

## 13: Who Do You Think You Are?

“I don’t need it.”

Sebastian’s tone was icy and dismissive as he barked, “I want to rest. All of you, get out!”

Pulling the covers over his face, he blocked out the world, refusing to engage further.

Yasmin’s eyes glistened with unshed tears at his blunt rejection. Grace hurriedly led her out of the room, whispering reassurances. “Yasmin, don’t take it to heart. You know how Sebastian is—his temper is terrible right now. Give him some time to cool off, and then you can visit him again.”

“Auntie, Sebastian is awake now, so there’s no need for a ‘luck-bringing’ bride anymore, right? Can’t you arrange for me to stay and take care of him instead? That woman doesn’t belong here—it drives me crazy just seeing her!”

Yasmin cast a hostile glance toward Caitlin, who was seated downstairs in the living room. For reasons Yasmin couldn’t explain, Caitlin’s very presence annoyed her to no end.

“Patience, Yasmin. Let me handle it,” Grace replied, smoothing over her irritation.

Descending the staircase, the pair stopped at the foot of it, their eyes locking on Caitlin. With the commanding air of The Vanderbilt Family’s matriarch, Grace addressed her, “Caitlin, we appreciate what you’ve done for Sebastian. But now that he’s recovering well, perhaps it’s time for you to bring this matter to Beatrice and take your leave.”

Caitlin raised her eyebrows, a wry smile tugging at her lips. These people clearly had no idea Beatrice had already ensured she and Sebastian were legally married.

“Grace,” Caitlin began coolly, “I’ve only been here for a day. There’s a saying: ‘If you start something, see it through.’ I wouldn’t want to leave without making sure Mr. Vanderbilt is fully recovered.”

Yasmin, sensing Caitlin’s determination to stay, snapped, “Caitlin, is it? The Vanderbilt Family is an esteemed family. I know exactly what you’re trying to do. You’re here to climb the social ladder and latch onto Sebastian as The Vanderbilt Family’s young mistress, aren’t you?”

Caitlin’s expression turned frosty, her tone cutting. “Oh, I’m well aware of The Vanderbilt Family’s status. But don’t forget, The Lewis Family isn’t exactly struggling either. My father is a prominent businessman in New York. Do you really think I need to climb anywhere?”

“Now, you, on the other hand,” Caitlin continued, leveling a pointed look at Yasmin, “seem awfully desperate to stay by Mr. Vanderbilt’s side. What’s your motive?”

Yasmin’s face flushed with embarrassment. “I—I’m here to care for Howard! Now that Sebastian is in trouble, I have a responsibility to help!”

Caitlin’s laughter was as cold as ice. “Responsibility? And what, pray tell, is your responsibility? The ‘luck-bringing bride’ wasn’t you, and Howard certainly isn’t your child. So, where exactly does your responsibility lie?”

With her back straight and voice rising, Yasmin retorted, “I’m The Vanderbilt Family’s childcare specialist! Taking care of Howard is my duty!”

“Oh? Then let me ask you something, childcare specialist—how did Howard end up being bullied so badly under your care? If you’re so dedicated to your ‘responsibility,’ how do you explain that?”

Yasmin stammered, her confidence wavering under Caitlin’s sharp gaze. “I… I wasn’t even here when it happened! If I had been, it never would’ve happened!”

“Great! Then why don’t you focus on doing your actual job—taking care of the child—and stop meddling in Mr. Vanderbilt’s affairs?” Caitlin shot back.

“I won’t! I want to take care of Sebastian!” Yasmin blurted out in frustration, finally revealing her true intentions. “I love Sebastian! We belong together! No one can come between us!”

Caitlin smirked, leaning back as if watching an amusing play unfold. “Oh, so that’s what this is about. Well, don’t worry—if Sebastian truly loves you, no one can tear you apart. When he recovers and you two get married, don’t forget to send me an invitation. After all, I’d be the one to thank for bringing him back to health, wouldn’t I?”

Yasmin’s eyes narrowed dangerously. “So you’re refusing to leave?”

Caitlin didn’t dignify the question with a response. Instead, Howard, who had been quietly observing, made his feelings known by toddling over to Caitlin and wrapping his arms around her leg.

“Howard!” Yasmin called out, holding out her arms. “Come to me and your grandmother!”

Howard stood still for a moment, then turned away from Yasmin and buried himself in Caitlin’s embrace. Caitlin scooped him up, holding him protectively.

Seeing this, Yasmin’s face darkened with fury. No matter how much effort she’d put into buying Howard’s affection with gifts, he’d always ignored her. And now, he was clinging to this woman instead?

Grace, too, was growing impatient. “Caitlin, even if Howard is fond of you, you should know that being a stepmother isn’t an easy job. I hope you know your place.”

Caitlin’s patience snapped. “Grace, you’re absolutely right. But if I ever do become a stepmother, it won’t be the same way you did.

“Mr. Vanderbilt’s father, as I recall, had a wife before you came along. You ousted her and made yourself the second wife—a stepmother by default.

“As for me, Mr. Vanderbilt has never been married. If I were to be with him, I’d be the first wife—Howard’s mother, plain and simple. There’d be no ‘stepmother’ title for me.”

Grace’s face turned a deep shade of red, her rage barely contained. “How dare you!”

Yasmin chimed in, her tone dripping with indignation. “Caitlin, Grace is Sebastian’s mother in every sense of the word. You need to show her respect!”

“Respect?” Caitlin snorted. “Have I said anything that isn’t true?”

The tension between them was palpable, an invisible battle of wills playing out as their gazes locked.

“You’re nothing but a rude, uneducated woman!” Grace spat. “Did your mother never teach you how to behave?”

A cruel smile curled Caitlin’s lips. “You’re absolutely right—my mother, Kelly, has passed away. But who do you think you are to insult her?”

Caitlin’s voice turned colder, sharper. “Grace, you might want to spend some time at the spa—your face is starting to sag. And while you’re at it, consider whether Raymond might want a divorce if he sees what you really look like.

“And Yasmin,” Caitlin added, turning her venom on the younger woman, “you’re always flaunting your beauty, aren’t you? Why not wipe off that makeup and show Sebastian your bare face? Or better yet, with him being blind, this is your chance—go get your face fixed in South Korea! Maybe you two can go together and split the bill!”

“You—!”

“How dare you—!”

Both women were trembling with rage, their faces red with humiliation. Yasmin rolled up her sleeves, ready to charge at Caitlin.

Caitlin, unfazed, stood her ground, tilting her chin defiantly. “What’s the matter? Want to fight me? Go ahead. I dare you!”