

Chapter 713 Gearveil Hall

It was a heartbreaking sight. A family once torn apart for years was finally whole again.

The emotion in the basement was so thick that it felt as though the very air was heavy with tears.

Elliana and Cole lingered quietly in the background, giving the Hendersons the space to embrace what they had lost for so long.

When the flood of emotion eased, Elliana signaled for the shackle to be removed from Cutler's ankle, granting him his freedom.

Gone was the careless grin Cutler used to wear. He looked at Elliana with a new gravity. "You want answers about the Serpent Society. Ask me. I won't hold anything back."

Relief softened Elliana's face. "Good. Let's have this conversation upstairs."

The group left the dim basement and gathered in a modest drawing room, where silence settled before Elliana asked, "Where is the Serpent Society's stronghold? And where is Maxine?"

Cutler shook his head. "Maxine's a ghost. She never lingers. The last I saw, she was aboard a cruise ship, but it has vanished without a trace. As for their bases... There isn't just one. Centuries ago, after being defeated by the Campbells, the Griffiths family scattered their forces, vowing never to rely on a single nest. They built hidden headquarters across the map, most known only to a chosen few. Even I was kept in the dark. Though Maxine betrothed me to Katrina, she never revealed the family's deepest secrets. Katrina herself knows little. The only place I can name is Gearveil Hall in Delta. That's where Katrina and I were raised."

Gearveil Hall. The name struck like a stone. Elliana and Cole froze. Both had built their own power in Delta. Both knew the weight that name carried. Gearveil Hall rivaled their own organizations—Thorn Rose and

Blaze Wildfire.

Gearveil Hall was a place cloaked in mystery. No records revealed who ran it or when it was founded. In Delta, rumor painted it as the domain of a noble house of immense power and strict hierarchy, one that nobody dared to cross.

When building their own forces in Delta, Elliana and Cole had avoided Gearveil Hall carefully, steering clear of any clash. Never had they imagined that the very stronghold they tiptoed around was tied to the Serpent Society itself. Now, no matter how dangerous, they would have to confront it.

Cutler continued, "I don't know if Gearveil Hall is their most important base, but it matters. Maxine visits often, but never on a schedule anyone can predict."

Elliana gave a sharp nod. "And the woman who fought me alongside you—that was Katrina?"

"Yes," Cutler confirmed.

Satisfied, Elliana left the Hendersons to their reunion, while she and Cole went to see Katrina.

Katrina was being held in another basement room, a shackle locked around her ankle.

As the iron door creaked open, Elliana saw Katrina on a sofa. But Katrina was a shadow of the warrior from the night before.

The night before, Katrina's eyes had burned with malice. Now, they were blank, hollow with fear. The sound of the door alone made her flinch.

"No... Please, don't hit me!" Katrina cried, dropping to the floor. She curled into a ball, shielding her head and begging for mercy.

Elliana frowned and turned to Adah. Adah only shrugged. "She has been like this since she came. We don't know if it's real or an act."

Elliana stepped forward, kneeling before her. Her voice was sharp, cold. "Playing crazy won't save you, Katrina. You're in my hands now, and you will answer me."

At these words, Katrina's trembling stilled. She slowly lifted her head, eyes wide with terror. "Are... Are you here to punish me? Did Grandmother send you?"

Elliana's frown deepened. Her medical eye told her this was no act. But could the ruthless Katrina have broken so easily? It seemed impossible. If Katrina were this fragile, Maxine would never have chosen her as heir. What had gone wrong?

Before Elliana could think further, Katrina suddenly clutched her sleeve. "Please, don't punish me! I'll study harder! I'll be the heir Grandmother wants. I won't fail again!"

Elliana didn't pull away. Instead, she leaned closer, watching Katrina carefully. A quick assessment told her the truth. Katrina wasn't insane. She was under the influence of a drug. Her mind had regressed, slipping back into a childlike state.

From Katrina's words, Elliana guessed Katrina was reliving the early days, right after Maxine had named her heir.