

Chapter 29

## Chapter 29

[Vivienne]

When I return to our table, Harvey seems to be scrolling through his phone.

But the moment he catches sight of me, he quickly puts it aside.

"So, everything okay?" he asks again as I sit down, probably because I still look lost in thought. I know this because I practiced looking normal in front of the mirror. But now I realize I've never been good at hiding my emotions. And it won't change in a matter of a few minutes either.

Caden's words really left their mark on me.

"Absolutely," I smile at him, hoping it works.

It doesn't. Harvey quickly raises an eyebrow, not at all convinced.

"It's nothing. I'm just not feeling well," I lie. I just want us to move on from this conversation. It keeps reminding me of my stupid encounter with Caden.

He gives me a long, scrutinizing look before nodding slowly. "Alright, if you say so. But you know you can talk to me about anything, right?"

"I know, Harvey. Thank you. That means a lot."

I take a deep breath and reach for my glass of wine, hoping to find some solace in its rich flavor.

Harvey leans back in his chair, watching me carefully. "You know, Viv, it's okay to not have everything figured out all the time. You've been through a lot."

His words hit me deep. I can feel a lump forming in my throat. But before I can even say something, he continues. "But I have to tell you that if Caden is the reason for all of this, you're better off without him. I always knew that he never really cared about you. Even at your wedding, it was hard to miss how distant he looked."

This new information takes me by surprise. "Wait. You were there at our wedding?"

Harvey smiles, his eyes twinkling with a mix of sadness and regret. "I was. Mom and dad were against it. They were really upset how you chose him over everything we stood for, our way of living, how we grew up. But I couldn't let my ego get the better of me, Viv. So I came there for you. I wanted to see for myself if it was true what you told us, that he really made you happy. But what I saw at the wedding... that wasn't happiness I saw. That was something else. Something that if I had talked you out of marrying him, you would have thanked me now."

This time, there's no stopping my tears from falling.

My brother's words ring true, bringing up memories long forgotten.

I never imagined how things would take such an unexpected turn.

A soft touch brings me back to reality. I look up and see Harvey giving me a concerned look. He takes my hand and squeezes it

Chapter 29

lightly, and I do the same back.

"It's alright. Don't let your past haunt you anymore, Viv. Let him go. I know it's not easy but this will only make you stronger, in the long run."

I nod slowly, blinking away my tears.

"Thank you. I don't know what I'd do without you."

He gives me a warm smile. "Anytime, sis. That's what siblings are for, right?"

I cannot agree with him more.

Perhaps that's why I feel bad when I decide to tell him the truth that's been gnawing at me ever since I bumped into Caden. "Please don't be mad, but I don't think I'm hungry anymore."

"You don't have to pretend, you know. I understand."

"Really?"

"Of course. We can always leave. Let me call the waiter and ask for the bill."

Harvey asks the waiter for the check, and it only takes around ten minutes before we find ourselves walking out of the restaurant. While Harvey calls the driver to bring the car out front, I stand at the curb and watch people walking in and out, mostly couples.

It's only then that I catch sight of two people kissing in a car. And realizing that I know that car well... does something to my insides.

I can't believe this man has the guts to say such things to me a while ago and now do this, with that woman of all people. I don't know what is going on between them, but I feel like throwing up.

I turn to look away, but I might have been caught staring at them because the next thing I know, Caden is fumbling out of the car. I try to get away from him, not wanting to see his face, not wanting to hear his voice, not wanting anything to do with him.

But he is fast. His long legs quickly close the distance between us, and I have no choice but to face him.

"What?" I snap, not able to help myself. "Get the hell out of my way."

But instead of moving out of my way, he looks confused, his eyes unfocused.

"Vivienne, wait," he says, his voice sounding strained. He reaches out as if to touch me, but I step back, keeping a safe distance between us.

"Don't touch me! You have no right."

He shakes his head, frowning. "It's not what you think."

"Why the hell do you care what I think or not?" I try to walk past him, but he grabs my arm and yanks me closer.

"We should talk."

"We have nothing to talk about."

"Just give me a chance to explain."

I laugh bitterly. "Explain what? How you kissed her right after telling me you can do whatever you want because I'm still your wife? Or how you've never cared about me or this marriage?"

I see him wince at that last part, and for a second, I feel a stab of regret.

But then, it is quickly replaced with anger and indignation.

I yank my arm free and push him away. "Just leave me alone. And go to hell, for all I care."

Caden stumbles back, holding his head.

What the hell is even happening right now? Is he drunk? Or high on something? Not that I care. And I don't need to. Because Sasha comes right on time and grabs Caden by the shoulders, helping him stay upright.

"Caden! Oh, my God! Are you okay? Are you hurt? What did you do to him, Vivienne? How can you be so heartless?"



Comments



Support

Chapter 30

### Chapter 30

[Vivienne]

I roll my eyes.

Caden's been cheating on me with her all this time, and I'm the one who's heartless?

What a joke!

"Oh, please. No need to be so dramatic now. I hardly pushed him. But you know what? Why don't you teach your boyfriend some good manners? He seems to have a hard time understanding that no means no!"

Sasha gasps at my words and pulls Caden even closer, glaring at me with fire in her eyes.

"Just stay away from us, Vivienne. Can't you see that your mere existence is making his life hell? Can't you see you've already done enough damage?" she snaps.

"Oh, shut up," I spit back. She doesn't even know what I've gone through these past years, but she thinks she knows everything. Idiot! What the hell does she want to prove? That I'm the bad guy here? That I'm the one who's wrong? Well, she can dream on.

I don't care what anyone thinks of me. Not anymore.

I turn around and decide to leave the lovebirds alone. I would hate to come between them. Besides, I don't think I can stay calm or sane if I

spend another second in their presence. Both of them are toxic as hell; it's better for me to leave before things escalate further.

I feel like the universe has finally given me a break when Harvey's driver pulls over at the curb in front of where I'm standing. He quickly steps out of the car, ready to open the door for me.

I take a quick look over my shoulder and catch a glimpse of Caden and Sasha in the same exact position. His head is buried in the crook of her neck while she rubs his back with one hand, her other hand combing through his unruly strands.

It hurts more than it should. But it also pisses me off. How can he even pretend they're not dating, not having sex for months, if they're so comfortable in each other's presence like this?

I feel bile rising in my throat at the thought. I quickly swallow it down. No way am I letting her have the upper hand. No way will I show them I'm affected. 1

With one last deep breath, I walk toward the car and slide into the back seat, all the while feeling eyes on the back of my head.

"Are you alright?" Harvey asks after a long moment of silence. He has been sitting next to me all this time but, for some reason, chose to keep quiet, as if trying to give me a moment to process everything.

And I'm glad he did. Because now that I turn to look at him, I'm not that upset.

"I am now. Thanks for not coming to rescue me out there. I really needed to face this on my own."

He smiles. "I know you did. And I'm proud of you. But I hope you don't make this a habit. It's good to stand up for yourself, Viv, but we should always remember that there are times when asking for help is not a bad thing."

I nod, smiling. "I'll keep that in mind. Sometimes it's just hard to ask for help, you know? Especially when you want to prove something to yourself."

His gaze softens. "I understand. Just remember, you don't have to do everything alone. You have people who care about you and want to support you."

I glance out the window, watching the city lights blur by as we drive away. It's a small comfort, knowing that I don't have to navigate everything on my own.

Harvey's voice breaks the silence again. "So, what's next for you?"

I think for a moment, though I don't have to. I have thought a lot about how I want my future to be. And as my brother said, once I set my mind to something, I don't easily give up.

"I'm planning to move out tomorrow. And then, once I'm settled, I was hoping I could work with you for some time. You already have an exclusive contract with Jasper, so it makes sense to work with you, no matter how long this takes. Besides, you won't mind having an extra hand to help you, will you? I can join the company as Jasper's assistant and we'll see how that goes."

Harvey gives me a thoughtful look before nodding.



"Sounds like you have a good plan. But don't rush things, take all the time you need to recover. Maybe take a vacation once you settle into the new place?"

"A vacation?"

"Yeah. Just take a few weeks and travel somewhere you've always wanted to. I heard Greece is lovely this time of year."

Greece, huh? The more I think about it, the better it sounds. And who knows, it might do me some good, get a fresh start, meet some new people, clear my head.

"It's not a bad idea, Harvey. I'll think about it. I promise."

"Good," he says, looking pleased. "Because we are home."

I look out the window and realize he's right. The car stops in front of the mansion, and the driver quickly gets out to open the door for us.

Harvey and I step out of the car, feeling the cool night air on my face—a welcome change from the tense atmosphere earlier—and head inside. But we've barely crossed the foyer when we hear Dad yelling at someone.

We stop and exchange a worried glance. We have no idea what's going on until we hear Dad again.

"Your son crossed the line, George," Dad snarls. "How dare he humiliate the Richardsons?"