

Shadows 521

Chapter 521 A Good Start At the same time , he did not want Tilda to come out . First , he did not want her to see the Jensons so humble , so humiliated . Second , he was afraid that if she did come out , she would only mock Dominic and the others without mercy . Dominic's lips twisted bitterly . " She came out , but I don't want to talk about what happened next . Dad , just ... don't think about it . You'll only be disappointed ." Russell felt as if something sharp had stabbed straight into his heart . A pain too deep to put into words spread through him .

After a long pause , he finally managed , " I understand ." Dominic left . Russell stayed rooted to his spot , lost in thought . He thought about everything that had happened since Tilda reappeared in their lives this past year . " I'm sorry , my daughter ... " It was me , your father , who failed you . I hurt you . I was wrong , so terribly wrong . The remorse came from deep within . He drew a long breath , forcing down the redness in his eyes . Words like these could only ever be whispered to himself . Never in front of others . Not even in front of his wife , not even his own sons .

If even he let guilt consume him to the point of collapse , then the Jensons ' fragile " peace " would crumble entirely . And that would mean their destruction . Just then , his phone rang . He wiped his eyes and answered . " How did the negotiations go ? " " Sir , they're asking twenty million to destroy the photos . I tried everything , but they won't budge . They even threatened to release them nonstop , twenty - four hours a day , until it goes viral if we refuse . " They're clearly extorting us , Sir . Should we use special methods to shut them up ?

" The head of PR knew well - this kind of mess could not be solved in the open . Sometimes , the dirty underground methods got things done far more cleanly . Even if the photos were real , people could be made to doubt . Who would believe something that outrageous ? And with the Jenson Group's resources , pushing back with public opinion would not even be hard . " Just pay them . But I want absolute certainty that those photos never show up again . If I find out they do , I won't forgive it ." " Sir ! But that's such a huge loss ... " Twenty million is nothing .

For the Jenson Group , it's a drop in the bucket . We can afford it . It's the winter holidays , and I don't want more headaches . Just protect the company's reputation . Just pay off some people online , say the pictures are all Photoshop , and they were all fabricated by competitors to slander us . " " Understood . " With the orders given and the money not from his own pocket , the PR director was content . The faster this ended , the faster he could go home for the holidays . After hanging up , Russell closed his eyes and let out a bitter laugh . " Tilda , this was your doing , wasn't it ?

You really hate us that much , huh ? Hate your brothers ? Hate me , your father ? " If it's money you want , I'll give it . Whatever you ask , I'll give you . If it can lessen even the smallest bit of your hatred toward this family , I'll consider it enough . " This is all that's left I can do for you as your foolish , unworthy father . " Meanwhile , on Tilda's side . She was at the supermarket with Liam and the others , buying supplies for the winter holiday . They would have the goods delivered straight to her place . Easy , no hassle . Her phone rang .

It was Bill , his voice practically buzzing with excitement . The Jensons had agreed - twenty million , cash for silence , deal signed . To make that much money just off these photos ? Jackpot . Of course , they all knew this move was basically picking a fight with the biggest corporation in Slosa . A few paparazzi trying to go head - to - head with a top - tier listed corporation deeply rooted in Slosa was nothing but wishful thinking . If the Jensons had been ruthless , they would have lost their lives .

Bill himself had hesitated , but Tilda had talked him into trying , and he had not expected it to go so smoothly . " Didn't I tell you ? With the winter holiday so close , a family like the Jensons won't risk a scandal now . " Send ten million to the account I gave you . " " On it ! " Bill dared not back out as Tilda held leverage over him . He had no choice but to follow orders . Just then , Myst walked up . " Tilda , what's with that smile ? You look so happy . " Tilda's lips curved playfully . " Oh , just a little stroke of luck before the holidays . I made some pocket change .

Where are Dane and the others ? "

Chapter 522 Home " On the way , we passed an arcade . Rain suddenly said he wanted to play , so Dane and Liam went in with them . " I saw you were on the phone . I was worried you wouldn't find us , so I come to get you . Let's head over together . " " Okay . " When Tilda and the others arrived , Rain was playing a shooting game with Liam , while Dane stood behind watching . Tilda and Myst walked up to Dane , patting him on the shoulder . Dane glanced at them and greeted them with his eyes . Watching Rain and Liam having such a great time , Tilda rubbed her forehead helplessly . " Seriously .

Even with disguises , it's crowded here . You guys should be more careful . If you like this stuff , just tell me . I'll set up a room for you to play as much as you want ." Dane sighed . " As long as they're happy ." Most of the time , it was just a spur - of - the - moment thing . If you missed the moment , the mood was gone . Happiness like this was priceless . Tilda gave a helpless yet doting smile . Finally , Rain and Liam worked so well together that they cleared the game with just one coin . The two high - fived . " See ? My combo with Liam is still the best !

" " Alright , we still have to check the supermarket . Let's see what else we need to buy ." " Playtime's over , now it's chore time . " " Got it ! " As they stepped out of the arcade , Rain's phone buzzed . He

glanced at the message , and a cold smile touched his lips . He quickly walked over to Tilda , lowering his voice . News just came in . Daphne left the Bell Residence with her daughter , Rebecca , who had just woken from her coma . Looks like they're meeting up with Blair and Kyla ." " You know what to do .

I only want Daphne dead ." Tilda's tone was calm , like she was talking about the weather - not about taking someone's life . She always lived by her rule , fight fire with fire . Since Daphne had tried to kill her , she could not complain if she ended up dead . The truth was simple - Daphne was weak , yet picked a fight with someone she couldn't afford to offend . If Tilda had not seen her as nothing more than a minor nuisance , she would not have lasted this long . If she ever forced Tilda's hand , death would not be merciful . " I get it . I even sent my most trusted guy this time .

No one's ever going to find a trace ." Rain pulled the orange lollipop out of his mouth , grinning , clearly waiting for praise . Tilda reached out , ruffling his hair . " I'm counting on you , Rain . " Her eyes flashed with killing intent . Daphne had lived long enough . Her time was up . Tilda then pulled out her phone and sent Jude a message . Tilda texted , " I'm making my move ." She informed him because , after all , Daphne was technically Jude's second aunt . Even though his branch of the family was at odds with hers , Tilda wanted to show him respect .

A minute later , Jude replied with just one word . " Good . " Then another message came . Someone told me photos of the Jenson brothers kneeling leaked online . Do you care ? " The ones spreading the news were naturally Alfie and Maurice , those two gossip - hungry guys who were always on the front line . The second the paparazzi posted the pictures online , they had saved screenshots and sent them to Jude , asking if Tilda was in trouble . Jude trusted Tilda . Since it involved the family she despised , he did not want to pry . Tilda replied , " Not at all .

I'm the one who leaked them . Made a nice chunk of pocket money too , hehe . " Seeing her response , Jude finally relaxed . He had been worried the incident might drag her into something messy . Yet , he knew Tilda - she was strong , capable , and rarely hurt by others . The only ones who could still wound her were the Jensons . Not wanting to keep on a topic that might upset her , Jude dropped it . Knowing she was behind it meant everything was fine . " You with your seniors right now ? " " Yep . What about you ? Did you go back to your old family estate ? " Jude replied , " No .

I went home . " Home . Tilda blinked , slightly caught off guard . Jude's home meant the Bells ' fourth branch . That's where his biological father , Devin , lived . She did not know much about Jude's family . Only that his father was still alive , but had collapsed into despair after Jude's mother died giving birth to him . Since then , he had been indifferent toward Jude . Later , Jude was taken in by his grandmother .

But after she passed , no one could protect him anymore , and Abram threw him into hellish training . He barely survived , but came out of it forged into the Jude of today .

Chapter 523 Family In a way , Jude and Tilda were really alike . They were the same kind of people . Not just because they both had Omega - type blood , but because of those twisted , suffocating families behind them . They hated them , resented them , yet could never cut off the ties of blood . When they were alone at night , licking their wounds in silence , they could not help but crave a little warmth from family . Something everyone else took for granted . Something that people like them could only dream of . Why was it so easy for others ? And yet for them ...

completely out of reach? Jude never talked about it , so Tilda did not ask . It was not something happy - why poke at someone's scars and make them hurt all over again ? When the time came , if Jude wanted to , he would tell her . And now ... Tilda texted , " You okay ? " Jude replied , " There's nothing to be okay or not okay about, Tilda . Don't worry about me . I've gotten used to it a long time ago . Besides , now that I have you by my side , that's all that matters . " Those words came straight from Jude's heart . He used to think he was all alone .

Even with Alfie and Maurice , no matter how close , they were still just friends - they could never reach the deepest , most fragile part of him . But now , Jude could finally say with pride that he had someone more important than his own life . A woman he loved so deeply that he would carry her for the rest of his days . With her , he could show his weakest , truest self . No masks , no secrets , just over yung inn The Jude who was always unyielding , cutting through thorns and storms , had found his one weakness . And this time , it was a weakness he embraced willingly . Tilda giggled .

" Wow , sweet talker . Jude , if you're feeling down , don't just bottle it up . Why not find your two bros , Maurice or Alfie , and hang out a bit ? " Jude texted back with an adorable emoji , " I'd rather see you . Tilda , when will you come to me ? " Cough cough ! Where did Jude even learn to use those pitiful little emojis ? Dude , you're supposed to be Mr. Cold , the ruthless CEO type - aloof , proud , untouchable ! Tilda replied , " When I'm free , for sure . " For now , she still did not dare let Jude meet her seniors . Explaining her relationship with Jude ?

She did not even need to imagine - her seniors would definitely lose their minds . Being loved too much was also its own kind of curse . One step at a time . She and Jude had a long life ahead anyway . Jude typed , " Alright . Tilda , I'll hold onto that . Don't make me wait too long . " After replying , Jude looked around the empty mansion . He had no feelings for this place . The only reason he was back was because it was the winter holidays - he was supposed to head to the old family home with his father for dinner . Nothing more than showing up together , sitting in silence .

But now , his father , Devin , was nowhere to be found , not even home . Sometimes Jude wondered - aside from blood , were they really father and son ? Because other than that , they were worse than strangers . At least strangers did not stir up your that complicated ache in chest . With Devin , reaching out felt like touching something that would shatter if he got too close . Every time Jude returned here , all he felt was loneliness . Emptiness . A bone - deep cold that seeped into his pores , impossible to guard against . But this time ...

Maybe because he realized he was not truly alone anymore , that he had Tilda by his side ... His body felt just a little warmer . Slosa , Sunlight Plaza . A commercial hub owned by the Bells , currently run by the second branch under Ryan . The place was buzzing with people . Daphne stepped out of a Maybach with Rebecca , scanning the crowd . Within a minute , she spotted someone and waved eagerly . " Over here , Blair ! " " Daphne ! " Blair hurried over with Kyla by her side . " It's been so long ! How have you been ? I heard a lot's been going on with you recently ...

" Blair said warmly , then her eyes shifted to the girl behind Daphne . Her heart dropped with a thud . Was this really the same Rebecca she remembered ? The one who used to shine so bright , dripping with pride and elegance ? Now , she looked timid , stripped of all presence , her face drained of color , her hands wrapped in bandages . On the street , she was the kind of person people would overlook completely . The second Rebecca noticed Blair's gaze on her , she panicked . Her whole body trembled uncontrollably . Mom , I can't . I really can't . I'm going back !

" " Rebecca ! " Ignoring Daphne's call , Rebecca spun around and bolted . Daphne immediately scolded her bodyguards , " What are you standing there for ? Go after my daughter ! If she so much as loses a single hair , it's on you ! " " Yes , ma'am ! " The bodyguards scrambled to chase after her . This turn of events had clearly thrown everyone off . " I'm sorry , Blair , Kyla ... I've embarrassed you . Rebecca ... she's really fragile right now . "

Chapter 524 All of This Is Because of Tilda nished " I actually came out to take Rebecca for a walk , hoping it might cheer her up a bit - and maybe Kyla could help comfort her . " But she's like this now . " Daphne's eyes went red ; she started to tear up . Blair lowered her voice . " Are the rumors true ? Rebecca offended Abram , so they cut off her fingers ? " " It's true . You know how strict that old man is . When he says something , it's final . Even his own grandchildren get punished if they break the rules . " In his eyes , there's no sentimental blood - tie - only value .

People are just things to be measured . " And it didn't stop there . Cutting off Rebecca's fingers ruined her spirit . She spent months in a coma in the hospital . " He did not visit her . When she woke up , they were going to send her out of the country immediately . I begged and begged until they agreed to let her stay through the holidays before they sent her away . " " Is it that bad ? " Blair's eyes widened . Blair

had heard Rebecca was hospitalized and called Daphne to confirm . Daphne had been too distraught to answer properly and hung up .

Later , when the Preston incident happened , Blair texted Daphne again and got no reply . Today , Daphne brought Rebecca along to invite Blair and Kyla out for some beauty treatments , which surprised Blair when she got the message . With her own bad mood lately and the heavy atmosphere at home , she happily agreed to go with Kyla . Before coming , Blair still held onto a bit of hope , thinking maybe she had misunderstood , but reality turned out to be far more tragic . Kyla , who seemed to know something , sucked in a sharp breath and said , " Oh my God , that's awful , Mrs. Bell .

What can we do ? Is there any way to save Rebecca ? I feel so bad . I feel sick just thinking about it . " Daphne shook her head . " There's nothing we can do . The old man has spoken . Who can overturn him ? Even my son was implicated . Jude got something on him and stripped him of branch - company control . He's a shell of a man now , depressed and listless . " " Even Jude turned out like that ... " No wonder Kyla had been thinking about Preston lately . He had not contacted her in a long time .

Even though Kyla's heart had started stirring again after Tobias appeared , neither Jude nor Tobias compared to Preston in her mind - at least not until she actually had them . Kyla had tried contacting Preston several times , only to receive perfunctory replies hours later , which infuriated her . However , with so many problems on her plate - acne , patchy hair loss - she needed treatment and could not risk meeting Preston in that state . Kyla had heard , not from Preston , that he had been removed from his position .

That news sparked small , resentful calculations - a belief that Preston , aside from his legitimate Bell bloodline , did not actually measure up to Jude or Tobias . He was , at best , a mid - level sympathizer . " Daphne , you ... Take care . I believe this will pass . This hardship is only temporary . " Blair tried to comfort her , unsure what else to say . " My family used to be fine . My children were the pride of the family - perfect heirs and the apple of our eye . All of this is because of Tilda . If not for that damned Tilda , my family wouldn't be like this !

" At the mention of Tilda , murderous intent flashed across Daphne's face . Her knuckles whitened as she dug her nails into her palm - pain that could not bring back reason . " Tilda ? Daphne , what are you talking about ? " Blair was confused . How did this involve Tilda ? " You don't know ? It's all because of that bitch Tilda ... Daphne caught herself . " Anyway , it's the holidays . I don't want to talk about it now . But it'll be dealt with soon . " Daphne did not hesitate to air her hatred in front of Blair .

After all , Tilda and the Jensons were totally estranged now , and so much had happened since . Daphne presumed the family must hate Tilda with a passion . What she did not know was the Jensons ' current collective attitude toward Tilda . A few days ago , Skin Organization contacted Daphne , asking her to prepare 150 million to buy Tilda's life . One hundred fifty million - a number a normal person could never dream of in ten lifetimes .

Chapter 525 Assassination For someone like Daphne , who came from a wealthy family , married into the Bells , and is now a well - off woman in her forties , coming up with the money was difficult - but not impossible . The killers from Skin were very firm . They demanded the full 150 million , not a penny less , all paid upfront . Only if she agreed to these harsh terms would they move to kill Tilda . Daphne worried they might take the money and back out , but Skin was ranked fifth among global assassin groups . They should care about their reputation .

If their reputation was ruined , who would hire them anymore ? They would be . Daphne knew that plenty of people had paid Skin to carry out hits , and each job had been handled flawlessly , without a trace . As long as you paid , Skin would agree to do it . Once the money was handed over , everything else was taken care of ; Daphne did not need to worry . So within just a few days , Daphne scraped together 150 million - part from her own hidden savings , part borrowed from relatives on her side of the family .

After transferring the money to Skin's handler , she had only one demand : kill Tilda as fast as possible . But not just that , before Tilda died , she had to suffer . Daphne wanted her broken , tortured , and left in pieces before being sent to hell . If Daphne could see her in person , even better . If not , a video of the torture would do . Only by then would she be satisfied . In her eyes , Tilda had ruined her precious kids and forced her through humiliation and expense . Simply killing Tilda would be too easy . She wanted her to live a life worse than death .

Skin's people promised to capture Tilda soon , keep it quiet , and even arrange a meeting so Daphne could personally torture her . That thought filled Daphne with joy . Otherwise , she would not even have had the mood to go to the Bells ' dinner party , or drag her friend Blair along for beauty treatments . Of course , Daphne wasn't stupid enough to spill her secret to Blair just because they were close . Even best friends had things they hid , and this murder plot was something she had to keep to herself .

When the news of Tilda's death came out , Daphne would just pretend she knew nothing . Watching Daphne , Blair could not help but feel uneasy . After all these years of friendship , she understood Daphne's personality - always vengeful , never letting anything go . And since this involved Rebecca and

Preston , Daphne would never stop until she got revenge . Blair could see it in her eyes: Daphne was already planning her next move . However , Tilda was Blair's biological daughter , and more than that , her lifesaver along with Dominic .

Blair could not just sit by and watch Daphne go after her . The problem was that Daphne's hatred was too deep , unlike anything Blair had ever seen . How could she possibly talk her out of it ? She and Tilda's relationship was already a mess . " Daphne , I think we really need to talk about Tilda ... " Blair tried . " Enough , Blair . We finally got a chance to hang out today , don't bring up that damned brat . " Come on , I already booked us at Sounds of Nature . They even sent me a reminder . Let's go . " With that , Daphne pulled Blair and Kyla toward the mall .

Blair opened her mouth but did not say anything in the end . Now was not the right time to persuade Daphne . She would have to wait for another chance . Kyla , however , noticed her mom's hesitation and felt her anger boil . Damn that Tilda , even Mom's heart was starting to lean toward her ! If Blair turned to Tilda's side , then Kyla would be completely on her own in the family . She had to ruin Tilda's image in Blair's heart before it was too late .

Kyla knew Daphne was already working against Tilda in secret , but from past experience , she doubted it would end the way she wanted . Better to take things into her own hands . Daphne could handle the assassination . Kyla's role was to destroy Tilda's reputation in the Jenson's and win back her own place . So , when they reached the beauty salon and Daphne set down her bag to head to the restroom , Blair sat there looking worried , still thinking about how to convince Daphne to stop targeting Tilda . That was when Kyla walked over , putting on a hesitant look .

Chapter 526 Stupid Mother Blair could see something weighing on Kyla's mind . She spoke . " Sweetheart , what's bothering you ? " Kyla lingered in silence , her lips parting and closing again before words finally tumbled out , low and uneasy . " Mom , are you really saying you don't know why Rebecca ended up being hurt by Tilda ? " Blair said , " I swear I don't know . Daphne never said a word to me . One day Rebecca was fine , and the next she was ruined .

" If only someone would give me the truth , then I could figure out how to get through to Daphne and make her stop chasing Tilda . " Kyla , wait . Are you trying to tell me you actually know something ? " The moment the words left her , realization struck her like a cold wave . " Mom , " Kyla whispered , tears already threatening her eyes . " I've been torn apart , wondering if I should tell you . But I can see it now . Daphne has already made up her mind . " She's going after Tilda . No one else can pull her back . The only person she'll listen to is you .

" Her voice cracked , and the truth spilled out in sobs . " Tilda filmed a shameful video of Rebecca . " Kyla's chest heaved as she broke down further . " It was me . All of it is my fault . Rebecca stepped up to

protect me , and that's how she crossed Tilda . If I wasn't cursed , if I didn't bring such rotten luck , none of this would have happened ." Tears streamed down her face as she trembled . " Rebecca and Preston wouldn't be suffering like this . I hate myself for it . I should have never come to this family . All I've ever done is bring pain to the people who cared about me .

" Blair's said , " Don't say that , Kyla . Don't blame yourself . My God , how could Tilda be so vile to Rebecca ? How could anyone sink that low ? " Her hands quivered violently . Tilda had gone far past the line of decency . No wonder Daphne carried a rage so hot she was ready to spill blood . Because of that vile recording , Rebecca had been stripped of her dignity . Months trapped in a coma , her fingers lost , and now she was being forced to leave the country for good . She could never come back to Slosa again .

It was a revenge so monstrous it made Blair's stomach turn . But now she had to act . She had to find some way to keep Daphne from making the same mistake , from killing Tilda in her blind fury . Her thoughts raced . Maybe she needed to sit down with Russell , weigh what to do next . But before she could even settle on an answer , the world around her shattered . A deafening crack tore through the air like a gunshot . Blair did not even manage to respond to the incoming disaster .

A huge chunk of ceiling was breaking loose , plummeting straight toward Kyla . Her body moved before her mind could catch up . That deep instinct , the raw drive of a mother , consumed her . " Kyla , move ! " Blair's voice ripped out in desperation : She lunged forward , shoving her daughter aside . Kyla barely had time to register what was happening when pain sliced across her face like a knife . Her scream ripped through the chaos . Blair's voice joined hers , both women crying out in unbearable agony . The room erupted , confusion and panic twisting everything into madness .

Across town , Tilda and her crew carried their bags from the supermarket , laughter and chatter trailing behind them . Rain's phone rang , breaking the moment . He pressed it to his ear , listened for a beat , then a sharp grin cut across his face . He turned toward Tilda , flashing her a quick sign with his hand . " It's done , Tilda ." Tilda said , " Good . Send me the details . I've got something else to handle . " You guys head home first . Put up the decorations , get everything ready , and wait for me . " There was no way she would miss this show .

Mystro frowned , suspicion already burning in his chest . " Tilda , what's the deal ? What were you whispering about with Rain ? Don't play games with us . We deserve to know too . " He had seen the quiet plotting between her and Rain , the way they kept the others in the dark . His patience snapped . Come on , don't leave us out of this . Dane and Liam stood frozen , staring at Tilda with desperate ,

pleading eyes . They hated being shut out . Tilda said , " I asked Rain to help me deal with someone . " There's something I need to check for myself . You three go on ahead .

I'll catch up soon ." With a wave , she turned and slipped away , vanishing into the street like a shadow swallowed by the wind . The brothers were left stunned , wide - eyed , before every gaze snapped to Rain . Rain chuckled , his grin spreading with mischief . " Don't even try . She told me not to tell you . This is between me and her . " He strolled off , one hand jammed in his pocket , flip - flops slapping against the ground . " Goddammit ! " The three brothers cursed under their breath . She trusted Rain , not them . That stung deeper than a blade .

At the Jenson home , calm finally returned after Kyla left with Blair . They heaved a sigh of relief . The heavy air that had weighed down the family lifted at last . Russell sat with his seven sons in the living room , the glow of the television flickering across their faces . For the first time in weeks , the house felt lighthearted . Howard shifted restlessly before breaking the silence . " Dad , are you sure letting Mom take Kyla with her was smart ? Sooner or later , she's going to figure out who Kyla really is .

And when she does , Mom will be the one left broken . " Russell let out a weary sigh , his shoulders slumping . " What was I supposed to do ? Tell Blair she couldn't go ? Daphne invited her out for skincare , Rebecca went too , and they both asked for Kyla to come . What choice did I have ? "

Chapter 527 Resigned " If Kyla keeps herself in line and stops causing problems , then out of respect for what we once had , she'll still have a place in the Jenson family . " But if she keeps sneaking around and doing filthy , shameful things , Dad , then you'll have to make a firm choice when the time comes . " Even if it breaks Mom's heart , we have to drive Kyla out of this family , and if possible , out of Cetherland too , so she never dares show up in front of us again !

" That's the only way to keep the family safe and to cut the damage down as much as we can ." Dominic's words cut through the air like ice . Because of Kyla's lies , he had turned his back on his mentor and even his own sister . It had reached the point where they could never face each other again . He hated Kyla so much he wished he could crush the life out of her with his own hands . But the truth burned worse than his anger . The feelings he had once given her had not been false . Before the mask slipped , Dominic and the others had treated Kyla as their sister .

They had sheltered her , adored her , and cherished her . They had all grown up side by side . That bond was carved into their blood and soul , something that could never be cut away without tearing themselves apart . So for Blair's sake , and for the years of love they had shared , Foster forced himself to allow this single act of cruelty . If she ever tried again , there would be no forgiveness . " I stand with Dominic's decision . " The others expressed no doubt . " I understand . If she does it again , we'll go with Dominic's plan .

" Russell's words had barely left his lips when the sharp sound of his phone tore through the room . He glanced at the screen . Blair's name glowed against the glass . He answered at once , his voice warm and eager . " Sweetheart , what's wrong ? Are you having a good time ? " " Mr. Jenson , something's happened . Please , you need to come to the hospital right away ... " The panic in her voice slammed into him , and his breath came short and hard . " I'm on my way right now ! " Foster and the others froze with worry . " What happened ?

Dad , what's going on with Mom ? " " We'll talk while we move . Let's get to the hospital , fast ! " When they rushed into the hospital , Russell sprinted toward the doctor in charge , his voice breaking . " Tell me the truth , Doctor . How's my wife ? " " Mr. Jenson , everyone , you need to prepare yourselves ... " Her life isn't in danger , but part of the ceiling collapsed on her right leg . We have to operate immediately ." Russell's face drained of color . " What did you just say ? " Their hearts nearly froze still . Her right leg ... Shattered beneath a falling ceiling ...

It meant Blair might never walk the same again . A woman with her pride would never bear to wake up to that . Dominic bit down on his tongue so hard the taste of blood filled his mouth , dragging his mind back into focus . " Doctor , are you saying my mom's leg cannot be saved ? " " We'll do everything we can . The worst case is amputation . But if there's even the slightest hope , we'll fight to save her leg ." Russell's shock broke into tears . He clutched the doctor's sleeve with shaking hands . " Doctor , I'm begging you .

No matter what it costs , no matter what it takes , save my wife's leg ! " " The operating room is ready . " Good . I'll head in right away . " " Mr. Jenson , please don't worry . I'll give it everything I've got . " The doctor vanished through the doors of the surgical room . The red light above the door clicked on , washing the hallway in its glow . Russell and his sons dropped onto the hard benches , crushed under the weight of despair . " This should never have happened . That ceiling should never have collapsed .

" Damn it , I should have stopped Blair . I knew something would go wrong if she went out with Kyla today . I felt it , I knew it , and still I let her go . Why didn't I stop her ? " He tore at his hair with both hands and hammered his fists against his thighs , each strike driven by guilt and rage . His sons felt the pain like knives to their hearts . Howard grabbed him before he could hurt himself any further . " Dad , nobody wanted this .

The only thing we can do now is pray for the surgery to work . " " If Mom makes it through , but you fall apart , it'll cut her even deeper . " Wade's steady words pulled Russell back from the edge . His fists stilled . His shaking slowed . Yet his face was still wet with tears , and the torment in his eyes gave eyes gave him away . He would rather be broken himself than see his wife suffer a single wound . ease , God , hear this man's plea . Please , save Blair's leg . Just then , a nurse approached with a chart clutched to her chest . Her voice was careful . " Excuse me ...

are you Kyla's family ? " " Kyla ... that's right . How is she ? " In the chaos of Blair's injury , they had forgotten her completely . She had gone out with Blair , invited by Daphne and Rebecca for a spa day .

Chapter 528 Kyla's Condition The nurse spoke . " Everyone , please don't panic . Her life isn't in danger , but the falling debris cut across her face . " We've done emergency treatment and repair , but the healing will take a long time . She'll need steady care , and you all need to be ready for that . " She kept her tone soft , careful not to offend . She knew these people carried weight and money , and she didn't dare be too blunt . Russell and his sons didn't need any further explanation . They were smart enough to figure out the unspoken conclusion . Kyla's face was ruined .

" The patient just came out of surgery , " the nurse continued . " She's sedated and still unconscious . She's in room 805 on this floor . " Who wants to see her ? I can take you there . " Russell fell silent and looked at his sons . There was a time when Dominic or one of the others would have spoken up , ready to sit with Kyla , ready to look after her . Now , not a single one of them moved . Every head dropped . Every thought stayed fixed on Blair and her surgery . So silence filled the air . Russell finally spoke . " Hire the best nurses . Give her the best care money can buy .

I don't care what it costs . " " Alright . " The nurse nodded quickly . She didn't question it . The Jensons were rich . That was all she needed to know . If she did this well , it might even earn her favor with them . And that could be useful someday . Condition While Russell and the others settled the matter and prepared to wait for Blair's surgery , a furious voice tore through the hall . " How could this happen ? You worthless fools ! What do you even get paid for ? " My mom can't just die like this ! You're going to bring her back !

I don't care how much it costs ! " If you don't , I'll make every one of you pay . I'll see this whole hospital shut down ! " The voice was wild with rage , ragged with grief , breaking apart with pain . Russell and his sons froze . The sound cut deep into them . It was Preston . And then the memory hit . Blair had gone out with Daphne and Rebecca . They must have been caught in the disaster too . Russell's face tightened . He spoke in a low voice . " Dominic , go see what's happening . " " Got it ... " Dominic wanted to stay by Blair , but he was the eldest . He couldn't refuse his father .

He turned and walked away . As he neared the corner , he caught sight of a shadow slipping out of view . It looked familiar . His chest tightened , and he quickened his steps . But when he reached the spot , it was empty . Only a dead end , filled with mops and cleaning supplies . " Did I imagine that ? Why would Tilda be here ? " He shook his head . He thought he was seeing things . Tilda had to be with her loved ones , probably sitting down to dinner by now . There was a time when he would have believed she caused Blair's accident .

But she had saved both him and Blair . That meant this wasn't her doing . If Tilda had come , it would only be because she'd heard about Blair's accident and couldn't stop herself from showing a flicker of daughterly concern . Damn it . What was he even thinking ? Dominic , stop embarrassing yourself . Tilda hasbeen hurt enough , all because of ourblind mistakes . She despises us He forced the thoughts away and went to find Preston . But in the shadows , Tilda watched everything . " Dominic is here ? Why would he come to this hospital ? He must have come to see Daphne's body .

" Her brow furrowed . It didn't matter . She had already confirmed Daphne was dead . Her goal was met . Still , the Jensons showing up here ... She decided to stay , to see what they were after . She didn't know Blair and Kyla had been dragged into it too . Dominic was already at Daphne's room . His eyes landed on the white sheet pulled over her body . Preston sat crumpled by the bed , his face swollen from crying , streaked with tears and snot . Dominic opened his mouth . Words stumbled , but he forced them out . " Preston ... Daphne ... she's gone ...

" The sound of his voice made Preston's head jerk up . He saw Dominic and broke apart completely . Tears flooded from his swollen eyes as he collapsed into Dominic's arms . " Dominic , my mom's dead ! " Preston ... " The dread that had been building inside Dominic weighed down his chest . A 54 He looked at the body under the sheet , at the doctors who could only stand helpless , and let out a heavy breath . He held Preston close and allowed him to cry . Blair might be left disabled , but she was alive .

As long as she lived , there was hope . But Daphne was gone .

Chapter 529 Gone And death Death left nothing but silence in its wake . The sound of hurried footsteps echoed down the hallway , each step growing louder as they closed in . Rebecca appeared in the doorway , breathless and shaken , her face drained of color . She was running away earlier . Her voice cracked the air , trembling with fear . " Preston ! Tell me ... tell me Mom's okay ! Please , tell me she's alright ! " Her desperate plea only lit the fire already raging inside Preston . His eyes blazed as he snapped at her . " Where the hell were you ?

While Mom was fighting for her life , you vanished to do God knows what ! " The words carved into her like knives . She shook her head over and over , tears brimming in her eyes . " I didn't ... I swear I didn't .

Preston , please , just tell me what happened to Mom ! " Preston's grief twisted into rage . His voice thundered through the room . " She's gone ! Mom is dead ! " The force of his shout struck Rebecca like a physical blow . Her body stiffened , her breath caught , and the world seemed to collapse around her . . . " No ... that isn't true When I left her , she was fine .

She was fine ! She can't be gone . She can't be gone like this ! " Her denial cracked into hysteria , her voice rising higher with every word . " You're wrong ! You're lying ! Stop lying to me ! " " Rebecca ! " Preston's fury snapped loose . He raised his hand , about to strike her across the face . But before the blow could land , Dominic lunged forward . He grabbed hold of Preston's arm and forced it back down . " Enough , Preston ! Stop this now ! You need to calm down ! " Dominic's voice cut through the storm . " Even if Rebecca had stayed , what could she have done ?

That collapse was massive . It would've killed her too . Do you really want your sister's body lying next to your mom's ? " thrashed against Dominic's grip , but before he could break free , a doctor rushed in and plunged a needle into his arm . The sedative worked fast , draining the fury from his veins . His breathing slowed , the wildness fading from his eyes . When his gaze fell on Rebecca , kneeling on the floor , her sobs tearing through her body , shame struck him harder than any blow ever could .

Rebecca wasn't the one going mad ; he was . He buried his face in his hands , his voice hoarse and broken . " I'm sorry ... I lost myself . The pain - it's eating me alive . I shouldn't have lashed out at you . I didn't mean it . I'm so damn sorry ." Rebecca lifted her tear - stained face , her voice raw and fractured . " No ... you were right . If I hadn't run , if I'd gone in with Mom , maybe I could've stopped her . " Maybe if I'd slowed her down , even for a second , she'd still be alive . I should've given my for hers . " life Her sobs tore into jagged gasps .

Her eyes rolled back , and her body went limp as she collapsed onto the floor . Chaos exploded in the room as the doctors scrambled to carry her away . Preston could only watch , hollow and powerless , every ounce of strength drained from him . All he could do was tell the doctor to treat Rebecca immediately . Dominic stayed at his side , refusing to leave him alone in the wreckage of grief . And that was when he noticed something strange . " Preston , " Dominic said carefully , " with something this tragic , why hasn't your father shown up yet ?

" The moment the word " father " left his lips , Preston's weakened body trembled with rage . Not even the sedative could stop that fury . The rage made him cough violently . " My father ? Do you think he ever cared about Mom ? Loved her ? " His voice cracked , then rose , shaking with fury . " The moment it happened , all he cared about was running to explain himself thrashed against Dominic's grip , but

before he could break free , a doctor rushed in and plunged a needle into his arm . The sedative worked fast , draining the fury from his veins .

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" The moment it happened , all he cared about was running to explain himself , running to protect his damn business at the plaza . " Even when I texted him that Mom was dead , he didn't bother to reply . To him , money , status , and reputation come first . " His wife , his kids - we're nothing . Nothing but pawns he can throw away when it suits him . " Dominic's eyes widened at the raw bitterness pouring out of Preston . After a long pause , Dominic pressed his lips together , struggling to find words . " Preston ...

I'm sure your father is coming . He must be shattered . Daphne was his wife . They were married for decades . No man could feel nothing after losing someone like her . " Preston let out a hollow laugh , muffled against his palms . " Dominic , I know you're just trying to make me feel better . But you don't understand my father . This is exactly who he is . " If it weren't for my grandfather holding him back with his eyes and ears all around the city , he'd already have filled this city with mistresses , fathered more kids , and used them against me like chess pieces .

" He would not hesitate to use them to take power for himself . That's the man you're talking about . " Dominic's grip tightened on Preston's shoulders . " Stop . Don't let your mind eat itself alive . Daphne is gone , and if she could see you now , she'd never want you destroyed by grief and rage . " Preston spoke again . " Do you know what Mom told me once ? She envied Blair . She admitted it . Because Blair found a man who loved her for life , a man who gave everything for her . Russell never failed her . That's what love was meant to be .

" On the outside , Mom and Blair's lives looked the same . " They both married rich men . But behind closed doors , it couldn't have been more different . " My mom was always scared around of my father . If she upset him , he'd hit her . He'd hit her right in front of me and Rebecca . " Dominic's hands slowly slipped from his shoulders , his face shadowed with despair .

Chapter 530 Alone Time " You're worn out , Preston . Stay here with Daphne for a while . " Dominic understood what was going on . Preston did not need words to soothe him . He needed some quiet time alone . He needed a moment to breathe . His mother had just been taken by a sudden accident . If Dominic stood in his place , he would never have held it together . If his own mother had died like that , he knew madness would have taken him . Dominic turned to leave . Then Preston's voice cut through the silence behind him . " Mom went out today with Blair and Kyla . What happened to them ?

Are they okay ? " Dominic stopped and looked back at him . " My mom is still in surgery . The doctors warned she might lose her leg . Kyla ... her face was destroyed . She hasn't woken up yet . " Preston's chest trembled as his words fell apart . " Why did this happen ? Why did it have to happen ? " Dominic could not answer him . Neither of them knew they were being overheard . Tilda stood hidden in the shadows , listening to every word . She wore a brown wool coat with a gray cashmere hat pulled low over her dark glasses .

Her pale legs were wrapped in black tights , and her steps were quiet in her leather shoes . Both hands stayed buried in her pockets . Her lips were set in a cold line , sharp and severe . The dark corner swallowed her figure whole . No one would notice her unless she wanted them to . " So Blair and Kyla got dragged into this too ... " she whispered , her eyes narrowing . It was not what she planned . Yet she decided it was nothing but justice . She pulled out her phone and typed a quick message to Dane . " Dane , I have a few more things to check . I'll be back late .

Keep working on the food without me . " " The menu for tonight is on the fridge . If you can't figure it out , wait for me . " She sent the message , tucked the phone away , and faded back into the dark . Later , Dominic gathered with the others . He was the one who broke the news of Daphne's death to Russell and the family . The words turned the hallway into stone . Silence pressed down on every chest .

Russell's voice finally broke , ragged and weak . " How could this happen ? " A woman who had been so alive , so close to them , was gone .

She had been Blair's dearest friend , like family to the Jensons . " Dad , boys , you have to stay calm . Take care of yourselves , " Dominic said , though his own voice shook . " She's gone , and all we can do now is honor her memory . What matters most is the family still alive . " His words tried to soften the grief , but sorrow still weighed down the air . Daphne had watched them grow up . She had been so close to Blair that she nearly became their godmother . To lose her this way cut deep . The light above the surgical ward flickered off .

Before anyone could gather themselves , the doors swung open . Russell lunged forward , his shirt damp with cold sweat . " Doctor , my wife ... Tell me she's safe ! " tell me she's alive . " Mr. Jenson , calm down . We did everything possible . We saved her leg . She will not face amputation . " Russell's heart soared . " She's safe ? Truly ? " Relief swept through the family like a burst of air in a suffocating room . That was the one good thing out of this mess . But the doctor's face grew grim . " I have to be honest . We saved the leg , but only just .

" Walking will be difficult for a long time . She will need years of therapy and support ." Russell's pulse stumbled . The smile froze on his face . " Doctor , what are you saying ? " " If her recovery goes well , she may walk again within five years , though she will never run . " If it does not , she will spend her life limping . " The words were gentle , but the weight behind them was crushing . The harsher truth meant Blair might need crutches or even a wheelchair . The shadow of permanent disability hung heavy in the air . The Jensons stood still , as if lightning had struck them all .

Their thoughts refused to move . Russell was the first to speak again . " Can I see my wife now ? " " She must remain in the ICU under close watch . " Only one visitor can enter , in full protective gear . You will have five minutes . The rest of you can watch from outside . " Russell nodded quickly . " Then I'm going in ." In moments , he was suited up and stepping into the sterile white room . There she lay , her body covered in tubes , her thigh bound tight in layers of bandages . She looked fragile , her beauty hidden under bruises and wires . Russell's eyes filled with tears .

The sight cut his soul open . He wanted to gather her into his arms , to hold her , but he dared not touch her broken body . " Blair ... I'm sorry , " his voice cracked as the tears fell . " I promised your parents I would protect you all my life . And now you're lying here , broken , because I failed you . "