

*Bonus Scene 1:
When You Let Her Go*

SPOILER ALERT

Please do not read ahead if you haven't read *Vow or Never*.

Reese

The reception room is quiet—too quiet, especially considering a wedding is supposed to happen soon. Half-packed florals. Chairs pushed aside. Boxes of champagne, decorations, and more are stacked in the corner, ready to be transported away. The room holds an echo of a wedding that never happened.

Carter stands near the altar, dressed in a shirt and jeans—clothes I never knew he owned. I hesitate before approaching. I'm unsure how he will react to seeing me.

Carter lets out a humorless laugh. "I should be mad at you.

"You should," I say. I deserve it.

Carter waits a beat before looking at me—*really* looking at me. But he doesn't look at me like a man full of anger. He looks like a man full of acceptance.

"Did you know all along?" he asks.

"I had an idea," I say.

Carter exhales, jaw tightening. "Of course you did."

"I want you to know I didn't plan this," I add. "Not like this. I never wanted to hurt anyone, including you."

Carter turns, staring out into the garden terrace. "Do you love her?"

"Yes," I reply without any hesitation.

"She told me everything," he says. "I guess it's better late than never."

"Carter, I'm so—"

He puts his hand up to stop me. "You know, I think I always knew she wasn't all in with me." He lets out a quiet breath. "I just thought that if I gave her enough time, enough stability... she'd get there."

I lean back against the wall, still respecting the space. "She didn't need more time," I say carefully. "She needed... the right kind of chaos."

My words almost elicit a smile from Carter.

“Yeah,” Carter mutters. “Sounds like her.”

Silence settles between us, but it’s different now. It’s less sharp, with rounded edges.

Carter picks up what was supposed to be one of the centerpieces, then sets it back down. “I wasn’t wrong for her,” he says. “I just wasn’t, well, *you*.”

“Honestly, I thought you were the better man.” I shake my head slightly. “I told her so.”

“She told me,” he smiles. “Remember that night I was talking about speaking fluently with the one you love?”

“You always spoke her language. I was just the guy trying to master it. I want you to know,” he continues, “you’re not the bad guy.”

“I feel like I am.” I let out a breath, tension easing from my shoulders as I watch him look around the room at a life that was supposed to start here.

“Take care of her, Reese.” He looks back at me. He says this not as a threat or a warning, but with genuine care.

“I will,” I say, my voice steady in a way it wasn’t before.

Carter nods once, as if it’s enough.

After a pause, he says, “For what it’s worth, if she was going to choose someone else, I’m glad it was you.”

I let out a breath. “Yeah?”

Carter shrugs. “I still think you’re a phenomenal writer. If we cross paths again, promise me you won’t love her, too.” He smiles before heading toward the exit.

Each step he takes carries a finality. It’s not as a man who lost, but as a man who let her go. And that might be the hardest thing of all.

Did you like this bonus scene?

Check out three more, plus a bonus epilogue and more in the Deluxe Edition of *Vow or Never*!