

Chapter 6 Push Me Too Far, And You'll Leave With Nothing

"Well, isn't that just tragic?" Freya's voice dripped with sarcasm. "Two years of marriage, and my husband still doesn't know the first thing about me."

Kristian froze, caught off guard. She just had to twist the knife, didn't she?

"You're coming home with me." He yanked his tie loose, snatched her purse, and clamped a hand around her wrist, dragging her toward the exit.

Freya stiffened, startled. Kristian halted too. Their eyes locked onto the purse in his grip.

Did he think she was Ashley? Otherwise, why would he be treating her with such sudden kindness now? The thought sliced through Freya.

Kristian offered no explanation, storming off with those infuriatingly long strides.

Ashley watched from the hospital room, her sweet facade crumbling. Her nails dug into her palms, leaving crescent marks she didn't even feel.

The door creaked open moments later.

"I thought Freya hired that hit-and-run driver?" Ashley's friend frowned. "Why is Mr. Shaw still—"

"It wasn't her." Ashley's brow furrowed.

At first, she'd assumed Freya was behind it—after all, her return threatened Freya's place as Kristian's wife.

But Freya's reaction today? Too genuine. Too uncalculated.

Kristian had noticed it too.

In the backseat of the car, tension hung thick between him and Freya.

Before Kristian could speak, Gerard's call cut through. "Sir, we traced the IP. The login didn't originate from our city."

"Understood." Kristian's grip tightened on the phone, the weight of his mistake settling like lead.

He'd wronged Freya. His gaze flicked to her, silhouetted by sunlight filtering through the window. The glow softened her edges, almost like the woman she'd been before—before the bitterness, before the barbs.

"Freya." Her name left his lips, uncharacteristically hesitant.

She'd overheard the call. "Don't tell me you're about to apologize."

Kristian's jaw clenched. Why did every conversation with her feel like walking into a trap?

"An out-of-town IP doesn't prove my innocence," she mused, voice light but edged. "What if I hired someone else to contact the driver?"

He knew she was baiting him.

The apology lodged in his throat, stubborn as a stone.

After a beat, he forced it out. "I know it wasn't you."

If she'd orchestrated it, she wouldn't dissect the evidence so coolly—or taunt him with its flaws. His worry for Ashley, Freya's recent unpredictability—they'd blinded him.

"Oh." Freya's reply was a dismissal.

Kristian blinked. Just... "oh"? He'd expected fury, demands, something. Instead, he thrust a black card at her. "Take the primary card. Spend however you want."

"Gladly." She plucked it from his fingers without hesitation.

His eyebrows shot up.

"Now the others," she added.

Kristian turned to her, not quite following. "What others?"

"Considering your inappropriate behavior today," she said, her tone impossibly neutral, "and to avoid any further complications, I'll be holding onto all your cards starting now. You'll get them back on the day of the divorce."

The driver nearly choked on air.

Kristian's brows snapped together.

"What, you don't want to?" Freya pressed, arching a brow.

"You should know when to stop while you're ahead," Kristian said, irritation creeping into his voice. The air in the car grew thick. "I admit I misjudged today, but let's not pretend your erratic behavior lately didn't play a role in that."

Freya stared at him, disbelief flashing in her eyes. He was seriously blaming her for this?

"Really?" Her voice was dangerously calm.

"Yes." Kristian didn't back down.

"Even if I hadn't changed," Freya countered, her confidence unshaken, "the moment you saw those chat logs about Ashley's accident, you'd have accused me without a second thought. Admit it."

Kristian opened his mouth to argue—then froze. She wasn't wrong.

With a flick of her wrist, Freya tossed the card back at him, rubbing her temples as frustration simmered beneath her skin.

What was wrong with her? Since when did she let someone so irrelevant rattle her? Hadn't she accepted long ago that Ashley would always come first in Kristian's heart?

The card bounced off Kristian's chest, leaving him momentarily stunned. Before he could react, Freya's voice cut through the silence—this time addressing the driver. "Watson, drop me at the next intersection."

"Understood, ma'am."

Kristian's voice turned glacial. "Why?"

"To stay away from you." Freya's tone was sweetly mocking, her composure fully restored. "Wouldn't want your idiocy rubbing off on me like some common cold."

Kristian's temper flared. Since when did she wield sarcasm like a scalpel?

"Drive straight home," he ordered through gritted teeth.

The driver obeyed, the car accelerating toward Regalia Villas.

Any lingering guilt Kristian had evaporated under the heat of his irritation.

Thirty minutes later, the car rolled to a stop at a villa's driveway.

Freya was out before Kristian could move, her purse slung over her shoulder as she vanished inside. By the time he reached the living room, the bedroom door had already clicked shut behind her.

Knowing she'd change, he forced himself to wait.

Ten minutes later, Freya emerged in soft, loose clothing, her wispy bangs framing a face that looked deceptively fragile.

She didn't so much as blink at Kristian's presence. She knew exactly why he'd stayed.

"We're due at my parents' at six," he said the moment she settled on the sofa. "Be ready. The driver will fetch you."

Freya grabbed the remote and flicked on the TV. "Not going."

"Freya!" His voice was a warning.

"You broke your promise first." She didn't glance up. "Don't expect me to play along now."

"There are priorities," he snapped, studying her like a stranger. "Shopping with you or Ashley's life—which matters more?"

The TV blared to life with a variety show's canned laughter.

Freya's jaw tightened. Just hearing Ashley's name made her temples throb.

Once, she'd pictured Kristian's beloved as gentle, radiant—worthy of the devotion he gave her.

Now? The woman's two-faced nature was almost disappointing.

"Shopping, obviously." Freya deadpanned.

Kristian's eyes turned arctic. "Must you always provoke me?"

Silence.

"If you want that divorce payout," he bit out, patience snapping, "you'll cooperate. Push me too far, and you'll leave with nothing."