A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 181

mber POV

By the time we arrived at the fairy house, the night had gone deep and quiet.

The gates opened in silence.

The gardens were lit softly.

The towers glowed against the dark like something out of a dream.

After the base, after the alarms, the screens, the gunfire, and the politics-

Home felt unreal.

The front door opened before we reached it.

Alice, Rose, and Iris were waiting inside.

Still awake.

Still dressed.

Still entirely too alert for the hour.

The moment they saw us, they rushed forward.

Questions collided instantly.

“Did you save them?”

“Was there a helicopter?”

“Did Alex do spy things?”

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“Did anyone get arrested?”

Alex, for once, looked openly excited.

No aloof expression.

No careful calm.

Just bright-eyed pride.

“Yes,” he said, already stepping into the center of attention.

And then he told them everything.

Or at least his version of everything.

Which somehow involved him finding the clue, helping with computers, meeting important people, and nearly becoming responsible for national security before dinner.

Alice stared at him in awe.

Rose demanded details.

Iris listened with narrowed eyes, trying to determine which parts were exaggerated.

Mrs. Sun sat nearby, waiting for us.

Alex spoke, her expression shifted between two things at once.

Impressed.

And worried.

I understood both.

I glanced toward Jason.

He had barely spoken since we left the base.

He stood near the doorway, jacket still on, shoulders tense, face unreadable.

The room was full of warmth and noise.

He looked miles away from it.

Still carrying the weight of everything unsaid.

I clapped my hands softly.

“Alright,” I said. “Hero stories are over. It is late, and everyone is going to bed.”

Immediate protests.

Of course.

“But-”

“No fair!”

“I’m not sleepy!”

“You are all tired,” I said firmly. “Including the genius who just saved the day.”

That made Alex straighten proudly before pretending he was not pleased.

Mrs. Sun rose at once and began herding children with practiced authority.

Within minutes, there were yawns, dragging feet, whispered arguments, and promises to continue the story

tomorrow.

One by one, they disappeared upstairs.

The house quieted.

Only then did I walk to Jason.

I took his hand.

He looked at me, finally.

Still tense.

Still distant.

Still holding too much.

“Come with me,” I said softly.

did.

Without argument.

Without a word.

And slowly, quietly-

I led him to our room.

The moment the bedroom door closed, Jason changed. The silence he had worn all night shattered in an instant

He turned sharply, caught me by the waist, and pressed me back against the door. Solid wood met my spine as his body caged mine completely. There was no space left between us, no room to move, not that I wanted any.

One hand braced beside my head while the other tightened at my hip. His breathing was deeper now, controlled only by force.

I looked up at him. His eyes were darker than before. Not angry. Not exactly. Something far more dangerous.

“Jason-”

“You have any idea,” he said quietly, “what tonight did to me?”

The roughness in his voice sent heat through me.

I lifted my chin. “That narrows nothing down.”

His jaw flexed. For one second, I thought he might laugh. He did not.

“You wanted to run into danger.” His hand at my waist tightened. “You let our son discuss military recruitment like it was a game.” He leaned closer, his breath warm against my skin. “And you looked entirely too calm while dismantling a criminal network.”

I could not help it. I smiled. “So that is what this is?”

“This,” he said, lowering his mouth to my ear, “is me trying very hard to stay reasonable.”

My pulse jumped. 1

He kissed the corner of my jaw, slow and possessive, enough to make my knees weaken. Then he pulled back just enough to look at me again.

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Chapter 182

Amber POV

“You terrify me,” he admitted.

The words erased every trace of teasing. Because beneath the tension, beneath the heat, beneath the control, there it was. Fear. Real and raw. The fear of losing something he could no longer Imagine living without.

My expression softened. I lifted both hands to his face.

“I came back,” I whispered.

His eyes closed briefly.

“You always need to,” he said.

Then he kissed me properly. Deep, demanding, like he needed proof I was there. Like he needed to feel me breathe. Like the whole impossible night had led only to this moment.

When he finally broke the kiss, his forehead rested against mine. He still trapped me against the door, still holding on, as if letting go was no longer an option.

Amber answered him the only way that felt right. She grabbed the front of his shirt and kissed him fiercely, all heat and challenge, demanding a response from him instead of more carefully chosen words.

Jason laughed against her mouth, but the sound came out strained, rougher than usual.

“You are shattering my control.”

His hands slid to her waist, holding her tighter as his forehead brushed hers.

“Do you know how sexy you look taking command of a room?” he asked, voice low. “Calmly destroying that idiot with a keyboard. Teaching Alex like it was the most natural thing in the world. Bonding with him in a room full of generals and intelligence operatives and still being the smartest woman there?”

Amber laughed, delighted by every crack in the control he tried so hard to maintain.

“Jason,” she murmured, fingers tracing the line of his jaw. “I don’t want you to be in control.”

His expression changed instantly. Desire, warning, affection, all colliding at once.

“You don’t know what you’re asking for, Amber.”

She smiled slowly.

“No, I don’t. So why don’t you teach me?”

That seemed to be his undoing.

For a moment he simply stared at her, as if she had taken every careful defense he had built and set it on fire. Then he said her name like a vow.

“Amber Asher.”

He kissed her softly, so unexpectedly tender it stole her breath more than any force ever could.

“I love you.”

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“Gods, woman,” he said against her lips, voice rough with feeling. “You are going to be the death of me.”

As hands framed her face, his thumbs brushing softly over her cheeks in complete contrast to the intensity in his eyes.

“My life has never been more chaotic, exciting, or amazing than it has been these last months with you.”

The confession settled between them, honest and unguarded.

Amber’s breath caught. For all his strength, for all his control, moments like this were when Jason felt most dangerous to her heart.

He rested his forehead against hers, holding her as though she were both anchor and storm.

“I want to marry you,” he said quietly. “Properly this time.”

For a second, she could only stare at him.

They were already married. Rings exchanged. Vows spoken. A bond forged in crisis and fire. But she understood exactly what he meant.

Not hurried.

Not surrounded by scandal.

Not in the shadow of enemies.

A real beginning.

Her eyes softened, and a slow smile curved her lips.

“You’re proposing to your own wife?” she asked.

Jason’s mouth lifted.

“Yes.”

Amber slid her arms around his neck and kissed him once, slow and sure.

“Then you should know,” she whispered against his mouth, “my answer is still yes.”

Amber smiled up at him, warmth and mischief shining equally in her eyes.

“Well,” she said lightly, fingers playing with the collar of his shirt, “it is a good thing you love me.”

Jason’s brows lifted.

“Oh?”

She nodded with perfect seriousness, though the laughter in her gaze betrayed her.

“Yes. Because I love you too, and it would have been terribly awkward if this had all been one-sided.”

For one heartbeat, he simply looked at her. Then a low laugh escaped him, softer than any she had heard from him before.

“Awkward?” he repeated.

“Very,” Amber said solemnly. “Imagine the inconvenience. Shared house, shared children, shared enemies,

dramatic kisses... and only one of us in love.”

Jason shook his head, still smiling, and pulled her tighter against him.

“You are impossible.”

“And yet,” she whispered, rising onto her toes to kiss the corner of his mouth, “you adore me.”

“I do,” he said, voice low and certain.

Then he kissed her again, like there had never been any other truth worth saying.

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Chapter 183

Vanished

next three weeks went amazingly well.

For the first time in what felt like forever, life settled into something almost peaceful. There were still businesses to run, statertients to manage, and enemies who had not entirely disappeared, but none of it reached the fairy house with the same force as before.

The children returned to school. Alice and Alex left each morning full of opinions, stories, and endless questions, then came back each afternoon with new ones. Their days quickly filled with lessons, friends, and the kind of small dramas only children could treat as world-ending.

Iris stayed behind at the house. After everything she had been through, forcing her into a classroom too soon had never felt right. Instead, a private tutor came each day.

To everyone’s surprise except perhaps my own, Iris learned at an astonishing pace. She absorbed information like dry ground taking rain, hungry for everything she had once been denied. Reading improved by the day. Writing became smoother. Mathematics, history, languages-she attacked each subject with fierce determination.

By the end of the third week, her tutor gave us a glowing assessment.

“At this rate,” she said, still sounding slightly stunned, “Iris will catch up to the rest of her age group in less than a year.”

Iris tried to act unimpressed by the praise, but the pride in her eyes gave her away completely.

And watching all of them grow, heal, and thrive under one roof, I realized something simple and dangerous.

Happiness had become real.

Everything changed the day of the Becker family trial.

I was in my office, preparing to leave for court, when my phone rang.

The caller ID showed the attorney handling the case against the Beckers.

I answered immediately.

“They need help,” he said without preamble. His voice was tight, rushed. “The Becker family’s defense has changed strategy.”

I straightened in my chair.

“How?”

“They’re going to claim it was all a game.”

For a second, I thought I had misheard him.

“A game?” I repeated coldly.

“Yes. They intend to argue that you entered willingly. That nothing was forced. That the so-called trials were staged entertainment and you participated by choice.”

My grip tightened around the phone.

Of course they would. Twist abuse into consent. Violence into spectacle. Crime into misunderstanding.

The attorney exhaled sharply.

And because there were no independent witnesses inside, only the Beckers, you, and Jason…”

He let the sentence finish itself.

“It becomes our word against theirs,” I said.

“Yes.”

I was already reaching for my laptop when another thought struck me.

“And the bombs?” I asked sharply. “What argument are they using to explain the bombs they planted?”

There was a brief pause on the other end.

“They’re claiming those were props.’

I went very still.

“Props?”

“Yes. Inert devices. Stage effects meant to heighten the experience. They’ll argue there was never any real danger, only the illusion of it.”

My voice turned colder.

“Where were the bombs placed after I deactivated them?”

Because I had given them everything.

Locations.

Systems accessed.

Timers.

Device placement.

Every detail they needed.

This time the silence on the line stretched longer.

Then the attorney sighed.

“The explosives seem to have vanished.”

I closed my eyes once. Slowly.

“They vanished.”

“Yes. They were never added to the evidence report. Without the physical devices, the prosecution cannot confidently proceed with the terrorism charges.”

Of course.

Evidence erased.

Threat neutralized.

Truth made inconvenient.

attorney continued carefully.

“They’re trying to paint you as a willing participant who regretted it afterward.”

I laughed once. It held no amusement at all.

Kidnapping became entertainment.

Threats became roleplay.

Explosives became decorations.

Missing evidence became reasonable doubt.

My hand flattened against the desk.

Outside, the morning remained bright and calm. Inside, something colder settled into place.

“No,” I said quietly. “They are not rewriting this story.”

The attorney hesitated.

“You have something?”

I thought of camera feeds.

System logs.

Remote detonators.

Power grids.

Money transfers.

And men arrogant enough to believe they had deleted everything.

A slow smile touched my lips.

“I think,” I said, opening the first secure file, “the Beckers are about to learn the difference between fiction and evidence.”

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New evidence

Jason POV

Amber was late to the trial.

That alone was enough to unsettle me.

Amber was many things-brilliant, reckless, Impossible, dangerous-but rarely late when something mattered.

And this mattered.

The courtroom was already filling.

The Becker family sat at their table looking far too pleased with themselves.

Relaxed.

Comfortable.

As if they had already won before a word had been spoken.

The Vinny family was there as well.

Of course they were.

Watching from the gallery with carefully neutral expressions that fooled no one.

No one attended a trial like this out of idle curiosity.

They were there for the outcome.

Or to protect their interests in it.

But what concerned me most was not them.

It was the state attorney.

He looked anxious.

Not the ordinary tension of a major case.

Something sharper.

The look of a man who knew time was slipping away.

I checked my phone again.

No message from Amber.

No call.

Nothing.

Then Lucas Bowman, the lead prosecutor, broke from his table and walked directly toward me.

His steps were quick.

Controlled only by effort.

“Mr. Sun,” he said quietly, “have you heard anything from your wife yet?”

he question landed badly.

I kept my expression neutral.

“No.”

Lucas glanced toward the courtroom doors, then back at me.

“She was supposed to arrive five minutes ago.”

A beat.

“With evidence we need to present.”

My jaw tightened.

Around us, the courtroom noise continued-papers shuffling, low voices, reporters whispering-but it all seemed suddenly distant.

Five minutes late.

No contact.

Critical evidence.

Across the room, one of the Beckers smiled.

That was enough.

reached for my phone again.

This time not as a husband waiting-

But as a man preparing for war.

The judge had not arrived yet.

We still had time.

That should have calmed me.

It did not.

I was not worried about the case.

I was worried about Amber.

Five minutes late had become seven.

Then nine.

I had already called her nine times.

No answer.

No message.

Nothing.

Across the room, the Beckers still looked pleased with themselves.

Too relaxed.

Too certain.

The Vinny family watched everything in composed silence

Lucas Bowman kept checking the doors.

I was about to call Amber for the tenth consecutive time when the courtroom doors opened.

She walked in like she owned the building.

Calm.

Perfectly dressed.

Completely unbothered by the tension she had caused.

And she was not alone.

Two women followed behind her, each carrying thick stacks of files and sealed boxes.

Not assistants.

Not decoration.

Purpose.

The shift in the room was immediate.

Heads turned.

Whispers started.

Even the Beckers lost some of their comfort.

Amber did not look at any of them.

She walked straight to me.

No hesitation.

No apology.

Then she took my face in both hands and kissed me.

Hard enough to stop every thought I had.

Long enough to make the courtroom disappear.

When she pulled back, she smiled faintly.

“You worry too much.”

Before I could answer, she turned smoothly and gestured to the two women behind her.

“With him,” she said.

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They moved directly to Lucas Bowman and began unloading files onto the prosecution table.

Binders.

Printed records.

Photographs.

Device logs.

Financial trails.

Chain-of-custody forms.

More than one attorney nearby stood to get a better look.

Lucas stared at the mountain of evidence like a man witnessing divine intervention.

Then looked at Amber.

“What is all this?”

Amber adjusted one cuff and finally glanced toward the Becker table.

Her smile was elegant.

Merciless.

“The truth,” she said.

Then she sat beside me as if she had merely arrived for lunch.

The two women who had entered with Amber did not remain at the prosecution table.

After delivering the files, they crossed the courtroom and took seats beside her with the calm assurance of people who belonged exactly where they were.

That drew a new wave of whispers.

I looked at Amber.

She looked entirely too pleased with herself.

Then she turned to me as if this were a perfectly ordinary morning.

“Jason,” she said smoothly, “meet Elora and Nancy Castro.”

She gestured first to the woman on her left, then the one on her right.

Both composed.

Sharp-eyed.

Unimpressed by the room around them.

“They are the judge’s assistants.”

For the first time that morning, I was genuinely surprised.

I glanced at the files now spread across the prosecution table.

Then back at Amber.

The evidence has already been reviewed and accepted,” she continued.

My tension eased by a fraction.

Only a fraction.

“The judge should arrive shortly to announce it.”

Across the room, the Becker family’s confidence visibly cracked.

One attorney began whispering urgently to another.

Martin Vinny stopped pretending disinterest.

Lucas Bowman looked like he might collapse from relief.

I turned back to Amber.

“You disappeared,” I said quietly.

She tilted her head.

“I was busy saving the case.”

I should have been annoyed.

Instead, I felt something dangerously close to admiration.

Again.

I leaned closer so only she could hear me.

“One day,” I murmured, “you are going to run out of ways to surprise me.”

Amber smiled without looking at me.

“No,” she said softly.

“I’m really not.”

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Treason

Amber POV

The courtroom doors opened again.

This time, no one whispered.

No one moved.

The entire room seemed to understand instinctively that whatever entered next would change everything.

The judge stepped inside.

He was not alone.

L

Several high-ranking military officials accompanied him, their uniforms immaculate, their expressions unreadable.

The atmosphere shifted so sharply it felt like the air itself had tightened.

As he passed our row, the judge glanced at me and gave the smallest nod.

Recognition.

Confirmation.

Then he continued toward the bench.

Behind me, chairs creaked.

Someone from the Becker table stood halfway before sitting again.

The Vinny family had gone completely still.

Even Jason, beside me, grew quieter.

The judge took his place.

Set down the file before him.

Looked across the packed courtroom.

Then removed his glasses with deliberate calm.

“Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.”

His voice carried easily through the room.

Measured.

Final.

“I am afraid this case will no longer be reviewed by me and this jury.”

Shock rippled instantly.

Lawyers began speaking over one another.

Reporters reached for phones.

The judge raised one hand.

Silence returned.

“The charges have been amended.”

He opened the new file

“Treason.”

A stunned pause.

“And terrorist attack charges.”

The Becker family’s attorney went pale.

One of the Beckers cursed under his breath.

Across the room, Martin Vinny’s expression hardened into something far more careful than confidence.

“As such,” the judge continued, “this matter will no longer proceed as an open trial.”

Every word fell like a door closing.

“It is now under restricted authority.”

He looked briefly toward the military officials standing at the rear of the courtroom.

“The military and intelligence divisions will be assuming control effective immediately.”

The room erupted.

Shouts.

Objections.

Questions.

Fear.

I stayed seated.

Hands folded in my lap.

Breathing steady.

Beside me, Jason slowly smiled.

Coldly.

Beautifully.

The Beckers had wanted a game.

Now they had one.

Mr. Becker stood abruptly.

Face red.

Voice shaking with outrage.

This is a plot!”

He pointed wildly across the room.

“A conspiracy by the Sun and Asher families to bring down my house because they are low on funds!”

The accusation was so desperate I actually laughed.

A soft chuckle.

Completely unbothered.

I stood slowly.

Every eye in the courtroom turned to me.

“Mr. Becker,” I said pleasantly, “exactly that type of wording and false accusations are what prompted the Asher family to stop all investments and ongoing business deals they had with your family.”

His face darkened further.

I smiled anyway.

“So thank you for confirming we made the correct financial decision.”

A few people in the room failed to hide their reactions.

I adjusted my sleeve and tilted my head.

“I wish you luck in your trials.”

Then my expression cooled.

“And please keep your son very far away from me.”

Silence followed that.

Sharp and complete.

I reached for Jason’s hand.

He took mine instantly.

Without another glance back, we walked out of the courtroom together.

We had almost reached the elevators when footsteps sounded quickly behind us. Fast. Purposeful. Not security. Not reporters.

“Amber! Jason!”

John Stait’s voice carried through the corridor. Jason slowed but did not release my hand. I turned as John caught up to us. He was not alone.

A man walked beside him, somewhere around forty, composed in the way dangerous people often were. Black hair brushed neatly back. Tailored suit. Sharp glasses that partially hid his eyes without softening them. Everything about him suggested precision and very little patience.

John stopped in front of us and exhaled once.

Good. You hadn’t left yet.”

Jason arched a brow.

“That depends entirely on what you want.”

John ignored the tone. He stepped aside and gestured to the man beside him.

“Amber, Jason, this is Emory Watson.”

The man inclined his head once. Measured. Observant. He missed nothing.

“He is the intelligence team leader in charge of the investigation against the Becker family.”

So this was the person cleaning up what the courtroom could no longer contain. Interesting.

Emory’s gaze moved from Jason to me, assessing us both in silence before speaking. His voice was calm, low, and direct.

“We need your help.”

Jason’s posture changed almost imperceptibly. More guarded. More dangerous.

“With what?” he asked.

John answered before Emory could.

“To make sure they remain behind bars.”

The hallway seemed to quiet around us. Elevator doors opened, then closed again unused.

Because that sentence meant only one thing.

The case was far from over. And someone, somewhere, still had enough power to threaten the outcome.

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Chapter 185

Power

Amber POV

Amber sighed and looked from John Stait to Emory Watson with visible disbelief.

“How,” she asked calmly, “is the evidence I just handed over not enough to keep them behind bars?”

Neither man answered immediately.

So she continued.

“I presented one of the bombs that was placed at the university. The one I deactivated in the warehouse where was forced to play their little game.”

Her voice remained level, but every word carried weight.

“I gave you videos and digital footprints placing the entire Becker leadership, including Emilian, in locations where top-secret information was sold to foreign countries.”

Emory’s expression did not change, though his attention sharpened.

“I proved corporate espionage committed against multiple companies on their estate. I traced what they stole, what they copied, and which secrets they sold.”

Amber stepped closer.

“I also included a list of men and women, heirs from minor houses, who were taken hostage by the Beckers. Children used as leverage while ransom was extracted from their wealthy families.”

Her eyes turned colder.

“And those who were not returned were raised inside the Becker second and third houses as assets. Without names of their own. Without freedom. Without control over any part of their lives.”

The corridor had gone completely silent. Even the elevator seemed to pause in respect of the moment.

“They have done much more,” she said quietly. “Worse things.”

Then she looked directly at them.

“So explain to me how that is not enough.”

John shifted first, but it was Emory who finally spoke.

“Because evidence and justice are not always the same thing.

Amber’s jaw tightened.

He continued.

“What you delivered is enough to destroy them legally.”

A pause.

“But only if no one powerful intervenes first.”

Now the real problem stood between them.

+15 Bchus

Not proof.

Not guilt.

Not law.

Power.

Emory Watson held Amber's gaze for a moment longer, then looked between both of us as if reaching a decision.

"Come with me," he said. "And trust me."

The request landed badly.

Jason's hand tightened around mine at once. His body shifted slightly in front of me, subtle but unmistakable. Protective. Defensive.

"Trust you?" Jason repeated, voice cool. "That is an expensive word to ask for in a hallway."

Emory did not flinch.

"If I wanted to waste your time, I would have let you leave."

"That is not an answer," Jason said sharply.

John Stait exhaled under his breath, already regretting every second of the conversation.

Emory's tone remained even. "There are things I cannot explain here."

Jason took one step forward. Not aggressive, but close enough to make the point clear.

"Then explain them somewhere else. But understand this first."

The corridor seemed to narrow around him.

"I will not gamble with Amber's safety."

Every word was precise. Controlled. Far more dangerous than shouting.

"And I do not want her any more involved than she already is."

I felt the truth of that in the way he still held my hand. In the tension running through him. In the fact that, even now, his first instinct was not strategy. It was me.

Emory studied Jason for a second, then nodded once.

“Good,” he said. “I would trust you less if you felt otherwise.”

That only annoyed Jason more.

John stepped in before either man decided diplomacy was overrated.

“No one is asking Amber to walk into danger alone,” he said quickly. “But if the Beckers have protection at the level we suspect, then the two of you may be the only people they did not plan for.”

Silence followed.

I looked at Jason.

He was still unconvinced.

Still ready to walk away with me and let the rest of the world solve its own corruption.

And somehow, that made me love him more.

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Safety

Amber POV

I looked at Emory Watson carefully.

He was controlled in the way only people used to carrying ugly truths ever were. No wasted movements. No unnecessary promises. No attempt to charm us into agreement. That, at least, I respected.

So I asked the only question that mattered.

“Can you guarantee our safety?”

My voice did not shake.

“Ours,” I clarified, “and our family’s.”

Jason went still beside me. John Stait looked away first.

Emory did not. He met my eyes directly and answered without hesitation.

“No.”

The word hit harder because it was honest.

“We cannot guarantee anything.”

A pause. Then, quieter-

“But we will do our absolute best to make sure nothing happens to you.”

Not comforting. Not polished. Real.

I valued that more than reassurance.

Emory glanced down the corridor once before continuing.

“The threat has escalated.”

Every instinct in me sharpened.

“What changed?” I asked.

He looked from me to Jason. Then back again.

“I do not believe the Becker family was ever truly in charge.”

The hallway seemed to narrow around us.

“They were visible,” he said. “Loud. Cruel. Ambitious.”

A beat.

“But not sophisticated enough to build something this large.”

I already knew where this was going. Still, hearing it spoken aloud felt different. Colder.

“I suspect the Vinny family is the one directing the entire operation.”

John Stait said nothing. Which was answer enough.

FY!!

“The Beckers were useful,” Emory continued. “Disposable muscle. Public faces. Convenient monsters.”

ackeys,” Jason said flatly.

Emory inclined his head once.

“Yes.”

A chill moved through me. Because if the Beckers had been the obvious enemy, then the real enemy had been standing in plain sight all along. Watching. Smiling. Waiting.

And now they knew we were looking back.

Jason’s gaze unfocused slightly, the way it always did when pieces were locking together faster than words could keep up.

Then he spoke, almost to himself.

“We need to find out how Mr. Vinny not only escaped conviction…”

His eyes lifted to Emory.

“But was also able to interrogate us at the station.”

The memory hit sharp and immediate. Martin Vinny seated like he belonged there. Acting with authority he should never have had. Asking questions as if we were the suspects.

Jason’s expression hardened.

“He was trying to frame us. That much is clear.”

No one argued.

For the first time since catching up to us, John Stait lost his composure entirely.

“Okay.”

The single word cracked through the corridor louder than it should have.

He looked at each of us in turn, patience gone.

“All of you, follow me to the base.”

Even Emory glanced at him.

John jabbed a finger back toward the elevators.

“If we are going to talk, we may as well do it in a secure space.”

His jaw tightened.

“Not in a hallway where anyone can hear us.”

The weight of that settled instantly.

Not might hear us.

Could.

Which meant John believed they already were being watched, listened to, or both.

Jason’s hand found mine again. Strong. Steady.

met his eyes.

The trial was over.

The real war was just beginning.

Before we moved, I reached for my phone. If we were going back to the base, there was one call I needed to make

first.

My grandfather answered on the second ring.

“Amber?”

His voice was calm, but I knew him well enough to hear the question beneath it. Why are you calling now? What changed?

“Grandfather,” I said, keeping my tone even, “we’re going to be home later than planned.”

There was a brief pause. Then his voice sharpened.

“Why?”

I glanced at Jason, then at John Stait, who was already pressing the elevator button with unnecessary force.

“We’re with Mr. Stait.” 1

Silence followed. Not empty silence. The kind filled with instant conclusions,

“I see,” my grandfather said at last. Which meant he absolutely did.

“The children are fine,” he added before I could ask. “Mrs. Sun is with them. Everyone is at the house.”

Relief moved quietly through me.

“Good.” 1

His voice lowered.

“Is this business... or danger?”

With anyone else, I might have lied. With him, there was no point.

“Yes,” I said.

Another pause. Then a sigh that carried generations of disappointment with the world.

“Come home safely, Amber.”

My throat tightened unexpectedly.

“We will.”

I ended the call and slipped the phone away. The elevator doors opened. John stepped inside first. Emory followed. Jason waited for me.

I took his hand again and entered beside him.

Home would be later than planned. If we were lucky, later would still come.

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Chapter 186

Amber POV

We arrived at the base, the ride was silent, you could feel the tension in the air.

The base was under heavier security than before. Gates opened in stages, checkpoints doubled, armed guards posted at every entrance. Whatever had begun in that courtroom had already changed the atmosphere here.

John Stait got out of the car, and after speaking with the guards for a few minutes we were in.

Now i got why he said we had to ride with him.

Emory Watson met us personally at the entrance, he just showed the guard his intelligence ID and he was in. Without ceremony, Mr. Stait handed Jason and me high-clearance access badges. Mine still smelled like fresh laminate. Jason glanced at his, then clipped it on without comment.

Emory Watson received a regular clearance pass.

That made Jason smirk.

It was small, quick, and deeply satisfied.

There was definitely something going on between those two. Some silent rivalry made entirely of professional pride and mutual irritation. Watching Jason become slightly immature over a badge was unexpectedly adorable, a happy moment in all the chaos.

John led us straight to his office. Once inside, he closed the door, took a long sip of water, and turned on the main

screen.

“First, Amber, Jason, thank you for coming,”

He took a deep breath.

“We know about the two girls you took in, what you are about to see may shock you, but we can assure you that we have taken Iris and Rose’s pictures off the victim board you are about to see,”

Photographs appeared.

Rows of faces. Men and women at different ages. Children in some images. Teenagers in others. Adults in later files.

Most looked unwell. Thin. Hollow-eyed. Neglected.

Too many of them looked exactly as Rose had when we first found her.

My stomach turned.

“In total,” John said quietly, “there are more than fifty victims.”

He changed the slide. Names, ages, family affiliations, dates last seen.

“These are the victims we have managed to identify. They were captives under the Beckers. Most come from influential families around the country.”

He paused.

“While we have located twenty-eight, the rest are still missing.”

The room felt colder.

We suspect the Beckers are involved in human trafficking with different purposes.”

No one spoke for a moment. Even Jason had gone still beside me.

John gave us time to absorb it, then stepped back.

Emory moved forward next.

“We tracked Becker locations and safe houses across the country,” he said, bringing up maps marked in red.” Unfortunately, we do not yet have enough evidence to formally prove another family is involved.” 1

He switched screens again. Financial records appeared. Transfers. Shell entities. Offshore routing.

“The reason we suspect the Vinnys is this. While the Beckers received payment from victims’ families, they transferred eighty percent of those funds to an offshore account.”

He enlarged one section.

“We connected that account to a phantom company belonging to the Vinny family.”

Jason’s expression darkened.

“The problem,” Emory continued, “is that the moment we linked the account to the Vinnys, it was closed.”

Meaning they knew.

Meaning someone had warned them.

“We have reason to believe the Vinnys were informed and chose to erase the evidence.”

His next words landed like a blade.

“And we are afraid that means they may choose to make their victims disappear.”

“We need to know everything there is, what you were able to find and how you extracted the girls from the Beckers house, this information may bring light to the missing victims location.”

Jason went still beside me.

The change was immediate and unmistakable. Not fear. Not surprise. Something older. Sharper.

Protectiveness.

John either did not notice or chose to continue anyway.

“How were you able to save Rose and Iris?”

The air in the room shifted.

Because Rose and Iris were not just part of an investigation to Jason. They were children who had survived something cruel. Children he had taken into his home. Children he guarded with the kind of instinct that came from wounds no one fully spoke about.

He had passed through something similar once.

And some scars never stopped recognizing themselves in others.

John’s voice softened, fipally understanding he was stepping onto dangerous ground.

We need to know how they were found. Where they were being kept. Who handled them. Anything that may help us locate the others.”

Jason’s jaw tightened. His hands curled once at his sides before relaxing again.

For a moment, I thought he might refuse outright.

Then I placed my hand over his.

He looked at me.

The tension in him did not disappear, but it steadied.

He exhaled slowly and pulled out a chair.

When he sat, his eyes were no longer on John. They were on the photographs of the missing.

On the children still waiting to be found.

I knew that look.

Jason did not sit immediately. He remained standing, shoulders rigid, eyes fixed on the wall of missing faces.

Then he spoke.

“I will not involve the girls in this investigation.”

His tone allowed no room for argument.

“Rose and Iris have already survived enough.”

A beat passed.

“I know what something like that does to a child.”

The room went still.

Jason’s jaw tightened before he continued.

“I went through something similar once.”

My breath caught.

He rarely spoke of that part of his life. Even with me, those memories came in fragments. Enough to understand the damage, never enough to touch the full shape of it.

He kept his gaze forward.

“I was taken from my home. Placed with someone else. Forced to work.”

No one moved.

“My father paid money.”

The words came colder now. Harder.

“It was not until my grandparents intervened that I was safe again.”

Emory straightened sharply.

ason," he said, all previous composure gone, "what do you mean you went through something similar?"

But I had already gone pale.

Because my mind was racing ahead of the room.

Jason had never been just a family scandal. Never simply a child shuffled through wealth and dysfunction.

What if it had been part of something larger?

What if the Beckers' operation had not begun years ago-

But decades ago?

What if they had been doing this long before anyone thought to look?

The room full of photographs suddenly felt even more terrible.

Because if we were right, then Jason had not only survived them.

He may have been one of their first victims.

X

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 187

Old wounds

+15 Benus

Jason did not sit this time. He remained standing, arms crossed, eyes fixed somewhere past the walls. He wasn't looking at us–he was looking through the years.

"My father remarried when I was three," he said flatly. No emotion. Just a log entry. "When my brother Oscar was born..."

A pause. Not hesitation. Calibration.

“I was sent away.”

John Stait frowned slightly. “Sent where?”

Jason’s jaw tightened. “To live with extended family,” he said. “I was five.”

The way he spat the words made it clear that “family” was just the legal cover.

“I was never called by my name,” he continued. My chest tightened; the room felt suddenly smaller. “No letters. No phone calls. No contact.”

Silence spread through the room like a cold front.

“If I tried to ask…” His voice hardened, the first crack in the ice. “I was beaten.

No one moved. No one interrupted. We weren’t just listening to a story; we were hearing the internal workings of

the ring.

“I was made to clean. To work. Small jobs, they said. To earn my keep.”

A child. Processing labor. Earning his keep.

Jason’s hands flexed once at his sides before stilling again. “I stayed there for two years.

Seven years old. Two years of being a ghost.

“Until my grandparents found me.”

Not visited. Not retrieved. Found.

The word landed heavier than the admission of the beatings. It meant he had been hidden. Scrubbed from the map.

Emory’s expression had gone completely serious now. The rivalry was dead. He looked at Jason with a new, grim understanding.

Because this was no longer a theory. It was a pattern. They didn’t just take kids; they erased them. And Jason was the one who had come back from the dark.

John Stait did not let the silence sit for long. He stepped closer, his voice quieter now, more careful.

“Were they really extended family?” he asked.

The question hung in the air. It mattered now-not as history, but as evidence.

Jason did not answer immediately. His gaze dropped briefly, not in hesitation, but in recollection. “By the time I was old enough to ask my grandparents...” he said slowly, “it was already over.”

His tone remained controlled, but I felt the vibrating tension beneath it, like a wire pulled to the breaking point.

“The only thing they could tell me,” he said, looking John straight in the eye, “was that I have been taken, hidden Rom them, my father would not tell them were i was.”

Not sent. Not placed. Taken.

John’s expression hardened into something jagged. “They took you by force?”

“They think someone took me by force,” Jason confirmed.

The room seemed to shrink around that truth.

“It took them two years to find me,” Jason added.

Two years.

A child lost.

Moved.

Hidden.

Used.

No one spoke. There was nothing to say that wouldn’t sound small and hollow against a debt like that.

Emory exchanged a look with John-a sharp, silent communication. This was no longer speculation. No longer a pattern forming in the margins of their notes.

It was confirmation. Whatever the Beckers had been doing, it had roots far deeper than anyone had realized. It wasn’t just a ring. It was a harvest.

Jason’s voice cut through the silence again, quieter this time, but heavier.

“I asked my father once,” he said. No one interrupted. We were all just witnesses now. “He told me he had sent me to live with a second cousin.”

The explanation sounded almost normal. Almost reasonable. The kind of mundane truth a child accepts because the alternative is too terrifying to imagine.

“At the time,” Jason continued, his gaze distant, fixed on a memory that was starting to rot, “I believed him. I thought he had simply paid some distant relative to keep me away.”

A pause.

“Away from my grandparents and their influence.”

Another pause, this one sharper.

“Away from his new, happy family.”

There was no bitterness in his tone. That was the part that made my skin crawl. It was the flat, dead calm of a man who had already stood in the center of the fire and come out the other side.

Jason exhaled slowly, the sound ghosting through the room. “But now…”

He finally looked at John. Then he turned that heavy, piercing gaze on Emory.

“I’m not so sure.”

The implication settled into the room like a physical weight-something dark and alive. Because if his father hadn’t simply sent him away, then he had been sourced.

Someone had organized the transit. Someone had maintained the cover. Someone had profited from the transaction. And they had all lied about it for twenty years.

Emory’s expression darkened, the usual sharp light in his eyes replaced by a cold, predatory focus. John’s hand tightened around his glass until his knuckles went white.

This was no longer just a case file or a list of missing names. It was a history. And it had just reached back from the shadows to claim Jason all over again.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 188

Amber POV

Emory rose from his chair with quiet certainty, the kind that did not ask for permission.

“Jason,” he said, his voice even but edged with purpose, “I think it is time to call your grandparents, don’t you?”.

The words settled over the room like a final piece placed on a board none of us had realized we were playing.

Jason did not answer immediately.

He went pale. Not dramatically, not in a way that would draw attention from anyone who did not know him-but I did. I saw the way the color drained from his face, the way his shoulders stilled, the way his eyes closed as if shutting out the present might give him space to understand the past.

Even with his eyes shut, I could see the movement beneath them. Quick. Restless. Searching. He was thinking- no, reliving-pulling apart memories he had once accepted and forcing them into a new shape. One that fit what we now knew.

I reached for his hand.

It was cold. Slightly damp.

Jason’s fingers tightened around mine, firm and deliberate. Not enough to hurt. Just enough to speak.

This matters.

This is hard.

Stay.

I stood, the legs of my chair scraping softly against the polished floor, the sound too loud in the stillness that had taken over the room. No one spoke. No one dared interrupt what was unfolding.

I stepped behind him and wrapped my arms around him, pressing myself lightly against his back. 1

For a heartbeat, he tensed. Reflex. Control. The instinct to stand alone in the face of anything that tried to reach him.

Then, slowly, I felt the resistance leave him.

His hands came up to mine, covering them, holding them there as though anchoring himself to something real, something present-something that would not disappear when the past grew too loud.

The room faded.

There was only the quiet weight of what had been said. What had not been said. What had been hidden for years and was now demanding to be seen.

Jason opened his eyes.

When he spoke, his voice was steady-not because it was easy, but because he had already made the decision to face it.

“I think you are right, Emory.”

He drew a slow breath.

“It is time for my grandparents to tell me exactly how they found me”

Jason did not hesitate.

There was no preparation, no careful phrasing, no attempt to soften what was coming. He simply reached for his phone, unlocked it, and called his grandfather.

Then he placed the call on speaker.

“Hello, son. Everything all right?”

Mr. Sun’s voice came through calm, curious-almost relaxed. The voice of a man who did not yet know the ground beneath him had shifted.

Jason did not match the tone.

“Actually, no,” he said. “Everything is not all right.”

A pause.

“When were you going to tell me that I was basically kidnapped instead of sent away to distant relatives like I was led to believe?”

I heard it.

The sharp intake of breath on the other end of the line.

The room went still again.

Even Emory did not move.

Jason had not eased into it. He had not given context. He had not warned him.

He had gone straight to the truth.

“Where are you, son?” Mr. Sun asked, his voice no longer relaxed. “This is not something that can be discussed over the phone.”

There was something else beneath it now.

Not just caution.

Resignation.

Jason let out a quiet, humorless breath.

“That’s the funny thing,” he said. “I’m currently assisting with the Becker and Vinny investigation.”

A beat.

“And my case seems to be related.”

Silence answered him this time.

Longer. Heavier.

“We cannot talk about this on the phone, Jason,” Mr. Sun said finally. “This is sensitive information.”

Jason’s hand tightened around the edge of the desk.

I could see the strain in the way his fingers pressed into the wood.

Grandfather,” he said, and for the first time, there was something raw in his voice. Not anger. Not quite. Something deeper.

“I need to know.” 1

Another breath.

“I need to know now.”-

The room seemed to lean in.

“What happened?” he continued. “How did you find me? Why?”

His voice lowered.

“The answers will help.”

A pause.

“I need to know.” 1

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 189

Borrowed textbooks 189

for your own protection

Amber POV

“Tell me where you are,” Mr. Sun said at last, his voice steady but stripped of its earlier ease.

“And I will meet you there, son. But I cannot do this on the phone.”

Jason did not hesitate.

“I’m at the military base,” he replied, the dryness in his tone cutting through the room.

There was a brief pause on the other end.

Then-

“I’ll see you there, son. I’m leaving right now.”

Another pause, softer this time, heavier.

“And Jason... just know this.”

The entire room seemed to still around us.

“Everything that was hidden from you... was done for your own protection.”

The line went dead.

Silence followed.

Not the quiet of uncertainty.

The quiet of something approaching.

Jason did not move immediately. The phone remained in his hand, the screen dimming slowly as if even it understood the weight of what had just been set in motion.

I stepped closer again, my hand finding his arm.

He exhaled slowly.

Not relief.

Preparation.

Across the room, Emory exchanged a glance with Mr. Stait. Neither spoke, but both understood the same thing.

Whatever answers Jason had been denied for years were now on their way to meet him.

Jason stood up abruptly.

The chair scraped back with a sharp, jarring sound that broke the fragile stillness in the room.

“I...” 1

His voice faltered. Just for a second.

“I need some air.”

He did not wait for a response.

+15 Bcnus

He was already moving toward the door, toward anything that was not this room, not these walls, not the weight of everything that had just been uncovered.

I followed him immediately.

No hesitation. No permission asked.

The hallway outside felt colder, quieter, almost too clean compared to what we had just left behind.

Jason stopped a few steps away from the door, one hand braced against the wall, head lowered.

For a moment, he said nothing.

Just breathed.

Deep. Controlled. Like he was forcing his body to keep up with everything his mind had already started unrayeling.

I stepped closer, slower this time.

Careful.

“Jason…”

He shook his head once. Not in refusal. Just… grounding himself.

“I was five,” he said quietly. “Five, and I thought I had just been sent away.’

His hand tightened against the wall.

“I thought he chose that.”

The anger was there now. Not explosive. Not loud.

Sharp. Focused. 1

Jason let out a slow breath, but it didn’t steady him this time.

It just made space for the thought that had finally taken shape.

He turned to me, his expression tight, controlled-but underneath it, something was unraveling,

“The entire relationship I have with my father…” he said quietly, “is based on the idea that he sent me away.

The words hung between us.

Heavy.

Rewritten in real time.

“I hated him for it,” Jason continued, his voice low, almost distant. “I thought he chose his new family. That he paid someone to take me off his hands.”

His jaw tightened.

“That he didn’t want me.”

I didn’t interrupt.

Didn’t soften it.

He needed to say it exactly as it was.

But if that’s not what happened…”

He looked away briefly, like even considering the possibility felt unfamiliar.

“If I was taken…”

The silence stretched.

“Then everything I built around that… is wrong.

Not just anger.

Not just distance.

Years of understanding.

Of decisions.

Of who his father was to him.

Jason let out a short, humorless breath.

“I don’t even know if I should be angrier… or less.’

I stepped closer, taking his hand again, grounding him in something real.

“You don’t have to decide that right now,” I said softly.

He looked at me again.

Still tense. Still thinking. Still processing.

“But you will find out the truth,” I continued.

“And then you decide what to do with it.”

Jason held my gaze for a moment longer.

Then he nodded once.

Directed somewhere it had never fully been before.

I reached for him again, this time resting my hand against his back.

He did not pull away.

“If this is connected…” he continued, voice low, “if this was never just family-”

He exhaled sharply.

“Then it wasn’t neglect.”

A beat.

“It was something else.”

Something planned.

+15 8cnus

Something hidden.

Something that had just reached into the present and demanded to be understood.

I moved closer, resting my forehead lightly against his shoulder.

“Then we find out,” I said softly.

Jason turned slightly, just enough to look at ine.

His eyes were still storming.

But they were steady.

“Yes,” he said.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 190

Amber POV

By the time Mr. Sun arrived at the base, Jason was unraveling in a way I had never seen before.

Not loudly. Not visibly to anyone who did not know him.

But I did.

He could not stay still.

He paced the length of Mr. Stait's office over and over again, measured steps that were anything but calm. His hands flexed at his sides, then crossed, then dropped again. Every movement was controlled-and completely restless at the same time.

The tension in the room had shifted entirely.

Emory had stopped speaking.

Mr. Stait watched in silence.

Even the screens had gone ignored.

Jason kept walking.

Back and forth.

Again.

And again.

I leaned against the desk, watching him, arms crossed, trying-failing-to remain patient.

"Jason..." I warned once.

He didn't even hear me.

Another turn.

Another pass.

Another silent storm contained in too small a space.

I exhaled sharply.

I was one second away from physically tackling him to the ground just to make him stop moving.

And then-

The door opened.

Everything in the room shifted instantly.

Mr. Sun walked in.

He did not rush.

He did not hesitate.

(we

But there was nothing relaxed about him now.

The calm voice from the phone was gone.

This man knew exactly what waited for him in this room.

Jason stopped.

Mid-step.

For the first time since the call-

He was completely still.

Mr. Sun did not greet anyone.

No pleasantries. No acknowledgment of the tension that had been building for the past hour.

He stepped into the room, took one look at Jason-and went straight to the point.

“Sit down.”

Jason didn’t argue.

That alone said more than anything else.

He pulled a chair and sat, his posture rigid, controlled, waiting.

The rest of us followed suit in a quieter, more cautious way.

I stepped forward slightly.

“Grandfather,” I said, keeping my tone respectful but steady, “this is Emory Watson, intelligence lead on the Becker and Vinny investigation.”

Mr. Sun’s gaze shifted.

Not surprised.

Recognizing.

“I am familiar with Mr. Watson,” he said calmly.

Emory inclined his head once, the earlier edge between him and Jason completely gone now, replaced with something more serious.

“And you already know Mr. Stait,” I added.

Mr. Sun gave a brief nod in John’s direction before turning back to Jason.

Everything in the room narrowed to the two of them.

Jason sat forward slightly, hands clasped, jaw tight.

No more pacing.

No more movement.

Just focus.

“Start talking,” Jason sajd.

anger.

No raised voice.

Just a demand that had waited years to be spoken.

Mr. Sun turned fully toward Jason, his presence filling the room in a way that demanded order whether anyone agreed to it or not.

“Now, son,” he said, voice firm, controlled, “I can admit I may have been wrong in hiding the truth from you.’

A pause.

“But I will not tolerate disrespect. Is that clear?”

The words landed sharply.

Old authority. Old rules. Old expectations.

Jason did not flinch.

He did not look away.

He did not soften.

For a moment, neither of them spoke.

Two men. Same blood. Different histories.

Then Jason leaned back slightly in his chair, his expression cold and steady.

“Respect,” he said quietly, “is earned.”

The room went still.

“I was five years old,” Jason continued. “Taken from my home, beaten for asking about my family, and left without a name for two years.”

His voice never rose.

That made it worse.

“So forgive me,” he added, “if I’m not particularly concerned about your standards right now.”

Mr. Sun’s jaw tightened.

For a second, it looked like he might push back.

Reassert control.

Shut this down.

But something in Jason’s gaze stopped him.

Because this was no longer a conversation he could command.

It was one he owed.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 191

Sun did not argue.

He simply nodded.

And for the first time, I could clearly see it-

Where Jason got it from.

That same unshakable presence. 1

That same refusal to bend once a decision had been made.

That same quiet authority that did not need to be raised to be felt.

Mr. Sun straightened slightly, his gaze moving across the room, taking in every person present.

“If I am going to tell this story,” he said evenly, “I will do so uninterrupted.”

A pause.

“Are we clear?”

No one challenged him.

Then his eyes sharpened further.

“And any mention of my wife will not be logged anywhere.”

That drew a reaction.

Subtle-but there.

He turned his attention directly to Mr. Stait and Emory.

“I do not consent for this to be recorded.”

The air shifted again.

Not tension this time-

Control.

Emory glanced at John.

John hesitated for half a second, then reached forward and disabled the recording system on his desk.

The faint hum of surveillance equipment cut off.

“Understood,” John said.

Emory gave a short nod.

“No recording.”

Mr. Sun waited a moment longer, as if ensuring compliance was not just spoken-but real.

Only then did he turn back to Jason.

15 Bçnus

He looked less like a patriarch....

And more like a man about to reveal something that had been buried for far too long

Mr. Sun did not rush.

When he finally spoke, his voice carried the weight of years-of decisions made, of truths buried, of consequences that had never truly settled.

“Two days after Jason’s fourth birthday,” he began, “Samuel White called us.”

Jason did not move.

“He requested fifty million dollars,” Mr. Sun continued. “Claimed there was an emergency in his company. That he needed a loan to carry through.”

A pause.

“We refused.”

The words were simple. Final.

“We had not even been allowed to attend our grandson’s birthday.”

Something cold settled in my chest.

“There was no celebration for Jason,” Mr. Sun added. “His younger brother, Oscar, was ill, and his stepmother did not consider it appropriate to spend money on him.”

Jason’s hands tightened slowly.

“Three days later,” Mr. Sun continued, “we went to the White residence.”

Not invited.

Not expected.

“We intended to give Jason his gift ourselves.”

His gaze flickered briefly-past Jason, past all of us-as if he were seeing that moment again.

“Samuel informed us that Jason had been sent away.”

The room seemed to shrink.

“To live with distant relatives,” he said. “He claimed Jason had been behaving badly.”

Jason let out a slow, quiet breath.

“We did not believe him,” Mr. Sun said. “Not for a second.”

His voice hardened slightly.

“But no matter what we offered-money, contracts, influence-he refused to tell us where Jason was.”

Mrs. Sun, I realized, must have broken long before this moment.

“My wife...” he said carefully, respecting his own condition, “was relentless.”

There was something almost reverent in the way he said it.

“She searched everywhere. We contacted lawyers. Investigators. Anyone who could help.’

Abitter exhale.

“But technology was not what it is now.”

People could disappear.

Children could vanish.

“And someone made sure Jason did.”

The silence deepened.

“We terminated every agreement we had with the White family,” Mr. Sun continued. “Every investment. Every partnership.”

Jason’s eyes flickered.

“And yet,” Mr. Sun said, voice darkening, “Samuel’s companies continued to perform… adequately.”

That was wrong.

“By the time Jason’s fifth birthday arrived,” he went on, “we were on our way to confront Samuel again.”

Another pause.

“When we came across a crash site.”

I straightened unconsciously.

“A car had overturned,” Mr. Sun said. “We called for assistance immediately,”

His jaw tightened slightly.

“And then I recognized her.”

Jason stilled completely.

“It was Samuel’s wife.”

Not Jason’s mother.

The other one.

“She was injured,” he said. “Bleeding, but conscious.”

“And grateful,” he added quietly.

The word felt heavy.

“She told us the truth.”

The room held its breath.

“Samuel’s companies had been on the brink of bankruptcy the year before.”

Of course they had.

“And someone made him an offer.”

Mr. Sun looked directly at Jason now.

Fifty million dollars... in exchange for you.”

No one moved.

“He accepted.”

The words fell like a verdict.

“After we refused him.”

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 192

The truth

Sun did not stop.

He carried the story forward with the same measured control, but now there was something darker beneath it- something closer to anger.

“We did not get more information at the time,” he said. “An ambulance arrived and took her to the hospital. We gave our statements to the police.”

Jason’s eyes had not left him.

“When we arrived at the hospital and asked for Rebeca,” Mr. Sun continued, “one of the nurses informed us that her husband had checked her out.”

A pause.

“Against medical advice.”

Of course he had.

“Two weeks later,” Mr. Sun said, his voice tightening almost imperceptibly, “we were informed by the police that she had died on site.”

The room went still.

“But she was alive when they took her.”

The contradiction sat there.

Heavy.

Deliberate.

“The funeral was closed casket,” he added.

Jason’s jaw clenched.

“But something was wrong.”

Mr. Sun’s gaze softened just slightly-not weakness, but memory.

“Your grandmother,” he said, “has always had… exceptional instincts.”

There was pride there.

And certainty.

“She was convinced Rebeca was still alive.”

A beat.

“That someone had taken her.”

The same way they had taken Jason.

“So we investigated,” Mr. Sun continued. “Quietly. Thoroughly.”

His tone sharpened again.

“And she found it.”

Athread.

A’mistake.

“One of the doctors involved had received a large sum of money.”

Emory leaned forward slightly.

“He was the one who signed the death certificate,” Mr. Sun said.

The pattern was undeniable now.

“The money came from a corporation called Blackboard.”

A pause.

“Or at least... it appeared that way.’

Jason’s expression darkened further.

“Because when we went to the listed location,” Mr. Sun finished, “there was nothing there.”

Silence.

“It was a phantom company.”

The same kind of ghost trail.

The same kind of invisible network.

The same kind of lie-

Carefully constructed to disappear the moment someone looked too closely.

And now-

It had a name.

Mr. Sun paused, but only briefly, as if even now he refused to give the past the power to slow him down.

“For a year,” he continued, “we had no more leads.”

His voice lowered.

“Your grandmother was wasting away before my eyes.”

The words were simple, but they carried something unbearable beneath them.

Not weakness.

Grief.

“So I did the only thing I could think of.”

He straightened slightly.

“I placed an ad in the paper.”

Emory frowned faintly.

simple niessage,” Mr. Sun explained. “No names beyond first names. No details. Just an offer.”

A’pause.

“More money… in exchange for information on Rebecca and Jason’s whereabouts.”

The room leaned into the silence that followed.

“Three days later,” he said, “I received a call.”

Jason did not move.

But I felt the shift in him.

“A woman,” Mr. Sun continued. “Her voice was… tired.”

He chose the word carefully.

“She said she was Rebecca.”

A breath caught in my chest. 1

“She told me she was being held against her will.”

The pattern again.

“In a country house. Forced to work for a wealthy family.”

Jason’s hand tightened into a fist.

“She refused to tell me where she was.

Of course she did.

Someone was listening.

Someone was always listening.

“But she gave me something,” Mr. Sun said.

A clue.

A direction.

A thread.

“She said I would be able to find my grandson... if I followed the path of the Blue Mountains.”

The words settled into the room like a riddle carved in stone.

“That was all.”

No explanation.

No reassurance. 1

No time.

“She ended the call.”

dence followed.

Because now-

The past was no longer just a tragedy.

It was a trail.

Mr. Sun’s voice did not waver, but something in the room had already shifted.

What had begun as a story was no longer just memory.

It was evidence.

“A year passed,” he said.

No one moved.

“Then we received a call from a contact in the military.”

Emory straightened slightly.

“They had found a body in the countryside.”

A pause.

“Rebecca’s.”

Jason’s breath stilled.

“They contacted Samuel first,” Mr. Sun continued. “He did not believe it. Said she was already dead.”

Of course he did.

“So they contacted us… to identify the body.”

The silence deepened.

“It was a fourteen-hour drive.”

Every mile felt in the room.

“When we arrived…”

He exhaled slowly.

“We confirmed it was her.”

I felt my chest tighten.

“She was dressed in fine clothes,” he said. “Her hands were delicate. Untouched.”

Not the hands of someone forced to work.

“It was obvious she had not been doing labor.”

A contradiction. 1

+15 8çnus

Another lie.

The forensic examiner determined she had died during childbirth.”

The words struck harder than anything before them.

Jason’s fingers curled slowly into his palms.

“We had her buried in her family land,” Mr. Sun added quietly. “The tomb that had been prepared for her… was empty.”

A ghost buried twice.

Then Mr. Sun turned fully toward Jason.

“Your father believed she had run away,” he said. “To live with someone else.”

A pause.

“He had found evidence she was being unfaithful.”

Jason did not react outwardly.

But I felt the tension coil tighter beside me.

“On our way back,” Mr. Sun continued, “my wife noticed something.”

His voice softened again.

“A trail of flowers leading up the mountains.”

Meaned forward slightly.

“Blue flowers.”

The room stilled.

The Blue Mountains.

“She insisted we follow it.”

Of course she did.

“And at the end of that trail…”

He stopped. Just for a moment.

“There was a house.”

My breath caught.

“And outside…”

Jason’s gaze dropped.

“You were there.”

Silence shattered into something sharper.

“You were sweeping the front,” Mr. Sun said quietly.

A child.

Working.

Silent.

“My wife got out of the car immediately.”

I could almost see it.

“She ran to you. Tried to hold you.”

A pause.

“You flinched.”

My throat tightened.

“But you made no sound.”

Not even then.

“We were fortunate,” Mr. Sun continued, his voice returning to steel. “We were traveling with guards. And with a friend-a commander.”

Emory exchanged a glance with Mr. Stait.

“We were able to retrieve you.”

Retrieve.

Not rescue.

Because by then-

Jason had already been taken.

“But the woman…”

Mr. Sun’s expression hardened.

“She shot herself.”

A final door closing.

“We were unable to get any information from her.”

Silence filled the room again.

Because the truth had finally been laid out-

And it was far worse than anything we had imagined.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 193

A victim

Amber POV

Silence followed.

Not the kind that invited comfort.

The kind that forced truth to settle.

Jason stood.

The movement was abrupt, sharp enough to cut through everything that had just been said.

“You said that was when I turned four,” he said, his voice steady but edged with something deeper. “But I was with them when I turned five.”

A pause.

“How is it that I’m missing a year?”

No one spoke immediately.

Mr. Sun sighed.

Not in annoyance.

In something heavier.

“The doctors believed it was trauma,” he said.

Jason did not react.

But I saw it.

The stillness in him tightening further.

“You have to understand,” Mr. Sun continued, his voice softer now, almost careful.

“You were a mischievous little boy.”

The words felt fragile.

“You laughed. You ran around. You charmed everyone around you.”

A faint, almost broken smile touched his expression.

“You were like Alice and Alex combined.”

That image did not fit the man standing in front of him now.

“You changed… drastically after that.”

The word hung there.

Drastically.

“It was difficult to get you to even say hello.”

Jason looked away.

Not because he doubted it.

Because some part of him recognized it.

A year gone.

A child replaced.

And whatever had happened in that missing time-

Had never truly left him.

Emory broke the silence first.

He turned to Mr. Sun, his expression sharpened now-not as an observer, but as someone following a lead.

“Did you continue searching for who took Jason?”

The question landed with weight.

Because now it mattered.

Not as history.

As proof.

Mr. Sun shook his head.

“Once we had Jason...” he said, “our priority was him.”

Jason did not react.

But I felt the shift in him.

“His father was notified,” Mr. Sun continued.

A flicker of something colder crossed his expression.

“He arrived at the manor.”

A pause.

“Angry.”

Not relieved.

Not concerned.

Angry.

“He was shouting,” Mr. Sun said, his voice tightening slightly. “Accusing us.”

The room stilled again.

“He claimed he was losing money because of us.”

Jason’s jaw clenched.

“That he had a deal… and we had ruined it.”

The words settled like confirmation.

Not suspicion anymore.

Not theory.

Truth.

“He refused to listen,” Mr. Sun finished. “There was no reasoning with him.”

Emory’s expression darkened.

Because that wasn’t just negligence.

That wasn’t ignorance.

That was involvement.

And Jason-

Jason had just been turned from a victim…

Into evidence.

Mr. Stait leaned forward, his attention locked on Mr. Sun.

“Did Samuel ever tell you who he made the deal with?”

The question cut straight through everything else.

Names.

Connections.

Proof.

Mr. Sun shook his head slowly.

“He claimed he didn’t know.”

Emory frowned.

“He said he received a call,” Mr. Sun continued. “From someone who told him they were looking for an heir.”

The word echoed.

“An heir to inherit it all,” he added. “They wanted to build the best possible candidate… someone capable of claiming the four houses for them.”

The room went colder.

Jason didn’t move.

“Samuel told me he was sent updates,” Mr. Sun went on. “Pictures.”

My stomach twisted.

“Images of Jason studying. With tutors. In classrooms.”

A pause.

“He believed…”

Sun’s voice tightened slightly.

“He believed his son was being raised like a prince.”

Silence.

“He could not have been more wrong.”

I closed my eyes briefly.

Because we all knew what those pictures really were.

A curated lie.

A performance.

A product being documented.

“When Samuel was finally taken to see Jason…” Mr. Sun said quietly,

Jason’s posture shifted almost imperceptibly.

“He shut down.”

The room seemed to hold its breath.

“He looked at his father,” Mr. Sun continued, “and said nothing at first.

Then-

“He told him…”

Mr. Sun looked directly at Jason now.

“Goodbye, father.”

No anger.

No pleading.

No child left in that moment.

“Then he turned around,” Mr. Sun finished, “and closed the door,”

Silence followed.

Because that had not been a child reacting.

That had been a decision.

And whatever they had tried to turn Jason into-

He had refused to become it.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 194

Bruises

Amber POV

Mr. Sun did not soften what came next.

He looked directly at Jason, his expression steady, unflinching.

“Your father is the one who sold you.”

The words landed without decoration.

Without mercy.

“We believe he may have even sold his wife as well,” he continued. “In order to secure the funds he needed.”

No one moved.

“We were never able to determine exactly what they intended to accomplish with you,” Mr. Sun said. “By the time we found you…”

He paused.

“You were already far ahead of your age.”

Jason’s gaze had gone distant.

“You could read. Write. Solve complex problems.”

A breath.

“It was difficult to get you to behave like a child at all.”

My chest tightened.

“The only time you seemed to lower your guard…”

Mr. Sun’s voice softened slightly.

“Was with the other heirs.”

Something shifted in Jason then.

Not violently.

Not dramatically.

The fight simply… left him.

“My father sold me,” Jason said quietly.

Not a question.

Not disbelief.

A fact settling into place.

“And you still allowed me to have some sort of relationship with him?”

His eyes lifted.

+15 8çnus

“You never thought it would be a good idea to tell me what kind of man he was?”

Sun cleared his throat.

“Well…”

For the first time, there was something like hesitation.

“It appeared you already hated him without us telling you.”

Jason didn’t react.

“And the visits to his house…”

Mr. Sun continued, more firmly now,

“Were court-ordered.”

The room shifted again.

“He filed a missing child report,” Mr. Sun said. “Claiming he had no knowledge of what happened to you.”

Emory’s jaw tightened.

“He accused us of trying to break a father-son relationship.”

Of course he did.

“We did what we could,” Mr. Sun finished. “With the circumstances we were given.”

Silence followed.

Because sometimes-

Even doing your best-

Still wasn't enough.

Jason said nothing.

He stood there, unmoving, the storm that had been building inside him now gone quiet in a way that felt far more dangerous than anger.

Emory was the one who broke the silence.

"If the Vinnys were trying to sabotage heirs," he said slowly, "they would have done far more than take Jason."

It was logical.

Cold.

Incomplete.

Mr. Sun turned to me.

There was something almost desperate in his gaze now, something that hadn't been there before.

"My wife had a theory," he said. "She told me she and Amber discussed it."

The room shifted again.

"That someone was trying to make the heirs... incompetent."

He looked at me, as if hoping I would either confirm it-or deny it and give him something simpler to hold on to.

Mr. Stait cleared his throat.

"Amber," he said, "care to clarify?"

I smiled.

Not because it was amusing.

Because it wasn't.

“Of course.”

I leaned back slightly, crossing my arms.

“The first night I went to the Sun estate,” I said, “I found a babysitter hitting and verbally abusing Alice.”

Jason’s head snapped slightly in my direction, but he didn’t interrupt.

“That same night,” I continued, “it came to light that Alex had been locked inside a closet multiple times as punishment.”

The room went still.

“He was found unconscious. With a gash on his head.”

Emory’s expression darkened.

“When the nanny was confronted,” I added calmly, “she admitted she had been paid to mistreat them.”

Silence deepened. 1

I let that sit for a moment before continuing.

“When I was young…”

My voice softened slightly.

“After I lost my parents, my grandfather took me in.”

A familiar story.

Or at least, that’s what it had always seemed like.

“We had multiple nannies. Caretakers.”

I met Mr. Sun’s gaze briefly.

Then looked back at the room.

“I was mistreated. Repeatedly.”

No one spoke.

“They never believed me,” I said. “They said I was grieving. That I was acting out.”

I smiled faintly.

“It wasn’t until I was eleven or twelve that I managed to record them.”

Proof.

Evidence.

The only language adults seemed to understand.

“That’s when my grandfather finally saw the truth.”

I let out a quiet breath.

“It would have been too much of a coincidence for all those nannies to pass his approval… only to mistreat me.

A pause.

“Especially when some of them also worked for family friends.”

I tilted my head slightly. 1

“And none of their children ever showed up with bruises.”

The room fell completely silent.

Because it wasn’t a coincidence.

It was a system.

And someone had been using it for a very long time.

x

Dehind the trac

Behind the tragedy

Amber POV

Пlet the silence settle before continuing.

Because what came next… mattered more.

“And lastly,” I said quietly, “we rescued the Stuart heir.”

Every head in the room turned.

“She was supposed to be dead.”

A pause.

“But she wasn’t.”

“Iris,” I added, “told me something important.

My voice hardened slightly.

“They were not allowed to abuse her body.”

Confusion flickered across Emory’s face.

“Because she was meant to be married.”

The realization hit the room slowly.

“Şold, positioned, controlled,” I continued. “Used to bind alliances.”

Mr. Sun’s expression darkened.

“She didn’t even know her own name,” I said. “Her parents died in a car crash.”

A beat.

“I believe that crash was arranged.”

The words felt heavier now.

Not theory.

Pattern.

“To use Iris however they saw fit.”

I looked at Jason briefly.

Then back at the room.

“I believe my parents died under suspicious circumstances because of this.”

No one spoke.

“And I believe Jason’s mother...”

My voice lowered.

“And Alex and Alice’s parents...”

Apause.

“Were murdered as well.”

”

Silence swallowed the room whole.

Because what had once looked like isolated tragedies- 1

Now formed a single line.

Children removed.

Heirs broken.

Families weakened.

Power redirected.

And someone-

Had been orchestrating it all.

Mr. Sun reacted as if he had been struck.

Not visibly, not in a way that would draw attention-but I saw it. The slight stagger in his posture, the tightening

of his expression, the way his composure cracked just enough to reveal something raw beneath it.

“But why?” he asked, his voice no longer as steady. “Why would anyone go to such lengths... and how?”

No one answered immediately.

Because the question was too large.

Too deliberate.

Too terrifying in its implications.

Mr. Stait spoke next, slower now, more careful, as if each word had to be placed exactly right.

“Amber,” he said, “what do you think connects all of these incidents... apart from the families themselves?”

For a moment, my mind went blank.

Not from lack of answers-

From too many.

Then it clicked. 1

My face must have changed, because Jason turned toward me immediately.

“They were all gone,” I said slowly, the realization forming as I spoke it aloud.

A pause.

“As soon as the heads of the families presented the children...”

My voice dropped.

Do the Fogerty

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 195

s possible heirs.”

Sdence.

“For the children’s gatherings.”

The pattern locked into place.

Not random.

Not opportunistic.

Targeted.

Timed.

They weren't just removing children.

They were eliminating-or reshaping-heirs.

Before they could take their place.

"My grandfather told me something once," I said, my voice quieter now, steadier only because I forced it to be.

"The children's gatherings served three purposes."

Everyone was listening.

"To bring the families together."

A pause.

"To form marriage alliances."

Another.

"And to evaluate the potential of each heir."

The room shifted.

Because now the pattern had structure.

"I remember attending one of those gatherings," I continued. "I was around five."

The same age.

"My parents were gone soon after."

No one interrupted.

"And after that..."

I let out a slow breath.

"I was mistreated to the point where I almost lost myself."

Jason’s hand tightened slightly at his side.

“It took me years to rebuild my confidence,” I said. “And even longer to develop the backbone I have now.”

I met Mr. Sun’s gaze briefly.

Men looked back at the room.

“I believe I was only mistreated to a certain degree...”

A bitter edge slipped into my voice.

“Because I was considered a potential match for the Becker family.”

Silence deepened. 1

“But I was the only female heir at the time.”

Which meant-

“The Vinnys would not have been able to use me the same way.”

I turned slightly toward Jason. 1

“And based on what Mr. Sun said...”

My eyes softened for a fraction of a second.

“Jason was brilliant. Outgoing. Charismatic.”

A pause.

“He would have stood out immediately.”

The realization settled heavily.

“He wasn’t just another child.”

My voice dropped.

“He was a threat.”

And threats-

In a system like this-

Were never left untouched.

P

System

Amber POV

“Someone is trying to make the heirs obsolete,” I said at last, the thought no longer abstract, no longer a suspicion, but something that had taken shape and refused to be ignored.

“They’re not just removing them.”

I shook my head, slowly, deliberately.

“They’re breaking them. Reshaping them. Weakening them.”

The words settled heavily in the room, each one finding its place among the fragments of truth we had been gathering.

“So that when the time comes…”

My voice softened, not in doubt, but in certainty.

“They are no longer capable of leading.”

Silence answered me.

“They want control of the families.

And yet-

Even as the conclusion formed, something in it resisted. Something incomplete.

“But why?”

I looked at them all-at Mr. Sun, at Mr. Stait, at Emory, at Jason-each of them carrying power in different ways, each of them part of something larger than themselves.

“It’s not like the four families hold all the power.”

A quiet breath.

“We are simply the most visible.”

That was the fracture in the logic. The question that refused to settle.

If someone wanted power, why begin here?

Unless-

The thought came slowly, unfolding with a quiet inevitability that made it far more dangerous.

“Unless it isn’t about power in the way we understand it,” I said.

Emory leaned forward, his attention sharpened.

“Then what is it?”

I turned my gaze back to the screen, to the faces that had become more than victims, more than names.

“It’s about access.”

The word lingered.

“Influence.”

Another piece.

“Legitimacy.”

Now it fit.

Too well.

“They don’t need to control everything,” I continued, my voice steady now. “They only need to control the ones everyone trusts.”

The ones who would one day lead.

The ones whose decisions would ripple outward.

The ones who stood at the center of alliances, of negotiations, of futures yet to be written.
1

“If they control the heirs…”

Jason’s voice, low and certain, completed the thought.

“They control the future.”

A pause.

“And if those heirs are weak…”

The realization settled like a verdict.

“They don’t need to fight for power.”

Another silence.

“It is simply given to them.”

Mr. Stait cleared his throat, the sound deliberate, grounding, as if he were forcing the room back into motion before it collapsed under the weight of everything we had uncovered.

“This may have started with the heirs,” he said slowly, his gaze sweeping across us, “but it has gone beyond that. Far beyond that.”

He gestured toward the screen, toward the faces that had stopped being distant victims and had become something far more personal.

“Most of the victims we’ve identified belong to powerful families. Whatever the original purpose was…’

He paused, as if even he disliked what came next.

“It may have changed.”

The word lingered. Changed. Not ended. Not failed. Adapted.

And something that adapted was far more dangerous than something that simply existed.

Jason spoke then, his voice cutting through the room with quiet precision.

“But why target Alice and Alex?”

All attention shifted to him instantly.

they no longer care about controlling the four families…” he continued, his gaze steady, “then why them?”

There was no emotion in his tone, and that made it worse.

“Why Iris?”

His jaw tightened, just slightly.

“And why try to take Amber’s position as heir away?”

A pause.

“Why finance Adrian?” 1

The questions stacked, one over the other, until the entire structure we had built began to tremble under its own contradictions.

“It doesn’t make sense.”

And for a moment-

It didn’t.

Silence stretched, thin and fragile, as if the truth were standing just outside our reach, waiting for someone to see it clearly enough to name it.

“It does,” I said softly.

Every gaze turned to me.

“It makes sense... if they never abandoned the original plan.”

I stepped forward, the pieces aligning in my mind with a clarity that felt almost cruel.

“They expanded it.”

The room seemed to still around the words.

“The heirs were only the beginning,” I continued. “The first step.”

I looked at the screen again, at the faces that had been taken, broken, reshaped.

“They were trying to control the future leaders.”

A breath.

“But now...”

I turned back to them.

“They’re not just targeting heirs anymore.”

My voice steadied, sharpened.

“They’re targeting influence itself.”

Something shifted in the room then.

Understanding.

They’re not breaking the system,” I said. “They’re replacing it.”

Jason’s expression darkened, the realization settling into him as it had into me.

“Alice and Alex aren’t just heirs,” I continued. “They are visible. Connected. Protected.”

A pause.

“If they fall…” 1

The rest didn’t need to be said.

The impact would echo far beyond them.

“And Iris?” Emory asked, his voice quieter now.

“She was never meant to be broken,” I replied. “She was meant to be used.”

A tool.

A future alliance.

A controlled variable in a much larger equation.

“And Adrian?” Mr. Stait pressed.

I exhaled slowly.

“They’re testing alternatives.”

Silence answered me.

“They’re no longer relying on a single path to control the future,” I said.

My gaze moved from one of them to the next.

“They’re building multiple.”

And that was the most dangerous part of all.

This wasn’t a plan anymore.

It was a system.

P

+15 Bçnus

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 196

Future

Amber POV

Emory was the one who broke the silence.

He didn’t raise his voice. He didn’t need to.

“I don’t think we’re talking about a single family anymore.”

The words shifted the ground beneath us.

“We know the Vinnys couldn’t have orchestrated this alone,” he continued, pacing slowly now, his thoughts moving faster than his steps. “And the Beckers…”

He shook his head.

“They were support. Tools.”

A pause.

“I don’t even think they knew the full scope of what they were part of.”

Mr. Stait frowned slightly.

“You think they were expendable?”

Emory nodded once.

“A fallback. A shield. Something to burn when necessary.”

The room fell quiet again.

“This…” he added, looking at all of us now, “this looks like an organization.”

Not a family.

Not a rivalry.

Something far more structured.

“Someone-or several people-are trying to break the nation’s systems apart.”

“The nation?” I echoed before I could stop myself.

Emory turned to me.

“Yes.”

He gestured toward Mr. Sun, toward Jason, toward the invisible weight of everything they represented.

“The four families are public,” he said. “They influence. They manage markets. They create opportunities. They move capital.”

His voice sharpened.

“They build companies. They create jobs. They sustain a system where people can grow through effort-not just inheritance or controlled access.”

A pause.

“The four houses represent stability.”

That word echoed.

“Growth,” he added. “Continuity.”

Jason’s eyes narrowed slightly.

“You remove one,” Emory continued, “and another rises.”

The inevitability of it. 1

“That’s how the system survives.”

He looked at Mr. Stait.

“Now that the Becker family is gone… which house replaces them?”

It didn’t even take a second.

“The Stuart family,” I said.

Emory nodded.

“Exactly.”

Then he stepped closer.

“And what happens if the Stuart family disappears?”

A pause.

“If they have no heir?”

I frowned slightly, thinking through it.

“Then…”

Another name surfaced.

“The Bloom family,” I said slowly. “Possibly.”

Emory’s expression sharpened instantly.

“Yes.”

The word hit like confirmation.

“See?” he said. “The system replaces itself.”

A beat.

“Unless you control the replacements.”

Silence.

“The Blooms,” he continued, his voice lowering, “have not one-but three daughters who were taken.”

My stomach dropped.

+15 8cnus

“All firstborn.”

A pause.

“All heirs.”

The pattern wasn’t forming anymore.

It was complete.

“They didn’t just plan for one outcome,” Emory said.

His gaze moved across all of us.

“They planned ahead.”

A final, devastating realization settled into place.

“They already have the Blooms under their control.”

The question did not echo.

It settled.

“How do we get them all?”

For the first time since this began, no one rushed to answer.

No theories.

No strategies.

Because this was no longer about understanding the enemy.

It was about confronting them.

Mr. Sun spoke into that silence, his voice measured, deliberate-like a man placing a final piece on a board he had been studying for years.

“I think…”

His gaze shifted to me.

“It may be time to call your grandfather, Amber.”

Something in the room tightened.

“He is close to the Bloom family,” he continued. “Closer than most realize.”

A pause.

“He financed their beginnings.”

Of course he had.

Influence rarely announced itself.

It rooted itself quietly-

In investments.

In favors.

doors opened Tong before anyone thought to question why.

I felt their eyes on me.

Jason’s first.

Steady. Grounded.

Then Emory’s-sharp, calculating, already moving three steps ahead.

Mr. Stait’s watchful, weighing risk against necessity.

This was not just another call.

This was escalation.

Because once my grandfather was involved, the lines between family and war would blur completely.

There would be no more distance.

No more plausible deniability.

I reached for my phone slowly.

Not hesitating-

But fully aware of what it meant.

The weight of it settled in my chest.

Because if we were right-

Then this was no longer just about rescuing the missing.

It was about stopping something that had already begun to reshape the future.

C

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 197

Resolve

Amber POV

What followed was absolute chaos.

Not the loud kind at first. Not shouting or panic.

The kind of chaos born from too many truths colliding in the same room, each revelation splintering another illusion we had once believed was stable.

My grandfather arrived less than an hour later.

He entered Mr. Stait's office with his usual composed authority, silver hair perfectly arranged, dark coat draped over one arm, expression carved into something unreadable. Yet I knew him too well not to notice the exhaustion beneath it.

And beside him-

To everyone's surprise-

Was Iris.

Jason stood immediately.

"What is she doing here?" he demanded, protectiveness sharpening every syllable.

Iris did not flinch.

She stepped fully into the room, shoulders straight despite her age, silver-blonde hair tied neatly behind her head. She looked too calm for a child who had survived what she had. Too composed.

“She made the decision herself,” my grandfather said before anyone else could speak. “Mr. Stuart was informed.”

As if summoned by the words, the office door opened again.

Mr. Stuart stepped inside.

The powerful head of the Stuart family looked nothing like the ruthless businessman the media adored. He looked pale. Hollowed out by grief and hope in equal measure.

His gaze landed on Iris instantly.

For a moment, he simply stared at her as though afraid she would disappear if he blinked.

“Iris…”

His voice cracked around her name.

Iris looked at him carefully, uncertainty flickering briefly across her face before she straightened again, reminding herself why she had chosen to come.

The room descended into movement almost immediately.

Questions layered over one another.

Emory asked for dates.

Mr. Stait demanded names.

\

Jason remained close to Iris without making it obvious, positioning himself between her and everyone else like

stinct alone had placed him there.

And through it all-

Iris answered.

Quietly. Precisely.

She remembered far more than the Beckers or the Vinnys had ever realized.

The new arrivals.

The children who vanished overnight.

The different houses they were moved between.

The way some children were trained and others were broken.

The way girls were valued differently depending on what alliances they could create.

But what shifted the entire room was one detail.

“The family I was supposed to marry,” Iris said softly, “was the Vincent family.”

Silence.

Emory straightened instantly.

Mr. Stait muttered a curse under his breath.

Even Mr. Sun’s expression darkened.

The Vincents.

One of the most powerful families in Country S.

A rival nation.

And suddenly the shape of the conspiracy changed again.

This was no longer simply about heirs disappearing.

This was infiltration.

Political. Financial. International.

And if heirs were being strategically positioned into foreign alliances against their will-

Then this had never only been about money.

Mr. Stuart sat down heavily, one hand pressed over his mouth.

“They were going to sell my granddaughter,” he whispered.

“No,” Iris corrected quietly.

Everyone looked at her.

“They already did.”

The words shattered something in him.

Mr. Stuart looked physically ill after that. But Iris continued anyway, her voice frighteningly calm for someone recounting horrors most adults would never survive.

She spoke of the rooms.

Of children crying quietly at night because loud crying resulted in punishitrent.

Of girls being taught posture, languages, etiquette, diplomacy.

Of boys disappearing after showing aggression or independence.

Of punishments designed not to leave visible marks.

Of names being erased and replaced.

“You stop thinking about yourself after a while,” Iris admitted softly. “It’s easier if you don’t.”

Mr. Stuart abruptly stood.

“I need a moment.”

No one tried to stop him.

He left the room quickly, shoulders rigid, as though staying any longer would destroy him completely.

The door closed behind him. 1

Silence followed.

Iris lowered her gaze to her hands.

“I didn’t mean to upset him.”

“You didn’t,” Jason said immediately.

His voice was gentler than I had ever heard it.

“You told the truth.”

Iris looked at him then, and something quiet passed between them. Recognition. Shared understanding.

Not of identical suffering.

But of survival. 1

My grandfather suddenly cleared his throat.

The sound drew every eye in the room toward him.

He was looking at me.

Not as the head of the Asher family.

As my grandfather.

“Amber,” he said quietly.

I straightened unconsciously.

+15 8chus

“I owe you another apology.”

e room stilled.

“Grandfather-”

“No.”

The word was firm but not harsh.

He exhaled slowly, years of regret visible in the lines of his face.

“I have already apologized to you before,” he admitted. “More than once.”

A pause.

“But it has never stopped weighing on me.”

My chest tightened unexpectedly.

“When you were young,” he continued, “I made your suffering small.”

The honesty of it hurt more than denial ever could have.

“You came to me repeatedly. You told me things were wrong. That the caretakers frightened you. Hurt you.”

His jaw tightened.

“And I believed you were grieving.”

Silence filled the room again.

“You were a child who had lost both parents,” he said. “Everyone around me insisted your behavior was trauma. Emotional instability. Attention seeking.”

His gaze lowered briefly.

“And I listened.”

I swallowed hard.

“You should have been protected,” he said quietly. “Instead, you were forced to prove your suffering before anyone intervened.”

No one moved.

No one interrupted.

Because the guilt in his voice was devastating.

“It was easier,” he admitted bitterly, “to believe something was wrong with the child than to accept something was wrong with the adults surrounding her.”

The truth of that settled painfully into me.

My grandfather looked older in that moment than I had ever seen him.

“And the worst part,” he whispered, “is that I taught you to doubt yourself before I taught you to trust your instincts.”

Something in my chest cracked open.

rossed the room before I fully thought about it.

He looked surprised when I hugged him.

For a second, he retained completely still. Then his arms wrapped around me tightly, almost desperately.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered again against my hair. “I’m so sorry, little star.”

My throat tightened painfully.

“You came for me in the end,” I whispered back.

His breath shook.

“But too late.”

“No,” I said softly. “Not too late.” 1

Because I was still here.

Broken in places, yes. Scarred. Angry. Guarded.

But alive.

And strong enough now to protect others.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 198

When I stepped back, Iris was watching us quietly.

There was longing in her expression. Careful and hidden, but unmistakable.

My heart twisted.

Because Iris had never truly had that.

Not safety.

Not unconditional love.

Not someone who chose her before the world demanded proof she deserved it.

Then Iris spoke again.

Softly. Firmly.

“I want to help.”

Jason frowned immediately.

“Iris-”

“No.” She lifted her chin. “I’m serious.”

There was steel beneath her calm now.

know things.”

She looked around the room, at all the adults trying to build strategies from fragments.

“I know how they move people. How they classify them. Which children disappear first.”

A pause. 1

“And I know there are more.”

The room went silent.

“Many more.”

Emory’s expression hardened.

“You think there are additional locations?”

“I know there are,” Iris corrected quietly. “The Beckers only handled part of it.”

My blood ran cold.

“How many?” Mr. Stait asked carefully.

Iris hesitated.

Then whispered-

“Enough that they stopped counting us as children.”

No one spoke after that.

+15 8cnus

Because some horrors were too large for immediate words. 1

But Iris looked around the toom again, shoulders straightening despite the tremor in her hands.

“They survived what I survived,” she said quietly. “Some of them worse.”

A pause.

“And no one came for them.”

The words hit harder than any accusation.

Iris inhaled slowly.

“But now we know.”

Something changed in her expression then.

Not innocence lost. That had happened long ago.

This was purpose.

Cold. Bright. Unshakable.

“I won’t let them stay there,” she said.

The room held still around her.

“They deserve names.

A breath.

“They deserve lives.”

Another.

“And I’m going to help free every single one of them.”

The room remained silent long after Iris finished speaking.

No one rushed to answer her. 1

No one dismissed her determination as childish idealism.

Because every person in that office understood the same thing-

Iris had survived something that should have destroyed her.

And instead of breaking, she had chosen purpose.

Mr. Stait was the one who finally moved.

He exhaled slowly, rubbed a hand over his face, then straightened with the weary posture of a man forced to carry truths no one should have to say aloud.

His gaze shifted first to Mr. Sun.

Then to my grandfather.

15 85nus

And finally to Mr. Stuart, who had returned to the room moments earlier, looking composed only through sheer force of will.

“There is something all three of you need to understand,” Mr. Stait said quietly.

The atmosphere changed immediately.

This was no longer theory.

No longer speculation.

“We already suspected the deaths of your children may have been connected to the Beckers and the Vinnys.”

The words landed heavily.

Mr. Stuart went pale again.

My grandfather’s jaw tightened.

Mr. Sun remained perfectly still, which somehow made him look more dangerous than either of them.

“But now...”

Mr. Stait glanced briefly toward Iris.

“Thanks to what Iris has shared with us...”

A pause. 1

“We can also consider the Vincent family involved.”

Silence swallowed the room whole.

The Vincents.

A foreign power. 1

A rival nation.

And suddenly every suspicious death, every missing heir, every broken child stretched beyond the borders of our own country.

Mr. Stuart was the first to react.

“No.”

The word came out strangled.

Disbelieving.

“They died in a car accident.”

But even he sounded uncertain now.

“My son and daughter-in-law were found after their vehicle lost control on a mountain road,” he continued, almost desperately. “The investigation concluded mechanical failure.”

“Investigations conclude whatever people are paid to conclude,” Emory said coldly.

Mr. Stuart flinched as though struck.

My grandfather spoke next, quieter than usual.

daughter and son-in-law died in a fire.”

I closed my eyes briefly.

I hated hearing them reduced to that.

A fire.

As if the word itself explained anything.

“The report claimed faulty electrical wiring,” he continued. “But there were inconsistencies.”

A pause. 1

“At the time…”

His voice roughened slightly.

“I believed grief was making me suspicious.”

Jason’s gaze shifted sharply toward Mr. Sun.

“And Rebecca?” he asked.

Mr. Sun’s expression darkened.

“We already know what happened to her body,” he said quietly. “The question is whether her death was planned from the beginning.”

Silence deepened further.

Because suddenly none of the deaths looked isolated anymore.

Not the crashes.

Not the disappearances.

Not the convenient explanations.

Patterns emerged where tragedy had once stood alone.

Emory stepped toward the screen again, fingers pressing against the edge of the desk.

“If we are correct,” he said carefully, “then this organization has been operating for decades.”

His voice hardened.

“And they are not just trafficking children.”

A pause. 1

“They are engineering succession.”

The words sent a chill through the room.

“Removing inconvenient heirs. Breaking promising ones. Positioning controllable alternatives.”

“And eliminating parents who become obstacles,” Jason finished quietly.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 199

No one contradicted him

Nooked around the room then.

At the heads of families who had spent years believing they had merely survived personal tragedies.

Only to discover they may have been victims of something systematic.

Calculated.

Intentional.

And the worst part?

Someone out there had succeeded often enough to become confident.

Which meant this organization no longer believed itself untouchable.

It believed itself invisible.

Emory remained standing near the screen, one hand braced against the edge of the desk, the dim light from the monitors casting sharp shadows across his face.

No one in the room interrupted him now.

Not after everything we had uncovered.

“If we are correct,” he said slowly, “then this organization has spent decades ensuring that the people meant to inherit influence either disappear… break… or become controllable.”

The room felt colder with every word.

“They remove obstacles early.”

A pause. 1

“And when they cannot remove them…”

His eyes shifted briefly toward Jason.

“They isolate them.”

Jason’s expression remained unreadable.

Emory exhaled quietly before continuing.

“Until now, they have operated in silence.”

He looked at the photographs on the screen again.

The missing children.

The recovered victims.

The dead.

“But that silence has been disrupted.”

My stomach tightened before he even said the next words.

His gaze landed on me first.

Then Jason.

“And the two people responsible for that disruption…”

A beat.

“Are you.”

The room stilled completely.

Mr. Sun straightened immediately.

Mr. Stuart’s face drained of color.

My grandfather looked ready to declare war. 1

Emory’s voice remained calm, but it carried the sharp certainty of someone laying out a battlefield.

“You exposed the Becker operations.”

He nodded toward me.

“You survived their games.”

Toward Jason.

“You interfered with the extraction of the kidnapped teenagers.”

Another pause.

“And together, you started asking the right questions.”

The realization settled over the room with brutal clarity.

“We believe Amber and Jason will be the next targets.’

NA

As an Asher

Amber POV

The silence that followed Etnory’s warning felt heavier than everything that had come before it.

Not because we were afraid.

Because for the first time, everyone in that room understood the same thing-

The enemy now knew exactly who we were.

Jason’s hand tightened around mine before he finally looked at me.

His expression had gone completely focused again, every trace of shock buried beneath strategy and instinct.

“We can’t stay at the fairy house anymore,” he said quietly.

The words landed hard.

Because the fairy house had become more than a hidden property.

It was safety.

Warmth.

The closest thing any of us had to peace.

I shook my head immediately.

“We’ll be safe there.”

Jason frowned at once.

“Amber-”

“I’ll explain later,” I interrupted softly, squeezing his hand once.

Not here.

Not in front of everyone.

Because the protections around the fairy house went far beyond what most people knew. 1

And if I explained them now, too many people would become aware of exactly how secure it truly was.

Jason studied me carefully for a moment longer before finally nodding once.

He trusted me enough not to push.

Even now.

Mr. Stait stepped forward again, already moving into logistics.

“Then we proceed carefully,” he said. “No sudden disappearances. No dramatic changes in behavior.”

Emory nodded in agreement.

“If they believe you suspect them completely, they may accelerate whatever plans they still have in motion.”

Which meant one thing.

We continue as normal,” Jason concluded quietly.

The irony of the sentence almost made me laugh.

Nothing about our lives had been normal for months.

Still, the decisions came quickly after that.

Practical. Precise. Necessary.

Jason and I would return to work at the company as usual.

Public appearances would continue.

Meetings. Interviews. Social obligations.

Nothing that suggested panic.

Nothing that suggested we had uncovered the existence of a decades-long organization infiltrating powerful families.

The children would continue attending school.

That decision was much harder.

I could see the reluctance in Jason immediately, the instinctive refusal to place Alice and Alex anywhere outside his direct reach.

But he also understood something important.

Fear was exactly what these people wanted.

“We increase security quietly,” Emory suggested. “Unmarked personnel. Rotation changes. No visible escalation.”

Jason nodded once, though tension still radiated from him.

“Rose will enroll as well, as my cousin, we already have the paperwork” I said softly.

Then Iris spoke.

“I want to enroll too.”

Mr. Stuart turned toward her instantly.

“Iris-” 1

“No.”

For the first time that night, her voice carried something fierce beneath its softness.

“I’m tired of hiding.”

The room fell quiet again.

“I want to learn normally,” she continued. “I want friends. Classes. Homework.”

A tiny, almost embarrassed pause.

“I want to know what normal feels like.”

Something in Mr. Stuart’s expression shattered at those words.

Because his daughter spoke about ordinary life like it was a fantasy she had never been allowed to touch. 1

Jason glanced toward me briefly.

I already knew what he was thinking.

That Iris and Rose would likely cling to Alice and Alex immediately.

That our household was about to become even more chaotic. 1.

And somehow... warmer because of it.

“For security reasons,” Emory said carefully, “Iris should not enroll under the Stuart name.

Mr. Stuart looked immediately uneasy.

“They may still be looking for her,” Emory continued. “If they realize she survived and is speaking-”

“We use my family name,” my grandfather interrupted immediately.

Everyone turned toward him.

“She enrolls as an Asher.”

Iris blinked in surprise.

My grandfather’s expression softened slightly when he looked at her.

“No one questions additional Ashers,” he said calmly. “And no one will dare touch you publicly under our protection.”

Mr. Stuart hesitated.

Only briefly,

Then he nodded slowly.

“If Iris agrees.”

All eyes shifted toward her.

Iris sat straighter in her chair, shoulders no longer quite so fragile.

“I would like that,” she said quietly.

My grandfather nodded once, decisive as ever.

“Then it is settled.”

And just like that-

Iris Stuart disappeared from the public eye.

And Iris Asher was born.

No SALE: 3500 bonus free fou you

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 200

Amber POV

Mr. Stait insisted on assigning protection immediately.

Not private security.

Not family guards.

Military protection.

Disguised as regular security personnel.

And according to him, it was completely non-negotiable.

“You are both considered high-risk targets now,” he said firmly. “And the children are connected to you.”

Jason looked ready to argue anyway.

“No visible tactical gear,” Emory added before Jason could speak. “No armored convoys. No dramatic presence.”

“A subtle security rotation,” Mr. Stait finished. “People trained to respond if necessary.”

Jason’s jaw tightened.

He hated strangers near the children.

Hated the idea of outsiders near our home even more.

But eventually, after several minutes of tense negotiation, he agreed under one condition-

Every single assigned operative would be vetted personally through Cronos.

Mr. Stait accepted immediately.

That alone told me how serious this situation had become.

We left the base shortly afterward.

Before separating, I stopped my grandfather, Mr. Stuart, and Mr. Sun.

“Meet us at the fairy house,” I told them quietly. “There’s something I need to show you.”

Jason glanced toward me instantly, intrigue replacing part of the tension that had followed him all evening.

“What exactly did you build in that house?” he asked as we walked toward the cars.

I smiled faintly.

“You’ll see.”

Iris stepped closer then, her expression calmer than before despite everything she had shared.

“Can I go with you?” she asked softly.

I nodded immediately.

“Of course.”

+15 Bchus

The drive home felt strangely quiet after the intensity of the base.

Jason drove.

Iris sat in the back beside me, watching the passing lights silently while my mind continued piecing together possibilities faster than I could fully process them.

By the time we arrived at the fairy house, it was already late. Nearly nine at night.

The property looked peaceful beneath the soft exterior lights, warm and impossibly normal considering the conversations we had just survived.

The front door opened before we could even knock.

Rose appeared first, followed closely by Alice.

“You’re back!” Alice announced dramatically before narrowing her eyes suspiciously at Jason. “Did you go somewhere cool without us?”

Rose looked much calmer than Alice, though amusement flickered in her expression.

“Alex is sulking upstairs,” she informed us quietly. “Because he didn’t get to go to the military base this time.”

Jason snorted softly under his breath.

“He’s six,” he muttered. “Why does he sound like a disappointed intelligence officer?”

“Because Mom Amber and you keep teaching him weird things,” Alice replied immediately.

I almost laughed.

Almost.

Instead, I took out my phone and quickly sent Alex a message through his tablet.

If you want to see something cool, come downstairs immediately.

Less than a minute later, rapid footsteps thundered overhead.

Alex appeared at the top of the stairs, hair messy, expression suspiciously serious despite the pajama pants covered in tiny rockets.

“What kind of cool?” he demanded immediately.

Jason crossed his arms.

“That was fast.”

Alex looked offended.

“I optimize my response time.”

Iris blinked.

Then, unexpectedly, she laughed softly.

It was the first truly childlike sound I had ever heard from her.

Once everyone gathered, I finally pulled out my phone again.

+15 8cnus

Jason watched closely now.

did my grandfather.

Mr. Sun and Mr. Stuart had arrived only moments earlier and were standing near the entrance, still carrying the tension of the military base with them.

I opened an app on my screen.

Simple. Minimalistic.

A panic system I had designed myself years ago and upgraded repeatedly after moving into the fairy house.

Then I pressed the activation button.

A soft mechanical hum echoed somewhere beneath the house.

Alice gasped dramatically.

“Ohhhh.”

“Follow me,” I said calmly.

Survive

Amber POV

I led them toward the kitchen.

Everyone followed in silence except Alex, who already looked like he was trying to reverse engineer the system in. his head.

Once inside the kitchen, I crouched slightly and pressed one of the floor tiles near the island counter.

For a moment, nothing happened.

Then-

A section of the back wall shifted.

Mr. Stuart startled visibly.

My grandfather looked stunned for perhaps the first time in years.

Jason simply stared at me with growing fascination.

The hidden wall slid open completely, revealing a dimly lit corridor beyond it.

Alex's mouth dropped open.

"THAT IS SO COOL."

I smiled despite myself.

"Language," Jason corrected automatically.

"That wasn't bad language," Alex argued immediately while hurrying after me.

The corridor led downward into a concealed command center beneath the fairy house.

Soft lights activated automatically as we entered.

Screens lined one entire wall.

Live camera feeds displayed every entrance to the property.

Thermal imaging.

Perimeter motion tracking.

Emergency communication systems.

Independent power backups.

Secure networks completely disconnected from public systems.

Silence filled the room.

Even Emory and Mr. Stait would probably have been impressed.

Jason slowly turned in place, taking everything in.

“You built this?” he asked quietly.

I nodded once.

Mostly.”

Alex looked deeply offended.

“I helped organize the cable colors.”

“You absolutely did,” I agreed solemnly.

That seemed to satisfy him immediately.

I moved toward another concealed panel and pressed my hand against it.

A second hidden passage opened nearby.

“This connects the three panic rooms,” I explained. “Each room has independent oxygen systems, food storage, water filtration, medical supplies, and direct emergency exits.”

Mr. Stuart looked genuinely shaken now.

“There are spaces between the walls,” I continued, gesturing toward the narrow passageways. “Small enough that only the children can move through them quickly.”

Alice immediately looked delighted.

“So we have secret tunnels?”

“Yes.”

“That is the coolest thing ever.”

Rose remained quieter than the others, but I noticed the way some tension finally eased from her shoulders as she looked around the room.

For the first time since arriving, she looked like she truly believed no one could reach her here.

Iris stood near the entrance to one of the hidden passages, fingertips brushing lightly against the wall.

Her expression was unreadable for several seconds.

Then she whispered-

“They’ll never take us from here.”

The room fell silent again.

Because beneath the excitement... beneath the hidden doors and secret corridors and clever systems-

That was what this really was.

Not paranoia.

Protection.

A promise built into the walls themselves.

Jason finally stepped closer to me, one hand settling against my waist as he looked around the underground command center with open admiration.

“And here I thought you just built a pretty house,” he murmured softly.

Nooked up at him and smiled faintly.

“I build to survive.”

“No one ever thinks something that looks like a fairytale would be protected,” I said quietly as I watched them continue taking in the command center.

Soft lighting reflected against the screens, against polished steel and hidden reinforced walls, creating a strange contrast against the warmth of the house above us.

“The house itself is a front.”

Jason looked at me with open fascination now.

Not suspicion.

Not concern.

Admiration.

“You planned for war,” he said softly.

I held his gaze for a moment before answering.

“No,” I corrected gently.

A pause.

“I planned to survive one.”

Silence followed me as I moved deeper into the underground level.

Everyone came with me this time, even Mr. Sun, who still looked faintly stunned by the realization that the whimsical fairy house concealed something closer to a fortified compound.

“I designed the panic rooms after the first year I moved here,” I explained while pressing another hidden panel. “ At first it was only supposed to be one.”

A soft click echoed through the corridor.

Then a section of wall slid open seamlessly.

Alex gasped again despite already knowing there were hidden systems in the house.

“That is SO cool.”

Jason sighed.

“You are definitely your mother’s child.”

Alex looked deeply pleased by that statement.

The first panic room was hidden behind one of the upstairs bathrooms.

More specifically-behind the shower wall.

Once the mechanism activated, the marble wall silently shifted sideways, revealing a reinforced steel door

beneath it.

Stuart stared openly now. 1

“You hid a bunker inside a shower?” he asked weakly.

“It’s waterproof, insulated, reinforced, and one of the least likely places intruders would immediately check,”I replied calmly.

Jason actually laughed softly under his breath.

“That is terrifyingly attractive.”

I ignored him with dignity.

Mostly.

Inside, the room looked less like a bunker and more like a minimalist apartment suite.

Beds folded discreetly from the walls.

Emergency medical kits lined hidden compartments.

Independent air filtration systems hummed quietly overhead.

Rose looked around slowly, her expression unreadable.

“It feels safe,” she whispered.

That alone made every sleepless night designing it worth it.

We moved toward the second panic room afterward.

This one was concealed near the living room.

At first glance, it appeared to be part of the decorative wall paneling beside one of the built-in bookshelves.

I pressed a hidden mechanism beneath the carved wooden trim.

The bookshelf rotated silently.

Alice nearly screamed in excitement.

“WE LIVE IN A SPY HOUSE!”

Jason pinched the bridge of his nose while my grandfather tried-and failed-to suppress amusement.

“This room,” I explained while they entered, “was designed for quick access during gatherings.”

Unlike the first, this panic room contained direct communication systems linked to the underground command

center.

Multiple monitors lit automatically the moment we stepped inside.

“It also contains enough supplies for several days if necessary,” I added.

Mr. Sun crossed his arms thoughtfully.

“You expected someone to attack your home eventually.”

+15 Bgnus

I met his gaze evenly.

expected someone powerful to realize I was harder to control than anticipated.”

Silence followed that.

Because now everyone understood that my paranoia had not been paranoia at all.

It had been instinct.

The final panic room was the one that affected the children most.

It was hidden between the kids’ rooms, concealed inside the shared clothing storage area.

At first glance, it looked completely ordinary. Shelves. Blankets. Extra clothes. Toys Alice had probably hidden and forgotten.

Then I pressed against one of the hanging rods.

The entire back section shifted inward.

A narrow passage appeared behind it.

“This one was built specifically for children,” I explained quietly.

The tunnel beyond was smaller than the others.

Lower. Easier for children to move through quickly without fear.

Soft emergency lights lined the walls, gentle instead of harsh.

Iris stepped inside first.

Slowly. Carefully.

Her fingers brushed the walls as though testing whether they were real.

“It connects to all three panic rooms,” I explained. “And to two external exits hidden on the property.”

Rose looked up at me.

“So if something bad happens…”

“You run here,” I said immediately. “No matter what.”

Jason’s expression darkened slightly at the conversation, but he stayed silent.

Because deep down, we all knew these preparations were no longer hypothetical.

Alice suddenly looked thoughtful.

“So basically…”

She pointed proudly toward me.

“Mom Amber built a secret survival castle.”

The room went quiet for half a second. 1

Then Alex nodded seriously.

“That is an accurate assessment.”

Dhexpected laughter broke through the tension.

Small at first.

Then real.

Even Iris smiled.

A tiny thing. Fragile.

But genuine.

And standing there, beneath the fairy house disguised as warmth and wonder, surrounded by hidden doors and protected children and people who had finally begun telling each other the truth-

For the first time since the investigation began-

It felt possible that we might survive what was coming.

P

+15 8chus

return the favor

Amber POV

Returning to the office felt almost surreal after everything that had happened at the military base.

The world outside continued moving normally.

People still walked through the lobby holding coffee cups and tablets.

Employees still whispered near elevators.

Phones still rang.

As if powerful families were not being dismantled from the shadows.

As if heirs were not disappearing.

As if war was not quietly forming beneath polished boardrooms and smiling headlines.

The moment the elevator doors opened onto the executive floor, I knew something was wrong.

The atmosphere felt sharp. Tight.

Focused in the dangerous way only highly intelligent people became when something was actively going wrong.

Clara was standing near the central workstation, one phone pressed against her ear while another rested between her shoulder and cheek.

A wireless headset blinked faintly against one ear.

“...No, isolate that branch immediately-”

Pause.

“No, I don’t care if it crashes the external server, cut the access now-

Another pause.

“Then reroute through backup seven!”

Silence hit the room the moment I stepped inside.

Every head turned toward me.

Pamela looked up from one of the computer stations.

Dark circles shadowed her eyes.

Clara somehow looked worse.

I frowned instantly.

“Why was I not informed earlier?”

Clara closed one of the calls immediately while Pamela visibly straightened in guilt.

“Amber-”

“No.”

My voice cut through the room sharply enough to make several employees freeze.

someone is attempting to breach our systems, I expect to know immediately.”

Pamela stood slowly, exhaustion evident in every movement.

“We knew you were already balancing too much,” she admitted quietly. “Your family was the priority.”

Clara nodded once.

“You’ve barely slept in days.”

For a moment, guilt flickered through me.

Then frustration replaced it just as quickly.

“My family is my priority,” I agreed. “But this company is part of that priority.”

I stepped toward the main workstation.

“And if we are under attack, I will not be protected from information.”

Silence followed.

Neither woman argued.

Because they knew I was right.

I dropped my bag onto the nearest chair and slid into the central seat.

The monitors immediately reflected lines of active intrusion attempts.

Sophisticated. Coordinated.

Aggressive.

My expression cooled instantly.

“Well,” I murmured softly, fingers already moving across the keyboard, “that’s rude.”

The room remained silent after that.

Not because no one was working.

Because everyone was watching.

I accessed the server architecture directly, bypassing the normal administrative systems.

Whoever was attacking us was good.

Very good.

They had already breached two external shells and were attempting lateral movement through mirrored financial pathways.

Most companies would not even realize they had been compromised yet.

Unfortunately for them-

This was my company.

The first five minutes were spent isolating the attack.

e next four identifying the false entry points they were using to disguise their origin.

Then came the fun part.

“They’re using distributed masking,” Clara muttered quietly behind me.

“They’re overcompensating,” I replied calmly.

Pamela blinked.

“What?”

“They want us to believe there are more attackers than there actually are.”

I tilted my head slightly while tracking the movement patterns across the screen.

“There are only three active operators.”

The room went silent again.

At minute twelve, I stopped defending.

And started hunting.

I reversed the breach architecture completely, rerouting their own hidden channels back toward the originating

systems.

The moment they realized what was happening, the attack pattern changed violently.

Too late.

“Oh, no you don’t,” I murmured softly.

My fingers moved faster.

Code flooded the screens.

Warnings appeared across three separate systems simultaneously.

Then-

Connection established.

I gained access to their primary server.

Pamela inhaled sharply.

“Amber…”

I ignored her.

Two more commands.

Three.

A reroute. 1

Then suddenly-

Audio activated.

ices filled the office speakers instantly.

“What the hell is happening?!”

A loud crash echoed somewhere on the other side.

“No, no, no-disconnect it!”

Another voice cursed violently.

“They traced us!”

I opened their camera feed next.

The image appeared black.

“Tape over the camera,” I noted calmly. “Paranoid. Smart.”

The voices continued frantically in the background.

“Who the hell are these people?!” someone shouted. “They must have hired a top-tier hacker!”

Another voice snapped back immediately.

“Well maybe if the White company paid enough we wouldn’t be using half-dead servers!”

Everything in me went still.

White company.

The room froze around me.

Pamela looked horrified.

Clara slowly removed her headset.

The hackers continued panicking in the background.

“Shut it down!”

“I’m TRYING-”

Their systems crashed before the sentence finished.

Every screen went dark simultaneously.

Connection terminated.

Silence consumed the office afterward.

I stared at the now-black monitor without moving.

Without blinking.

The White company.

Samuel White had made his move.

After everything.

After Jason.

After Rebecca.

After selling his own son.

He had still decided to come after us.

Something cold settled into my chest then.

Not shock.

Not fear.

Resolve.

Years ago, I had sworn I would destroy everyone who tried to break the people I loved.

And now-

At last-

It was time to return the favor.