

Chapter 79

[Vivienne]

I don't have to hear anything anymore.

For some reason, I thought he was different—still, a criminal, but a better man who knew how to treat a woman right—but maybe such men are almost impossible to find.

“Well, that settles it then,” I grumble under my breath and get out of the car, not waiting for him to say anything anymore.

But before I head inside whatever this place is, his deeply exhausted voice comes from behind.

“If I didn't know any better, I would say you're really mad at me.”

I whirl around to face him, feeling so damn frustrated.

“I am mad, but maybe not at you exactly. I just...I just hate the way men treat their women. I mean, if you're not ready for a commitment, just say so, you know? Don't lead her on and make her believe that you're in love with her and that you're going to be there for her when you clearly don't want to. It's just not fair. And I get that you have responsibilities and that you don't want to be tied down, but you should at least give her a heads up, not just throw her away like she's some piece of trash.”

He says nothing. Nothing. Just stares calmly at me as if I'm the unreasonable one here.

I sigh, letting my shoulders drop. “I know we don't know each other and that I have no right to judge your relationship, but I just can't stand that

Chapter 79

kind of behavior. It makes me sick to my stomach. You need to talk to her, or you need to let her go.”

“I see.”

I wait for him to say something else, but he just keeps staring at me, unblinking, his expression completely unreadable.

“Are you going to say anything else?”

“Is there anything more you want me to say?”

I huff out a breath and shake my head. “You know what, forget it. Just forget everything I said. I don’t care about your business. It has nothing to do with me, and I shouldn’t have interfered. I’m sorry. You can go now. I’ll be fine on my own.”

I turn around to leave.

“Wait!”

I stop and turn to look at him again. “What?”

He walks around the car, and when he stands on the side I’m on, he leans his back against the car and crosses his arms over his chest. “Why do I have the feeling this has less to do with me and more to do with you?” He tips his head to the side, curious. “What happened to you, Ms Sinclair? Who hurt you this bad?”

His question catches me off guard. But maybe I should have expected that.

I turn away from him. “No one. And it’s none of your business.”

“Well,” he says, dragging on the word like an elastic. “You should have

Chapter 79

thought that before you got into my business.”

I can’t even argue. He does have a point.

When I say nothing, he walks closer. I can’t see him, but I can hear his footsteps against the path, the way heat radiates from his body when he stands right behind me.

“But I don’t mind you asking questions,” he says, and I bite my lip. “I don’t mind you doing anything at all. Do you know why?”

I glance over my shoulder, trying to keep my heartbeat in check.

He looks straight at me, his gaze unwavering.

“Because you’re special, Ms Sinclair. Very special.”

He reaches out to help me turn back around and face him. “I won’t say I know what you’re coming from, because God knows, I have no clue. But one thing I can assure you of is this: the day I find the woman I want to spend the rest of my life with, I won’t play with her. I’ll cherish her, make her feel like a queen. I won’t toss her aside like yesterday’s trash, because she’s the most precious thing in the world to me. I’ll take care of her. I’ll protect her. And I won’t hesitate to fight for her. But Tanya...”

He trails off, as if he doesn’t want to say it, but does anyway. He frowns. “She’s not that person. And she never will be.”

“But the baby—”

“Is not mine.”