

Chapter 3 Paisley felt the firm grip on her wrist tighten suddenly , and the pain made her gasp in surprise .

Paisley , who is he ? Dominicks voice was sharp , his gaze burning into her .

The one who called you just now was it him ? in his expression The tension in the room thickened as Dominicks eyes drilled into hers , a flicker of something dark He remembered the way she had called the person on the phone darling earlier a term of endearment she had never once used for him during their four years of marriage .

The air between them crackled with tension , and Paisley quickly gathered herself , her voice a low murmur of defiance .

None of your business .

She pulled her wrist from his grasp with all the strength she could muster .

His voice from Dominick frowned , about to take a step closer , his lips parted as if to speak , but before he could say anything , he was interrupted by a behind Dom so this is where you've been Marissas voice was sweet and light , laced with an almost too casual warmth .

She appeared at Dominicks side , clad in a gorgeous , tailored outfit that seemed to glow with sophistication .

Her long hair cascaded behind her .

swaying as she moved with an easy grace .

My mother was so happy to see you earlier , she continued , her tone playful She was actually a bit upset , saying I don't take enough care of you , having you come to the hospital when you're always so busy Marissas laughter was soft and full of charm as she stepped closer to Dominick Honestly , I'm the one who's been wronged .

You came here on your own , so next time , you explain it to Mom , alright ? Only then did Marissa seem in notice Paisle Paisley standing there .

Her gaze shifted with a swift , almost rehearsed smile .

Ms.

Sutton ? You're back ? Her smile was polished and brilliant , radiating warmth .

If Paisley hadn't caught the subtle way Marissa had been eyeing her studying her from the moment she came into Marissas view she might've believed Marissas friendliness was genuine .

At that moment , Paisley couldn't help but feel a wave of utter boredom wash over her .

There was no point in her staying and listening to more of Marissas well-rehearsed act .

Without a word , she turned and walked away , her heels clicking sharply against the ground as she headed for the car door .

She quickly got into the car and left the scene .

Later , in the living room , the air was heavy with unspoken thoughts .

Emery handed Paisley a warm cup of milk , the steam rising gently from the surface .

So , you still haven't cleared things up with him ? Emery was a good friend Paisley had met in Brightmoor , a renowned designer of evening gowns .

She had come to Harrowfield with Paisley , setting up her custom boutique in the town's poshest mall .

She was known for her sharp eye for detail and even sharper opinions .

Paisley sipped the milk slowly , feeling the warmth settle in her chest .

No.

I didn't explain anything Emerys reaction was far more animated than Paisleys .

Why not ? she asked , her eyebrows lifting with frustration Paisley leaned back , the flicker of an old , bitter smile tugging at her lips .

Were divorced .

We have nothing to do with each other anymore .

There's no need to explain Her eyes darkened , and she muttered with a touch of dry humor , Besides , he's about to remarry With that batch ? Remarry ! Emerys eyes went wide in shock .

What that bitch was Emerys usual nickname for Marissa .

Paisley used to correct her whenever she said it , though Marissa truly was a total bitch But after a few unsuccessful attempts to stop Emery from saying that , Paisley had given up .

The truth was , her marriage with Dominick had crumbled because of both of them not just because of Marissa .

Yes , deep down , Paisley knew she couldn't help but feel that sting .

The end of her marriage had never been as simple as a villain in a story .

It had been about two people who had simply disagreed and drifted apart .

Yeah , that's her .

Paisley continued sipping her milk quietly , as if the conversation didn't concern her .

Emery shook her head in disbelief , her voice tinged with irritation .

You're like one of those heroines from those over-the-top romance novels- 1/3 Dreamer 2/3 Romance .

Download 9:35 PM CST VOJ Chapter 3 silent as a stone , driving everyone crazy Paisley couldn't help but chuckle at Emerys comment .

You're mistaken .

According to those novels , I'm not the heroine .

Dominicks fiancée is the main character serious second lead- Paisley had a wry smile on her lips as she thought of herself from Marissas point of view .

In her eyes , Paisley was the venomous returning after disappearing for four years , simply because she was the mother of Dominicks child .

She imagined Marissa would think of her as the type of woman who , after vanishing , suddenly reappeared to insert herself back into Dominicks life , trying to repair her relationship with him and their son , and stirring up tension between Marissa and Dominick In the world of those overdone stories , she'd be the villain , the one who'd come back to disrupt the perfect life the hero and heroine were about to build And in the end , the story always ended the same the hero would realize his fiancée

was his true love , and the villain would be cast aside , left with nothing But honestly , Paisley wasn't interested in playing that part .

She didn't want to rekindle anything with Dominick To her , he was nothing more than a stale loaf of bread , long past its expiration date .

Seeing him again only made her feel disgusted By the way .

Emery added , shifting gears as she thought of something else , did you see your ex-husband today ? And what about your ungrateful The mention of her son made Paisleys calm demeanor waver just slightly .

Grayson , her little boy whom she hadn't seen in four years was a constant ache in her heart .

When she left four years ago .

Grayson was only three .

Now he was seven .

She couldn't help but wonder what he would be like now .

Before Paisley could dwell on it for too long , a soft , childish voice broke her thoughts .

Mommy .

A tiny , soft body rushed into her arms , and Paisleys heart instantly softened .

It was Serena Sutton , her youngest , still wet from her bath , her hair damp and messy .

Serenas chubby line cheeks glistened with droplets of water , her big doe eyes blinking up at Paisley with curiosity and affection .

Paisley held her close , feeling the familiar warmth of her daughter against her chest .

Why didn't you dry your hair before coming out ! What if you catch a cold ? she scolded gently , her hands already reaching for the towel Maria had handed her to dry Serenas hair .

Marta , the ever-smiling nanny who had been with them since Brightmoor , chuckled softly , Rena heard your voice and just couldn't wait .

She missed you so much and ran right out to see you , no matter what .

Paisley couldn't help but smile at the thought .

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She didn't blame Maria she had known her for years , and Maria had always been nothing but devoted to them both Moreover , Paisley understood her daughters personality all too well just like her , Serena was incredibly stubborn .

Serena , her small face still tucked into her mothers arms , peeked out from under the towel and looked up with wide eyes .

Mommy , I was really good today .

Can I not go to kindergarten tomorrow ! The hopeful gleam in her eyes was enough to melt anyone's heart Paisleys fingers gently rubbed her daughters soft hair , and as much as she wanted to give in to that pleading gaze , she held firm .

No , sweetheart .

You have to go to kindergarten tomorrow , Serenas eyes dimmed , the sparkle fading from her little face .

Okay .

she murmured , her shoulders slumping just a little .

Serena had been conceived right before Paisley divorced Dominick four years ago , and like her mother , she carried the surname Sutton .

Just as Paisley had nicknamed her son Sonny all those years ago , she had given her daughter a name that started with the letter S There had been no mention of Serena to Dominick Paisley didn't think it was necessary .

Otherwise , it would only stir up old feelings and drag her into a tangled mess she no longer wanted to be a part of .

She had severed that connection long ago , and she intended to keep it that way .

The institution that combined kindergarten , preschool , primary , and middle school all Paisley had enrolled Serena in a prestigious school , a unique one under one roof .

The school boasted strict administration , a solid faculty , and state-of-the-art facilities .

It had taken Emery several inquiries , along with a little help 2/3 Chapter 3 from her connections , to get Serena into this school The kindergarten , preschool , and first grade and second grade primary school departments were all located in the same area and shared the same entrance .

At the gate .

Paisley crouched down , hugging Serena tightly as they said their goodbyes .

Today was Serenas first day of kindergarten , and it was also the first time she would be separated from her mother for an extended period .

Serenas face was scrunched up , trying to hold back tears , her little lips trembling .

It broke Paisleys heart .

Mommy , I'll behave and listen to the teachers .

You'll be the first to come pick me up tonight , right ? Serena pouted , her eyes glistening with unshed tears Paisleys heart shattered at her daughters words .

She wanted nothing more than to scoop Serena up and run away , to keep her close forever , away from this world of school and strangers .

But she couldn't , age , and it would But she held back , Serena was already three years old old enough for kindergarten .

Besides , she was exceptionally sharp for her age , a baby good for her to go to the kindergarten and interact with more children , to learn and grow in that environment Though Paisley knew it was the right thing , the logical thing to let Serena go , it didn't make it any easier . The teacher , who had seen countless parents and children go through the same heart-wrenching goodbyes when the kids started kindergarten , didn't rush them .

She gave Paisley and Serena the space to say their farewells in their own time .

A car slowly rolled up , its engine humming gently as it came to a stop .

Inside , Grayson stared blankly ahead , his eyes unfocused as if lost in thought .

Sonny , what are you looking at ? Stella Prescott , a little girl with her hair styled in cute pigtails , leaned in and followed Graysons gaze .

Her eyes widened when she saw Paisley squat down , hold her daughter close and speak softly to her .

Paisleys tone was gentle but heavy with the sadness of parting Stella blinked and asked tentatively , Sonny , are you thinking about your mommy ? The mention of his mother seemed to hit a nerve .

Graysons face darkened , his expression sharpening into something fierce .

His gaze turned almost hostile .

Don't talk about that vile woman .

She doesn't deserve to be my mother .

I would never , ever , miss her .

His voice turned cold .

Stellas eyes widened in surprise , and she was momentarily frightened by Graysons intensity .

She paused for a moment before responding softly .

Trying to comfort him , You're right , Sonny .

A vile woman like that doesn't deserve to be your mom , She studied Graysons face , searching for any sign of relief , before continuing .

But I do your new mommy .

She loves you so much .

She'll be your real mommy then.

When Aunt Marissa marries Dominick , she'll be Graysons face softened a little at her words , though the storm in his eyes hadn't completely cleared .

He clung to the thought , finding a small bit of solace in it .

Yeah , if Manso could be my mom , that would be great .

The idea swirled in his young mind like a comforting balm , as if the idea of Marissa stepping in the role of his mother could somehow make things better , could fill the void he felt

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