

The Villainess Needs a Hug – Hug 9

Chapter 9

“What?”

Emma’s heart skipped a beat. She clutched the blood–red ruby necklace at her throat, her fingers trembling. With nowhere to hide, she glanced helplessly at Rosetta, her eyes instantly brimming with tears.

“I’m sorry, sis. It’s not that I don’t want to give it to you... it’s just–Micah gave this to me. It was a promise, a token of our love,” Emma said in a weak, wavering voice, her tears streaming down her cheeks.

Rosetta frowned in annoyance. “Ivy, don’t take what belongs to someone else.”

“Then why did she take what belonged to me?” Ivy’s retort was light and unhurried, but it left both Rosetta and Emma speechless.*

Micah had been Ivy’s childhood sweetheart.

Now, he was Emma’s fiancé.

If stealing her own sister’s boyfriend wasn’t taking what belonged to someone else, then what

was?

Ivy let her words hang in the air, not bothering to look at their faces. She gathered up the jewelry and stood, heading straight for the small room off the kitchen where the housekeeper stayed.

It wasn’t that she enjoyed swallowing her pride–far from it. She just didn’t want to be close to this family, so fighting over a room upstairs seemed pointless.

She wouldn’t be staying here long anyway.

The next morning.

When the Windsors woke up and discovered Ivy was gone, everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

“Where did she go so early?” Emma asked, her voice threaded with both curiosity and feigned concern. “She doesn’t have a penny to her name. What’s she going to do out there?”

Baillie shrugged. “Maybe she went to find a friend.”

“But with her illness... who’d dare to meet with her?” Emma muttered under her breath.

Rosetta let out a heavy sigh, her face clouded with worry. "I barely slept last night. Just thinking about Ivy coming back like this—it's like a knife to my heart."

Emma ladled some nourishing porridge into a bowl and set it in front of her mother, coaxing gently, "Don't be like this, Mom. You still have me and my brother."

Baillie frowned, his expression grim. "I think Ivy's having a mental breakdown. We should take her to see a psychiatrist."

"She'll never admit it," Emma grumbled. "You saw how she was—lying about everything, denying everything..."

Rosetta sighed again, then turned to her silent husband. "Adkins, why aren't you saying anything? What do you think we should do?"

Adkins clenched his jaw. "What else can we do? Keeping her here just brings trouble, and no one would want to marry her now anyway. I say, give it some time until the fuss dies down, then let her move out on her own."

"Move out?" Rosetta mulled it over for a few seconds, then nodded. "That's probably for the best. I'll have someone look for a cheap little apartment for her these next few days."

Emma lowered her head, stirring her porridge, but as she listened to her parents' conversation, the knot of anxiety that had kept her awake all night finally began to loosen.

As long as Ivy was kicked out of the house, she wouldn't be able to expose the truth.

But as long as Ivy was alive, she was still a threat to Emma's position.

She'd have to find a way to make sure there was only one Miss Ivy in Neo Haven—and that would be her, Emma.

Early that morning, Ivy left the house and caught a cab straight to the city's largest luxury consignment shop.

Without a moment's hesitation, she sold every piece of jewelry—more than a dozen sets in all.

What had once been worth over ten million dollars fetched only five and a half million.

But it was enough.

She didn't *need* the money; she just didn't want those jewels festering in her

life, and she certainly wasn't about to leave them for Emma.

She asked the shop owner for half a million in cash, then put the remaining five million into a cashier's check—available whenever she needed it.

Leaving the *store*, Ivy walked into a nearby mall and bought herself a whole new wardrobe, head to *toe*. The clothes she'd borrowed from Emma—she stuffed them straight into a trash bin.

She packed the cash into a sturdy backpack and slung it over her shoulders.

After getting a fresh haircut and picking up a new phone, she hailed another cab and headed for the hospital.

On the way, she logged into her stock account on her phone. A small, satisfied smile played at her lips.

Her initial two million had quintupled in three years.

Now, her trading account sat at a figure that would be the envy of anyone.

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For the first time in three long, dark years, her heart felt a sliver of sunshine—a little warmth cutting through the despair.

Once her emotions settled, she logged onto an investment forum, ready to face whatever came **next**.

Chapter 10