

## Chapter 49 Haven't We Kissed Before

The officer stepped forward, silver handcuffs glinting in his hands as he moved to cuff Alicia.

Caden quickly raised a hand, stopping him. "Hold on a second," he said, his voice calm but firm. "There's no need to go overboard."

The officer hesitated, his eyes flicking between Caden and Alicia. Sensing the connection between them, he lowered his hands and backed off.

Alicia quickly tucked her scalded hand by her side, trying to hide it as she climbed into the police car.

Caden followed her in, squeezing into the cramped space next to her.

"Aren't you going back?" she asked, a hint of surprise in her voice.

Caden shrugged, his long legs crammed awkwardly in the tight seat. "Why go back? The action at the station is far more entertaining."

Alicia's eyes narrowed. She knew there was more to it than he was letting on, but she chose not to ask.

Instead, she leaned back in the seat, letting the silence settle between them.

One of the officers handed Caden a bottle of water, a polite smile on his face. "Thanks for everything, Mr. Ward. We really appreciate your help."

Caden took the bottle with a gentle nod. "I didn't do much," he replied modestly, his tone soft.

Alicia shot him a sharp, cold glance. Really? Quite the humble act.

The officer chuckled softly. "Mr. Ward, you're too kind. With all the donations you've made over the years, we owe you a great deal of



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respect."

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Alicia blinked in surprise. Donations? She hadn't known Caden was such a big contributor.

Caden caught her eye for a brief moment but said nothing more.

He twisted open the cap and handed her the bottle.

Alicia, still feeling the sweat from the fight, took the water.

She was parched, but her expression was cautious as she eyed the bottle.

Caden noticed her hesitation and gave a reassuring smile. "It's just water, Alicia. I promise you won't be drugged."

Alicia's face shifted, an expression of confusion crossing her features. "I didn't even say anything, and yet you're already confessing?"

She knew there was no way Caden could be trying to drug her, but his sudden kindness threw her off. It felt strange. Why was he acting like this?

He even opened the water bottle for her, a gesture that reminded her of their kiss last time. It all felt oddly intimate.

She drank almost half the bottle in one go before handing it back to him.

Without missing a beat, Caden opened the bottle and took a couple of casual sips.

Alicia's brow furrowed slightly. "I drank from that," she remarked, her voice quieter now.

Caden didn't bat an eye. "So?"


Her eyes met his, silently conveying a deeper meaning. So? Sharing a drink like this... it feels a little too personal, doesn't it?

Caden raised an eyebrow, a smirk playing on his lips as if to say, "Haven't we kissed before?"

Alicia's face flushed, her ears turning bright red. She quickly looked away.

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Caden, noticing her reaction, couldn't suppress a sly smile.

By the time they arrived at the police station, the surveillance footage from the store had been retrieved.

It turned out the troublemakers were just a bunch of drunkards, and they were the ones who'd started everything.

Alicia only needed to give her statement, and that was that.

"What about the defamation?" Alicia asked, her voice tight with concern. "They've been spreading lies about me online, completely ruining my reputation. Will they be held accountable for that?"

The officer looked at Alicia and said, "If you decide to press charges, we can initiate an investigation once the case is filed, but it will take time. Your best bet is to gather solid evidence and target the ones who instigated this."

Alicia nodded, understanding the gravity of the situation. "Thank you, officer."

Things were already messy, and with the Green family making things worse, Alicia feared that by the time they reached any resolution, she'd be buried under public backlash.

She sighed, feeling the sting from the burn on her hand intensify. Rolling up her sleeve, she saw small blisters beginning to form.

The last thing she wanted was to visit the hospital again.

So, she borrowed a first aid kit from the station and tended to the wound herself, applying ointment and wrapping the bandage around her arm.

A few moments later, Caden walked over, having finished some paperwork. He saw her fumbling with the bandage in a corner, clearly struggling.

Sitting down beside her, he said, "You don't have to do everything on your own, you know." Without waiting for a response, he grabbed a cotton ball, dipped it in iodine, and began to carefully treat the burn. "For example, you could have asked me for help."



Alicia didn't respond, her lips pressed tight.

Caden's touch wasn't exactly delicate, and she winced as he applied the iodine to her scald.

After applying the ointment, he wrapped the bandage around her arm twice, securing it with a knot.

The gesture was practical, but somehow, it made Alicia feel unexpectedly warm inside.

Without meeting her eyes, Caden packed the first aid kit back into the bag. "I saw your record," he said casually. "Honestly, I'm surprised this is the first time you've gotten into trouble."

Considering her temper, it was impressive.

Alicia's eyes darkened.

Maybe it was because he had seen her at her weakest, or maybe it was just the stress of the whole situation. Either way, she found herself lowering her guard. "I don't have anyone left," she said softly, her voice almost a whisper. "No family to bail me out if things go south."

And she couldn't always rely on her friends. Not even Joshua.

So, it was better to stay out of trouble altogether.

Caden stopped what he was doing and looked at her, his expression serious. "So, after tonight, when things get worse... will you always choose to fight back?"

Alicia pressed her lips together, her mind racing. "I need to gather evidence, file a lawsuit, make them admit their mistakes, and force them to apologize to me."

She hadn't taken the situation seriously before, but tonight's incident made one thing clear: Lilliana and Joshua weren't going to let her go.

Rather than be intimidated, she decided it was time to strike first.

Joshua's success had been built on the money she had invested in him long ago. Did anyone know that he had once depended on her for

If she could gather the right evidence and expose it, Joshua would be the one facing public backlash. She wouldn't even need to lift a finger.

The only problem was, how could she gather that evidence?

Her thoughts were interrupted by Caden's mocking laugh. "With your... build," he said, clearly amused, "how exactly do you plan to gather evidence?"

Alicia shot him an annoyed look.

Rolling her eyes, she was about to snap back when Caden, with his usual ulterior motives, said, "Well, if you're smart, you know who could help you."

Before Alicia could respond, she heard footsteps approaching.

She glanced up and saw Joshua entering the room.

His gaze immediately zeroed in on her, darkening as it met hers.

Alicia felt the weight of his stare, the meaning in his eyes clear, and suddenly, a plan began to form in her mind.

She kept her eyes fixed on him, thinking through her next move.

Caden noticed the tension and chuckled. "I think I'll leave you two alone."

Alicia was taken aback, her mouth opening as if to say something, but the words stuck in her throat.

Why should she explain herself?

Let him think whatever he wanted—there was no need to justify anything to him.

