The IVF Secret That Shook a Dynasty

Chapter 19

He didn't know the woman before him, but the situation was intensely awkward. Seeing her swollen eyes and the clear red handprint on her cheek felt like an intrusion into her private pain, and his own discomfort deepened.

Vivica stared back, equally stunned. Despite their several chance encounters, this was the first time she had truly seen his face. He had a strong brow, sharp eyebrows, and a piercing gaze. His features were so defined they looked as if they had been carved from stone—chiseled, powerful, and severe. He radiated the aura of a man at the pinnacle of power, someone who commanded respect.

What surprised her most was that she could see a faint, moist redness in his sharp eyes. It was as if... he had also been crying.

She couldn't fathom that a man so powerful, so cold and aloof, could have sorrows of his own, that he could shed tears. And as she looked at his face, she felt a strange sense of déjà vu—a fleeting thought that her son, Chaim, bore a slight resemblance to him.

Vivica was so lost in thought that she forgot to look away. Joseph, however, only glanced at her for a moment before averting his eyes. He let go of the door, and it swung shut with a soft thud, startling her back to reality.

Acting as if he hadn't seen her, Joseph walked past, his stride steady and powerful. Vivica caught the faint scent of smoke.

Right, Joseph had been smoking in the stairwell. He wasn’t a regular smoker, but since his brother's death, he would have one whenever the grief became too much to bear. Smoking was forbidden in the hospital, so he had hidden in the empty stairwell. He hadn't expected to walk into such an awkward scene on his way back.

After Joseph left, Vivica’s own grief felt strangely scattered by the unexpected encounter. The image of his face lingered in her mind, and she chided herself for being so overwrought that she was starting to see her son in every stranger she met—first a fallen firefighter, now this cold, imposing man.

She pushed herself up from the ground, took a few deep breaths of the cold air, and felt her strength return.

Around the corner, Joseph, who had already walked away, paused. For some reason, he turned and glanced back down the corridor. He spotted a passing nurse and called out to her.

"Mr. Baird, is there something I can help you with?"

"There's a family member on the terrace over there who seems emotionally unstable. You might want to keep an eye on things."

He was worried Vivica might jump. It was a tragically common occurrence in hospitals.

The nurse nodded. "Of course. Thank you, Mr. Baird. I'll go check on her."

Joseph turned and walked away.

The nurse headed toward the terrace, but by the time she got there, Vivica had already composed herself and was walking back toward the south wing.

Vivica spent the weekend at the hospital with her son. Fletcher never showed up again. He was probably openly with Riley and her daughter by now.

Vivica didn't care. The initial sting of his betrayal had been sharp, but in the face of her child's illness, it had faded into insignificance.

On Monday, Vivica started her new job as scheduled.

Q-Cloud Technology was a leader in the IT industry. The work was demanding and the pressure was high, but the pay was notoriously good. Vivica desperately needed the money and was grateful for the opportunity.

To her surprise, the department manager turned out to be a senior from her university program, two years ahead of her.

"Vivica, is that really you? I was on a business trip last week and heard the department hired a new beauty. When I came back and saw your resume, I was floored!"

Zavier Fulton threw an arm around Vivica's shoulders and introduced her to the team. "This is our new colleague, Vivica Lynn. She was in my program at our alma mater—campus belle and genius coder rolled into one. I expect you all to take good care of her."