

Chapter 708 Ancient Books

The sight before the group was breathtaking, leaving them frozen in awe.

Beyond the stone door stretched a chamber far larger than the last. Its marble walls gleamed, both strong and elegant, like an underground palace.

Yet, it wasn't the hall's grandeur that silenced them. It was what lay inside. Piles of gold, silver, jewels, and relics stacked higher than they could count.

Elliana, Cole, and Jason had seen wealth before, but nothing of this scale. The treasure was staggering. Who would have guessed that deep in this ancient forest, a hidden vault like this existed? Every item inside was worth more than most could earn in a thousand lifetimes. Whoever claimed it would instantly rise among the world's richest.

But whose fortune was it? And how did it end up here? The same questions struck all three at once. And just as quickly, the answer followed. The bracelets that had opened the door came from the Serpent Society. This treasure must be theirs.

Their suspicion was soon confirmed. At the far end of the hall, a massive totem loomed. Two serpents—one male, one female—were carved into the wall, so vivid that they seemed alive. Their design matched perfectly with the bracelets in Elliana's hands.

Beneath the carving stood a golden chest, its lock sealed tight. Like the stone door, it bore two circular slots. Without hesitation, Elliana stepped forward and slid the bracelets into place. The chest groaned open.

But inside, there was no gold. No jewels. Only rows of ancient books. Though the covers were intact, the yellowed pages betrayed their age.

Elliana scanned the titles, her eyes halting on one: The Griffiths Dynasty.

She opened it. History poured out like a flood. Captivated, she sank to the floor, reading with wide eyes.

Cole and Jason followed, each picking a book of their own and leaning against a mound of treasure.

The three of them read with sharp focus, eyes racing line after line. In the silence of the vault, time slipped away. Hours later, they closed their books and gathered their thoughts.

Elliana turned to Cole. "This one—The Griffiths Dynasty—records your ancestors' history, from the dynasty's rise to its fall. It also explains the origin of this vault."

At the words "your ancestors' history," Cole's brow lifted, a wave of dry amusement crossing his face. Yes, his mother was a descendant of the Griffiths family, and he carried their blood. But he had never been part of that world. To him, "Griffiths Dynasty" was nothing more than a name.

Jason's curiosity sparked as he gazed at Cole. "So you are tied to the Griffiths?"

Cole didn't hold back. "My mother is a Griffiths."

Jason nodded, the truth settling neatly into place.

Elliana continued, "The Griffiths Dynasty was overthrown by the Campbells. Nearly the entire royal family was slaughtered, but one princess survived. She escaped into this forest with her loyalists and the kingdom's treasure."

Elliana swept her hand across the glittering vault. "This was their treasury. The plan was to rebuild their dynasty with it. But history is merciless. Their dream died here."

Cole spoke up. "The book I read continued from there. It told of the Serpent Society. The princess never reclaimed her throne. She fled overseas, and over generations, her descendants forged the Society into a force of power. They even sought revenge against the Campbells."

Elliana's heart stirred. She had heard the tale before from Arthur, but always painted through Campbell's eyes. Now, from the Griffiths' side, the story felt altogether different.

Once Elliana and Cole had shared what they'd read, they turned their attention to Jason.

Jason lifted his book. "This one is a Griffiths genealogy. It traces the bloodline from the first emperor to the current leader. Every generation's key figures are recorded in detail."

He flipped near the end. "The present matriarch is Maxine. Her life reads like a legend."

After recounting her story, his expression darkened with confusion. "What I don't understand is why she never had an heir of her own. She's nearly eighty and still has no successor. Katrina is nothing more than a stand-in. If Maxine finds someone she prefers, Katrina will be cast aside."

Elliana's mind flashed back to Cameron's storybook. In an instant, the answer came to her. "It was probably because of love," she whispered.