

## Chapter Forty-Three

### Recap

Suddenly, I feel a soft touch barely below injury on my upper arm. I flinch in surprise and jerk my head to stare down. I stare in complete shock as Travis presses his lips to the skin once again.

“What—“ I begin airily.

He straightens in his position but his thumb never leaves my arm.

“You should never be glad you’re hurt—because watching that bullet even brush you—it scared the living daylight out of me.” He bends down to look at me.

Just as I open my mouth to speak, we hear a bang behind the door.

Travis and I fly apart, nearly running into opposite walls, when the door flies open. Layla bursts through, completely unapologetic to her behavior, and marches right over to me.

I stand frozen, completely aware that my arm is entirely visible to her eyes. In an instant, she grabs my opposite shoulder and pushes me so that she gets a full frontal view of the marks.

Anger, full fledged rage, crosses her beast like features. She holds the phone up—the screen paused on a scene where my patched up shoulder could be slightly visible through my jacket slip.

Layla reaches across the room and grabs my jacket off the floor before tossing it to me.

“I knew it.” She growls, looking between the two of us, “Explain to me everything—all the way up to why my sister has been shot!”

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“Layla,” Travis begins again cautiously, holding one hand between Layla and I.

His first few attempts at calming her down were utter failures, and I don’t think I was able to contribute positively either. Layla is fuming, and I’ve never seen her so angry before.

She points a finger at Travis and bites out in a low growl, “Tell me to calm down one more time, and you can say goodbye to your balls.”

Silence echoes in the claustrophobic bathroom while she spits out the ridiculously believable threat. Despite her serious tone, Travis stares down at her in irritation and astonishment.

“Fine,” He replies in a harsher, forced tone, “Then why don’t we go someplace and talk this out.”

Layla is already shaking her head ferociously from side to side, “No. I want to know right here, right now.”

Another moment of tension passes before she suddenly whips around to throw her full wrath in my direction.

“Actually,” She states, sarcasm dripping in her sweet tone, “I want you to explain.”

I open my mouth to speak, but Travis cuts in again, causing her to whirl around to face him instantly.

“We can both explain everything to you,” He emphasizes, “someplace else”

“I really don’t understand why we can’t do this now.” She snaps bitterly.

Travis drops his hand to his side in agitation and flashes me agony filled glance before turning on his heel to walk out of the bathroom. He grabs the notch and twists, pulling the door open and heading out as Layla hisses for him to come back.

“Is he serious right now?” Layla spins to face me with an incredulous expression, “Are you serious right now?”

“Layla,” My eyebrows drop in reasonable sympathy, “I understand that you’re angry right now—“

“Angry is an understatement—try hurt and furious”

“Okay,” I nod, and restart, “I understand that you’re hurt and furious—“

“Do you?” She skeptically interrupts, “So you understand how badly it hurts to be lied to repeatedly by your own sister?”

“It’s not like that, I promise I had reasons for keeping this from you.” I persist, trying my best not to focus on the burning sensation at the brims of my eyes.

“So are you two responsible for the break in and the gym shooting?” She demands, ignoring my last statement.

“What?” Her detour throws me off guard, and my head rings at the subtle accusation. “No, I—we don’t know who broke into our house, or why—and the gym shooting was completely unexpected!”

She raises an eyebrow in humorless disbelief, “You didn’t answer my question.”

“Look at me,” I insist, “I’ve been shot because I know what’s going on. I don’t want that happening to you.”

Somewhere in my explanation, I had looked down at the floor. So, I when glance up, my heart cracks at the image of Layla’s watery eyes.

She wipes them angrily as I watch her wordlessly.

“You don’t get to decide what happens to me.” She argues bluntly, “Cheers to you for keeping this whole thing hidden for so long. Maybe everything would be great if I didn’t find out, but not anymore. You got caught, and I am not accepting ‘it’s for your own good’ as a reply.”

I purse my lips in utter despair as a trainwreck of thoughts bombard my mind. Hot water threatens to spill over when I begin to accept her determined expression as a fact. From the way she clicks her jaw in defiance, the way she stands up straight, and the way she clenches her fists by her sides, I know she is completely honest about her previous reply.

She isn’t going anywhere.

Slowly, I bring a hand up to pinch the bridge of my nose.

With my eyes closed, I hiss with an exasperated sigh, “Travis!”

“Are you going to tell me the truth this time?” Layla is still standing in her position as I release my hold on her a few moments.

I nod at her, but look towards the door for Travis to come back inside.

I know I have to tell her everything now. For once, I understand how Travis must have felt when I refused to let this go. The fear of losing Layla with the information that I have and will be giving to her...it just makes perfect sense now.

Moments after I called him, he reappears with a weary expression on his face. I meet his dark, eden gaze and give him a brisk nod to begin his story.

Telling Layla his role in this is not my story to tell. Though he is a big part of it, I’m praying he will save her from some trouble and leave certain things out that he didn’t leave out for me.

A sense of déjà vu enters my memories as he steps towards Layla and shoots her a regretful, warning look. His features furrow in disappointment, and his jaw clicks in utter seriousness, as he opens his mouth to repeat the same words he had said to me the day that we played 20 questions on the rooftop.

“Just so you know,” He recites gruffly, taking a quick glance at me, “Once I tell you, there’s no going back.”

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I loved writing this chapter! I don’t know why, I just did.

Just one thing I’d like to note: I’m getting a little irritated when people state that the content of my chapter is not worthy of a chapter. I get that it’s an opinion you have, but you see—I only accept three kinds of comments: 1. genuinely nice ones 2. BASICALLY, it’s really not impossible to comment freely on my stories. The comment that I mentioned earlier about my chapters, doesn’t fall into any of those three categories. It falls into one called x.) rude. So please, refrain from those. Not just on mine, but on all the stories here. They might hurt a lot more than you intend for them. Some may take them way more seriously than I do. Just beware of that, please. Thanks.

On the other hand, I’m glad you enjoyed the last chapter! Thanks for reading and Comment peeps!

QOC: Layla is extremely angry in this chapter. If you were placed in her shoes, would you react the same way? If not, how would you react? Also, if you had the amazing power to predict emotions, how do you think Travis feels in this entire situation?

Can I get 68 comments?

VOMMENT.

xxSummerxx

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