

"—and what about your mom? Don't you miss her?"

Emma didn't let the pain get away to her face.

She couldn't let people in.

She had a world to please. To make everyone believe things were okay.

"We meet. Just not on regular basis." Emma's white lie left no room for further questions as she jotted down all the codes Diana had told her to.

"You're lucky you have one." She sighed leaning back against the chair. "I wish I had—" she stopped glancing at her. "Isn't it odd how the present change into past, Emma? If she was around, if she had seen. . . what a load of ifs." She waved her hand with a smile but Emma could see she had hid everything under it.

"I understand." Emma said it from her heart. She got the facade Diana had to put on for her sake. For the fear of being called weak.

Diana nodded, biting her lower lip hard. "Can you take this to Max's room?" She said it in a rush—Emma could see the wet sheen in her green eyes.

It was clear.

She wanted a moment to collect herself.

Emma had vowed to never set a foot in that room but seeing Diana struggle had to be worst thing ever. So with a gentle nod and no argument, she stood up. Took the laptop Diana had slid her way on the table and went out.

Hearing a snuffle as she closed the door.

Emma didn't move.

She stood by the door, listening to her snuffles.

Emma placed her hand on the door, her heart hurting for woman on the other side.

"I know what you're going through. I wish I could do something for you. Please know nothing bad can ever happen to people like you. This world exists because we have people like you walking on it. And . . . It's gonna be alright. The sun will rise, Diana. . . it always do." She whispered. . .

xxxxxxxxxx

Walking slowly, she knew the way to his room. She was deliberately walking with such slow pace. This time Emma knew she didn't have to fear anything because the beast wasn't around.

She was free to do as she pleased.

Reaching the destination, her hand triggered the bolt. . . opening the black door all the way with a worn out creak.

Standing on the threshold, she scanned the room.

Just in case. . .

Making sure. . .

She was all alone.

Why was she acting like a mouse? It was time she stepped in with her head held high!

He wasn't around anyway.

"Stupid beast. . ." She muttered stepping in. . . the door shutting behind her.

Feeling bold with his absence, she stood right in the middle of his room. Eyeing everything from the rose gold curtains to the dressing table to the king sized bed to the wardrobe. It was as if she was challenging his status to go tell their master she was here! And she was looking at his status as she pleased!

Bold and brash, with the laptop tucked under her arm she went towards the plush chair she had occupied the last time.

Sitting on it, she pitched her chin forward.

There was no one to challenge her authority. Smiling for no reason, she placed the laptop on the table—and nearly jumped out of her skin!

The laptop had split into two!

The screen and the keyboard had fallen apart. Emma had gone into a septic shock at what just happened.

"Oh my God—" with shaking hands she touched the black screen like her touch would awaken it from the dead. . .

"No no no. . ." She kept saying it. Denying what was present.

Absorbed in her doomed thoughts she didn't hear the door open. Didn't hear the footsteps—her hands busy in trying to glue back the cut-in-half laptop.

She was doing her job when something came in her peripheral vision. And her hands stilled.

So did her heart.

Two shiny shows with the Hermes H.

Thud thud thud.

Blood rushed into her ear, a strange ringing noise filling her. . .

Slowly, her neck turned at the shoes. Her eyes going from the expensive brown pants to the white dress shirt. A blood red tie which was being loosened up now.

Emma swallowed the dread filling her in.

Scrambling up from the chair she had so boldly so rightfully occupied, she stood up. A three feet space between them. His heated gaze seared her skin as he unlatched his wrist watch and dumped it on the bed.

His deep voice breaking the frozen air.

"You have such talent. There is nothing in this world that can surprise me much but you keep surprising me. With every move you keep spiraling down to your worth which is none" He hard voice could cut up rocks. What was Emma's heart in front of it?

Emma opened her mouth.

"I didn't—"

"I heard people like you don't spit in the plate they eat in. But then. . . you surprise me—"

"I didn't do this! I swear—"

"Shut the fuck up." He didn't tell or snap and yet she physically bristled. "Don't cut me when I'm talking. " He raised his index finger in warning.

That didn't settle well with her.

Her eyes flared up in response. And she threw caution to the wind.

To hell with it!

"!|I talk however I want and seems like you love blaming people for things they didn't do. And you know what? Let's prove you right! I'll break it to pieces!" Fiercely, she turned at the broken laptop and was about to touch it when suddenly he grabbed her wrist—pulling her up.

With widened eyes, she glanced at her wrist capture in his vice like grip. She could see the red imprints of his fingers digging in her skin. Marking her.

His harsh breath hitting her.

There was only a breath of distance between them. Green eyes had lit up with fury and brown had nothing but shock and outrage.

"Let go!" She pulled at her hand weakly only hurting herself further.

"How dare you threaten me? You dare touch my status? You—"

"What the hell. . ."

A feminine voice had cut up the tension in the room.

The both of them glanced at the late comer. Diana. . . with her mouth hanging open and her eyes stuck to the painful grip Emma's wrist was in.

"Let go this instant. . ." She said so ly and Maximus muttered darkly, letting her go harshly. Rattling Emma's insides.

She clutched at her bruised hand, rubbing it in soothing manner. Her heart in shreds.

Diana stepped in, disbelief on her pretty face.

"What happened?" She glanced at Emma and then back at her brother's stone face. "Will someone tell me what—"

"D, this girl you have is nothing but a fucking thief. I saw her breaking my laptop." He sneered with pure disgust.

Emma didn't hold back.

"And a laptop has more importance than a human—"

"Enough!!" He bellowed taking a threatening step towards her. His aggression silencing her into submission. As if he slapped her.

Diana quickly stepped in between them. Her hand on her brother's hard chest.

His hands crunched into fists.

"Emma? Did you break anything?" Diana asked her hurriedly.

"I didn't do anything." She replied so ly, her eyes on him trying to get to her.

Diana's puzzled eyes went from her and then to the broken laptop in sight. Her eyes rolled up.

"I broke it." She announced, a flicker of shock coloring Maximus's eyes. "I asked Emma to locate it back to your room. She didn't break it, Max." She said sternly. "I'm sorry, Emma. It was entirely my fault."

He didn't let Emma speak.

"You don't need to apologise. She's an employee. Our money runs her house." His hissed, grabbing at his sister's hand and getting it out of his chest.

Like thunder, he went towards the door. Nearly snatching the handle and went out. Slamming the door, the hinges rattling with the sudden force.

Not answering to Diana's "Max!"

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

She came storming in his room.

Showered and relaxed, his eyes were trained on the soccer match.

"Just when I think my brute of a brother has changed for the better —," she muttered turning around and taking the switch of the LCD out of the socket.

He didn't react.

Merely crossed his arms.

Having his full attention, she stood in his line of vision—hands on her hips. Glare on her face.

"How can you keep bullying her, Max? When is this going to stop? Do you want her life?" She asked dryly.

He glanced at his glowing sister.

"What I want is not to be disturbed in my house."

"What you did was wrong! Emma told me everything you said to her —no! Don't roll those eyes at me, young man!! It might work on others but not your sister!"

"What do you want?" He shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Apologize to Emma." She dictated. Crossing her thin arms, a defiant look on her face.

He sighed.

"She works for me. If I apologise to her, all of my employees would expect the same."

"I don't care! Emma is different! She's an orphan! We are one too, Max. Don't you ever forget." She warned.

"People with an orphan badge are not special, D. You need to stop pitying people for being an orphan."

"This is not a discussion about orphans! Are you apologizing or—"

"Fine." His voice was curt.

She nodded in satisfaction. Seemed like she wasn't wrong for she had seen a glimmer of regret in his eyes.

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx