Chapter 16

I can't trust you, can I?

Instantly, Tommy stopped in his steps, masking his urge to smirk with a bitter and stern expression as he stared deeply at his sister-in-law and then at Peach.

"Well, look who finally decided to know her place and behave like how you suppose to behave in your low status!" Tommy remarked, his words laced with venom and sarcasm.

Then he walked over to Miss Grace, handed her the paper, and commanded, "Sign it, and let's stop beating around the bush about this matter! I am being very generous, you know!" With trembling hands, Miss Grace slowly reached out for the papers, tears rolling from her eyes, but before she got a hold of it, Peach grabbed the sheet and shredded it to pieces as tears ran down her face.

The anger in her eyes as she did it was something that no one has ever seen on her face before. Then Peach looked at Tommy with pure disgust and contempt and yelled at him, "Your father and my dad must be rolling in their grave because of your actions. You are just a despicable human being, and the way you treat people is just disgusting! I hate you… I hate all of you!!"

Looking at her daughter with rage mixed with sadness in her eyes, Miss Grace mounted up enough strength to raise her hand and beat her palm against her daughter's cheek. "Mama," Peach whimpered, holding her burning cheek and staring at Miss Grace with wide open, wounded eyes.

Immediately, her mother pulled her into her arms, hugged her tightly, feeling remorseful, and fixed her eyes on Tommy, anger sparked in her eyes as she let out, "You and Patricia should leave."

A raw look of shock emerged on Tommy's expression, and before he could utter anything, he felt his wife's soft fingers gripping his wrist, and he was about to lash out when he looked over at Elijah recording them with his phone.

"You either get out, or you can put on a show that the entire internet can learn about later!" Elijah said in a cold tone, his eyes locked on Miss Grace as he watched her wiping her eyes with the back of her hand.

Pulling her husband along with her, Patricia dragged him away as she yelled out, "Don't you say that we are heartless when we decide to use harsh methods to get you guys to pay us back for all that you owed us!"

When the door slammed closed behind them, Miss Grace released the breath that she was holding and her head rested on her daughter's shoulders as she tried to keep her emotions under control.

"I know you are worried about us paying the hospital bill…" Peach whispered gently and caressed her mother's hair tenderly.

Shaking her head slowly, Miss Grace raised her gaze, wiped her tears from her eyes, gazed at her daughter deeply, and said, "I know that doctor Ben didn't give us a grace period to pay my hospital bill and you were lying to me… I don't want you taking on such burdens!" "I know, mama. But that's what I came to tell you. Elijah is going to help pay the twenty thousand dollars, in exchange for his friends and him to stay at the motel for a long time…"

Peach answered as she grabbed her mother's hand. "What are you saying." "I am being truthful. That's why Elijah is here. He really agreed to give the money." Looking away from her daughter, Miss Grace focused her eyes on Elijah, a soft expression on her face as she said, "No offense, but you are known to be Melina's useless stay-at-home husband who lived off her pocket, so how can you afford to help pay my bills?".

'No offense always means brace yourself for what's coming…' Elijah thought, frowning at the words she used to describe him.

It took a while for him to suppress his anger and compose himself and answer calmly, "Do you guys want my money or not?"

Both Peach and Miss Grace looked at him, a hint of hurt in their eyes as they stared at each other, and then Peach swallowed her pride and said, "It's better them selling our Motel to my uncle, so yeah. We want it."

"I will make the withdrawal tomorrow morning and do the down payment to Peach," Elijah said, feeling a sense of hurt.

Then he turned away from the mother and daughter and walked out of the room, shoving his hands into his pocket, feeling overwhelmed with emotions. "Elijah," Peach's voice called him out, but he kept walking, ignoring her calls. Of all the places he could have ended up, he had to land in the Hayes' nest, and he didn't know if it was a good thing, but so far, he wasn't very excited about it. Frowning, when Peach caught up to him, she grabbed his arm, trying to turn him around, but he pulled his hand, and she banged into his back.

"Ouch!" Peach whined, clutching her sore forehead as she glared at him.

When Elijah turned around, he stared into her eyes, and he wanted to apologize to her, but his lips refused to move, and he just gazed at her with a blank expression.

After looking away from him, Peach sighed heavily, and then she let out in annoyance, "My mom wanted to say, 'thank you…' Why did you walk out like that!"

"Thank you?" Elijah asked, his eyebrows arched as he looked at her.

Rolling her eyes at him, Peach retorted sarcastically, "Yes, you idiot. Thank you for helping to pay the bills for her treatment. You don't know how relieved she is now… It means a lot."

"Wow, I didn't know this, a useless stay-at-home husband who lived off his wife's pocket deserved a 'Thank you!' Elijah replied sarcastically, glaring at her angrily as he raised an eyebrow

Noticing the hurt in his eyes when he spoke made Peach feel guilty, and she lowered her gaze, sighed, and whispered, "My mother's words hurt your feelings, huh?… I am so… so sorry, Elijah. I can promise you that she didn't mean it in a hurtful manner. She does respect you and your friends."

"Whatever," Elijah mumbled, turning away from her and continuing to walk forward.

Taking a deep breath, Peach hurriedly ran after him, and when she was close enough, she

grabbed his arm again and said, "I am sorry for what my mother said to you, Elijah, truly. Please know that she doesn't actually mean any of those things, okay?" "What's your problem?! You weren't even the one who said them in the first place!" Elijah shouted at her, pulling his arm away from her grasp. "So why are you so hung up on this?!" "Because I know what it means to get looked down on, treated like you're worthless, and are nothing more than a piece of shit… As though you are not even human. Like your feelings are worth less than dirt."

"Peach, I-"

"And it hurts! It tears you down! Make you feel insignificant and pathetic and helpless, just like I'm feeling right now." Staring at her finally, Elijah realized that she was crying silently, tears rolling down her cheeks and her lip quivering. "It has been the way I felt since I was a child, as a teenager, and now, as a woman, a twenty four years old adult!" Peach exclaimed, raising her voice and crying even harder. "Being ignored by everyone around me is hard enough, so yes! I'm so sorry that my mother hurt your feelings!"

Not putting thought into it, Elijah pulled Peach into his chest and wrapped his arms around her waist, hugging her tight, resting his chin on her hair. Her soft sob echoed into his ear, and he squeezed her tightly, realizing just how ignorant he had been with

his pain that he disregarded everyone else's pain and suffering. This was the first time for Peach to be held so intimate by the opposite sex, and it felt so strange, yet nice, and she never imagined that it would feel this good.

It made her feel things that she never thought possible. She had never felt this comfortable with anyone before, and she never thought it would happen with someone she just met yesterday.

Her mind was so distracted that she didn't even realize that she had stopped crying, her heart pounding with ease as she clutched onto him tightly, burying her face in his chest "Peach, the nurses are watching us," Elijah whispered, loosening his grip on her body, allowing her to pull away slightly from him.

Her cheeks felt hot from the embarrassment when she saw the serious expression on his face,

she cleared her throat and then heard the whispers of the nurses and their chuckles.

Feeling timid, she dropped her hands to the side and looked at him shyly, and then she glanced away, her cheeks blushing fiercely. "Well, I am sorry too for being such an ass to you… for every time I acted like a douchebag towards you and treated you like crap." Elijah said when the nurses had walked further away.

"Umm… it's okay. We can just start over and put the past behind us, turning a new chapter in our lives." Peach responded, smiling at him as she tucked some of her hair behind her ears.

"Alright," Elijah said softly, nodding his head and offering her a small smile. There was a brief pause as Elijah stood there staring at her, feeling a bit awkward as he waited for her to say something to break the silence between them.

"Umm, thank you for standing up for my mother and me against my uncle. I know it was not your job to defend us." Peach muttered, lowering her gaze. "Well, as you said, we know what it means to be bullied, so I got your back, little buddy," Elijah said with a small grin.

"Thanks, big buddy." Peach chuckled, shaking her head at his nickname for her.

Staring intensely at her eyes, Elijah wore a smile on his face, but his mind was distracted by a question, disturbing his thoughts, 'I can't trust you, can I?' 2