

Chapter 9 No.9

Elisa pressed herself flat against the wood of the door, wishing she could melt through it. Gallagher was too close. The smell of cedar and his own clean, masculine scent was overwhelming.

"Let me out," she said, her voice barely a whisper.

"Sit down," Gallagher ordered. He pointed to one of the leather armchairs.

"I am not staying in this room with you."

"This hospital group is my largest private equity holding, Elisa. Every person in this building works for me. You can either sit down and talk to me, or I can have security escort you to my car. Your choice."

He had her. He knew it.

Elisa walked stiffly to the armchair and sat on the very edge. She kept her coat on, clutching the lapels together.

Gallagher sat in the chair opposite her. He reached out and took her foot, lifting it onto his knee.

Elisa flinched. "What are you doing?"

"You cut your feet the night before last," he said. "Running barefoot in the city. It's asking for an infection."

He slipped her shoe off. His hand was warm, his fingers strong. He inspected the soles of her feet. There were small cuts, red and angry.

He opened a drawer in the side table and took out an antiseptic swab and a tube of ointment. He began to clean the cuts. His touch was incredibly gentle, a stark contrast to his imposing size and the threat he represented.

Elisa watched him. The top of his head was bent, his dark hair falling slightly forward.

"Why are you doing this?" she asked.

"Because Chris wouldn't notice if you lost a limb," Gallagher said without looking up. "And because you're mine now."

Elisa pulled her foot back. "I am not yours. I'm marrying your nephew."

Gallagher looked up. He didn't let go of her ankle. His griptightened just enough to be a warning.

"You're not marrying him," he said. "You left the ring."

"I can get another one."

"You won't," Gallagher applied the ointment. The sting made her hiss. "You know what he is. That's why you were at the club."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Don't lie to me, Elisa. It insults my intelligence." He finished with her foot and stood up.

"I can't speak for my nephew's... activities," he said, his voice dropping. "But I can assure you, Elisa. I am clean."

His gaze was intense, unwavering.

"How do you know about me?" she whispered.

"Because you were a virgin until you met me," he said bluntly.

Elisa's face burned. She felt exposed, stripped bare by his words.

A knock at the door.

Gallagher stepped back. "Come in."

A nurse poked her head in. "Mr. Osborne, your 10 o'clock board meeting..."

She looked at Elisa, sitting in the chair, flushed and disheveled, and Gallagher standing over her. Her eyes widened.

"Cancel it," Gallagher said. He walked over to Elisa and placed a hand on her shoulder. His thumb rubbed the hollow of her collarbone. "I'm

< Chapter 9 No.9

 +120 Points at most

attending to a... personal matter."

The nurse nodded, a knowing look crossing her face. "Of course, sir." She closed the door.

Elisa shrugged his hand off. "Stop touching me."

"You liked me touching you two nights ago," Gallagher said. He leaned in, his lips brushing her ear. "I'm going to give you a choice, Elisa. You can either end this farce with Chris yourself, or you can watch as I dismantle it for you. Piece by piece. Publicly."

"You wouldn't," Elisa breathed. "It would ruin you too. The scandal..."

"I am the scandal," Gallagher said. "I thrive on it. Chris, however... Chris would crumble."

He pulled back, his eyes cold and hard.

"The choice is yours. But I am not a patient man."

He unlocked the door.



 SPIN 999 BONUS! 100% chance
of winning!

Check