

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 79

Sophia's POV

I woke up to an unfamiliar ceiling, my head throbbing as if someone had taken a hammer to it. Blinking against the morning light filtering through the window, I tried to sit up, but a wave of dizziness forced me back down.

"Easy there," a deep voice said from across the room. Startled, I turned my head to see a tall, broad-shouldered man standing in the doorway. His concerned eyes met mine as he approached cautiously.

"Where am I?" I croaked, my voice hoarse.

"You're in my home," he replied, pulling a chair next to the bed and sitting down. "I'm Adrian. I found you fainted on the beach a few days ago. Took you to the hospital."

The fog in my mind began to clear, but the pounding in my head made it difficult to focus. "What happened to me?"

"The doctors said you were attacked," Adrian explained gently. "You were hit on the back of the head. Luckily, it wasn't too severe, but it did put you in a temporary coma."

I reached up to touch the tender spot on my head, wincing as I felt the bandage. "Who... who did this to me?"

"I don't know," he admitted. "I found you unconscious and brought you to the hospital. They did what they could and said you just needed rest. So, I brought you here."

I took a moment to process his words, glancing around the room. It was a cozy, beach-themed bedroom, the sound of waves faintly audible through the open window. "Why didn't they keep me at the hospital?"

"They wanted to, but you were stable, and I insisted on looking after you," Adrian explained, his tone earnest. "I live just down the beach, and I thought it might be more comfortable for you here."

I was skeptical about all of this. My head was still throbbing, and the memories of the frantic search for Reese were fuzzy at best.

"Did you see my car? Or my cell phone?" I asked the man standing by the door. My voice-sounded weak, even to my own ears.

He shook his head. "I didn't see your phone. I saw the car, but I didn't realize you had the keys."

1 frowned, trying to piece together the events. "Where are my keys now?"

He shrugged. "I haven't seen them."

I looked down at my clothes, immediately searching my pockets. But that's when I realized that I had on a shirt and a pair of shorts that didn't look familiar. They didn't belong to me, and these weren't the clothes I was wearing when I went to the beach!

Seeing my bewildered expression, Adrian looked a bit embarrassed. "Uh... It was my sister who'd helped change your clothes," he explained. "You were soaked and dirty."

"Oh," I said. "Uh, thank you."

As I thought about my daughter and where she could be now, it made me sit up fast and try to climb out of bed. But the sudden movements brought me a headache, and my vision began to blur. I felt as if the entire room was spinning.

"Ohhh, I'm still so dizzy," I murmured, holding on to the bed frame and steadying myself.

"Maybe you should rest for a bit longer," Adrian suggested. "You can use our phone if you remember any numbers."

I nodded again, feeling a wave of helplessness wash over me. "Thank you. I'll stay for now."

He gave me a reassuring smile. "No problem. If you need anything, just let me know."

I watched him leave the room, my thoughts a tangled mess of worry and exhaustion. Reese was still out there somewhere, and I needed to find her. But for now, I had no choice but to rest and regain my strength.

I didn't realize I had fallen into a slumber again. When I woke up, it was already dark. I wished I could head over to my apartment or go to Daniel, Kayla, or Elijah. I needed to know what had happened in those days that I was out.

"It's too late to leave now," Adrian told me. "And I don't have a car. Perhaps you should rest and we'll try in the morning."

—

"But you don't understand "I tried to protest.

He insisted that I rest for the meantime. He also served me some soup and bread for dinner. After eating a bit, I fell asleep again.

The next morning, I was awakened by the sound of a beautiful male voice singing a melancholic ballad, accompanied by an acoustic guitar. Curious, I got up and realized that I was feeling a lot better already.

I followed the sound and saw that one bedroom's door was ajar. The lovely melody was coming from inside. Through the open gap, I could see Adrian playing the guitar and singing, but his back was on me. He was sitting by the window and looking out into the ocean.

Slowly I tiptoed inside and was immediately enamored by all the musical instruments lining up one wall: There was a full-sized digital piano, a few acoustic and electric guitars, and even a violin. Wow, this man was a musician!

Suddenly, a glint of light caught my eye from a nearby table. A small, glossy card peeked out from under a stack of sheet music. Curiosity got the better of me, and I picked it up. The words "Raven Media" were emblazoned across the top in sleek, modern font. My heart skipped a beat.

Raven Media was Kayla's family's entertainment company. I remembered the stories Kayla had told me about her family's business, how they'd worked with some of the biggest names in the industry.

Just then, Adrian stopped playing and turned around, becoming aware of my presence. His eyes narrowed a little.

I showed him the card. "Are you a musician or do you want to be a famous one? This company belongs to my best friend's family. I can help you with your dream."

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Sophia's POV

Adrian snatched the business card out of my hand, his expression skeptical. It was clear he didn't believe a word I said about knowing the owner of Raven Media.

"You should think about how to get in touch with your family and friends," he said, his tone flat. "Our family won't take in a strange woman for too long."

I opened my mouth to protest, to explain again that my connection to Raven Media could help him. But then I realized that this could be my way out of here, to reconnect with the people in my life and tell them what had happened to me. They must be worried sick! And what about Reese? I must find her!

Suddenly, the man's sister burst into the room before I could get a word out. Her eyes sparkled with excitement as she rushed over to us.

“You know important people from Raven Media?” she said eagerly, practically bouncing on her feet. Then

you have to hear Adrian sing his original song!”

“What?” Adrian asked, looking startled.

“Come on, let her hear it,” the sister urged.

Adrian rolled his eyes but strummed a chord on the guitar. The familiar sound filled the room, a

and he started to sing. His voice was rich and smooth, blending perfectly with the melody.

I stood there, entranced by Adrian’s voice as it filled the small room. His singing was raw, filled with a passion that was hard to ignore. I didn’t know much about music, but I knew talent when I heard it. When he finished, I couldn’t help but clap enthusiastically.

“Wow, Adrian, that was amazing,” I said, my voice filled with genuine admiration. “You have a real gift.

Adrian looked at me skeptically, his eyes narrowing. Thanks, but I doubt it matters. No one important is ever going to hear me.”

“I can really help,” I blurted out. “I can get you a chance to be heard. We’ll call Raven Media now and I can talk to my best friend.”

“See, Adrian? There’s still a chance!” his sister exclaimed, her eyes twinkling. “Maybe there’s a reason you found this woman on the beach and brought her here.”

-Adrian raised an eyebrow, clearly doubtful. “You? You don’t look like you know anyone with money or influence.”

I felt a flush of irritation but kept my voice calm. “Well, I can prove it. We just have to call this number.” I couldn’t wait any longer.

It was a good thing his sister believed me. She grabbed a phone and dialed the number. We all waited in suspense. Eventually I saw her face shift from uncertainty to surprise. “Yes, Kayla Davis? My name is Amanda, and I have Sophia Bennett here with me. She said you could help my brother, Adrian, with an audition or something? He’s a singer and a musician...

She paused, listening and nodding. I wanted to grab the phone from her right then and there.

“Let me talk to her,” I said, coming closer to her. But she had already put the phone down, to my great disappointment. Then she announced, “Kayla is coming over right now.”

“Oh, thank God,” I said with a sigh of relief. “Now I can go back to my family and friends.”

It wasn’t long before Kayla arrived. It was so good to see a familiar face again! It was only then that I had a rush of emotions that I didn’t realize I had been holding back. Tears filled my eyes as I stared at her.

“Sophia!” she called out, her voice filled with excitement as she hurried through the open front door.

“Kayla!” I exclaimed, jumping up from my seat. “You’re really here! Oh, god! You’re here!”

We met halfway, and she wrapped me in a tight, familiar hug. “Oh, my gosh! I’m so glad to see you’re okay! You’ve been gone for three days! What happened to you?”

you came at once, and I can now n

“It’s a long story, but I’m just so glad home.”

Just then, I noticed some movement behind her. My eyes widened as I saw Elijah standing there, gazing at me with worry, relief, and longing.

Elijah. Just saying his name in my mind filled me with warmth and a soothing feeling, as if everything was going to be okay.

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Sophia’s POV

“We were so worried about you, Sophia!” Kayla exclaimed. “How are you feeling now?”

“I’m good,” I answered with a little smile, taking my eyes off Elijah. “I was fortunate enough to have been found by good people.” I quickly explained how Adrian brought me to the hospital for a checkup and how he and his sister Amanda had taken care of me while recuperated.

Kayla smiled at them.

But then, I moved forward and clutched her hand, “But what happened to Reese? I’ve been desperate to find out, to get out of here and resume my search for her...”

The fear for my daughter surged through me like a tidal wave, overpowering the pain.

Elijah stepped forward then, his face serious but calm. "Reese is safe. We found that same day when you disappeared. She doesn't seem to remember much about what happened, which is a good thing. She's not traumatized at all because she isn't aware that a kidnapping happened."

"She's been asking about you, though," Kayla said. Now that I looked at her closely, I could see that there seemed to be dark circles under her eyes. She must not have been sleeping well, looking for me!

"What did you say?"

"I just told her you had some work to do for a few days Kayla explained. "And I've been staying at your apartment with her, along with her nanny too." She glanced at Elijah. "Elijah has also been visiting her everyday."

Relief washed over me, and tears sprang to my eyes. Thank you, Elijah. Thank you, Kayla," I whispered, my voice breaking. "I'm so sorry. I received a text message from the kidnapper telling me to come to the beach alone, or else Reese could be harmed! I was afraid to tell you or the police because I had to protect her."

Kayla looked surprised for a while, but then she reached out and squeezed my hand. "We understand, Sophia. You did what any mother would do."

Elijah nodded in agreement, but there was a tension in his eyes. He and Kayla exchanged a meaningful glance, and my heart sank.

"What is it?" I asked, my voice trembling. "What aren't you telling me?"

Elijah took a deep breath. "I'm just remembering how worried we were about you, Sophia. But anyway, what matters right now is that you and Reese are safe!

"Yes, you're right," I agreed. Reese must be missing me so much by now. I couldn't wait to hold her in my arms again, to feel her—little fingers clutching mine. "We have to go. I really need to see her now."

Elijah nodded and began leading me out the door. But just then, I heard Adrian's voice.

"So, you're just leaving without saying thank you?" His tone was sharper than I'd ever heard it before, stopping me in my tracks.

I turned around, surprised to see him standing there with a defiant glint in his eyes. Adrian, the young man

who had taken me in when I was unconscious at the beach, had always been kind and supportive, more like a younger brother than anything else. I realized then that I hadn't properly thanked him for all he had done.

"Oh, Adrian," I said, walking back toward him. "I'm so sorry. Thank you so much for everything. I really appreciate all of it. I appreciate you and Amanda."

He crossed his arms, looking somewhat mollified but still a bit pouty. "It's just... it's like you forgot about me already," he muttered.

I reached out and placed a hand on his shoulder, giving him a sincere smile. "Oh, I'm sorry. You know how desperate I was to see my daughter again! But you've been amazing, really."

His expression softened, but he still looked a little sulky. Just then, Kayla and Elijah walked up. "Guys, this is Adrian," I introduced, motioning toward him, realizing I had not yet introduced them. "He's the one who found me and took care of me when I was unconscious on the beach."

Kayla extended her hand first, her bright smile lighting up her face. "Nice to meet you, Adrian. Thank you for looking out for Sophia."

Adrian shook her hand, his demeanor shifting slightly under her warm gaze. "It's nothing," he said, but could see he was pleased.

Elijah gazed at him doubtfully. I could see the suspicious expression on his face. "It seems odd that you were there at the right time, just when Sophia got hurt on the head," he mused, giving Adrian a puzzled, curious look.

"Did you not see anyone else?"

"No," Adrian answered, looking annoyed and insulted. "What are you insinuating?"

"Just that it's such amazing timing on your part," Elijah replied. "What were you doing there?"

"I don't have to explain myself to you!" Adrian said defiantly. Kayla and I exchanged worried glances. We could definitely feel the increasing tension in the air.

Elijah scoffed. "Or perhaps you don't want to because you don't have an explanation that wouldn't prove you weren't involved in all this somehow."

"What the hell are you talking about?" Adrian was now obviously angry.

He took a menacing step forward, but Elijah didn't back down. "Were you working with Serena? What was your real intention with Sophia?"

Adrian's face darkened. "I don't know any Serena, and only helped Sophia," he said through gritted teeth. "I'm not going to stand here and be accused of something I didn't do!"

"Elijah, stop it," I pleaded, stepping between them. "We don't know that. And I really don't think Adrian was involved in getting me harmed or in the kidnapping of my daughter."

Adrian shook his head, his voice low and furious.

"I've had enough of this nonsense. Sophia, you and your friends need to leave. Now."

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Sophia's POV

"Oh, we're really sorry, Adrian," Kayla suddenly said. "But I remember your sister Amanda mentioning your talent!"

Adrian's expression changed. Kayla had hit the mark, and disrupted the growing tension between Adrian and Elijah. Well done! But I can't believe I'd forgotten about that.

"Isn't that the main reason she asked me to come here?" Kayla continued. "She spoke highly of your talent. So do you still want to audition to become a new talent at our company?"

Adrian looked taken aback, his eyes widening in surprise. "Audition? At Raven Media?" he repeated. He suddenly began looking uncertain and nervous.

I felt like I needed to jump in at that moment. "Oh, that's right, Kayla! I've already heard him sing and play the guitar, and he's really good. You should hear him too."

"Well, we're always on the lookout for fresh talent," Kayla said with a kind smile. "I can have your audition scheduled immediately."

Elijah, standing nearby, grunted softly, his disapproval palpable. I shot him a quick glare, hoping he wouldn't say anything to derail the conversation.

Kayla continued, undeterred by Elijah's reaction, "I've recently been in charge of a new project at Raven Media, and I'll be there a lot. It would be great to see you come in for an audition. Who knows? We might even work together in the future."

Adrian hesitated, his brow furrowing in contemplation. "I don't know... I've never really considered it seriously. Someone just gave me that card, honestly, telling me to call and give it a shot. But I... I'm not used to playing in front of an audience."

“There’s no harm in giving it a try,” I encouraged him. “You never know what might come of it.”

Suddenly, Amanda came out and joined us. She seemed to have been in the shower, which was the reason she didn’t hear Kayla and Elijah arrive. “Oh, I’m so glad you’re here, Miss Kayla Davis. Really, my brother is an amazing musician. He can be your new star!”

Kayla smiled. “I’m pretty sure he’s got great potential. And I’d be more than happy to help you through the process... So just think about it, okay?”

“Uh, sure. Alright.” Adrian still didn’t seem that sure, but at least he wasn’t angry anymore.

We eventually said goodbye and piled into Elijah’s car. I slid into the passenger seat while Kayla settled in the back. Elijah took his place behind the wheel, and soon, we were cruising down the tree-lined streets toward home.

I turned to look at Kayla, curiosity piqued. “So, what project have you taken on at Raven Media?” I asked, eager to catch up with her.

Kayla smiled, adjusting her sunglasses. “Oh, it’s nothing too crazy. Just helping my parents with styling the image of some new talents. You know, the usual.”

“Nice! What about any new design projects?”

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+25 BONUS

Kayla’s smile widened. “Actually, yes. I’ve got a new design project with Sinclair Realty.”

Elijah’s eyes lit up. “Yes, we’ve hired her again for another project. I’m excited to see what she comes up

with.”

“I think it would be awesome if you and I can finally work together, Sophia!” Kayla suddenly exclaimed.

I hesitated, knowing my workload was already overwhelming. “Kayla, I’d love to, but I have too many projects on my plate right now. And I probably have backlogs already... Maybe you could collaborate with some other designers from Urban Next for the project?”

Before Kayla could respond, Elijah cleared his throat. "Actually, there's something I've been meaning to discuss with you, Sophia."

I turned to face him, intrigued. "What's that?"

"I want you to take over as head of the design department for the time being," Elijah said, his tone serious. "I've been thinking about this for a long time now, and I've also discussed it with Trevis."

The shock hit me like a wave. "But... Serena is the one in charge of that, right?"

Elijah's expression darkened instantly, his grip on the steering wheel tightening until his knuckles turned white. I felt a chill run down my spine.

"Serena?" His voice was cold, clipped. "She's the reason Reese went missing."

I turned to him, shock washing over me. "What do you mean?"

Elijah's eyes remained fixed on the road ahead, but I could see the storm brewing in them. "It was Serena who took Reese. She orchestrated everything. But don't worry, Sophia, she won't get away with it. I'm suing her, and I have all the evidence I need. It won't be long before she's behind bars."

I struggled to process his words. "So it was really her all along? I can't believe she hates me that much..." whispered as my hands began to shake. My heart pounded wildly.

"I can't believe she's that evil!" Kayla added, beginning to sound furious.

Elijah's lips pressed into a thin line. "I had my suspicions. I hired a private investigator. Turns out, she had everything to do with it. I have recordings, documents... everything."

Before I could respond, Kayla leaned forward, her face serious. "Reese knows we found you, Sophia. Daniel just sent a message now that she's already awake and would like to see you

Just then, as Kayla checked her phone, the screen lit up, showing an incoming video call. She quickly handed it to me. My heart pounded as I swiped to answer.

"Mommy! I miss you!" Reese's little face appeared on the screen, her eyes bright with excitement.

Tears welled up in my eyes. "Reese, sweetheart, I miss you too! I'm so, so glad you're okay!"

As I held the phone, adjusting it to get a better view, I accidentally angled it toward Elijah. Reese's eyes widened with joy.

“Daddy!”

Elijah’s head snapped around, his eyes meeting mine in a moment of sheer surprise. I froze, my mind racing.

Reese’s voice echoed through the car. “Daddy!”

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Sophia’s POV

I could feel the color getting drained from my face. “Why is she calling you that?” I hissed.

Kayla’s eyes widened as she took the phone from me and began chatting with Reese to distract her. Elijah glanced at me as he continued to drive. He was quiet for a while. “Sophia, I...” He was hesitant for a while, making my heart race even more. “I’ve already told Reese that I’m her father”

My mouth dropped open. “You what?” I whispered, barely hearing my own voice. I remembered that I hadn’t even divulged it directly to him yet. “How did you. I mean, why...” I paused, taking a few deep breaths. For a while, I considered denying it again.

“Sophia, I’m her father, am I not?” Elijah said with emphasis, “It’s the truth, and I’ve always felt it in my heart ever since I met her.”

I gulped, feeling tears rising up in my eyes. My heart was swept up in a storm of emotions. But I reminded myself that this wasn’t about me. It’s my daughter and her feelings that count the most. It’s the reason why I wanted to approach this issue carefully.

“H–How did she take it?” I asked him, still unable to process this.

Elijah smiled and reached over to touch my hand briefly. “She was very happy, Sophia. She never doubted it for one second. I think she could also feel it in her heart, even at her very young age.”

I nodded, a lump forming in my throat from my unshed tears.

“Mommy? Daddy?” I suddenly heard Reese’s voice from the phone. Kayla leaned over toward us from the backseat, her eyes questioning.

I nodded at her and took the phone again, smiling widely as I faced my daughter. “Hey, Reese, we’re still

here.”

“When are you coming home?” she asked in her sweet voice, looking excited.

“Very soon, sweetheart. We’re on our way,” I reassured her, my heart swelling at the sound of her voice.

“They’re coming, Uncle Daniel!” Reese exclaimed.

Daniel’s face appeared beside Reese’s on the screen. “Hey, how about we all go out for dinner to celebrate you coming back safe and sound? I mean, that is, if you’re feeling up to it, Sophia.”

Kayla leaned closer to get in the frame. “That’s a great idea! What do you think, Sophia?”

I smiled, feeling a wave of gratitude for the support around me. “I think that’s perfect. I’m feeling good, don’t worry about me.”

I could sense Elijah tensing up, knowing that he and Daniel weren’t really on good terms yet. But then he smiled at me. “I think this would be good for Sophia and Reese.”

Reese clapped her hands excitedly. “Yay! I can’t wait! See you soon, Mommy and Daddy!”

My heart skipped a beat at her words. It would take some getting used to.

+25 BONUS

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We ended the call, and I turned to Elijah. “Thank you for telling her. I’m glad she’s happy.”

Elijah’s grip on the steering wheel tightened slightly. “She needed to know. And I needed to be honest with her. With both of you.”

Kayla chimed in, breaking the moment of silence. “This is a big step for all of us. But we’ll get through it together.”

After a while, we got to the restaurant near my apartment. I stepped inside, my heart pounding as I scanned the room. There they were—Reese and Daniel—waiting for us at a corner table. Reese’s eyes lit up when she saw me, and she waved enthusiastically. I rushed forward, unable to contain my emotions any longer.

“Mommy!” Reese exclaimed, jumping off her chair and running toward me.

I knelt down, scooping her into my arms, and hugged her tightly. Tears streamed down my cheeks as I held her close. "Oh, Reese," I whispered, my voice choked with emotion. "I'm so sorry, baby. I'm so sorry I couldn't take care of you."

Reese wiped away my tears with her small hands and kissed me on the cheek. "It's okay, Mommy. Don't cry," she said softly, her innocence and love breaking my heart even more.

Elijah approached us, placing a comforting hand on my shoulder. "Sophia, you've done a good job as a mother," he said, his voice steady and reassuring.

I looked up at him, grateful for his support. Just then, I noticed Daniel glancing at Elijah and then back at me, a mixture of concern and curiosity in his eyes.

"Sophia," Daniel said, stepping closer. "Are you hurt? Is everything okay?"

I shook my head, forcing a smile. "I'm okay, Daniel. I'll tell you everything later. But for now, let's just enjoy this moment and be thankful that we're all here together and safe."

He nodded, though I could see the worry still etched on his face. "Alright, but if you need anything, you let me know."

"I will," I promised, standing up and taking Reese's hand. "Let's sit down and have a nice meal. We deserve it."

As we made our way to the table, I couldn't help but feel a sense of relief. Despite everything that had happened, we were here, together. And that was all that mattered.

After dinner, Elijah offered to walk Reese and me home. "Let's leave the car for now," he suggested, his voice steady. "It's a nice night for a walk."

I hesitated for a moment, then nodded. "Alright, thank you."

The streets were quiet, the cool evening air refreshing after the warmth of the restaurant. Reese skipped along beside us, holding my hand with one of hers and Elijah's with the other. I couldn't help but smile at the sight. It felt almost... normal.

When we reached my apartment, Elijah offered, "How about I put Reese to bed tonight?"

I nodded, feeling a warmth in my chest. "Okay."

We got Reese into her pajamas, and she climbed into bed, her eyes already drooping. Elijah sat on the edge of her bed and began telling her a fairy tale. But it wasn't a typical one. He spun a funny story about a mischievous dragon who couldn't stop sneezing fire and a brave princess who tried to help him find a cure.

Reese giggled, her laughter softening into sleepy murmurs as Elijah continued. Within minutes, her breathing became slow and steady. She was asleep.

I stood in the doorway, watching them. I felt like crying. I never imagined that Reese would be tucked in by her father. It was a sight that filled me with an unexpected happiness.

Elijah carefully tucked the blanket around Reese and then stood up, his eyes meeting mine. We quietly walked out of her room and into the living room. The silence between us was comfortable, almost

intimate.

"It's late," Elijah said softly, breaking

the silence. "I should go."

I nodded, feeling a pang of reluctance. "Thank you for tonight. It meant a lot to Reese... and to me." He stepped closer, wrapping his arms around me in a deep hug. For a moment, I was stiff, unsure. Then, his warmth and the sincerity of his embrace melted my reservations, and I relaxed into him.

"I'm glad you're okay," he murmured into my hair. "If anything had happened to you... I would have regretted..."

But

He didn't finish, but I knew what he meant. His words caught me off guard. I closed my eyes, allowing myself to just be in the moment, feeling his heartbeat against mine.

"You don't have to carry it all alone, Sophia," he murmured, his breath warm against my ear. "I'm here for you."

I nodded, speechless. As he slowly pulled back, Elijah's eyes locked onto mine, searching for something I wasn't sure I could give. He cupped my face gently, his thumb brushing my cheek.

"Sophia," he whispered, his voice barely above a whisper. "..."

He trailed off, and I could see the struggle in his eyes. Then, as if making a decision, he began to lower his head, his lips moving closer to mine. My heart pounded in my chest, a wild, uncontrollable rhythm. Just as his lips were about to touch mine, a small voice broke the spell.

"Mommy, I want to go to the bathroom."

I jerked back, startled, and looked down the hallway to see Reese standing in her doorway, clutching her bunny.

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Sophia's POV

It felt good to finally be back in my office and to be working on a new design project.

The room was quiet, save for the soft hum of my computer. I loved this part of the process, where creativity flowed freely, and the outside world faded away.

As I was sketching out ideas, a knock on the door interrupted my thoughts. I looked up to see Julia standing there with a look of concern on her face.

"Hey, Sophia," Julia began, stepping into the room. I heard from Elijah about what happened. Are you okay?"

I forced a smile, though my heart tightened at the mention of Elijah. "I'm fine, Julia. Really. Just trying to get this project done."

Julia nodded, but I could tell that she didn't plan on going away soon. She glanced at my sketches, then back at me. "I know you're busy, but I was wondering if I could study with you. I know I'm not as good a designer as you, which is why Chris chose you for this project. I really want to learn more from you so I can improve faster."

Her sincerity caught me off guard. I didn't like being disturbed when I was in the zone, but Julia's earnestness was hard to ignore.

I hesitated, weighing my options.

"Please? I promise not to get in your way," she added, sitting down across from me at my work table.

I could feel the sincerity in her words, and it was clear she was genuinely eager to learn. Finally, I relented. "Alright, Julia." 1

Her face lit up with gratitude. "Thank you, Sophia. I really appreciate this."

We settled into a rhythm, with me working and Julia watching intently. Occasionally, she would ask a question, and I found myself explaining my thought process, which surprisingly helped me see my work from a different perspective.

As the afternoon wore on and we took a little break, Julia even got some herbal tea for both of us. She's been trying hard to be good to me after the plagiarism issue, and I was beginning to appreciate her more.

But then, she suddenly brought up a topic that I never knew she was aware of.

“Did you hear about Serena?” Julia asked, her voice tinged with curiosity and something else I couldn’t quite place. “She’s been sentenced already.”

My heart skipped a beat. After I’d appeared in court to tell my side of the story, I hadn’t paid much attention anymore to the trial, It was Elijah who was adamant to get her to pay for the wrong things she had done.

Julia’s expression grew serious. “I heard that it’s for kidnapping Reese and you, and for trying to hurt you at the party. She deserves it... And of course, she’s still being tried for some illegal stuff she did here in the company.”

I was surprised that she knew so much. But what caught my attention was her mention of my daughter.

I blinked, taken aback. “You know about Reese?”

Julia looked a little flustered, her fingers fidgeting with a swatch of wall cladding. “Elijah told me,” she said, her eyes avoiding mine.

“Elijah told you?” I repeated, trying to keep my voice steady. A wave of emotions surged through me. I didn’t expect Elijah to tell Julia everything.

“Yes, he did,” Julia replied, her voice softer now. “He wanted me to know what kind of person Serena was.”

I nodded slowly, processing the information. “I didn’t think he’d share that much.”

Julia gave me a sympathetic look. “He just wanted to protect everyone involved, I think.”

“Maybe,” I said, my mind racing. I couldn’t shake off the feeling of unease. How much did Elijah really share with Julia? And why?

We returned to our work, but my thoughts kept drifting back to Serena and the unexpected revelation. The room was filled with the sound of pencils scratching on paper, but an undercurrent of tension lingered between us.

I was glad when we finally called it a day. I went straight home, eager to rest. However, the news about Serena still lingered in my mind. Elijah hadn’t contacted me yet about it, so I was surprised that Julia knew already.

When did they become so close? Did he finally accept her as Sabrina already?

I unlocked the door, letting out a sigh of relief as I stepped into the familiar comfort of my home. The aroma of freshly brewed coffee wafted from the kitchen, but it was the sound of giggles that drew me into the living room.

There, sitting on the floor, was Daniel, engrossed in a playful conversation with Reese. She was waving her favorite doll around, and Daniel was pretending to be a dragon, complete with growling noises and exaggerated hand motions.

“Mommy!” Reese called out, her eyes lighting up when she saw me. She ran over, wrapping her small arms around my legs. “Look, Uncle Daniel’s playing with me!”

I smiled. “I see that, sweetheart. You having fun?”

“Lots!” she replied, before dashing back to her spot on the sofa, her dolls scattered around her.

Daniel stood up, a serious look crossing his face. “Hey, there. How was your day?”

“Tiring, but okay. Quite productive.”

“That’s good,” he replied, leading me to an area where Reese wouldn’t be able to hear us but we could still keep an eye on her. “Uh, I’ve been meaning to talk to you...”

“Sure, what’s up?”

“I didn’t expect you to tell Elijah about Reese’s existence so quickly,” he said, his voice low but tense.

I folded my arms, trying to maintain my composure. “Daniel, it’s not like I had much choice. Reese and Elijah keep running into each other. It was bound to come out sooner or later.”

His jaw tightened, and he ran a hand through his hair. “Are you getting back together with him? Have you forgotten everything he did to you? He’s not reliable, Sophia. He’s just going to hurt you again.”

I shook my head, feeling confused. “I... I don’t know. It’s complicated, Daniel. I haven’t even thought about that. But why are you reacting like this? Why are you so agitated?”

“He’s now so involved in your life, Sophia. I just... can’t trust him.”

“I can understand that. But don’t worry, okay? I’m fine and we’re both busy nowadays, anyway. There’s been no talk of getting back together or that sort of thing.”

He looked away, his shoulders tensing up. There was a long pause, filled only by the sound of Reese humming to herself.

Finally, he turned back to me, his eyes filled with a helplessness I hadn't seen before.

"Sophia, I like you," he said, his voice barely above a whisper. "A lot."

The words hung in the air, their weight sinking into my heart.

"I thought... I'd gotten over you, but I haven't," he continued, taking my hand in his. "... haven't stopped. loving you all these years."

I stood there, speechless, my mind racing as I tried to process what he had just confessed.

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 85

Sophia's POV

I froze, my heart pounding in my chest, as Daniel's words sank in. "I've liked you since high school," he confessed, his voice filled with sincerity. "Back then, I thought you were too focused on your studies to pay attention to me. And I guess I was too... afraid to approach you."

High school felt like a lifetime ago. I had been so engrossed in my academic pursuits that I hadn't paid much attention to anything else. Certainly not to Daniel, who had apparently been quietly looking out for me all along. I did vaguely remember some encounters we had then, but we never even became close friends during that time.

"Even in college, though I was studying abroad, I still kept checking your social media," he admitted. "And asking some people about you."

"Oh," was all I could say at the moment. This was indeed a revelation.

"I was sad when I found out you were married," Daniel continued, his eyes searching mine. "But it was even harder to learn that you were unhappy. I was very happy that we ended up studying in Paris together and becoming very good friends. I was so glad to have had that chance to take care of you and Reese in France, and even here."

His words were like a whirlwind, stirring up emotions I had long buried. Gratitude, guilt, confusion—all swirled together as I struggled to find the right words.

"... I'm truly grateful, Daniel," I began. "But I... I only see you as a friend. You know that. I've told you this before."

The words hung in the air, heavy with unspoken feelings. Daniel's expression faltered, a flicker of disappointment crossing his features before he masked it with a smile. But his eyes were red, almost on the brink of tears.

I felt burdened with guilt, but I had to be honest with him. “I’m sorry, Daniel.”

He nodded with understanding. But then, he still looked troubled. I’ve noticed that you and Elijah have gotten close. He was never like this to you when you were married. That’s what you told me. But now, he’s pursuing you and he wants to get back with you, right?”

I was flabbergasted and didn’t know how to answer. But yes, he was right. I could feel that—and Elijah had been quite vocal about it too.

“What do you think of him, Sophia?” Daniel asked outright, his voice wavering a bit.

I sighed. “Daniel, I only think of Elijah as Reese’s father. Nothing more. And I think it’ll stay like that for a long time... Because you’re right about him. I still don’t know if I can rely on his words or his actions now. And besides, I’m not looking for a relationship. I just want to focus on my career. You know how long I’ve waited to have this opportunity to realize my dreams.”

He nodded. “Yeah, I know. But... I was just afraid... that you might fall for him again.”

I shook my head. “It just so happened that I’m working for Trevis and Urban Next here in the US is partnered with Sinclair Realty. I guess there will always be things that will connect Elijah to me.”

Suddenly, he stepped closer and held my hand. “Sophia, I can stay here with you and help you take care of Reese if you want to be busy with your career. I’ll treat her as if she were my daughter.”

I pulled my hand away gently, shaking my head. “No, Daniel. I can’t ask that of you. You’re much too good to become just that for me... like a... like a house—husband? No way. It doesn’t suit you at all. The nanny comes often, anyway, so don’t worry about me. And you’ve got your businesses to run too.”

“I don’t care,” he said in a stubborn tone of voice. “I only care about you and being with you. I want to protect you and take care of you, and make sure that you won’t get harmed anymore.”

I felt paralyzed as Daniel’s words hung in the air, his face inching closer to mine. My heart pounded and I about to meet mine, the shrill sound of the doorbell shattered the couldn’t move. Just as his lips were moment.

Oh, thank God. Saved by the bell.

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 86

Elijah’s POV

I walked into the police station, the familiar scent of disinfectant hitting me as I approached the front desk. Serena had asked to see me urgently, something about having important information. I found her in a small interrogation room that they used for visiting prisoners, looking nothing like her usual self. Her hair was disheveled, dark circles marred her eyes, and she seemed to have aged overnight. Nevertheless, I didn't feel an ounce of pity for her.

"What's going on, Serena?" I asked as I sat down across from her, not wanting to beat around the bush. "Why did you want to talk to me?"

She glanced up, her expression weary. "I need to tell you something, Elijah. Something important."

"What is it?" I asked straightaway, trying to gauge if she was telling the truth.

"I'm not the one behind everything," she said quietly.

I frowned, taken aback. "What do you mean? You've done so many terrible things, Serena. Are you trying to pass the blame onto someone else now? And why didn't you say that in court, huh?"

She shook her head, a hint of desperation in her eyes. "Elijah, I'm serious. I was just a pawn. There's someone else, someone higher up."

I scoffed, not believing her for a second. "And who might that be? Who's the real mastermind, Serena?"

"I can't say," she replied, her gaze dropping to her hands folded on the table. "Not unless you can get me out of here, protect me."

I leaned back, crossing my arms. "You expect me to believe this? That you suddenly have a change of heart and want to do the right thing? I think you're just trying to stall, Serena, I don't buy it."

She looked up, desperation clear in her eyes. She glanced at the officer guarding the door, before she leaned forward and lowered her voice. "Elijah, please. You have to believe me. I'll tell you everything, but you have to get me out of here first."

I shook my head, standing up. "I can't help you if you won't help yourself, Serena. You made your bed, now you have to lie in it." With that, I turned around and started walking out of the room.

I heard Serena's sobs. "Please, Elijah..." she cried out.

I paused and turned back to face her. She was devastated, her tears flowing freely and her shoulders racking hard.

“All I did, Elijah, was because I love you,” she cried, her voice breaking. “I hate Sophia because I realized it was her that you liked and loved all along. I did everything for you, but you never learned to love me. You couldn’t see me the way you saw her!”

She spoke with great emotion. I was stunned. I hadn’t realized Serena still had such strong feelings for me after all this time. And to hear her say that about Sophia... I felt a pang of guilt. Had I been blind to the -pain I’d caused Sophia and Reese?

I’m the reason that Sophia and Reese were almost hurt badly.

The room’s stark lighting cast harsh shadows across Serena’s tear-streaked face. She looked at me with desperation in her eyes, her voice trembling as she declared her love once more.

“Elijah, please, you have to believe me. I never wanted any of this. I just... I just wanted us to be together. Sophia, she was always in the way. You and I... we belong together!”

Her words hung in the air, filled with agony and misery. I could see the sincerity in her eyes, but it was too late. Too much had happened, too many lies had been told. I knew deep down that Serena had orchestrated everything, manipulating situations to her advantage.

Before I could respond, Serena lunged toward me, her hands outstretched as if to grab hold of me. The guard by the door reacted instantly, stepping between us and grabbing Serena by the arms.

“Ma’am, you need to calm down,” he said firmly, his grip firm as he pulled her away from Serena fought against him, her voice rising in desperation. “No, Elijah, please, don’t leave me. I love you, I would do anything for you.”

I watched as she was dragged out of the room, her cries echoing down the corridor. I felt a little sympathy for her, but I knew that she’d brought this upon herself after all that she had done.

As I left the police station, Serena’s words echoed in my mind, leaving me shaken. Her confession, her undying love for me, and the dark path it led her down—it was all too much to process. She had admitted to wanting Sophia out of the way, claiming there was a real mastermind behind it all.

I wonder if it’s true that there’s someone else involved. I can’t think of anyone else who would want to do those things to Sophia and Reese.

I felt a sudden urge to see Sophia, to make sure she was okay, and to let her know that Serena was now behind bars.

Sophia, everything will be alright, I wanted to tell her, I'm here for you at all times and I'll make sure that you and Reese are always safe.

Driving to her apartment felt like an eternity. My mind raced with thoughts of what I would say to her, and how I would comfort her. I wanted to be there for her, to be the rock she could lean on in this storm of chaos.

As I parked the car and made my way to her building, my heart thumped hard and fast in my chest. I took- a deep breath and rang her doorbell, hoping she would answer.

My Ex-Husband is Out of Control Chapter 87

Sophia's POV

I opened the door to my apartment, and was surprised to see my ex-husband standing there. My heart unexpectedly skipped a beat, and I felt a flutter of excitement mixed with uncertainty.

"Hey," Elijah said, a small smile playing on his lips.

"Hi," I replied, trying to sound casual. "What are you doing here?"

"Sorry to bother you... I just wanted to talk," he said, his expression serious. "Can I come in?"

I hesitated for a moment, then stepped aside to let him in. Daniel was just heading out at that time. I saw how Elijah's eyes narrowed when he saw him, especially when Daniel touched my hand briefly.

"Sophia, think about what I said, okay?" Daniel said before moving past Elijah. "I'll see you soon."

"Uh, okay," was all I could reply. It was definitely an awkward moment, having both him and Elijah there, especially after Daniel had just confessed his feelings.

As Daniel left, Elijah turned to me, his gaze searching. "What was that all about?"

"It was nothing." I said quickly, acting nonchalantly. "Nothing important."

Elijah nodded, but I could tell he wasn't convinced. Reese came running out of her room, her face lighting up when she saw Elijah.

"Daddy, you're here!" she exclaimed, running up to him. "Play with me?"

Elijah looked down at her, a smile spreading across his face. "Of course, Reese. What do you want to play?"

I couldn't even make myself tell her to get back to bed. She was so delighted to see her dad and to be able to play with him, so I simply watched them for a while. Seeing them together again, I couldn't help but wonder what could have been if things had been different between us.

It wasn't long before Reese began yawning and stretching her arms over her head. "I'm so sleepy, Mommy..." she murmured. Elijah and I tucked her into bed inside her room before we settled in the living room to talk.

"I went to see Serena today" he said quietly, breaking the silence.

I turned to him, not knowing how to react. I knew that she was in prison, according to Julia. "How is she?" I treaded carefully.

Elijah sighed, running a hand through his hair. "Not good. She's not in a good place right now. But she deserves it."

Yeah..." I agreed, listening intently. Serena's actions had caused so much pain and confusion. "So what did she say?"

"She told me that she loves me, that everything she did was because of that love," Elijah explained, his voice heavy with emotion.

I scoffed, shaking my head in disbelief. "Well, that one's obvious," I said. "But why was she driven to do such evil just to make you notice her? It's gone too far!"

I know."

Serena's feelings for Elijah had always been evident, even when she tried to deny them. "I'm sorry, Elijah," I said softly.

"No, I'm the one who's sorry," he said, looking into my eyes. "I caused all this trouble for you and our daughter, and if anything bad had happened, I would never have forgiven myself!"

"Nothing bad happened," I told him reassuringly. "It's all over now. Serena is behind bars, right? So we can move on."

He shook his head, his gaze distant. "I don't know, Sophia. I don't know if acknowledging Reese is the right thing to do. I don't want her to suffer because of me... Maybe I shouldn't have told her I'm her father. Maybe I was selfish and you were the one who was thinking of her first."

I reached out, placing a comforting hand on his arm. "Elijah, Reese is a part of you, a beautiful part. She deserves to know her father, to feel loved by him. Look how happy

you made her feel tonight, even for just a little while. She's never been happier, you know."

He looked at me, gratitude shining in his eyes. "Thank you, Sophia. I needed to hear that."

Just then, my phone buzzed. I wondered who was sending a message at this hour. I didn't recognize the number, but I immediately opened it to check what it was about.

Hi, Sophia. This is Adrian. I need your help with something.

"Adrian," I murmured. What does he want?

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Sophia's POV

"Who was that?" Elijah asked.

"Uh, just a friend," I answered, not wanting to get into the details. I knew that he didn't trust Adrian. I stood up and excused myself for a while.

I went out to the balcony, feeling the cool evening breeze on my skin as I dialed Adrian's number. He picked up after a few rings, his voice filled with a sense of urgency.

"Sophia, I'm so sorry to bother you at this time," Adrian said, his tone cryptic. "I just didn't know who else to contact... Uh, can you come to the grocery store near Raven Media? I need your help with something."

I furrowed my brow, wondering what could be so important at this hour. "Sure, Adrian. I'll be there soon," I replied, already thinking about how to get there quickly.

Turning back inside, I found Elijah playing with Reese on the floor. "I need to go out for a bit, Elijah. Can you watch Reese for me?" I asked, trying to keep my tone casual.

Elijah looked up, concern evident in his eyes. "Where are you going? Is everything okay?" 1

"It's just a favor for a friend, Elijah. I'll be very quick, I promise," I reassured him, grabbing my keys and heading for the door.

I arrived at the grocery store, scanning the aisles for Adrian. Spotting him near the dairy section, I approached, only to find him looking flustered, his hands digging through his pockets.

"Adrian?" I called out, causing him to turn around, relief washing over his face.

“Sophia, hey,” he greeted, his voice slightly breathless. “I, uh, apparently don’t have any cash left and my cards aren’t working for some reason.”

I glanced at his basket filled with groceries. “No worries, I can cover it. Do you have your phone? You can use a payment app.”

He shook his head. “I’m so sorry... These groceries are kind of important for the week, and I’m already

here.”

I nodded, understanding his predicament. What’s a mere advance for groceries when compared to how he had saved my life at the beach?

Suddenly, he gave me a sheepish smile and said, “You know what? I’m sorry, Sophia. I shouldn’t dragged you into this. I can just come back and have

“No, it’s fine, Adrian,” I cut him off. “I’ll pay for these. You’ve done a lot for me and this is the least I can do for you.”

He looked hesitant, then nodded gratefully. As I paid, couldn’t help but notice several credit cards in his wallet. And his wallet was of an expensive brand! I wondered what he and his sister did for a living. But of course I didn’t say anything at that moment.

Adrian seemed a bit off, different somehow. His hair was dyed, his clothes changed, He actually looked a lot more like a real musician now.

“Thanks, Sophia. I’ll pay you back as soon as I can,” he promised, a grateful smile on his face.

“No problem, Adrian. Just let me know if you need anything else,” I replied, returning his smile, though a nagging thought lingered—I realized I didn’t really know much about Adrian beyond his love for music.

After paying for the groceries, we walked to the exit quietly.

“Sophia?” Adrian suddenly said. “Is everything okay?”

I waved a hand, trying to brush off my hesitation. “It’s nothing. Adrian.”

“I swear I’ll pay you.”

“It’s not that. Don’t worry about it.”

As we continued on our way, the rain outside seemed to intensify, the sound of it against the roof of the store loud and insistent. Adrian looked out the window, frowning.

"It's pouring out there," he said. "I'll take you home, Sophia."

Before I could protest, my phone rang. I glanced at the screen to see Elijah's name. I answered, holding the phone to my ear.

"Hey, Elijah," I said, trying to sound casual. "What's up? Did Reese wake up? Is she looking for me?" "Oh, no, everything's fine here," he assured me. But then, his voice changed and he sounded greatly concerned. "But what about you? What time are you coming back? It's getting late."

I glanced at the rain outside, debating whether to tell him about Adrian's offer to drive me home. "It's raining pretty hard," I said. "I don't want to drive in this weather. You can go ahead if you need to, I'll be back soon."

"Where are you?" Elijah asked. "Do I need to come get you?"

Before I could respond, Adrian's voice cut in. "Sophia, it doesn't seem to be raining as hard anymore."

My heart pounded wildly. Did Elijah hear him speak? What do I tell him?