

Escape from a Sanctuary Full of Lies Chapter 2 - Chapter 2

I regained consciousness the following day.

A dreadful feeling settled over me. I lifted the covers to discover a fresh surgical scar across my side.

My life seemed to shatter in that instant. I intended to demand an explanation from Xavier, but he spoke first, saying, "Darling, you had a sudden internal hemorrhage yesterday evening. The scans showed your kidney was ruptured in the accident, so I authorized its removal to save your life."

Concerned I might not believe him, he presented me with the forged medical report. Indeed, it indicated a ruptured kidney.

Had I not overheard his orders to the surgeon, I might have accepted his lie.

Gazing at the ugly new mark on my body, I felt as if my soul had been stolen, leaving only a hollow void of pain.

Xavier embraced me, his tone overflowing with sympathy as he tried to console me. "Darling, I know how much your health means for your work, but your life is my primary concern. I can't imagine a world without you. If this means you can't dive for a while, we'll find other ways to support your research."

I started to speak, but the door opened before I could say a word.

Jennifer entered, carrying a box of rare, imported tea.

"Pardon my intrusion. I just came to check on you, Miranda. We were all so worried."

Jennifer was a fragile socialite, known for her delicate beauty and a chronic battle with lupus. Her family's fortune was propped up by Xavier's firm.

It was easy to see why he might feel responsible for her.

Xavier's demeanor remained cool and detached. He acknowledged her with a nod, then turned his focus back to me.

However, I saw the tension in his clenched hands.

I turned away from them, burying my emotions, and said, "I'm tired. I want to sleep."

I expected Jennifer to leave, but surprisingly, she stayed. She sat quietly in a chair nearby, keeping Xavier company.

Xavier stayed by my side, gently rubbing my shoulders. Jennifer, meanwhile, sat demurely, completing the picture of a concerned family friend.

Yet unseen, beneath the blanket, Jennifer was desperately gripping Xavier's other hand.

He didn't pull away, letting her hold on until her grip became frantic. Only then did he reach down, squeezing her hand tightly to silence her desperation.

But Jennifer persisted. Once his hand was free, she stood and moved behind him, her touch on his shoulder a silent plea.

Xavier glanced at me, making sure my eyes were closed and my breathing was even, as if I were in a deep sleep. Convinced, he turned and followed her out into the hall.

He quickly withdrew, his icy gaze a warning to be careful.

But Jennifer was beyond caution. She leaned into him again, her body trembling.

This time, Xavier couldn't resist. After one last look in my direction, he took her arm and led her away.

As the door clicked shut behind them, I opened my eyes.

Xavier would never suspect that every detail of his silent, tense exchange with Jennifer had been reflected on the dark screen of my tablet, allowing me to witness everything with perfect clarity.

I silently followed them to a deserted balcony.

Hidden behind a large potted plant, I saw Xavier pinning Jennifer against the wall, his jaw tight as he hissed, "Didn't I tell you to control yourself around her?"

Jennifer remained defiant. She leaned her frail body against his arm and whispered, "It's just that you've been so focused on her. I'm scared, Xavier. The doctors said..."

Her voice cracked, her fingers tracing the lapel of his suit, "Mr. Colton, haven't you always loved taking risks? Let's just... forget everything else. This floor is empty, and your wife is asleep. No one will ever know."

Before Xavier could reply, she raised herself on her toes and pressed her lips to his.