



41 Chapter 41 Truth and Consequences

Elara 1

I slept late the next day and woke up with a scratchy throat.

I was probably getting a cold.

Linda saw me come out of my room and quickly got busy.

I looked around the dining room but didn't see Dominic anywhere. Linda noticed me looking and smiled. "The Alpha went to work. He said not to wake you up."

"Okay," I said, my voice coming out raspier than usual. "I think I might be coming down with something."

Linda's expression immediately shifted to concern. "Oh dear, let me take care of that right away." She bustled into the kitchen and returned with a steaming mug of tea with honey and lemon, along with a small bowl of homemade chicken soup.

"This should help," she said, setting everything down carefully. "There's also some elderberry



syrup in the pantry that should boost your immune system."

I took a grateful sip of the warm, soothing tea, feeling the honey coat my throat.

After breakfast, I got a call from Grandma Elizabeth's assisted living facility.

I quickly got dressed, grabbed my car keys, and left. When I got there, I found more than just my grandmother waiting. Nadia was sitting in the garden too, her posture rigid and her lips pressed into a thin line.

My stomach dropped. Of course. I immediately got angry. Nadia almost never visited Grandma, so she obviously came here to trap me.

"You're finally here," Nadia said in that annoying superior voice, checking her watch like I was late to some appointment I'd never agreed to. "I've been waiting."

I took a deep breath and completely ignored her.

Instead, I smiled at my grandmother.

"Grandma, let me take you to that sunny spot over there."

Elizabeth's weathered hand felt fragile in mine, but her grip was firm. Her eyes showed she



understood. "Elara, talk to your mother first. I'm right here to help you." Her voice carried the quiet authority that had always made me feel safe.

I squared my shoulders and turned to face the woman who'd made my childhood miserable. I turned to Nadia, keeping my voice calm. "What do you want to talk about?"

Nadia's eyes flashed with irritation at my controlled tone. "Is this how you talk to your mother now, Elara? You blocked my calls and texts. Do you want to cut me out completely?"

She leaned forward, her voice getting meaner, like a snake preparing to strike. "Without the Amber Pack connection, do you really think you could have married Dominic Wolfe? You think you hit the jackpot, but without me supporting you, Dominic will throw you away like trash."

My hands clenched into fists at my sides, but I forced myself to stay silent. Let her show her true colors in front of Grandma.

"Dominic's always been mysterious about dating," she continued, her words getting nastier, each one designed to cut deeper. "He's always with his male friends and business



partners. People have talked about what he really likes for years. He only married you to look normal and make his family happy. Do you really think you're special enough to actually win his heart?"

The words hit exactly where she intended them to. My chest tightened with the familiar ache of my deepest insecurities being thrown in my face.

"Stop!" Elizabeth's voice cut through Nadia's attack like a whip crack as she slowly walked toward us. "Nadia! How can you talk to your daughter like this?"

My grandmother's eyes filled with tears as she took my hands, her fingers trembling with age and emotion. "Elara, is what your mother said true? About you and Dominic?"

I felt like I was drowning. The concern in her eyes, the hope I might deny it all – it broke something inside me.

I couldn't lie to her. My relationship with Dominic was exactly what Nadia said.

A contract. A business deal.

But I never wanted Grandma to know this painful truth. She deserved to believe I'd found real love.



Elizabeth seemed to understand my silence, the way my shoulders sagged in defeat. She sighed and squeezed my hands with surprising strength. "Elara, we'll cancel this marriage. No man is worth this. I will always love you, with or without him."

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