My Brother's Best Friend's Secret Baby –

Chapter 8

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Chapter 8 Rosalie's POV I made it all the way to the elevator before I turned around. I didn't know what made me do it. Part of me refused to walk away while he still had the last word. Part of me had spent seven years waiting to say the things I'd never been able to say before, because I'd been too young, too broken, and too pregnant to do anything except run. So I went back into the conference room. He was still there. He hadn't moved from his chair, which surprised me. I'd almost expected him to already be on the phone, calling influential people who could make things happen.

Instead, he was sitting exactly where I'd left him, his hands clasped on the table, staring at the door as though he'd known I'd come back. That irritated me more than I could explain. I pushed the door open and walked back to the table. I didn't sit down. I remained standing at the far end, my hands gripping the back of a chair as I looked him straight in the eye. "You want to talk about rights?" I said. "Fine. Let's talk about rights." He didn't say anything. He just watched me. "You lost every right to her the morning you told me I was a mistake." My voice was steady. I was proud of that.

"You gave up those rights when you told me to forget everything. When you walked out of that guest room without looking back." My grip tightened on the chair. "That's when you lost them. Not in a courtroom. Not on some piece of paper. You gave them up yourself." Something changed in his expression. A slight tightening around his eyes. The smallest movement of his jaw. He flinched, but barely. He was too controlled for it to be obvious. But I'd spent years memorizing his face.

From the time I was thirteen, I'd cataloged every expression, every tiny movement, the way people study something they know they shouldn't want. I saw it. A dark sense of satisfaction settled inside me. This chapter was taken from (.)com without permission. "I saw the announcement," I continued. "The engagement. The pictures of the two of you at that military ball. Her hand on your chest. The ring." I paused deliberately, letting the words hang between us. "You were engaged the whole time." I lifted my eyes to his. "When you kissed me. When you came to my room.

When you whispered all those things in the dark." My voice dropped. "I was the other woman and I didn't even know it." Something happened then. It was not a flinch this time. Something slower and more complicated. Like a man watching the damage he'd caused unfold right in front of him, unable to stop it. He finally opened his mouth.

"Don't," I said immediately. He closed it again. "I don't want your explanations. I don't want you telling me it was complicated, or that the engagement wasn't what it looked like, or whatever version of the story makes you feel better." I shook my head.

"I spent a long time at nineteen. Heartbroken. Pregnant. Completely alone. I spent years trying to figure but how could have been so stupid. How I could have believed you. And I'm done trying to understand." My eyes met his. "I just want you to know that I know. I know what you were when you touched me." 1 Follow the newest chapters on novelceo.com. The words landed hard. "And I want you to understand that's why I left." He didn't move at all. I'd imagined saying these things thousands of times. In the darkness of that awful apartment where Lucy and I had lived during those first years.

When she was finally asleep and there was nothing left to do except think, I'd whispered them to the ceiling to the bathroom mirror to paintings that were secretly inspired by him, even when I pretended they weren't. I had never imagined saying them to his face. It felt different than I'd expected. It was not better. Just more real. "Please leave," I said. "Go back to wherever you came from and leave us alone." He looked at me. His face settled back into that controlled expression of a soldier. "I'm not leaving," he said quietly. "Excuse me?" "I'm not leaving town.

And I'm not giving up." There was no aggression in his voice. If anything, he sounded calm. Which somehow made it worse. "I've already spoken to a family-law attorney. As Lucy's biological father, I have legal rights, no matter what happened between us."

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