

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 39

Sophia's POV

The next two weeks were a whirlwind of creativity and productivity. I threw myself into refining my design, working day and night to bring my vision to life. The last time I devoted myself to a project like this was back in school, and I relished every moment of it.

It's tough, but quite thrilling.

As I immersed myself in my work, I felt a renewed sense of passion and purpose. I realized that being a designer wasn't just a job for me—it was a calling. The thrill of bringing my ideas to life, of creating something truly unique and impactful, was exhilarating. I was in my element, and I loved every minute of

it.

The days blurred into nights as I poured myself into perfecting my design. I often found myself staying late in the office, most of the time the only company being Craig, my architect partner.

He shared my dedication to the project, which I truly appreciated. He would linger, offering insights and ideas that helped me refine my work.

One evening, as we worked side by side, Craig turned to me with a smile. "You know, Sophia, I've been really impressed with your design. It's bold, and innovative, yet still rooted in a deep respect for the local culture. I think you're onto something special here."

His words warmed my heart, and I felt a sense of camaraderie growing between us. We began to bounce ideas off each other, building upon each other's concepts and creating something greater than either of us could have achieved alone.

As we worked, I found myself opening up to Craig, sharing not just my design ideas but also bits and pieces of my life and experiences.

"I didn't know you went to Fairview University!" Craig exclaimed at one point. "I also studied there."

"Really?" I asked in surprise. "Nice! Then I guess that's why I can trust you more to help me out. They're known to develop great designers, architects, and engineers."

The door suddenly swung open, and a group of my coworkers barged in, carrying pizza boxes and bottles of wine. They had decided to surprise us with a makeshift celebration for our hard work and dedication.

"Look at you two, burning the midnight oil together," one teased, nudging Craig with a grin. "You make quite the team. And I must say, you both look pretty good together too!"

The others joined in with playful banter, commenting on how well Craig and I worked together and how natural we looked as a pair. I couldn't help but blush.

"Thanks for your support, you guys," I told them happily

Trevis eventually joined us in the room, which was already a little cramped. But I was glad for the short break. "I was certainly right in pairing these two together," he commented, making the others tease us again. We all laughed in good nature.

That night, I came home late again. But I was surprised to find my daughter still awake.

"I told you not to wait up for me, sweetie," I told Reese gently.

She pouted but didn't say anything.

"Come on, let's go to sleep," I urged, taking her hand. But she refused to follow me into the bedroom. She also wouldn't talk.

Eventually, I sighed and just hugged her, feeling quite drained after a long day at work. "I'm so sorry if I haven't had time to play with you lately," I said softly, thinking that this could be the reason she was acting like this.

"Mommy's working hard for you, for us. I hope you'll try to understand and be a little more patient. I promise that after this project, we'll spend a lot of time together again!"

Finally, Reese looked at me, her innocent eyes seemingly searching my face for the truth. Eventually, she softened and gave me a kiss on the cheek. I felt happy and relieved.

"Miss you, Mommy," she whispered.

"Aww, I miss you too, sweetie. How was your day? Did you make any new friends?"

"Uhm... Uncle Daniel came," she said, a smile coming onto her face. She then pointed out the toys on the rug that they'd left from their playtime. "Play again! Play more!"

"Oh, that's so wonderful!" I exclaimed, glad that Daniel was able to make time for her. But then, it made me feel guilty. I knew that he was also busy with his business and yet he was able to play with my daughter. He wasn't even related to her!

I took Reese into my arms and hugged her tightly. "I promise we'll play together when my work is done, alright? Give me a few more days, Reese. Then we can get some new dolls or maybe go to that ice cream shop down the street. What do you think?"

She grinned and nodded, her eyes twinkling. She then yawned and let me tuck her in bed before I went to my own room.

My phone rang. "Hey, Craig," I greeted, seeing his name on the screen. "What's up?"

"Sorry, I know it's late, but I just had to tell you this idea that was going through my head while I was on the way home..."

I laughed. "Alright, I'm still up. What is it?"

He began to discuss the details. I didn't notice that Reese had walked into my bedroom, looking sleepy in her pajamas. "Mom?" she said.

At that moment, Craig immediately stopped talking. He had obviously heard her speak. I felt my heart beginning to race.

"Sophia..." Craig started hesitantly. "You have a daughter?"

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 40

Sophia's POV

I was about to answer Craig's question over the phone when Reese came over and tapped the end button. I looked at her in surprise, wondering why she had interrupted me. Her face was red, and she looked quite angry, even though her eyes were sleepy.

"Now, sleep! No phone!" Reese declared, her voice firm despite her tiredness. I couldn't help but smile at her determination. I pinched her nose affectionately, thinking that I would just explain to Craig tomorrow.

"Alright, alright, no phone," I chuckled, lifting Reese up and placing her gently on her bed. She snuggled into my pillow, already half asleep.

I grabbed a storybook that was lying on my bedside table and began reading it to her. Eventually her eyes closed and she was sound asleep.

"I love you, Reese," I whispered, giving her a kiss on the cheek and lying down next to her to sleep.

Soon the big day came for Julia and I to present our refined proposal to the entire team. As I stepped into the meeting room, my heart skipped a beat when I saw Serena sitting there, looking as composed as ever. She didn't even glance in my direction, which made me feel even more nervous.

Holy shit. She will surely shoot down my presentation and all my ideas.

Trevis welcomed everyone, “Good morning, everyone. I’d like to introduce Serena Foster, the Director of Design for the Sinclair Realty Group.”

My heart sank as the others clapped. Serena smiled at them briefly then glanced at me with an expression I couldn’t read.

She’s still angry at me, for sure, even though I haven’t seen Elijah for some time now. But Trevis will see that her comments are unfair and unjustified. Besides, there are plenty others who will also cast their

votes.

As Julia presented her ideas, I couldn’t help but notice the similarities between her work and mine. It was a strange feeling, knowing that our designs overlapped in terms of creativity. There was no clear line in the sand when it came to creativity, making it difficult for me to pinpoint any evidence of plagiarism.

By the time it was my turn to present, I could sense the whispers among my colleagues. They, too, must have noticed the similarities between our work. I took a deep breath and tried to ignore the knot of anxiety in my stomach. I began my presentation, by focusing on the unique aspects of my design that set it apart from Julia’s.

Later on, when the votes were tallied, it became clear that Julia and I had received the same number of votes. I glanced at Serena, whose expression gave nothing away. I knew she must have voted for Julia, based on her earlier reaction to my presentation.

The room fell silent as Trevis’s mysterious smile hung in the air. “I’ve arranged for a special guest to cast the final vote,” he announced, his voice dripping with suspense. “Since we had taken a video of the presentations, we had sent this to someone with the authority to pick the design.”

”

I wasn’t really interested anymore because Julia wasn’t playing fair. It really made me feel bad, especially since I considered her a friend and she’s been acting the opposite lately.

“Please welcome our guest...” Trevis started.

The door creaked open, and all eyes turned to see who would enter. A figure stepped into the room, shrouded in shadows. As the figure moved closer, we could make out the familiar features of Elijah. My heart skipped a beat. What the hell is he doing here?!

Trevis gestured for Elijah to join us, and as he took his place among the panel, the tension in the room grew thicker.

“Everyone, this is my good friend Elijah Sinclair, the President and CEO of Sinclair Realty Group. He also studied design back in the day, and for those of you who are not aware, he’s a multi-awarded businessman in the real estate industry,” Trevis said. “Elijah, you will cast the deciding vote.”

My eyes widened in alarm.

As Elijah spoke, his words felt like a blur to me, full of official jargon about the design process and the luxurious resort project. I couldn’t bring myself to care about what he was saying. My mind was too preoccupied with the outcome of his vote.

Finally, Elijah’s words took a turn that caught my attention. “After careful consideration,” he began, “I believe that Julia’s work not only meets but exceeds the commercial viability needed for this project.”

My heart sank as his words registered. Elijah’s vote was for Julia. Despite all my hard work and dedication, he believed her design was superior.

I tried to maintain my composure, but I could feel the disappointment welling up inside me and eventually turning to anger. This decision doesn’t feel fair. It feels personal.

The room fell silent, and I knew that Julia’s design had been chosen. I forced a smile and congratulated Julia, but inside, I felt defeated. All the whispers and doubts about plagiarism seemed to echo louder in my mind.

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 41

Sophia’s POV

The meeting ended, and despite my best efforts, I couldn’t hide my disappointment. I managed to keep a smile on my face, but inside, I felt crushed. I ignored the sight of Julia basking in their victory, focusing only on the need to retreat to my small office and be alone.

Elijah’s eyes shifted to me, and it seemed like his gaze meant to tell me something. I hurried away quickly, not caring to find out.

As I entered my office, I hoped to find solace in solitude, but my wish was not granted. Serena followed me in, ignoring my request to leave. She locked the door behind her and sat down on couch, looking at me expectantly.

“What do you want, Serena?” I asked, trying to keep my voice steady.

“Well, do you know why Elijah chose Julia’s design over yours?” she asked straightaway, her eyebrows furrowing. She seemed greatly bothered by this, and I silently wondered why she wasn’t celebrating with them instead.

"I'm not interested to know why," was all I answered as I turned on the computer before me,

determined to show Serena that I was going to get back to my work.

But to my astonishment, Serena lets out a laugh. "Anyone who has carefully studied design can see, that Julia copied much of your proposal. Elijah was a top student back at the university. I'm sure he

noticed it too."

My interest was definitely piqued. I stared at her, wondering why she was saying this.

"You know what I think?" Serena continued. "Your design is obviously a lot better and more well thought out. It's quite comprehensive too... However, Elijah picked Julia's because he cares about who she truly is."

My eyes narrowed and I felt a crease forming on my forehead as I waited for her to go on.

"Elijah believes that Julia could be Sabrina Baker," Serena stated. "It's as simple as that... You remember Sabrina, don't you? You were supposed to be a replacement for her. But now that she's back, then in Elijah's eyes, you no longer matter. Your work doesn't have merit at all. It's Julia that he'll always side with in all aspects."

It hurt badly. I could feel my chest constricting, and didn't want to listen to the rest of what she had to say. So I muttered an excuse to leave, but, Serena stuffed a copy of Julia's proposal into my bag. before I got out of the office.

When I got home, I couldn't help replaying the presentations in my mind, including the casting of votes. I could not make myself forget and rest. Serena's words also kept running through my head.

"What the hell!" I eventually cried out as I snatched Julia's proposal from my bag, the one that Serena had placed there.

Upon closely reviewing it and comparing it with mine, I could tell that it really had plenty of traces of my own design elements and specific plans.

I wasn't sure if Elijah had the ability to discern the subtle traces of my work in Julia's design. But it not longer seemed to matter to him, not when he knew Julia as his beloved Sabrina. It was as if the details of the program had become inconsequential in his eyes.

I felt like I was chasing after the moon reflected in water—no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't grasp the real thing. Elijah's decision had shattered my hopes, and I couldn't shake off the feeling of betrayal. and injustice.

I curled up in the corner of my bedroom, tears streaming down my face. It was the kind of crying I hadn't done since my divorce. My emotions were a tangled mess of hurt and anger. I felt defeated, like all my hard work had been for nothing.

Just when I thought I was going to get my big break from this project. I've even sacrificed coming back here with my daughter! And for what?!

As I sat there, lost in my despair, I noticed the blinking light on my cell phone. There was an incoming call. If I were to look closely, perhaps I would have found out that it was Elijah calling me.

But at that moment, I didn't have the strength or the desire to answer. I just wanted to be alone with my thoughts, to try to make sense of everything that had happened.

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 42

Elijah's POV

Knowing that Sophia was working in the same building where I was, every single day, drove me crazy. I often found myself glancing around in the lobby, in the elevator, in the hallways... always searching for her, hoping to catch a glimpse.

Today, Trevis and I had a meeting. Finally, I had good reason to go to Urban Next Design Studio. At first, I didn't see Sophia anywhere. Then after the meeting, my heart went crazy when I saw that her office door was ajar. Taking a quick peek inside, my heart dropped. There she was, closely sitting together and poring over some designs, even whispering to each other. Sometimes she would giggle, oblivious to my presence.

That architect even had the nerve to put his arm around her and rub her back!

It was all I could do not to pull him away from her and punch him in the nose. I shook my head as I tried to control the anger that threatened to consume me.

"What's happening to me?" I asked myself as I went back to the top floor and closed the door behind me in my office. I gulped down a glass of wine, shaking my head in disbelief and trying to calm down. I used to always be composed, never showing my real emotions. But ever since Sophia and I had separated, I'd become easily affected by her.

I could not control the surge of jealousy and anger that came over me, the intensity surprising myself. I had hoped that coming back to the U.S. would distance me from such feelings, but seeing Sophia with another man right inside my own building

reignited the emotions I had tried to bury. I clenched my fists, trying to push the thoughts away, but they lingered, festering like an open wound.

Just then, there was a knock on my door. Chris poked his head in after a while. “Hey, Elijah!” he called in a jolly voice, oblivious to my negative emotions. “My sister has finally come home here! Did you know?”

I narrowed my eyes, looking puzzled, as he entered. Then it dawned on me who he was talking about. Do you mean Julia Stanford?”

“Yes!” Chris said eagerly. “You’ve met her?”

I nodded, thinking about the woman I’d met at the restaurant. She did look a lot like Sabrina. “She works at Urban Next, Trevis’s company.”

“Yeah, she was an intern there in Paris! I did hear that Trevis partnered with you and they have an office here now. That’s awesome! You have easier access to Julia then. You need to help me

convince her to take that DNA test.”

I then remembered the bracelet I saw Julia wearing the very same one I’d given Sabrina years ago. When I told Chris about it, he was even more ecstatic,

“I’m telling you, she’s the one!” Chris said with confidence and excitement. “Maybe she doesn’t remember her childhood because of the trauma, but she really is Sabrina. We’ve finally found her!”

“Maybe...” I said, hope rekindling in my heart. But I still couldn’t be too sure. “It’s still best that we have her take that DNA test. I’ll try my best to persuade her, though I can’t guarantee you that she’ll say

yes.”

“She will. You’ve got that charm over her. She always listens to you.”

The next day, I had my assistant call Julia to my office. She enthusiastically entered, though she seemed a little shy at first. It reminded me of Sabrina who was always quite shy even though she was eager about something. I struggled to see any resemblance between them other than the physical appearance and this modest, bashful demeanor.

Perhaps it’s because we don’t really know each other well.

“Take a seat, please. How are you, Julia?”

"I'm great, thank you." She sat down in front of my desk, gazing into my eyes and smiling widely.

"Your work at Urban Next, right? We've partnered with them for our latest development. I'm glad to know you'll be one of our latest project's designers."

"Oh, yes. That's awesome!"

"So..." I started, thinking of the information I wanted to fish out from her. "You seem to be very creative. I'd love to learn more about your background, how your interest in design began, that sort of thing..."

She began to describe herself as a shy, artistic child. It was through her sketches that she was able to release her emotions and express herself. "I, uh, had a troublesome childhood," she told me hesitantly. That perked up my interest at once, and I leaned forward to listen closely. She continued, "I went missing when I was around ten years old, then I was adopted afterwards..."

"Wow, really?" I asked, my heart thumping faster. She could really be Sabrina.

She paused for a while, perhaps struggling to decide if she would tell me more. I offered her wine, and she gladly accepted. As she sipped it, she began to physically relax.

"It must have been a traumatic experience," I remarked.

"Yes, and it resulted in losing my memories from before I was ten. But I knew that art and design were always a part of me. It helped me feel better and adjust to the new life I had."

"I'm sorry to hear that," I genuinely said. Then slowly, carefully, I mentioned Chris Baker which made her frown. "I know that you've been feeling harassed by him in Paris, but he's a good friend of mine who just really loves his sister dearly and would like to get her back if possible. Even until now, he hasn't lost hope... Even I would like to find out if you could be Sabrina. You know, she was my childhood best friend."

Her eyes widened and she seemed to be thinking about it.

"Sabrina means a lot to me," I added softly, remembering the last moments I shared with her.

"Wait, but I'm curious about something," Julia suddenly said. Out of the blue, she asked, "What's your relationship with Sophia? I mean, I saw how you two acted in the elevator..."

I took a deep breath and told her the truth. "She's my ex-wife."

"I see." She didn't even seem to be surprised. "Is she still important to you, more than Sabrina?"

"I... I was about to say yes. But then I remembered Sophia whispering with Craig. It reminded me of how angry I'd been whenever I saw her with Daniel. And now there was Craig too! Damn, it hurt me

badly. It made me so furious.

Julia was still waiting for my answer. To her, it was probably just an innocent question.

"No, she doesn't matter to me anymore," I finally said, "It's long been over between us. Sabrina is much more important to me."

Julia nodded, a slight smile beginning to appear on her lips. "Okay. I'll get the DNA test."

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 43

Julia's POV

I've always told Chris no, that I didn't want that DNA test. I'm not interested in finding out what life I had before I went missing as a child. And I don't care about going back to the Bakers.

This is my life now, and I'm happy and content where I am. I don't want to complicate things.

Every time Chris had visited me in the past, he would always mention new things about their family. He revealed their wealth, but that wasn't enough to allure me back. My parents had the same kind of wealth, and they had always given me what I wanted ever since I'd been adopted.

I'm lucky to have rich and good parents now. How can I be sure that the Bakers will treat me the same? It might not be good to open up the past again.

But these were my sentiments before I'd met Elijah Sinclair and found out that he was deeply connected to Sabrina Baker.

I remembered looking up into his eyes that first time at the restaurant and hearing his deep, velvety voice, feeling it roll across my skin and warm me inside. Immediately, I was besotted with his mysterious, handsome looks and the way he carried himself with such power and confidence.

Who knows if I'm really Sabrina? But whether it's true or not, I have to be her. I need to be her. We can have Elijah fall for me. We can be together.

The day arrived for the DNA test schedule. I arrived at the clinic, a whirlwind of emotions swirling within me. Chris was already there, waving enthusiastically as I walked in. I couldn't help but feel a pang of disappointment that Elijah wasn't there as I had expected. Chris greeted me warmly, and we exchanged pleasantries before settling into the waiting room.

As we sat there, Chris began to reminisce about our childhood, sharing fond memories of our time together. "Do you remember how you used to doodle everywhere?" he asked, smiling at the memory. And Mom got so mad when you drew on the sofa, even though it was our family portrait!"

I hesitated, unsure of how to respond. Chris seemed so certain that I was Sabrina, but these memories felt distant and unfamiliar to me. "Really?" I simply said. "So what happened then?"

"I told her it was me so you wouldn't get in trouble, but she knew I wasn't capable of drawing like that!" He laughed, and it made me laugh too. But I felt hollow inside because I couldn't recall anything like it.

"And I remember how Elijah always came to your defense too! You two were so inseparable!" Chris quipped.

At the mention of Elijah's name, my ears perked up "Yes, I think I recall something like that," I said softly, though I was just making it up. "I mean, when I first met Elijah, I felt an instant connection to him."

Chris nodded. "We always teased you guys, you're like soulmates or something."

I found myself giggling. "Tell me more about how we were when we were kids..."

Chris was quite talkative, eagerly telling me more stories and helping me develop that picture of Elijah and me and how we were before. Then suddenly, he mentioned how Elijah used to draw on Sabrina's shoulder because she had a unique red mole there, and he would often turn it into a sun or a flower or a heart.

I froze when I heard this. I didn't have that mole! So that means I'm not Sabrina! I felt greatly disappointed because there was a part of me that had hoped I could really be her. Fortunately, the dress I was wearing had sleeves and covered up that part of my body.

"Don't worry, Julia," Chris said. "We'll get you the best therapists and perhaps there's still a chance for you to get your memory back. Honestly, I don't think this DNA test is really necessary, but it's just for formality."

I could feel my heart pounding hard. He was truly convinced I was Sabrina. "Why? Don't you want to be 100% sure?"

He pointed to the bracelet I was wearing. "Where did you get that?"

"Well, I believe I was wearing this when my parents first adopted me," I told him truthfully.

"See? It's because Elijah gave it to you before. He made it himself!"

Suddenly, as I stroked the bracelet, I had a faint memory of another child giving it to me. But I could remember it clearly.

"You remember it now, don't you?" Chris asked excitedly.

"Uh, I think so. But it's very faint." In reality, I was more convinced that it was impossible for me to be Sabrina Baker. After all, I didn't have that mole he talked about.

They've looked for her for so many years. Maybe she has disappeared for good.

I closed my eyes briefly, trying to focus on that faint memory that had been triggered by the bracelet. I tuned out Chris and the rest of the sounds around me.

My thoughts wandered to the girl I saw in the snow when I was a child. She was the one who gave me my bracelet and told me to get help. I remembered how the little girl had looked at me with sad eyes, telling me that her best friend would come to her.

It was a strange memory, almost like a dream, but felt so real. Could that girl have been Sabrina? And if she was, where was her friend? Was it Elijah, she was talking about?

"Hey, Julia," Chris suddenly said, interrupting the memory.

I immediately snapped back to reality and realized that it was my turn for the test. I went through the process, thinking about the negative results that were bound to come out. What would happen then?

Elijah probably won't give me the time of day after that, I thought anxiously.

"I want to see the results as soon as possible," Chris said to me after the test.

"But... I need to prepare myself for this," I told him. "It's a huge thing, a big leap and change in my life. Please give me more time to process it, then I'll be the one to get the results here."

"They said it'll take about a week or so."

"I'll return in two weeks," I promised him, and he agreed.

As soon as I got back home that day, I quickly dialed a number on my phone. “Hi. I’d like to make an appointment for a tattoo tomorrow... Yes, it’s just a simple design. A red dot that looks like a mole.”

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 44

Elijah’s POV

“Sabrina...” I whispered as I sat in my large, mahogany-clad office, my gaze fixed on a very old photo I held in my hand.

A wave of nostalgia washed over me. The photo captured a moment frozen in time, one of laughter and innocence, with Sabrina’s bright smile lighting up the frame. A tinge of guilt spread throughout my chest as I thought about all the years I had failed her because I was never able to find her, even when I had all the money in the world.

A series of knocks interrupted my thoughts, followed by the door swinging open to reveal two familiar faces—Chris and Trevis, my closest friends.

“Morning, Elijah,” Chris greeted me, his eyes twinkling with excitement. “I’ve got some news for you.”

I raised an eyebrow, intrigued. “What’s up?”

“I got the results of the DNA test,” Chris began, grinning widely. “And it turns out that Julia is actually Sabrina! Can you believe it? After all these years, we now have her back!”

I wasn’t that shocked, but I couldn’t understand the strange emotions swirling inside me. I felt relief, that Sabrina was finally found. Also confusion, as I tried to reconcile the image of Julia with my memories of Sabrina.

“Our parents are over the moon, and they’re planning a welcome party for Sabrina,” Chris added. “You should be there.”

I nodded, my mind still reeling from the news. “Of course, I’ll be there.”

Trevis then threw down the gauntlet. “Now this news is really something else. But you know, since Julia and Sophia are both such good designers, I’d like you to take a look at their proposals and be the one to make the final decision on which one to use for your project.”

My eyes narrowed as I thought about being in this tight spot. But it was my company’s project, so Trevis was right.

Chris frowned. "You have to choose Julia," he said firmly. "She's been lost for so many years! This is the least we could do for her after everything she's been through."

Something occurred to me then. Trevis hadn't even informed me that all this time, Sophia had been an Intern in his company in Paris, and that now, she was his employee!

"Why didn't you tell me about Sophia?" I asked Trevis, my voice tight.

Trevis shrugged, looking grumpy. "You never mentioned your wife's name," he retorted.

I exhaled slowly, trying to calm myself. This situation's getting out of hand.

"Fine," Trevis finally said, breaking the tense silence. "We're having a meeting soon to vote on the better design for the project. Hopefully, you'll be able to attend the meeting and make your decision then."

I nodded, my mind racing. I need to figure out what to change everything to do. Julia or Sophia? This decision could

A few days later, as I was taking a short break after the day's tasks and meetings, my phone buzzed with a notification. I glanced at it and saw a message from Trevis. He had sent over two designs and a video of the presentation.

Sophia's presence on stage was magnetic. She stood confidently, presenting her design with such passion and clarity that it was hard not to be captivated. I felt a surge of pride watching her. Her dedication and talent were undeniable.

I never thought she could be this good. Why hadn't I given her a chance to be part of my company when we were still married?

I had underestimated her abilities, and now she was obviously shining and on her way to becoming the amazing woman that she had always been,

I switched my focus to the designs. At first glance, they seemed quite similar. Both were elegant, innovative, and had that distinct edge we were looking for. I made a mental note to delve deeper into the details later.

Just as I was about to continue walking, my phone buzzed again. This time, it was a message from Julia.

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Elijah, I heard from Chris that you'd be coming to vote. I really hope my work will be favored. Just a

with Sophia. But I assure you, I haven't plagiarized anything. I'm not sure if Sophia got her ideas from me, though.

I stopped in my tracks, rereading the message. Julia's words stirred confusion and concern within me. The similarities between the designs suddenly took on a new light. Had Sophia really drawn inspiration from Julia's ideas? Or was it merely a coincidence?

I typed a quick reply to Julia, trying to keep my tone neutral.

Thanks for letting me know, Julia. I'll take everything into consideration.

As I reviewed the designs once more, I couldn't shake off the nagging thoughts. Plagiarism was a serious accusation, even if Julia hadn't outright claimed it. Trust and integrity were paramount.

But Sophia's work is far superior, I think. It's comprehensive and very professional, and she explained it really well.

I made my way to the Urban Next Design Studio office, still thinking about which proposal to pick. What would best suit and benefit our project? Which one would resonate more with our target market?

Arriving at the venue, I took a deep breath, straightening my tie as I walked to the front of the room. Plagiarism was not to be taken lightly. It gnawed at me, conflicting with my certainty that Sophia would never stoop to such a level.

After Trevis introduced me, I stepped up to the podium and gave a few general words about the project, why the design was so important, and what we were looking for in this development.

"Ladies and gentlemen," I continued, my voice steady, "Today we're also set to evaluate the efforts and achievements of our talented individuals..."

I scanned the room and saw Julia beaming up at me, I smiled at her, thinking that if she were Sabrina, we had a lot of catching up to do. But there seemed to be no warmth or affection within me for her. Maybe it's because we need to get to know each other again.

My gaze then wandered to Sophia. She sat with a composed demeanor, her eyes fixed forward, never once meeting mine. She didn't appear anxious about the outcome. Instead, her focus seemed to be elsewhere, and it struck me that perhaps she was more concerned with my presence than the decision itself.

Nevertheless, in my mind and in my heart, I knew that it was Sophia's proposal that stood out more. But as I opened my mouth to announce my decision, I suddenly saw

that architect approach her and whisper something in her ear. She smiled brightly at him, and it made my blood boil.

That damn Craig Miller, I thought furiously.

In that instance, I changed my mind. I changed my decision. "I believe that Julia's work not only meets but exceeds the commercial viability needed for this project," I finally said. "Her proposal will be perfect for our luxury resort."

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 45

Sophia's POV

I took a deep breath, trying to steady my racing heart. My heels clicked sharply against the polished marble floor of the Urban Next office, echoing my determination.

This is it. I have to do the right thing, no matter the consequences.

As I approached Travis's office, I squared my shoulders.

"Ms. Bennett," his assistant greeted me with a nod, recognizing the resolve in my eyes. She signaled for me to enter.

"Travis," I said, stepping inside and closing the door behind me. The owner of Urban Next looked up from his desk, surprise flickering across his face at my abrupt entrance.

"Sophia," he replied, leaning back in his chair. "To what do I owe this unexpected visit?"

"I need to talk to you about the new project assigned to Julia."

His brows knitted together in confusion. "I know you were disappointed that your proposal wasn't chosen, but I also thought you'd be pleased for her. You've always had a good relationship with Julia,

"That's exactly the problem," I said, my voice firm. "Julia's design... it's copied from mine. I can just let this slide."

Travis's eyes widened. "Are you sure? This is a serious claim, Sophia."

"Absolutely sure," I said, meeting his gaze head-on. "So I'm here to ask the studio to investigate the

matter."

He shifted uncomfortably. “Sophia, you’ve been a valuable part of this team. I don’t want you to doubt yourself or your colleagues over one project. I’ll arrange a new project for you.”

My hands clenched at my sides, frustration bubbling up. “It’s not about getting a new project, Trevis. It’s about integrity. If this plagiarism incident isn’t investigated, I’m afraid I’ll have to hand in my resignation and leave Urban Next Design Studio.”

The weight of my words hung in the air. Trevis studied me, realizing the gravity of my stance. “You’re serious about this,” he finally said.

“Dead serious,” I replied without hesitation. “I won’t be part of a place where hard work and originality aren’t respected.”

For a moment, neither of us spoke. There was great tension in the air, a silent battle of wills. Finally, Trevis sighed, rubbing his temples. “Alright, I’ll have the matter looked into. But I hope you understand, this could have repercussions for everyone involved.

I understand,” I said softly. “But it’s the right thing to do.”

Trevis sighed then nodded, his expression softening. “You’re a strong woman, Sophia. I admire your principles. We’ll get to the bottom of this.”

+15 BONUS

My heart pounded with anger and anxiety. Trevis, with his furrowed brow, seemed as helpless as I felt.

Trevis’s assistant had just stepped out to fetch Julia, I clasped the folder containing my “proof” against my chest, trying to steady my breathing. The wait felt interminable, but soon enough, the door opened, and Julia walked in, her face a picture of confusion and concern.

“Julia,” Trevis began, his voice heavy with authority, “Sophia has made a serious claim regarding the design you submitted. She believes it might have been copied from her work. What do you say about

that?”

Julia’s eyes widened, and she glanced at me before focusing back on Trevis. “I... I don’t understand. I never saw Sophia’s design. I swear I didn’t copy anything.”

Trevis gestured for her to sit. “We need to discuss this openly. Explain how you came up with your design.”

Julia took a deep breath, clearly rattled. "I've always been interested in this project. I started working on the design a few months ago. I was inspired by some concepts I'd been developing independently."

I couldn't stay silent any longer. "Julia, there are too many similarities for this to be a coincidence."

Julia turned to me with a hurt expression. I felt a bit guilty, but I was adamant to do the right thing.

"Sophia, I swear I'm telling the truth. I didn't see your design. If there are similarities, it's purely accidental."

Trevis sighed and looked at me. "Sophia, you mentioned you have some proof?"

I nodded and handed over the folder. "Here. These are the side-by-side comparisons I prepared. You'll see the patterns, the motifs... they're almost identical."

Trevis took the folder and began to flip through the pages, his expression growing more concerned with each passing moment. Julia leaned forward, peering at the documents. Her face grew pale.

"This is impossible," she whispered. "I didn't copy anything."

Suddenly, Julia's eyes lit up with a thought. "Architect Craig!" she exclaimed. "I shared my idea with him when I first came up with it. He's the only one who knew about it."

Trevis looked up sharply. "Craig? Are you suggesting he might have...?"

Julia nodded vigorously. "Yes. He's been working with Sophia, right? Maybe he inadvertently shared my ideas with her."

I felt my face flush with surprise and indignation. "Wait a minute, Julia. Are you saying you stole your design?"

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Júlia looked torn, her gaze flicking between Trevis and me. "I don't know, Sophia. I'm just trying to make sense of this. Craig was the only one I told. If he talked to you about it, maybe it was an accident. I'm not accusing you directly. I'm just... trying to understand."

Trevis closed the folder with a decisive snap. "This complicates things. We'll need to speak with Craig as well,"

+15 BONUS

I took a deep breath, trying to keep my voice steady. I couldn't believe she was trying to turn it on me now. "Julia, I didn't steal your design. I came up with my own concept. I even have all my plans intact from when I first began the design."

Julia nodded slowly, still looking shaken. "I just... I don't know what to think right now."

Trevis stood up, signaling the end of the meeting. "We'll get to the bottom of this. For now, I need both of you to stay professional. I'll talk to Craig and figure this out. I will also need to speak with Serena and the top management of Sinclair Realty."

As soon as I stepped out of Trevis's office, I was greeted by an unexpected sight—Elijah, entering the studio with his usual confident stride. My heart raced. Had he heard our discussion?

I kept my face composed. The conversation with Trevis had been intense, filled with accusations and denials. My mind was still replaying every word, every defensive statement I had to make. I barely noticed Julia emerging from the office behind me until she called out, "Elijah!"

Her voice was intimate, the kind that came with shared secrets and long, quiet talks. It grated on my nerves. Elijah responded, but he didn't look at me. Not once. His eyes were fixed on Julia, as if I didn't

exist.

Since when did they become close to each other?!

My stomach tightened. I couldn't stand the sight of them, their unspoken connection. It was as if they were in their own world.

When Trevis came out too, I turned toward him immediately. "Trevis, Craig and I are innocent." My words sounded heavy and final.

His expression was unreadable, a mask of professionalism that gave nothing away.

"If you don't thoroughly investigate and give me a satisfactory answer," I told him, my gaze unwavering, "then I'm sorry but I will have to resign."

I could feel Elijah's presence behind me, but I refused to turn around. I couldn't bear to react, not now.

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Silence stretched thin, a taut string ready to snap. I held my ground, waiting, my heart pounding in my

chest.

It was Elijah who spoke next. He stepped forward and faced me. "Lighten up, Sophia. Julia wouldn't do this. I promise."

At that moment, I wanted to slap his face.

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 46

Sophia's POV

I stormed out of Urban Next, greatly pissed off at Elijah. My mind raced, a tangle of frustration and disbelief. How could he be so blind?

"Sophia, wait!" Elijah's voice rang out behind me, his footsteps pounding against the floor as he caught up with me in the hallway. I didn't slow down,

"Sophia," he repeated, more urgent now, grabbing my arm gently. "Please, just listen. Julia—or Sabrina -she's been my friend since we were kids. I know her well enough to know she wouldn't do something like this."

I turned sharply, yanking my arm free. "Of course, you do. Because Julia's Sabrina, right? And you're always right about everything." My voice dripped with sarcasm. "But let me tell you something, Elijah. You're being quite unfair. These people that you choose to trust may have no credibility at all."

He looked genuinely baffled and taken aback. "What do you mean?"

I scoffed, crossing my arms. "You also studied design, didn't you? Surely you can see the similarities in our work. Julia's—or should I say Sabrina's—copy of the design was much rougher than mine. And you actually believed her claim that I was the one who copied her?"

His brows furrowed, confusion giving way to a defensive posture.

"You haven't seen each other in decades, Elijah!" I pointed out, frustrated and hurt. "There's no guarantee if she's still the same person inside and out. You didn't even recognize her as Sabrina when you first saw her!"

Elijah opened his mouth to argue, but I held up a hand to stop him.

"People change. And people lie." I was angry and wasn't planning to hold back. For many years, I've been so submissive and passive when it came to him. But I've

changed too. "You think you know her because of some childhood bond, but you're blind to the possibility that she could be deceitful now."

We gazed at each other defiantly. Then I said, "Either way, I'll finish the investigation and clear my name. I don't need your misplaced loyalty complicating things."

For a moment, there was silence between us, the air heavy with unresolved tension.

"You know what I think? This might actually have something to do with that architect," he said with malice, his eyes boring into mine.

I blinked, taken aback. "You mean Craig? What are you talking about?"

He shrugged, a cold smirk playing on his lips. "I hear you two are very close. It's possible he's behind. this."

The accusation hung in the air like a bad smell. My mind raced, trying to comprehend the twist Elijah had just thrown into this complicated situation. Then I remembered it was exactly what Julia was insinuating earlier. Perhaps the two of them had discussed this before. That thought made me cringe.

Craig was a good friend and had always been very professional. Our conversations only involved the project and he never once mentioned anything about Julia's work. The idea that he could be involved was absurd.

"Craig can't have anything to do with it," I said firmly

Elijah raised an eyebrow. "How are you so sure? Do you know him that well? What's really going on between you two?"

The questions struck me like a physical blow, knocking the wind out of me. He was treading in dangerous waters.

"You're trying to protect her, aren't you? Your Sabrina?!" I shot back, my voice gaining strength from my rising anger. "You're willing to implicate innocent people to shield your precious first love."

Elijah's expression hardened, but he didn't deny it. The silence between us grew unbearable. I felt the sting of tears welling up in my eyes but refused to let them fall. I wouldn't give him the satisfaction of seeing me break.

Without another word, I turned on my heel and left him, storming back inside. Luckily, Trevis and Julia weren't around anymore. I went straight to my office, breathing heavily as I leaned against the closed door. I let out a shaky breath as tears filled my eyes.

My heart was racing, and I could still hear Elijah's infuriating voice in my head, replaying our argument over and over. The man could get under my skin like no one else.

A knock on the door interrupted my thoughts, and I turned to see Craig opening the door. His expression was unreadable, but there was something in his eyes that made me pause.

"Sophia," he said, stepping into the room. "I heard raised voices. I ran into Trevis, and he mentioned the situation in passing, though we're planning to meet up later. Is everything okay? How are you holding up?"

I sighed. "I'm not really... fine. I'm the one who reported Julia of possibly copying my design, but then she's trying to turn it around. And now, she and Elijah have implicated you too."

Craig looked bewildered. "I swear I haven't told anyone else about your ideas or the design you and I have been working on. Remember we even wanted it to be a surprise to everyone? And I haven't even been speaking with Julia about any of her designs!"

I plopped down onto my chair, burying my head in my hands. "Oh, god. This is just so messed up."

"Hey..." Craig said softly, approaching me. "What matters is that you know you're innocent and you're the one who hasn't done anything wrong."

I looked up and managed a faint smile. "Thank you, Perhaps we should just let Trevis finish up the investigation. I'm just afraid, though, that if it's up to Elijah and Serena to decide on this, I'll be the one who ends up with a tarnished name."

"Hey, we don't know that for sure yet..."

He opened his mouth to say something more as I waited. But I saw him hesitate, making me narrow my eyes and wonder what it was about.

"What is it?" I urged.

But then, my phone rang and it was Daniel. I knew that he'd picked up my daughter from school today so I answered it quickly..

"I'm so sorry, Sophia," Daniel immediately said when I answered his call. His voice sounded anxious. Reese kept insisting that she wanted to see you and where you worked, so I had to bring her with me. But I said we'd just meet you at the park beside your building. And then..."

My heart skipped a beat as I waited for him to go on,

... It seems I've lost her. I turned around to buy a balloon she wanted, and then suddenly, she's gone!! can't find her!"aa

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 47

Elijah's POV

I stood by the floor-to-ceiling windows of my office on the top floor, looking down at the park below. where several kids were playing happily. It reminded me of when things were so simple and I could just be happy and carefree with Sabrina.

Sighing, I sank back into my leather executive chair and let it swivel as my thoughts went back to my conversation with Sophia.

Immediately, I called my assistant Connor to my office.

"Connor, I need you to look into Craig. Something about him doesn't sit right with me," I said, getting straight to the p

"Of course. I'll get on it immediately," Connor replied without hesitation. That's one of the reasons I valued him so much. He never questioned my instincts.

"And there's something else," I continued, glancing at the clock on my desk. "I need you to get a copy. of Julia and Sophia's design from Trevis. I want to review them closely."

"Understood. I'll have it to you by the end of the day, Connor promised.

"Thanks. I appreciate it," I said, about to dismiss him. But a thought nagged at the back of r

it any longer. "Wait, Connor. There's one more thing." couldn't ignor

"Yes?" he responded, his curiosity piqued.

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"I need you to investigate Julia," I said, my voice dropping to a near whisper.

"Something about her seems... off. She's so different from the Sabrina I knew as a child. I need you to do this quietly. I don't want Chris to know. Not yet."

Connor was silent for a moment, likely processing the request. "I understand. I'll be discreet."

"Good. I'm counting on you."

I sat in my office for a long time, the late afternoon sun casting long shadows across the polished wooden desk. The weight of my earlier argument with Sophia pressed heavily on my mind. I couldn't shake the image of her standing there, her eyes brimming with unshed tears, her lips trembling as she tried to keep it together. The look of hurt and betrayal etched on her face was something I had promised myself years ago never to cause again.

Yet, here I am, the source of her pain, I thought bitterly.

I leaned back in my chair, running a hand through my hair in frustration. It wasn't just what I said, it was how I said it. The anger, the frustration, all of it had come out wrong. I had let my emotions get the best of me, and Sophia bore the brunt of it.

My ex-wife had changed over the years, becoming more confident, more sure of herself, and undeniably on the path to greatness in her career. She was shining, and I should have been there. supporting her, not questioning her integrity.

But there was something about her unwavering trust in Craig that ignited a fury within me. She placed so much faith in him, it blinded her to the potential deceit around her. And now, with Julia's accusations of plagiarism hanging in the air, Sophia's integrity was on the line.

She's right... I don't know if Sabrina is still the same. Heck, I don't even know if Julia really is Sabrina, despite the DNA results. All I'm sure of is that I know Sophia very well, and she wasn't capable of such dishonesty.

No, the real issue was between Julia and Craig. I could see it clearly, yet I had lashed out at Sophia, the one person who deserved my support.

I took a deep breath, trying to steady my thoughts. I had work to do, but my mind was a whirlwind of guilt and regret. My laptop screen stared back at me, the cursor blinking impatiently, but I couldn't focus.

All I could think about was Sophia, the way her eyes had pleaded with me to understand, to trust her. And I did trust her. I knew her heart, and her dedication. She would never compromise her principles.

I was so out of it that I eventually decided to go down to the park for a moment. I need to clear my head.

I found myself walking slowly along one of the jogging paths, trying to calm down. Suddenly, I came across this little girl who looked very familiar. I immediately knew that she was the one I v at the restaurant the other day, the one who had an uncanny resemblance to Sophia

Wow, even here, she still seems to haunt me...

The lovely little girl seemed to recognize me, pointing and smiling happily. I looked around and didn't notice any babysitter around. So I knelt with concern and said, "Hi. Who are you with?"

With innocent eyes, she answered, "One uncle."

"Where is he?"

"Uh... don't know."

I began to worry. I couldn't just leave her alone. "Okay, how about we play a little game?" I suggested, trying to keep my tone light. "I'll stay with you until your uncle comes back. How does that sound?"

"Uhm... Okay..." she said hesitantly. "Your name?"

That made me smile a little bit. "I'm Elijah. And I remember that your name is Reese."

Her face lit up. "Right! Reese!" She pointed to herself,

"What a beautiful name," I said. She grinned at me and then went off to run and play. I kept a close eye on her, checking around from time to time and wondering where her uncle was.

After a while, I saw her running so fast that she stumbled and fell on the grass. I hurried over and took her in my arms, checking for any wounds. "Reese, are you okay?"

To my surprise, she smiled at me and kissed my cheek. "Don't worry, Uncle Elijah. When mommy's sad, I kiss her. You... sad... So I kiss you. Soon you'll be happy!"

My eyes widened, but her words made me smile.

Suddenly, at that moment, Reese stood up and point waving with a big smile on her pretty face.

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 48

Elijah's POV

I froze. Now I'm going to find out if Reese's mother is Sophia...

My heart raced as I turned slowly, scanning the area, half-expecting to see Sophia's familiar face. rushing toward us. Instead, I saw the woman from the restaurant, the same one who had been with the little girl.

My face fell. I was greatly disappointed.

I don't know why, but I always thought it would be Sophia. Maybe it's because Reese looked so much like her, but it was probably just a coincidence.

The woman hurried over, her eyes filled with concern. Reese's little arms wrapped around my neck in a tight hug. "Take care of the little one," I told the mom. "I think she was lost earlier, so I stayed with her."

"Thank you," she said, almost breathlessly. She hoisted Reese onto her hip and began to walk away, clearly in a hurry.

As they moved further away, I overheard her soft voice ask Reese, "Where's Dan?"

The question stopped me in my tracks. Dan? Who was Dan?

"I talked to your Uncle Dan," I heard the woman say "He turned around to buy you that balloon you wanted, but then you suddenly disappeared. He's been looking all over the park for you. Both of us were so worried!"

"Oh!" Reese exclaimed. Then she suddenly began shouting. "Uncle Dan! I'm here!"

I looked around but I didn't see anyone coming closer. Perhaps they were meeting him somewhere. I wondered if this could be Daniel, Sophia's friend. Just then, the Paris scenarios involving all of us flashed back in my mind.

Could this be Sophia and Daniel's child? I wondered in alarm. But why is it that I feel so drawn to the little girl?

For some reason, I started walking behind them, intending to follow them and see for myself if it was really Daniel they were meeting. Maybe Sophia would even be with him!

For a while, though, I paused, shaking my head. You've already proven that this is the mother, not Sophia, a voice in my head told me. But my heart seemed to whisper otherwise. Maybe I'm just being paranoid.

It was then that my stepmom Morgana called. "Hello Elijah! Where are you?" she demanded to know. Serena told me we already have a designer for my luxury resort idea. I want to see the final proposal that was selected. I'm here in your office now."

"Oh, really?" I was surprised. My eyes followed the diminishing figures of Reese and her mother, and I felt torn. But of course, it was stupid to be so suspicious. Hence, I eventually decided to go back to the office building to meet Morgana.

The office was almost deserted when I got back. It was past working hours, after all.

“Elijah, dear! What took you so long?” Morgana exclaimed. “I’ve been waiting for ages.” But she didn’t even look up. She stood near the large drafting table, a thoughtful expression on her face as she examined two design layouts side by side.

“Two designs for the upcoming development,” she said, lifting one slightly. “Both have their strengths and weaknesses, but this one,” she held up the design in her hand, “is better in comparison.”

I felt a twist in my gut as I recognized the layout she praised. It was Sophia’s, not Julia’s.

Before I could gather my thoughts, Morgana continued, “The use of color, the composition, it’s striking. It’s clear she has a natural talent. And all the details are quite thorough. Plus, I think the designer clearly understands what’s needed by the target market. This is wonderful!”

I took a deep breath, masking my surprise. “Yes, it is impressive,” I admitted, walking closer to get a better look. Indeed Sophia had done a fantastic job, and I began to wonder if I’d made a huge mistake by choosing Julia’s work over hers just because I got pissed off at Chris’s attention toward her.

With the issue of plagiarism being investigated now, it’s even more complicated. But nevertheless, I could still change my final decision.

“I like that one too,” I finally remarked, a mischievous smile playing on my lips. “But this designer doesn’t have much experience, and I’m not sure you’ll want her to take on this project.”