

Chapter 10

I didn't trust him.

"Dad," I said, turning to my father, "call in our own cybersecurity team. I want them to supervise."

Damien's eyes flickered, and I saw a flash of raw hurt in them. "You don't believe me?"

"No," I said, my voice flat and empty. "I don't."

He clenched his fists at his sides, a muscle twitching in his jaw. Then he relaxed, his shoulders slumping slightly. "Fine," he said, his voice soft. "I will earn back your trust."

He sat down and opened his laptop. His fingers flew across the keyboard, a blur of motion. Code scrolled rapidly down the screen. My father's team of experts gathered around, their faces a mixture of awe and confusion. They couldn't keep up. He was on another level entirely.

Within minutes, he stopped. A grim, triumphant smile touched his lips.

"I found it," he announced.

Everyone leaned in, trying to decipher the complex data on the screen.

"Who was it?" my father demanded.

Damien's smile vanished. His face went rigid, his complexion turning a sickly, ashen gray. He stared at the screen, his eyes wide with horror, as if he were looking at a ghost.

The code on the screen told a clear story. The signal originated from a burner phone, routed through a dozen proxy servers to hide its location. But Damien had broken through them all. The final line of code revealed the phone's unique identifier. And attached to it was a name.

Eve McClain.

Damien's face was a mask of pure agony. Without a word, he slammed the laptop shut.

"There's no need to look any further," he said, his voice strained.

He lunged for the laptops of my father's security team, trying to shut them down as well.

"Damien, what are you doing?" I yelled, trying to grab one of the computers back from him.

He caught my wrist, his grip like iron. "Elena, stop. It's over."

He looked over my shoulder, his gaze finding Eve in the crowd. She was pale and trembling. Then he looked back at me, his eyes filled with an apology that tore at my already broken heart.

"It was me," he said, his voice a hoarse whisper. "I did it."

