

Chapter 36

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[Sasha]

When I reach the Lawrence residence, I hear Caden's mom and Avery laughing before I even enter the living room. They're both on the couch, smiling widely, and their faces brighten even more when they see me.

"Sasha!" Avery rushes over and hugs me tightly. "Thank God you're here. Mom and I were just talking about you."

"Really? Talking about me?" I ask, pulling back from the hug and plastering on a smile. "What were you saying?"

Avery leads me to the couch, her eyes sparkling. "Oh, Sasha! You won't believe what happened last night. You're going to go crazy."

"I can't wait to find out. What happened?"

Caden's mom places her hand on my knee and leans in. "Remember how I promised to get rid of Vivienne? Guess what happened last night."

"What happened?"

Avery jumps in, excited. "Vivienne is gone, Sasha. You don't have to worry about her anymore. We got her good. She'll never manipulate Caden again."

Before I can ask how the hell they made that possible, Caden's mom continues where Avery left off.

"Last night, Avery was with her friends at this club when she spotted

Vivienne with a friend of hers. Do you know what she was doing? Dancing. Partying. Having a damn good time. I mean, can you believe the audacity of that woman? Here, my husband is still at the hospital, fighting for his life, and there she is, dancing her night away. What a soulless woman!" She makes a face, shaking her head. 1

"Anyway," Avery continues, "I called Mom and told her everything. Mom wanted to teach Vivienne a lesson, and we decided to use that chance to get rid of her for good. You know how much I loathe her, right? Remember when she slapped one of my friends just for following her into the kitchen? He was only trying to get a glass of water, and she acted like he was trying to assault her or something. What a joke. She thinks she's some kind of goddess that everyone's dying to get into bed with. Ugh!" She rolls her eyes. "As if."

"So, what did you do?" I ask, trying to sound casual while buzzing with curiosity.

Caden's mom leans closer, whispering conspiratorially. "We set her up. Avery had a friend at the club spike Vivienne's drink."

"You drugged her?" I didn't think they were capable of something so nasty, but maybe I need to be more careful—or use this to keep my hands clean. We'll see.

Avery laughs. "It was just enough to knock her out. Then we moved her to a hotel room in the same building. I called Caden, told him Vivienne was at the hotel with a man. Mom wanted him to catch her in the act. It's not like she hasn't cheated before, right? I mean, come on, who is she fooling? We all know she married Caden for his money, that bitch. Why else don't they have a kid? Anyway, Caden was furious when he found out. I bet he'll divorce her immediately after what he saw. Isn't that great?"

"Oh my God, is that true? Do you think that will be enough to convince him?"

Caden's mom shrugs. "That depends on you. Caden's blind if he thinks Vivienne is worth his love. Why can't he see how lucky he is to have someone as beautiful, young, and talented as you, with such an incredible heart?"

I force a smile and blink rapidly to stop the tears. "Do you really mean it? Do you think I'm perfect for Caden?"

"Of course," she says, squeezing my hand. "I've been rooting for you for a long time and have always told Caden the same. But that damn stubborn boy. Never listens. But he's going to see it now. With Vivienne out of the picture, he'll need someone to fill that empty space in his heart. He needs someone who truly cares for him. And that's where you fit in."

"You think he'll see it that way?"

"He'll have to," Avery cuts in. "You're way better for him than anyone else. He'll come to you, and then he'll be yours. Trust me. Everything's going to fall into place. You'll be with Caden and get everything you want."

Avery's cut short by the sound of heavy footsteps in the hallway.

I look up to see Caden storming in, looking furious.

The plan must've worked; he's probably seen Vivienne with another man and realized what a total bitch she is.

Caden's mom stands up and intercepts him before he can walk past us.



"Caden, what's wrong? You look...upset. What happened?"

Caden's jaw clenches, but he doesn't stop. "I need to make some calls. Don't bother me."

He barrels past us like a freight train, ignoring my presence, and heads straight to his room.

I'm itching to follow and find out what he's planning with Vivienne, but I know Caden's not one to open up easily and needs his space, especially now.

Avery's eyes light up. "I'm calling my friend to get all the details. If the plan worked, we're popping some champagne to celebrate!" She leaps from her seat and heads down the hallway.

Avery's mother also gets up. "I'll ask the chef to make something really good. This is going to be great. I hope you stay for lunch, Sasha. This is gonna be fun."

"Of course, Mrs. Lawrence. I will definitely stay."

When I'm alone, I finally get to smile. Everything's going according to my plan.

But then, Avery comes running with her eyes wide and lips curled in a tight line.

Caden's mom follows right after her, and the moment she catches Avery's shocked expression, she asks her the same question I have burning in my head.

"What? What's wrong, sweetie? You look like you just saw a ghost."

Avery turns pale, her phone sandwiched between her palms. "Mom,

it's not good."

Caden's mom looks alarmed.

"What's not good?"

"I just called my friend, and he said everything was going according to the plan until Caden arrived and kicked him out."

"What?" I blurt out. This can't be happening again.

"Guys, it's worse than that."

"How can anything be worse than that?" Caden's mom asks, unhappy.

"When Caden got there, he didn't just kick my friend out, but he... Mom, he... He spent the night with Vivienne."



Diti Koshy



Author

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