

Chapter 19

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[Caden]

I stare at the statements the head of the finance department brought me and frown hard.

"Are you sure this is right?" I ask, glaring at the numbers, the numbers that make no sense at all.

Mr. Hilton nods, pushing those thick-rimmed glasses up his nose. "Absolutely, sir. At your word, I contacted the bank right away and requested them to send all the statements of the accounts you mentioned. It's all in there. Up to date."

But how is that possible? For the last three years, there hasn't been a single transaction. All the money I put in these accounts and the more I transferred on several occasions, they are all completely untouched.

Was Vivienne telling the truth? Did she truly never spend a penny of mine?

But why? Why would she do that? And why am I noticing this only now?

I continue to sift through the statements. The numbers, or rather the lack of them, stare back at me, mocking my confusion. This doesn't add up.

"Can you double-check with the bank? Maybe there's been some mistake."



"I already did, sir. But unfortunately, this is all they have. Seems like these accounts were never used, not for any outgoing transaction, at least."

I lean back in my chair and rub a hand down my face. "Fine. You may leave."

Mr. Hilton takes that as his cue to exit the office and closes the door behind him.

I grab the same statements from the table and shake my head. "I always thought I had you figured out, Vivienne, but it seems to me now that I barely scratched the surface."

Tossing the papers aside, I decide to call Vivienne and confront her about it. But it seems she won't pick up.

I stare at her number and clench my jaw. This woman and her games. I'm not sure what her angle is here, but it's probably in my best interest to figure out whatever the hell she wants this time.

However, all my thoughts take a pause when my phone buzzes in my hands, my mom's number lighting up the screen.

I pick up in an instant, maybe it's about dad.

"I need you to come here as fast as possible!" She sounds frantic.

My body grows taut as a wire. "Why? Is it dad?"

"Yes, he just woke and has been asking for you. Do you think you could drop by the hospital, darling? I can't really leave his side at the

moment.”

I nod, even if she can't see me. “Yeah, of course. I'm coming. Stay put. I'm on my way.”

She thanks me profusely before ending the call. I stare at the black screen of my phone, a coldness wrapping around my chest. I take in a deep breath and try to get a handle on my emotions before heading for the door.

By the time I reach the hospital, a nurse is coming out of my father's room. She greets me with a nod but doesn't stop to give me any updates. I go straight in.

“Caden, you came!” My mom smiles as soon as she spots me, but there is worry written all over her features. She holds my arm and tugs me towards Dad's bed.

I look at him and find relief in knowing he looks better than before. Though he's still pale and there's an oxygen mask over his face, his eyes are alert and I can see he's trying to sit up. I gently press his shoulder back to stop his feeble attempt. “It's alright, Dad. I'm here.”

My voice seems to appease him. He rests his head against the pillow and closes his eyes, as if that alone was draining.

I turn towards another nurse in the room. “Can he take it off?”

She glances at her tablet and nods. “Sure, but if he starts getting uncomfortable or you notice him panting, just put it back on.”

“Alright. Thanks.”

As soon as the nurse is gone, my mother sits on the chair next to him, taking his hand in hers and kissing the back of it.

My father, looking much better now, turns towards my mother and whispers, "Don't worry, dear, I'm here, and I'm not going anywhere."

She looks like she wants to protest, but he shuts her down with a crooked smile. "You and I both know it was just a scare. I'm much better now."

He then turns to me, and his smile seems to have vanished. "I have something important to discuss with you."

"I'm all ears, Dad."

"Good." He then takes a deep breath. "Sasha told your mother that you're divorcing your wife, is this true?"

I pause before I answer and take a second to look at the two of them. It's just the three of us in here, and my mother is staring at me expectantly. I don't like the fact that Sasha—being my assistant—would be telling anyone what is happening in my personal life. But it's too late to confront her right now. Perhaps later.

I nod. "Yes. She is the one who asked for the divorce."

The relief that crosses my dad's face makes my fingers clench. I glance up at Mom, and she seems to be smiling too. But before I say another word, she cuts me off.

"It must be one of her conniving tactics to make you crawl back to her. But you don't have to listen to her, Caden. This is a golden

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opportunity. Get rid of her as soon as possible. She never truly belonged in our family anyway, always lurking on the edges like a shadow, manipulating situations to her advantage, always trying to make us look bad in front of others. She's been a thorn in our side from day one. Good riddance, I say."



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