

The bitter goodbye

(Olivia)

As I continued to search that day, luck was nally on my side. I found a one-bedroom apartment downtown. It wasn't anything fancy, but it was clean and furnished, and most importantly, it was mine.

It had this tiny balcony that overlooked the city, a fresh start in every sense of the word. The rent was reasonable, and thankfully, I had enough saved from my job to cover the rst few months without worry.

Working as a marketing consultant had its perks. Flexible hours, decent pay, and most of all, the ability to focus on something apart from my broken marriage.

It kept me grounded, especially now when my entire life felt like it had been ipped upside down. I'd have something to pour myself into, to distract me from the mess Aaron and Lila had left behind.

After signing the lease, I picked up my keys and made my way to the apartment. The moment I stepped inside, a wave of relief washed over me. I was alone in a place that was mine. No memories of Aaron, no traces of betrayal. Just quiet.

I set my luggage down by the door and took a deep breath. The silence was comforting, for once. I walked through the small living room and opened the sliding door to the balcony. The city below buzzed with life, and for a moment, I felt the weight of everything lift from my shoulders.

This was it. My new beginning.

Just as I was about to step back inside, my phone rang.

"Hello," I answered quietly.

"Olivia," my mother's voice was stern, the way it always got when she was about to deliver one of her lectures.

"Your father and I need to speak with you." She said.

"Okay." I replied.

"Come over. Now," she said, not even bothering to wait for my response before hanging up.

I stood frozen for a moment, staring at the phone. I didn't want to go, didn't want to walk into whatever storm awaited me, but I also knew avoiding it wouldn't change anything. So, with a heavy heart, I grabbed my keys and headed out.

The drive to my parents house was short, but it felt like an eternity. I barely noticed the familiar streets as I pulled up to their driveway, memories ooding back of all the times I had been here, trying so hard to make them proud. And yet, it was never enough.

I knocked on the door, and it opened almost immediately. My father stood there, his expression cold and distant.

"Come in," he said gruy, moving aside to let me in.

I stepped inside, my heart racing as I walked into the living room where my mother sat, her face drawn into an unreadable expression. I could feel the tension in the air, thick and suffocating.

"Sit down, Olivia," my mother said, gesturing to the couch.

I did as I was told, feeling like a child about to be scolded for breaking some unwritten rule. They both sat across from me, their eyes heavy with judgment.

"Your marriage to Aaron," My father started to say.

"It was a disaster from the beginning. We hoped you would gure it out, but clearly, you couldn't even manage that." My stomach twisted. I knew where this was going, but I wasn't ready to hear it.

"I'm sorry things didn't work out, but that's not all on me. Aaron ch..." My mother cut me off, her tone sharp.

"You've always made excuses, Olivia. Always blaming someone else when things go wrong. Aaron moved on because he found someone better. And frankly, we don't blame him." The words hit like a punch to the gut. I opened my mouth to argue, to defend myself, but I couldn't nd the words.

"We've given you every opportunity, every chance to prove yourself," My father continued, his voice growing colder.

"But you've done nothing but disappoint us." I swallowed hard, my heart pounding in my chest.

"What are you saying?" I asked. My mother leaned forward, glaring at me.

"We're saying that it's time you stop pretending like you belong here. You were never really one of us." I blinked, trying to understand what she was saying.

"What are you talking about?" My father sighed, rubbing his temples as if this conversation were an inconvenience.

"You're adopted, Olivia. We thought it was time you knew. After everything, it's clear you're not part of this family."

The room spun. Adopted? My whole life, I had felt like the outsider, the one who never quite t in, but I had always brushed it off as my insecurities. And now they were telling me I wasn't their daughter? That they didn't want me?

"Mom, Dad... what are you saying?" I managed to choke out, my voice trembling.

"We're saying you're no longer welcome here," Mom said, her voice cold and nal.

"You couldn't make your marriage work, and we've had enough of your failures. It's time you move on." I stared at them, the people who raised me, who I had spent my entire life trying to please, and realized they never cared. Not really. I had been living a lie.

Just then, the door opened, and Lila walked in, her eyes red and puffy from crying. She looked at me with guilt in her eyes.

"Please, don't do this. Olivia, I know we messed up, but this isn't the way." My mother's expression softened slightly, but only for a moment.

"Lila, you're just in time. We're explaining to Olivia that she needs to leave." Mom said.

"I'm sorry," Lila replied, her voice trembling.

"I didn't want this. Please, just give her a chance. We can work this out." My mother looked at her, then back at me.

"Fine. We'll give you some time to collect your things." I nodded, though my heart was pounding. I knew this wouldn't be the end.

Once my parents left the room, Lila's demeanor changed instantly. She turned to me, a smirk spreading across her face.

"You really thought you'd be part of this family? How pathetic. You were always the outsider." Her voice dripped with mockery.

"You should have seen this coming. Aaron and I were just waiting for the right moment to nally kick you out." I stared at her, shocked and hurt.

"How can you be so cruel?" She laughed, a harsh, bitter sound.

"Cruel? You mean like you were with me? Always thinking you were better, always stealing the spotlight. You brought this on yourself bitch." I wanted to scream, to ght back, but instead, I took a deep breath, ghting to keep my composure.

"I'm leaving. I won't let you or anyone else tear me apart." Lila's smile faded slightly, but she didn't try to stop me.

"Good riddance. Don't let the door hit you on the way out." I turned and walked out, my heart aching. I'd lost so much, but I refused to let Lila's cruelty break me. I had to move on, nd a way to rebuild my life from the shattered pieces.

As I drove away from my parents house, I felt the tears nally come, but I kept my head high. This was the end of one chapter, but it was also the beginning of a new one.

I would nd my way, no matter what.