



## Chapter 19

Rebecca was momentarily stunned.

Vance was right about one thing, though. She used to love him deeply.

He had said those exact words at their wedding. Back then, she had thought, though it wasn't a confession, it was a promise. He had given her a lifetime commitment. <sup>1</sup>

A lifetime was so long. Surely, one day, they would truly love each other. And even if, by some misfortune, he never did, that was okay. Her love for him would suffice.

"Vance," she said, having one more question she wanted to ask him.

"Hm?" He exhaled hot breath against her ear, laced with alcohol.

"But Catherine is back now. If you're with me, what about her?" she asked.

"Catherine..." He repeated the name, suddenly choking up. "Catherine, I'll never forget. What I promised you... I'll never forget..."

Rebecca's blood ran cold as she realized that he had mistaken her for Catherine.

"What was it? What did you promise Catherine?" she asked numbly.

His arms suddenly tightened around her. "Everything... All of it... Cathy..."

Before she knew it, he lifted her off the ground and pressed her down

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onto the bed. His breath, heavy with the scent of alcohol, assailed her face, nose, and chin.

He desperately searched for her lips, but she dodged each time. The alcohol stench made her nauseous. When his hands began tearing at her nightgown, she struggled fiercely.

"Cathy, stop fussing. Obey me," he slurred.

In her desperate struggle, she freed one hand and slapped wildly at him. Finally, one connected with his face, a crisp smack echoing through the room.

"Vance!" she shouted at the top of her lungs. "Look closely! I'm not Catherine!"

His body stiffened briefly. Seizing the moment, she shoved him off with all her strength.

He flopped back onto the bed, murmuring, "I'm sorry... I have to go home. I promised to take care of her for life. I owe her..." 1

Rebecca clamped her hands over her ears. Those words had haunted her like a curse for five years, buzzing in her head whenever they surfaced.

She glared at the man sprawled on the bed, roaring, "I don't want you to owe me! Do you hear me? I don't want your debt! I want you to set me free!" 2

Vance's phone vibrated, the screen flashing with the caller ID: Cathy Babe. 1

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The irony was biting. On his phone, Rebecca's contact was simply her name.

Right after the wedding, she had fantasized about him calling her Becky or simply Honey. She had secretly wondered if she should ask him to change her contact to something affectionate, whether on WhatsApp or his phone book.

But no.

Whether in conversation or contact, she was always just Rebecca. For self-consolation, she had told herself that this was just his personality—straightforward, distant, and rigid.

She had been wrong.

The nickname on the screen was glaring, and a battle raged inside her. She was torn between answering the call and ignoring it.

Finally, she bit her lip, picked up the phone, and unlocked it.

Catherine spoke first. "Vance."

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