

After All the Hurt, She Chose Herself

Chapter 19

As Aria raised her hand to slap him, Charles didn't even flinch. He just stared straight at her.

His dark pupils were like a bottomless abyss, capable of pulling a person in with just a single glance.

But Aria's hand stopped in mid-air. From her angle, she could faintly see Charles's right hand trembling slightly—a lasting injury from when he had saved her.

His hand had been injured protecting her. When he was rushed into surgery, the doctors said it was bad. The worst-case scenario was amputation...

A surgeon losing the hand he was most proud of was something Charles couldn't accept, and neither could Aria.

She would always be indebted to him.

Aria lowered her hand and turned her head away, tossing out a single, cold sentence. “My business is none of your concern.”

She turned and walked away, ready to get in her car.

The weather had turned cool, and since she had come to the hospital in a hurry, Aria was only wearing a thin shirt, her long, pale neck shivering in the thin air.

Charles's gaze fell on a red patch of skin on Aria's neck.

They were both adults. Charles could see it was clearly a hickey, and a fresh one at that.

“Of course I don't need to worry about your affairs.”

Aria looked back, not understanding what he meant.

Charles raised an eyebrow, his tone dripping with sarcasm. “It’s because you were already planning to have a child with Gideon and couldn't wait for an opportunity like this.”

“Now that you've latched onto a big shot like Gideon, of course you'd look down on the little money I can offer.”

Following Charles's gaze, Aria saw the embarrassing mark on her skin and recalled the violent, forced encounter that night.

A sharp pain stabbed through Aria's heart. She pulled at her collar, desperately trying to cover the mark, then scrambled into her car as if escaping a place that was suffocating her.

“You must have been hoping for Lilith to get sick, right? After all, why else would Gideon ever touch you?”

Watching his figure shrink in the rearview mirror, Aria closed her eyes, feeling exhausted.

How had she and Charles reached a point where they couldn't stand the sight of each other?

Just as Aria's mind drifted, the self-driving car seemed to sense a danger ahead and braked sharply. Aria's head slammed into the steering wheel.

Someone tapped twice on the window.

When she came to her senses, Aria quickly looked outside.

A man was standing in front of her car.

He wore a mask and a tailored suit. He stood tall, and the skin visible was pale, but not in an unhealthy way.

He had piercing, hooded eyes that seemed to strip away her defenses.

Aria frowned and quickly got out of the car, asking with some uncertainty, “Raphael?”

Raphael Evernight was Gideon's brother. Aria had heard he wasn't in good health and had been living abroad to recuperate.

In her three years married into the Evernight family, Aria had never met this so-called “brother”; she had only seen his picture in a family photo album.

Raphael's gaze lingered on Aria's pale face for a moment before looking away. “Do you need a ride?”

Aria was stunned for a moment, but she quickly realized that from where Raphael was standing, he must have witnessed her entire argument with Charles.

Aria shook her head repeatedly. “No, that’s alright. Thank you.”