

## Chapter 757 Vicious Jealousy

"That's right," Elliana replied, her tone icy. "I am Death Thorn."

With no hesitation, Elliana revealed the emblem that marked her as the Thorn Rose's leader. It was time to let her enemy feel the full force of her reputation. There was nothing left to hide.

Maxine went rigid, eyes glued to the symbol in Elliana's hand, utterly lost for words. She'd always been aware of Elliana's talent, but the extent of Elliana's real power was staggering. To have become a formidable figure as Death Thorn at only twenty, alongside her other remarkable feats, was nearly unimaginable.

While the Serpent Society could handle Blaze Wildfire or Thorn Rose alone, dealing with a united front between them was a whole different threat.

As the Griffiths family's matriarch, Maxine's main concern was protecting the Serpent Society's supremacy in Delta, not plunging everyone into a destructive conflict.

At first, Maxine had intended to rely on her status and the Serpent Society's influence to pressure Elliana and Cole into submission. But now, it was obvious that mere words wouldn't sway them. She'd have to make a substantial offer if she wanted results.

A faint smile curved Maxine's lips as she spoke. "Elliana, I never meant your daughter any harm. I want to raise her to be as remarkable as you are, so one day she can inherit the entire Griffiths family. Why would you be against that?"

"I'll raise my daughter myself. I don't need your so-called help," Elliana shot back, her words laced with contempt. "I don't need my daughter to be the Griffiths heiress, and I will never let her live in this dark, underground world!"

"You—" Maxine could only sputter, completely taken aback by Elliana's fierce refusal. She truly hadn't expected Elliana to stand her ground so

relentlessly.

She hesitated briefly before turning her smile toward Cole. "Cole, you're part of the Griffiths family. You carry our blood. Your mother and I are cousins, which makes me your aunt. How can you talk so casually about destroying your own family?"

Cole let out a derisive laugh, not bothering to hide his contempt. "Spare me the family speech. The Griffiths blood means nothing to me, and I don't care about having you as an aunt. If I hadn't been strong enough to take on the Griffiths Family, you would have finished me off long ago, wouldn't you?"

Maxine was rendered speechless, with nothing left to argue. The truth was, she had indeed given the order to kill Cole before learning he was the Blaze Wraith.

Neither Elliana nor Cole was the type to be manipulated. For the first time, Maxine had been at a loss on how to address the situation.

"Isn't there any way we can talk things out and reach a compromise?" Maxine asked, her voice adopting a gentler tone.

She fixed her gaze on Elliana. "If you'll let me raise your daughter and promise not to stand against the Griffiths family, I'll reveal everything I know about your mother's past."

Turning to Cole, she added, "And you. You'd be free to take your mother and grandmother with you. That's what I'm willing to put on the table."

Elliana and Cole locked eyes, silently weighing the proposition before facing Maxine again. Her offer was tempting. Elliana longed to uncover the truth about her mother, and Cole was desperate to save his family. Still, their daughter was untouchable; no deal in the world could make them hand her over.

"Absolutely not," Elliana replied, her words sharp and unyielding. "You're going to tell me about my mother, and you're going to give me back my daughter. I refuse between the two."

Maxine fixed Elliana with an impatient glare. "You're even more headstrong than your mother ever was. Wanting it all—doesn't that seem a bit greedy to you?"

A spark of anger flickered in Elliana's eyes. "Greedy? Is that what you call it? Or are you just projecting your own madness? You took my mother from me before, and not long ago, you took my daughter. All of this chaos is on you!"

She stopped for a heartbeat, her voice turning razor-sharp. "Tell me, Maxine, is stealing other people's children some sort of obsession for you? If you want a child so badly, why not have your own instead of destroying other families?"

Maxine felt those words hit her with the force of a slap. The pain of being childless was her deepest, most festering wound—a lifelong sorrow that had only deepened with age. She had spent her entire life loving Cameron and resenting him in equal measure. He had taken her devotion, left her empty, and then found happiness elsewhere, raising a family while she clung to memories of a love that never truly belonged to her.

Looking at Elliana and Cole, so united, fiercely protective of their child, Maxine felt that old bitterness churn inside her. This was the life she had always longed for: to marry the one she loved, raise a child born from that union, and build a real family. But it was always out of reach.

But destiny had shown her no mercy. She had lost the man she loved, and the children she had raised turned on her one after another. Now, on the verge of turning eighty, she found herself completely alone. All that sorrow festered into vicious jealousy, snapping something deep within.

"So you really think you get to have it all, Elliana?" Maxine spat, her words venomous. "My entire life has been a string of regrets. I refuse to sit by and let you live out the happiness I never had." Her eyes turned glacial and ruthless. "If you refuse to let your daughter stay with me, I'll have Sophie and her mother killed right now. And as for you, Elliana, you'll die never learning the truth about your mother."