

Chapter 770 Refused To Return To Ublento

"Consider yourself retired." Cole's voice sliced through the air, cold and absolute.

Hugh shrank as though struck, his body collapsing inward on itself. Twenty-three years old—still young, still strong—and already Cole had tossed him aside like something broken.

Heather knew she and Hugh had returned too late. She plastered on an ingratiating smile at Elliana. "From what I can see, there was an explosion at the underground base. Tell me—what became of Maxine and Miguel?"

Elliana borrowed Cole's glacial tone without hesitation. "Consider yourself retired."

Heather's face twisted. Her hand rose to touch her nose in an awkward gesture. How could Elliana entertain the notion of discarding her?

"We should head back," Elliana said, pivoting toward Cole.

Cole nodded and then shifted his attention to Sophie and Aubrie. "Mom, Grandma—come back to Ublento with me."

Aubrie said nothing. At her age, she would follow her daughter wherever the road led.

Sophie, however, shook her head. "Cole, you and Elliana should return to Ublento. I'll remain here in Delta. Gearveil Hall has always belonged to the Griffiths family—it was our secret stronghold. I once lived there. Now that Elliana leads the family, I can move back in."

"Mom, why won't you come back to Ublento with me?" Confusion shadowed Cole's face. "I can take better care of you if you're with me. Besides, Dad has been waiting years for you to come home. He has ruined his health searching for you. He'll be thrilled when he finds out I've



found you."

Sophie shook her head again. A faint, bitter smile touched her scarred face. She refused to go back to Ubleto because she didn't want Jarrett to see her. Back when they had fallen in love, she'd been a vision of grace, and he a man whose smile could light up a room. But now, her face was a map of old wounds, a ruin she couldn't show him. Better to let him keep the memory of her as she was—beautiful, untouched by time or pain. Some dreams were kinder left unawakened.

Elliana, as a woman, understood Sophie's mindset too well. She murmured to Cole, "Your mom has been through enough. She only just got her freedom back. Forcing her to return to Ubleto with us might be too much. Let's honor her choice."

Understanding dawned in Cole's eyes. "Alright," he said quietly. "Mom, I'll take you and Grandma back to Gearveil Hall first."

He knew the truth of it—if he were the one scarred and broken, he wouldn't want Elliana to see him either. When love ran that deep, one would want the person they cherished to remember their brightest light, not their shadows.

The group boarded the plane and set their course for Gearveil Hall.

After takeoff, Sophie's eyes glistened. "Cole," she whispered, "tell your father... that I'm gone."

She surmised that since her health was fading, her days numbered, why let him find her, only to lose her soon enough?

Cole's frown deepened. He understood her reasoning, but his heart refused it. He and his father had spent years clawing through grief and hope to find her—how could she now choose absence over reunion?

Elliana said nothing, simply reached for Sophie's wrist and drew her close, her touch gentle, professional, deliberate as she assessed Sophie's condition.

Cole watched in silence, his thoughts a silent prayer for Elliana to make a miracle happen to Sophie.

"Sophie, you don't have to surrender hope," Elliana said softly once she'd completed her assessment. "Your condition is grave, but it isn't beyond

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repair. I cured Cole's Psycephrenia, and I believe I can heal you as well. I can help you recover, but I'll need your complete cooperation."

A flicker of light returned to Sophie's eyes. She never truly wished for death. She had clawed her way through the madness of Psycephrenia, survived pain most wouldn't comprehend. And now, reunited with her son, she had a reason to live—to reclaim what life had stolen.

"Elliana, could you really cure me?" Sophie's voice trembled with fragile hope.

Elliana nodded with quiet confidence. "Since Cole's treatment, I've refined my methods and deepened the research for Psycephrenia. I'm certain I can heal you. But your body's been through hell—it'll take time, and you'll have to be patient."

"I'll give you all the patience you need," Sophie declared, her voice steadying with fresh resolve. After everything she had survived, what was a little more waiting?

Elliana smiled. There was no greater gift for a doctor than a patient's faith. Her gaze softened as it drifted over Sophie's face. "And about the scars," she said gently, "I've examined them closely. Surgery can remove them—restore your face as it once was."

The spark in Sophie's eyes flared brighter. What woman didn't long for the reflection she once knew? To lose her beauty had been a wound that never stopped bleeding. She would have traded years just to glimpse her old self again.

"But it can't be rushed," Elliana added, catching that desperate glimmer. She smiled again—warm but cautious. "We can only consider surgery once your body is strong enough. And even then, recovery will take time. It's a long road ahead. And there's one more thing..."