

The Villainess Needs a Hug – Hug 4

Chapter 4

Rosetta rushed forward, worry etched on her face. “I told you not to drink, but you never listen. It’s probably your stomach acting up again. Come inside and rest.”

Adkins turned to the gathering guests. “Everyone, let’s head inside. The ceremony is about to begin.”—

He barely finished speaking before several guests offered awkward smiles and quickly found excuses to leave.

Who could blame them?

Everyone had heard the rumors about Ivy—supposedly tainted, carrying a contagious disease. Who would risk sitting down to dinner with her? No one wanted to gamble with their health.

Rosetta had meant to accompany her youngest daughter indoors, but seeing the guests slipping away, she spun around and tried to convince them to stay. It was useless.

In the blink of an eye, most of the guests had vanished.

Ivy watched the scene unfold, her expression unreadable, her heart sinking with cold clarity.

So this is what people mean by the fickleness of human relationships, she thought. The warmth and chill of the world, all laid bare.

She could see it clearly now—not just the guests, but even her own family, who had loved her for twenty years, were shunning her.

But she hadn’t had a child. She wasn’t sick. Where had these rumors started?

Was this Emma’s doing too? Just to ruin her reputation, to make her a pariah?

Emma had just reached the porch steps. Seeing the guests leaving one by one, her perfect engagement party falling apart, she stood frozen, tears welling up in her eyes.

Rosetta, catching sight of her younger daughter trying to hold back tears, hurried over to comfort her. “Emma, don’t cry... We can always throw another engagement party—one even bigger and grander.”

Emma wiped her tears, looking frail and miserable as she leaned into Micah, but she still managed to sound gracious. “It’s alright... Having Ivy back is what matters most. Today is a blessing in disguise, really. My disappointment is

nothing..."

"Good girl, you're so thoughtful." Rosetta's tone softened as she glanced back at her eldest daughter, the contrast in her affection obvious.

But she couldn't help venting her frustration. "Ivy, why didn't you tell us you were coming back?"

Ivy was taken aback, finding the question almost laughable.

She remembered what the police had said and replied quietly, "The officers called you several

times. You thought it was a scam and hung up."

Rosetta fell silent.

The atmosphere grew tense. Micah, still holding Emma, tried to smooth things over. "Emma's right. Ivy's return is a good thing. The engagement can be rescheduled. Rosetta, no one is blaming Ivy—let's not make this harder."

Emma was quick to agree, playing the role of the considerate sister. "She's been through so much these past years. That's enough suffering for anyone."

Then, as if just remembering, she changed the subject, her tone innocent.

"But... where will Ivy stay now, given her condition? We can't expect the whole family to risk getting infected—"

Ivy turned to her, voice steady. "If you say I'm sick, show me proof."

Emma's eyes flickered; and she muttered, "How could you not be? After being in that place... Besides, we saw it ourselves at the police station—"

"If someone claims I have a child, bring the child here for me to see." Ivy cut her off bluntly.

Even Mr. Windsor—Baillie Windsor himself—couldn't stay silent. "Ivy, we know what you've been through. We're sorry for you, truly. But please, don't lie to us."

Ivy looked at her brother, disappointment and hurt clouding her gaze.

Once, he had indulged her every whim, protected her without question. Now, he looked at her as though she were poison.

"Everything I've said is true. Before coming back, the officers took me for a medical exam. If you don't believe me, you can ask them—or take me to the hospital yourselves."

She looked at each family member, desperate to clear her name.

But the Windsors just stared back, skepticism in every pair of eyes.

Suddenly, Emma's face lit up with another idea. "Micah—your uncle's a doctor, isn't he? He'd know what to look for. Why not have him check Ivy?"

Micah's face brightened. "Good thinking, Emma! I almost forgot." He turned, scanning the room until he spotted a stern-looking man sitting coldly on the living room sofa.

"Uncle!" Micah called respectfully.

Ivy frowned. Micah's uncle? Who was that?

Just as she wondered, a tall, imposing man stepped out from the house.

His features were sharp and handsome, his eyes cold and piercing, radiating a commanding presence that warned people to keep their distance.

And suddenly, Ivy remembered—