

## Chapter 12

[Vivienne]

Before I even knock on the study door to let Dad know that I have arrived, he already welcomes me with a wave of his hand. "Come on in. I was waiting for you," he says, and I take a seat in the chair across from him. He turns his wheelchair around to face me, his hands on the table.

"I will not take much of your time. I understand you must be tired. Besides, we might have to head for dinner soon, or your mom will be furious." He chuckles, and I smile, remembering how strict my mom is when it comes to punctuality.

I wait for him to continue, and when he does, I almost cringe.

"I heard about what happened," he says, "about your divorce."

My divorce.

The words sting so much that I bite my lower lip to hide the pain.

"Elijah says you're sure about this. But as a father, I have to ask. Do you really want to divorce Caden Lawrence?"

I nod, trying to sound as confident as possible. "Yes, Dad. You heard right. That's exactly what I want."

He leans forward in his wheelchair. "I'm not going to ask you why because I know you'll tell me whenever you feel ready. But still. Are you absolutely sure about this? Divorce is such a huge step. It's irreversible. Once you do it, there's no coming back."

I don't know how to reply to that. I don't know whether I'm sure about this or not. All I know is that I want to divorce Caden and end this relationship once and for all.

"Dad, I..."

He holds up a hand to stop me. "Don't answer me now. Just think about it carefully. Don't rush into anything. Take your time."

I nod, thankful for the time to think things through.

"Anyway, the reason I wanted to see you is because I wanted you to know firsthand that your brother recently launched a new company. He's currently looking for someone to hold the post of CEO, and I think you might be his best choice. What do you think?"

His words bring me so much joy. My brother always wanted to start his own company. Sure, he was happy running our family business too, but he always wanted to expand his horizons. And now, he finally got the chance to do what he always dreamed of doing.

I am so proud of him.

I grin, unable to help myself. "Is it the jewelry business?"

He nods, a small smile appearing on his face.

"Oh my God. That's amazing. I need to meet him immediately. Where is he?"

"In London, taking care of some minor issues. He will return tomorrow morning, so you guys can meet then."

I am about to ask him more about the company when Mrs. Williams' voice floats from the intercom, informing us that dinner is ready.

"Okay. Thank you for telling me," I say, getting up.

He smiles, wheeling himself out of the study. "Now, let's go before your mom gets mad at us."

I laugh, following him.

We are halfway through dinner when my phone rings, and my mom gives me a knowing look. She always hates it when we bring our phones to the dinner table.

"Sorry, Mom," I say, taking out my phone, hoping to reject the call. But the moment I see the name flashing on the screen, my legs do the rest of the work. Before I know it, I'm away from Mom and Dad's earshot, already answering his call, as if I have no control over this.

"Where the hell are you? I have been calling you forever," Caden yells. I frown, wondering why he's acting like he still has some hold over me. Sure, we are not divorced yet, but we are in the process of it. I am single now. I don't owe him anything.

I open my mouth to say something when he cuts me off, sounding even angrier.

"Forget it. Wherever you are, come to the hospital right now."

"Hospital? Why? What happened?"

"I can't tell you everything over the damn phone. Just come here as soon as you can." He hangs up before I get a chance to say anything.

I stare at my phone, wondering if I should listen to him this one last time. When my gaze shifts to my parents, who are watching me curiously, I know what I have to do.

I pocket my phone, take a deep breath, and walk back to the dining table.

"I'm sorry, Mom. Dad. Something came up, and I have to leave," I say, already planning to make my visit as short as possible. I don't know why Caden wants me there, but I know it's nothing good.

I just hope I don't regret this.

Mom is about to say something when Dad stops her.

"It's okay. Marcus will drive you wherever you need to go. Just take care of yourself and come home soon."

I nod, planting a kiss on his cheek and hugging my mom before rushing out of the house.

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[Caden]

Mom and I are in the waiting room when the doctor finally walks out of Dad's room. I jump to my feet, eager to know about his condition.

"How is he?" Mom asks, unable to control herself.

The doctor gives us a reassuring smile. "He's fine. We got him stabilized. He is resting now. However, I would suggest we keep an eye on him for the next few days. Also, please ensure that he reduces

stress. He is diabetic, right? Make sure he keeps his blood sugar levels in check. Otherwise, he might suffer from another heart attack."

Mom nods, too overwhelmed to say anything.

After the doctor leaves, Mom turns to face me. "I'm going to stay here tonight. Why don't you head home and get some sleep? I'll call you in the morning."

I shake my head. "No. I'll stay. I have called Vivienne. She'll keep me company."

The mention of Vivienne makes my mom frown. She sighs, shaking her head. "Vivienne, Vivienne, Vivienne. When will you understand she's not worth it? Look at her, so much happened, and she's nowhere to be found. If she had even a little bit of shame, she would've come here on her own accord. Instead, you have to call her like some errand boy."

I roll my eyes, already knowing where this is going. Mom doesn't like Vivienne. She never has. Ever since I married her, my parents never missed a chance to show how unhappy they were with my decision.

Mom continues, "She has changed you, Caden. She ruined you. The old you would never have tolerated such behavior from any woman. But look at you, always making excuses for her. You are behaving like a fool. You are throwing away your life for a girl who doesn't deserve you. Stop giving her so much importance. She isn't worth it. Never has been."

If only my dad wasn't lying in a hospital bed after having a heart attack, I would have argued with her. But I don't. Instead, I ignore her and walk out of the waiting room, wanting to clear my head.

I stop, however, when someone calls me by my name.

"Caden!"



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*Thank you for reading this chapter :)*

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