My Great Escape Led Me to You

Chapter 11

Emily Blair almost laughed out loud.

All this time, she'd thought Andrew Lane was just your typical emotionally clueless guy—incapable of tenderness or care. But she'd been wrong. It wasn't that Andrew Lane didn't understand how to be gentle; he simply saved all his kindness for Isabella Austin, and only cared about the son Isabella had given him.

Isabella's shoulders slumped. She lowered her head and stepped back, her voice small and uncertain.

"It's all right, Andrew. It makes sense that Ms. Blair doesn't like me—"

Before she could even finish, Emily, under the sharp glare of Andrew's eyes, snatched the glass of juice from Isabella's hand and downed it in one long gulp.

She handed the empty glass back to Isabella, drew in a deep breath, and met Andrew's icy gaze head-on.

"Are you satisfied now, Andrew Lane?"

Andrew's eyes narrowed.

"Don't bother me again."

Emily let out a short, bitter laugh, spun on her heel, and slammed the door behind her.

Once the door was shut, Emily bolted for the bathroom. She gripped the edge of the sink, forced her fingers down her throat, and retched up every last drop of juice from her stomach.

She leaned against the porcelain, gasping for breath as her hair stuck damply to her cheek and her lips turned faint and bloodless.

It had happened just like this in her previous life: Isabella had handed her a glass of juice, and, trusting her, Emily had drunk it never suspecting it was laced with something vile.

This time, she wasn't going to fall into their traps. She would keep her distance from Andrew Lane. No more entanglements.

Five minutes later, shouts erupted outside her room.

Emily ignored them. She kept her head down, scribbling formulas in her workbook, blocking out the noise.

Until someone started pounding on her bedroom door. Amelia Lane's shrill voice sliced through the wood.

"Emily Blair, get out here! What disgusting thing did you leave in my brother's room? Open the door!"

At first, Emily didn't react. But as Amelia's pounding grew louder, the desk began to shake beneath Emily's hands.

"Emily Blair, stop pretending you're not there!"

With a sigh, Emily pulled off her headphones and yanked open the door. Amelia's fist froze mid-air, her eyes locked on Emily with barely contained fury.

"What do you want?"

Amelia sneered, grabbed Emily's wrist, and dragged her down the hall into Andrew's room.

Inside, Andrew stood by the window, his expression stormy. He gripped a pink envelope so tightly his knuckles had gone white, veins bulging across his hand.

Isabella hovered at his side, clinging to his arm as if she might collapse without his support. Her cheek pressed lightly to his shoulder, eyes brimming with tears—a picture of wounded innocence.

"How could you hide someone else's love letter in your room, Andrew?" Isabella's voice trembled with hurt as she glanced at Emily, as though she couldn't bring herself to say more.

Andrew's jaw clenched. He crushed the letter tighter in his fist, nearly crumpling it into nothing. Then he reached for Isabella's shoulder, pulling her close.

"I'll handle it," he said hoarsely.

Isabella nodded, eyes shining with trust. "Okay. I believe you."

Emily looked at them all and felt a cold weight settle in her chest.

Amelia released her with a shove. "How dare you put a love letter in my brother's

room, Emily Blair? That's disgusting! Have you no shame?"

Emily rubbed her wrist, her voice steady and cold. "I didn't do it. That letter isn't mine."

She had never stooped to anything like this. Not now, not ever.

Amelia snatched the letter from Andrew's hand, tore open the envelope, and waved the folded note in front of Emily's face.

"Look at the handwriting. Look at the signature. Who else could it be if not you?!”

Andrew held Isabella's frail shoulders, his dark eyes fixed unblinking on Emily, cold and hard as stone.