

Chapter 5 We Meet Again So Soon

Alicia's nerves coiled tight like a spring.

That voice...

Her messy thoughts blurred into chaos, but one thing broke through the haze—Joshua's calm declaration. "Alicia and I have been married for two years now. She cares about me, so we kept it low-key. Just went straight for the registration; no ceremony. You were busy abroad at the time, so we didn't bother you."

Caden arched a brow, his voice laced with venomous mockery. "Oh, so she's my sister-in-law."

The way he spat the words "sister-in-law" felt more like a slap than a title, leaving no doubt about his contempt for her.

Alicia could feel the man's sneer underneath every syllable.

And all this was thanks to her so-called husband, Joshua.

Her hand trembled as she snatched a tissue, vigorously wiping her hand, as if scrubbing herself clean from his dirty touch.

"Looks like Alicia's a bit of a germophobe," Caden observed, his tone a casual jab at her disgust.

Joshua's expression darkened, the tension between them thickening. He hadn't expected her to humiliate him like this.

"It seems I've spoiled her too much," he muttered, his voice low and tight with irritation.

Caden's eyes gleamed with a dangerous glint. "If it's a serious condition, she should get treated. It could impact her role as a mother. You know how badly our father has wanted a grandchild."

At this, something flickered across Joshua's eyes.

Even though Alicia, his wife, was right beside him, he went ahead and lied through his teeth. "Thanks for the concern, Caden, but I already have good news for Dad. I just haven't gotten around to telling him yet."

Caden's smirk deepened, his gaze flicking toward Alicia, who was about done with the bullshit of a charade.

She quietly excused herself and strode off, the sensuous sway of her hips catching Caden's attention.

"How far along is she?" he asked meaningfully. "Doesn't seem like she's pregnant."

Joshua didn't miss a beat. "Just a month."

The answer was as much a threat as it was an announcement.

Now, the inheritance stakes had just been raised, and Jerald, ever focused on continuing the family line, would certainly take his unborn grandchild into consideration.

Caden's smile hardened, and Joshua delivered the final blow with a smug undertone. "You'd better catch up, Caden. I can't always be one step ahead."

Caden, unfazed, waved his hand lazily. "No rush."

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Alicia stepped onto the terrace, the cool night breeze washing over her skin. She drank in the fresh air hungrily to steady her nerves.

Pulling out her phone, she quickly dialed the manager of the private cinema again.

"Have you found the ring?" she asked anxiously.

The manager hesitated, sounding troubled. "Ms. Bennett, we've searched thoroughly and questioned all the staff, but... we really couldn't find any ring."

"Then..." Alicia clenched her fist, her mind racing. "Do you have the contact details of the guest who booked the room that day?"

"I'm sorry, but due to our privacy policy, we can't disclose any information on our clients."

Her heart sank. "I see," she sighed with resignation. "Please tell me immediately if anything turns up, okay?"

In a perfect world, she could've just bought an identical ring and pass it off for the original.

Unfortunately, Joshua had that ring custom-made, and it wasn't easy to replicate.

After dinner, it started to rain.

The relatives began to trickle out one by one.

Joshua stood by her side as they made their way to the car, his eyes trailing down to her bare wrist. "If you liked that bracelet at the auction, then I can buy you something like it," he said coolly.

Alicia had to resist the urge to roll her eyes sardonically. She didn't believe for a second that Joshua had a change of heart towards her.

"Trying to buy my silence, huh?" Her words were sharp, slicing right through Joshua's tender facade. "No need. I have no desire to be tangled up in your affairs."

Joshua hadn't intended to sound like that, but her mocking tone struck a nerve. His jaw clenched, and a bitter smile crossed his lips. "Fine. Don't take it. The money I spend on you is a waste anyway."

Alicia bit the inside of her cheek before adding firmly, "Joshua, I already told you. I'm willing to leave this marriage empty-handed. Let's sign the divorce papers tomorrow morning and end this once and for all."

His smile twisted into something dark, something dangerous. "What about the ring?"

"I lost it."

Joshua's eyes narrowed, his tone unrelenting. "I don't care about anything else. I want the ring."

She could barely contain her frustration, her breath hitching as he delivered his final blow.

"If you can't find it," he said coldly, "I'll assume you're holding onto it because you still care about me."

Just then, Joshua's phone rang; it was Lilliana calling.

"Joshua." She mewled his name pitifully. "The thunder is so loud. I'm scared to sleep alone... Can you come over?"

The car wasn't heading anywhere near Lilliana's and Joshua was furious with Alicia, so without a second thought, he kicked her out into the rain and sped off.

He didn't even leave her an umbrella.

Alicia stood frozen by the roadside, the downpour quickly soaking through her clothes. The cold rain seeped into her bones, chilling her to the core.

Gritting her chattering teeth, she swallowed the bitter taste in her mouth and began trudging along the drenched pavement.

Behind her, the soft hum of an engine crept closer. A sleek, low-profile Maybach rolled up beside her, its headlights cutting through the rain.

"Mr. Ward," the driver said, glancing back, "I believe that's Ms. Bennett."

The car slowed to a stop.

Caden glanced out the window, his sharp eyes narrowing on Alicia's lonesome figure.

She had just paused, her fingers gathering the fabric of her soaked dress, tying it up to ease her stride.

Her slender legs glistened under the rain.

Despite her legs looking delicate, there was a quiet strength about them.

He couldn't help but recall how those legs had entwined around him like a serpent only nights before.

Caden's lips curled into a faint, knowing smirk at the memory. "Invite her inside," he drawled.

The car came to a halt next to Alicia.

The driver stepped out, holding a large umbrella over her head, his voice polite. "Ms. Bennett, it's hard to find a cab at this hour. May I offer you a ride home?"

Alicia's eyes flicked up, recognizing the man as the Yates family's driver.

She hesitated for a moment before nodding, her voice soft but steady. "Thank you. Sorry for the inconvenience."

However, as soon as she slipped into the backseat of the car, she locked eyes with its other passenger—Caden.

"We meet again so soon, huh?" His voice, smooth as velvet, carried a hint of mischief.

