

## Chapter 39

Two hours after leaving, Alexander returned looking disturbed. He passed by me, looking as if he'd seen the devil himself, and growled:

"In my office, now, Catherine!"

I froze at his tone. Patrick and Mariana were following him, and I heard them asking him to calm down. But Alexander ignored them. Confused, I got up and entered his office, with the other two following behind me and closing the door.

I stopped when I saw his angry gaze fall on me, his furious voice saying things I couldn't even understand.

"How could you, Catherine! You came here like an innocent lamb, but you're nothing more than a wolf! You betrayed my trust in a way no one ever has. And after everything that happened between us. You're the biggest disappointment of my life!" he shouted at me, rage exuding from every pore.

"Alexander, what's going on? What are you talking about?" I asked, already feeling my throat tighten as tears started streaming down my face.

"Don't play innocent with me, not anymore!" he paced back and forth, rubbing both hands over his face. "You know exactly what you did. I want you out of my company and out of my life now! And consider yourself lucky, because the only reason you're not leaving here in handcuffs is that I feel sorry for your son!"

What was he talking about? I didn't understand! Handcuffs? I was already in shock. I didn't understand what had happened. I was trembling, and

when he yelled, I nearly collapsed.

"Get out now! Out of my company! I guarantee you'll only work in this city again if it's in the sewers, where rats like you belong, you're despicable, I regret the day I hired you! Out!" He roared, slamming his hand on the desk.

I felt a hand on my shoulders gently pulling me out of that office. I was paralyzed, my eyes burning, my chest aching with pain, I couldn't understand.

Mariana grabbed my purse and took me to Patrick's office. They both sat down with me and finally explained.

"Catherine, remember when I called Alex on Saturday saying we suspected information had been leaked?" Patrick spoke seriously and didn't seem very friendly.

"Yes, and you were going to thoroughly check everything. Did you find who it was? But what does this have to do with me?" I asked, confused.

"Well, Cat, it turns out the hacker found two emails sent from your computer. They were sent and deleted, but he managed to recover them," Mariana explained calmly.

"What do you mean two emails? What emails?" I looked at her, not understanding.

Patrick handed me two sheets of paper. The first one contained an email dated from last Thursday with the following message:

From: Catherine Vergara

To: hidden@darkweb.com

Subject: Warning

Sir,

The board had a closed-door meeting. They're suspicious. Take necessary measures.

Catherine Vergara CEO's Assistant Group Miller

The second email was dated from this morning. It contained a horrible message that read:

From: Catherine Vergara

To: hidden@darkweb.com

Subject: Plan working

Sir,

Everything's going as planned. That idiot Alexander is falling for my charms and eating out of my hand.

Catherine Vergara CEO's Assistant Group Miller

I looked between the two sheets, confused. How were these emails sent from my computer? Still crying, I looked Patrick in the eyes and said:

"Patrick, I never sent these emails. I swear! I don't know how they were sent from my computer, but it wasn't me. I would never do something like this, especially not to Alexander. You need to believe me and investigate this because I didn't do it!"

I felt Mariana's hand on my back as she spoke firmly to Patrick:

"I'm certain it wasn't her, Patrick. When I hired her, I checked with the Larsons – she's absolutely trustworthy. Almeida also spoke highly of her these past few days. It's impossible that Catherine would do this!"

"Mari, I don't know what to think. Catherine is the only employee who's been here for a short time; everyone else has been here for ten years or more. On the other hand, the fraud we're investigating has been going on for a long time. I don't know what to think. And you need to understand that Alexander is blind with rage – he's hurt, wounded," Patrick explained calmly.

"But Patrick, he didn't even give me the benefit of the doubt! He should at least investigate properly instead of treating me with all that hatred!" I said, hurt.

"Catherine, please try to understand my friend. He's got a lot on his mind. Besides, understand that the executive floor now doesn't receive anyone without prior authorization, and you're the only newly arrived employee. How can we explain that an employee who's been here for so long suddenly betrayed us?" Patrick tried to justify his friend and himself.

The pain I felt at that moment transformed into absolute anger. I wiped my tears, handed my work phone and badge to Mariana, grabbed my purse, and stood up. I looked Patrick in the eyes and spoke in an icy voice:

"Of course, it's easier to accuse than to investigate. And it's easier to blame the newcomer than to accept that you're all big idiots who've been fooled by the real culprit for years. But fine, Patrick. I understand, and I'm leaving the company immediately – you won't see me again. I just hope that when you realize the injustice you're committing, the real culprit hasn't had time to leave you in ruins."

I turned to leave but halfway to the door, I turned back and said

sarcastically:

"Would you like to search me, Mr. Guzman, to make sure I'm not stealing anything?"

"Oh, Catherine, please don't take things this way..." Patrick said nervously while I kept my eyes firm, demanding his answer to my question. "No, Catherine, I won't search you. You can go home, and I'll have them send your settlement for the days worked and your documents later." 1

"I don't want anything from here, just my employment record cleared so I can look for another job, even if it's in the sewers!" I said with a cold look, turned around, and left. 1

When I left Patrick's office, Celeste came running.

"Catherine, what happened?"

I looked at her as if looking at a hyena eager to snap at its prey, turned my back, and pressed the elevator button, which opened just as she was about to persist. She made a move to enter with me, but I raised my finger and said:

"Stay there!"

I pressed the elevator button and the doors closed. The security guard let me through the turnstile without questions when I explained I didn't have my badge. Once I reached the street, I jumped into the first taxi I spotted and gave my home address. Only when I got to my room did I allow myself to collapse on the bed and sob uncontrollably until I had no strength left.