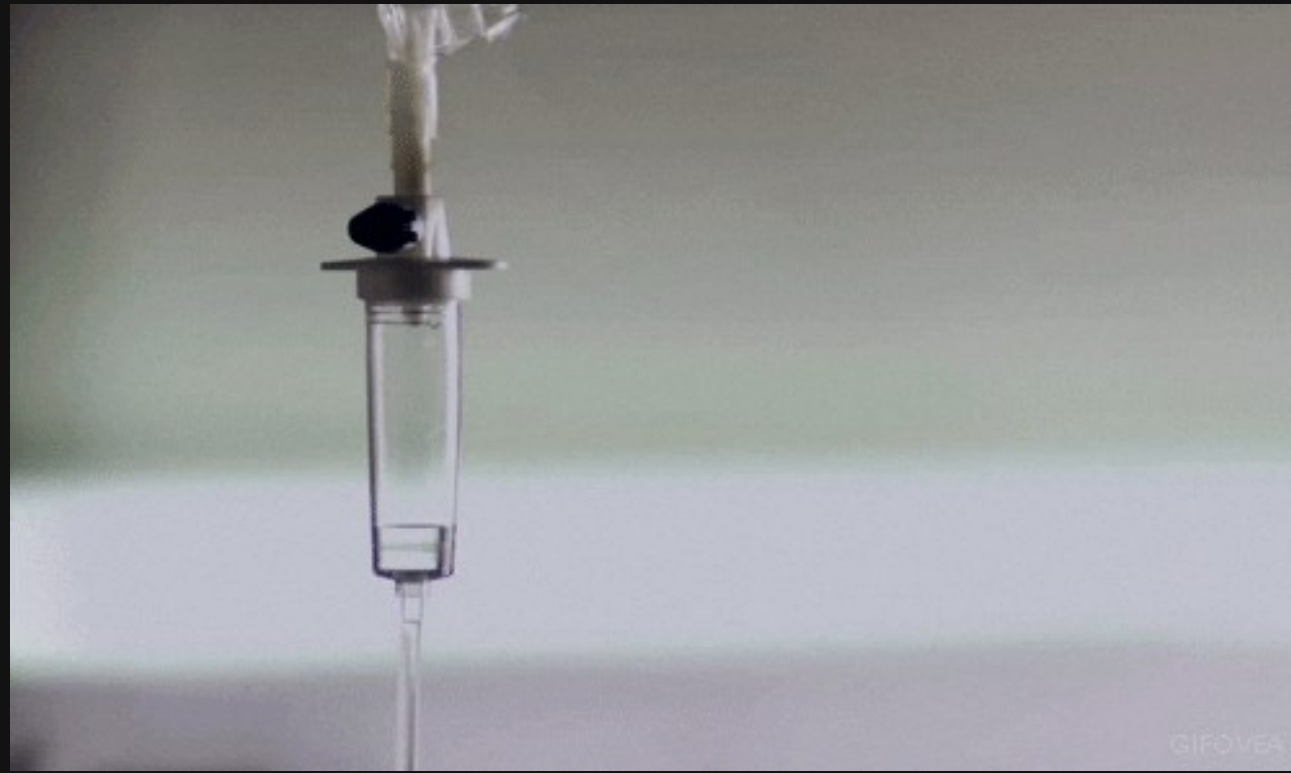


Chapter Fifty-Two



A steady beeping. The smell of antiseptic. Someone holding my hand.

My eyes fluttered opened, and I groaned against the white light.

"Jo?"

Once I could keep my eyes open, I turned my head to see a familiar face.

"JJ?"

He broke out into a smile.

"Yeah, sweetheart, I'm here."

He stood from his chair next to the bed, leaned over me, and swept hair o my forehead before placing a kiss there.

"Where's here?"

"You're at St. Olives."

JJ sat back down as Shoupe walked in.

"What happened?"

"You passed out," JJ said, and I turned my head back towards him.

"The doctor thinks it was caused by a mixture of low blood sugar, fatigue, and stress."

I nodded just as another person walked into the room.

"Miss Routledge. Good to see you awake," the woman said with a smile. "You had your friends quite worried there for a while, but I reassured them a er some fluids and a good night's rest, you'd be back into shape."

I looked at the hand JJ was holding, noticing the IV. I looked back up at JJ, noticing how horrible he looked.

The doctor asked me how I was feeling, saying a nurse would be in later to check my vitals. She was pretty sure I'd get to go home tomorrow. She le with a nod to Shoupe.

"Look, if there is anything I can do, let me know."

I glared up at him and sat up.

"Yeah, there are a few things."

He nodded at my words.

"First, I want to be emancipated. I don't want Ward as my legal guardian, and I don't want to be put into foster care," I said, and Shoupe nodded.

"Second, I want Rafe Cameron arrested for the murder of Sheri Peterkin and Ward arrested for trying to cover it up."

"We are conducting an investigation-"

"Third, I want my brother's name cleared of any and all charges."

Shoupe looked to JJ for help, but he stayed silent, squeezing my hand.

"I'll see what I can do."

He excused himself and le without another word.

JJ laughed from next to me.

"Is it weird that that turned me on a little bit?"

I ignored JJ's words and just glared at the door.

"What do we do now, sweetheart?"

"Now, we finish what my dad and my brother started."

JJ looked shocked.

"We go get the gold."

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