

Chapter 75

[Vivienne]

As soon as I step out of the car, I'm struck by the sheer opulence of the place.

Marble columns, golden accents—this isn't just wealth; it's power. I don't have time to gawk, though, because Alexander is already leading me inside.

We pass through massive doors, the kind you see in movies where some king lives in a ridiculous palace. But this isn't a movie, and I'm sure this man is more dangerous than any fictional character I know.

"You live here?" I ask, trying to keep the disbelief out of my voice.

"Yes," he replies, like it's no big deal. "The one and only."

I follow him down a hallway that feels like it could go on forever. I'm still trying to wrap my head around the fact that this is not a dream—or a nightmare, for that matter—I'm tangled up with a guy who kills people for a living and probably doesn't even blink afterward.

I bite the inside of my cheek and follow him without any more questions.

When we reach further inside the palace, past at least a dozen guards, a grand view of a voluptuous staircase comes into sight. An older man appears, and let's just say, he looks so much like Alexander that I don't doubt for a second he must be Bane Senior.

Bane Senior is sitting on a couch, nodding at something the man next to him seems to be saying when his sharp, old eyes land on us, and his

entire face fumes with anger.

He's off the couch in a blink.

"What the hell is wrong with you, Xan!" he roars, looking really mad. "I warned you, didn't I? Why don't you fucking listen to me anymore? I swear to God, if you—"

Those sharp gray eyes anchor on me, and his lips purse into a straight line.

Bane Senior furrows his brows. "Who the hell is she now? A new toy for the week?"

Okay, I might have been a little distracted by the ridiculous similarity in their faces, but now that those words have come out of this man's mouth, I can't help feeling offended.

But before I can say something or clear up this unnecessary misunderstanding, Alexander steps forward. "Enough, old man. Let's leave this conversation for after dinner. We're all tired right now."

Bane Senior doesn't look pleased, but he grunts, like he's decided to let it slide—for now.

"Fine. Meet me in the office in an hour. I need all the details."

Then, he turns on his heel and walks out of sight, the man from earlier following him like a shadow.

Alexander sighs deeply, then turns around to face me.

"I apologize for that. I really thought he'd gone to sleep by now." He chuckles, and I feel weird knowing how quickly his whole demeanor has

changed. "But either way, let me assure you, the old man isn't so bad at heart. Mother says the angrier he is, the more worried he is."

"Worried?" I scoff, staring in the direction the old man disappeared. "He looked like he wanted to rip your head off."

Alexander shrugs. "He's always like that. You'll get used to it."

"Used to it?" I narrow my eyes. "I'm not here to get used to it. Speaking of which, when am I free to go? I need to find Rosita and make sure she's okay. I'm really worried about her. What if something happ—"

"Don't worry about it!" He slides his hands into his pockets, his eyes softening. "I already have some of my men on it. If they find anything, you'll be the first to know."

Then, before I can say anything else, he looks to his right and calls out, "Mrs. Sullivan?"

An older woman, probably in her sixties, shuffles into the room. She's got that no-nonsense vibe, the kind of person who doesn't take shit from anyone.

"Yes, Mr. Bane?" she asks, her voice curt.

"Please, show Ms Sinclair to the guest room, and make sure she's comfortable."

Mrs. Sullivan eyes me up and down, clearly sizing me up. I'm not sure if she's judging me or just used to seeing new faces dragged into this madhouse.

"Yes, sir," she replies, then looks at me with a stiff smile. "This way, miss."



I hesitate, glancing back at Alexander.

He's already pulled out his phone, scrolling through messages like this is just another day at the office. I want to ask him a million things—what the hell is really going on, why I'm being treated like some hostage guest, and most importantly, when I can get the hell out of here.

But I bite my tongue, knowing damn well I'm not going to get any straight answers right now.

I follow Mrs. Sullivan out of the room.

Suddenly, I'm so nervous. I don't even know why. Maybe the reason is obvious, maybe it's not. But one thing is for sure: I need to get out of here ASAP. Maybe I should call Harvey as soon as I get some privacy.

The bubble of my thoughts bursts when we take a sudden turn into another hallway, and I almost run into someone.

"Watch it, bitch!"



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