

## Chapter 9

Vance lowered his head and gently blew on her wound. "Let's get you some ointment so it won't leave a scar."

Rebecca had never seen him so tender toward anyone before.

Even after her car accident, when she had sustained multiple injuries all over her body, including the crippling of her leg and scars everywhere, he had never shown this kind of naturally flowing, deep-seated heartache.

He had asked her if it hurt, telling her to cry it out. That was not heartache; it was guilt.

He would never hold her wounds with such careful tenderness and protectiveness. When faced with her scarred and marred body, his choice had always been to evade, to hide, and to look away.

"It's really nothing. I don't feel any pain at all." Catherine's voice grew even more flirtatious and playful. 1

Vance looked up at Rebecca. "Look how understanding she is. What are you waiting for? You should apologize to her."

"Why should I?" Rebecca shot back, tears burning in her eyes. His face blurred in her vision, but she refused to give in. "She went around claiming to be your wife, and now I have to say sorry to her for that?" 1

"When did you become so mean?" he sulked. "Catherine already explained the situation to you. Mr. Lemke made a misunderstanding, and for the sake of the collaboration project, we just went along with



it. Why can't you let it go?"

He was getting angry again, upset about the slightest offense to Catherine.

"You're mistaken. I have no intention of clinging to anything. I didn't even expose the two of you on the spot," Rebecca sighed, shaking her head. "If someone wants to be Mrs. Bradford, let them have it. I don't care; I just want a divorce. Just agree to it quickly, and then everything can be out in the open and legitimate."

She hadn't revealed the truth right then and there precisely because there was no need to. Since they were heading for divorce anyway, why create extra complications for herself?

If she had spoken up, she would have had to explain the tangled relationships between herself and these two to Lauren. It simply wasn't worth the trouble. <sup>1</sup>

"Why are you so petulant now?" Vance's frustration intensified. "There's a limit to throwing tantrums. Now, hurry up and apologize to Catherine."

"No way!" Rebecca turned around, intending to walk away. <sup>1</sup>

"Stop right there!" Vance strode forward in a single bound and grabbed hold of her. "Where do you think you're going? You pushed Catherine down, and her arm got scraped. You're not leaving until you apologize!"

Rebecca looked down at the hand gripping her wrist, and a sense of despair spread through her like a rising tide, flooding every part of her



being.

She looked him straight in the eye and spoke, word by word. "Yeah, I only crippled one leg, but she got a scrape on her arm!" 4

She saw a flash of intense pain cross his eyes. His grip loosened, and he staggered back. 1

Freed, she ran toward the elevator regardless of how awkward and ungainly it looked. She absolutely could not let him see the tears streaming down her face. 1

From the moment of her injury, through their marriage, and over the five years that followed, this was the first time she had ever used her leg injury as a weapon against him.

In the past, she had always been so careful and considerate of his feelings, tending to his emotions with the utmost delicacy. She had avoided anything that might make him feel guilty, worried, or self-blaming, so she never brought up the condition of her leg or referenced the car accident five years ago. 3

Even when she endured countless gossipy whispers and cold, judgmental stares from others, she kept it all hidden inside, processing it silently on her own.

All she had wanted was to provide him with a warm, comforting, and relaxed home. She had hoped that her love for him, over the passage of time, might blossom into something beautiful and vibrant.

But the reality was harsh. 1