

Through Rising Fog We Walk Paths Unknown Yet Comforting

Chapter 191

BELLA'S POV

The director called for rehearsal. The extras gathered.

We knelt once. Then again.

My knees pressed against the hard ground. I ignored the discomfort and followed instructions carefully. I had learned obedience the hard way. This was nothing compared to what I went through in prison.

I noticed movement ahead.

Kathy had stepped into the scene herself instead of sending her stand-in. She stood beside the male lead, dressed in a luxury dress. Her posture was flawless.

After the second rehearsal, just as the director was about to call for filming, Kathy spoke up.

"Director," she said sweetly, "I don't think the servants knelt neatly enough."

The director blinked. "Not neatly?"

"Yes," she said

"It affects the scene. Why don't they practice a few more times? I don't mind waiting. Quality matters."

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Her tone was perfect. It sounded reasonable.

The director hesitated, then nodded. "Alright. Extras, kneel again."

We knelt. This time, Kathy stood directly in front of me.

I lowered my head, hands pressed to the ground, playing my role. From my view, I saw her shoes. They looked clean and expensive.

I felt no anger. Only clarity.

Kathy smiled. I knew Kathy was doing it on purpose.

That much was obvious.

Bonus

What I had not expected was for the director to follow her lead so completely. Every extra could see it. No one said it out loud, but the tension in the air was thick. Everyone felt restless, like something might snap at any moment.

“Again,” the assistant director shouted.

I lowered myself to my knees once more.

The floor was cold and hard. The fabric of my costume scraped against my skin as my palms pressed down. I bowed my head, 298

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played the role, then stood up again when told.

He made us do it again.

And again.

And again.

And again.

Each time, my knees hurt even more. I could feel the skin there peeling off a bit. I felt an ache spread upward. I felt the pain settling deep in my bones. I clenched my jaw and forced myself not to slow down.

I couldn't afford to. I thought of Tara.

I thought of the money she had paid for my grandmother's medical care without asking for anything in return. I knew she would never chase me for it. That made it worse. I already owed her too much. I couldn't keep adding to that debt with . excuses and pride.

“Again,” the voice rang out.

I knelt.

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Around me, the other extras began to complain. Someone 378 muttered under their breath. Another cursed softly when their

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+3 Bonus

knee slipped. A man two rows away suddenly straightened and raised his voice.

"This is ridiculous! We're not machines!"

"Yeah," someone else echoed. "You can't just keep doing this without paying us more!"

The mood shifted instantly. The air got tighter.

The director frowned and exchanged a look with his assistant. He clearly hadn't expected things to escalate this quickly. After a brief hesitation, he gestured toward the assistant director.

"Go ask Miss Kathy what she thinks," he said quietly.

I didn't need to look to know what would happen next.

Kathy stepped forward with one hand resting lightly at her side. The expression on her face was thoughtful, as if she were genuinely considering the best solution for everyone involved.

She paused, then smiled.

"I think there's an easy fix," she said gently. "Actually, I noticed that one of the extras did exceptionally well."

Her eyes landed on me.

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+3 Bonus

"She has the posture right," Kathy continued. "Her movements are clean, and her timing is perfect. Why don't we let her demonstrate for the rest? Once everyone sees how it's done properly, they can follow. It'll save time."

She turned slightly. "Of course, I don't know if she'd be willing. It'll be more tiring for her than the others."

She sounded considerate. The assistant director's eyes

lit

1. up.

"That's a great idea," he said quickly. "This will be much better than upsetting everyone."

He turned toward me. "You. Come here."

I walked forward calmly.

"If you demonstrate, we'll pay you an extra two hundred dollars," he said. Then his tone got hard. "If you refuse, it'll be considered a breach of contract. You won't get paid today, and you may not get hired again."

The words were blunt.

I stood there and understood, very clearly, what my choices were.

If I still had my wolf, Anna would have risen under my skin. She would be furious. She would have snarled at Kathy,

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challenged her openly, dared her to push further.

But I was human now.

Not only that, I was poor, alone and stripped down to survival.

I needed the money.

I looked at Kathy. She stood only a few steps away, watching me closely. Her lips were curved in a polite smile that made my stomach turn. She wanted me to hesitate. She wanted to see me struggle.

I didn't give her that.

Three hundred and thirty dollars was not a small sum to me. I had endured far worse than kneeling. Prison had taught me that humiliation could be survived. Pain could be endured. What mattered was what I chose to protect.

I lifted my head slightly and met Kathy's eyes.

Then I smiled.

"All right," I said evenly. "I'll kneel."

A hint of surprise crossed her face before she masked it. She didn't expect me to take it so well.

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+3 Bonus

I walked toward her, keeping my expression calm. I stopped at the marked position and asked quietly, "Should I start the demonstration now?"

"Ah... yes," Kathy replied.

I knelt. I did it slowly and correctly. I did it without hesitation.

My back was straight. My movements were precise. My hands pressed flat against the ground. My head lowered at exactly the right angle. Every motion was clean and practiced.

I groveled.

I rose. I repeated it again.

The set grew quiet.

No one spoke. No one laughed. No one whispered.

I could feel eyes on me, but none of them burned like Kathy's. She stood frozen. Her smile was stiff. She didn't look satisfied

at all.

I didn't rush. I didn't falter. I gave them a perfect demonstration.

And in that moment, I realized something clearly.

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This was not humiliating.

18)

+3 Bonus

What was humiliating was watching someone try to step on another person's dignity..... and fail.

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GINA'S POV:

I sat in the air-conditioned lounge. The place was cold, the kind that made people forget what the weather felt like outside.

I sat with my legs crossed and my posture relaxed, as my assistant stood beside me and spoke in a low voice.

"They're still rehearsing the kneeling scene," the assistant said. "Kathy hasn't let it go."

As she spoke, she pulled out her phone, tapped the screen a few times, then handed it over. "I recorded this just now."

I accepted the phone then looked down at it. The screen showed a woman kneeling on the ground. Her back was straight and her movements looked really controlled. The servant girl's costume was plain. It was something I wouldn't be caught dead in, not even if the world was ending.

I recognized that posture instantly. I looked deeply into the phone, wondering if my eyes were playing tricks on me.

It was Bella.

My lips curled into an evil smile without me realizing Bella's Well, aren't you a sight for sore eyes?

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снар

What was she doing here? On my set?

The thought made me smile wider. This would be fun. Kathy was on set too.

“Some people really have a death wish,” I said calmly, handing the phone back.

My assistant laughed lightly, then leaned in. “Right? That extra must have offended Kathy badly. Everyone on set knows Miss Kathy can’t be crossed.”

Halfway through the sentence, she froze.

Her face drained of color. “I—I’m sorry, Miss Gina. I shouldn’t have said that.”

She rushed to correct herself. Her words kept spilling out nervously. “Kathy is only acting bold because she’s Alpha Eric’s girlfriend. Once he dumps her, forget second female lead roles, she won’t even qualify to stand in front of a camera.”

I raised my hand to silence her. “Enough.” My voice was calm, but she still flinched in fear. “You don’t need to explain that to

me.”

Kathy had never shown me goodwill since joining the crew. Every exchange between us was awkward. It was obvious that

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I wondered what Kane would do once he found out. That Alpha never followed rules. Even as my sister’s fiancée, he unsettled me. I was scared of him.

Even the Monroe Pack never dared provoke him openly.

I let out a deep breath and stood. “Let’s go take a look.”

My assistant hesitated. “Now?”

“Yes,” I replied lightly. “It would be a shame not to see it with our own eyes.

I walked out of the lounge without waiting.

BELLA'S POV

Early April was cold in a biting way.

The male extras were doing a lot better. They had extra layers under their costumes. But for the female servants, the director insisted on thin base clothing to avoid bulk.

My hands were cold. My knees felt numb. I had been kneeling for what felt like an eternity.

Most of the extras had wrapped themselves in coats while

resting, stamping their feet lightly to keep warm. I was the only 4/7

one still in costume.

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Still kneeling. Still groveling.

+3 Bonus

Kathy stood a short distance away. She had a thick coat over her shoulders. She didn't look bothered by the cold.

"Oh dear," she said sweetly, tilting her head. "I'm not sure they're learning fast enough. Why don't you slow it down a bit and do it again? Let them really see the movement."

I looked at her. Her eyes were bright. They were filled with thrill, evil thrill.

"Sure," I replied calmly.

I knelt again.

By now, even the crew could see it clearly. It was obvious that this had nothing to do with rehearsal. Kathy was doing this deliberately.

But I didn't care. Compared to prison, this was nothing.

I focused on my breathing. On the money. On my grandmother's pale face in the hospital bed. On Tara's kindness.

Then suddenly, I heard a loud sound.

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Something heavy slipped. I felt a crushing impact on my left hand. Pain exploded through my arm.

I gasped as the copper stove prop smashed against my fingers. If it had fallen a little higher, it would have hit my head.

I straightened and my breath hitched.

When I looked up, I saw it. The flash of triumph in Kathy's eyes.

It vanished instantly.

"Oh my God!" she cried, bending down. "I'm so sorry. I didn't hold it properly. Are you hurt?"

Before she could finish, someone rushed forward.

Strong arms lifted me from the ground.

"Are you all right?" a man demanded urgently. "Your hand, can you move it?"

I raised my eyes to see who it was.

It was Eric.

Efroze

I froze in shock. 677

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He held my injured hand carefully. His fingers trailed through mine, trying to soothe me. Pain shot through me.

I gasped in pain. My fingers shook.

"It hurts," I said hoarsely.

Eric's face darkened completely.

Without another word, he bent down and lifted me into his arms.

“Call the crew doctor,” he said coldly to the men behind him. “Now. Bring them to the lounge.”

Kathy stood frozen. The set fell silent.

And in Eric’s arms, with my hand throbbing violently, I realized-

This was no longer just rehearsal.

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THIRD PERSON’S POV

“Eric!” Kathy shrieked.

3 Bonus

She looked at him in disbelief. What was he doing here? She wasn’t expecting to see him here today.

She stood frozen where she was, staring at the scene in front of her as if it had cracked reality open. Eric had not even looked at her. Instead, he had bent down and lifted Bella straight into his arms. He did it quickly, like it was the most natural thing in the world.

Why the hell was he bothered about Bella? Did they know each other?

The

way

he looked at her felt familiar, like this wasn’t the first time they were meeting each other.

“I’m right here,” Kathy said hoarsely, taking two steps forward. “Eric, I’m your-”

He cut her off with a glare. The look he gave her was cold. It felt detached. He didn’t even look irritated – just indifferent.

Then he turned away.

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+3 Bonus

Without another word, he carried Bella toward the lounge. He walked quickly. Bella's head rested awkwardly against his chest. Her injured hand was placed carefully between them. Her face was pale.

The set erupted. Everywhere became filled with gossip and chaos. What just happened was the highlight of the day.

Whispers spread round the place. Everyone was shocked. Eric was known to be cold to women. Yet he carried Bella with so much care.

"That extra... did you see that?"

"He didn't even hesitate."

"Kathy's finished."

"He doesn't even go close to women. See how he took her in his arms? Are they together?"

Some people looked at Kathy with pity. Others watched her with open curiosity. A few didn't even bother hiding their mockery.

Everyone knew what that scene meant.

09:00

Eric Simpson had chosen to protect an extra instead of his own 278. girlfriend. And that extra was just a servant girl.

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(*)+3 Bonus

Not far **away**, Gina stood rooted to the spot. The amusement on her face slowly faded into disbelief.

Bella... and Eric?

Her brows furrowed as she followed them with her eyes. She had expected chaos, yes but not this. Eric's reaction had been far too caring, far too intense.

Was he interested in Bella too?

Her assistant gasped softly beside her. "Oh my God... the prince and an extra. This is better than a drama series."

She sneered a little, then added, "No wonder Kathy went after her. Maybe she already knew the extra had something to do with Eric."

Gina didn't respond. She looked at the ground as she fell into thought.

Eric was clearly protecting Bella. Then what about Kane? Did Kane know?

Gina's lips tightened. She wasn't happy about this. Things were getting complicated.

Meanwhile, Kathy stood alone in the middle of the set. 378

09:00

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+ Bonus

surrounded by eyes that cut deeper than knives. Some of them pitied her. Some of them were curious to know what was happening. So was she.

This was wrong. This was not how it was supposed to be. She was Eric Simpson's girlfriend. She was supposed to be admired and envied. She was supposed to be surrounded by jealousy, not pity.

Yet now, everyone looked at her like she was a joke.

Her chest tightened violently. She almost screamed.

She almost shouted that she was the legitimate girlfriend, that Bella was nothing, that this meant nothing at all. But she didn't. Her face flushed red as she turned and left. As she

walked, her heels hit the ground too fast, too hard.

The moment she disappeared, silence fell.

The assistant director stared blankly at the director. "What...

what do we do now?"

How were they supposed to shoot now? Kathy was the second female lead and she was in almost all the scenes. She just left and she didn't seem like she was in the mood to film at all.

The director rubbed his forehead, exhausted. This was Eric 478

Simpson. No one dared intervene.

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After a long pause, he sighed heavily. "Shoot the scenes without Kathy first."

It was the only choice.

Inside the lounge, the door closed quietly behind them.

Bella sat stiffly on the sofa after Eric gently placed her down. Her left hand throbbed violently. The pain was intense. Bella felt a bit embarrassed as she realized how close they were.

"I hurt my hand," she said quietly. "Not my leg. I could have walked."

"I know," Eric replied.

He did not explain further. He simply stayed. Bella fell silent.

Eric crouched slightly in front of her, looking at her hand. "Does it hurt?"

"A little," she said.

He knew she was lying.

Her brows were drawn together. Her lips were pale. She was

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sweating at her temples. She was enduring it, the way people who had suffered for a long time always did.

Something

wisted painfully in his chest. She looked fragile, yet she looked strong at the same time.

She didn't even have a wolf. The thought struck him hard.

Then came the memory – the sight of her kneeling again and again. He remembered the sight of the copper stove crashing down.

His wolf growled inside him, turning furious and restless. For a split second, he almost lost control.

Why had it affected him so much? He had already confirmed she wasn't the one he was looking for.

And yet-

Before he could think further, the door opened and the crew doctor rushed in.

Bella stiffened as the doctor examined her hand. When pressure was applied, she whimpered softly, biting down on her lower lip.

"No fracture," the doctor said after a moment. "Just a bad laceration. Apply medicine. Rest the hand. No heavy lifting."

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Bella exhaled in relief. "Thank you."

+3 Bonus

After the doctor left, Eric spoke again. "You should still get it checked at the hospital."

"I'll be fine," she replied gently. "I'll get some medicine."

She paused. "Thank you... for earlier."

He frowned "Why were you kneeling like that?"

She answered calmly, "They asked me to demonstrate."

He looked at her in confusion "And you agreed?"

"Yes."

"Because they told you to?"

"If I refused, I wouldn't be paid."

Eric was livid. She went through all that pain and embarrassment for money?

"How much?"

“Eighty a day. Plus extra for kneeling.”

7/8

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His expression darkened. “For that amount?”

She nodded.

His chest felt clogged, like he was suffocating.

Then he asked quietly, “Do you and Kathy have a problem?”

“She’s my half–sister,” Bella replied simply. “She thinks my imprisonment ruined her life.”

His eyes widened in surprise. He knew a lot about Kathy but he didn’t know the two of them were half sisters.

Before he could respond- The door opened.

Kathy stepped inside, looking pale. Her eyes moved between Bella’s bandaged hand and Eric.

The air turned heavy.

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BELLA’S POV

When Kathy walked in, the air in the lounge shifted immediately.

I felt it before I saw it – the tension in the air.

Eric was standing beside the sofa. He gave Kathy a disapproving look. Kathy paused for a second at the door, clearly startled by his expression. Then she quickly adjusted herself.

She smiled innocently.

She moved closer to him and gently leaned into his arm.

“Eric,” she said softly, in a sweet tone, “thank you for taking care of my sister and for calling the doctor to check on her.” She sighed lightly, as if relieved. “I actually ran into the

doctor on my way here just now. When he said her injury wasn't serious, I finally felt at ease."

Then she turned to me.

"I'm really sorry, Sis," she said, with a fake guilty expression. "I didn't hold the hand stove properly. That's why it felt so hot to you."

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I looked at her calmly,

I looked at the sister I had once treated with genuine care.

+ Borus

Back then, I had truly believed we were family, I had helped her quietly, smoothed paths for her, even thought about how I could support her acting, career once I was stable again. I had believed that blood meant something.

Until the poisoning.

That single act had torn away all my illusions.

Standing there now, watching her perform remorse so smoothly, I felt nothing but clarity. This was who she was. And I had been foolish to expect anything else.

At the same time, something else became clear to me.

I finally understood how she had climbed from a C-list actress to the second female lead of a major production in such a short time. Why the director indulged her. Why the entire crew tiptoed around her moods.

I looked at Eric. That was when the realization hit me. Eric must have helped her.

It was him.

So it was

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He was the one backing her. The realization didn't shock **me as** much as I thought it would.

I didn't argue. I did not even respond to her apology.

Instead, I spoke calmly "I'll send you the list of medicine I bought," I said evenly, "along with the certificate for lost wages. Please pay them accordingly."

Then I turned to Eric and nodded politely.

"Thank you for today, Alpha Simpson," I said. "I need to go now."

There was no bitterness in my voice. No accusation. Just distance.

I stood up, ignoring the ache in my hand, and walked out of the lounge without looking back.

KATHY'S POV

The door closed behind Bella. The sound felt loud. Too loud.

The moment she was gone, the air in the lounge became suffocating. I turned toward Eric and froze. He was staring at me.....coldly.

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The look on his face wasn't anger. It wasn't jealousy either, It was worse than that. It was the look of someone reassessing a thing they had already grown tired of.

My heart skipped.

I forced a smile. "Eric... why are you looking at me like that?" I hesitated, then asked carefully, "By the way... you and my sister

do you know each other?"

"Why do you want to know?" Eric replied flatly. "Do you want to pry into that too?"

My throat tightened. "I—I was just curious. She's never mentioned you before."

"Of course she wouldn't," he said calmly. "She lives in a small house. She sweeps roads for a living. Today, she knelt and groveled in front of you again and again for three hundred and thirty dollars." His eyes got darker. "Why would she talk about that with you?"

I shivered.

This was the first time. The first time he had ever spoken to me

in such a tone.

“Eric...” I said weakly. “My sister and I... we had a

47.8

misunderstanding-”

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*) +3 Bonus

“What kind of misunderstanding,” he interrupted, “requires you to make her kneel over and over **again?**”

My breath hitched.

“I—I only wanted the film to look better,” I rushed out. “She

did it well, so I thought

letting her demonstrate would help everyone. I really didn’t mean to-”

“That’s enough.”

His voice cut through my excuses cleanly.

“Do you really think people will believe that?” he asked coldly. “Are you pretending to be foolish, or do you think I am?”

My face drained of color.

Eric reached out casually and took my wrist. My body stiffened.

On my wrist was a diamond—encrusted limited—
edition watch, worth over two million dollars.

“You feel powerful now, don’t you?” he said lightly. “Making your sister kneel. Showing her how much influence you have. Doing whatever you want because you know she can’t fight back.”

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My lips parted, but no words came out.

+3 Bonus

"I've given you quite a lot during this time," he continued calmly. "And others have given you even more, hoping you'd speak well of them in front of me. Pick any one of the things you're wearing right now. Your sister probably couldn't earn enough to buy it even after several years."

He paused. "Did you ever think about helping her?"

"I..." My eyes widened in panic.

I shook uncontrollably.

I had thought I was clever. I thought I was being subtle I had believed no one noticed how people fawned over me, how they slipped favors and gifts my way, hoping I would casually mention their names in front of Eric. I had even helped some of them.

I thought it was my secret. Now it lay exposed.

"You know why I never exposed you?" Eric said lightly. "Because it didn't matter to me." He smiled faintly. "You work hard acting in front of me. I paid you for it. That was fair."

My face burned. I felt humiliated.

6/8

09:00

"But," he continued, his expression turning dark, "I dislike

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people who forget their place."

He removed the watch from my wrist and let it dangle between his fingers.

"I can make you famous," he said quietly. "But that doesn't mean you can do whatever you want. The higher I lift you, the harder you will fall."

His fingers loosened. The watch hit the floor with a heavy sound. Cracks spread across its surface.

I gasped. In that moment, I felt my legs almost giving out.

“And don’t bother attending tonight’s party,” Eric added coldly as he turned to leave.

He walked out without another glance.

I stood frozen, staring at the watch on the ground.

This watch cost two million fucking dollars. The most expensive thing I had ever owned.

And he had dropped it as if it were nothing. As if I were nothing.

My fingers curled slowly into fists. 778

Outside, people could praise me, envy me, worship me. But to him?

I was disposable.

This was all Bella’s fault. My useless, wretched sister had ruined everything.

Tonight’s party was meant for the city’s wealthiest elites and most powerful pack members. I had ordered a custom dress from France just for it. It was my chance to rise higher, to secure connections, to shine.

And now I couldn’t go.

Bella would pay for this.

I swear to the goddess, she will.

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THIRD PERSON’S POV

The party hall was filled with noise and light.

Outside the grand entrance, journalists were packed tightly behind barricades, shouting names, raising cameras, fighting for even a single usable photo. Not everyone had the qualifications to enter such a party. Only the most influential media outlets were allowed inside. The rest could only wait outside, hoping that someone important would stop long enough for them to capture something valuable.

Camera shutters clicked nonstop. There were flashes everywhere.

Celebrities arrived one after another. Politicians stepped out with composed smiles. Powerful Alphas and elegant lunas appeared, surrounded by bodyguards. Luxury cars rolled in endlessly, lining up before the entrance. It looked as if wealth itself was on display.

Then a black Bentley stopped.

The moment the car came into view, a few seasoned journalists froze.

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They recognized the license plate. Without a word, they

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lowered their cameras.

No one needed to remind them.

The man inside did not like being photographed.

Among reporters, there was an unspoken rule – do not photograph Alpha Kane Stonewood. Even if you accidentally caught his face, never upload it. Never publish it. If you absolutely had to take a photo, make sure it was only his back.

Otherwise, the consequences weresevere and instant as well.

One inexperienced journalist ignored the warnings. He snapped a clear photo of Kane's face and uploaded it within minutes. Less than ten minutes later, the photo vanished from the internet, and the journalist lost his job.

It became another cautionary tale.

The Bentley door opened. A tall figure stepped out.

The crowd fell silent for a split second, then went wild. .

Gasps spread through the journalists. Even those who had sworn not to raise their cameras could not help staring. Kane Stonewood stood calmly beside the car.

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He was handsome in a way that defied logic. His features were beautiful, almost unreal, yet he carried an aura that made people lower their eyes. He was breathtaking.

When his eyes moved over the crowd, some journalists felt their hearts skip. Others felt a sudden chill crawl up their spines. They didn't understand why.

What they didn't know was that part of that reaction came from his alpha pressure. Right now, he kept it controlled but it was still overwhelming. Kane rarely released it. If he did, it would be disastrous.

He was surrounded immediately by his bodyguards and the venue's security team. His tall, powerful frame was wrapped in a perfectly tailored black suit. Kane's fashion sense had always been flawless. That was something even his critics agreed on.

Tonight, however, something was different. He had a light purple scarf on his neck. He wore matching gloves of the same colour.

The accessories were clearly not luxurious. The wool looked slightly rough. The stitching was uneven in places. They didn't look new. They looked handmade.

Whispers broke out among the reporters.

3/10

"Why does that scarf look... different?"

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"It's not his usual style."

"It looks old. Is it some kind of limited vintage piece?"

"Most men wouldn't pull off that color," another whispered. "But somehow, it suits him."

Some reporters secretly raised their cameras despite knowing better. One bodyguard took a step forward, clearly about to intervene.

Kane's eyes narrowed. He was wearing a half mask but his bodyguards could see his eyes and working with him for so long, they knew what each action meant. The bodyguard stopped instantly.

The reporter who had taken the photo felt his breath catch. His palms were damp. He waited, tense, until Kane disappeared into the venue. Only then did he dare to breathe.

Inside the hall, Kane became the center of attention without trying.

Music flowed softly. Crystal lights reflected off marble floors. Well-dressed guests turned toward him. Conversations paused. Eyes followed his every movement.

The elite ladies gathered nearby, pretending to chat while

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(*) +3 Bonus

stealing glances in his direction. Several found excuses to approach him.

Jonas walked over, grinning as he examined Kane from head to toe.

“You look sharp,” Jonas said honestly. “But that scarf and those gloves...they’re definitely not your usual style.”

Kane raised an eyebrow. “And what exactly is my style?”

Jonas laughed. “Not woolen gloves in a gentle color, that’s for sure.”

He leaned closer and lowered his voice. “Still, with your face, you could wear a sack and people would worship you.”

“Don’t exaggerate,” Kane replied coolly.

Jonas gestured toward the surrounding women. “Too late. Look at them. They’ve already forgotten I exist.”

Indeed, the daughters of powerful packs, even though they all admired Jonas, barely looked at him tonight. Their eyes were

fixed on Kane.

“Come on,” Jonas said. “Let’s make the rounds. I’ll introduce you.

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“No,” Kane replied flatly.

(40)

43 Bonus

Jonas groaned. “If you don’t move, they’ll swarm me instead. I’ll be annoyed to death.”

Kane rolled his eyes. That single motion caused several nearby women to sigh.

“Oh my God,” someone whispered. “Even that looks good.”

Jonas felt like coughing blood. As Kane slipped off his gloves, Jonas’s eyes landed on them. He paused, then suddenly grabbed one.

“These feel...” Jonas frowned. “They’re hand-knitted.”

Jonas got even more confused as he looked at them further

“The stitches aren’t even. The wool looks reused. Did someone cheat you?”

Kane looked at him. “Who said I bought them?”

Jonas froze. His mouth fell open.

“If you didn’t buy them...” His mind raced. “...then someone made them for you?”

Kane extended his hand calmly. “Give them back.” 6/10

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Jonas was about to comply when another voice cut in.

“Those gloves...”

Eric had walked over.

Jonas blinked. “You recognize them?”

“They’re handmade,” Eric said slowly, staring at the gloves.

Jonas muttered, “Yeah. I noticed.”

3 Bonus

Eric's eyes shifted to Kane. Those gloves were familiar. They looked like the exact gloves Bella dropped in his car.

"Are they from someone else?" Eric asked.

"Yes," Kane answered.

His eyes darkened as he studied Eric. "Have you seen them before?"

"Yes," Eric replied without hesitation.

The atmosphere shifted. Jonas felt it immediately. Something tightened in the air.

09:01

He hurried to break the tension. He changed the subject. "By

7/10 the way, Eric, why didn't you bring your new girlfriend

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tonight? I heard she caused quite a scene on set."

Eric glanced at him. "You hear a lot."

Jonas laughed. "Pure coincidence. I heard she made an extra kneel repeatedly. Then you carried the extra straight to the lounge. Pretty dramatic."

He grinned teasingly. "What, did you fall for the extra? Dumping this girlfriend already?"

"Yes," Eric said calmly.

He never looked away from Kane. The room seemed to darken.

A powerful pressure spread outward. It was invisible yet suffocating. Humans shifted uneasily, feeling unsettled for no clear reason. The wolves present froze instantly.

Kane was furious.

"Hey-" Jonas stepped closer, lowering his voice. "Kane. Calm down. I don't know what pissed you off but this isn't the place."

Kane ignored him. Instead, he looked at Eric.

"Is the extra your girlfriend's sister?" Kane asked.

09:01

8/10,

“Yes,” Eric replied. “Quite a coincidence, isn’t it?”

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Kane’s lips curved into a smile but it wasn’t warm, Kane was boiling on the inside.

“Yes,” he said softly. “What a coincidence.”

Then he turned and walked toward the exit.

Jonas stared after him, stunned. “He’s... leaving? Already?”

Eric watched Kane’s back with a heavy expression. Jonas had no idea what was going on. Everything was fine one **minute** and then the next, they both looked like they wanted to rip each other’s throats out.

Jonas scratched his head. “Did I miss something?”

Eric looked away. “Some coincidences,” he said quietly, “aren’t coincidences at all.”

Chapter 196

BELLA’S POV

G

9 min left

I sat on the edge of the small dining table with my takeaway box open in front of me, eating slowly while scrolling through my phone. The room was quiet but I didn’t mind at all.

I had learned to enjoy silence. It felt earned.

A video started playing on its own on Instagram. It was a live stream.

An influencer stood outside a brightly lit venue. Even from the video, I could hear the sound of music and people talking coming through the open doors behind her. She wore heavy makeup and an excited smile, holding her phone at just the right angle.

“Alright, everyone,” she said brightly, waving at the screen. “I’m outside tonight’s charity fundraising party. All the big names are already inside. Here, we have the biggest celebrities, politicians, pack leaders – you name

it.” 1/10

20:35

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9 min left

She laughed and leaned closer to the camera. “Sadly, I can’t get in, but don’t go anywhere. I’ll be waiting right here. Who knows? Maybe someone important will come out.”

I chewed my rice slowly, only half-listening. I wasn’t interested in celebrities. After prison, glamour had lost its shine. People like that lived in a different world. They were all untouched by consequences.

Why should I be bothered about them? We live in two different worlds. They don’t do anything for me. I’d never been the type to fawn over someone anyway. For me, this was just pure entertainment since I was bored.

“Why don’t you guys wait with me?” the influencer continued, striking playful poses. “Let’s test our luck tonight.”

Comments rolled quickly across the screen.

“OMG! Who *do you think is gonna* be the first person *you* interview?”

“Can we see Ashley *Harton’s dress*? I heard *it’s rare*”

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“*I wish I was there. You’re so lucky!*”

9 min left

The comments kept coming in. Names, fire emojis and hearts appeared on the screen. People kept guessing about who might appear.

She laughed and set up a poll. “Alright, vote now. Who do you think I’ll bump into?”

I shook my head then took another bite. This was just background noise while I ate.

Then a voice off-camera said urgently, “Someone’s coming out.”

The influencer froze. She looked a bit nervous “What?

Already?”

She spun the camera around so fast the image blurred. “Oh! Someone’s leaving already. That was quick. Is it an emergency ? Nobody ever leaves this early. Is something wrong?”

She grinned. Even from the screen, I could feel her excitement bubbling over. “Let’s zoom in. Come on, Please be someone good.”

20:35

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#

I paused mid-bite. A man stepped out of the venue.

9 min left

He walked quickly. His steps looked confident, even through the screen. He had a calm but dominant presence. Even through the phone screen, there was something about him that made the crowd outside go quiet..

As he came closer, the camera caught more detail. He wore a perfectly tailored black suit that had clean lines. He had long legs and neat hair.

He turned his head slightly towards the camera as he walked then my breath caught. The rice in my mouth nearly went down the wrong way.

It was Kane. My fingers tightened around my phone.

He wore a mask, but I would have recognized those eyes anywhere. They were dark and intense. They carried a cold patience that didn’t belong to ordinary men.

Slowly, he pulled his mask down as he walked. It looked like he had no idea anyone was watching.

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9 min left

Around his neck was a light purple scarf. On his hands. were gloves in the same color.

They didn't match the suit at all. These were the things I made for him. Why did he wear them on designer clothes?

The comments exploded.

"WHO IS THAT?"

"OH MY GOD HE'S TALL."

"Those eyes???"

"Why does he look dangerous and hot at the same time?"

"Zoom in!! ZOOM IN!!!"

My chest felt tight.

Why was he there? And why was he leaving so early? And why was he wearing the stuff I made for him on such an important night? Those items were cheap. They were nothing compared to what he might have.

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9 min left

The influencer beamed at the screen. "Wow, everyone's excited. Alright, let's go say hello. I hope this gentleman doesn't mind a quick interview."

She took a few eager steps forward but the camera didn't move.

She stopped and turned back, laughing. "What's wrong? Is our cameraman already tired?"

There was a pause.

Then a shaky voice came from behind the phone. "T-That's Alpha Kane. That man is Alpha Kane Stonewood."

The influencer froze. Her eyes widened in shock.

“What?” she said. Her expression was filled with disbelief.

She stared at Kane again, really looked this time. Her smile vanished. Her face drained of color.

“Cut it,” she shouted suddenly. “Turn it off. Stop filming

now!” 6/10

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9 min left

But it was too late. The live stream had already gone wild.

“ALPHA KANE STONEWOOD???”

“WAIT THAT’S HIM???”

“OH MY GOD HE’S REAL.”

“I’VE SEEN HIS FACE.”

“HE’S BEAUTIFUL.”

“MY HUSBAND.”

“NO HE’S MY HUSBAND.”

“I’LL FIGHT YOU ALL.”

The screen flooded with chaos before the live stream abruptly ended.

I sat there, frozen, phone still in my hand. My heart beat faster than it should have. A few minutes later, curiosity got the better of me. I searched.

36heone had already reuploaded the clip.

20:35

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The video showed Kane stepping out of the venue, walking quickly. The comments were already in the thousands.

People dissected every second.

"Why did he leave so early?"

"Look at his steps. He's walking faster than normal."

"Something urgent must've happened."

"Is the Stonewood Group in trouble?"

"Could it be his grandfather?"

Others argued.

"No way. He looks angry."

"Probably argued with someone inside."

"Did you see all the women around him earlier?"

"He probably escaped."

8/10

8 min left

20:35

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8 min left

I scrolled quietly. On the outside, my expression looked calm but my thoughts were restless.

I knew Kane. He didn't leave places without reason. And he didn't lose control easily.

So why now? What went wrong?

I was still reading when a knock sounded at the door.

I stiffened. Who could that be? No one ever came this

late.

I set my phone down and stood, walking to the door cautiously. I did this out of habit. Prison never really leaves you.

I opened it. And stopped breathing.

“Ahem-“I choked, coughing as my throat tightened.

Heat rushed to my face.

Standing outside my door, calm and powerful looking even in the narrow hallway, was the man the entire 9/10

20:35

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internet was losing its mind over.

Kane.

Coin Package: **get** more free bonus

Chapter 197

BELLA'S POV

#B

I had not expected Kane to appear at my door at this hour.

8 min left

The moment I saw him, my throat tightened. I choked before I could even say a word. My body reacted before my mind caught up.

He looked even more breathtaking in his suit

up close.

He frowned slightly and stepped closer at once. His hand came up, patting my back in a slow rhythm, guiding my breathing like a doctor would. His touch was warm. It calmed me in a way I couldn't explain.

“What's wrong?” he asked in a low voice. “Why are you choking like that? Do you have a cold?”

I shook my head, coughing again. It was not a cold. It was him. Standing there. So suddenly. So close. He was the only man who could have this effect on me.

20:35

finally caught my breath and looked up at him. Why

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why are you here?"

He raised a brow. "Why? Can't I be here?"

8 min left

The answer was obvious. He owned the cabin. I pressed my lips together and said nothing.

He stepped inside and shut the door behind him. The small space immediately felt different. Kane had that effect. Wherever he stood, the air seemed heavier, tighter, like the room had learned his presence and adjusted itself around him. His aura was that dominant.

His eyes dropped to my left hand. It was red and swollen.

His eyes darkened. "How did you hurt your hand?" he asked. "Was it when you were working as an extra?"

Before I could answer, he reached for my wrist and lifted my hand. His fingers hovered, about to touch the swelling.

"Don't touch it," I blurted out. "I just applied ointment."

His fingers paused, then tightened slightly around my

wrist! His touch wasn't painful but firm. His eyes stayed

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fixed on the injury, like he was memorizing it.

8 min left

"It was hit by a prop," I said lightly, as if it were nothing.

Then it hit me.

I looked at him in surprise. "You know I went to be an extra today?"

He didn't answer immediately. His eyes then shifted to my forehead.

I felt it before I realized what he was looking at. The

bruise.

His frown deepened. "This too?" he asked quietly. "From kneeling today?"

His finger brushed the edge of the bruise. I winced in pain. It still hurt me a bit.

"Ouch." I sucked in a breath.

"Does it hurt?" he asked in a low tone.

Of course, it did. I glared at him. I could feel my eyes

< Chapter 197

watering slightly.

8 min left

He let out a short, humorless laugh. "Good. Very good, Bella."

I froze. What did he mean by that?

"I wanted you to stay," he continued coldly. "You refused so quickly. I thought you had dignity, a backbone. And now?" His eyes bored into mine. "Was it fun being an extra? Being pushed around like that?"

I stared at him, stunned. I was the one who had been hurt. Why was he angry at me?

"I wasn't playing," I said after a pause.

"Not playing?" he said. "Then why did you go? What set? What were you thinking? Do you want to be a star?"

I shook my head, but he didn't stop.

"If you wanted that, you could've told me," he said coldly. "I can make you one. You don't need to kneel. You don't need to grovel. You don't need to hurt yourself."

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8 min left

I felt the pressure around me change. His presence got darker, heavier.

“Kneeling again and again,” he said slowly. “For your sister.”

I took a step back without thinking. How did he know all this? He seemed to be aware of everything that happened on set today. He stepped forward.

I retreated until my back hit the wall. There was nowhere left to go. He planted his hands on either side of me, caging me in. His body was close enough that I could feel his heat.

“Tell me,” he said quietly. “Was it fun?”

His eyes were dark. I could see the anger in them.

I swallowed. My heart pounded, not only from fear but from something else I didn’t want to name.

He lifted his hand again and touched my forehead. I gasped.

He watched my reaction closely. “Good,” he said again, :35

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almost mockingly. “At least you feel pain.”

I glared at him. “You’re angry at the wrong person.”

8 min left

“Am I?” His voice was sharp. “You humiliated yourself for that.”

“For 330 dollars,” I said suddenly.

He paused. “For what?”

“Three hundred and thirty dollars,” I repeated, lifting my chin. “One hundred and thirty for being an extra. Two hundred for kneeling. That’s why.”

His eyes got even darker. In that moment, I almost regretted my words. Almost.

“You did that for 330 dollars?” he asked slowly.

“Yes.”

His jaw tightened. “Why didn’t you come to me?”

“I’d have to pay something back,” I said calmly. “Nothing for free.”

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"You think I'd ask for payment?"

8 min left

"I don't want to owe anyone," I said. "I can earn money with my own hands. I don't need to be afraid of it."

His eyes searched my face. "Do I scare you?"

I hesitated. What do I even say to them? Maybe? I wasn't sure of that answer. All that I knew was that, with him standing so close to me, my body felt alive in a way it

never has with any other man. My heart beat was literally pounding. I had goosebumps all over my arms due to how close we were.

It was all because of him.

"I know what this is," I said quietly. "You're curious. One day you'll be bored."

His expression darkened.

"And if I offend you?" I continued. "Will I end up like before?"

His eyes narrowed. "You're afraid?"

7/10

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"Yes," I admitted. "But I'll still say it."

"Do you think I'll hurt you?" he asked.

I looked at him, straight in his dark eyes "Will you?"

Silence fell.

8 min left

I smiled bitterly. "What role do I even have by your side? Sister? Toy? Either way, I don't belong."

He suddenly smiled. It was a dangerous smile.

He leaned closer, brushing my cheek with his fingers.

“Then let’s see,” he said softly. “Who gives up first?”

My breath hitched. My heart race picked up even more. It felt like the air went still.

“Will I stop wanting you,” he continued, “or will you be the one begging me to stay?”

My knees felt weak. His presence pressed into me. He felt overwhelming, intoxicating.

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Then he stepped away.

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8 min **left**

He walked to the table, pulled out a chair, and sat down calmly, as if nothing had happened.

I let out a shaky breath. I felt my sweat breaking out on my palms.

He reached for my phone.

I froze. “What are you—”

Too late.

He glanced at the screen and raised a brow. “Looking me up?”

I flushed. “I just-”

“If you’re curious,” he said, “ask me.”

I changed the subject quickly. “You left early. Doesn’t that matter?”

“It was just a party,” he replied. “By the way, you need to 9/10

20:36

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eat.”

8 min left

He nodded toward my food. He had noticed that I was eating before he came. Honestly, I had lost my appetite. but there was no need to argue with Kane.

I sat down slowly and continued eating. I was aware of his eyes on me the entire time.

“I need to leave soon,” he said casually.

I nodded. The air felt thick. My face burned. Even swallowing felt awkward. This wasn’t the first time I was eating in front of him. Still, it felt....weird. Especially with him watching me.

Then he spoke again.

“Sis,” he said calmly. “Do you like Eric Simpson?”

Chapter 198

BELLA’S POV

Poof.

The rice I had not swallowed burst out of my mouth.

I coughed violently, choking as grains scattered across the table and onto him.

“I—I’m sorry!” I said in a panic. I reached out at once, brushing at his suit, trying to wipe away the mess. My hands trembled. I was mortified.

He caught my wrist easily. He did it calmly. He didn’t look bothered at all.

“Sis,” he said quietly, “you still haven’t answered me.”

I froze. He was still asking that same damn question. How did he even know that Eric and I knew each other?

“Do you like Eric?” he asked again.

Hooked at him blankly. My mind went empty for a

20:36

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second.

8 min left

Like Eric? Why would he ask that? How did he even know I knew Eric?

I had never mentioned Eric to him. Not once.

Questions flooded my head all at once. My silence made his brows twitch slightly. It was a subtle movement, but dangerous.

He moved closer to me. slowly, he raised his hand and touched my lips with his finger. My breath hitched. I felt like I couldn't move even if I tried.

"Do you?" he asked again.

His voice was gentle. Too gentle. It carried a kind of danger that settled straight into my bones. His voice

alone made me shiver a bit.

"I... I have nothing to do with him," I said quickly. "Why are you asking this?"

I

turned my head, trying to avoid his touch. His fingers immediately slid to my jaw, fixing my face in place. 20:36

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8 min left

Before I could react, he lowered his head and pressed his lips lightly against mine.

The kiss wasn't rough. It was slow but it stole my breath all the same. I tried to resist but who was I kidding? The heat radiating from his body was enough to make me compliant. I wanted this.

I moved

my lips against his slowly. But before I could get into it, he stopped. My lips parted, breathing heavily.

"If there's nothing," he said against my lips, "then why did he carry you to the lounge today?"

I stared at him, stunned.

He knew. My heart sank hard.

He pulled back just enough to look at me. His eyes were dark and unreadable.

“Why are you surprised?” he asked. He sounded a bit amused. “Do you think nothing reaches me when that many people were watching?”

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8 min left

His lips moved closer again. They were hovering against mine, almost touching.

My face burned. It took everything in me not to lean in

and claim his lips. I wanted him so badly. Just one more move and we would kiss again.

I had to restrain myself.

“Don’t...” I whispered. I felt flustered and helpless.

He paused, looking into my eyes.

“Then explain,” he said calmly. “How do you know him?”

The command sank deep. I could feel it in my chest.

“It was because of a bracelet,” I said hurriedly. “Someone stole it. They ran into me, and it fell into my pocket. He wanted it back. That’s how we met.”

His eyes narrowed slightly. “Is that all?”

“Yes.”

44 many times have you seen him?”

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8 min left

I swallowed. My heart pounded. I hadn’t really counted the times I saw Eric but I couldn’t tell Kane

that. He wanted answers. I thought about it mentally and counted our meetings in my head.

“Four times,” I said quickly. “Once for the bracelet. Once

when he invited me to eat. Once at the county office. Once at the hospital when my grandmother was there. Today was the fourth.”

He leaned closer.

“Do you like him?” he asked again.

The same question. This man sure was persistent.

“No,” I said firmly. “I told you, I have nothing to do with him.”

I forced myself to stay calm. “He’s an Alpha. He’s wealthy and powerful. I’m wolfless. I clean streets for a living. We’re not from the same world.”

In my eyes, the question made no sense at all.

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He chuckled softly. “And what about me?” he asked.

7 min left

Before I could answer, his lips brushed the corner of my mouth. He did it slowly. As he brushed his lips with mine, he picked up a stray grain of rice with his lips.

My entire body stiffened. My blood surged.

He was too close. Too calm. Too dangerous.

“What if Eric is attracted to you?” he asked quietly. “Would you like him then?”

My mind went blank. I didn’t know what to say to that.

“Well?” he murmured.

I placed my hands on his chest, but
I couldn't push him away. It was like trying to move a wall.

"No," I said quickly. "I wouldn't."

His voice dropped lower. "You shouldn't lie to me."

The warning beneath his words sent a chill through me.

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"Never like Eric," he said. "Understand?"

My body went rigid. It wasn't a statement. It was an order. His tone was soft, but there was no room for negotiation.

It was absurd.

7 min left

He was the one who blurred lines. The
one who pulled me in. And now he was asking me not
to lie to him while he lied to me throughout our stay together. How ironic.

"I don't like him now," I said, forcing the words out. "But I don't know if I'll ever—"

I didn't get to finish. His lips crashed down on mine, cutting me off completely.

I gasped, and he deepened the kiss.

My hands lifted, trying to push him away. He caught my right wrist
easily. I raised my left without thinking, he pressed down.

Pain shot through my injured hand. 7/10

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"It hurts!" I cried out.

&

7 min left

The sound broke me. He took advantage of it instantly. The kiss deepened as my mouth opened. I was

overwhelmed, breathless, dizzy. My mind knew I should resist.

My body betrayed me. I kissed him back.

I didn't know how long it lasted. Seconds. Minutes. It felt like I had been pulled under water. Our mouths moved against each other passionately.

When he finally let go, my legs gave out. I nearly slid off the chair.

His arm wrapped around my waist, steadying me. His other hand lifted my injured one carefully.

"Did I hurt you, Sis?" he asked quietly.

I bit my lip and glared at him. "Why did you do that?"

"Because," he said calmly, "I don't like hearing things I don't want to hear."

8/10

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He smiled. He looked so beautiful in that moment.

7 min left

"I don't mind kissing you again," he added, "if you plan to say more."

I shut my mouth immediately. He looked at the swelling on my hand.

"This needs proper care," he said. "Staying here isn't suitable."

My heart skipped. "What do you mean?"

"Come to my place," he said simply. "Stonewood Residence."

I stared at him in shock "What?"

"There are many rooms and servants. You won't need to lift a finger."

“No,” I refused at once. “I won’t go.”

His expression cooled instantly.

You don’t want to?” he asked.

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I swallowed hard. “You said you wouldn’t force me.”

7 min left

“I won’t,” he replied calmly. “But this is recovery. I don’t want to worry about you.”

He smiled slightly. “Do you want me to worry?”

He looked at me with those intense eyes on his. I understood then. Refusal was pointless. He wasn’t forcing me but I couldn’t refuse either. If he wanted something, he would get it.

In the end, I whispered the words I had no strength left to fight.

“Alright. I’ll go.

c 199

BELLA’S POV

I didn’t have much to pack.

I folded a few changes of clothes into my old duffel bag, moving slowly. Everything I owned fit easily inside it. When I reached for my toiletries, Kane stopped me with a calm voice from behind.

“They’re all available at Stonewood,” he said. “You don’t need to bring any.”

I hesitated, then nodded. He was right. I’m sure Kane had everything in his mansion. The thought of it was surreal.

A

few months ago, I thought this cabin was all he had. How stupid of me. The more I thought of it, the more I felt foolish.

When I zipped the bag, he looked at the clothes inside and frowned. “You don’t need to bring these either. You can wear new ones there,”

Of course, he had clothes there too. What didn't they 20:36

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have there?

"I'm used to these," I replied quietly. "They're comfortable."

7 min left

For a moment, he studied me. His eyes were dark but had no emotion. Then he said nothing more.

"Take them," he said at last.

When I bent to lift the bag, his hand reached out first. He picked it up effortlessly.

"I'll carry it." he said.

I followed him out of the cabin. The narrow hallway suddenly felt smaller. Kane had a way of swallowing space up even without trying. As I walked behind him, I couldn't help watching his back. Kane was unpredictable. One moment he was gentle and the next, he carried an invisible pressure that made people lower their heads. I didn't know what version of him to expect these days.

i

Now I was going back to Stonewood Residence with him.

That thought made my chest tighten.

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What exactly were we now?

7 min left

I didn't belong in his world. I had never belonged anywhere powerful or glorious. I wondered when this strange entanglement would end. Would it only stop when he grew bored of me?

As I stared at him, my eyes landed on the scarf around his neck. I had knitted it myself. It was made of nothing but old wool. It was nothing expensive. Nothing special.

Yet he had worn it openly to a party full of elites.

I remembered the comments I had seen online later. People kept wondering where he got it from. I could imagine how surprised and confused they would have been. They kept speculating about luxury brands. People assumed it was made by famous designers or a limited edition.

They had no idea.

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No one had thought that it might have been made by an ordinary woman with rough hands and cheap yarn. An ex convict, for that matter.

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I smiled bitterly at the thought.

7 min left

Perhaps Kane was right. It didn't matter who made it. What mattered was whether he chose to wear it.

Outside the building, the familiar black car waited. Jayden stepped out quickly and took the duffel bag from Kane with both hands.

Kane turned around. I was still standing a few steps behind him.

"What's wrong?" he asked. "Come."

He extended his hand toward me. I bit my lip. For a second, I hesitated. In the end, I did not take it.

His brows furrowed together. He withdrew his hand

without comment.

As I bent to get into the car, he bent down with me. His lips brushed close to my ear. His voice was low.

"You may not want to hold my hand today," he said, "but sooner or later, you won't want to let go."

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7 min left

My body went rigid. For a moment, I couldn't breathe. His words sent a shiver down my back. I swallowed hard.

I sat down, feeling my heart pounding wildly. Kane's hand rested on his own knee, close to mine.

Sooner or later? What did he mean by that? He seemed pretty confident that I would want him soon.

I looked away, staring out the window, afraid of what that possibility might mean.

The car drove for what felt like hours. At the end, the car moved through massive gates that opened slowly. Beautiful trees lined the road, filling up the driveway. I felt as like I was entering a world sealed away from time. This estate was huge. It seemed like a whole different place.

When the Stonewood Residence finally appeared, my breath caught.

There were wolf head sculptures on the rooftops. They were all carved with fierce detail. They watched silently, as if alive. There was a huge water fountain in the center. 5/10

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The mansion was white with gold designs on it. The driveway could fit a thousand people. There were so many expensive cars.

7 min left

I had seen luxury before. Damien Silverwood's place was impressive. It was modern. But this was different.

This was not just wealth. This was authority.

I could feel waves of power in the air. The place alone could make you submit. I didn't know how to explain it.

The car stopped in front of the main house. Kane stepped out and took my hand, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. This time, I took his hand and he led me inside.

The inside was even more beautiful than the outside. I had to close my mouth, so as not to appear awkward.

Inside, I felt eyes on me immediately.

"Young Master." A voice said.

An older man approached us. He was dressed in a simple Sulit.

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7 min left

"This is Bella," Kane said simply. "She'll be staying here for a few days."

Then he turned to me. "This is Uncle Wes. He manages the house. If you need anything, go to him."

Uncle Wes studied me carefully. There was surprise in his eyes, but no disrespect.

"Hello, Uncle Wes," I said politely.

"Miss Jameson," he replied warmly. "Please let me know if you need anything."

He already knew my name? Why am I not surprised?

"You can call me Bella," I said, feeling awkward.

He smiled. "As the Young Master's guest, I must address you properly."

I didn't insist. He wouldn't listen to me anyway.

"I won't be here long," I reminded myself silently.

7/10

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7 min left

“Show her the rooms,” Kane said. “Let her choose.”

“Any room is fine,” I said quickly.

Uncle Wes glanced at Kane.

“The annex on the third floor,” Kane said lightly.

The annex? What was that? I didn’t ask. I followed Uncle Wes upstairs.

When he opened the door, I paused.

The room was large and softly lit. It looked feminine. The walls were pink and so were the curtains and the bedsheets. Vintage furniture filled the space. Everything felt like luxury. This was every girl’s dream room.

“Your necessities will be sent shortly,” Uncle Wes said. “If you have preferences, please tell me.”

I looked at the room in awe. I had never seen a space as big as this. It was double the size of the cabin.

“No,” I said. “This is fine.”

8/10

20:37

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7 min left

After he left, servants arrived quickly. They changed the sheets, arranged toiletries, and brought up my duffel bag. When I was alone, I unpacked slowly.

As I opened the closet, my breath stopped. A wedding dress hung inside.

It was old—fashioned. It looked carefully preserved in a transparent dust bag. The design was exquisite. Whoever made it had poured patience into every stitch.

Who had worn this? Or had it never been worn at all?

I turned away, feeling unsettled, and noticed another door.

When I opened it, I froze.

The room beyond was entirely different. It was cold and dark. Blue and black tones dominated the space. It had modern furniture.

It felt empty.

I stood there, my heart beating slowly. 9/10

20:37

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7 min left

The two rooms were connected. And somehow, I knew without being told-

One room was meant for me. The other belonged to Kane.

The door remained open between them.

Write your comment

c 200

BELLA'S POV

7 min left

I moved quietly toward the bedside table in the cold, dark room. I didn't why my steps slowed down. I only knew that something about this place made my nerves spiral.

In front of me, I noticed a picture frame, I took it to look at it.

As soon as I saw it, I froze. The person in the photo was

1. me.

My breath caught in my throat as I lifted the frame closer. It was unmistakably my face, my profile, my hair falling loosely over my shoulders. Yet I had no memory of ever taking such a picture. My eyes in the photo were not looking at the camera. I was turned slightly to the side, as if caught mid-thought, unaware I was being watched.

My heart began to pound.

Who took this? Why was it here? And whose room was this really?

1/7

20:37

< Chapter 200

7 min left

Before I could think further, there was a soft click behind

1. me.

The door opened. I looked up and flinched in shock.

Kane stood there.

"Well," he said calmly, closing the door behind him, "it seems like you already figured out that the two rooms are connected. I was wondering how long it would take."

He walked toward me slowly. His steps were as confident as ever. His eyes landed on the picture frame in my hand, and his lips curved a bit.

"What do you think?" he asked.

I tightened my grip on the frame. My heart was pounding so loud in my chest that I thought he could hear it. My stomach felt tight.

"Why is there a picture of me here?" I asked.

He reached out and took it from my hands with ease, placing it back on the bedside table as if it belonged there. I was shocked. I didn't know what to say or even what to

< Chapter 200

think.

&

7 min left

"I took it," he said simply. Then, after a pause, he added in a lower voice, "When I can't see you, I miss you."

The last word made my heart race even more. My chest felt heavy with something I didn't want to name.

My whole body felt tight. I forced myself to stay calm. "Is this... your room?"

"It is," he replied, nodding once.

My lips pressed together.

"Then," I said slowly, "get me another room."

He looked at me, genuinely amused. "Why? Didn't you say any room would do?"

His eyes darkened "We've shared worse arrangements than this. You slept above me. I slept beneath you. We stayed in the same room for months as a married couple. There wasn't even a door back then."

My face warmed instantly.

20:37

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7 min left

The memory came without warning. I remembered all the times we slept together in the cabin. The creaking bed frame. Looking down and seeing him lying on the floor, one arm behind his head, eyes closed. Even in the cold, that place had felt warm.

Back then, I could approach him freely. Now, every step felt dangerous.

Why? Because he wasn't the person I thought he was.

"Sis," he said suddenly.

He bent closer, and I noticed the change in his eyes. The playfulness in his eyes faded. His eyes got darker and something about the change made my breath hitch. The air felt thick. It felt like the air was seized from my lungs.

"Don't look at a man like that," he said quietly.

I startled and took a step back, but his arm slipped

around my waist, stopping me instantly. His hand was firm, possessive, leaving no room for escape. His touch burned my skin....in the best way possible.

4/7

20:37

< Chapter 200

7 min left

"1—it's late," I said quickly. "I need to wash up. I'm going to bed."

My body was stiff. My heart raced. I was afraid he would kiss me like he had before, without warning, without mercy. And honestly? A part of me looked forward to it. A part of me wanted it. And that was what I was afraid of.

"Is it?" he asked.

He looked at me intensely.

I felt

as though he could see straight through me. He looked at me like he could see every thought, every weakness, every lie I told myself. His eyes were beautiful and dangerous, like deep water. It felt like I was drowning

in them.

I

couldn't hold his gaze. I lowered my head. It was all....too much. My body was out of control just by looking at him.

For a moment, there was silence between us.

Then he released me.

5/7

20:37

< Chapter 200

7 min left

"It's late," he said lightly. A small smile returned to his lips. "Go wash up."

Relief rushed through me so fast my knees nearly buckled. I turned quickly and left his room without looking back..

Inside my own room, I went straight to the bathroom and shut the door. For a minute, I leaned against the door, breathing heavily. I stared at my reflection in the mirror.

My cheeks were flushed. My lips were red, swollen, almost shining.

My eyes looked soft and hazy, nothing like the guarded expression I thought I wore so well.

No wonder he warned me. I turned on the tap and splashed cold water onto my face, breathing deeply.

What was wrong with me?

I should have been afraid of him. Kane was dangerous. His words could lift me up or crush me without effort. He could toy with me and discard me whenever he pleased.

He lied to me for months. He was a whole different person

< Chapter 200

person from what I thought he was.

6 min left

And yet, when he stood close, when his breath brushed my ear, I lost control.

I gripped the edge of the sink. Even if he called me “sis,” I knew the truth.

In his world, I was nothing more than a temporary piece on a board he controlled completely.

I was just a pawn in his game. I couldn’t mean anything to him, could I? If I did, why did he lie to me for so long?

I had so many questions and no answers.

I stared at myself until the water ran cold.

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