

Chapter 148 Feel Better Now

Alicia drifted off to sleep on the bed in the dimly lit lounge.

Caden, on the other hand, remained fully awake, despite their passionate affair just now.

His body thrummed with a sense of fulfillment, a sense of satisfaction coursing through his veins.

He pulled out the USB drive Randolph had slipped to him earlier, and until now, Caden hadn't bothered to look at its contents.

He had intended to watch it with Alicia, but she had tired more quickly than expected.

A wry smile tugged at his lips—actually, he had made sure of that. Wearing her out had been part of his plan, a sly way to keep her compliant, perhaps even coax her into cooking for him.

Caden plugged in the USB and clicked on the audio file, and the next second, a low hum emerged from the speakers.

The crackling sound was unmistakably from a secret recording, untouched and raw.

Caden's casual demeanor shifted as the recorded conversation filled the room. At first, it seemed like any other piece of incriminating evidence—something banal in its criminality. But as the recording continued, a deep crease formed between his brows.

His gaze flickered toward the closed lounge door, where Alicia slept peacefully.

Reaching for the volume, he dialed it down to barely a whisper, leaning in closer to catch every word.

The recording wasn't long—less than five minutes— but each second was packed with damning details.

It took him back three years, to the time of a tragic plane crash.

No survivors, the headlines had said, and everyone believed it was a terrible accident.

Except, it wasn't.

Joshua's name surfaced in the recording; he had been one of the orchestrators behind it all.

Caden clenched his jaw, the weight of the revelation hitting him hard. Though he had distanced himself from the Yates family long ago, their dirty deeds had never truly been out of reach.

They reaped what they sowed, and he had no intention of being dragged back into their web.

More importantly, that crash three years ago—Alicia's parents had died in it.

His thoughts raced as he quickly cross-referenced the details.

While there was no direct proof linking Joshua to the death of Alicia's parents, the pieces were starting to fit too neatly.

Caden pressed his lips into a tight, thin line, his face shadowed by the harsh light overhead.

The sharp brightness felt oppressive, casting stark contrasts over his expression, amplifying the rising tension beneath his cool exterior.

Without a second thought, he grabbed his phone and dialed an anonymous number.

"Get this done for me. I want answers within a day."

Once the call ended, Caden slipped the USB drive into the safe, locking it securely away.

Two hours later, Alicia stirred, her mouth parched and her body aching in familiar places.

Every sexual encounter with Caden ended in her crotch and legs

throbbing with soreness, a discomfort she'd unfortunately grown used to. Wincing slightly, she slid off the bed, her steps slow and cautious as she made her way out.

By now, the sky outside was already black.

In the dim office, only two wall lamps remained on, their soft glow casting long, indistinct shadows that danced across the room.

By the window, Caden sat in quiet contemplation, a half-finished glass of wine in his hand.

Alicia found her eyes drawn to him, studying the tousled strands of hair that had fallen across his forehead.

His shirt, now slightly wrinkled, had several buttons undone, revealing the hard planes of his chest.

Faint red scratches and bite marks marred his skin, evidence of their earlier passion.

The deeper the marks, the deeper Caden had thrust himself inside her.

She leaned against the wall, biting her lip as memories from just hours ago flooded her mind.

The same uncomfortable wave of embarrassment washed over her.

How could she still be so inexperienced, so hopelessly sensitive to his touch? No matter how many times it happened, she never seemed to toughen up.

Seeming to sense her presence, Caden turned his head toward her, his dark eyes meeting hers with that same unreadable intensity.

"You're awake," he murmured, his voice low.

Alicia swallowed her discomfort, trying to play off the awkwardness by pretending it never happened.

"So... where's the thing you were going to give me?" she demanded stiffly.

"The USB drive?" Caden replied casually. "It's damaged. I'll get it to you

the day after tomorrow."

He sent a quick message on his phone before rising from his seat.

His sudden movement made her pulse quicken involuntarily, a flash of fear flickering through her as he approached. "D-don't tell me you're not planning to hand it over," she stammered, more out of nervousness than defiance.

"With your attitude, do you think I'd lie to you?" Caden, ever composed, filled his glass with warm water and handed it to her. "Accidents happen. How about this? If you don't have it by the day after tomorrow, feel free to burn my company to the ground."

She scowled, speechless.

She wasn't some kind of ruthless monster capable of such destruction.

Reluctantly, she accepted the glass, since she was indeed thirsty.

She took a long drink, nearly draining the glass in one go.

"How'd you know I was thirsty?" she asked, her voice softer now.

Caden smirked slightly, leaning closer as his words slid smoothly from his lips, "Don't you remember how wet you were earlier?"

Heat rushed to her cheeks, her face flushing crimson.

She clamped her mouth shut, too embarrassed to make a sound.

As the warm water settled in her stomach, it triggered a low rumble, which made her realize just how hungry she was.

Caden barely batted an eyelash. "The food will be here soon," he announced flatly.

Alicia set down her glass with a sharp clink. "You can eat alone. Just looking at you killed my appetite."

He smirked, his expression sly. "Really? That's a shame. I was just about to tell you something about Joshua's company."

At this, her cool demeanor instantly cracked, and she couldn't help but

ask, "Why, what happened?"

"There's a problem," he replied with a deliberate pause. "His cash flow has dried up."

Alicia's lips curled into a slow, almost wicked smile. Karma certainly hadn't wasted any time.

"So, how's he taking it?" she asked, her tone bright with amusement.

Caden casually sank into the chair, crossing his legs as if he had all the time in the world.

"I'm starving," he said lazily, "and too tired to talk. Let's eat first, and then we'll chat."

Alicia stared at him, fighting the urge to roll her eyes. Was this really how he wanted to play it?

Sighing, she plopped down into the chair opposite him.

"Do I suddenly look appetizing to you now?" Caden teased, arching a brow.

She went silent for a beat, then drawled, "Sure, whatever you say."

As if on cue, the arrival of their meal broke the tension. The elegant containers, sealed tight, still managed to release tantalizing aromas that filled the room.

Despite herself, Alicia swallowed involuntarily and reached for her utensils.

She dug in, and without even taking a bite, Caden leaned forward slightly and told her everything she wanted to hear.

Alicia's eyes gleamed with interest, the corners of her mouth lifting ever so slightly. "So, if Joshua wants to keep his little empire from crumbling, he's going to have to swallow his pride and beg for help—anywhere he can find it. Correct?"

Caden nodded, watching her closely.

Something in her shifting mood stirred a flicker of unexpected sympathy

within him. "Feeling better now?"

Alicia, unable to hide the sparkle in her eye, obviously wasn't in a sour mood anymore.

She picked up a piece of chicken, struggling to hide her growing smile. "I guess."

He leaned in with a knowing grin. "Want to feel even better?"

She blinked, curiosity piqued. "You're planning to make your move now, aren't you?"

Caden hesitated, considering.

It was tempting, very tempting. A few well-placed moves and Joshua would be cornered— but ending things now would also cut their little agreement short.

That wouldn't do.

"Not yet," he replied thoughtfully. "We don't have enough to nail him down. Going in too soon would be a mistake." He set his fork down and met her gaze, his eyes twinkling with mischief. "But if you just want to make things difficult for him, then it'll be a piece of cake."

Alicia's interest flared. "What exactly do you have in mind?"