

Chapter 11

Vance's pupils shook. "I don't..."

"Stop deceiving yourself," Rebecca interrupted. "Some things, once brought into the open, don't look so pretty, and it won't do either of us any favors in terms of face. Divorce really would be better for both of us. Catherine fits your ideal image of Mrs. Bradford far more than I do." 2

"Rebecca!" Vance cut her off. "Are you still fixated on her? I've explained this countless times already."

"The one who can't move past Catherine isn't me," she said, holding his gaze steadily. "It's you."

He was stunned once more. "Rebecca..."

"We both know the truth, don't we?" She tried to keep her tone calm and measured, making it clear she was approaching this as a serious discussion rather than an emotional outburst. "It's time to put a period at the end of our five years. Let's part ways with dignity and let the grievances of the past fade away." 3

Vance stared at her for a long moment before finally standing up. "You're overthinking things. In time, you'll see that Catherine's return won't change anything. It's late now. Get some rest."

"I know you feel guilty toward me, but you don't have to anymore," she said. "I truly don't need a marriage built on guilt. Let me go, and free yourself too. Wouldn't that be..." 1

Before she could finish, he shrugged off his jacket and headed

straight to the bathroom.

She looked at the jacket he had tossed onto the small sofa. In the past, she would have picked it up, hung it neatly, fetched his pajamas, and placed them just outside the bathroom door. 1

Not this time.

For the past five years, she had always thought that since her legs weren't fully functional and she didn't work outside the home, she couldn't contribute meaningfully to the household in terms of income or growth.

Vance had arranged everything at home so perfectly that she felt like a mere ornament, placed there for display but serving no real purpose. 2

Unable to help in other ways, she had at least tried to care for him to the best of her ability. 2

What she might have overlooked was that perhaps he didn't need her small, insignificant acts of care. Maybe what he really wanted was a wife who could present well in public—someone who could stand by his side at events or accompany him when dealing with clients. 2

She just couldn't understand why he was still clinging to this loveless marriage.

When Vance emerged from the bathroom, he went straight to bed without a word, clearly signaling his refusal to continue the conversation.

Rebecca didn't bring it up again. Every attempt at communication



drained her mentally and emotionally anyway.

She had better use that time to think about her own future, working hard toward the direction she truly desired. Once she could leave, whether they were divorced or not wouldn't matter much.

Lying in bed, she nurtured all kinds of thoughts, not about Vance or Catherine, but about her upcoming schedule.

In a month, she would join Lauren's troupe for the European tour, and by the time that wrapped up, it would be nearly time for school to start. 1

She glanced at the man beside her. Vance was already sound asleep.

In the dim, gray light, she could only make out a vague outline of his profile. The distance between them on the bed, wide enough for three people, felt impossibly vast.

She no longer blamed him, even wishing him a happy life without her.

The one thing she felt truly grateful for now was that they had never consummated their marriage, and they had no children. If they had, navigating this separation would have been exponentially more difficult. 2

She never could have imagined that the very thing which had once obsessed her thoughts and broken her heart would turn out to be a fortunate circumstance. 3

She slept well that night, better than she had in ages. She didn't even wake up naturally the next morning. It was the sensation of someone moving nearby that roused her.



Opening her eyes, she saw Vance somehow sitting on her side of the bed.

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