

Hate Lies

Hate Lies

Grace

" Uhm... " Celine stands in front of the door, her nervous eyes scanning the room, lingering on Tristin, and then landing on me. " Am I disturbing— "

" No. " I force a smile on my lips. " You came just in time. I am getting discharged today. "

I heard that she got discharged three days ago and Tristin arranged for her to stay at a hotel. Given that she has no passport and we were literally shipped into this country illegally, she has no choice but to stick with Tristin's plans for now.

And I feel bad.

It's all because of me that she has to go through all this.

" Oh, that's great news. " Celine smiles widely but that gesture falters when her gaze meets Tristin's stoic face.

I murmur under my breath. " stop scaring her. "

" Am I? " Tristin says, still staring at her but a cryptic smile creeps up his lips. " Am I scaring you Ms. Vitana? "

" N—No. " Celine stutters, shifting her weight from one foot to another.

" Tristin. " I sigh and rub my temples.

What does he have against her?

Is he jealous or wary because he simply doesn't trust her?

" You heard her. I am not scaring her. She knows lots of men like me so it's impossible for her to get scared because of innocent eye contact. " Tristin takes his eyes off her and fixes me with a strange stare.

The double meaning of his words causes a spike in my heart rate. Awkwardly, I glance towards Celine and find her stiffening in her spot, her wide eyes staring at Tristin's back.

" Why are you— "

" Why don't you ask her? " Tristin grumbles, grabbing my hand to run his thumb along my knuckles.

" Ask what? " A heavy feeling settles onto my chest.

Tristin looks into my eyes for a long moment, just thinking and contemplating his next words. In the end, he releases a breath and decides against saying anything.

" Tristin. " Alarms are ringing inside my head.

Now, I suspect that he is not jealous, or suspicious, or cranky. There is so much more to this animosity.

" Maybe, not today. " He whispers, releasing my hand and rising to his full height.

Hate Lies

" I think I know what Mr. Roberto wants to tell you, Grace. " Celine's soft voice echoes, grabbing my attention.

" What is...it? " My guts are twisting. I have a terrible feeling about this whole scenario.

" Why don't you go rest in your hotel room? " Tristin suggests, his tone firm.

Celine heaves a deep breath and meets my gaze. " our meeting was not a coincidence. It was not...a coincidence that I found you among a sea of people and decided to befriend you, Grace. "

My hands turn cold in my lap. Any gut feeling, no matter how bad, couldn't have prepared me for the words spilling out of her mouth.

" I was paid and enrolled in the same major as you, in the same classes so I could keep an eye on you under the pretense of becoming your friend. " She utters, her eyes turning glassy as if she is about to cry and saying this hurts her.

I shake my head, waiting for her to burst out laughing because she loves to joke often. But she shows no sign of that.

She is serious, I realize.

" Who? " I whisper, my eyes becoming cold on her.

This was my worst imagination, right?

In the start, I always doubted that Celine had an ulterior motive, that she couldn't have decided to stick by my side, to become best

Hate Lies

friends with the most boring girl in the class.

But...with time, I started to believe that maybe, we are really friends and it's my paranoia speaking. For once, I wanted to believe in the best to happen instead of expecting the worst.

I wanted to think people can do things selflessly.

But I was wrong.

" Grace, I— "

" Who was it? My parents or... " My blood runs cold in my veins.

Ethan came to the warehouse to save me. Why would he do that? We are over. We signed the divorce and it was finalized.

But he still turned up in that warehouse and attacked those men, and asked me to accompany him.

I shouldn't have shaken off those gestures as easily as I did.

" Mr. Calder... " Celine whispers, and hangs her head low.

Tears stream down her cheeks, as she rubs her hands down her face but it doesn't affect me anymore.

I huff, and lean back, wanting to forget that she is standing there.

So...he didn't stop coming after me, did he now?

What does he want though?

After everything, instead of finding Lily, why is hell-bent on keeping

Hate Lies

an eye on me?

"You always knew?" I whisper, preparing myself for another shock from Tristin.

If he says that he always knew and that he didn't think it important to tell me, I don't know what I will do.

I just told Alma that I will stay by his side no matter what, but can I do that if he hides things from me?

"I got to know when I came to visit you. I saw you with her in the Cafe and found her suspicious. Luca looked into her and traced her connection to Ethan." Tristin tells me, his hand reaching for mine again. "You were already sleeping, and I was...kind of not into my element so I couldn't tell you. But I was going to come back in a few days to reveal the truth. I wouldn't have dealt with this problem without informing you, Grace."

Instinctively, I stare into his soft eyes. I need to know if he is telling the truth or if he is fooling me like everyone else did—and his eyes show me everything I need to know.

My tense muscles relax, and I don't pull away when Tristin squeezes my hand and caresses it.

"I made up my mind. I will not do anything without considering your opinion, Grace. It's important for me to include you in every decision, in every matter that concerns you." Tristin murmurs, and pulls my hand up to press a kiss to the back of it. "Trust me."

Trust me. Such small, two words yet they hold the weight of the

Hate Lies

world. My heart screams at me to trust him, but my wounded mind says something else.

Yet, in the end, I decide to listen to my heart. That's just who I am and no matter what I like to think, I can not change my nature.

" Grace. " Celine whispers, making me glance her way.

My eyes turn cold again. There is a pain in my heart. Losing a friend hurts as much as losing a part of your family.

Even if we were not friends for long, I started treating her as my family, as someone I always looked forward to meeting and seeing every day.

And now...

It has turned into this ugly situation.

" This friendship started as a deal. But... " She rubs her hands together. " But I really like being friends with you. That's why I came here today. Even if Mr. Roberto didn't interfere, I was going to tell you the truth. "

I shake my head. " you want me to believe that, Celine? Do you think you can make a fool out of me again? "

" No. " Her teary eyes widen. " I don't...I am not trying to do that. I...I just couldn't continue to deceive you when you care about me so much. Back in that warehouse, we were both in danger, but you cared more about me than your own life. How can I keep lying to someone like that? "

Hate Lies

Every word from her mouth now sounds like I lie. I want to believe in it but I can't because my mind refuses to accept that Celine can tell the truth.

"You reported everything to him." My heart sinks in the pit of my stomach.

All this time, Ethan made me believe that he had changed his mind about haunting me but he was using different tactics to hold me inside a gilded cage.

"I had to. I..." More tears slide down her cheeks and she wipes them right away. "I needed the money. I am sorry."

Sometimes, you try to hate people. You try your best. But you can't.

They just drop from the height of your heart and become insignificant.

And Celine has suddenly become that for me. I avert my gaze from her face and look at Tristin's hand that is still holding mine.

"I don't need your excuses. You can choose to go to your Boss now if you wish or you can return to your country..." I look at Tristin, wondering if he can help me with this.

"I will arrange everything for her. She will get home safely." There is an edge to Tristin's voice and demeanor. It's like he is desperate to wring Celine's neck but he is holding back, because I want him to.

Amidst the coldness that grips my heart, this man acts like a blazing fire melting everything in its way.

Hate Lies

"I am sorry. I am really...sorry." Celine whispers, and sprints out of the room.

For a long time, I stare at the open door, at the white wall of the corridor and my heart fills with all sorts of emotions. Hurt, anger, disbelief.

Then, I look at Tristin and sigh. He is observing me like I am a specimen and I have no doubt that he is simply struggling to find the right words to comfort me.

"I...just..." I sigh, resting my head back. "I really find it hard to forgive a liar. Lying is the worst thing you can do to someone because it means you think they are idiots, and they deserve to get cheated by your words."

Tristin's grip tightens around my hand so much that I flinch. He lets me go when he realizes that it hurts, but the odd look in his eyes has me shuddering.

"You...never lied to me and will never lie to me, right?" I utter, holding my breath.

His neutral face makes it hard for me to understand what he is thinking, but to my relief, Tristin nods and looks away before I can assess the look in his eyes.

He is the man who was ready to throw away his whole life for me, so how can he deceive me?

Trust him. My heart keeps whispering and I am going to do just that.

