

Chapter 758 Mother And Son Finally Met

Maxine wasn't someone who bent easily. Once she set her mind to something, a frigid, threatening presence emanated from her—a wordless warning that commanded obedience.

Eliana and Cole locked eyes, a silent conversation passing between them. They both recognized Maxine for what she was: a brutal woman who never made idle threats. If she vowed to execute Cole's mother and grandmother, she would follow through without hesitation or remorse.

After a moment stretched taut with tension, Cole's voice emerged in a strained tone. "Where's my mother? Is she all right? What have you done to her?"

"Your mother turned her back on the Griffiths family," Maxine declared, her tone devoid of feeling. "According to our laws, she should have faced execution the instant we captured her. But for the sake of the bond she and I had once shared, I postponed the sentence. For the time being, she's imprisoned in the dungeon alongside your grandmother."

Maxine hesitated, something cruel flickering in her expression. "Her condition deteriorates daily. The Psycephrenia has been eating away at her for years, draining every ounce of vitality from her body. She's become as gaunt as a dead branch, her face... ruined beyond repair. I suspect she doesn't have long left. Even if I showed mercy, she'd perish on her own before much time passed."

Searing pain tore through Cole's chest. "Bring me to her," he commanded, his voice scraped raw. "Right now."

"That can be arranged," Maxine replied, her tone glacial. "Maybe seeing your mother might make you reconsider. Afterward, you can decide. Will you choose your mother and grant her a peaceful end to whatever days remain? Or will you claim your daughter and abandon your mother to decay in this subterranean prison?"

With that, Maxine pressed a button and spoke into the intercom. "Escort them to Sophie."

The words had scarcely left her mouth when the door glided open.

Several guards dressed entirely in black strode inside, their expressions blank. "This way," one announced, his voice stripped of inflection.

Though anxiety for their daughter gnawed at Elliana and Cole, Sophie's desperate circumstances took precedence. Hearts laden with dread, they trailed the guards from the room.

Built into the mountainside blanketed with snow, the compound consisted of five levels—two ascending above ground, three descending beneath it—with Sophie imprisoned in the lowest basement.

They descended in the elevator to the deepest level and then wound through a labyrinth of twisting passages before arriving at an imposing black iron door.

One of the guards lifted a remote, and the door groaned open with an ear-splitting roar.

Elliana and Cole lunged forward, hungry for any view of what lay beyond, but what greeted them made their hearts sink like stones.

The chamber beyond stood in brutal opposition to the clinical hallways they'd just traversed. It revealed itself as a primitive, crumbling cavern swallowed by near-complete darkness. An icy wind rushed out, saturated with the smell of wet soil and hopelessness, sending shivers racing down their spines.

Cole widened his eyes. His mother and grandmother were trapped in this hellhole. The realization struck him like a physical assault. Anguish coiled in his stomach, and his hands, dangling powerlessly at his sides, balled into trembling fists.

"Follow me," the guard instructed, his voice stripped bare of emotion as he crossed the threshold first.

Elliana and Cole pressed forward behind him.

Past the iron door stretched another cramped corridor. They walked for

what felt like an eternity before arriving at Sophie's cell, the air growing increasingly frigid and moisture-laden with each step.

Where the corridor terminated, the passage widened into a cavern studded with rows of iron cages. Within each one, figures crouched in shredded clothing. Some had been savagely beaten, their bodies motionless and soundless on the precipice of death. Others extended skeletal arms through the bars, their desperate cries reduced to guttural murmurs.

This was the Griffiths family dungeon—a manifestation of hell itself.

Cole's eyes blazed crimson, inflamed with fury and anguish. The vision of the cages unleashed a renewed torrent of suffering through him, so intense that he thought his heart might split apart.

His gaze darted wildly from one cell to the following, hunting for his mother. He studied each shattered form, caught between frantic hope of discovering her and nauseating terror that he actually would.

Suddenly, the guard slammed his fist against the bars of a nearby cage, the metallic crash reverberating through the cavern. "Sophie!" he shouted. "You've got a visitor."

Cole spun around.

Crouched in the corner of that cage sat two emaciated figures, their garments reduced to tatters, their hair caked with grime and filth.

At the guard's voice, both women gradually raised their heads, their eyes hollow and unfocused as they gazed at Cole.

One woman's face had been ravaged into a landscape of scar tissue, her features warped beyond any possibility of recognition. This was Sophie.

Sophie had never imagined she would encounter her son in this place. From the instant Maxine's men seized her, she had accepted that she would never lay eyes on him again. The sole force that had sustained her grip on this miserable existence was the image of him preserved in her memory.

"Cole..." The name emerged from her as a shredded whisper, barely a voice at all, yet it quavered with disbelief and a flood of unthinkable joy.

The sound shattered Cole's frozen state. A violent tremor seized his entire body. His mother had been ripped from his life when he was merely twelve years old, and the woman huddled before him appeared as a stranger—a demolished, mutilated ghost. But that voice... That voice had been carved into the deepest part of his soul. It belonged to his mother.

"Mom!" Cole collapsed to his knees before the cage.

Summoning what meager strength remained in her wasted body, Sophie dragged herself toward the front of the cage. Their hands found each other through the frigid iron bars, fingers weaving together in a frantic, desperate clasp.

"Mom..." he gasped, the word crumbling into a broken sob. "I'm so sorry. I failed to protect you from this."

A smile spread across Sophie's ravaged face, the tears streaming down her scarred cheeks. "No... It's all right," she whispered, her voice discovering a fragment of strength. "It's more than all right. I never thought I'd see you again. To feel your hand in mine and to hear you call me 'Mom' today... If death claimed me tonight, I would leave this world content."

Cole tightened his grip on her hands, as though he could anchor her to life through nothing but raw determination. "Don't speak like that," he begged. "You're not going to die. I'll tear you free from this place. I swear it."

But Sophie refused to allow herself the cruelty of hope—not even for a fleeting moment. She understood Maxine's nature too intimately. Escape existed only as a fantasy. The euphoria of seeing her son had already dissolved, overtaken by a piercing new dread. Would he ever leave this hellish place breathing?