

Rewritten 28

Chapter 28

Jadie waited for a moment before she spotted Zach emerging from the study. Swiftly, she moved toward him. "Zach, what's wrong? You look upset. Did he... give you a hard time?"

Zach, with a blazer draped over his arm, was visibly troubled. But upon catching sight of her, his expression softened slightly. "It's nothing. Let's head back."

Seated in the car, Zach's grip on the steering wheel tightened as he replayed the conversation from the study, his gaze sharp and determined.

"This is an invitation to a charity gala happening next week. I'll send someone to assist you. You know what to do."

Zach accepted the invitation. "Is Father trying to ally with the Young family?"

"No, it's a bid for a strategic marriage between our families. You're not getting any younger, Zach. It's about time you settle down. Currently, the Young family seems like

"I understand. I won't disappoint Father." For some reason, Zach pulled over.

Confused, Jadie turned to him. "Zach, what's going on?"

your

best bet."

Before she knew it, Zach pulled her into his arms, the delicate scent of camellias from her filling his nostrils. Jadie stiffened at his sudden embrace, caught off guard. Though they had been together for years, there had always been a chasm between them, a line neither had dared to cross even though

their feelings were apparent. Now, Jadie could sense something was off with Zach. This man who had always been conscious of boundaries was initiating an intimate moment.

The air in the car grew thick with tension, Jadie slowly relaxed into his arms, her head tilted back to rest on his shoulder as her hands rubbed gentle circles on his back. Her voice was soft, almost a whisper. "Zach... What's wrong? Are you upset about something?"

It was only after a while that Zach let her go. "Jadie, I've got some things to deal with soon. I need you to stay on campus for a while."

Jadie paused, taken aback by his request. A wave of disappointment washed over her. Her heart felt heavy in her chest. "Did I cause you trouble?"

Zach smoothed her disheveled hair with a gentle hand. "No, you've been great. Just give me some more time. After you graduate, I'll give you all the answers you're seeking."

Zach had the most expressive pair of almond-shaped eyes, full of depth and sentiment. But he had always been reserved, hiding his emotions, which made him appear cold. Staring into his intense gaze, Jadie's heartbeat picked up pace, and she lowered her slightly flushed face.

"Zach... I understand. I'll do as you say."

A hint of a smile tugged at Zach's lips. "I'll pick you up after school on Friday."

Jadie nodded. "Alright."

After dropping Jadie home, Zach made a beeline back to the office, where Kevin Harrison was waiting to debrief him on the upcoming arrangements. Kevin, Zach's right-hand man, presented several documents for him to sign. Wearing a sleek black vest and gold-rimmed glasses, Zach exuded a commanding air of self-discipline. He meticulously reviewed the departmental reports and upcoming

project proposals. Outside the window, the sky had faded to darkness. His phone, placed on the desk, buzzed to life. His gaze never left the papers, as he accepted the call and placed it to his ear.

“This is Zach Jardin speaking. Who is this?”

“Oh darling, I miss you so much...” A woman’s voice, sultry and seductive, wafted through the receiver.

Zach’s eyebrows knitted together. He put down the documents, leaning back in his chair, an air of impatience emanating from him. From the other end, the sound of running water could be vaguely heard.

“You’ve got three minutes. You’d better have something important to say.”

“When did you become so timid, Zach? Scared our secret might be discovered? Why don’t you guess what I’m doing? If you guess right, I’ll come over right now and you can do whatever you want with me.”

“Jasmine, I don’t have time for games. If you don’t want this, feel free to decline. There’s no need to test me. I’ve always said that you’re free to walk away anytime.”

Zach ended the call, and just as his screen was going dark, a new message popped up. It was from someone named Ethan.

[The walnut cake you made was delicious. Thanks, Madelyn, I loved it.]