



## 155 Do you really think I would ever regret you?

Aiden's eyes lingered on hers, searching, as if trying to read what was beneath her hesitation. "What do you mean, Moon," he asked, his voice low and calm, but with an undertone of quiet menace that sent a shiver down her spine. 1

Arwen's lashes remained fluttered shut for another second while her inner pain became palpable.

"Look at me, Moon," Aiden urged, his voice steady but firm. While it carried the gentleness to coax her, there was an unmistakable edge of impatience simmering beneath it. 1

At his words, Arwen's shoulders tensed a little. Slowly she opened her eyes, finally meeting his piercing gaze. The vulnerability in her expression made Aiden's chest tighten.

She drew in a shaky breath before finally confessing, "The mark on my cheek ... it wasn't from them." She stared at him, even though it was hard to meet his gaze at the moment. Her heart was clenching, thinking what he would think if she told him it was her mother who slapped her.

Aiden's sharp features hardened. His jaws



clenched as though trying to suppress the storm of emotions that were trying to boil over. "Then who?" he asked with a voice low but sharp.

Arwen pressed her lips, unwilling to reveal. Aiden could read her eyes like the back of his hand and he could easily tell that she was holding in her tears, resisting the urge to bawl from the pain that was eating her from inside.

"Who did it, Moon?" he asked again, this time softly as if coaxing her to let her walls down and allow him to see the wounds that she was hiding away.

Arwen stared at him. It was hard to resist his unwavering gaze. She bit her lower lip, hesitating, but the emotions inside her were too overwhelming to contain. "It was ... my mother," she finally said, but her voice was barely above the whisper.

Aiden's eyes widened briefly, but the shock quickly gave away to an expression so dark and cold that it made Arwen's heart lurch. His jaws tightened as he repeated, "Your mother?"

Arwen nodded and was about to speak when the door of the room pushed open and Jason entered with the X-ray report in his hands.

"The reports —" Jason paused when he noticed the tensed air in the room and Aiden half bent

over Arwen. "I am sorry. Did I —"

"Did you get the reports?" Aiden asked just when Jason would have excused to leave the two alone. He then straightened his posture, helping Arwen back to sit on the bed.

Jason took his steps in, showing the file in his hands. "Yes, I got them. But are you sure you want to talk about it now?" he then shifted his gaze to Arwen before adding, "I mean you two seemed amid an important conversation. You two can complete that, I can come later."

Aiden shook his head, cutting Jason off. "No need for that," he said curtly, his voice carrying a sharp edge. His gaze lingered on Arwen for a moment before turning away. "Tell us the results, so that she can get discharged."

Arwen's heart sank. His abrupt shift in demeanor, the way he avoided looking at her, sent a pang through her chest. *Was he disappointed?* She bit the inside of her cheek, her mind racing. Although a part of her said that he wasn't the same and wouldn't judge her. But then seeing her own parents judging her, she lost all her faith and confidence

How could he not be disappointed? She had just admitted that her own mother had hit her. Was that enough to make her look weak and pathetic?



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Jason cleared his throat, sensing the tension but wisely deciding not to comment. "The X-ray shows no fractures or serious injuries. It's just a minor twist, as I suspected. With proper rest, by tomorrow, she will be all fine."

"Thank you, Jason," Aiden's tone was clipped.

Jason hesitated, his eyes darting between the two before he nodded. "That's all. You can take her now. I have already helped you complete the discharge procedures so, you are all set to go." He then glanced at Arwen, giving her a faint smile that felt more than reassurance than anything. "Take care and rest up, alright?"

Arwen nodded in response, murmuring a soft thank you.

Jason lingered a beat longer before stepping out leaving the two in the heavy silence. The moment the door clicked shut, Aiden moved, gathering her belongings with methodical precision. Once done, she handed her to hold it.

Arwen didn't understand what he meant and she looked at him in confusion. Seeing her brows furrowed, Aiden motioned her to hold her bag before saying, "I won't be able to hold it."

Arwen chest tightened, the weight of her emotions threatening to suffocate her. She reached out to grab it from him. "It's fine. I understand. I can do it on my own."

Aiden felt something was wrong. Frowning, he asked, "What do you want to do on your own?"

Arwen did look up at him. Keeping her gaze down, she muttered, "I don't know. Maybe everything. I understand you must be disappointed in me as well."

Aiden's frown deepened, his gaze fixed on her. Crouching down in front of her, he brought his face to level with her. "What did you just say?" his voice was low and steady, but carrying an edge.

Arwen looked at him, tears already blurring her vision, but she refused to let them fall. "It's fine. Aiden. You don't have to pretend anymore, I get it," she said, her voice trembling, betraying the turmoil inside. "You must think I am weak, pathetic even. My own mother refused to understand me, and over the years, I failed to stand up for myself. It's fine —I wouldn't blame you if you regretted marrying —"

"Stop," Aiden cut her off sharply, his tone firm yet controlled. "Do you think so little of me?" he asked quietly, his voice barely above a whisper. "Do you really think I would ever regret you?" 3

