

Chapter 725 Trade

The gravity of the situation hit Milton the moment Levi spoke. He stepped forward and took the report from Levi just as Elliana's hand reached for it. One glance was enough to drain the color from his face.

"What's in it?" Elliana asked quickly.

Milton opened his mouth, but no sound came out. After a moment, he lowered the paper, keeping it out of her reach. "You don't need to know this right now. Just focus on the delivery. I'll take care of it."

He turned to leave.

"Milton!" Elliana's voice rose, tight with frustration. "You know I'm not some fragile doll you have to protect. I can handle the truth. What's tearing me apart is you keeping it from me."

Milton exhaled and sank back into his chair. "Alright. I can't keep this from you. But promise me you won't let it break you."

Elliana gave a small, tense nod.

At last, Milton handed the report over.

Her eyes raced down the page. Even though she'd braced herself, the line confirming the DNA belonged to Rita struck her like a physical blow. She lurched to her feet.

"Elliana, careful!" Milton shouted, lunging to steady her.

She forced herself to breathe. Two slow breaths. Then, she sat back down, trying to steady the storm inside her.

She hadn't expected the vial of blood to be really Rita's. Now the question was simple—was it fresh blood or something taken years ago and kept safe?

Either way, it tied straight back to Rita. The thought tightened both

Elliana's and Milton's chests.

Elliana pushed the panic aside and sharpened her focus. "Whoever sent this isn't just trying to hurt us. They have another move. Let's sit tight and wait for them to show their hand."

Milton nodded.

Just as Elliana had predicted, it wasn't long before her phone pinged with a message from Carlos. "Three hours have passed. I assume you've confirmed the blood belongs to your mother?"

Elliana's eyes narrowed as she read. She'd never thought Carlos could be involved. He hadn't reached out once during her pregnancy. Now he contacted her with her mother's blood—what was his angle?

A second message arrived. "I'm sorry to disturb you so close to your delivery. It'd be a shame if stress caused complications for the babies. But you failed to deliver the Medical Codex as promised. You left me no choice."

Elliana's reply was sharp. "Cut to it. I don't play games."

Carlos sent another message. "If a vial isn't enough, maybe this will." A video followed.

Elliana tapped it open. Milton leaned in, eyes fixed on the screen.

The footage flickered on. Rita filled the frame. A timestamp showed it was recorded ten years ago. She was young and still had her beauty, but she looked frail. Her clothes were dark with blood. Her hair was tangled. The wind made her sway.

She stood on a huge rock at the cliff's edge. The sea screamed below. Her eyes were on someone off-camera. Sorrow and stubbornness warred in her face. She stepped back until her heels hung over the void. There was no way out.

A cold dread squeezed Elliana and Milton. They had not expected their first sight of their mother in years to be her so cornered and defeated.

The video kept playing.

A rough voice barked from off-screen. "Stop running! This ends now."

Make it easy and come with us quietly, or we'll make it much worse."

Rita wiped blood from her mouth and let out a bitter laugh. She wouldn't give in. "Dream on! You won't even get my body."

Then, she turned and stepped off the cliff.

Elliana and Milton sprang up, hearts hammering for what came next. The screen went black. The clip ended right there. It was cruel and deliberate—a trick to leave them dangling in torment.

As the shock settled, another message from Carlos popped up. "Finished the video?"

Rage flared through Elliana. "You said you had nothing to do with my mother's disappearance. You swore you never hurt her. That was a lie!"

Carlos texted back. "I didn't lie. I didn't film it, and I didn't force her off the cliff. But I know who did. I know what happened after she fell. I want a trade: that information for the Medical Codex. Give it to me, and I'll send the rest of the video and tell you where the vial came from."