

## Rare Gem

Grace

After an hour, the car comes to a stop in front of a tall tower. I stare at the envelope in my hand, completely unconcerned about Tristin's unwavering gaze on me.

"I own the penthouse. You can stay as long as you want." He says, his voice deep and low.

"I still don't understand it...What do you truly want?" I whisper, keeping my gaze on the envelope.

"I told you. I want you to work for me." Tristin repeats.

"What would you achieve by having me work for you? I am inexperienced, and not much of a help in anything." I sigh, meeting his eyes and finding myself holding my breath.

"At age 17, you won the international contest for the best building design. Later, Ethan used your design and earned millions. Surprisingly, your sister took the credit for it in his company." He straightens his cuffs, taking his eyes off me.

A noose tightens around my throat as I stare at him.

Lily asked me to give her that winning design because she wanted to impress Ethan. As her sister, I didn't think much about it.

My parents said I was talented. I can always make more million-dollar-worthy designs.



" She stole from you, didn't she? All her winning designs, her best works, and her reputation. " He looks up nonchalantly.

I swallow the lump in my throat and nod slowly.

" I know talent when I see it. You are a rare gem, Little Butterfly. " He leans in closer suddenly.

I gasp, my back pressing into the door. He moves closer, his dark eyes peering into mine deeply.

" It's time you let them all know how worthless they are without you. A rare gem like you. " His voice deepens.

My heart clenches in my chest. " Mr. Roberto. "

" Be my rare gem and let me borrow some of your winning streaks. I will make your husband and your sister grovel. In return, you have to earn me the big bucks by defeating your family and your husband at every turn. Can you...do that for me? " His breath ghosts my forehead.

It feels inappropriate for him to be so close, but I can't seem to push him away. This feels so wrong. Yet, I am frozen.

" Think about it. " The door behind me opens with a click.

Instantly, he moves away. I realize he was only opening the door for me and shake my head.

" I will give it a thought. " I whisper, getting out of the car.

" Grace. " He calls me out before I can rush away.

I turn around and face him. " Yes, Mr. Roberto. "

" Linda is waiting for you in the lobby. Don't think about running away. Your husband is out there, looking for you like a mad dog. You will be much safer in the penthouse. No one will interrupt your stay or bother you with their presence. " He says before looking away from me.

It feels like his way of telling me that I don't need to be scared. I will be alone in that space and no one will bring me any harm.

I struggle between trusting a stranger who seems to have a vendetta against Lily and roaming the streets where Ethan must be looking for me.

The car zooms past me, leaving me alone. And I lose the battle within myself.

Clenching the envelope between my fingers, I stroll inside the Lobby. A young woman approaches me with a polite smile on her lips.

" Hello, Ms. Whitlock. Boss sent me to escort you to the penthouse. " She greets me.

I release a soft breath. " Linda? "

" Yes, Ms. Whitlock? " The woman's eyes seem to be innocent but I can sense it's a carefully crafted facade to make me feel less threatened by her presence.

" Please lead the way. " I mumble in defeat.

It's much better to trust a stranger than let Ethan get his hands on me when I am so vulnerable.

I need to come up with a plan to get a divorce from him so he doesn't have any claim over me. Then, I will show him hell.

The elevator goes up. Linda stands in front of me, keeping her eyes ahead and letting me peacefully think.

When the elevator doors ding open, she steps out and waits for me to follow her. I sigh before moving behind her.

The lavish corridor is themed black and grey, making everything appear dark. I swallow, following her to the big double doors at the end. 1

She opens the gate with a keycard and steps inside. I follow behind, stunned by the breathtaking view of the lounge.

The inside is black and grey just like the corridor but what grabs my attention is the glass walls. I can see the whole city from up here, the tiny lights and the dark corners.

"You can call the room service anytime. Or you can dial 5 which will direct you to me. Is that fine with you, Ms. Whitlock?" Linda asks.

I nod reluctantly, "Yes, Linda. Thank you."

She shoots me another professional smile before she leaves. I drop the envelope on the center table, the sound resonating in the space.

With a heavy heart, I move towards the glass walls. I always wanted a penthouse, just for a view like this. But Ethan preferred mansions, the symbol of power and grace.

So, I sacrificed my love for the world for his love of big empty halls.



I place my hand over the cold glass. The tears that I kept pushing away fall freely.

I am alone now. Broken. Lost. Defeated.

But I am given a chance again. I survived. If I don't make them pay, I will be wasting this chance.

I wipe away the tears and decide to check out the space. Slowly, my mind starts thinking about Tristin's offer. I have a hunch that this man has many ulterior motives...but I can't bring myself to care.

After roaming the modern penthouse, I walk into the bathroom and strip to take a bath.

As water runs down my body, I stare at my flat tummy. My body is a constant reminder of what I have lost.

I turn away from my reflection in the mirror and wrap a towel around my body before stepping out of the bathroom.

Immediately, a yelp escapes my mouth and I jump in my spot. Tristin said I will be alone in here. No one will get to me.

"How long has it been?" He asks, his back facing me as he stares out the glass wall.

"How did you get in?" My heart is pounding inside my chest.

I need to call Linda or the security or someone. Instinctively, I rush to the landline placed at the side table.

Before I can reach it, a muscular arm wraps around my waist and

pulls me flush against a broad chest. The warmth of his body is so familiar that it sends shivers down my spine.

" How long have you been sleeping with him?! " Ethan growls in my ear, startling the living hell out of me.

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