

Shadows 221

Chapter 221 Why Are You Defending Her ? Before Blair could even say a word . Tilda was already heading upstairs . Thinking back to what Tilda had just said , Blair turned pale . That was right . With connections like Andy and Jude , there was no way Tilda was short on cash . Trying to corner her from that angle was pointless . Maybe if she could make Tilda blow off some steam . But should she do what Tilda said - get on her knees and bark like a dog ? No way ! Blair would never humiliate herself like that . She didn't even dare call Daphne . All she could do was text . " I failed , Daphne .

I'm sorry . You'll have to handle this one yourself ." Blair was powerless against Tilda , barely able to hold herself together . Her hand still throbbed from getting slammed in the door . Then , her phone rang . It was Russell , Blair took a deep breath . She picked up the call with her uninjured hand and tried to sound steady . " Hey , Honey . What's the matter ? " " It's serious , Darling . You need to come home now . Something happened to Howard ! " Blair went pale , " W - what ? I'm coming home right now ! " She soon rushed back to the villa . " Russell , what happened ?

" Russell let out a long sigh . " Howard locked himself in his room . No matter how much we call , he won't answer . Wade tried talking to him . " Meanwhile , Wade came down the stairs . He shook his head when he saw Blair and Russell's worried looks . " Dad , Mom , Howard is probably just in a bad mood . Let him cool off . Don't bother him right now . " What happened ? Everything seemed fine when you left today . " Watch this

Russell handed his phone to Blair . She took it in confusion . But as soon as she saw the video , her face fell .

" This is ... Tilda ? No , this can't be real . Something is wrong with this video . " Howard is a WWE champ ! How did he let Tilda thrash him so badly ?! " " Mom , it's real . I was there . Howard insisted on challenging her . The video is legit - he did lose . " That's why he's so ... upset right now . " Honestly , " shut down " described Howard perfectly right now . Tilda had completely crushed him . That was the pride he'd always been proud of . Now , in front of the sister he once ignored and looked down on , he was utterly humiliated .

The hit to Howard's ego was worse than anything Wade had ever felt . Finished " Why does it always have to be Tilda ? Everything was fine before . How did Howard end up fighting her ? " Russell felt his anger rising again . He kept telling himself to stay calm and not repeat his mistakes . Last time , he had stormed off at Tilda and ended up revealing a major weakness . " Dad , this isn't Tilda's fault . Howard

was the one who pushed her to fight . " She didn't even want to deal with us at first , but Howard wouldn't let it go .

That's why it all ended like this . " Seeing the Jensons about to blame Tilda again , Wade jumped in . " Wade , why are you defending Tilda ? " Blair looked at him in surprise . She remembered Wade always hated Tilda . " I'm just speaking the truth , Mom . We can't keep misunderstanding her . We already owe her so much . " We haven't done anything we promised her . She's part of this family - my little sister and your daughter! " But all we've done is misunderstand her . We hurt her , push her away , and turn her into an enemy . We've never given her anything else !

" Blair and Russell froze , staring at Wade in shock . He was still breathing hard , his face flushed . He'd been holding all those feelings in for a long time . Wade knew that even if he said that , Russell and Blair probably wouldn't care .

They'd just think he was overreacting , They'd never understand what it was like to be misunderstood and abandoned by their family . That was exactly what Tilda went through . And the worst part ? After losing their little sister for 19 years , they acted like everything was normal .

They treated her so coldly . Thinking about it hit Wade like a tidal wave of guilt . It almost made it hard for him to breathe . He wondered how someone as messed up as he even deserved to live . " Wade is right . " Just then , Dominic's voice came from behind . It didn't have his usual calm or confident tone .

Chapter 222 Her Guilt Dominic walked in looking completely drained , with dark circles under his eyes . Even his lips were pale . It was clear he'd thrown himself into work . He tried to escape the guilt he felt toward Tilda and numb his own pain . Russell jumped up . " Dominic , you're back ! What about Howard's video ? " " I already handled it . It's under control and hasn't blown up . I caught it just in time , so it shouldn't cause any more trouble . " " It's good then . " Russell let out a relieved sigh , but something felt off . " Dominic , you just said ...

" I'm with Wade on this . Dad , Mom , we were way too harsh on Tilda . " Wade and I know we messed up . We just don't know if Tilda will ever let us make things right . " Dominic gave a dry , bitter laugh . Dominic , seriously ? At this point , you're still shamelessly hoping Tilda might forgive you ? You ? Do you think that if you bend over backwards and point out the family's mistakes , she's going to forgive you ? Dominic didn't know Tilda , but he knew Queen's personality . If someone hurt Queen and she gave up on them , they should count themselves lucky .

Lucky if she didn't come back for revenge . Forgiveness ? Forget it . Russell and Blair were speechless . " Wait , I'm so confused . Can you guys just pause for a sec ? " Russell rubbed his temples . What even happened today ? Never mind how Tilda had managed to crush Howard so badly . Wade had been acting strange lately . Whenever the Jensons badmouthed Tilda , he'd jump in and defend her fiercely .

Dominic was also acting weird . Didn't he always hate Tilda ? He once blamed her for embarrassing Russell and bringing shame to the family and company . He even wished she would just disappear .

Sometimes , Russell even thought about telling Dominic to chill . After all , she was his little sister . They shared the same blood . Even though Russell wanted to cut ties with Tilda for good , a tiny bit of fatherly feeling lingered .

Since leaving the hospital , Dominic had seemed like a different person . He worked even harder , like he was running from something . And now , he was saying stuff like that to Russell . Blair suddenly gasped in pain . Russell snapped out of it and immediately noticed the cut on her hand .

" Darling , what happened to your hand ? " " It's nothing . It just got pinched by accident . I was going to treat it , but then the whole thing with Howard suddenly came up . " Blair didn't dare tell her family she'd been hurt by Tilda . Daphne had warned her many times not to let Rebecca's situation slip . " That's not good ! Wade , grab the first aid kit . I'll put some medicine on it for your mom . " " On it ! " The real darling of the family was hurt , and everyone panicked . They instantly forgot about Tilda .

Seeing her family so worried , Blair wanted to say something , but nothing came out . Seeing her three sons all changed because of Tilda , Blair felt a twinge of guilt . She thought back to what Tilda had said . She'd been angry before and hadn't thought it through . Now , seeing Wade and the others changing for Tilda , Blair kept replaying Tilda's words in her mind . What if Tilda hadn't shown any talent and was still the same girl who first came to the villa ? Would Blair have defended her if she got bullied ?

Back then , Blair would say , " Of course I would . " But she hadn't truly meant it . The truth ? She didn't know the answer . She claimed to have searched for her missing daughter for 19 years . But what she did to Tilda wasn't what a mother should do . Now , Blair felt completely lost . The next day , Tilda was back at Orica University . She was a campus legend by now and had many fans . She'd won the National College Art Competition and was even recommended for the world title .

One of her paintings went viral on TikTok .

She'd saved a father and daughter from a car just before it exploded . She even beat Wade's record . All of that turned Tilda into an overnight superstar . Her popularity was skyrocketing . Even Twitter had started an official fan club for her . People were scrambling for selfies and autographs . Tilda hated crowds , though , so she grabbed Una and slipped away . She moved so fast that nobody could keep up . Security blocked the path , too . It was a university , not a fan event . Only when threatened with grade penalties did the fans finally back off .

Chapter 223

Myst Kyla watched what was going on from a distance . Jealousy burned in her eyes . She clenched her fists so tightly that her nails dug into her palms . Even the pain couldn't snap her out of it . Damn it ! Damn it !!! Yesterday , Kyla didn't go home . Finished She'd gone to a hot spring resort with Preston . It was Preston who invited her . To make things less awkward , he even brought a few friends along . Everyone got their own room . Of course , Kyla was well aware of Preston's nasty little thoughts about her . She acted like she hesitated .

After Preston's friends kept persuading her , she finally " reluctantly " agreed to go along . If it had happened before , Kyla would've said no instantly . She had to protect her image of being kind , pure , and beautiful . Going to a hot spring with Preston was just too suggestive , even with other people there . But now , Tilda had stirred up chaos everywhere . Everything around Kyla was changing because of Tilda . So , Kyla panicked and decided to give Preston a little attention . That was why she had no clue what happened at the Jenson Villa yesterday .

If she did , she'd totally lose it . Right then , her phone rang . When she saw who it was , her expression changed . She rushed somewhere private . " Hello ? Since you called first , have you found anything on Tilda ? " Kyla had been so furious at Tilda that she kept hounding the intelligence agency . She pushed them constantly to dig up dirt on Tilda . After all , she'd paid a ton for that .

Myst The intelligence agency was well - known . They'd dealt with Kyla before , and she drove them crazy . They finally lost their temper .

They even said that they'd rather refund her than take the case . Kyla freaked out and begged . She acted like a victim until they agreed to keep working . Money wasn't the issue . If she didn't find Tilda's weakness soon , she'd be in real trouble . She never expected them to call her first today . " We didn't find anything new on Tilda . " " What ?! " That was the last thing Kyla wanted to hear . She might as well have taken the refund . At least she wouldn't be out all that cash ! " But about the painting Tilda submitted for the competition , we found something .

" A few years ago , a painting sold at a charity auction overseas for ten million dollars . The style is almost identical to Tilda's work . " The artist went by X. Nobody can find this person now . But back then , X occasionally appeared on a famous anime forum abroad . Whenever X shared a painting , it always got pinned and turned into the highlight of the forum . " Similar style , huh ? Kyla pursed her lips . She could completely spin that into a plagiarism claim . " Got it . Show me that painting ! " " There's more . Tilda's composition is nearly identical to Myst's work .

Myst just won the Picasso Painting Competition two years in a row . People say Myst is the most talented young artist out there . No one else comes close . " These are the only two solid leads we've got . " Myst ?! Kyla sucked in a sharp breath . Anyone into art knew Myst . Not knowing Myst was like not

knowing Van Gogh or Picasso ! Nobody knew Myst's real name . Hardly anyone had ever seen that person . But Myst was legendary for winning the Van Gogh Best New Artist Award right out of the gate , The next year , Myst won the Picasso World Championship .

It had been five years since Myst debuted . Recently , Myst won the Picasso Championship again - the second time in a row . Myst The contest only happened every three years . Myst was now the reigning champ! Nothing like that had ever happened in the competition's history . Nobody expected Myst to score another victory . Finished Pure talent smashed every rule and bias . Once the judges saw Myst's work, they couldn't even consider anyone else . Some people were just born to shine , like stars . Everyone else , no matter how hard they tried , was just background players .

It stung , but after seeing Myst's work , they were crushed . All they could do was bow . Myst was unbeatable . It was just like Tilda's debut at the National College Art Competition . She'd crushed all her rivals . Kyla didn't care much about art . She only wanted to break into showbiz and win Best Actress .

Chapter 224 He Comes Back But when it came to Myst's legendary art and insane achievements , Kyla was a total fangirl . It was only natural for people to look up to the strong and the talented . " These two leads are amazing ! Send me everything I need to see it myself ! " Kyla was thrilled . If she could catch Tilda messing up , it would be huge . Myst had fans all over the world . That kind of power could completely crush Tilda . Especially in an international competition , with the whole world watching and pride on the line .

If Tilda got caught in a plagiarism scandal , her future would be finished .

Meanwhile , Tilda had no idea Kyla was plotting . She dragged herself back to her apartment , completely drained . She sighed . " So this is what being famous feels like ? Not worth it . " Next time she went to campus , she'd need makeup or some disguise . If not , she'd be stuck signing autographs and taking selfies all day . What a nightmare . Just then , her phone buzzed . It was Una . " Tilda , you're famous now !

My friends and family keep asking for your number and autograph . " Tilda replied helplessly , " This isn't the life I want . " Una comforted her , " Don't stress . It's just temporary . Ignore it , and people will get bored soon . " That was how the internet worked . At first , everyone went crazy . If she let it slide , didn't try to turn her fame into something more, and just kept going as usual , people would eventually move on . They'd chase after the next rising star and leave her behind . Online fame barely lasted a second . After chatting with Una a bit , Tilda got a message from Jude .

" I'll land in Slosa at 7:00 p.m. tomorrow . " Jude's flight was set for 9:00 p.m. since his private jet was in for maintenance . He wasn't about to take off until every detail was cleared . If something failed that high in the air , it'd be a

straight shot to death . But Jude couldn't wait to see Tilda . So , le ditched the jet and booked a normal flight instead . That way , he'd arrive sooner . Finished Tilda texted back , " Cool , I'll send my address when you land . Come over for dinner . Bring your friends too , haha .

" Jude smiled when he read that , but he was annoyed deep down . She invited him , yet Alfie and Maurice were gonna tag along like freeloaders . Hmph ! The next day , at 7:00 p.m. , at the airport . Alfie and Maurice came to meet Jude . Even in the VIP lounge , even if people couldn't recognize them , the two men in casual clothes gave off an invisible pressure . Tall , striking , and commanding attention effortlessly , they were impossible to ignore . People hanging around in that lounge were all rich . So , everyone soon recognized them as the heirs of the Woodward Group and Rowse Group .

Unlike Maurice , Alfie was lugging a heavy - looking bag . " Wait , is that Alfie and Maurice ? I saw them once at a party . " " Their aura is unreal . Hard to believe they're only in their 20s . They feel more powerful than CEOs in their 50s . " " And they're so tall and good - looking . Do they have to be perfect ? I kinda wanna introduce my daughter . " " Forget it . Guys like them have seen every type of woman . They won't look at someone from an average family . " TH " Still , maybe if I get brave enough to say hi , I could make a business connection .

Imagine working with the Woodwards or the Rowses . " " By the way , are they that close ? Who are they waiting for ? " As people whispered , Alfie spotted someone familiar . His eyes lit up , and he dashed forward , waving like a little kid . " Jude ! Over here ! " Jude ? Everyone turned their heads . A man in a tailored suit walked in - tall , over six feet , one hand in his pocket . His face was razor - sharp and flawless , carrying a cold , distant aura .

His deep eyes were like endless voids , capable of stealing anyone's soul . His brows drew together slightly , lips pressed in a thin line , radiating an innate nobility etched into his very bones . With one glance , people knew he didn't belong to the same world as them . He was like a god on a pedestal - someone they could only admire from afar and revere , Everyone held their breath . The lounge went so quiet that anyone could hear a pin drop . As Jude walked over , Alfie finally set down his heavy bag .

Chapter 225 Fondue House In front of everyone , Alfie suddenly pulled out a durian and a keyboard . Then , he set them down on the ground . Everyone was dumbfounded . What the hell is this ? Is he about to smash the keyboard on the durian ? Finished " Hey , Jude , I didn't forget what I promised you . See ? Keyboard here , durian there . Pick one , and I'll kneel on it . " Let's just call it even , alright ? Please ? " Alfie gave Jude a pitiful look , practically begging . Last time , Jude let Alfie off because of Tilda . So Alfie didn't need to fly over to apologize in person .

But he knew his friend well - Jude held grudges . When it came to the girl Jude liked , he was ten times worse . He'd better apologize now than wind up mysteriously gone later . Jude just looked at Alfie like he was the dumbest guy . " Cut it out , Alfie . You're embarrassing yourself . Do it in private ." Maurice walked over and smacked Alfie on the back of the head . " Damn it , Maurice ! That hurt ! Trying to kill me ? " Alfie looked like he wanted to pounce on Maurice . I'm scared of Jude , not you , punk . Sneak - attacking me ? No manners at all ! " We're leaving .

" Jude's cold voice cut through , not interested in their clowning around . He wasn't rushing back tonight to watch Alfie kneel on anything . " Hey , Jude , don't walk so fast ! Wait up ! " " Come on , he's heading to see his girl . No time for your circus . " " Screw you , Maurice ! You think I'm soft just because I'm not pissed ? Wanna get smacked ? " The three vanished from sight .

It took the crowd a while to recover . They were breathing hard with pale faces . Some had even forgotten to breathe for a moment . " Wait , Jude ?

Could that be Jude Bell from DY Group ? " " Holy crap , did I just miss my chance ? If I'd known , I would've walked up no matter what ! " Jude and the others followed Tilda's pin until they reached a busy area . Cars couldn't get through the crowds , so they had to go on foot . " Uh , Jude , are you sure Tilda sent the right spot ? " Alfie looked around , baffled . Sure , the street was buzzing with life , all down - to - earth and noisy . But eating here ? That didn't truly fit their usual status . Wasn't Alfie's Sky Dining good enough ? Jude didn't bother answering .

He just kept walking until they arrived at a cheese fondue place . He ignored everyone's admiration and attention and texted Tilda . " I'm here . Are you in Granny's Fondue House ? " " Yep ! Wait for me at the door - I'm coming down . " Granny's Fondue House was super popular . Tables spilled outside . People sat around shirtless , knocking back beers , laughing , eating nonstop . Jude and his friends looked completely out of place . Maurice and Jude stayed cool as always . Alfie , though , kept glancing everywhere curiously . Maurice rolled his eyes . " Seriously ?

Haven't you seen a busy street before ? Don't embarrass us . " " I haven't been here in ages ! I just came back from overseas . I haven't had time for spots like this . " And wow ... that smell of lamb barbecue . Gotta admit , it's kinda new to me . " Maurice facepalmed . " Hey , you guys finally made it ! " Tilda came out with her phone in hand . " Did I keep you waiting ?

Finished When Jude saw the gorgeous girl standing there , his cold eyes softened right away , warmth flooding in . " Not at all . " " Order whatever you want . It's on me .

I got hooked on cheese fondue in Hetsa . Una and I hunted down this place . It's the real deal ... " # Jude naturally drifted to her side , just listening quietly . His cold , untouchable aura was gone , replaced with a gentle warmth , like spring air . Alfie rubbed his chin and said meaningfully , " First time I've ever seen Jude like this . He's definitely fallen hard . " " Yeah , no doubt . We're just extras today - they're the main show . " Since Tilda invited Jude's friends , Una would be here as well . Thinking of Una's stubborn but innocent face , Maurice smiled .

He stuck one hand in his pocket and walked inside . Alfie shrugged . " Hope we don't choke on all the lovey - dovey vibes . "

Chapter 226 How to Pay ? Tilda and the others headed upstairs . At the same time , more guests showed up at Granny's Fondue House . Finished " Jack swore this place has the best cheese fondue . Even the high - end restaurants can't compare . Kyla , I know you're crazy about cheese , so I brought you here . " Thanks , Preston . " Kyla smiled brightly at him . He reached out and ruffled her hair . " You must be starving . You look worn out . Let's get some food . " " Okay . " But honestly , Kyla didn't look off because she was hungry .

It was because when she went back to Jenson Villa earlier , something felt wrong . The whole place gave off a strange vibe she couldn't explain . It felt like something had gone down behind her back . Howard locked himself in his room . Wade kept dodging her . Dominic and Russell both went to the company . Blair was missing as well . For the first time , Kyla noticed that the Jenson Villá no longer carried the laughter , joy , or warmth she had always known . Now it felt cold and hollow , nothing like a home anymore . And it was all because of that bitch , Tilda !

If Tilda didn't exist, the Jensons would still treat Kyla like a princess , making her the girl everyone envied . Kyla thought of the evidence in her hands and gave a cold smile . Tilda , your little glory days are coming to an end . You don't even know I've already started setting up my plan . I'll drag you down so far that you'll never climb back out ! Tilda had no clue Preston and Kyla were downstairs .

She guided Jude and the others to the open - air fondue tables on the second floor . " This place is super lively .

Sure , the private rooms have AC , but it kills the vibe . " Out here you can enjoy the breeze , look at the lights , and eat fondue - it's perfect , right ? " Luckily , it was autumn . The night air was cool . If it were summer , sitting out here eating cheese fondue would be torture . Jude lowered his gaze , his voice soft , filled with warmth . " As long as you're happy . " " Hey , Una ! It's been a while . " Maurice grinned at her

. Finished Her brows twitched . " Uh ... Mr. Rowse , could you please stop calling me like I'm a kid ? It's embarrassing . " " No way , I think it's cute .

" Maurice even reached out and patted her head . She was speechless . Great . Now I look even more like a kid . " Alright , food is here . Let's eat . Try this juice first - it's perfect . " Here's the menu . Una and I ordered two broths already , one spicy and one mild , in case someone can't handle heat . " Lots of meat choices . Just pick what you want and scan the QR code on the table to order more . " Tilda explained everything patiently . 2 2 2 2 52 But Jude , Alfie , and Maurice just stared at her , looking confused . Una couldn't resist teasing .

" Wait , don't tell me you guys don't know how this works ? " Alfie cleared his throat . " Honestly , no clue . How about you , Maurice ? " " Me ? Of course I know ! Just scan it , right ? " Maurice tried to play it smooth , pulled out his phone , and quickly scanned the QR code . " Huh ? Why's it not working ? " Una leaned over . " Did you not even verify your account ? Wow , seriously ? Are you from another planet ? No verification , no payment . " Maurice muttered , " ... I've only ever used cards . " Una was speechless. Damn rich people !

Finished . Alfie was laughing so hard that his stomach hurt . " Oh man , Maurice , you tried to show off and totally flopped . " " Shut up . " Maurice stomped on Alfie's foot . Alfie yelped , his face twisting in pain , turning red . Una burst out laughing . Watching those two mess around was way more fun than expected . They were supposed to be the untouchable heirs , completely out of reach for regular folks . Even though Una's family owned a business in Slosa , her family was nothing compared to the Woodward Group and Rowse Group .

The two future heirs of powerful families were now arguing like ordinary folks , struggling just to figure out how to pay with a QR code . It was kinda cute . Tilda teased , " If people saw the heirs of Woodward Group and Rowse Group acting like this at a fondue house , it'd be breaking news . You guys don't even know how to scan a code ? How pampered can you get ? "

Chapter 227 They Meet Each Other Jude nodded . " Yeah , they don't know the basics of real life . " Of course , stuff like that would never hit the news . The PR teams for Woodward Group and Rowse Group were no joke . Any gossip like that would vanish in seconds . " What about you ? You know how to do it ? " .. Just a little . " Tilda raised her eyebrows . " Wait , you're not gonna pretend ? " Normally , Jude acted like he had it all together , untouchable , always one step ahead . It seemed like there was nothing he couldn't do . It was rare to see him admit he couldn't do something .

" I'd rather risk looking like a fool in front of the girl I love than keep lying to her . " He said it straight to Tilda , his eyes steady and full of sincerity . She smiled . " Not bad . That answer earns you points . " She couldn't stand liars either . After what happened with Dominic , she was over it . Right then , Preston

and Kyla walked in . He said , " Kyla , our spot is right here . They've got private rooms , but I thought you'd enjoy the outside seating more ." Finished She smiled . " Yeah , Preston , great choice !

I've always heard this place has amazing fondue , but I never got the chance to come . Glad you brought me ! " Then , she caught something in the crowd and froze . Tilda?! Am I seeing this right ? Why is she here ?! Preston noticed her stare , and his face darkened . Damn it . Of all places , he had to bump into Tilda again . He wondered if she was tailing him . Ever since he came back from abroad , she kept showing up .

First the Nightingale Bar , now here . And the guy sitting across from her looked oddly familiar from behind .

Finished But Preston couldn't see clearly . Jude and the others had their backs turned , tall enough to block his view . Una was the first to recognize Kyla . Her face instantly darkened . She tugged on Tilda's sleeve , whispering , " Tilda , it's that fake bitch . Ugh , why do we keep running into her ? It's so gross . " Tilda finally spotted Kyla , but she just shifted her gaze and said calmly , " Ignore them . Let's just eat . " " Fine . " Una forced herself to look away . If that fake bitch dared to mess with Tilda again , Una swore she'd dump her drink on Kyla's head .

" Forget it , Kyla , don't even look at them . Let's just eat . " Preston had worked hard to get this dinner with Kyla - just the two of them . No way was he letting Tilda ruin it . On that point , he and Tilda oddly agreed . Both treated the other like they didn't exist . But Kyla didn't budge . She barely heard Preston's words . Her eyes were locked on Jude's back - the man she couldn't get out of her head . She'd only met him twice , but those moments were carved into her memory . Those were her most precious memories .

She had secretly snapped tons of photos of him , mostly from the side or behind . Jude was too sharp . If Kyla tried to photograph his face , he'd notice right away . She'd dreamed about him countless times . So , of course , she could still recognize his back . " Kyla ... " Preston frowned , noticing how she zoned out , staring at Jude . His pride stung . Kyla finally snapped out of it . She swallowed nervously and pointed at Jude's back , trying to sound casual . " Uh , Preston , is that Jude ? " And not just Jude - Alfie and Maurice too , the heirs of the Woodward Group and Rowse Group !

The most famous bachelors in Slosa were all sitting there ! Finished Kyla had memorized every detail about her backup future husbands , so she knew their info better than her SAT prep . What the hell ? Why are they all hanging out with Tilda ? Could it be that Tilda's just shameless enough to throw herself

at them ? "Jude ? " Preston blurted without thinking . The moment his name was called , Jude turned and glanced at Preston . Right away . Jude's eyes carried a cold , crushing power , like a weight pressing down on Preston's chest .

Chapter 228 Go Say Hi Preston's mind went blank . His body froze up , breath caught in his throat . Jude only spared Preston a single glance before turning away . As for Kyla , Jude didn't even acknowledge her existence . But her heart pounded . Jude just looked at me ! No doubt about it ! That gaze landed in our direction . I'm sure of it ! Instantly , all the bitter thoughts she had about Tilda disappeared . Maurice and Alfie noticed as well . Alfie said , " Jude , isn't that your uncle's son ? " " I'm not familiar with him , " Jude answered flatly .

In his eyes , most people weren't even worth remembering . To Jude , Preston was just Ryan's son who shared the same last name with him . He didn't have any spare memory space for someone so insignificant . " We can tell . " Alfie and Maurice were used to Jude being distant . After all , the Bells weren't what they used to be . Finished If not for Jude , they'd have already slipped into irrelevance . Neither the Woodward's nor the Rowses would bother with them . But Jude alone had flipped their fate . He dragged the Bells up to the top of Slosa's high society .

Even the strongest families had to give him respect . It was no exaggeration to say that Jude was the Bells ' savior . Without him , they'd be nobodies again . Still , some people in that family didn't get it . Una leaned close to Tilda and whispered , " I still don't get it . How is someone like Preston related to Jude ? They're not even in the same world . " She had seen Preston at the Nightingale Bar . When she found out he was from the Bells , she was extremely shocked .

To her , the Bells had always seemed untouchable in Slosa .

She thought every one of them would be like Jude , who could silence a room with just one look . Clearly , she'd been overthinking it . Even in a family that strong , someone like Preston could still exist . He was full of pride , but with nothing to back it up . " Guess it's just luck . Families must've racked up major karma in past lives to get someone like Jude . " Tilda and Una kept trash - talking Preston . Meanwhile , he could feel Jude's cold dismissal eating at him . His face burned with anger . He told himself over and over not to explode , or else Jude would win .

Deep down , Preston knew the truth . Even if he dreamed of replacing Jude , the gap between them was massive . Preston still needed time to grow . Jude ran DY Group and carried the whole Bells . Picking a fight with him would be pure suicide . " All right , Kyla , let's stop caring about them . Let's eat . " " But Preston , I want to say hi to Tilda . Go sit down first . I'll head over . " Running into Jude , Alfie , and

Maurice like that ? She couldn't waste the chance to show off . If she let it slip , Tilda might snatch them all away . Kyla had to leave an impression .

Preston froze , stunned she'd even suggest that . But while he was still processing it , Kyla had already walked off . " Hello , Tilda ... " she said softly . Tilda almost lost her composure . Kyla actually had the nerve to stroll over , pretending to be sweet . Is she fearless or just shameless ? Her sudden greeting made everyone pause . But Tilda noticed where Kyla's eyes kept drifting toward Jude . Now it was obvious .

Kyla wasn't here for small talk . She was drooling over Jude .

Kyla didn't realize that Tilda could see straight through her act . She was so hooked on Jude that she could barely think straight . Her eyes clung to his perfect profile . Damn ! He's gorgeous ! He's the best ! Even Preston couldn't measure up standing next to Jude . Especially that effortless aura Jude gave off - nobody else even came close . Kyla leaned in closer to Tilda , but she stood closer to Jude on purpose . She wanted to flaunt her figure and let him notice . Her long hair fell just so , her perfume drifting lightly in the breeze . She was putting on a show .

She could almost breathe in Jude's scent . It was dizzying . So that was what Jude smelled like . She'd never been this close to him before .

Chapter 229 It Hurts Preston's chest tightened . He rushed over , pulling her up . " Are you okay ? " " I - it hurts so much ... Preston " Jude , why would you hurt me ? What did I do wrong ? " Kyla lifted her tear - streaked face at Jude , acting like the wounded victim . She couldn't believe he stabbed her in front of everyone . Jude calmly pulled out a handkerchief , wiped the blood away , and didn't even look her way . Finished Alfie smirked . " You call him like you're close , but do you even know he hates it when women crowd him ?

" Especially the hypocritical ones chasing money and status . Alfie or Maurice might've just brushed her off . But Jude didn't think in terms of men or women . There were only people he could stand and people he couldn't . If someone ticked him off , it didn't matter who she was . He'd handle her without hesitation . Kyla gasped , crying harder , her eyes red and swollen . Of course , she knew that . Jude , the head of DY Group , wasn't into women . He had a bad temper , was cold - blooded , and controlled people's fate . But then why could Tilda sit calmly beside him ?

Why did Jude let Tilda be close , even showing her a softer side ? Not just Jude - Alfie and Maurice were relaxed around her as well . Why not Kyla ? " Jude , wasn't that too harsh ? Kyla's still a girl , " Preston

said , trying to defend her . " Keep your girlfriend in line . That was the first warning . Next time , I won't hold back . " Jude's expression stayed cold . He didn't even bother to glance at Preston . His voice was sharp and final , like a death sentence . Preston , usually full of himself , suddenly went silent . He didn't even dare breathe too hard , let alone argue back .

It felt like a blade was pressed against his neck . It might slice deeper if he spoke again . For Jude , cutting him down would be effortless .

Sure , they were family by blood , but Jude never saw it that way. In his world , people were either valuable or they weren't . Preston knew that for Jude , his whole branch of the family was worthless . Maybe even worse off than Jarrett , who did nothing but play games all day . That truth burned inside Preston . He hated how far below Jude he was . All he could do was grit his teeth and promise himself he'd rise .

Just wait , Jude . One day , I'll pay you back for all this humiliation - with extra on top ! " Kyla , let's- " " Jude , don't take it the wrong way ! Preston and I are like siblings . There's nothing between us . " Finished Preston was just about to tell Kyla they should get her injury treated . But before he could say anything , she cut him off . She cried as she rushed to clear things up .

Chapter 230 You Make Me Sick It was like she was terrified Jude might get the wrong picture . Preston just froze . His flicker of unease instantly grew . Is Kyla into Jude ? Is that why she's falling over herself to explain , desperate for him not to misunderstand ? Kyla didn't care what Preston was thinking . She thought she'd figured it out . Finished Jude ignored her and even went so far as to stab her with a fork . She thought it was probably because he thought she was Preston's girlfriend . But that was totally wrong . She wasn't with Preston .

She wasn't like Tilda , who shamelessly chased after guys like Andy and Jude . She was pure , kind , and innocent ! Alfie gave a low whistle . Some people just couldn't be saved . Kyla was blind to reality . She stepped right over every chance Jude had given her and still tried to get close . Did she truly think she could seduce Jude ? Girls like that never had a happy ending . Tilda hadn't moved a muscle . She decided to stay out of it . Jude would deal with Kyla himself , and he'd make sure she regretted ever trying . She didn't need to get her hands dirty .

The crowd watched in silence , but not a single person dared jump in . Jude's aura was too overwhelming . Anyone with sense could see it wasn't something normal people should mess with . If they did , they'd only get themselves wrecked . Those who knew Jude already figured Kyla was as good as gone . But she kept clinging to her silly hope . She still tried to talk her way out of it . " Jude , it's me - Kyla , the Jensons ' adopted daughter . We met at a party once . Don't you remember ?

" You even helped me when I was being picked on- " Right then , Una grabbed a glass of juice and threw it right in Kyla's face . The cold , sticky drink drenched her , shutting her up instantly . As it dripped down her skin , her head finally cleared " Fake bitch , who do you think you're fooling ? Beat it ! " You seriously believe anyone buys that crap ? You make me sick ! " Una couldn't hold it back anymore . Even after everything that just went down , Kyla kept acting fake .

She still shamelessly called Tilda intimately while trying to seduce Jude . Una wanted nothing more than to rip Kyla's hair out and beat her into the ground . She hadn't exploded earlier because Jude had stabbed Kyla with a fork . That scene had shocked her . She never thought he'd go that far . But watching Kyla still play the poor - me act , Una almost wished Jude had shoved the fork straight down her throat and landed her in the ICU . " How could you treat Kyla like that ?! " Preston finally came to his senses , glaring at Una . He knew he couldn't go against Jude , but Una ?

That was different . " Preston , can't you control your mutt ? Didn't you see her drooling all over Jude , practically throwing herself at him ? " Tilda finally spoke , and her words cut straight to the bone . She nailed the one thing Preston didn't want to face . His face instantly darkened , like he'd just been cheated on . " Tilda , yes ! You nailed it ! " Una had been struggling to put it into words , but Tilda summed it up perfectly . She clapped her hands , fired up . Jude , who'd been about to finish things himself , turned his eyes on Tilda .

There was surprise there , and maybe even curiosity . Was Tilda snapping at Kyla because she was jealous ? If that was true , Jude would be thrilled .

" Tilda , you've got it wrong . Finished " I just haven't seen Jude in ages . I got a little too excited . That's all . " I don't have any feelings for him . I swear ! " Now that her head was clearer , Kyla started to panic . She scrambled to explain , looking more pitiful than ever . Seeing her looking like that , Preston immediately slid back into full - on simp mode . " Tilda , quit talking trash !

You're only jealous of Kyla . That's why you're trying to humiliate her ! " He had grown up with Kyla , so he refused to believe she liked Jude . He was convinced he still mattered to her . In his mind , they were perfect for each other . " Kyla , do you talk to every guy this intimately ? Maybe grab a mirror and see just how fake you are . "