

Chapter Forty-Four



It was late morning when we got back to the Chateau. We had spent all night looking for John B, checking surf spots, the Boneyard, The Wreck, and the different docks we usually frequented.

Nada.

I couldn't even make it all the way to the house I was so exhausted. I stopped at the dock, sat down by the swimming ladder, and let my feet dangle over the water.

I felt the need to cry and scream and curse out every living thing, but I didn't have the energy or the will to do it.

I felt someone sit down beside me. I turned, expecting it to be JJ, but I was surprised to see John B sitting next to me.

"John-

He cut me off by pulling me into a hug.

Neither of us said anything, just sat in silence. Kiara and JJ eventually joined us. John B laid back onto a pile of life jackets while Kiara and JJ sat on the rails of the dock. I stayed where I was with my feet in the water.

John B told us everything. He told us how Ward let it slip about knowing about Redfield and that's how John B figured out that he killed our dad. He said that he went to talk to Ms. Lana, and she told him that it was accident but he still covered it up. John B said he went back to the Crain house this morning, but all of the gold was gone.

"You sure he got everything?" Kiara asked so ly, and I just stared down at the small waves that lightly bounced my feet.

"Every bar. The whole enchilada."

I heard John B grunt and caught him sliding off his cast out of the corner of my eye.

I looked back onto the water.

"Look, it's not like I expected a happy ending or some shit."

"John B-

"What, Kie? It's a hairline fracture. Who cares?"

"You should care. Your arm's gonna be messed up for life."

"It's fine. See?"

I scooped when I saw him wiggling his fingers.

"Guys!"

I turned fully around to see Pope running down the dock, still in his interview suit.

"Oh, oh. Oh, God. I ran all the way here," he panted, doubling over to try and catch his breath.

"Yeah, I can tell."

"How was the interview, Pope?" JJ asked, and I shook my head and looked back at the water, still pissed about last night.

"Don't ask. JB, Jo. Look, I'm sorry, dudes. About everything."

"It's fine," John B answered, but I stayed silent.

"But, but I don't have a lot of time, and, and I have information that is tactically relevant. So, before I had my interview, my dad said he was going down to the private airstrip to cut palms for Cameron's big plane because it was too heavy, and it needed a longer landing strip to take off. So, I'm there sitting in my interview, thinking to myself, 'hm. Why would Cameron need a longer airstrip to take off? What could be so heavy to eight it down?'"

"Gold," JJ answered.

"That's right."

"Exactly! Guys, this is our chance, but it leaves tonight, and we have to go."

"Guys, we can't give up now," Kiara said, an edge of excitement in her voice.

"What's the plan, big man?" JJ asked.

"We're gonna steal that shit back."

I didn't turn around as everyone began to laugh and hoot and holler. I stayed staring at the water.

"Jo?"

I shook my head at JJ's voice, tears gathering in my eyes.

"I can't," my voice cracked.

"Can't what?"

"I can't do this."

"Why not?" He sounded a little outraged.

"I am, so fucking tired, JJ," I cried, finally looking at him.

His face softened as he stood up. He held out a hand.

"You can do this."

"How do you know?"

"Because I'll be there right beside you. I may not be able to carry it for you, but I can carry you."

I let out a small, tearful laugh.

"You do know that was a nerd reference, right?"

I grabbed his hand, and he pulled me to my feet.

"Shut up."

He pulled me into a run after our friends, getting the van as it was started up.

JJ started loading the gun on the floor of the van, sitting between my legs while I sat behind Kiara's seat.

"We go in there, guns a-blazin' and make Ward Cameron beg for mercy, abscond with as much gold as possible and vámonos, get the hell out of there."

"Send that shit down the Intracoastal."

"Wait for the weather."

"Exit to Cuba."

"Cuba? Nah, man, Xcalak, Jewel of the Yucatan."

I smiled.

"Lobsters so thick, mangoes, and no word for money," I added, and JJ turned around and winked at me.

"Let's do this shit."

We pulled up to the fence of the airstrip and rush out of the van.

"What the plan? Broad strokes," Kiara asked as we ran up to the fence.

"I don't think we got that far."

Pope pulled out the binoculars and held them up to his eyes.

"They're loading up the gold."

I snatched the binoculars from him. They were using a forklift to load large white crates into the belly of the plane. A car honked and drove up. I watched Ward climb out of the car.

"Ward's here."

I kept watching and cursed under my breath as another person got out of the car.

"So's Sarah."

John B snatched the binoculars from me, and I shared a look with JJ.

I heard a distant yell and turned back to the airstrip.

"What's happening?"

"He's hurting her. They're fighting."

I watched John B hand the binoculars to Kie but looked back as the plane started up. I heard the van start up and turned just in time to see John B driving right at the fence.

"John B wha-"

JJ yanked me out of the way as John B crashed through the fence.

"What are you doing?"

We all yelled variations of that question as we watched John B race the plane down the runway.

"Oh, my God, he's gonna stop the plane," I muttered as he got out in front of it.

I started to run forward as John B slammed on the breaks and turned in front of the plane, but arms wrapped around my waist, stopping me.

"No!"

I watched as the plane stopped feet away from running John B over.

I went limp in JJ's arms, breathing out in relief.

A police siren sounded in the distance.

"Guys, I can't get arrested," Pope said.

"I'm on probation," JJ added, letting me go.

"Look, we're no good if we're all in jail."

"Then you guys go."

They all turned to look at me.

"I am not leaving my brother behind."

JJ ran up in front of me as I started walking down the airstrip.

"Whoah, Jo, wait. You can't get arrested. They'll send you to Ward."

"I don't care."

"I do!"

"I'm sorry."

"Yeah, me too."

I screamed as JJ picked me up and threw me over his shoulder.

"JJ, no!"

I watched the airstrip get further away as I beat on JJ's back, trying to get him to put me down. I lose sight of it just as the police car stopped in front of the plane.

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