**🩸 Chapter 10: Safe for the First Time**

💋 *"She didn’t see his ghost this time. She only saw her."*

🎵 **Track**:  
**“The Rip” – Portishead**  
(Moaning synths. Rain-wet heartbreak. Sacred breath.)

💦 **Fluids**:  
Sweat, Cum, Tears

🕯️ **Ritual Tag**:  
Sacred Sex / First Safe Climax / Emotional Complicity

The night had teeth.

Cruz sat on the edge of her bed, still in her slacks and sweat-stained blouse, the rotary phone receiver dangling between her fingers. Gallagher's words were still humming in her skull like a siren wound too tight.

*"I’ll be reviewing that tape first thing tomorrow, Cruz."*

The click of the line going dead had felt like a verdict.

She lit a cigarette with shaking fingers, sucked smoke into her lungs until her chest ached. The window was cracked just enough to let the city's breath seep in—wet asphalt, old cigarette butts, something sour under the rain.

Every muscle in her body was a confession she couldn't speak.

She thought of Vivien.

The way she looked at her—not like a cop. Not like a woman. Like something sacred and breakable. Like something she already owned.

Cruz closed her eyes, cigarette trembling between her fingers.

She could lose everything.

The badge. Her career. Her family's brittle pride.

But the silence in her apartment tasted worse. Tasted like failure. Like a body cooling under motel sheets.

She stubbed the cigarette out against the windowsill, grabbed the phone, and dialed.

The payphone outside the bar two blocks down answered with a mechanical whine. Cheap jazz spilled from the doorway behind her, but the line hissed like a secret.

It rang once.

Twice.

**"Vale."**

Vivien's voice—hoarse velvet, already breathing into her like smoke.

Cruz swallowed.

*"It's me,"* she said. *"I… I needed—"*

She didn't finish. Couldn't.

Vivien was silent for a beat. Then:

*"You shouldn't be calling me."*

*"I know."*

Another beat.

*"Are you alone?"*

*"Yeah."*

The rain whispered against the awning overhead. Cruz shifted, rainwater leaking through the cracked phone booth ceiling, dripping onto her shoulder.

She heard Vivien breathe out. A soft, broken thing.

*"I can't stop thinking about you,"* Cruz said, voice raw.

There was a sharp inhale on the other end—like a wound reopening.

*"Good,"* Vivien whispered. *"Because I can't stop thinking about you either."*

The city groaned around them—sirens, wet tires, distant jazz—but the line held steady. A lifeline made of filth and fear and need.

*"Where are you?"* Vivien asked, low and dangerous.

*"A payphone. Outside..."* She glanced back at the bar sign—peeling paint, neon bleeding down the brick. *"O'Hara's."*

*"Wait there."*

Click.

Gone.

Cruz stared at the dead receiver, heart punching her ribs. She hung it up, wiped her palms on her thighs. Waited.

But a thought slipped under her ribs—hot, urgent, embarrassing.

She hadn't showered.

The realization hit her all at once. The sweat still clinging to her skin. The taste of cheap cigarettes on her breath. And worse—the memory of Vivien rimming her. Vivien's mouth—slow, reverent—pressing against the part of her that had never been touched before, let alone kissed like gospel.

Cruz shivered.

That moment had cracked her open. Not just the pleasure—the shame. The tenderness. The way she'd sobbed into motel pillows without meaning to, the way she'd been remade with every flick of Vivien's tongue.

She needed to be clean. Needed to be ready. Just in case.

Not because she expected it—she told herself—but because if it happened again, if Vivien touched her like that again, she wanted to be worthy of it.

She darted back to her apartment, stripped in the hallway, and stepped into the shower before the water had even warmed.

The water hit her cold, then scalding. She scrubbed herself raw—between her legs, between her cheeks, everywhere Vivien might kiss, might claim.

Not vanity. Not fear.

**Devotion.**

By the time she was back outside, hair still damp, jeans clinging to clean skin, she was trembling. Not from the cold.

From want.

Five minutes. Ten.

Then—

A black coat bleeding out of the night.

Vivien.

Hair damp, lashes clumped from the rain, red lipstick smeared like a prayer she'd already half-forgotten. She moved like a slow sin, hips swaying under the trench coat, eyes locked on Cruz like she might eat her whole.

She didn't speak.

She just walked up, pressed one gloved hand to Cruz's chest—right over the badge hidden beneath—and pushed.

Cruz stumbled back into the phone booth.

Vivien followed.

Rain slicked the space between them, but their bodies erased it in a breath. Vivien's mouth hovered a fraction from hers.

*"You sure?"* she rasped.

Cruz nodded.

Vivien kissed her.

It wasn't soft. It wasn't slow.

It was teeth and tongue and the kind of hunger that tore stitches open.

Cruz whimpered into it, her hands finding Vivien's waist, clutching the wet fabric like it could save her. Like it could drown her cleaner.

The kiss broke with a gasp.

*"Come with me,"* Vivien said.

And Cruz did.

They ran through the rain—no umbrellas, no apologies—to Vivien's apartment. A third-floor walk-up that smelled like wet brick and forgotten prayers. Jazz bled from the window next door. The hallway tasted like old cigarette smoke and somebody else's regret.

Inside, the bedroom was dim, the bed a mess of black sheets and tangled promises.

Vivien stripped Cruz with her eyes first. Then her hands.

She pushed the blouse off Cruz's shoulders, unzipped the slacks, let them fall. Cruz stood trembling in plain black underwear, nipples hard from the cold, from the want.

Vivien shed her coat. She wore only a slip—black, clingy, almost obscene in its simplicity.

She reached for Cruz. Pulled her to the bed.

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The city was humming beneath the open window—horns low in the distance, the occasional bark of a dog, the wet shimmer of tires on pavement. But inside Elena Cruz’s bedroom, everything had gone still.

Vivien Vale straddled her.

Bare legs against warm skin, her slip hiked up, the soft black fabric bunched around her waist. Elena was beneath her, hair haloed across the pillow, chest bare, sweat pooling in the small of her throat. The room smelled like sex and summer—like breath and salt and something about to shift.

Elena’s hands cupped Vivien’s hips, not possessive, not demanding—steady. Grounded. Her thumbs moved in small circles over the skin there, reverent, like she didn’t want to guide Vivien’s rhythm, just witness it.

Vivien rocked her hips forward, grinding against Elena’s thigh. The slick heat between her legs left no mystery about what she needed—what she was chasing. And yet, her body held tension like a live wire. Each thrust forward was met with hesitation, the echo of something old, something bleeding.

She didn’t let herself close her eyes.

Because if she did, she might see him.

Ellis.

The final breath. The collapse. The way his head hit her thighs the moment she came. That night was etched into her nervous system like a death rattle. Every climax since had been a curse—blood-soaked, involuntary, wrong.

But Elena didn’t know any of that.

She just held her.

Beneath her, Elena breathed steady. Her eyes never left Vivien’s face. She didn’t ask for more. Didn’t push. Just existed—bare, open, safe. Her thigh rose slightly, pressing more firmly against Vivien’s cunt. The contact dragged a moan from Vivien’s throat—low, surprised, almost ashamed.

She bit her lip.

“Don’t stop,” Elena whispered, barely audible. “You can let go.”

Vivien didn’t know if she believed that. But she wanted to. So she moved—slow at first, hips grinding down, her clit dragging against Elena’s thigh, the friction maddening in its precision. Her hands braced on Elena’s ribs. Her breath started to stutter.

And then it hit.

Not sharp. Not violent. Soft.

A wave.

Pleasure rolled through her like warm water. Her spine arched. Her mouth fell open. She gasped.

“Oh my god,” she choked out.

Her thighs trembled, body locking in place, then shaking loose. There were no flashbacks. No Ellis. Just Elena’s body beneath her and the sound of her name still echoing off the walls.

Her orgasm crested, crashed, and left her empty—but not broken. Just quiet.

She collapsed forward, forehead resting against Elena’s collarbone, breath ragged.

For a long moment, neither of them moved.

Elena reached up and stroked her back. “I’ve got you,” she said. No ceremony. No pity. Just truth.

Vivien let herself be held.

Her chest ached—not with grief, but with the unbearable weight of relief. Her body was still humming, but this time, it wasn’t with fear. Just sensation. Just her.

“I didn’t see him,” she whispered, almost to herself.

Elena didn’t answer right away.

Then, soft: “Who?”

Vivien’s eyes burned. “Ellis. I always see him when I come. His face. His blood.” Her throat tightened. “But not this time.”

Elena pulled her closer. Not to fix her. Not to fill the silence. Just to be there.

They lay like that for a while. A tangle of sweat and tenderness, the kind that made time feel like it bent around them.

Eventually, Vivien stirred. She pushed herself up, kissed the edge of Elena’s jaw, and murmured, “I need a minute.”

Elena nodded, letting her go with a final squeeze to her hand.

Vivien padded barefoot to the bathroom, not bothering to pull her slip back down. Her thighs were still slick. Her skin flushed. Her reflection was waiting.

The light buzzed on.

She froze.

There she was. Hair wild, lips kissed raw, eyeliner smudged to hell. A bruise on her shoulder she didn’t remember getting. The blood was gone. The scream was gone. And in her eyes?

Stillness.

She leaned over the sink, staring hard.

“You didn’t show up,” she whispered to the ghost that wasn’t there.

The mirror didn’t answer.

She turned off the light.

When she walked back into the bedroom, the stillness followed her—held close, like a secret she hadn’t decided whether to share. Elena Cruz was still there, waiting. Watching. The sheet curled around her like armor she hadn’t decided to drop.

Vivien didn’t speak.

She just stood in the doorway a second too long. Then walked back. Slipped into bed. Took Elena’s hand like it was the most natural thing in the world.

And said nothing.

The silence stretched, heavy but tender. Rain smudged the outside world into watercolor shadows against the window.

Elena swallowed hard. Her voice was a rasp in the dark.

*"Gallagher's gonna listen to the tape."*

Vivien didn't move, just let her thumb trace slow, almost reverent circles over the back of Cruz's hand.

*"The interrogation?"* Vivien finally asked, soft.

*"Yeah. Said he'd review it first thing."*

The words tasted like rust in Cruz's mouth. Fear curled tight around her ribs. Not just fear of getting caught—fear of what she'd already given up without even being asked.

Vivien turned her head, forehead brushing Cruz's temple. *"Let him."*

*"You don't get it,"* Cruz whispered. *"This badge—I fought for it. Crawled over men who wanted me to fail. Laughed it off when they called me..."* She couldn't even say it.

*"Dyke?"*

Cruz flinched. Not at the word. At how easily Vivien said it, like stripping off a wet coat.

*"I can't lose it,"* Cruz said. *"Not like this."*

Vivien was quiet for a long moment.

*"You're not going to lose anything that matters,"* she said. *"Not tonight."*

Cruz stared at the ceiling, heart pounding. The unspoken truth buzzed between them like neon—thick, aching.

She knew.

Vivien knew she knew.

Neither of them said it.

Vivien shifted closer, slipping a thigh between Cruz's legs, pressing the length of her body against hers.

*"You were never just a cop,"* Vivien murmured against her skin. *"You were always more than that."*

Cruz closed her eyes. Breathed her in—lipstick, sweat, rain.

*"This doesn't end well,"* Cruz whispered.

Vivien kissed her shoulder. A benediction. A dare.

*"Then let's make it worth ending for."*

Cruz turned into her without thinking, tangled their legs together. She clung to Vivien like she was the only thing tethering her to the ground.

Outside, the city kept humming—wet and ruthless and alive.

Inside, Cruz let go.

Not of her badge.

Not of her fear.

Of the lie that she was still trying to survive without her.

Only this.

Only her.