

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford

Chapter 121

Rebecca was utterly powerless against his hold.

“What exactly is she doing?” Vance demanded, a storm brewing in his eyes.

“It’s rehabilitation,” the nurse replied.

Vance’s frown deepened. “Rehabilitation? What kind of rehab leaves a person like this? Is this healing or torture?”

“Vance!” Rebecca clenched her teeth. “Just stay out of my business!”

“If I don’t look after you, who will?” He turned and carried her out of the room.

“Stop!” she protested.

“Sir, regarding her rehabilitation...” the nurse began.

“We’re done here!” Vance said roughly.

“You have no right to decide anything for me!” Rebecca snapped.

Every time she had truly needed him, he had never shown up. Now he wanted to interfere.

He carried her through the crowded clinic, past staring nurses, patients, and waiting families. She protested, “Vance!”

She hated how helpless she felt. Every tiny movement sent fresh pain ripping through her muscles.

Years of dance had taught her to endure bruises and sprains, but nothing had ever hurt like this. She couldn’t even twist free of his hold.

Edwin stepped out of his office just then and saw them. “What’s going on? Did the session not go well?”

Vance, usually calm and courteous, had been unraveling lately. Every outburst was tied to Catherine, and now he turned that edge on the doctor.

“Look at her! Your so-called rehabilitation program did this? Is something wrong with it?” His tone was sharp, almost accusatory.

“Yes, the exercises are intense and challenging,” Edwin patiently explained. “But if the patient can push through, the results are worth it. As her husband...”

“As her husband, I refuse to let her continue this kind of torture!” Vance’s face was thunderous as he carried Rebecca away.

She twisted toward Edwin. “I’m sorry, Dr. Jefferson. I...”

“Be quiet!” Vance snapped, marching straight to the parking lot and tossing her into the car.

The nurse hurried after them with Rebecca’s bag. “Mrs. Bradford, you...”

“I’ll be back tomorrow,” Rebecca said, offering a small smile.

The exercises were indeed brutal, but quitting was not an option. Once she set her mind on something, she never gave up.

It was just like the day she had fallen in love with dance and never looked back. It was like the night at 16 when she had fallen for a boy and run straight into heartbreak.

And now, having decided to grow new wings, she would endure whatever it took—broken bones, rebirth, fire—without ever turning back.

Vance slammed the door and slid behind the wheel, staring at her. “There is no tomorrow! You’re not coming back!”

“Vance!” She glared at him, her anger boiling over. “Don’t you think you’re overstepping? What gives you the right to control my life?”

“You tell me!” he countered. “I am your husband!”

Support

Share

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford

Chapter 122

The words from his post resurfaced in Rebecca's mind. She laughed out loud. "My husband? A man who has spent his entire life working for another woman? You're hilarious."

It was so absurd that it stopped hurting.

Vance flipped the mirror toward her. "Look at yourself!"

Rebecca glanced into the mirror, realizing she had pushed herself too hard during the rehabilitation. Her hair was soaked, her face was shiny with sweat, and her clothes were plastered to her body.

She looked wrecked. Even now, her lips were quivering, and her hands were trembling. So what? She didn't see anything wrong with it. This was just proof of her effort.

"What's wrong with how I look?" she asked, touching her flushed cheeks.

The woman staring back at her was healthy and alive. She was satisfied with her current self.

"You don't need to..." Vance sighed. "I know you're upset about Cathy's return. She is more beautiful, healthier, and more capable. You're uncomfortable, so you're pushing yourself to outdo her." 3

She stared at him, dumbfounded.

"You don't need to suffer like this. Seeing you in pain hurts me too," he said, softening his tone. "You don't have to compete with anyone. No matter what you look like, you're still my wife. That won't change. You don't have to be anxious. Your whole life has narrowed down to Cathy..."

"I'm anxious? I'm obsessed with Catherine?" She cut him off. "How big is your ego, exactly? First, I have never compared myself to her-not in beauty, health, or ability. Second, my life is full of wonderful things that have nothing to do with you or her. And third, whether or not I'm Mrs. Bradford means absolutely nothing to me anymore."

What on earth made him think her entire existence revolved around competing for his attention? But no matter how she expressed herself, Vance wouldn't believe her.

He clung to his version of events, his gaze shifting from gentle to mocking. "If you're not jealous, why did you report her? Do you think locking her up will push her out of my life and consolidate your position? You're wrong. This only drives me farther away from you. Can't you see that?"

She rolled her eyes. Talking to someone on a completely different wavelength was exhausting. Did he even understand English?

“Vance,” she exhaled slowly, “get one thing straight: if Catherine goes to prison, it’s because she committed a crime, not because I put her there. You went to a top university. Surely, you can grasp basic logic. And whether you’re close to me or far away is none of my concern. I don’t care.”

“You don’t care?” He gave a cold laugh. “The more you lack something, the louder they proclaim they don’t want it. You say you don’t care, but you care the most. Don’t think I am clueless. In high school, you had a crush on me, didn’t you? Asking me to explain homework was just an excuse to get close. Giving me that pumpkin pie on Halloween was your way of chasing me. After graduation, you risked your life to save me. And now, you want me to believe you don’t care? Who would buy that?”

Rebecca was speechless.

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford

Chapter 123

Rebecca had thought the pain was behind her. But she underestimated the wounds this relationship had inflicted on her.

Vance had known everything and remembered every detail. Yes, she had once harbored a secret crush on him, but she had never planned to act on it.

When she asked him to tutor her, it was only a way to pay him so she could help him through the months his family cut him off, without wounding his pride.

When she shared pumpkin pies with him during Halloween, it was because she wanted to bring him a bit of warmth on that special day when they both felt isolated.

When she saved him at the cost of her leg, she had never expected repayment or dreamed of using it to force him into marriage.

She had already decided to surrender in this marriage. She had built a tough exterior and kept telling herself not to hurt for anyone again. Yet she had never imagined that every kindness she once offered him would become arrows that he could fire straight through her defenses, tearing her open all over again.

She was exhausted, unwilling to explain or argue with him further. Actions spoke louder than words. When she finally walked away, he would see for himself whether she had ever cared about that title.

When she fell silent, he reached over and tried to pull her against his shoulder.

She held her breath, still remembering that long-ago Halloween night under the osmanthus tree. As they parted, a blossom landed on his shoulder, glowing soft gold in the moonlight.

The air was filled with a sweet fragrance, lingering through all her teenage years like a promise.

Now the man leaning close smelled only of expensive cologne-cloying and suffocating. She turned her face away and pushed his hand off her shoulder. "Talk if you want, but keep your hands to yourself. I told you-I find it disgusting."

Anger flashed in his eyes, but instead of snapping at her, he softened his voice. "I know you still love me. The promise I made won't change. You will always be my wife."

She tilted her head. "And?"

He hesitated. "And stop going after Cathy. That incident..."

Rebecca gave a short, bitter laugh.

There he was. For Catherine, he would swallow every insult, even from her. The proud, untouchable man could endure being called disgusting if it meant protecting his beloved woman.

Her phone rang from her bag. It was the police station asking her to come in.

"Okay, I'll be there soon," she said, hanging up.

"I'll drive you," Vance offered.

She thought for a moment and nodded. He looked hesitant, as if he had more to say, but she pretended not to notice.

Sure enough, he placed his hand on the steering wheel and softly called out, "Rebecca."

"Hmm?"

"Promise me you won't make things difficult for her."

"She tried to kill me. Did I imagine that?"

Of course, the words bounced right off him. In his mind, his innocent angel could never hurt anyone; it was all a misunderstanding.

"She..." He barely got the word out before she cut him off. "Forget it. Don't say anything."

“Rebecca...”

“Aren’t you the one who can fix anything? With all your money and connections, you said you’d do whatever it takes.”

“Fine.”

His face darkened. He put the car in drive and pulled away from the curb.

Support

Share

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford

Chapter 124

A question burned in Rebecca’s mind. In the rehab room, had Vance really stopped her because he saw how much pain she was in, or had he only wanted to drag her out so he could beg her to drop the case against Catherine?

She didn’t ask. The answer was obvious. He hadn’t even bothered to check whether she was still hurting.

That suspicion was confirmed the moment they reached the police station. Vance climbed out and headed straight inside without once looking back to see if she could walk.

She was on a phone call when she stepped out of the car. By the time she finished, he was already far ahead. He glanced back once, then kept walking and disappeared through the station doors.

She had never expected his loyalty to tilt her way anyway, so she slowly walked inside by herself.

Catherine was already there, crying prettily in a chair. Aiden and Lucas flanked her like bodyguards, glaring at Rebecca like their deadliest enemy. Vance was engaged in conversation with a police officer.

When Vance finished, Aiden stood and offered his seat. Vance took it without hesitation, settling beside

Catherine as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

Rebecca watched the little performance and wondered how many more absurd scenes the universe had in store for her. She was unaware that even more bizarre events awaited her.

The statements from Vance's employees had magically changed. What the receptionist and Kimberly had said at the company now contradicted everything they told the police.

The receptionist claimed she was new, didn't know Rebecca, and assumed she was just another woman chasing Vance. As for the desperate call for help, she said other women had pulled the same stunt before. She had only been protecting the company and the boss's marriage. Her intentions had been good.

Kimberly admitted she knew about the mango allergy but had served the juice anyway, claiming it was passion-fruit lemonade. Security footage proved she had locked the door; she confessed to that, too.

Her motive? Jealousy. She had worked for Vance for years and secretly loved him. In her mind, a crippled woman like Rebecca didn't deserve him. She felt it was unfair, so she did that to teach Rebecca a lesson.

The electrician admitted he had cut the wires for repairs and hadn't finished the job before the fire started.

Rebecca glanced at Vance, figuring this was his full-court press-money and influence at work. Every loose end had been neatly tied to someone else, while the real culprit had been removed from the picture.

Aiden and Lucas looked at her with triumphant smirks that said, "What now?"

Catherine sobbed, struggling for breath, and turned tearful eyes on her. "I know you feel insecure around

Chante M

Vance, especially about me. That's why you've been so quick to blame me. But you see now, don't you? It really had nothing to do with me. Vance and I are completely innocent."

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford

Chapter 125

Rebecca watched Catherine bury her face in her hands, tears slipping through her fingers.

The three men instantly turned to her, their faces tight with concern.

Aiden was agitated. “What’s there to cry about? We’ve got your back. Who would dare mistreat you?”

Lucas chimed in, “Exactly. Ask Vance. The only person who can walk tall around here is you.”

“Vance...” Catherine looked up at him, her eyes shimmering. “I’m not afraid of being wronged. I’m just worried the rumors will hurt the company. That would be disastrous. Maybe I should just resign.”

“Not a chance!” Aiden interjected, glaring at Rebecca. “Anyone who tries to force you out will answer to me and to Vance. We’ll see who really runs things around here.”

“Right!” Lucas echoed. “Vance is the boss. Some useless person with zero contributions doesn’t get to call the shots.”

Apparently, his words were aimed at Rebecca. In their minds, she had always been a liability.

Rebecca listened in silence, expecting nothing from Vance. She already knew which side he would choose.

Catherine looked up at him with misty eyes, shaking her head. “I don’t want to put you in a difficult position. If one day you ever have to choose between me and anyone else, I hope you’ll always choose to let me go.”

That was touching. When had Rebecca ever forced him to choose? In fact, she had been constantly asking him to let go, but his mind had been muddled.

And his subsequent reaction proved just how blind he was. The rims of his eyes reddened, and so did Aiden’s and Lucas’s.

She marveled at the spectacle. How had three men with brains this small ever built a company? If things kept going this way, bankruptcy was only a matter of time.

“Look at that heart of gold,” Aiden said, his voice thick with emotion. “Only the people who were there from the beginning understand loyalty. Only Cathy thinks of you first. Open your eyes, Vance!”

“Vance...” Catherine collapsed against Vance’s shoulder, sobbing.

He wrapped an arm around her. The four of them sat there in a little tableau of shared emotion. Pressing against Vance’s shoulder, she flashed Rebecca a small, triumphant smile.

Then she hastily pulled away, wiping her eyes. “I’m sorry, Rebecca. I was just so upset I lost control for a second. There’s really nothing between Vance and me. Please don’t look at me like that. I apologize for my behavior.”

Aiden and Lucas rushed to her defense.

“Why do you apologize to her?”

“What did you do wrong? What right does she have to be offended? When we were building this company from nothing, she wasn’t even in the picture!”

Vance glanced at Rebecca, then calmly pulled Catherine back against his shoulder.

Support

Share

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford

Chapter 126

“Rebecca, I never thought you could be so small-minded,” Vance sighed deeply. “I could forgive jealousy -at least it comes from love. But I cannot forgive cruelty. You would lie and frame an innocent person just because you’re jealous? That’s terrifying.”

The verdict was in: Catherine was the pure, innocent fairy cruelly wronged by Rebecca’s vicious envy. Rebecca was the jealous villain willing to do anything to drive her away.

Rebecca was speechless, seeing no way to explain to these people that she had never been jealous of

Catherine.

“Rebecca,” an officer called out.

While the others had been shouting for what felt like hours, Rebecca had said nothing. There was no point arguing with them or trying to reason with people who had already decided the truth.

“Coming.” She ignored the four people and slowly walked toward the officer.

A female officer noticed how hard she was moving and came over to help her. The simple gesture of kindness warmed her heart.

“Thank you,” she said gratefully.

It turned out the receptionist, Kimberly, and the electrician had given statements that contradicted Rebecca’s account, so the police had called her back in.

They asked her the same questions again, and she gave the same answers.

The three employees emerged from the back. The electrician didn’t know her and showed no reaction, but the receptionist and Kimberly both went pale.

Rebecca glanced at them and asserted, “They’re lying.”

“Who’s lying? You’re the only liar here! You’re the one who slandered innocent people and even set fire to the company!” Aiden shot to his feet, roaring, “Why did the conference room suddenly catch fire while you were in it? Did you start it yourself? Even if the electrician cut the wires, they wouldn’t have ignited on their own. You care so little for company property. You don’t deserve to be Vance’s wife!”

His logic sparked fresh inspiration.

Lucas stood up and echoed his words. “I knew it! We’ve been in that office every day with no problem, but the moment you show up-fire! So, that’s how it is!”

He turned to Vance and added, “I’m not trying to bad-mouth her, but what the hell were you thinking when you married her?”

“Rebecca...” Catherine cried once again, looking at her with wounded disbelief. “I never imagined you hated me this much. To set fire to the company just to frame me? That was company property and Vance’s life’s work. You could have just told me to leave. Why hurt him like this? Don’t you care about him at all? He was so worried about you. He couldn’t sit still, terrified you might have been burned. And it was all a scheme?”

“Isn’t that her specialty?” Aiden scoffed. “Vance, I suspect the rescue five years ago was part of the same act-to trick you into marrying her. She just didn’t expect to cripple herself in the process.”

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford

Chapter 127

Rebecca knew Aiden’s cruelty too well. She had heard the same phrase so many times in the past weeks that it had lost its power.

During those confrontations, she had repeatedly told herself that was what they were. She thought she had already seen the bottom of their shamelessness. But she never could have imagined Aiden would stoop so low, saying that her rescue of Vance was a scheme.

But in extreme anger, she found a strange calmness. She stared at Vance, fully aware that he would never side with her. Still, she wanted to confirm if he shared Aiden's twisted perspective.

If he did, then it was no longer just a matter of her being blind. It was him being ungrateful.

"Vance, come here," she called out firmly and calmly.

Sitting beside Catherine, he looked up at her.

Aiden, acting like a spokesperson for Catherine, quickly tried to intervene. "Vance, don't go!"

Vance met Rebecca's eyes and paused. Then he rose and walked over.

She stared at the man she had sacrificed a leg to save, asking quietly, "Do you believe that too?"

He remained silent, and she pressed, "You also believe I set fire to your conference room on purpose? That I saved you from that car accident was a scheme to trick you into marriage? And I crippled myself in the process?"

His pupils contracted, and he looked away.

"Speak, Vance! Look me in the eye and say it!" She tilted her chin, realizing for the first time that he wasn't much taller than she was.

His throat bobbed. "You don't have to be so extreme. We're husband and wife. Can't we talk like adults?"

This kind of drama only hurts you in the end."

So, that was his answer. Yes, he believed she had set that fire.

Something inside her chest tore open. She drew a sharp breath, trying to swallow the pain, but her vision blurred uncontrollably.

How could anyone be hurt this deeply and not feel it?

When she spoke again, her voice shook despite her best efforts to maintain control. "So, you think my rescue five years ago was all an act to force you to marry me?"

He stared at the floor for a long time. Finally, in a low voice, he said, “Yes.”

That one word was cold and final.

She burst into tears and slapped him across the face, pouring every ounce of rage and heartache into that blow. The crack echoed through the station.

Catherine screamed in shock, while Aiden and Lucas shouted in outrage. It was chaotic.

The force of the blow sent Rebecca stumbling backward. She expected to hit the floor, but a pair of arms caught her in time.

Turning her head, she saw it was a female police officer. “Are you okay, ma’am?”

Rebecca’s face was wet with tears. “I’m okay. Thank you.”

With the officer’s help, she lowered herself into a chair. Behind her, Catherine fussed over Vance’s cheek while Aiden and Lucas called her every name they could think of.

Support

Share

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford

Chapter 128

With tears still shining on her cheeks, Rebecca ignored them all. Her voice trembled, but her words were steel. “I have evidence that proves they’re lying.”

All the noises stopped in an instant. She took out her phone and started to play a recording. a

“Vance, please don’t call the police.”

“Cathy, was it really you?”

“I’m sorry. I just wanted to play a prank on Rebecca.”

“No, listen to me! I never meant to harm her. I just wanted to get back at her for what she did to Aiden and Lucas. So, I asked Kimberly to bring her the mango juice.”

This was a snippet of the conversation between Catherine and Vance when she visited Rebecca in the hospital after the fire.

“Catherine admitted it herself,” Rebecca stated. “She had Kimberly serve me mango juice.”

Catherine’s face drained of color. “You recorded us?”

Aiden and Lucas were shocked. “And you didn’t give it to the police?”

In her anger and panic, she had overlooked it. But thanks to it, Vance’s lawyers didn’t know and couldn’t prepare a defense.

Catherine scrambled. “What does that prove? I gave you mango juice, so what? How does that connect to the fire?”

“Exactly!” Aiden and Lucas jumped in. “Cathy only wanted to embarrass you. Who knows how the fire started? Besides you, who else was there?”

They were still trying to pin everything on her.

Rebecca kept scrolling, this time opening an album that contained several surveillance clips. She opened one and said, “In this clip, Catherine is talking to Kimberly. Listen carefully.”

The audio was faint but clear.

“You must insist it was you, Kimberly. You gave her the mango juice and locked the door out of jealousy. None of it has anything to do with me. If it works, I’ll give you \$500,000. Don’t worry; you won’t be in trouble. Trust Vance’s legal team.”

Catherine collapsed into her chair, white as paper. “How did you...”

“Catherine!” Kimberly nearly passed out. “You said it would be fine! What now?”

“We’re just getting started,” Rebecca sneered, tapping on another clip. “Check this out.”

Once again, Catherine’s voice rang out. “You must claim you were only doing your job, protecting Mr. Bradford from gold-diggers. Never mention that I told you to make things difficult for Rebecca. If it gets done, there’s \$500,000 for you.”

The receptionist’s legs gave out. She sank to the floor, sobbing, “No... You said no one would ever find out. How did this happen? Am I going to get fired? Will they confiscate my \$500,000? I’ve spent it all.”

“And there’s more.” Rebecca played another clip, this time showing Aiden and the electrician.

Aiden's voice rang out. "You're responsible for the exposed wires in the conference room. \$500,000."

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford

Chapter 129

Aiden shot out of his chair, pointing at her. "You stole company surveillance? Or did you secretly install cameras? That's illegal!"

Rebecca remained composed. "First, the footage I accessed didn't violate any company secrets or harm its interests. If you think I broke the law, sue me. Second, these cameras are meant to protect the company. As a shareholder, I was nearly killed in that conference room. My life was threatened, and the company suffered serious damage. In this situation, installing additional cameras in vulnerable areas is completely reasonable. I'm sure our esteemed CEO has no objection, right?"

She glanced at Vance, his earlier answer still echoing in her ears.

"So, you think my rescue five years ago was all an act to force you to marry me?"

"Yes."

That one decisive word had struck her like a heavy stone, causing residual pain to quake within her. She pressed her hand against her chest, trying to quell the hurt, and managed a small smile. "Or does he have some unspeakable secret he wishes to protect?"

She was a shareholder in the company. When they married, Vance had gifted her 10% of the company shares, but she had never been involved in its affairs..

It wasn't that she didn't want to, but there was an invisible barrier surrounding this company that Vance and the others had built-a barrier she could never breach.

The handprint on his cheek was still vivid; her nails had drawn blood. It was glaring against his refined features. His eyes were red-rimmed. Was he in pain? Or was he upset that his money hadn't been enough to bury the truth?

"Why so silent, Mr. Bradford?" she scoffed. "Having trouble deciding which is worse-my unauthorized cameras, or your executives conspiring to commit arson, fabricate witnesses, and frame an innocent person?"

"You're despicable!" Aiden spat, but he had no legal ground left to stand on.

He knew well that their issues were far graver, and now he could only complain to Vance, “So, this is the woman you married. A total ingrate! The modern-day farmer and the snake!”

Rebecca sneered. How could he have the nerve to say that? Who was truly the farmer, and who was the snake?

Calmer, Lucas tried another angle. “Those videos were recorded under abnormal circumstances. They won’t be admissible in court.”

“With shareholders like you, it’s no wonder the company is struggling,” she laughed. “You’re just clueless.”

Lucas lost it. “Who are you calling clueless?”

“Aren’t you?” she shot back sarcastically. “Do you really think the company owes its success to your efforts? What have you done all these years? Vance is lucky to have you people around. Without you, he wouldn’t even be in this position today.”

Aiden and Lucas initially believed she was praising them, but then her tone shifted. “If it weren’t for you dragging him down, he would have brought the company to the top. He is stuck thanks to you dimwits.”

Her words got under their skin. “What the hell?”

Support

Share

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford

Chapter 130

“Vance, say something about the snake you married!” Aiden shouted.

Vance touched the stinging scratches on his face, then stepped forward. “Let’s not get sidetracked. What do you want, Rebecca? Name your price.”

“Yeah,” Catherine chimed in, moving closer, “Lucas is right. Your footage probably won’t hold up in court. Why make this bigger than it needs to be? It could hurt the company. Just tell us what you really want.”

“Whether it’s admissible is not for you to decide, and honestly, it doesn’t matter. What matters is that the footage is real. Facts influence people’s minds,” Rebecca said. “Even if the court won’t accept it, the internet will. Worst case, I post everything online and let

public opinion decide. Let everyone see how Mr. Bradford and his friends plotted to burn his wife alive for the sake of his mistress. Then we'll see whether it counts as evidence."

"You've lost your mind!" Aiden's eyes blazed. "You're willing to destroy Vance's reputation, ruin the company, and turn Catherine into a public villain. What do you get out of it?"

"Me? Satisfaction. I want that shameless woman condemned by the whole world," Rebecca laughed, raising a finger. "I didn't name anyone. Whoever jumps up to defend themselves is obviously guilty. Or maybe all of you are just shameless."

The trio had been ready to hurl insults, but her words stopped them cold. Their faces flushed dark red.

"Damn it!" Aiden cursed, rolling up his sleeves.

Rebecca stood her ground, teeth clenched. If he dared hit her inside a police station, he really had lost his mind.

Vance caught his arm, and the officers stepped in as well. While Aiden was restrained, the others lost control-Lucas cursing, the receptionist and Kimberly wailing, and the electrician pounding the desk in despair.

The station descended into pure chaos.

Just as Rebecca had said, regardless of the source, the facts were undeniable. The details would need further investigation, but the outcome was clear.

Vance surveyed the noisy scene, feeling overwhelmed by the cacophony. He drew a deep breath and roared, "Shut up! All of you!"

The room quieted for a moment, but then the shouting, crying, and cursing resumed. The officers tried to restore order, but they couldn't silence every mouth.

"Enough!" Vance yelled again. "If you don't want to face consequences, shut your mouths right now!"

He pushed past the crowd, approaching Rebecca and the officer. "I'm the head of the company. I take full responsibility. Any wrongdoing is on my leadership. It has no or little connection with them."

Because Rebecca had filed the report, and because a fire had occurred and she had nearly been killed, how Vance shouldered this blame now rested entirely on her.

Would she withdraw the complaint? The question hung in the air once more.

Vance spoke for everyone. “If she doesn’t want to drop the case, I won’t force her. Handle the case as the law requires. They are my subordinates, acting on my orders. I accept every consequence.” 2