

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 9

When she pulled up to the gates of Emerald Heights later that afternoon, the housekeeper looked thoroughly shocked. "What are you doing back here?"

Her tone was aggressively defensive, a sharp pivot from her earlier dismissal. Someone had clearly briefed her. Willow, on the other hand, was ice-cold. "This is my marital home. Why wouldn't I be here?"

"Your home? News to me." The housekeeper sneered. "The only people running this house are Mr. Sinclair and Ms. Sinclair. You're just some deranged squatter trying to stake a claim."

She moved to slam the heavy oak door. "Get the hell out before I call estate security."

Willow calmly wedged her heel against the threshold. "It sounds like Vivienne has fed you quite the story. But did she happen to mention that I'm violently unstable? That I have severe anger issues and a habit of lashing out when provoked?"

She slowly raised her hand, making a subtle, threatening gesture.

The bluff worked beautifully. The housekeeper paled, stumbling backward in terror.

Willow held back a scoff. She hadn't expected the woman to cave so easily over a fabricated threat. Vivienne must have spent years painting Willow as an absolute lunatic to the staff.

"Open the door," Willow demanded. "I'm only here for my personal belongings. Once I have them, you'll never see me again."

She was desperate to leave this toxic wasteland behind.

She had moved into this house full of hope, fully believing she would grow old with Julian. She had packed up all her irreplaceable treasures—childhood photo albums, keepsakes, and everything that held sentimental value.

If she was walking away, she was taking her history with her.

The housekeeper hesitated under Willow's lethal glare before finally stepping aside.

Once inside, Willow made a beeline for the master suite.

She had originally stored all her belongings in the master bedroom dressers, assuming they would share the space. But as she pushed the door open, her stomach dropped. The room had been completely renovated. The elegant furniture she had meticulously chosen was gone, and her drawers were completely empty.

"Where are my things?" she demanded, spinning to face the housekeeper who had been hovering over her shoulder like a prison guard.

"I have no idea," the woman replied with a smug shrug.

"No idea?" Willow let out a dark laugh. "Perfect. Then I'll assume you stole them. I'm calling the police right now."

She pulled out her phone and deliberately tapped the screen.

Realizing Willow wasn't bluffing, the housekeeper cursed under her breath and angrily escorted her up to the attic.

It was a cramped, suffocatingly tight space that reeked of damp mildew. Scanning the gloom, Willow found her precious mementos carelessly tossed into a filthy corner. Most were damaged or broken, and the surviving pieces were buried under a thick layer of dust.

It wasn't hard to guess who had orchestrated this petty vandalism. Taking a deep breath to reign in her temper, she grabbed a box and rapidly sorted through the wreckage.

Carrying the salvaged box downstairs, she crossed paths with Toby, who had just woken from a nap. Seeing her, the little terror instantly balled his fists and spat aggressively at her feet. "Fat, ugly freak! Who said you could come into my house?"

Willow knew exactly why he was such a monster. The apple didn't fall far from the rotting tree; he was simply mimicking his psychotic parents.

Deciding he wasn't worth the energy, she ignored him and kept walking. But Toby mistook her silence for weakness. He lunged forward, viciously kicking at her shins. "My mom says trashy people own trashy mutts! You're just as pathetic as your stupid dog! I'm going to kill you both! I'll kill you!"

If he hadn't brought up Cooper, she might have let it slide. But the mention of her battered dog ignited an explosive fury inside her.

Willow dropped her box. Grabbing Toby by his entitled little arm, she spun him around and delivered two resounding smacks directly to his backside, settling the score for both her and Cooper.

"Since your parents clearly refuse to discipline you, I'll do it myself!" she snapped.

She hadn't held back. The sharp sting instantly broke his bravado, and Toby erupted into genuine, terrified wails.

The housekeeper rushed over, frantically shielding the crying boy. "Are you insane?! Wait until Mr. Sinclair and Ms. Sinclair hear about this! They're going to destroy you!"

Bolstered by his defender, Toby glared through his tears. "Yeah! I'm telling Dad! He's going to kill you!"

"Be my guest." Willow coolly brushed the dust from her hands, picked up her box, and turned toward the door.

Passing through the living room, a massive framed portrait on the wall caught her eye. It was Julian, Vivienne, and Toby, posing intimately together like the perfect, happy family.

She reached out and deliberately unhooked the heavy frame from the wall, inspecting it with cold detachment.

"Put that down!" Toby screeched from the hallway. "You're too dirty to touch our stuff!"

"Am I?" Willow flashed him a chilling smile. She opened her fingers. The massive frame plummeted to the hardwood floor with a deafening crash, the glass exploding into thousands of jagged shards. "Make sure you tell your dad about that, too."

Ignoring Toby's hysterical shrieks, she kicked a piece of shattered glass out of her path and marched out the front door.

The ruined portrait perfectly mirrored her marriage.

Irreparably shattered and entirely beyond saving.

But that was the ugly truth about moving on. Sometimes, you had to burn the old life down before you could rebuild from the ashes.

Standing on the sidewalk outside Emerald Heights, she dialed a number she hadn't called in three years. She had deleted the contact long ago, assuming she had permanently ruined the relationship.

To her surprise, the call connected on the second ring. "Hello?" The voice on the other end was intensely guarded.

"It's Willow."

"I know. What do you want?"

"Jade," Willow choked out, her voice cracking as the dam finally broke. "I'm getting a divorce."