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"Really now?" Stefan seemed conflicted, his lips curving upwards. "What should I do then? Should I crash the wedding in the name of love?"

Renee's expression turned stiff for a moment, as mixed emotions welled up in her chest. 'So that means he really hasn't moved on from Cecilia Smith.'

In a way, her heart was aching for both him... and herself. She realized that their four-year marriage truly was a mistake from the start. Even without Briar driving a wedge between them, there was no way that she could've won his heart over.

His first love had already taken over his entire heart, leaving nothing for her.

"If you really can't let her go, then have a good talk with Miss Smith about your feelings. As long as you do that before the ceremony, it wouldn't be too late to change her mind..." Renee said, suppressing the bitterness in her heart. She acted as if she wasn't affected in the slightest, even going as far as to give him advice.

"Oh, and, if you really do love her, don't use such childish methods to annoy her. I could tell that she was very upset when we kissed. You may think you've won, but you could've lost her there."

Stefan nodded with a serious face. "You're right. Thank you, I've learned a lot."

"But... this beach does look really beautiful, especially during the ebb tide. And there are a myriad types of seashells lying around in the sand. Why don't you come with me, and we'll go find some?"

"Me?"

"You're the only one who knows about my true feelings. That's why I need your help. I'd like to give her a surprise," Stefan said. The arrogant undertone in his voice, however, did not sound like he was asking for help at all.

Renee was extremely frustrated by this. What the heck?! Do I owe you anything, my man? Why would I ever go find seashells with you?!' she thought.

However, she still agreed to his request.

"I can help you... for a price. Fifteen hundred dollars for each minute, and I'll give you a twenty percent discount if we take more than an hour. And you'll have to transfer the money to me right after, deal?"

After hearing this, Stefan chuckled lightly at the sheer ridiculousness of this. 'When did this woman start loving money so much? She keeps talking about it no matter the conversation! Does she need money that much?'

With the amount of wealth he possessed, Stefan was more than happy to use money to get this woman to

'obey' him. 'Deal!"

The two then immediately headed towards the beach opposite the hotel. This beach was known for its clear blue seas. Anyone who stood before it would feel as if they had been cleansed by the sea breeze, all their troubles dissipating in an instant.

"Hi, o' beautiful sea! How are you?" Renee exclaimed as she spread her arms wide.

She loved the sea very much, and her mood was instantly boosted by the fact that she'd be earning money while enjoying a beautiful sea view.

Although the sun was shining bright above their heads, the sea breeze was cool to the touch. The temperature wasn't all that hot at all.

Renee danced around the mild tides, feeling slightly guilty about this deal they had made. She turned to look at the man and grinned.

"Don't worry, Boss! I heard this beach has a seashell called the 'Heart of The Sea.' People who find it will be blessed with happiness!"

'Til make sure to turn this entire beach inside out to find it for you and Miss Smith. Then you can just ask her to get back together with you by presenting her with the seashell! You'll succeed for sure!"

Stefan raised an eyebrow. 'Then you must find it for me. I really wish to start over."

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Sticking to her principle of working hard for the one who paid, Renee started looking for seashells with a serious face.

Stefan, on the other hand, followed behind the woman from a short distance, as if he was her secret guardian angel, protecting her from afar.

With the light wind breeze, the two walked around the warm golden sand, leaving their footprints behind as their shadows danced over each other. The scenery was just wonderfully romantic, as though it had come straight out of a teenage romance film...

"Oh my god! I found it! I found it!" Renee cheered excitedly after digging behind a

reef. Stefan seemed amused and dumbfounded at the same time. 'So it really

exists?'

He was someone who was solely aligned with materialism, and normally viewed things in a complete logically way. Hence, he didn't believe in myths at all.

Despite this, he somehow didn't intend to undermine the woman's efforts, seeing just how exhilarated she seemed. He even approached her, acting as if he was just as interested.

"What does it look like? Let me see."

'Look! This is the 'Heart of The Sea'! Doesn't it look like a heart? And it's pink too!" Renee washed the sand off of the heart- shaped seashell. She then smiled very widely as she carefully held it up to show Stefan what she found.

Under the sunlight, the pink seashell seemed to emanate a dreamy glow. The colors triggered a magical atmosphere that was filled with love.

"Ahem!" Stefan cleared his throat, hoping that he could tell the woman that he'd seen seashells like this all over the place when he was on a vacation in Alnwick. It wasn't something she should cheer over.

However, he managed to hold in the urge to reveal this truth, going against his usual mindset, and replied softly, "Mhm, it's alright, I suppose."

He himself had no idea why he had suddenly become 'kind and considerate ' when he usually would just do whatever he wanted.

Stefan then figured it was because the woman had rarely shown such a soft side, considering they always fought every time they spoke.

He simply wished to preserve this moment for the time being...

Just then, Renee quickly went into professional mode and took her phone out, calculating the total time they

spent. "So it took us an hour and thirty-seven minutes to novelxo find this seashell."

"According to what we agreed, you'll have to transfer 145500 dollars. With the discount, your total amount will be 116400

dollars. I'll round the number down to 116 thousand, then. Pay up!"

After tapping on her phone several times, Renee lifted her chin and flashed him a big smile. "How was that? Money well spent, right? Just get on one knee and present her with this seashell at the wedding! No woman could possibly resist this!"

Stefan was speechless. 'Damn it. I was too careless.'

This woman is so calculative she can throw someone under the bus at any time! How could she possibly be a soft, adorable sweetheart?!'

Stefan's dashing facial features were now plastered with a layer of frost. Just as he was about to leave, Renee grabbed his hand and said, "Don't go just yet! Take the 'Heart of The Sea' with you!"

She then pried the man's hand open, placing the pink seashell right onto his palm. "You spent a lot just to get this love charm. It will definitely bring you luck.'

Stefan fell silent. He wondered if the woman was being sarcastic, and at that moment, he felt like lashing out at her.

The wedding ceremony was extraordinarily lively, with almost all the guests present in gorgeously tailored apparel, chattering around the church.

Christopher and the group had finally brought the bride over, and they were merely waiting for the ceremony

to begin. Stefan and Renee had arrived at the venue too, but their appearance together attracted quite some

gossip.

"Hasn't your cousin divorced her? Why did they show up together? And why do they still seem pretty close?"

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A famous celebrity, Ruby Chisholm, was shooting daggers at the two with her eyes, her expression visibly filled with jealousy.

She had had her eyes on Stefan even before she joined the entertainment industry, promising herself that she'd work hard to get his attention and subsequently become his wife.

Unexpectedly, he married someone else before she got to make a name for herself.

Yet after a long while of waiting, waiting for her dream man to get a divorce, it seemed that it would be to no avail.

"Who knows? I just know my cousin dislikes her, so I'm guessing she was the one who's pestering him!" Charlotte said as she looked towards Renee with disdain, patting Ruby on the shoulder.

'You're just too modest, Ruby. You won't even make a move on him! Now that they're divorced, you should just go for it... My cousin is literally

available now! Do you know how many people want him? How can you be so relaxed?"

Ruby was visibly frustrated. "It's not that I don't want to, but I am at the peak of my career now. My new movie is going to premiere soon too. I just can't afford to get into a scandal!'

'But my cousin is single. People would praise you for winning his heart! How could that be considered a scandal then...'

Just then, Charlotte let out a sigh. "Though, you have to be careful around that witch, Everheart. Don't be fooled by her nonchalant act. She actually has a lot of tricks up her sleeve, you know?"

' Back then, when Briar Desrosiers was pregnant with Stefan's child, Everheart went as far as to destroy her! So I don't dare to provoke her either. I'm avoiding her at all costs!"

Ever since Briar lost her place in the family, Charlotte had been meaning to find someone in her circle as a replacement, and Ruby was definitely her best option as of now.

Ruby's beautiful face was brimming with pride and confidence, smiling slyly. "Her tricks are child's play compared to the entertainment industry! You should know that I managed to work up from the bottom to where I am today, so how could I possibly lose to her?"

In order to prevent more gossip, Renee quickly separated from Stefan and headed straight for the dessert section. She had been starving during their quest to find the seashells and wanted to reward herself in some way.

Seeing how the woman was rushing off, Stefan felt upset but didn't stop her this time. Instead, he walked backstage to meet with Christopher and the others.

From afar, a figure in white appeared before him. Surprisingly, it was Cecilia in her wedding

gown. Stefan furrowed his eyebrows slightly, his expression distant. "Why are you here?"

Cecilia seemed depressed, on the verge of tears, as she said, "Stef, can we go somewhere private for a bit? I have something to say to you.'

"Just say it here." Stefan remained cold, keeping his distance from the woman.

"I need to speak to you in private. Please, I'm begging you, or else this wedding can't go on..."

Stefan looked rather hesitant. Many famous figures were present at Christopher's wedding, and it would be humiliating for the Jacobs if something were to go wrong.

"Stop hesitating, okay? Just take it as a sacrifice for your precious little Chris! I'll move on after our conversation is done!" Cecilia chewed on her lip as she grabbed Stefan by the arm, heading straight to the VIP room at the side.

Out of consideration for the bigger picture, Stefan reluctantly agreed to follow.

Cecilia shut the door and instantly pounced into the man's arms. It was as if she had been suppressing all her emotions up till now, sobbing hysterically.

"Stef, I regret everything! I really do! I don't love Christopher at all. It's always been you!"

"After breaking up with you, I've always dreamed of getting back together with you. I just didn't think you'd marry so soon! Thank god you've divorced now..."

Tears continued welling up in Cecilia's eyes, her expression pitiful as she stared back at Stefan, carefully asking, "What if I told you I wanted to start over? Would you take me away from this wedding?"

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"No/ Stefan quickly replied, his voice dismissive.

"Impossible!" Cecilia broke down, wailing at this point. She wrapped her arms around his neck, rubbing her cheek against his as before, hoping to rekindle his love.

"You're worried about hurting Christopher. You're holding back your love for me, right? You've never forgotten about me, right?! You feel the same, don't you?!"

"This has nothing to do with Chris." Stefan looked frostier now, pushing her away.

"Even if you never ended up with Chris, there's just no hope between us. Please understand that."

"Why?!" Cecilia yelled at Stefan, unable to accept the fact that the man no longer loved her.

"You used to love me so deeply!" she moaned. "I remember how you confessed to me under the sakura tree, how you kissed me softly! I know you genuinely loved me!"

"You were willing to give up your position as an heir for me! You would follow me overseas when I was planning to further my studies! How could you give up on love as deep as that?!"

"I admit I once loved you deeply, and that love was genuine too, but that's all in the past now. Both of us have to cherish other people in our lives now. " Stefan replied with hidden implications.

He did indeed fall for Cecilia back then, to the point he mistakenly thought he still held feelings for her during his entire marriage. Only after Renee divorced him did he finally realize that he missed the genuine love he once provided. It definitely wasn't Cecilia. With his current single status, he felt like he was just reminiscing about that pure, innocent relationship they once had.

"Hah... cherish others? Who are you talking about, huh?!" Cecilia huffed sarcastically.

"You might not know this, but your precious little Chris is such a fake person! He doesn't even love me. He just thinks my status and background make me a suitable candidate to join the Jacobs family!"

"They're involved in politics, so, of course, they have to find someone with a scholarly family too..."

"Would you believe me when I say he'd be relieved if I were to become a runaway bride?"

Stefan narrowed his eyes. He had never noticed Christopher and Cecilia encountering problems in their relationship.

They've been so lovey-dovey for the past few years, though ... '

"Christopher is a logical man. He normally shows his love through his actions. He might not be expressive, but that doesn't mean he doesn't care about you," Stephan responded. He didn't wish pain on Cecilia.

He then patted her on her shoulder for extra comfort. "Don't overthink it. Chris does love you."

"Don't try to comfort me. You don't know anything..." Cecilia took a deep breath, her expression

bitter. "So you're rejecting me because you have someone else you'd like to cherish, don't you?"

Stefan pressed his lips together, staying silent.

He wondered, 'Do I have someone else? I'm not sure either.'

However, the first person who came to mind was Renee.

'But we've already ended things...'

"I understand. I lost." Cecilia flashed him a soft smile, then looked upon him with endearing eyes.

"Miss Everheart is an amazing person, and I can tell that she really loves you. I wish only the best for you both. I admit defeat now."

"Alright, it's fine, I'm fine. You should leave now. If you stay here any longer, others might really misunderstand ... "

"Really?"

"Really!"

"And about the wedding ... "

"The wedding will go as planned." Cecilia shrugged, still smiling. "I'm not a little kid anymore. I just needed to let out some steam. I still have responsibilities../ "Chris might not love me, but he treats me well. I think I'm considered luckier than most to be able to marry him. I'll definitely cherish him." "Good."

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Stefan nodded while opening the door to exit with Cecilia.

Suddenly, they bumped into Renee, who was holding a piece of cake.

"Uhm..." The two of them met eyes, yet Renee was the one feeling embarrassed, despite having

nothing to hide. "Ah... I didn't bother your conversation, right?" She asked awkwardly.

Stefan didn't reply, merely staring down at her with an arrogant gaze.

Renee, however, continued asking, ignoring the awkwardness. "Did you succeed? Did the 'Heart of the Sea' work? Are you guys planning on running away now?"

Hearing this made the man colder. He merely whispered something to Cecilia before walking past Renee. Acting as if they were complete strangers, his arrogance practically seeped out of his aura.

"That petty bastard! I just asked for some money! What's with the attitude?! "Renee mumbled angrily to herself as she watched him leave.

She actually wanted to find a place for a nap due to a wave of exhaustion from

earlier events. She never would've expected to bump into the two as they were in

the middle of a 'date.'

Although she strongly encouraged Stefan to steal the bride, she couldn't help feeling upset, knowing that he actually went through with it...

As Renee was about to look for another resting area, Cecilia called out to her. "Miss Everheart, may I have a few words with you?'

"I have nothing to say to you." Renee refused.

That was because she didn't understand what Stefan's first love could possibly want to tell his ex-wife, who was considered a failure.

'Is she trying to one-up me? I don't have the time or energy!'

"Don't worry, Miss Everheart. It won't take long. I'll be able to get closure after saying this, so please

fulfill my wish." "Ah..." Renee found Cecilia to be forthcoming and didn't have the heart to refuse.

"Alright, I'm listening.'

"It's nothing, really. I just found out that you're very important to Stef. That's why I hope you can take good care of him...'

Cecilia seemed even more saddened after saying this. "We'll never be able to get back together, but I really wish him happiness. He actually prioritizes love a lot, so he'd give his all as soon as he falls for someone. Back then..."

Renee spent ten whole minutes listening to Cecilia's description of their love story and how the man was willing to give up everything for her.

"You should know this since you've slept with Stef before. He has a scar around his waist. He got that from protecting me, which is why I could never move on from him... Never..."

"Alright, alright, I'm getting tired..." Renee was quickly able to interrupt her with a smile. "You know, if you have so much to say, you could write it all into a book and publish it. You might even earn some extra cash from that."

"Are you jealous, Miss Everheart?" Cecilia smiled. It was exactly what she wanted to achieve.

"This is a necklace, the token of our love. I've always had it with me, and now. I'm giving it to you. Take it, or just throw it away, it's your choice. It symbolizes the ending to me and Stef's relationship as well." Cecilia said and shoved the necklace into

Renee's hands.

The woman had obviously refused to take it, so the two looked as if they were fighting with each other. Cecilia even fell to the ground from this, making the entire atmosphere really glum and hopeless.

Yet, the scene was also coincidentally captured by a person with certain intentions...

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In the end, Renee didn't feel like keeping this up, so she took the necklace begrudgingly.

She then held her hand out to Cecilia, who was still on the ground. She sounded rather helpless as she said, "Fine, I'll take it. But you gave me the freedom to deal with it however I want, did you? So I'll just be throwing it into the trash."

Cecilia didn't seem mad and still showed a bittersweet smile. "Sure, throw it away. I can't do it myself anyway, so you can help out instead... Just as I told Stef earlier, I admit defeat if you were the one I lost to.'

The woman's words made Renee extremely confused.

'Huh? Aren't they planning to elope? Why did they include me in this? And the whole admitting defeat thing... What does she even mean?!'

However, she didn't intend to ask any further questions. With Cecilia being the bride, she should be able to have the choice of eloping or going through with the wedding.

'She can think about it on her own. Prying would only make it seem like I care about this a lot when I don't care about their issues at all! Hmph!'

Seeing how the sun was setting, the sea and the skies were painted in a lovely shade of reddish orange. Since the church was built with french windows, people inside were able to admire the incredibly romantic and gorgeous lighting.

Just then, the bell rang, as it was time for the ceremony. The priest held up his cross, getting ready for the rituals while the guests took their seats.

Everyone seemed exhilarated about the bride and groom's appearance.

Renee, on the other hand, didn't understand if the person in charge of arranging seats had something against her.

'How could they arrange for Stefan to sit next to me when everyone knows we're divorced.'

To make things worse, her old nemesis, Charlotte, was on her left.

'Isn't this giving me trouble both left and right?'

She turned and looked at the cold iceberg next, then looked towards her ex -cousin-in-law, who seemed to be putting up an attitude.

As she was trying to get up, the priest announced the groom's entrance, so she had no choice but to awkwardly sit back down.

With that, Christopher entered the venue in a white suit, holding a bouquet of red roses in his hands. He then slowly walked to the holy statue elegantly.

The women started cheering and screaming at the top of their lungs, absolutely in awe over the groom, as if he were their prince charming.

'Oh my god, Christopher looks so good!"

Renee was stunned as well, nearly getting up to her feet and clapping profusely for the man. She thought to herself, 'Dang, a bouquet of flowers? With this beautiful sunset? And a handsome man sincerely waiting for his bride to appear... What a wedding!'

Just then, Stefan shot her a dirty glare, despite having ignored her the entire time. He coldly said, "Why are you so excited about someone else's wedding?"

He wasn't being loud, but he wasn't exactly soft-spoken either, which resulted in the people nearby clearly hearing him.

Renee blushed, and she clenched her fists angrily, retorting, "Why are you being like this, Mr. Hunt? I'm just trying to compliment someone! If it makes you so unhappy, get on stage and fight him! Let's see who the bride would pick at the end of the day!"

"Don't be foolish!" Stefan looked like he was about to explode, turning to the stage and swearing to himself that he'd just ignore the foolish woman.

"Hah! Look at how upset you are. I'm just telling the truth!" Renee said, not understanding why the man was getting annoyed at this time.

'He doesn't have the courage to steal the bride, and he's jealous of Christopher! So why is he lashing out at me?! He only knows to take his anger out on the weak, like me!'

Underneath the holy symbol, the priest was wearing a black robe, with a vow book in his hand. He then spoke out to the other end of the church," The groom has arrived, so it's time to welcome the bride!"

Just then, solemn music resounded, and all the guests followed the priest's signal, looking towards the bride's supposed entrance.

Yet, the bride didn't show even after the music had stopped.

"What's happening? Why isn't the bride here? Is this a test for the groom?"

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Everyone started gossiping among themselves.

The priest had never handled such a situation but cleared his throat and said, "Love may be late, but it's worth the wait. Let's welcome the bride once more!"

Once again, the music echoed through the halls, but when that ended, Cecilia was still nowhere to be found.

Both parents of the families were panicking at this point, ordering their employees to investigate this matter. All of the guests were making their own assumptions as well, and the entire event fell into a state of chaos.

Renee couldn't help her urge to nudge Stefan with her elbow, whispering." Hey, is this your doing? Did you hide her somewhere?"

Stefan's expression darkened, his voice frosty. "Mind your tongue if you'd like it to stay intact."

Renee gulped and instantly shut up. 'Well, was I wrong? Why did he have to be so mad?! Petty b*stard!'

Xavier was panicking the most out of everyone, rushing up the stage and calming the guests down as much as he could.

No need to panic, everyone! Our Chris and Cecy are no doubt each other's true love, so this is definitely some kind of surprise to their wedding!

Please just wait a little longer!" He said.

Xavier had been crushing on Cecilia for years, and he was the standard simp for her at this point. He worked hard throughout the entire day, just so the wedding could go smoothly.

He just hoped that his muse could marry a good man, and enjoy a happy marriage for the rest

of her life. This sudden situation caught him rather off guard and left him feeling quite uneasy.

Compared to Xavier, Christopher, who was expected to panic most, looked rather calm as the groom. He stood there emotionless as if this incident had nothing to do with him.

"This is bad! Miss Smith is gone! We could only find her wedding gown in the waiting room!" Someone came delivering the news after a short while.

"Gone?" Xavier grabbed the person by the collar, angrily shouting. "Don't spread lies! Cecy is the bride here! How could she have gone missing? And she would never take her wedding dress off for no reason!"

"It's true! If you don't believe me, just go to the waiting room and see for yourself!"

Xavier then turned to look at Christopher, visibly anxious. "Chris, what are you doing just standing there? This must be a test from Cecy. Let's go look for her together!"

However, the groom seemed uninterested. "These tests have gone on for an entire day. I'm sure she's chosen her answer, and I won't force her to do anything she doesn't like."

"Oh man, what are you even saying? She chose you! You've been together for so long! You've been through so much already, so don't just give up at the very last second!"

Christopher still didn't intend to get a move on. Instead, he seemed rather optimistic as he consoled Xavier. "Calm down. She's an adult. She knows how to take care of herself."

Hearing this, Xavier found himself speechless.

Christopher then turned to the guests, who were still gossiping amongst each other. "As you can see, it seems that the bride changed her mind about the wedding and chose to leave. I deeply apologize for having wasted your time, so let's treat this as a simple gathering hosted by the Jacobs! Please do enjoy yourselves!"

"These youngsters are still too immature. We are truly sorry, everyone." Christopher's parents maintained a humble demeanor as they bowed toward the guests, despite feeling absolutely ridiculed in this situation.

With this, the chaotic mess soon subsided.

Suddenly, someone stood up from the crowd, announcing. "The bride didn't leave on her own! Someone else is behind this!"

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The guests gasped in shock as they looked toward the person who was speaking. It was Ruby, the woman who had managed to win the best actress award last year.

At the time, Ruby was sitting right next to Charlotte, which meant that she was sitting in the same row as Stefan and Renee.

She kept a low profile the whole time, silently sitting next to them without causing a ruckus. Hence, she was able to watch as the two interacted with each other.

From an outsider's perspective, Stefan and Renee acted as if they were sworn enemies. However, Ruby's sharp observation skills allowed to notice the special relationship between them, which made their banter seem rather flirtatious.

She was consumed by jealousy, which strengthened her determination to take Renee down.

Xavier quickly dashed towards Ruby, asking hurriedly, "What the hell are you saying? Do you know where the bride

is?" "I don't exactly, but I can make a wild guess as to who is responsible for her disappearance.

She then used her best acting skills, glancing at Renee nervously, pretending as if she had something she couldn't say out loud.

Despite this, it was clear that she was trying to accuse Renee, which made everyone turn to look at the woman.

Renee was initially part of the crowd, so she was confused when the spotlight was turned upon her instead, "What? Why are you all looking at me? I don't know anything about this!"

Ruby replied, 'Stop acting, Miss Everheart. I've already taken a few photos of your conflict with Miss Smith earlier...."

Upon receiving this new information, the entire hall broke out in a heated discussion.

Xavier, visibly agitated, further questioned Ruby. "Show us the proof, then! We can afford to waste time! If something were to happen to our bride, we might still have time to save her!"

He also thought to himself, 'I knew that my gut was right! Cecy only disappeared because she was in trouble all along. '

Renee was furious, especially after she was accused of such a heavy crime out of nowhere.

However, she remained calm and said, "That's right, show us the proof. But I'm warning you, if your so-called proof isn't enough to show that I am responsible for this, or if your words have the intent to defame me, I will take legal action against you, and make sure you pay for what you said."

Ruby's eyes were now wavering with slight fear. She hadn't expected a divorcee to behave in such an aggressive

manner. 'Looks like Charlotte was right. she is a tough one.'

'But I've been in the industry for as long as I can remember! I didn't receive the title of best actress for nothing!'

Ruby then showed her phone, revealing the photos to everyone in the hall." When I was passing by the waiting room, I noticed Miss Everheart in an argument with Miss Smith."

' Miss Everheart was trying to snatch a necklace from Miss Smith, to which she refused to hand over! So the two ended up fighting."

"Miss Everheart even went as far as to push Miss Smith to the ground, swearing that she wouldn't allow her to go through with the wedding. "

In an instant, everyone cussed profanities at Renee, pointing at the image in Ruby's phone.

"This b*tch! How cruel must she be to have to fight a bride on her wedding day?!"

"Is it because she got f*cking ditched? Is that why she can't bear seeing others happy? She must be evil!"

Even Xavier started angrily questioning her. "Did you say something to Cecy to have made her so angry that she ran off?!"

Facing the endless amounts of insults, Renee calmly explained herself. "I did meet with Miss Smith just now, but we weren't arguing. She was the one who forced me to take the necklace. She wouldn't let me refuse, and that's how the photo came to be."

"Besides, I have absolutely no clue as to where she is now."

The guests seemed doubtful about her explanation. Sensing opportunity, Charlotte decided to fuel the fire. "Stop pretending like you're an innocent bystander, Everheart. Everyone knows just how heartless you can be."

"You didn't even let go of Briar, who was pregnant! How could you possibly resist letting go of my cousin's first love?"

"You definitely knew how my cousin couldn't move on from Cecy. That's why you took this chance to take revenge on her!' Charlotte smiled.

"Cecy and Stefan really did love each other then. It's a commonly known fact! So why would she ever give you such an important necklace?

Besides, how are we supposed to just brush off the fact that there's a photo of you pushing her to the ground?"

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Charlotte's instigation immediately made the people who were on Renee's side immediately switch stances.

With that, Renee turned into a criminal in their eyes. Everyone began calling her a cruel witch, apart from... Stefan and Christopher.

"Silence!" Christopher put up a serious face and approached Renee.

He then brought out the ring he had prepared for Cecilia, handing it to Stefan. "Stef, put this ring on Miss

Everheart." The intelligent Stefan instantly understood what Christopher was trying to do, and he nodded

gently.

He grabbed Renee's hand without saying anything, attempting to put the ring on the woman's finger.

Renee started backing away out of anxiousness. "What are you doing? You can't just put a ring on anybody! Get it

off me!" "Wear it!" Stefan demanded.

Hence, the two started struggling to achieve their individual wishes, looking as if they were

in a fight. Ding ding ding ...

The bells started chiming again, as it was the perfect time to watch the sunset. As the golden ball of fire slowly descended into the horizon, the famous prophecy was once again announced within the church...

"As the sun sets, the couple shall be blessed by the goddess of the sea, as long as they exchange rings. They will be forever bound to each other, and live the rest of their lives in peace!"

Stefan managed to put the ring onto Renee's ring finger by this point, but had also stumbled backward due to the woman's sheer strength.

Taking this chance, the man pretended to trip and fall, and the moment was captured with Christopher's phone.

The photo was able to prove that Renee's words had some truth in them, as it looked uncannily similar to the photo of her and Cecelia's 'fight.'

"As you can see, it might not have been a fight at all. It might really be due to the fact that Miss Everheart was refusing to accept something. So, this shows that she could be telling the truth." Christopher said, clearly defending Renee.

Only then was the woman able to realize their efforts. She looked towards Stefan with eyes filled with gratitude but was somehow unable to say a single thanks.

However, Stefan still looked rather smug. "You don't have to thank me. If the myth is true, then we'd be bound for life. You'll have plenty of chances to thank me."

Renee was speechless. 'Oh god, I need to get myself checked. Why the heck would I ever expect anything good

from him?!! 'He's basically just a big sly fox. He can dream on if he thinks he can trap me with a mere ring!'

Ruby had not expected Stefan to step in and defend Renee, let alone the groom himself. For a moment, her mind completely ran out of tricks.

After falling silent for a few seconds, she spoke up once more. "But I saw Miss Everheart throwing that necklace into the sea! She might really hold resentment towards Miss Smith, which gives her the motive to harm the bride!"

Renee nodded. "I did throw that necklace away because Miss Smith told me I could deal with it however I wanted. I didn't want to hold onto it anyway, so I just threw it away."

Xavier snapped. "So you admit it! Do you know how important that necklace is to Cecy?! You god-damned

witch!" Renee shrugged. "I have no idea."

She then thought to herself, 'It's just some token of their love, right? If it really was that important, why would she force it onto me then?'

Stefan's expression grew colder as well. "How could you throw it away?!"

Just as Renee was about to retort, one of the employees came running over, audibly

distressed. "Help! Help! This is bad!"

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Everyone immediately looked toward the employee.

The male employee's forehead was covered in sweat, as he tried his best to catch his breath. "The... winding bank... We found Miss Smith's shoe around the cliffside of the winding bank! She must've fallen into the ocean!"

The winding bank was quite a famous sightseeing spot within the area, as it was formed by a short mountain range in the shape of the letter 'C.' Moreover, it was known for its treacherous terrains as well.

"She fell into the sea?!" Xavier howled. "But Cecy doesn't know how to swim! We need to save her right now!"

He was the first to rush out, with Christopher and Stefan following behind.

Renee, on the other hand, froze slightly. She then followed a group of curious guests to the site.

The tides around the bank were actually rather calm. However, with the sun already set, there wasn't enough light for them to locate Cecilia well.

Renee observed the heels placed neatly at the edge of the cliff and tried analyzing the situation. 'Could it be that Miss Smith found her shoes too tiring to walk in, and intentionally placed them here while she went somewhere else to have some fun?"

"How is that possible?!" Ruby acted as if she were superglue, sticking by Renee's side as she spoke in a haughty tone.

"Everyone knows how considerate Miss Smith is. Why would she not attend her own wedding just to fool around? Do you think she'd ever make everyone panic like this?"

"Are you feeling guilty about your actions, Miss Everheart? Are you trying to stall some time and divert our attention away from the truth, just so you can achieve your hidden goal?"

Renee was about to explode right then and there, her expression as cold as ice. "Hmm, I wonder why I myself have no clue what these hidden goals are!"

"If I were to guess, you must've pushed Miss Smith off the cliff with your own two hands! If something were to happen to her, you'd be the biggest suspect!" Ruby accused, her words leading to an uproar.

"That's right. It must've been her!" Cecilia's mother lunged at Renee, her eyes reddening as she tried to attack her. "You heartless wench! Why

would you ever do this to my daughter? Give her back!"

Renee understood how a mother would feel rageful in such a situation, so she wasn't mad at her reaction at all. She didn't even try to dodge but instead shrugged helplessly.

"Yeah, Mrs. Smith. I have no idea why I'd have to do this to your daughter too. I have no reason to! Do you think I'd become a murderer overnight just because I felt like it?"

Cecilia's mother had lost all sense of rationality then, unable to converse in a reasonable way. All she did was lash out at the woman uncontrollably.

'I dont care! I know you did this to her! There are photos as proof! Not only did you hit my daughter, but you pushed her off a cliff... You have to pay! I'll make you pay!"

A barrage of punches came raining down on Renee, so she instinctively protected her stomach with her hands. This time, however, she mounted a counterattack. "I'm going to fight back if you keep this up! I'm warning you!"

This reaction brought her right back into the spotlight again. Everyone seemed certain that she was novelxo the villain of this story, and continuously insulted her. Some even came to help Cecilia's mother out by swinging toward the woman as well.

"Call the cops right now! We have to throw this wretched woman in jail!"

"What are we waiting for ?! Let's beat her to death!"

Many of Cecilia's family and friends started joining in, having set their minds to take matters into their own hands. They wanted her to pay with her life. Renee couldn't handle such discrimination anymore.

She balled her fists up, intending to teach these people a lesson.

"Try hitting her. I dare you!" Stefan dragged Renee backward and shielded her with his own body. He then glared coldly at those

who jumped in for a fight, his chilling aura clearly frightening them.

Cecilia's mother was on the verge of a breakdown, wailing. "Step aside, Stef! You've once dated our beloved Cecy. You mustn't protect her murderer!"

Stefan's perfectly sculpted face was painted with a layer of frost. "You have no proof, so don't falsely accuse someone of such a serious crime. She's mine, so don't you even think about harming a single hair on her head.

Xavier, also convinced that Renee was Cecilia's murderer, glared at Stefan with a furious gaze. "The truth is as clear as day! What more proof do we need?! Besides, you're divorced! What does she have anything to do with you? Why are you defending her so much?!"