

Shadows 571

Chapter 571

Tilda shook her head . " Nope , I've already learned what I wanted . There are things I need to do out there . I'll leave my four teammates here with you . They're still learning plenty and enjoying it . There's a lot left for them to pick up . " " But they're your squad . Without you , how am I supposed to keep them under control ? " " Relax . They're already top - tier hackers , totally able to handle things . The world is full of smart people , but the rare ones are those who stay focused and keep grinding .

As long as you're right , they'll back you . " " You brat ... You even dragged your suitcase in here . Guess you're dead set on leaving . What else can I say ? I haven't forgotten what I promised to your Comet Squad . Just keep working hard . " " No problem . Whatever missions you've got , throw them our way - we'll nail them ! " After that week together , Tilda had bonded with the Bluewing Base crew . She smiled , gave Benedict a small wave , and then rolled her suitcase out .

He laughed softly , shook his head , and was about to sit when an emergency call cut straight through all channels and hit his office . Benedict frowned slightly and snatched it up . " What happened ? You ... What did you just say ?! Is this real ?! " The look on his face flipped from worry to total joy . Meanwhile , Tilda dragged her suitcase to the old factory outside . Just then , her phone buzzed . Seeing Manfred's name , she instantly felt something big had gone down with Dane's group . She picked up . " Mr. Parker ? " " Queen ! We did it ! We truly did it !

" The roar of cheering in the background nearly drowned out his voice . He was tearing up so badly that his voice cracked . Even far away , she could hear the celebration shaking the place . Tilda's chest tightened . " Mr. Parker , is it the lithography machine ? " " Yes ! It worked ! All these years of sweat finally paid off ! 1/3 22:15 Fri , Oct 3 " Getherland's first 4nm chip ! " Manfred's voice shook with emotion . He was in his 60s , with more than 20 years of fighting uphill battles , brushing past death more times than he could count .

But he'd never felt like that before . Tears ran freely down his face . They weren't tears of sorrow , but of pure joy . That chip meant Cetherland had finally shattered the monopoly and built its own . Anyone who'd lived through Motrar's crackdown on their tech would feel nothing but pride and fire in their chest at the sight of it . Back then , that chip seemed like a star they could never reach . No matter how hard they tried , it stayed out of their grasp . For years , Cetherland was trapped , forced to accept whatever price outsiders demanded .

Their industries were smothered , powerless to fight back . Nobody wanted to bow down and take it , but reality was harsh . The gap was a canyon built on decades of scientific lead . And bridging it took more than brains and effort . It needed the right timing , the right place , and the right people . Still , through sweat , sacrifice , and stubbornness , they had finally pulled it off . That chip carried the struggles of countless people who refused to give up . Foreign powers had tried again and again to crush Cetherland's future .

But the chip's birth marked a new beginning - a loud signal to the world . Cetherland wasn't broken or asleep , and they had never lost the will to fight . More breakthroughs would come . They would catch up , then stand tall . One day , they wouldn't have to bow to anyone just to survive . If they could close a decades - long gap by building a 4nm lithography machine , then wins in other fields weren't just dreams anymore . Confidence , pride , and faith - that was the true fuel for progress .

Tilda's whole body buzzed with excitement . Her blood burned with pride for her country . Anyone who cared for Cetherland - no matter how cold - would be moved by news like that . " Mr. Parker , what about Dane and the others ? " " Dr. Kerrigan is treating Professor Kerrigan right now . I didn't want to bother them , so I haven't told them yet . " " Got it ! I'm heading there right now ! " She ended the call , grabbed her suitcase , and bolted forward . Her legs felt light , like she could run forever .

Chapter 572 His Surprise Andy stood by the road waiting . From a distance , he saw Tilda rushing over , so he waved at her right away . " Tilda , I know you missed me , but running full speed like that ? You're making me feel way too important . " " Drive . Take me to the airport - I need to get to Dugan ! " " What ? " Wasn't she supposed to meet him today and let him handle everything ? Andy had already set up their plans , ready to whisk her off and start living in their little sweet world together . And now , she suddenly wanted to ditch him and fly out to Dugan ? Seriously ?

What a heartbreaker . It turns out I was just wasting my time all these years ! It stung , but Andy still drove her to the airport without a word . Tilda hacked the airline system herself and grabbed the next ticket . On the way , she told Andy everything Manfred had said . He sat there stunned , needing a moment to process . If even a top lawyer like him was rattled , it showed how big the news was . " ... Alright , now I get it . Buckle up . I'm stepping on it . You're catching that flight ! " Andy grinned , shifted gears , and slammed on the gas .

The red Ferrari tore down the highway like a fire arrow . Jeselton to Dugan was only a three - hour flight . By the time Tilda landed , it was 4.00 p.m. Right then , a message from Dane popped up . " Tilda , we did it . " It was just a few words , but she could feel his excitement bursting off the screen . " Yes , Dane , you did it ! You finally built the 4nm chip lithography machine ! " " This victory belongs to everyone . Without your help , none of it would've happened " Almost immediately , Manfred called .

The car he'd arranged was already waiting , taking her straight to the hotel . At the center of Dugan , Tilda finally reunited with Dane and Liam . They walked toward her . Liam called out , " Tilda ! " " Dane ! Liam ! " She ran over and hugged them both , her eyes glowing . " I missed you guys so much ! " Liam ruffled her hair fondly . " We missed you , too . Hard to believe it's been nearly two months already . " " Yeah , I still can't believe it myself . The second I saw Mr. Parker's message , I booked a flight straight to Dugan . I had to celebrate this moment with you guys !

Oh , does Mystro know yet ? " " Dane already messaged Mystro , and he replied . Oh , Tilda , Dane has got something he wants to ask you . " " Ask me ? Dane , whatever it is , just say it . If I can help , I'm all in ! " Tilda never said no to her seniors . She and Liam had already spent plenty of time talking about Dane's condition . What Dane was dealing with was something no one had ever come across before . Nothing in the medical books even came close . No surprise Harvey couldn't figure it out either . But thanks to Liam's steady treatments , things had finally started moving forward .

Tilda couldn't help but let herself hope . If there was truly a breakthrough , would it show up now ? Right as she was about to speak , Dane signaled her to stay quiet . He took her hand , pulled her out of the crowd , and brought her into an empty room . Tilda followed without a fuss , closed her eyes cooperatively , and teased , " Dane , what kind of surprise are you cooking up for me ? " " Til ... da ... " A rough , shaky whisper brushed her ear . She froze in place , then slowly opened her eyes .

When she realized the sound came from the man standing right in front of her , her breath caught . " Dane ... say that again ? " " Tilly ... Tilly ... " He kept softly calling her nickname while patting her head . His voice was ragged and weak , but to Tilda , it was the sweetest sound she'd ever heard in her life . She threw her arms around him . " Dane , you can finally talk ! " " It's still ... hard ... but at least ... I can speak ... " It's all ... thanks to ... Liam ... 11 Truth was , Dane had almost given up hope .

Plenty of top doctors had tried , even Tilda herself , but nobody could solve his problem . He had only stuck with Liam's treatment so that he wouldn't disappoint him . But somehow , it worked .

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Tilda covered her mouth , nodding nonstop . " This is crazy ! Liam , you liar ! You told me there was only a little progress - this is a straight - up miracle ! " " Hey , don't blame me . Dane was the one who wanted to keep it quiet . He wanted to surprise you , and he thought he'd be even better the next time you saw

him . " And since the news about the lithography machine came out today , it brought you all the way here . " " Thank you Liam ...

" Dane's eyes showed nothing but gratitude . If Liam hadn't stepped in , he would've given up long ago . He'd been close to breaking . " Not at all . We're like brothers . I'll do everything I can to help you recover . But honestly , it's your grit that made this work . The treatment was endless and brutal , and you never once complained . You just kept going . That's what a real doctor - patient team looks like . " " Exactly ! One is a genius scientist , and the other is the legendary Mad Doctor . Both tall , handsome , and totally awesome . And lucky me - I get to call you both my seniors .

Wow , I just wanna parade you two around and show off ! " Tilda winked , grinning from ear to ear . She hadn't felt this happy in ages . Was that what people meant by double blessings ? It felt amazing . A brand - new lithography machine was born , and Dane could talk again . " Oh yeah , Dane , you still haven't told Tilda what you needed from her . Go on . Say it now . " Tilda raised a brow . " Hmm ? Do you actually need my help ? I thought this was just about surprising me . " " Tilda ... Mr. Parker said ... since I'm the lead on the lithography machine project ...

I'll get a medal like everyone else ... but I also have to give a speech . " It'll be broadcast ... live worldwide ... but my voice isn't strong enough yet I'll write the speech ... and I was hoping ... you'd read it for me ... up on stage " " Me ?! " Tilda's eyes nearly popped out . " Dane , are you serious ? Wouldn't Mystro or Liam be way better at this ? " Pagric " No way . I'm not standing in front of the whole world and talking . Not happening . I'd rather stay in the shadows . " And I already talked to Mystro .

He agrees this is the best plan . The three of us are all on the same page , so you can't say no . " Tilda bit her lip . " But ... " " I ... asked Mystro ... and Liam . They both said ... they don't want ... their names on the project . They don't want ... the spotlight . " Tilda ... what do you think ? I truly want you ... to do this for me . You're the ... only one I trust with it ... " Even Dane , who usually didn't care about recognition , treated this speech as one of the biggest moments of his life . He had poured his heart and years of effort into that project .

Even Manfred , who'd been with him the whole time , didn't fully know how much Dane had given up . He'd risked it all . Even if it had failed , he could've held his head high . But they'd succeeded . And nobody felt that joy more deeply than Dane . He wasn't the type to show emotions . But for him to ask for this favor with that look , how could Tilda possibly turn him down ? After a pause , she said , " Alright

, Dane . If this is what you want , I'll do it . But don't put my name on the research . This belongs to your team . I don't need the attention .

" She knew being too high - profile only brought trouble . In fact , Mystro and Liam had made the smart choice . They already had enough titles , wealth , and influence - why pile on more ? The same went for her . If her name got attached as part of the very first lithography machine team in Cetherland , she'd probably shock the whole world . She'd never live in peace again . Besides , Tilda and the others hadn't done much . The real work - the plans , the methods , the years of trial and error - came from Dane's team .

They were learning from and building upon the experiences of those who had gone before them . All three of them did was help things along at the right time . In short , they'd just been lucky .

Chapter 574 Their Excitement " Alright ... Once Tilda agreed , the rest was simple . Soon , the big day arrived . The official news dropped , and it blew up instantly . Every forum , headline , and social media feed went crazy . " Getherland Creates Its First 4nm Chip Lithography Machine ! " The headline was bright red , stamped with a giant - BREAKING . Twitter , TikTok , and Quora - apps all lagged or crashed . Comments were coming in , hitting over 100 thousand per minute . [I can't believe I lived to see this ! Cetherland made their own lithography machine ! I'm crying !

] [I told my grandpa . Even though he's been in a coma for years , a tear rolled down his face !] [Dad , Mom , I'm going to your graves today ! The strong nation you dreamed of is finally real !] [Our phone brand's about to blow up ! Chips are back !] [Who built this thing ? They erased a decades - long gap overnight . Absolute legends ! It's like watching a god descend to earth ! We're lucky to witness it !] [No exaggeration . I know how lithography machines work and how far behind Cetherland was . This is unreal . What kind of genius pulled this off ?!

] The whole country was buzzing . Family chats , group messages , and feeds were full of it . The streets echoed with cheers and clapping . Everyone shouted the same thing . This was their country ! Patriotism had never felt so raw . People were proud of the progress , proud to belong here . For years , they'd been crushed by tech blockades , chip bans , and foreign pressure . The world wanted to keep Cetherland down , to pin them beneath the sky , Hope had been smothered , disappointment piled high .

People ranted , but nothing ever changed . It felt hurt to admit the gap with developed nations . Now , this news hit like pure adrenaline , waking the nation up . At the same time , it carried a message loud

and clear . " Play dirty , threaten us , block us - it doesn't matter . We'll push through with our grit and claim the place we deserve ! " Cetherland had talent , passion , and people who loved their country enough to sacrifice everything . Schemes and enemies couldn't scare them .

Decades ago , when they built the atomic and hydrogen bombs , they started from nothing , facing impossible odds . It took years of sweat and sacrifice . Top scientists gave up their names and families , vanishing for secret projects . They never spread the news . Back then , there was no tech support , no internet , not even computers . Everything for the bomb had to be calculated by hand on chalkboards . And somehow , they still pulled it off ! That stubborn , never - give - up spirit was carved into the bones of Cetherlanders . It was in their DNA !

And now , once again , they'd proved it to the world . Sure , life had improved , money was flowing , and the nation was stronger , but that spirit of sacrifice and hard work had never gone away . They turned every insult , every letdown , and every roadblock into fuel . With tougher hearts , they kept pushing forward , closing in on the rest of the world . Cetherland was ready to rise again ! Andy called Tilda . 56 Prats " Tilda , all the Motrar stocks we grabbed hit their limit today . We made billions in one go . " Hah !

You're officially a rich lady now - you'll never have to worry about your life again . " That was what came with insider info . The second Cetherland announced the 4nm lithography machine , Motrar's market went wild . Some tech stocks shot through the roof , while others nosedived . In Motrar , there were no limits . When a stock went up , it kept climbing , and when it dropped , it was gone for good . Money showed up fast , but it could vanish even faster . Tilda and Andy had played it smart , shorting some stocks and buying others . In just one day , they raked in over ten billion .

After the split , Tilda still walked away with five billion . She was officially rolling in money . She said , " We struck gold together ! By the way , did you see my invitation ? There's a banquet in Dugan in three days to celebrate the lithography machine team . " Come by . Let's enjoy it together ! " " Of course ! No way I'd miss something this epic ! "

Chapter 575

Maurice rolled his eyes . " Hold on . Weren't you all about diamonds before ? Now you're obsessed with some cheap plastic ring from a street stall ?

You've been messing with it all night . Spill- what's up with that ? " " You wouldn't get it , Mr. Forever Single . " Maurice's jaw dropped . No way ! Did this guy also land a girlfriend ? That'll leave me as the only single one left ! " So who's the lucky lady ? Don't tell me you're just fooling around . If that's the case , it doesn't count . I've got plenty of those ! Don't call me single ! " Maurice flipped Alfie the bird .

Chapter 576

" If this weren't such a huge event , I'd never leave Blair behind . But this is history for our country .

I want to meet the team that made the lithography machine myself . It's something that only happens once . " Wade , you should see it for yourself and learn . " " Got it . " The moment the news about the lithography machine dropped , the whole Jenson Group couldn't stop talking about it . Even Blair had been smiling more , pushing harder at her recovery . Russell and Blair had always been seen as model patriotic entrepreneurs . Jenson Group had built a strong reputation in Cetherland - not just through business , but also with their foundation and charity work .

They'd even built over a dozen Sunshine Elementary Schools . Helping people rise had always been their belief . With the support of the clients and national policies , Jenson Group had reached the top . Russell and Blair always remembered where they came from . So when they heard about the new lithography machine , their pride ran deeper than anyone else's . They felt proud of their country and of all the hardworking people behind it . Without hesitating , they decided the foundation would put ten million into the science fund project .

Later , once Russell and Wade returned to the villa , they filled Blair in on what had happened . She lit up with excitement . " That's awesome ! Honey , you've got to go ! Wade , head there with your dad and make sure he doesn't get carried away and overdo it with the drinks , or he'll end up embarrassing himself . And you should pay attention too ! Everyone at this banquet will be the best of the best in Cetherland . It'll be a huge boost for you ! "

Chapter 577

Russell puffed out his cheeks , acting wounded . " Darling , I'd never do that . I'm grown . I know how to handle myself . " " We've been married for years . Don't you think I know you by now ? At most parties , you're fine . But this kind ? Who knows what you'll pull ? " Still , Blair's heart felt light and happy . Darell sat nearby , peeling an apple for her and grinning . " Yeah , Dad , Mom is the boss now . Better just do as she says . " Justin and Kayden walked up with a box of grapes . " Mom , these are fresh , just flown in from Lumenland . Have some !

" Wade spoke up seriously , " Mom , this is a big deal . I'll do what you say , watch over Dad , stay focused , and try to make some good connections . " Blair reached out , touched his face , and laughed . " Good boy . " " Wade , even you're saying that ? You've totally taken your mom's side ! " Russell muttered , feeling wronged . He looked ready to tear up - something only Blair's kiss and soft words could fix . Seeing Russell , usually so serious , acting that way made everyone crack up . The room was full of warmth , laughter , and love .

It was like the sweetness of spring , as if music itself was drifting through the air . No one noticed Kyla standing in the shadows by the stairs . The Jenson villa overflowed with joy , but she didn't belong in it at all . She clenched her teeth so hard that it felt like they'd shatter . She was clenching her fists , her nails digging into her palms until pain shot up her arms . Rage burned inside her , and she felt like she could cough up blood . She couldn't even step forward to say a single word , afraid she'd destroy the happy scene .

Kyla felt that if she dared to walk over , she'd be treated like an outsider , a bug to be crushed . There was a time when moments like those , full of love and laughter , were hers . Back then , all the Jensons revolved around her . She thought it was only natural , like the whole world existed to keep her glowing , with the sun and moon shining just for her smile . And when Kyla caught Tilda hiding in some corner , ignored , watching with eyes full of hope and fear , it made Kyla feel satisfied in a twisted way .

Everything changed when Blair found her real daughter after 19 long years . Kyla had been terrified that her spot as heiress would be snatched away by that girl . Tilda was the real daughter who'd been missing for 19 years . She had all the advantages . The Jensons had poured endless time , money , and effort into finding her - of course , they would spoil her . But strangely , they didn't . They treated her like she wasn't even there . They were cold and distant . Instead , they kept doting on Kyla , even bullying Tilda for her sake . Only Kyla mattered .

She was the one they called their good daughter , their precious sister . For 18 years , Kyla had played the perfect act , never slipping up . She truly believed she had won , that Tilda couldn't touch her . Even though she was just adopted , she still stood higher than Tilda - the real daughter who had finally come home . Tilda , the one Blair had searched for all those years , longed for the things Kyla thought were just normal . Kyla looked down on her , convinced she could crush Tilda like nothing . But now , everything flipped .

The corner where Tilda once sat crying , unnoticed , had become Kyla's place . Tilda had turned into the family's treasure , untouchable and adored . And Kyla ? She was nothing now - just the air , the pest ruining their happiness . Why ? How had it all gone so wrong ? The love that used to belong to her so easily now sat just out of reach . And Tilda didn't even care . Didn't that mean Kyla was the one being stepped on now ? All her pride , all her smugness - it all came back like invisible slaps to her face . No , it can't be real .

This has to be some kind of mistake . A A maid came over to clean and spotted Kyla by the stairs . She asked subconsciously , " Ms. Kyla , what are you doing here ? " Kyla spun her head around . The maid froze and stepped back in fear . Because Kyla was looking at her with an expression she'd never seen before - cold , dark , and filled with deadly intent .

Chapter 578

Russell shifted uncomfortably , rubbing his shoulder . " Alright , I have some contracts to handle . Wade , come with me to the study . " " Sure , Dad . " Russell and Wade slipped away fast . They wanted to get out of the heavy , suffocating mood . Darell and the others weren't as lucky . They had to stay and watch Blair and Kyla talk and laugh together . Whenever they spoke , it was always to Blair .

When they talked to Kyla , their tone was cold and distant . It felt like they weren't family - just people who happened to know each other . The more Kyla felt that , the tighter her chest became , like something was squeezing her heart . She could hardly breathe . So , she found an excuse to leave . Blair didn't stop her . She watched Kyla go with a look of regret , then turned to Darell and the others . " Darell , Justin , Kayden , you guys are being way too unfair to Kyla . " " Sorry , Mom . This is the best we can do . We told you before .

Because of Tilda , we just can't get past it like you can . " Dominic and the others had their excuses ready . They always brought up Tilda to shut Blair down . It was something Blair couldn't argue with . " How could I ever get over it ? Tilda was my daughter . I carried her for nine months , almost died giving birth , and lost her the day she was born . I did everything to find her . " And when I finally did , I didn't protect her . I hurt her again , broke her heart , and made her lose hope in this family . She even saved our lives . I owe her more than I can repay !

" I'm just holding myself together because I don't want to hurt Kyla after hurting Tilda . They're both my precious girls . I'd give my life for them . That's all I can do ... " 2/3 22:17 Fri , Oct 3 Every time she thought about Tilda cutting ties and leaving that hospital , her heart felt ripped apart . Blair wished she

could be like Russell and the others - just let it go , ignore Kyla , and stop thinking about Tilda . Maybe then it wouldn't hurt so much . But she couldn't .

She couldn't be that selfish to Kyla . She just couldn't . Darell quickly tried to soothe her . " Alright , Mom , we're sorry . We shouldn't have said that . Don't take it to heart . " But they didn't know Kyla had overheard everything while lingering outside . At that moment , she finally understood what it felt like to be empty inside . " So ... in Mom's eyes , I'm just a burden now ... Just something she has to carry . " I'm nothing but a stand - in for Tilda . Someone Mom uses to fill the gap and ease her guilt over Tilda ! " Why ... Why do this to me ? This is so unfair !

I'm the one who's scarred for life , while Tilda gets that beautiful face and everything else . They still look down on me and don't care . I'll never forgive them ! " Kyla clenched her fists until her whole body shook , her eyes burning with pure hatred . She used to look down on Tilda - the one the family had rejected . But now she was the replacement , and Tilda had become the one the family couldn't let go of .

Chapter 579

Cut of the Shadows Tilda's Brilliant Second Life At Austin Hotel in Dugan , the invited guests stepped onto the red carpet one after another . Decked out in heavy makeup and glamorous outfits , they entered the so - called miraculous piece of architecture and the most luxurious seven - star hotel in Dugan . Outside the hotel , Maybachs , Rolls - Royces , and more luxury cars were lining up in a dazzling parade .

The fountain reflected the faces of influential people , who could shake up major cities with a single move . This was an exclusive private party . Thus , no reporters were invited to capture the event . For these people , being invited to this exclusive party was a sign of recognition and a great honor . Tomorrow , the whole world would watch live as the lithography machine research team received their medals , gave speeches , and unveiled Cetherland's first - ever 4nm chip !

By rights , with their status , influence , and experience , they had trained themselves to remain calm and wouldn't be easily impressed . Except ... For that one person . Everyone's gaze turned to him as he walked confidently like he owned the place . Jude stepped out of a specially customized Maybach . It was a special license plate from Slosa , numbered 10000 . That number alone screamed his prestigious status . He was the CEO of DY Group , the youngest head of the Bells .

He had single - handedly pushed DY , already at its peak , to even greater heights and had become the youngest billionaire on the Forbes list . He was so talented that even Abram , who was still in his prime , willingly retired and handed 1/3 22:17 Fri , Oct 3 " There's only one rule in this game . Never offend Jude Bell !

Even if you can't partner with DY Group , you must never be their enemy . " Once Jude locked onto someone , it was a fight to the death . No one dared to mess with mad dogs , especially one that was smart enough to aim for the vital spot . Once , there was a tycoon from Melville who tried to fight DY Group for a multi - billion landmark project and resorted to every dirty trick . Jude dismantled them one by one until the man went insane and jumped off a building . In the end , DY scooped up his company and grew even stronger . Such moves terrified everyone .

With all these titles , it was no wonder he stood out so much . Not to mention his looks . He was nearly 6 foot 3 , with a jawline so sharp it looked like a masterpiece itself . A custom black suit framed his long and lean body like that of a supermodel - flawless from head to toe . His lips were cold and sensual . His dark eyes were deep as the universe , stealing souls with a glance . He had the natural aura of a king . Even wealthy ladies found their hearts pounding and blushed like they were girls again , as if seeing their first crush . He outshone the crowd .

He was born for the spotlight . When he appeared , everyone else became dull and faded into the background . Jude's gaze swept the room . However , he didn't see the person he was looking for . Disappointment flickered in his eyes . He pulled out his phone and texted as he walked . " Tilda , I'm in Austin now . Where are you ? " Tilda replied quickly , " Go look around first . I'm still doing Dane's makeup- " Dane ... A guy ? Dane Kerrigan ? The research team leader of the lithography machine ? Jude's jealousy surged .

The air around him turned icy instantly . Those who planned to approach him immediately backed off . They couldn't help but sigh . Out with the old , in with the new . These young folks are so intimidating , making them feel their age . Even after decades of experience , they'd still be shaken by Jude . Indeed , no matter what kind of event it is , once Jude appears , he will always be the spotlight . " " Geez , sometimes I feel bad for him . He clearly doesn't want all this attention , but his presence is too strong .

Right , Alfie ?" Not getting the response she wanted , Maurice frowned and called him again , " Alfie ? " She spotted Alfie busy wandering around , recording videos and snapping pictures . Maurice couldn't help but complain , " Seriously , Mr. Alfie ? You've been to events like this dozens of times . Why are you still acting like some country bumpkin , even taking pictures ? How tacky can you get ? You're seriously getting more childish ! "

" Who knows ? Apart from that case , DY Group hasn't had much direct conflict with the Jensons . " Still ...

Jude being close to Tilda surprised me . It shows how little we really know about her . " What I fear ... " He paused , unease tugging at his words . Wade leaned closer . " Fear what , Dad ? " Russell let out a slow sigh , speaking just loud enough for Wade to hear . " That Jude has feelings for her . " Wade's eyes flew wide . " What ?! Dad , how's that possible ? Sure , Tilda's smart and beautiful , but this is Jude Bell we're talking about ! He's the head of the Bell family ! " If Jude really did get involved with Tilda , the Bells themselves would be the first to revolt .

They'd claim she wasn't worthy of him . " Everyone has their own taste . When I married your mom , your grandparents fought it hard , but we pushed through anyway . The thing is , someone like Jude stands way too high . Being around him is risky , like standing too close to power that could crush you at any moment . " What I fear most is that Tilda gets pulled into his world . Being Mrs. Bell isn't a title . It's a target . Countless eyes watching , arrows in the dark . You can dodge an open strike , but the hidden blade is the one that kills .

I'm afraid this could put her life at risk . " And the greatest danger might not even come from the Bells or outsiders . It came from Jude himself . In the business world , his power over life and death was infamous . He was cold , ruthless , and more terrifying than a demon . They called him a mad dog . No one dared provoke him , terrified it would cost them everything . Tilda had inherited his own stubborn streak . If she clashed with a man like Jude , the danger was beyond words .

Just imagining Tilda defying Jude , and how he might lash out , made Russell's whole body shake uncontrollably . Hearing him say it out loud , Wade finally felt just how dangerous this really was . Tilda's life was hanging by a thread . in the Dark They had to warn her , and fast . But ... " Even if we try , Dad , what can we do ? Tilda hasn't forgiven us . She's already cut ties with the Jenson family . If we go to her now , trying to talk sense into her , she'll only push back harder .

The more we warn her , the more determined she'll be to stick with Jude . " Wade's eyes dimmed . The truth was , they no longer had the standing - or the right - to say these things to Tilda . The last time she came to the hospital to see Blair , it had only happened because Russell had begged for her to go . " If it really comes to that , then I'll throw away my pride if I have to . I'll tear Tilda and Jude apart with my own hands . " I made one mistake already . I can't make the same one again .

Even if she hates me for the rest of her life , I can't just stand by and watch her walk straight into the Bell family's wolves ' den . " If it goes wrong , she could end up like your Daphne . She'll die . I'd rather have her alive and hating me forever than be gone from this world for good . " Russell's fist curled tight at his side . He knew what he'd been back then - a hypocrite of a father , exactly as Tilda had once said . Stubborn , blind , and so wrapped up in his own pride that he'd hurt her again and again .

He had trusted Kyla instead , humiliated and slandered Tilda again and again , clinging to his pride in senseless quarrels - shameless beyond redemption .