

Chapter 6 No.6

My jaw went slack as I stared at Caius, the locked door feeling like a cage. "Why did you lock us in?" I hissed, my voice a panicked whisper. "Someone could see us!"

He reached out, his fingers gently brushing my cheek. A shiver I couldn't control ran down my spine. "Relax," he murmured, his voice low and confident. "It's empty. And the door is locked. No one will disturb us."

I clenched my jaw, anger bubbling up to mask my fear. "You're the only disturbance I need to worry about."

He had the audacity to look wounded, placing a hand over his heart. "Why are you so cold to me? I just want to talk."

"Talk?" I scoffed, frowning. "We have nothing to talk about."

He shook his head slowly, his eyes tracing the lines of my face. "We do. The way you ignore me, ignore Aldric... it's frustrating. We can't stop thinking about why you're so different." He reached for my face again, his thumb stroking my cheekbone.

I flinched and tried to pull away, stumbling back a step until the cold, hard edge of the sink counter dug into my back. He closed the distance in an instant, caging me in with his arms on either side. I was trapped. A flutter of genuine panic rose in my chest.

"Don't... don't stand so close," I stammered.

He shook his head, a slow, deliberate motion. "No." His voice was a soft whisper. "You're mine."

"I am not!" I shot back, my hands coming up to push against his chest. It was like pushing a brick wall. He didn't budge. Instead, he lowered his head, his nose skimming the side of my neck. A gasp caught in my throat.

"You smell incredible," he whispered, his warm breath fanning over my skin. "It drives me crazy. I could just eat you up."

I rolled my eyes, trying to cling to my slipping composure. "I can't afford perfume. Do you use that line on all the girls? That does not work on me."

He pulled back just enough to look me in the eyes, his expression

suddenly serious. "No," he said, his gaze intense. "Only you."

A swarm of butterflies erupted in my stomach. He was too good at this. His warm breath ghosted over my cheek, making me feel both ticklish and strangely restless.

Then, he lowered his head again, a slow, deliberate descent that spoke of an intent absent from his earlier teasing. This time, there was no mistaking his purpose. His lips, impossibly soft, found the fluttering pulse at the base of my neck.

A jolt, sharp and sweet, shot through me. I stiffened, a statue carved from conflict, every muscle tensing in a silent plea for him to recognize my hesitation.

But he did not stop.

Oblivious, or perhaps indifferent, to my rigid stillness, he began a slow pilgrimage down the sensitive column of my throat. Each kiss was a brand, a slow, deliberate seal against my skin, tracing a path of fire from the shell of my ear to the elegant architecture of my collarbone.

My own breath hitched, a traitorous captive in my chest, as the battle between my mind's protest and my body's awakening raged under his mouth.

The world narrowed to the warm pressure of his mouth on my skin. As his head dipped a second time, his lips found the hollow of my neck. I froze, a silent scream trapped in the cage of my ribs, my body turning to marble beneath his touch. It was a protest he ignored.

Undeterred, he mapped a tender, aching trail of kisses down the arch of my throat. Each one was a slow, melting point of contact, a deliberate unraveling of my resolve that left a phantom heat in its wake. The sensation was a treacherous tide, pulling me under, blurring the line between invasion and bliss. My mind screamed in defiance, but my body told a different story.

And then, from a place deep within me that no longer heeded my will, a soft moan escaped. It was a tiny, shattered sound, the sound of surrender, and I felt it vibrate against his lips—a secret I could no longer keep.

I heard him smirk against my skin, the sound vibrating through me. He looked smug.

He then took my hand, pressing my palm flat against the firm, warm plane of his chest. "You're mine," he repeated, his voice husky. "And I'm

yours. You can touch me whenever you want."

His words made my heart skipped a beat. I'd never been this close to a man before. The only comparison was Robert's drunken, groping hands, which always filled me with disgust and fear. But this... Caius's touch was different. It sent a thrill through me, a confusing mix of nervousness and a deep, undeniable pull.

I was uneasy, but I wasn't repulsed.

"Do you hate this?" he whispered, his lips close to my ear.

I stayed silent. I wasn't used to lying, but I refused to give him the satisfaction of the truth—that my heart was hammering and my skin was on fire.

Caius sighed, feigning defeat. "I see. I'll just have to try harder to win you over, then."

My cheeks flushed. A part of me, a part I was deeply ashamed of, was curious about what "trying harder" meant. But at that moment, a sharp rap on the door shattered the tense intimacy.

I jumped, instinctively shrinking into Caius's chest, seeking shelter.

He let out a low, rich laugh, his arms tightening around me. "Look at that. First time you've willingly come to me." He sounded unbearably pleased. "Don't worry."

"Don't worry?" I whispered, horrified. "If someone sees us like this..."

Before I could finish, Caius abruptly released me and stepped away. My eyes widened in confusion, then pure horror as I realized his intention. He was going to open the door.

I moved to stop him, but it was too late.

The lock clicked. The door swung open, and Aldric stepped inside, locking it again behind him with a calm, practiced motion.

My face burned. He stood there, his expression unreadable as his gaze swept over my flushed skin and disheveled clothes. I felt utterly exposed, as if he could see every secret kiss Caius had left on my skin.

I hastily straightened my uniform, desperate to escape this dangerous room. "I have to get back to work," I mumbled, trying to sidestep him.

Aldric moved, blocking my path effortlessly. A small, knowing smile

touched his lips. "You could skip work all day, and still, the manager wouldn't say a word." His voice was quiet but absolute. "This restaurant belongs to my family."

I was stunned for a moment. Then a cold, sharp anger began to crystallize within me. How dare they hold themselves with such superiority? They moved through the world as if they were its masters, and I, a mere trinket placed there for their amusement. I had enough!

I spat, "I am not your toy!"

His smile faded, replaced by a look that was strangely sincere. "I don't think of you that way," he said, and something in his tone made my heart stutter.

For a second, I felt... cherished. Yet, this conviction was perpetually contradicted by their actions—a cruel dissonance that churned within me. Their teasing smiles and playful nudges, which might have been mistaken for fondness in another light, only served to underscore my powerlessness. Each casual gesture was a reminder that I was not an equal to be respected, but a diversion to be amused by.

"Then please," I pleaded, my voice shaking, "just leave me alone. I don't want anything to do with you."

Aldric echoed his brother's words, his voice a low, possessive murmur. "But you're mine."

They moved closer, until I was sandwiched between them. Their body heat was overwhelming. I could feel the hard, unyielding evidence of their arousal pressing against me from the front and back.

My body began to tremble, my limbs turning to jelly as a wave of helplessness washed over me. I stopped struggling, my will to fight dissolving.

Just as I surrendered to the inevitable, a familiar voice called out from the other side of the door, sharp with concern.

"Sylvia? Are you in there?" It was Betty.