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[Vivienne]

"Let me go, you asshole!" I growl. "Or I swear to God, I'll rip your balls off."

I can tell the stranger is in a lot of pain, but he doesn't let go of me. Instead, he tightens his grip and whispers in my ear, "If you're not careful with your words, you're not getting out of here alive."

His voice sends chills down my spine, but it doesn't change the way I feel right now. "I said let go. Or do you need me to repeat myself?"

"Oh, come on, babe, no need to be so angry," the other stranger says. "Just loosen up a bit. Have some fun with us."

"Yeah," his friend agrees, inching closer.

The first guy's breath smells of beer. I crinkle my nose.

"You know you want this, just admit it. We can give you what you want," he whispers.

I look away and roll my eyes at the ceiling. "In your dreams."

"But you do—" The rest of his words are cut off by a giant man who suddenly appears in front of us. The man is so tall, so broad, and so dangerous-looking that I find my breath hitching in my throat.

He grabs the guy by the scruff of his collar and lifts him into the air with just one hand, as if he weighs nothing. "All of you. Time to leave."

Now," he growls and throws the guy on the floor like he's nothing but a toy. "All of you. Out."

The four guys scamper to their feet and run as fast as their legs can carry them out of the club.

I'm still a little dazed from everything that happened in the last twenty seconds when the giant bouncer turns to me. "And you, follow me."

"Me?" I squeak out in confusion. "Why? I didn't do anything wrong. It's those stupid guys."

"Yeah. Sure. Whatever," he says and takes hold of my upper arm, dragging me toward the door guarded by another giant man wearing the same uniform. It's only when he brings me inside and I catch sight of Rosita slumped in one of the chairs that I understand what's happening here.

She must have called for help when I got into trouble. Even her smile is a little drunk when she sees me dragged inside like a doll.

"Viv! Oh my god, I was so fucking worried," she slurs and rushes toward me, engulfing me in a tight hug. "Are you hurt? Are you okay? That asshole didn't do anything, right?"

"I'm fine. Don't worry."

"Good. But you should have seen it, Viv. They were all over you. I didn't know what to do, so I came here asking for help. I told you the dress is divine, right? No doubt they couldn't keep it in their pants," she snorts, then giggles silly. "Now, tell me, are you sure you're okay?"

I look back at the giant man behind me. His expression is unreadable. I can't tell whether he is annoyed or pissed off with me, but I know one thing: he looks so much more terrifying than those two men combined.

"I'm fine, but I'm getting really tired," I say, feeling the exhaustion from the night's events catching up to me.

Rosita nods, understanding. "Alright, we can leave now—"

The bouncer interrupts, his deep voice cutting through the air. "No one leaves. You need to speak with the manager before you go."

Rosita and I exchange confused glances. "Why? We didn't do anything wrong."

"It's just a formality. He needs to make sure you're okay and get a statement about what happened."

"Nope! Not need for that. We're just gonna leave and get out of your hair as soon as possible," as I start to help Rosita towards the door, hoping the night ends sooner than later, the giant bouncer steps in front of us and glares hard.

He didn't even have to say anything, his body language talks for itself. He simply grunts and my legs are already wobbling.

"Alright. Alright. Gosh!" Rosita rolls her eyes, but before she says another word, another door across the room opens and a man in a crisp white suit steps out.

He wears a broad grin on his face and following him is a woman who

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is dressed in the same uniform as the bartender outside.

"Ladies, my name is Ricardo Mancini, and I'm here to apologize for what happened a while ago," he puts his hand on his heart. "Truly, I take pride in keeping my club free of trouble but sometimes, my patrons become a little unruly when they get drunk and high. I sincerely apologize. Really. Genie?"

The woman standing behind him, carrying a tray, bows down her head a bit.

"I brought you something to make it up."

Genie holds the tray forward. On top of it are two drinks, looking very expensive, and smelling a lot like strawberry and something nice.

I turn to look at Rosita, and I find her staring at the tray with glazed eyes.

"Oooh, a drink. That's what I was missing. Do you have any more? Because I'm going to drink them all and not share with Viv, here, at all," she slurs, snickering, and almost falls to the ground. I try to support her weight, but I don't know if I'm strong enough.

"You're both drunk as hell, so I thought some fresh drinks would help," Ricardo says with a chuckle. "Trust me. It's going to help. Genie, place those drinks on the table, please."

Something about this man feels really fishy, but maybe it's the alcohol in my system, or the fact that my feet and my body feel heavy as fuck, and my head is buzzing with a dull headache, that the thought of sobering up a little sounds very, very tempting.

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"Okay, but we leave after this, alright?" Rosita says and grabs the two drinks, offering me one. "Come on, Viv. Maybe you can drive after this."

We both finish the drinks, but that was a mistake. The world soon grows blurrier, and the last thing I remember, before everything turns black, is the twisted grin on Ricardo's face and Genie's evil gaze.



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AD is coming

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[Vivienne]

When I wake up next time, my head hurts like hell.

My body feels like it has been run over by dozens of elephants, and I find myself blinking up at the ceiling, trying to make sense of everything around me.

I turn to lie on my side, only to find a large expanse of someone's naked back blocking my vision.

That's when the first wave of panic sets in.

"Oh my god!" I yell and jump up, my heart beating in my throat. I look down at myself for good measure, and that's when a second wave of panic hits.

"What the hell?!" I squeak. I'm absolutely naked. And not just that—there are bruises on my inner thighs and a deep, deep bite mark on my hip.

Oh god. No. This is a bad, bad dream. That's it. This must be a nightmare.

"No!" I shake my head and bolt out of the bed, now facing the bed and staring at the man who was lying beside me.

I cup my mouth and try not to have a breakdown.

"God, what did I do?" I run my fingers through my hair and realize it's

a complete tangled mess.

I try to think of what happened last night, but it proves to be an impossible task with all the aches and throbbing in my head and body.

The stranger turns in his sleep, and that's when the third and final wave of panic hits me. Hard.

My blood runs cold in my veins.

"Caden?" What the fuck am I doing in his bed?

Wait, that's not his bed. And now that I look around, it's not my place either.

"Where the hell are we? And how did we get here? What happened between us? And why do I have all these... marks? What did we do?!"

My legs give way under me as the realization dawns on me. "Vivienne?" I look up and find Caden blinking and slowly getting up, his naked body exposed. I shake my head and try to stop my brain from going into overdrive, but I can't. I can't think.

Glimpses of the night before flash in front of my eyes. I remember going to the club with Rosita, then that fight happened, and I was being dragged by a hefty bouncer. Then, oh god, there was a man—the manager—and the drinks he offered...

And because I have no memory of what happened after that, I know for sure that's when everything went wrong. But then I look up at Caden, and all my emotions come back in full force.

I stomp over to him and slap him hard. "You son of a bitch!" I growl, starting to gather my clothes that are spilled on the floor and putting them back on as fast as I can. "How dare you?!"

"What the fuck, Viv?" he looks angry. Oh, he looks like he's about to kill me. But I have had enough of his shit.

"Shut up!" I scream and shove him back. I can't believe he would stoop to this level. I mean, I always knew he was a stubborn man who thought of himself above everyone, but I didn't think he could go this low just because he couldn't have what he wanted. "Just shut up. I know what you did, and I fucking hate you."

Caden gives me a confused look, and for a second, I almost believe that maybe he's just as clueless... But no. There's no way this happened accidentally.

He's such a jerk. That's what he meant when he told me I have his attention. He must have been looking for an opportunity, and when he got one, he didn't think twice. What a despicable person!

I can't find my bag anywhere, but there's no time to look. I have to leave now. I have to leave.

"I never want to see you again," I tell him, shaking with fury. "Do you understand? Don't ever come close to me again."

"Vivienne!" He brings his feet to the floor, his face as hard as marble. "What the hell are you talking about?"

"You know what I'm talking about!" I glare at him with all the venom

and anger I'm feeling at the moment. "I never knew you could be so evil. What was this to you? A sick game? Huh, did you enjoy fucking me while I was out? Did you get your revenge now?"

"Vivienne, what—"

"All these years, I tried to be everything you wanted me to be. I tried to be a good wife. I tried to make you happy. I tried to ignore all the days and nights you hurt me, ignored me, and treated me like I'm just a body and not a living person. But the moment I decide to end this toxic marriage of ours, this is what you do." I laugh in disgust and disbelief. "How could you?"

"Vivienne—"

"Don't! Just shut up and stay away from me. I swear to God, Caden, if I find you anywhere near me ever again, I will make your life a living hell, you got me? I won't be so docile and complacent as before." I warn him and take one last glance at him. At the way he stands there, with the deepest scowl on his face and a dark, brooding expression in his eyes.

It hurts.

It hurts to look at him.

It hurts to look at the face of someone I used to love so much.

But he's not the same person. And maybe it's a good thing that I'm not the same person either.

I will not tolerate this ever again. I don't want anything to do with him

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ever again.

"You know what? This act of yours has made things final for me. I want that divorce, Caden. And I want that divorce now."



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