

Chapter 171 The Confrontation

Rachel stared in shock at the small emerald guardian angel pendant in Isabel's hand.

"That belongs to Xander! He wore it all the time when he was little. How did it end up with you?"

Isabel turned, raising an eyebrow at Rachel, who looked like she'd been hit by a truck—face twisted, eyes wide with disbelief.

It's just an emerald guardian angel pendant, right? Sure, Xander wore it as a kid, but was that really a reason for her to look like she wanted to tear me apart?

Isabel didn't know that when she was a child, she had once touched Xander's emerald guardian angel pendant, and he had kicked her out of the villa. Even though it was for Ivana's sake, he wouldn't let her stay.

So, when she saw the pendant hanging around Isabel's neck just now, it instantly triggered a flood of memories. She was transported back to her childhood, remembering when Xander had sent her away for a month, not allowing her to return.

"I get it now! You stole it!" she yelled, convinced.

Yeah, that had to be it!

She admitted that Xander treated Isabel differently, but she couldn't believe that he would pamper her to the extent of giving her the emerald guardian angel pendant.

After all, she, his childhood friend, wasn't even allowed to touch it.

So, it had to be that Isabel had stolen it.

"You're crazy," Isabel said, shooting Rachel a bemused glance. She closed her eyes and basked in the afternoon sunlight.

The light danced with the swing sway, and Isabel let go of her worries, enjoying the peaceful moment.

Meanwhile, Rachel stood nearby, her face contorting even further as her teeth ground together. Finally, she reached her breaking point.

Without warning, she lunged forward and yanked the pendant from Isabel's neck.

"Hss—" Isabel winced, clutching her neck, and whipped around to glare at Rachel.

"You are seriously out of your mind!" Her gaze dropped to the pendant in Rachel's grip.

"Give it back. Now." Her voice was ice-cold, leaving no room for argument.

"Ha! Give it back? This thing was never yours in the first place!" Rachel sneered, turning to leave with the pendant.

Isabel took a deep breath, her starry eyes narrowing with chilling coldness.

Rachel had truly pushed her to the edge! She had already suspected that Rachel was behind what happened to Yvette. Now, she had gone so far as to steal her emerald guardian angel pendant.

Fine, if she wanted a fight, she'd get one.

With lightning speed, Isabel darted forward, blocking Rachel's path.

Rachel looked at her warily. "What do you think you're—"

Before she could finish, Isabel slapped her hard.

Smack! The sound echoed as Rachel staggered, falling to the ground in pain.

"Ahhh! That hurts—so much!" Rachel shrieked, clutching her cheek.

Ignoring her screams, Isabel snatched the pendant back.

"That's mine! Give it back!" Rachel screeched, eyes blazing.

Isabel raised her hand mockingly. "This is yours." And then she slapped her again.

This slap was for Yvette—whether or not Rachel had actually done anything to her that night, she'd earned it for what she'd done at the bar.

Rachel clutched her face, which was surely swelling now despite not needing a mirror to know it.

"Isabel, I'm going to kill you!" Rachel scrambled to her feet, all semblance of grace and composure forgotten. With her long, sharp nails, she lunged at Isabel's face, intent on tearing it apart.

Isabel's expression remained emotionless as she lifted her foot and kicked Rachel in the stomach.

"Ahh—" Rachel screamed in pain, collapsing to the ground.

The noise was too loud to ignore, and by the time Xander and Samuel arrived, they walked in just in time to witness the scene.

"What's going on here?" Xander asked, brows furrowing.

"Xan! Ahhh! Xan! She hit me! Look what she's done to me." Rachel rushed over to Xander, grabbing onto his arm with a pitiful expression.

Xander recoiled in disgust, pulling his arm away from her grip. Without sparing her another glance, he walked straight toward Isabel.

Seeing this scene, Rachel felt a surge of satisfaction as she looked at Isabel, thinking, Dare to hit me and get caught by Xander? Let's see how you explain yourself today.

Isabel raised her brows slightly, her expression unreadable. She knew Xander cared for her, but Rachel was Ivana's daughter and his childhood friend. Beating her so blatantly was a bit disrespectful to Xander. Still ...

Even if she had to do it again, she would still lay hands on Rachel without hesitation.

Before Xander could reach her, Isabel spoke up first. "I hit her. She deserved it."

Xander stopped in his tracks. "Next time, don't hit anyone yourself."

Rachel's smirk grew wider at his words, her eyes gleaming with mockery as she stared at Isabel.

Isabel's lips pressed together, and for a moment, an uncomfortable feeling surged inside her. After a brief pause, she looked up at Xander, ready to say something, but before she could speak, Xander's voice cut in first.

"If you want to hit someone again, just tell me, and I'll handle it for you." Xander's gaze softened as he looked at her, his eyes full of tenderness, as if she were the entire world.

Isabel's pupils widened, and her heart began to melt, the icy walls inside her gradually crumbling, like spring thawing a frozen lake under the warm sun.

Rachel's mouth fell open, her jaw nearly touching the ground. She had thought Xander would defend her, considering the situation. After all, it was obvious to anyone that Isabel had bullied her. But now she couldn't believe her ears. Xander had just turned the tables completely.

Samuel rolled his eyes. What was supposed to be a typical melodramatic fight scene had suddenly turned into a cruel, never-ending saga full of bitter, tragic drama.

"Don't you mind me hitting her?" Isabel couldn't help but ask, her voice laced with confusion.

"If you hit her, there's a reason for it." Xander stared intently at Isabel, his gaze unwavering, full of trust and conviction.

How much trust did he have in her for him to say something like that?

At that moment, Isabel felt overwhelming emotions surge inside her.

"What if I didn't have a reason?" she asked again, curiosity lacing her words.

"Then what? As long as you like it, that's enough."

Xander's carefree response took Isabel completely by surprise. Was he really being so reckless with his affection?

"Xander, if you keep going like this, I'm serious—"

Before she could finish, Xander suddenly reached out, unzipping her jacket and pulling the collar open.

What was he doing? In broad daylight, in front of so many people, was he really about to—?

"What's this on your neck?!" Xander's face tightened with a cold fury, his eyes fixated on the bloodstains on Isabel's neck.

The crimson streaks stood out against her fair skin, striking in their stark contrast.

Isabel immediately realized why Xander had ripped open her jacket—he had seen the marks on her neck.

She absentmindedly touched her neck, wincing slightly at the faint sting.

"Who did this?!" Xander's voice rose in anger, a low growl escaping him.

Rachel, startled by his intense voice, swallowed nervously and took a couple of steps back.