

243: Keep This Up, and You'll Be Completely Isolated

Eliza had never been particularly close to Willa, her sister-in-law. Their relationship had always been strained, and now that she had returned, there was no way she'd let Willa continue stirring up trouble.

With a composed smile, Eliza said, "That's right, dear sister-in-law. Caitlin gave our Vanderbilt family four children. The fourth one will return soon enough. We just have to wait."

Willa felt her appetite vanish.

Four?!

She had barely processed the fact that Caitlin had triplets, and now there was another child? She had always prided herself on having twin grandsons, but now, compared to Caitlin, it felt... underwhelming.

If only her son weren't in prison—she would have pushed for more grandchildren immediately! 1

As breakfast continued, Vincent turned to Caitlin. "Sister-in-law, have you heard from Sebastian yet?"

"I was just about to bring it up," Caitlin said, placing her coffee cup down. "I have good news—Sebastian messaged me. He found his father. They'll be back soon."

Molly nearly jumped out of her seat. "Oh my god! Mom, Grandma, Dad is coming home!"

"Thank the heavens!" Beatrice's hands trembled with emotion.

No one was more affected than Eliza. Her eyes instantly welled up with tears.



It had been eighteen years.

After all this time, she would finally see her husband again.

Was he okay?

This was the best news the Vanderbilt family could have received. Everyone rejoiced—except for Willa and the second branch of the family.

Raymond's return meant one thing: they would no longer have a say in anything.

After breakfast, Caitlin prepared to leave, leaving the triplets in the care of the family.

"Caitlin, don't worry about the kids," Eliza reassured her. "I'll take good care of them."

"And so will I!" Molly added. "I'd be happy to help."

Caitlin smiled. "Thank you both. I appreciate it."

She said goodbye to her sons, then turned to Vincent. "Vincent, are you free? I need a favor."

"Of course! What do you need?"

"Drive me to the hospital."

Vincent was a little taken aback but nodded. "Sure thing."

As they drove off, Vincent asked, "What's going on? Why the hospital?"

Caitlin's expression darkened. "Your father was attacked."

Vincent stiffened. "What?! What happened?"

"I don't know the full details. We'll find out when we get there."

At the Hospital

Upon arrival, they immediately ran into Felix, whose left arm was wrapped in bandages.

Caitlin's gaze sharpened. "Felix, what happened?"

Felix exhaled heavily. "We were transferring Jasper when we were ambushed. He got shot. I was hit by some shrapnel from an explosion."

Caitlin's expression darkened. "It was an assassination attempt."

Felix nodded grimly. "That's what I think too. Someone wanted to silence him."

"Where is he now?" Vincent's voice was tight.

"He's in surgery."

Vincent wasted no time and rushed toward the ICU.

Caitlin turned back to Felix, glancing at his injury. "Are you sure you're okay?"

Felix waved a hand dismissively. "This is nothing."

Just as Caitlin was about to say something else, a sharp, high-pitched voice cut through the hallway.

"Caitlin? Felix?! What the hell is going on here?!"

Felix flinched.

Caitlin turned to see Madison storming toward them, her designer handbag swinging violently.

Madison's eyes were locked onto Caitlin with pure hostility.

The moment she reached them, she shoved Felix aside and pointed an accusatory finger at Caitlin. "Didn't I tell you to stay away from my husband?! Why are you here again?"

Felix sighed. "Madison, calm down. We're discussing police business."

"Police business?" Madison scoffed, folding her arms. "You hear one word about him getting hurt, and you run to see him? Caitlin, you are absolutely shameless! You're divorced from Sebastian, and yet you still show up at the Vanderbilt family's events, and now you're chasing after my husband?! You disgust me!"

Felix pinched the bridge of his nose. "Madison, enough! I've told you a hundred times—Caitlin and I are just friends. She and Sebastian are getting back together. Will you stop embarrassing yourself?"

Madison's lips twisted in fury. "You want me to believe that? Then let's settle this today."

Caitlin crossed her arms, her tone icy. "Fine. Let's settle it. Tell me, Mrs. Jones—what exactly do you think is going on between me and Felix? Have you caught us doing anything inappropriate? Do you have proof of your accusations?"

Madison's eyes flickered, but she held her ground. "I don't need proof! Anyone with eyes can see it!"

Caitlin's expression turned scornful. "That's your logic? No evidence, just vibes? If you had proof, we wouldn't even be having this

conversation."

Madison clenched her fists. She was the daughter of a prestigious family—when had she ever been humiliated like this?

"You—" She pointed a trembling finger at Caitlin.

Caitlin batted her hand away. "Don't point at me unless you want to lose that finger."

Madison stumbled back, stunned.

Caitlin's voice turned sharp. "You think I'm the problem? Look in the mirror, Madison! You're acting like a crazy woman. You show up at hospitals and yell at your husband, throwing baseless accusations around. You're embarrassing yourself."

Madison's face turned red with rage.

Caitlin continued, her words cutting like a knife. "Felix is one of the best officers in the city. He risks his life every day, and what do you do? Accuse him of cheating just because he's busy? You think being a police officer's wife is easy? Then leave! At least let him have some peace!"

Madison's chest heaved with anger. "You... you..."

Caitlin took a step closer, her voice dropping to a deadly whisper. "Keep this up, Madison, and you'll end up completely alone. Your paranoia is pushing everyone away. Even your own husband is getting tired of this."

A tense silence filled the air.

At that moment, a man passing by paused, his attention caught by Caitlin's voice.



James.

He had met her before—briefly. That striking, confident woman he nearly ran over.

And now... here she was again.

For some reason, every time he saw her, an inexplicable feeling stirred in his chest.

He didn't know why.

But he wanted to find out.

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