

## Chapter 45

[Vivienne]

On my way to the precinct, I spill everything to Rosita. I tell her how we were drugged the previous night, the terror of nearly losing my eyes, and how it's all courtesy of one of her clients, hellbent on making me pay the price for my non-existent actions.

Rosita listens, her face growing more horrified with each detail. By the time I'm done, her hands are trembling, and she's white as a sheet. "Vivienne... I had no idea. I'm so sorry. If I'd known—"

"It's not your fault, Ro," I cut her off, trying to keep my voice steady. "You couldn't have known that this client of yours would go this far."

"I know, but still. We at least need to do something about that club manager. How dare he drug us? If I see him, I'll strangle him with my bare hands. He can't just do that to women without repercussions."

I can't agree more with her, but before I can reply, Marcus pulls the car over in front of the station, and we climb out.

The detective is already there, waiting for us. He takes us into a small room that seems to be set up for questioning. A tape recorder sits in the middle of a wooden table, along with some pens and notepads. There are two chairs on one side of the table and a metal folding chair on the other.

We sit on the side with the chairs, and I try my best to focus. My headache is killing me, but I force myself to stay in the moment.

"So, just to be clear, let's go over what happened," he says. "Miss Sinclair, please tell me what happened when you were at the nightclub."

So, I do.

He takes notes as I talk and keeps the recording running the whole time. "That's pretty much all I know."

"Do you know the man's name? Have you met him before?"

"I think he introduced himself as Ricardo Mancini, and the woman with him, the one who was carrying the drinks, he called her Genie."

The detective nods. "Alright. My team picked up some women who work at the bar—or used to. If you both come with me and see if you recognize anyone, I think that would be really helpful."

I exchange a quick glance with Rosita before nodding at the detective. "Of course. We'll do whatever we can to help."

He leads us down a narrow hallway to a room with a one-way mirror. On the other side, several women stand in a line, their faces a mix of defiance, fear, and exhaustion. The detective motions for us to step closer to the glass.

"Take your time," he says, his voice steady. "If you recognize anyone, let me know."

I scan the faces. Each one blurs into the next until I reach the fourth woman in line. My eyes widen. It's her—the woman who was with Ricardo. Genie. Her expression is cold, almost detached, as if this is

just another inconvenience in her day.

"It's her," I say and Rosita nods. "That's the woman who brought us the drinks."

The detective bobs his head, jotting down notes. "Are you sure?"

"Positive. I'll never forget that face."

Rosita steps forward, her eyes narrowing at the sight of Genie. "That's her, alright. She looked so smug then."

The detective clicks his pen and steps back. "Thank you both. This will help our case significantly. We'll be questioning her shortly. We have some more leads that we are following concurrently. How about you wait in the waiting room? I'll call you soon. I think I'm very close to getting to the bottom of this."

The way he assures us makes me believe that reporting the incident was the right decision. Such things should never go unchecked. These men and women who think they can do whatever they want without consequences need to learn their lessons.

But there's one more thing gnawing at me.

"What about Ricardo?" I ask, wanting to know if they've caught him yet. "Did you arrest him? Has he been brought in for questioning at least? He deserves to be behind bars after what he did to me and Rosita."

"We've got an all-points bulletin out for him," he informs me. "But he has connections that are helping him evade us for the time being. I

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assure you, though, Miss Sinclair, we will do everything we can to put him away for good. It won't be easy, but we're doing what we can."

I nod, understanding that he's doing the best he can. But I wonder. If Ricardo is connected to people who can help him hide from the cops, how long will it take before he's back in business, doing the same thing to another girl? The thought makes me sick. No. Ricardo needs to be caught and thrown behind bars—that's the only way to ensure he never does this to another woman.

"Thank you, detective," Rosita says, shaking hands with the man. "This means so much to us. You have our full cooperation. Just...just make sure these people don't get away. That's all."

The man nods and then guides us towards the waiting room.

As soon as we step out of the room and turn to walk down the hallway, I bump into a very hard chest. Hands grab my arms to keep me from stumbling backward and falling, and the familiar scent is all too recognizable.

My heart does a little tap, tap when I realize who he is.

It can't be...

I look up, confused.

"Caden?"

What the hell is he doing here?