

## Chapter 28 The Demo

In the private lounge, Charles and Barbara helped Millie into a chair. Her body was clearly worn out.

"Barbara, get Serena some water please," Charles said, waving her off gently.

When the door closed behind her, it was just the two of them left.

Though the lounge was private, the recording equipment was installed, and Charles was Serena's boss. There'd be nothing to feed the rumor mill.

Charles kept his voice casual as he asked, "What was Vivian going on about just now? I didn't quite follow."

Millie gave a quick glance at the nearby recording device, and then quietly pulled out her phone. Using her coat to block the view, she typed something and tilted the screen toward Charles.

He looked down at the words that appeared. "Vivian thinks I'm your secret lover. She came over to drop a warning—said there's someone else in your heart which prevents you from making me and our relationship official."

Charles blinked at the words, confused.

He wouldn't have minded keeping Millie for himself. She would never accept that though, and he knew it.

If she ever thought that was what he was after, she'd disappear from his life without a second thought.

"Think about it. What did you do to make her think that?" Millie said, voice low.

Charles thought for a moment, and then it hit him.

He started to speak, but Millie gently pressed her hand to his arm, stopping him.

He got the message. Instead, he pulled out his phone and typed a reply, keeping it hidden beneath his coat.

"When you didn't show up to rehearsal and people started talking, I shared your medical report with the internal team. It was real, but I removed your name and changed the date to ten days ago. The word 'miscarriage' was in there. She must've seen it and thought you were pregnant with my baby."

Millie read the screen and nodded. That explained everything.

She turned to the live feed playing in the corner.

A contestant's voice filled the room. The stage lights flickered across the screen.

Charles watched her for a second, and then said quietly, "He's here. Did you know?"

"Yeah," she answered, like it didn't matter.

Charles hesitated, wanting to say more, but then changed his mind.

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Across town, a black Bentley glided through the city streets. Brandon sat in the back seat, his tablet on his lap, reviewing company files like always.

But his eyes drifted. Out the window, roses bloomed along the edge of the road, and for a moment, he saw the woman in the red dress again—bold, graceful, untouchable.

Only one person came to mind when he thought of those words.

Up front, Eugene noticed the shift in his boss' expression and smiled. "Miss Simpson did well today, didn't she?" he asked.

"She did," Brandon replied, though he still hadn't looked away from the window.

"I figured," Eugene said, tapping on his tablet. "It's all over the Internet. People are saying it's the first time you've ever shown up for a recording like this. Must be because of Miss Simpson."

He kept talking, but Brandon wasn't listening anymore.

It wasn't that he didn't watch variety shows. He just didn't watch them for entertainment. He had only ever watched them for Millie.

The Watson Group had no intention of investing in entertainment, but he



had created a media department anyway—just to make room for her. But too bad she had already signed with Evans Entertainment by then.

Millie had grown up around music. Started with piano, moved to violin, picked up guitar, even tried the drums. She had a gift—and the discipline to master it.

Back then, he would often find himself standing on the balcony, watching the Bennett house from a distance.

Brandon quietly watched the rows of red roses blur past outside the car window.

They reminded him of her. Millie, when they were younger—loud, bright, fearless. Maybe influenced by her mother, Millie used to wear red all the time.

That year, Millie, still the heiress of the Bennett family, had worn a red dress and stood in the garden, violin in hand, surrounded by fallen leaves. Her long, slightly curled hair moved with the wind, the red of her dress blending with the maple trees behind her. All the boys noticed.

He had been one of them.

When did that version of her disappear? ❸

Brandon lowered his eyes slightly.

Maybe it was the collapse of the Bennett family. Or maybe it began with what happened to her mother.

As for the idea of this being some rare exception, Brandon didn't bother defending it.

He had made so many exceptions in his life that the word had lost meaning.

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Meanwhile, the live broadcast was still going strong, sending waves through the Internet.

Vivian's performance had drawn the first round of attention. Especially her song—"Glimmer of Love."

It hit fast. Social media was flooded with praise and speculation. One particular comment went viral. "This is heartbreaking. I could feel how much Vivian loves Brandon just from the way she sang it. Even while

fighting terminal stomach cancer, her love for him hasn't faded. This song captured her whole life's journey beautifully."

More comments followed, piling into trending threads.

"Yes. Once it all made sense, I was stunned. There's no doubt this song was meant for Vivian."

"Didn't you know? She wrote it herself!"

"The most beautiful three-line poem—Singer: Vivian. Lyricist: Vivian. Composer: Vivian."

"She's incredible. Not even a professional, and yet this performance blew everyone else away."

"Even the two earlier pros didn't match her emotion. I doubt anyone will top her performance today."

"Exactly. Vivian outshone them all."

"Honestly, the only one who can beat Vivian is Vivian. You guys need to check the hot search right now!"

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Curious viewers quickly clicked into the trending topics. #VivianGlimmerOfLove#, #VivianBrandon#, #BrandonExceptionForVivian#. And then a new one began climbing the ranks—#GlimmerOfLoveRecordingDemo#

The link led to an old demo recording.

It wasn't polished. Not mixed or edited. The sound quality was low, a little fuzzy. But the voice—soft, clear—stopped people in their tracks.

A flood of comments followed as more people listened.

"Oh wow... this is 'Glimmer of Love,' Vivian's song, but it hits so differently in this version."

"Right? I felt more listening to this than I did during the live or official release."

"Same here. The voice—it doesn't sound exactly like the other versions."


"I saw someone say this might be the original recording. And did you notice? The file wasn't even called 'Glimmer of Love,' it was titled



'Glimmer of Light.' Maybe she recorded it casually, before they locked in the final version."

"Same here. Honestly, I think this version's better than the live one. Don't cancel me; I'm just saying." 

"Honestly, I get that feeling too, but it makes sense. You heard how fuzzy the recording was, right? She was probably caught up in the moment. She's not a trained singer, so of course the demo and the final version don't sound the same."

"Either way, she's talented. Whether it's the studio, the stage, or a demo—Vivian delivered." 

"She's amazing. End of story."

"Only Vivian can top Vivian."

While the Internet buzzed, Vivian stayed silent—likely still busy with the post-performance process.

But the attention around the demo kept growing. And not everyone was content to wait. So someone decided to confront Vivian live on air, ready to ask questions about the demo.