

Chapter 3 More Pain

Roxanne took the first taxi she saw and headed to LexCorp. She did not care that there was a mother and stubborn crying baby inside. In fact, she liked the fact that there was a crying baby in it, that way, she was able to mask the sound of her own wailing.

She would have bailed from work if today wasn't so important to her. Besides, it won't hurt to get a piece of good news after being slapped in the face with a bad one.

So, she bit her lower lip and tried to hold on to the thin thread her sanity was clinging to. All the while, trying to think of two good reasons why she shouldn't drive a bullet into Jonah's heart.

Finally, when the taxi alighted fifty-story building, she jumped down from the taxi and pushed her way past the high glass doors.

She ignored every greeting and did not say a word to anybody, not even the receptionist whom she usually threw a smile at every morning; well, this wasn't like every other morning.

Roxanne hurried to the bathroom on the ground floor and planted herself in front of the mirror. Even though she was forty-five minutes late for work, she couldn't bring herself to walk into the conference Hall with her eyeliner smudged and her mascara running down her cheeks, mixed with her tears.

She drew out a wad of tissue and wiped her face bare.

Yes, it wouldn't hurt to look bare and numb, those were the words closest to defining what she felt right now.

When she was done, she scurried out of the bathroom stall, into the office lobby, and flung herself into the first elevator she saw open.

Her knees were shaking, her head was spinning, the hole in her chest seemed to sink deeper and deeper with every second, but Roxanne had to pull through it.

"Think of your promotion," she said to herself, inhaling and exhaling deeply and slowly.

In three minutes, she was on the 27th floor, where the conference Hall sat. She hurried out of the elevator, clutching her bag the same way pain held her heart, and navigated through the lobby of offices, until she found the door of the conference room.

It was slightly open. Roxanne inhaled deeply. She could do this, she could pull herself together for thirty minutes. She just had to.

On that note, she squeezed her way through the door and sneaked into the hall.

All eyes around the round table fell on her immediately.

Including her CEO's, Alexander. She feigned a smile as she squeezed herself into a seat by the door.

The elderly man did not take his eyes off her, instead, he frowned.

"Nice of you to join us almost an hour late, Miss Harvey."

Oh no. She was screwed, what would she say to him? Roxanne thought of opening her mouth to say something.

"I'm sorry, sir, I was..."

"There is no need, we were just about rounding off. You can meet your colleagues..." he cut in then paused and heaved a long sigh. "Ex-colleague for the rest of the details..."

Roxanne blinked twice. The last thing she heard him say was "ex-colleagues" before she zoned out completely.

What did he mean by ex-colleagues? She shook her head violently. This had to be a dream, every part of it had to be a scary nightmare. Maybe if she shook her head hard enough, she would wake up.

"The company needed to lay off some people due to the recent struggles. You are one of them. You're fired, Roxanne Harvey."

As she struggled to make sense of what she had just heard, she sat stunned in between her colleagues.

Her shocked eyes continued to dance around the round table. She was finding it hard to believe her ears.

What did he mean by she was FIRED? How the hell could she be fired? No! There had to be a mistake somewhere.

She didn't know when she stood up and banged the table with her palms.

"What?!"

Not this, not today. All these things could not be happening to her today. Her world could not be crumbling into pieces in just one day!

Alexander, the CEO of Lex Corp - the company she had given seven years of her blood, sweat, and tears to- tore his gaze from the paper in his hands and looked over to her, ordering her to sit down.

Roxanne wouldn't budge. She admired and respected the older man, but this mistake had to be rectified immediately.

"With all due respect Mr. Lex, there has to be some kind of mistake..."

"Are you saying Hardy did not access your efficiency correctly?" he cut in, visibly irked.

Roxanne's eyes drifted to Hardy, Thomas Hardy. He stood behind Alexander, his usual grin spread across his face.

His eyes danced around her face. As if saying, "I won bitch".

Thomas Hardy was, and still remains Roxanne's worst nightmare.

Head of human management at LexCorp, Thomas Hardy, had always had his eyes on Roxanne.

Four times he had tried to get Roxanne into his bed-or rather, office table-four times, she had blatantly refused him.

Thomas had not taken it likely. After serving her countless queries, he had finally decided to threaten her with her stay at LexCorp.

"If you keep on like this, your days in this corporation are numbered," his words echoed in her ears like thunder.

Damn. You. Bastard.

She cursed underneath her breath.

Desperate, she returned her focus to the older man.

"Sir please, I have given my life to this company. You have to understand that I..."

'That this job is the only thing that's keeping me sane. That I have lost my fiancé, severed all ties with my family and this is all I have left...' she wanted to add, with shaking breath. Thankfully, she was interrupted by the last man she wanted to look at now; well, after Jonah.

"You can see me after this meeting if you have any complaints Miss Harvey. For now, please sit down," Thomas ordered, his daunting eyes toyed with her furious violet ones.

Defeated, Roxanne fell back into her seat, trying to still her violently shivering body and quivering lips.

The rest of the meeting went by in a blur. For the remaining ten minutes, Roxanne could only focus on one thing; ten ways to castrate Thomas once the meeting was over, and extend the hand of castration to Jonah as well.

As Alexander rose to leave the board room, Roxanne rushed to her feet, following him closely behind.

"Sir please, give me a chance to..."

"You heard Mister Hardy, if there's anything you need, be sure to meet him." Alexander threw over his shoulder, not sparing her another glance.

Roxanne staggered back, this couldn't be happening, it had be a nightmare, one that she really needed to wake up from.

Slowly, she turned back to Thomas, giving him a stony glare as she approached him.

"The nerve of you," she said. Her tone was low; anger had made her almost inaudible.

Thomas's eyes rested on her, traveling around her face as he scoffed.

"Don't act so surprised. You certainly knew this was coming for you," he shot back, looking over her shoulder.

"All this because I wouldn't let you fuck me?"

The words were out before she could take them back, but she fought the urge to cry. She would never give Thomas the pleasure of seeing her distraught, vulnerable.

He bursts out laughing, tapping her shoulder for support.

Roxanne wished she could stab his hands, but an assault charge would do her no good.

"Don't flatter yourself Miss Harvey, I can get a good fuck anywhere."

He leaned into her and whispered against her left ear.

"This is because you thought you were different. I am simply reminding you that you're like every other American woman out there. Now, you're like every jobless woman out there." The way he emphasized the word 'jobless' caused Roxanne to shrink under his gaze.

No matter how she looked at it, he had the upper hand.

Thomas straightened his frame and shook his head, before slamming her face with a teary view of his back.

"You have just ten minutes to exit this building Miss Harvey. Make it count."

She heard Hardy's voice call out.

Standing transfixed, she watched him exit the room with his back turned to her. Her eyelids burned with the tears that threatened to swarm her cheeks, even as her knees buckled beneath her thighs.

Five years of dedication was just thrown out of the window. Everything she had ever worked hard for, walked out of the room with Hardy.

Beads of sweat trickled down her face. This still wasn't making any sense. How could Lex Corp throw away seven years of hard work and dedication? Did her countless sacrifices to this company mean nothing to them? Did nothing she did for anybody matter to them?

Her family! Jonah! And now LexCorp.

Seven years of giving Lex Corp all she had. Seven years of being endlessly dedicated came to a tragic ending in the twinkle of an eye.

And Jonah? Roxanne found herself choking on her tears as his face flashed through her mind.

She had been with him for more than half of her life, growing from friends to lovers. Yet, even he did not think twice before snatching the greatest opportunity to break her heart into pieces. She suddenly remembered her best friend's words this morning.

"Your modesty insults me, Roxy. You know that job is yours. Girl you've given that company all your late nights and early as fuck mornings, they'll be crazy not to give you that promotion." Emily's words had assured her she would get the promotion.

Planning your weekend reading? Ensure you're on 05s.org for uninterrupted enjoyment. The next chapter is just a click away, exclusively available on our site. Happy reading! Emily was the one person she should talk to right now. Her best friend and flat mate was the one person she needed to see, she was the one person who could pacify her right now. With that thought, Roxanne picked up her bag and whatever was left of her dignity and hurried out of conference room, running out of the building without looking back.

The next thirty days went by in a blur. Between searching for jobs online and spending most of her time in her sister's bakery, Roxanne had lost track of time.

Isabelle, her oldest sister and best friend had been wonderful to her. Besides Emily, she was the next person Roxanne knew she could run to, whether she needed a helping hand or a listening ear. After all, Isabelle understood more than anyone what it meant to be blindsided by family.

After Isabelle came out as a lesbian to the Harvey's, the rest of the family had found ways to isolate themselves from her and her affairs.

Isabelle Harvey couldn't have been gladder anyway. It allowed her the freedom to get married to Carrie and be happy.

It was on one of the visits to Isabelle's confectionery shop that Roxanne had been talked into attending the wedding.

Isabelle had gone so hard on 'family first' that she could not believe it was the same Isabelle their mother had practically kicked out.

Roxanne found hope in Isabelle. If she could attend the wedding and look at their parents without breaking down, then Roxanne could attend the wedding as well.

Isabelle wasn't the one who was about to watch her ex-fiancé get married to her twin sister.

But, Isabelle made Roxanne promise to attend. Who says no to their favorite sister?

Jonah tried to reach her. Calls went straight to voicemail and emails remained in the trash of her Gmail. The night he dared to show himself at her house, Emily gathered all the morality she could muster not to beat him up. The wedding was only a few hours away. Emily and Isabelle had taken it upon themselves to be her personal stylist and make-up artist.

Now, all she needed was a date.

"There is no way we're letting you step feet into that cathedral without a man," Emily's voice still thundered in her head as she swiped through her tinder app.

None of the seemingly decent men she had found had been interested in her profile. She could remember Emily saying it was as a result of the picture she used, but Roxanne didn't see anything wrong in the photo and so did not change it. When the last person refused a meet up, Roxanne sighed and turned off the laptop.

"Men are stupid," she said, causing Emily who was busy knitting a scarf on the couch in front of the television, to smile.

"Tomorrow is the wedding, sure you don't want to try harder?"

"Fuck it. I'm going to bed. I'll survive tomorrow on my own."

Roxanne gave up, taking slow strides up the stairs.

Deep down, she wanted to believe it was true.

Maybe, just maybe if she said it to herself in the mirror time and time again, she would be able to believe herself.

She might just be able to make it through the wedding tomorrow without pulling the trigger on any of them; Rayla or Jonah. Or, Both?