A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 177

I crouched and took his face in my hands.

You brilliant boy.”

Then I stood and turned back to the screens.

My voice came ouf cold and clear.

“They’re alive.”

I pointed to the second panel.

To the ring.

To the background details no one else had yet noticed.

“And now we find where that arena is.”

To my complete lack of surprise, Jason rewarded Alex immediately.

He reached into his wallet, pulled out a sleek black card, and handed it to him like a ceremonial medal.

“Here you go,” he said.

“Your reward.”

Alex gasped.

Held it with both hands.

Reverently.

It was a credit card.

Of course it was.

I just shook my head.

Only Jason would respond to elite investigative work by financially empowering a six-year-old.

Alex looked at me.

“Can I buy a robot?”

“We’ll discuss supervised spending later,” I said.

Jason did not waste another second.

He turned toward me, caught my face in one hand, and kissed me hard enough to steal the air from my lungs.

The room around us vanished for one brief moment.

Then he pulled back and sat down beside me as if nothing unusual had happened.

“Well,” he said smoothly, already reaching for the keyboard.

“Guess it’s my turn, isn’t it?”

I was still recovering.

He knew it.

Which made it worse.

Jason’s fingers moved across the secure terminal.

Fast.

Precise.

Relentless.

“I just got intel,” he said.

The main screens shifted as he cross-referenced hidden files, property registries, sealed investigations, and black -market activity reports through the secured network.

He enlarged the image of the underground fighting ring.

Compared structural beams.

Lighting rigs.

Entry tunnels.

Historic raid photos.

Financial shells.

Then he went still.

There it was.

“This arena,” he said quietly, “is apparently one of the Becker family’s underground businesses.”

A cold silence spread through the room.

He tapped another file.

Ownership hidden through proxies.

Operations moved through dead companies.

Security paid through offshore accounts.

“The side of the empire they kept off the books.”

His jaw hardened.

“The side Emilian managed.”

Everything sharpened instantly.

The kidnappings.

The ring.

The container.

The hidden routes.

Emilian might be gone.

But his network was not.

I leaned closer to the screen.

“Can we trace current access?”

Jason’s eyes gleamed.

Dangerous.

Certain.

“Oh,” he said.

“We’re about to.”

Jason POV

Everything was connected.

Too connected to be coincidence.

Emilian.

The Becker family.

Their underground businesses.

The fighting ring.

The shell accounts.

The container route.

The missing teenagers.

The money offered to trigger an international war.

It formed a structure.

Layered.

Intentional.

Built over time.

And that was exactly what bothered me.

Because even with all of it laid out in front of me-

Something was missing.

I leaned back slightly and let the data roll across the screens.

Transactions.

Family ties.

W

+15 8çnus

Pow!

Historic partnerships.

Shared legal counsel.

Political donations.

Closed investigations.

Buried disputes.

The Beckers were involved.

That much was obvious.

But they were never sophisticated enough to move something this large alone.

Not quietly.

Not internationally. 1

Not while keeping pressure off themselves for so long.

Which meant someone else had strengthened the machine.

Funded it.

Protected it.

Directed parts of it from the shadows.

There was no world in which the Vinny family was not connected somehow.1

No world.

Not after Martin’s timing.

Not after his public statement.

Not after his attempt to claim Amber.

Not after arriving at the warehouse before the police.

I just had to prove it.

I reopened Martin Vinny’s corporate history and began pulling threads.

Subsidiaries.

Joint ventures.

Shipping contracts.

Land purchases near industrial ports.

Political foundations.

Charity fronts.

Amber moved beside me, reading as fast as I opened files.

Alex leaned over the desk, watching like this was the greatest show on earth.

Good.

Let him learn what monsters looked like when they wore suits.

I narrowed the search to dormant companies tied to Decker assets.

Then expanded to cross-board memberships and silent investors.

One name surfaced.

Then disappeared behind three holding groups.

I followed it again.

Another shell.

Another proxy.

Another trust.

There.

A quiet percentage stake.

Small enough to ignore.

Large enough to matter.

I smiled without humor.

“Found you.”

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Predator

Amber POV

There was nothing sexier than a man excelling at something.

And Jason-

Jason was devastating.

He was completely focused.

Sharp.

Untouchable.

The kind of competence that made everyone else in the room seem slower by comparison.

Ten different windows were open across his screens.

Maybe more.

Each one changing in real time.

Data shifting.

Files opening.

Maps updating.

Names surfacing.

He tracked all of it at once without missing a beat.

And somehow, in the middle of all that, he had manifested a headset.

I had no idea from where.

One second it was not there.

The next, it was on him like part of the uniform he had never really stopped wearing.

He spoke into it while typing.

Calm.

Smooth.

Effortless.

“No, listen,” he said, voice threaded with practiced irritation.

I glanced at the nearest screen.

He was using a disguised line routed through three countries.

Of course he was.

“Yes, I’m with the Becker family.”

15 Borus

A pause.

en Jason rolled his eyes dramatically at whatever the person on the other end said.

“I forgot my cellphone.”

He kept typing with one hand while altering a shipping registry with the other.

“Yes, forgotten. It happens.”

Several analysts nearby had stopped pretending not to listen.

Even John Stait was watching now. 2

Jason’s tone sharpened just enough to sound entitled.

“And I need to get to the fight scheduled tonight.”

Another pause.

Then he leaned back slightly.

Annoyed aristocrat. Perfectly performed.

“The location was on my phone.”

I nearly smiled.

He sounded exactly like someone raised rich enough to be inconvenient.

He tapped another key.

A camera feed opened.

Then a financial ledger.

Then a private contact list.

He did not look at any of them directly.

He simply knew.

The person on the line must have started doubting him.

Jason scoffed.

“Do you know how many donations my family has made to keep places like yours breathing?”

Three people in the room physically flinched.

Then he softened his voice into dangerous patience.

“So either help me…”

A beat. 1

“Or explain to your boss why I missed tonight’s event.”

Silence followed.

15 8gma

Then Jason smiled.

slowly.

Victory.

“There we are,” he murmured.

He wrote something down.

Coordinates.

A time.

An access phrase.

Then he ended the call and removed the headset like none of it had been extraordinary.

I stared at him.

He looked at me once.

One corner of his mouth lifted.

“What?”

I folded my arms.

“You are disgustingly attractive when you do crime for good reasons.”

The room went silent.

Again.

Jason’s smile deepened.

“Good to know.”

Jason had the coordinates.

The moment he got them, he handed everything to John Stait without hesitation.

No flourish.

No need.

Results spoke for themselves.

John was already issuing orders before the paper touched his hand.

His personal unit moved instantly.

Vehicles redirected.

Teams armed.

Routes cleared.

“Retrieve the teenagers,” he ordered.

“No delays.”

tepped forward at once.

“I’m going too.”

“No.”

Jason and John said it together.

Immediate.

Absolute.

I crossed my arms.

“I was not asking.”

“You are not going,” Jason said, finally turning to face me.

“It could be dangerous,” John added.

I opened my mouth again, ready to argue.

Jason stepped closer before I could.

His voice dropped so only I could hear it.

“I need you here.”

That stopped me.

He held my gaze.

Steady.

Certain.

“I can’t do it all on my own.”

The words were quiet.

But they landed harder than any command.

“Not if we want to buy them time.”

I looked at the screens.

At the feeds.

At the systems only we could disrupt from inside.

He was right.

I hated that he was right.

Then I looked down.

Alex was staring at me with visible concern.

“I don’t want you to go either,” he said quietly.

hat took the rest of the fight out of me.

“Fine,” I muttered.

Instead, Jason and I took over the control panel.

If I could not be in the field-

I would own the battlefield another way.

Jason traced the live feeds, pulled camera access, mapped entry tunnels, and hijacked the internal security loops.

I entered through the club servers, overriding permissions, rewriting admin rights, and silently locking out every user who thought they controlled the place.

The first fight was scheduled to begin.

And when the main screen switched over-

My stomach tightened.

At the center of the cage stood Alex's friend.

Alison Michaels.

She looked tiny beside the man across from her.

He was massive.

Built like something engineered to break bones for sport.

She looked like a toddler next to him.

But her eyes-

Her eyes were those of a predator.

Cold.

Aware.

Waiting.

I knew instantly.

She would win.

Somehow.

Some way.

She would win.

But why risk it?

I looked at Jason.

He was already watching me.

Already understanding.

ave him one small nod.

He rerouted the camera loop.

I seized lighting control.

Then I shut down the main light directly above the cage.

Darkness dropped over the center ring.

Gasps erupted through the speakers.

Shouts followed.

Confusion spread.

To everyone else-

It would look like a busted bulb.

A technical failure.

Bad wiring.

Nothing more.

To Alison-

It was an opening.

P

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+15 Barus

get it

Upper hand

Amber POV

The darkness lasted less than a second.

It was all Alison needed.

The giant across from her had barely shifted his stance when she moved.

Fast.

Precise.

Explosive.

She drove forward, struck his throat, pivoted behind him, and used his own weight against him before he could even understand he was under attack.

He crashed to the floor like a felled wall.

Unconscious.

The crowd screamed.

Not in outrage.

In excitement.

They thought it was part of the show.

Idiots.

The light above the cage remained out.

I made sure of it.

Then the first gunshots rang out.

Sharp.

Rapid.

Echoing through the speakers.

The room at the base changed instantly.

Every operator straightened.

Every eye locked onto the feeds.

The diversion had begun.

And now-

It was time to get the children out.

Jason was already moving faster than anyone else.

He spoke into comms, rerouted cameras, unlocked side corridors, sealed two security doors, and projected escape

paths onto the tactical screens.

Team Bravo, left stairwell."

"Two hostiles near the holding cells."

"Take corridor three. Avoid the main floor."

No hesitation followed his commands. 1

Only movement.

I switched camera angles, feeding him every visual advantage I could.

Alex sat beside me, fists clenched, eyes huge, refusing to look away.

Then we found them.

The teenagers.

Grouped in a reinforced holding section behind the arena.

But they were not huddled.

Not crying.

Not waiting to be saved.

They were ready.

The moment the breach team reached the corridor, the teens moved first.

One girl jammed a guard’s wrist into the bars and stole his keycard.

A boy used the opening door to slam another attacker face-first into the frame.

Two more had already improvised weapons from broken bed supports.

I almost laughed.

“We were right,” I said.

Jason did not look away from the screens.

“They were never helpless.”

Within moments, the balance shifted completely.

The kidnappers had expected frightened hostages.

Instead, they got trained prodigies with a chance to fight back.

One by one, guards went down.

Doors opened.

The formation broke.

And the teenagers took the upper hand.

+16 Bcrus

It took nearly two hours for the teenagers to return to the base.

Two long hours of shifting feeds, incoming reports, medical updates, and the kind of tension that only grows once danger should be over but is not yet confirmed.

Then the transport convoy finally arrived.

The operations floor changed at once.

Doors opened.

Voices rose.

Medics moved in.

Security widened the perimeter.

And one by one-

The missing teenagers came home.

They were exhausted.

Bruised.

Dirty.

But standing.

Alert.

Alive.

By then, every parent had been notified.

Some were already on site.

Others were arriving under escort.

The reunions that followed were too raw, too private, too human to look at directly for long.

Relief never looked graceful.

It looked like shaking hands, tears, anger, laughter, and people holding on too tightly.

John Stait was asked repeatedly for a statement.

Who found them?

Who led the breakthrough?

Who uncovered the dock deception?

Who identified the signal?

He refused to take the credit.

Openly.

Publicly.

+15 8çnus

Without hesitation.

The first critical lead," he said for everyone to hear, "was found by Alex."

He placed a hand on Alex's shoulder.

"Six years old." T

The room turned.

All of it.

Parents.

Officials.

Officers.

Recovered teenagers.

Everyone looked at the small boy beside me.

Alex remained stoic.

Face composed.

Expression as aloof as Jason's on his coldest days.

If not for the top of his ears turning bright red, no one would have known he was embarrassed.

Then someone broke from the group of rescued teens and ran straight toward us.

Alison Michaels.

Before anyone could stop her, she threw her arms around Alex in a fierce hug that nearly knocked him backward.

He froze in total shock.

She pulled back laughing, bright and wild with relief.

Then turned toward the room and announced loudly-

“My friend found us!”

She pointed dramatically at Alex.

“He’s six years old!”

The room laughed through tears and exhaustion.

Even hardened officers smiled.

Alison was not done.

She put a hand on her hip and declared-

“Everyone should learn from me and make cool, intelligent friends too.”

That broke whatever restraint remained.

Laughter spread across the entire room.

Even some of the parents laughed while wiping their eyes.

Alex looked deeply offended by being hugged in public.

The red at the top of his ears only intensified.

My chest tightened with pride so fierce it almost hurt.

Then the next shock arrived.

A secure call.

Passed directly to John.

He listened.

Straightened.

Then looked at Alex with renewed interest.

“The President has made a request.”

No one spoke.

“He would like Alex included in the program.

The room changed again.

“Not with the teenagers,” John added quickly.

“A new training group scheduled to begin in three weeks.”

I turned slowly toward Jason.

Too slowly.

Because I already knew.

He was completely against it.

The answer was written in every line of his body.

In the dangerous stillness that meant anger had gone silent.

But before he could speak, Alex did.

“I’d like to hear about it.”

I blinked.

Then Alex added, as if discussing snacks rather than state programs-

“And they should include Alice too.”

For one terrifying second, I thought Jason might actually explode.

The room seemed to brace for impact.

Instead, he stood.

Stowly.

Controlled.

Far more dangerous than shouting.

He looked directly at John Stait.

Then at everyone else.

“My son needs rest.”

His tone allowed no argument.

“You may contact me later.”

He took Alex’s hand.

Reached for mine.

And with one final glare at John Stait-

Led us out.

PASTA POW

John Stait POV

Stait PUV

John received the President’s call the moment the teenagers were confirmed safe.

He expected relief.

Gratitude.

Political urgency.

What he did not expect was enthusiasm.

The President was ecstatic.

Not only because the teenagers had been recovered.

Not only because his granddaughter was alive.

But because, in the middle of crisis, something else had been uncovered.

A prodigy.

A real one.

Young enough to shock everyone.

Brilliant enough to matter.

Alex.

And beyond that-

Opportunity.

The President spoke quickly, already building futures out of the night's chaos.

He wanted Jason involved directly.

Wanted him to train and lead a new children's prodigy unit.

Wanted Alex included.

Wanted Alice evaluated.

Wanted Amber attached to the program as well.

A brilliant family.

Connected to two of the most powerful houses in the city.

Bound to the military.

Useful to the country.

Strategically, it was an extraordinary proposition.

Politically, even better.

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Aston V

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Chapter 180

Personally-

was a disaster.

Because John knew Jason.

And there was very little Jason hated more than seeing those he loved placed in danger.

That was precisely what the President was asking.

Dress it however they wanted.

Call it service.

Call it national duty.

Call it legacy.

At its core, it was risk.

The second John relayed the request to the room, he saw Jason change.

Not dramatically.

No shouting.

No scene.

Worse.

He shut down.

It was not hesitation.

Not negotiation.

Not a maybe.

It was a complete, final no.

John had seen soldiers lose composure under fire with less intensity than the silence that settled over Jason.

No one else in the room seemed to fully understand how close they stood to consequences.

If Amber had not been there-

John was certain someone would already have paid for the suggestion.

So he watched her instead.

Watched the way Jason still reached for her hand.

The way her presence alone kept the room intact.

He prayed, not for politics or strategy-

But that Amber would keep everyone alive.

And then there was Alex.

A separate problem entirely.

The boy had not looked frightened.

Not by the feeds.

Not by the gunshots.

Not by the rescue.

Not by the idea of training.

If anything-

He looked excited.

Curious.

Ready.

John’s assistant had quietly informed him of something else.

While directing the operation, Jason had not only led the teams.

He had been teaching Alex.

Explaining routes.

Decisions.

Threat responses.

Command logic.

Even in crisis, Jason had instinctively trained him.

Interesting.

Very interesting.

Maybe they did not need to force the matter now. 1

Maybe they did not need a program.

Not yet.

Maybe Alex could be observed.

Guided indirectly.

Prepared quietly.

And formally recruited when he came of age.

Only twelve more years to go.

John sighed.

For the first time that night, patience seemed like the most dangerous mission of all.

+15 Benus

John watched them leave.

Not as assets.

Not as opportunities.

As they truly were.

A family.

Jason walked in the center.

Amber beside him.

Alex between them for a moment before reaching outward.

The boy asked for Amber’s hand first.

Not Jason's.

Amber gave it to him without hesitation. 1

Then Jason took Alex's other hand.

Three figures walking through a military corridor that had seen war plans, crises, and state secrets-

And somehow they were the most formidable thing in it.

John noticed the small smile on Jason's face as he looked down at them.

Brief.

Unguarded.

Gone almost immediately.

But real.

That expression told him more than any threat could have.

Jason loved deeply.

Completely.

And men like that were dangerous when crossed.

John felt genuine pity for whoever was still trying to hurt Amber.

Not because she needed saving.

That had never been in question.

He had seen enough in one night to know Amber could handle herself just fine.

More than fine.

No.

The danger was not Amber.

+15 Benus

It was what stood beside her.

John knew that took in Jason’s eyes.

The calm one.

The quiet one.

The one that appeared when decisions had already been made.

Jason was planning something.

Something painful.

Possibly cruel.

Almost certainly illegal.

John had spent enough years around intelligence work to recognize vengeance when it put on a suit.

For that reason alone, he was profoundly relieved the military had moved quickly.

The public statement had already gone live.

Amber was officially acknowledged as a military consultant.

Her contribution recognized.

Her name linked to them before anyone else could claim or attack it cleanly.

Smart.

Necessary.

Protective.

It would not stop Jason from doing whatever Jason intended to do.

But it might keep that storm pointed elsewhere.

John exhaled slowly and looked down the hall where they had disappeared.

At least, he thought, we are not on Jason’s bad side.

Then he reconsidered.

Not entirely.

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FY!