

Jennifer wanted to take Stella back to her place. But Stella insisted on going to Azure Heights on Starlake Avenue. It was an apartment she had bought herself three months ago. This made one thing painfully clear. She'd been preparing to leave Evan for a long time. "I tell you to come stay with me and you refuse," Jennifer said. "You need someone to look after you right now. When did you even buy this place?" As she spoke, she pulled out a blanket and draped it over Stella. Then she went into the kitchen to make some food. Stella adjusted the blanket around her shoulders. "The second month after Steven died." The second month? That was early. "You were already planning to divorce Evan back then?" Jennifer asked. Stella gave a tired hum in response and lay down on the couch. The month Steven died, Evan had practically moved into the family estate. He was rarely home. And even when he was, one call from the estate about Summer would send him rushing out again. Who could endure a marriage twisted like that? The phone started vibrating. It was the landline from the villa. Stella didn't even think twice. She hung up and blocked the number. A moment later, Jennifer's phone rang. It was Evan. She answered, her tone dripping with sarcasm. "What, your sister-in-law doesn't need you anymore?" "Let Stella answer the phone." Evan's voice was low and tight. He'd just arrived at the hospital when Marianne called to say Stella had left. He rushed back to the villa. The moment he reached the gate, he saw the stone slates outside scorched black in a wide circle. Marianne told him Stella had done it. Her clothes were gone from the closet. Everything she'd bought for him was gone too. Burned. What was she trying to do? Was she really going to keep escalating this? Jennifer let out a mocking laugh. "Your sister-in-law just gave birth and she's weak. You should be worrying about her. Why are you looking for Stella? What is Stella to you, exactly?" "Jennifer Tanner!" Evan's patience snapped. Jennifer glanced back at Stella. She was staring at something on her phone, her expression dark. Seeing that Stella wasn't paying attention to who she was talking to, Jennifer walked into the kitchen and shut the door. "Evan Wright, are you out of your mind?" she snapped. "Does Summer see you as Steven, or does she want you, with that identical face, to be her stand-in husband? Don't tell me you're too stupid to know the difference. "And you don't even bother keeping your distance. Do you have any idea what people in Harbor City are saying about you two right now? Or are you just deaf and blind?" She was furious. Summer had no shame, the entire Wright family indulged her, and Evan went right along with it. Evan gritted his teeth. "I said, let Stella talk to me." He was out of patience. Stella was clearly spiraling, and he had no intention of arguing with Jennifer. "She just miscarried," Jennifer shot back. "With your attitude, you shouldn't be talking to her at all." "If you can't be a proper husband, then stop ruining her life. Your sister-in-law needs you so badly, go stay with her for the rest of your life." If Evan wouldn't care for Stella, then Jennifer would. Thinking of what Stella had said earlier — that Summer shoved her today — Jennifer didn't give Evan another chance to speak. She hung up. Back in the living room, she saw Stella gripping her phone so tightly her knuckles had turned white. "What are you looking at?" Jennifer asked. "If it's upsetting, don't look at it." She reached out to take the phone, but Stella avoided her hand. "Redcrest Valley," Stella said. "You remember it?" "Of course," Jennifer replied. "You worked on the tourism design project there three years ago. Your proposal got rejected." Redcrest Valley. A place Stella loved. Especially in October, when the hills turned red and gold. They'd been there together. When the area was being developed for tourism, Stella had entered the design competition. She'd stayed up night after night for three months, traveled there more than five times for site inspections. And still, her design wasn't chosen. "Why are you asking about it?" Jennifer asked. Stella handed her the phone. It was an article praising Redcrest Valley's successful tourism launch, recommending it as a new destination. Influencers were already flocking there. The reviews were glowing. Jennifer frowned. "Wait..." She stared at the photos. "These spots... this is your design." Every section matched what Stella had created back then. Jennifer remembered it clearly. Stella had designed everything from a visitor's point of view. Jennifer's expression darkened. She quickly searched for more articles, then tapped on the project details. When the words "Lead Designer: Summer Bailey" appeared on the

screen, Jennifer nearly smashed the phone. She shoved it back at Stella. Stella let out a quiet laugh when she saw the name. "So that's how I got eliminated." Jennifer's lips pressed into a hard line, fury burning in her eyes. "I was planning to start with her mother," Stella said calmly. "But now, looks like I should turn the gun on her first." Jennifer's heart jolted. "Stella... what are you saying?" Was she talking about Summer? And Ruby? No, wait... Jennifer was angry too, but seeing the cold clarity in Stella's eyes, she forced herself to calm down. "Listen, babe. Forget how the entire Wright family, including Evan, has always sided with Summer. Just her mother alone... that woman isn't someone you can take on," she said carefully. "Don't do anything reckless, okay?" Stella's lips curled into a mocking smile. "Not someone I can take on?" Of course she hadn't forgotten how untouchable Ruby Bailey was. But what if that woman lost the very thing that made her untouchable? At the thought of how Summer had spent years in the Wright family, teaming up with Dora to corner and humiliate her, the last trace of warmth in Stella's eyes vanished. All that remained was anger and hatred!