

After All the Hurt, She Chose Herself

Chapter 15

“Flora, when did you get back?”

At the sound of a cheerful female voice, everyone’s gaze shifted toward the end of the hallway.

Lilith had somehow made her way to the payment counter. The girl’s face was an unhealthy pale, and her blue-and-white striped hospital gown hung loosely on her frame.

She looked terminally ill.

Aria looked away.

The sight of Lilith in her current state was not only heart-wrenching for Gideon but also unsettling for Aria herself.

It was no wonder Gideon stayed by Lilith’s side constantly, even ignoring the emergency call from the hospital about her.

Aria’s lips twisted into a cynical smile.

The moment she saw Lilith, Flora’s eyes lit up. She rushed past Aria and pulled Lilith into a bear hug, looking her over repeatedly.

“Lilith, are you really okay? If anyone gives you trouble, you have to tell me.”

“We’re best friends, after all.”

“If anyone dares to bully you, I’ll make them pay!”

As she spoke, her gaze flickered meaningfully toward Aria.

Aria wasn’t a fool; she knew Flora’s words were aimed at her.

Back in school, Flora often used these passive-aggressive tactics, forming cliques to isolate her. How was she still pulling the same childish tricks as an adult?

It was truly pathetic.

Lilith hugged Flora back tightly.

She had been waiting in her room for Gideon to return, and when he didn't, she decided to come out and look for him.

She never expected to run into Flora, and Charles too!

“Flora! We haven’t gone shopping together in so long! The last time was two years ago!”

“Charles, I can’t believe you and Flora are dating!” Lilith laughed, playfully poking Charles’s arm like a cute, pouting girl. “I video-called you a few days ago, why didn't you tell me?”

“I was about to come back and wanted to surprise you,” Charles said, gently ruffling Lilith’s hair with a soft and doting look. “Now that you see me, are you surprised?”

“Charles, you managed to keep your relationship with a wonderful woman like Flora a secret for this long?” Lilith feigned annoyance, hands on her hips, pretending to be fierce. “Aren’t you afraid my Flora would leave you?”

Her playful act made the other three burst into laughter.

Gideon gently squeezed the back of her neck, a hint of a smile in his voice. “You’re in a hospital and still can’t behave? Stop messing around.”

Charles also laughed, pulling Flora into his arms. “When Flora and I have our wedding, you two better be there.”

The four of them laughed and joked together. An outsider would have thought they were two loving couples.

Aria took a deep breath.

Who would have guessed that one of them was her current husband and the other was her ex-boyfriend?

What's more, Charles knew perfectly well that she was Gideon's wife, yet here he was, inviting Lilith and Gideon to his wedding together.

Lilith also knew about her past with Charles, yet she was teasing him and Flora.

The four of them were clearly excluding her on purpose.

Aria felt a wave of nausea. Hearing them continue to laugh and joke, she couldn't stand it any longer and turned to leave.

As she turned, she was struck hard by a wheelchair that came out of nowhere.

The motorized wheelchair had a lot of force, and Aria was knocked to the ground.

Instantly, a cold sweat broke out on her forehead.

“What’s wrong with you, young lady? So young and you’re already lying on the ground?”

The man in the wheelchair had a full head of white hair. He was the one who had hit her, yet now he was playing the victim.

The commotion was loud enough to draw Gideon’s gaze.

Charles glanced over as well but quickly looked away. “Mr. Evernight, it’s not often we get to meet like this. Shall we have a meal together?”

Gideon lowered his eyes, put an arm around Lilith, and started walking away. “My assistant has already booked a table. Let’s go together.”

The four of them walked past the fallen Aria without a second glance, as if she didn't even exist.

Aria clutched her stomach, sitting on the cold floor, a profound sense of desolation washing over her.

“Ms. Rowan! What happened?”