

## Chapter 13 Don't provoke me!

When the dinner party was finally over, Vanessa was still rooted in her place and let the hall turn empty.

In a couple of minutes, only Vanessa and Caroline were present in the enormous hall, and she sighed.

Inhaling a deep breath, Vanessa stood up and turned around to go to the restroom, and Caroline caught up with her from behind as she was worried for Vanessa.

When Vanessa walked out, Austin eyed her leaving silhouette and his gaze turned cold, but his face was detached of any emotion, and he too strode out in his long steps.

Theo, who stood silently behind Austin, followed the gloomy man out, but didn't utter a word, too scared to say anything that would trigger Austin's anger!

But he was bewildered would be an understatement when he saw Vanessa standing in front of them all safe and sound, because he had scoured for her like crazy all these months, personally checking all the places they thought she could be present at, yet, he couldn't get a single clue of her whereabouts.

However, she abruptly appeared in front of them tonight, but her persona seemed totally different!

How she had managed to become the manager of the Grant Corporation was still a question to him, but nonetheless, he wouldn't poke his nose into his boss's ex-wife's business unless he was ordered to!

The most surprising thing to him was that Vanessa, who was once head over heels for Austin, didn't even spare another glance at Austin and behaved as if they were total strangers who had met for the first time!

"Wow! What a twist in character?" He couldn't help but mutter under his breath because, in these three years of their married life, he had never felt Vanessa had the audacity to challenge Austin!

But seeing her today, he presumed, things might be going to change now!

Caroline eyed Vanessa coming out, and a troublesome expression was settled on her face and mumbled softly, "Ms. Grant, are you all right?"

Caroline was personally hired by Daphne Grant to take care of Vanessa and protect her in all situations.

Naturally, she was aware of the relationship between Vanessa and Austin, but she didn't expect they would face each other the first night Vanessa stepped foot into New York City.

And she couldn't help but be concerned for Vanessa when she recalled how cold Austin was to Vanessa and didn't even bother to give her some face!

"That arrogant bastard!" Caroline cursed in her heart for the heartless man, and she even wondered why didn't he see how beautiful Vanessa was and how did he have the heart to divorce her after all these years?

But she got to only one conclusion, that Austin must be blind to not notice Vanessa's true love for him!

She shook her head since Vanessa and Austin didn't have any future together, but she was indeed worried for Vanessa!

When Vanessa heard Caroline's words, she lazily turned off the faucet, grabbed the tissue, and wiped her hands clean. Eyed herself in the mirror and brushed the few loose hair strands, and a pleased smirk was settled on her beautiful face.

Turned to Caroline, she queried with raised brows, "did you really think seeing Austin would upset me?"

Without waiting to get a response from her, Vanessa continued while a soft smile was dancing on her lips, "not going to happen."

With a slight pause, Vanessa added, "because he isn't worthy!"

Vanessa knew Austin well, and there was no way in hell that she would be foolish enough to shed tears for that cold man again! Well, it's none other than her ex-husband!

Listening to her words, Caroline was flabbergasted and was rooted in her tracks for a second, but soon, she was relieved as understanding dawned on her! And she couldn't help but praise Vanessa in her heart.

By the time they had reached the exit and gotten down from the lift, Vanessa thought they would be the only ones left, but alas, luck wasn't on her side, as she again came face to face with the far away Austin in the lobby.

"Damn!" She wanted to curse herself for the situation she was in but put on a cold facade and strode forward in elegant steps.

Her eyelashes slightly fluttered when she passed Austin and Theo but soon, relief washed over her insides when none of them had initiated a conversation. She was grateful for that since she was in no mood to entertain Austin Jones!

With that, she kept her head high, her face was proud, hiding the slight changes she was feeling in her heart. Her steps were steady as the sound of her clicking heel could be heard, and she didn't even spare them a glance as she moved further and further away like she owned the place.

When she saw the exit door, she finally thought she successfully escaped, but a shrill voice stopped her in her tracks, "what are you doing here?"

Hearing the once accustomed voice, she identified the person as Mia without needing to turn around because she remembered the struggles she faced all these years in the Jones family, and Mia Jones was partly responsible for it!

When Vanessa hadn't responded to her yet, Mia leaped to her in a swift move and yelled, "you still had the guts to come back, Vanessa?"

These past months, the Jones family was on a bumpy road, all thanks to Vanessa and the released audio and video files.

If the Jones family weren't powerful enough and had their roots deeply engraved in the city, the Jones family would be nothing but a joke!

Although the people hadn't said anything on their faces because of their power, they had become a laughing stock in the city, and that was a well known fact.

To top it off, Mia, who was always proud and put on airs, had suffered terribly as well, because she was still studying in a school where all the kids were from elite families, and no one bothered about anyone's background in particular.

However, Mia always belittled Vanessa in front of her friends and sprouted all the nonsense she could think of about Vanessa.

But when the scandal erupted suddenly on the internet with solid proofs, she was laughed at by her friends on her face and was humiliated!

And the reason behind her demise was Vanessa!

If Vanessa hadn't given the green signal to release the files on the internet, the Jones family wouldn't have seen such a terrible day in their family history, and their image in public wouldn't have deteriorated.

But the things that happened couldn't be undone!

So, when she finally caught a glimpse of Vanessa, Mia's anger, which had been suppressed all these months, suddenly burst into flames, ready to burn Vanessa into ashes.

Mia stormed onto Vanessa in a flash and raised her hand to hit her, who didn't faze even in the slightest with her furious appearance.

But before a slap was landed on Vanessa's face, Mia's hand was grasped strongly by Vanessa, and she almost crushed it with the pressure she had put on Mia's wrist while a yelp escaped Mia's pale lips.

Startled, Austin tilted his head and peeped at Vanessa's menacingly cold face, her appearance had suddenly shifted from a demure lady to a fearless warrior and he couldn't help but stare at her.

Eyeing the shrieking Mia, Vanessa sneered, her voice was so cold that sent shivers down Mia's spine, "want to hit me?"

With a slight pause, Vanessa called, "Mia."

That single name made Vanessa remember all the awful things she had faced in the Jones family, and she added when her hazel pools sent daggers onto the trembling Mia, "you aren't even worthy to touch my little finger, let alone beat me!"

After Vanessa finished saying, a loud and crisp slap landed on Mia's face, and five-finger marks were imprinted on her fair cheek when Vanessa added calmly, "this slap is what you owe me."

Eyeing Mia's swollen face, one could say at a glance that Vanessa was really merciless when she hit her!

Hearing the commotion, Theo, who was not far from them was shocked

and took a sneaking glance at Austin, whose fists were clenched.

Austin, who was on the phone, abruptly cut it off and strode to Vanessa and Mia expeditiously, his aura was cold, and his facial features screamed danger.

Mia stood there dumbfounded, too lost in the change of situation to even react!

When Mia saw Austin's figure approaching them, she immediately covered her cheek with her palm and cried with the grievance, "Brother. That bitch Vanessa slapped me!"

Hearing that, Vanessa, who stood aside, raised her head and snorted as if she had heard a joke and muttered, "yes, I hit her. Would Mr. Jones hit me back to avenge her?"

"Damn!" Austin was never the type to get provoked, but Vanessa successfully did that, and his blood boiled when he eyed the woman in front of him who looked so different that he couldn't find any resemblance with the Vanessa he knew!

He couldn't help but muse in wonder, "how dare she to shout at me?" But his mind was struggling with an even more pressing question, "How did she change so much in just five months?"

As he didn't know the answer to any of them, his face turned livid while his lips were pressed into a thin line.

When he was about to retort her, Vanessa added in her haughty tone, "Don't try to provoke me when I didn't take the initiative to stir any trouble with you."

Without giving him any chance to say, she continued, her eyes shot daggers at him and Mia, "If I become angry because of your stimulations, don't blame me for being heartless to the Jones family."

She sneered, "after all, I have a lot more gossip that could throw mud on the Jones family."

When Vanessa was done, she gazed at Austin with freezing coldness and muttered, "you were an ex-husband to me. So, behave like one and don't poke your dirty nose in my business."

"Also, consider it as my first and last warning to the Jones family." Vanessa gave the final blow and walked away while brushing her hair, leaving the infuriated Austin and Mia behind.

## Chapter 14 Her new lover was quite attractive!

Mia was enraged as she stared at Vanessa's arrogant silhouette while the sting in her face was still fresh in her mind, compelling her to remember what that bitch Vanessa had done to her.

Her eyes grew fierce as she stroked her swollen face, and the desire to rip Vanessa to shreds settled in the back of her mind!

With that idea, she broke free from Austin's grip and attempted to catch up with Vanessa, but Austin sensed her intentions and forcefully grabbed her hand, pulling her back with a severe look.

Mia looked at Austin in astonishment, incredulity was written over her face, and she couldn't help but ask him about what was going through his head.

She blinked her moist eyes and asked, "brother?" in a mournful tone, making him uncomfortable, but he knew restraining Mia was the best thing for her for the time being.

"Don't try to meddle with her," Austin admonished the miserable Mia in his arms, sending shivers down her spine with his harsh tone.

Mia was infuriated to see him shield that bitch Vanessa since she clearly didn't give Austin any face before she went away, and she really wanted to make Vanessa suffer.

But when she saw the frostiness in his onyx pools, she was stunned in her tracks, too afraid to move or do anything against his wishes.

She whispered, "I'm sorry," with a wounded expression on her face, and continued with a light sob, "It was I who was struck by her. Brother, how can I maintain my composure as if it never happened?"

Hearing Mia's comments, his hold on her eased involuntarily, and he shifted his gaze to the back of Vanessa, who was strolling gracefully, her confidence seeping out of her body with each step she took as if she wasn't the one who had just made shambles in here.

His attractive face was fixed in a scowl as he reflected on how much this woman had changed in just five months!

In such a short span, the prior meek and timid woman had transformed

into a rebel who could agitate and question him without backing down?

How can he accept such drastic changes in her temperament?

Outside the venue, Vanessa didn't stop her steps until she reached her car, and without turning back, she climbed into it because deep down in her heart, she knew Austin had never laid his eyes on her and her feelings on him were meaningless!

Caroline, who was in the front row, was concerned as she observed Vanessa's serene manner despite her fragile face being exceedingly pale.

The dismal night sky, hazed by grey clouds, had mirrored wonderfully on her face, making the mood within the car turn melancholy all of a sudden.

Vanessa put her head against the window, her eyes were closed, and her brows screwed up, obviously indicating that she was upset, but Caroline didn't dare to say anything despite the anxiety in her heart.

Hesitantly, Caroline attempted to initiate a conversation to distract Vanessa from her sadness and called, her voice trembled a little in the end, "Ms. Grant."

Vanessa didn't open her eyes when she heard her name, instead gently inquired, "yes?"

When Caroline didn't respond, Vanessa reluctantly opened her eyes and peered at her, who was attempting to communicate with her, and she couldn't help but ask, frowning, "Are you afraid of me?"

Almost immediately, Caroline shook her head in denial and asked, "did you truly consider it through before you decided to stay in New York City for another year?"

Vanessa gave a bewildered expression as she heard her words, and her nose wrinkled in recognition "What's the matter? Did you really think I would fall for that man again?"

She wasn't the sort to turn around and pick up the pieces of her shattered heart from a man who didn't care about her.

Vanessa wanted to make her stance clear so that Caroline wouldn't misjudge the situation.

Caroline murmured, "It's not because of that, Ms. Grant," and she really



wanted to punch herself for her stupid mouth and continued, "I'm just scared you'll be bullied here, just like the Jones family did."

Listening to that, Vanessa's lips curled upwards while a gleam erupted in her amber orbs, "that won't happen. Because only less than a handful of people are qualified enough to bully me."

As Vanessa finished her words, coldness emanated from her body and she clenched her fists.

She would never allow the Jones family to bully her again as they did in the past, and if they dared to cross her this time, she would not hesitate to damage their reputation and would crush them with her own hands.

Caroline who wanted to say something had stopped when she saw the determination and the frostiness in Vanessa's eyes, and she pursed her lips together, not letting another word come out from her mouth as the realization sunk in and she pondered, "Ms. Grant's assessment is absolutely correct. As she's the only daughter of the Grant family, who had the guts to harm her?"

She even considered what had happened in the banquet hall when Vanessa smacked Mia in the face in front of Austin. Instead of avenging his sister, he advised her to stay away from Vanessa, proving Vanessa's analysis to be true, and she breathed a sigh of relief.

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Mia was immersed in her thoughts with a scowl on her face and she was waiting for a show to happen when she let her grandfather know of the incident.

As soon as the car came to a stop in front of the Jones mansion, Mia leaped out of the car and practically sprinted to Old Master Jones to unleash her rage on Vanessa.

Although it's been five months since the scandal had broken out, Old Master Jones's anger towards Vanessa hasn't diminished in the least.

As a result, Mia's interpretation of what had transpired earlier was like pouring oil into the fire, making the elderly man shake with rage.

He couldn't take it any longer and dialed Austin's number, all the while tapping his walking stick on the floor to show how resentful he was!

By then, Austin had just walked into his house, lit a cigarette, and marched to the balcony, where he reclined against the wall with one



knee folded, ruminating over the previous occurrences.

With the buzzing sound, he stared at the caller's information, and he got a headache seeing it, but nonetheless answered, "grandfather?"

"Bring that damned witch Vanessa to me! I want her to bootlick Mia and kneel in the Jones mansion when she apologizes tomorrow."

Hearing Old Master Jones's absurd request, his gloomy countenance had gone so icy that it would freeze anything in his path, and he replied in a chilling tone, "We are already divorced!"

"It doesn't matter to me if you're divorced or not. I want her to be punished for the humiliation she had inflicted on us and made us suffer all these months." Old Master Jones yelled making the last ounce of patience vanish into thin air.

Unknown to his reactions, his grandfather still continued in a menacing tone, "Let us call the police and inform them of the sin she had committed and let her sit behind bars for a few months so that she would learn a lesson this time!"

Austin exhaled angrily and undid the first few buttons on his shirt before rolling his sleeves up to his elbows and raking his hair with his fingers, "she was telling the truth. We would be the laughingstock again if you made the cops arrest her!"

Master Jones was taken aback as Austin's words left his mouth, and he stood like a dead fish as if the ocean had been emptied dry, and when he came to his senses, Austin had hung up on him!

While his heart and thoughts were in confusion, Austin tossed the phone aside and peered at the pitch black sky!

No matter how hard he tried not to think about Vanessa, his thoughts kept returning to her, and he couldn't stop thinking about her disappearance five months ago and the way she appeared as the Grant Corporation's Manager.

The previously demure woman had suddenly turned ferocious, boldly challenging him without blinking!

While the thick smoke had blanketed the balcony, he smirked as he remembered, "In just five months, she'd changed so much? That's fantastic!"

When he finished puffing his cigarette, his phone, which was resting on

a neighboring chair, rang again, prompting Austin to cast a frigid glance at it.

He didn't even want to know who was calling him right now!

But, alas, the caller had not given up and continued to call, causing him to moan, and he unwillingly picked up his phone.

"What is it?" Austin mumbled when he realized it was David, but the blaring music from the other end was ear-splitting to him, and he considered hanging up, when he heard David exclaim, "We had arrived at the King. Didn't you say you were coming?"

He flatly refused him with a 'No,' but David responded with a sarcastic tone, "Austin, did you know who was here? Vanessa!"

After a little pause, David continued, "I am wondering if I was seeing things or was she real?"

Hearing his comment, Austin pinched the middle of his brows and muttered, "she was back."

"Wow! That means she was standing right in front of me with another man!" He yelled loudly, "Maybe she's found a new lover? But, I must say, that dude was quite attractive!"

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Chapter Comments



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