

Until You're Mine / Humble Ex-wife is Now A Brilliant Tycoon

The Humble Ex-wife is Now A Brilliant Tycoon

Chapter 181:

A horrible realization dawned on Katie, her face draining of color. “Wait, you’re not planning to burn us alive, are you?”

The shock hit Thea next. “Oh my god, are those—are those gasoline barrels?”

“Don’t! Please—don’t do this!” Their screams echoed in the car as they fumbled frantically at their restraints—until the cold press of gunmetal against their skulls stopped them cold. No escape.

Tears streaming, heads shaking in frantic denial, they clung to their seatbelts, hearts thundering with terror.

“You’re in it for the cash, right? I’ll pay—anything! Just name your price, but let me go!” Thea pleaded, desperation choking her words.

Beside her, Katie’s face was ghostly pale. “I also have money—please, take whatever you want! Or if you need a favor, I’ll do it. Just don’t kill us!”

But their sobbing pleas fell on deaf ears. The masked men remained stone-faced, unmoved by the fear in the car. Not even their frantic offers of cash or desperate bargaining for their bodies drew the slightest response.

Katie and Thea trembled more violently. Could this really be their final moment? Panic had leeches every bit of color from their faces. Dread pressed down, suffocating them. All they could do was watch in paralyzed horror as the masked men wrenched open a blue barrel and hefted it toward their sports car. This had to be the end. There was no way out. Was this really how their lives would finish—here, like this?

No, it couldn’t be. Not this way!

Then, the first wave hit—liquid splattered across them.

“Ugh! Ugh...” Both women sputtered, coughing and retching. Wait—this wasn’t gasoline at all!

Earlier, caught in their terror, they hadn't even noticed the absence of fuel's sharp tang. Instead, a foul, overpowering stench crashed over them. It wasn't fire in those barrels—it was sewage, thick and foul. Before the shock could even settle, the second barrel was already being dumped out, drenching them once again.

credit goes to: [ghostnovels.com](#)

“Ugh...” Their bodies convulsed with dry heaves, gagging until tears pricked their eyes and everything blurred.

Devastation etched across Thea's face as she watched her cherished sports car drown beneath waves of reeking waste. “My car! Bluh—” she exclaimed, but her cry was drowned out as the third barrel's contents splashed directly into her mouth. “Ack! Ugh...”

Katie was hit just as hard—so violently that she accidentally opened her mouth and swallowed a mouthful of the vile sludge. “Gaaah!” she gagged, choking on the foulness.

Both Katie and Thea convulsed and retched, but their attackers showed zero mercy, relentlessly dumping barrel after barrel of putrid waste onto their heads. What kind of twisted lunatics were these? Complete maniacs—all of them.

Katie and Thea had thought they were kidnapped—no, this was something far worse. They'd been ambushed by a squad of sewer workers gone rogue.

The relentless assault only ceased once the last drop of filthy sludge had been poured out.

Thea and Katie sat frozen, too rattled even to scream, but the stench clung to them like a second skin, invading every breath—no, it seeped into their pores. Disgusting beyond words. They were utterly wrecked, teetering on the edge of tears but too horrified to even sob.

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Just the thought of having accidentally swallowed that filth made them gag anew. They had no clue how long they'd been vomiting when an ear-piercing honk shattered the chaos behind them.

"What the hell is wrong with you? Parked smack in the middle of the road! You wanna get yourself killed?"

"If you wanna die, we don't! Ugh—what is that smell?"

"Wait... no way—that's sewage, isn't it?"

"Ugh... You people are sick! Who the hell just stops in the middle of traffic to bathe in shit?"

A few drivers crawled out of their cars, only to recoil instantly, gagging, faces twisted in pure disgust.

The pink sports car ahead was a nightmare: splattered from bumper to roof with slimy, dripping filth. Its once-bright paintwork was barely visible beneath the stinking mess.

But the real horror? The two women inside, drenched head to toe in sewage, the muck dripping and oozing from every inch of their clothes and hair.

Just looking at them made stomachs churn. Nobody wanted to get close enough to catch the putrid smell that clung like a toxic cloud. With the road completely blocked, a line of cars piled up behind them, horns blaring in frustration. Phones came out—click, click—as people snapped pictures, holding their breath to avoid gagging.

"Holy crap, since when did shit become a fetish?"

"Drowning in literal crap. What kind of freakshow is this?"

"No way—I'm posting this. My friends have to see these 'shit-girls' live and in color!"

"Wait—is that a Ferrari LaFerrari? Like, worth thirty million? What a total waste, soaking in sewage like that!"

First upload: fanovels.com

"The paint's barely visible under all that muck. You think the factory will fix it? Bet it'll cost a fortune."

"Looks like they were getting revenge... Check it out—the wheels are gone!"

Speculation buzzed through the crowd, but Thea and Katie barely heard. They covered their faces desperately, silently begging no one would get a clear shot to post online.

Humiliation beyond words. Not only were their wheels missing, but their phones were smashed to bits. No way to call for help. No escape.

Thea finally crumbled, sobbing uncontrollably—her charmed life shattered in an instant by this humiliating nightmare.

Katie had been holding back—steady, strong—until Thea’s raw wails broke through her defenses. Tears spilled freely down her cheeks as she joined the chorus of grief.

“When I find out who did this, I’ll skin them alive!” Thea screamed between sobs.

Katie’s voice dropped low, fierce with rage. “Those twisted maniacs... when we catch them, I’ll make them beg for death.”

Nothing short of savage vengeance would quell the fire raging inside them now.

Meanwhile, inside the sleek, dimly lit CEO’s office of the Scott Group’s branch, “Mr. Scott, it’s done.” Edwin set a tablet down on the polished desk, its screen glowing with a damning photo of Thea and Katie, drenched in filth, broken and exposed.

Dylan lifted the device, flicking through the images with an air of cold detachment—satisfied, but not nearly enough.

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“The mastermind is the daughter of the Reed family?” His dark eyes flickered with a sharp, dangerous glint.

Edwin stood tall and answered with a respectful nod. “Yes.”

“Let’s make the Reed Group’s shares take a tumble.” Dylan stared coldly, his tone clipped and emotionless, yet every syllable hinted at danger.

Without a moment’s hesitation, Edwin straightened up. “Understood, Mr. Scott. Is there anything else you need?”

“That will be all,” Dylan replied curtly.

Edwin stepped back with careful precision, his head slightly bowed as he moved away from the desk. Reaching the door, he turned to leave, quietly closing the office behind him.

Thea had dragged her family into disaster by messing with someone Dylan valued. It was predictable now—trouble was about to rain down on the Reeds. The Reed Group was doomed.

In Bayview Estates, Christina had just ordered her staff to get to the bottom of who sent thugs to destroy her car when a sharp knock cut through her concentration.

She tucked her phone away and went to greet whoever was at the door. Chloe appeared on the doorstep, her smile bright and full of excitement. “Christina!”

Chloe’s eyesight had gotten a little better now. Fuzzy shapes had started to appear, but she still couldn’t see everything clearly. Maybe it was just luck, maybe something more—she decided not to overthink it. Instead, she focused on making the most of every day.

“So, what’s got you grinning like that? Something good happened?” Christina asked, running a gentle hand through Chloe’s hair.

Chloe thrust a tablet into Christina’s hands, practically bouncing. “You need to see this! The two women spewing harsh words from the store? They’ve gone viral!”

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A voice chat with Ralphy had tipped Chloe off about the juicy gossip. The moment she realized it was those two evil women, she had gotten the butler to pull up the news online before racing over to deliver the story herself.

Christina scrolled through the articles, each headline more shocking than the last.

Thea and Katie had been drenched in something unspeakable—judging by the pictures, it was filth. The sight practically sent the smell wafting off the screen.

That wasn’t the end of it. Their flashy sports cars sat useless, every single tire gone, as if someone had stolen every last bit of their pride and left them drowning in utter humiliation.

Neither woman dared lift her head, hiding their faces behind trembling hands. Humiliation had pinned them down so completely that they couldn’t even glance up.

Journalists stopped short of printing their names, and the license plates vanished beneath a digital blur. Despite those half-hearted attempts at privacy, crowds on the street had already snapped a dozen revealing photos.

Internet detectives didn't waste a second. A few hours passed, and Katie's and Thea's identities were out in the open, pieced together by relentless strangers online.

Social media exploded with taunts and theories, everyone eager to dissect the juicy details and point fingers at the mysterious mastermind behind the stunt.

"Any idea who they pissed off this time? Whoever did this knows how to humiliate without leaving a scratch. Those two won't get the stink off for weeks, I swear."

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"Only someone with real influence could pull this off. No way a regular person would dare take on people from families like theirs."

Flipping through more and more comments, Christina let herself get lost in the online speculation. Beside her, Chloe practically vibrated with excitement, urging her to read the best ones out loud.

Chloe's laughter burst out, her hands coming together in cheerful applause. "They got exactly what was coming! That's karma in action. Serves them right!"

A quick laugh escaped Christina before she handed the tablet over.

"Anyway, what do you feel like for dinner tonight?"

"Steak sounds perfect," Chloe replied, her eyes still sparkling.

"Steak it is." Christina nodded.

Once Chloe headed out, Christina didn't waste any time. She pulled out her phone and called Dylan. He answered immediately, leaving her a little startled by how quickly he picked up.

The silence stretched for a moment before Dylan finally spoke. "Is something wrong?"

"It's nothing big," she replied. "Just wanted to ask you something."

Curiosity had been gnawing at her ever since she saw the news, and she couldn't shake the suspicion that he had orchestrated that outlandish payback.

"Go ahead," Dylan replied, voice even and composed.

"The whole mess with the... well, the filth. Was that your handiwork?"

A silence settled—short but weighted—before Christina finally heard the faint rumble of Dylan's voice.

"Yeah."

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"Thanks," Christina said softly, the word barely more than a breath.

Dylan stood before the towering windows, the skyline stretching endlessly behind him. A flicker of amusement tugged at his mouth. He tried to contain it, but the corners kept twitching upward, betraying his amusement.

Christina stayed on the line, letting the silence pool out longer than it should've. She moistened her lips and then spoke again, voice tentative.

"Are you still there?"

His smirk faded as he brought himself back to the moment. When he finally answered, his voice was steady.

"Yeah. I'm still here."

"It's not a big deal," she said quickly, playing it cool. "Chloe mentioned steak for dinner. Thought I'd ask if you wanted in." She made it sound like an afterthought, but even she didn't believe that.

"Sure," Dylan replied, his tone as crisp and effortless as ever. His lips curved again, slowly, inevitably—like a reflex he couldn't quite control. Was Christina inviting him to dine together?

Before he could get lost in the thought, her voice sliced through—steady, composed.

“Well, I guess that’s all then.”

“Hold on,” Dylan interjected, the word slipping out before reason could catch it.

“Anything else?” Christina asked, her voice edged with curiosity.

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His gaze hardened, sharp as a blade, cutting past the skyline beyond the glass.

“Do you want those two women gone?”

Her reply came swift and certain.

“No need. That won’t be necessary.”

“Understood.” The ice in his tone thawed, just slightly.

“In that case... I’m ending the call.” Without another breath, she cut the line.

The moment the line disconnected, her phone lit up again—this time, with Laretta’s name pulsing on the screen.

Meanwhile, chaos erupted in the Reed Family Mansion.

“Ugh! Filthy vermin—all of you!” Thea shrieked, snatching a bottle of luxury skincare from the vanity and flinging it with vicious force.

The glass cracked against a maid’s forehead with a sickening thud, splitting the skin. Blood spilled down her face, but she stood frozen, too terrified to even flinch.

“You’re just a bunch of low-class servants! Who gave you the right to wrinkle your noses at me?” Thea had scrubbed herself until her skin turned raw—again and again—but that

revolting stench still clung to her like a curse she couldn't wash away. And these maids—a group of nobodies—had the nerve to wrinkle their noses at her right in front of her face.

The door burst open. “What’s all this noise?”

Martha Reed, Thea’s mother, stormed in, her eyes immediately taking in the chaos—the shattered bottle, the bloodied maid, the ruined decor. Her expression darkened.

“Mom!” Thea dissolved into sobs, throwing herself into her mother’s arms. “They’re laughing at me! Can you believe they’re wrinkling their noses at me as if I’m some sort of farm animal?”

The moment Thea pressed close, a wave of rancid stench hit Martha full in the face. Her jaw tightened, her nose twitching involuntarily. She resisted the urge to recoil—but only just. Instead, she gently eased Thea back a step with a forced, motherly smile.

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“There, there, my darling. Don’t cry.” Then, Martha’s smile vanished as she turned to the trembling maids. “What are you waiting for, you useless idiots? Out. Now. Not one of you eats tonight.”

“Y-yes, Mrs. Reed!” The maids bowed hastily and fled, stumbling over each other in their rush to escape.

Everyone in the estate knew one thing: when it came to Thea, the Reeds could see no wrong. No matter how outrageous her behavior, blame was always redirected—never hers to bear.

“I can’t take this anymore!” Thea screamed, her sobs ragged and raw. “My life is ruined! Everyone’s laughing at me! How am I supposed to go outside like this?”

The memory alone made her gag. She could still feel it—smell it. That vile, stomach-turning stench that clung to her skin like a second layer.

“It’ll wear off in time, darling. I’ve already sent people to wipe those posts from every platform,” Martha murmured, stroking her daughter’s hair. “And when we find the monsters who did this, I promise—they’ll wish they’d never been born.”

“Why is it taking so long?” Thea snapped, rage flaring in her teary eyes. “And whoever’s behind this—they’re dead. I’ll make them beg for death before I’m done with them!”

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“We’re looking into the matter. Don’t worry,” Martha said, her voice like ice wrapped in silk. “No one humiliates my daughter and gets away with it. They’ll pay—with interest.”

Just then, a timid knock interrupted the moment. A maid poked her head in, her face pale and her voice quaking. “Sorry to interrupt, but Mr. Reed wants you both downstairs.”

“Your father’s home,” Martha said softly. “Perfect timing. Let him take over from here—he’ll help you get your revenge.” She gave Thea a comforting pat on the back and rose to her feet.

Thea was desperate to track down those scoundrels—she burned with a fierce need to make them pay for what they had done. With her father’s influential network, she was confident she could root those vermin out quickly, no matter where they hid.

Before long, Thea followed her mother into the living room, her heels clicking against the marble floor.

Grant Reed, Thea’s father, looked tired, his face unusually serious. Thea noticed but didn’t think much of it, assuming he was probably mad on her behalf.

“Dad! You’re finally back,” Thea said, latching onto his arm with a bright smile. “You have to help me teach them a lesson!”

Grant’s jaw tightened. He was ready to shut her down, but her childlike tone made him pause. He sighed, the frustration already bubbling inside him. “Thea, I need you to be honest with me. Have you offended someone you shouldn’t have?”

Thea blinked. “Offended someone? Me? No way. Even if I did piss someone off, it’s not like they were big potatoes. They can’t touch us—we’re the Reeds.”

“I’m serious,” Grant said, staring at her. “Are you absolutely sure the people you messed with were just nobodies?”

“Yes! If they were better than us, I’d either be friends with them or at least avoid causing trouble,” she said, waving it off. “Come on, Dad. I’m not dumb.”

Author’s version available at galnovels.com

Grant kept his voice calm, but his eyes narrowed. “Think harder. Is there anyone—anyone at all—you might’ve offended recently? Someone you dismissed as nobody while the reality is otherwise?”

Thea froze for a second, scanning her memories. Then, she shook her head confidently. “No one important. Just the usual jealous losers.”

“That’s strange,” Grant muttered under his breath, the crease in his forehead deepening. Something wasn’t right. The company had hit a crisis—fast and hard. Everything was falling apart overnight, and he couldn’t figure out why. And just before everything fell apart, his daughter had somehow become a target of retaliation. He couldn’t help but suspect the two events were connected, but no matter how much he investigated, he couldn’t find the culprit. That was why he came home—to find out if Thea had accidentally stepped on the wrong toes.

“Dad, stop worrying about all that now! My problem is way more important. You have to help me get even!” Thea’s voice took on a whining edge as she clung to his arm.

Grant rubbed his temples, a headache threatening behind his eyes as he regarded his most spoiled child. “Are you absolutely certain you haven’t offended anyone?”

“NO! How many times do I have to say it?” she snapped, standing abruptly. “Will you help me or not? They humiliated me—they threw dirt on me! Do you realize how disgraceful that is? They spat right in the face of the Reed family!”

Grant let out a long, exhausted breath before slowly getting to his feet. “You’re grounded,” he said, his voice firm. “Stay home. No arguments.”

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“What?” Thea’s eyes widened. “I asked you to help me get back at them, not lock me up like some prisoner!”

“Forget about revenge. You need to let this go and act like it never happened. Sometimes, swallowing your pride is the only way forward,” Grant said quietly but firmly, the weight

of his concern evident. He feared his headstrong daughter might unwittingly cross a dangerous line and pay a far greater price than humiliation.

“I won’t let it go!” she hissed, her voice rising. “If you are not going to help me, I’ll handle it myself! I’ll track them down with or without you!”

Martha, who had been silently watching from the side, stepped in quickly. She saw the storm building in her husband’s eyes and gently pulled at Thea’s arm. “Thea, please. Just listen to your father for once. He’s only trying to protect you,” she said softly. “Apologize to him now.”

“Apologize?” Thea scoffed. Her laugh was cold and sharp. “For what? For demanding justice? If he wants to be a coward, that’s his choice—but I won’t be!”

Grant’s expression darkened. His hands clenched into fists at his sides, the veins on his temples pulsing. “Do you really want to make things worse for yourself?” he warned, his voice shaking with suppressed anger.

“I will have my revenge!” Thea screamed. “No one—no one—gets to humiliate me and walk away. You can’t stop me! I will—”

Suddenly, a sharp slap cracked through the silence, the sound echoing painfully in the room. Thea’s head snapped sideways from the unexpected blow. A stunned silence fell.

Even Grant looked shocked, disbelief flickering across his features. He had just struck the daughter he cherished most.

Thea slowly turned her head, a crimson mark already forming on her cheek. Her eyes welled up, more in shock than pain. “You hit me?” she whispered, her voice barely audible. “You actually hit me...”

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It was unfathomable that the father who had always protected and adored her would raise his hand in anger.

“Thea...” Grant’s voice cracked with regret, his arm reaching out on instinct. But she recoiled like his touch was poison.

“I hate you!” Thea’s scream rang through the room, her face streaked with tears. “You’re nothing but a coward, lashing out at me while letting everyone else walk all over me! You don’t even care!” Her sobs trailed her as she stormed up the stairs, leaving Grant rooted in place, hollowed out and haunted.

Silence descended on the living room like a funeral shroud. Grant dropped onto the couch, shoulders sagging under an invisible weight. The fight in him had vanished, replaced by the brittle shell of a man who looked years older in an instant.

“What were you thinking?” Martha snapped, her voice sharp with reproach. “She’s our daughter. No matter how angry you were, that was—”

“We’re being targeted,” Grant cut her off, his voice grim and low.

Martha blinked, confused. “You mean... someone’s retaliating against us because of Thea?”

Grant gave a slow, somber nod. “Right after her humiliation hit the internet, the company started spiraling. Our stock is tanking. Investors are panicking. If this keeps going...” He didn’t finish the sentence.

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Martha’s face paled. She sank onto the couch beside him, her breath catching in her throat. “No... it can’t be because of that. Maybe it’s just market volatility—some bad timing?”

Grant met her eyes, and what she saw there made her blood run cold. “This isn’t coincidence,” he said quietly. “It’s retribution.”

Martha’s breath caught. “Then... what are we supposed to do?” she asked, her voice trembling as panic slowly crept in.

“Keep Thea under strict watch,” Grant said, his tone steely. “No matter what happens, she can’t come to harm—not before the Hubbards’ reunion banquet. If my instincts are right, this isn’t just about humiliation. Someone may be trying to take her life.”

Martha’s stomach twisted. “I’ll watch over her,” she promised quickly, though unease was already blooming in her chest. Only an hour ago, she had been picturing Thea dazzling at the Hubbards’ reunion banquet—either catching the eye of one of the Hubbard men or

forging a bond with their recently acknowledged daughter. A match, an alliance, a foothold into greater power. But now...

"I hope I'm just overthinking this," Grant murmured, rubbing his temples, his sigh heavy.

Thea wasn't the only one suffocating. Katie was locked in her own nightmare.

She had been in the shower so long her fingers were pruned, her skin rubbed raw and pink—yet no matter how many times she scrubbed, the vile stench clung to her like a second skin.

Worse still, after a vicious shouting match with her brother, her nerves were already in tatters. And now, the internet was on fire with cruel mockery—comments piling in like vultures circling her shame.

Just then, someone knocked.

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"I said leave me alone! Are you all deaf or just plain stupid?" Katie shrieked at the door.

"Katie..." Yolanda's soft, gentle voice floated through.

Katie's heart jolted at the sound. She leapt off the bed and yanked the door open without hesitation. The moment her eyes landed on Yolanda's seemingly worried face, the dam broke—tears welled up and threatened to spill over.

"I saw the news online. I was scared you might do something reckless. I had to come check on you," Yolanda said softly, her brows knitting in mock concern.

A faint, sickening odor still hung in the air around Katie, making Yolanda's stomach twist, but her expression remained carefully composed—measured sympathy etched into every line of her face.

"Yolanda, everyone's mocking me. The entire damn internet saw me soaked in filth!" Katie's voice cracked, trembling as she fought back tears barely held at bay.

"Shh, don't cry. I'm here now," Yolanda murmured, her hand resting gently on Katie's trembling shoulder. "Have you asked your brother to track down who did this? It's just... who would be so heartless?"

"He said he couldn't find anything. What a lie! He just doesn't want to look into it. It's not him who's been humiliated for the whole world to see!" Katie's gaze burned bright with rage.

“I’m pretty sure he genuinely can’t track them down. You know how much he cares about you,” Yolanda said softly.

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“Cares about me? Then why won’t he get those posts taken down?” Katie snapped. Her brother insisted he couldn’t remove the news, but she wasn’t buying it—she was convinced he just didn’t want to spend the money.

“Actually...” Yolanda’s voice dropped to a whisper, hesitant. “I heard even the Reeds themselves couldn’t get those stories erased. Maybe your brother really can’t do anything—it’s not that he’s refusing to help.”

Katie’s eyes widened. “What? Even the Reed family can’t scrub the news? Then... what am I supposed to do? Am I doomed to be an online joke forever?”

“Well...” Yolanda bit her lip, struggling with whether or not to say more.

Katie leaned in, her voice urgent. “What is it? You’ve got something to help me, don’t you, Yolanda? You know a way out of this.”

Yolanda hesitated, words catching in her throat as if she were genuinely torn. “I don’t know. It might be wrong.”

“Yolanda!” Katie’s tone sharpened, frustration flickering in her eyes. “You’re about to become my sister-in-law—if I can’t count on you, who else is there? If you’ve got an idea, spit it out already. I’m desperate.”

With a heavy sigh, Yolanda seemed to relent. “Well, I really didn’t want to suggest something so underhanded. But... how can I stay quiet when I see you like this? You’re like a sister to me. And if I don’t step in, who will?”

“Exactly!” Katie exclaimed, clutching Yolanda’s hand. “You’re the only one who can pull me out of this mess!”

Yolanda's expression shifted, her voice now calm and calculated. "You know how it works in showbiz. When a scandal hits, the fastest way to bury it is to throw something even juicier out there. Give the public something bigger to chew on, and they'll forget all about yours."

Katie's eyes lit up with sudden clarity. She clapped her hands, beaming. "Oh my god, that's brilliant! Why didn't I think of that? Yolanda, you absolute genius—"

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But Katie's triumphant grin faltered. Her brows furrowed in confusion. "Wait, where am I supposed to dig up a scandal worse than mine?"

Yolanda gave a delicate shrug, feigning innocence. "Beats me. It's not like we're sitting on a pile of celebrity secrets or anything." Then, with a sly glance and the ghost of a smirk, she dangled the bait. "But, hypothetically, if an actress married into serious money and then cheated on her husband—got thrown out like yesterday's trash—that kind of juicy drama would blow up fast. Netizens eat that stuff alive."

Yolanda said it as if it were just idle talk, a random what-if about some nameless starlet. But the real target was crystal clear—Christina. The only question was whether Katie would pick up on it.

For a heartbeat, silence hung between them, heavy with implication. Yolanda was just about to give Katie a nudge—subtlety wasn't working—when Katie suddenly gasped, her eyes widening.

"I've got it!" Katie said, her mouth curling into a wicked smile. "I know exactly whose scandal I'm about to blow sky-high."

"Oh?" Yolanda blinked, her words dripping with mock caution. "Katie, I hope you're not planning to ruin someone innocent just to save yourself—"

"Hah! Innocent? That witch Christina?" Katie spat the name like poison, her sneer venomous. "If she hadn't latched onto my brother for those three miserable years, you two would have been married by now!"

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“What?” Yolanda gasped, covering her mouth as if scandalized. Her eyes widened in feigned disbelief. “You’re actually going to go after Christina? Katie, no—that’s... that’s too far. She hasn’t really done anything.”

Katie rolled her eyes and scoffed. “Only someone as soft-hearted as you would still defend her. She hates you, Yolanda. She’s been bitter ever since the divorce—always pulling her little stunts, trying to worm her way back into my brother’s life.”

“But—”

“No buts!” Katie snapped, her tone sharp and unforgiving. “Keep playing the good girl and watch her steal my brother right from under your nose. Wake up, Yolanda. She’s a snake. And she deserves everything coming to her.”

A twisted grin slithered across Katie’s face. “Besides, I’ve got the perfect bomb to drop—paparazzi photos, sold to me personally. Once I release those, no one will be talking about my mess. And Christina? She’ll be done.”

Katie could already taste the satisfaction. After everything—every smug look on Christina’s face, every time Christina had made her feel small—she was finally holding the knife.

“Katie...” Yolanda’s fingers curled around her sleeve, her voice trembling just enough to make her performance more convincing. “Maybe there’s someone else—anyone else you could use. Christina is...”

“No!” Katie barked, yanking her arm free and storming toward the desk. “If you’re really on my side, stop defending that slut!” She dropped into the chair with a huff, her back turned, too wrapped up in her scheming to notice the flicker of a smile on Yolanda’s face.

Everything was going exactly as planned. Yolanda had planted those photos herself, fed them to the paparazzi like bait, and now the fool was doing the dirty work for her. Soon, the internet would be ablaze, and Christina would be caught in the firestorm. Truth? It wouldn’t matter. Not when outrage spread faster than facts.

Yolanda’s eyes glinted darkly as she whispered inwardly, “Burn.”

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“Christina. Let’s see if your perfect little image survives this storm.”

In the CEO’s office, Dylan stood from his desk, methodically undoing the sapphire cufflinks at his wrists.

Edwin entered, extending a neatly bound proposal. “Mr. Scott, this is about the resort project.”

Expecting Dylan to glance over the paperwork and settle back down, Edwin was caught off guard when Dylan simply took the file and strode toward the door.

“Mr. Scott, are you leaving for the day?” Edwin asked, keeping his tone respectful.

Dylan replied coolly, “Yes.”

That one word left Edwin reeling. He’d never seen a harder worker than Dylan—relentless, almost obsessed, and never one to leave before sunset. Whenever Dylan burned the midnight oil, the whole secretarial pool was doomed to overtime, and the late-night complaints were legendary. But today, for the first time ever, Dylan had left early without any apparent crisis.

Edwin stifled his curiosity and trailed behind in silence, determined not to push his luck with any more questions. As soon as they exited the office, he shot off a quick message to the secretary department group chat. “Mr. Scott is heading out for the day!”

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