

Until You're Mine /

The Humble Ex-wife is Now A Brilliant Tycoon

Chapter 21:

“That won’t be necessary—I wish you and Yolanda a lifetime of happiness,” Christina said, her tone even.

A heavy ache settled in Brendon’s chest, making it hard to breathe. He tried to say something, but the car rolled to a stop before the words could leave his mouth.

Christina stepped out swiftly and left him behind, frustration and heaviness pressing down on him like a stone.

Having been informed of their upcoming visit, Bethel had been waiting by the entrance, scanning the drive with anticipation.

As soon as Christina appeared, Bethel’s whole face lit up. A genuine smile broke through as she hurried forward to greet Christina. “It feels like ages since you last stopped by, Christina,” Bethel called out, her gray hair shining and her eyes lively with joy.

Months of Christina’s attentive care had done wonders for Bethel’s well-being—she now brimmed with vitality.

A soft smile touched Christina’s lips. “I’ve just had a lot on my plate lately...”

Bethel squeezed Christina’s hand, the mischief plain in her eyes. “Did Brendon not exercise any restraint in intimacy, overwhelming you?”

This caught Christina off guard, leaving her a bit awkward. Her eyes darted away from Bethel’s open warmth, unsure what to say.

Concern flashed across Bethel’s face as she caught the subtle shift.

“Something wrong? Has Brendon been giving you grief?”

Christina shook her head. “No, nothing like that...”

Before Christina could add anything further, Brendon quickly interrupted. “Let’s continue this conversation inside.”

“Yes, yes, come in! The kitchen’s outdone itself—there’s a full spread of your favorite dishes waiting. I even asked for a nourishing soup, perfect for both of you!” Bethel’s face brightened as she agreed.

Deciding to avoid the topic of divorce for now, Christina shifted the conversation, chatting with Bethel about lighter things as they walked. She knew springing the news of their divorce before dinner would only spoil Bethel's mood, so she chose to hold off until after the meal. Bethel made sure Christina and Brendon sat side by side and then ladled steaming soup into each of their bowls with care.

"I had this made just for you two—drink it while it's warm," Bethel said, her voice warm and gentle.

"Thank you," Christina murmured, dipping her head to taste the soup. A smile crept across Bethel's lips as she watched Christina and Brendon, feeling hopeful that any tension between them seemed to have faded. She imagined she'd soon be cuddling a great-grandchild.

"All I want now is to see a great-grandchild in my arms, and then I'll be perfectly content," Bethel said with a chuckle.

"You can count on that, Grandma—your wish will come true." Brendon flashed her a reassuring grin.

Christina gave a gentle smile, choosing silence instead.

Throughout the meal, the atmosphere stayed light enough, though an undercurrent of discomfort lingered whenever conversation drifted back to Christina's relationship with Brendon.

After the meal, Bethel took Christina by the arm and led her into the living room to chat.

Initially, their conversation stuck to safe topics, but it wasn't long before Bethel steered things back toward the subject of Brendon.

Leaning in and squeezing Christina's hand, Bethel spoke with quiet urgency. "My dear, my strength isn't what it used to be. I'm not sure how much time I have left. All I want now is to see you and Brendon start a family soon."

A wave of sorrow swept through Christina. "Bethel, you're still healthy—don't talk like that. It's not good to focus on such worries. Besides..."

Pausing for a moment, Christina wrestled with her words and then made up her mind to speak the truth. Honesty was best, she realized. Letting this drag on would only make everything worse. The last thing she wanted was for Bethel to hear the news of her divorce from someone else. That sort of surprise would only be cruel.

Christina said gently, "Actually, Brendon and I are already divorced."

Bethel stared at her in stunned silence, thinking it must be a joke—until Brendon suddenly barked, "Christina!"

The sudden outburst snapped Bethel back to herself. "Is this true? You two are really divorced?"

Trying to cover it, Brendon jumped in, saying, "No! She's making things up—it's just a joke."

Yet, Christina didn't waver. Refusing to look away from Bethel, she ignored Brendon's warning glare and said, "This isn't a joke. The divorce is real—it's already official."

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Chapter 22:

"What on earth are you doing, Christina?" Brendon's voice was sharp, thick with anger.

Christina stayed calm, her expression unreadable. "I just told the truth. Bethel deserved to know. What's wrong with that?"

"You—" Brendon started, but Bethel's voice cut through his like a knife. "That's enough! Why are you raising your voice at her?" she demanded, her eyes narrowing at him.

Despite her age, Bethel's gaze was sharp as ever. She looked at Brendon. "Now tell me—what's really going on between you two? Why did you get divorced?"

Brendon let out a heavy sigh. "Grandma, you already know. There was never any real love between us. Marriages fall apart when there's nothing left to hold them together."

Christina remained silent, though inside, she was laughing bitterly. If Yolanda hadn't come back, would Brendon have kept pretending instead of demanding a divorce? Of course, he would have. It worked to his interest that way.

Bethel gave a harsh, humorless laugh. "Don't try to play me for a fool. I may be old, but I'm not stupid. Either you tell me the truth now, or I'll find it myself."

Brendon hesitated, jaw tight. He knew what would happen if Bethel found out on her own. And it wouldn't be pretty. Finally, he muttered, "Yolanda's back..."

Bethel shot to her feet, slamming both hands on the table. Her eyes burned with fury. "I told you before—I will never allow Yolanda to join this family!"

"Grandma!" Brendon's defiance flared. "Yolanda and I love each other! Why can't you just accept her?"

"Love?" Bethel scoffed. "You think this is love? You're the only fool who can't see her for what she is! That woman disappeared the moment the doctors said you might never walk again years back! Did she even call? No! Not once!" She pointed a trembling finger at Christina. "And who stayed by your side? Who looked after you when you couldn't even stand on your own? Christina did. Day and night. She was the reason you recovered. Even the doctors said it was a miracle—and that miracle was her doing!"

Brendon rolled his eyes. “Yolanda had no choice. And fine, maybe Christina helped a little, but my recovery was all about my own willpower and strength. Anyone else could’ve taken care of me, and I still would’ve walked again!”

Christina’s lips twitched slightly. She didn’t say a word, but inside, she was seething. If it weren’t for her—her medical knowledge, her sleepless nights, her silent sacrifices—Brendon would’ve been trapped in that wheelchair forever. That miracle he took credit for? It was hers.

Bethel’s eyes flared. Without warning, she lifted her cane and struck Brendon across the shoulder. “You ungrateful fool!” she spat. “How did our family raise someone as ungrateful as you?”

“Ungrateful?” Brendon’s voice rose. “I gave Christina enough money to live comfortably for the rest of her life! All I want now is to marry the woman I love. Is that so wrong?”

Bethel’s grip on her cane tightened, fury dancing in her eyes. She lifted it again to strike, but Brendon caught it midair this time. His jaw was set, eyes blazing. He growled, “I’m done backing down. I will marry you.”

Bethel’s chest heaved as she trembled with rage. “Fine! Marry her, then!” she spat. “But listen carefully—she will never be officially acknowledged by the Dawson family. Not while I’m alive!”

Brendon stared at Bethel, torn between frustration and disbelief. Why did she defend Christina so fiercely yet reject Yolanda with such disdain? He had compromised once, bowing to his grandmother’s wishes. But not this time. Not when his heart was on the line.

“My decision’s final,” Brendon said, his voice cold but steady. “I will marry Yolanda, the woman I love. No one else could ever take her place.” His eyes flicked to Christina as he spoke, deliberate and pointed.

Bethel’s expression darkened, her voice a low, venomous whisper. “Then go ahead—marry that woman. But the day you bring that woman into this house is the day you lose everything.”

Her heart ached at the sight of her grandson throwing away a diamond for dirt. One day, he’d understand what a fool he’d been—but by then, it would be too late.

Brendon stood taller, rebellion surging through him. “Grandma, give it up! I’ll never go back to Christina. I’ve made my choice—I will marry Yolanda, and no one’s stopping me.”

“You—” Bethel gasped mid-sentence. A sudden tightness seized her chest. Her cane slipped from her hand as she staggered, clutching her heart. With a choked cry, she collapsed to the floor.

“Bethel!” Christina and Brendon shouted simultaneously, rushing to her side in panic.

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Chapter 23:

The atmosphere in the hospital was taut, thick with unease.

Bethel had been rushed into the ER, leaving Brendon outside—pacing, fidgeting, unable to settle.

Only now did the gravity of it all hit Brendon like a punch to the chest. Anxiety clawed at him. The weight of the Dawson legacy rested squarely on his grandmother's frail shoulders. If she faltered, everything they built would come crashing down.

Brendon's eyes cut to Christina. "This is your doing," he said, voice quiet but laced with steel. "I told you—we needed the right time to tell my grandmother. Not like this."

Christina didn't argue. She couldn't. A part of her knew she'd triggered Bethel's collapse.

"When my grandmother gets through this—and she will—you're going to follow my lead," Brendon said firmly. "We can't afford another shock. We keep her calm. We keep her safe."

That snapped Christina out of it. She turned sharply, her gaze like ice. "What do you expect me to do? Pretend we're back together?"

"It's a performance. Don't make it more than that," he said with a sneer. "Even with my grandma in your corner, don't kid yourself—you'll never have my heart. The whole acting is strictly for her sake. Don't get delusional."

Christina let out a sharp, humorless laugh. "Wow. Your ego's still the size of a small planet, huh? Relax. If every man on Earth vanished overnight, I'd still never come crawling back to you."

Her words sliced through him, drawing blood he didn't want to show. Anger sparked—but then, something else. She must be bluffing. He could see it. Women always masked their feelings behind sharp tongues and cold stares. She was just trying to protect her pride. After all those years of devotion, of her orbiting his world like he was her sun—she couldn't have just let go. Not completely. Not really. That thought calmed him and even fed a quiet, smug satisfaction.

He exhaled, his scowl melting into a faint, knowing smirk. "Just play your part when my grandma's around. That's all I need."

"Fine," Christina muttered, her tone clipped, her posture rigid. She agreed—for Bethel. The woman had once lifted her from rock bottom, offering refuge when

Betrayal had left her shattered and alone. Bethel had shown her nothing but warmth and compassion, and for that, she would endure this farce with Brendon.

Brendon felt a rush of satisfaction from her quick agreement. He knew it. She still had feelings for him. How could she not?

"Then hand over the treatment slot with King," he said, emboldened by her agreement.

Christina's glare could've turned lava to ice. "I've already told you—no."

"You'd really risk my grandma's life? King could save her!" Brendon shot back, frustration etched across his face. But that wasn't the truth. He wanted King for Yolanda's illness.

"Bethel has been stable for years. Her chronic conditions are managed, and her vitals are strong. She doesn't need King—any competent surgeon can handle this," Christina said, voice unwavering. She'd made sure of it. For three painstaking years, she had taken care of Bethel—tracked every symptom, followed every treatment. Bethel's body was stronger now. She had done her homework. The surgery was routine, the risks minimal.

Brendon's jaw clenched. "So you're willing to roll the dice with her life? Can you live with that if something goes wrong? Even healthy people die on the table—what about an elderly woman?"

"If you really care about her, you'll hand over the treatment slot. It's the only way to ensure she survives."

Each word dripped with manipulation, cutting into her patience like glass. She knew exactly who he was fighting for—and it wasn't Bethel. No way was she going to hand him that win.

"I can find another way—" she said, but a shrill scream split the air.

"You bitch!" A hand came flying at her—fast, wild, and furious.

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Chapter 24:

The slap was a breath away from Christina's cheek, but in a flash, she pivoted, dodging cleanly. Her hand shot up, catching the attacker's wrist midair and wrenching it in one fluid, brutal motion.

"Ah! Ouch, ouch, ouch!" Joselyn Dawson, Katie and Brendon's mother, cried out, her face twisting in agony, pain etched deep into her furrowed brow.

"Mom!" Katie and Brendon shouted at once, panic lacing their voices.

"Christina, let go!" Brendon barked, lunging in and yanking at her wrist.

Katie hurried to intervene, reaching to pry Christina's fingers away, but she didn't need to. Christina had already released her hold, cold and calculated.

Joselyn cradled her wrist, stunned and trembling. Had no one stepped in, there was no doubt in her mind—Christina would've broken it clean. Ruthless didn't even begin to cover it.

"Disrespecting your elders is one thing," Joselyn snapped, her voice razor-sharp as her glare bore into Christina, "but now you've pushed Bethel into a hospital bed with your theatrics—what do you have to say for yourself?"

Joselyn's dislike for Christina ran deep. To her, this woman was unworthy of her son—no pedigree, no influence, no place in their world. If Bethel hadn't insisted on that godforsaken marriage, Christina would've never gotten to marry into the Dawson family. Her son deserved better. Someone like Yolanda—refined, well-connected, useful. Not Christina, who was nothing but a liability, dead weight dragging him down.

"You have no right to accuse me of anything," Christina replied, voice calm but cold, her chin lifting with unshakable defiance.

That expression—it drove Joselyn mad. The arrogance. The nerve. The way this nobody stood there like she owned the room, like she belonged.

"No right?" Joselyn hissed. "Bethel is my mother-in-law! And you are the reason she's lying in that hospital bed! If she dies—I'll see to it you rot in jail."

Christina's gaze didn't waver. "All I did was break the news of the divorce. Your precious son is accountable. He argued with her and raised his voice, insisting that he marry Yolanda. He's the one who pushed Bethel over the edge. Not me."

Christina's voice cut like tempered steel. Yes, maybe she'd played a role in Bethel's collapse—but Brendon lit the fuse. He'd stoked the fire. Without him, Bethel might have been upset—but she wouldn't have collapsed in that chair, gasping and pale.

Christina wasn't about to lie—but she sure as hell wasn't taking the fall for all of it.

"Christina, you bear undeniable responsibility in this," Brendon said, his brow furrowed with exaggerated gravity. "If you hadn't brought up the divorce, none of this would've happened."

Christina let out a sharp, humorless laugh. "Did you really think you could keep it a secret forever? Not everyone's as clueless as you seem to hope. And newsflash—the divorce is real. I have every right to speak the truth."

Katie's voice exploded like a grenade. "Grandma was perfectly fine until you showed up! The minute you stepped into that house, she ended up in a hospital bed. This is all on you!"

"Exactly!" Joselyn snapped, her voice like venom. "If anything happens to her, you'll pay dearly."

Brendon pounced, seizing the moment like a vulture. "Christina, let's not make this harder than it is. You're not blameless, and you know it. Give up your treatment slot for my grandma, and we'll move forward—no grudges."

"Never," Christina replied, her tone flat, final.

Brendon's frown deepened, twisting into disappointment. "Christina, how could you be this heartless?"

Katie threw up her hands. "See, Brendon? I told you she was vile! After everything our grandma did for her—this is how she repays her?"

"Trash. That's all she ever was!" Joselyn snarled furiously. "A gutter rat clinging to scraps of power she doesn't deserve. Bethel must've gone mad, wasting all that affection on such a woman instead of her own blood!"

Christina remained stone-faced. "I'll get Bethel a surgeon. If she has the operation and proper post-op care, she'll recover fully. That's what matters."

Katie burst out laughing, cruel and shrill. "You? Don't make me laugh! You couldn't even book an appointment with a half-decent doctor, let alone someone reputable. Just admit it—you want her dead. You'd hand her off to a back-alley butcher and call it 'help'. My grandma gave everything to you, and you repay her with betrayal!"

Christina didn't flinch. Her next words cut through the chaos like a blade. "I'm bringing in Dr. Calvin Emmett."

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Chapter 25:

"Wait—what did you just say?" Gasps filled the room as everyone stared in disbelief. Calvin Emmett? The country's most renowned surgeon? The one even the mighty Dawson family couldn't get an appointment with, no matter how much money or influence they threw around? And now Christina—someone they'd all written off as a washed-up nobody—claimed she could bring him here?

Brendon blinked in disbelief. "Hold on. Are we talking about Dr. Emmett? The top cardiac surgeon in the entire country?"

Christina met his gaze without flinching. "Yes. Him."

Katie let out a sharp, disbelieving laugh. "Oh, please. Do you hear yourself? That's ridiculous!"

Joselyn folded her arms, her tone edged with scorn. "Let's be real. Even our family couldn't get through to him, and you think you can? The man's practically retired!"

Brendon gave a mocking laugh. “Christina, you’ve been out of the game for years. You’ve spent the past few years behind closed doors, reduced yourself to household chores. You don’t have the influence—or the contacts—to pull something like this off.”

Christina’s voice was calm, but there was steel beneath it. “Who I know and how I get things done isn’t your concern. What matters is—I will bring him.”

Katie laughed louder, clutching her stomach. “The arrogance! Do you really expect us to believe you’ve got a direct line to Dr. Emmett?”

Brendon tilted his head, his expression softening, mockingly so. “Just give King’s treatment opportunity to me, Christina. Save yourself from the humiliation.”

Christina hadn’t planned on rising to their bait, but the condescension, smugness, and absolute dismissal in their voices pushed her past silence. She tilted her head slightly, a cold smile playing on her lips.

“And what if I do bring him? What then?”

Brendon rolled his eyes. “You can’t possibly make it.”

“Then let’s make it interesting,” Christina said, her voice cool and sure. “A wager.”

Brendon raised a brow. “What kind of wager?”

Christina’s smile widened. “If I manage to get Dr. Emmett here, every single one of you owes me a public apology—and five million in compensation.”

Katie’s eyes narrowed. “And if you fail? What then? What if Dr. Emmett doesn’t even step foot here, let alone operate on my grandma?”

“Then I’ll forfeit my shot at treatment from the great King—and pay you five million,” Christina said firmly, her tone razor-sharp.

Brendon’s interest wasn’t in the money. But the chance to claim King’s treatment? That was something else entirely. His heart skipped a beat at the thought. If he won this bet, he could use the treatment opportunity on whoever he pleased—no one could argue against it.

“Deal.” Brendon agreed without hesitation. He didn’t believe for a second that Christina could pull this off. If the Dawson family, with all their wealth and influence, had failed to reach Dr. Emmett, how could Christina possibly succeed? She must be clinging to illusions, still trying to win his attention. Pathetic.

Katie exchanged a triumphant glance with her mother, both grinning from ear to ear. In their minds, this bet was practically charity. Not only would they earn the five million, but they’d also take the golden ticket to King’s treatment. A double victory.

Yet, Joselyn wasn’t thrilled at the idea of Brendon using King’s treatment on Yolanda. That opportunity was priceless—capable of opening doors, sealing partnerships, and even elevating their family’s position. Squandering it on Yolanda? That was out of the question.

Christina wasn't losing sleep over Bethel. She had already analyzed Bethel's condition during the ride to the hospital. Bethel's vitals held steady. Her body was still strong and resilient enough to withstand the episode.

As expected, Bethel was soon transferred from the emergency room to a VIP suite. Before long, she regained consciousness.

Once awake, Bethel wasted no time. She sent Katie and Joselyn out of the room, leaving only Christina and Brendon by her bedside. Her voice was soft, but her eyes held a familiar glimmer. "So, you two really aren't getting back together?"

Christina offered a warm but cautious smile. "Let's focus on your recovery. We can talk about everything else later."

But Bethel wasn't letting it go. Her brow knit with worry. "No, I need an answer. If I don't hear it now, I won't be able to eat or sleep."

Brendon was quick to speak up. "Grandma, I'm sorry for how I've acted. I've been stubborn, but I'll think about trying again. Maybe we just need time—to rebuild what we lost."

Bethel turned to Christina with gentle eyes. "And what about you, dear? If your heart's not in it, I won't force you. I just want to see you happy."

Bethel's words made Christina hesitate to announce her lack of intention of getting back with Brendon. Managing a smile, she said, "Maybe a little more time, and things will work out."

Bethel gave her hand a warm pat, sensing the hesitation but choosing not to press. "Alright. No matter what happens, you have my full support."

"Thank you," Christina whispered.

After this talk, Christina didn't walk away. Instead, she stayed by Bethel's side for hours, quietly keeping her company.

Later, Bethel asked Christina to step out for a moment and then gave Brendon a private tongue-lashing. She made it crystal clear: Yolanda would never be accepted into the family. Ever.

Knowing better than to argue at this point, Brendon nodded along with everything Bethel said. He wasn't foolish enough to challenge her in this state. Eventually, he excused himself for a business meeting, leaving Christina to look after Bethel through the rest of the afternoon. Only once Bethel had drifted off into a peaceful sleep did Christina quietly slip out, confident the nurses would manage the rest of the night shift.

As Christina stepped out into the crisp evening air, the weight of the day settled on her shoulders. She decided to grab something to eat before heading home.

But just as she reached the sidewalk, a black van screeched to a halt in front of her.

The doors burst open, and in seconds, a group of rugged men stormed out, closing in around her like a pack of wolves.

