

Released

Grace

For another day, I stay locked up and the man stands guard. The Calders try to cause trouble, but their people are handled easily by the Robertos.

As their power game continues, I find myself in a trance. He says Tristin had an accident right after leaving the event. This means he got into an accident when I was thinking of reaching out to him.

Did Ethan really cause his accident?

My heart clenches at the thought. But then, I am forced to think about the sudden disappearance of Lily.

If...Ethan caused Tristin's accident and Tristin is unconscious...

Who took Lily?

Did someone take her or she disappeared?

The mystery around Sebastian Roberto's death and the secret that Lily holds has become more confusing.

In the end, the detectives call me to the interrogation room and ask me the dreaded questions.

Where is Lily Whitlock?

What did I do to Lily Whitlock?

No matter how many times I tell them that I did nothing to Lily, they

don't believe me. I have no alibi. Ethan's men destroyed all evidence of my kidnapping. They are clean, and I am the number one suspect.

I attempted murder on Ethan. I must have done something to Lily Whitlock too because I threatened them both at the party and there are too many witnesses of that.

Their accusations are harsh and their voices are harsher. They twist the same questions and ask them until I find myself going silent.

Then they are accusing and shouting and yelling, but I can no longer respond to them.

When they realize I won't answer, they send me back to the cell. Everything goes back to usual. The man sent by Alma stands beside the cell, and I sit against the wall, thinking and silently assessing the situation.

Why is Alma only keeping me alive and not getting me out of here if she truly wants to help me?

Suddenly, the kind woman doesn't seem so kind anymore.

Maybe it's me being bitter and selfish but I can't help...but think this man is a bone thrown my way so Alma can hide bigger things.

Did Alma take her chances and hurt Lily?

The question makes me sigh. How can I even think something like that? Alma is not that kind of person.

I glance towards the man who appears bulky and professionally trained. The scary way in which he stands still for hours has me thinking different things.

" How is Tristin now? Do you have any news? " I whisper, my voice hoarse and scratchy.

" Mr. Roberto is out of danger but hasn't woken up yet. " He replies without looking my way.

A breath of relief leaves my mouth as I rest my head against the wall.

" What about Ethan Calder? " I wonder.

When I ask about him, the man never replies. It's like he is instructed to not talk about the Calders or Whitlocks.

A heaviness settles on my shoulders. I can sense something coming up my way again.

Closing my eyes, I listen to my ragged breaths and prepare myself to spend another dark night in the cell.

But my thoughts come to an abrupt halt when footsteps sound outside.

" Come out. " The door is opened, and streaks of light peek inside.

I look towards the two guards standing on the other side and my muscles stiffen. " Are you taking me to the interrogation room again? "

For some reason, the interrogation room with its musky air, rusty chairs, and angry voices has scared me more than the dark cell.

Here, I can be silent. No one is shouting at me or blaming me for things I never did.

But in there, I face demons that reside in people. Their loud voices and threats drill inside the skull. Their angry stares bring shame. Their slamming palms on the table invoke terror.

" I didn't do anything. " I whisper, rubbing my hand over my bandaged arm.

" The charges were dropped. You are being released, Mrs. Calder. " One of them informs me mechanically.

My heart jumps to my throat. Instantly, I get to my feet and follow them out without a second thought.

In the next few minutes, the formalities are done, and I am sent out of the station. In a daze, I step out into the fresh night air and flinch.

My eyes land on the awaiting figure right away. He opens the backdoor of the familiar car and looks my way.

" Mrs. Calder. Please get inside. " Josh says, standing beside the open door.

It gives me a sense of deja vu but I don't fight this time. I get inside without a word and look down at my grimy dress.

I ran so hard and fought with all my will only to end up like this again. It's a cycle, I have realized.

No matter where I run in this circle, I will always end up at the starting point. No matter who I fight in this circle, in the end, I will be in front of the same person.

In no time we are at the hospital. Josh doesn't comment on my

disheveled state or my dirty face. He leads me inside the luxurious hospital owned by the Calders and straight to a private room.

Outside the room, Ethan's family awaits. His mother, sister, and grandma.

They are saying something, their voices loud and shrill. I watch in slow motion, with muffled hearing as they lunge towards me but get stopped by the men around me.

" Bitch. I will kill you. "

" You are a leech! "

" How dare you hurt my grandson?! "

" Mrs. Calder. " Josh grabs my wrist and pulls me inside the private room.

The door slides closed, and suddenly, there are no more voices. Just silence.

My gaze lowers to the polished floor, the flare of my dirty, tattered dress a stark contrast against the tiles.

Slowly, I lift my gaze towards the bed. Ethan is sitting on it, his back resting against the pillow. Our eyes meet, and my heart starts aching again.

" Grace. " Ethan raises his hand towards me.

Silently, I walk towards him and sit down on the stool beside the bed. His hand remains hanging in the air but I don't take it.

 +5 BONUS

His head is still bandaged and his face is sickly pale as if all blood has drained from his body.

"I—"

"Did you..." I swallow the lump in my throat to prepare myself for asking the terrifying question. "...try to kill Tristin?"

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