

Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel

Chapter 121

Read Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 121 -

Echoes Of Forgotten Dreams - 121

Chapter 121

55 vouchers

The next morning, Stella came downstairs and bumped into Celia, who had just finished her morning run.

“Morning,” Celia said with a smile, wiping sweat off with her towel. The black prayer beads on her wrist swung lightly, almost identical to Sebastian’s, except hers were clearly made for women, with smaller beads.

Stella glanced away and nodded, not really caring. She said, “Morning.”

“I’ve never seen you on the island before,” Celia said with a smile, not bothered by Stella’s cold attitude. “After all, not just anyone can get up here.”

“That’s fine. We’ll be seeing a lot of each other from now on,” Stella replied, brushing past Celia without a second glance, not caring how Celia reacted.

Celia’s smile faltered as she watched Stella’s back disappear, falling silent.

When Stella walked into the dining room, Sebastian happened to look up. Their eyes met, but before he could say a word, Stella had already looked away and made her way to the table, not giving him a chance.

Sebastian fell silent.

Her face was cold and distant.

“Morning, Stella. What breakfast? Coffee or milk?” Allan called out, as chatty as ever. He was just about to remind her to sit next to Sebastian, but Stella pulled out the chair beside him and sat down.

The temperature in the room instantly dropped to freezing.

Allan was left speechless.

He could feel the icy aura coming off Sebastian without even looking, enough to make his blood run cold.

Stella said flatly, "Coffee, thanks."

Before Allan could even react, Sebastian slid a cup of black coffee over to her. "Here," he said, his eyes dark and steady on her.

Stella didn't even look at the cup or at Sebastian. She got up, went to the kitchen, poured herself a fresh cup, and on her way back, pushed Sebastian's coffee over to Allan.

Sebastian fell silent.

Allan was left speechless.

Allan snuck a glance at Sebastian from the corner of his eye. He figured no one had ever dared treat Sebastian like this before. Seriously, this was a once-in-a-blue-moon moment. Damn, this was freaking priceless.

16:35 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 121

:

He instinctively reached for the coffee, but his hand froze mid-air.

He could feel the chill crawling up from his feet, almost reaching the top of his head.

Allan quickly faked a move, dodging the coffee just in time.

W5.

E55

65 vouchers

Sebastian's mood darkened, and when he spoke, his voice was already icy. He said, "Don't get upset."

“Tell me, which eye of yours saw me angry?” Stella replied and let out a cold laugh, her tone light and indifferent, not even bothering to look at him.

Sebastian fell silent.

Allan was left speechless.

Allan was itching to answer for Sebastian; hell yeah, both eyes saw it.

Stella picked up her coffee cup, about to take a sip.

“Stella, your hand,” Allan blurted out, his face full of shock. Meanwhile, Sebastian’s chill grew even colder, because both of them could clearly see a dark bruise circling her fair wrist.

“It’s nothing,” Stella said, giving it a quick, indifferent glance. Her skin bruised easily anyway, and yesterday, when Sebastian lost control for a moment, he didn’t realize his own strength, so this was the result.

Sebastian reached out, but Stella saw it coming and dodged him. She asked, “Mr. Gray, planning to grab me again?”

Sebastian hesitated and replied, “I just...” Her words stung him like a bee.

Rubbing his sleepy little eyes, Lucas wandered in from outside. His voice was soft and sweet as he headed straight for Stella, his cherubic face radiating pure trust.

He clambered slowly onto the chair and cuddled right up to Stella.

He was completely oblivious to the tense atmosphere in the dining room.

“John,” Sebastian said, his voice low and tinged with self-reproach. “Go get some ointment for the bruise.”

John quickly brought the ointment over.

Lucas tilted his head, finally noticing the bruise on Stella’s wrist. His eyes welled up with tears. He reached out his tiny hands, carefully holding her wrist and gently blowing on it, trying to make it all better, just like a little

kid would.

Celia walked in right at that moment.

“Are you hurt, Ms. Carter?” she asked, glancing at Stella’s wrist with a light laugh. “Young people get banged up all the time.” She moved to sit beside Sebastian, but before she could, Sebastian yanked the chair away.

A sharp, grating noise tore through the dining room.

16:35 Sat, Jan 24

444

45

Chapter 121

E 55 vouchers

Celia’s smile faded a bit. She said, “Mr. Gray...” She watched as Sebastian maneuvered his wheelchair right past her, stopping beside Stella, and gently took her by the wrist.

He’d yanked the chair away like a boss, but when he held Stella’s wrist, it was as if he was afraid she might break.

“Don’t move,” Sebastian said, fixing her with a hawk-like stare, making it clear he wouldn’t take no for an

answer.

Stella fell silent.

‘Watch me move,’ she thought, defiant.

“Celia, sit here,” Allan said, playing peacemaker as he pulled the chair back.

Celia gave a faint smile, sat down, and was just about to pick up her coffee cup.

“That one’s mine,” Sebastian said, his voice cold and eyes never leaving Stella’s wrist. He gently rubbed the ointment in with his long fingers, making sure to cover the whole bruise.

He took his time, careful not to miss a single spot.

Celia’s face fell; even she couldn’t keep smiling at this point.

Stella noticed that Celia's wrist was bare; the black prayer beads, the ones just like Sebastian's, were missing.

"Ow," Stella said, shooting Sebastian a glare, clearly annoyed. "Can you be a little gentler?"

Lucas joined in, waving his tiny fists in protest.

Sebastian fell silent.

The servant brought over a fresh cup of coffee for Celia, plus breakfast, and all options filled the table. Celia scanned the spread, then frowned. She said, "Why are there carrots? Mr. Gray never touches those."

Allan was left speechless.

He just gave Sebastian a look, but didn't say a word.

Celia was just about to tell the servant to take the carrots away, but Stella reached out, grabbed a fork, and dropped a huge piece of carrot right onto Sebastian's plate.

Celia was speechless.

Allan ducked his head even lower, trying to disappear.

"Eat it," Stella said coldly, locking eyes with Sebastian.

Jake scratched his head in the corner, feeling a bit lost. 'Is it just me, or is the vibe in here kinda weird?' he thought.

16:35 Sat, Jan 24 d

Chapter 121

55 vouchers

Sebastian stayed silent, his flawless face giving nothing away. The bitter scent of his aftershave lingered in the air as he paused, glanced at Stella, then parted his lips just a little, clearly signaling her to feed him.

'Damn!' Allan thought, nearly falling out of his chair.

He was so shocked, Allan almost wanted to get down on his knees for Sebastian. ‘Seriously, if this isn’t the legendary late-in-life passion that burns like wildfire. Then what is?’ he thought, completely floored by the scene.

Stella fell silent.

‘Is this really necessary?’ Stella thought, feeling a bit ridiculous.

Sebastian kept his eyes fixed on her. After a moment, Stella picked up the carrot with her fork and fed it to him, watching as he chewed slowly and swallowed.

He kept a straight face the whole time.

Lucas just stared, his big, round eyes glued to Sebastian’s mouth. After last time, he wasn’t about to miss a thing.

Lucas blinked in surprise. ‘Did Uncle Sebastian really eat it this time?’ he thought, eyes wide with disbelief. Sebastian gave Lucas a cold glance, then turned to Celia. He said, “I’ll eat it.”

Celia instinctively tightened her grip on her fork.

田

AD

Comment

Send gift

No Ads

16:35 Sat, Jan 24 d.

Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 122

Read Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 122 –

Echoes Of Forgotten Dreams – 122

Chapter 122

Chapter 122

55 vouchers

“Guess people’s tastes really do change,” Celia said, acting as if nothing had happened. She smiled, grabbed two shrimp, and started on her breakfast.

After all that fuss, Stella actually felt a little better.

“I don’t see Snowball anywhere,” Stella said, glancing at the empty tree. Snowball loved the hustle and bustle, and on most mornings, he’d be coiled up in the branches, flicking his tail.

Lucas had been searching everywhere, even crawling under the dining table.

Celia looked up at her, saying, “Pythons carry tons of parasites and all kinds of nasty germs. Plus, people get hurt by them all the time. I never agreed to Lucas keeping that snake in the first place!”

“So?” Stella asked and raised an eyebrow, her impatience showing.

Allan was left speechless.

He thought, ‘Is breakfast always this heated?’

‘Ugh, my stomach hurts.’

“I told the servants to put him outside,” Celia said. Before she finished, Stella was already up, flinging open the door to the courtyard. Sure enough, there was Snowball, hanging upside down from a tree, looking like he was about to cry his eyes out.

“Snowball,” Stella called.

Hearing Stella’s voice, Snowball, who’d been all curled up and miserable, instantly perked up. With a swoosh, he slid down from the tree and rushed straight toward her.

Snowball felt so sad being shut out. He needed cuddles.

Stella didn't know what to say.

She let Snowball bury his big white head in her shoulder, his little red eyes pretending to be all watery, which was certainly not true cause snakes didn't have tear ducts. He kept flicking his tail back and forth, acting all spoiled and needy.

Lucas huffed. He hadn't thrown a fit in ages, but now his whole face screamed not happy seeing his friend being bullied. He stared at Celia, lips pressed together, looking like he was about to blow his top.

"Mr. Gray, I'm just doing what's best for Lucas," Celia replied calmly, looking straight at Sebastian, clearly convinced she was in the right.

"Celia," Sebastian said, his gaze cold and distant, like there was a storm swirling in those eyes, impossible to see the bottom. "Ever since Lucas found Snowball at age three, Snowball's been family on this island."

Celia's breath hitched, and she stayed silent.

16:35 Sat, Jan 24 d.

Chapter 122

:

55 vouchers

She instinctively glanced at Stella, and there was Snowball, thicker than her own waist, acting like a sulky kid weighing a couple of hundred pounds, glued to Stella, nuzzling and wriggling all over her. He didn't look like a snake, more like a big puppy.

Celia couldn't believe it.

She'd been to the island so many times, and Snowball had never paid her much attention.

'Seriously, when has he ever acted like this around me?' Celia thought, still in shock.

"Got it, Mr. Gray," Celia said. She could sense something had quietly shifted in the air, so after a couple of seconds of silence, she smoothly switched topics. "Mr. Gray, have you heard of Dr. Conrad?"

As soon as she brought it up, everyone turned to look at her. That little bit of attention helped her regain some confidence, though she totally missed the subtle glances the others exchanged.

“I’m interning at Kinetic University Tech Research Institute right now, and there’s a good chance I’ll get to join Dr. Conrad’s team. He’s the leading expert in chip research in Clusia; you’ve probably heard of him,” Celia said, her smile perfectly poised.

She couldn’t hide her pride about landing the internship at Kinetic University Tech Research Institute.

“Dr. Conrad is giving a lecture today at Edenbury Academy. If you’re interested, Mr. Gray, I can introduce you. I’m sure it would be a huge help for Gray Group,” Celia said, sounding totally sure of herself.

She looked straight at Sebastian, brimming with confidence.

After all, from what Celia knew, Conrad was currently searching for a reliable partner to help launch his team’s new smart robot.

Allan was left speechless.

They looked like they wanted to say something, but held back.

The next second, Sebastian said, his voice cold as ice, “I’m not the CEO of Gray Group anymore.”

“What did you just say?” Celia asked. Her smile froze, like she couldn’t believe her ears.

‘Did I really just hear something that crazy?’ she thought.

Celia was totally confused. She asked, “How could Mr. Gray?”

This time, Sebastian didn’t respond. He just turned his gaze back to Stella, noticing she seemed a lot more cheerful than before, his eyes dark and unreadable. He asked, “Did you try on the uniform?”

“No,” Stella replied. The only thing she did after heading upstairs yesterday was block Sebastian on WhatsApp.

“After breakfast, go upstairs and change. I’m taking you to Edenbury Academy to register today,” Sebastian said, his tone calm and unhurried. But to Celia, there was a hint of warmth in his voice.

Stella glanced at him, muttered “Okay,” and sat back down to cat.

16:35 Sat, Jan 24 ..

Chapter 122

Snowball glanced at Celia, gave his tail a dramatic wiggle, and zipped out of the dining room.

Snowball thought, ‘I’ll never forgive you. Hmph.

155 vouchers

After breakfast, Stella went upstairs to get changed. Celia walked over to Sebastian, saying, “She’s still a student? Carter? I don’t remember the Gray family having any relatives with that name.”

“Celia, my patience has its limits,” Sebastian said coldly, his eyes completely indifferent.

Celia was speechless.

Her eyes were rimmed with red. She looked so fragile in her white dress, like someone a man just wanted to protect. She said, “But you promised me.”

Celia turned her face away, brushing away tears before they could fall.

“Let’s not get into anything else right now. At least give me a ride to Edenbury Academy later, okay, Mr. Gray?” Celia said. She didn’t want to be late for Conrad’s lecture; this was her shot to make a good impression on him.

After all, Conrad was the kind of legend even 709 kept trying to poach over and over.

If she could get into his team, she’d have it made.

“Okay,” Sebastian replied, turning his gaze out the window. Celia gave him a quick look, then hurried upstairs to get changed.

Allan stood off to the side, saying. "Seems like the Gray family's quiet deal with Dr. Conrad's team is working out." But his eyes stayed cold; there was no real amusement there.

"You think what Stella hinted at last time was for real?" Allan asked. With all the hype around Conrad right now, just one chip and the whole country's talking; if something went south, it would be a total joke.

Sebastian rolled the black prayer beads around his wrist, sitting there shrouded in shadows; no one could guess what was going on in his head.

Suddenly, the sound of footsteps echoed from the staircase.

Sebastian and Allan both looked up at the same time.

When they saw who it was, Allan whistled under his breath. Sebastian, who'd been rolling his prayer beads between his fingers, froze mid-motion, his eyes locked on Stella as she made her way down the stairs in her new Edenbury Academy uniform.

Stella wore the crisp two-piece uniform, white shirt with tie, navy blazer, and knee-length skirt. Her face was bare and porcelain-smooth, long hair spilling down her sunlit back. She moved with lazy ease, deep amber eyes indifferent to everything.

She strolled down the stairs, lifting a hand to lazily gather her hair into a loose ponytail with a white silk ribbon, not caring if it looked perfect.

16:35 Sat, Jan 24 ...

Chapter 122

Everything about her was relaxed and effortless.

When she reached the last step, Stella came to a stop right in front of Sebastian.

田

Comment

Send gift

49

E55 vouchers

Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel

Chapter 123

Read Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 123 -

Echoes Of Forgotten Dreams - 123

Chapter 123

& D

55 vouchers

Lucas was right by her side, unable to take his eyes off Stella. His eyes sparkled like tiny stars, and his cheeks were rosy, making him look absolutely adorable.

Lucas thought, 'So pretty. Stella is so pretty!'

Sebastian couldn't take his eyes off Stella's face, swallowing hard. He said, "That looks amazing on you."

"It looks way too good," Allan said. He was practically orbiting Stella, his eyes shining. "If you show up at school like this, you'll get so many love letters your hands will be sore."

Lucas and Sebastian were both speechless.

Their frosty faces turned to glare at Allan, but the culprit was still totally clueless.

Allan drawled, "Stella, come on, call me?"

Stella looked up, her delicate face deadpan. She said, "Get lost."

Allan just replied, "You got it."

Lucas was giggling nonstop, his laughter all babyish and sweet.

Stella slung her black backpack over one shoulder and nudged her shoe with a lazy kick.

She hadn't even noticed her shoelace had come loose. She was hesitating, thinking she might just leave it like that, when Sebastian, sitting in his wheelchair, suddenly bent down, startling Allan.

Stella was stunned. She instinctively wanted to step back.

"Don't move," Sebastian said, his voice low and steady as he held her pale ankle.

Stella stood still.

With quick, practiced movements, Sebastian's long fingers tied the loose white shoelace into a perfect bow.

Celia came downstairs and caught sight of the scene.

Her grip on her bag tightened.

"All done," Sebastian said, looking up at Stella, his gaze intense and his voice low.

"Oh," Stella replied, a little awkwardly.

Her ankle still felt numb. Playing it cool, she looked away but ended up meeting Celia's eyes. Now in a sharp suit, Celia smiled and said, "Ms. Carter, still a student? Students should focus on their studies. Wearing makeup isn't ideal."

Stella kept silent.

16:35 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 123

The air was thick with tension.

55 vouchers

Sebastian shot Celia a frosty glare, making her smile falter. Just as she was about to speak, Stella, her face cold and expressionless, casually tossed her backpack to Allan and walked over to Celia.

Celia fell silent.

Stella gave off a cold vibe, and Celia could feel it even from across the room.

Stone-faced, Stella casually grabbed a tissue from the table, wiped her face right in front of Celia, then raised it for her to see.

Celia instinctively took a step back.

“Seriously, which eye of yours thinks I’m wearing makeup?” Stella said, turning the tissue around to show it was perfectly clean.

Celia fell silent.

Celia awkwardly bit her lip, looking at Stella’s ridiculously smooth skin and rosy lips. She was totally at a loss

for words.

She turned to Sebastian and said, “Mr. Gray, I’m about to be late.”

Stella, totally unfazed, tossed the tissue into the trash. She said, “Why don’t you head out first, Ms. York?”

Celia fell completely silent.

A few minutes later, two cars stood at the villa entrance, their sleek black bodies gleaming coldly in the sun. Still silent, Celia watched Sebastian enter the Maybach and, without thinking, began to follow.

But before she could even touch the door, Jake stepped in front of her.

“Ms. York, Mr. Gray is a bit of a clean freak. Please take the car behind,” Jake said.

Celia watched as Stella slipped into the car right after Sebastian, then shot Jake a look, her eyes clearly asking him about the clean stuff.

Jake was speechless.

‘Sure, I saw it, too,’ Jake thought, ‘but come on, Ms. Carter is on a whole other level.’

Obviously, he couldn’t just blurt that out in front of Celia, so he kept his eyes glued to the sky, the ground, anywhere but her.

“Ms. York, this way, please,” Jake said, gesturing toward the car,

As the black Maybach with Sebastian inside pulled away, Celia stomped her foot and climbed into the car

behind.

On the road, without Lucas, the car felt strangely empty. Stella propped her chin on one hand, gazing out the

16:35 Sat, Jan 24 ...

Chapter 123

Я

5👉 55 vouchers

window. Her hair was loosely tied with a white ribbon, looking a little messy; she was effortlessly gorgeous in that laid-back way.

The air conditioning was blasting inside the car.

Sebastian was sharply dressed today in a tailored black suit, flawless and crisp. His shirt was buttoned all the way up, his Adam's apple just visible. With cool eyes and controlled coldness, he seemed untouchable yet undeniably magnetic.

"Are you planning to live on campus?" Sebastian suddenly asked.

Edenbury Academy had dorms.

Stella was lost in thought and didn't answer. Sebastian turned to look at her, his gaze lingering on her profile, intense and unreadable. His fingers unconsciously started to fiddle with his prayer beads.

The sound of prayer beads echoed clearly in the quiet car.

The clacking snapped Stella out of her thoughts. Without thinking, she slapped her hand over Sebastian's and said, "Too loud."

She kept thinking about how Allan had mysteriously pulled her aside before they left, promising there'd be a surprise waiting for her today.

The sound of the prayer beads cut off instantly.

Sebastian's eyes darkened. He lowered his head as if nonchalant, yet his gaze lingered on her pale hand against the black prayer beads. That touch seemed to stir something deep within him.

Up front, John, the driver, fell silent.

He raised his hand, and the privacy partition slid up automatically.

Almost as soon as the partition went up, Sebastian snatched his hand free, grabbed Stella's wrist, and pulled her right up to him, still careful not to use too much force.

He moved so fast that Stella's loose hair whipped through the air in a messy arc.

"Don't accept any love letters," Sebastian said, his voice deep and husky. His gaze was heavy and shadowed, pressing down on Stella until the air felt thick and the space seemed to close in around her.

Stella met his eyes with a blank look. She asked, "Love letters? What are you talking about?" She had already forgotten Allan's teasing earlier.

Sebastian fell silent.

He released her wrist with deliberate care, then let his hand drift to her hair, brushing it softly. He replied, "It's nothing."

His cologne, with that mature note, invaded Stella's senses. "What did you ask me earlier?" she said, reaching up to push his hand away from her hair, only to bump into his black prayer beads. "Not the love letter thing."

16:36 Sat, Jan 24 d

Chapter 123

Sebastian sounded a bit helpless. He said, "I asked if you were planning to live on campus."

Stella asked, "Live on campus?"

49

55 vouchers

Maybe it was the distant, unreadable tone in her voice, but after Sebastian gave a quiet mm, his fingers in her hair grew a bit restless, even though his face didn't show a thing.

"Do you want me to live on campus?" Stella replied, her gaze relaxed and casual.

Sebastian's voice suddenly went deep and husky. "No."

Stella just made a non-committal sound, not committing either way. She replied, "Look, you messed up my hair."

Sebastian fell silent.

He looked at Stella's hair, now a mess thanks to him, and gave a muffled sound. But Stella just turned back to the window and said, "Fix it for me."

She told him what to do, like it was the most normal thing ever, not even pausing to think if it was weird.

Sebastian fell silent.

Staring at Stella's silky hair, Sebastian was, for the first time in his life, completely stumped.

'Seriously, how was I supposed to brush a girl's hair?' he thought, feeling totally out of depth.

At Edenbury Academy, when Celia stepped out of the car, the principal, Zack Wilde, the board, and all the big shots were lined up at the entrance. She thought that they must be waiting for Conrad, but then someone suddenly called out, "Mr. Gray."

'Wait, they're here for Sebastian?' Celia thought.

Celia was stunned.

Up front, the Maybach had already stopped, but the doors stayed shut; no one got out.

AD

Comment

Send gift

No Ads

Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel

Chapter 124

Read Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 124 -

Echoes Of Forgotten Dreams - 124

Chapter 124

:

49

55 vouchers

Zack asked, “Mr. Gray?” Zack, trailed by a crowd, peered curiously at the car when Sebastian didn’t step out. But with those tinted bulletproof windows, there was no way to see inside.

Celia was starting to get impatient. She was about to reach for the car door when Jake held out his hand to stop her.

Jake flashed a smile and said, “Ms. York, that’s not really appropriate.”

“Mr. Gray still hasn’t come out. Is something up?” Celia asked, fiddled with her fingers, trying to sound calm, though inside she was itching to get to Conrad’s lecture. She forced herself to wait.

Jake paused, thinking it over. He replied, “Maybe?”

Celia fell silent.

Another half minute passed, and Zack couldn’t take it anymore. He shot Jake a pitiful look.

Jake was speechless.

'This old geezer is so ugly,' Jake thought.

After a moment's hesitation, Jake finally raised his hand and knocked on the window.

With several knocks, the next second, the window rolled down, and everyone could finally see inside.

And when the scene inside came into view, everyone was stunned.

Everyone remembered Sebastian as the cold, unpredictable, and downright scary guy. But right now, he was sitting there, expressionless, clumsily fixing the girl's hair.

And honestly, he was pretty clumsy at it.

Sebastian shot a cold look at the people outside and said, "Just wait."

The window rolled up again.

Everyone went dead silent, not daring to make a sound.

Only Jake looked totally unfazed, like he'd seen this kind of thing a hundred times before.

Celia's face fell. She thought, 'So Mr. Gray made all these people wait outside just because he's busy doing that Stella girl's hair? That's it? This is just absurd.'

After a long, heavy silence, the door opened. The first thing to hit the ground was a pair of white sneakers. As Stella stepped out, everyone couldn't help but sneak a look at her hair, their faces full of complicated

emotions.

'Did Sebastian really butcher my hair like this?' Stella thought, totally stunned.

16:38 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 124

๙๙

49

55 vouchers

She turned her head, catching her reflection in the car window. It wasn't exactly ugly, just kind of loose and sloppy, obviously the kind of hairdo from someone who barely knew what they were doing.

On the other side, Sebastian got out, sitting in his black wheelchair, giving off a cold vibe as John pushed him. along.

"Mr. Gray, you're here," Zack said. He rushed over, a bunch of school bigwigs trailing behind. Jake stepped up, making sure to keep some space between them.

"Stella," Sebastian called, his eyes skipping right past Zack and locking onto Stella.

Stella strolled over with one hand in her pocket, moving with a laid-back swagger.

"Senior year. You handle the class," Sebastian said, his voice icy as he turned to Zack. To everyone else, it sounded more like an order than a request.

"Understood," Zack replied and nodded quickly. Then, as if remembering something, he asked, "Do you need a dorm room?"

At that, Sebastian glanced over at Stella.

"No," Stella said, her tone frosty.

Her voice was cold and distant.

But that was enough to put Sebastian at ease.

"Mr. Gray, Dr. Conrad, and his team are lecturing in the auditorium now. Would you like to attend?" Zack said. He didn't even get to finish before Sebastian shot him a cold, piercing look, and he quickly swallowed the rest of his words.

Celia, reduced to a total background character, kept glancing at her watch, growing more anxious by the second.

Inside, she was getting desperate.

Suddenly, Stella lazily raised her hand and poked Sebastian. She said, "Let's go check it out."

Everyone was speechless.

“To the auditorium,” Sebastian said, barely moving his lips as the icy vibe around him faded.

Zack was speechless.

Inside the auditorium, every seat was taken.

Conrad stood at the front, writing out a complicated math problem on the board. The long formulas and numbers looked like a puzzle, and the students below were completely silent, hanging on his every move.

Conrad was in his forties, dressed in a deep brown suit. His hair was slicked back, and he wore gold-rimmed glasses, giving him an air of sophistication and knowledge.

16:38 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 124

The auditorium doors swung open from the back.

42

55 vouchers

“I’m Conrad, but most people just call me Dr. Conrad,” Conrad said with a smile, turning to face the audience. “Today, I’m honored to bring my team here to Edenbury Academy to share our work with you.”

As soon as he finished, the applause thundered through the auditorium. The students stared up at him, their eyes full of admiration.

In the corner, Stella lounged next to Sebastian, her gaze drifting past Conrad to the chalkboard behind him. She stared at the math problem, her face completely expressionless.

“As you know, my team has made key breakthroughs in domestic chip research, and will soon launch our first home smart robot, v1.0,” Conrad said, beginning to present his team’s work, but below, an elderly man in a traditional suit sneered.

Standing in the same corner, Celia watched Conrad and his team on stage, her eyes wide with awe.

He said, “This problem behind me has challenged top universities for years. Only my team solved it. If anyone here can solve it before the semester ends, I guarantee admission to those top universities and a spot on my team.”

As soon as Conrad said that, the crowd went wild.

It was like the whole auditorium blew up, everyone buzzing with excitement.

Celia was so hyped she instinctively stepped forward, her eyes practically sparkling with excitement.

Students rushed up to the stage one after another, but every single one left with their heads hanging low.

It was just way too hard.

Some people barely managed to write a single line before getting stuck, then just walked off looking totally defeated.

“Anyone else?” Conrad called out.

“Me,” Celia said. She strode confidently toward the stage, her eyes shining with determination.

John frowned and glanced at Sebastian. He said, “Mr. Gray, this problem?”

Sebastian raised his hand, signaling him to be quiet.

But when Sebastian looked up at the math problem on stage, his eyes went ice-cold, a wave of hostility practically crackling in the air. Stella, standing right next to him, caught it immediately, feeling thoughtful.

“Come on up,” Conrad said, his eyes lighting up as soon as he spotted Celia. He grinned at the mic and said, “You don’t look like a student, do you?” Still, he handed her the chalk.

“No, but I really admire you, Dr. Conrad,” Celia replied.

In the corner, Stella was speechless.

16:38 Sat, Jan 24 d

Chapter 124

:

49

55 vouchers

Celia took the stage with confidence and swiftly wrote across the chalkboard. As the board flipped and turned, all three panels were soon filled. Conrad, initially relaxed, went from visibly surprised to watching intently, while his team grew serious.

With her back to the crowd, Celia smiled confidently, savoring the gasps behind her. After all, she was an intern at Kinetic University Tech Research Institute, playing in a whole different league than these students.

Celia wrote down the final answer and set the chalk down.

She turned around, and the whole auditorium exploded with applause. Down in the audience, that old guy in the suit just shook his head as he took off his glasses.

‘Too bad,’ he thought.

Conrad picked up the mic, asking, “Thank you, Miss. What’s your name?”

“Celia York,” Celia replied.

“Thank you, Ms. York. You really went all out, but the answer to this problem,” Conrad said.

“It’s wrong,” someone said. Suddenly, a cold female voice rang out in the auditorium.

B

AD

Comment

Send gift

No Ads

Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel

Chapter 125

Read Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 125 –

Echoes Of Forgotten Dreams – 125

Chapter 125

Everyone turned toward the voice.

49

E55 vouchers

A girl in an Edenbury Academy uniform descended the auditorium steps with ease. Delicate-featured and fine-skinned, she carried a defiant, unapproachable air, clearly not one to cross. Even under the gaze of the entire school, she showed no trace of fear.

Celia's smile froze on her lips.

Stella walked right up to the stage. Conrad blinked in surprise, then, ever the gentleman, said, "Unfortunately, this student is correct. The answer to this question is indeed wrong."

"It's not just the answer," Stella said, her eyes flicking up to meet Conrad's with a calm, almost indifferent look. She radiated such a strong sense of dominance that it felt like she was the one running the show.

Conrad fell silent. 'She's got some nerve,' Conrad thought.

In the audience, Zack forced a smile. He asked, "Mr. Gray, is this really okay?" 'If I remember right, both those girls came with him. And Conrad isn't just anyone. Is this really going to be alright?' he thought.

Sebastian sat in his wheelchair, half-shrouded in shadow, his gaze fixed on the problem written on the movable blackboard. A chilling, almost bloodthirsty aura seemed to spread from him, cold and dangerous.

That cold, intimidating presence made Zack instinctively fall silent.

On stage, Stella reached out to Celia. Before Celia could even react, Stella had already snatched the chalk from her hand. Then, with a sharp, screeching sound, Stella dragged the chalk across the blackboard.

The harsh noise blared through the microphone in Conrad's hand, echoing through the entire auditorium.

It even jolted awake the crew-cut guy in the very back row, who had been napping with his school uniform draped over his head.

He scowled, looking seriously pissed.

He looked up, and the first thing he saw was Stella up on stage.

She was beautiful, fresh-faced, and cold as ice.

The guy froze for a second.

Stella, stone-faced, slashed a massive X over Celia's calculations. She said, "From this step on, everything after this is wrong."

And that was only the second step in Celia's solution.

In other words, all that self-assured work she'd done was for nothing.

Celia was speechless.

16:38 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 125

Her expression was so mortified that words couldn't even describe it.

1255 vouchers

Meanwhile, Levi, sitting in the front row, suddenly perked up. His hand, which had been about to take off his reading glasses, froze mid-air as he stared at Stella.

"So, you think you can do it?" Celia finally managed to speak, her voice cool and detached. She said, "Well then, I'm really looking forward to your little show."

She put extra emphasis on the word show, making it clear she thought Stella was just performing.

The tension in the air was thick enough to cut with a knife.

Stella gave Celia a nonchalant look, but before she could say anything, an eager voice called out from the audience. "Let me wipe it for you," Levi said, rushing up to the stage, grabbing the eraser, and wiping the board like it was his job.

Conrad and his team, knowing exactly who Levi was, just stared, speechless.

They looked like they wanted to say something, but held back.

Soon, the blackboard was spotless. "Alright, miss, show us what you've got," Levi said, his eyes shining with

excitement.

"What, scared now?" Celia said.

The next moment, Stella turned her back to the thousands of students, picked up the chalk with unhurried confidence, and started writing. Even from afar, her handwriting was free-spirited and striking, so gorgeous it burned itself into everyone's memory.

The whole auditorium fell silent.

Celia stood with arms crossed, her face showing smug disdain. At first, she thought Stella was just another romance-novel dreamer showing off, but as Stella kept writing, that smugness froze in place.

Because Stella was using a method that was way simpler and clearer, basically slapping Celia in the face with

the truth.

Sebastian watched Stella up on stage, her back to him; she looked absolutely stunning. Those legs under her school skirt were long, straight, and fine as ivory, and the ponytail he'd tied for her was a little messy, falling down her back in loose waves.

With a sudden smirk, Sebastian asked, "Did you all catch that?"

Everyone was puzzled.

'Catch what?' everyone wondered.

Sebastian lifted his hand, the black prayer beads on his wrist catching the light as he pointed at Stella. He said, "I tied her hair for her."

Everyone was left silent.

16:38 Sat, Jan 24 d.

Chapter 125

They thought, 'Why does he sound like a dad showing off his own kid? No words!

a

40

50 vouchers

After a moment, Stella put the half-used chalk back in its tray. Levi's eyes were practically burning with excitement as he stared at her. He asked, "Are you interested in?"

"Not interested," Stella replied carelessly, cutting him off before he could finish.

Levi was speechless.

"Hey, at least let me finish telling you the terms," he burst out, eyes wide. He thought, 'Does she even realize what she's passing up?'

Stella looked up at him, cool as ever. She replied, "Nope, not gonna listen."

Levi huffed, his eyes wide in disbelief.

The Conrad team, who'd strutted in with all that arrogance, now looked completely shocked. They rushed up to the stage to whisper with Conrad, while the students below started whispering and gossiping. The whole auditorium erupted in chatter.

Celia shot Stella a glare, asking, "Did you do that on purpose?"

Stella was honestly at a loss for words. She thought, 'Math doesn't care about man's feelings; it's either right or wrong. Someone points out the mistake, and suddenly it's a personal attack? Does she really think the world revolves around her?'

Stella said flatly, “If you’ve got issues, maybe see a doctor.” She tapped her temple for emphasis.

Celia was speechless.

After a while, Conrad gave his feedback. He said, “Edenbury Academy truly has its geniuses. Who would have guessed a student here would unlock a problem that stumped three top universities for years?” He gazed at Stella with clear admiration.

With that, Stella instantly became the center of attention. Everyone started craning their necks and whispering, trying to figure out which class she was from.

“I’m keeping my promise. Not only will you get a guaranteed spot at any of the top three schools, but I’d be honored to invite you to join our team,” Conrad said.

Conrad smiled kindly and handed the mic to Stella, his gaze full of admiration.

Everyone stared at Stella, faces full of envy and jealousy. After all, this was Conrad.

Getting into his team was basically a one-way ticket to the top.

Stella glanced at the mic Conrad was offering, took it with a knowing look, and said, “Oh, I refuse.”

Her voice was calm, like she was just talking about the nice weather today.

The auditorium went dead silent for a split second.

16:38 Sat, Jan 24 ...

Chapter 125

9)

55 vouchers

Conrad’s polite smile froze, like he couldn’t believe what he’d just heard. But Levi, the old man in the traditional suit, suddenly burst out laughing, his laughter echoing through the silent auditorium.

Conrad stammered, “You? What did you just say?”

Stella shot him a sideways glance and said, “I refuse.”

Someone in the crowd yelled, “Damn, that’s badass,” and the whole place went wild.

Whistles and screams echoed nonstop.

The crew-cut guy, feet propped up on the seat in front, a fresh scar at the corner of his eye, his whole vibe rough and rebellious; right now, he just smirked.

Celia stood on stage, her glare fixed on Stella, seething with humiliation.

‘She turned me into nothing but a clown, a pathetic side character for her spotlight,’ Celia thought.

“And another thing,” Stella said, her voice cold as ice as she stared at Conrad. “You and your team weren’t the first to crack this problem. Need me to remind you?”

Stella turned off the mic and leaned in close, her voice so low only Conrad could hear. She said, “Five years

ago...”

Conrad’s face instantly changed, like he had seen a ghost.

AD

Comment

Send gift

Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 126

Read Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 126 -

Echoes Of Forgotten Dreams – 126

Chapter 126

15)

El 55 vouchers

Not long after, Conrad and his team hurriedly excused themselves from Zack and left looking pretty flustered.

Zack was left completely baffled.

As they walked back to Sebastian, Jake asked in his usual naive way, “Why did Conrad leave like that?”

Stella paused, then shrugged carelessly. She replied, “Who knows?”

Sebastian and John, however, were both watching her.

They thought, ‘Just how did Stella know that Conrad’s team wasn’t the first ones to crack the problem?’

Clearly, she had no intention of responding. Leaning against the wall with one hand in her pocket, Stella idly scrolled through her phone. Even as Celia fixed her with a burning glare, Stella never once looked up.

After Conrad and his team had been sent off, Zack hopped back onto the stage, gave the mic a quick tap, and it was clear he had something to say.

He kicked things off with some opening banter to break the ice.

“What did you say to Conrad at the end?” Celia sidled up next to Stella, asking. But Stella looked visibly irritated, not even bothering to respond.

Celia reached out to shove her. She said, “I’m talking to you.”

But before her hand could even touch Stella, Stella didn’t even bother to look up, just smacked her hand away with a sharp slap. Stella replied, “None of your damn business.”

Her voice was cold as ice, not giving a damn about being polite.

Celia stared at her now-reddened hand, totally in disbelief.

‘Did she seriously just hit me?’ Celia thought. Her mind was spinning.

“Mr. Gray,” Celia said. She instinctively looked for Sebastian.

But just then, Zack's voice suddenly boomed from the stage, stealing the spotlight. He said, "And now, let's give a warm welcome to the new chairman of Edenbury Academy, Mr. Gray."

Stella fell silent.

Her hand paused on her phone as she turned to glance at her sponsor, eyes narrowing just a bit. Sebastian, meanwhile, kept that flawless, unreadable look on his face. With the students clapping curiously, John nudged him forward, and Sebastian stepped onto the stage.

The moment he stepped onto the stage, the girls in the audience went wild.

16:38 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 126

There was only one reason; Sebastian was unbelievably handsome.

家 49

55 vouchers

His face was flawless and pale, with a regal and indifferent look that made him seem like a living masterpiece. Sunlight poured through the auditorium windows, but it couldn't thaw the icy aura around him; he was like a cold deity, noble and distant.

Sebastian hit all the right notes for the girls in the crowd.

"He's so hot."

"He's the new chairman."

"Oh my god, I can't breathe."

The girls were whispering nonstop. Leaning against the wall, Stella raised an eyebrow, thinking, 'Wow, since when was Mr. Gray this much of a heartthrob?'

Meanwhile, on Sandridge Island, Allan was lounging in the courtyard, soaking up the sun with his usual carefree attitude, watching Lucas struggle with his tiny legs as he dragged a little hose to water Stella's flowers, his cheeks flushed bright red from the heat.

“Big Ben, go put a hat on Lucas,” Allan called out.

Big Ben didn't hesitate for a second. He'd been cooped up in the room for the past couple of days, so bored he was practically growing mold.

“Wonder if Stella's gonna be shocked?” Allan muttered. He sprawled out on his sun chair, legs crossed, looking totally chill. Sebastian had donated a whopping five teaching buildings and 600 million, and just like that, he landed the chairman's seat at Edenbury Academy.

God knew how stunned Allan was when he saw the news in the study.

His eyeballs nearly flew out of his skull.

Bet the Gray family never saw this coming, Sebastian, kicked out of the Gray Group, now turning around and becoming Edenbury Academy's chairman.

‘Seriously, only a guy worthy of being Stella's dad could pull this off. He can't even chill when Stella's just going to school, talk about being a worrywart dad,’ Allan thought. ‘Damn man.’

Inside the auditorium, Sebastian said, his voice icy, “I'm Sebastian Gray. Starting today, I'm the chairman of Edenbury Academy.” And that was all he said.

Everyone was speechless.

They thought, ‘Seriously? That's it?’

Normally, Zack could ramble on for an hour without stopping, so nobody was used to someone being this short and sweet.

16:38 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 126

49

55 vouchers

Suddenly, the mic from Conrad's speech lit up again. Someone asked, “Mind if I ask? Are you really the guy living on that mysterious island?”

With that one question, the place had been buzzing like crazy, but now even a pin drop could be heard.

Everyone was thinking about that mysterious island.

Just the mention of the mysterious island was enough to give everyone in Haliville the creeps.

The island closest to Haliville was totally off-limits, strictly private. People avoided it like the plague, and whenever it came up, everyone acted like it was some kind of taboo.

On stage, Sebastian's expression didn't change, his voice icy. He replied, "Yes."

The girl who'd just been gushing about how hot he was couldn't help but swallow nervously.

The man continued asking, "So, did you really slice open your own brother back then?" But then the mic suddenly screeched, loud and harsh, making everyone instantly cover their ears. And then, just like that, the place went dead silent.

John was shocked.

He watched in silence as Stella, looking every bit the badass, grabbed the audio cable with one hand and yanked it out, totally unfazed. He couldn't help but give her a silent thumbs-up in his mind.

Levi, still sitting in the front row and not having left with Conrad, just stared, clearly intrigued.

He'd just seen Stella prop herself up on the edge of the stage and flip up with one hand, smooth as anything, not even blinking. His eyes lit up with even more excitement.

Stella tossed the cables onto the floor without a word, then headed straight for Sebastian. She said, "Let's go."

She grabbed the handles of his wheelchair, didn't bother asking for permission, and wheeled him right off the stage. But just before leaving, she shot a look back at the spot where that student had asked the question.

Her gaze was all swagger and attitude, pure rebel energy.

In the boardroom, Stella's textbooks and other things had already been brought over ahead of time, now stacked up on the coffee table.

The boardroom was decked out in dark, heavy tones, giving off a faintly oppressive vibe. The outer area was for work, but inside, there was a lounge and a bathroom; honestly, it felt more like a mini apartment than just a meeting room.

At the door, Stella called out lazily, "Chairman?"

Sebastian shot her a look and said, "Hand." His voice was cool, palm open and waiting. Stella didn't even think twice; she gave him her hand, and just like that, her fingerprint was scanned into the boardroom's security

system.

16:38 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 126

Celia was speechless.

:

4@)

12.55 vouchers

She was about to reach out, but Sebastian didn't even spare her a glance. He said, "Celia, have Jake take you home."

Celia hesitated.

"I'll go back with you guys later," Celia said.

But Stella just lazily lifted her eyes. She said, "Didn't you already get the name of the hotel Conrad's staying at? Why not go try your luck again?" She had seen Celia chase after Conrad right before he and his team made their hasty exit.

Celia's face turned bright red, totally exposed. She just pressed her lips together and didn't say a word.

"Ms. York, let's go," Jake said, motioning for her to come along.

Celia gave Stella a lingering look, but Stella just shot her a lazy eyebrow raise, not bothered at all.

Then, without another word, Celia spun around and left, letting Jake escort her to Conrad's hotel.

The door swung open, and a blast of cold air greeted them as Stella calmly wheeled Sebastian inside. John, quick on the uptake, stayed at the doorway and pulled the door shut from the outside.

And at that exact moment, he found himself staring straight at Levi, who'd been sneakily trailing them all the way and was now standing in the corner.

Levi was speechless.

Yeah, that was awkward.

田

AD

Comment

Send gift

Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 127

Read Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 127 -

Echoes Of Forgotten Dreams - 127

Chapter 127

42

55 vouchers

Inside the boardroom, Sebastian said, "If you ever want to take a break or skip class, just come here," rolling his wheelchair into the lounge and opening the closet right in front of Stella. "Your extra clothes are in here."

Stella didn't know what to say.

Inside the closet, her clothes hung on the left, and Sebastian's on the right. It was split right down the middle.

"Get used to the place today. You'll officially start next week, and I'll have Jake drive you every day," Sebastian said, his voice cold and low, his strikingly handsome face unreadable. Stella just mumbled a half-hearted sound and casually took off her school uniform jacket.

She tossed it aside.

Sebastian suddenly fell silent.

As Stella shrugged off her jacket, her white shirt, once neatly tucked into her skirt, now hugged her curves.

Her waist was slender and perfectly defined.

It looked so delicate that a man could easily encircle it with one hand.

"Why so quiet?" Stella asked, lounging sideways on the armrest of the leather sofa next to his wheelchair. Her beautiful eyes had a lazy, relaxed look, and her long, slender legs were half-dangling, idly kicking at his leg every now and then.

Sebastian didn't know how to react.

He averted his gaze, keeping his tone icy. He said, "I'll give you 30 thousand a month for spending money." But before he could finish, he suddenly reached out and caught her unruly leg.

Sebastian said, "Stop moving around."

Her skin was creamy-smooth, soft as fresh milk.

When it brushed against the rough calluses of his palm, a jolt of tingling electricity shot through Sebastian, impossible to ignore.

Stella replied, "I wasn't moving." She tried to pull her leg away, but he held on tight. "Let go, Uncle Sebastian?"

Sebastian froze. He asked, "What did you just call me?" Just those words made his heart burn with a rush of forbidden heat, and before he knew it, his grip on her leg tightened.

“You’re starting to sound like a stuffy old man,” Stella said, leaning back as she stretched, the slender curve of her waist now in full view.

“Besides,” she continued, pointing at Sebastian first, “You’re thirty.” Then she shifted her finger toward herself.

16:38 Sat, Jan 24 ↻

Chapter 127

:

“And I’m eighteen. Calling you the same as Lucas is only fair, isn’t it?”

As he watched her laugh, his face grew cold and shadowed.

40

55 vouchers

But almost immediately, Sebastian’s voice took on a dangerous edge. He asked, “Is that so?” Before Stella could even process it, he gave her leg a sudden tug, and she lost her balance, falling backward.

But before she could hit the couch, his big hands caught her slim waist.

She just blinked, saying nothing. The next second, she found herself suddenly airborne. Before Stella could react, she ended up perched sideways on Sebastian’s lap. He was strong.

Stella didn’t know what to say.

Sebastian let out a cold laugh, asking, “Behaving yourself now?”

Stella lost her earlier swagger, looking everywhere but at him. “Mr. Gray,” she said. Before she could finish, his cold hands grabbed her cheeks, squeezing until her lips puffed out like a little goldfish.

Stella didn’t know what to say.

Sebastian gave another cold laugh. He said, “Weren’t you just calling me uncle a second ago?”

Stella shook her head.

Sebastian laughed coldly again. He said, "Say it again. I want to hear it."

Stella fell silent.

Sebastian let go, slowly loosening his collar as his deep eyes locked onto her face. He said, "Say it, and I'll give you 3000 bucks."

Stella thought, 'As if I'd cave for just 3000?'

Sebastian calmly upped the ante. He said, "15 thousand."

Stella stayed silent.

Sebastian raised the stakes again. He said, "30 thousand."

Without a second thought, Stella whipped out her phone. She said, "Transfer it."

Sebastian was speechless.

He shook his head with a soft laugh. He thought, "This little money-grubber. If it hadn't been for that 30 million dollars, I have no doubt she would've walked off the island without a second thought.'

He pulled out his phone, ready to transfer the money.

But the next second, Sebastian's face went completely blank as he stared at the red exclamation mark on WhatsApp. A chill radiated off him, making the whole boardroom feel like it could freeze over.

16:38 Sat, Jan 24 ..

Chapter 127

"Stella. What is this?" he asked, each word clipped and deliberate.

He held up the screen, a faint, cool smile touching his lips.

Stella kept silent. 'Uh, did I maybe block him?' Stella thought, suddenly unsure.

49

55 vouchers

“Stella,” Sebastian said. He looked every bit the villain shrouded in darkness, and the deeper his smile grew, the more suffocating the air became.

“I’ll unblock you,” Stella said. She didn’t even hesitate; she just wrapped her arms around Sebastian’s neck and hugged him tight.

She was trying to put out the fire.

Sebastian was speechless.

In an instant, the terrifying storm in the room vanished, replaced by clear blue skies, and even the darkness turned into a flurry of rainbow bubbles.

Stella patted Sebastian’s broad back with one hand, just like she would when soothing Lucas.

The sweet and tangy scent of citrus drifted through the air.

It was the smell of Stella’s body wash.

After a beat, Sebastian’s voice rumbled behind her, the sound vibrating through his chest. He said, “Now. Right now. Immediately.”

Stella fell silent.

Just as she tried to pull away, his cold, strong hand caught the back of her head and pulled her right back into

his arms.

“Seriously, the older you get, the pettier you become. Guess that’s true,” Stella said, whipping out her phone and unblocking Sebastian. The second she did, transfer notifications started flooding in.

Then four transfer notifications popped up.

Stella fell silent.

“Am I still being petty?” Sebastian asked, his face expressionless and his voice cold as ice, but Stella could tell he wasn’t nearly as upset as he pretended.

Stella couldn’t help but grin. She replied, “No way, not petty at all. You’re the most generous guy ever.”

Sebastian was speechless.

‘Why does that sound so wrong?’ Sebastian thought.

Sebastian coughed awkwardly and decided to let it slide.

16:38 Sat, Jan 24 d.

Chapter 127

♪

49

65 vouchers

“You really are obsessed with money, aren’t you?” Sebastian said, remembering how she acted like a total money fiend back at the hospital, even though she always seemed so chill and distant.

Just as Sebastian was wondering if he should send her even more, Stella said, “Of course I do. Once our deal is over and Lucas is doing better, I can finally leave Sandridge Island. All this money will be my nest egg for the future.”

Stella was always planning for the future.

Sebastian was stunned.

His hand froze over the keypad, and he snapped his head up to lock eyes with her.

He thought, ‘Wait, did she just say that? The deal’s ending? Is she really planning to leave Sandridge Island?’

Stella, completely missing Sebastian’s shift in mood, reached out to claim the money transfers, but his icy hand was quicker; he snatched her phone away before she could even react.

“Mr. Gray?” Stella called out.

Without even looking at her, Sebastian kept his face blank as he methodically reversed every transfer he’d just

sent.

Stella was stunned. She thought, ‘Did my money just fly away?’

Before she could even get a word out, Stella was suddenly lifted off her feet again. Sebastian grabbed her by the waist and set her back down on the wide armrest of the leather sofa.

Sebastian looked up at Stella, saying, “They kicked me out of Gray Group.”

Stella stared at him, speechless.

Sebastian, “And I still have Lucas to feed.”

Stella kept silent.

AD

Comment

Send gift

No Ads

Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 128

Read Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 128 -

Echoes Of Forgotten Dreams – 128

Chapter 128

:

Sebastian said, “Sandridge Island is huge, and maintenance is expensive as hell.”

Stella kept silent.

Sebastian said, “And your greenhouse costs a ton, too.”

Stella kept silent.

55 vouchers

Sebastian lowered his gaze, his pale, tempting face looking even more sickly. He coughed twice, then said, "I'm just a half-dead cripple who could kick the bucket any minute." He glanced up at her.

His eyes, usually cold and ruthless, now looked dark and a little wet, almost vulnerable.

Stella couldn't help but want to reach out and gently pat his head, just to comfort him.

Stella asked, "So, what's your point?"

She was totally lost, wondering how the conversation had taken such a random turn.

Sebastian was speechless.

He looked into Stella's eyes and, with great difficulty, managed to say the biggest whopper he'd ever tried to pull off in his life. He said, "I'm broke."

Stella was officially out of words.

"What about that canvas?" Stella asked, giving him a complicated look.

Sebastian kept a straight face, his tone firm. He said, "Fake."

"And all the ancient antiques?" Stella asked.

Sebastian didn't even blink. He said, "Those are all knockoffs."

Stella stared at him. Her deep amber eyes lingered on Sebastian's face, thoughtful and silent.

Sebastian fell silent because of her look.

He heard her sigh, and his heart tightened. He was just about to say, "Okay, maybe I'm not that broke," when she fiddled with her phone, and his phone buzzed right away.

He glanced down. It said 6 million dollars hit his account in seconds.

Sebastian didn't know how to react.

Stella reached out and patted his shoulder. She said, "Don't worry, Uncle Sebastian. I'm here for you."

Sebastian was speechless.

16:46 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 128

:

Stella tilted her head, asking, "Is that enough? If you need more, just say the word."

Sebastian thought, 'Should one time she acted as expected?'

°4)

47

EX 55 vouchers

At the entrance, no matter how much Levi tried to sweet-talk or scheme, John just kept his face blank and ignored him.

"Fine, I'm leaving," Levi sighed and said, sneaking a glance at John as he pretended to leave. But John didn't even flinch, just stood there like a statue.

The next second, Levi pulled a fake-out spin, but before John could block him from knocking, there was a sharp crack.

Levi was speechless.

John was shocked.

Levi's back gave out.

Levi just silently reached out his trembling hand to John.

John hesitated for a second, then, being the respectful guy he was, reached out to help steady Levi.

Right at that moment, the boardroom door swung open. Stella wheeled Sebastian out, giving John and Levi, who were caught in an awkward half-hug, a complicated look.

Everyone was silent.

A chill wind blew by, sending two fallen leaves spinning through the air.

“Kiddo, I’m about to kick the bucket,” Levi said, his eyes swimming with tears as he reached out to her, looking as pitiful as humanly possible. “I’m just a lonely old guy. It’s so miserable.”

John just stayed silent, having seen Levi’s whole fake-out act with his own eyes.

Stella, face blank, stepped out from behind the wheelchair and walked up to Levi. With a sharp crack, she fixed his back, just like that; the old man’s spine was back in place after his wild spin.

Levi was speechless.

Levi twisted his waist left and right, giving it a few good spins. He shook himself, his face lighting up with genuine surprise and delight. He said, “Huh? Hey, wow. Is it all better? That’s unreal. Not even a twinge left.”

‘You really don’t have to look so amazed, Stella thought.

“Let’s head back,” Stella said, not even bothering with her textbooks; she’d just dumped everything in the boardroom.

John nodded.

John couldn’t help but feel like Sebastian was surrounded by some seriously bad vibes.

16:46 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 128

47

55 vouchers

As soon as the black Maybach pulled up and everyone hopped out, a flurry of flower petals and star-shaped confetti came cascading down from overhead.

Sebastian and Stella stood there, absolutely drenched in petals and star confetti, just staring in stunned silence.

Lucas blew on the small conch shell around his neck. Snowball, perched in the tree, swished his tail wildly, sprinkling petals and glittering stars. Big Ben was grinning from ear to ear, cradling Eggie, who was squawking up a storm.

As for Allan, he even had Big Ben cue up a song for celebration.

Sebastian's face was as dark as a thundercloud. Stella kept a straight face, totally expressionless. Jake stayed silent, not saying a word.

They thought, 'This was really unnecessary!

Allan grinned and said, "Surprise. Stella, how does it feel on your first day? Was it like you just unlocked all your hidden powers and got a full-body upgrade?"

Stella looked down at Sebastian, her face dead serious, and asked, "Can I hit him?"

Allan blinked, totally thrown off.

Sebastian, deadpan as ever, spat out a petal. He said, "Lucas is watching."

Allan stared, completely baffled.

Stella glanced at Lucas, the cutest little guy, thought for a moment, then nodded seriously. She said, "Good point. I'll let him live till tonight."

Allan was left speechless.

He was so stunned, thinking, 'Why always me?'

AD

Comment

Send gift

No Ads

16:46 Sat, Jan 24 d.

Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel

Chapter 129

Read Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 129 –

Echoes Of Forgotten Dreams – 129

Chapter 129

No one paid him any attention.

55 vouchers

Snowball slithered down from the landscape tree, its tail tip wrapped around a small basket. It nuzzled up to Stella, rubbing its big, round head against her affectionately.

Lucas wasn't about to be outdone. He grabbed onto the hem of Stella's shirt, tugging her over to show her the patch of ground he'd helped water..

His sun-kissed cheeks were rosy, and he looked up at her with a sweet, eager-to-please expression, clearly hoping for some praise.

Stella was speechless.

Sebastian looked grim as he headed inside in his electric wheelchair. Allan watched Sebastian retreat back, arching an eyebrow with a smirk, clearly amused.

D

In the study, Sebastian had been sitting in his wheelchair, barely moving, for a solid five minutes. Even Allan, who was just chilling against the doorframe, was getting tired of watching. "Dude, what the heck are you looking at?" Allan asked.

'What's so fascinating about that?' Allan thought.

Allan sauntered over, snatched the file right out of Sebastian's hands, and took a quick look.

Allan rolled his eyes.

Allan thought, 'Wait, 30 million dollars for three years. So that's how Stella ended up staying?'

Allan shot a sidelong glance at Sebastian, who was sitting in his wheelchair, giving off a dark, icy vibe. 'Why did Sebastian pull this out after his trip to Edenbury Academy?' Allan wondered.

"Sebastian, you-" Allan started, but Sebastian cut him off.

Sebastian said flatly, "She said she'll leave Sandridge Island once the agreement is up."

Allan was speechless.

'Help, the gloomy energy pouring off Sebastian is about to fill the whole study!' Allan thought.

"Uh, Sebastian-" Allan said.

Sebastian didn't even look at him, his voice cold as ice. "She's young. The Carter family is all trash, and she's beautiful. What if she runs into some bad guys after she leaves the island?"

Allan was speechless.

16:46 Sat, Jan 24 ..

Chapter 129

2

447

65 vouchers

Remembering how Stella had once greeted an assassin with a kick that would end his family line, Allan decided it was smarter to just zip it.

If Stella really did run into some bad guys, Allan was honestly more worried about the bad guys than her.

Allan was about to say something, but Sebastian spoke up again, his tone icy. "Lucas will be devastated. In three years, he'll be eight. Prime time for a kid to start acting out. What if he ends up getting into trouble because of this?"

Allan was speechless.

'Eight years old? Rebellious phase? Seriously?' Allan thought.

Before Allan could even process that, Sebastian continued, "Strictly speaking, Eggie is Stella's. If she leaves, does that mean Eggie will have to be separated from its official father, Snowball? Snowball might be a python, but animal mental health matters, too."

Allan sputtered, "Sebastian, just wait—"

Sebastian looked up at him, his eyes cold and lifeless, like he was staring straight through a corpse. "Wait for what?"

Allan paused for a moment, then asked, "And you?"

Sebastian gave a cold chuckle. "Me? What's there to say?"

Allan held the agreement in one hand, his voice heavy with meaning. "You keep talking about how Stella's leaving will affect everyone else. But what about you?"

Sebastian sat in silence for a while, lost in thought.

Still speaking in that icy tone, his flawless, statue-like face betraying no emotion, he replied to Allan, "Me? What impact could I possibly have?"

Allan did not say anything but thought, 'These two are absolute masterminds!

'Sebastian's stubbornness is so strong. Archimedes could use it to move the Earth!'

Allan flashed a smile and handed the agreement back to Sebastian. "Mind if I ask you something?"

Sebastian shot him a sideways glance, his face completely expressionless.

"You're thirty, right? Don't tell me you're still a virgin?" Allan meant it as a joke, but Sebastian just sat there in stone-faced silence.

Over the next thirty seconds, Allan's face did a complete 180, from chill to panic, to shock, and finally to total indifference.

Nothing kills the vibe like a sudden, awkward silence.

Sebastian's scowl deepened; if his dark mood could manifest, the whole room would be swarming with

16:47 Sat, Jan 24 ..

Chapter 129

2%

55 vouchers

"Sebastian, you're actually taking Stella's money? Is this peak villainy or just a total lack of shame?" Allan's voice got weaker under Sebastian's icy glare.

But he rallied for one last shot. "Should we try to dig through the agreement and see if there's a loophole or something?"

'Maybe there's a way to game the system?' Allan thought.

Sebastian tilted his head, looking at Allan with a thoughtful and calculating gaze, as if already plotting his next

move.

Fifteen minutes later.

Allan said, "Dude, who wrote this thing? Were you that terrified Stella would stick around forever? You even slapped on a penalty section? If she didn't leave, she would owe five times the money."

'Man, this thing is watertight. It seriously does not leave Sebastian even a crack to escape,' Allan thought.

Sebastian was speechless.

Sebastian's face looked even more stormy.

'Jake did that,' Sebastian thought.

Jake was still loitering outside Conrad's hotel, bored to death, when he suddenly sneezed out of nowhere.

He just stood there with a blank stare, totally spacing out.

'Am I coming down with something?' Jake thought.

Allan scratched his chin thoughtfully, a sly grin creeping onto his face. He shot Sebastian a mischievous look, waggling his eyebrows. "At this point, maybe there's only one thing left to do. Didn't you always want to play daddy for Stella?"

Sebastian looked at him, his eyes narrowing in thought. "So you're saying...?"

Allan flashed a crooked and sleazy grin. "Yeah, that's exactly what I mean..."

He was obviously just here for the drama, the messier the better.

Sebastian thought he understood. He said, "So... You mean I should adopt Stella?"

Allan was speechless and shocked.

Allan let out a sigh and stood up. He flashed a big fake smile and gave Sebastian a theatrical bow. "Man, go wash up and get some sleep already!"

16:47 Sat, Jan 24 d.

Chapter 129

47

55 vouchers

'Seriously, Sebastian and Stella are a perfect pair. Stop ganging up on me!' Allan thought, exasperated.

Sebastian glanced out at the still-bright sky, confused. "What?"

Night was falling, and the city lights were just starting to come on.

Celia and Jake still hadn't come back.

'Now that the annoying lady was nowhere to be seen,' Snowball thought. It was chilling on the landscape tree, its tail tip swaying lazily.

In the little basket hanging from a branch, Eggie was copying Snowball's chill pose, even draping a wing over the peregrine falcon's belly and letting out a happy chirp.

Meanwhile, back at the hotel, someone called out, "Levi, it's almost eight o'clock."

Levi, the director of the Jaffina Kinetic University Tech Research Institute, sat ramrod straight on the sofa, and his eyes were glued to the phone on the coffee table.

His assistants were scattered around nearby, while the security guard assigned to protect Levi stood by the window, alert and ready for anything.

Even though they'd flown in with Conrad and his crew, they weren't part of the same faction.

They were here because they'd heard rumors that Caleb, the mayor of Haliville, might have some kind of secret connection to Lab 709, and they were hoping to get lucky.

For half a month, they'd been reaching out to Lab 709 through every channel they could think of, hoping to snag exclusive authorization for a set of research data. But for reasons unknown, Lab 709 hadn't replied at all. (For more on this, see Chapter 105.)

Then, Levi got an email just now.

It said they'd be calling at eight tonight.

Everyone immediately dropped whatever they were doing and gathered to wait, feeling pretty lucky. After all, Levi was supposed to go see Caleb tomorrow, but now they could skip that whole hassle.

As it got closer to eight o'clock, Levi was still in his traditional outfit from earlier, arms folded and looking completely unfazed. He said, "Look at you all, so nervous!"

'Always losing their cool at the slightest thing. No one has any poise!' Levi thought.

The assistants were speechless.

‘Maybe you should check out your own leg. It’s shaking so much, and you look more nervous than anyone,’ the assistants thought.

16:47 Sat, Jan 24 d.

Chapter 129

55 vouchers

Right at eight o’clock, the phone rang.

The old man, who’d just been complaining about everyone else being nervous, suddenly got so excited he could barely breathe. He waved for everyone to quiet down, took a couple of deep breaths, and hurriedly pressed the speaker button.

The person on the other end spoke fluently in another language, exchanged a few formal pleasantries, and then got straight to the point.

Even after the call ended, Levi was still in a daze, his mind spinning.

He never imagined that getting through to the director of Lab 709 could be this easy.

“Am I dreaming?” Levi muttered, still in a daze.

This was a top-secret collaboration between the Kinetic University Tech Research Institute and the military, aiming to equip next-gen fighter jets with ultra-precise tracking, targeting, and defense systems. If successful, it would take the jets’ combat capabilities to a whole new level.

However, the entire project was currently stuck at the most critical step, which was Lab 709’s monopoly on a crucial set of data.

Ding. An email popped up with the director’s phone number.

With trembling hands, Levi punched in the number.

On Sandridge Island, Stella stepped out of the bathroom after her shower, sipping water from a glass with one hand. The bedroom door was slightly ajar, and Lucas,

who had been sprawled on the bed reading a picture book, was nowhere to be seen.

She picked up her phone and saw a message from Nimbus.

At the same time, her phone rang. The caller ID showed a number from Jaffina.

Stella raised an eyebrow and answered.

“Hello, is that the director of Lab 709? My name is Levi, director of the Kinetic University Tech Research Institute in Jaffina, Clusia...” The voice on the other end was deep and shaky, speaking a foreign language with a careful tone and a whole lot of respect.

Stella stayed cool, taking another sip of water as if nothing could faze her.

‘Where have I heard that voice before? It rings a bell! Stella wondered.

“Yeah, go on,” she said.

Levi was stunned on the other end of the line.

Levi wondered, ‘Is there something wrong with my hearing?’

16:47 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 129

...

‘How can a voice sound that young?’

‘Wait a second, is that Clusian?’

‘Hold up, that’s not a foreign language.’

‘Wait, the director of Lab 709 is Clusian?’

‘And she’s a woman?’

Levi froze for a couple of seconds.

A

EL 56 vouchers

Stella didn't rush him since the door was nudged open by a big, round, white head. Snowball was slowly crawling in, balancing a plate of sliced fruit on its head. When it saw Stella looking at it, it happily wagged the tip of its tail.

Stella was speechless.

After a nudge from his assistant, Levi cleared his throat and finally found his voice. With everyone staring in shock, he switched to Clusian and got straight to the point. "If you have time, we can fly to Monterra to discuss things in person."

"No need," Stella's cold voice came through the phone, making Levi's heart jump into his throat. He tensed up, worried she might turn him down.

"I-I'm actually in Haliville right now. If you need me, I can book the earliest flight tomorrow morning—" Levi stammered.

Stella cut him off. "I already said no."

Stella realized they were both in Haliville. 'So he's actually in the same city as me right now?' she mused.

Stella was lost in thought while Snowball plopped its big head on the table, mouth wide open, tail tip smacking the floor.

Stella was speechless.

She chucked a piece of melon into Snowball's mouth, then said, taking her time, "Give me three minutes."

Stella popped open her own super-thin laptop with one hand and scanned through Nimbus's email at lightning speed, getting the gist in seconds.

Meanwhile, Levi was clutching his phone so hard it looked like he might crush it, cold sweat pouring down

his back.

She might be young, but her vibe was so intense, it freaked him out even over the phone.

Every second of those three minutes dragged on like a year.

“How long are you staying in Haliville?” Stella’s icy voice finally came through after three minutes.

16:47 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 129

Levi blurted out, “About a week.”

“Just stay by your phone,” Stella said coolly, then hung up without another word.

Levi just stared at his phone, stunned.

‘So... did she just say yes, or not?’ Levi thought.

47

55 vouchers

Snowball cocked its big, round head, looking absolutely adorable as it watched Stella, who was still deep in thought after hanging up. It nudged up against her, the cool, scaly touch bringing Stella back to earth.

She dialed up Caleb.

Caleb picked up right away. “Ms. Carter, what’s up?”

From the background noise, it was clear he’d just gotten home and was grabbing a bite to eat.

Stella asked in her usual laid-back way, “You have Central Military Command’s contact info, right?”

Caleb instantly got nervous. “Ms. Carter, is something wrong?”

“No, it’s nothing urgent, just...” Stella explained everything, idly stroking Snowball.

As Caleb listened, his face grew more serious, realizing this was no small matter. “Understood, I’ll reach out right away.”

Stella hung up, still as chill as ever, as if nothing had happened. She stretched lazily, her gaze drifting to the picture book spread out on the bed. She paused for a second.

‘So where did Lucas run off to?’ Stella wondered.

Upstairs in the bedroom, a grown-up and a kid sat facing each other, both frozen stiff like statues.

Lucas, with his chubby pale cheeks puffed out like a squirrel with its cheeks full, stared at the three-year contract on the table, arms crossed just like a little adult.

Lucas poked Sebastian.

Big Ben said, “Lucas is so cute, Stella would definitely pack him up and take him along if she ever leaves!”

Lucas cupped his chubby little cheeks, looking absolutely adorable.

Sebastian was speechless.

Lucas shot Sebastian a sideways glance, his eyes full of disdain.

Lucas poked Sebastian again, not letting up.

16:47 Sat, Jan 24 ..

Chapter 129

Big Ben added, “Sebastian, you’re not cute at all! Stella would never want you!”

Lucas gave a little dismissive wave, his face full of adorable disdain.

Sebastian was still speechless.

Sebastian said coldly, “She gets so many love letters that her hands get tired.”

Lucas’s smile froze on his lips.

Sebastian muttered, voice low and menacing, “She might end up liking some random guy.”

Lucas’s eyes went wide in disbelief.

Sebastian's eyes went cold and dark. "As soon as the three years are up, she'll be gone."

Lucas was shocked.

K

55 vouchers

Sebastian watched as Lucas started storming around the sofa in circles, letting out a cold laugh. "So-"

五

AD

Comment

Send gift

Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 130

Read Paid To Care, Destined To Conquer Novel Chapter 130 -

Echoes Of Forgotten Dreams - 130

Chapter 130

Lucas stopped his tantrum, whipped his head around, and looked up at Sebastian, blinking. "Huh?"

'So what?' Lucas wondered.

"You need to help me keep her here," Sebastian said, his face unreadable.

Lucas just stared at him, unimpressed.

Stella was on the phone with Victor, whose grandson had just been discharged from the hospital, and he wanted to invite her over for dinner tomorrow.

“Okay, I got it,” Stella replied, her tone cool and indifferent.

Victor didn’t care about her attitude at all. He asked, “Should I have Henry pick you up tomorrow?”

“No need. Just send me the address. I’ll go myself,” Stella said. Just as she finished, Celia walked in, smelling of alcohol and her cheeks slightly flushed. She looked tipsy and pleased. She’d had a good time talking with Conrad.

Seeing Stella alone downstairs, Celia leaned against the wall with a smug grin. “You don’t actually think you won just because you stole my thunder today, do you?”

Stella was speechless.

‘Is she out of her mind?’ Stella thought.

“I’ll hang up now,” Stella said, shooting Celia a cold glance as she ended the call with Victor, her voice icy.

Not wanting to deal with her, Stella turned to head upstairs, but Celia stepped right in front of her, blocking her way.

“Just move,” Stella said, barely holding onto her patience.

Celia didn’t move an inch. “Tomorrow, Conrad is taking me to the Military Compound to visit Mr. Quinn. Ever heard of him?”

Stella was speechless.

Just then, Stella’s phone buzzed with a WhatsApp notification.

She glanced down and saw that a location pin for the Military Compound had just been sent to her.

Celia kept rambling, “He’s the founding father of nuclear physics, the backbone of the nation. Someone you could never hope to meet!”

“Are you done?” Stella asked, her tone flat and her face completely expressionless.

16:4 Sat, Jan 24 J

Chapter 130

47

El 55 vouchers

Her indifference was just like earlier in the Edenbury Academy auditorium, which really pissed Celia off, especially when she remembered how Lucas depended on Stella.

‘Lucas would freak out if I even tried to touch him, but he’s all sweet and obedient around her. Why does he have to be like that with her?’ Celia fumed inwardly.

“You-” Celia started, her eyes narrowing, but before she could finish, Stella, who was usually so aloof and hard to approach, suddenly snorted with laughter. The next second, she casually tossed a glass of water right into Celia’s face.

Her move was quick and ruthless..

Celia was stunned into silence.

Already a bit tipsy, Celia just stared at Stella in utter disbelief, her eyes wide in shock.

Water ran down her face.

Water dripped all over the floor.

Stella shot Celia a cold, dangerous look, her eyes rimmed red, looking fierce and impossible to mess with. “Next time, get this through your head. When I tell you to move, you move.”

Celia just stood there, totally stunned.

Stella didn’t even look back as she walked away, leaving Celia to stomp her foot and scream in frustration.

When Stella walked into the bedroom, she saw Lucas, freshly washed and in his pajamas, sitting on the bed looking all cute and spaced out.

As soon as he saw her, his eyes lit up, and he patted the spot next to him with his little hands.

Stella was speechless.

No matter how many times she'd seen him like this, she still couldn't resist how adorable Lucas was.

The bed was covered in brochures for different kindergartens. Lucas, dressed in his long-tailed shark pajamas, was clutching his tail, his face scrunched up in frustration.

"Hmph!" he huffed, then swiped one of the brochures off the bed and tossed it to the floor.

He was clearly not satisfied.

"Did Sebastian let you choose?" Stella asked, glancing over the brochures. Lucas nodded enthusiastically, tilted his head to the side, and gave her arm a little shake.

Lucas poked.

"Stella, you pick," Big Ben said.

16:47 Sat, Jan 24 d

Chapter 130

Stella's eyes finally landed on the brochure for Edenbury Kindergarten.

¶

47

55 vouchers

Edenbury Academy was the most famous private school in Haliville. Moreover, it covered every level, from kindergarten all the way through high school.

Stella tapped the brochure for Edenbury Kindergarten. "How about this one? The school uniform is the same as mine, and we can go to school together. I can even pick you up after class."

When Lucas heard they'd have the same uniforms and could go to and from school together, his eyes sparkled with excitement. He started rolling around on the bed, totally thrilled.

Lucas laughed and agreed.

Stella smiled softly. “Bedtime.” She gathered up the brochures, tidied the bed, and turned off the lights with a gentle touch.

The next morning, when Stella came downstairs, Celia was already fully made up, clearly taking today’s meeting very seriously.

When Celia saw Stella, her face soured. She was about to throw out a few snide remarks while no one else was around, but when she saw Stella lazily sipping her water, she swallowed her words and just curled her lip in disdain.

Stella caught Celia’s little moves, but honestly, she was too lazy to care. As long as Celia didn’t try anything in front of her, Stella would just let it slide.

The two of them walked into the dining room one after the other.

As soon as Stella walked in, Snowball, who’d been lazily draped over the tree, perked up, his tail wagging like a dog. But the second he spotted Celia, he instantly got annoyed.

‘What a buzzkill!’ Snowball thought.

Snowball slithered down from the tree, and as he passed by Celia, who was about to sit down, his tail sneakily wrapped around the chair leg and tugged it back just enough to mess things up.

Stella heard a sudden thud behind her.

She turned around and saw Celia had landed flat on her butt, shrieking, “Stella!”

Snowball, the proud snake, slithered past and affectionately rubbed his smooth, white head against Stella’s hand, looking completely satisfied.

‘Yep, I’m still as clear about my likes and dislikes as ever. Love who I love, hate who I hate!’he thought smugly.

Then he slithered off.

Stella was speechless.

16:47 Sat, Jan 24 ...

Chapter 130

Allan walked in right at that moment and caught the whole thing.

Allan was speechless.

555 vouchers

He exchanged a look with Stella, who looked totally unfazed, her delicate features calm and composed.

“I didn’t see anything!” Allan said, quickly turning his head away. He gave Stella a subtle hand signal that Sebastian was about to come downstairs, so she should hurry and help Celia up while he played dumb.

Stella was speechless.

‘What a weirdo!’ Stella thought.

She didn’t even look at Celia, just turned and took her seat.

“Mr. Reed,” Celia called out, forcing Allan to come over and pull her up. “She did that on purpose! She’s totally picking on me!” Celia whined, trying to play the victim.

Stella ignored her completely and just looked up at Allan. “Let me borrow your car.”

“Heading out today?” Allan tossed her the keys without hesitation, totally brushing off Celia’s obvious plea for backup.

Stella just gave a lazy nod, and right then, Sebastian and Lucas walked in.

“Where are you headed?” Sebastian shot a look at the car keys in her hand.

“Just meeting someone,” Stella replied.

As soon as Lucas heard that, he started whining and clinging to her, not wanting her to leave.

Celia stood off to the side, feeling like she was the odd one out, even though she kept telling herself Stella was supposed to be the outsider here.

Out of nowhere, Celia looked at Sebastian’s ridiculously handsome face and just blurted out, “Mr. Gray, the memorial day is coming up. Do you remember?”

For a moment, the room went dead silent, as if all the air had been sucked out.

It was suffocating.

Sebastian looked up at Celia, his whole vibe like the depths of a frozen winter sea, cold and unforgiving. Celia felt a stab of regret, but the words were already out, so she had no choice but to brazen it out.

Stella's gaze lingered on Celia, her eyes flickering with something unreadable.

"You want me to stand up for you?" Sebastian asked, idly turning his prayer beads. The tension eased a little, but his pale, sickly face was still cold and distant, impossible to read.

Celia stayed silent, looking at Stella with stubborn defiance in her eyes.

16:47 Sat, Jan 24 d

Chapter 130

Allan was speechless.

"John," Sebastian called out, his voice low.

55 vouchers

John stepped out from the shadows, shot Celia a glance, and repeated what happened downstairs last night. His face was blank as ever, and Celia's face grew paler with every word.

Celia's mind reeled, 'He actually knew!'

Allan couldn't help but sigh inwardly, 'Seriously, why does Celia always have to go looking for trouble with Stella?'

Sebastian was radiating coldness, looking downright intimidating. "Go on," he said.

John recounted, without sparing Celia's feelings, how Snowball had secretly moved the chair, leaving her with absolutely no dignity.

"Celia, isn't this just what you brought on yourself?" Sebastian's voice was cold and emotionless, making Celia's face burn with shame. She flung her napkin onto the table and stormed out of the dining room.

“You guys eat,” Sebastian rasped, stifling a cough that tasted like blood in his throat. His face was so pale it looked like it might tear apart at any second, fragile as crumpled paper.

Just as he reached for control of his wheelchair, a fair hand reached out with casual authority and gripped his wrist, stopping him in his tracks.

Stella spoke, her voice cool and unwavering, “Eat something before you leave.”

Sebastian kept silent.

After a moment, he murmured, barely audible, “No appetite.”

“Want me to feed you?” Stella drawled, propping her chin on her hand. Her face was totally blank, but there was something strangely comforting about her presence.

Sebastian was stumped.

Allan couldn’t help but shake his head inwardly. He thought, ‘The deadliest kind of flirting is the kind people don’t even realize they are doing, and these two are just a pair of dense idiots.’

He was still thinking that when a set of car keys smacked him right on the head.

Sebastian tossed the keys back to Allan. “His car is still in the shop. Take mine. Pick any from the garage.”

Allan was left speechless.

Allan cursed inwardly, ‘Shit!’

‘My ride has been ready for ages, damn it!’

He was just about to protest when Sebastian shot him a cold look that killed any comeback before it even

16:47 Sat, Jan 24 .

Chapter 130

started.

Allan was silenced.

:

KI

155 vouchers

“So, Stella, who are you meeting up with later?” Allan asked, his curiosity getting the better of him.

Stella didn’t keep it a secret. “Mr. Quinn. His grandson just got out of the hospital, so he invited me over for

dinner.

“Any idea what I should bring?” she added after pausing.

Sebastian stayed quiet for a couple of seconds before finally answering.

“Are you sure?” Stella blinked in surprise.

Allan snorted, “Just go with whatever Sebastian says. He loves playing tricks on me, but he’d never do that to you, Stella.”

Sebastian shot Allan a frosty glare, and Allan instantly mimed zipping his lips.

“I’m not messing with anyone,” Sebastian said coldly.

Sebastian explained to Stella in a calm, serious tone.

Stella was speechless.

At the dock, Celia, now dressed up, climbed into Conrad’s car. The moment she sat down, Conrad immediately grabbed her hand and brought it to his lips for a kiss. “Just a little foreign tradition,” he said with a smile.

“Let’s go,” Celia said, barely hiding her discomfort behind a smile, awkwardly trying to pull her hand away but not too forcefully, playing along just enough.

Up front, Conrad’s assistant shot them a look of pure disdain before turning to stare out the window.

Just then, a black Porsche Cayenne roared out of the driveway. The window rolled down, revealing a jaw- droppingly gorgeous face, her eyes cool and indifferent. She was so striking that people couldn’t help but

stare.

Conrad's assistant thought, 'She's got that wild edge.

'She looks so familiar... but where have I seen her before?'

Forty minutes later, they pulled up at the gates of the Military Compound.

Conrad's car was stopped by the sentry for a routine check. Celia rolled down her window, finally able to breathe easily until a black Porsche Cayenne rolled up right behind them. She glanced at the driver and

16:47 Sat, Jan 24 d.

Chapter 130

nearly screamed, "Stella?!"

The shock was so real, she couldn't hold it in.

52 55 vouchers

Stella was leaning casually on her window, her face bare and flawless, looking like she was carved from ice, an absolute beauty, cold and untouchable.

Hearing the commotion, Stella barely spared Celia a glance, her eyes icy and indifferent.

"Are you following me?" Celia eyed her warily, suddenly paranoid that Stella had overheard her drunken rambling last night. She thought, 'Is she here for Mr. Quinn, too?'

"Why do you have to be so thick-skinned?" Celia said.

Stella was speechless.

'Seriously, is something wrong with her brain?' Stella thought.

"Stella?" Conrad's face popped up at the window, making Celia's heart skip a beat. She was worried Conrad might actually let Stella in. If Stella just swallowed her pride, it would totally happen.

"You here to see someone?" Conrad asked, still intrigued by her mysterious, distant vibe, even after how he'd slipped away yesterday.

Conrad narrowed his eyes, trying to figure out just how much she really knew about the whole thing back

then.

“Who are you here to see? I can take you in,” he said with a friendly smile, totally missing how Celia’s hands were clenched so tight on her lap her knuckles were white. Celia was practically seething with hate for Stella

now.

Stella was left speechless.

‘What are they even rambling about?’ Stella thought.

Henry showed up at the gate just in time to see Stella with that wild, untamed look that said she was seconds away from blowing up.

He rushed over to talk to the sentry and get her through, worried that if he waited even a second longer, this little firecracker was about to go off.

Henry shot her a warning look. “Ms. Carter, no fighting at the gate. This is the Military Compound.”

Stella was left speechless.

She swallowed her annoyance, barely keeping it together. “Get in.”

Henry jumped into the passenger seat without another word, and the sentry immediately lifted the barrier to let them through.

Conrad and Celia watched the whole thing unfold, both left speechless.

16:47 Sat, Jan 24

Chapter 130

47

E55 vouchers

Especially since they were stuck there, still dealing with all the tedious ID checks, while Stella just rolled right in like she owned the place. The difference was night and day. It left them totally stunned.

After a while, Conrad found his voice. “Who is she here to see?”

Celia was speechless.

Celia grumbled inwardly, ‘How would I know?’

‘The only thing I am sure of is that my face was still throbbing with pain.

‘My face has been throbbing nonstop since last night!’

“Ms. Carter, there’s a last-minute guest today. Mr. Quinn asked me to let you know, so please don’t mind,” Henry said, sounding way more respectful than before.

Stella just gave a noncommittal hum, her face completely unreadable.

After parking, Stella had just stepped into the courtyard when she heard a booming voice with a laugh. “That girl just looked Conrad right in the eye and said, ‘Oh, I refuse. Conrad’s face went totally green. Wish you could’ve seen it.”

Stella, carrying a small basket, stopped in her tracks.

Stella thought, ‘That voice rings a bell.

‘Wait.

‘Not sure. Let me listen a bit longer.’

“What a coincidence, I’ve got a little friend with a pretty unique temper I want you to meet today,” Victor said, sounding pretty cheerful.

“Mr. Quinn, Stella has arrived!” Henry called up to the second floor of the villa.

The curtain was pulled aside, and Victor stepped out first, with an elderly man in a classic-styled jacket right behind him.

When they saw Stella standing in the courtyard, the other old man looked completely stunned as Victor gave her a warm, grandfatherly smile.

Victor blurted out, “Stella-”

“Miss-” Levi called at the same time.

They both paused, realizing something was off, and turned to look at each other.

