

## Chapter 20

Dad nods, as if agreeing with every word Mom said.

"You should have married Sasha. You two would make a perfect pair. Not like that Vivienne, who's a scheming manipulator. I always warned you not to marry her, and I still firmly believe you would've been much better off with someone like Sasha. Sasha knows you inside out, has been a part of our lives for years, understands your every whim and desire."

"It's better late than never," Mom adds. "Now that the divorce is underway, I'm sure Sasha is available. Why don't you take her out on a date? Try to get to know her better. Perhaps you'll discover a genuine connection, someone who truly appreciates you for who you are."

Dad nods.

"I agree. Give it a go. Take her on a few dates. Maybe you will learn to appreciate her for the sincere person she really is."

"It's a good plan. Do it."

I listen to the two of them plotting and making suggestions while I'm in the room. I shake my head and stand up, already feeling exhausted and frustrated by their interference in my private life. I know they have the best of intentions. They care and only want me to be happy. But my parents have been against Vivienne from the very beginning, so it's no surprise they are so ready to encourage me to date Sasha. They were the ones who forced me to take her as my assistant in the

first place, despite her coming from an affluent family who didn't need to work for anyone.

I glance at my watch. I should leave, otherwise I may say something that will upset my parents. Considering Dad isn't exactly in the best shape, I should learn to keep my mouth shut, now more than ever.

I sigh. "I'll think about it. And I'm sorry, but I have to go now. I have a few appointments scheduled."

They don't stop me as I walk out of the room. But Mom follows me to the elevator and stops me before I enter.

She presses her palm against my cheek and stares into my eyes.

"I know you think we are interfering in your personal life, but I only want what's best for you and for the business. Trust me, Caden, Sasha will make you much happier. She's the right one for you. She always has been. And because I know you would never take the initiative yourself, I told her that you will be taking her out to dinner tonight."

I can't believe she just said that. "You did what?"

She shushes me, waving her hand around. "You should be grateful, Caden. You were always headstrong and wouldn't even entertain the idea of taking a good woman like Sasha. Now that you and Vivienne are separated, this is the right time to explore a possible relationship. And before you tell me that I've overstepped, know that this is for your own good, okay? Just give her a chance. Please, promise me that?"

"Mom, this is too much. I can't promise something like that."

She tsks at me, pressing her finger to my lips. "None of that, mister. I raised you better than that. Go to dinner. At the very least, just treat her to dinner, nothing else. For once, just do as I say without an argument, okay?"

I let out a heavy sigh and nod, if only to placate her.

But I really don't want to take Sasha anywhere, much less on a date.

Mom shakes her head, her expression hardening. "You always defended Vivienne, but look where it got you. She was never good enough for you, Caden. Always wrapped up in her own ambitions, using you as a stepping stone. You deserve someone who truly cares about you, someone like Sasha."

I resist the urge to argue further. Deep down, I know she means well, but her words about Vivienne cut deeper than I care to admit.

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[Vivienne]

After leaving Rosita's store, with a promise to see her at dinner, I ask Marcus to drive me straight to my brother's place.

Marcus knows the address, and it doesn't take long before he's pulling up the car in the driveway.

"It might take me some time," I tell him, and he nods.



"I will be right here waiting."

"Thanks," I say to him and give him a small smile before climbing out of the car.

Once inside the building, I make my way to the receptionist.

"I need to see Mr. Richardson," I say to her, and she nods, checking something on her computer.

"What's your name?"

"Vivienne Sinclair. I don't have an appointment or anything, but I would greatly appreciate it if I could see him."

She gives me an apologetic smile. "Sorry, Ms. Sinclair. It seems Mr. Richardson has no free slots at the moment, so you'll have to wait if you don't have an appointment."

I know it would be much easier to see him if I just told this woman who I really am, that Harvey Richardson is my brother, but I don't want to do that. I have plans to work here, and revealing my identity would jeopardize everything I've worked so hard for.

I decide to wait. "I'll wait."

She smiles at me. "Sure. Why don't you check out our store? We have a great jewelry collection this year. Every piece on display this month is exclusively designed by the famous designer Jasper Sterling."

Jasper Sterling. It seems like a century has passed since I heard that name.

I smile to myself. "Of course. I would love to check it out."

She directs me towards the jewelry shop, which is actually on the ground floor of the building, and I thank her before stepping inside.

As I walk into the store, I take in the décor, the smell, and the pride in the air as my feet carry me towards a ring set in the glass case. It is absolutely beautiful, a masterpiece that I can't help but be proud of.

"Look! What the cat dragged in!" A shrill voice cuts through my thoughts, forcing me to tear my eyes away from the display. I turn around just in time to see the woman I know too well, glaring at me.

Not again.

"What do you want, Sasha?" I ask, annoyed, wanting nothing more than to get rid of her.

She smirks at me, then changes her expression so fast, it almost gives me whiplash. "Security! Security!" she screams, her loud voice echoing throughout the whole floor.

Moments later, several guards, staff, and customers gather around us.

Sasha points a finger at me. "She's a thief. I saw her trying to steal that ring!"