

# Through Rising Fog We Walk Paths Unknown Yet Comforting

Chapter 291

BELLA'S POV

Kane and Thomas took turns driving.

At first, Kane was behind the wheel. He didn't speak much while driving. He just focused on the road ahead. After about an hour, they stopped at a rest area, and Thomas took over. The switch was smooth. The two of them didn't even have to say anything to each other.

It was as if the two men had already formed an unspoken understanding.

I sat in the back seat with Tara.

The scenery outside the window slowly changed. The tall buildings of Byron City faded into flatter land, quieter roads, and unfamiliar signs.

~This is it, I thought. I'm finally facing the past.

By the time we arrived at the detention center, it was already past nine in the morning.

1/10

The building looked cold. It had one

16:41

+16 Bonus

< Chapter 291

gates. There were guards standing outside. Everything about the place reminded me of confinement. It

reminded me of prison. The thought made me sweat.

Calm down, Bella, I told myself. You're not the one being detained.

Thomas had already made arrangements in advance. We were led inside smoothly and brought to a room

next to the meeting room. The room was quiet. Several large screens were mounted on the wall, all displaying live footage of the meeting room next door.

—

I could see everything clearly – The table. The chairs. The cold white walls.

I swallowed.

This was where the witness would sit. This was where the truth might finally come out or remain buried.

After a short while, the mediator entered our room.

He looked calm and experienced. He was dressed neatly. His expression was professional. He greeted us briefly before turning his attention to me.

16:41

+16 Bonus

< Chapter 291

“Ms. Jameson,” he said politely. “Let’s go through the key questions again.”

I nodded and took out my notes.

As I spoke to him, my voice remained steady, but my heart was pounding hard in my chest. I

explained what I needed to know, what I wanted clarified, and what details mattered most to me.

“Focus on the source of his money,” I said. “Especially the house. Five million is not something an ordinary man can earn easily.”

The mediator nodded thoughtfully.

“I’ve already considered that angle,” he said. “I’ll guide the conversation naturally. Don’t worry.”

I felt a small wave of relief. Thomas really did find someone capable.

After our discussion ended, the mediator left our room and entered the meeting room next door.

I bleated forward. I felt even more nervous. My heart was 1

pounding harder now. My eyes were practically glued to

+16 Bonus

< Chapter 291

the screen.

A few minutes later, the door of the meeting room opened and two police officers walked in.

Between them was a man – Ted Peterson.

The moment I saw his face, my breath caught.

It's him.

Of course, I recognized him.

How could I forget?

This was the man who had stood in court three years ago and said, without hesitation, that he saw me drug Sophia's drink the night of the banquet. He said he even tried to tell me to stop but I ignored him.

I remembered his voice. When saying those things, he - sounded so certain. I begged him to say the truth but

he insisted that he wasn't lying. He sounded so sure of himself that I even started to doubt my own memory.

remembered standing there, numb, listening as he described events as if he had lived them himself.

16:41

+16 Bonus

< Chapter 291

And because of him and many others like him, I had been sent to prison.

Why...?

The question echoed in my mind.

Why would you lie like that?

Back then, I asked myself this question countless times. No one answered me.

Now, as I stared at the screen, my nails dug into my palms.

Will I finally get an answer today?

The mediator began speaking. His tone was relaxed, almost casual, as if this were a normal negotiation.

He talked about minimizing impact, settling disputes, - and resolving matters quietly. Slowly, he guided the

conversation away from compensation and toward Ted's personal life.

"Mr. Peterson," the mediator said calmly, "I heard yo1%00:41

+16 Bonus

< Chapter 291

live in a very nice house now."

Ted's posture stiffened a bit. He looked tense, like he knew where this was going.

"Yes," he replied. "I worked hard for it."

"A house worth five million," the mediator continued lightly. "That's impressive."

Ted frowned. "I earned it by helping my friend with his business."

"I see," the mediator nodded. "But the people you injured are demanding compensation. You're sure you don't have more than a hundred thousand?"

Ted's voice suddenly rose. "Of course not! I don't have a million lying around! I worked my butt off for that house!"

The mediator leaned back slightly.

"You're sure it's not dirty money?" he asked calmly. "If those people find out it's illegal, you'll lose much more than five million."

16:41

+16 Bonus

< Chapter 291

Ted's eyes changed. They flickered. Just for a second but I saw it.

My heart skipped.

“No,” Ted said quickly. “I earned my money honestly.”

The mediator nodded as if accepting the answer. Then he shifted the topic smoothly.

“I went to your parents’ house yesterday,” he said. “They speak Byron City’s dialect. Are they from Byron City?”

Ted hesitated before replying. “Yes. They used to live there.”

“So did you?” the mediator asked casually. “Why move to Melgrad?”

Ted shrugged. “Big cities stress me out. Melgrad is more comfortable.”

“That’s true,” the mediator smiled “Oh, by the way-”

My heart beat got even faster. It felt like my heart would jump out of my chest any minute.

16:41

+16 Bonus

< Chapter 291

“The man you fought mentioned Miss Monroe,” the mediator said. “He said if you don’t pay, he’ll expose everything.”

Ted froze. His face turned pale.

“I don’t know what he’s talking about,” Ted said stiffly. “Miss Monroe was a victim in a case. She was a famous socialite in Byron City. She died because she was poisoned.”

He swallowed and continued, almost hurriedly.

“That’s why having bad intentions is dangerous. If that woman wasn’t so envious, Miss Monroe wouldn’t have

died.”

I felt a pain stab my chest.

There it is again. The same accusation. The same certainty.

“Why would that man mention Miss Monroe?” Ted added, pretending to be confused.

“I don’t know,” the mediator replied calmly. “Maybe you

can ask him when you’re out.”

+16 Bonus

< Chapter 291

The conversation dragged on. They kept talking. no matter how the mediator tried, Ted did not crack.

Eventually, the mediator left the meeting room and returned to us.

“I’m sorry,” he said as he walked into the room. He looked defeated somehow “I couldn’t get anything

useful.”

As soon as he said those words, I felt disappointed. I felt my heart sink to my stomach.

“It’s fine,” I replied softly.

I had expected this. If the truth were easy to uncover, I wouldn’t have spent three years in prison.

Still... some things stood out.

The house. Five million. Helping a friend’s business? It -didn’t make sense.

After the mediator left, Thomas spoke.

I checked the money trail,” he said. “Five million was

was 6:41

+16 Bonus

< Chapter 291

deposited into Ted’s account by a friend. But we still need to find out why.”

Tara scoffed. “A regular employee earning five million? Please.”

“We’ll investigate further,” Thomas said.

“I’ll have people look into it,” Kane said calmly.

Then he turned to me. He held my hand in his as he looked into my eyes.

“You don’t have to worry,” he said. “If you want to clear your name, I’ll help you.”

I stared at him in disbelief. Kane really believed me? The fact that he did was shocking.

Tara clapped her hands excitedly.

## Chapter 292

### BELLA'S POV

Now that Kane, the most powerful Alpha, wanted to help me clear my name, I felt like we would surely make it. Besides, I was innocent. Whoever was behind it was sure to be uncovered. The thought filled me with hope real hope.

I looked at Kane as we walked out of the detention center. He walked beside me with his hand resting on my lower back. The gesture was protective without being possessive. I liked that about him. He never made me feel trapped.

Tara brightened up immediately. Her whole face changed.

"It's almost noon," she said cheerfully. "Let's have lunch together."

I nodded. "Sure."

The four of us walked out of the detention center together before getting into the car.

1/8

20:33

**16 min left**

< Chapter 292

Tara pulled out her phone the moment we got in. She was busy going through the list of recommended food in Melgrad.

"There are so many places to try here," she muttered excitedly. "Look at this one. And this one too."

She found several restaurants within minutes and then

turned to me.

"Bella, which one do you want to try?" she asked.

I leaned over to look at her phone. The pictures all looked good. Honestly, I didn't have a strong preference. After years of eating whatever I could afford, fancy restaurants still felt foreign to me.

“Any of them is fine,” I said.

The two men had no objections either. Kane simply nodded. Thomas glanced briefly at the phone before starting the car.

“Let’s go to this one,” Tara decided, pointing at a restaurant with high ratings.

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20:33

16 min left

< Chapter 292

Thomas drove us there without complaint. The drive wasn’t long. Melgrad was smaller than Byron City, so everything felt closer together. The streets were quieter too. There was less traffic.

When we arrived, I saw that it was a local specialty restaurant in Melgrad with a good reputation. The building looked old but well-maintained. There were wooden beams across the ceiling and traditional decorations on the walls.

The four of us got out of the car and walked inside. A server greeted us immediately.

“Welcome,” she said politely. “How many people?”

“Four,” Thomas replied. “We’d like a private room.”

“Of course. Follow me, please.”

She led us through the main dining area and down a hallway. The private room was spacious and clean. There was a round table in the center with comfortable chairs around it. The lighting was warm.

We sat down. Tara immediately grabbed the menu.

20:33

**16 min left**

< Chapter 292

“Let me order,” she said eagerly.

She started going through the menu while referring to her phone at the same time. She was reading the online recommendations and matching them with the dishes available.

“This one looks good,” she muttered. “Oh, and this one too. We should try this.”

She kept adding dishes one after another. I watched her with amusement. Tara always got excited about food. That was one thing that never changed about her.

After a while, she looked up from the menu and counted the dishes she had ordered.

“It seems we’ve ordered a little too much,” she said embarrassedly. “There are about twenty dishes here, but there are only four of us.”

I glanced at the list. She was right. It was a lot of food.

“You can order anything you like,” Thomas said calmly. “We rarely come here, so we might as well try more of this

4/8

20:33

16 min left

< Chapter 292

place’s specialties.”

Tara’s face brightened immediately. “Really?”

“Yes,” Thomas replied. “Order whatever you want.”

She looked relieved. “Okay then.”

She added a few more dishes before finally handing the menu to the server. The server took it with a smile and

left the room.

While we waited for the food, Tara pulled out her phone again. This time, she turned to me with excitement in her

eyes.

“Bella, remember I told you about that TV series?” she asked. “The King’s Lover?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Look at these posters,” she said, holding up her phone. “The lead actor is so handsome. Look at him.”

She scrolled through several images. Each one showed

9m Howell in different costumes. He looked good in all

20:33

16 min left

< Chapter 292

of them.

I leaned closer to see better. The images were well-shot. The costumes were beautiful. I could see why people liked

the show.

“What do you think?” Tara asked eagerly. “Isn’t Howell’s costume manly, seductive, and sexy?”

Her voice was filled with excitement. She always got like this when talking about actors she admired.

I opened my mouth to respond, but before I could say anything, I noticed Thomas’s face darkening. He looked annoyed. Actually, he looked more than annoyed. He looked jealous.

I understood why. As Tara’s boyfriend, he probably didn’t enjoy hearing her gush over another man. Worst of all, Tara always acted head over heels for those actors or idols she liked right in front of Thomas. She didn’t seem to notice his reaction at all.

Before I could see the posters properly, the phone was suddenly taken away from in front of me.

6/8

20:33

**16 min left**

< Chapter 292

I looked up in surprise. Kane was holding Tara’s phone. He looked down at the posters on the screen, swiping to see more of them. His expression was unreadable.

My heart started beating faster. I didn't know why he took the phone. I didn't know what he was thinking.

After a while, he looked up and stared at me. His eyes locked onto mine. They were intense.

"Is this your ideal type?" he asked.

His voice was calm, but there was something underneath it, something that made my stomach flip.

I went into a frenzy of embarrassment. My face heated up instantly.

"Well... I... I had high hopes for this actor," I stammered. "His acting is good, and some of the TV series he starred in are also pretty good."

My words came out rushed. I didn't know why I felt so flustered. It was just a TV show. Just an actor. But Kane was looking at me like it mattered, like my answer mattered.

20:33

16 min left

< Chapter 292

"Is that so?" Kane said slowly. "Fine. How about I ask my secretary to ask him out some other day, so you can have a good look and ask for an autograph or something?"

"Huh?" I was stunned.

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Chapter 293

BELLA'S POV

My brain went blank. Did he just say what I thought he said? Ask Tom Howell out? For me?

Tara's eyes widened. She looked like she was about to scream.

I stared at Kane in disbelief. "You... you don't have to do that."

"Why not?" he asked simply.

“Because... because that’s not necessary,” I replied quickly. “I just like his acting. That’s all. I don’t need to meet him.”

Kane’s eyes narrowed. He handed the phone back to Tara but kept looking at me.

I felt my heart pounding. I couldn’t tell if he was serious or teasing me. With Kane, it was always hard to tell. He didn’t show much emotion on his face. Everything was controlled.

But his eyes... his eyes told a different story. They were dark and possessive, like he didn’t like the idea of me admiring another man. Even if that man was just an actor on a screen,

Just then, the door opened. The waiter came in with the first round of dishes.

1/7

16:51

< Chapter 293

“All right, let’s eat,” Kane said calmly.

**+4 Bonus**

His tone was normal again. He sounded casual like nothing had happened.

I let out a breath I didn’t know I was holding.

The four of us started eating our lunch. The food was delicious. Each dish had its own unique flavor. The restaurant really did live up to its reputation.

When the prawns arrived, I reached for one. Before I could peel it myself, Kane’s hand moved.

“Let me,” he said.

He took the prawn from my plate and started peeling it.

I was a little embarrassed. After all, we were now in front of my best friend and Thomas. It felt intimate, too intimate for such a

public setting.

Tara noticed immediately. She winked at me from across the table. Her eyes were sparkling with mischief.

I wanted to sink into my chair. My face felt hot. I didn’t know where to look.

But Kane didn't seem to care. He looked so graceful while peeling the prawns for me that he did not seem to care about

2/7

16:51

< Chapter 293

+4 Bonus

other people's opinions. His focus was entirely on the task and on taking care of me.

When he finished peeling the prawn, he placed it gently on my plate.

"Eat," he said.

"Thank you," I murmured quietly.

He nodded

and reached for another prawn. He peeled that one too then another. He kept doing it until I had a small pile of peeled prawns on my plate.

I ate them slowly. They tasted better somehow. Maybe because someone else had prepared them for me. Maybe because that someone was Kane.

After the meal was over, Kane reminded me, "Don't forget to take your medicine twenty minutes after lunch."

I had

almost forgotten. The medication the doctor prescribed for my joints. I was supposed to take it regularly.

"Okay," I replied.

"Are you sick?" Tara was shocked. She asked with immediate concern. "What's wrong? Are you okay?"

"No, it's just some health-restoring pills," I answered quickly.

3/7

16:51

< Chapter 293

"It's medicine for the pain in my joints."

Tara was stunned. She stared at me for a moment, then understanding crossed her face.

#### **+4 Bonus**

She knew about my imprisonment. She knew what three years in that place had done to my body. After I was released from prison, I suffered from pain in my joints. The cold cells had taken their toll. My joints would hurt when the weather was cold and rainy. Sometimes the pain was mild. Sometimes it was unbearable.

I saw the sadness in her eyes. She blamed herself. I knew she did. She always felt like she should have done more to help me back then.

"It's not serious," I said gently. "The doctor said it will get better with treatment."

"Good," Tara said quietly. "That's good."

When it was time to take the medicine, Kane gave me a cup of warm water. He had already asked the server to bring it earlier.

Then, he took out the medicine from his pocket. He placed it on my palm carefully and made me take it.

I swallowed the pills with water. Kane watched me the entire time, making sure I took them properly.

4/7

16:51

< Chapter 293

#### **+4 Bonus**

Tara looked at his gentle movements. I could see something shift in her expression. She could feel how Kane doted on me. It was written all over her face.

I knew what she was thinking. You could tell how much a guy cared about a girl not by how much cash he threw her way or how smooth he talked, but by what he'd actually do for her. The small things. Those mattered more than grand declarations.

And Kane... Kane did those small things without being asked and without expecting praise. He just did them.

After I finished taking my medicine, Tara suddenly stood up.

“Bella, come with me to the washroom,” she said.

I blinked in surprise but nodded. “Okay.”

We excused ourselves and left the private room together. The washroom wasn’t far. It was just down the hallway.

As soon as we were inside, Tara grabbed my hands. Her eyes were wide with curiosity.

“Are you and Kane really together now?” she asked urgently.

I nodded slowly. “Yes.”

“Bella...” she started, then stopped. She looked like she didn’t know how to continue.

5/7

16:51

< Chapter 293

**+4 Bonus**

I took a deep breath. I decided to confess my feelings in front of my best friend. She deserved to know the truth.

“Tara, I thought I’d never fall in love with anyone anymore,” I said quietly. “But now I want to try to date him and see... if we can make it to the end.”

The words felt heavy as they left my mouth. They were true. Every single one of them.

I was careful now. More careful than I had ever been before. I was taking every step with more caution because I had once been hurt in a relationship. Damien had broken something inside me. Something that took a long time to even begin to heal.

But Kane... Kane made me want to try again. He made me want to believe that maybe, just maybe love didn’t have to end in betrayal.

“Why wouldn’t you?” Tara patted me on the shoulder “Before this, I would have thought it was impossible between you and Kane, but today, I can see that he’s serious about you.”

She paused for a moment, then continued.

“I mean, people say all kinds of things about Kane, but when it comes to women, he has kept his hands to himself. It seems that he only had one fiancée, Sophia...”

6/7

16:51

< Chapter 293

+4 Bonus

Tara stopped short. Her face changed. She glanced awkwardly at

1. me.

The air between us shifted. It became heavy.

Sophia.

That name. That woman.

After all, Sophia was not only Kane's former fiancée but also the victim of the poisoning. The woman I was accused of killing. The woman whose death had sent me to prison for three years.

I felt my chest go tight. I felt the familiar pain rushing back.

But this time, something was different. This time, I had Kane on my side. He believed me. He was helping me clear my name.

The past still haunted me. The injustice still burned.

But I was trying. I was trying to move forward. I was trying to believe that the truth would come out eventually.

And with Kane by my side... maybe it would.

Chapter 294

BELLA'S POV

I could see the worry on Tara's face. She was concerned about how I felt discussing Sophia. She probably thought it would hurt me to talk about Kane's dead fiancée. The woman I was accused of killing.

Never mind. I'll find out the truth and give Sophia justice while clearing my name!" I said.

I meant every word. Finding the truth wasn't just about proving my innocence anymore. It was about doing right by everyone involved. Even Sophia. Even if she had been Kane's fiancée. Even if her death had destroyed my life. She deserved justice

too.

Tara looked at me with admiration. "You're so strong, Bella."

I shook my head. "I'm not strong. I just want to move forward."

I decided to shift the conversation. I wanted to know how she was doing.

"What about you?" I asked. "How are you with Thomas?"

Tara's expression changed. She shrugged casually, but I could see something else in her eyes.

### **23:16**

< Chapter 294

her tone. It sounded almost sad.

Tara always said she needed to remind herself constantly that everything was fake. That much was clear. But was it really fake? From what I had seen today, Thomas didn't treat her like someone he wanted to hurt. He treated her like someone he cared about.

"I still don't think Thomas is going to take revenge on you as you think," I said gently.

Tara looked at me with surprise. "Why would you say that?"

"Because if he wanted to take revenge on you, people like Thomas have a lot of ways to torment people," I explained. "There's no need for him to choose such a time-consuming method. It doesn't make sense."

She bit her lip. I could tell she was considering my words.

"I hope it's not what I think it is too," Tara said.

"Just... be careful," I said softly. "And pay attention to how he treats you. Actions matter more than words."

"I know," she replied quietly.

left the washroom and headed for the private room.

2/7

When we entered the double doors

23:16

< Chapter 294

leaning down toward Kane. Their gazes were almost at eye level, and their faces were very close together. They were too close.

Tara and I were stunned. I blinked several times, trying to make sense of what I was seeing.

Tara even gasped in exaggeration beside me. "What... what are you doing?"

Thomas straightened up quickly.

"Nothing," Thomas said flatly

"Nothing indeed," Kane said smoothly "Alpha Sulkin and I were just chatting."

Chatting? I looked between them. Did they need to get so close to each other to chat? That seemed excessive.

Tara and I weren't convinced, not one bit. Something was going on. But neither Kane nor Thomas offered any further explanation. They just sat there looking perfectly composed.

I decided not to press the issue. Whatever they had been discussing was their business.

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

23:17

< Chapter 294

When it was time to settle the bill, Kane was one step ahead and paid it with his phone before anyone else could react. Thomas had reached for his wallet, but Kane had already completed the transaction.

"I'll treat all of you next time," Thomas said. "Let's get together again when we're free."

"Sure," Kane replied calmly.

The four of us walked out of the restaurant together.

Kane drove us back.

When the car drove back to Byron City, it arrived at Stonewood Residence first. The large iron gates came into view. Kane slowed down and parked near the entrance.

Kane and I got out of the car while Thomas moved to the driver's seat. He would drive Tara home from here.

"See you next time, Bella," Tara said as she waved to me.

"Sure. Thank you for today," I replied. "And be careful on your way back!"

"We **will**," Tara said with a smile.

**Kane** and I walked through the large **iron** gates of Stonewood:17

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< Chapter 294

I felt safe.

I felt like nothing bad could touch me as long as he was beside

1. me.

TARA'S POV

I looked at Kane and Bella as they disappeared behind the iron gates. They walked side by side, holding hands. They looked good together.

"Haven't you seen enough?" Thomas asked.

I jumped slightly. "I'm just looking at them, that's all," I muttered defensively.

When I met Kane at their cabin previously, although I didn't see him as a homeless person, I never thought of him as the most powerful man in Byron City. The revelation still shocked me. Bella was dating the Alpha Stonewood – the man everyone feared and respected.

Suddenly, a pair of hands grabbed my face roughly. My face was turned forcefully to face Thomas.

"Didn't you say you liked looking at my face the other day?" Thomas demanded. "Are you now interested in Kane?"

I almost choked. What was he saying? Why did he think that?3:17

< Chapter 294

“What? Why would I be interested in Kane? I was just... blessing Bella in my heart.”

That was the truth. I was happy for my best friend. She deserved someone who would treat her well after everything she had been through.

“Really?” Thomas’s face closed in on mine. His eyes searched my face as if he was trying to see what I was really thinking.

“Of course!” I shrieked.

“It’s best if that really is the case,” Thomas said slowly. His voice dropped lower. “Don’t forget whose girlfriend you are.”

Being Thomas’s girlfriend felt like a curse sometimes. It kept reminding me that I was paying back what I had owed him earlier.

However... looking at the handsome face so close at hand, I had to admit that Thomas’s face was indeed pleasing to the eye. He was gorgeous. Dangerously so.

If I didn’t know how it would end and if it was a real relationship, then maybe I would have really fallen for him. Maybe I already was falling for him. That thought scared me more than anything.

Of course, I won’t forget that I’m your girlfriend,” I replied<sup>23:17</sup>

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< Chapter 294

revenge. He didn’t look like someone planning to hurt me. He looked like someone trying very hard not to care.

“Don’t you dare fall in love with someone else, Tara,” he warned. His voice was low and rough.

I tried to retort. The words were on the tip of my tongue but when I looked at him, I stopped. His eyes were intense.

I shut my mouth. Whatever I had been about to say died in my throat.

Sometimes, with Thomas, I didn't know where I stood. I didn't know if he hated me or wanted me. I didn't know if this was real or fake anymore.

And that uncertainty terrified me.

Chapter 295(Revised)

BELLA'S POV

+8 Bonus

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"What about you?" I asked. "How are you with Thomas?"

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09:24

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+8 Bonus

<Chapter 295(Revised)

"Just... the usual," she said. "We look just like a couple in a normal relationship."

The way she said it made me pause. There was something off about her tone. It sounded almost sad.

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2/8

09:24

+8 Bonus

<Chapter 295(Revised)

"I know," she replied quietly.

left the washroom and headed for the private room.

When we opened the door to the private room, we both froze.

Thomas was standing with one hand on the table and the other on the back of the chair Kane was sitting on. He was half bent over, leaning down toward Kane. Their gazes were almost at eye level, and their faces were very close together. They were too close.

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3/8

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I decided not to press the issue. Whatever they had been discussing was their business.

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

That made sense. It was already past one in the afternoon. The drive would take about two hours.

When it was time to settle the bill, Kane was one step ahead and paid it with his phone before anyone else could react. Thomas had reached for his wallet, but Kane had already completed the transaction.

“I'll treat all of you next time,” Thomas said. “Let's get together again when we're free.”

“Sure,” Kane replied calmly.

The four of us walked out of the restaurant together.

Kane drove us back.

When the car drove back to Byron City, it arrived at Stonewood 4/8

09:24

+8 Bonus

< Chapter 295(Revised)

Residence first. The large iron gates came into view. Kane slowed down and parked near the entrance.

Kane and I got out of the car while Thomas moved to the driver's seat. He would drive Tara home from here.

"See you next time, Bella," Tara said as she waved to me.

"Sure. Thank you for today," I replied. "And be careful on your way back!"

"We will," Tara said with a smile.

Kane and I walked through the large iron gates of Stonewood Residence together. His hand found mine naturally. Our fingers were intertwined.

I felt safe.

I felt like nothing bad could touch me as long as he was beside

1. me.

#### TARA'S POV

I looked at Kane and Bella as they disappeared behind the iron gates. They walked side by side, holding hands. They looked good together.

"Haven't you seen enough?" Thomas asked. 5/8

09:24

+8 Bonus

< Chapter 295(Revised)

I jumped slightly. "I'm just looking at them, that's all," I muttered defensively.

When I met Kane at their cabin previously, although I didn't see him as a homeless person, I never thought of him as the most powerful man in Byron City. The revelation still shocked me. Bella was dating the Alpha Stonewood – the man everyone feared and respected.

Suddenly, a pair of hands grabbed my face roughly. My face was turned forcefully to face Thomas.

"Didn't you say you liked looking at my face the other day?" Thomas demanded. "Are you now interested in Kane?"

I almost choked. What was he saying? Why did he think that I was interested in Kane? That was ridiculous.

I was just marveling at the fact that Bella actually got together with Kane. That was all. Nothing more.

“What? Why would I be interested in Kane? I was just... blessing Bella in my heart.”

That was the truth. I was happy for my best friend. She

deserved someone who would treat her well after everything she had been through.

6/8

09:24

+8 Bonus

<Chapter 295(Revised)

“Really?” Thomas’s face closed in on mine. His eyes searched my face as if he was trying to see what I was really thinking.

“Of course!” I shrieked.

“It’s best if that really *is* the case,” Thomas said slowly. His voice dropped lower. “Don’t forget whose girlfriend you are.”

Being Thomas’s girlfriend felt like a curse sometimes. It kept reminding me that I was paying back what I had owed him earlier.

However... looking at the handsome face so close at hand, I had to admit that Thomas’s face was indeed pleasing to the eye. He was gorgeous. Dangerously so.

If I didn’t know how it would end and if it was a real relationship, then maybe I would have really fallen for him. Maybe I already was falling for him. That thought scared me more than anything.

“Of course, I won’t forget that I’m your girlfriend,” I replied carefully. “Don’t worry. I promise I won’t fall in love with anyone else before I fall in love with you.”

But looking at his expression now, I wondered if he still wanted that revenge. He didn’t look like someone planning to hurt me. He looked like someone trying very hard not to care.

7/8

09:25

+8 Bonus

< Chapter 295(Revised)

“Don’t you dare fall in love with someone else, Tara,” he warned. His voice was low and rough.

I tried to retort. The words were on the tip of my tongue but when I looked at him, I stopped. His eyes were intense.

I shut my mouth. Whatever I had been about to say died in my throat.

Sometimes, with Thomas, I didn't know where I stood. I didn't know if he hated me or wanted me. I didn't know if this was real or fake anymore.

And that uncertainty terrified me.

Chapter 296 (Revised)

BELLA'S POV

+8 Bonus

After Tara and Thomas drove away, Kane and I walked through the gates of Stonewood Residence together. His hand was warm in mine. Our fingers were laced together naturally, like they belonged that way.

The sun was beginning to set. The sky had turned a soft orange color. Everything felt peaceful.

But my mind wasn't peaceful at all. It kept replaying the events from Melgrad.

I kept thinking about Ted Peterson's face, his nervous expressions, the way he avoided certain questions, the five million dollar house that made no sense for someone like him.

When we got in, Kane closed the door behind us and turned to look at me. His dark eyes studied my face carefully. He seemed to be searching for something.

"Are you disappointed today?" he asked quietly. "We went to Melgrad but didn't find anything useful."

His question surprised me. I looked up at him and shook my head immediately.

1/8

09:25

+8 Bonus

< Chapter 296 (Revised)

“No,” I said.

He frowned slightly. His eyebrows drew together. “You’re not disappointed?”

He seemed genuinely surprised by my answer. Maybe he expected me to be upset. Maybe he thought I would feel frustrated that we didn’t get the answers we were looking for.

But I wasn’t disappointed. Not really.

“Because you’re willing to help me find clues and clear my name,” I said honestly. “I’m happy regardless of whether we find something useful or not.”

I meant every word. The fact that Kane was helping me at all meant everything. He believed in me. He trusted me. He was using his time, his resources, his connections to help me prove my innocence. That alone was enough to make me grateful. That alone was enough to make me feel like I wasn’t fighting this battle alone anymore.

For so long, I had been completely on my own. No one believed me. No one stood by my side. Everyone looked at me like I was guilty, like I was a murderer who deserved to rot in prison.

But Kane didn’t look at me that way. He looked at me like I mattered, like my truth mattered.

2/8

09:25

+8 Bonus

< Chapter 296 (Revised)

Now that I trusted Kane more, the walls I had built around my heart were coming down, piece by piece. I was letting him in. I was allowing myself to depend on him.

And that scared me as much as it comforted me.

Kane stared at me for a long moment. His expression was unreadable. His eyes were dark and intense, like he was thinking about something he couldn’t say out loud.

I wondered what was going through his mind. Did he regret getting involved in my case? Did he think it was too complicated? Too messy?

“As long as you’re happy,” he finally said.

He smiled softly. It made my heart skip a beat.

Then he changed the topic smoothly. "What are you going to do the next few days if you're not going to work?"

I blinked at the sudden shift in conversation. It took me a moment to process his question.

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

Recently, I had been so busy with work that I didn't have time to call my grandmother and check on her. I felt guilty about it.

3/8

09:25

+8 Bonus

<Chapter 296 (Revised)

"All right," Kane said. "When are you going? I'll go with you."

I froze. My eyes widened in surprise. "You? You want to visit my grandmother too?"

I was taken aback and completely caught off guard.

Why would he want to visit my grandmother? We had only been dating for a short time. Meeting family was a big step. A serious step.

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

His tone was matter-of-fact, like it was the most obvious thing in the world. For some reason, his words touched me deeply.

He didn't have to do this. He didn't have to come with me but he wanted to. He wanted to meet my grandmother.

That meant something. That meant he was serious about us, about our relationship.

"All right," I said softly. "Then we'll go together."

A small smile appeared on his lips. He looked satisfied with my

answer.

4/8

09:25

+8 Bonus

< Chapter 296 (Revised)

In the evening, it was time for me to take the herbal tea. The tea was supposed to help my uterus recover. It was part of the treatment plan the doctor had given me.

I sat at the dining table and stared at the cup in front of me. The dark liquid looked bitter just from the color alone. I could already imagine how it would taste.

I sighed quietly.

If Kane hadn't taken me for a physical examination, I might still think that I would never have a child of my own. I might still believe that my body was too damaged, that the injuries from prison had destroyed any chance I had of becoming a mother.

But now I had hope, real hope.

The medicine seemed to give me that hope. It was proof that I still had a chance. A thirty percent chance. It wasn't much, but it was something.

"The tea is a little bitter," Kane said gently. He was sitting across from me, watching me with concern. "You should take some candy or chocolate after drinking it to get rid of the bitter taste in your mouth."

His thoughtfulness made my heart warm. He had already

5/8

09:25

+8 Bonus

< Chapter 296 (Revised)

thought about how to make this easier for me. He had already prepared candy just in case.

"Okay," I answered quietly.

I realized the amount of care he was putting in for me. Every little detail. Every small gesture. He paid attention to everything.

I picked up the cup with both hand. I took a deep breath and brought it to my lips.

Then I drank the tea in one gulp.

The bitterness hit me immediately. It was intense. My face scrunched up automatically as I forced myself to swallow.

It tasted awful, truly awful.

I quickly put the cup down and reached for a piece of candy. I popped it into my mouth immediately, desperate to get rid of the horrible taste. The sweetness of the candy helped. Slowly, the bitter taste began to fade.

"Is it bitter?" Kane asked.

I nodded, still sucking on the candy. I couldn't speak yet. My mouth was too full.

6/8

09:25

+8 Bonus

< Chapter 296 (Revised)

Then I saw him pick up the cup. There was still some leftover tea at the bottom. Just a little bit, but it was there. Before I could ask him what he was going to do with it, I saw him lift the cup to his lips. He drank the rest.

I was shocked. My eyes went wide. The candy nearly fell out of my mouth.

"Why did you drink it?" I asked in disbelief.

He put the cup down and looked at me calmly. "Because I want to know how bitter your medicine is."

He paused, then added, "It's indeed bitter."

I was speechless and completely confused.

What Kane just did confused me. Why would he drink my medicine? Why would he want to taste something so bitter?

It made no sense. Unless... unless he just wanted to understand what I was going through. He wanted to share even this small burden with me.

"Why don't you have a piece of candy to keep the bitterness down?" I asked. I was still sucking on the candy in my mouth. My words came out a bit muffled.

"Sure," he replied simply.

7/8

09:25

+8 Bonus

< Chapter 296 (Revised)

But instead of reaching for the candy on the plate, he leaned over the table toward me. His hand reached out and grabbed the back of my head gently but firmly. His handsome face inched closer to mine.

“You...” I started to say something.

But the moment I opened my mouth, his kiss fell on my lips.

I froze. My whole body went stiff with surprise.

## 297

### Through Rising Fog We Walk Paths Unknown Yet Comforting

#### BELLA'S POV

Later that evening, Kane stayed in the restaurant and had dinner with me.

Kane ordered dinner without asking for my opinion, but when the dishes arrived, I realized every single one of them was something I could eat comfortably. Nothing too spicy. Nothing too heavy. Nothing that would upset my stomach.

Kane didn't ask if I was hungry. He simply assumed I would be, the way someone did when they already knew you well.

Kane ate slowly. He had that calm expression on his face, like nothing could touch him.

I caught myself watching him.

*Stop, I told myself. You're staring.*

But I couldn't fully look away.

When dinner ended, Kane stood up and reached for my coat without a word. He helped me put it on.

As we walked out together, I noticed the looks immediately.

My colleagues from the restaurant stood nearby, pretending to be busy while very obviously watching us. Their eyes moved back and forth between Kane and me. Their eyes were wide with curiosity.

“Is that her boyfriend?” someone whispered.

“He’s *ridiculously* handsome.”

“He looks rich.”

I heard every word.

By the end of the night, everyone knew. Bella Jameson, the quiet woman who worked diligently and kept to herself, had a boyfriend. And not just any boyfriend, but an incredibly handsome one.

They didn’t know who he really was. And I made sure they didn’t.

When they asked me, I simply said, “His name is Kane.”

The jokes followed soon after. Someone laughed and said I was about to climb the social ladder. Another teased that I might not need to work forever if I held onto him.

I smiled politely and let it pass. I didn’t take it to heart.

I knew better.

I knew that if those same people ever learned Kane’s real identity, they wouldn’t be joking. They wouldn’t be laughing. They might even whisper behind my back that someone like Kane would never truly stay with a woman like me. Some of them might wait eagerly for the day he left.

On our way back, I looked out the window. The silence inside the car was comfortable, not awkward. Kane rested one arm casually, looking at the road

“Your boss is a nice lady,” he said suddenly.

“Yes,” I replied softly. “Jazz *is* nice.”

I paused, then frowned as something came to mind.

“By the way,” I added, “Riley is having his operation tomorrow. Jazz and her mother are going to the hospital to watch over him. The restaurant will be closed for a few days, so I’ll have some time off.”

Kane glanced at me, lifting an eyebrow. “Does that mean I won’t be able to eat the lunch you deliver tomorrow?”

I was caught off guard. For a moment, I didn’t know how to 3/9

answer. Then it dawned on me. I had been having lunch with him recently. We ate together almost every day.

I looked away briefly, pretending to think.

“...I suppose not,” I muttered.

I thought of how we lived together in the cabin. Back then, when work kept me late, I would prepare food in advance for him. He would heat it up and eat it alone. I remembered how happy I felt whenever I watched him eat.

“How about I cook lunch tomorrow and bring it over?” I said suddenly.

Kane turned to me “All right. You said it yourself. I’ll wait for your lunch tomorrow.”

Now that I had promised him, I knew I couldn’t go back on my word.

“Do you have anything you want to eat?” I asked.

“I’m not a fussy eater,” he shrugged “I’ll enjoy anything you make.”

I understood immediately. He didn’t have favorites or maybe he simply didn’t care.

“Then I’ll cook something,” I said.

When we returned to the Stonewood Residence, we got in. I washed up and stepped out of the bathroom. I stopped when I saw Kane already sitting on the bed.

These days, we slept on the same bed. Somehow, it had become routine.

I needed the lights on to sleep. Darkness still reminded me too much of prison.

“I don’t think you’ll get used to sleeping with the lights on,” I said gently. “Maybe you should go back to your room.”

Kane looked up at me. “I want to sleep with you. The lights don’t matter to me.”

I froze.

I swallowed the rest of my words and turned away, pretending to tidy something that didn’t need tidying. *He really says things like that too easily, I thought. Does he know what it does to*

me?

As I walked toward the bed, my thoughts became scattered.

“Are you going to sleep?” he asked.

5/9

“Yes,” I replied.

I lifted the quilt and lay down. Almost immediately, Kane’s arms wrapped around my waist. He pulled me close without hesitation. He buried his face against my chest and breathed me in.

I was stiff at first, then slowly relaxed.

I liked this side of him....too much.

“So,” I said quietly, trying to distract myself, “what did Eric say to you today? Were you arguing?”

“What of it?” Kane replied lazily.

He didn’t loosen his hold. If anything, he held me closer, breathing me in even more.

“I heard him say he didn’t want to be against you,” I continued. “It sounded serious.”

“He meant it literally,” Kane said.

I frowned. “Why? Are you competing over a business deal?”

“No,” he replied flatly. “We’re competing for you.”

I nearly choked. My breath caught, my body stiffening in his 6/9

arms.

+8 Bonus

“...What?” I asked.

Kane lifted his head and looked at me. His eyes were dark and deep, blending into the night

.

“He likes you,” he said. “He wants to take you away from me”

My mind went blank. That can’t be right. Eric was with Kathy.

“So I told him,” Kane continued calmly, “that if he dares to make a move, I’ll make him my enemy. And I won’t hesitate.”

My heart pounded violently. “You’d really do that to Eric?”

"I told you before," Kane said quietly. "I love you. You're as important to me as my own life. Did you think I was joking?"

I bit my lip, feeling stunned.

I didn't realize how vulnerable I looked. Kane did.

His finger lifted and gently brushed my lips.

"But even if he wants to snatch you away, he can't," Kane

murmured. "Because the person you like is me.

And the person you're destined to love... is me."

He leaned in then he kissed me.

The kiss was deep and intense. It wasn't rushed. It was passionate as always. I kissed him back, gripping his shirt as the kiss deepened. It left me breathless.

Kane would be the death of me. I was sure of that

When I woke the next morning, Kane was already gone.

After breakfast, I prepared lunch for us. The ingredients and lunch boxes were ready. The chef stayed nearby in case I needed help. When I finished, I looked at the lunch box and

felt satisfied.

*I really have improved,* I thought.

I headed to the Stonewood Group. The security guards bowed their heads when I got out of the car.

"Good afternoon," I greeted.

"*Good...* afternoon," they replied.

I went up to Kane's floor.

"Is Alpha. Stonewood in?" I asked. 8/9

09:26

"Yes."

"Is anyone with him?"

"No."

As soon as I heard that, I walked into his office. I knocked and entered, seeing Kane at his desk in a video conference. I froze, relieved the camera wasn't facing me.

"You're here," he said. "Wait a bit."

"Okay," I whispered.

As I placed the lunch box down, a voice came from the screen.

"Oh, Kane... is that the woman we saw during the last meeting?"

Chapter 298

BELLA'S POV

After finishing my breakfast and taking my medicine, I prepared to go shopping. I wanted to buy gifts for my grandmother.

As I was about to leave, the butler approached me.

+3 Bonus

"Where do you want to go, Miss Jameson?" he asked politely. "I'll ask the driver to take you."

"It's fine," I said quickly. "I'll just take the bus."

I didn't want to bother anyone. The bus was perfectly fine. I had taken it many times before.

But the butler looked worried. "Let the driver take you, or Young Master Stonewood will blame me for not taking good care of you."

I hesitated. I didn't want to give the butler a hard time. He was just doing his job. And Kane would probably be upset if he found out I refused the driver.

"All right," I finally agreed.

The butler looked relieved. He quickly arranged for the drive

+3 Bonus

< Chapter 298

Soon, I was sitting in the back of a luxury car, heading toward the mall downtown.

When we arrived at the mall, I thanked the driver and told him he could wait in the parking area. I would call him when I was ready to leave.

The mall was busy. People were everywhere shopping, eating and talking.

I was on a mission to find food and clothes that my

grandmother needed. The lower levels of the mall were packed with all sorts of food joints and specialty stores. That's where I headed first.

I walked slowly, looking at different shops. I wanted to find something special for her. Eventually, I stopped at a bakery that sold cakes and pastries. The display case was full of beautiful desserts. They all looked delicious.

I studied the labels carefully. Many of the pastries were too sweet, *too much* sugar. That wouldn't work for my grandmother.

Then I found it – a special dessert that was suitable for people with high blood sugar. It was designed specifically for diabetics or people who needed to watch their sugar intake.

It was a bit expensive, more expensive than I would normally

19:39

< Chapter 298

spend but when I remembered that my grandmother's blood sugar level would sometimes get too high, I didn't hesitate.

I bought it immediately.

After paying for the pastry, I carefully carried the box in my hands. It had a nice ribbon tied around it. It actually looked like a proper gift.

I felt satisfied. My grandmother would love this.

I walked toward the escalator, planning to go up to the second floor. There were clothing stores up there. I wanted to find something comfortable for her to wear at home.

When I reached the second floor, I stepped off the escalator and started walking. Suddenly, someone walked up to me. Their steps were quick and they were directed at me.

Before I could even see who it was, before I could react, a hand came flying toward my face.

SLAP!

The sound echoed loudly as the person slapped me. exploded across my cheek. I gasped in horror.

What the hell just happened?

3/6

Pain

19:39

+3 Bonus

< Chapter 298

My whole body staggered from the force. I nearly fell to the floor as my balance was completely thrown off.

I steadied myself just in time, gripping onto a nearby railing. But the pastry case I was holding had already fallen to the floor.

I heard it hit the ground thud. The box crushed under the impact.

No... no, no, no...

"I thought my eyes were deceiving me, but it's you!" a voice said.

The voice was loud and angry.

"You're out of prison now?! You even came to the mall to shop?"

I clutched my burning cheek and looked up slowly. My vision was still blurry from the pain.

The woman standing in front of me was middle-aged. She looked elegant and well-dressed. Her face was twisted with rage and disgust.

I found her face familiar, very familiar. For a minute, I wondered who she was.

4/6

19:39

+3

+3 Bonus

< Chapter 298

Then it hit me.

My breath caught in my throat. My whole body went cold.

It was the same woman who had come up to me when I was in court and slapped me so hard that the corners of my mouth cracked. My face had remained swollen for days back then.

The bailiff standing next to her that day didn't even try to stop the woman. It was as if he had deliberately let the woman hit

1. me.

This woman was Sophia's mother – Diane Monroe.

Now that I was out of prison, she had found me again....and she slapped me again.

My cheek throbbed with pain. I could feel it swelling already. It was the same spot she had hit years ago.

People around us stopped walking. They turned to look. Some pulled out their phones to record. Of course, they did. People were always hungry for drama.

Diane's face was red with fury. Her eyes were filled with hatred. Pure, burning hatred. Then, as if one slap was not enough, she raised her hand again.

K/R

19:39

+3 Bonus

< Chapter 298

She was about to strike me a second time.

My body reacted before my mind could catch up. I raised my hand quickly and grabbed her wrist. I held it tightly, stopping her from hitting me.

"I've never harmed anyone!" I said loudly.

I stared at Diane coldly. My eyes locked onto hers.

I wasn't going to let her hit me again, not this time.

Not anymore.

Chapter 299

BELLA'S POV

Diane's face twisted with rage as she glared at me. Her eyes were wild and filled with a hatred so deep it made my skin crawl.

"You have the nerve!" she screamed. Her voice echoed through the entire floor of the mall. People stopped walking. Heads turned. Phones came out. "The court has already found you guilty. You've only been in prison for three years. In my opinion, you ought to be in prison for life!"

She raised her other hand high, attempting to slap me again. I reacted quickly this time. I blocked her with my free hand, catching her wrist before it could connect with my already throbbing cheek.

"Even judges make mistakes and send innocent ones to jail," I said firmly. My voice didn't shake even though my insides were trembling. "Listen here, I don't owe you anything, and you have no right to hit me!"

The words felt powerful coming out of my mouth. For once, I wasn't cowering. I wasn't backing down. I had spent three years being beaten down, humiliated, and broken. Not

anymore.

1/6

16:19

+3 Bonus 連凱

< Chapter 299

“Oh, really?” a deep male voice came through.

My blood ran cold. That voice. I knew that voice.

“Who the hell do you think you are, talking about rights?”

I stiffened. My whole body went rigid as I slowly looked up at the man walking toward us. My heart dropped straight into

stomach.

Lucius Monroe – Sophia’s father.

The man was tall and had a dominant aura. He wore an expensive suit that probably cost more than what I earned in six months. His graying hair was slicked back perfectly. His face was as hard and cruel. Everything about him screamed power and wealth.

And

I had nightmares about him too. Not just Kane. Lucius Monroe had haunted my dreams just as much.

During my trial, he had stood in the courtroom gallery and watched me with eyes so cold I thought I might freeze to death. He had testified against me. He had used his influence to make sure I was convicted. He had destroyed my life without a second thought.

And now he was here, right in front of me.

016

16:19

+3 Bonus

< Chapter 299

Several security guards followed behind him. They were all large men dressed in black uniforms. They looked ready to do whatever Lucius commanded. I could see their wolves burning behind their eyes.

My throat tightened. Fear crept up my spine like ice water.

“Go and help the madam before this crazy woman hits her” Lucius ordered his bodyguards without even looking at me properly.

The bodyguards moved immediately, growling. Two of them rushed forward and grabbed my arms. They yanked me backward, pulling me away from Diane roughly. Another bodyguard stepped between us, creating a barrier.

I struggled against their grip, but it was useless. They were too strong. Besides being men, werewolves were incredibly strong. My feet barely touched the ground as they held me in place.

(

“Seriously, aren’t you afraid of embarrassing yourself in a place like this?” Lucius said. His tone was casual, almost bored, as if this entire situation was beneath him.

Diane’s voice cut through the air sharply. “I saw her and got so angry. Didn’t you hear what she said? It’s so outrageous! She killed Sophia but is saying that she never harmed anyone!”

I wanted to scream. I wanted to shout that I didn’t do it. I

2/6

16:19

+3 Bonus

< Chapter 299

wanted to tell them the truth until my voice gave out.

But what was the point? They would never believe me. They had already decided I was guilty years ago.

Lucius looked at me. His eyes turned from dark grey to gold. I could feel his wolf struggling to come out. His claws protruded a bit from his fingers. His eyes were like steel – cold, hard, and completely void of empathy. He looked at me the way someone might look at an insect they were about to crush under their

shoe.

“You got out,” he said slowly. “Whether it was a wrongful conviction is a matter for the court to decide, but when you talk about rights...”

He paused. His lips curled into something that wasn’t quite a smile. It was more like a sneer

.

“You’re not qualified to talk about rights in front of me.”

My face burned with humiliation. My chest tightened painfully.

He didn’t see me as a person. To him, I was nothing. I was an ant. Something insignificant.

“Kick the woman out,” Lucius said to the security guard beside him without breaking eye contact with me. “And send her picture to the mall’s security and management. This woman is 4/6

16:19

8

+3 Bonus

< Chapter 299

not allowed to enter the mall again.”

The security guard nodded. “Yes, sir.”

The two men holding my arms immediately started dragging me toward the exit. I stumbled as they pulled me along. People watched. Some whispered. Some recorded everything on their phones.

The shame was overwhelming. It burned through my entire body like fire.

“My... my things are still on the ground,” I managed to say.

I looked back desperately at the floor where I had dropped the box of pastries. The beautiful ribbon was crushed. The box was dented.

That dessert had been for my grandmother. I had spent so much money on it. I had chosen it carefully. And now it was just lying there on the floor like garbage.

Lucius followed my gaze. He stared at the box for a moment. Then he pointed directly at another security guard standing nearby.

“Throw this garbage in the trash can,” he said coldly. “It’s an eyesore.”

5/6

16:19

< Chapter 299

No. No, please.

"Wait- "I started.

+3 Bonus

But the security guard didn't hesitate. He bent down, picked up the box of pastries, and walked over to the nearest trash can. Then he dropped it inside without care.

Just like that.....Gone.

## C 300

Through Rising Fog We Walk Paths Unknown Yet Comforting

BELLA'S POV

The sight of them trashing the dessert made my heart break.

"No" I breathed.

My blood boiled with anger. My face went red with fury. My hands clenched into fists so tight my nails dug into my palms. Tears burned behind my eyes, but I refused to let them fall.

The humiliation was unbearable. He had done that on purpose. He wanted to embarrass me in front of everyone. He wanted to make me feel small and powerless.

And it worked. Goddess, it worked.

I had no power to fight back. I couldn't do anything. I could only be dragged out of the mall like some kind of troublemaker who didn't belong.

The security guards pulled me all the way to the entrance. The glass doors slid open automatically. They shoved me outside onto the sidewalk, then finally let go of my arms.

I stumbled forward and barely caught myself before I fell.

"Don't make trouble here anymore," one of the guard warned

+3 Bonus

<Chapter 300

me harshly. "Or we'll call the police and sue you."

I turned around slowly. I looked past the two security guards, through the transparent glass doors, and into the mall. Inside, people were still staring. Some pointed. Some laughed. So me looked at me with pity.

I tried to tell myself that there was no need to be sad. There was no need to feel bitter about this. The more I let my disappointment show on my face, the more I gave them what they wanted.

Lucius and Diane were just trying to embarrass me. They wanted to break me. They wanted to see me suffer. Maybe they had their reasons. They thought I killed their daughter. They thought I poisoned Sophia

But I didn't. I swear I didn't.

Sophia died unjustly. That was true. Her death was tragic and unfair.

But what about me? What about my life?

I was also unjustly accused. I was also wronged. I lost three years of my life in prison. I lost my career. I lost my dignity. I lost everything.

No matter how many times I told the Monroe family I was 2/6

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+3 Bonus

< Chapter 300

innocent, they gave me nothing but humiliation. Again and again and again.

There was a weight pressing down on my heart. It made it hard to breathe. My chest felt tight and heavy.

I wanted to clear my name so badly it hurt. I no longer wanted to suffer these accusations and insults for something I didn't do. I didn't kill Sophia Monroe. I didn't poison her. I didn't hurt her.

But no one believed me. And that was the worst part of all.

LUCIUS' POV

I watched as the security guards dragged Bella Jameson out of the mall. She looked pathetic and weak.

Good.

Beside me, Diane was still seething. Her face was flushed red with anger. Her hands were trembling.

"You shouldn't be so merciful, simply throwing her out of the mall!" she complained bitterly.

I turned to look at my wife. "Well, then, what do you want to

do?"

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"She should at least be locked up for another ten or eight years," Diane said through gritted teeth. Her eyes were burning with hatred. "Still can't believe that she's already out. That punishment was too easy on her."

She paused, then continued with even more venom.

“She still has the mood to go shopping while my Sophia died so young. If Sophia hadn’t died, she would be Mrs. Stonewood now! Sophia had such a bright future ahead of her, but she ruined it!”

I felt my own anger flare at the mention of Sophia’s lost future. My daughter should have married Alpha Kane Stonewood. She should have become the Luna of the most powerful pack in the

world.

Instead, she was dead, buried in the ground. Her future was stolen from her.

All because of Bella Jameson. My wolf howled inside me as an idea formed in my mind. It wouldn’t be difficult, not for someone like me.

“It’ll be easy to make someone like her go to prison again,” I said calmly.. “I’ll make that happen later.”

Manipulating other people’s destinies was perfectly normal for me. I had done it countless times before. I had the connections.

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I had the money. I had the power.

Sending Bella Jameson back to prison would be child’s play.

Diane’s eyes lit up immediately. A twisted smile appeared on her face. “Then give her a life sentence this time,” she said eagerly. “I want her to stay in there for the rest of her life!”

Her voice was filled with dark satisfaction. She wanted Bella to suffer. She wanted her to rot away in a cell until she died.

And honestly? I did too.

“All right, I’ll do as you please,” I agreed easily. “Don’t dwell on thinking too much about Sophia. It’ll do you no good. Think about Gina.”

Diane’s expression softened slightly at the mention of our younger daughter.

“Of course, Gina is our only daughter now,” she said. Her voice was quieter now. “Who else will I think about?”

Then her face fell again. “It’s just a pity that the man she likes is the Silverwood’s boy. If it’s Kane, we might still be his

in-laws!”

There was regret in her tone. She still mourned the loss of that potential connection. I understood. Having Kane Stonewood as 5/6

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a son-in-law

would have elevated our family’s status immensely but that opportunity was gone now. Sophia was dead.

“We can’t be that fortunate all the time,” I said pragmatically. “At least... Gina is getting what she wants now. Silverwood is a powerful pack as well”

Diane nodded slowly. Then her face hardened again. “Then you must make my wish come true soon too. I must see Bella go to prison again!”

“All right, I’ll hurry!” I assured her.

Just then, my phone rang. I pulled it out and glanced at the screen. It was one of my business associates.

I answered. "Hello?"

"Alpha Monroe," the voice on the other end said. "I heard something interesting. Is it true? You met Bella at the mall?"