



Chapter 11

Chapter 11

Little Sophie stood still, staring at her mommy in expectation, waiting for her to tell her who Oscar was.

"Honey, you don't interrupt when adults are having a conversation."

"I'm sorry, mama. But I want to know who Oscar is." She gave a puppy dog face.

"Why?" Lara asked, coming to her sister in law's rescue.

"Because mommy kept whispering his name on our way back and saying bad words. She said his name just now and said the bad word too."

"I think he made Mommy mad." The little girl added.

Lara took a glance at Vicky, then back at Sophie.

"You're so sweet and so protective." Lara caressed Sophie's cheek.

"I have had to remind myself of her age a couple of times."

"You promised you were going to protect me and I promised you that I was going to do the same for you, remember?"

A heartwarming smile crept to Lara's lips. "What are you going to do if you see Oscar?" She directed at the little girl.

"Oscar...." She mumbled, with his finger on her chin. "That's

the name of a boy, right?"

Lara nodded, while Vicky looked stunned by what her daughter was saying.

"I'll tell him to stop making my mama sad because I don't like to see mommy really sad."

"How did I get so lucky to have you as mine?" Victoria mumbled, intertwining her hands with her baby's own and pulling her close to her.

"I'm fine, baby. Mama is just a bit stressed with work. Oscar is just a very annoying colleague. You don't have to worry about me. I'll deal with him at work."

Sophie nodded.

"Can you go back to play with your toys while I continue my conversation with your aunt?"

Sophie nodded.

Victoria kissed the little girl's cheek before she politely excused them.

"With how smart she is, I wonder how long we will be able to keep this from her." Lara said with a lower tone.

"I know she will eventually learn the truth when she's older but I'm going to do my best to keep protecting her."

"I almost lost her being in their midst and I'm going to do whatever it takes to keep her away from them."

"You're a good mom."

Vicky sighed, "I hope so."

"I mean it. Look at her." She gestured at where Sophie was seated, playing with her toys.

"I hope so. I really do. Sometimes it can be really hard and on some days, it's as if I have no clue what I'm doing. Some days, I feel like I don't do enough, and other times, I just want to close my eyes and sleep forever."

"But she's the greatest gift I've ever had. If I had to go through all of the sufferings again, just to bring her to life, then I would."

"You're amazing with her and I'm so proud of you both."

"Lest I forget, what's Sophie's plan for this weekend?"

"Nothing specific. Except for her normal routine."

"Oh, that's good. Can she come with me to New Zealand?"

"It's my niece's 3rd birthday party on Saturday and we will be back on Sunday. Gabriel too would be joining us."

"It's totally fine if you don't want her to go. I only extended the invitation because I thought it was something that she would love and since there would be other kids there, so..."

"It's fine, Lara. I trust you."

"I'm going to miss her terribly but it would be selfish of me to

deprive her of spending time with her aunt and uncle."

"Besides, I could use some alone time as well."

"To go on dates." Lara smiled.

"Oh, no! Not you, Lara, please!"

She chuckled, "But I haven't said anything yet."

"That doesn't mean I don't know what you're driving at."

"Too bad. You don't want my precious baby to be a big sister."

Vicky frowned, "What did I miss?"

"So I assume she told you already?"

"Today."

"She told us the last time she went shopping with me and Gabriel."

"He had asked her what she wanted from the store when she said she wanted a brother."

"Gabe made her understand that you were the only one who had the answer to that."

For the first time since their conversation, Vicky reached for the glass of wine on the table beside her and gulped down a few sips.

"I know I said I was going to give her the world but I didn't mean what she's requesting."

Chapter 11

"I understand your fear but you know all men are not going to be like him, right?"

"I know there are good men out there. One of which is my brother."

"It's not certain that if I put myself out there, I would end up with an amazing man."

"I honestly don't know how I moved on from the pains of my past but I'm not willing to feel that way anymore for any person whatsoever."

"I'm really cool being alone. I just want to focus on my daughter and my career."

Lara was about to say something but was interrupted by the ringing of Vicky's phone.

"Sorry," She reached for her phone, mentally rolling her eyes upon seeing the caller ID.

"Yes, Kathie."

"Christ, Vicky, where the hell have you been?"

She frowned, "At home, why?"

"Geez, you have a date. Okay, are you all dressed?"

Victoria mentally facepalmed.

"What date?"

Chapter 11

"Girl, what shall it profit you if you keep treating that poor guy like trash?"

"I told you today was his birthday and you are still going to disappoint him?"

"You promised today but you didn't leave him your address. He said he's been trying to reach you but he's unable to get through to you. Let me guess, you blocked him already?"

"Look Kathie, I'm really sorry to disappoint him. I thought from my gestures, he would have known that I'm not interested."

"Babe, he's not asking you to marry him. He just wants to hang out with you."

"Wait, is this about Sophie? You mentioned that her Nanny had the day off. I can come over to look after her so you can go on your date."

"No. That won't be necessary."

"I'll reach out to him myself."

"You should be with him and have fun."

"We shall see," Vicky ended the call with Kathie.

"So sorry about that. Kathie is just a pain in the ass." Vicky said to Lara.

"So you have a date?"

Chapter 11

"Please don't start, Sis. I'm already tense enough."



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