

Chapter 61 Why Bother Covering Up

The water wrapped around Alicia like a tender embrace, its warmth so luxurious she almost wondered if she was dreaming.

Drowsiness overtook her; keeping her eyes open seemed impossible. She managed to glimpse Caden through her haze, her voice barely above a whisper as she asked, "Are you done showering?"

Her senses were still dulled, not fully aware of the situation, her guard completely down.

The softness of her tone, the delicate vulnerability in her gaze—she was like a petal drifting on a calm breeze.

Caden's lips curled into a subtle smile, barely noticeable, as he gently pressed his fingers against her skin.

"You still awake?" he whispered.

Alicia flinched at the gentle pressure, her foot jerking reflexively and sending a small splash across the water.

The sudden jolt cleared the fog from her mind.

Realizing where she was, she instinctively wrapped her arms around herself, her pulse quickening. "What's happening? Why am I here?"

Hadn't she been waiting outside for him to finish just now?

"You dozed off," Caden replied, his tone casual, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. "So I carried you in."

Alicia blinked in shock.

Had she fallen into so deep a sleep that she hadn't felt a thing?

Her gaze dropped to her bare body beneath the water, and her cheeks flushed with sudden heat.

"Did you... take my clothes off?!"

Caden's eyes shifted briefly to the soaked dress strewn on the floor.

Earlier, when he stepped out of the shower, he found her curled up and shivering in the cold, her lips tinged with blue.

He didn't think twice; he scooped her up into his arms.

He knew she'd catch a terrible cold if he hadn't helped her into warm water.

"Yeah," he admitted without a trace of hesitation.

Alicia's face burned a deeper shade of red. "Why didn't you just wake me up?" she demanded, her voice rising in embarrassment.

"I couldn't," Caden said, his tone still unbothered. "Why else did I wake you up like that?"

"Like what?" Her brow furrowed in confusion.

Instead of answering right away, Caden's fingers grazed her knee again, the touch sending an unexpected jolt through her.

"Hey!" Alicia gasped. The pain startled her into kicking her legs beneath the water.

The sudden movement sent ripples across the water's surface, momentarily revealing glimpses of her smooth skin.

Caden didn't even bother to pretend to look away.

Noticing his bold stare, heat rose to Alicia's cheeks.

She quickly sank deeper into the water, her arms instinctively wrapping around her chest in a feeble attempt to shield herself.

Caden's gaze lingered, his eyes dark and unapologetic, before he spoke, his voice low and almost teasing. "Why bother covering up? I've already

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seen it all."

 +120 Points at most

The words stunned her into silence.

Even with the subtle tension that crackled between them, she knew he wouldn't dare make a move—at least, not here.

When he stood, his towering form cast a shadow over her. With a lazy smirk, he said, "Go ahead and wash yourself up."

Alicia hurried through the bath. Less than twenty minutes later, she limped out, her skin flushed and damp.

Caden was waiting, lounging in a chair draped in nothing but a dark robe.

In his hand, he held a small bottle of ointment.

Earlier, he'd taken a moment to check her injured knee—thankfully, the bruise wasn't serious. The ointment would be enough to soothe it.

Without hesitation, Alicia accepted the bottle.

She poured a bit of the cool liquid into her palm before gently rubbing it into the sore spot.

Outside, the weather had taken a turn for the worse, the rain drumming steadily against the windows.

Yet inside, the room glowed with the soft amber light of the lamps.

Despite the brooding atmosphere, the warmth of Caden's presence unexpectedly made her feel safe, as if he could keep the darkness at bay.

He didn't speak, his attention fixed on the brewing storm outside, but his expression was distant, unreadable.

Minutes ticked by, the silence between them growing heavy.

Suddenly, a sudden flash of lightning slashed across the sky, and the thunder that followed was deafening.


Startled, Alicia's gaze flew to Caden.

Only then did she notice the slight tremor in his tightly clenched fists.

36.1%



Special bonus over 40% >

13:30 

Such an obvious thing hadn't escaped her notice.

The dark glint in Caden's eyes dissipated, replaced by a wanton smile.

"Why the sudden interest?" he asked, his tone dripping with playful suspicion. "Are you gathering intel for Joshua, or are you planning to team up with me against him?"

Alicia's lips curved into a small, amused smile.

"Just asking," she replied casually, but her true motive lingered beneath the surface.

She only wanted to divert his attention, keep him occupied, and shield him from the storm raging outside.

"I could ask you the same question." Not one to let things go easily, Caden pressed, "What're you doing here with the Yates family?"

She brushed off his question with a shrug. "I don't want to struggle anymore. I'm here to enjoy life under Joshua's protection."

Caden's grin widened, his eyes gleaming with mischief. "What if I beat him? The Yates family will be mine... and so will you?"

Alicia's mouth twitched.

He was being roguish again, and for a moment, she allowed herself to forget the scared child she saw in him just a moment earlier.

She quickly pushed aside the fleeting sympathy and capped the ointment bottle in her hands, setting it aside with a soft thud.

"I'm leaving," she announced, the decision firm in her tone.

She moved toward the door, pausing briefly to check the hallway.

Satisfied that no one was lurking nearby, she hobbled out, leaning against the wall for balance.

But as she rounded the corner, her heart jumped into her throat.

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Shelia had clearly been waiting there for a while already. "Alicia," she purred, her tone dripping with false concern. "What were you doing alone in a room with Caden for so long?"

