

Chapter 698 Leave Nothing Behind

Cole stared down into the endless black void below, his eyes wild with rage and grief. His hands scraped desperately against the rocky edge, his chest tight with a pain so sharp that it felt like his heart might stop beating. He had failed in his most sacred duty as the Evans family head. He was supposed to protect the family members, but instead, he had been forced to watch helplessly as Taylor plummeted from the cliff like discarded trash. The drop below was a graveyard. Nobody could survive that fall.

"Michael!" Cole snarled the name through gritted teeth, his burning gaze shifting to the phone screen. "I swear on my life that every single one of you bastards will pay for this!"

Without warning, Cole exploded into action. He went straight for the scar-faced man.

Cole moved with deadly speed. Even though the scar-faced man had been preparing for a fight, he couldn't react fast enough before Cole's iron grip locked around his throat.

The sound of breaking bone echoed across the clifftop like a gunshot.

The scar-faced man never got the chance to scream. His neck twisted with a wet snap, and Cole released him without emotion, watching his lifeless body drop to the ground.

The entire attack lasted only seconds. None of the black-clad figures had expected their leader—a seasoned killer who could hold his own against almost anyone—to be destroyed so effortlessly. The scar-faced man had been their strongest fighter, the one they all looked up to, yet in Cole's hands, he had been as helpless as a child.

The remaining black-clad figures backed away in pure terror. Not one of them had imagined that Cole possessed this kind of lethal skill.

Far away from the clifftop, Miguel watched everything unfold through the camera feed, and his wine glass exploded in his tightening fist. He had always known that Cole was a business genius who excelled at everything he touched—but he had never dreamed that Cole's combat abilities were this devastating. The scar-faced man had been one of his personally trained assassins, yet Cole had eliminated the scar-faced man like he was swatting a fly.

Miguel knew that without the scar-faced man, the rest of the men were just lambs for the slaughter. If Cole managed to capture and question them, and they broke under pressure and revealed his secrets, the fallout would destroy everything.

Miguel's eyes turned to ice. He barked a harsh command into his phone. "All of you—jump now! And leave nothing behind!"

Cole was preparing to tear through the remaining black-clad figures one by one, but before he could strike again, they all lost their minds and began hurling themselves off the cliff. They took everything with them as they fell—the scar-faced man's corpse, the phone that had been recording everything, and even the helicopter that had been waiting nearby.

Within moments, only Cole and Elliana were left standing on the desolate clifftop.

The phone connection to Miguel had been severed when the device plummeted into the darkness below.

The wind roared across the rocky peak, whipping Cole's and Elliana's hair and clothes around them like a tornado.

Cole's eyes blazed red with fury, his hands clenched into fists so tight that his knuckles went completely white. A hurricane of rage was building inside him.

Elliana moved closer and pulled Cole into her arms, her voice breaking with sorrow. "We're going to make them pay for what they did to Taylor. I'll stand beside you through everything that comes next."

Cole slowly lifted his face toward the dark night sky above them, his neck straining as he searched the endless black canvas. Hot tears gathered in the corners of his eyes, threatening to spill over, but he



refused to let them fall. All he could see when he closed his eyes was Taylor's face.

Cole decided to make Michael pay for what he'd done. He was going to hunt that monster down and make the latter suffer in ways that would make tonight's violence look like child's play. And Michael would beg for mercy before he was finished with him, but there would be none to give.

The sound of helicopter blades cutting through the night air suddenly broke through Cole's dark thoughts. The mechanical thumping grew louder and louder until it seemed to shake the very ground beneath their feet.

Elliana looked up, shielding her eyes from the wind as she recognized the aircraft. It was Jason.

Within moments, the helicopter was touching down on the rocky ground nearby. Jason leaped out before the spinning blades had even come to a complete stop.

Jason had raced here the moment he'd finished cleaning up the mess with the Serpent Society's operatives. During the entire flight, a heavy knot of worry had been growing in his stomach, fearing what he might find when he reached them.

But the scene that greeted Jason was eerily quiet and still. There was no sign of Taylor anywhere. No evidence of their attackers. No indication that a violent struggle had taken place just minutes before. There were only Cole and Elliana, standing together in the moonlight, both of them wrapped in a grief so deep that it seemed to radiate from their very souls.

Jason had never seen Cole look so utterly broken. A cold dread seized him as a guess took hold. "Tell me what happened here," he said quietly, though part of him already knew he didn't want to hear the answer.

Cole remained perfectly still, his eyes still fixed on the star-filled sky above them as if he could somehow will Taylor to reappear among the distant lights.

It was Elliana who finally broke the silence. Her voice was soft and broken as she told Jason everything—about Michael's trap, about the fighting, about watching helplessly as Taylor disappeared over the edge of the cliff.

When she reached the part about Taylor's fall, Jason squeezed his eyes shut tight, as if blocking out her words could somehow make them untrue. A crushing wave of guilt crashed over him—self-reproach that felt even heavier than what Cole must be carrying. If he had been faster, smarter, and more careful, maybe he could have prevented this tragedy. Maybe Taylor would still be alive. But he forced himself to push those feelings aside.

After several minutes of heavy silence, Jason walked over to Cole and placed a firm hand on Cole's shoulder. "What's done is done, and standing here won't bring Taylor back," he said, his voice steady despite the pain in his heart. "We need to take all this grief and anger and turn it into something useful. We find Michael, and we make him suffer for what he's taken from us. That's how we honor Taylor's memory."

Jason's words cut through the haze of Cole's grief. Jason was right. There would be time to mourn later, but right now, they had work to do.

Cole slowly forced himself to look away from the sky and began walking toward the waiting helicopter with mechanical, determined steps. Elliana followed close behind him, her hand briefly touching his arm in silent support.

Once Cole and Elliana were both safely aboard and the aircraft had lifted off into the night, Jason sent his helicopter back to the city. But he himself remained behind on the desolate cliff top, alone with his thoughts and his self-chastening.

Jason walked to the exact spot where Taylor had fallen and stood there in complete silence, keeping a solitary vigil as the hours slowly passed. The wind whipped around him, but he didn't move from his position at the edge of the precipice.

When the first pale light of dawn began to creep across the forest below, he finally allowed himself one last long look into the dark abyss. Then, he pulled out his phone and placed a video call to Irene.

The call connected immediately, and Irene's face appeared on the screen, her features twisted with barely controlled rage. She had clearly heard that their carefully planned assassination attempt against Cole had failed once again.