

Crushed Affections

Chapter 5 Her Heart Would Skip a Beat

Bella slowly began to regain her senses, opening her eyes to meet the deep gaze of the man before her. She had thought he would be asleep at this hour.

The morning light shone through the floor-to-ceiling windows, casting dappled shadows across the room. The soft golden glow landed perfectly on Dominic, lending a gentle warmth to his usually stern features. He looked so captivating that she couldn't look away.

Bella was completely entranced. Whether she was five years old or nearly 25, every time she looked at him, her heart would skip a beat.

"Aren't you a cardiologist? What were you doing in the gynecology department?"

Dominic suddenly changed the topic, asking about the day before. Why had she been in the gynecology department with Mandy?

Bella was a bit confused. Clearly, her exhausted mind couldn't keep up with his.

Suddenly, darkness crept into her vision. Panicking, she broke free from Dominic's grip and grabbed onto the staircase railing. "Let's talk later. I'm too tired and need to rest."

Without waiting to see his expression turn angry, she numbly made her way back to her room.

She didn't realize it at the time, but for the first time ever, she had been the one to let go of Dominic's hand. Up until a moment ago, it had always been him pushing her away.

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That afternoon, the sound of her alarm jolted Bella awake. She reluctantly opened her eyes, still enveloped in a heavy drowsiness.

God knew how much she wanted to stay curled up in bed forever, but she couldn't. She had a private piano lesson to teach that afternoon. It was a well-paying gig, one of the most lucrative side jobs she could find. She couldn't afford to miss it.

After getting ready and applying light makeup, she headed downstairs.

She was cautious in her every movement, only regaining her usual composure when she noticed that Dominic wasn't home.

She was always walking on eggshells around him, careful not to provoke his irritation. But honestly, had there ever been a single day, or even a moment, when he didn't despise her?

It was her first time going to this particular job. After a half-hour car ride, she arrived at an upscale neighborhood. The residents here were wealthy, and their fees reflected that.

At the door of the employer's house, she rang the bell. Soon, a woman in her 40s opened the door. "You must be Ms. Jones, here for the lesson. Come in."

Following the woman inside, Bella could hear the faint, irregular sounds of piano playing. It was clear the student was a beginner. It seemed she would need to be patient.

When she finally met her student, Bella couldn't help but feel amused. The girl, around seven or eight years old, was named Yvonne Quinn.

She was an adorable child—dressed in a pink, puffy princess dress—but the disdain on her face was impossible to ignore. Was this young girl already looking down on her?

Yvonne unleashed a barrage of snide remarks. "So, you're the piano teacher my brother chose for me? You're so young. Are you sure you can play the piano?"

"This piano was my mother's. It's not only expensive but also of great sentimental value. Do you really think you're qualified to touch it with those claws of yours?"

Yvonne's rude comments caught Bella off guard. She glanced at her own slender fingers and replied humbly, "I believe these 'claws' are up to the task."

Yvonne pouted, reluctantly moving aside. "Play something for me. If I'm not satisfied, you can leave immediately. I don't like beautiful women like you."

Bella's mouth twitched—was that a compliment or an insult?

She sat down at the piano and tested the keys. The instrument was in excellent condition, and it was absurdly expensive.

She decided not to impress Yvonne with anything too complicated, so she played a simple, improvised piece. Yvonne's expression shifted almost immediately.

The woman from earlier couldn't help but praise her. "As expected from the teacher Yvonne's brother chose. I'll leave her in your hands now. I have some other matters to attend to."

Finally, Yvonne softened. "Ms. Jones, what was that piece called? I've never heard it before."

Bella said, smiling slightly, "It doesn't have a name. It's an improvised piece, just... the burst of emotion I feel when I think of someone."

"That person must make you feel very suffocated... It's someone you care about, right?"

Suddenly, a deep, magnetic voice came from the doorway.

Yvonne quickly ran over. "Felix! I like this teacher. Let's keep her!"

Bella turned her head, and her breath caught. "Felix? This... This is your home?"