale restaurants. While others worried about securing a position, Stella had already secured hers, beating everyone to the punch

With finals looming, the class atmosphere grew more focused as everyone tried to avoid failing. Ultimately, Eliana achieved the top score, securing first **place** in her department

When summer break was announced, **Willow** approached Eliana, feigning politeness. “So, are you going home for the summer, Eliana? It’s been **so** long since you’ve been back. Andy and Victoria must miss you”

Eliana didn’t believe a word of it. Since she’d arrived in Dratora City, Andy and Victoria had completely ignored her, as though they’d forgotten she even existed. Willow’s suggestion **was** clearly to show off how much affection Andy and Victoria lavished on her, subtly undermining Eliana’s confidence.

Without

even glanc

glancing at Willow, Eliana treated her like air

Feigning surprise, Willow added, “Oh, I almost forgot. Are you planning to get a summer job, Ellana? Why don’t you skip that? Come **back** to Avragow with me. Andy and Victoria can set **you up** with something far better than struggling to **earn** a little pocket money alone”

Stella, standing nearby, rolled her eyes. “Willow, Eli already owns her cafe. Why would she need a summer job? Not everyone relies on their parents like you do. How do you even have the audacity to look down on someone who works hard for their success?”

Willow’s face froze for a second. She’d forgotten entirely about Eliana’s cafe. Regaining her composure, she forced a smile. “Alright then, Eliana. If you’re not coming back, so be it. I was only worried about you having a hard time.”

With that, Willow returned to her seat, acting as though her good intentions had been rudely dismissed.

As the break approached, many classmates continued to search for summer jobs, but positions weren’t as easy to find as they’d hoped. Meanwhile, Stella proudly secured hers at the cafe, **which** boasted excellent perks, leaving the others envious.

Sharryl **and** Charlene, who had planned to stay in Dratora City, were jealous.

“Doesn’t the cafe only survive because of the students from Isonstead University?” Sharryl muttered. “Once the break starts, who’s going to buy coffee there! It’ll be out of business in no time.”

“Exactly,” **Charlene** chimed in. Those kinds of shops are just parasites feeding off the school, **What’s** there to be proud of?”

Their bitterness was palpable, like a stale jar of pickles Stella smirked.

“Well, aren’t you two charming? That sourness is practically a stench,” she teased. “For your information, Sunset Cafe isn’t just any job. Short hours, free **meals**, afternoon tea with **snacks**—and the pay **is** amazing.”

The others in the **class** stared in disbelief. A job like that w

Someone boldly **asked**, “Eliana, are you still **hiring**?”

No F

Eliana **said** bluntly.

1/2

was practically a dream, impossible to find.

1:00 PM

Chapter 110

A collective sigh of disappointment followed.

ryes

Willow's narrowed as she observed the scene. With a quick pivot, she addressed Elian a again. "Eliana, are you sure you're not coming home? Andy and Victoria just called yesterday—they're **taking** me to Bobhana for the summer! It'd be such a shame if you missed out."

"Wow, Bobhana?" someone gasped. "Willow, your parents must be loaded! That's incredible!"

"Oh, it's nothing, really, Willow said, pretending to be modest. "It's mostly just sightseeing and light shopping. I'll bring gifts to everyone when I get

"You're so **lucky!** Having a life **like** that must be incredible. The rest of us are **stuck** working all summer," another classmate sighed,

Surrounded by envy and admiration, Willow basked in the attention. She turned to Wendy with a grin. "What about you, Wendy? Any exciting plans for the summer?"

Casually admiring her nails, Wendy replied, "Oh, just the usual. Hannah bought an island near the North **Sea**, so we'll probably spend some time there. It's been so hot lately, a private island sounds perfect.

An island?

The class was still envious of Willow's plans to spend the summer in Bobhana when Wendy casually mentioned she'd be vacationing on a private

one her family had purchased.

island

Willow's smile stiffened. While she enjoyed attention, **Wendy's** news overshadowed her plans. But she quickly recovered, laughing lightly. "Wendy, don't forget to bring back some signed photos from Hannah I'm looking forward to it

"Of course," Wendy replied smoothly.

Turning **back** to Eliana, Willow p

ressed on. "Eliana, you still haven't answered me. Are **you** sure you won't come **back** with me?"

Eliana paid no attention to Willow, but Willow wasn't about to let this chance to undermine her slip by.

In her past life. Eliana had stayed in Dratora City over the summer, working tirelessly for a month to save up some money. She had spent most of her earnings on gifts for **Andy** and **Victoria**, **trying to please** them. But **they dismissed** her efforts as cheap and useless when they compared her humble gifts to the luxurious souvenirs Willow brought back from **Bobhana**. She'd wasted her time, money, and energy only to be ridiculed

Knowing how it would play out, Eliana wasn't about to repeat her mistakes.

"I'm not going," she said flatly,

Willow blinked, surprised. "If you're not going home, what will you do? She feigned concern. "You're not just planning to work at the cafe all summer, right?"

Eliana hadn't finalized her plans yet. A few weeks ago. Thomas had suggested a trip to Mongeland, complete with horseback riding and eagle hunting. She was still considering it

"Where I go is none of your business, Eliana said. "Unless, of course, you're offering to foot the bill?"

Willow's smile faltered, and she quickly looked away

In her **last** life, Eliana's summer had been unremarkable. Willow figured it would likely be the same this time—nothing to worry **about**.