

14; The Family Business.

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Chapter Fourteen- "The Family Business".

Isabella Montague.

I hunched over, retching out every content of my stomach. I took in a deep breath, before I vomited

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out every food content that was in my stomach, leaving a bitter taste in my mouth. A sigh escaped my lips as I moved my hand to tap the flush button, before landing back on the bathroom floor, exhausted to the core.

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I could feel myself becoming light headed, every bit of my body sore and aching. The little strength I had in me has all been exhausted down the drain along with the breakfast I had to force myself into eating despite knowing what would happen afterwards.

I remained in that position for a while, trying to get a little energy to get myself back on my feet. It took a short while, but soon enough, I felt I had the strength to get up and fix up myself. So, I made my way to the sink and washed my mouth, brushing my teeth clean afterwards to get rid of the bitter taste left.

Afterwards, I splashed some water on my face repeatedly, drying it off with a towel. I left the bathroom afterwards, making my way back into my bedroom with weary bones, settling on the chaise lounge there after shrugging off the overcoat I had on. I had already taken off the boots when I entered the room, before making a beeline to the en-suite to empty out the contents of my stomach.

Picking up my phone I had dropped there earlier on, I swiped it to unlock, my gaze falling on Amy's message that had come through a while ago, but I'm only seeing now.

-Do you want me to bring some food for you later on? I'll drop by around noon.

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My fingers moved across the screen as I typed in my reply.

-Yes, please.

After sending the message, I left the messages app and went back to the tab I'd earlier opened while I was still in America. I refreshed the page, seeing more articles sprout up on the web, and I scrolled through it, looking for a particular one I was stuck in earlier, but is nowhere to be found now.

My brows drew in, knowing I asked Amy to leave it as it is and not make any move to take it down. I know she couldn't have done since I asked her not to as I was planning on addressing it when I come back. But, it's now nowhere to be found. The other articles are, but that particular one is nowhere to be found.

I turned off my phone and dropped it aside, unwilling to spend more screen time, knowing it'll only add to my growing pile of worries. I flicked my eyes close, trying to tune out the memories of what I'd read from that article to what transpired earlier during breakfast out of my head—seeking a break and some much needed silence and break from everything. Somehow, that momentarily silence with some shut eye turned out to be a full nap.

Because the next time I flicked my eyes open, I

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realized I'm still in the same seated position I was in earlier on the chaise lounge, the only difference being when I checked the time on my phone, and realized I'd slept for nearly three hours.

And it's about to be noon already—meaning Amy would be here in an hour or so. Another yawn escaped my lips, which I used my hand to cover. Dropping my legs from the couch, I got on my feet, stretching to get rid of the sores I'd gotten from sleeping in such uncomfortable situation before making my way to the bathroom again to freshen up.

Once done, I made my way out of my room and towards the study, the only place where I know I'd find my old man. Upon reaching the mahogany door leading to his study, I knocked on it softly, awaiting his response that came soon after.

"Yes..." His voice was the usual gruff voice everyone in the house knows him with, the same one that makes him appear strict and unapproachable to them all. But, not me. Never me. "...come in."

A small smile donned my face as I pushed the door open, and stepped in—my gaze falling on him as he's seated beside his table, his glasses perched up on his nose while he held a tablet in his hand. My gaze shifted to the man standing beside him—my eldest step-brother Alexander, no

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doubt discussing business and such.

"The reports about the States company isn't as good as I expect, I told you to make it better but..." My father, Edward Montague looked up from the document he's viewing on the tablet, his gaze falling on me. His lips instantly slanted upwards into a warm smile. "...Vivien." He lifted his hand, and waved me over. "Come, I was just thinking of calling you." He closed the tablet, and placed it on the table.

Alexander looked up as well, his gaze falling on me. When our eyes met, he gave me a look that was hard to decipher. I held his gaze for a split second, my heart spiking behind my ribcage, my feet suddenly cold.

I blinked, shifting my gaze from him to my father, my earlier smile returning as I closed the distance between us, going to settle down on one of the two chairs situated in front of his desk.

He leaned close, dropping his hands on the table and intertwining them. "How was your rest? Are you still jetlagged?"

I shook my head. "I'm good now."

"Good to know." He then tilted his head in the direction of Alexander slightly. "Leave us." He didn't need to expatiate; he's never been a man of words with others.

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Alexander didn't comment, he simply offered the old man a curt nod before he turned around and walked out. I refused to spare him a glance, and my mind wasn't at ease until he was out of the room, and I felt I could breathe again.

I breathed out a small, discrete breath and then offered dad another smile, this time, a more relived one. "You wanted to talk?" I quirked a brow slightly, suddenly nervous. I know he wouldn't be angry at me for any reason, he has never been. Even when he gave me an ultimatum when I decided to marry James, a man he never liked—to either marry him and cut ties with my family, or to stay in the family, I still chose James.

He didn't cut ties with me regardless. He still asked one of my Uncles, unknown to the business world to walk me down the aisle since I hid my family identity from James. And, he still supported me financially without me having to ask. He didn't call, but he sends messages every once in a while.

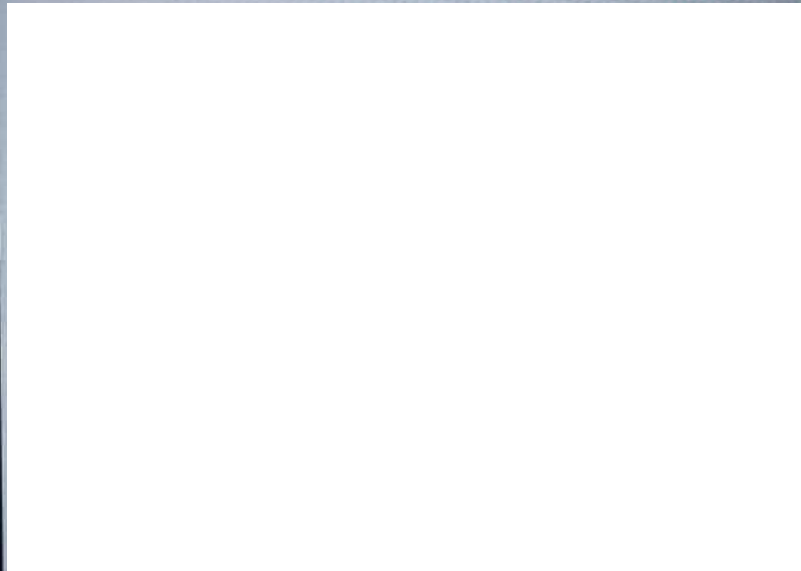
And when my marriage to James crumbled, and I decided to return home, he sent Amy to take care of me and return me back home in one piece. When I returned, he was at the door, and welcomed me with a smile and a warm hug.

I vividly remember his words that had me breaking down. "You've done well." He said, patting my back lovingly. "You've done well, my Vivien."

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Welcome back."

Now tell me, how can I not love my father? He's the only one in this world that I know will love me regardless of anything—he's proved that time and again. But, that doesn't stop me from feeling nervous at the moment...perhaps, it's because of



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what Sebastian brought up earlier during breakfast.

He cut him off before anyone could pick up and throw shady remarks. He simply called out his name in a warning tone, and just like that, the conversation died down. Now that we're alone, I feared he would bring it up again.

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Much to my surprise, he didn't. "Karl and Rose sent me a message." He spoke up, breaking the ice. "Said you handled the ceremony yesterday well in my place." He was originally meant to be there, but instead of sending Alexander like he usually does, he asked me to go instead.

I released a sigh of relief. "I'm glad then." I was hoping I wouldn't screw it up, since I didn't want to let him down. I have no idea why he asked me to go, but I'm glad I did.

He nodded slowly, then continued. "And while we're on that, I've come to a decision." He reached out to take off his spectacles, folding it and placing it aside. "Our business in America isn't doing that well, and I've invested a lot in it. So, I want you to handle it."

My lips parted. "What..."



Mia Jay.

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