

STEBROTHER'S PUNISHES ME EVERYNIGHT -

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Rolex's POV

I stood in the kitchen, staring into my black coffee like it held all the answers. The events from yesterday kept replaying in my mind - Mia tied to that pillar, bruises marking her skin, those bastards laughing at her pain. My grip tightened around the mug. What bothered me most wasn't just what happened to her, but how much it affected me.

The sound of footsteps pulled me from my thoughts. Xavier walked in, car keys dangling from his fingers.

"I'll take Mia to school today," he said casually, grabbing an apple from the fruit bowl.

"No." The word came out like a growl.

Xavier paused mid-bite, studying me with those annoyingly perceptive eyes of his. "Since when are you so protective of our little stepsister?"

He crossed his arms, a knowing smirk playing on his lips. "Besides, don't you have patients waiting?"

The word 'stepsister' made my stomach turn. If he only knew. I forced myself to shrug. "Someone has to make sure she doesn't get beaten up again."

"That's what I'm offering to do." Xavier leaned against the counter, that irritating smirk playing on his lips. "Unless there's another reason you want to take her?"

Before I could answer, Mia appeared in the doorway. She wore a baggy sweater that practically swallowed her whole, probably trying to hide yesterday's bruises. My wolf stirred at the sight of her, and I had to look away. Mate. The word echoed in my head, unwanted but undeniable.

"Morning," she said softly, fidgeting with her sleeve.

"Let me drive you," Xavier and I said simultaneously.

Mia's eyes widened slightly, darting between us. The awkward silence that followed made me want to punch something.

"I've got patients waiting at the clinic," I admitted reluctantly. "Xavier can take you."

"We'll both go," Xavier suggested, twirling his keys. "The clinic's on the way anyway."

I wanted to refuse, but what excuse could I give? That every time I looked at her, my wolf went crazy? That I was fighting the urge to protect her, even though I'd sworn to make her pay for what her mother did?

Xavier's eyes narrowed at my demanding tone, but he nodded. As Mia followed him out, she glanced back at me, confusion and something else swimming in those innocent eyes. I turned away, unable to face what I saw there.

The moment they left, I slammed my fist against the counter. How cruel was fate to make her my mate? Her mother—the woman who had driven our mother to that fatal heart attack with her schemes and manipulation - her daughter was meant to be mine?

The memory of that day still haunted me. Mom collapsing after reading that letter from Lillian, her last words a broken whisper about betrayal. And now her daughter was here, carrying the same blood, awakening feelings I didn't want to acknowledge.

"Control yourself, Rolex," I murmured to myself, as I raked my fingers between my hair in frustration.

The drive was quiet at first. Mia sat in the back, and I kept catching glimpses of her in the rearview mirror. She looked so different from Lillian - softer, more vulnerable. The woman who'd driven our mother to her death with her schemes and manipulation... how could her daughter be my mate?

"You're awfully quiet back there," Xavier called out, breaking the silence. "Not planning any more early morning peep shows, are you?"

Mia's face turned bright red. "That was an accident! I didn't mean to-"

"Sure you didn't," I found myself joining in, the words coming naturally despite everything. "Just like you didn't mean to stare at me on the bike yesterday."

As I drove, my mind kept wandering to her - the way she clung to me on the bike yesterday, her soft body pressed against mine, her scent surrounding me.

"I wasn't staring!" She sank deeper into her seat, face burning brighter.

"No?" Xavier grinned. "Then why are you blushing?"

She shook her head, and as we reached to school. She tried to quickie ran away.

"Wait," Xavier called out as Mia started to walk away. His voice carried across the parking lot, drawing attention from nearby students. "We'll walk you to class."

I stepped out of the car, adjusting my jacket. The way the other students stared at us, their whispers already starting - it made my wolf want to bare its teeth. Mine, it growled possessively. I pushed the thought away.

"Come on, little sister," Xavier said, emphasizing the last two words loud enough for everyone to hear. He placed a hand on her shoulder, the gesture both protective and territorial. "Show us the way."

Mia glanced between us, confusion clear in her eyes. "You don't have to—"

"We insist," I cut in, falling into step on her other side. Students parted before us like water, their eyes widening as they recognized us. Good. Let them see. Let them know she's protected now.

As we walked through the halls, I noticed how Mia seemed to shrink into herself, trying to become invisible. It made something in my chest ache. How long had she been living like this, trying to disappear?

"Hey everyone," Xavier called out, his voice carrying that alpha authority that made others instinctively pay attention. "Meet our little sister, Mia Atwood."

The name drop had its intended effect. Whispers erupted through the hallway. Atwood. One of the most powerful wolf families in the region. I saw the fear in their eyes, Not to mess up with us.

"Remember that name," I added, my voice cold enough to freeze. "Because if anything happens to her..." I let the threat hang in the air.

Xavier's smile was all teeth as he finished my thought. "You'll answer to us. Her big brothers."

We reached her classroom, and I fought the urge to scent-mark her before letting her go. My wolf was going crazy, wanting to claim, protect, possess.

"We'll pick you up after school," Xavier told her, his reply leaving no room for argument.

"Both of you?" Mia asked, her voice small.

"All of us," I corrected. Let everyone see the full force of the Atwood family united behind her. "Nathan and Sean too."

She gulped her nervousness and went to her seat.

While Xavier and I walked out of the school,

"Coffee?" Xavier asked me, "We need to talk."

Ten minutes later, we sat in a quiet corner of the local café. I stirred my coffee absently, thinking about how much had changed in just a few days. When Dad first brought Mia home, all I could think about was revenge. Make her suffer like we had suffered. But watching her endure actual suffering... it felt wrong.

"What's your deal with her?" I finally asked, looking up at Xavier.

His usual playful expression vanished, replaced by something more serious. "You really want to know?"

"I wouldn't ask if I didn't."

Xavier leaned forward, lowering his voice. "She's my mate."

The world seemed to stop for a moment. My coffee cup froze halfway to my mouth as his words sank in. "What did you just say?"

"You heard me." His eyes held mine steadily. "I felt it the moment she walked through our door."

A laugh bubbled up in my throat, but it wasn't happy. "That's impossible."

"Why?" His eyes narrowed. "Because she's Lillian's daughter? Because we're supposed to hate her?"

"No." I set my cup down carefully, fighting to keep my voice steady. "Because she's my mate too."

The silence that followed was deafening. We stared at each other across the table, the implications of what we'd just revealed hanging heavy between us. How can we have one mate? And not just any mate - the daughter of the woman we'd blamed for destroying our family.

"Well," Xavier finally said, sitting back in his chair. "This is fucked up."

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