

Chapter 14

[Vivienne]

I storm out of the hospital, gritting my teeth, when I hear someone calling my name.

I turn around, only to find Sasha and Mrs Lawrence walking towards me.

Now what else do these two women need? Aren't they satisfied after insulting me in front of the entire hospital?

Mrs Lawrence is the first to shake her head, looking just as disappointed in me as she always did. I wonder why all these years, I tried to win her approval, it's clear as day that she never really liked me. Her attitude towards me was always brusque and unfair, and not once but on multiple occasions she tried to push Sasha towards Caden, hoping her son would finally see the obvious difference between the two of us and leave me for real.

"I can't believe you just created a scene like that," her wrongly directed accusation almost makes me laugh. "What were you thinking? Oh, wait. You weren't. You never do. All you know is to embarrass us and make a fool of us. How can someone be so shameless, Sasha? Have you ever seen someone so shameless? It's like you live to humiliate us. You have absolutely no regard for the situation or the people around you. Just standing there, looking smug as if you haven't done anything wrong. Have you no dignity, no self-respect? It's astonishing how you can be so oblivious to your own disgraceful behavior. Have you no sense of decency at all?"

I feel a burning surge of anger rising within me. I take a deep breath, trying to keep my composure, but the fury in my voice is unmistakable. 1

"How dare you?" I retort, my voice trembling but firm. "How dare you stand there and throw baseless accusations at me? You think I'm the one embarrassing you? Have you ever looked in the mirror and seen how your constant blame and belittling of others make you look? It's not me who's shameless; it's you, for thinking you can talk to me like this without any consequences. You know nothing about what I've done or what I've been through, so spare me your self-righteous judgment."

I can see the shock on Sasha's face, and for a moment, Mrs Lawrence seems to have lost all her words. But I'm not done.

"And you know what? I'm done trying to fit into your twisted idea of perfection. If standing up for myself makes me shameless in your eyes, then so be it. I'd rather be shameless than a bully who thrives on making others feel small. So go ahead, keep throwing your insults. They mean nothing to me anymore."

"What the hell is wrong with you? Have you gone completely crazy? How could you talk to Mrs. Lawrence like that? I have been patient with you, Vivienne, but only because of Caden. But you... you actually don't care about anything. You have no respect for anyone, no sense of decency. You're a disgrace."

"Oh, leave it, Sasha dear," Mrs. Lawrence interjects, her tone dripping with contempt. "This woman is a lost cause. She's nothing but a parasite, sucking the life out of everyone around her. I'm just living

for the day when my son will teach her the lesson she deserves and marry you instead. Then and only then, I'll find some peace. Until then, I'll have to endure the sight of this wretched woman, knowing full well that she's brought nothing but misery and shame to our family."

Every word spoken by them hurts, but I keep my mouth shut and my heart under lock. 1

I have decided. There's no point in making my case in front of them or engaging in any kind of argument. They have their minds set and nothing can change that.

"If the two of you are done spewing nonsense, can I go? I have more important things to do than deal with... well, whatever this is."

Then, before either of them can say a word, I turn around and don't look back even when Sasha screams at the top of her lungs.

I pick up my phone from the ground and curse the bitch for breaking it. It's not even turning on now.

Shit. How will I contact Marcus now?

"Ms. Richardson?"

It's as if the gods heard my prayers because when I look up, I find Marcus standing right in front of me.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Richardson asked me to check on you to see if you needed anything," he looks at my phone, frowning. "Are you alright, Miss?"



Dad. Of course, he would do that, always wanting to know if I was okay.

My eyes sting with tears once again, but I hold them back.

"I'm fine. Thank you, Marcus. My work here is done and we can leave if you can just bring the car around."

"Sounds great. I'll be right back."

Once Marcus leaves, I check my phone again. But the screen remains dark and nothing I do works.

"Great. I guess it's time for a new phone then."

This phone was gifted to me by Caden two years ago.

Maybe it's symbolic because now that I have decided to divorce Caden and free myself from this toxic cycle of hurt and betrayal, every string that ties us to each other is snapping one by one.

Perhaps it's actually time to let go.

Perhaps it's actually time to move on.

But just when I look up to see if the car has arrived, a hand comes flying to slap me across the face.