

## Shadows 441

Chapter 441 Secrets at the Party " Tilda , I've noticed my brother Theo's been spending plenty of time with you . I don't know what he's involved in , but if you're there , I know he's in good hands . Watch out for him , will you ? " Alfie couldn't help thinking about how secretive Theo had been recently , slipping away without telling anyone . After digging around , Alfie found out Theo wasn't just hanging out with childhood friends . He had set up some kind of online base - and Tilda's name was connected to it . With Tilda involved , Alfie wasn't as worried .

For some reason , he trusted her . " Tilda , when did you meet Alfie's brother ? " Una asked , curious as ever . She had never even met Theo herself . Hmm , something felt off . But on second thought , it wasn't strange at all . After all , Una not knowing Alfie's brother made sense . " Ahem , just a friend , " Tilda answered casually , brushing it off . She couldn't reveal the truth . The Comet Squad was too sensitive a topic to talk about . It involved national cyber security . The dinner that night was a buffet .

World - class chefs had been brought in , and everything looked like it came out of a top - tier restaurant . Drinks were all premium brands , and the desserts were beautifully decorated . Most importantly , everything tasted amazing . " Wow , Tilda , try this strawberry cake - it's so good ! " Una said , " excited . And this chocolate cake looks so cool ! " Tilda reminded , " Don't eat too much . Weren't you trying to lose weight ? " " Oh , please . Who cares about dieting when the food is this good ? I'll start again tomorrow .

This donut is delicious !" She had no words , Finally , Tilda pushed the food - obsessed Una over to Alfie to handle . She poured herself a glass of champagne and walked to the floor - to - ceiling window . The silver frost outside shone under the moonlight , her eyes reflecting its glow . Tilda ." A familiar voice came from behind her . She turned her head . It was Stephen . Tilda answered coolly , " Mr. Woodward . " " Hey , drop the formality . We've met before , and Kayden already left the resort ." " Oh . Tilda's tone stayed flat , her reply short and simple .

" Technically , this is your family business . I shouldn't ask , and I don't really have the right to , " Stephen said .. " But I saw Kayden pleaded with you . He has never met you , yet he still did it . You cut ties with your family so decisively . I'm not asking if you'll forgive them , but ... Kayden does seem pretty innocent . " Even as he spoke , Stephen felt uneasy . He hated playing the role of peacemaker ; it was never something he liked or wanted to do . " Mr. Woodward , if Kayden hadn't helped you fix those violins , or if you didn't know him , would you still be saying all this ?

" Tilda asked . " No. Honestly , I don't want to defend him either . But I saw him , a grown man begging for forgiveness . It was hard to watch . So if anyone's going to take the heat for saying this , let it be me . If I've offended you , please forgive me . " Stephen let out a heavy sigh . " Mr. Woodward , you didn't press charges when I entered your collection room without . permission , and you even let me use that violin " I'm not mad . But I'll make this clear - my feud with them is far more complicated than you think .

I will never forgive them . Not in this life . For me to forgive the harm they did way that happens is over my dead body . Her tone was sharp , unyielding . the only " So don't ever bring this up again . No matter how many times you ask , my answer is the same . I will never forgive them . " Tilda's voice was firm . There was no room for persuasion . Stephen knew there was no convincing her . He gave an apologetic nod . " I understand . I'm sorry for bringing up something so painful . " " It's fine ." Tilda replied flatly . Stephen's admiration for Kayden made sense .

He had helped him so much , and among wealthy families , favors carried weight . The fact that Kayden had begged for her forgiveness had shocked even Tilda . Stephen's sympathy and his attempt to plead for Kayden were understandable . But forgiving them ? That would mean returning to the same naive fool she had been in her past life , shackled by family ties . And more than that - Tilda wanted their most beloved daughter to be the one to destroy the whole family . Stephen left with a heavy heart . Not long after , he bumped into Alfie . Alfie greeted him respectfully . " Uncle Stephen .

" Stephen coughed lightly . " Alfie ... yes , hello ." " I just saw you talking to Tilda . Do you two know each other ? " Alfie asked . " You could say that . A lot has happened lately . " Facing his most favored nephew , Stephen couldn't hold it in any longer . If he bottled it up , it would eat him alive . " Oh , so that's what happened , " Alfie murmured , surprised .

Chapter 442 Jude's Weakness Alfie's eyes flickered as he glanced toward Tilda , standing not far away . " You know Tilda too ? Wait - she didn't come here because of you , did she ? " " She's Jude's girl . " Stephen froze , his breath quickening . Kinushad For a moment , it was as if he'd discovered something unbelievable . He turned his head around and sneaked several more looks at Tilda . As a seasoned businessman , Stephen had seen countless storms , so it didn't take long for him to calm down . " Never thought Jude would actually fall for someone ... No wonder .

I always felt Tilda is special- He let out a low whistle . " Right now , the Jensons no longer deserve her . " The Jensons carried weight in Slosa ; that was true . But compared to the Bells , they were still small - time . The Bells were untouchable , the kind of people even the Woodwards wouldn't dare to cross . " Right ? " Alfie smirked as he secretly snapped a few pictures of Tilda on his phone . He sent them straight to Jude . Stephen gave him a questioning look . Alfie shrugged . " I want to discuss a deal with Jude .

Sending him some pretty shots of Tilda first makes it easier to get things moving . " Stephen nearly fainted . " Kiddo , if Tilda finds out , she'll knock you flat ! That girl has a fiery temper . " He sighed , rubbing his forehead , not knowing what else to say . Alfie just grinned . " Uncle Stephen , this is called knowing your audience . Jude always gets everything handed to him . The only weak spot he has is Tilda . See ? He already replied . " Alfie flashed Jude's message at Stephen and walked away with a smile . Stephen just stood there speechless .

Sigh !

Young people these days . I couldn't keep up anymore . By then , Alfie had already struck a deal with Jude . Furnitatio He texted . " Thanks , Jude . I'll sneak a few more great shots of Tilda for you . Kiss emoji . " Jude fired back . " Do that again and I'll cancel the deal - and come after you ! Mad emoji . Tilda is my girl . How dare you secretly take her pictures ? Are you asking for trouble ? Alfie teased . " But Jude , don't you think there are sides of Tilda you've never seen ? Smiling cutely emoji . Jude fell silent . He scrolled through the pictures Alfie had sent . Fine .

He had to admit there were some sides of Tilda that were ones he had never seen . But he hated the thought of another man snapping those photos . For the first time in his life , Jude found himself torn . He didn't know what to choose . Jude knotted his brows deeply . " Alright , enough jokes , " Alfie finally said . " But today I figured something out . You and Tilda really do fit each other . " " What makes you say that ?" Alfie told Jude what had happened between Tilda and Kayden at the resort . " Two lonely souls finally crossed paths .

What you feel for each other isn't just the pull of that Omega bloodline , right ? " Jude went quiet . Alfie sighed . " Honestly , I just wish Tilda's family wasn't such a mess . She deserves a life with more happiness and joy . " Jude closed his eyes . He knew that feeling - growing up without a family's care and even facing their hate . Jude understands that all too well .

That was his life from the very start . Unlike Tilda , though , Jude still had his grandmother . She had no one . Her mentor was important , but he wasn't blood .

Being treated with cold cruelty by her family and forced to cut every tic - there was no way she hadn't suffered , no matter how calm she looked . " I know your temper , " Allie said quietly . " Once you decide on something , you'll never change . But as your buddy , I still have to tell you this . Treat her well . Tilda is a good woman . Don't ever hurt her . " As Alfie replied to the text , his eyes drifted to where Tilda stood a short distance away , laughing softly with Una . " Don't talk nonsense , Alfie . In this life , I will never let Tilda down . Only my death would stop me .

Kayden didn't return home until almost eleven at night . The place was pitch black . No lights , no sound . Everyone was not around . No one was home . Maybe that was better . After watching Tilda walk away so decisively , Kayden had no idea how to face the rest of his family . He didn't feel like showering or sleeping . Instead , he went straight to the music room . Kayden flipped on the light , tossed his jacket aside , and stepped barefoot onto the cold floor . Sitting down , he laid his fingers on the piano keys . His mind was chaos .

The only way to release it was to play - fast , wild , and hard . Notes came like a storm , the rhythm sharp and frantic , buzzing like a swarm of bees .

His fingers blurred across the black and white keys , so fast they left shadows . He played until his chest burned . Until everything inside him broke loose . At some point , Justin appeared at the doorway . He didn't say a word . He just watched as Kayden , eyes shut , played like a man possessed . Only when the last note faded did Kayden vent out all of his pain .

His hands slipped , his body slid down , and he fell to the floor like the air had been punched out of him .

Chapter 443 The Weight of Silence Kayden was gasping for air , sweat running down his face . That was when Justin walked in . He tossed a towel onto Kayden . Anished " Justin , I thought you went out . " " Mom and Dad took Kyla out to clear their heads . I wasn't in the mood , so I stayed behind , " Justin replied . Then he sat at the piano and began to play . It was Moonlight Sonata . The notes carried like the ocean under the moon , endless and slow . The pace wasn't fast , but the music held a sense of loneliness no one else could touch .

It was the quiet kind of solitude , set apart from the world . It was nothing like Kayden's frantic , angry way of playing . From Justin's music , Kayden could feel what was weighing on his heart . The events over the last few days had worn him down . He was a little better now , but his eyes were sunken , dark circles carved deep , and his appearance unkempt . Gone was the once - famous prince of the piano who had shone on international stages . Kayden looked at him , opened his mouth , but no words came out . Truth was , he wanted comfort himself .

He wasn't in the mood to comfort anyone else . The last note ended . al Justin noticed Kayden had calmed down Only then did he speak . " Weren't you supposei to help Mr. Woodward tune his violin at the resort ? Why are you rushing home this late ? " " Something happened . I couldn't stay there , " Kayden said quietly .

Justin said nothing . He mimicked Kayden , stretched out , and lay down beside his brother on the cold floor . " Remember when we were kids ? " Justin said . " Even in January , we'd lie here like this . Back then , it felt warm .

We could talk forever . We had endless energy ." He gave a short laugh . " Now we're grown , stronger , but somehow we can't do anything . It just feels cold . Kayden bit his lip , finally making up his mind . " Justin , let's give up on Tilda . " " Give up ? " Justin gave a bitter smile . " I gave up al time ago . I couldn't even recognize the sister who saved me , the one who meant the most . I let myself be tricked by others . What right do I have to stand in front of her now ? I don't even deserve it . " " Then that's good . " Kayden murmured .

Kayden couldn't bring himself to tell Justin what had happened at the resort today . Or the cold , final words Tilda had said after learning the truth . Since Justin already knew letting go of Tilda was the best choice , Kayden no longer worried about him getting hurt . " Kayden , you've changed . What happened to you ? " Justin sensed something was wrong . The Kayden he knew would never carry this kind of heavy , defeated air , like someone who had given up completely . " Justin , " Kayden said softly , his eyes pleading , I suddenly got some inspiration . Will you help me write a song ?

" Kayden's pleading eyes made Justin sigh quietly . Forget it . Everyone has secrets . Things you can't explain to outsiders . Even to the closest brother ... No - especially to the closest brother .

You have to keep it a secret . Years ago , ago , #when Justin was at his lowest , it was Kayden who pulled him from the dark . Now , it was Justin's turn to do the same for Kayden . " Alright . I'll help you . I've got nothing else going on anyway . Writing a new song might be at good way to pass the time . " Life was already in ruins .

At least they could protect their music . It was the only thing they were proud of . They couldn't let Tilda keep looking down on them again and again . Days passed quickly . At Jeselton Airport , Una and Tilda wheeled their suitcases out of the VIP terminal . " Phew ! Finally made it here ! " Una let out a breath . " It's not that close to Sloga . A five - hour flight , after all . " " Hello , ladies . " Andy was already waiting . One hand in his pocket , he greeted them with his trademark smile . Even with sunglasses on , his confidence and charm were impossible to hide .

His pale , sickly skin and striking golden hair caught the eyes of passersby everywhere . Even Tilda couldn't Una aside go unnoticed . bundled in a down coat , with her hat pulled low and her hands stuffed into her pockets , still drew stares . Her flawless face , her lips touched with pale lipstick , and skin as smooth and fair as a baby made people want to reach out , just to know what it felt like . Una stuck her tongue out playfully . " Every time I see you , it feels like running into a superstar . Andy , it's a good thing we didn't run into a mob of crazy fans of yours at the airport .

They'd probably have killed us to get to you . "

at " Relax , " Andy said , grinning . " Don't forget my job . I'm a lawyer With me around , nothing's going to happen to you . "

Chapter 444 Dinner at the Top " You might even get a nice chunk of compensation out of it . " Both of the girls fell silent at the remark . Una was just joking , but Andy looked dead serious . " Alright , let's go , ladies . I cleared my schedule just to show you around . I'll be your host for the next few days . " Tilda gave him a faint smile . " Fine . Let's see if this city you keep bragging about is really that much fun . " Andy threw an arm around Tilda and the other around Una , strutting down the street like a king surrounded by his queens .

The sight drew plenty of stares - some envious , some bitter , depending on who was looking . Andy drove his BMW through the busiest part of the city , showing his guests around the city with pride . Una peeked out the window at the endless stream of traffic and luxury cars . She grumbled , " Jeselton really is dazzling . I've lost count of how many high - end cars I've seen . Even the license plates look like they cost a fortune . " Andy smirked . " This city never runs out of rich folks or power players . Jeselton is the center of it all .

The country's best talent gathers here." He paused a little before he declared , " Alright , we're here . " Andy pulled into an underground garage and parked . The three of them took the elevator all the way up to the top floor . " This , " Andy said with pride , " is Jeselton's most famous restaurant - George Madron . It's a chain . named after the founder . The specialty is Yvoria cuisine . It tastes good . You'll like it . " Andy his introduction . When the elevator doors slid open , they were greeted by sheer luxury .

A crystal chandelier , nearly fifteen feet wide , hung from the center of the hall , turning slowly . Inside it , countless tiny bulbs sparkled , their light bouncing off the mirrored glass , casting a dazzling glow across the room .

The marble floor stretched beneath a red carpet , leading toward the dining area . From the 50th floor , the glass walls revealed the glittering skyline of the city at night .

Red roses were placed with care , candlelight flickered on every table , and each spot carried a small nameplate engraved with the restaurant's brand . Every detail was polished to perfection . A waiter scanned Andy's reservation code , then bowed slightly and led the three of them to their table . " Order whatever you want , don't hold back . The next few days , it's on me . Eat all you want . " Waiter , bring

us a bottle of '82 Lafite . " " Yes , sir . " Una smiled . " No wonder you're a top lawyer . You talk like someone who's used to big spending .

Tilda , I've never had Yvoria cuisine before . Can you help me pick something good ? " Andy advised , " If you're not sure about the taste , just go with their house specials . Those are always safe . " Tilda chimed in , " I haven't had Yvoria food . Let's try their top recommendation . " " Okay , then I'll order the same as Tilda . " Andy propped his chin on one hand and said pitifully , " This restaurant is great , but compared to your cooking , Tilda , it's nothing . I wish I could ... Tilda gave a helpless shrug . " Fine . When I have time , I'll cook something myself for you all .

" " Yeah ! Nothing better than having Tilda cook for us . I've missed it so much . " " Same here ! " Andy and Una's eyes lit up as they stared at Tilda . She smiled affectionately at the two . Sigh ! What did I do to deserve these two ! Just then- " Dammit ! " someone shouted . The group turned toward the sound . Tilda caught sight of a figure she thought she recognized .

This woman ... at Her mind raced , searching for the memory . Then it clicked .

The one who cursed out loud was a middle - aged woman , dressed in a limited edition Hermes winter fur coat , black stockings , and high heels . Her hair was curled into big waves , her face heavy with makeup . She wore two gold bangles on her wrist , and her earrings were set with large pearls . She gave off the look of someone who had money but no class . Right now her face was twisted in disgust . The noise had startled the manager , who rushed over . " Ma'am , is something wrong ? " " What's wrong ? Look at this ! " she snapped . " Why is there a fly in my pasta ? That's gross !

What kind of hygiene do you people have here ? " She jabbed her finger toward the fly in the plate and called out in disgust . The whole time she spoke in a foreign language , but her words were choppy . The accent slipped now and then into local slang , making it sound clumsy - almost comical . The manager stammered , " T - that's impossible , ma'am . Every dish is inspected before leaving the kitchen . And our kitchen and dining area both passed the highest health standards- " " So you're calling me a liar ? How dare you ! " She cut in , her voice sharp .

" I heard this is one of the best restaurants in Jeselton . Do you know how long I waited to get a table here ? I brought my friends to enjoy a nice meal , and this is what we get ? And you still make excuses ? Shame on you ! "

Chapter 445 The Fly in the Pasta Finisht The wealthy woman stood with her hands on her hips , glaring so fiercely it looked like her eyes . could kill . Her heavy makeup only made her face look more twisted and unpleasant .. " Come on , Megan , calm down . " "Yeah , yeah , don't make a scene . People are watching . " The two ladies who came with Megan Walsh stayed much calmer , though their faces still

showed disgust . After all , they were here to enjoy a meal at one of the city's top restaurants . Having something like this happen was enough to ruin anyone's mood .

But Megan wasn't about to let it go . " I don't care ! I want to see your boss right now . Someone has to explain this to me ! " The manager , sweating under the stares of the other diners , could only bow and nod . " I - I understand . I'm so sorry , ma'am . Please , come with me . " With no other choice , he hurriedly led Megan and her friends out of the dining room . The little drama came to an end . uneasy . " No way ... did that really happen ? A fly in her food ? " Una looked uneasy . " No way Tilda shook her head .

" This restaurant has been one of the top names in Jeselton for over ten years . Not once has it had a hygiene issue . For a place like this , a mistake that simple is impossible . " From what I know , this restaurant has run in this place for more than ten years without a single health issue . Not once , Tilda continued . " And in the restaurant world , health problems are worse than anything else . They really destroy a brand's image . " They even hire dozens of staff just to check the dishes and tableware before they're served . Una's mouth dropped open . " Wait ...

Are you saying she put that fly in there herself ? " Tilda gave Andy a look . " What do you think ? " " Getting a table at George Madron's isn't easy . Only Jeselton's elite can eat here - status , wealth , and connections all have to line up , " Andy said .

" People like that don't usually skip the bill or try to smear the restaurant's name . Dropping a fly in their own food ?

That's almost unthinkable " He paused , then added , " But if there's enough to gain , if the reward is big enough , human nature can turn ugly no matter who you are ." Andy lowered his voice . " That woman who caused the scene - her name's Megan . From what I've heard , her husband's company has been struggling . He's got a lover and kids outside the marriage , and he's been secretly moving money around . " Una frowned , not quite sure she understood . " Wait ... Andy , are you saying she planted that fly herself just to get out of paying the bill ? " " Of course , Andy said calmly .

" I'm a lawyer , I wouldn't make a claim like that without being sure . " He asked . " Tilda , you seem genuinely interested in her . Do you know her ? " Tilda's lips curled into a cold smile . " She's Kyla's real mother . " " What ?! " Una almost shouted but quickly covered her mouth . Andy's grin widened . " That explains it . " Of course it did . Tilda hated the Jenson's with every fiber of her being , and that included

Kyla . Since she planned to use Kyla to bring the family to their knees , she had already dug into everything about her .

That meant even tracking down the parents who abandoned Kyla for eighteen years . " There's nothing to hide , " Tilda said . " I've already looked into everything about Kyla . As for Megan ... I don't know if it was fate or coincidence , but running into her here was not something I expected . " Her fingers brushed her chin . She looked like she'd just found a new game to play . Kyla's life was already a raging fire . Now Tilda had found the perfect kindling to throw on top . It was the perfect fuel to throw in to keep the flames rising higher . Andy read her expression and spoke lightly .

" What did I tell you about Megan ? Ninety - nine percent of it is true . "

Tilda smirked . " Thanks , Andy . That's good intel . I haven't bothered checking on her in ages " If not for today's coincidence , she might have forgotten Megan even existed . It only proved how good her life was now - that she could go this long without sparing a thought for Kyla's parents still hiding out in Jeselton . Una rolled her eyes . " Andy , why do you sound like a doctor with all that ninety - nine percent talk ?

" Andy seductively touched his finger to his lips and exhaled slowly , his eyes flashing with mischief . " Una , that's called precision . " Oh my gosh ! Una felt a jolt shoot straight through her chest . She had to admit - Andy was dangerously attractive when he did that . Damn ! What an incubus ! I almost fell for him . Send Gifts After all the drama , Megan finally walked away with a settlement , a shaky truce between both sides .

Chapter 446 A Chance Encounter with Tilda " Hmph , guess you finally came to your senses ! What rotten luck today . Next time , ladies , I'll treat you to something better . " " Oh . Ljust remembered I have something to do . I need to go now . See you , Megan . " The two women who came with her grabbed each other and hurried off . As soon as Megan wasn't looking , they were badmouthing her behind her back . " Finding a fly in the food was gross , but did Megan really have to go that far ? " " Exactly . Yelling at the manager in front of everyone with no shame at all .

So embarrassing . " I heard her husband's company isn't doing well . Maybe she staged it on purpose . " " I suspect as much . Come on , this restaurant has run in Jeselton for years . The place is always booked solid and serves only the top crowd . How could they make such a rookie mistake ? " " Let's not hang out with Megan again . She's going to bring trouble . After tonight , word will spread , and every fine restaurant in Jeselton will probably blacklist her . " Megan had no idea her friends had pictured her as a villain . She strutted into the restroom like she had just won a battle .

Megan thought about the 500,000 - dollar check and the free meal the manager had given her . Humming a tune , she stood in front of the mirror , fixing her makeup and adding lipstick . That's when a

shadow moved behind her . Megan glanced to the side and froze . The face looked so familiar . After a moment , she gasped , " Wait ... Aren't you Tilda Jenson ? " Tilda turned her head , feigning surprise even though she knew the bait had worked . " Hmm ? You know me ? " " Oh , who doesn't ? You're a world champion ! Everyone knows your name .

Even in Jeselton's high circles , people talk about you . Some folks are even offering big money for one of your paintings ! "

with Tilda Sensing a chance to cling to someone powerful , Megan hurried over with a bright smile . She acted as if she and Tilda were close friends , nothing like strangers meeting for the first time . As she chatted , Megan even tried to slip her arm through Tilda's , But Tilda shifted away smoothly , avoiding the touch without making a scene . A flash of distaste crossed her eyes .

No wonder - Kyla's mother was cut from the very same mold . Megan noticed Tilda's avoidance , but she didn't get frustrated . She seemed to sense something about Tilda's personality and forced a still smile . " Of course , I'm a fan too . I saw one of your paintings once , and it blew me away . " That ... well , I just happened to bring these with me ." Then , almost too eagerly , Megan dug into her handbag and pulled out a sheet of paper and a pen . " Tilda , could I ... oh wait , could I get five autographs ? My whole family are your fans .

" Please ." Megan , nearly fifty years old , batted her eyes and tried to act cute . With her heavy makeup , she looked more like something out of a ghost story than a fan . Tilda fought back her disgust and said , " Since you're a fan , I don't mind signing ." She pulled out a pen , took Megan's notebook , and wrote five big " X "s . " Uh ... what ? " Megan froze .. This was not the signature she expected . Shouldn't she have signed it as Tilda ? Tilda smiled faintly . " If I publish anything in the future , I'll be using the name X .

So it's easier to sign this way ." Megan coughed awkwardly . " Right , thank you , Tilda . You've really made Tilda . You've really made my wish come true . " Still , she mumbled to herself , staring at the plain Xs . They didn't look special at all . Unless Tilda personally certified them , maybe with a stamp or something , no one would

with Tilda believe they were real . Fintatied Who would spend money on something like this ? Even as a gift , people would think it was fake .

Even with her thick skin , Megan knew she couldn't push any further . This was their first meeting . Tilda had already done her a favor . Asking for more would only get her rejected and embarrassed . " Hmm , Tilda , " Megan said carefully , " I think meeting you today is fate . Why don't we exchange contacts ? I

do have some connections here in Jeselton . If you ever need help , come to me. I'll try my best to repay you for this autograph . " She leaned in closer . " Also , I'd love for my family to host you sometime . They're all big fans of yours . " " Wouldn't that be too much trouble ?

" Tilda asked , pretending to be shy . Megan's eyes lit up at once . " Not at all , not at all ! It's settled then ! " After getting Tilda's work number , Megan left in high spirits . She watched her go , the corners of her lips curling into a cold smile . This had gone easier than expected . She had to admit , in some ways , Kyla had outdone her mother . At least Kyla knew how to act . Megan was nothing but vain and shallow , Grabbing a bottle of hand sanitizer , Tilda scrubbed her hands clean . Just touching Megan's notebook made her feel filthy .

Chapter 447 The Trap is Set As soon as Tilda stepped out of the restroom , she saw Andy waiting by the door . He leaned against the wall with his arms crossed , his blue eyes deep as the ocean , with a playful glint in them . When he noticed Tilda , he ran a hand through his blond hair , lips curving into a teasing smile . "So , how did it go ? " he asked . " Easier than I thought , " Tilda replied . Andy chuckled . " The fish has already taken the bait . Now we just wait for the right time to reel it in . " Tilda's mind was already racing .

How could she use Megan in corner Kila With Megan's family in financial trouble , this was the perfect chance . " Sometimes I almost feel sorry for the Jensons , " Andy said , grinning . " They picked a fight with the Queen . When they finally learn the truth , it'll be hilarious . " " They don't deserve pity , " Tilda answered coldly . " They brought this on themselves . If they treasure Kyla so much , they should have known this day would come . I'm just pushing it forward a little faster . " There was no hesitation in her voice .

When it came to this plan , Tilda didn't have the slightest doubt . This was the debt the Jensons owed her . Andy waved a hand . " Relax , don't take my words so seriously . Come on . Tilda . Dinner's already being served . Let's eat before it gets cold . " " Sure , payback feels great . But you and Una just got off a long flight . You must be starving . Eat and drink first - full stomachs make everything easier . " We still need to keep up our strength if we're going to enjoy ourselves in Jeselton , " he added with a grin .

Tilda stepped forward , tapped Andy's check lightly with her toe , and smiled brightly . "You win , Andy . I'll listen to you ." Yes - getting revenge was important . But it could never come before the people she had finally

found again , the friends who truly mattered to her . They were her true family . Compared to them , the Jensons would always come second . 国 #: At the same time , not far from the restaurant , a luxury hotel rose above Jeselton's movie town . On the 40th floor , a man lay in bed , drenched in sweat , his face twisted in pain .

It was Darell , the nation's beloved best actor , known for his cold and untouchable personality . He had been living in Jeselton's movie town for months , locked away with the crew . He rejected every endorsement deal and reality show , focusing only on his new movie . His only goal was to finish this new film and win the Best Actor award again , climbing to a peak no one had ever reached before . He was not even thirty , yet he already held two Best Actor trophies .

Darell wanted to silence the rumors - that he had coasted on his looks , relied on dumb luck , or used his family power to take the prize . He wanted his fans to feel proud deep in their hearts , proud of the idol they had chosen . To do this , Darell had disappeared from the media for more than half a year , seeing his family and friends only through video calls . Tomorrow would be the final day of filming . The closing scene . At last , it would be over . But in his dream , Darell stood in the middle of a burning building . " Damn it ! Not this dream again . " He groaned with frustration .

For the past two weeks , he had been trapped in this same nightmare .. No - it had all started after that strange psychic showed up . The dream was creepy , but it hadn't hurt him or shaken his mind too badly . Still , having the same nightmare for two weeks straight was unsettling .

was It was downright strange . He sat down on the ground , strangely clear - headed for someone dreaming . Darell knew he was dreaming , the fire didn't harm him , yet everything felt vivid . I've been stuck in this fire for two weeks now .

I searched everywhere - there's no way out . It feels like an abandoned warehouse . If I could just lie down and wait until morning like usual , I'd wake up fine . Tomorrow's the last day for the filming : I can't let myself slip or wake up tired . Darell was about to lie down , ready to let the dream fade as usual If he slept again inside the dream , he would wake up in the real world when morning came . But then- A desperate cry broke through the crackle of fire . " I didn't ... I swear I didn't ... Dad , Mom , brothers it wasn't me ... " Please , you have to trust me . I didn't do this .

" " What was that ? " Darell's eyes . flew open . The voice seemed to come from somewhere deeper in the blaze . For the first time in two weeks of repeating this nightmare , he was hearing something new . And the voice , it sounded familiar . He just couldn't place where he had heard it before . Curiosity gnawed at him . After all , this was only a dream - what could really happen ? Darell had always been a man of strict science , never one for superstitions or ghost stories .

So , instead of waiting for the alarm clock to wake him in the morning , he decided to push on and find out what trick his mind was playing . Step by step , he followed the pleading voice . The fire roared all

around him , swallowing his body in flames that looked frighteningly real . Out of the Shadows Tilda's Brabant Gessoal Life

Chapter 448 The Burned Stranger The fire didn't hurt Darell at all . After all , it was only a dream , not reality . At last , he found the source of the voice .. The flames had reduced it to a blackened , charred shape . Its features were gone ; even the hair burned away completely . Darell had seen photos of people burned to death before . What lay before him looked exactly the same . Even though he couldn't make out its mouth , he could still hear words coming from it . " It wasn't me . I didn't do it . " I never hurt anyone . " Why won't you believe me ? " I'm your daughter .

I'm your sister . Why do you believe everyone else so easily but not me ? " When I spoke , you brushed me aside . You even watch me dic . " What did I do so wrong that you had to treat me this way ? Why ? Why ? " Most people would have run away in terror when they saw this scene . Even if it was only a dream , everything felt so real to Darell . He even caught the smell of burned flesh that clung to his nose . His mind told him that , dream or not , this was a nightmare with no good ending . The safest thing would be to stay away from it and stop digging for answers .

At least until after tomorrow - when filming wrapped up . He had worked for months with the crew , traveling overseas and back to the country again . He should just focus on finishing his film . 1/4 国

But ... why ? Looking at the burned figure , Darell felt something stir in his blood . A strange pull connected him to the one in the fire , like they shared the same bloodline . Like they were family . He couldn't turn that person away . Almost against his will , he spoke . " W - who are you ? " Why had she appeared in his dream ?

Why did someone so unfamiliar feel so important to him ? Why did it seem like he had seen her before ? " B - brother ... " " The voice trembled . " You finally came back to save me . You believe me , don't you ? You know I'm innocent . None of this was my fault ." Darell froze . Why is she calling me as a brother ? The voice belonged to a woman . Is that Kyla ? No , something doesn't add up . A sudden image flashed through Darell's mind . A woman he had only seen in old photos and heard mentioned a few times - Tilda . Could it be her voice ? He wasn't sure .

He saw her picture more than half a year ago - too long to remember clearly . In the later video call with his family , Darell never asked about Tilda . He had never met her . Yet the question kept tearing at him . "Are you Tilda ? Am I right ? Why do you keep appearing in my dreams ?

What is with these nightmares I've been having for the past two weeks ? Are you behind them ? How did you do this ? " Darell was a believer in science . But the strangeness of what he'd seen forced him to ask .

He needed an explanation for the dream , some reason that made sense . Tilda opened her mouth to speak . Suddenly , flames that had been wrapped around her flared higher with a snap . " AAAHHH !! " Her scream was a raw , painful thing - like nails on a chalkboard . It split Darell's head until it felt like it might burst .. At the same time , eight dark shadows rose up around Tilda . " What makes you think you're worthy to be a Jensons ? " " We must have been blind to welcome you back as family . " " You don't deserve to be one of us .

You're not worthy to have the same blood flowing in your veins ! " " How dare you hurt Kyla ? She's innocent and kind . Tilda , you have no conscience . " " You belong in hell - burn in flames and fall as a demon ! " " Kyla , don't look . Let's leave her . Let her rot here . " " Daddy , Mommy , I think Tilda didn't mean it . Let's help her ... " She did mean it ! She should die ! Anyone who hurts you should die ! " Darell froze . The voices were too familiar . It was the voices of his family . Russell , Blair , Kyla , Dominic ... and even his voice , echoing inside his head . Crack ! Crack !

Crack ! Darell felt his head splitting .

Dammit ! This is killing me ! My head hurts . What is happening ? " If this is a dream , please let me wake up . Darell dropped to his knees and clutched his head , rocking , overwhelmed by pain. Meanwhile , Tilda was burned by the flames . She watched her family walk away and spat out a curse through clenched teeth . " U - unforgivable . " I will never forgive any of you . " " If I could do it all over . In another life , I would sever every tie with all of you .

We will have nothing to do with one another !" Her voice broke , full of finality and a cold , terrible resolve .

Chapter 449 The Dream That Wouldn't End King , ring , ring ! Darell shot up in bed , heart pounding . The alarm clock had ripped him out of sleep . He was gasping for air , drenched in sweat . It was five in the morning . His call time wasn't until nine , but he had to be downstairs for makeup in half an hour . " It was ... just a dream . Thank God , " he whispered . " But why such a strange dream ? Why was everyone there ? Why did it feel so real , like it had actually happened ? " Darell rushed to the counter , poured himself a glass of warm water , and downed it in one gulp .

He choked from drinking too fast , coughing so hard he spilled water down his pajama shirt . Anyone who knew him would have been shocked . Darell was the most precise and disciplined among his family . Even Dominic couldn't compare with him . If Darell had chosen business instead of show biz , the one to inherit the family business might not have been Dominic at all . Just then , the hotel phone buzzed

with a message . " Darell , are you awake ? I'm already in the makeup room downstairs . Today's the final day of shooting .

Once you get through this , everything will pay off " It was Cindy Stenham , his manager . Darell took a deep breath . Whatever happened , he had to get this day right . This was the most important moment of his career . There could be no mistakes .

And once today's filming was over , he had to see that psychic again . And Tilda . His gut told him it was the only way . Otherwise , these dreams would never end . 30 Across the city , Tilda also had the same dream .

She was back on the night of her past life - the night she burned to death . Tilda watched her body consumed by flames until it was nothing but a ruined figure . Around her corpse , the Jensons sneered and spat , their faces twisted with scorn and contempt . But Tilda's heart didn't stir . She stood calmly inside the nightmare , simply waiting to wake up . " Tilda , hurry up and eat breakfast . Andy just texted me . He's coming to the hotel soon . " " Okay . " After washing up and getting ready . Tilda and Una headed downstairs to the buffet .

" I heard there's a huge movie town near Jeselton . Andy's supposed to take us there today . " Una urged , " Wow , this five - star hotel buffet is amazing . These pastries are so good . Tilda , you have to try one . " " Sure . " At that moment , Darell walked through the lobby . He wore sunglasses , a mask , and the hood of his down jacket pulled up . Wireless earbuds sat in both ears . His manager and two security guards flanked him as they moved toward the front entrance . Suddenly , Darell slowed . He picked up on something and turned his head slightly toward the buffet restaurant .

Cindy noticed and asked , " What is it , Darell ? " " Nothing . Let's go ." But inside , he frowned . That sudden , unexplainable pull - it had to be his imagination .

Meanwhile , Tilda and Una had spotted the commotion . " Wow , look at all those people . Must be some A - list celebrity . " 200 " Probably rushing off to shoot a movie in the movie town . The hotel security is tight Good thing there aren't any crazy fans hanging around , or it would be chaos " Tilda asked casually , " Hey , that actor you used to like ...

What was his name again ? " " Don't even mention him , Tilda . I swear I'm cursed . Every time I start liking a star , they end up in some scandal . " She sighed . " The whole industry is built on fake images . None of them are clean . Now I just watch shows for fun , maybe some variety programs . Spending money on stars ? No way . I'm done with that nonsense . " Tilda's lips twitched into a half - smile . She

remembered how Una used to be obsessed with idols back in freshman year . Now here she was , acting all wise , saying she'd outgrown it . Well , maybe she had grown up . This was good .

Tilda felt an odd , proud warmth - like a parent watching their kid finally mature . Soon Andy arrived and took Tilda and Una to Jeselton's movie town . " I've been here too many times already , " Andy said , smirking . " Besides , I've got some legal work to handle . So , do you want to see me in action , or would you rather just wander around the studios on your own ? " Una's eyes lit up . " I've never seen you work before ! You're a top lawyer - famous across the country .

I'd love to watch you ." and sited plenty of movie towns before , with their modest village houses , grand palaces , She had and period backdrops . It was all the same . But Andy at work ? That was new and far more interesting . Tilda stretched lazily . " You go ahead . I'll just walk around on my own . Text me when you're done , and we'll meet up . "

Chapter 450 A Walk Through Movie Town Andy pouted wrongly and said , " Tilda , why don't you find me attractive when I'm working ? Didn't you say a man looks his best when he's serious ? " Tilda rebuked , " How many times do you think I've seen you working ? I'm immune to it now . " " Well , Una should tag along and learn a thing or two . If she saw the way you act when you're working , she'd probably be scared out of her mind . " Una clicked her tongue . " I - is it really that bad ? " " Of course not !

I look ten thousand times cooler when I'm working . Anyway , see you later when I'm done . " Tilda agreed , " Alright . " After parting with Andy and Una , Tilda stuffed her hands in her pockets and decided to stroll around the movie town . Jeselton's movie town really lived up to its name . The sets and props were built with style and detail . Slosa had a movie town too . Tilda had visited once with Una , but it wasn't nearly as impressive or realistic as this one . It had snowed in Jeselton a few days ago , but today the sky was clear and the sun was warm .

Tilda walked comfortably under the light , feeling at ease . She pulled out her phone , snapped a few photos , and sent them to the Comet Squad chat and a group chat with Andy and Una . Jarrett wrote , " Blank face emoji . Queen isn't just amazing at hacking . Even your photography skills are awesome . Love it ! " Theo scolded playfully , " Hey ! Jarrett , you stole my line ! I was about to say , " Queen makes everything look epic ! " Astrid chimed in , " Ugh , you two need to stop . Do you think Queen actually cares about your flattery ? " Zach replied , " Agreed .

" As for Una and Andy , they hadn't replied yet . Those two were probably busy with something . Tilda soaked in the sunlight , gazing at the bright blue sky while wandering through the streets

of the movie town . From a distance , she occasionally spotted film crews at work . The atmosphere felt peaceful and refreshing . TV Funny , since my rebirth , this is the first time I've come to a place like this . It feels entirely different somehow .

She leaned against a stone arch bridge shaped like a figure , resting her chin on one hand as the winter breeze brushed her face . Tilda seemed completely at ease . She turned toward a nearby crew shooting a movie . From the costumes and makeup , it seemed to be some kind of ghost story set in the early 1900s . The setting was tucked inside a fake grove . Tilda suddenly noticed someone approaching . Her sharp instincts caught a strange , hard - to - place energy . She turned toward the figure . It was a Nomari woman .

She wore a black robe , with a veil covering her face , showing only a pair of deep brown eyes . Her skin was a warm shade of olive , and jewelry with a distinctly Nomari style hung around her neck . She looked middle - aged , yet Tilda could tell , beneath the veil , was a face that was striking and refined . The Nomari woman's calm , dark brown eyes locked on Tilda . They were deep , almost endless , as if they could see straight through her soul . " Excuse me , do we know each other ? " Tilda asked . She had met people from many countries , but this Nomari woman felt different .

There was something unfathomable about her presence . It had been a long time since Tilda felt this way . The last person who gave her that same unsettling feeling was Jude , the night they first crossed paths outside the Nightingale Bar . And now , she was feeling it again - from someone else . " We've never met , the woman said softly , " but you are unique . " #) She gave a small nod . " Forgive me for not introducing myself sooner . My name is Zorana Silva , but you can just call me Silva . I'm Nomari from Yaflana .

My profession ... I'm a psychic " She spoke fluent Cetherese and reached out her hand . Since she had already introduced herself , Tilda shook her hand politely and smiled . " Nice to meet you , Silva . My name is Tilda Jenson . Psychic , do you mean like a medium ? " " Yes , " Silva said with a steady tone . " Since I was a child , I've seen things others cannot . It comes from my bloodline . That's how I became a psychic . Back in Yaflana , I'm fairly well known . Later , a film crew invited me to consult for a horror movie , which brought me here to Cetherland .

" She gestured toward the set Tilda had been watching earlier . " Well , that's interesting . " Tilda replied . In her past life , she would have scoffed at such things . Back then , she was a tech specialist , traveling from city to city with her mentor , trained through formal education , and grounded in rational thinking .

She grew up brushing aside superstition . But now , after her rebirth , Tilda saw the world differently . She understood there were countless mysteries science had yet to solve . For some things , it was safer to believe than to dismiss . The riddles of the universe .

The dark void of black holes . The Bermuda Triangle , Necromancer , all of these remain untouched by human understanding . Even in an age of modern science , so much remained unknown .