

Love Amidst the Shadow Chapter 1

Chapter 1

The huge TV screen in the middle of the hospital's lobby was currently airing an engagement ceremony. The young lady next to me was beside herself with jealousy as she watched the ceremony, constantly gushing over the wedding couple's looks. I dipped my head slightly and instinctively placed my hand on the slight swell of my abdomen. A sense of ridicule seized my heart. The baby's father was currently smiling lovingly with his fiancée in his arms while the crowd blessed him. Meanwhile, I was waiting here in this hospital, preparing to abort his baby. My phone suddenly rang inside my bag. The caller ID showed that it was Emil Penrose. I looked up at the TV screen again. The program had already changed to a commercial. I pressed accept and then spoke. "Done already?" "Where are you?" He did not answer my question. My heart rate sped up. In the end, I never told him I was at the hospital. Instead, I simply said, "Just hanging around outside." "Let's meet tonight," he said. His tone was bland. A little cold, even. I hadn't even managed to give him my answer when the call was disconnected. It seemed that he only called me to tell me to meet him later. "Vivian Lovelace, 26 years old. 8 weeks pregnant," the doctor stated as he looked at me with my test results in hand. "The fetus' heart is already formed, and everything is developing as normal. Are you sure you want the abortion?" "Yes!" The middle-aged woman who had entered was faster than me at answering him. "Wasn't the time for the operation already decided on beforehand? Why do you doctors keep rambling pointlessly?" After the doctor recovered from his episode of shock, he turned to me. "Miss Lovelace, although an abortion isn't a major procedure, I still require the signature of the baby's father." "That baby's father is getting engaged today. Can't I sign the papers instead?" the middle-aged woman asked, having already grabbed the pen from the doctor's hand while she was speaking. She scrawled her name down on the consent form in shaky letters—Anna Lamport. Then, she urged the doctor to begin the procedure. My heart nearly burst from anxiety as Anna pushed me into the operating room. I turned my head back to look at her. "This is still Emil's child too. I should get his opinion on whether I should keep the baby." "Why do you still have the energy for nonsense? Didn't he get engaged today?" Anna asked, her forehead wrinkled in a frown. "Do you think the Penroses will accept a woman that they can't openly parade around?" Every one of her words stabbed my heart. Inside the operating room, the surgeon who would be handling the abortion introduced herself before she ordered, "Take your pants off and get on!" I looked at the operating table. A moment of hesitation later, I asked, "Do I need to take my underwear off too?" She glanced at me and nodded before asking, "Do you have a pad in there?" I nodded. My hands unconsciously gripped the hem of my shirt tightly. It was the nerves. She made a sound of acknowledgment and beckoned for me to get on the operating table. I spread my legs as she requested me to. I leaned back. After she went over the details of the procedure, the anesthesia kicked in and drowsiness hit me. I clawed at my last scraps of consciousness to look at the doctor and asked, "Will it hurt?" She smiled kindly. "No. It'll be over in fifteen minutes." I pressed my lips together. My throat ached and I choked unconsciously. "Will the baby be in pain?" She froze for a moment. Then, she opened her mouth, but she was silent. A while later, I gradually drifted off, unable to fight against the anesthesia's effects. I thought that the abortion procedure would be painful, but I had been overthinking it. It was like taking a nap. When I next woke up, I was in a bed. The only thing that proved that the baby had existed was the pain coming from my belly. Emil called me then. I didn't speak. His low, charismatic voice came over my phone. "Which area are you in? Should I come and pick you up?" "No," I said, my hand unconsciously roving over my empty belly. He got impatient. "Send me your location." "The baby's gone. If you don't want to have another abortion, Vivian, you will stay away from Emil." I hadn't even managed to answer Emil when Anna's voice rang out. She entered the room, her high heels clicking on the floor. There was a basket of fruit hanging from her arm. She seemed to be in high spirits. Emil fell into obvious silence then. Then, his tone grew heavy. "Whose baby has been aborted?" Emil's anger simmered before I could answer. "Where are you, Vivian?" His voice struck me hard. In my panic, I blurted, "Caedon Women's and Children's Hospital!"