“Forget your way home?” Emma’s dad asked as the front door clicked shut behind her.

Emma knew that tone—sarcasm stretched thin over frustration. He always tried his best not to raise his voice, to let calm do the talking. But there was no mistaking it—he was mad. Or, as he liked to say, *not mad, disappointed.*

“No…” Emma stepped lightly into the living room, glancing toward her dad in his favorite armchair. One of the few pieces of furniture that always survived their many moves.

Her dad checked his watch—pointedly. “Really? Because you texted me over thirty minutes ago that you were on your way home.”

Emma rolled her eyes, knowing full well it would poke the bear. “Ugh, Dad, can we not right now? I’m tired, and I still have homework.”

“Um, no, I think we *can* right now, Emma James—”

Oh boy. *Middle name.*

“What took you so long? And no text? No call? Immediately after I ask you to do just that, no less.” He rubbed the bridge of his nose. “Emma, I need to know where you are. Who you’re with. As your father, I need to know these things. I get that you’re a teenager now, but as long as you’re under my roof—”

“I met a friend at the library, okay?” Emma snapped before she could stop herself. “I was leaving right after I texted you when I ran into a girl from school, and we… we got to talking for a bit. I’m sorry, alright? My. Bad. I’m sorry. Can you not give me the fifth degree?”

Her dad opened his mouth to argue, then closed it again. He blinked, caught off guard. “You did?”

“Yes,” Emma scoffed. “Don’t act so surprised.”