

Chapter 169

After receiving many hugs and hearing multiple times that everyone was happy and relieved that Peter and I were found safe, Alexander led me to Patrick's office.

I placed Peter, who was sleeping soundly, on one of the beds still there and covered him, but first noticed a mark on his right ankle, which I didn't understand.

"Alexander, what's this mark on Peter?" I wondered if Alexander would have more information, since he had been following everything closely.

Alexander looked at our sleeping son and gently ran his fingers over the mark, as if he could make it disappear with his touch, and sighed. He grabbed a blanket, covered our son, kissed his forehead, and pulled me to the sofa, making me sit on his lap.

"My angel, the conditions in which Peter was found were terrible. According to what Detective Moreno told me on the phone, there are no other marks on his little body and no injuries, which suggests he wasn't physically abused. But he was chained to the leg of a table." A tear rolled down Alexander's face as he spoke.

"Are you telling me those monsters chained up my son?" I was possessed by rage and began to cry. "He's just a child! How could they?"

"Human evil can reach unimaginable levels, Catherine. The potential for human cruelty has no limits. There are people, like those who kidnapped you, who place their own interests, desires, or personal motivations above anything else in the world." Alexander spoke while running his hands along my back and watching our son sleep safely.

"This goes far beyond my comprehension. How can they harm a child, almost a baby still, a being who only knows love and kindness?" I was inconsolable, crying with my face buried in the father of my child's neck.

"I have no idea how they're capable of this. Moreno found him chained to the table, dirty and hungry and thirsty. Those two crazy women didn't even take my boy to the bathroom or put a diaper on him, nothing. Moreno said he was crying a lot." Alexander had a pained expression while telling me what he knew. 1

"You said two? Who else was with Caroline?"

"Celeste. And Claude was helping them too."

"Claude? My ex-boyfriend? Are you saying my ex-boyfriend is involved in this?" Alexander confirmed with a nod. "My God! Why? What does he gain from this? I can't believe that someone I've known my entire life, who used to frequent my house, would have the courage to do me such great harm."

"I'm not surprised. He cheated on you with your cousin. He has no character." Alexander was right. But there was a big difference between betrayal and committing a crime.

"My angel, they haven't been interrogated yet, and I spoke very briefly on the phone with Moreno, and the only thing I wanted to know was if our son was okay. So, I don't have much information."

"Right. But now that he's safe, I want to know everything." I was angry, disappointed, worried about my son and how all this could affect him. "We need to take him to the doctor to make sure he's okay."

"Peter was taken to the hospital in Bellwood and examined. The doctors

assured that physically he's just dehydrated and has that horrible mark. But I want Molina to check him out. I've already scheduled an appointment for tomorrow; he'll come here to the office," Alexander informed me.

"That's a great idea," I agreed. "But why did you schedule it here?"

"Because I can't go home yet. There's a lot happening, and when you're rested, I'll tell you everything. But I don't want you both away from me."

"I don't want to be away from you either. But tell me what's going on right now." Alexander sighed and began to speak.

"Cat, my parents' helicopter was sabotaged by Johnson. Joseph and his wife have disappeared. And we're revealing the audit results – all the people we've discovered to be involved are now being interrogated in the conference room on this floor and the adjoining rooms. Alan is leading this with Larson's help."

"Johnson sabotaged the helicopter?" I asked, horrified.

"Yes. My parents were murdered!" Alexander let out a sob, tears streaming down his face. "Farias, Liz's father, gave me a box yesterday with the missing evidence about the accident and lots of other information. And with it was Johnson's confession video and a letter from his wife revealing many things."

"Wait, is Liz involved in this?" I asked, growing furious.

"No. Liz is quietly staying in Switzerland with her mother and brother. Relax! But her mother took yoga classes, and Johnson's wife attended the same class. They became close, and Johnson's wife asked Liz's mother one day to keep the box for her, requesting that if anything happened to

her, she should give the box to me."

"And why did he give you the box now?"

"Because Molina told him about the kidnappings, and he mentioned it to his wife on the phone. She got scared and told him about the box, asking him to bring it to me. This woman had all the answers in her hands this whole time and had no idea."

"My God! This is all absurd." I was shocked and outraged by everything I was discovering.

"My angel, and you? Are you really okay? Did they hurt you?"

"I'm fine. They kept me locked in a room in some kind of unfinished house in the middle of nowhere. They were taking orders from Johnson, and from what I heard, the order was not to touch me unless Johnson commanded it, as I was his guarantee for escape. They didn't know Peter was your son; they took him just to get to me too." I started recalling what I'd been through in that place. "But at one point, Dennis came to the room intending to rape me. When he grabbed me, Daniel came in and pulled him off me, holding him against the wall and telling him not to touch me before Johnson authorized it. I took advantage and ran out, locked them both in the room, ran outside, and didn't stop running until I ran into a police officer. That's how they found me."

"Did that son of a bitch try to assault you?" Alexander's eyes flashed with hatred.

"Alexander, be careful not to wake Peter up," I warned him, reminding him that our son was there.

"I'll destroy that pervert!" Alexander clenched his fist, and I could feel

his entire body tense beneath me.

We heard a knock at the door. Alexander lifted me off his lap and placed me on the sofa. He walked to the door and opened it, letting Virginia in, who quickly made her way to me.

"Thank God you're okay, honey. I just heard you'd arrived," she said while hugging me. "Alexander, we need you in the conference room. I can't stay with you right now, sweetie, I have to go back—I'm helping Alan. I'm sorry."

"Don't worry, Vi. Thank you for what you're doing, it's really important. Go."

At that moment, several people entered the room: my parents, Mel's mother, Jorge and Lygia, and Fred's mother. All of them were anxious to see Peter and me.

"Alexander, you found them! Thank you!" my father said emotionally, giving Alexander a hug.

"They're my life, Dad," Alexander replied with a smile. "My angel, I'm leaving you in excellent company, but I want you to rest."

"I will," I reassured him, knowing he had enough worries at the moment.

"Let's go, Virginia," he called out as they left the room.