

Chapter 695 Twisted And Ugly

A sea of black-clad figures stretched along the entire edge of the cliff. There had to be at least a hundred men standing in perfect formation. They were wearing traditional martial arts clothing and black cloth masks that covered their faces, making them look exactly like the Serpent Society assassins from earlier. They remained completely silent and motionless, but their presence felt like a storm cloud ready to unleash its fury.

Every single pair of eyes was locked onto Elliana and Cole with ice-cold intensity. The weight of their collective stare was almost suffocating.

The scar-faced man, standing at the front of the black-clad figures, took a confident step forward. A cruel, twisted smile spread across his lips as he looked at the couple standing before him. "How absolutely touching this is," he said, his voice dripping with false sweetness. "You two are so devoted to each other. I suppose that you would like to be together even in death."

Cole felt a surge of murderous rage building in his chest, but he forced himself to stay in control. His voice came out sharp and dangerous when he spoke. "Stop playing games with us. What the hell do you actually want?"

The scar-faced man turned his head slightly to glance at Taylor, who still stood frozen like a statue behind him. Then, he looked back at Cole, and his cruel smile grew even wider. "What we want is really quite simple. We want you to die in his place instead."

Both Elliana and Cole narrowed their eyes. The pieces of the puzzle were finally falling into place. So the promise of "business negotiations" had been nothing but a complete lie from the very beginning. This entire situation was an elaborate trap designed for one purpose only: to murder them both.

The scar-faced man raised his arm and pointed toward something at the edge of the cliff. "Do you see that device over there? That phone has been recording everything that happens on this cliff top since the moment



you arrived. The footage is being streamed live to our people in real time."

Following the direction of his gesture, Elliana and Cole spotted a black tripod standing near the cliff's edge. A smartphone was mounted on top of it, and the small red light of its camera blinked steadily like a malevolent eye.

"Here's how this is going to work," the scar-faced man continued with obvious pleasure. "If you jump off this cliff in Taylor's place, we guarantee that we'll send him back to Ublento completely safe and unharmed. But if you refuse our generous offer..." He paused dramatically, savoring the moment. "Well, then you'll have the privilege of watching Taylor take that final dive instead."

His wicked grin stretched wider across his scarred face. "And we'll make sure to post the entire video online for the whole world to see. Everyone will get to watch how the great and mighty head of the Evans family is actually nothing but a coward who was too afraid to die for his own cousin. Let's see how you manage to face the world after that kind of humiliation."

It was a threat of such pure, twisted cruelty that most decent people couldn't even imagine thinking of such a thing. Yet, the scar-faced man spoke about it as casually as discussing the weather, clearly taking great enjoyment from their situation.

Both Elliana and Cole understood with perfect clarity that the scar-faced man meant every single word he had just spoken. Men who operated this far outside the boundaries of human decency had no limits to the evil they were willing to commit.

Cole pressed his lips together in a hard, thin line. His eyes lifted to look at Taylor, who continued to stare blankly into the dark abyss below as if his mind had completely disconnected from reality.

Cole had never been a coward, not even for a single day of his life. Protecting his family members was not just his responsibility—it was his sacred duty. If the situation truly demanded it, he would trade his own life for Taylor's without a moment's hesitation. He would gladly die for any of the people he loved. But he would never allow himself to be manipulated by the empty promises of a monster like this man. To leap into that deadly chasm because of nothing more than this man's word would make him the worst kind of fool imaginable.

The scar-faced man let out a cold chuckle. "And since we're well aware of how deeply you care for each other, we won't make you die alone, Mr. Evans. We'll have both of you jump together at the same time."

When only his own life had been at stake, Cole had managed to remain relatively calm while his mind raced to find a way out of this nightmare. But the instant they dragged Elliana into their sick game, something inside him completely shattered. A blazing white-hot rage erupted in his chest like a volcano. "You're signing your own death warrant!" he snarled through clenched teeth.

Cole would never allow anyone to harm Elliana or the precious unborn children she carried. Not even with threats. He would burn this entire world to ashes before he let that happen.

Elliana reached over and gently squeezed Cole's hand, sending him a silent message of warning through her touch. Her voice was barely above a whisper, but it carried urgent intensity. "You need to calm down right now. He's deliberately trying to provoke you into doing something stupid. This is all part of his trap."

Cole took a deep breath and fought to push the murderous rage back down into the depths of his soul where it belonged.

While Cole battled to control his fury, Elliana showed no signs of anger whatsoever. Instead, a faint, mocking smile began to curve her lips. It was an exact mirror of the cruel expression the scar-faced man had been wearing. "If you really want us to jump off this cliff to our deaths, the least you could do is tell us why we have to die," she said in a voice that sounded almost conversational. "Who sent you? Who hates us enough to go to all this trouble?"

The scar-faced man hesitated for just a moment before answering. "That information is classified. I can't tell you that."

Elliana tilted her head slightly in the direction of the mounted smartphone. "That device isn't just recording, is it? You're actually on a live video call right now. The person on the other end of that connection is your real leader, aren't they?"

The scar-faced man's entire body went rigid with tension. He didn't say a word, but his silence was as good as a complete confession.

Elliana took two deliberate steps forward until she was standing directly in front of the camera. She stared straight into the lens as if she could see through it to the person hiding on the other side. "What's the matter? Are you too ashamed to let us see your face?" she called out, her voice filled with pure contempt. "You're nothing but a pathetic coward who has to hide in the shadows and use dirty tricks to get what you want. How absolutely disgusting."

Dead silence came from the phone's speaker. No voice responded to her challenge.

But Elliana's finely tuned intuition told her that the person listening on the other end was absolutely seething with rage. Their anger was probably building to dangerous levels. Perfect. That was exactly what she had been hoping to achieve. She needed to provoke them and create some kind of crack in this deadly stalemate they were all trapped in.

"You can't even show your face to us," she continued, her voice becoming as sharp and cutting as a razor blade. "That tells me everything I need to know about what kind of person you really are. You're a twisted, ugly creature that can only survive by hiding in the darkness."

Pausing, she taunted, "If you're a woman, no decent man would ever want to come anywhere near you. If you're a man, no woman with any self-respect would waste even five minutes of her time on someone as worthless as you. You're destined to spend your entire miserable life surrounded by nothing but filth and garbage. You'll never be good enough to even touch the hem of a truly extraordinary woman's dress!"

It was a completely wild shot in the dark, a stream of insults based on nothing but a hunch about what might hurt this person the most. But before she could even finish her tirade, the ragged sound of furious breathing began crackling through the phone's speaker. Direct hit. Bullseye.

Elliana's lips curved into a smile of pure triumph. She had struck exactly the right nerve. From the sound of that breathing, it was definitely a man on the other end. And from the intensity of that rage, it was a man who had been rejected and scarred so deeply by some woman that it had completely twisted his soul into something monstrous.

"You insolent little bitch!" the voice on the other end snarled through gritted teeth, the words crackling with barely contained fury.

Elliana strained her ears, trying to pick up any additional clues from the sound of his voice that might help her identify him. Yes, definitely a man. His voice sounded grim and bitter, carrying the weight of middle age and years of accumulated resentment.

But as she listened, her eyes flickered toward the scar-faced man and his army of assassins. Something very strange was happening to them. They were all trembling now, their earlier confidence and menace completely replaced by raw, primal fear. A single disembodied voice from the line had reduced these dangerous killers to this pathetic state. Whoever was on the other end of that video call wasn't just their leader or employer. He was their absolute terror, the thing they feared more than death itself.

A bold and disturbing thought suddenly struck Elliana like a lightning bolt. Was it possible that these men had some kind of AI control chips implanted directly into their brains? Were they nothing more than human puppets, with their strings being pulled by the monster hiding on the other end of that camera?