

Mr. Ford Is Jealous by Boat of Peaches Chapter 31

Chapter 31

Those words caused Weston to brush his hand against his face. The corner of his lips twitched when he saw the smear of blood that appeared on the back of his hand.

“She certainly didn’t pull her punches...!!

The image of Stella as she appeared to him just moments ago popped up in his mind.

Thinking of their recent meeting, Weston languidly massaged his temples.

He always knew Stella couldn’t possibly only want to see him. According to his plans, things should’ve wrapped up nicely after he sent Stella and Roger away. They should’ve gotten back on track

Yet, when Ben suddenly told him about Stella, he completely sidetracked and did what he never planned-agreeing to come to the hospital.

The fact that she rejected him was another unexpected outcome. Weston closed his eyes. The stormy turmoil inside him that started when he saw Stella falling off the building had calmed significantly after learning she was safe. However, now, it was showing signs of returning He had never been considered impulsive, but he seemed to lose all self-control the moment he saw Stella.

Weston opened his eyes. “Let her do whatever she wants.”

“What... What do you mean, Mr. Ford?” Weston got up and glanced furtively at the closed door before looking away. “Waste no more time,” he told Ben. “Fulfill all of her requests as best you can.” “Yes, Mr. Ford,” answered Ben. “Are we still following our original plan, sending them to Fern City tomorrow?” “Are all preparations in Fern City complete?” “Everything’s been done according to your orders, Mr. Ford,” replied Ben. “Ms. Sealey and Mr. Sealey will have completely new identities and they can begin a safe, peaceful life there.”

A mere wall separated them, but Stella heard nothing that was going on outside. Still, she had no doubts that the man was right there in the hallway. She closed her eyes; her body still trembling from head to toe. The fierce emotions that overcame her moments ago had consumed all her energy. Ever since falling from that building, Stella had forced herself to recall those fateful moments repeatedly, her heart growing ever colder with each agonizing second that passed. It wasn’t until today that she found out she hadn’t abated the hatred in her heart. She placed her hand on her belly, and tears began to well up. Despite it all, she sucked it up, not allowing herself to shed a single tear, That was the only child she could have ever had in her life...

Vet ever since waking up, Weston had never uttered a word about the child, as if its existence meant nothing to him. At a time when she was enduring her most excruciating pain, all he could care about was if her existence would envy Guinevere. Fearing her jealousy, he would give her a new identity and send her off to another city, out of his sight... What had she done to deserve pain and suffering of such magnitude?

Stella curled up in a ball, allowing waves of hatred and resentment to wash through her. She hated herself for getting into this position... she couldn’t even find a way to get justice and revenge... all she could do now was to helplessly and shamefully follow his plans, leaving this place to hide from that woman... that murderer!

Because he wouldn’t believe her.

Stella tightened her fists into balls. Embrace the pain, she told herself. Let it hurt so bad

that it would numb her. After that, the pain would eventually go away. Fern City. A lovely little city that was a lot more idyllic than the hustle and bustle of the more prosperous Ahn City. Life here proceeded at a leisurely pace. The seasons' change was much more apparent here, too—you could almost hear fall creeping into the city as the warmth of summer waned away.

Stella's days gradually simmered down. The deep, roiling emotions faded away with time and distance. She even managed to spend away a significant amount of time without thinking of Weston.

But every once in a while, she would wake up in the middle of the night soaking in sweat from a nightmare.

"Sis! Sis!" shouted Roger as he banged on Stella's door. "I'm fine, Roger," mumbled Stella, her voice drowsy and thick with sleep. "Go back to bed!" Separated by the door, Roger could barely make out Stella's muffled rambling. "Sis!" he continued, refusing to leave. "Are you having that nightmare again?"

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Every time Stella had that nightmare, a faceless child would be standing in front of her, trembling. She would try to get a better look at the child, but the thick, white fog would surround them. The moment she reached out her hand to touch the child, the entire scene would disappear in a puff of smoke. When the fog cleared, what she would see next would be the last thing she wished to see. It was that dreadful scene that would shatter her heart into a million pieces. "You have one choice between the two. Who do you choose?" "I choose Gwen... She's afraid of heights."

Each word pierced into her heart like a real knife, tormenting her with excruciating pain, even though she was actually dreaming. The scene changed. Suddenly, she was lying on the street. Her lower body was covered in blood. Her child was slowly flowing out of her body. Meanwhile, not so far away, two shadowy figures were in a sweet embrace, mockingly trampling her and her baby's misery and tragedy...

Stella sat up abruptly on her bed. She was sweating profusely, so much that the nightshirt clung to her back, soaking wet.

Roger still stood outside her door, simply refusing to leave. The last thing she wanted was for her brother to see her in this state.

"I really am fine, Roger," she assured him as she groggily ran her fingers through her hair. "Go back to bed! I need to be up early for work!" she croaked. Her voice was frail and a little hoarse.

Roger gripped the door handle tightly. He hesitated for quite a while but eventually gave up and let out a helpless sigh. "Fine..." he muttered. "Get a good rest, okay, sis?"

"Okay." Stella sighed in relief when she heard Roger's receding footsteps. She let her body collapse onto the bed, her head falling once again onto the pillow.

The next day... Roger had a class early, so he was out by seven o'clock. A college student, he was initially admitted to the prestigious Ahn City University, a school considered the country's top university. Thanks to his medical condition, however, he had no choice but to take a semester

off.

Fern City was nowhere nearly as affluent as Ahn City, but it was still considered among the country's major cities. In fact, it had a long and illustrious history and a rich cultural heritage. Likewise, Fern City University was seen as an elite university. Weston had managed to make

the necessary arrangements, getting Roger transferred to Fern City when he created new identities for the two siblings.

Since both their parents were dead and they had no relatives, assuming new identities was all but a simple matter of changing names.

Hence, Stella Sealy was now called Ella Steele, and Roger Sealey was now Robb Steele. Fortunately, Roger's health had improved significantly, and though he still had regular check ups every now and then, he could now consistently attend classes, which was huge progress. Stella, on the other hand, found a new job as a dance teacher at a training institution. Although they could both live comfortably off Weston's money, Stella still thought it best to get a job. At the very least, having a career to focus on would distract her from her harrowing, heart-wrenching past.

Every once in a while, she would come across a mother-and-baby store or bump into a mother holding her child's hand on the street, stopping her dead in her tracks.

She really did like children a lot... Yet because of her congenital medical condition, she could probably only ever have one child her whole life... The dispenser water overflowed from Stella's cup onto the floor. "Look out!" shouted a concerned voice.

"That's hot water! You'll scald your hand!" It was Yvonne, her voice snapping Stella back to the present. Only then did she sense a sharp pain on the back of her hand.

"Sorry..." she mumbled as she quickly recoiled her hand. Yvonne hastily pulled out a tissue paper and wiped Stella's hand. "You're lucky it's not boiling!" she gasped, "or you'll have a serious burn on your hand!" Initially from Fern City, Yvonne's father was a renowned doctor there. In fact, her entire family has always lived in Fern City, and she had only started a training institution in Ahn City because her husband worked there.

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Yvonne's husband was transferred back to Fern City, so she naturally followed suit. She had never been able to find a suitable replacement for Stella after she left Random Art Training Center in Ahn City. Thus, coupled with other factors, she finally decided to close the training center in Ahn City and move everything to Fern City instead.

The training center had only started operating recently, and apart from a few acquaintances, Yvonne was still recruiting new teachers. Simultaneously, Stella had just moved there and was looking for a job. As fate would have it, they bumped into each other.

Sometimes, the world was just that small.

Yvonne couldn't believe her eyes when she saw Stella. "Stella Sealey?" she cried. Her face turned pale as if she'd just seen a ghost. "But aren't you already...?"

Yvonne and Stella had never been all that close. Still, Stella's talent and dedication to her job left a good impression on Yvonne. Upon receiving the news of Stella's death,

she was terribly shaken and began to mourn. Still, they were only acquaintances, and Yvonne knew nothing about Stella's death other than that it was an accident. Thus, not long after that, Yvonne moved on, and her life went on as usual. Nevertheless, Stella's sudden reappearance in Fern City nearly gave her a fright!

Similarly, Stella never thought that she would ever meet Yvonne again. After overcoming her initial shock, she decided that it would be best to keep her real identity a secret from Yvonne and introduce herself as Ella Steele.

Yvonne found it hard to believe that doppelgangers did really exist. Not only did Ella and Stella had uncanny resemblance, but their voices were identical, their dance moves and musical instruments they played were precisely the same, and even their names sounded similar! If she hadn't worked with Stella before and knew for a fact that she had died in an accident, she would've been sure that Ella Steele and Stella Sealey were the same people. Sometimes when she was with Ella, she would be momentarily confused and think that the person in front of her was Stella.

But dead people never came back to life. Yvonne knew this, so she gradually got used to Ella's existence as time passed. But still, every once in a while, an incident would occur that would make her see Stella in Ella-just like what was happening now...

Yvonne remembered that when Stella was going through a divorce, her mind would be so preoccupied that she would forget to turn off the faucet, causing the back of her hand to be scalded, just as Ella had done just now.

As those thoughts coursed through her mind, Yvonne swiftly and efficiently helped Ella deal with the burns.

"Why are you so good at this?" asked Stella, bewildered by Yvonne's deft movements, "My husband's a doctor," Yvonne smiled. "He taught me all the simple first aid procedures.

As she spoke, a shadow suddenly passed over her face.

"You really are a lot like that friend of mine," she told Stella. "Sometimes I would mistake you

for her... How is it possible that two unrelated people could be so alike? Not just your looks and voices but also your talents and your careers are similar..." She stared at Stella intently as if trying to draw out some kind of clue from her face. This unnerved Stella, and she quickly pulled her hand away from Yvonne. "Nothing's impossible in this big world," Stella said. "Just look at the news, and you'll see all kinds of bizarre coincidences! Compared to those, two people that look alike almost seem mundane!"

"By the way," continued Stella with a smile, "how is that friend of yours doing? I've been hearing so much of her from you that I'm getting curious about her!". Yvonne's face darkened. She fell silent for a while before finally letting out a gentle sigh.

"She... She died unexpectedly in an accident. We've never been particularly close, but I've always thought that she was a great person. She was so young too. I never thought that she would..."

Yvonne could not finish her sentence.

"I'm sorry," Stella let out a somber murmur. "I wouldn't have brought it up if I had known..."

"Don't worry," Yvonne shook her head. "Looking at you makes me feel better. It almost feels like she's still here. Perhaps it was fate that brought us together."

Stella said nothing in reply. She turned away from Yvonne as tears welled up in her

eyes. She was deeply moved that someone in Ahn City actually remembered her, even if it was just a casual acquaintance...

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That day, Yvonne didn't go straight home. She usually did when she got off work. Instead, she went to Stella and asked if she would like to go shopping. Stella thought about it for a while and accepted Yvonne's invitation. She had just got off the phone with Roger, who told her that he was going to a party with his classmates that evening. Since they were starting a new life in a new city, Stella thought it would be a good idea to make new friends, and she agreed to go out with Yvonne.

"My husband invited some guests to dinner this evening," Yvonne told Stella, "and I really don't have anything to wear! Will you help me choose something nice?"

"Sure," replied Stella. "But I must warn you that my fashion sense is pretty lousy!"

It had been ages since Stella was as relaxed as this when she and Yvonne spent time together. It even helped Stella forget all her pain and heartaches, even if only temporarily. They had so much fun that day that Yvonne was reluctant to part ways when it was time to go home.

Indeed, she had discovered that she was very fond of Stella.

"Why don't you come over to my place for dinner, Ella?"

"But your husband is having guests over this evening!" replied Stella. "It wouldn't be appropriate for me to barge in, would it?"

"He has his guests over, and I have my guest over! It's our house, after all, not just his!"

"Besides," Yvonne added, resolute, "It's been so long since I last invited any of my girlfriends home for dinner! You're my friend now, so let's have dinner together this evening, okay? I don't really have any friends here, so..."

After Yvonne put it in such a way, Stella found it hard to refuse her. She sent Roger a short text and told him she wouldn't be home for dinner. The two women then went on to shop for a little longer. "My husband's here to pick us up," Yvonne announced after checking her phone. "He's waiting for us in the car nearby." Yvonne then led Stella there in a hurry to a car that was waiting for them in the parking lot behind the mall. A black car, it looked classy and expensive but not in a flashy way.

Stella froze in her tracks. She began to have some reservations. She remembered seeing the exact brand in Weston's garage, although she'd forgotten what it was called. But as soon as they turned up in the parking lot, the driver of that car stepped out and walked towards Yvonne.

"Madam," he greeted.

"Put these in the trunk," she ordered as she handed her bags to him before taking Stella's hand and leading her into the car,

There was already another man sitting inside. He glanced outside when he heard the two women approaching before frowning disapprovingly when Yvonne clumsily scrambled into the car.

"Be careful," he reminded her brusquely. "Don't hit your head again."

Yvonne pretended not to hear him, leading Stella by the hand to sit beside her. The car

was more than spacious, enough to fit the three with room to spare. Once they were settled in, Yvonne began introducing her husband to Stella. "This is my husband, Lucas Quirk," she stated. "He's a doctor." "Nice to meet you," Stella nodded politely. "I'm Ella Steele. I'm a dance teacher, and I work with Yvonne."

Lucas gave a few polite words in reply, then went back to looking at his tablet. Stella thought he seemed a little distant and aloof, although he was nowhere near as standoffish as Weston Ford. Instead, Lucas gives off a sense of upright decorum, despite being not that friendly or approachable.

Yvonne frequently talked about her husband with Stella. In fact, he was among one of her favorite topics. According to what she heard from Yvonne, Lucas was a stern, old-fashioned man. But now that she had seen him herself, she found him much younger than expected, besides looking rather intelligent and attractive.

Lucas and Yvonne certainly made a handsome pair. There was an atmosphere of undeniable intimacy between these two, the kind that showed that they trusted and perfectly understood each other without the need to say much.

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"Can you believe this guy?" grumbled Yvonne. She shot a glare at Lucas. "He's always like that. He never talks. All he cares about is reading medical journals all day... Please don't mind the nerd, Ella!" Stella chuckled.

"You two make such a great pair!" she exclaimed.

"You think so?" Yvonne replied. She seemed a little surprised, though it was obvious that Stella's words pleased her very much. "I guess you've got a keen eye after all!" She poked her husband with an elbow as she spoke, adding, "Ella thinks we make a great couple. What do you think?"

"Whatever makes you happy," Lucas replied without even looking up from his tablet.

Yvonne was all too happy to let Lucas's lukewarm reply ruin her mood. Hence, she just turned her attention to Stella and continued chatting with her for the rest of the journey. In almost no time, they reached their destination, where Stella found herself at a lofty mansion. She wondered why rich people loved living in mansions so much. In fact, this mansion was even slightly bigger than Stardust Mansion.

Once she stepped out of the car, Stella was about to get her bags from the trunk when Yvonne held her arm and stopped her. "Just let the driver deal with them, Ella!" she told Stella. Yvonne had always been cheerful and affable with everyone at work, but Stella was still pleasantly surprised that she would treat her so cordially in private. As Yvonne gleefully led Stella into the house with a spring in her step, Lucas followed them from behind slowly and calmly.

"Take it easy, Yvonne," he warned. "Your injury's just healed not too long ago. If you sprain your ankle again, you'll have to take care of it yourself because I won't bother myself with you anymore."

Yvonne stopped in her tracks and glared at Lucas. She said nothing but still slowed down as her husband suggested. "That guy acts like he's my father," she complained to Stella in a whisper. "He's always nagging about everything!" Stella said nothing and

merely chuckled, envying how lucky a woman like Yvonne was. Lucas was a doctor who was completely dedicated to his career. Because of his relatively young age, he hadn't accumulated much experience and reputation, but his intelligence, excellent education, incredible talent, and maturity more than made up for that. Unsurprisingly, he stood out from his peers, consequently swamping him with work. Even when he was home, he would spend most of his time buried in his study, dealing with work-related matters.

Once they got inside, Yvonne gave Stella a complete tour of the mansion before she took her to a guest bedroom,

"You'll be staying here for a few days," she told Stella. "I've asked the maid to get it ready for you."

Yvonne then put Stella's things away in the closet and led her out to the back garden, where they hung out and chatted. When it was around time for dinner, Lucas instructed a maid to inform them that the guests were already there,

Yvonne brought Stella to her bedroom so they could change. Although she had asked Stella to help her choose some nice clothes, it had all been Yvonne who had done the choosing, no thanks to her splendid sense of style. She even chose a dress for Stella, who initially refused, but caved in since Yvonne just wouldn't take no for an answer.

Stella's dress was a simple champagne silk slip dress. At a glance, it looked plain and minimalist, but because of the high-quality materials employed and exceptionally well tailoring, it complemented Stella's body shape exquisitely. Coupled with her fair, delicate skin, she looked positively radiant,

Even Yvonne was stunned by Stella's transformation. She stared at Stella in awe after she had changed into her dress.

"Clothes maketh the woman indeed!" she exclaimed, "You really should dress up more often, Ella!"

Yvonne had always known that Stella was pretty most dancers were anyway. But Stella had always dressed so plainly that she'd never noticed how captivating Stella's figure and facial features were

"I guess I just never had the time..," mumbled Stella as she checked herself in the mirror, a little astonished at her own transformation,

Ever since her parents died, she had to grow up overnight and had since lost all interest in dressing up. On the rare occasions that she did, it was to merely look professional and presentable enough to get a good job.

She did think of sprucing up her looks after marrying Weston, but he didn't seem to care about anything, save for that business in bed. Stella didn't want to get herself worked up for nothing, so she didn't give the matter a second thought

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After that, Yvonne changed into her new clothes. She loved wearing red because it contrasted nicely with her snowy white skin and accentuated her striking facial features. Wearing her new dress, Yvonne looked bewitchingly stunning. Even Stella couldn't take

her eyes off her.

The two women had been in the room for so long that Lucas had to come up and rush them himself.

“Hurry up!” he barked as he banged on the door. “They’re here!”

Yvonne gathered up the hem of her dress and rushed to the door when she heard her husband’s voice. As soon as she opened the door, Lucas was visibly taken aback by the sight of his beautiful wife. However, he only showed it by raising his eyebrows slightly. The anger on his face dissipated a little, and he didn’t sound as impatient as he did before. “Can’t you hurry up a little?” he asked.”

Yvonne had many bad habits, but her lack of punctuality got on Lucas’s nerves the most. He would often nag at her for never being on time for anything. Yvonne knew that she was in the wrong, so she smiled at him sweetly, pulled him closer by the arms, and kissed him. “I’m sorry, darling!” she cooed. “Wasn’t that kiss sufficient compensation?” “Was that compensation, or are you just taking advantage of me?” “Hmph!” Yvonne grumbled. “Now you’re making me mad!” Lucas shook his head indulgently and brushed his hand against Yvonne’s cheek. “You and your rotten temper...” he murmured. Yvonne paid no mind to him and went to Stella instead.

“Don’t worry, Ella,” she assured, holding her hand. “You’ll sit next to me. They’re all Lucas’s friends, and they’re about our age. You can just relax. I’ll be there with you, so you’ll be just fine!”

It was only then that Lucas realized someone else was in the room. He quickly returned to his usual distant and reserved self, no longer showing his more laid-back and casual side as he did with his wife just moments ago. “Okay, Yvonne,” replied Stella with a nod and a smile. Meanwhile, the food was already on the table downstairs, and a man and a woman were waiting nearby. As Stella walked down the stairs, she could feel a pair of eyes glued on her. As she looked up

Her eyes met with another familiar pair. They were dark and distant but as deep as the starry sky at night, luring your stare and drawing you into it.

Stella froze. She felt as if it was a fantasy. Her breathing halted.

It was him...

Was she dreaming? How could she see Weston Ford here?

“What’s the matter?” Yvonne asked when she noticed that Stella had just stopped in her tracks.

“Nothing,” answered Stella, shaking her head, though she looked pale.

Stella could distinctly feel Weston’s eyes following her every move. Maintaining her cool, she made sure not to react and refused to look at the man.

She would not look at Weston, and she would not look at the woman beside him, but she could sense that the atmosphere had changed ever since she appeared downstairs.

But Weston’s eyes never left Stella. His dark eyes had always been calm and impenetrable. No one could ever guess how he felt. The woman beside him couldn’t tell what he was thinking either, but she knew things had gone awry when she realized that Weston had been staring at that woman for a long time.

Only after everyone was seated did Weston draw his eyes from Stella.

“You didn’t tell me that there’d be a stranger joining us,” he commented, directing those words at Lucas.

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Lucas waited for his wife to sit before taking a seat opposite her; his expression stoic and unchanged the entire time. "She's Yvonne's friend," Lucas told Weston as he sat down. "Don't mind it too much."

Stella frowned ever so slightly when she heard the word "stranger" coming from Weston's mouth, but she still wouldn't look at him. She sat down stiffly at the dining table, her ears ringing from the absurdity of the situation. Never in a thousand years would she have guessed that Lucas's guests were Weston Ford and Guinevere Cohen. Weston had noticed her the second she appeared. Naturally, Guinevere did too. The moment she saw Stella, her body stiffened, sure that she'd just seen a ghost! Blood drained from her face, and she stared at the woman like a hawk. It was only when they were all seated that she realized she was covered in goosebumps.

That face... there could be no mistake. She would never forget that woman's face! But how could Stella Sealey be here? Wasn't she already dead?

Although Guinevere's back was soaked in a cold sweat, she had been in the entertainment industry for many years, and she could take this much without losing control. Once she regained her senses, her first instinct was to check for Weston's reactions. When she saw that his eyes had been glued on the woman the whole time, her fists tightened. She even clenched her teeth.

Could she still be... alive?

From then on, she'd lost all control. Her mind was now blank. All she could do was stare vacantly at Stella.

Such a drastic change in the atmosphere did not go unnoticed by Yvonne. She could sense that something weird was happening but was utterly befuddled by the scene. "Do you know each other?" she asked Stella, looking at both Guinevere and Stella back and forth.

"No," Stella answered simply with a shake of her head. She seemed utterly nonchalant, but under the table, her fingernails dug into the flesh of her thighs so hard she almost bled.

Guinevere regained her senses and forced herself to look away from Stella at that moment. Then her gaze turned towards Yvonne.

"Who is she?" Guinevere demanded tersely as she glared at Yvonne haughtily.

Yvonne was taken aback by Guinevere's strange behavior that she instinctively backed away. Lucas noticed this and frowned frustratedly. He put himself between his wife and Guinevere, shielding her from Guinevere's glare, which Lucas sensed as malicious.

"Miss Cohen," he said, "you can speak to me directly if there's any problem. There's no need to glare at my wife like that."

Yvonne and Guinevere weren't that close, but since Lucas was Henry Moore's attending doctor, and Henry Moore was close to Stella and Guinevere, Yvonne considered Guinevere an acquaintance,

Nevertheless, she could not deny that she found Guinevere's behavior just now offensive. Still, Guinevere and Weston were her husband's guests. Thus, wanting to cause no trouble as the host, she let the matter slide and introduced her friend to them.

"This is Ella Steele," she announced. "She's a dance teacher at my training center." Ella Steele... Guinevere repeated that name silently. The name left a bitter taste in her mouth. But she gradually calmed down and took another good look at Stella, now with more scrutiny and suspicion.

So this was not Stella Sealey after all? But just another woman who looked like her? But they didn't just look alike. Their voices were identical. Even their names sounded similar...

Serious doubts arose in her mind. She couldn't help but turn toward the man beside her. To her surprise, Weston was completely calm and indifferent. He didn't seem to care about this woman's appearance at all.

But the calmer Weston was, the more frantic Guinevere's mind got.

How could he not have any reactions to the appearance of a woman who looked exactly like his wife? If he was so indifferent to Stella, then why did he fall into pits of despair when Stella died?

Now Guinevere was a lot more worried about Weston's cold reactions than the actual appearance of this woman itself.

"Ella... Steele?" she asked in a hoarse voice after a long pause. "Is she called Ella Steele?" "Yes," answered Yvonne, still so bewildered by Guinevere's reactions that she couldn't help but add, "Do you know her?" "No," replied Guinevere, shaking her head. Her face was ashen as she forced a feeble smile on her face. "She just looks a lot like someone I knew."

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A shadow seemed to fall on Weston's face for a moment, but he remained silent through it all. He calmly regarded Stella in scrutiny while Stella sat beside Yvonne in silence, as if she did not notice him staring at her. Stella would never have guessed that the guests Yvonne talked about were Weston and Guinevere. What a small world it was! She thought of the irony of them meeting again, when Weston was so adamant about sending her off out of his sight. Despite everything, Stella was curious to see how Weston would react next, now that he'd seen her.

"I had the same thoughts myself when I first met Ella!" said Yvonne with some astonishment. "She looked just like a friend of mine! I guess it is a strange coincidence. I never thought that two people who aren't twins could look so much alike. It was weird enough that I knew someone who looked like Ella. I can't believe that you know someone who looks like her too!"

Yvonne then turned towards Stella and studied her face.

"Such a pretty face... I can't believe there'd be so many people who look like this!" Stella couldn't help but snicker. "You're only saying that to flatter me, aren't you?" she teased Yvonne.

Yvonne didn't mind that Stella read through her mind at all. She put her arm around Stella's shoulders and said, "I'm only speaking the truth! You really are that pretty!"

At this point, Guinevere had gotten much calmer now, and with a clearer head, her suspicions began to solidify. Could this woman really not be Stella Sealey? Could there

really be someone who looked just like her? How could that be possible? Could such perfect doppelgangers exist in this world?

"These two are the guests that I mentioned," Yvonne continued. "This is Mr. Weston Ford, and with him is the superstar Guinevere Cohen. You must've heard of her, right? Well, Mr. Ford is her..."

Yvonne paused and smiled at the couple. "Um... so is he your boyfriend or fiance?" Guinevere turned pale and silent. She gazed at Weston. It was a meaningful gaze. Anyone would've guessed what the gaze meant just by looking at it.

"Ah!" Yvonne gasped. "I guess we should be expecting good news from you two soon! When is the wedding going to be?" Only then did Weston draw his eyes away from Stella. "In two months," he answered plainly without a thread of emotion. "So soon? Will the two of you be ready in time?"

"I'm sure we will," Guinevere replied with a smile as she willed herself to remain calm. "It's only a simple ceremony, after all." "So when are you two getting a marriage license?" Yvonne asked.

The air instantly got tense. Guinevere's countenance displayed an obvious shift, though Weston remained as indifferent as ever.

"We're not in a hurry," he stated matter-of-factly.

Anyone would've been able to tell that as soon as Weston uttered those words, Guinevere's mood changed drastically. It didn't matter how good an actress she was; the shift was too striking to slip through a woman's intuition. Yvonne had always been bold and brash, but even then, she knew that something was wrong. In an attempt to turn things around, she quickly changed subjects, hoping to lighten everyone's mood a little. She noticed that Stella had been particularly quiet ever since they came downstairs. She didn't want her friend to feel left out, so she turned to talk to her. "What kind of man do you like, Ella?" she asked. "I can set you up with someone, you know?" Stella almost choked. She started hacking away, and her cheeks flushed beet-red. Tears welled up in her eyes as she stretched out to grab the napkin. It was on the table right in front of her, but as she was about to grasp the napkin, Weston picked it up and put it in her hand. 1

Stella froze. "Thank you," she muttered without looking at him.

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Chapter 39

It was just a tiny gesture. Nobody had noticed it, except Guinevere. She clenched her fists. Her eyes darkened. She glanced at Stella, then turned to Weston. Weston didn't seem to notice the change in her moods. He remained as calm and unbothered as ever, as if nothing out of ordinary had happened all evening.

He didn't think of anything either when he handed her the napkin, although he did sweep a glance over her outfit today... The dress suited her very well indeed. She never dressed up like this in the past.

Weston retracted his gaze. A sense of restlessness crept up over him when he saw Stella's trembling eyelashes. Meanwhile, Yvonne was oblivious to what was going on and was just amused by Stella's reaction. "What's wrong with my suggestion?" she

teased. "You're so pretty and so young, you can't be planning to spend the rest of your life single! You'll need to find someone eventually and the sooner you find him, the longer you'll be able to enjoy the romance!" Stella giggled but said nothing. "Don't be so shy!" Yvonne pressed on. "I know lots of handsome guys! I can set you up with any kind of guy you like — " Before she could finish her sentence, Lucas stuffed broccoli into her mouth. "Ngghh..."

Yvonne glared at her husband, annoyed at being interrupted mid-sentence. Lucas, however, calmly ignored his wife's scowl and kept on eating his food. "Don't talk while you chew," he said nonchalantly. Yvonne grunted in disapproval, but still didn't argue any further and just kept on quietly chewing the food in her mouth.

Lucas ate with grace-quietly and politely. Every once in a while he would see Yvonne pick at her food and he would frown slightly before stuffing food in her mouth. Yvonne would seem irked by this, but nonetheless, she would quietly chew the food and say nothing. Though she might look headstrong, Yvonne actually always respected Lucas. Stella looked on at the happy couple and admired how well they got along. The sight was so sweet that she just had to smile.

Unbeknownst to her, that slight expression of happiness of hers vexed someone else to no end. Guinevere didn't care whether this woman was Stella or not. The fact that she looked exactly like Stella meant that this woman was a thorn in her side that she was anxious to get rid of.

Stella should've completely disappeared from Weston's life the moment she fell down that building. She should not suddenly reappear somewhere else like this.

Frustration filled Guinevere's chest. She wanted to let it out, but the man beside her was so indifferent and calm that she didn't think it would be good to cause a scene.

(you shouldn't say things like that in front of Dr. Quirk, Yvonne!" said Guinevere suddenly with a smile after a long pause. "Aren't you afraid that he'll get jealous because you know so many handsome guys?"

Those words got Yvonne's attention. She leaned over towards her husband and grinned.

"Were you jealous?" she asked Lucas. Lucas ignored her and continued eating silently.

Yvonne leaned even closer to him, prompting him to nudge her head away. "Can't you mind your manners and eat your food properly?" he barked. "So you really are jealous!"

Yvonne exclaimed, not angry at all that her husband just pushed her away. Instead, she added chirpily, "Don't worry, Dr. Quirk, you're the only handsome guy in the world that I like!" At that moment Guinevere turned towards Stella and said, "Looks like those men that she'll set you up with are just her rejects!" She sounded as if she was only joking, yet there was an undeniable malice undertone to it too. Yvonne squinted at her, then sat up straight and smiled, her eyes shining with mischief. "Ah, never mind that! By the way, why didn't the two of you bring your baby with you today? I heard that he's totally adorable! I'd really like to meet him!" "Oh, he's still too small to travel," replied

Guinevere, her expressions softened considerably when talking about her child. "We'll make sure to bring him along next time we visit." Yvonne nodded innocently as she listened to Guinevere speak, but then smiled slyly and turned to Weston. "I'm so jealous of you, Mr. Ford!" she said. "Everyone knows Gwen was the hottest girl that every man in Ahn City's high society pined for! Yet now she was even willing to have a child with you out of wedlock! Not all women are strong enough for that! But still, Mr. Ford, she's

the mother of your child now, and you haven't even given her a wedding? That's a little heartless, isn't it, Mr. Ford?"

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Chapter 40

Yvonne was the type of person who would always stand up for herself. She would never let anyone mock or taunt her without a fight. She could sense Guinevere's jiving tone earlier, and she didn't care if it was intentional. She just had to fight back.

Once Yvonne was done talking, Guinevere's face turned blank and frigid. The air got tense again. Silent awkwardness ruled the table.

Nobody spoke. Yvonne dangled a spoon aimlessly, not knowing what she said. Lucas pushed food onto Yvonne's plate, urging her to eat. Yvonne accepted the food without saying anything.

Yvonne knew that Guinevere didn't like the fact that she had a baby out of wedlock because it was something that tarnished her pure and noble reputation, but she deceived herself into thinking that she was fine. She might pretend that it didn't matter to her, but she was obviously troubled by it. As for Yvonne, she didn't care that they had a child out of wedlock. Things could happen, especially between a couple who had spent a lot of time together. However, she found it amusing that a woman looked down on people who had children out of wedlock when she had a child with Weston before they got married. Yvonne wouldn't have brought up a topic like this at the dinner table. Not only would it make things awkward, but it might also offend or anger someone. She would've been just as respectful to Guinevere had she not taunted her earlier.

It was still dead silent at the dinner table. Weston calmly and gracefully cut up the beef steak into smaller pieces. He then exchanged his plate with Guinevere. He did this in complete silence, but he still had the attention of everyone at the table. He showed that he was devoted to Guinevere without needing to say a single word.

Stella lowered her head and focused on her plate of food the second she noticed Weston doing this. Her fingers dug into the flesh of her thigh, but her face remained expressionless.

She remembered the first dinner they had together after marrying Weston. They were in a fancy restaurant and, just like now, they were also having steak. She remembered how Weston would cut up the steak into bite-sized pieces for her just as he was doing now, as if it was his duty. She could not help but laugh at herself. She had been so foolish as to be moved by that little gesture. She had assumed that it was Weston showing his gentle side to her.

As it turned out, it was only a habit of his, borne out of his time with Guinevere.

Guinevere's face now gradually regained its color. She gazed lovingly at the man beside him and thanked him sweetly. "Didn't I tell you," Weston suddenly spoke as he wiped his hands, "that I will always care for you and our baby even if we're not married? A marriage license is nothing but a piece of paper."

Yvonne pouted and snorted mockingly. She could tell, of course, that this man was trying to protect Guinevere. Just as she was thinking of firing back again, Lucas suddenly grabbed her hand under the table to warn her to stop, holding back what she

had to say.

Stella had said nothing at all the whole time. She was trying to minimize her presence as much as she could. The sight of those two as a happy couple made her feel a wave of disgust. She felt incredibly sick when Yvonne mentioned that their child was already born. It made her think of her child... She thought of how their baby must now be showered with all the love in the world. Her child, on the other hand, was nothing but a pile of flesh and blood...

What had they done to deserve the blissful happiness while treated awfully just because she wanted to keep her only child? And now, she even had to change her name and run away to another city!

She had been nothing but a worthless plaything to them, or perhaps just collateral in their game of love. Why did they not tell her that from the beginning? Why did they have to torment her?

As Stella put a morsel of fish into her mouth, she suddenly felt a rush of nausea surging up her throat. Before she could control it, she threw up a little in her mouth.