

### 259: Ximena's Critical Misstep

Back then, it was Sienna and Teresa who had saved Caitlin and brought her to a safe place to give birth. When the last baby was born, they had told her that one of them didn't make it.

It was Teresa who had taken the stillborn child away to "handle" the situation.

But why was it that Ximena just so happened to "find" the baby?

If the child had truly been stillborn, they would have likely disposed of the body somewhere remote, somewhere no one could just stumble upon it.

Yet, Ximena somehow ended up with the baby?

The whole thing never quite added up.

Caitlin had suspected Sienna and Teresa, but the sisters were loyal to Shadow Moon Pavilion. She had investigated them thoroughly and found no signs of betrayal or collusion with Ximena.

Still—something wasn't right.

Ximena smirked at Caitlin's suspicion.

"It was my subordinate. He happened to pass by, found the child, and brought her to me. I believe I've told you this before."

Caitlin's eyes narrowed.

"And where is this 'subordinate' now? I want to speak to him."

Ximena's lips curled into a mocking smile.



"Unfortunately for you, he left my employment over a year ago. I have no idea where he is now."

Caitlin studied her carefully, her expression unreadable.

"Even if that's true, I still don't believe you."

Ximena arched a brow.

"You spent five years keeping Patricia by your side. You went to great lengths to get Yun's Aromatic Codex. That's not something you do on a whim. Why is it so important to you?"

This time, Ximena didn't answer.

Her silence told Caitlin everything.

The ancient codex wasn't just a valuable artifact—there was something more.

There were plenty of things in the world more valuable than an old book, so why was Ximena so obsessed with this one?

Was it really about the rumored treasure?

Caitlin let the silence hang for a moment, then took a deep breath and said firmly,

"Even if you refuse to tell me, I'll find out myself."

Her lips curved slightly.

"And don't forget—I still have Freya."

Ximena's expression finally cracked.



Her brows knitted together.

"I already gave you Patricia. If you keep pressing about that old matter, you're just being cruel!"

This was her biggest mistake—

She should have had Freya eliminated when she had the chance.

Now, that loose end had come back to haunt her.

Caitlin let out a cold chuckle.

"Compared to the things you've done, Ximena, I'd hardly call myself cruel."

She leaned in slightly.

"You can choose to tell me the truth now, and I might be grateful.

Or... I can dig it up myself, and if I find out that you were involved—don't expect mercy."

With that, she brushed past Ximena and walked out of the room.

Ximena watched her go, her eyes narrowing.

From this moment on, she and Caitlin were officially at war.

—

Outside the hotel

Sebastian was walking with Patricia when a sharp voice called out.

"Mr. Vanderbilt!"



Sebastian turned around to see Zora approaching.

Sensing she had something to say, he gestured for Xavi to take Patricia ahead.

"Miss Harris," he greeted coolly.

Zora let out a bitter laugh.

"Well, well... the great CEO of VEG... turns out you're nothing but a liar. I regret ever trusting you."

Her eyes burned with fury.

"I was sincere toward you! But you—you played with my feelings! You're a fraud!"

She raised her hand, intending to slap him—

But Sebastian caught her wrist mid-air.

"Miss Harris," he said evenly, "I admit that I approached you because of Patricia.

But I never made you any promises.

I never spoke about feelings.

You misunderstood."

Zora's breath hitched.

"Not even a little?" she whispered. "Not even for a second... did you like me at all?"

Tears welled in her eyes.



She hated that her first love had been a complete lie.

She wanted to believe that somewhere along the way, Sebastian had felt something for her.

But—

Sebastian sighed.

"Miss Harris, you're a beautiful, accomplished woman. You'll find someone far better than me.

Don't waste your time on me."

He let go of her wrist and turned to walk away.

But Zora couldn't let go.

She rushed forward, wrapping her arms around his waist from behind.

"Sebastian, don't go..." she pleaded.

"I'll be the perfect partner for you.

I'm young, beautiful—I'm just as good as Caitlin!

I'll do anything for you!

I can give you children—as many as you want!"

Her voice was desperate.

Sebastian pried her arms off him, his tone final.

"Stop wasting your breath, Miss Harris.



And don't ever compare yourself to Caitlin.

No one can replace her.

She is, and always will be, the only woman in my heart."

With that, he walked away without looking back.

Zora stood frozen, watching him disappear.

She felt humiliated.

He had given her hope, only to rip it away so cruelly.

Why?

Why did he do this to her?

What did Caitlin have that she didn't?

Her nails dug into her palms, her chest burning with a mixture of anger and sorrow.

—

Caitlin arrived just in time to witness it all.

Zora, standing there with tears in her eyes, hatred blazing behind them.

She glared at Caitlin as if she were the sole reason for her heartbreak.

If Caitlin didn't exist—

Sebastian would have chosen her.

Zora stepped forward, blocking her path.



"Caitlin!"

Caitlin stopped, her expression calm.

"Miss Harris," she said, cold and detached.

"Something you want to say?"

Zora's voice trembled with rage.

"Yes! I do!"

Her hands clenched into fists.

"You're already divorced! So why don't you just leave?"

"Excuse me?" Caitlin arched a brow.

"Why are you still hanging around Sebastian?!" Zora demanded.

"You use the kids as an excuse, but really, you're just clinging to him!

How is he supposed to move on if you never leave his sight?!"

Caitlin's gaze sharpened.

"I don't see how my divorce has anything to do with you."

Zora's face twisted in anger.

"Because it's because of you that he won't choose me!"

Caitlin laughed softly, but there was no warmth in it.

"Really? You think without me, he'd be with you?"

Zora flinched.



"Tell me, then—

If he cared about you, why didn't he pursue you before I came back?

If he was interested, why didn't he reach out to you all these years?

If you loved him so much, why weren't you there when he was injured?"

Zora's lips parted, but no words came out.

Tears welled up in her eyes again.

Caitlin stepped past her, offering one last piece of advice.

"Love yourself first, Miss Harris.

If you have to beg for love, it was never yours to begin with."

With that, she walked out of the hotel.

Quincy pulled up in front of her.

"Heading to DanCa Estate?"

"Yes," she nodded.

But just as the car merged into traffic—

A speeding vehicle came barreling straight toward them.