

CHOSEN 1893

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The car pulled to a curb and Yasmine spoke with a detached indifference before swinging the door open and stepping out.

She glanced at the nearby diner, a sardonic smile creeping over her lips. The place was one of P City's top-tier spots, not the kind of joint a college kid with no family to speak of could afford – hell, even folks from a decent background wouldn't waltz in there without a second thought.

Talking about splashing the cash.

Boyd followed, stepping out of the car's other side.

Yasmine was on the edge of the pavement, the rush of traffic buzzing by. Boyd, with a furrowed brow, strode over to her and guided her across to the safety of the sidewalk.

Yasmine brushed off his hand, "I'll say it again – I'm not feeling great, I'm not going to the hospital, and I certainly don't need you hovering over me every second. You go meet whoever you're meeting. I'm heading home."d2

She pulled out her phone to order a ride.

Boyd, with pursed lips, snatched the phone from her grasp. Yasmine looked at her empty hand, her usually impassive face darkening with irritation. "Boyd, there's a limit, you know. My temper's been good lately, but don't mistake that for weakness."

Instead of responding, Boyd opened the car door and nudged her back in.

"Can't bear the thought of leaving you here to fend for yourself. Does that make me heartless and cold? I don't think so."

Her smile was syrupy sweet, "Heartless and cold? Those words don't even begin to do you justice."

Boyd slid back into the car and shut the door behind him. "Drive."

Rubbing at her temples, Yasmine continued, "So you're playing the soothing boyfriend now, only to deal with Serana later? Doesn't that wear you out?"

"You and she are never on the same scale for me," Boyd said. "Making you feel better doesn't mean I have to deal with her. And like I said, she's not your concern."

Yasmine gave a half-hearted smile, watching the road ahead, "If you don't listen to me and end up taking me to the hospital anyway, you might as well fire your driver and sell the car."

She noticed the driver stiffen – clearly, he wasn't deaf.

Boyd turned to look at her, his hand briefly checking her forehead for fever before letting it drop. "You sure you don't need the hospital?"

She gave him a withering glance and remained silent. The look in her eyes said it all – she was looking at him like he was an idiot.

Boyd pressed his lips together, then took her hand gently, "Home."

"My place," Yasmine corrected.

He didn't speak, just gave a meaningful look to the driver, who understood immediately.

On the ride back, Yasmine, leaning against the seat with her eyes closed, seemed genuinely uncomfortable.

As expected, Serana's call came through. Boyd answered honestly, saying that

Yasmine wasn't feeling well – and Yasmine didn't even bat an eyelash.

Was Boyd honest? Painfully so. Not just with her, but with everyone. It seemed 'lies' were not in his vocabulary. But then again, she couldn't fault someone for being too sincere.

Half-asleep, she felt the car stop and was just straightening up when Boyd

scooped her out of the seat.

Seeing they were at Boyd's apartment, she frowned, "So my words are just

bullshit to you now?"

He gave her a disapproving glance.

Yasmine knew he disapproved of her choice of words, but at the moment, she

couldn't be bothered to come up with something more elegant that carried the

punch she intended.

"I have everything you need here. Aren't you feeling unwell?"

She didn't bother to respond.

Back in the apartment, Boyd set her on the couch. "Rest up. I'll whip something

up for you."

Yasmine wasn't hungry, but she didn't protest. Just like she said, her words were as good as nothing to Boyd.

During his cooking stint, she took a quick shower. Emerging, she caught the comforting scent of chicken soup.

In the dining room, Boyd motioned for her to sit while he ladled the soup into a bowl for her. The table was set with light appetizers – nothing fried, all looking refreshingly appetizing.

Yasmine didn't play coy, digging in as soon as she sat down. Boyd took a seat opposite her, also with a bowl of soup. After a few sips, she noticed he was just having soup as well, and her eyes flickered. "That lazy, huh? You can't even make yourself a proper meal when you're in the kitchen?"

A smile touched his lips, "This is fine by me."

She went back to eating in silence.

Later, after they had finished, Boyd asked if she was feeling any better. Yasmine gave a noncommittal hum.

The next day, Yasmine called in sick to school. Boyd, deciding to play the

devoted caretaker, stayed home with her.

The living room was his makeshift office, papers strewn across the coffee table,

while Yasmine half-watched some TV show.

Before noon, Serana called to check in on them and offered to come over with

lunch, which Boyd promptly turned down.

Yasmine rested her forehead in her hand, listlessly watching a TV show she had

stumbled upon halfway through.

Boyd made no effort to hide, so she couldn't help but overhear. At times like

these, she felt as though women discussing their love lives were truly akin to

lunatics. She didn't want Boyd to have any secret dealings with Serana behind

her back, but neither did she want to watch them openly interact under her very

nose, acting as though they were guiltless. It was even more annoying.

After hanging up the phone, Boyd gave her a glance, "What do you want to eat

for lunch?”

“I don’t know.”

There was still some time, so Boyd didn’t press her further.

However, not long after, the doorbell to the apartment rang. Yasmine, groggy

with sleep, was jolted awake by the sound. The TV in front of her had already

switched to commercials.

Boyd got up to answer it.

It was Serana.

“Why are you here?” he asked.

Serana flashed a smile, “I heard Yasmine wasn’t feeling well. Thought I’d come

by to check on her.”

Yasmine’s brow twitched. Nobody knew better than Serana herself that her

presence was the last thing Yasmine needed. It was almost like she’d come to

rub salt in the wound.

Serana entered with a bag of groceries, clearly planning to stay for lunch. She

smiled at Yasmine, asking where she felt unwell.

“Feeling sick,” Yasmine replied, her voice light as air.

Serana’s expression shifted ever so slightly, but she maintained a smile, “Then

I’ll whip up something light for lunch.”

Boyd said, “I can handle it. You don’t need to trouble yourself.”

Serana shook her head, “Let me do it. You guys did stand me up last night, so

making up for it with a lunch isn’t too much to ask, right?”

Yasmine let out a sarcastic laugh from her perch on the couch.

Without waiting for their consent, Serana headed straight for the kitchen. “By the

way, guys, I bought quite a lot of groceries today. Mind if I invite someone else

over?”

Boyd frowned, “Who?”

“A friend of mine.”

Without looking back, Serana opened the kitchen door, effectively cutting herself

off from them.

Boyd's expression darkened. Yasmine wasn't sure if it was because Serana had shown up unannounced, the fact that she insisted on cooking, or the sudden, inexplicable desire to invite a stranger into his home.

Yasmine, watching his mood sour, smirked and tossed the remote aside before standing up and heading for the bedroom.

She wasn't on the same level as Serana? Well, it was about time to put that theory to the test.

Boyd stood in the empty living room, looking even more upset.

Before lunch, the doorbell rang again. Serana dashed out from the kitchen to answer it.

Boyd sat on the sofa, his efficiency with paperwork drastically lower than when

Yasmine had been watching her shows beside him earlier.

Serana returned with her guest, "Boyd."

Boyd put down his papers and stood up, giving Serana's companion a cursory

glance.

The man was dressed simply, with a polite, shy smile that seemed a bit out of place. Seeing Boyd stand, he quickly said, "Hi, I'm Patrick, Serana's classmate."

Boyd gave Serana a cold look and nodded slightly.

"Just in time. Lunch is ready. Boyd, could you call Yasmine to the table?"

"Sure."

Yasmine had no intention of making things easy for Serana, but Boyd wouldn't

allow her to skip lunch. Since he couldn't win with words, he had to use force.

He carried her straight to the dining room.

She wasn't wearing shoes, so he threw a cushion from his chair onto the floor

for her to step on.

Despite her reluctance to afford Serana any respect, Yasmine still cared about

Boyd's feelings. She couldn't bring herself to cause a scene in front of their

guests.

Their intimate interaction left Patrick feeling awkward.

Serana served them soup with a smile, "It's a light broth. I added just a bit of

vinegar to stimulate the appetite. Yasmine, you go first."

Yasmine pursed her lips, stepped on Boyd's foot, and ground her heel in a bit.

She was frustrated but still had to be mindful of his image.