

A Favor 261

Chapter 261

With an exaggerated eye roll, she shouted, “Yes, sir!” I pressed my lips together, doing everything I could not to let her see how amusing I found her frustration.

When I stepped into the study, she followed close behind, her heavy steps full of annoyance.

She stopped at the threshold and glared at me. “All right. What do you want to talk to me about?”

My eyes flicked to my desk as I fought the urge to say something I’d regret. This definitely wasn’t the time to let my imagination run wild.

“You’re out of this competition, Sophia. I’m not letting you participate.”

“What did you just say?” she shouted, her eyes wide with disbelief.

“You heard me. I said you’re not competing this time,” I replied firmly.

She stared at me for a moment, then burst out laughing as if I’d just told a joke.

“Excuse me, Mr. Kelley? Did you just say I can’t participate in the dance competition? Since when did you become my manager?” she mocked, still laughing. “Are you in charge of me now?”

“I’m not joking, Sophia.”

“Oh, I believe you.” She went serious all of a sudden and gave me a look. “It’s just funny, considering I don’t remember the last time you spoke to me without reminding me you’re serious.”

I frowned in frustration.

“What’s with this sudden concern about my decisions, Daniel? Why do you care now?” She crossed her arms and tilted her head.

“You’re wrong, Sophia. I’m not interested in running your life, and honestly, I don’t care to get involved.”

“Then why are you trying to keep me out of the finals? What’s with all this sudden interference?” She shot me a furious look and raised her voice.

“Those bruises aren’t just your problem. They reflect on me too. I have a reputation to maintain, Sophia!”

Her laughter rang through the room—sharp and scornful.

“So is this about winning for attention, or is it the money that drives you?”

“That’s my business, Mr. Kelley. Whatever I want from this competition is none of your concern.” She clenched her teeth and held my gaze.

Despite her words, I fought the savage urge to close the distance and silence her with a kiss.

“If this is really about helping the typhoon survivors in Amador City, you can withdraw now. I’ll personally donate double the winner’s prize to the relief fund.”

She laughed again, as if my offer were some kind of joke. “Go ahead, Mr. Kelley. Double it, triple it—throw all the money you want. Honestly, I couldn’t care less!” she exclaimed, folding her arms and lifting her chin in defiance.

My breath caught, and I clenched my fists, trying not to react.

“Honestly, you can do whatever you want with your money. It doesn’t affect me at all. But don’t think for a second I’m going to drop out of this competition just because you say so. You’re not in charge of me, so stop interfering in my life.”

When I reached for her arm, she yanked away, hissing in pain as my hand brushed her bruise.

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"I'm sorry," I murmured, immediately releasing her. Her eyes widened, clearly caught off guard by my apology.

"You're right. I'm not your boss. But for the next year, I'm your husband, and that means you have to look presentable in public. That was part of the agreement."

She pulled her hand away and pinned me with a hard stare.

"You don't have to remind me of my role, Mr. Kelley. I know exactly what's expected of me in this agreement. I'm supposed to smile for the cameras, play the devoted wife, and make sure no one sees a crack in our story. But when it comes to my decisions—my dreams—you don't get to control that. This marriage is just a signed paper, nothing more."

Her words left me stunned and silent as she walked toward the door.

"And let's be clear—if you shower Amador's victims, or anyone else's, in millions, I'm not withdrawing from the competition. Not now. Not ever."

She threw me one last look and slammed the door behind her.

Staring at the empty space she'd left, I stood frozen for a moment.

“How did I end up married to the most stubborn woman in the world? This has to be your doing, Mother,” I thought, rubbing my face with both hands in exasperation.

Sophia’s POV:

“I can’t believe it’s almost the day, girl! Let’s hope everything goes our way tomorrow.”

Craig burst into my office with his usual enthusiasm, but my mind was still tangled in the words Daniel had said to me earlier.

Maybe Craig noticed I wasn’t myself, because he sank into the chair across from my desk with a worried look.

“What’s going on? You’re usually the one who hypes us up before competitions. Aren’t you excited about tomorrow?”

I let out a long sigh and leaned back in my chair. “You have no idea, Craig. I’m more than excited, honestly. It’s just that... Daniel caught me completely off guard this morning. He told me I should drop out of the finals.”

“Wait, what?”

His outburst made me roll my eyes.

“That was exactly my reaction, believe me.”

“Did he at least give you a reason? Why does he want you to quit?”

I let out a dry laugh and crossed my arms. “Can you believe it’s because of these bruises I got during rehearsal? He thinks that’s reason enough for me to give up.”

“Oh, please. He’s just playing protective. Like he suddenly cares because you’re his wife.”

I lifted my brows and couldn’t help laughing, my tone dripping with sarcasm. “Yeah, sure, Craig. He’s so worried.”

“Didn’t I tell you?” Craig grinned, rubbing his head theatrically as if he weren’t bald.

“He’s worried about how it affects him, not me. Since when does Daniel care about my well-being?”

“Maybe because he’s fallen in love with you too.”

Here we go again with his crazy theories.

I sighed and shook my head in disbelief. “Wait. Did you just say ‘too’?” I asked, narrowing my eyes at him.

“Wow. Did I say that?”

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“Yes, you did. You said he’s in love with me too.”

“Forget it, girl.” Craig winked, not missing a beat. “More importantly, what did you say to Daniel? Did you tell him you’d quit?”

“Of course not! Even if Daniel offered to donate every last cent he has to typhoon relief, I’m not dropping out. You know everything we’ve put into this team—how hard we’ve worked just to make it to the finals. There’s no way I’m backing down now. Whether Daniel likes it or not, we’re going all the way to the grand finals. There’s nothing he can do to stop it!”

“That’s the attitude I like!” Craig sprang to his feet, grinning as he clapped. “With that fire, we’re taking that trophy home, no doubt!”

His mention of a crown made me laugh. “Craig, you know we signed up for a dance competition, not a beauty pageant, right?”

“Hey, a win is a win! Trophies, crowns—everything means victory!”

“Whatever you say.”

“Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the grand champions of the United States International Dance Competition...”

The host fell silent for a moment. Craig squeezed my hands, and we exchanged looks as we waited for her to speak again.

My heartbeat rose above the deafening cheers that rolled through the stadium, the noise growing so intense it felt like my ears might burst.

A deep, artificial thud pulsed through the speakers around the arena, only tightening the nerves running through both of us.

“The champions are...”

“Just say it already!”

The curse Craig muttered came out loud enough for me to hear, and it made me laugh even as I frowned at him.

“She’s dragging this out too much. I swear she knows I can barely handle waiting for the result. If she keeps playing with us like this, I’m going to lose my mind...”

“The grand champions of the United States International Dance Competition are... Sophia and Craig from Los Angeles, California! Congratulations!”

Before her dramatic pause could fully end, our names thundered through the speakers.

“Did I hear that right?” Craig asked, eyes wide with shock. “Did she really say our names?”

“Yes, she called us!” I shouted, nodding hard.

“Does that mean we actually won?”

“You heard her loud and clear, Craig! Of course we won! We did it—we’re the grand champions!”

Our voices tangled as we shouted in celebration.

While Craig kept cheering at the top of his lungs, I caught sight of my husband in the crowd, smiling at me—bright and unapologetic.

My heart flipped.

He came.

Barely daring to believe it, I stared at him standing there beside his sister, his mother, and a handful of our friends.

A staff member rushed up and handed us the trophy. Not long after, someone else brought out the giant check, and a bouquet of fresh flowers landed in my arms.

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We stayed at center stage for what felt like forever, surrounded by a stream of people offering their congratulations. Sponsors shook our hands, the stadium president smiled for the cameras, the judges offered kind words, and then the host motioned for my husband to step forward to speak.

Craig nudged me right as Daniel took the microphone and walked toward me.

He took my hand, and I had to force myself not to panic.

“My dearest...”

I nearly rolled my eyes at his dramatic opening.

“I’m so proud of you and Craig. I know how much work you both put into this, even if it meant leaving me behind for a whole week so you could chase this dream all the way to the finish.”

My tears threatened to spill, but I couldn’t stop smiling at him.

No one in the crowd could guess that my whole world had narrowed to the feel of his hand holding mine. Of all the things he could’ve said, did he really have to bring that up in front of everyone?

And yet, I knew exactly why this moment belonged at the heart of the grand finals. Every sacrifice suddenly felt worth it.

Daniel let the audience see our fingers intertwined, wearing a proud smile.

Shameless liar.

“I know I don’t say it enough, but I hope you understand how much you mean to me. No matter what dream you pursue, I’ll be here, supporting you—always.”

A roar of applause and a chorus of cheers wrapped around us, with Craig and the host joining in from behind.

But before I could say a single word, Daniel handed back the microphone, framed my face with his hands, and kissed me—right there under the brilliant stage lights.

“Bravo, Craig and Sophia! You were absolutely dazzling tonight!” Mrs. Giovanni said as she leaned in to kiss our cheeks.

She didn’t waste any time inviting everyone to a small celebration in Washington before our trip back to Los Angeles.

“We’re very grateful, Mrs. Giovanni,” Craig and I replied in unison.

“Sophia, I have to ask—did you really leave your husband all alone for an entire week to rehearse your choreography?”

At her question, I glanced toward Daniel, who was already deep in conversation with Mr. Giovanni.

“Yes, but he’s been incredibly understanding about it. I promised it won’t happen again,” I said, and my smile faltered when I noticed trouble heading straight for us.

Poor Daniel had no idea what was coming.

I forced my smile back into place, but honestly, I could've wrung his neck for bringing that story up in front of the whole crowd.

"Good evening, ladies."

"Daniel, you should know I was just congratulating your wife and Craig. They were absolutely fantastic out there!"

"I couldn't agree more, Mrs. Giovanni. I think I fall a little more in love with her every time I see her dance," he replied, sending me a look that would've melted anyone else.

He could've won an award for his performance.

Every time he turned on that charm, my stomach twisted. How did he manage that sweet routine so easily in front of everyone? If only they knew he'd almost convinced me to drop out of the entire competition at the last minute.

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"You two look so adorable together." Mrs. Giovanni sighed dreamily. "I'll leave you to enjoy your moment. I have to catch my husband before he gets away from me."

“Of course.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Giovanni,” Craig and I said in unison.

She giggled and exclaimed, “How precious!” before walking off to find her husband.

The second we were alone, I tried to slip away from Daniel, but he caught my arm and pulled me back against him.

“What exactly are you up to?” I asked, shooting him a glare.

“I’m simply taking my wife somewhere private,” he replied, his signature smile gleaming.

“Mr. Kelley,” I hissed through my teeth.

“That’s a terribly formal way to address your husband, don’t you think, sweetheart?”

With that, he wrapped an arm around my waist and drew me in until there was barely any space between us.

My throat tightened when his hold firmed. When his gaze dropped to my lips, I barely had time to process it before his mouth captured mine in a kiss that was both tender and electrifying.

My whole body shuddered, and for a split second, my mind went completely blank as his tongue deepened the kiss. All I could do was melt into him, my hands sliding up around his neck.

Time seemed to disappear while we stayed like that—pressed together, lost in the moment—until...

A gasp slipped out of me when a voice rang out behind him, but he refused to let me go. One of his hands slid to the back of my neck as he tilted his mouth over mine, pulling me into an even deeper kiss.

Desperate for air, I tugged at the side of his jacket, but he held on and didn't pull away.

"Unbelievable, Daniel! This is what you call loving your wife—trying to make her pass out with your kisses?" Rian's voice snapped me out of my haze, and I shoved him back, not wanting any more attention.

Breathless, I turned to his sister, who just stood there smiling at the both of us. He shot her a quick look, but Rian, as stubborn as ever, only laughed.

Without another word, he slipped away and walked off with his sister, leaving me behind.

“Seriously. Unbelievable. He’s the most dramatic husband in the world,” I muttered to myself as I watched him disappear into the crowd.

Sophia’s POV:

“Mrs. Smith, congratulations. You’re ten weeks pregnant.”

Rian turned to me, her eyes bright as she fought back tears. The screen glowed with the image of a tiny figure, and her expression softened completely.

“Look at it, Belle. Isn’t it adorable?” she said, wiping her cheeks with trembling fingers. The doctor patiently pointed out every angle, making sure Rian could see the faint movements on the monitor.

“It’s wonderful news, Rian. I know Alex will be so happy.”

“Actually, I’m planning to surprise him with the results tomorrow. It’ll be his birthday gift.”

“Really? I can’t think of anything that could top this for his birthday.”

“Do you think he’ll really be happy?”

I pressed my lips together, uncertainty flickering across my face as her questions kept coming.

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“Honestly, who wouldn’t want to hear they’re about to become a father? You don’t have to worry, Rian. He’ll be over the moon about this,” I said, squeezing her hand gently and offering my warmest smile. “This is a fresh start for both of you. You’ll be parents soon.”

“And you’ll get to be the baby’s aunt.”

That word caught me off guard. My smile faltered for a moment.

Just a pretend aunt, I thought, masking my feelings with a shrug and a faint smile.

“Don’t say that! You’re Daniel’s wife, Belle. You’re the real aunt, whether you believe it or not.”

I let out a silent sigh and shifted my gaze to the doctor, who was already preparing the ultrasound printout.

“Let’s save the wedding talk for another time. Shouldn’t we focus on Alex’s birthday tomorrow and how we’re going to surprise him?”

Rian rolled her eyes, a playful smile on her lips.

“Mrs. Smith, everything looks perfect. Your baby is growing well. Just make sure to take it easy, avoid unnecessary stress, and rest whenever you can. I’m prescribing vitamins, and you’ll need plenty of nutrients for both you and the little one,” the doctor explained, handing her the prescription along with the ultrasound photos.

“Thank you, Dr. Steve.”

“You’re welcome, Mrs. Smith. I’ll see you next month, but if you ever feel unsure or need advice about your pregnancy, don’t hesitate to call me,” he said with a reassuring smile, offering Rian his business card.

“Thank you so much, Dr. Steve. I’ll remember that.”

When Rian finished her appointment, we split up. She said she wanted to stop by Alex’s office and share the news. Meanwhile, I planned to swing by my place to grab a change of clothes and my laptop, since I’d rushed out earlier and completely forgotten them.

As I pulled into the driveway, something immediately caught my attention. A sleek, unfamiliar sports car was parked in the garage.

“Good afternoon, Mrs. Sophia,” Erwin, Daniel’s driver, greeted, waving to me.

“Hi, Erwin. Do you know whose new car this is?” I asked, pointing at the gleaming CCXR Gray Trevita.

“Yes, ma’am. Your husband added it to his sports car collection,” Erwin replied with a smile, and I nearly gaped at the sight.

“He went out and bought another one? Unbelievable.” I shook my head and spun my keys around my finger with a sigh. “That’s what happens when someone has more money than common sense. Wow.”

Erwin only smiled, as if we were sharing a secret.

“You know, Erwin, if it were up to me, I’d spend all that money helping abandoned children or supporting patients fighting cancer. Not on another shiny toy for the garage.”

I said it like Erwin had bought the car himself, my tone half teasing, half exasperated.

He chuckled. “Why don’t you give him that little speech, ma’am?”

I rolled my eyes and scoffed. “Yeah, like he’d ever listen to me.”

“Why wouldn’t he? You’re his wife. I bet he’d take your advice.”

I laughed, letting the topic drop.

“So what brings you here today, Erwin? Where’s Daniel?”

“He’s upstairs in the study, Mrs. Kelley.”

I nodded, offering him a quick smile. “Thanks, Erwin.”

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I twirled the keys again as I headed inside, leaving Erwin behind in the garage. Daniel’s sudden visit sparked my curiosity, but I kept it to myself. I wasn’t about to ask his driver for details. I had no interest in seeming nosy about his business.

The house was quiet. I glanced into the empty living room, then went upstairs for a quick shower and clean clothes.

I was almost to the kitchen when a loud knock echoed at the front door. Turning on my heel, I opened it and found Alex on the other side. He looked exhausted—hair tousled, shirt wrinkled.

“Alex? What’s going on?” I asked.

“Is Rian here?” The question caught me off guard, and I frowned.

“No, she isn’t. Why? Did something happen?”

Without another word, he stepped inside and collapsed onto the couch, dragging his hands through his hair and letting out a long, frustrated sigh.

“Damn it. Where could she have gone?”

I stood there, confused and a little worried, wondering what could have sent him here looking for his wife.

“Can someone explain what’s going on? Alex?” Daniel’s voice sounded behind me, more irritated than curious.

“What are you doing here?”

Even with Daniel demanding answers, Alex didn’t bother to look up—and I didn’t feel like answering either.

“We spent the morning together. I went with Rian to her appointment with the OB-GYN. After that, she said she had work at the office. Why? Did something happen?”

“So you know about the pregnancy?”

He ignored my question completely, his eyes heavy with worry.

“Wait. Who are you talking about? Who’s pregnant?” Daniel’s confusion only deepened.

“Yes, I know. We encouraged her to go to the doctor so she’d know what to expect. She wanted to surprise you, Alex. She planned to tell you tomorrow for your birthday.”

“Damn it,” Alex groaned, pressing his palms to his face. He bent forward, elbows on his knees, as if the weight of the world had just dropped onto his shoulders.

“Can someone speak clearly, please?” Daniel demanded, his voice suddenly sharp. He looked between the two of us.

“Daniel, do you ever listen?” I turned to him and couldn’t help rolling my eyes. “Who else would we be talking about? Who’s pregnant and has anything to do with Alex?”

He stared at me, hands clenched into fists, and I let out a dry laugh.

“Let me guess. Maybe his dog, the neighbor’s cat, or the chicken that wanders around your yard?”

"For the love of God, can you stop talking nonsense?" He closed his eyes and shook his head.

I gave him a razor-edged smile and lifted my brows. "Oh? So you think I'm talking nonsense, darling? I'm spelling it out for you."

"Is that what you call explaining?"

"Of course," I replied, crossing my arms over my chest with all the confidence I could muster.

"Damn it—"

"For the love of God, can you two stop arguing like this is some kind of couples' showdown?" Alex snapped before Daniel could say anything else. His voice cut through the room, and we both turned toward him—though not before I rolled my eyes at my grumpy husband.

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"Rian's gone," Alex muttered, raking a hand through his hair again, worry written all over him.

"What?" Daniel and I blurted at the same time, then looked at each other, stunned.

“She’s pregnant. I saw the test results and the ultrasound report. She didn’t even realize she left them on my secretary’s desk. The moment she realized I was coming back to my office, she bolted for the elevator and disappeared.”

“Why would she run like that when she knows she’s pregnant? Didn’t she say anything to you?” I asked, settling onto the couch across from him. I raised my brows when Daniel immediately sat beside me, as confused as I was.

“No. She came into my office right as Francine was in there insisting I’m the father of her baby.”

“Wait. Who’s Francine?” I gaped.

“Francine was his first girlfriend,” Daniel answered for me, his voice tight.

His gaze locked on Alex, deadly serious.

“Is there any chance the baby is actually yours?” Daniel asked, jaw rigid.

“No. It’s not mine. Yes, Francine and I were together once, but I’m sure we were always careful.”

I bit my lip, feeling the air grow heavy around us. Daniel loved his sister so much, and I almost expected him to explode—maybe even punch Alex. To my surprise, he stayed perfectly still beside me, whatever he felt hidden behind his expression.

“Oh, God. Where could she have gone? Did you call her friends? Anyone she might contact?”

“I’ve called everyone she knows, but there’s still no sign of her.”

“Listen to me, Alex. I expect you to bring my sister home safe and sound. If anything happens to her—or my nephew—I swear you’ll pay for it.”

“Don’t forget it could be your niece too,” I couldn’t help adding, arms crossed.

“It’s a boy,” Daniel shot back, staring at me stubbornly.

“But what if it’s a girl?”

“It’s a boy. End of story.”

Our little argument stopped when Alex stood and headed for the door.

“Alex,” I called, and he paused with his hand on the doorknob. “I’ll try to locate her too. If I find her, I’ll let you know right away.”

“Thanks, Belle.” He managed a tired smile before leaving.

Daniel followed him out, leaving me alone in the silent house.

Without wasting a second, I pulled out my phone and started calling Rian’s friends, hoping to find any clue that could lead us to her.

“Craig, can you reschedule my meeting with Mrs. Graughan for another day?” I asked, handing him my laptop as I spoke.

He looked up at me with a frown. “What’s going on? Why the sudden change?”

“There’s an emergency at home. Rian disappeared, and no one knows where she is.”

“Are you serious? How did that happen? What happened?”

I took a deep breath, worry tightening in my chest. I started explaining everything, my thoughts circling how devastated Rian must be right now. She had loved Alex deeply, and then she’d been blindsided by this mess without warning.

"I honestly thought Alex loved her. How could he put her through something like this?" Craig shook his head, frustration written all over him.

"Alex doesn't even know if the other baby is his. This is a disaster."

"What is that supposed to mean? How can he not be sure? He slept with that woman, and now he's acting like it's some mystery?"

"We can't focus on that right now. The priority is finding Rian. She's pregnant, Craig. The last thing she needs is all this stress. It's dangerous for her and the baby."

"Did you call the police? Maybe they can help."

"Not yet. You can only report someone missing after twenty-four hours. Until then, they can't do anything officially."

"Right. I forgot that rule."

"I need to go. I want to be there when someone finally finds Rian."

"Don't worry about your meetings. I'll handle everything for you today."

“Thanks, Craig.” I kissed his cheek in gratitude, grabbed my bag, and hurried for the door.

“Alex, do you have any idea where my daughter is?”

The moment I arrived at Alex’s house, my mother-in-law’s anxious voice rang through the room.

“Did you call the police yet?” Mrs. Smith asked, turning to her son for answers.

I stayed quiet, listening to the conversation unfold, until I felt a hand press gently to the small of my back. I turned, startled to see Daniel beside me, his frown tight. Without a word, he pulled me into his arms and held me firmly.

My breath caught.

“What are you doing?” I whispered, confused, but he didn’t bother explaining. Instead, he settled behind me, wrapping his arms around my waist and resting his chin on my shoulder.

A shiver ran down my spine as Daniel tightened his hold. I couldn’t imagine what was going through his head to cling to me like this. When I tried to wriggle free, he only held on tighter, refusing to let me go. I swallowed a sigh, thinking I could wring his neck right there if his parents weren’t watching.

“Honey, the police have their hands tied. We have to wait until Rian has been missing for at least twenty-four hours before they’ll act.”

“So you’re saying we have to sit here helpless for almost an entire day before anyone even tries to help us find her?”

Her words hung in the room. No one could blame her for being on edge. Ever since the news broke—and especially after learning Rian was pregnant—she hadn’t stopped crying.

“Mom, please, you need to breathe. We’re doing everything we can. Alex and I already hired the best investigator in the city,” Daniel said, finally releasing me as he moved to his mother.

I watched the pain and anxiety carved into every face in the room. Compassion tightened my chest, and I shook my head, wishing I could offer more than words.

“Tell me, Alexander. Who exactly is this Francine?”

We all turned to Alex, waiting for answers only he could give. Mr. Smith’s booming voice shattered the tense silence.

“She’s my ex, Dad. I promise the baby isn’t mine!” Alex said quickly.

The room fell silent for a beat, none of us prepared for what happened next.

“Damn you!” Mr. Smith shouted, grabbing Alex by the collar with both hands, rage blazing across his face. “I told you to stop chasing after every woman you see! And now look at the mess you’ve made!”

“Vincent, stop!” Mrs. Smith shrieked, jumping up to pull her husband away from her son-in-law before he completely lost control.

I stepped back with a heavy sigh, unable to take any more of the scene. Their chaos stirred memories I’d buried years ago. No matter how hard I’d tried to explain myself back then, my father had never listened. He’d chosen his business and his money above everything—above even me.

Needing air, I walked to the window and closed my eyes for a moment. I silently begged that Rian—and the baby growing inside her—were safe somewhere.

When I opened my eyes, a name slipped into my mind as if someone had whispered it to me: Bryan.

My fingers moved quickly as I scrolled through my contacts, wondering how I’d forgotten him. He ran a detective agency—someone who worked miracles when it came to tracking people down. If anyone could help us find Rian, it was him.

I dialed his number and waited as it rang three times.

“Well, hello, beautiful. What brings you to me today?”

“Bryan, I need your help immediately,” I blurted, skipping any greeting.

My voice came out louder than I meant it to, cutting through the background noise of the house. I was too caught up to notice Daniel’s eyes on me from across the room.

“What’s going on? Did you run into Felix again or something?” His tone shifted, every trace of teasing gone.

“No, this is different. I need your help finding my sister-in-law. She’s missing.”

Bryan let out a low chuckle on the other end of the line.

“Well, look at you. You’re part of the family now, huh?”

I bit my lower lip, refusing to take the bait. There was no time for his games.

“Bryan, this is serious. My sister-in-law disappeared. I really need you to help us locate her. We’ve already contacted all her friends, but no one has any idea where she could be. We’re running out of options.”

“Did you try calling her again?”

“Yes, I did, but her phone is already off. There’s no way to reach her.”

“All right. I’ll do what I can on my end. Send me her number, her details, a photo, and the license plate of the car she was using. That’ll help me get started.”

“Of course. I’ll message you everything right away. Thank you so much, Bryan. I owe you a big one!”

“Just do me a favor. If you ever run into Felix again, you’d better call me and let me know.”

That pulled a small smile from me. I nodded before realizing he couldn’t see it. “Yes, I promise. You’ll be the first to know.”