

Chapter 606 Allies

Having seen all she needed, Elliana rose to leave.

Eloisa's gaze followed Elliana, full of silent pleading, "Ms. Marsh, you..."

A dozen thoughts seemed to rush through Eloisa's mind, but not a single word could make it past her lips. Her features twisted with raw emotion.

It didn't take words for Elliana to recognize the storm brewing in Eloisa.

Twenty-three years of fear and longing had weighed on Eloisa's heart, and finally learning her son was still alive must have sent her reeling. That hope, though, came tangled with dread; had he become some sort of monster?

Elliana spoke gently. "Eloisa, I promise, if I find anything more about Cutler, you'll hear it first."

Relief and gratitude lit up Eloisa's face. "Whatever the truth may be, please, just let me know. Even if he's gone down the wrong path... he's still my boy."

Gatlin's jaw tightened. "We share in this. As his parents, we'll shoulder whatever he's done."

Self-reproach pressed on Gatlin and Eloisa both, thick and suffocating. They had failed to take a good watch on Cutler and let him wander outside all these years when he needed their guidance the most. Throughout the years, they had carried that self-blame for ever losing him and not being there for him.

Gatlin and Eloisa, each in their own way, were quietly begging Elliana to show mercy for Cutler.

Elliana gave a slight, unreadable smile and chose to say nothing more. There was so much she didn't know about the Serpent Society, about who Cutler had become. She refused to offer reassurances she couldn't back up.

Charles, however, made no such pleas. He simply said, "Ms. Marsh, allow me to walk you out."

Elliana agreed, and they stepped outside together.

Moments before she swung a leg over her motorcycle, Charles broke the silence. "Ms. Marsh, I don't know what else you're capable of, but my gut tells me you're an exceptional woman. So I'm asking, if Cutler crossed a line, please consider giving him a chance. If he's done wrong, I'll answer for it. That's my duty as his brother."

Elliana studied Charles, weighing his words. Finally, she asked, "Can I ask you something? Do you believe my theory? That the storybook tell Cameron's real story? That everything, Cutler's abrupt missing, Barbara's being poisoned by Scorpion King, traces back to this 'Max'?"

Charles fell silent, his mouth set in a firm, uneasy line as he searched for an answer.

Deep down, Charles had already agreed to Elliana's deduction, even though he couldn't bring himself to speak it. Acknowledging Elliana's theory meant admitting that Cameron, once the family's model of integrity, might be at the heart of all their pain. Reconciling the memory of someone so upright with the possibility of such darkness was almost impossible. But the facts piled up, and denying them would only blind him to reality.

After a long pause, Charles finally nodded. "I agree. You have a sharp mind. You cut right to the heart of the matter. I admire that, and I trust your judgment."

Elliana appreciated Charles's calm objectivity, so she got straight to business. "If we're on the same page, there's no need to circle around it," she said, her tone turning steely. "I'm convinced Cutler is involved with the Serpent Society. His exact role, what he's done, and whether he's crossed a line we can't forgive, that's what we need to uncover."

Charles nodded, his expression resolute. "Understood. You have my complete cooperation."

Elliana continued, "Now that I know it's him, I'll hold back where I can. But I can't guarantee his safety if he comes after me again; he's made attempts on my life, Charles. I have no choice but to defend myself, and

he may get hurt. You need to understand that."

Charles nodded in understanding, his posture more attentive than ever. "I hear you. I'm grateful you're willing to hold back at all. Please, don't risk your own life for him."

It felt good to deal with someone who didn't let emotions cloud his reason. Elliana offered a slight, genuine smile as their alliance took shape. "My focus is on finding out why the Serpent Society targeted my mother. Yours is your brother. It seems to me we should be allies."

Relief softened Charles's features. The fear that Elliana might blame the entire Henderson family or cut them off faded instantly now that she welcomed his help.

"Sure," he replied, real warmth in his voice. "Before, I thought being older than you meant I should look out for you, but it's clear you're the one leading. I'm ready to follow your directives from here on out."

He meant every word. In the past, after Elliana cured him and Barbara, he had considered taking her under their family's protection. But now, the idea felt ridiculous. It was obvious she was way more powerful and resourceful than their assumption.

Now that they were allies, Elliana didn't hesitate. "Actually, there's something you can help me with right away."

Chapter 607 Breakthrough

Charles's soft look hardened. "Go on," he urged.

"We need to figure out what this Serpent Society is, and fast," Elliana said, locking eyes with him. "And we have to know more about Max's family. I'll use my own contacts, and you need to do your part, too. Think carefully about everything Cameron has done. Go through all his belongings and see if there's a clue we missed."

"Understood. I'll start right away," Charles replied.

Elliana swung onto her motorcycle and pulled on her helmet. "Stay in touch. Share anything you find."

The engine roared to life, and with a burst of dust, she sped off.

Leaving the Henderson estate behind, Elliana aimed her bike toward Ublento Medical University. No matter what, her hunt for the Medical Codex would not stop.

Halfway there, her phone buzzed. She pulled over and checked the screen. The caller ID showed Milton's name. She answered at once.

"Elliana, where are you?" Milton's concerned voice came through the phone.

"I'm on my way to Ublento Medical University," she replied. So much had happened last night. She intended to tell him everything. Finding their mother was a mission they shared. She should keep him in the loop.

But Milton beat her to it before she could reveal anything. "There was a breakthrough in my investigation. On the surface, Mom donated the Medical Codex to Ublento Medical University, but the Medical Codex was actually taken to the Enlightenment Institute."

Elliana felt no surprise. Ublento Medical University was only an affiliate of the Enlightenment Institute. A book as legendary as the Medical Codex would never be kept at a simple university. Of course, the

Enlightenment Institute's top brass would have claimed it.

Milton continued, "We don't know exactly where the Enlightenment Institute is keeping the Medical Codex, or if it's been moved again. But I tracked down the man Mom was in contact with back then."

"Who?" Elliana asked quickly.

"The founder of the Enlightenment Institute, Davin Haynes."

A spark lit in her chest. At last, a name. A direct link to their mother. "Where is he now? Have you found him?"

She remembered the whispers. Davin was nearly eighty, long retired, gone from public sight.

Milton's answer crushed her hope. "That's the problem. He's been missing for fifteen years. No trace, nothing."

"That's okay. Finding a lead on Davin is a huge step forward," Elliana said, her voice still optimistic. "And I've found something important on my side, too..."

She quickly recounted the assassination attempt from the previous night.

Milton's voice went tight with alarm. "Elliana, are you hurt?"

"I'm fine, really," she assured him. "All those assassins had the same tattoo on their chests—a serpent. They had to be part of the same group that had hunted Mom all those years ago."

Panic laced Milton's voice. "Elliana, I'm coming to get you right now!" The memory of their mother being hunted was still raw for him. The thought of his sister facing the same threat was unbearable.

She said gently, "Don't fret. I can protect myself and fend them off."

But he doubted her abilities. "Elliana, those people are merciless! Even Mom had to flee to escape them—what makes you think you are capable of protecting yourself? Give me your location. I'm coming to get you, and from now on, you're not leaving my sight!"

Her heart warmed at his fierce concern. To ease him, she chose to reveal a truth she had kept hidden. She said calmly, "Milton, I am Death

Thorn. Adah is Doomsday Rose. The staff at Rosewood Villa? They're the Four Guardians of Thorn Rose. Believe me—I can protect myself."

Silence stretched on the line before he finally spoke. "Elliana, are you really Death Thorn?"

"The one and only," she said with a faint smile.

Milton was stunned. His sister was actually the Death Thorn, the woman even the Campbells respected. Her name alone carried weight. Her reputation was unmatched.

Ublento was a city bound by laws. Those assassins only dared to operate in the shadows. They couldn't risk a big scene—drawing official attention would be a death sentence. Since Death Thorn had survived Delta—a place ruled by chaos and blood—she could more than handle those assassins in Ublento.

The thought settled Milton's fear. Anxiety gave way to pride. His sister was such a genius. Aside from being a skilled fighter, she had founded a formidable organization. She was a force of her own. A storm. An empire.

"Alright." Elliana's voice pulled him back to focus. "Let's get back to business..."