

## Chapter 89 Fake Medicine

Sheila's heart skipped a beat, startled by the sudden noise behind her.

Instinctively, she spun around, clutching the medicine bottle tightly against her back. When her eyes landed on Joshua, her shoulders sagged in relief. After a quick glance to confirm they were alone, she murmured, "I'm just getting medicine for Jerald."

Joshua's gaze landed on the bottle she tried to hide.

Then he glanced at her uneasy, tense expression.

Something obviously wasn't right.

His brow furrowed. "Then what's with all the secrecy?"

Without hesitation, he reached for the bottle, turning it in his hands to examine it closely.

Sheila's voice dropped to a whisper. "Actually, I was going to ask if you had any connections to get more of this medicine."

Joshua squinted at the label. He wasn't exactly well-versed in pharmaceuticals, but the name of the drug rang a faint bell.

Was it rare? He couldn't be sure.

What he did know was that it cost a small fortune—and it certainly wasn't covered by insurance.

His interest waned. "Didn't Caden buy this already?"

"Exactly." Sheila nodded, her eyes narrowing. "And that's the point. Why let him take all the credit if we can get it ourselves? Also, this stuff works well, but we're running low."

Joshua arched an eyebrow. "Aren't there still plenty left in the box?"

Sheila hesitated, then leaned in closer. "They're fake." Lowering her voice even more, she continued, "I was worried we might run out, so I bought some counterfeit ones as a backup."

"What?!" Joshua felt his stomach churn. "Do you realize how dangerous that could be? What if something goes wrong?"

It wasn't Jerald's possible death that troubled him—it was the thought of being held responsible.

As he reached to dispose of the fake meds, Sheila grabbed his arm. "You're overreacting," she protested. "I know people who work at the factory where these are made. They replicate big-name drugs all the time. Sure, the fakes might not be as effective, but no one's ever died from them. They're not dirt cheap either—I paid a good sum for them. Throwing them away would be such a waste."

But Joshua shook his head firmly. "No. They have to go."

Sheila's lips tightened in frustration. "And if Jerald doesn't take these, what then? You're just going to let Caden swoop in with the real stuff and play the hero?"

"He's the eldest. Isn't that his responsibility?"

"Sure, but who was by Jerald's side when he needed help? You were. And everyone remembers that. Do you really want to let Caden steal your thunder this late in the game?"

Joshua paused, her words working their way into his mind.

He hadn't stayed by Jerald's hospital bed out of concern—he had been calculating.

If Jerald died, he wanted to be sure the will left him in a secure position.

If Jerald lived, then playing the loyal son might just leave a lasting impression.

And with Caden at odds with Jerald, this was his opportunity to step ahead.

"Fine. I'll figure something out. But don't give him the fake meds just yet."



Joshua snapped a quick photo of the bottle for future reference. "By the way, where's Alicia? I didn't see her when I got back."

Sheila huffed, her irritation flaring. "She's out getting a facial or something. How much money did you even give her?"

Joshua wasn't in the mood for a discussion.

"Stay out of our business," he hissed. "If Lilliana gets wind of this, you know what'll happen."

With that, he pulled out his phone and walked away, dialing Alicia's number.

Alicia had just stepped out of Monica's place, where she had safely stashed the photos Caden had slipped to her.

When she picked up, her voice was light, casual. "What's up?"

"Why aren't you home yet?" Joshua's tone was impatient.

"I'm on my way back," she replied simply, almost wanting to end the call there. But then, she remembered the part she had to play and quickly added, "I just left Monica's."

"Oh, okay. Anyways, I got off work early today," Joshua said, his words carrying a faint urgency. "Come home soon. Let's spend some time together."

Alicia hesitated, caught off guard by his sudden request.

Even through the phone, she could sense the frustration simmering beneath his smooth facade.

"I'm still on my period," she replied, trying to keep her tone neutral.

Joshua let out a low chuckle. "Do you think I only want to see you for sex? We were married for two years. Did I ever do anything to you back then?"

His words only deepened the disgust bubbling inside her.

The irony wasn't lost on her—when she craved his attention, he was off indulging with Lilliana.

Now that she wanted nothing to do with him, he was suddenly present—persistent, if anything.

But Alicia knew better. Whatever was meant to happen would eventually unfold. "Okay, I'm on my way back now," she said, her voice steady.

"Great," Joshua murmured, as if appeased. "I've been missing your cooking. It's been a while."

Alicia nearly laughed aloud.

Cooking? Again?

He and Caden really were brothers—they both treated her like some kind of servant.

"I should've just invited you to join us earlier," she quipped sarcastically.

"What?" Joshua was confused.

Clearing her throat, she covered her tracks quickly. "Nothing, I just had dinner with Monica."

As soon as the call ended, Alicia shook her head, half-amused, half-annoyed. If cooking was what he wanted, she'd oblige—for now. It was better than the alternative. After all, sex was the last thing she wanted from him.

With a new plan forming, she turned back toward Monica's door. "Monica, do you still have that medicine you mentioned?"

Monica nodded and went to fetch a small vial. "Yeah, you should make him take it now. It takes a few days to really kick in."

"Perfect," Alicia muttered, a grim smile tugging at her lips. She took the vial, pocketing it swiftly.

Joshua wanted her cooking? He'd get it, alright.

## Chapter 90 Craving An Old Flavor

The vial contained a medicine that could induce a lack of appetite, drowsiness, and most notably, a significant decrease in sexual desire.

"This is an upgraded version crafted by my mentor," Monica explained with a knowing smirk. "It's tailored for patients who have... difficulty controlling themselves. The side effects are mild, but it works like a charm. The best part? It's nearly impossible to detect!"

Alicia's curiosity was piqued. "Patients? Do people really struggle with controlling their sexual urges?"

Monica, well-versed in the oddities of human behavior, shrugged it off like it was nothing out of the ordinary. "You wouldn't believe the bizarre conditions out there. It's hard to keep up. My mentor and I have dedicated ourselves to researching these issues, and we've made impressive strides over the past two years."

Alicia found herself both impressed and a little ashamed. "You put in so much effort, and here I am using your work for... less noble purposes."

Monica laughed, a mischievous glint in her eyes. "Oh, don't sweat it. Serving justice to assholes like Joshua is as noble a purpose as ever. Honestly, I wish I could whip up a pill that would turn him into a pathetic little lapdog. That way, when you're in a foul mood, you could kick him around, and when you're feeling generous, you could feed him shit."

Alicia couldn't help but burst into giggles, the imagery disturbing yet oddly satisfying.

Being with Monica was such a welcome escape, but she couldn't afford to dilly-dally. She sighed, painfully aware that the clock was ticking.

Monica noticed her hesitation to leave. "Stop acting like you miss me so much. If you really did, you'd think of me more often."

Alicia smiled faintly. "I've been busy today. I didn't avoid you on purpose, silly."

Monica quirked an eyebrow. "Busy with what exactly? You've been tied up all day."

Monica's question immediately brought Caden to the forefront of Alicia's mind. Their earlier encounter replayed in vivid detail—how he'd done unspeakable things to her.

It wasn't something she could easily forget, and just thinking about it made her cheeks flush.

Monica noticed the change immediately and her curiosity flared. "Oh-ho! Look at you! Who's got you blushing like that? Some dashing rogue stealing your heart?"

Alicia tried to wave it off, fanning her reddened cheeks. "It's nothing like that! I just had a lot of errands to run."

"Errands, huh? What kind of errand would make you turn as red as a tomato?" Monica teased, her suspicions only growing. She leaned forward with a conspiratorial grin. "Come on, spill the beans. Who's the lucky guy? I've never seen you so horny, not even with Joshua."

Alicia gasped, taken aback by the comment. "Horny? What on earth are you talking about? I'm not horny!"

She quickly rubbed her cheeks, as if that would erase the telltale blush.

Monica crossed her arms, raising an eyebrow in disbelief, like a parent catching their child in a lie.

Feeling cornered, Alicia finally caved, her voice defensive. "After I parted ways with Rachel, I met up with Caden. He said he had something I wanted, and things got a bit heated. That's why I'm late."

Monica's sharp gaze softened noticeably when Caden's name slipped into the conversation. "So, it was Caden who held you up?" she asked, her tone lightening.

Alicia's heart fluttered unsteadily, beating in time with the sudden nervousness gripping her chest. "Yes," she squeaked guiltily.



Monica leaned in, her tone tinged with concern. "Did he give you a hard time?"

Alicia caught the shift in Monica's demeanor the moment she mentioned Caden. It was as though his name alone had the power to dispel Monica's earlier suspicions.

How remarkable, she thought. Almost too convenient.

"He wasn't exactly cruel," Alicia admitted, "but he didn't make things easy for me either."

Monica let out a long sigh, her tension easing away. "That explains it. You were acting so oddly, I thought you'd fallen head over heels for some idiot again."

Alicia was rendered speechless, but now that Monica stopped teasing her, she felt relieved.

Yet, something about Monica's reaction sparked her curiosity. "You didn't suspect Caden at all?" she asked cautiously.

Monica blinked, her lips twitching with amusement. "Suspect him of what? Being involved with you?"

Alicia nodded.

Monica laughed aloud, the sound ringing out with genuine disbelief. "You and Caden? That's like me dating Joshua. What would you make of that?"

Alicia grimaced internally.

What an awful comparison.

After parting ways with Monica, Alicia found herself on Sunset Road, picking up one of Joshua's favorite snacks. The whole time, her mind buzzed with conflicting thoughts.

When she returned home to the Yates Mansion, she discreetly crushed the medicine she had brought and mixed it into the snack before presenting it to him.

Joshua's brow furrowed in displeasure the moment his eyes landed on

the takeout. "Didn't I just say I was craving your food?"

Alicia kept her voice even as she replied, "Cooking takes time, you know. Just have a little of this while I prepare something."

The tension in Joshua's posture eased slightly.

He was always picky, rarely finding food that satisfied him, and few people remembered his specific tastes—but Alicia did. She always had.

It was just like before.

Joshua's gaze lingered on her, his voice softening. "Sunset Road is over forty minutes away. Did you take a cab?"

Alicia offered a vague nod. "Yes," she said, not wanting to linger on the details. She had no desire to dwell on their strained dynamic longer than necessary.

Unexpectedly, Joshua stepped forward and wrapped his arms around her, pulling her close. "Thank you. You still care about me so much. After our divorce, I even began to doubt if you ever truly loved me. Looks like I was just overthinking."

Alicia remained silent, biting back the urge to roll her eyes.

She thought bitterly, "Overthinking? No. I just needed you close enough to drug your food."

The feeling of his body pressed against hers made her skin crawl, and she instinctively tried to push him away.

But Joshua only tightened his grip, refusing to let go.

Memories of their two years of marriage flitted through her mind like unwelcome ghosts. He'd been endlessly busy, always under pressure, and his demands—especially in the bedroom—had been relentless.

At first, he'd constantly tried to seduce her, but her shyness and discomfort had only fueled his frustration.

Eventually, he gave up, leaving her untouched.



And then came Lilliana, who was bold, daring, and more than eager to satisfy his needs.

Lilliana had been everything Alicia wasn't—exciting, confident, and skilled in the art of seduction.

But even the sexiest of women would lose her appeal after enough time. Now that Lilliana was pregnant, she'd grown insufferably arrogant and unpredictable, adding more stress than excitement to his life.

Now, he craved the very same Alicia who once repelled him.

Men like him always grew tired of their own choices, endlessly chasing the next fleeting thrill.

Alicia's stomach churned at Joshua's familiar, sickening scent, so she subtly held her breath. "I can't cook like this," she muttered.

Joshua, ignoring her protest, buried his face in the curve of her neck, inhaling deeply.

"There's no rush to eat," he whispered.

Just then, the sound of footsteps descending the stairs made them both pause.

Shelia appeared in the doorway, her eyes narrowing at the scene before her. "What are you doing?" she asked, her voice dripping with disdain.

Joshua reluctantly released Alicia, an annoyed frown creasing his brow.

Shelia's gaze flicked between them, settling on Alicia with a sneer. "Are you really that horny?" she scoffed. "Can't you at least wait until you're out of the kitchen?"