

Chapter 144 Apologize

When Caden grasped Alicia's foot again, she felt uneasy.

She attempted to withdraw her foot, yet Caden immediately tightened his grip.

She was unable to pull away.

In a subdued voice, she inquired, "Caden, what are you doing?"

Caden clumsily applied some herbal oil to her bruise and began massaging it.

His voice was rigid as he demanded, "Tell me exactly why you were at the Yates Mansion."

Alicia tensed up.

In a soft tone, she insisted, "First, apologize to me."

Caden's expression turned stern.

She expected an apology from him?

Regardless of right or wrong, did he really need to apologize for something so minor?

He stated icily, "I've never been good at apologizing."

"Then we have nothing more to discuss," she declared, attempting to retract her foot.

Caden held on firmly, pressing on her delicate bones. "I might not excel at apologies, but I'm familiar with using a bit of force. Shall we proceed?"

After his warning, he increased the pressure.

Alicia immediately experienced a sharp pain and numbness in her joint,

crying out, "Caden, release me!"

Caden relaxed his grip, but his tone remained strict. "Explain now."

Alicia internally cursed him repeatedly.

She then explained tersely, "Joshua deceived me by claiming Rachel wanted to meet. When I arrived at the Yates Mansion, he dragged me into the bedroom and locked me up."

Caden, unsatisfied with the explanation, pressed further, "Why did he lock you up?"

"Why else? He was aware of our relationship," she responded.

Initially, Joshua was merely suspicious.

His suspicions turned to rage after a call from Caden.

Caden then noticed her neck, asking pointedly, "Did he hurt you?"

Alicia pressed her lips tightly together, still haunted by the fear. "He didn't succeed."

Caden's concern deepened. "Did you manage to escape through the window while resisting?"

Alicia clarified, "Not exactly, but that essentially summarizes what happened."

Caden fell quiet.

After the oil had been absorbed, he wiped off the residue with a tissue.

Alicia recognized this as an uncharacteristic gesture resembling an apology, but she was not ready to accept it.

Once Caden pulled back, she dug through her purse and pulled out some cash.

Caden eyed the money. "What's this for?"

"It's your tip."

With precision, she slipped the cash into his collar as one might tip a male escort. "Your massage skills are rough and unrefined, but this is the going rate. You won't be shortchanged."

Caden was left speechless.

She was compensating him as if for a service, now even for applying the oil, pushing his boundaries further.

Perhaps he had been overly lenient with her.

He rejected the gesture, throwing the cash back. "We should put this morning's incident behind us and look ahead. Once your foot is better, we'll plan the next steps."

"Who mentioned moving on?" Alicia retrieved her money. "You seem to forget your harsh words from this morning. It hasn't even been a day. Do you think we can just forget all that happened?"

Caden countered, "Had you given an explanation, I wouldn't have misunderstood."

"And who felt like explaining while you were throwing a fit?"

"I did ask you. Why remained silent?"

Alicia fixed a stern gaze on him. "Then why didn't you apologize when I asked you to? Has the cat got your tongue?"

Caden was silenced once more, feeling the sting of her sharp retort.

His patience snapped. "Do you insist on a verbal apology?"

Alicia held her head high. "Yes. And don't thank me—I'm simply being generous."

Caden scoffed, "If that's the case, this isn't over by a long shot."

Alicia found herself at a disadvantage when it came to bargaining. Now that she had cut ties with Joshua, the future seemed uncertain.

In time, her defiance would catch up with her.

But Caden misjudged her resolve. Alicia had accepted her fate. Things had reached a point where, at worst, her life might spiral downward. If that were the case, why should she care about living miserably?

"Fine with me." Alicia brought up the sofa again, her voice resolute. "I'll pay for it. Take it or leave it. If you won't, then report me to the police. Let me rot in prison."

Caden had no words.

As she limped toward the bathroom, she added, "I'll wash off the oil you just applied. Then we'll owe each other nothing."

Again, Caden was struck silent.

His anger boiled beneath the surface, but he had nowhere to direct it.

"What a stubborn, infuriating woman," he thought bitterly.

Suddenly, Alicia's phone rang.

Caden noticed it was a WhatsApp call from someone listed as a doctor.

The profile picture showed a man.

Without hesitation, Caden answered.

A calm voice asked, "Ms. Bennett, is your foot feeling better?"

Already in a foul mood, Caden's patience wore thin.

In a cold tone, he replied, "She's busy. She's in the bathroom."

The doctor seemed caught off guard, stammering, "I'm sorry— I didn't mean to intrude."

Not ready to give up, the doctor cautiously inquired, "Are you Ms. Bennett's brother?"

Caden's expression darkened, and he responded flatly, "This is her father."