

## Chapter 16 Hitting Him Back

"Violet, are you alright?"

Violet lifted her head, eyes filled with unshed tears, her voice quivering as a wounded sob slipped out. "Carsten... you finally came... Please speak to Evelyn for me, will you? I truly never meant to settle into your new house, and I certainly didn't intend to toss out any of her belongings. Could you ask her not to hit me again? I'm terrified something might happen to the baby..."

The instant Carsten noticed the distinct imprint of fingers across Violet's cheek, his head snapped upward, and his icy gaze locked onto Evelyn. "You hit Violet?"

"She didn't only hit Violet; she hit me as well!" Yara exclaimed, eagerly stoking the flame. "Carsten, you need to stand up for Violet and me!"

Carsten gently released Violet and marched straight toward Evelyn.

Then, he lifted his arm.

His hand swung down violently and smacked across Evelyn's face.

The force of it knocked Evelyn sideways, a fierce red mark blooming at once across her cheek.

The very moment his hand connected with her face, regret struck Carsten.

His anger had flared so fiercely that he had acted without thinking and struck her in a moment of blind fury.

But only he understood the true cause of his anger.

The thing that had truly shattered his restraint was not Violet and Yara being hit.

It was the unfamiliar male voice that had come through Evelyn's call

earlier that morning.

The mere thought that Evelyn might be involved with another man behind his back had ignited a storm of jealous fury inside him.

Yet now, as he looked at the swelling on her cheek, a knot of guilt tightened painfully in his chest.

Carsten slowly raised his hand, intending to touch Evelyn's face.

But in the very next moment, two savage slaps rang out across his face, one striking from each side.

Stronger, harsher, and far more ruthless than the blow he had delivered to Evelyn.

Violet and Yara had watched with smug delight when Carsten struck Evelyn.

Then, they witnessed something that froze them in shock.

Evelyn had returned the slap. And not just once, twice!

Had she completely lost her senses?

The crisp sound of those strikes seemed to echo through the air.

Carsten ground his teeth, his cheeks burning with scorching pain.

The sting left no room for doubt—this had truly happened.

His expression darkened until it looked ready to burst with rage. He lunged forward, seized Evelyn by the wrist, and dragged her directly in front of him.

"You actually dared to slap me?" he said.

Evelyn gave a short, cold laugh. "What, so you can hit me, but I am not allowed to hit you back?"

Carsten faltered at her words, then swallowed his anger and barked, "I struck you because you refused to behave. Tell me—who was the man you were with this morning? Where did you go last night and who were you with? Answer me!"

Evelyn jerked her arm sharply and wrenched herself free. "Where I went and who I spent time with has nothing to do with you. Carsten, let me make something clear—our engagement is finished. You and I are strangers now. Even if I kept ten handsome men around and shared a bed with every single one of them, what business of yours would that be?"

Carsten shouted, "You wouldn't dare!"

His chest rose and fell violently, fury blazing in his eyes.

But almost immediately, he forced himself to calm down.

The anger drained from his face, replaced by a tone of indulgent patience. "Evie, there's no need to drag other men into this just to provoke my jealousy. I've told you before—I will marry you, and I'll look after you for the rest of your life. I won't break that promise. But if you intend to become my wife, becoming a member of the Ward family, you must control that temper of yours. Take a lesson from Violet. Be kinder, softer, and more compliant. Don't behave like those shallow, spiteful women who waste their days drowning in jealousy—"

Before he could finish speaking a thunderous metallic crash cut him off.


Evelyn had kicked over the trash can beside her.

The blackened debris inside—burned down to ash and scraps—spilled all over Carsten's shoes.

With the tip of her shoe, Evelyn hooked the ruined white coat—so scorched that it was barely recognizable—and nudged it directly in front of him.

A cold, mocking laugh escaped her. "You want me to learn from Violet? You mean learn how to burn my belongings including the very first gift you ever gave me?"



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