

Chapter 48

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[Vivienne]

His lips on mine come out of nowhere.

One minute, I'm trying to get the truth out of him, and the next, my back is being pressed against something hard, his ruthless fingers digging into my waist, and his mouth... his mouth is all over mine.

I cannot begin to tell you how much I hate him right now.

The fact that he thinks he can still use the same tactics to shut me up makes my blood boil. I'm so done with this man. So fucking done.

"Get off me!" I push him hard—hard enough to peel his body off mine and shove him away. "What the hell is wrong with you? Is this how you handle all your conversations? Kissing people so you won't have to hear the truth?"

The look he gives me is one of confusion and something else I don't want to analyze. He clears his throat and fixes his tie, as if that could somehow fix his entire asshole personality.

Disgusted, I wipe my mouth with the back of my hand, wanting nothing more than to get the hell out of here.

Shit. This entire day has already been a shitshow. You'd think it would at least have a better ending so I could get a decent night's sleep, but no. My fate seems to have other plans, making me run into this family more often than I ever wanted.





But I don't have to endure this, not more than I already have.

"You're such an asshole, Caden. I wish I knew it sooner." I'm ready to leave with that. I don't want any answers. I don't want to know what his involvement is in this whole drugging-me thing. I just want a break—a break from him, a break from this never-ending drama that doesn't seem to stop.

But I can't. The moment I turn to leave, he grabs my arm again, pulling me in the direction I don't want to go.

"You will drop the case, Vivienne. Drop it now." He says it like a command, and there isn't even a hint of shame in his voice. The woman he was married to for three years got drugged by some insane person, almost molested by another, and all he cares about is what he thinks and what he wants.

I scoff, yanking my arm out of his grip. "Well, you're in for a disappointment, Caden. Last time I checked, I wasn't your obedient little wife anymore. You're expecting too much from someone who doesn't give a fuck about what you want."

I'm ready to leave again when he says something that makes me stop of my own accord.

"Name your price," he says. "Everyone has a price. You name yours, and I'll give it to you."

I turn around to see if this is the same Caden I married three years ago, if he's the same silent and studious guy I fell in love with.

I laugh, a bitter sound that echoes in the empty night. "You really think you can buy me off? Is that what you've reduced yourself to? Throwing money at problems until they go away?"

He doesn't flinch. "This isn't about money, Vivienne. It's about what you want. And I know you want something. So name it, and we can both get what we need."

"You don't get it, do you?" I shake my head. "I don't want anything from you. I never did. All I wanted was honesty, respect—a relationship that meant something. But you... you turned everything into a transaction. You're still doing the same. Now I wonder if it was my mistake for loving you so blindly that I overlooked the kind of person you were, or if it's yours because you're just too arrogant and full of yourself to appreciate anything that doesn't come with a price tag."

He rolls his eyes. "You can twist it however you want, but I'm offering you something here. You drop the case, and you can have whatever you ask for. A baby, for instance. You always wanted one, didn't you? How about you do what I'm telling you, and we can go back to being a couple again? Although you already got what you wanted last night. But still. Isn't there a saying? The more you try, the better. What do you think about that?"

My brain stops for a moment.

I stare at him, unsure of how to react. This entire conversation is ridiculous. He wants me to drop this case, and I don't want to, so now he's bringing a child into this?



I can't even begin to explain how this is making me feel right now. I feel dirty, and the more I think about it, the more it sinks in that the person standing in front of me isn't the Caden I used to love.

He's a monster, the one I should have never married.

"How... how dare you." I struggle to find the words. The things he's said, the things he's done—no decent man would do those things. And now he has the nerve to use my wants and desires against me like a weapon?

But this needs to end. I want this to end more than I've ever wanted anything.

"But you're right. I do want something."

He looks so pleased with himself when I say that, and I hate him so much, more than ever now.

I step closer until we're almost nose-to-nose. "What I want, Caden, is for you to sign those divorce papers. And the sooner you do that, the sooner this case disappears. So, what do you say now, dear ex-husband? Do we have a deal?"



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