

Ex Convict 451

Chapter 451

The two men got into the car. As the two women were already in the back seat, Hadwin Stephenson got behind the wheel while Jason sat in the passenger's seat.

When the car was on the road, Lina Sweeney suddenly felt

as if her rattletrap had gotten an upgrade. Others would be shocked if they knew that the president of Reed Group and

the president of Stephenson Group were both in it.

On their way there, the two men in the front row were silent

while the two women in the back were chatting.

Lina Sweeney did most of the talking while Grace just listened.

"By the way, there's a very popular TV series recently. It's called The King's Lover. Have you seen it?" asked Lina Sweeney.

Grace shook her head. She would go to work during the day and only went home at night. At most, she only had some time to check several news feeds on the internet before going to bed.

"It's pretty good. The plot... Tsk tsk... I can't spoil it. I'll give you the link for it later. By the way, the male lead is the Howell

Webb you liked a lot back then," said Lina Sweeney. She was once again hooked on the actor because of the TV series.

She was also his fan for a while, but she got hooked on another TV series and fell under another actor's spell.

As a fan, Lina Sweeney was definitely an unfaithful one. She would like this one today and like another one tomorrow.

Grace was stunned. Howell Webb. How long had it been since she paid attention to the actor? Before she went to prison, she was actually a fan of the celebrity, which of course, meant contributing to the ratings and occasionally buying some of

the actor's endorsements.

When she went shopping with Lina, she would also introduce the TV series the actor starred in because she thought he was good in terms of looks and acting. He might get popular in the future if he had the chance.

Listening to Lina Sweeney mentioning Howell Webb now made Grace feel like she was going back in time. It seemed that she had always been tense after being released from prison. How long had she not relaxed?

She had something important to do today, but in the car, she was somehow relaxed.

"Sure," said Grace. Speaking of which, it had really been a long time since she watched a TV series.

She had no opportunity to do so in prison and no mood to do so after she got out of prison. The fatigue of working every day seemed to almost wear her down.

Even though she was working in the small restaurant and only finished work at nine o'clock at night, she still had an hour or two for leisure time before going to bed. Since she did not have to wake up as early in the morning as she did when she was working at the Sanitation Service Center, she was living a more balanced lifestyle.

Jason, who was sitting in the front row, looked impassive as he heard this, but his eyes glistened.

As for Hadwin Stephenson, when he heard Lina Sweeney recommending *The King's Lover*, he was immediately speechless.

Lina Sweeney had been telling him how good it was and how touching the plot was all this time. Of course, the most important thing was how handsome the male lead was.

According to Lina Sweeney, the male lead was simply the best spokesman for someone who was good-looking, powerful, but tragic! She only wished to travel into the TV series and comfort the male lead, which made Hadwin Stephenson angry and helpless.

Chapter 452

He was angry that he was jealous of an actor and even a mere TV role. However, he could only accept it because of Lina Sweeney.

If he pressured her, she could take it. If he was nice to her, she would push her luck and he could do nothing.

However, Hadwin Stephenson suddenly felt a little more relaxed when Lina Sweeney said that Grace was also Howell Webb's fan.

It seemed that he was not the only one to feel bitter!

Jason and Hadwin Stephenson took turns driving the car, each driving half the way. By the time they reached the detention

center in S City, it was already past nine o'clock.

Hadwin Stephenson already had everything arranged, so they went into a room next to the meeting room.

There were several large screens in the room, which showed images of the meeting room. They could see what was going on inside and hear the conversations of the people inside.

After a while, the mediator came into the room where Grace was. Grace told him the key questions she had come up with and communicated with him about how to ask the questions.

He was clearly experienced and had already thought of many questions without being reminded by Grace.

Grace was glad that Hadwin Stephenson found a good mediator to assist her.

After communicating with Grace, the mediator went to the meeting room next door and waited. Soon, the police came with the witness whose last name was You.

When Grace saw the witness, she stared at the screen. Of course, she recognized the face. This man had testified in court that she drank alcohol on the night of the accident. Even when she said she was wronged and asked the man to recall hard, the man insisted that he had seen her drinking. He then described the incidents like they actually happened.

Of course, he was only one of the witnesses. There were so

many that their testimonies and physical evidence formed a whole chain of evidence she could not argue.

Why... Why...

Back then, she kept asking herself this, but no one could give her an answer.

3/3

Could she finally get an answer today?

The mediator was talking to You Lei right now. He talked

about how to resolve this issue so that the impact of this issue could be minimized.

With his skills, the mediator steered the conversation from compensation to the house You Lei now lived in as well as his family.

However, no matter how he asked, You Lei insisted that his house of five million was bought with the money he made when he helped his friend with his business.

"I paid for the house with my life. How can I possibly sell it? No way, I don't have a million for them! I don't have more than 100,000 bucks!" said You Lei.

"Did you buy the house with clean money? Those people know you have such a house. If you don't pay them more and they find out you got it illegally, you'll only lose a lot more when you're just trying to save a little."

Chapter 453

You Lei's eyes flickered with guilt as he said, "What do you mean by clean? I'm usually upright and honest. What is it that's not clean?"

"By the way, I went to your parents' house yesterday to talk to them about you. They were both talking in Emerald City's dialect. Are they from Emerald City?" the mediator said casually.

"Yes, they used to live in Emerald City."

"You used to live in Emerald City too? Why did you settle in S City? Emerald City is better than S City," the mediator said as if they were having small talk.

"Big cities have a lot of pressure. Although it's smaller here, it's a comfortable place to live."

"That's true." The mediator smiled and suddenly said, "I

almost forgot. The man you wounded asked me to ask you about Miss Atkinson. He said that if you're not afraid of being exposed, you'd better pay the money as he requested, or he'll tell the world."

You Lei's face turned pale, though he seemed to be trying hard to hide it. "Miss Atkinson... I don't know what he has to expose,

but I was a witness in a case where the victim had the last name Atkinson. She was quite a famous socialite in Emerald City who died a tragic death. That's why you shouldn't drink and drive. If it hadn't been for a woman who drank and drove, Miss Atkinson wouldn't have been killed in the car accident."

As though unwilling to recall, You Lei shook his head. Then, he looked as if he was puzzled. "Why did the man I fought mention Miss Atkinson for no reason?"

"I don't know. Maybe you can ask him once you're out?" asked the mediator.

They talked for a while longer, but he could not find anything useful from You Lei.

Finally, the mediator went to the next room and said to Grace and the rest, "I'm sorry."

"It's fine." Grace smiled a little. The outcome was exactly what she had expected. After all, it was just one meeting. How could it be so easy?

However... You Lei said he earned the money for the house by helping his friend with his business. If she could find out where the money for this house came from, could she find out who was the person who wanted to frame her?

Grace thought to herself. After the mediator left, Hadwin

Stephenson, as if he had read Grace's mind, said, "I've checked the source of the money for this house. It was a guy who deposited five million into his account, and the guy was a friend of his, but we still need to check why he deposited five million to You Lei. After all, it has been three years, and his friend is now abroad."

"Did he really help out his friend's business? So he got some bonus or reward from his friend? Did he need that much

money, though? Besides, You Lei was only a regular employee back then. How much money could he make for his friends?" Lina Sweeney sneered.

“We need to check this further,” said Hadwin Stephenson.

“All right, I’ll have it checked out,” said Jason before looking down at Grace. He continued saying, “I’ll have people look into it next. You don’t have to worry. If you really want to clear your name, I’ll clear your name for you.”

He could clear her name with the truth hidden as long as she could be satisfied and happy.

Grace stared at Jason, a little dumbfounded. Did he really believe she was innocent and would find all the evidence for

her?

“Hey, that’s great! With Mr. Reed’s help, Grace’s case will definitely be reversed!” Lina Sweeney exclaimed happily.

Chapter 454

If the local tyrant of Emerald City wanted to help someone reverse a case, it was sure to be a success!

Besides, Grace was innocent! Whoever was behind it was sure to be found out!

Lina Sweeney, relieved from her gloom, brightened up. “It’s almost noon. Let’s have lunch together.”

Grace nodded, and the four of them walked out of the detention center before getting into their car.

Lina Sweeney was busy going through the list of recommended food in S City and found several restaurants to try. Then, she asked Grace to choose one. The two men had no objections, so Hadwin Stephenson drove up to the restaurant.

It was a local specialty restaurant here in S City, and it had a long-established reputation. Four of them got out of the car and asked for a private room before they started ordering.

Of course, Lina Sweeney did most of the ordering, but she based her orders on the recommendations she read online.

As Lina Sweeney had ordered by referring to her phone, she looked at the 20 or so dishes. There were only four of them, so she embarrassedly said, “It seems we’ve ordered a little too much.”

“You can order anything you like. We rarely come here, so we might as well try more of this place’s specialties,” said Hadwin Stephenson.

Lina Sweeney was immediately at ease again.

Then, while waiting for the dishes to be served, Lina Sweeney held her phone and showed Grace the various posters of The King's Lover, the TV series she recommended earlier.

"What do you think? Isn't Howell Webb's costume manly, seductive, and sexy?" Lina Sweeney said with some

excitement

Hadwin Stephenson's face darkened right away. This woman who watched TV dramas and chased after idols all day long

obviously forgot that he was her boyfriend now!

Worst of all, she presented herself to him as if she were always

looking at him with fascination. In the next moment, however, she was again fascinated by all kinds of idols and celebrities.

Before Grace could see the posters, the phone was taken away by Jason.

Jason peered down at the posters on her phone, swiping to

see more of them. After a while, he looked up and stared at

Grace. "Is this your ideal type?"

Grace went into a frenzy of embarrassment. "Well... I... I had high hopes for this actor. His acting is good, and some of the TV series he starred in were also pretty good."

"Is that so? Fine, how about I ask my secretary to ask Howell Webb out some other day, so you can have a good look and ask for an autograph or something?" asked Jason.

"Huh?" Grace was stunned.

Lina Sweeney's eyes widened with admiration on her face!

Oh my God! Was Jason going to help Grace meet her idol? Lina Sweeney was impressed. It was just too badass! With Jason's abilities, no matter which celebrity Grace was a fan of, Jason could ask them out.

Hadwin Stephenson looked at Lina Sweeney and his face seemed a lot more gloomy. Did this woman... need to show her envy so visibly on her face?

He was just a celebrity. Was he that good? It was just a meeting to get his signature. Could she really be that envious?

Just then, the waiter came in with the dishes, breaking the

eerie atmosphere in the private room.

Chapter 455

"All right, let's eat," said Jason.

The four of them started eating their lunch. Jason offered to help Grace peel the prawns when they were eating this particular dish. Grace was a little embarrassed. After all, they were now in front of her best friend and Hadwin Stephenson.

Lina Sweeney, in particular, even winked at her, making Grace a little speechless.

Jason looked so graceful while peeling the prawns for her that he did not seem to care about other people's opinions.

After the meal was over, Jason reminded Grace, "Don't forget to take your medicine 20 minutes after lunch."

"Okay," replied Grace.

"Are you sick?" Lina Sweeney was shocked and asked with immediate concern.

"No, it's just some health-restoring pills. It's medicine for the pain in my joints," answered Grace.

Lina Sweeney was stunned. She knew about her best friend's imprisonment for three years. After she was released from prison, she suffered from rheumatism. Her joints would hurt when the weather was cold and gloomy.

She had advised Grace to go to the hospital to check it out and treat it, but Grace always gave a lot of excuses.

She knew Grace thought it was too expensive to treat it and that it would be over soon if she just hung in there. She tried to pay for the medical expenses once but was refused by Grace.

Now that Grace was starting to take care of her body and health, it must be Jason's doing.

Lina Sweeney's fondness for Jason increased suddenly.

Although Grace's ordeal in prison was somewhat related to Jason, he did not know Grace back then.

She could see that Jason was really nice to her best friend.

It would not be the worst outcome if Jason could be her best friend's happy ending.

In that case, Grace could finally enjoy life after all her sufferings.

When it was time to take the medicine, Jason gave Grace a cup of warm water. Then, he took out the medicine, placed it

on her palm, and made her take it.

Lina Sweeney looked at his delicate and gentle movements. She could feel how Jason doted on her best friend.

How much a man doted on a woman was not judged from how much money he gave her or how well he could talk, but

how much he would do for her.

After Grace finished taking her medicine, Lina Sweeney dragged Grace to the washroom and curiously asked, "Are you and Jason really together now?"

"Yes." Grace nodded unabashedly, confessing her feelings in front of her best friend. "Lina, I thought I'd never fall in love with anyone anymore, but now I want to try to date him and

see... if we can make it to the end?"

Her feelings were careful. She took every step with more caution because she had once been hurt in a relationship.

"Why wouldn't you?" Lina Sweeney patted Grace on the shoulder and said, "Before this, I would have thought it was

impossible between you and Jason, but today, I can see that he's serious about you. I mean, people say all kinds of things. about Jason, but when it comes to women, he has kept his hands to himself. It seems that he only had one fiancée,

Jennifer Atkinson..."

Lina Sweeney stopped short and glanced awkwardly at

4/4

Grace. After all, Jennifer Atkinson was not only Jason's former

fiancée but also the victim of the car accident.

Chapter 456

As if she could see what her best friend was worried about, Grace said, "Never mind, I'll find out the truth and give Jennifer Atkinson justice while clearing my name!

"Never mind me. What about you? How are you with Hadwin Stephenson?" asked Grace.

"What else? That's all." Lina Sweeney shrugged and said, "We look just like a couple in a normal relationship.""

It was precisely because it looked too 'normal' sometimes that she often got into a trance, thinking that she was really dating Hadwin Stephenson. She even got caught up in this 'dating' feeling. She needed to remind herself constantly that everything was fake. Hadwin Stephenson was only going to take revenge after she fell in love with him.

"I still don't think Hadwin Stephenson is going to take revenge on you as you think," said Grace. If he wanted to take revenge on Lina, people like Hadwin Stephenson had a lot of ways to torment people. There was no need for him to choose such a circuitous and time-consuming method.

"I hope it's not what I think it is too." Lina Sweeney curled her lips disapprovingly.

Grace knew that Lina still thought Hadwin Stephenson was dating her for revenge, but as she did not know much about Hadwin Stephenson, she did not go on. Some things could only be understood by experiencing it.

She just did not want Lina to get hurt in any way.

They left the washroom and headed for the private room.

When they opened the door to the private room, they saw Hadwin Stephenson with one hand on the table and the other

on the back of the chair Jason was sitting on. He was half bent over and talking to Jason.

Their gazes were almost at eye level and their faces were very close together.

Grace and Lina Sweeney were stunned. Lina Sweeney even gasped in exaggeration.

"What... are you doing?" Lina Sweeney only felt that the scene before her was beautiful like a picture. In her eyes, the spaces

around and between the two men were filled with roses, just like in the comics.

Hadwin Stephenson's face darkened. Just from Lina Sweeney's expression, he could guess what kind of mess was going on in

Chapter 456

her mind.

3/4

"Nothing." Hadwin Stephenson straightened up and slouched back into his seat.

"Nothing indeed." Jason smiled too. "Mr. Stephenson and I were just chatting."

Chatting... Did they need to get so close to each other to chat? The two women doubted it.

"All right, now that we've finished our lunch, let's head back to Emerald City. If we go back now, we'll reach Emerald City by four or five o'clock," said Jason as he stood up.

When it was time to settle the bill, Jason was one step ahead and paid it with his phone.

"I'll treat all of you next time. Let's get together again when we're free," said Hadwin Stephenson, his tone seemingly

meaningful.

"Sure," Jason replied calmly.

The four walked out of the restaurant, and Jason drove them back.

Jason usually drove luxury cars when he was driving. It was his first time driving an inexpensive car like Lina Sweeney's.

Lina Sweeney was filled with emotion as she watched Jason drive her rattletrap. Who would have thought her car would one day be driven by Jason?

Chapter 458

Fine, he was her creditor anyway!

After Grace and Jason returned to Reed Residence, Jason asked, "Are you disappointed today? We went to S City but didn't find anything useful."

Grace shook her head. "No."

"You're not disappointed?" He seemed somewhat surprised.

"Because you're willing to help me find clues and clear my name. I'm happy regardless if we find something useful or not," she said.

It was as if he really trusted her, and the original estrangement between them was slowly disappearing.

He stared at her. He understood her desire to reverse the case, only... He could clear her name, but he could not tell her the truth.

Even though it was a truth she wanted to know.

"As long as you're happy." He smiled slightly and sidestepped the topic by saying, "What are you going to do the next few days if you're not going to work?"

"I'm going to visit Grandma in a couple of days," she said.

She was so busy with her work that she did not have time to call her grandmother to check on her. Since it was rare for her to have these days off, it was natural for her to visit her grandmother.

"All right, when are you going? I'll go with you," said Jason.

"You? You want to visit my grandmother too?" She was taken aback.

"She's your grandmother. Of course, I'm going to visit her," said Jason.

Such a simple sentence left Grace with a bit of a sore nose for no reason.

"All right, then we'll go together," said Grace.

In the evening, the traditional medicine from the hospital arrived. It was to help Grace with her uterus.

Grace looked at the traditional medicine and felt a touch of emotion. If Jason had not taken her for a physical examination, she might still think that she would never have a child of her own.

The medicine seemed to give her hope.

In the evening, about 20 minutes after dinner, Jason asked the servant to bring the heated traditional medicine over. Along with the traditional medicine came a plate of candies and chocolates.

"The medicine is a little bitter. You should take some candy or chocolate after the medicine to get rid of the bitter taste in your mouth," said Jason.

"Okay," she answered, realizing the amount of care he was putting in for her.

Grace took the bowl and drank all the traditional medicine in one gulp, causing her eyebrows to frown. It was... extremely bitter!

Then, she picked up a piece of candy and put it in her mouth. to wipe out the bitter taste.

"Is it bitter?" asked Jason.

Grace nodded. Then, she saw Jason picking up the bowl she had just drunk the medicine with. It still contained some leftover traditional medicine.

Before she could ask him what he was going to do with it, she saw him lift the bowl and tilt his head slightly before drinking the rest of the traditional medicine.

Grace was shocked. "Why did you drink it?"

"Because I want to know how bitter your medicine is," he answered. He seemed to savor the taste of the traditional medicine in his mouth. "It's indeed bitter."

Chapter 459

"..." She was speechless. No one had ever tasted other people's medicine just to know how bitter it was. Besides, it was medicine for women.

Even though there was only a little bit left and it would not hurt him, but... Uh, he was a little careless in doing so.

"Why don't you have a piece of candy to keep the bitterness down?" she asked while still sucking on the candy in her mouth.

"Sure," he answered. However, instead of taking the candy on the plate, he leaned over to her. His hand grabbed the back of her head while his handsome face leaned close to her.

"You..." She had just opened her mouth when his kiss fell on her lips.

All of a sudden, she could feel him prying his way inside her mouth. It was as if he wanted to rob her of everything...

His kiss was lingering and domineering, making her almost breathless. The bitterness was mixed with sweetness, and it was evident by the end of the kiss that she could not tell what was the taste in her mouth.

When the kiss was over,

hand was still on the back of her head. She could not look away.

"It's sweet!" His extremely beautiful and amorous eyes gazed

at her while his thin lips whispered these words as if they were teasing her heart. His eyes glistened with longing for her.

Grace only felt that her mind was in turmoil at that moment. It was as if she had been bewitched by him.

Grace got on the phone with her grandmother, and after setting the time and date she would visit her, she decided to buy something for her.

Her grandmother had been discharged from the hospital. According to her, since her health was the same regardless if she was hospitalized or not, she might as well save a few

bucks and rest at home.

Grace knew that her grandmother was worried about spending too much money on the hospital bills. Although her grandmother could take her medicine on time, the nurses at the hospital would take good care of her, and thus, it would be

better for her health. However, her first uncle, second uncle, and third aunt would not be pleased.

Plus, could her grandmother be well taken care of at home?

She also learned from the doctor about her grandmother's sickness. She knew that she needed a long rest.

'I'll just wait and see what happens after I meet Grandma,' thought Grace.

Jason had already gone to work. Grace woke up to find a bank card on her bedside table with a note saying, 'Keep it on you

and use it if you need anything!

His simple and strong handwriting was pleasing to the eye.

If it had been in the past, Grace would have given the bank card back to Jason, but she thought differently now.

The reason she would keep the card was not because of how much money it had. It was because she knew he was showing

concern for her.

Although she still believed that a woman needed to be

independent and strong without relying on others easily, but... Once in a while, when she was tired, she still wished she could

have someone to lean on.

Jason was probably that someone.

After finishing her breakfast and medicine, Grace was going to buy a gift for her grandmother.

"Where do you want to go, Miss Cummins? I'll ask the driver to take you," said the butler.

"It's fine, I'll just take the bus," said Grace, not wanting to bother the driver.

"Let the driver take you, or Young Master Reed will blame me for not taking good care of you," said the butler.

Chapter 460

Grace hesitated and nodded yes, not wanting to give the butler a hard time.

Grace had the driver drive her to a mall downtown.

She wanted to buy something suitable for her grandmother to eat and wear. The mall's lower floors were full of restaurants and eateries, so Grace went there first.

She looked at the cakes and pastries and chose a dessert that was suitable for people with high blood sugar. It was a bit expensive, but Grace bought it anyway after remembering

that her grandmother's blood sugar level would sometimes get too high.

After paying for the pastries, she walked up the escalator with it in hand.

When she reached the second floor, someone suddenly walked up to her. Before she could even see who it was, she was slapped hard in the face.

Grace's whole body staggered and she nearly fell to the floor. She steadied herself, but the pastry case she was holding had fallen to the floor.

"I thought my eyes were deceiving me, but it really is you.

You're out of prison now? You even came to the mall to shop?" That person's voice rang in Grace's ears.

Grace clutched her cheek and stared blankly at the irate lady in front of her.

She remembered this face!

It was the same woman who had come up to her when she was in court and slapped her so hard that she cracked the corners of her mouth. Her face remained swollen for days.

The bailiff standing next to her did not even try to stop the woman. It was as if he had deliberately set aside time for the

woman to hit her.

This woman was Jennifer Atkinson's mother... Mrs. Atkinson, Camelia Meyer.

Did this woman hit her because she was from the Atkinson family? She, however, had no background and was even a loser who got kicked out by the Stevens family.

Now that she was out of prison, the same woman slapped her face again. Then, as if one slap was not enough, the woman's hand was about to strike again.

Almost subconsciously, Grace raised her hand and grabbed the woman's hand that was about to hit her.

"I've never harmed anyone!" said Grace as she stared at her coldly.

"You have the cheek to say you've never harmed anyone when the court has already found you guilty. Three years... Hmph! You've only been in prison for three years. In my opinion, you ought to be in prison for life!" said Camelia Meyer who looked furious. She raised her other hand, trying to slap Grace again.

Grace could only block her with her other hand. "Are there no wrongful convictions in court? Listen here, I don't owe you anything, and you have no right to hit me!"

"Rights?" Another middle-aged male voice chimed in. "What qualifies someone like you to talk about rights?"

Grace stiffened as she looked up at the man walking over. It was... Jennifer Atkinson's father, Harold.

Jason was not the only one she had nightmares about. There was Harold as well.

Harold was accompanied by several security guards.

Harold said coldly to his bodyguards, "Go and help the madam before this crazy woman hits her."

The bodyguards hurried forward and pulled Grace and

Camelia Meyer apart.