

Illusions 101

Chapter 101

After Lizetta had breakfast and just got into her car, her phone rang – it was Yolanda.

She saw the news from the neighborhood chat group and was worried sick, so she asked

for leave from the set and bolted.

Lizetta met her at the café, and they'd barely exchanged a few words when the landlord called, sounding really ticked off, demanding Yolanda get back ASAP.

Lizetta went with Yolanda back to the apartment, only to find their stuff chucked outside, all haphazard and messy. And to top it off, the landlord refused to refund over four

months' worth of rent.

"The place nearly turned into a haunted house, and I let you off easy not suing your butts! Renting to people like you was like bad karma! Thinking of getting your rent back? Dream

on!"

The landlord was this hefty woman, nearly 200 pounds, hands on hips and looking fierce.

"What do you mean 'people like us'?"

Yolanda was fuming. She got the landlord being mad, and she came back all sincere, ready to talk it out, anything to sort things out.

But the landlord was being nasty and throwing insults – who could stand that?

“All spooked up, up to no good, causing a ruckus chasing men, and you still got the nerve to ask me?!”

She gave Lizetta the once-over with a look of utter disdain, as if she was staring at something filthy.

It was one thing to talk smack about her, but saying things about Lizetta was off-limits Yolanda lost it and grabbed the chunky landlord, dragging her down the stairs.

“Are you fricking brain-dead or just lacking any sense of critical thinking? Blaming the victim – you’re so ‘enlightened’, aren’t you? Come with me!”

Yolanda was strong, and the landlord stumbled helplessly, getting scared and collapsing on the stairs, wailing.

“Assault! Someone’s gonna murder me!”

Yolanda wanted to drag her to the neighborhood committee to settle this, but then the landlord suddenly played the victim. Yolanda snorted and rolled up her sleeves.

“Alright! Assault and murder, is it? Today you’re gonna witness some real fighting spirit!

Lizetta grabbed her, panic written all over her face, “Stop! You’re the eight-time boxing champ, unbeatable across the city! If you hit her, at the very least she’ll end up with

broken legs. Remember that thug you paralyzed for provoking you? Lucky for you, you were a minor then and avoided a record. Please, keep your cool!”

Yolanda turned around, completely baffled.

Was she really that badass?

But she caught on quick, grinning menacingly, “Let go! I’ve got to teach her a lesson today. If anything happens, they will have my back!”

The landlord was usually not easy to fool, but she had just seen some medals and trophies while packing up, which seemed like legit boxing stuff.

She swallowed hard, standing her ground.

“You can’t scare me! It’s my house, and I won’t rent if I don’t want to!”

“Once a rental contract is signed, within the lease term, you have no right to evict someone without my clients’ agreement.”

Just then, a familiar melodious voice echoed up the stairwell. Lizetta turned to see Hogan, clad in a gray suit, climbing the stairs.

He caught her surprised look, smiled slightly behind his glasses, and then addressed the landlord, “I’m their lawyer, Hogan White; here to deal with this situation.”

Hogan had that elite vibe, the kind of composed and meticulous aura shared by doctors and lawyers.

The landlord’s eyes flickered even more, and Yolanda, unsatisfied, yanked Hogan aside, raising her fist, “You’re early. Go downstairs. After I’ve knocked some sense into her, you can come up and sort it out.”

Both the landlord and Lizetta were speechless. Hogan paused too, and then spoke to the

landlord.

“If there’s been an incident, it means the house is unsafe, and breaking the lease is even less appropriate. If we go to court, you’ll be on the hook for damages and breach of contract fees. If you’re really not willing to refund the rent, we’ll have to take legal action.”

The landlord's defenses were down, and she shouted, "I'll refund it!"

Hogan looked at Yolanda, who quickly passed over the payment code.

"Just refund the rent, forget the breach of contract fee,"

After all the drama, the place might be hard to rent out for a while. She had planned to renew the lease for another year, figuring the incident would be old news by then, and the landlord wouldn't lose out. But she hadn't counted on this attitude.

Once the landlord transferred the money and stood up to leave, Yolanda blocked her way with a foot against the wall.

"Apologizer"

The landlord caved in, quickly turned around and mumbled an apology to Lizetta.

Yolanda dropped her leg, and the landlord bolted upstairs, slamming the door like she was being chased by ghosts.

The hallway went quiet, and the three of them looked at each other and simultaneously burst into laughter.

Chapter 102

"Nice one, Dr. White, you've got some acting chops!" Yolanda pats Hogan on the shoulder "Right back at ya."

Lizetta looked at Hogan, puzzled, "Weren't you off doing medical aid? What brings you here?"

“Just got back. Was worried about you girls being here, just in case, so I left the security guy my number to ring me up if there’s any trouble. Let’s get out of here.”

Hogan bent down to pick up two large luggage bags and headed downstairs first, “Don’t lift a finger; I’ll come back for the rest.”

As his tall figure descended, Yolanda nudged Lizetta with her shoulder.

“Remington’s given you a lift home before too, right? But I never saw him leave his number like that. Dr. White’s really quite a catch, uh!”

Lizetta clamped her hand over Yolanda’s mouth, “You’re quite the actress yourself. Hurry up and pack; you really want him to come back up here?!”

She grabbed two cardboard boxes, and Yolanda, knowing she didn’t want to talk about it, dropped the subject.

After they load everything into the trunk of Hogan’s car, they all hopped in, and he said, “Finding a temporary rental could be tough. I happen to have a two-bedroom place nearby that’s just sitting empty. Why don’t you check it out?”

Before Lizetta could reply, Hogan seemed to anticipate her concerns and added, “Don’t worry. I won’t let you crash for free. You’ll pay rent. It’s not good for the place to be empty anyway, and a little extra

cash never hurts. Plus, you can help me keep an eye on it – it’s a win-win.”

Lizetta felt it was not quite right, but he’d made his offer so generously, and after all, Yolanda was in this mess because of her. Finding a spot last minute was a hassle.

“That would be a great help, Hogan.”

Hogan’s place was obviously top-notch in terms of light, layout, and decor.

Lizetta, planning to study abroad in just a month or two, had thought about renting a place with Yolanda after her divorce. A two-bedroom apartment would be perfect.

As they emerged from the bedroom, Lizetta turned to Hogan, "Let's get the rental agreement signed, Hogan."

Hogan chuckled, "No rush. It's almost noon after all this running around. Let's grab some lunch. I'll have someone prepare the contract and call you when it's ready."

"Then Yolanda and I will treat you to lunch."

Hogan, knowing her straightforwardness, raised an eyebrow and agreed.

Lizetta picked out a trendy restaurant nearby. Once they were at the restaurant and had ordered, Lizetta raised her glass, "Hogan, thanks for all your help today. I'll toast you with water instead of wine."

Smiling, Hogan was about to respond when a soft, melodic voice cut in, "Hogan, what are you doing with these two?"

Shirley stood a few steps away, decked out in a new sparkling dress from Brand X, clutching a platinum bag, looking down her nose at them.

She glared at Lizetta, thinking, "This woman is born to be wild. She climbs into Remi's bed and now she's trying to snag Hogan too?"

Yolanda's good mood vanished. She picked up her glass and said, "Haven't seen you in ages, and you're still stepping out without brushing your teeth? How about a free mouthwash to rinse out that stink?"

She gestured as if to throw the water at Shirley, who scrambled back, nearly tripping over in her high heels.

"It would be a waste of water to douse you," Yolanda wore a look that read "you're not worth it", and casually took a sip of her water.

Shirley, red-faced with anger yet managing to hold back tears, looked to Hogan with her eyes welling up, "Hogan, they are bullying me."

Lizetta almost broke out in goosebumps from Shirley's suddenly whiny tone.

Hogan kept a straight face, "Ms. Shirley Dashiell, she who flirts is cheap."

Shirley was stunned, not getting it, and Yolanda couldn't help but laugh.

"The bimbo obviously didn't catch that. Liz, do the honors and recite the whole thing for her."

Prodded by Yolanda, Lizetta reluctantly began, "She who flirts is cheap. If you start trouble, you can't blame anyone when you get hit."

Yolanda added, "Let me translate for you. Being frivolous and impetuous degrades yourself. Better repent sooner than later, esteemed Ms. Shirley Dashiell."

In a flash, Shirley's face turned from red to white, and tears started to fall, "You guys are

too much!"

She turned and ran toward the door, "Remi, Eve, I'm being bullied!"

At the moment, a few more people walked in, with the most striking being a tall, handsome man accompanied by a delicate woman. It was Remington and Evelina.

Joined at the hip, those lovebirds.

Chapter 103

Just thinking about Evelina's Facebook post about changing the dressing made Lizetta wanna hurl.

When Remington's gaze floated over, Lizetta quickly looked down, scalded the curry with hot water, and placed them in front of Yolanda and Hogan.

"Remi! Are you just gonna stand there and watch them pick on me?" Shirley whined for ages, but Remington didn't even bat an eyelid, which really ticked her off.

Remington's eyes were still on Lizetta, noticing how her smile vanished into thin air the moment she saw him, and how she fussed over some other dude.

The man's handsome face turned a shade darker as he withdrew his gaze.

"What do you mean, 'picking on you'?"

"I went over to say 'hi' to Hogan and Lizetta, all excited, and her friend comes at me with water to throw in my face! Lizetta doesn't even take my side and starts mocking me, saying I'm cheap."

Shirley made up a sob story, looking all wronged.

Lizetta stood up and strutted over, chin up, her gaze at Remington dripping with sarcasm, "Remington, why are you hanging out with these two?"

Evelina's eyes welled up, "Sis, are you mad?"

"Not at all," Lizetta said, the picture of innocence.

“Then why’d you talk to Remington like that? You must’ve gotten it wrong.”

Shirley felt like she’d heard Lizetta’s words before. Realizing what was happening, she quickly tugged at Evelina.

Evelina turned, seeing Shirley looking all panicky. She was confused, but Shirley was mentally cursing her for being such a lousy wingman today.

Lizetta smirked, “You got it wrong. I was just saying ‘hi’ to you guys, exactly like Ms. Shirley Dashiell did just now!

Evelina was mortified, and Shirley was on the verge of actual tears.

Remington cast a cold glance at her, “You call that a happy greeting?”

Shirley felt embarrassed and wronged. Evelina opened her mouth to defend her, but she was the one who had just accused Lizetta of having an attitude.

“Apologize!” Remington commanded Shirley coldly.

Shirley bit her lip, stubborn as ever. Lizetta scoffed and waved it off, “Forget it, it’s more than you can handle. Just don’t disturb our meal, okay?”

She turned to leave, but Remington grabbed her wrist.

“Shirley,” he said, his voice calm but clearly displeased.

Shirley looked up, eyes red, “I’m sorry.”

“Sorry to whom?” Remington’s patience was wearing thin.

Shirley's tears started to fall; this time her apology seemed a lot more genuine, at least on the surface.

"Lizetta, I'm sorry for disturbing your meal."

Lizetta nodded coolly and struggled to signal Remington to let go. Remington looked at Yolanda and Hogan, "Since we've bumped into each other, let's all head to the private

room."

Lizetta pulled her hand away, "No need, we've already ordered."

Evelina said with a smile, "They can bring the dishes to the private room; come on sis, it's been ages since we had a meal together after I came back."

She tried to link arms with Lizetta, who dodged with a raised hand, fed up, "No, thanks."

Evelina bit her lip, "Sis, are you still mad at me?"

Yolanda walked over and put her arm around Lizetta's shoulders, "Ms. Hawthorne, you always have so much on your mind. I get social anxiety, I get indigestion around strangers, and of course, Liz needs to consider that."

She walked off with Lizetta, while Remington's gaze lingered on Hogan for a moment before leading the others away.

Lizetta sat back down, and Yolanda gave her a thumbs up.

"Liz, your acting's not bad either; you nailed that Shrew Shirley!"

“Shrew Shirley?”

Hogan explained, “She’s like some woman who always stay with nostrils in the air, stinking to high heaven, and is practically a rat.”

She turned to Hogan, “Hogan, you know Shirley?”

Hogan simply said, “Met a few times, not close.”

“But Ms. Shirley Dashiell seems to have a huge crush on you, Dr. White,” Yolanda teased, her eyes like a love radar.

Hogan’s smile grew slowly, “But I’ve already got someone I have a crush on, and it’s not

Ms. Shirley Dashiell.”

His gaze unintentionally fell on Lizetta, who caught the overly tender look behind his glasses and paused, her mind elsewhere.

Shirley had got her nose in the air, and Hogan was clearly from a notable family. But Lizetta hadn’t heard Hogan talk about it, nor had she seen him in the usual circles; she always thought Hogan was just a regular doctor.

“Evelina’s planning to break into showbiz? The folks she was with are big names in the industry,” Yolanda mentioned, as she was from a film academy and, though she hadn’t landed a role yet, she’d been on movie sets doing stunts, so she knew her showbiz folks.

way around

Chapter 104

Sure, she knew them, but they didn't know her from a can of paint.

When Lizetta thought about Remington splashing out big bucks for Evelina's music, she

didn't feel it strange.

"Probably, yeah."

"Pfft, with Evelina's violin skills, trying to hit it big in the art scene is a dead end. No wonder she's shelling out for tunes. She's got her sights set on using her violinist gig as a stepping stone before diving headfirst into showbiz."

Yolanda clicked her tongue, clearly unimpressed.

Lizetta kept mum. Remington was laying down the red carpet for Evelina, spoon-feeding her opportunities, even stooping to wine and dine with her. Talked about bending over backward.

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way around

Then the waiter brought the dishes, and Yolanda, not wanting to make Lizetta feel awkward, dropped the subject.

But no sooner than the food hit the table, Hogan's phone buzzed. Picking up, he frowned after a few words.

"What's up, Hogan?"

"Got an emergency. I need to dash back for a ventriculoperitoneal shunt surgery. Sorry, afraid I can't give you a ride later."

He stood up, and Lizetta quickly waved him off, "Go!"

Hogan gave an apologetic smile and made a beeline for the exit.

"Man, being a doc is no cakewalk. Can't even enjoy a good meal."

Yolanda sighed and was about to dig in when she realized she was about to chow down on some sliced beef. Her utensil quivered, and the beef plunged back into her plate.

Lizetta couldn't help but snicker at her startled reaction.

The restaurant was decked out in traditional style. Hogan stepped out and paused in the courtyard, looking up at the second floor.

Ginkgo leaves tinged with autumn hues, the carved windows open to the east, a man in a black suit stood at the window, the midday sun dancing across his sharp brow, not softening his aura of aloof solitude one bit.

It was Remington, a man green with jealousy.

The moment Hogan got the call from the hospital, he knew this wasn't just a coincidence.

Remington's hand was all over it.

Eyes locked, Hogan's expression stayed put, giving a cordial nod before striding away. He was a doctor, after all. Whether the surgery was legit or not, he couldn't afford to waste time.

Lizetta had 2 small appetite. Even though she was eating for two now, by the time she was full, Yolanda was just getting into the swing of things.

Good thing that girl worked off her food with all the exercises she did. Lizetta told her to take her time and headed for the restroom.

While washing her hands, voices started up outside.

"Eve, I'm so jealous of you. Remi loves you so much, thinking of everything for you. With Remi paving the way, you'll be A-list this time next year!"

"You too, let's give it our all."

Shirley and Evelina came in all lovey-dovey, not a hint of surprise on Lizetta's face.

Shirley wanted to savor Lizetta's green-eyed misery, but Lizetta's face gave away nothing. She barely glanced at them before making a beeline for the door.

Evelin

stepped forward, and Lizetta hastily retreated, moving so quickly it nearly gave Shirley a fright.

“What’s your deal? Jumping at shadows!” Shirley snapped.

Lizetta smirked, “Gotta watch out for scammers, right? If she takes a tumble and blames me for hurting her little golden nugget, who am I gonna argue with?”

Lizetta grabbed her phone, hit record, and faced Shirley and Evelina as she walked away.

Shirley, fuming, grabbed Lizetta, mindful of the recording, and changed her tune.

“Sorry about that, Lizetta. We didn’t realize you were here. Remi’s setting up a showbiz company for Eve, making her a star. You heard all about it, right? The folks we dined with today are big-name directors and producers. You don’t mind, do you?”

By the way, Remi dropped 200 grand just so Eve could play her idol’s tune once. Bet you never guessed Remi had such a romantic side, huh?”

Lizetta raised an eyebrow. She knew alright. Remington wasn’t being romantic; he was being played for a sucker.

Evelina’s smile was radiant, “Sis, you’re so pretty; why not join us in showbiz? Don’t worry; I’ll talk to Remington for you.”

Shirley immediately chimed in, “Eve, you’re too kind. Showbiz is all about being loved. You need good connections to make it. What hope does Lizetta have?”

The insinuation was clear: Lizetta was the type people loved to hate,

Lizetta couldn't stand their bragging and boasting, She nodded, her gaze landing on Evelina's belly.

"No offense, but I've never seen a baby bump debut. But hey, you're a special case, Who knows, maybe you'll make it big riding on that bump, Good luck."

She shook off Shirley's grasp and walked away, leaving behind a trail of Shirley's indignant

curses.

Heading back to the main hall, Lizetta didn't expect to be swept up by a strong arm around her waist and pushed against the wall just as she rounded the corner.

Chapter 105

familiar woody scent of a man hit Lizetta before she could even get a good look at

but she knew instantly who it was.

She furrowed her brows, yet Remington reached out, his big hand pressing against her forehead.

Feeling under the weather? You look like death warmed up, yet here you are out dining with folks."

Lizetta had taken a cold bath last night, slept terribly, and even had a nightmare. Pregnant and having decided to keep the baby, she hadn't bothered with makeup since, and it showed, although she still looked pretty stunning..

Lizetta brushed Remington's hand away with a cool, indifferent voice, "I'm fine. Mr. Dashiell, busy as a bee, managed to make time for lunch with others too, right?"

As soon as she finished speaking, her chin was lifted by the man, forcing her to meet his gaze. The lighting in the corner was poor, and with the man's head bowed, his handsome features were half in shadow, his pupils oozing danger.

"Mr. Dashiell? My, my, I seem to be donning quite a few hats around you."

Lizetta gave a fake laugh, "If you don't like it, I can stick to Remington Dashiell."

"Pick something more endearing or don't expect me to let go."

Lizetta rolled her eyes, "Like what?"

Remington leaned in, his forehead against hers, his deep voice vibrating near her nose. He uttered, "Try 'honey'."

Lizetta thought her ears were busted. It'd been two years, and he hadn't accepted her as

his wife.

He didn't like her calling him "Remi", nor was he keen on "honey".

Now, as she was gunning for a divorce and he was parading around with Evelina, he suddenly wanted her to call him "honey"?

"Heh, Remington, are you kidding me?"

Lizetta was sarcastic, and Remington, utterly dissatisfied with her reaction, lifted her face higher and planted a punishingly hot kiss on her lips.

If all this pretty little mouth can do was spout stuff he hated, might as well bite it off and be done with it!

Lizetta wanted to protest and curse, “You jerk, Remington!” But all that came out was, “Mmm, mmm!”

He must have been drinking, the taste of red wine seeping through their intertwined lips Lizetta thought about how it was all for schmoozing with Evelina, which made her eyes go red with anger. She tried to kick him.

But the man pressed her even harder against the wall, his knee wedging her legs apart, his right thigh pressing into the crook of Lizetta’s leg, and his hot hand tracing down along her waistline.

Lizetta wanted to bite him, but he just chuckled derisively and kissed her even more aggressively, leaving her teeth and gums tingling.

Just as Lizetta was about to burst into tears, she heard the sound of high heels. It was Evelina and Shirley coming!

The mistress was here, and this douchebag was about to crash and burn. Lizetta thought to herself, and didn’t bother to struggle anymore, even wrapping her arms around Remington’s neck.

She waited to see Remington’s embarrassment, wondering if Evelina would scratch his face. But to her surprise, instead of panicking and pushing her away, Remington responded even more passionately to her, and his body reacted in turn.

Lizetta felt it and her eyes widened at the approaching footsteps. She thought Remington must’ve lost it. Didn’t he hear someone coming?

Or maybe he didn’t know it was Evelina? That had to be it. Lizetta stiffened, waiting for Evelina’s screams and frenzy, but.

The footsteps stopped, and then suddenly retreated, chaotic, like fleeing. Lizetta was like,

“??”

“Ouch!” She was full of questions when her tongue got bitten. And finally, Remington backed off, loosening his grip on her.

Lizetta was weak-kneed, sliding down and ending up almost straddling his right leg, her thigh against that part of him, the heat scorching even through the layers of clothing.

Blushing and embarrassed, Lizetta tried to stand but her legs wouldn’t cooperate, and she glared at him annoyed, “You!”

Remington cut her off, “Don’t plame me; your response just now was too much to handle.” Lizetta hadn’t realized before how good he was at turning the tables. She struggled a bit, and Remington’s hand on her waist squeezed a warning.

“Stop squirming!” He was still catching his breath, his voice deep and hoarse.

Lizetta, mortified, said, “Just stop talking!”

A light chuckle escaped from Remington’s chest, tempting as sin.

Lizetta, thinking about how Evelina and Shirley had seen everything, and how even now, someone could come down the hallway at any moment, felt like a shrimp boiling in a pot, turning redder by the second.

Thankfully, Remington soon helped her to stand and stepped back. Lizetta instinctively glanced down at him, and he lifted a hand to cover her eyes.

Chapter 106

“Still watching, it’s not shy, just thrilled to bits.”

Lizetta's face was heating up non-stop, her eyelashes fluttering like crazy. Like a little brush, they tickled Remington's palm. As if she was plucking the strings of his nerves, sparking an electric current; it was killing him.

No one spoke, just the sound of their ragged breaths, one deep, one shallow, all tangled

up.

"You good now?" After a moment, Lizetta knitted her brows and spoke up.

Remington didn't say a word, and just gazed deeply at the woman in front of him, her face so small, hidden behind a pair of big eyes, revealing only her delicate jawline and red lips.

She looked so well-behaved and soft; he didn't want to let go. If he did, she'd turn back into that rebellious teenager who just knew how to get under his skin, like her adolescence got extended or something.

"No," he answered.

Lizetta rolled her eyes, wishing she hadn't flirted back earlier knowing he was such a beast.

Thinking back to what happened just now, she spoke up again, "It was Evelina who came by earlier."

"So what if it was her?" Remington replied, nonchalant.

Lizetta couldn't help but laugh at his casual tone. What did he mean "so what if it was

her?"

"You know it's her, and you're still not letting me go! Aren't you afraid she'll get mad as hell, claw your face off?"

Lizetta teased, prompting Remington to finally release his big palm from her eyes, their gazes meeting as he raised an eyebrow.

“Heh, aren’t you the one looking for excitement? The only one who could scratch my face. is you. She’s more sensible than you.”

Lizetta almost choked on her breath and raised her hand to really scratch his face. Her wrist got caught by him, and he looked into her angry eyes, finding this lively little face somehow cuter than when it was all icy.

Lizetta struggled hard, and Remington frowned, “You’re gonna rip my wound open again.”

Only then did Lizetta realize he was using his injured hand to hold her, she paused for a moment, and then struggled even harder, “Good, let it rip open so your darling can fuss. over you and change the dressing again!”

Remington smirked, eyebrow cocked, “Darling? You sure know how to flatter yourself.”

Lizetta frowned, annoyed, “I’m talking about Evelina!”

Remington’s handsome face darkened, “Cut the crap, when did I ever let her change the dressing for me?”

Lizetta was taken aback, “Didn’t you go to her place last night?”

Twent to the company!” Remington released her hand and tapped on Lizetta’s head, as if to chide her for her blockhead thinking and her wild imagination.

Lizetta pressed her lips, her chest heaving slightly. Remington didn’t go to Evelina’s place, but what was up with Evelina’s Facebook then? Playing such a drama, posting it intentionally for her to see?

But if Remington didn't give Evelina the chance, how could she have misunderstood? Regardless, Remington left her last night when she was injured and needed him. He was always like this, and now he was back pestering her for no good reason.

Thinking this, Lizetta pushed Remington away and walked off. Remington straightened his suit and followed, taking her hand, "Let me take you back."

"Don't bother!" Lizetta shook off his hand, but Remington wrapped his arm around her

waist.

As the two of them struggled, Evelina leaned against the wall in the restroom, her pale face streaming with tears.

Shirley patted her sympathetically, frustratedly saying, "Eve, why hide? Remi clearly likes you. Lizetta was just flirting with Remi because she knew we were behind. You should've stormed up there, pulled her off, and slapped her hard!"

Shirley was so shocked seeing that scene, and nearly rushed out, only to be dragged back into the restroom by Evelina covering her mouth.

"Shirley, stop it. No matter how much Remi likes me, it's no use. His wife is the official one, and it's normal for them to be like that. How can I interfere? I don't have the right."

As she spoke, her face was a picture of despair. This wasn't an act; she was genuinely heartbroken.

She hadn't expected Remington, so aloof, to show such passion. She was so jealous, wishing she could replace Lizetta and be the one he held and kissed.

One day she would! She wiped away her tears, took Shirley's hand, and said earnestly.

“Shirley, I can’t be happy anymore, but you must hold on to your happiness. Don’t you like Hogan? Keep a close eye on him. The way Hogan looks at Lizetta isn’t normal. Back then,

he and she almost.”

She abruptly stopped, and Shirley, impatient, asked, “What almost happened between Hogan and Lizetta back then?”

Chapter 107

Remington said he was gonna give Lizetta a ride, and though she was kinda annoyed inside, she couldn’t really argue with him.

“Let go, I gotta go find Yolanda first.”

If he insisted on playing chauffeur, let him. He was the one throwing a bash to pave the way for Evelina, and then bailing midway – if anyone was gonna be left holding the bag, it was Evelina, not her.

Seeing her nod, Remington finally let go of her waist.

“Meet me in the parking lot.”

The

guy

said his piece and then took off. He left his phone in the private room; gotta go

back for it.

Heading up the stairs, he came across two girls walking towards him, glued to a phone

screen.

“This race car driver is just too hot, right? Is that his girlfriend? Hugging in public like that, they must be an item. They’re such a visual feast, even more shippable than celebs!”

“Totally, he’s my new idol, the first guy to burst into F1! So freaking cool, it’s just that racing isn’t big here; otherwise with those looks and his record–breaking feats, he’d be a national heartthrob for sure!”

They walked past Remington, who glanced at the phone screen, spotting Lucian hugging some short–haired chick, looked like it was at the racing club, and Lucian was wearing the same outfit as last night when he dropped Lizetta home.

In a flash, Remington’s eyes were filled with a frosty chill. No wonder that woman was acting so off last night.

His ferocious look was so intense it startled the girls, who turned to look back, but only caught a glimpse of his tall, retreating figure. Even his profile and poise were top–notch, leaving them both blushing.

In the parking lot.

Yolanda, arm in arm with Lizetta, couldn’t help but ask her, “Do you think Evelina’s baby might not really be Remington’s?”

Yolanda had got eyes like an affair detector, she noticed right away that Lizetta’s lips looked a bit swollen when she came back.

Pressed by her, Lizetta had no choice but to give her a brief rundown of what just went down.

Lizetta shrugged, “Remington says it’s not his, but he seems to care a lot.”

She was getting annoyed, she didn't want to dig into it anymore. Whether it was his or she was over it the marriage was gonna end anyway.

Yolanda gripped Lizetta's hand, if he says it's not his, maybe it really is. Hand he been stalling the divorce? if the kid was really his, you'd think he'd benching to get the divorce over with. Liz, maybe you should watch him a bit longer?

Lizetta looked at her, discombobulated, Yolanda used to be all for her getting a divorce

"What's up with you?"

"Well, I just, ah, being a single mom is tough, and Eveline is just vile. if her kid 19th Remington's, maybe Badass Remington isn't beyond saving. You pulling out now wouldn't that just hand Evelina a win on a silver plate?

Yolanda's words left Lizetta silent she touched her lower bely. Yean what if the baby grew up and found out she had a chance to give them a complete family and didn't take it? Would her kid blame her?

Just then, driver Christ hurried over, Mrs. Dashiell the boss can't make it back right now he sent me to drive you and Yolanda

Christ went to open the car door, but Yolanda was grinding her team cake back what I just said."

She shouldn't have said anything nice about that jerk Of course Remington couldnt leave he couldn't bear to part with Evelina

Lizetta gave a faint smile, took Yolanda by the arm, and told Christ. "No need, we've already called a cab."

"Yeah, who cares about riding in Badass Remington's luxury car? Probably still reeks of some vixen in there!" Yolanda said loudly, dragging Lizetta away.

Christ looked anxious and hurried after them, “Mrs. Dashiell, you’ve got it wrong. Evelina didn’t ride with the boss coming here, they met at the entrance. There’s no smell in the car! The boss told me to drive you.”

Christ couldn’t catch up; Lizetta and Yolanda were already in the cab.

Lizetta told Christ through the car window, “I’m the one who doesn’t want to ride in his car he won’t give you trouble for it. Go back.”

Christ still followed a few steps, reminding her, “Mrs. Dashiell, the boss said he has to change the dressing on his arm wound today; remember to come back tonight.”

Now that she’d got less on her plate, Lizetta had got some free time. She visited Thaddeus at the hospital, chatted with him for a while, and massaged his legs.

As she was about to leave, Jolin showed up. She’d got a new perm, makeup done, wearing a thin cashmere cardigan over a black dress, toting an Hermes bag – one would

think she was some wealthy lady.

She grabbed Lizetta’s hand, but couldn’t keep up the pretense for long, “Liz, I’m a bit

strapped for cash lately; got any money to spare? Give me some. Been stressed with your brother’s condition, wanna go abroad with my friends to unwind.”

Lizetta pulled her hand away, “I’m broke.”

Chapter 108

She strutted over and plopped down on the edge of the hospital bed, fussing with her manicured nails.

“Well then, I guess I’ll just have to hit up my in-laws; they’re a couple of sweethearts. Or maybe I’ll swing by the Starlight Group and corner my dear son-in-law.”

*Over my dead body!” Lizetta stopped dead in her tracks, whirling around to shoot Jolin a piercing glare.

It was Jolin’s constant badgering for money from the Dashiell family that made her feel like she couldn’t hold her head high.

But why would Jolin care about her daughter’s well-being? She was only ever out for number one, laughing all shamelessly.

“You’re the precious lady of the Dashiell family, aren’t you? Just be a good girl, fork over the cash, and we’re square.”

Lizetta felt a chill run through her, but she couldn’t chain down Jolin’s legs. She had given Jolin access to her cards, but her mom’s greed knew no bounds.

Lizetta had lost her temper, threatened, pleaded, but Jolin was like a stone wall; she only wanted to leech off Lizetta.

Not a dime did Lizetta give, and Jolin would go and block Nathan at the entrance to the Dashiell Group.

It was an ugly scene, not long after she and Remington had tied the knot. Nathan had summoned her to the mansion’s study, didn’t scold her, and just left her standing there all night long.

Came morning, and his secretary handed her a card with a message, “The Dashiell family has taken care of you without expecting anything in return, but the least you could do is not drag our name through the mud over and over.”

“I’m not asking for a fortune; I’m your mother for crying out loud. After all, I raised you. Is it such a crime to spend a little of your money?”

Jolin said, coming over to try and snatch Lizetta's purse, wanting to rummage through it herself.

Lizetta jerked away violently, sending Jolin stumbling a step back, livid as she pointed and cursed, "How dare you lay hands on your mother! You ungrateful brat!"

The rage on Lizetta's face faded to cold indifference, "I'm not giving you a penny! Make a scene wherever you like. I can't wait to be divorced. If you want to add fuel to the fire, be my guest."

She turned and left, Jolin recalling the divorce papers that had fallen from Lizetta's bag last time, panic flashing across her face.

"You little devil! You're not seriously considering divorce, are you? Look, drop the money thing; just don't do anything stupid"

She chased out of the ward, fuming as she stared at Lizetta's retreating figure, who didn't

look back once.

"Eve still sends me 2 grand a month as a token of respect, what's the big deal if I ask you for some cash?"

Lizetta stopped in her tracks, turning around, "Evelina gives you 2 thousand a month? Since when?"

Jolin, looking guilty, quickly said, "What I mean is, if you won't give it to me, I ask Eve. She's dutiful, not cold-hearted like you, living the high life while your own mother scrapes by!"

Lizetta couldn't be bothered with her anymore and simply walked away. She entered the elevator, thoughts on Remington's injury, and made a detour to the hematology department to consult the doctor who had taken the blood samples.

After leaving the doctor's office, Lizetta couldn't help but laugh in exasperation.

Night fell.

Lizetta, half-asleep, was jolted awake by the relentless vibration of her phone. Frowning, she grabbed it without looking and answered.

"Where are you? When are you coming back?"

Remington's impatient voice, cold as striking jade, cut through the silence of the night and jolted Lizetta fully awake.

"Come back to warm your bed? Mr. Dashiell, you've called the wrong person!"

She was about to hang up when the man's voice came through again, "Forgot to mention, Mrs. Dashiell, if you're so inclined to come back and warm my bed, I wouldn't say no."

"Hah," Lizetta laughed sarcastically.

As she was about to disconnect, he added, "My wound seems to be festering."

"Festering?"

Remington mistook her response for concern, a smile curling his lips, but then he heard her cold, impatient voice.

"So what if it's festering? Wait till it's crawling with maggots, then give me a call. I'll be sure to rush over to watch."

Lizetta ended the call without giving Remington a chance to respond, hanging up irritably. She tossed her phone aside; it wasn't two minutes before it buzzed again.

Fuming, she answered, and this time Remington's voice was calmer, deeper, more soothing, "You found out, did you?"

Lizetta laughed coldly, "Found out you've been playing me for a fool? It's not my gullibility that's to blame. I've seen plenty of people wish illness on others, but you're the first I've seen curse themselves with sickness. Mr. Dashiell, with your acting chops, why waste time being a CEO? Why not join Evelina in showbiz? The two of you could sweep all the awards in the industry with your deceitful duo act!"

Her voice was filled with anger and mockery, a sharpness uncharacteristic of her nature. "Lizetta!" Remington's veins bulged with frustration; he called her name sternly, and then softened his tone, trying to cajole her.

"I didn't mean to deceive you; I just wanted you to worry, to care about me. I want you to come home! I need you, Lizetta; our marriage is no joke!"

Chapter 109

Man, even Remington felt cheesy listening to those words.

The moonlight snuck in through the floor-to-ceiling windows, and a blush quietly crept up

the man's ears.

He waited for her reply, feeling oddly nervous, but there was dead silence on the other end, "Liz?"

Remington checked his phone and the call had been ended at some point! A shadow fell over his handsome face as he called again. And that was when he realized he'd been blocked again.

Lizetta had been kept up by the commotion and went to bed late. Lucky for her, she didn't have a side gig the next morning.

Her deep sleep was shattered by Yolanda's yelling. She opened her eyes to see Yolanda bursting in, phone in hand.

"I'm so pissed! Bitch Evelina can't go a day without stirring up some drama! Liz, you gotta check this out; you're trending for all the wrong reasons!"

Lizetta was dragged out of bed and rubbed her eyes as she took the phone. Her undercover Maestro Adagio's Twitter account had shot up the trending topics.

#Average Talent; Top for Extortion#

With Yolanda guiding her, Lizetta clicked on the trend and quickly caught up with the whole story.

Last night, Evelina posted a short, half-minute video of herself playing the violin under the moonlight.

Her fans went nuts, showering her with praise and asking what piece she was playing because it was just so enchanting.

Soon after, Shirley chimed in to answer the curious fans.

[Don't bother searching the whole internet, folks. The piece is a special composition bought for 200 grand to serenade a sweetheart by Maestro Adagio, a premiere in the country. Maestro Adagio only granted Eve a one-time play, so if you dig the tune, remember to snag tickets to Eve's solo concert. Don't miss out; here's the link.]

Ever since Evelina returned to the country, she'd been hyping up her romance with Remington, while Shirley, flaunting her Dashiell family heiress status on Twitter with over 3 million followers, had been showing off.

Their frequent exchanges cemented the rumor that Evelina was set to become the young Mrs. Dashiell, earning Evelina a load of shippers.

This show of love sent the shippers into a frenzy, crying and shouting about their fairy-tale romance. But of course, the critics had to have their say.

[Who's Maestro Adagio? Some big shot? Never heard of the person! Eve's the top young violinist out there; playing his tune is a disservice, or what? 200 grand for a single play what kind of scam is that? This is his scheming plans, for sure!]

[Composing music's a gold mine, huh? Some no-name composer getting 200 grand for one play? Eye-opener!]

[I know that guy, just some random uploading so-called original music online, hardly a composer. Honestly, the talent's just meh.]

[Guess he knew Eve's gonna be Mrs. Dashiell and decided to shoot for the moon.]

[Mr. Dashiell adores Eve; he'd pay any price as long as Eve's happy. Just gouging him for all he's worth, really leaves a bad taste.]

These voices started a chorus in Evelina's comment section, and that was when she started following Maestro Adagio's Twitter and even posted a message.

[Maestro Adagio is super talented, and I adore his style so much I was willing to spend 200 grand for a single play. Also, thank you, Maestro Adagio, for choosing me.]

She seemed humble, and the netizens went even wilder. Thanks to her shoutout, Lizetta's Twitter was under siege, with her comment section flooded with hate.

"Bitch Evelina definitely did it on purpose! Those initial comments had to be her paid trolls; she's getting back at you for rejecting her!

She's stirring up this romance thing, crafting this narrative of Badass Remington being all crazy about her, and now she's dragging you into it. She must've been weaned on barbed wire, her insides all twisted and nasty! Never seen a soul uglier than hers, yuck!"

Yolanda was livid, having gone to war with netizens for what felt like three hundred rounds. But the enemy was too vast; she was fuming mad.

Lizetta was surprisingly chill, her phone's screen going dark, "Trending, huh? Didn't you notice my followers jumped by over 200 thousand this morning?"

"But they're all haters, haters!"

Yolanda's eyes were red with anger. Lizetta had been building up this alias for five or six years. Mainly focusing on composing and choreography, she consistently churned out at least five original pieces a year, all top-notch.

Not every single one was a smash hit, but she always had a presence on the annual hot. music charts. Her choreography was killer, with some of the hottest pop idols of the past couple of years dancing her moves.

Last year, her series of ancient-style dances caught the eye of Skyward Studios and were

featured in the hottest ancient-themed mobile game "Immortal Heroes", sending her alias soaring in fame once again.

She had earned those 5 million followers with pure talent, and that was no small feat!

Chapter 110

Was this what they called no talent? Just average?

Evelina wasn't fool; she insisted on Lizetta's tunes even if it cost her 200 grand per play.

Yolanda was fuming, pounding the bed, "The haters don't even bother to get to know you before they start throwing shade! Ugh! I feel like grabbing a kitchen knife and going after that Bitch Evelina!"

Lizetta tried to calm her down, “Chill, I’m not even sweating it.”

Was anyone made of stone here? Could one really brush off getting dragged by so many people?

Grabbing her phone, Yolanda said, “I gotta check if that trending topic was paid for, see if we can get it pulled down.”

Yolanda had got some clout, studying at the film academy and always on movie sets. She got the lowdown pretty quick, hung up, and got even more pissed.

Lizetta had a hunch, “Remington’s doing?”

Yolanda’s eyes were blazing, “The Dashiell Group ordered the hit. They want it up for two days, no takedowns allowed.”

Lizetta saw this coming. How else would an arranger like her hit the trending topics and catch so much flak without someone pulling strings?

“Liz, stop smiling. If you wanna cry, just cry it out. You holding it in is freaking me out,” Yolanda gave her a hug.

Lizetta was not made of steel. These past four years with Remington sitting on his hands, she’d weathered her share of high society’s whispers and even battled mild depression a couple years back, finally clawing her way out of it.

“I’m fine. I’ve had my fair share of face-to-face slander, so why should online hate faze me? Besides, not everyone gets to be infamous, right?”

“But you cared so much about this account; you always kept it clean, never cashing in on it, treating it like a haven for your music world. And now Evelina’s trashed it!” NôvelDrama.Org © 2024.

Lizetta's eyes flickered, her expression distant for a moment before she cracked a slight smile, "Yolanda, do you know how I came up with the name 'Adagio'?"

Yolanda shook her head; Lizetta never told her.

Lizetta curled her lips slightly, "That stormy night fourteen years ago, when Remington brought me into the Dashiell family, the lyric playing on the phonograph had 'Adagio' in the lines."

So, the sanctuary you're guarding isn't your dream of music and dance, but Remington? Yolanda's voice trembled.

Lizetta's eyes curved with a smile, a mix of relief and desolation.

"Yeah, see, now he's personally shattered it. Full circle, it's fate. It's all good."

She was smiling, but Yolanda felt she was breaking inside. Who knew if Remington would regret it one day.

Just as Yolanda was pondering this, Lizetta's phone rang. It was Cedric. Lizetta frowned, hesitated, but answered anyway. After all, Cedric never wronged her.

"Cedric?"

But it was a familiar, deep, magnetic male voice that came through, "Unblock me! And come to the office."

Lizetta frowned, "Remington, I'm not your employee now, nor your sister anymore. What right do you have to order me around?"

"As

your husband, Mrs. Dashiell!”

A wave of emotion hit Lizetta, her grip tightening on the phone. All those days she waited for him, he never acknowledged her status. Now that she was letting go, he was throwing “Mrs. Dashiell” around like it was some kind of joke.

“A husband doesn’t act like you do! And I don’t want to be your Mrs. Dashiell anymore,” her voice steadied, and she hung up.

In the Starlight Group President’s office.

Remington watched the call end, a flicker of frustration crossing his brows.

Cedric stood at the desk, hardly daring to breathe. He was fixated on his phone, noticing the expression worsen when he saw Lizetta hadn’t blocked him, and now the boss’s pride was wounded.

“Worried about your phone?” Remington’s voice was cool.

Cedric instinctively responded, “New phone. I mean, I’m worried that being upset is not good for your health.”

Remington’s features chilled further, Cedric clammed up, sensing he’d said the wrong thing again.

But as he was sweating bullets, Remington was back to normal, tossing the phone back to him, along with a stack of papers from the desk.

“Get out.”

That stack was information on the three most famous dance troupes in Zion City, all

prepped for Mrs, Dashiell, connections already made. Just picked one, and the meet the troupe leader directly. Such a shame to pack it away.

Cedric hesitated, and then offered, "Boss, should I take these papers to Mrs. Dashwelth