

## Chapter 6 The Man From That Night

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Alicia's face, pale from the cold, flushed crimson.

The humiliation of letting her nemesis see her in such a sorry state stung deeper than the biting cold rain.

She leaned against the car door, trying to put as much distance between them as possible.

Caden's eyes still lingered on her legs. "You've got great legs," he remarked casually. "Joshua seems to like them. And I'm sure plenty of other men would, too."

He tilted his head, fingers drumming leisurely on the armrest, the rhythm as infuriating as his words. "In fact, I'd bet quite a few would find them... irresistible."

Alicia's throat tightened, an icy shiver running down her spine.

It was pitch black out, and with the pouring rain, common sense dictated it wasn't safe for a woman to be out alone. However, the way Caden said it made it seem like what was merely a statistical possibility became an inevitable conclusion.

What a disgusting jerk!

She hesitated, but her options were limited. With a reluctant sigh, Alicia strapped on her seatbelt, pressing herself against the door as if it could somehow shield her from the man sitting next to her.

Her drenched dress stuck to her like a second layer of skin, the discomfort gnawing at her. She couldn't help but hunch her shoulders, shivering from the cold.

Without a word, Caden tossed his coat over her lap.

The weight of it surprised her, but she wasted no time wrapping it around herself, grateful for the warmth.

The coat carried Caden's unique musk—a blend of cologne and something raw, masculine.

It clung to the fabric, seeping into her senses and dragging her back to that fateful night...

The familiar voice.

The familiar scent.

Alicia's heart sank to the pit of her stomach as realization dawned on her. Could it really be him?

Oh, God... It couldn't be!

The ridiculousness of the idea made her shiver again, but she couldn't shake her suspicion. She turned her head stiffly to study him, hoping to find some answer in his face.

Caden, oblivious to her turmoil, didn't even glance up from his phone. "Stop staring. I'm not interested."

Jerk!

Alicia ignored the jab and cleared her throat. "So, Caden, when did you get back?"

Only then did he lift his gaze from his phone.

He looked at her with a detached amusement, as though he was admiring a pretty bird in a cage. "The 14th."

Her heart dropped like a stone, her mind spinning with the weight of those words.

The 14th?

That was the day of her "incident"!

Heart pounding in her chest, she continued her line of questioning. "And

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where were you staying that day?"

 +120 Points at most

Caden leaned back, a smug smile dancing on his lips as he watched her squirm. He seemed to relish seeing her panic like this. "Can't remember. I was too busy fucking some girl."

Fucking some girl?

Alicia felt her mouth go dry in an instant.

This still didn't prove anything, but anxiety gnawed at her insides.

Before she could question him further, Caden's phone rang, breaking the tension.

He lazily answered, glancing her way with a raised brow. "What is she looking for?"

The cinema manager's voice crackled through the line. "A ring."

Caden glanced at Alicia's delicate hands.

She hadn't heard anything the caller had said, but his look alone was enough to make her frown. Without thinking, she clasped her hands together.

When the call ended, Caden's voice was tinged with mockery. "Didn't Joshua spend a fortune on a bracelet for you? Why aren't you wearing it?"

At this, Alicia's expression darkened. She spoke with a coldness that concealed the sting beneath.

"He bought it for his mistress," she muttered indifferently.


Caden let out a low, humorless laugh. "Generous, isn't he? Spending a fortune on a dog collar."

Alicia said nothing, but she felt a strange sense of satisfaction in his words.

And just like that, the weight of her earlier doubts and worries faded into the background.

Whoever that man had been that night didn't matter. She had used him,

35.6%

11:14 

"Oh, and one more thing," Hank added after reporting everything. "I saw Joshua at the police station earlier. It looked like he was searching for Ms. Bennett."

Caden let out a sharp laugh, his eyes gleaming with amusement as he tossed Hank a bottle of water.

"The ever-submissive Alicia finally stood up to him, and he liked it. Imagine that."

Now that they were on the subject of Alicia, Hank handed a ring to Caden and asked, "Should I send Ms. Bennett's ring back to her, or have her pick it up herself?"

Caden looked over the ring.

It was just a small, plain silver band, with no diamond to speak of.

It was too big, a little loose, likely slipping off during that night's... intensity.

Cheap material, and even cheaper sentiment.

Yet, Alicia was desperate to get it back.

Caden's lips curved in a cynical smirk. What did she have besides that enticing body of hers? Not much.

Hank sighed, almost regretfully. "If Ms. Bennett weren't your sister-in-law, Mr. Ward, perhaps your troubles—"

At this, Caden's expression darkened, and Hank immediately shut up.

"It was the drug," Caden hissed, his voice sharp as ice.

Without thinking, Hank corrected him. "But it was Ms. Bennett who was drugged, sir."

Caden's fingers curled tighter around the ring, the cold metal digging into his palm. The atmosphere dropped several hundred degrees, a chill creeping over the room.

"My apologies, Mr. Ward. I spoke out of turn," Hank murmured, stepping

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back, eyes downcast.

 +120 Points at most

Caden's gaze shifted downward, to a part of himself that was already reacting to thoughts of Alicia.

Just thinking about that woman turned him on.

With a wicked smile, he added, almost to himself, 'We'll know where the problem really lies... after another round.'

