

Chapter 172 The Price of Betrayal

Noticing Rachel's unusual actions, Xander turned back to look at her, his face icy.

His sharp gaze felt like a blade, making Rachel feel her blood was freezing.

"No, no, Xan, it's not what you think. She stole your emerald guardian angel pendant. I saw it. I asked her to give it back, but she refused. I only tried to help you get it back, so ... "

"So you hurt her." His voice was icy and bloodthirsty, with no trace of warmth, as if the temperature around them had plummeted.

Rachel's heart skipped, her gaze filled with fear as she looked into Xander's cold eyes.

Xander had been cold to her in the past, but not like this. Never had he looked at her as if he wanted her gone.

"I didn't mean to."

"Apologize to her," Xander commanded.

Rachel's heart simmered with anger. Her face stung, and the more she thought about it, the angrier she got.

"You're so unfair, Xan! Yes, I accidentally hurt her, but she hit me! She slapped me. My face was swollen, and she even kicked me! I ... "

"If you don't apologize, leave. Don't come back here. Ever." Xander's tone was merciless.

Rachel couldn't believe her ears. Xan wanted her to leave? And never come back?

Especially the word 'ever' felt like a dagger.

Rachel glanced at Isabel, then quickly lowered her gaze to hide the anger and resentment.

This was all because of Isabel!

Before Isabel appeared, Xan had never treated her this way.

She hated her!

At that moment, she realized something: Isabel's place in Xander's heart was far more significant than she'd imagined. If she wanted to deal with Isabel, she'd have to be subtle, like when she dealt with Yvette. No traces.

Isabel, wait. One day, she'll watch Xander throw you out of this villa. And then, with no one to protect you, she'll make sure you suffer.

But for now ...

Patience was key.

Rachel decided to swallow her pride for now for the sake of her grand revenge plan.

"I'm sorry!" she bowed at a full 90 degrees, apologizing loudly to Isabel.

Isabel looked at her with a calm expression, raising an eyebrow defiantly. "I don't accept your apology."

What?

Rachel hadn't expected that.

"What are you looking at? Just because someone apologizes doesn't mean it has to be accepted. Who says I have to accept your apology, Rachel? Even if you groveled and begged, I wouldn't."

After she stole her emerald guardian angel pendant and possibly hurt Yvette, there was no way she was accepting Rachel's apology.

Samuel watched Isabel, his eyes lighting up. He felt a refreshing change in perspective. Isabel's defiance might seem unyielding, but it had an unusual allure. Her boldness was exhilarating.

She was right! Just because someone apologizes doesn't mean you have to accept it. Especially if it crosses your boundaries.

Xander, seeing Isabel's reaction, seemed even more stubborn. Looking at Rachel, he said coldly, "Leave. Don't come back."

Rachel was about to cry. "But ... "

"Not leaving? Do you want me to escort you out?" Xander's expression was full of rejection.

Rachel hesitated, knowing he was severe and that nothing she had said would change his mind.

As she turned to leave, Xander's voice echoed from behind her.

It would be better to wait a few days until things cool down and approach him again.

"My things are hers. Whatever she wants, she can take. There's no such thing as 'stealing.'"

Rachel froze and looked back, stunned.

Isabel was also staring at Xander, deeply moved.

He wasn't done.

"No, she did steal something." He paused, then looked at Isabel, smiling slightly as he placed her hand over his chest. "You stole my heart."

The room fell silent.

Xander and Isabel locked eyes, both lost in thought.

One was full of emotion; the other had feelings beyond words.

"Ah!" Samuel covered his eyes and turned away. He couldn't handle it.

"You both ... " Rachel was honestly in tears, thoroughly provoked by them.

Sobbing, she stormed out.

Isabel cleared her throat, slipping her hand from his. "Isn't she Ivana's daughter? You two grew up together; I've already done this to her face. Aren't you even a little mad?"

Xander's eyes drifted to her neck, his brows furrowing.

"I am mad. You didn't protect yourself."

How could he always say things that tugged at her heartstrings? And it seemed her defenses against him were growing weaker.

"Um, I was meditating earlier. I didn't expect her to suddenly jump me for the emerald guardian angel pendant, grabbing so hard."

Isabel tried to steer the conversation away.

But it was the truth.

She hadn't been on guard around Rachel because this was Xander's villa. Knowing Rachel, she didn't expect her to act so maliciously here.

Besides, it was Sunday, and Xander was at home. That's probably why Rachel came over.

Thinking about it, Isabel recalled something Rachel had said in her outrage.

This belongs to Xan. He used to wear it all the time when we were kids. How could it be with you?

She vividly remembered how, when Rachel said those words, her face was filled with utter disbelief, twisted into an exaggerated, almost grotesque expression.

So, was this emerald guardian angel pendant essential to Xander?

Maybe she could use it to get some secrets out of him.

"Xander, can I ask you something?"

"Sure, go ahead."

Isabel held up the emerald guardian angel pendant in her hand. "You once said this pendant was a gift from someone extraordinary. I'm curious: Who gave it to you and made it so precious?"

Xander's deep gaze lingered on her. He already knew Isabel's motive for getting close wasn't revenge on Kaleb but this emerald guardian angel pendant.

Why was she so interested in it?

The Nelsons were long gone, and the little girl who once owned this emerald guardian angel pendant had vanished from the world.

"You seem especially interested in it," Xander said, deflecting her question, studying her face closely, searching for any hint of emotion.