

We Listened to the Darkness by Sorin Pax

81

81-Karma Did Not Strike

Madeline:

“**Wow**, you’ve changed so much,” my father said as we stood face to face.

“Well, you seem not to have changed at all,” I replied. I wasn’t trying to insult him, I was just being honest.

“Yeah, your sister takes good care of me. I don’t have to worry about money or anything. All I do now is enjoy my life.”

He was so quick to praise her, something he had never done with me, or so I thought.

“I heard you’re doing great things in the human world. You must be doing well for yourself,” he continued.

As soon as he said that and the frown began to form on my forehead, he laughed, as if to let me know it was just a joke.

“I guess I should say I’m proud of you.”

At those words, something tugged at my spine.

“Wow–thank you,” I said, taking a deep breath. “Maybe Mother would’ve said the same thing.”

I slipped her name into the conversation deliberately. I had never done that before.

When I lived with my father, I was never allowed to speak of her–ever. If I did, I was punished.

But now, I was an independent woman. I could finally mention my mother, the woman who gave me life.

I saw my father's body stiffen at her name, but he had to respond.

I wasn't just his daughter anymore, I was the researcher the council and the alphas had paid handsomely to bring here.

They couldn't treat me the same way they used to.

"Well, I'm sure she had," he said, nodding.

"When did she pass away? I mean, I know you said she died giving birth to me, but I checked. I asked Alpha Ron about my birth records, and he said I wasn't delivered at any hospital of the pack," I spoke in a monotone, watching the color drain from his face.

That was because I was lying. I hadn't spoken to Alpha Ron but the thought of doing it had crossed my mind.

Still, the bluff seemed to work, because my father quickly began to speak.

"That's because she didn't die," he said.

Before I could react to the shock, he continued.

"And I'll say this, what she did and how she left- I guess it's safe to say she just died. That's why I told you she was gone."

He spoke as if that explanation made any sense.

I stared at him in disbelief.

"Madeline," he went on, "when you were born, I told your mother I would take care of her. But she didn't want a

1/3

81 Karma Did Not Strike:

+25 Bonus

child. So what was the point of telling you about her when she didn't even want you?"

His voice was **flat**, his reasoning vague, but he must have noticed I wasn't convinced.

So he went on.

“I was reckless **back** then. I was cheating on Karla with women from the brothel.”

The mention of those women made my body stiffen.

“And one of those women was your mother,” my father said. “She used to entertain the rogues. One of those nights, I made an irresponsible mistake. After that, I never saw her again because I never went back to that house.”

He sighed.

“I was ashamed. I apologized to Karla, made too many promises, and focused on taking care of my newborn. I became the best husband I could for those nine months. Then your mother left you on the doorstep with a note saying she didn’t want a child. She didn’t want shackles. That’s why I told you she was dead. That’s all I have of her. That’s all I know.”

My father rubbed his face tiredly with one hand.

“Are we talking about that woman again?”

Finally, my stepmother appeared.

I watched her come out of the kitchen, wearing a fake, concerned smile and pressing her lips together as if she were upset for me.

“Let’s forget about her. Have you met my daughter? She’s a big researcher now,” my father said to her.

Karla wore a gray dress and had dyed her hair blonde.

She was covered in jewelry and dressed in branded clothes, thanks to Baxter.

“Yeah, I’ve heard about her,” she replied. “She confronted Yuvonne in a café. They had a huge fight. I was so surprised that Madeline is coming back and that she’s back to her old ways.”

As expected of Karla, she spoke in her usual taunting tone, but this time she didn’t raise her hand like she used to in the past.

“Oh yeah? So your daughter told you that she hired the same woman who started rumors about me and Alpha Graham?” I shot back, my voice steady and sharp.

For a moment, she didn’t even respond.

Then she shook her head, forcing a smile and waving her hand dismissively.

“Let’s not talk about it,” she muttered.

“Anyway, I saw the kids. They’re really pretty. But they have completely different features. I mean, not just their features, their hair color and eye color are different.” She laughed, making me swallow hard, afraid she might figure it out.

She was always the type to notice things before anyone else.

“I see you’ve redecorated your house. It looks nice,” I said, shifting the attention from my kids to the house.

“Yeah, Baxter loves Yuvonne so much. He just likes to surprise her with new things.” Of course, she threw it in

2/3

Bl-kom Dis Not Strika

+25 Bonus

my face.

She remembered that Baxter used to be friends with me.

“I can tell,” I uttered. She had no clue that I was now good at hiding my feelings.

That’s when my kids rushed out of the living room, hugging me tightly. And then Baxter appeared with Yuvonne clinging to him.

“Baby, I really like that little beard you’ve got going **on**,” I heard her say as she ran her hand along his jawline.

Then she tiptoed to kiss his cheek.

I looked away quickly, and when I did, my eyes met Karla’s by accident. She was watching me.

As Baxter walked toward us again, his phone started ringing.

He unwrapped his arm from around Yuvonne to take the call.

While holding the phone to his ear, he lingered nearby but kept glancing at me before turning back to Yuvonne with a smile.

Ruby Walker

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82

82-1 Feel Left Out

Madeline:

When he hung up, he gestured for Yuvonne to **come** with him.

She hurried over, and I could tell his parents must have arrived for him to **call** her.

“They’re here!” my stepmother said excitedly, wrapping her arm around my father’s and dragging him away.

At that moment, I felt completely alone and out of place.

Then my eyes shifted to my kids, I wasn’t really alone.

“Mommy,” Bodhi said softly.

I nodded to let him know I was listening.

“You’re prettier than your sister,” he added, covering his mouth to laugh.

My other two children nodded too, and he was right, I could never feel alone with them beside me.

After a while, Baxter’s family walked in. A short, chubby man with a bald head and a tall, slender woman with perfectly straight black hair.

She had curves even I couldn’t compete with.

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was incredibly beautiful and carried herself with such grace that anyone who saw her couldn’t help but stare.

She used to be an alpha's daughter.

After her father passed away, their packs merged, which was how Baxter's pack became so wealthy.

As she stepped inside, I noticed the way she looked around the house.

Her husband kept glancing at her for approval, and he only appreciated something once she did.

Otherwise, he stayed silent.

"The house looks nice now," she said flatly.

Judging by the way she barely spoke to anyone, I could tell she wasn't happy about the marriage.

I wondered how Baxter had managed to convince her.

Then her eyes landed on me.

"Oh, you must be Madeline Sawyer, right?" she said.

She was the only one who called me by my new surname, which told me she hadn't come here *by* chance.

She had done her research.

"Yeah, Mom, she's the one helping **the** children with the sickness," Baxter explained, standing beside her.

She was tall, and I could see where Baxter got his height from.

He still towered over her, built like a giant with broad shoulders and a narrow waist.

"Oh, and you have three children now. Well, I'm glad you've moved on from your tired little life and done

1/4

82-1 Feel Left Out

+25 Bonus

something with yourself."

As expected, she spoke softly, barely raising her voice. But her gestures and body language still carried envy and hostility.

I knew what it meant to argue with her, but I decided to respond anyway.

“Mrs. Eugenia, you haven’t changed one bit. One would think you’d be smiling today. It’s a big day for your son. When a woman becomes a mother, she usually inherits compassion. But I guess some women never change.”

That was my way of reminding her that she was still immature, the same woman who used to argue with teenagers like me.

Even now, she hasn’t changed.

I noticed her expression sour, and Baxter’s eyes widened slightly, surprised by the way I spoke to his mother.

“Mrs. Eugenia, please come and have a seat. Dinner’s been served,” Yuvonne uttered quickly, trying to lighten the

moment.

“And My Goddess, that black dress looks so good on you,” she added, forcing a smile.

Instead of responding, Eugenia rolled her eyes and walked toward the dining room with her husband beside her.

I watched Yuvonne’s smile fade as she turned to glance at Baxter, silently complaining about his mother’s behavior.

We were all welcomed to the dining table.

The dining room looked newly built, positioned at the corner of the house, right next to the garden.

It was part of the main house, but definitely a recent addition.

The walls were made of glass, and in the center stood a beautiful antique dining table with perfectly matched

chairs.

Everyone began to take their seats, and I sat down with my children.

Baxter sat directly across from me, so when I looked up, he was the first person I saw.

Beside him was Yuvonne, followed by her parents.

On Baxter's right sat his own parents, his mother closest to him.

I was seated on the opposite end of the table with my children.

The maids hired by Baxter began to appear, serving the food.

The dishes looked incredible, like something from a royal dinner.

I could already tell Eugenia was trying to recognize the maids, just to prove that this arrangement wasn't made by Yuvonne or her family, but by her own son.

When she was done glancing around, her eyes landed on me.

We stared at each other for a moment before she smiled and turned her attention to my children.

"Bodhi, Elara, and Gina," she began, calling their names.

2/4

82-1/es/Left Out

+25 Bonus

She must have learned them when Baxter introduced the kids earlier, and now she wanted to show me that she remembered.

"Yes ma'am."

What she didn't expect was for Bodhi to respond. I noticed she was caught off guard.

"Well, you're a charming little boy," she commented, staring at him a little too intently.

I started to wonder if she was comparing him to her son.

"Well, you're a very gorgeous lady too," Bodhi replied.

The moment he complimented her, everyone laughed, but Eugenia looked rather impressed.

She smiled, then turned to Baxter. It was the first time I had seen her smile so genuinely.

"You're a sharp little boy. I like the way you talk," she told Bodhi.

For the first time, her tone sounded natural.

It wasn't the usual slow, deliberate way she spoke, as if savoring each word.

"My mom always says to respond to everyone nicely," Bodhi continued proudly, raising his eyebrows. "And when someone is very beautiful, I respond even more beautifully."

He went on, charming her further.

I looked at him, then at Baxter. The two of them looked so eerily alike.

"Eugenia, you really look great. I need some tips on your skincare routine," Yuvonne quickly spoke up, interrupting.

She couldn't let Bodhi have the spotlight on her big night.

"Thank you," Eugenia replied, her tone turning cold again.

"Anyway, this dinner is for me to announce the date of my engagement ceremony with Yuvonne."

Baxter began speaking, gesturing for a maid to bring the envelopes containing the invitations.

She started placing them in front of each of us.

Elara quickly snatched one from me and opened it.

I noticed the disapproval on Eugenia's face, she didn't like Elara's manners,

Her expression soured, especially toward Elara, who tended to be more lively.

"Look! It's on December 28th, right after Christmas," Elara exclaimed, a bit too loudly.

Everyone looked at her since they were meant to read it together with Yuvonne after opening their envelopes.

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83

83-The Toxic People Never Change

Madeline:

I quickly glanced at her, then looked at everyone with an apologetic smile as I took the envelope from her.

I noticed Yuvonne's smile fade.

She had planned to make that announcement herself, and though everyone would have found out in a minute, it clearly mattered to her.

"Oh, right—it's the 28th," Baxter said quickly, before anyone else could react. "And I'm glad our little angel got to announce it. Seems like good luck."

He added the last part with a reassuring nod to Yuvonne, urging her not to let it ruin her mood.

"Anyway, let's raise a toast to the good news," Yuvonne said. She swallowed hard, making it clear she wasn't happy about it.

I glanced at Baxter before picking up my glass of wine.

Everyone cheered and took sips. It was all a blur to me.

I understood my daughter shouldn't have done that, but it was just a minute's difference.

They were going to read it anyway. It's not that I thought Yuvonne didn't have the right to be upset, but for all of them to glare at my little girl like that, it didn't sit right with me.

I remembered when Yuvonne used to do things like this, my stepmother would defend her fiercely.

There was never a time she didn't ruin things for me.

Back then, I was only a child, and whenever I got upset about it, they would scold me and tell me to grow up.

Now, a grown Yuvonne was getting upset over something so small, and they were still backing her up while blaming my child.

It was obvious, Yuvonne was everyone's favorite.

"Oh, wait a minute. Excuse me," Baxter said as his phone started ringing.

He stood and walked out. The moment he left, I felt every eye turn toward me.

The air seemed heavy, almost pressing in on me.

"So, I'm sorry about you losing your baby," Karla said, breaking the silence,

She said it loud enough for everyone to hear.

I noticed Eugenia and her husband exchange a glance before turning to look at me.

"Okay," I replied shortly, grabbing the crab legs to crack them, trying to avoid the conversation.

I glanced at the door, hoping Baxter would return soon.

"Yeah, I can't even imagine having an abortion at eighteen," Yuvonne said.

Of course, she had found the perfect moment to humiliate me for Elara announcing the date earlier.

1/3

013-The Toxe People Never Change

+25 Bonus

"It's okay," I said again, this time more firmly, making it clear I didn't want to discuss it.

Then my stepmother turned in her seat toward Eugenia and her husband.

"When she was eighteen, she got herself pregnant by someone," she said.

My jaw dropped, and my eyes widened.

I looked at my father, wondering if he would finally stop her from saying something so cruel.

They weren't even worried about Yuvonne's night being ruined anymore, they were just digging up my past.

“What? Is that true, young lady? You got pregnant without a mate?” Jonah, Baxter’s father, asked, gently reaching for a tissue to clean his hands while searching my face for an apology.

“Kids, you know, you would’ve had another sibling if the baby hadn’t died back then,” Karla added, this time speaking directly to my children.

I set my spoon down hard enough to get their attention.

“They are children. Don’t talk to them about it.” I looked Karla straight in the eye, warning her that she had crossed a line.

“Wow, she’s still the rude one,” Eugenia muttered, rolling her eyes and folding her arms over her chest.

“I’m sorry, what did you just say?” I turned toward her.

I didn’t know when to stop, not after my wolf stirred awake.

“I said you’re rude, and your children are mannerless,” she replied coldly, showing no hesitation or concern for how her words might hurt.

“My children have far better manners than the one you raised,” I shot back.

She gasped.

A

“Madeline, come on. We were just giving our condolences,” Karla said. “Besides, you shouldn’t even feel sad about the child you lost. It was illegal. You’re lucky you ran away that night.”

My stepmother’s words made my jaw tighten. I glared at her.

“Oh, so that’s why she ran away,” Jonah said, nodding with disapproval.

“That’s it. There’s no reason for me to stay here anymore.” I took the napkin off my lap, slammed it on the table, and stood up.

“I think I’ll leave. My therapist told me not to sit around toxic people for too long,” I said, hearing gasps the table,

“Who does she think she is?” Eugenia muttered, snapping her head toward her husband.

around

“I’m a human researcher, the one you all begged to come here,” I replied, leaning over the table and pointing at

her.

The room erupted at my response.

There was a time when I couldn’t speak up for myself, and now I couldn’t stop talking even if I tried.

Eugenia glanced from my finger to my face.

2/3

83-The Toxic People Nove Change

+25 Bonus

“What’s going on here?” Baxter asked as he entered the room, right when I was pointing at his mother.

“Your human researcher is throwing a tantrum because she thinks too highly of herself **to** sit with us,” Eugenia lied, hiding everything she and the others had said and making it seem like I was the problemn.

“What’s going on, Madeline? Why do you look so angry?” Baxter asked, his tone sharp but not accusing.

Thankfully, he didn’t push me further and instead asked me why I was angry.

I straightened my back and swallowed hard, trying to contain my anger.

“It was a mistake. She shouldn’t have come here,” Yuvonne snapped, the same woman who had begged Baxter to invite me, just so she could remind me of who I was and where I belonged.

Now she was saying things only to please her in-laws.

“She doesn’t know when to keep her mouth shut. And tonight, she’s humiliated almost everyone at this table,” Yuvonne continued, her voice cracking.

I stared **at** her in disbelief. What an actress.

“She’s lying! They were all saying horrible things to Mommy, so Mommy got upset!” Elara yelled, slamming her small hand on the table in my defense. 1

Comments

Support

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84

84-After I Was Humiliated

Madeline:

“And look at her! Her daughter is a liar, just like her,” Eugenia shouted, pointing at my child.

Gina started crying, and Bodhi clung to me tightly.

“Don't talk to my daughter like that,” I managed to say, my voice shaking with anger.

“Mom, she's just a child. And children don't lie,” Baxter said, turning to his mother. “Why did you wait for me to leave to talk to her? What did you even say to her?”

Baxter standing up for me shocked everyone, especially me.

But **of** course, he should have. It was his fault that I was here being humiliated in the first place.

“Of course they lie,” Yuvonne snapped. “Children lie when their mothers tell them to, when they teach them to lie.”

She slammed her hand on the table and stood up after watching Baxter defend me and my children.

Even Baxter's eyes widened at her reaction.

“Okay, everyone, just calm down. Maybe we should try to fix this issue,” Karla said, panicking.

She was the one who started it all, and now she could see Baxter getting worked up.

Eugenia, however, was smirking, probably because she wanted the night ruined.

But it was Karla and Yuvonne’s fault from the start.

“Maybe you’re talking about yourself,” I snapped at Yuvonne.

She turned to me, one eyebrow raised.

“I remember how Karla used to encourage you to lie,” I said, watching Karla start to rise, ready to argue.

“No, don’t even try to defend your actions,” I told her sharply. “You were a horrible mother and stepmother. And your daughter is right, it’s a mother’s fault when her kids turn out messy. Yuvonne learned it from you.”

My fists clenched as both women stared at me, suddenly shocked to be on the receiving end for once.

“Do you not see it? Do you not see how she’s talking to me?” Yuvonne hissed, pointing at me while speaking to Baxter.

“You wanted your sister here,” Baxter yelled at her. “And now you’re acting like she came here just to ruin your night.”

Yuvonne folded her arms across her chest.

“I wanted my sister here out of the goodness **of** my heart. But she came and started saying things that made me feel like a useless person. Aren’t you going to ask her why she chose to be so messy? Why she said all the wrong things?”

She was still talking when Bodhi spoke.

“I don’t want to come here ever again. I **don’t** like this place. I don’t like these people,” he murmured.

1/3

84-After Was Humiliated

+25 **Bonus**

His voice was so low it was barely audible, but Baxter heard it and so did everyone else.

I turned and hugged Bodhi tightly, carrying him as I tried to leave, but Yuvonne wasn't done.

"Take your kids and leave!" she shouted.

As soon as she said that, Bodhi started to cry even louder, and that was it.

Before Baxter could say anything, I put Bodhi down and walked from the table toward Yuvonne.

When I reached her, I slapped her so hard the sound echoed through the room.

Everyone gasped. Yuvonne fell onto the table, right into the red crab sauce.

It smeared across her face, hair, and dress.

"Oh, what the fuck?" she stammered, barely able to stay upright as her mother grabbed her to help.

My father rushed forward but stayed silent.

Then Karla stepped out from behind her daughter, raising her hand to strike me.

But my wolf, Lena, caught her hand.

"You will not touch me again. Enough is enough," Lena growled.

It wasn't me speaking, it was her. Her voice was deep and frightening, even to me.

"She has a wolf!" my father growled, announcing the news as everyone gasped.

In the heat of the moment, I didn't realize what was happening.

Karla looked terrified. She stepped away from me, raising her hand as if to warn me not to come any closer.

"Come on, Madeline, let's leave," Baxter said as he came up behind me, grabbing my arms to pull me back.

He wrapped one arm around me, and I paused just long enough to lift Bodhi into my arms.

Baxter let go so he could carry Elara and Gina, and together we stormed out of the house.

Outside, I wanted to stop him from carrying the

dren, but doing so would have left me waiting for a car.

I knew the night was dangerous, and there was no way I could walk home with my kids.

Ordering a cab wasn't an option either, most drivers were reckless to omegas or new people.

Once the kids were settled in the back seat, I climbed into the passenger seat, and Baxter drove us away.

I saw Yuvonne run out of the house, trying to get his attention, maybe to tell him not to worry about me, was too late. Baxter had already driven off.

Halfway down the road, her name kept flashing on his phone as she called again and again.

None of us spoke, and he didn't answer. I watched him end each call as soon as it came through.

When we finally reached the hotel suite, I told the children to go inside.

Before Baxter could follow, I turned to face him.

"Come on, let's go inside and talk," he said quietly, noticing I was about to ask him to leave.

but it

2/3

84-After Was Humiliated

+25 Bonus

Because the moment I arrived, I noticed Kaylee coming out of her suite, sneaking around, probably trying to gather information.

With a stern look and a silent warning, I went back into my suite.

As soon as I stepped inside, I realized I needed to take care of my kids before even talking to Baxter.

I expected him to be gone by the time I got them ready for bed.

However, the moment I laid them down, Elara's question stopped me.

“Mommy, did we have a sibling?” Elara asked softly.

“Did you really run away because you didn’t want our sibling?” Bodhi asked, his voice filled with confusion. I took a deep breath and swallowed hard.

“And Mommy, why do your parents hate you so much?” Gina continued to question.

Their words pulled me back to the time I spent with my family.

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85

85-1 Cannot **Leave** The **Werewolf** Land Now

Madeline:

“It’s not like that,” I stuttered as I looked at their innocent faces, waiting for me to respond.

“**It’s** okay, Mommy, you don’t have to answer us. But I’m glad you left that place. We already got the answers when we saw how they treated you,” Elara said, surprising me with her maturity.

I broke down in front of them, trying to smile through my tears.

“Mommy, please don’t cry.”

Bodhi got up and held my hand, guiding me to sit on his bed.

The others came closer and hugged me.

“You don’t need them, Mommy. You have us,” they said together.

Their words filled me with warmth, realizing my children were more mature than the family I had once depended

1. on.

It comforted me in a way I hadn't expected. I decided then, I would stop thinking about them.

After taking care of my kids, I tucked them into bed.

Then I stood up and walked out of the room, planning to have a glass of wine.

I thought Baxter would be gone by now. By the end of the day, he always went back to comfort Yuvonne because, as she said, I had ruined her day.

But when I stepped into the living room, I was surprised to see him still there.

The moment he saw me, he stopped pacing and quickly walked toward me

I raised my hand to stop him.

"Let's initiate the rejection." That was the first thing I said.

I noticed the veins on his neck tense.

"No." After a brief pause, he replied firmly, shaking his head in disbelief.

"What do you mean by no? I want rejection. That's my final decision. It's the only way we can move forward," I said through clenched teeth, my fists tightening.

He stared at me like I was asking for something unreasonable.

Then he took a deep breath and shook his head again.

"I said no. I'm not going to reject you. I stayed here to apologize and comfort you, not to have the rejection thrown in my face," he responded, his tone sharper than I expected.

"Then what do you want from me? Because this mate bond is not going anywhere. It's not going to change the fact that you're engaged to my sister and I'm married. So what's the point of staying connected?" I asked, keeping my eyes locked on his.

"You promised, Baxter. You promised I would be respected there. But I came back humiliated, with my children full of questions. You're the reason we're hurt today." My voice trembled, but I didn't look away.

85-1 Cannot Leave The Werewolf Land Now

+25 Bonus

“And I’m sorry for it. If anything, it made me realize that you were right,” he began, but I shook my head, refusing to let him twist things with his words again.

“You’re the reason I went there. You tricked me into it. And now I’m in a mess because of you, Baxter. So believe me, I’m rejecting you this full moon to make it official. I don’t care what you say. You’ll have to accept it,” I said, my voice cracking slightly.

He looked like he had seen hell.

If he hadn’t convinced me to go there, pretending everything was fine, I wouldn’t have been questioned in front of my kids.

And that wasn’t even the worst part.

The worst part was the feeling that something else had happened, something I couldn’t quite focus on.

“Please leave,” I demanded, swallowing my anger to sound calm, even though I didn’t have to.

He stared at me for a moment before finally turning around and storming out of the room.

Once he was gone, I let out a long breath and walked back to my room.

I removed my makeup and took a shower, but nothing helped calm me down.

Eventually, exhaustion took over.

Whenever I stay angry for hours, I end up drained, and that’s what happened.

I fell asleep, not knowing what kind of disaster waited for me the next morning.

When I woke up, the kids were already up, taken care of by Nina. I, on the other hand, was a mess.

My eyes were swollen, and the bags underneath were huge, so I had to apply double makeup before leaving my

room.

After fixing my appearance, I walked out wearing blue baggy jeans, a white top, and a pink sweater.

“I made you coffee. It’ll help with the headache,” Nina said as I sat at the table near the large window, my hand covering my eyes.

She patted my back before leaving to bring the cup.

We had arranged a small setup in the corner to make something for ourselves in emergencies.

Living in the suite still felt like temporary camping, with little help and no proper kitchen.

I needed a real place where my kids could go outside, play in the garden, and be among trees, just the way they liked.

While Nina prepared the coffee, I checked my phone and saw several missed calls and messages from Baxter, all saying the same thing—apologies.

Then I noticed a text from Yuvonne, and my body stiffened.

Stupid: It was a huge night for me, Madeline, and you ruined it. I hope you get karma for it.

I clenched my fists, ready to type something back, when another notification appeared, one that made me forget about her completely.

2/3

85-1 Cannot Leave The Werewolf Land Now

+25 Bonus

It was a new article from the same reporter I had seen with my sister before.

I had subscribed to their channel to keep up with updates about the kids and that sickness spreading among them.

The title made my heart tighten.

“The Human Savior Shows Her Wolf. Does That Mean She’s Not Leaving the Werewolf Land?”

My eyes widened as I quickly opened the article.

It was a one-on-one interview between the reporter and my half-sister.

In one part, she said,

“It was really surprising when I saw my sister’s wolf last night. It made me think, oh my God, my sister is staying with us now! I mean, human land is nice, but I think my sister will love it here. Finally, she has a home, and it’s where she belongs.”

Her words sounded warm and proud, like she was genuinely happy for me.

But I knew better.

I knew the kind of monster she was.

This wasn’t excitement, it was cruelty disguised as care.

She had ruined everything for me again.

Because now, even if I wanted to go back to the human land, I couldn’t.

Ruby Walker

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We Listened to the Darkness by Sorin Pax

86

86—Running Away Once Again

Madeline:

“We shouldn’t let the kids know. They’ll freak out,” Nina said as we sat together **at** the table, both worried about

the news.

The article was everywhere now. Even if they deleted it, it didn’t matter anymore.

Enough people had seen it for the council to know.

And even if only two people had read it, that was still too much information out in the open.

“It all happened because of Baxter. I should’ve never let him back into my life. I knew he was trouble,” I told Nina, slapping my forehead.

“He used to be your best friend. What kind of friend does this to someone they care about?” she asked.

I chuckled lightly, almost laughing. “That’s because he was never my friend to begin with. You’re right, a friend would never do this to their friend,” I said, though complaining didn’t change anything.

The damage was already done.

“You know why? Because you’re not fighting back,” Nina said firmly.

I tilted my head at her.

“I understand that you want to stay away from the drama, but when you’re dragged into it, you need to respond. Your sister made herself look like some gentle princess. Why not show these messages to another news outlet? The drama is already out there,” she said, trying to convince me to expose my sister’s lies.

She mentioned the threatening texts Yuvonne had been sending me for the past few minutes.

One of them was insane.

In her exact words, she told me to read the article and watch how she’d ruin my chance of ever returning to the human land or to my supposed husband.

For a moment, I hesitated, but Nina was right.

Even in that interview, Yuvonne had hinted that I ruined her perfect night.

What was the point of keeping quiet anymore?

I was already trapped in the werewolf land.

I might as well tell the world what I’d gone through so they’d stop expecting me to act like part of that family,

I wouldn’t **let** them play the victims.

“There’s this guy,” Nina said, pointing to another news reporter on her screen. “His name’s Amir. He doesn’t get along with Sherry, they’re from rival channels. You should reach out to him. They’ve been emailing us for an interview about the sickness. I think this is the right time to speak up, not just about Sherry but your half-sister

too.”

I tapped my fingers on the table, thinking. I’d played fair for years, and it never worked in my favor. Maybe it was time to play dirty.

1/3

86–Running Away Once Again

+25 Bonus

I opened my laptop and turned the screen toward Nina.

“Go ahead. You have my permission to email him and finalize **the** interview.”

Nina smiled and started typing quickly.

At the same time, I received more texts and calls from all my mates, but I didn’t respond to anyone.

A sudden knock on the door made me realize someone was right outside the suite.

“You keep doing the work. I’ll go check who’s at the door,” I said to Nina as I got up and walked over.

As soon as I opened it, thinking maybe room service had brought breakfast, the sight in front of me froze my entire body for a minute.

It was always the same, every time this man appeared, I reacted the same way.

Standing outside with a proud smile on his lips and a dark aura surrounding him, Mr. Eldon was smirking at me. Lord Eldon, what are you doing here?” I asked.

The door was still half open, my hand resting on the door and frame, making sure I blocked the entrance, because it looked like he had come ready to barge in.

“I came here to speak with you. May I come inside?” he asked, a strange and unsettling smile lingering on his face.

“I’m not sure why you’ve come so early in the morning,” I replied softly. “My kids haven’t eaten yet, and they get really fussy when they’re hungry. How about we talk after breakfast?” Even though I spoke gently, deep down I wasn’t comfortable with him standing at my door.

“Well, then you’ll be surprised to know I want to talk about the children only,” he said.

As soon as those words left his mouth, my world felt like it had shifted beneath me.

I narrowed my eyes and clenched my jaw.

“What happened?” he asked with a smile. “Don’t see me as your ex-best friend’s father. See me as a council head right now.”

His way of reintroducing himself as a council member was just his attempt to assert power and make me listen instead of treating him lightly.

I stepped aside, partly because I wanted to hear what he meant by coming for the kids only.

That couldn’t be a good thing.

As soon as we stepped inside, he walked straight toward the kids, making them lift their heads from the TV but not even getting up to greet him.

My children knew how to greet people; they were always well-mannered.

But ever since they had come home after last night’s argument, Elara had been telling Bodhi and Gina not to react to everyone or everything the way they used to.

It was as if she was trying to build a small team with her siblings against our bullies, and I honestly didn’t like that.

I didn’t like involving my children in these kinds of things.

“Doesn’t she have my son’s eyes?” Lord Eldon pointed at Gina and spoke about his son.

2/3

86–Rumming Avoy Once Again

+25 Bonus

The world around me began to shrink because I already knew where this was going.

“Not really. They look just like their father,” I said, trying to stay calm even though my body was shaking under

the surface.

“Really? **Well**, I haven’t seen your husband, and we haven’t heard from him either,” Lord Eldon said carefully.

Just like everyone else, he refused to believe that I had a husband.

“But I got a call from your stepmother earlier this morning,” he continued.

As soon as he mentioned my stepmother, I knew exactly where this was heading.

“Really? Now she’s calling you?” I asked. “Go ahead, talk to her if you want. I’m not her gatekeeper.” I tried to sound casual but also aimed a jab at his character because I knew what kind of man he was, the kind who had cheated on his mate and driven her to end her life.

I thought that would make him storm off after arguing with me, but instead, he laughed.

“Not only did she call me, she told me something amazing,” he said. “Something about the fact that when you ran away from the werewolf world, you were pregnant. And I remember at that time, you were friends with my son.”

That was all he said, and my body began to shake terribly. 1

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We Listened to the Darkness by Sorin Pax

87

87–The Haunting DNA Test

Madeline:

“If you’ve come here to talk about that, let me tell you, I had a miscarriage. I was worried and had no means to start a normal life. Then I met my husband about fifteen days later. It was an instant connection. We got married, and now I have children,” I said, taking deep breaths to steady myself.

I was afraid my fear was showing on my face.

“Really? What a nice story,” he mocked. “It’s amazing because it checks out with the children’s age, right?” His taunting smile stayed fixed on his face.

“Well, it’s not a story. It’s the truth. Now, will you please leave?” I asked, pointing toward the door. When I noticed he looked offended, I added, “Since my stepmother called you, she must have told you about the chaos last night. My kids are still shaken from that, and I don’t think they’re comfortable with a stranger standing here.”

I tried to keep my tone soft, but I meant every word sharply.

“Sure, I’ll leave. It’s not like I came here to stay forever,” he said, taking another deep breath.

I had been watching his body language carefully, worried about what he might do next.

“I’ve only come here with a simple request,” he added.

I swallowed hard. “What is it?” I asked.

“Well, I need a DNA test of these children.”

The moment he said those words, my head snapped toward Nina, who had reacted the same way.

Before I could speak, she got up from her chair and walked over.

“I don’t know much about the werewolf world, since I’ve never lived here before,” she began. “But I’m pretty sure not just anyone can demand a DNA test. It’s insulting, and it could damage the relationship between my boss and her husband. I hope you understand what you’re asking implies that my boss cheated on her husband.”

Thankfully, Nina stepped in for me because my throat was too tight to speak.

“Well, I’m not just anyone. I’m the father of the man I believe she slept with,” Lord Eldon stated confidently, folding his arms across his chest.

“Then your son should be the one to demand it,” Nina replied firmly. “Until then, we’d ask you to please give us a moment. You’ve already caused my boss enough stress.”

I noticed the old man glare at her before his eyes dropped to her chest.

The way he chuckled and looked away, shaking his head, made my blood boil.

“Sure. Bring in a beautiful assistant and try to seduce an old man into complying,” he sneered. “I’ll come back with my son and the rest of the council.”

After making that vile, misogynistic comment, the old man walked away.

Nina turned to me, pointing after him.

“What the fuck is wrong with this man?” she asked, disbelief clear on her face.

1/3

87-The Haunting DNA test

+25 Bonus

“Well, this old man thinks every girl wants to seduce him. That’s what’s wrong with him,” I muttered, shaking my head before hurrying to the door and locking it.

“Once I locked the door and turned around to face the suite again, I noticed Nina was still watching me.

“About the baby, is it true? Were you pregnant before leaving the werewolf land?” Nina questioned, her tone carrying a hint of skepticism.

Of course, it did, she didn’t know anything about my past. I hadn’t told anyone there.

“Yeah! I was pregnant, but it’s also true I had a miscarriage. Anyway, let’s not talk about it. I really need to do something,” I said, anxiously rubbing my face with my hands.

“What are you going to do now?” she asked. I looked at her face again, probably wearing the same expression I had years ago, when I’d decided to run away.

“We have to leave,” I said simply. Her eyes widened.

“But go where?” she questioned as I began rushing toward my room.

“Children, come on, pack your bags! We’re going back home!” I tried to sound cheerful.

My kids stared at each other, then got up from the floor.

One would think they’d be happy to go home, but they didn’t look happy.

Of course, they knew I was worried, so without questioning me, they hurried to their room to pack their belongings.

While I hastily threw my clothes into my bag, Nina said,

“Madeline, I know you want to go back home and that’s the right thing, but how? You saw the news. Everyone will be alerted by now, you can’t just leave.“.

She was right, but I refused to believe it. I had done this before.

Though it was true, I didn't have a wolf back then. I faced her, rubbing my palms together anxiously.

"What if I can find something to hide my wolf?" I asked.

"I don't know if such things exist," she said helplessly. Of course she didn't.

The pendants my children wore came from someone else's help. It was going to be harder this time.

"It doesn't matter. All I need to do is reach the human land. I'll convince everyone, even if I have to..." I paused, taking a deep breath. "Forget about my wolf, I'll do it."

"Fine, I'll go help the children. Let's see what happens," she said finally. Thankfully, Nina didn't argue much,

I guess she could see how panicked I was.

Just as she reached the door, she stopped and turned around.

"Are you running away from the DNA test, or because of the humiliation?"

Of course anyone would wonder that.

"Of course not, Nina. I don't want to give them my children's DNA to add to their system. You know how crazy these people are. I just don't want anything to do with them anymore," I lied, the only excuse I could come up

2/3

87-The Haunting DNA Test

+25 Bonus

with.

Finally, she ran out of the room, and I began shoving everything I'd brought into my bag.

I called the guards and told them we were leaving, asked them to get the **car** ready.

They said the car was ready and that they'd come knock when I was prepared to head out, so they could carry the bags.

In the next fifteen minutes, I had packed everything in a rush.

My kids stayed silent. Once everything was ready, I called the guard again and told him to come get the bags.

A storm raged outside, darker than usual.

I don't know why, but I preferred the dark, it hid too many things: people, truths, and sometimes even me.

When there was a knock on the door, Nina rushed to open it and let the guards in.

We had to move fast; in my mind, everything was spinning.

But another shock hit me when Nina returned, followed by Baxter and Elgin, their eyes widening at the packed bags.

"I'm leaving," I said, without any explanations. I stated my decision, clear and final.

Comments

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We Listened to the Darkness by Sorin Pax

88

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88-Keeping Me Away From Madeline

Graham:

"You can stop pacing around the room now," Kaylee complained after I hadn't spoken a word to her and had been pacing for an hour straight.

“Are you worried because she went out with Baxter to his family dinner?” she continued.

I closed my eyes, my hands on my waist, trying to contain the anger rising inside me.

“I’m just asking because isn’t it odd that every time she’s with one of your friends, your mood sours? Is there something I should know? I hope you didn’t have a crush on her like she had a crush on you,” she went on.

The thing about Kaylee was that she didn’t know when to stop.

“Kaylee, you knew what you were getting into before marriage, didn’t you?” I finally snapped, reminding her of her own words, “What was it you said? Once someone gets married, they eventually surrender. Isn’t that what you told me when I said I didn’t want to marry you?”

I noticed the color drain from her face.

She looked furious, beyond angry. She threw the comforter off, got out of bed, and marched toward me.

The minute she reached me, she slapped me. My fist clenched, but I didn’t hit her back.

I never had.

“Why would you say that? Why would you say it after I asked if you have feelings for her? Is that an admission of guilt?” she demanded, grabbing my collar and shaking me for an answer.

“Kaylee, how many times do I have to tell you not to raise your hand on me?” I reminded her, my jaw tightening, my voice low and rough.

I think she noticed the veins on my arms tightening and the muscles in my neck stiffening.

She slowly released my collar, stepped back, and began to sniffle.

“I didn’t hit you because I hate you. Why do you always make it sound like I’m abusive toward you?” she whimpered.

I already knew what would happen next.

She’d cry, throw a scene, and then my father would come in, slap me across the face, and remind me I was a man, that I wasn’t supposed to complain about little things.

“Fine, you don’t need to do all that,” I hissed tiredly. “But I really want to know what’s wrong with you. She’s married, and it seems like she loves her husband. Why are you trying to rekindle a friendship that died a long time ago? Men or women, once they’re

married, they don't keep old friends hanging around. Their spouse becomes their friend," she yelled and then took a deep breath.

"I am your friend! I've been your friend for five years. Haven't I?" she asked, pointing at her chest. I turned my

face away.

"Fine, I said those things, but at the end of the day, you're a man. You should have said no to the marriage, even when I didn't. But you didn't, and after that, we lived a happy life, until now. Until she came back." She grunted, mentioning Madeline again.

1/3

Ba Keeping Me Away From Madeline

Every time she said her name, or anyone did, or even when I looked at her, I felt like a loser.

Like happiness was within *my* reach, yet I couldn't have it. It stirred defiance in me.

"Come on, come to bed. We need to give your father an heir."

Her voice changed as she started running her hand up and down my chest.

I instantly grabbed her wrist and shook my head.

+25 Bonus

"I'm not in the mood, and I'm not a baby-making machine. You can't just drag me into bed whenever you decide it's time to have a baby," I said before storming out of the room.

I walked straight to the couch in the living room and lay down.

The whole night, I tossed and turned until I heard a commotion outside.

I assumed Madeline and Baxter had returned, but Kaylee rushed out ahead of me to see what was happening.

She came back telling me that Madeline looked happy, laughing and talking with Baxter.

Then she taunted me, saying Madeline was probably closest to everyone but me, even though she once claimed to have a crush on me.

After that, I didn't go talk to Madeline, partly because Kaylee was on high alert.

The next day arrived, and Kaylee was eerily sick.

She wouldn't get out of bed, kept complaining about throwing up, and was coughing so much I thought she'd cough her organs out.

I figured that was probably why she was vomiting, the coughing itself was violent.

I didn't even have time to check my phone before my father ordered me to take her to the hospital.

I knew my responsibilities and it's not like Madeline was giving me any chance to do otherwise right now. So I took Kaylee to the hospital.

Once we arrived, the doctors told me she was completely fine.

One of them even said he had no idea why she was

with her lungs.

complaining about coughing when there was nothing wrong

It all seemed forced. That's when I realized why I'd been sent there.

But there were too many people around, and every time I tried to walk away, Kaylee would throw a tantrum.

I didn't want to cause any more trouble for Madeline but I had already seen the news.

"So that's why you made me come here. What is Dad planning to do?" I asked, my fist clenching.

"Madeline has a wolf," Kaylee hissed. "And your father said he'll use it to make her tell everyone she wants to go back. That's it."

"No. Are you fucking insane? Kaylee, do you ever use your brain?" I snapped, stepping closer to her.

We were in the parking lot now, and she refused to get in the car.

"What did I do now?" she shot back.

2/3

BERG We way from

+25 Bonus

“Dad said he would make her leave because she has a wolf and that’s why you made me come here? So my friend will be gone?” I said slowly, emphasizing each word. She began **to** nod

“Did you ever think that if Father talks about her having a wolf, they won’t let her leave?” I demanded.

But she didn’t look like she understood what she’d done and that’s when I realized there was something more to this.

“Your father said he’ll go tell Madeline that he’s going to help her leave the human lands,” Kaylee spoke hastily, but only after he convinces everyone she doesn’t have a wolf.”

Comments

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We Listened to the Darkness by Sorin Pax

89

89—It Is Always About Madeline

Graham:

“Your father will drive her out of the werewolf land,” she repeated herself.

Even though she looked confident that my father could pull this **off**, I didn’t believe a word of it.

There was no way he would simply send her away. There had to be something else.

So I immediately called Elgin and Baxter to warn them about what was happening.

They were up in the mountains with the trainers and might not have seen the news yet.

I contacted their warriors and told them to call me back, I explained everything and asked them to go check on Madeline.

“Okay, listen to me. If you don’t get in the car right now, Kaylee, I won’t care what you do or how loud you scream about Madeline ever having a crush on me. I’ll leave,” I warned her.

“And if you said her name again here, I will reject you,” I threatened and watched her eyes widen in shock and fear.

I wanted her to understand that if she threatened me, I could do the same.

At last she understood and reluctantly climbed into the car.

During the drive she cursed at me, tried to scratch my arms, and yelled because I had threatened her about Madeline. I didn’t care.

I kept my eyes on the road and drove carefully.

When we reached the suite, I didn’t wait for her to get out.

I stormed from the car and headed straight for the elevator, pulling down my sleeves to hide the scratches on my

arms.

She had left deep bruises, but as an alpha who could heal, I stayed quiet.

I saw my father walking out of Madeline’s suite, his face hard with anger.

His eyes met mine and he grunted, motioning for me to follow him to our own suite.

He hurried after me, but I reached it first. She came later, and Penny opened the door for her.

“What were you doing in Madeline’s suite?” I demanded.

“I went there to have a talk with her,” my father replied, sounding calm. “She’s grown a tongue. That girl needs to be reminded she’s nothing. Even if her wolf has woken, she’s still an omega from omega parents,” he hissed.

Penny wrinkled her nose. I was just glad they didn’t know Madeline wasn’t an ordinary omega, her wolf was different, and I wasn’t going to tell them.

“What were you doing in her suite, Father?” I repeated.

“You can’t just walk into someone’s suite, make them uncomfortable, and expect them to respect you,” I said.

I knew he must have done that.

1/3

89-It is Always About Madeline

+25 Bonus

Madeline would never be rude unless she felt threatened, and she had only just started standing up **for herself**.

It angered me that people kept stepping on her.

“Why are you talking to your father in that tone over that woman?” Kaylee asked, stepping forward to defend him.

“You stay out of it, Kaylee, or I’ll take my anger out on you too,” I warned, pointing at her to remind her I could leave her.

She went silent. Five years had passed and she still hadn’t given my father even a hair.

So I could kick her out of my life at any moment.

“Well, do you want to know what I did when I went there?” my father asked.

His calm scared me, it showed he had a plan he believed would work.

“I went there to ask her about her children,” he admitted.

When he said “children,” my muscles tightened, and I saw confusion cover Kaylee’s face.

I wanted to laugh in her face. She was foolish to think my father was trying to help her leave.

“What do you mean by children? Why would you want to talk about her children?” I asked my father, even though I knew exactly what he meant.

Of course, my father had already figured it out, or something must have happened to make him suspicious.

“As if you don’t know.” He laughed at me for still trying to cover it up.

“I don’t know, so tell me,” I said sternly, watching him take a deep breath.

“Well, your beloved friend was pregnant when she ran away. Did you know anything about it?” my father said.

My muscles stiffened again at his words. But it was Kaylee who gasped and rushed toward us, stepping into view.

“What do you mean by that? What does this have to do with Graham or us?” Kaylee asked quickly.

But my father raised his hand, signaling her to stay quiet, while keeping his eyes on me.

“Madeline was pregnant. Her parents told me she ran away to hide who the father was. But now that she’s back, she claims she had a miscarriage. Then, within fifteen days, she met her husband and got pregnant again. It sounds like a neat story to confuse anyone about the children’s age, But my instincts tell me there’s more to it,” my father said, making me swallow hard as I forced a calm look.

“Well, let me end your hopes or whatever you’re expecting. I never slept with her,” I said.

The certainty in my tone made Kaylee place a hand on her chest and breathe in relief.

But my father wagged his finger.

“**You** should have seen her face when I asked for a DNA test. She was scared,” he said.

His insistence drained the color from Kaylee’s face again.

“Maybe because you were accusing her **of** something that would make her look unfaithful to her husband,” I replied. “Besides, I don’t know if she ever cheated or not. No **one** would want a stranger asking for a DNA test. You’re lucky she didn’t slap you.”

2/3

89- Atrays About Madeline

+25 Bonus

As I said that, my father’s **face** turned red.

“**If** she had done that, I would have killed her right there,” he shouted, angry that I’d even suggested **it**.

“And then you think you would’ve walked out of there alive?” I muttered.

His shocked look told me he hadn't expected that.

"What do you mean by that?" Kaylee reacted instantly, grabbing my hand to make me look at her.

"Kaylee, please, wait a minute. We're talking!" I shouted, my frustration spilling out.

"Penny, take Kaylee to her room. I need to speak with my son in private and make him understand something," my father ordered his useless wife.

His tone made me take a deep breath because I knew what was coming.

He was going to try to pressure or blackmail me into going against Madeline. 1

☐

Comments

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We Listened to the Darkness by Sorin Pax

90

+25 Bonus

90—Accepting Her As His **Daughter**—In-Law

Graham:

Penny led the reluctant Kaylee away, even though she clearly wanted to stay and hear everything. She wanted to know what was really happening between me and Madeline.

Once she left, my father leaned forward. “Madeline was never right for you, and even if the child was mine, you wouldn’t have treated her well,” I snapped at him as I reminded him how hostile he used to get just at her mention.

“So why would you respect her now?” I asked him.

“Things have changed,” he said. “Madeline isn’t that shy, nerdy girl anymore. She carries herself with confidence. Everyone talks about her wherever she goes. I don’t want my son tied to someone who can’t give him an heir. But to have three grandchildren already? That would make my life complete.”

As my father spoke, I stood frozen.

“All I’m asking from you,” he continued, “is to cooperate with me. When the other council members arrive and we ask Madeline for a DNA test, you’ll agree to it. This time, I won’t take her away from you. That’s my word. I’ll make sure she marries you. She’ll be yours, and the children will call me Grandfather.”

His words convinced me. It felt like, finally, my wishes were being granted.

“What are you thinking? Don’t you want that?” my father asked, snapping me out of the dream I had gotten lost in, the dream of being with Madeline. When I looked at him, I remembered the promise he had just made to me. Everything he said felt like a dream come true, something I had wanted for years.

“What about “I paused, hesitating.

–

“What? Tell me. I’ll help you with all your questions,” my father insisted, making me take a deep breath.

“Well, what about Kaylee?” I finished asking, watching as my father’s face relaxed. There was a clear sign in his expression that he wasn’t bothered about her, nor did he care.

“She’s dry land anyway. Why would you keep her around?” he remarked, making my eyes widen at his words.

“I mean, it kind of serves her right though, doesn’t it?” he added.

“Okay,” I muttered, clearing my throat. “Wouldn’t her father be upset about it?” I asked, genuinely curious.

“Do you think he can do anything? He’s just a royal beta. If he complains too much, he’ll be kicked out too,” my father replied. He really did have an answer for everything, just like he said he would. Now it was up to me to decide.

“It’s okay. Go ahead, be in your room, think about it, and then let me know,” my father said, making me nod before I walked away.

I didn’t know why I silently listened to him, but what he suggested was something I had wanted for so long. Maybe that was why.

When I returned to my room, Penny, who had been sitting with Kaylee, stood up from her seat. She gave me a full glance, almost judging me, before walking out.

“What did your father say to you?” Kaylee rushed to me, trying to grab my arm to get my attention.

“I need to be alone for a moment,” I told her, motioning for her to leave.

1/3

90-Accepting Her As His Daughter-in-Law

+25 Bonus

“No, I’m not leaving. There’s no such thing as a moment alone. We’re a couple, husband and wife. You’re supposed to share things with me. Tell me, what did he say?” She went on and on, just a perfect Kaylee response.

“Kaylee, I just need a minute alone,” I said, turning to her and showing her with my fingers how little time I needed.

“No,” she replied stubbornly.

I scoffed and shrugged. Thankfully, my father arrived. He must have heard the noise Kaylee was making. Even when she spoke normally, her voice was always raised.

“Kaylee, come outside!” my father shouted.

Her eyes shifted from me to him, then back to me. I knew what she was silently asking why I never took a stand for her when my father yelled. But why would I? She believed in an abusive kind of relationship. She always raised her voice, cursed me out, and hit me. Now that my father was calling her out, she suddenly wanted my help.

“Go, Kaylee. Your father-in-law is calling you,” I said, taunting her for always depending on my father during the early days of our marriage. She had tortured me so much by using him against me. But that grip had finally loosened, and I had escaped. I guess that was what bothered her the most.

After she reluctantly left, I sat down to think about my father's words. The first thing that came to mind was my friends and what they were doing. What were their plans regarding Madeline?

Before I could make any decision, a call came through. I was instantly irritated when I saw Yvonne's name on the screen, but curiosity got the better of me. Why was she calling? Pushing aside my hesitation, I answered.

"Hello?" I replied coolly, hoping she noticed the tone. But I knew she wouldn't care. She sounded like she was dealing with something herself.

"Where is Baxter?" she stammered, repeating the question. I could hear small sniffles and hiccups, she had been crying.

"I don't know. Busy, maybe. Why?" I asked curiously.

"He's not picking up my calls since he left my home last night with Madeline. What is your friend up to, huh? Is he really going to chase her now, this close to her engagement ceremony?"

Her words echoed in my head. He's going after her? That was unsettling. He was already cutting off his old flame

just so he could be with—Madeline?

"I don't know. I'll let you know when I speak to him," I said before ending the call. I tapped my fingers on the phone anxiously.

Then I called Silver, trying to find out what was going on between her and Elgin. Strangely, she told me the same thing. Elgin hadn't called, checked in, or spoken to her since he arrived here.

She said the only time she heard from him was when he called the nannies to ask about the children. That was it.

I realized **then**, they were one step ahead, trying to win Madeline back. So why should I hold back? I guessed my father was right.

2/3

9: He Came With Dean

Ruby Walker

Ruby Walker is a rising voice in the world of romance and spicy fiction. With a gift for weaving deep emotions, sizzling chemistry, and unexpected twists, her stories are a blend

of passion and drama that captivate readers from start to finish. Ruby's writing style is bold and irresistible—perfect for those who crave intense, addictive love stories.