

After All the Hurt, She Chose Herself

Chapter 6

She finally understood. Roxanne had called her back today to make her give up all hope.

At the dining table, the family sat down, with Aria in a corner seat.

Roxanne asked, "I heard Charles say you two are planning to get engaged? Have you chosen a venue and everything?"

Charles put some food on Flora Keene's plate. "Whatever Flora likes, I'm fine with it."

"Then do you think you could have Aria be the bridesmaid?"

Roxanne's question cast a silence over the table.

"This child has been attached to Charles since they were little. I'm sure she'll be overjoyed to know you're getting married."

"Right, Aria?" As she spoke, Roxanne looked at Aria with a beaming smile.

But how much of that smile was genuine?

Aria tightened her grip on her utensils.

Asking her to be a bridesmaid at her ex-boyfriend's wedding?

She poked at the rice on her plate. "I'm married. I can't be a bridesmaid."

"I don't want anything unlucky or tainted at my engagement party."

Two voices spoke at the same time.

Aria froze.

The second voice was Charles. Did he just call her something tainted?

Aria knew Charles still hated her.

When they were eighteen, Charles had been protecting her from some thugs when his hand was cut, severing the nerves. He could no longer hold a scalpel.

His only hope for a cure was to get into the most advanced pharmaceutical research institute.

And the prerequisite for entry was for Charles to successfully complete a biological experiment.

Aria was supposed to complete that clinical trial with him, but in the end, she had bailed on him.

Even worse, at his lowest point, she had abandoned her medical studies and married Gideon.

It was understandable that he hated her.

No one expected Charles to say something so harsh. The atmosphere at the table grew quiet.

Flora tugged on Charles's sleeve. "Charles, no matter what, Aria still calls you uncle Charles..."

Charles was unfazed, pulling out a napkin to wipe the corner of Flora's lips. "In a month, she'll be my wife."

This meal had completely ruined Aria's appetite. "I'm full. I'll be going now."

"My dear, why do you eat so little?"

"Charles's bark is just worse than his bite. We'll invite you to the engagement party."

Aria didn't slow her steps.

Back in her car, her phone buzzed incessantly. It was the work group chat.

She opened it and saw a flood of messages welcoming Lilith to the company.

Henry had even posted a photo celebrating Lilith's new job.

Gideon was sitting beside Lilith, a smile playing on his lips.

Aria thought back to the time she had a high fever but still went to a business dinner with Gideon to sign a major contract.

She was forced to drink throughout the event. After signing the contract, she went to the restroom and vomited her guts out, only to come out to an empty private room.

Because the contract was signed, the group chat was planning a celebration, but they hadn't even bothered to notify the hero of the hour.

Later, Aria found out that Gideon had forbidden her from attending.

Because of things like that, everyone knew that Mr. Evernight disliked his secretary, Ms. Rowan.

Aria wiped her face, belatedly realizing it was wet with tears.

Her phone buzzed again. It was a message from her assistant.

It was a detailed record of the academic conferences her professor had recently attended.

Aria flipped through a few pages, her finger stopping on a research report. It was a hypothesis she had proposed seven years ago.

Her professor was still following up on her idea!