

The Villainess Needs a Hug – Hug 3

Chapter 3

Ivy's heart twisted at her mother's reaction.

Of course, she knew she reeked. After sleeping in a pigsty for three years, the stench had seeped deep into her skin, clinging to her bones. The policewoman who'd escorted her had helped her wash her hair and scrub herself clean, but the smell wouldn't go away.-

Rosetta had to force herself, hand pressed tightly over her nose, to manage a strained smile. "You're home now. You must have suffered so much..."

Hearing her mother's words, Ivy felt a small comfort, though her eyes reddened with hurt and pent-up grievance.

One of the officers pulled out her phone. "Come on, let's get a picture together. We'll need it for the case file."

The female officer, seeing Ivy's distress, wrapped a gentle arm around her shoulders. "Take a photo with your family. The nightmare's over now. Everything will be alright."

Ivy stepped forward. The gathered guests instinctively drew back, putting a little more distance

between themselves and her.

Adkins and Rosetta watched as their daughter approached, their bodies rigid with discomfort, as if they'd rather bolt than stand there.

But the two officers blocked their way, one on either side, quietly but firmly herding the family together.

"We still need everyone for the family picture! Come on, let's have a big reunion shot," one of the officers called out, beckoning to the wedding couple.

"Micah, Emma, you too."

Emma glanced at Micah, her lips trembling. "Micah, I'm scared..."

Micah pulled her close, murmuring, "It's alright. Just don't get too close... The police are here. Let's go."

With that, he guided his visibly reluctant fiancée over.

Standing so near to his former girlfriend, Micah's expression grew complicated; his dark eyes flickered with pain and a chilling sense of distance.

Once, just the sight of him would send Ivy bounding into his arms—she'd been radiant, lively, brimming with confidence, a butterfly impossible to ignore.

Now, she looked awkward and withdrawn, her features sharper, those wide, cat-like eyes dulled and lifeless.

Apparently, the rumors were true. Three years stolen away, abused and broken—of course, she'd lost her mind.

The family photo was taken, but not a single face showed any real joy.

When the police finished their instructions and finally left, the Windsors were left standing in

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awkward silence, staring at their long-lost daughter, their hearts tangled with uncertainty.

They had never expected Ivy to come back. Now, the biggest question was what to do with her.

"Um... Ivy, why don't you come inside..." Rosetta managed, forcing herself to look at her eldest daughter. She couldn't summon her old delight, not anymore. Truthfully, she didn't even want Ivy to step through the door. But she was her flesh and blood; she couldn't just turn her away. That would be abandonment, and the law wouldn't stand for it.

Taking the hint, Ivy turned toward the house. As she passed the newlyweds, she paused, gaze settling on her sister, stunning in her designer wedding dress.

"Hey, sis..." Emma blurted, her eyes darting away, guilt flickering across her face as she shrank back.

Ivy looked her up and down. "You look beautiful today. Congratulations."

"Thank you, Ivy."

"Are you scared to see me back?"

Emma stiffened, her eyes growing frantic. "What do you mean by that?"

Ivy's voice was calm, but a cold hatred flashed in her eyes. "You know exactly what I mean. I treated you like my real sister, loved you, protected you. I never thought you'd have such a poisonous heart."

For three endless years, Ivy couldn't understand why her own sister would betray her. At first, there was heartbreak, disbelief. But over time, her pain hardened into hatred, growing bigger and heavier, until it became the only thing keeping her alive—the thing that drove her to escape. "Ivy, I... I don't know what you're talking about—" Emma stammered, feigning innocence,

voice trembling.

The tension between the sisters did not go unnoticed; the guests whispered, casting furtive glances.

Rosetta quickly stepped in, frowning. "Ivy, why are you saying these things? Emma's been wracked with guilt ever since you disappeared. She told us you'd gone missing because you tried to save her that night. She was under so much pressure she needed a therapist for two whole years before she could recover."

"Mom, that night I—" Ivy turned to explain, but Emma suddenly let out a soft cry, her face contorted in pain as she clutched her stomach.

Micah rushed to support her. "Emma, what's wrong?"

"My stomach... it hurts," Emma whimpered weakly.