A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 201

Rope

Amber POV

I decided that night that the White company would end.

Not through revenge.

Not recklessly.

Systematically.

The office had mostly emptied by then, the city lights reflecting against the tall windows while lines of code continued moving across my screens.

Jason remained nearby, speaking quietly through his headset while reviewing the newest security arrangements around the children and the fairy house.

Every few minutes, his eyes drifted toward me.

Watching.

Checking. 1

I slipped back into the White company's systems carefully, this time looking beyond the attack itself.

If Samuel White had decided to move against us openly, then he was either desperate... or hiding something large enough to justify the risk.

Probably both.

The deeper I dug, the colder my expression became.

At first glance, the White company looked stable again.

Cleaner financial projections.

Recovered investments.

Profitable luxury developments.

And that was what immediately caught my attention.

Because the stabilization was real.

Adrian had done it.

\ I recognized his work almost instantly.

The restructuring patterns.

The corrected spending ratios.

The reduced debt exposure.

For all his mistakes-for all the ways he had allowed himself to be manipulated by the Beckers and the Vinnys- Adrian had genuinely tried to save the company.

And in the end...

He had defended me.

Pablicly.

Against his own allies.

Which was why what I uncovered next irritated me more than it should have.

The board reports did not match the internal numbers.

Not even close.

I leaned closer to the screen, opening one file after another.

Luxury apartment projects.

Sales campaigns.

Occupancy projections.

Except-

The buildings did not belong to the White company.

Not legally.

The company had only been contracted for construction management.

The ownership rights belonged to another investor entirely.

An older man currently hospitalized under heavy medication.

No active relatives.

No direct representation.

And Samuel White was trying to exploit that.

The internal communications made it obvious.

They were preparing occupancy transfers while the owner remained sedated and incapable of defending himself legally.

Jason walked over quietly behind me.

“What did you find?”

I tilted the screen toward him.

His expression darkened immediately as he read through the files.

“He’s stealing the properties.”

“He’s trying to,” I corrected calmly.

I opened another document.

One showing Adrian’s objections buried beneath the board approvals.

Jason noticed it immediately.

“He opposed this.”

odded once.

“He’s been trying to stabilize the company legitimately.”

A pause.

“But Samuel and the board are using the company itself as a weapon.”

Jason crossed his arms, eyes narrowing slightly while reviewing the financial structures.

“So what now?”

I leaned back slowly in my chair.

Because unlike Samuel White-

Adrian still had a choice.

He had been manipulated.

Used.

But not corrupted beyond return.

And if I was going to destroy the White company properly, I needed Samuel isolated first.

I reached for my phone.

Jason looked at me curiously.

“Who are you calling?”

“Adrian.”

The call connected after only a few rings.

“Amber?”

His voice sounded tired immediately.

Not hostile.

Just exhausted.

“We need to meet,” I said calmly.

A short silence followed.

“...That sounds ominous.”

Despite everything, I almost smiled.

“Relax,” I said dryly. “I’m not calling to threaten you.”

“That’s reassuring considering recent events.”

I glanced once more at the documents glowing across the screen.

At Samuel White’s signatures.

the fraudulent transfers being prepared behind Adrian’s back.

“When can you meet?” I asked.

“Tonight if necessary.”

Good.

“There’s something you need to know about your company,” I said quietly.

His tone sharpened immediately.

“What happened?”

I turned slowly in my chair, meeting Jason’s gaze briefly before speaking again.

“I need you to sell your shares.”

Silence.

“To Samuel White.”

Jason’s eyebrows lifted slightly.

On the other side of the phone, Adrian went completely quiet.

“...Amber,” he said carefully after several seconds, “what exactly are you planning?”

I looked back toward the financial files one last time.

Toward the corruption hidden beneath polished investor reports.

Toward the company built on lies and exploitation.

Then I answered softly-

“I’m giving Samuel exactly enough rope to destroy himself.”

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A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 202

Save your reputation

Amber POV

Adrian arrived at my building a little after ten the following morning.

Publicly, the meeting had a simple explanation.

He was supposedly attempting to convince me to sell him one of the beachfront properties I had reclaimed from the White company after the Becker fallout.

A normal business negotiation.

Predictable.

Safe.

Boring enough that no one would question it.

Reality, however, was very different.

Jason was already waiting inside my private office when Adrian entered.

The atmosphere shifted immediately the moment Adrian noticed him there.

Not hostility.

Awkwardness.

Guilt.

Adrian stopped just inside the doorway, dark hair slightly disheveled from the late hour, suit jacket hanging loosely over one shoulder. He looked exhausted in a way sleep could not fix.

“Jason.”

Jason gave a short nod.

Not warm.

But not cold either.

A massive improvement considering their history.

“Adrian,” Jason replied calmly.

Adrian’s gaze shifted toward me afterward.

“You sounded serious on the phone.”

“I was.”

I motioned toward the seating area near the screens.

“Sit.” 1

The moment he did, I pushed the tablet toward him.

No dramatic speeches.

N

No buildup.

Just

st evidence.

At first, Adrian looked confused.

Then focused.

Then pale.

His eyes moved rapidly across the documents.

Financial reports.

Ownership records.

Unauthorized occupancy transfers.

Internal board communications.

“What…”

His voice nearly failed.

“That’s impossible.”

“It’s very possible,” I replied quietly. “Your board has been manipulating asset ownership while the legal owner remains hospitalized.”

Adrian kept reading.

The more he saw, the worse his expression became.

“No,” he muttered under his breath. “No, no, no…”

He opened another document.

Then another.

“I blocked this transfer,” he said sharply, looking up at me. “I personally rejected this weeks ago.

“You rejected the official version,” I corrected calmly. “They continued the process through shell approvals afterward.”

Adrian stared at the screen in disbelief.

“They used my authorization chain.”

Jason crossed his arms nearby.

“They used your position.”

Adrian looked sick now.

Not defensive.

Genuinely horrified.

“I was trying to stabilize the company,” he said quietly. “I thought…”

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His jaw tightened painfully.

thought if I fixed enough, maybe…”

“Maybe it could still be saved?” I finished softly.

He looked away immediately.

Because yes.

That was exactly what he had hoped.

“I know what they did to you Amber, I know that you helped Oscar bring the company back up from the ground his father bought shares after you left and then he sold them to me at a really low cost, it was just to good of an oportunity to pass, at first i wanted revenge for you, but i thought that if the company was good enough you could come back”

Before anyone could continue, Jason’s phone vibrated sharply against the table.

The sound cut through the room instantly.

Jason frowned slightly and unlocked the secure Cronos notification.

Then his entire expression darkened.

“What?” I asked immediately.

He turned the screen toward us.

A series of flagged property reports filled the display.

Rental agreements.

Luxury occupancy records.

Financial routing structures.

Every single one linked back to White company properties.

And behind them–

The Vinny family. 1

Using aliases.

Shell identities.

False holding companies.

Adrian stared at the screen in shock.

“... You’ve got to be kidding me.”

Jason scrolled further down.

“They weren’t just using the company,” he said coldly. “They were operating through it.”

The realization hit the room hard.

The White company had become infrastructure. 1

A laundering system.

Ashelter.

A legal mask for criminal operations.

I looked directly at Adrian then.

“The Vinny family is currently under suspicion for organized criminal activity,” I said carefully.

Adrian closed his eyes briefly.

“And if this becomes public...” he murmured.

“The value of every connected property collapses,” I finished.

Silence followed.

Heavy. 1

Strategic.

Because now Adrian understood exactly what Samuel White had done.

Not just corruption.

Not just fraud.

He had tied the White company directly to a potentially criminal international network.

And if the investigation became public-

The company would not survive it.

I watched Adrian carefully for a moment before finally speaking again.

“Sell your shares.”

His eyes lifted toward me instantly.

“Amber-”

“Sell them to Samuel White,” I interrupted softly. “While they still have value.”

Silence stretched between us.

“You tried to avenge me at first,” I said quietly. “Even when you were being manipulated by the Beckers and the Vinnys... part of you genuinely believed I had been wronged.”

Adrian looked away immediately.

“And in the end,” I continued, “you defended me when it mattered.”

Jason remained silent beside me, but I could feel his attention sharpen slightly.

I leaned back slowly in my chair.

“But I’m never going back, Adrian.”

The words were calm.

Final.

Not to the White company. Not to that life. Not to pretending any of this can still be repaired.”

Adrian’s jaw tightened painfully.

“So at least save yourself.”

A pause.

“Save your money.”

Another.

“And save your reputation before the company collapses with everyone still inside it.”

For the first time since arriving, Adrian looked truly defeated.

Not because he had lost.

But because he had finally realized there was nothing left worth saving.

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+15 8chus

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 203

Amber POV

The plan moved forward three days later.

Publicly, it looked brilliant.

Privately, it was a controlled detonation.

Adrian and I appeared together for the first time in weeks during a scheduled investor.conference hosted at one of

my commercial towers overlooking the ocean.

The media reacted exactly as expected.

Questions exploded immediately.

Had the cousins reconciled?

Was Adrian returning to work alongside me?

Were the White and Asher groups preparing a merger?

Neither of us answered directly.

That only fueled the speculation further.

Exactly as planned.

The real announcement came twenty minutes into the conference.

The White company would be acquiring a premium beachfront property location.

At what Adrian described as “a strategic acquisition opportunity unlikely to appear again in the next decade.”

The phrase alone sent investors into a frenzy.

Especially once the images of the property appeared across the massive presentation screens.

Crystal-blue water.

Private marina access.

Luxury commercial development permits.

One of the most desirable coastal projects in the country.

And according to the White company—

They had secured it at an unbelievable price.

The market reacted almost instantly.

Share prices rose aggressively before the conference even ended.

Because unlike months earlier, the White company was no longer seen as unstable.

Adrian had changed that.

In only four months, he had managed what most analysts believed impossible.

He stabilized the company.

Reduced debt.-

Recovered investor confidence.

Restructured failing branches.

The media had practically turned him into a corporate miracle..

And because Adrian had managed to stabilize the White company in barely four months, investors reacted aggressively.

The market trusted him.

Not Samuel White.

Not Oscar.

Adrian.

Which was precisely why the next part worked so perfectly.

Adrian played his role flawlessly during the final section of the conference.

Calm. Professional. Slightly exhausted.

“I’ve spent the last four months focused entirely on rebuilding the company,” he told reporters carefully.

A faint smile crossed his face.

“And while I’m proud of what we achieved…”

He paused.

“I realized something important.”

The room went completely silent.

“I don’t want this life anymore.”

Questions erupted immediately afterward.

“What do you mean?”

“Are you resigning?”

“Who will take over the company?”

Adrian adjusted his cufflinks slowly before answering.

“I’m tired,” he admitted honestly. “Stabilizing the company required everything I had.”

Another pause.

“And now that the company is finally strong again…”

A faint exhale.

“I want peace more than power.”

The statement spread across financial networks within minutes.

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Adrian White the man who had rescued the White company in record time-was preparing to retire from executive leadership. 1

Even though Adrian was not the White heir, he had become the public face of the company's recovery after the Becker fallout nearly destroyed investor confidence.

While Oscar remained the official White heir and Samuel White's chosen successor, Adrian had been the one handling negotiations, restructuring debt, calming shareholders, and stabilizing operations.

And because the company now looked stronger than it had in years...

Samuel White panicked.

Exactly as expected.

By the next morning, he contacted Adrian privately.

He wanted full control immediately.

The possibility of Adrian leaving while still holding a major percentage of shares terrified him.

Especially now that investors trusted Adrian far more than they trusted the board.

So Samuel White made the offer himself.

He would buy Adrian's shares personally.

At full market value.

An absurd amount of money.

Jason nearly laughed when Adrian forwarded us the proposal through a secured channel.

"He really thinks he's winning," Jason muttered.

"He thinks he's inheriting a recovered empire," I corrected calmly.

When in reality-

He was accepting full ownership of everything hidden beneath it.

The transfer happened quietly two days later.

No public scandal.

No visible hostility.

No corporate war.

Adrian publicly announced his retirement from executive management shortly afterward.

The media praised him relentlessly.

The brilliant financial strategist who helped rescue the White company before stepping away from corporate life entirely.

Meanwhile, Oscar White publicly supported the merger alongside his father, fully unaware that the empire they

Traud

were consolidating had already begun rotting from the inside out.

The White company's shares climbed even higher after Samuel White assumed complete control.

Investors believed unity had returned to the family. 1

That stability had been restored.

That the company was entering a golden erä.

Only a handful of people knew the truth.

Jason.

Adrian.

Me.

And Samuel White himself.

Because hidden beneath the rising stock prices-

Beneath the luxury beachfront developments and polished investor confidence-

Was fraud.

Illegal property manipulation.

Criminal financial routing.

Connections to the Vinny family.

And enough evidence to destroy the entire company once exposed.

Samuel White had spent years sacrificing others to survive.

Using people.

Using families.

Using anyone vulnerable enough to exploit.

And now-

For the first time in his life-

He owned every consequence personally.

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Chapter 204

Samuel White announced the merger less than a week later.

Publicly, it was described as visionary.

A strategic consolidation between the White company, the real estate branch Adrian had stabilized, and White Lotus Construction-Samuel White's personal construction empire.

On paper, it looked perfect.

The media praised it relentlessly.

Financial analysts called it "a generational restructuring."

Investors celebrated the possibility of centralized leadership under the White family.

Business channels spoke about recovery, legacy, and stability.

And most importantly-

It gave Samuel White complete control.

Exactly as intended.

Jason watched the live announcement beside me from the office lounge, one arm resting behind my chair while Samuel White smiled confidently from every financial screen in the country.

“My family has worked tirelessly to restore confidence in the company,” Samuel White declared smoothly during the press conference. “And now it is time for us to move forward as a united enterprise.”

I almost laughed.

United.

After selling one son.

Manipulating another.

And allowing Oscar White-the official heir of the White family-to stand proudly beside him without understanding the true state of the empire he was inheriting.

Jason remained silent beside me, but I felt the tension in him immediately.

Not fear.

Anticipation.

Because now Samuel White stood at the center of everything.

There would be no board to hide behind anymore.

No fragmented ownership.

No excuses.

Only him.

The collapse took two months.

Two long, strangely quiet months.

And somehow...

The silence felt worse than open conflict.

Jason and I prepared for every possible scenario during that time.

Every contingency.

Every escape route.

Every weakness. 1

The fairy house transformed slowly beneath the surface.

What had once been hidden security systems became something far more extensive.

We expanded the underground passages.

Reinforced the hidden walls.

Built an entirely new escape tunnel connecting every room directly to the outer cliffside.

The tunnel led beneath the property and opened near the private beach below.

Hidden there-concealed inside the natural rock formations and reinforced beneath the cliffs-

Was a second stronghold.

Completely independent from the house.

It had supplies.

Medical equipment.

Satellite communication systems.

Secure transportation routes.

Enough resources to disappear for weeks if necessary.

Jason personally supervised most of the construction at night.

The workers believed they were reinforcing coastal foundations.

Only a handful of people knew the truth.

Meanwhile, life above ground continued almost normally.

Or at least... as normally as possible.

The children adapted surprisingly quickly to the new routines.

Security escorts disguised as staff.

Rotating school routes.

Emergency drills hidden beneath games.

+15 8chus

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Alex treated everything like a classified mission.

Alice treated it like an adventure movie.

Rose and Iris, however, understood the truth.

And because they understood it-

Jason trained them personally.

Not aggressively.

Not like soldiers. 1

But carefully.

How to recognize surveillance.

How to memorize exits. 1

How to move quietly through the hidden passages.

How to react if separated from adults.

At first, watching it hurt me.

Seeing children learn survival before they fully learned safety felt fundamentally wrong.

Then one night I found Rose helping Alice navigate one of the underground passages while Iris timed their response speed with complete seriousness.

And Alice-

Alice laughed the entire time.

Somehow, despite everything...

They were still children.

That realization nearly broke me.

The happiest moment during those two months came unexpectedly.

Rose and Iris celebrated their first real birthday party.

Not survival anniversaries.

Not forgotten dates whispered quietly in hidden rooms.

A real birthday.

The fairy house transformed completely for the occasion.

Alice insisted on decorating everything herself.

Which resulted in excessive glitter, crooked banners, and balloons absolutely everywhere.

Alex built a ridiculous “security schedule” for the cake.

Jason pretended not to be emotionally affected watching Rose stare at her birthday candles like she didn’t fully

understand they belonged to her.

s cried when everyone sang to her.

Quietly.

Almost invisibly.

But I saw it.

Mr. Stuart had to leave the room afterward because seeing his daughter smile without fear destroyed what little composure he still had left. 2

For a few hours that night, everything felt almost normal.

Warm.

Safe.

Real.

And then-

The media exploded.

It happened on a Tuesday morning.

I had just walked into my office when Clara nearly ran toward me holding a tablet.

“Amber.”

Her expression alone made my stomach tighten.

“What happened?”

She turned the screen toward me.

Every major financial network.

Every news outlet.

Every business platform.

All broadcasting the same headline.

WHITE LOTUS CONSTRUCTION UNDER FEDERAL INVESTIGATION FOR FRAUD, MONEY LAUNDERING, AND INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL CONNECTIONS. 1

Below it-

Another headline appeared.

LEAKED DOCUMENTS CONNECT WHITE ENTERPRISES TO VINNY FAMILY HOLDINGS.

And then another.

LUXURY PROPERTIES LINKED TO ILLEGAL OCCUPANCY TRANSFERS AND SHELL COMPANIES.

The room went completely silent.

Because the collapse had finally started.

And this time

There would be no stopping it.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 205

Amber POV

The media frenzy became absolute chaos within hours.

Every network wanted statements.

Every financial analyst wanted reactions.

Every reporter suddenly remembered that Jason and I had nearly finalized a collaboration with the White company before the scandal exploded publicly.

By noon, our public relations teams were overwhelmed.

Phones rang endlessly.

News vans gathered outside both Phoenix Ashes headquarters and Cronos Tower.

Social media platforms exploded with speculation.

Were we involved?

Did we know beforehand?

Had the Ashers and Suns secretly supported Samuel White?

It was exactly the kind of confusion the Vinny family needed.

Jason stood beside me inside the press room we had arranged on the executive floor of Phoenix Ashes.

He looked calm.

Too calm.

The kind of calm that usually meant he was already planning how to ruin someone permanently.

“You ready?” he asked quietly while adjusting my microphone.

I looked toward the wall of screens displaying the growing headlines.

Then toward the reporters gathering beyond the glass doors.

“No,” I admitted honestly.

Jason’s lips curved faintly.

“Good,” he murmured. “Means you still think like a human being.”

That almost made me laugh.

Almost.

The doors opened moments later.

Flashes exploded instantly the second Jason and I entered together.

Questions hit us from every direction.

“Ms. Asher, did Phoenix Ashes know about the White company investigation?”

“Mr. Sun, is your company connected to the White family?”

Are the merger negotiations still active?”

“Were your companies collaborating with White Lotus Construction?”

Jason guided me toward the podium while security kept the reporters from surging forward completely.

The room finally quieted once we stopped in front of the microphones.

I allowed exactly enough silence to build tension before speaking.

“Phoenix Ashes is horrified by the information currently being released regarding the White company and White Lotus Construction.”

The cameras flashed aggressively.

“Effective immediately,” I continued calmly, “Phoenix Ashes will not be proceeding with the sale of the oceanfront property previously under negotiation with the White company.”

A ripple spread through the room immediately.

“In addition,” I said steadily, “all collaboration discussions currently underway between our companies are terminated as of today.”

Questions erupted instantly again. 1

“Ms. Asher, did you suspect criminal activity?”

“Was the White company using your developments?”

“Did Adrian White know?”

I ignored most of them.

“What concerns me most,” I said quietly, “is not the financial damage.”

That made the room still slightly.

“It is the possibility that innocent people were harmed while these operations were allowed to continue.”

I looked directly into the cameras then.

“Phoenix Ashes will be offering legal support, temporary housing assistance, and financial aid to the rightful property owners and any victims affected by fraudulent White company operations.”

The room exploded again.

Jason stepped forward slightly afterward, his voice colder than mine when he finally spoke.

“My company has initiated a complete internal audit regarding all White company interactions.”

His expression hardened visibly.

His expression hardened visibly.

“And if we find any evidence that our systems or infrastructure were used illegally...”

A pause.

“We will cooperate fully with federal authorities.”

The statement spread across every financial platform within minutes.

And that was when the Vintry family retaliated.

The attacks began subtly at first.

Anonymous financial blogs.

Leaked “insider” accusations.

Claims that Phoenix Ashes had been secretly colluding with the White company for months.

Then came the forged documents.

Manipulated contracts.

False meeting records.

Fake offshore transactions.

They wanted confusion.

Enough uncertainty to bury the truth beneath scandal.

Unfortunately for them-

They forgot I was significantly better at information warfare than they were.

Three hours after the first false leaks appeared, I anonymously released a data package across multiple encrypted networks.

No name.

No traceable source.

Only evidence.

Rental agreements.

Property access records.

Internal White company communications linking shell tenants directly back to the Vinny family.

And then came the final blow.

Footage.

Raw, unmistakable footage.

Emory Watson himself was seen escorting men, women, and children out of concealed apartment units hidden

inside one of the newest White company luxury developments.

The footage spread across media platforms like wildfire.

Victims wrapped in blankets.

Children shielding their faces from cameras.

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Federal agents securing entire floors.

And then the official statement arrived.

The individuals recovered from the apartments were confirmed kidnapping victims connected to an ongoing national investigation.

The country lost its mind.

Because suddenly this was no longer financial fraud.

No longer corporate corruption.

Human trafficking.

Kidnapping.

Illegal detainment operations hidden inside luxury developments marketed to the elite.

And worst of all for the Vinny family-

The public now had proof that someone powerful had been protecting it for years.

Jason stepped into my office shortly after the footage became public.

He closed the door quietly behind him before looking toward the screens showing the chaos unfolding nationwide.

“They’re panicking,” he said calmly.

I leaned back slowly in my chair.

“Good.”

Because for the first time since this began-

The monsters hiding behind wealth and influence were finally being dragged into the light.

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A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 206

another little girl

Amber POV

Emory was fully aware of the video before it was released.

Hell-

He had practically directed it.

The image of him escorting rescued victims out of the White company apartments had not been accidental.

The angle.

The timing.

The federal presence.

All of it had been carefully orchestrated.

It was bait.

We needed the Vincent family to move.

Not carefully.

Not politically.

Emotionally.

Desperately.

Because suspicion was not enough anymore.

We needed evidence.

Real evidence.

Public evidence.

The kind that could not disappear behind lawyers, bribes, or diplomatic pressure.

Unfortunately...

That meant placing Iris directly in the center of the storm.

The realization sat like poison in my chest every time I looked at her.

Because if the Vincent family discovered she was alive-

And worse-

That she was with us-

They would come for her.

We were absolutely certain of it.

Jason hated the plan immediately.

AR

Not cautiously disliked it.

Hated it.

“She’s a child,” he snapped during one of the late-night strategy meetings inside the fairy house command center. “We are not using her as bait.”

“No one is using her,” Emory replied evenly.

Jason laughed coldly.

“That’s exactly what this is.”

The room tightened instantly.

Mr. Stait looked exhausted.

My grandfather remained silent near the screens, arms crossed tightly while Mr. Stuart looked physically ill every time Iris’s name entered the conversation.

“We don’t have enough to touch the Vincents directly,” Emory continued carefully. “Not legally. Not publicly.”

He looked toward the files projected across the monitors.

“The Vinny family was sloppy.”

A pause.

“The Vincents are not.”

And that was the problem.

The Vinny family had already started collapsing publicly.

Their accounts were frozen within forty-eight hours of the kidnapping victims being recovered.

Several offshore assets disappeared entirely under federal seizure.

Three shell corporations connected to their logistics chains were raided before sunrise the following day.

And then came their public statement.

I watched it live beside Jason inside my office.

Mr. Vinny stood before reporters looking deeply offended by the accusations against his family.

Controlled. Elegant. Respectable.

Exactly the image they needed.

“Someone is attempting to frame our family,” he declared firmly. “Yes, entities connected to our corporation were renting some of the locations where kidnapping victims were discovered.”

A calculated pause. 1

“But we had no knowledge of illegal activity occurring there.”

Jason snorted beside me.

The cameras flashed aggressively while Mr. Vinny continued his performance.

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+15 Bçhus

“The individuals directly responsible for hiding those victims are already behind bars,” he said smoothly. “Our

amily is cooperating fully with authorities.”

Liat.

The worst part was that he sounded believable.

Calm. Rational.

Exactly what wealthy people sounded like when they expected to survive scandals.

Which meant Emory was right.

We needed more.

Real proof tying the Vincents directly to the operation.

And the only confirmed link we had left alive-

Was Iris.

I found her later that night sitting near the hidden passage entrance between the children’s rooms.

The house was quiet.

Alice and Rose had fallen asleep during a movie.

Alex was supposedly sleeping, though I strongly suspected he was secretly listening to security communications through his tablet again.

Iris looked up the moment I approached.

“They’re talking about me again,” she said softly.

Not accusatory.

Just tired.

I sat beside her quietly.

“You heard?”

She nodded once.

“I always hear.”

That answer hurt more than it should have.

Because children like Iris learned to hear everything.

It was survival.

For a few moments neither of us spoke.

Then she surprised me.

“If they come for me…” she whispered carefully, “that means we’re close to finding them, right?”

My chest tightened painfully.

“Iris-”

,” she interrupted softly. “Please don’t lie to me.”

Her silver eyes lifted toward mine.

Far too old.

Far too knowing.

“They’ll come eventually anyway.”

And that was the terrifying truth none of us wanted to say aloud.

The moment the Vincents realized she survived-

She became a threat to everything they had built.

“I’m scared,” Iris admitted quietly.

The honesty in her voice nearly broke me.

“But…”

She swallowed hard.

“If we stop now, they’ll just keep taking people.”

Silence settled between us.

Heavy.

Then Iris straightened slightly beside me.

“I don’t want another little girl to grow up like me.”

That sentence destroyed something inside me completely.

Because Iris said it so simply.

Like she had already accepted her suffering as permanent.

As history.

I reached for her hand immediately.

“You are not alone anymore,” I told her firmly.

For the first time since I met her, Iris looked uncertain in a truly childlike way.

Fragile.

Hopeful.

And somewhere deep down-

That frightened me more than anything else.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 207

Their move

Amber POV

What we feared happened the very next morning.

I was halfway through reviewing security reports inside my office when my private emergency line vibrated.

Not my phone.

My watch.

Only four people had access to that number.

Jason.

Alex.

Alice.

And the emergency relay system connected to the fairy house.

The moment I saw Alex's name flash across the screen, every instinct in my body sharpened instantly.

I accepted the call immediately.

"Alex?"

His voice came through low and controlled, eerily calm for a six-year-old child calling from school. 1

"Mom Amber," he whispered quietly. "I think something is wrong."

Ice slid down my spine.

“Tell me.”

“I heard Ms. Green talking to the principal,” he said carefully. “They’re preparing the school for shareholders.”

A pause.

“They arrive in four hours.”

I straightened immediately in my chair.

“Shareholders?”

“Yes.”

Another pause.

“One of the Vincents is on the school board.”

Everything inside me went still.

Alex continued before I could respond.

“They said they were coming to inspect the facilities…”

His voice lowered even more.

“And to make sure the students were up to standards.”

one horrifying second, I couldn’t breathe.

The Vincents were making their move.

Not openly.

Never openly.

An elite school inspection.

Board members.

Standards evaluations.

Perfectly legal.

Perfectly harmless on paper.

Except Iris was there.

Rose too.

And if the Vincents had even the slightest suspicion that Iris Stuart survived-

“Alex,” I said calmly, forcing every ounce of panic out of my voice. “Listen to me carefully.”

“I know.” 1

Of course he did.

I closed my eyes briefly.

Six years old.

And already understanding danger like this.

“I need you to tell your teacher that you feel itchy.”

Alex paused.

“...Itchy?”

“Yes.”

I stood immediately, already reaching for my bag and secure phone simultaneously.

“Say your skin feels strange and ask to go to the infirmary.”

Another pause.

Then Alex understood.

“You’re getting us out.”

“Yes.”

I grabbed my keys while opening the secured family communication channel at the same time.

“Take Alice with you.”

And Iris and Rose?”

My chest tightened painfully,

“All of you.”

Alex lowered his voice even further.

“Okay.”

Then, softly-

“Mom Amber?”

“Yes?”

“I knew you’d answer.”

The line disconnected immediately afterward.

For half a second, I simply stood there gripping my phone too tightly.

Then everything exploded into motion.

I activated the emergency family protocol directly through the Cronos-secured system Jason built.

Every hidden security operative attached to the children received alerts simultaneously.

Jason called less than ten seconds later.

“You got the call.”

Not a question.

“Yes.”

His voice had already changed.

Cold. Focused. Dangerous.

“I’m on my way to the school now.”

“No,” I interrupted immediately. “If both of us arrive visibly, we confirm there’s a reason to panic.”

Silence.

Then-

“You think they’re testing reactions.”

“Yes.”

A beat.

“And if they realize Iris is important enough to trigger visible panic…”

“They’ll know she’s alive.”

Jason swore quietly under his breath.

ll handle extraction,” I said immediately. “You lock down the fairy house and move the secondary team into position.”

“Amber-”

“I know.” 1

The words came sharper than intended. i

“I know exactly what this means.”

The Vincents were not investigating randomly.

They were probing.

Looking for reactions.

Patterns.

Weaknesses.

And somehow-

Somewhere-

They had gotten close enough to suspect something.

I was already halfway out the office when Clara intercepted me near the elevator.

One look at my expression and she paled instantly.

“What happened?”

“The Vincents moved.”

That was all she needed.

Within seconds, Phoenix Ashes security protocols began shifting quietly beneath the surface.

Employees believed it was another corporate audit response.

Only a handful of us understood the truth.

This wasn’t business anymore.

This was a retrieval attempt.

And if we failed-

Iris would disappear again.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 208

ber POV

Jason arrived at my office before I even made it to the parking garage.

The moment the elevator doors opened, he stepped out already moving toward me, dark suit slightly disheveled, – expression sharp enough to make nearby employees scatter instinctively.

“We’re pulling them out now,” he said immediately.

No greeting.

No hesitation.

Pure instinct.

“I’m already going,” I replied while grabbing my coat from Clara’s hands.

“No.”

The word came fast. Absolute.

I froze briefly. 1

Jason stepped closer immediately, lowering his voice the moment he noticed employees nearby pretending not to listen.

“I’ll get the children.”

His jaw was tight enough to hurt.

“You are not placing yourself in danger if the Vincents are making a move.”

I stared at him for a second, understanding exactly where this was coming from.

Not control.

Fear.

Because if the Vincents recognized Iris-

Or connected her to us-

Things could escalate very quickly.

“Jason,” I said carefully, “I’ve been the one picking them up from school for weeks.”

He frowned immediately.

“And?”

“And suddenly sending armed security or having you appear personally changes the pattern.”

His expression darkened further because he already knew I was right.

“We need to maintain the image that everything is normal,” I continued quietly. “No panic. No sudden changes.”

Jason ran a hand through his hair roughly, pacing once before stopping again directly in front of me.

fat strategy

“I hate this.”

know.”

“I should be the one protecting them.”

The honesty in his voice hurt.

Because he truly believed that every threat against us was somehow his responsibility to stop personally.

I stepped closer and took his hand briefly.

“You are protecting them,” I said softly. “By not letting them realize we’re afraid.”

Jason closed his eyes for half a second.

When he opened them again, the panic had buried itself beneath cold calculation.

Reluctantly-

He nodded once.

“I’ll monitor the Vincent movements,” he said quietly. “If this visit has another purpose, I’ll find it.”

That was the frightening thing about Jason.

The moment emotion stopped driving him, strategy took over completely.

My phone rang before I could answer him.

The school.

Jason’s entire body tensed instantly as I accepted the call.

“Mrs. Sun?” the school nurse asked carefully.

“Yes?”

“We believe Alex may have chicken pox.”

I blinked.

“What?”

Beside me, Jason looked equally stunned.

“He can’t stop scratching,” the nurse explained quickly. “And several red spots appeared on his arms and legs.”

I stared into space for a second before realization hit me so suddenly I almost laughed.

Alex.

That little menace.

Of course he committed fully to the mission.

“I see…” I replied carefully, maintaining a serious tone with great effort.

The nurse lowered her voice sympathetically.

+15 8çnus

“We isolated him temporarily, but considering he lives with other children…”

videned my eyes dramatically despite her not being able to see me.

“Oh no.”

Jason turned away abruptly.

His shoulders were shaking slightly.

He was laughing silently.

I kicked his shoe lightly.

“I actually have four children living together,” I continued seriously into the phone. “Alex, Alice, Rose, and Iris”

The nurse audibly panicked.

“All four?!”

“Yes,” I answered gravely. “Should I pick them all up?”

“Yes!” she exclaimed immediately. “Absolutely. We’ll notify the administration right away that Alex potentially has chicken pox, so all of them need to leave the campus immediately.”

Perfect.

I covered my mouth briefly to hide my smile.

“Thank you,” I said warmly. “I’ll be there soon.”

The call ended.

Silence lasted exactly two seconds.

Then Jason laughed.

Actually laughed.

The sound startled several employees nearby.

“Chicken pox?” he managed between breaths. “That was his emergency strategy?”

I crossed my arms with dignity.

“To be fair, it was effective.”

Jason shook his head slowly, still laughing under his breath.

“Our six-year-old just orchestrated a biological evacuation protocol.”

I could not stop smiling anymore.

“Honestly,” I admitted quietly, “I’m a little proud.”

Jason pointed at me immediately.

“That attitude is exactly why the children are becoming tiny masterminds.”

Probably true.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 209

Amber POV

On the way to the school, I received three more calls.

One after another.

Alice.

Rose.

Iris.

I stared at my phone in complete disbelief by the third call.

Apparently, Alex had somehow managed to alert the others that they needed to report to the infirmary immediately.

I honestly did not want to know how.

The school, however, was now fully convinced they were dealing with a chicken pox outbreak.

“Mrs. Sun,” one of the teachers told me anxiously over the phone, “we are especially concerned about Iris since she is older than the others. Symptoms can become more severe-”

“I understand,” I interrupted gently while trying not to laugh at the absurdity of the situation. “I’m already on my way.”

By the time I arrived, the school was practically in controlled panic mode.

Parents were already receiving notifications.

Teachers were whispering nervously through hallways.

The infirmary staff looked ready to declare biological warfare.

Instead of directing me toward the main entrance, security waved me toward the emergency access lane located behind the school.

Away from the regular pickup area.

Away from the arriving guests.

The irony was almost painful.

As I stepped out of the car, the principal herself hurried toward me looking deeply stressed.

“Mrs. Sun,” she said quickly. “Thank you for coming so fast.”

Her expression carried genuine concern.

Not suspicion.

Concern.

“We are currently investigating how the outbreak started,” she continued while leading me toward the side entrance. “And surprisingly…”

She lowered her voice slightly.

We identified another student with symptoms that appear much farther along than Alex’s.”

Iblinked. 1

Another child?

The principal nodded immediately.

“His mother is already here.”

As we walked toward the infirmary, I spotted the woman in question almost instantly.

She looked horrified.

Absolutely mortified.

The second she noticed me, she rushed forward apologizing repeatedly.

“I am SO sorry,” she said frantically. “I thought it was allergies at first and then this morning he developed fever and spots and I didn’t realize-”

“It’s alright,” I assured her gently. “These things happen.”

The poor woman looked seconds away from crying.

“I can’t believe the children were exposed because of us-”

“It’s alright,” I repeated more firmly this time.

Beside me, the principal looked visibly relieved that I was not reacting dramatically.

The infirmary door opened moments later.

And suddenly four children emerged looking suspiciously healthy for patients supposedly carrying chicken pox.

Alice spotted me first.

Immediately, she began scratching her arm dramatically.

“Mom Amber,” she sighed weakly, “I think I’m dying.”

I stared at her.

Jason was absolutely going to encourage this behavior later.

I could already tell.

Rose looked like she was trying very hard not to laugh.

Iris remained composed, though her eyes softened slightly the moment she saw me.

And Alex-

Alex looked deeply proud of himself.

The tiny menace even had strategically placed red marks on his arms.

“How exactly did those appear?” I asked suspiciously.

+15 8chus

Alex glanced away innocently.

may have scratched myself with a ruler.”

The principal gasped quietly,

I closed my eyes briefly.

“Of course you did.” 1

The principal, however, looked completely convinced by the entire situation.

“We truly recommend the children isolate for at least several days,” she explained seriously. “Especially until we confirm the extent of exposure across the school.”

“Absolutely,” I agreed immediately.

Alice coughed weakly for dramatic effect.

I ignored her with dignity.

Mostly.

Once the children gathered their things, I quickly guided them back toward the emergency exit corridor.

The principal walked with us the entire way.

“We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience,” she said again. “And thank you for cooperating so quickly.”

As we reached the exterior doors, she suddenly hesitated before speaking again.

“Mrs. Sun…”

I looked back toward her.

“If possible,” she said carefully, “could you please leave using the alternate exit street?”

A cold feeling settled instantly in my stomach.

“Why?” I asked calmly.

The principal smiled apologetically.

“We are receiving an important guest.”

A pause.

“They just arrived.”

Behind me, I felt Iris go completely still.

The Vincents.

They had arrived only minutes too late.

I smiled politely anyway.

“Of course.”

Then I took the children home.

+15 Bchus

Corrupted

Amber POV

The moment we got inside the car, the children exploded into conversation.

All at once.

“We escaped.”

“Alice almost overacted.”

“I did NOT.”

“You fake-coughed three times.”

“That was commitment.”

I pinched the bridge of my nose while driving away from the school through the alternate exit route the principal had requested.

The same route conveniently far from the arriving Vincent vehicles.

Too close.

We had been entirely too close.

I glanced briefly toward the rearview mirror.

Iris was quiet again, though her shoulders had finally relaxed slightly now that we were moving farther away from the school.

Rose sat beside her holding one of Alice’s glitter-covered stress toys while Alex looked immensely satisfied with himself.

“How exactly,” I asked carefully, “did all of you coordinate this in less than ten minutes?”

Alex immediately sat straighter.

“I contacted them.”

“Yes, I gathered that,” I replied dryly. “How?”

Alex lifted his wrist proudly, showing the small smartwatch Jason had modified months earlier.

“I sent a GIF.”

Silence.

“A GIF,” I repeated slowly. 1

“Yes.”

Alice immediately leaned forward enthusiastically.

“It was a sick little cartoon boy wrapped in a blanket sneezing.”

Rose finally laughed softly.

“And under it,” Iris added quietly, “Alex sent the yellow alert symbol.”

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 210

The children exchanged looks like I was the one falling behind.

Iris looked slightly embarrassed before answering.

“I created emergency code signals for the watches.”.

I nearly missed a turn.

“You WHAT?”

Alex looked delighted now that the truth was out.

“There’s different colors,” he explained proudly. “Yellow means soft extraction. Red means danger. Blue means regroup point.”

Alice raised her hand immediately.

“Purple means snacks.”

Jason was going to lose his mind.

Or worse-

Encourage this.

By the time we arrived at the fairy house, I already knew exactly how the upcoming conversation would go.

I opened the secure video call with Jason.

His face appeared almost instantly on the large kitchen screen.

He was still inside the car heading back from Cronos Tower, tie loosened slightly, expression tense until he saw all four children visibly safe behind me.

The relief in his face was immediate.

Subtle.

But there.

“You’re home.” 1

“We’re home,” I confirmed softly.

Then Alex launched directly into the explanation before I could stop him.

“I used the watch system.”

Jason blinked once.

“The what?”

And just like that, chaos erupted again.

All four children started explaining simultaneously.

Emergency codes.

IF signals.

Color systems.

Chicken pox strategy deployment.

For several seconds, Jason simply stared at them in complete silence.

Then-

To my utter betrayal-

He laughed.

Not a polite chuckle.

A real laugh.

The kind that forced him to lean back slightly in his seat.

I crossed my arms immediately.

“This is your fault too.”

Jason shook his head instantly, still laughing under his breath.

“No,” he said calmly. “This is entirely your fault.”

“Mine?”

“You corrupted them.”

Alice looked deeply offended.

“We are highly efficient.”

Jason pointed directly toward the screen.

“See? Tiny masterminds. Exactly like you.”

Honestly?

Fair.

The children scattered the second we entered the house.

Alice dramatically announced she was “too fragile for school.”

Rose immediately started helping prepare tea like she had lived there her entire life.

Iris quietly disappeared upstairs for a few minutes, probably needing space after almost crossing paths with the Vincents again.

After the call settled slightly, I opened my company communication system and sent an internal executive notice.

Due to a chicken pox outbreak affecting the children in my household, I will be working remotely for the next several days to avoid unnecessary exposure. All scheduled meetings will continue digitally unless otherwise specified. 2

YO

+15 Benus

Within minutes, the responses began flooding in.

Mostly sympathy.

A few terrified messages from executives suddenly worried about catching chicken pox themselves.

Jason sent a nearly identical notice moments later.

Then he canceled his final meeting of the day entirely and began heading home.

We remained connected through the secure call while he drove.

I was halfway through explaining how suspiciously convenient the school inspection timing had been when Jason's expression shifted suddenly.

His assistant's voice echoed faintly through his headset.

"Sir," the man said carefully, "there is someone from the Vincent family requesting to speak with you."

The kitchen went completely silent.

Jason's eyes lifted slowly toward the screen.

Toward me. 1

And then-

Very calmly-

He accepted the call.

+15 Bghus

He knew

Jason POV

The moment my assistant mentioned the Vincent family, the atmosphere inside the car shifted completely.

Cold.

Focused.

Dangerous.

I glanced briefly toward the screen still connected to Amber's kitchen.

"Patch it through," I said calmly.

The line connected almost instantly.

"Mr. Sun."

The voice was smooth. Cultured.

The kind of voice that belonged to old money and dangerous men raised to hide threats beneath manners.

"Gabriel Vincent," the man introduced himself pleasantly. "I apologize for contacting you unexpectedly."

I leaned back slightly against the leather seat.

"Mr. Vincent."

A soft chuckle echoed through the speaker.

"I'm currently in town handling several investment opportunities," he explained smoothly. "And I hoped we might discuss securing some business deals between our corporations."

Of course he did.

"Cronos has been attracting impressive attention lately," Gabriel continued. "And I believe cooperation between our enterprises could prove... mutually beneficial."

The threat hid beneath every polite syllable.

Not aggressive enough to acknowledge.

Just enough to be understood.

“And,” he added casually, “I was hoping you might point me toward the best way to contact Phoenix Ashes as well.”

I kept my expression completely neutral.

“Ms. Asher’s company has grown remarkably fast,” Gabriel continued pleasantly. “A rising real estate empire is always worth observing.”

Observing.

Interesting choice of word.

Then came the real reason for the call.

“Oh,” Gabriel said lightly, almost as an afterthought, “I should mention that I’m part of the school board for the

cademy your children attend.”

Every muscle in my body tightened instantly.

“I was lookitig forward to meeting thein today.”

A pause.

“I’ve heard wonderful things about Alex and Alice.”

There it was.

The threat.

Wrapped carefully inside civility.

I forced myself to remain calm.

Measured.

“Unfortunately,” I replied smoothly, “Alice and Alex are currently in quarantine.”

Gabriel paused very slightly.

“Quarantine?”

“Chicken pox.

Behind the secure video screen, Amber covered her mouth immediately to stop herself from smiling.

I continued calmly.

“The outbreak apparently began at the school this morning.”

A soft hum echoed through the speaker.

“How unfortunate.”

Not even remotely convincing.

“I’m sure they’ll recover quickly,” Gabriel added pleasantly. “Children are resilient.”

Noted.

I smiled faintly despite the cold rage building beneath my skin.

“Indeed.”

Silence stretched briefly between us.

Careful. Calculating.

Then Gabriel spoke again.

“Well,” he said smoothly, “I appreciate your time, Mr. Sun.”

Another pause.

“And thank you for considering collaboration opportunities with our family.”

Family.

Not corporation.

Family.

“I’ll have my assistant contact yours,” I replied evenly. “We can arrange a meeting.”

“Excellent.”

The line disconnected immediately afterward.

For several seconds, I simply stared at the darkened screen in silence.

Then I exhaled slowly.

“Jason?” Amber asked quietly through the video connection.

I looked toward her.

Toward Iris standing partially hidden near the kitchen entrance.

“They know,” I said calmly.

Amber’s expression hardened instantly.

“The comments about Alice and Alex were deliberate.”

A pause.

“A threat.”

But then I looked toward Iris again.

And something cold inside me eased slightly for the first time since the call started.

“But…”

Amber immediately understood there was more.

“He doesn’t know about Rose or Iris.”

The realization spread across her face immediately.

Gabriel Vincent had only mentioned Alice and Alex.

The publicly visible children.

The ones attached openly to me and Amber.

Not Rose.

Not Iris.

Iris was still hidden.

Still safe.

For now.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 211

I leaned forward slowly in my seat, voice lowering dangerously.

But that means they're searching."

And if the Vincents were searching personally-

Then we had far less time than we thought.

Amber went very still after I finished speaking.

Not frightened.

Thinking. 1

Then her eyes narrowed slightly.

"Jason..."

I looked toward the screen again.

"Gabriel knew."

A pause.

"He knew you were Cronos."

Silence filled the car instantly.

Her voice had gone colder now. Sharper.

The same tone she used whenever she noticed something everyone else missed.

"He didn't even try to hide it," she continued. "He specifically called you for collaboration with his corporation."

A pause.

“And then casually mentioned Phoenix Ashes separately.”

I felt it then.

The shift in the conversation I had missed while focusing on the threat toward the children.

“He already separated us into categories,” Amber said quietly.

Her eyes locked onto mine through the screen.

“You weren’t Jason Sun to him.”

A beat.

“You were Cronos.”

Cold realization settled heavily in my chest.

Most people still treated Cronos like a corporation.

An entity.

A system.

Only a handful of people understood that I personally controlled nearly every meaningful operational layer.

d Gabriel Vincent had spoken like someone who already knew exactly who he was talking to.

Not guessing.

Knowing.

“He was testing reactions,” I murmured slowly.

Amber nodded once.

“And sending a message.”

Action

Jason POV

I leaned back slowly against the seat, replaying the conversation inside my head.

Every pause.

Every carefully chosen word.

“I’ve heard wonderful things about Alex and Alice.”

Not from the school.

From surveillance.

“I was hoping to secure business with your corporation.’

Not a request.

An acknowledgment.

Gabriel Vincent knew exactly how much power Cronos actually held.

And if he knew that-

Then the Vincents likely had far deeper intelligence networks inside the country than we originally believed.

Amber crossed her arms slowly.

“He wasn’t introducing himself.”

“He

A pause. 1

“He was letting us know he already sees the board.”

The board.

The game.

The pieces.

And somehow, that realization disturbed me more than the direct threat itself.

Because people like Gabriel Vincent did not speak casually.

Every sentence carried intention.

Every implication was measured.

Which meant the real message hidden beneath the call was simple.

I know who you are.

I know where your children are.

And now you know I’m watching too.

My jaw tightened instinctively.

Amber noticed immediately.

ason.’

Her voice softened slightly.

“He called instead of acting.”

I looked toward her again.

“He’s probing first.”

Testing boundaries.

Testing responses. 1

Testing weaknesses.

Which meant one important thing.

The Vincents still weren’t completely certain what we knew.

Good.

Because uncertainty was dangerous.

And dangerous people made mistakes.

The drive back to the fairy house felt longer than usual.

Not because of traffic.

Because for the first time since this began, the threat no longer felt distant.

Gabriel Vincent had called me directly.

Mentioned my children directly.

And made it very clear he knew exactly who I was beneath the polished corporate image.

He had entered our lives intentionally.

Which meant one thing.

We could no longer afford to remain reactive.

By the time I arrived at the fairy house, my mind was already shifting strategies completely.

Defense alone would not work anymore.

Not against people like the Vincents.

Amber met me in the kitchen the moment I walked in.

The children had already been moved upstairs under the excuse of “movie quarantine.”

Though judging by the suspiciously quiet atmosphere overhead, Alex was probably trying to hack school security cameras from his tablet again.

Amber handed me a cup of coffee without speaking first.

A dangerous sign.

meant she was thinking too hard.

I took the cup and leaned against the counter.

“They’re escalating.”

Amber nodded immediately.

“They tested the school.”

“They tested us,” I corrected quietly.

Her eyes lifted toward mine instantly.

Because she understood the difference immediately. 1

The school inspection had not been about children.

It had been about reactions.

Timing.

Fear.

Gabriel Vincent wanted to see how quickly we moved when threatened.

I took a slow breath before finally saying the thing both of us had already realized independently.

“If they’re going to intrude into our lives…”

Amber straightened slightly.

“…then we need to intrude into theirs.”

Silence settled heavily between us afterward.

Not uncertainty.

Agreement.

Because this was no longer a situation we could solve quietly from behind secure walls and defensive protocols.

The Vincents had influence.

Money.

Political protection.

International reach.

Which meant we needed leverage.

Real leverage.

Amber moved first, pulling one of the command center screens onto the kitchen wall display.

Financial reports appeared instantly.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 212

Then property maps.

Then family structures.

I almost smiled faintly.

Most people would have panicked after a threat like Gabriel's call.

Amber built war rooms.

"We start with public overlap," she said immediately. "Events. Boards. Investments.".

I nodded once.

"Controlled exposure," I agreed.

If the Vincents wanted proximity, we would give it to them.

Carefully.

Strategically.

Enough to monitor them directly.

Not enough to expose Iris.

Amber began pacing slowly.

Something she only did when mentally connecting ten plans at once.

"Their weakness is image," she murmured. "Families like theirs survive because people are afraid to question them publicly."

I leaned against the counter watching her work through possibilities.

"So we make ourselves impossible to isolate," I finished.

Amber pointed at me immediately.

“Exactly.”

The Vincents operated through shadows.

Quiet influence.

Fear.

Manipulation.

But attacking people constantly visible in the public eye?

That created risk.

Witnesses.

Questions.

“We become socially unavoidable,” Amber continued. “Business galas. Educational foundations. Investment circles.”

C

A pause.

We let them think they’re slowly pulling us into their orbit.”

I understood the real meaning instantly.

While we mapped theirs.

I crossed my arms slowly.

“We’ll need access to their internal people.’

Amber nodded immediately.

“Assistants. Drivers. Security staff. Financial coordinators.”

Not to bribe.

To observe.

Patterns always existed around powerful people.

And powerful families became arrogant eventually.

I walked toward the command screen, eyes narrowing at the Vincent family structure Amber had already begun building.

“How much do we actually know about Gabriel?” I asked quietly.

“Not enough,” Amber admitted.

That alone irritated me.

I hated blind spots.

Amber zoomed further into the family records.

International investments.

Educational foundations.

Luxury developments.

Political connections.

Then she stopped suddenly.

“That’s interesting.”

I stepped closer immediately.

“What?”

Amber tapped one of the listed foundations slowly.

“The Vincents heavily fund elite youth programs.”

A cold feeling settled in my chest instantly.

Youth programs.

you

Schools.

Heirs.

The pattern again.

Always the same pattern.

Amber looked up at me slowly.

“If this organization really began by targeting heirs…”

I finished the thought for her.

“Then the Vincents wouldn’t just monitor powerful families.”

A pause. 1

“They’d recruit around them.”

The room fell silent.

Because suddenly the school board membership felt far less innocent.

Amber looked toward the staircase briefly, where the children slept above us completely unaware that their lives had become part of something much larger than family rivalries.

Then she looked back at me.

“It’s time to stop hiding.”

And for the first time since this war began-

I agreed completely.

Hunting

Amber POV

Jason was angry.

Not loud.

Not explosive.

+15 Benus

Which somehow felt far worse.

He paced through the fairy house command center like a man preparing for war, tension radiating from every movement while his eyes constantly flickered toward security feeds and perimeter alerts.

Twice, I caught him looking over his shoulder when absolutely nothing had moved.

That alone worried me more than he realized.

Because Jason did not scare easily.

And Gabriel Vincent's call had affected him deeply.

We informed Emory and Mr. Stait immediately after settling the children upstairs for the night.

The secure video call connected within minutes.

The moment Gabriel Vincent's name left my mouth, both men went completely still.

"He's in the country?" Emory asked sharply.

Mr. Stait looked equally surprised.

"We had no notification of a Vincent family arrival," he admitted grimly.

Jason laughed humorlessly from beside me.

"Well," he said coldly, "now you do." 1

The room fell silent for a moment afterward.

Emory leaned forward slightly on the screen.

"What exactly are you planning?"

Jason's expression hardened immediately.

"We're going on the offensive."

I sighed softly beside him.

"Passive aggressively," I corrected calmly.

Jason looked mildly offended.

"We want it to look like coincidence," I explained carefully. "Not retaliation."

Mr. Stait immediately understood.

"Pressure without direct confrontation," he murmured thoughtfully.

"Exactly."

Because openly attacking the Vincents would only force them deeper underground.

No. 1

We needed proximity.

Visibility.

Enough disruption to force movement and mistakes without openly declaring war.

Jason moved toward one of the larger monitors and pulled up a file he had been reviewing obsessively since the

Gabriel call.

“I found something interesting this afternoon,” he said quietly.

The screen shifted instantly.

Maps appeared.

Land contracts.

International investment requests.

“The Vincent family has been attempting to purchase premium land in Sum.

My eyes narrowed immediately.

Our neighboring country.

Powerful trade routes.

Private transport access.

Weak enough regulations to hide operations inside luxury development projects.

“They haven’t received government approval yet,” Jason continued. “Foreign acquisition laws require at least three years of successful established business operations inside the country before purchases of this scale are approved.”

Emory frowned slightly.

“And the Vincents don’t qualify?”

Jason’s lips curved faintly.

“No.”

A pause.

“But I do.” 1

Now Mr. Stait looked interested.

Jason zoomed further into the property details.

Two hundred and fifty acres.

Mining rights included.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 213

Historic infrastructure.

And sitting near the center of the property-

A castle.

An actual castle.

I blinked slowly at the screen.

“... Why is there a castle?”

Jason looked far too calm about that detail.

“Old noble estate apparently,” he replied casually. “Restored several times over the years.”

Alice would absolutely lose her mind if she saw it.

Then I noticed the listed price.

And immediately frowned.

“Less than three million?”

Every instinct I had screamed instantly.

Too cheap.

Far too cheap.

For that amount of land alone, the number made no sense.

Adding mining rights and historical structures should have increased the value dramatically.

“It’s throwing every red flag imaginable,” Jason admitted quietly. “Which means either the property is worthless

…”

“Or someone wants it badly enough to hide its real value,” I finished.

Silence settled heavily over the room.

Emory crossed his arms slowly.

“You think the Vincents are connected to it somehow?”

“I think they want it badly,” Jason replied carefully. “And I want to know why.”

That was enough for me.

The decision formed almost instantly afterward.

“We travel,” I said calmly.

Jason looked toward me immediately.

Not surprised.

Expecting it.

“We’re already supposedly working remotely because of the chicken pox situation,” I continued. “No one will Question us disappearing for several days.”

Mr. Stait looked deeply unhappy about the idea immediately.

“You want to travel internationally while the Vincents are actively probing your family?”

“Yes,” Jason answered before I could.

A dangerous calm had settled over him now.

The kind he developed whenever strategy fully replaced emotion.

“If Gabriel Vincent wants to enter our lives,” Jason said quietly, “then it’s time we entered his.

The call ended nearly forty minutes later after multiple security discussions, emergency contingencies, and, enough warnings from Mr. Stait to fill an entire legal document.

And somehow...

The most difficult conversation came afterward.

My grandfather.

The moment I informed him Jason and I were traveling to Sum, he didn’t even pretend to consider letting us go

alone.

“Absolutely not.”

I blinked once across the phone call.

“Grandfather-”

“No.”

His voice carried the exact same tone that once made entire executive boards panic.

“If the Vincent family is involved there, then I am coming with you.”

I rubbed my temple slowly.

“This isn’t a vacation.”

“I’m aware.” 1

A pause.

“That’s precisely why you are not going alone.”

Jason, the traitor, looked deeply amused beside me.

“He has a point,” he murmured.

I narrowed my eyes at him immediately.

“You are supposed to support me.”

Jason’s lips twitched slightly.

“I support your grandfather’s survival instincts.”

Wonderful.

Now both powerful men in my life were teaming up against me.

Somehow, despite the danger surrounding us...

Despite the Vincents...

The investigations...

The threats...

A strange feeling settled in my chest while I watched Jason quietly begin arranging travel logistics beside me.

For the first time since this nightmare began-

We were hunting back.

P

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 214

Asher corp

Amber POV

My grandfather called me the morning after we finalized the Sum travel arrangements.

Not as my grandfather.

As Chairman Asher.

“Come to the company tomorrow.”

No greeting.

No buildup.

Straight to business.

I leaned back against the kitchen counter while watching Jason argue with Alex over whether “tactical backpacks were appropriate for a family trip.

“I already manage Phoenix Ashes,” I reminded him carefully.

“And you manage it well,” my grandfather replied immediately. “But Phoenix Ashes is still only one part of the Asher influence.”

A pause.

“As my granddaughter and heir, you will eventually be expected to help manage Asher Corp directly.”

That made me go quiet.

Because despite everything that had happened recently...

Despite the investigations, the Vincents, the Beckers, the White family-

There was still an empire waiting behind my grandfather’s name.

And one day...

It would become mine.

“I’ve allowed you freedom because I knew you needed to build something of your own,” he continued more softly. “But it is time the board becomes familiar with the reality of who you are.”

Not the orphaned girl they ignored.

Not the quiet granddaughter hidden behind Phoenix Ashes.

The heir.

“I’ll be there tomorrow,” I said finally.

The call ended shortly afterward.

Jason looked toward me immediately.

“That sounded ominous.”

“It probably is.”

He smiled faintly.

Need backup?

I considered it seriously.

Then shook my head.

“No.”

+15 Bchus

A pause.

“I think this is something I need to do alone.”

Jason studied me carefully for several seconds before nodding once.

“Then remind them who they’re dealing with.”

The next morning, I arrived at Asher Corp.

The building stood in the absolute center of the city like a declaration of power.

A massive skyscraper of dark glass and silver architecture rising fifteen stories above the financial district.

Elegant.

Cold.

Untouchable.

The very top of the building contained one of the city’s most famous private scenic gardens.

A place reserved for executive meetings, high-profile negotiations, and charity galas attended by people powerful enough to reshape markets over dinner.

I had visited the building before as a child.

Back when everyone still saw me as the quiet orphan following behind my grandfather silently.

Now, however, I walked through the main entrance as something entirely different.

Adrian accompanied me.

Mostly because he claimed he wanted to “watch the chaos.”

“You’re enjoying this too much,” I muttered while we crossed the polished marble lobby.

“A little,” Adrian admitted shamelessly.

The reception staff noticed him immediately.

Their expressions brightened at once.

“Mr. Adrian!” one of the associates greeted warmly. “We weren’t informed you were visiting today.”

Adrian smiled politely.

“Last-minute decision.”

Their eyes shifted toward me almost instantly afterward.

+15 8chus

And the atmosphere changed completely.

Curiosity.

Dismissal.

Judgment.

I recognized it immediately.

The silent social calculation wealthy corporate environments perfected.

Who is she?

Does she matter?

Should we care?

Unfortunately for them-

No one recognized me.

Phoenix Ashes kept me surprisingly separated from traditional corporate society.

Most people knew my name.

Very few actually knew my face.

One of the younger associates leaned subtly toward another woman near the front desk.

Not subtle enough.

“Is she his new girlfriend?” she whispered quietly.

Another woman glanced toward me briefly before shrugging.

“Probably.”

“She’s pretty enough.”

I nearly laughed.

Beside me, Adrian suddenly looked deeply entertained.

The traitor.

One of the senior executives finally approached us with a polished corporate smile.

“Mr. Adrian,” he greeted warmly before glancing toward me with obvious assumption. “And who is your guest?”

I opened my mouth to answer.

Adrian beat me to it immediately.

“My cousin.”

The executive nodded absently.

Still dismissive.

Still unconcerned.

Then Adriati added casually-

“And the Asher heir.”

Silence.

Absolute silence.

The color drained from the man’s face so quickly it was almost impressive.

The nearby associates froze completely.

One woman nearly dropped her tablet.

I smiled pleasantly.

“Good morning.”

The atmosphere changed instantly.

People straightened.

Voices lowered.

Eyes widened.

And suddenly everyone in the lobby understood the same horrifying thing simultaneously.

The woman they had mistaken for Adrian’s latest conquest-

Owned the building they were standing in.

+15 8chus

Candy bars and rocket daunchers

Amber POV

Before I could properly enjoy the absolute horror on the associates’ faces, the elevator doors behind us opened.

And my grandfather walked out.

The entire lobby straightened instantly.

Executives who moments earlier had barely acknowledged me now looked one step away from cardiac arrest.

My grandfather, however, seemed entirely unbothered by the tension surrounding him.

The moment his eyes landed on me, his severe expression softened visibly.

“Amber.

Not Ms. Asher.

Not granddaughter.

Amber.

That alone sent another visible wave of shock through the lobby staff.

He walked directly toward me, ignoring everyone else entirely before briefly squeezing my shoulder.

“Come,” he said calmly. “The board is waiting.”

Adrian looked deeply entertained by the chaos unfolding around us.

The elevator ride to the executive floors passed in silence.

Mostly because the board members inside looked terrified to breathe incorrectly near my grandfather.

The moment we entered the conference room, every conversation stopped.

Executives.

Investors.

Division directors. 1

All of them turned toward us immediately.

My grandfather walked straight to the head of the table before finally speaking.

“This,” he said calmly, “is my granddaughter and heir.”

Every eye shifted toward me instantly.

“Starting today,” my grandfather continued, “she will begin slowly managing portions of Asher Corp directly alongside me.”

Murmurs immediately spread around the room.

“Beginning,” he added, “with the Sum project.”

My eyes widened slightly despite myself.

+15 8chus

The Sum project

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 215

s trip had already been planned.

This was not simply my grandfather insisting on accompanying Jason and me out of protectiveness.

He was already involved.

Already moving pieces ahead of us.

Of course he was.

My grandfather dismissed the meeting shortly afterward with the same terrifying efficiency that made executives fear him across multiple industries.

Then, surprisingly-

He spent the next hour personally walking me through the building. 1

And smiling.

That was the truly shocking part.

As we moved through the executive floors, department heads and managers visibly exchanged confused looks

behind us.

Because Chairman Asher was not known for smiling.

At all.

Yet the entire morning, he remained oddly relaxed while introducing me to division leaders, department managers, financial coordinators, and legal teams.

“This is Amber.”

“My granddaughter.”

“The future heir.”

Every introduction caused another ripple of panic through the building.

I almost felt bad for them.

Almost.

As we crossed one of the upper hallways overlooking the city, my grandfather finally explained the real reason behind the Sum project.

“The land you and Jason are interested in,” he said calmly, “is directly beside the property Asher Corp is preparing to purchase.”

I stopped walking immediately.

“What?”

My grandfather looked faintly pleased with himself.

“If we purchase neighboring land simultaneously,” he explained, “your involvement with the property becomes significantly less suspicious.”

Realization hit me instantly.

the Vincents, It would look like coincidence.

Corporate expansion.

Family collaboration.

Not targeted interference.

I smiled slowly despite myself.

My grandfather had already planned three steps ahead.

Again.

“You’re terrifying,” I informed him honestly.

He looked deeply satisfied by the statement.

We finally reached his office shortly afterward.

And somehow… 1

That surprised me too.

No secretary.

No assistant desk.

No outer reception area.

Just massive double doors leading directly into his office suite.

I frowned slightly while entering behind him.

“Where’s your assistant?”

My grandfather removed his suit jacket calmly before answering.

“He quit.”

I blinked once.

“…Why?”

“He claimed I was too much.”

I stared at him in silence for several seconds.

Honestly?

Fair.

His office itself was enormous.

Dark wood.

Floor-to-ceiling windows.

Private meeting areas.

And enough organized chaos to perfectly reflect the Asher empire itself.

The moment we settled in, we opened a secure video call with Jason.

His face appeared almost immediately across the office screen.

“You survived the board?” he asked dryly.

“Barely.”

My grandfather ignored us both and immediately shifted into strategy mode.

Within an hour, the plan was finalized.

We would travel together to Sum.

Officially, the trip would be framed as a joint family business expansion.

Asher Corp.

Sol Management-Jason’s company operating under the Sun corporation.

And Phoenix Ashes.

A family consolidation strategy.

Completely normal.

Completely public.

And perfectly positioned to overlap directly with Vincent interests in the region.

Once the board and department heads fully understood who I actually was, the atmosphere around me shifted completely.

The same associates who initially looked at me with contempt now practically tripped over themselves trying to assist me.

It was exhausting.

The rest of the day passed almost too quickly.

Mostly because my grandfather apparently owned half the world.

He introduced me to division after division.

Food manufacturing.

Shipping logistics.

Luxury hotels.

Construction firms.

Defense contracting.

Retail chains.

At one point I genuinely stopped and stared at one of the presentations.

We make candy bars?”

“Yes.”

Five minutes later-

“...Why do we manufacture custom rocket launchers?”

“Because it became profitable.”

I honestly did not know whether to laugh or be concerned anymore. 1

I honestly did not know whether to laugh or be concerned anymore. 1

The Asher corporation was absolute chaos.

A monstrous empire stitched together from dozens upon dozens of industries that should not logically fit together.

And somehow-

It worked perfectly.

By the end of the day, my head hurt.

My grandfather looked energized.

And somewhere in the middle of endless reports and company structures and strategic discussions-

I realized something quietly terrifying.

One day...

All of this would belong to me.

15 8cnus

A trap

Amber POV

The planning progressed terrifyingly fast after that.

Within forty-eight hours, legal teams were mobilized, investment proposals finalized, and enough paperwork exchanged between Asher Corp, Sol Management, and Phoenix Ashes to make the entire trip look like nothing more than an aggressive family expansion strategy.

Which, technically, it was.

Just not entirely for business reasons.

By the time we boarded my grandfather's private plane, half the Asher board was already treating Jason like some kind of mythical creature.

Not openly, of course.

Executives of that level knew how to maintain professionalism.

But every glance lingered slightly too long.

Every interaction carried quiet curiosity beneath polished corporate masks.

Because while most people knew Jason Sun as the billionaire head of Sol management and one of the most influential businessmen in the country-

The older executives remembered something else.

Sómeone else.

His mother. 1

Jason sat beside me near one of the large cabin windows, reviewing investment reports while pretending not to notice the constant stares directed toward him.

He absolutely noticed them.

My grandfather, meanwhile, seemed deeply amused by the entire situation.

One of the senior Asher managers finally gathered enough courage to approach us halfway through the flight.

An older man with silver hair and nervous eyes.

“Mr. Sun,” he greeted politely.

Jason looked up immediately.

“Yes?”

The man hesitated briefly before smiling faintly.

“You look exactly like your late mother.”

The atmosphere around us shifted instantly.

The manager seemed to realize too late what he had said.

“I mean-” he began awkwardly.

t Jason stopped him with a slight movement of his hand.

“It’s alright.”

The older man exhaled softly in relief before continuing more carefully.

“The resemblance is striking,” he admitted. “Especially the eyes.”

A faint smile crossed his face.

“And the icy glare you seem to carry most of the time.”

I almost choked on my coffee.

Jason looked deeply offended.

“I do not glare.”

Three nearby executives immediately looked away to avoid laughing.

Even my grandfather’s shoulders moved suspiciously.

The bittersweetness of the moment settled quietly afterward.

Because despite everything Samuel White had done...

Despite the pain attached to Jason's past...

There were still pieces of his real parents, his mother living quietly inside him.

Not all memories attached to the White family were ugly.

And somehow, I think that realization unsettled Jason more than the comparison itself.

The Sum country airport was exactly as disappointing as the reports suggested.

Run down.

Poorly maintained.

Chaotic.

The structure looked decades behind modern standards, with cracked pavement visible even from the plane windows.

Inside, the terminal barely seemed capable of handling half the passengers currently moving through it.

Which aligned perfectly with everything we had uncovered.

The country had resources.

Massive resources.

But somehow...

Almost none of the wealth actually reached the people.

Several black SUVS waited for us outside the airport.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 216

Security moved immediately around my grandfather the moment we stepped onto the pavement.

Predictably, my grandfather insisted Jason and I ride in the same vehicle as him.

“You are both more useful where I can see you,” he declared calmly while entering the SUV first.

Jason looked deeply amused.

“Yes, Chairman.”

The city officials waiting for us nearly tripped over themselves with excitement once introductions began.

+15 Bchus

Apparently, the idea of the Ashers and Suns collaborating publicly on a family expansion project was viewed as a massive economic opportunity.

And Jason-

Jason was practically treated like royalty.

“Mr. Sun brought thousands of jobs through Sol Management,” one official explained enthusiastically during the drive. “Entire districts recovered because of his investments.”

Another man nodded immediately.

“He restarted local industries after the shipping crisis.”

Jason looked mildly uncomfortable receiving that much praise directly.

Which honestly made the officials admire him even more.

The mayor of Rain City personally insisted on giving us a tour of the surrounding lands.

Both the Asher property and the land Jason intended to purchase sat near the mountainous regions outside the city itself.

Beautiful.

Wild.

And painfully underdeveloped.

Unfortunately, the terrain was too rough for normal vehicles in several areas.

Which meant ATVs and reinforced Jeeps.

Jason looked far too happy about that development.

“I’m driving,” he announced immediately.

I narrowed my eyes suspiciously.

“That smile concerns me.”

Jason only smirked before handing me a helmet.

“You worry too much.”

That statement became significantly less convincing once he accelerated the ATV over uneven terrain like a man who had briefly forgotten human mortality existed.

I grabbed onto him harder immediately.

ason!”

He laughed.

Actually laughed.

The sound disappeared into the wind while the ATV cut across rocky terrain dangerously fast.

And suddenly I realized something interesting.

Jason liked speed.

First the go-karts back at the Asher estate.

Now this.

A mental note instantly formed in my head.

Future gift idea.

The mountains surrounding the mining area grew rougher the farther we traveled.

Dense forest.

Steep cliffs.

Old stone structures partially hidden by vegetation.

And somewhere in the distance-

I caught sight of the castle.

It looked ancient against the mountain skyline.

Massive.

Almost haunting.

“This place looks like the setting of a murder mystery,” I muttered quietly.

Jason looked entirely too entertained by that statement.

“Comforting.”

As we finally approached the mining site itself, the atmosphere shifted subtly.

The workers nearby looked nervous.

Too nervous.

Jason noticed it at the exact same moment I did.

I felt his body tense instantly beneath my hands.

Then-

A gunshot cracked through the mountainside.

+15 8shus

Everything happened at once.

Jason slammed the brakes hard enough to send the ATV skidding sideways through dirt and gravel.

“DOWN!”

Before I could even fully process what happened, Jason grabbed me violently and shoved me off the ATV.

We hit the ground hard behind a rocky incline just as another shot echoed through the air above us.

Screaming erupted nearby.

The Jeeps behind us stopped abruptly while security agents scrambled instantly into defensive positions.

Jason’s body covered mine almost automatically.

One hand gripping the back of my head. 1

The other already reaching for the concealed weapon strapped beneath his jacket.

His expression had transformed completely.

Cold.

Lethal.

Another shot rang out somewhere above the cliffs.

And suddenly-

The trip to Sum no longer felt like a business strategy.

It felt like a trap.

W

finders keepers

Amber POV

Chaos erupted the second the shots rang through the mountains.

Workers screamed and scattered in every direction, sume dropping tools as they ran for cover while the police escorts immediately began shouting into their radios for reinforcements.

The sharp echo of gunfire bounced violently against the cliffs surrounding the mines, making it impossible to tell exactly where the shooters were positioned.

I hit the ground hard beside Jason behind one of the rocky inclines, my palms scraping against dirt and gravel while another shot cracked somewhere overhead.

“Stay down,” Jason ordered sharply.

His body shielded mine almost entirely, broad shoulders tense as he kept himself between me and the open terrain.

The governor’s security detail was already moving, weapons drawn while officers rushed civilians toward the Jeeps farther behind us.

Still, despite the numbers around us, I knew exactly how fragile this situation truly was.

If Jason did not have the influence he carried-

If people did not genuinely like and respect him the way they did-

I doubted even my grandfather would have managed to secure police escorts deep into these territories.

And when men with rifles faced people armed mostly with bodyguards and pistols-

The odds were always ugly.

Another shot rang out.

Then another.

Jason’s arm tightened around me instinctively.

I felt his muscles lock suddenly.

Then-

A hard impact slammed against him.

My breath caught instantly.

Jason didn’t scream.

Didn’t even curse.

But I felt the violent tension ripple through him immediately afterward.

“Jason-”

“I’m fine,” he snapped instantly.

Which obviously meant he was not fine.

unfire erupted again somewhere farther above us, followed quickly by shouting.

Then more shouting.

Then silence.

The entire fight lasted less than five minutes.

Five horrifyingly long minutes.

Police officers rushed toward us almost immediately afterward while several armed guards sprinted uphill toward the captured shooters.

“Chairman Asher!” one of the officers shouted. “Are you injured?”

My grandfather ignored everyone entirely and rushed directly toward us instead.

“Ambulance!” he barked furiously. “Get an ambulance here now!”

The governor himself looked equally alarmed while several security personnel immediately surrounded us protectively.

Jason finally stood slowly beside me.

And only then did I properly see the blood running down his right arm.

My stomach dropped instantly.

“Jason.”

He looked down briefly before rolling his shoulder dismissively.

“It’s nothing.”

Nothing.

There was literally blood dripping down his hand.

“It’s just a graze,” he muttered while flexing his arm experimentally. “Nothing compared to military training.”

I stared at him in horror.

“You got shot!”

“A little.”

That was not how bullets worked.

The paramedics finally reached us, but Jason waved them away almost immediately and demanded a first aid kit instead. 1

Apparently, according to him, this situation did not qualify as “serious enough to waste an ambulance.”

I wanted to strangle him.

Lovingly.

Possibly violently.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 217

ventually, after several minutes of arguing, Jason sat on one of the supply crates while I carefully cleaned the Wound myself.

Fortunately-

And I nearly cried from relief when I realized it-

The bullet had only grazed his forearm.

It looked ugly.

Painful.

Bleeding more than I liked.

But not life-threatening.

Jason watched me fuss over him with suspicious amusement while I disinfected the wound.

“You’re glaring at the bandages,” he observed quietly.

“Because I’m angry.”

“At me?”

“At bullets.”

That actually made him laugh softly.

I wrapped the clean bandage around his arm carefully while trying very hard not to imagine what would have happened if the bullet had landed inches differently.

The shooters, fortunately, were caught almost immediately.

And surprisingly-

They had nothing to do with the Vincent family.

Former miners.

Recently fired.

Desperate men whose families had lost their only stable source of income after parts of the mining operations slowed down months earlier.

The governor looked mortified while explaining everything to my grandfather.

“It appears they believed the investors were responsible for the layoffs,” he explained grimly. “They intended to scare everyone away from the project.”

Jason only nodded calmly while flexing his newly bandaged arm.

“Poorly executed strategy,” he muttered.

Despite everything, the inspection continued afterward.

Partially because my grandfather refused to leave.

And partially because Jason was apparently incapable of acting like a normal injured person.

The mines themselves stretched deep into the mountainside, old stone tunnels reinforced by newer structures added over decades.

The farther we walked inside, the colder the air became.

I was only half paying attention to the foreman explaining excavation routes when something caught my eye.

A small purple glimmer hidden between layers of dark stone.

I stopped walking immediately.

“What is that?”

The foreman followed my gaze before suddenly laughing loudly.

“Well,” he announced dramatically, “of course the only woman in the group would find it.”

Several workers nearby chuckled immediately.

I frowned slightly.

“Find what?”

The foreman stepped closer before carefully helping loosen the shining stone from the rock wall using one of the smaller mining tools.

“Young lady,” he said proudly, “according to local legends, the rare purple mineral only reveals itself before women.”

My grandfather looked intrigued immediately.

Jason too.

The foreman finally freed the crystal entirely and placed it carefully in my hand.

I gasped.

Because it was not a mineral.

It was alexandrite.

A massive piece of raw alexandrite.

Wordlessly, I handed it to Jason.

His own eyes widened slightly the moment he recognized it too.

Alexandrite that size...

Untouched...

Naturally hidden inside a supposedly “worthless” mine?

No wonder the land price made no sense.

Jason recovered first, his expression instantly smoothing into polite indifference. 1

“Interesting,” he said casually.

The foreman kept smiling proudly.

“The old stories say the mountain reveals purple gems only to women blessed by fate,” he explained Fenthusiastically. “Long ago, only women worked these mines because of it.”

I smiled politely while internally screaming.

“Would it be alright if I kept it?” I asked carefully.

The foreman laughed immediately.

“For this one,” he declared warmly, “we apply finders keepers law.”

Perfect.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 218

Sum

Amber POV

The rest of the tour passed in a blur after that.

Mostly because my brain remained completely stuck on the fact that we had potentially just discovered a hidden. alexandrite source.

Then they showed us the castle.

And suddenly nothing else mattered.

The structure rose directly from the mountainside like something stolen from a fantasy novel.

Tall stone towers.

Massive arched windows.

Ancient ivy climbing across dark walls.

It was breathtaking.

I actually stopped walking entirely.

“Oh,” I whispered.

Jason immediately noticed my expression.

I turned toward him slowly, completely serious.

“Oh, Jason...”

My eyes widened helplessly while staring at the castle,

“We are buying this.”

Several people behind us laughed quietly.

I ignored them completely.

“I want this,” I informed him firmly. “I need this castle.”

And I really did.

Because standing there beneath the mountain sky, staring at ancient towers wrapped in mist and stone

It looked exactly like something out of a fantasy world.

And unfortunately for everyone around me-

I loved fantasy things far too much to walk away from a real castle.

The mayor and the governor exchanged amused looks beside us.

Then, surprisingly, the governor cleared his throat.

“Well,” he said carefully, “that actually simplifies things considerably.”

I blinked and turned toward him.

+15 Bçnus

“What do you mean?”

he governor smiled faintly before gesturing toward one of the men standing farther behind the security detail.

A’middle-aged man carrying a thick leather briefcase immediately stepped forward.

“Our notary traveled with us today,” the governor explained calmly.

Jason straightened slightly beside me.

My grandfather’s eyes narrowed immediately with interest.

“And,” the governor continued, “the land rights are currently under my administration pending final approval”.

Silence settled around us instantly.

The mayor smiled awkwardly.

“To be honest,” he admitted, “we hoped you would accept the project.”

The governor nodded once.

“You already have successful operations in Sum through the Sun corporation,” he told Jason. “And the Asher family has the infrastructure and resources to actually develop this area properly.”

A pause.

“We do not need promises of luxury.”

His expression sharpened slightly.

“We need jobs.”

That answer alone told me more about the country’s current situation than any report had managed to.

The governor extended the leather folder directly toward us.

“Create opportunities for the local people,” he said simply. “And the land is yours.”

Jason accepted the contract first before immediately passing it to me.

My grandfather leaned closer over my shoulder while I opened the documents carefully.

The acquisition terms themselves were surprisingly straightforward.

Land rights.

Mining permissions.

Preservation agreements.

Then one section caught my attention instantly.

My eyes narrowed slightly while rereading the clause.

“What is it?” Jason asked quietly beside me.

I kept reading slowly.

The castle must remain structurally preserved and unchanged due to its recognized historical value.

That part made sense.

Honestly, I would have refused to alter it anyway.

But the second clause...

That one made my stomach tighten.

The land may not be resold or transferred to third-party entities under any circumstance.

Strange.

Very strange.

Then came the final condition.

The owners of the property shall not enter business dealings, partnerships, or land negotiations involving the Vincent family regarding this territory or the Sum country in general.

Silence fell around us instantly.

Slowly, I looked up from the contract toward the governor.

His expression had changed completely.

Gone was the enthusiastic local politician from earlier.

Now he looked tense.

Careful.

Almost wary.

Jason’s voice lowered dangerously beside me.

“...Why is the Vincent family specifically mentioned in a government land contract?”

The wind moved quietly through the mountains around us.

No one answered immediately.

And suddenly-

The castle no longer felt magical.

It felt important.

P

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 219

Evolved

Amber POV

The inside of the castle met every single fantasy I had ever built in my head as a little girl.

No-

It surpassed them.

The moment the massive wooden doors opened, I forgot about the gunshots from earlier.

Forgot about the Vincents.

Forgot about the investigations and the endless tension that had followed us for months.

For one impossible moment, I simply stood there staring like a child seeing magic for the first time.

The entrance hall alone was breathtaking.

Tall vaulted ceilings stretched overhead, faded paintings decorating the stone arches despite centuries of wear. Massive chandeliers hung above us, dark with age but still beautiful in a haunting way. Wide staircases curved toward the upper floors while sunlight filtered through colored glass windows, scattering fractured shades of gold and violet across the old stone floors.

I actually felt giddy.

Genuinely giddy.

Of course, the place needed work.

A lot of work.

Cracks spread through sections of the stone flooring. Several doors were chipped or warped with age. Parts of the walls carried water damage, and the plumbing system looked ancient enough to qualify as an archaeological discovery.

One corridor even leaned slightly to one side.

But somehow that only made me love it more.

Because beneath all the damage, I could see what the castle could become again.

I could picture warm lights in the hallways.

Music in the ballroom.

Children running through the gardens outside.

I could see life returning to it.

My fingers brushed lightly over one of the old stone walls as we walked deeper inside.

The castle almost felt... alive.

Like it remembered something.

My grandfather suddenly laughed behind me.

Not one of his polite business chuckles.

Areal laugh.

Warm and rich enough to make half the people accompanying us freeze in shock.

“Oh darling,” he said between amused breaths, “if I had known a castle would make you this happy, would have. bought you one ages ago.”

I turned toward him, still smiling helplessly. 1

“You are enabling me.”

“Absolutely.”

Then, to my complete surprise, my grandfather turned toward the mayor.

“Henry,” he said calmly, “I will handle the payment personally.”

The mayor blinked quickly.

“Chairman Asher, that really is not necessary-”

“It is,” my grandfather interrupted smoothly. “Everything will be placed under their names, of course.”

Their names.

Mine and Jason’s. 1

I stared at him in shock.

“Grandfather-”

He waved one hand dismissively before looking directly at me.

“Consider this a late wedding present.”

Silence filled the massive hall for half a second.

Then I laughed softly despite myself.

Because honestly?

Only my grandfather would casually gift us an entire medieval castle like it was a bouquet of flowers.

When I turned toward Jason again, I noticed he had gone unusually quiet.

His gaze moved slowly across the old walls before returning to me.

Softly.

Carefully.

Like he was seeing something important.

“This,” he said quietly, “is why you got into real estate, isn’t it?”

I blinked slightly.

Jason stepped closer beside me, his voice lowering enough that only I could hear it properly.

“The stories a place carries.”

pause.

“Not just the revenue involved.”

The words hit me far harder than they should have.

Because most people misunderstood me completely..

They assumed I liked beautiful buildings.

Luxury projects.

Easy money.

But Jason...

Jason saw me.

More importantly-

He took the time to know me.

He understood that I loved places because they survived people.

Because buildings remembered things long after humans disappeared.

Because homes carried grief, love, history, joy and pain inside their walls.

And somehow...

Jason understood that without me ever fully explaining it.

I smiled softly at him before turning back toward the governor.

“If we take this project,” I said carefully, “I need to know something.”

The governor straightened slightly.

“Why can’t we work with the Vincents?”

Silence settled heavily around us.

“Have they done something?” I asked quietly.

The governor sighed deeply.

For the first time since we met him, he suddenly looked older.

Tired.

“The Vincents,” he began slowly, “were once our royal family.”

I frowned immediately.

“What?”

“Hundreds of years ago,” the governor clarified. “Before the republic existed. Before modern Sum.”

+15 8çnus

The mayor crossed his arms quietly while the governor continued.

They ruled this fand for generations.”

A’pause.

“Until they were exiled.”

Jason’s expression sharpened instantly beside me.

“Exiled?”

The governor nodded once.

“It is still written into our laws that members of the Vincent bloodline may not reclaim land or political power

here.” 1

A cold feeling settled in my stomach immediately.

“Why?”

The governor’s jaw tightened.

“Because the things they did were so vile,” he said quietly, “the country believed the land itself would never forget.” 1

Silence fell around us again.

Even the workers accompanying the tour looked uncomfortable now.

I looked back toward the castle slowly.

Then realization hit me.

“Wait a minute,”

I turned sharply toward the governor and mayor.

“Is this their castle?”

Henry, the mayor, smiled sheepishly.

“No,” he admitted. “This is not the Vincent family castle.”

Relief flooded me briefly before he continued.

“The Vincent family was banished by the Ember family.”

My breath caught instantly.

“You share their name, young lady,” Henry said carefully. “Almost as if this was meant to be.”

The governor nodded solemnly beside him.

“The Ember family discovered what the Vincents were truly doing.”

The air inside the castle suddenly felt colder.

“What were they doing?” Jason asked quietly.

The governor looked directly at us.

rafficking women and children.”

Silence.

Heavy. Suffocating silence.

My stomach twisted violently.

The governor continued slowly, each word deliberate.

“They would take children from noble and aristocratic houses...”

A pause.

“Raise them under Vincent influence.”

Another pause.

“And strategically marry them into powerful families in order to gain complete control.”

Nobody spoke after that.

Because suddenly-

The Beckers.

The Vinnys.

The heirs.

Iris.

Jason.

All of it connected too perfectly.

And standing inside that ancient castle, beneath centuries-old stone and forgotten history-

I realized with horrifying clarity that this nightmare had not started recently at all.

It had simply survived long enough to evolve.

+15 8cnus

get it

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 220

Amber POV

The Vincents were trying to repeat history.

That realization settled inside me like ice.

Not metaphorically.

Not symbolically.

Literally.

They were rebuilding the exact same structure that had once gotten their bloodline exiled from an entire country.

Taking heirs.

Manipulating noble families.

Controlling powerful bloodlines through marriage, fear, dependency and carefully engineered loyalty.

The horrifying part was not how impossible it sounded.

The horrifying part was that we already had proof it was happening.

Iris.

Jason.

The Bloom girls.

The children hidden inside luxury apartments.

The Beckers.

The Vinnys.

If someone had told me all this a year ago, I would have laughed in their face.

Not because it sounded ridiculous.

Because it sounded too ridiculous to survive in modern society.

But powerful people rarely disappeared.

They simply adapted.

A terrifying thought crossed my mind then.

Was this only happening in our country?

Or had the Vincents already succeeded elsewhere?

Shadowland Country.

The neighboring economic empire constantly fighting for international influence and trade control.

The same country where the Vincent family held massive political and financial power.

C

Had they already won there?

idea sounded insane if you ignored the scale of what they had already accomplished.

But once you saw the pattern...

Once you understood how deeply they infiltrated systems...

It stopped sounding insane very quickly.

We were little mice moving through a maze they built generations ago.

Puppets tied to invisible strings while they convinced themselves they alone dictated the movement of entire nations.

I felt sick.

Actually sick.

Jason must have noticed the exact moment the realization overwhelmed me because his hand immediately found mine.

Then, without saying anything, he pulled me gently against him.

The warmth of his arms grounded me almost instantly.

“It’s alright,” he murmured quietly near my hair.

No.

It really wasn’t.

But I appreciated the effort anyway.

I took a slow breath before looking back toward the governor.

I carefully softened my expression, pretending this information shocked me far less than it actually did.

“Oh wow,” I said quietly. “I had no idea this was something of this scale.”

That part, at least, was true.

I glanced back toward the massive staircase rising through the castle halls.

“If this castle and land didn’t belong to the Vincents…”

I paused.

“Who did it belong to?”

The mayor smiled faintly.

“Oh,” he replied casually, “the Ember family.”

The name sent a strange chill through me again.

“They left shortly after the Vincents were exiled,” the governor explained. “Wanted a completely fresh start away from politics and blood feuds.”

I frowned slightly.

Happed

+15 8çnus

“They abandoned all of this?”

The governor nodded once.

“According to historical records, the Ember family believed the land carried too much pain after what happened.”

A pause.

“So they disappeared.”

Disappeared.

Not died out.

Not destroyed.

Gone.

My grandfather looked thoughtful beside us while Jason’s expression became colder with every piece of information we uncovered.

Because

inking the same thing now.

Fa

ply vanish.

amilies.

meone made them.

ything after that moved quickly.

Almost unnaturally quickly.

My grandfather finalized both land purchases before sunset.

The neighboring territory under Asher Corp ownership.

The castle land and

The gov

directly under mine and Jason’s names.

hieved signing the agreements.

waiting for someone specific to claim the property.

ry seemed strangely emotional while processing the documentation.

s castle has been untouched for generations,” he admitted quietly while organizing the final paperwork. Most people were too afraid to buy it after the stories surrounding the land spread.”

Jason signed the final documents beside me with calm precision.

”

“You should have led with the haunted castle rumors,” he muttered dryly. “Amber would have purchased it even faster.” 1

“That is slander,” I informed him immediately.

Jason looked entirely unconvinced.

stly?

The moment ownership transferred officially, the atmosphere around us shifted strangely.

Sabtly.

But enough that I noticed it immediately.

The workers relaxed.

The governor smiled more genuinely.

Even the police escorts looked oddly satisfied.

As if something heavy had finally settled into place correctly.

The castle itself became ours before sunset.

And somehow that felt far more significant than simply buying property.

Because deep down, I could feel it.

This place mattered.

Not just strategically.

Personally.

Historically. 1

The ride back toward Rain City passed more quietly afterward.

The adrenaline from the attack had faded, leaving exhaustion behind instead.

Jason sat beside me inside the SUV, one arm still loosely bandaged from the gunshot graze while my grandfather reviewed legal files across from us.

I kept staring absentmindedly at the contract resting in my lap.

Specifically one section.

No dealings with the Vincent family.

Not discouraged.

Forbidden.

That kind of wording only appeared when laws were written in blood.

“You’re overthinking,” Jason murmured softly beside me.

“I usually am.”

“You’re spiraling.”

I sighed quietly.

“What if this is bigger than we thought?” I admitted softly enough only he could hear. “What if the Vincents aren’t rebuilding something?”

Jason turned toward me slowly.

C

+15 8çnus

“What if they never stopped?” I whispered.

Sence followed immediately afterward.

Because neither of us could dismiss the possibility anymore.

The castle purchase suddenly felt less like luck.

And more like stepping directly into the center of a war that had started centuries before either of us were born.

Shore

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 221

Amber POV

We arrived at the hotel shortly after sunset.

The building itself was elegant in an old-world sort of way, the kind of luxury hotel that had once been magnificent and still carried traces of that glory despite the years. Tall marble columns framed the entrance while golden lights illuminated the dark stone exterior against the mountain skyline.

Grandfather's bodyguards secured the perimeter immediately while the executives accompanying us handled the last of the paperwork regarding the land acquisitions.

Most of them still looked slightly overwhelmed after the speed at which the entire purchase had happened.

But strangely enough...

That was not the part that caught my attention most.

It was the way people kept looking at us.

More specifically-

At my grandfather.

And me. 1

The hotel receptionist greeted us politely the moment we entered the lobby.

At first, she behaved normally enough while checking the reservations under Asher Corp.

But the second she looked up properly at my grandfather, she nearly dropped the room cards in her hands.

“W-welcome,” she stammered quickly. “It is an honor to have you here.”

Her eyes then shifted toward me.

And somehow she became even more nervous.

Beside me, Jason looked mildly amused while the poor receptionist suddenly avoided eye contact entirely.

“Your suites have already been prepared,” she continued hurriedly. “If you need anything at all, please contact us immediately.”

Then she looked toward Jason.

And to my complete confusion-

She blushed.

Actually blushed.

“Mr. Sun,” she said softly, suddenly shy. “We are very honored by your visit as well.”

Jason blinked once, clearly caught off guard.

“Thank you,” he answered politely.

The receptionist nearly melted on the spot.

N

+15 8chus

I narrowed my eyes suspiciously while we moved toward the elevators.

This place is weird,” I muttered quietly.

One of the older executives walking beside us overheard me and chuckled softly.

“You noticed?”

I glanced toward him immediately.

“Do they always act like this around my grandfather?” I asked quietly.

The executive looked genuinely surprised by the question.

“Of course,” he answered immediately.

I frowned slightly.

“Why?”

The man hesitated briefly before answering carefully.

“Because around here,” he admitted quietly, “people treat Chairman Asher almost like royalty.”

That made me stop walking for half a second. 1

Royalty.

The word echoed strangely after everything we had learned earlier about the Vincents and the old ruling families of Sum.

I glanced toward my grandfather ahead of us.

He walked calmly beside several officials, entirely unsurprised by the way hotel staff lowered their eyes respectfully whenever he passed.

And suddenly... 1

Something about this country felt stranger than before.

Later that evening, Jason and I called the children from our hotel suite.

The second the screen connected, chaos erupted immediately.

“You bought a castle?!” Alice practically screamed into the camera.

Alex looked equally scandalized.

“You bought a REAL castle and didn’t bring us?”

Rose looked excited enough to vibrate while Iris remained quieter, though even she could not fully hide her curiosity.

“It has towers,” I informed them proudly.

Alice gasped dramatically.

Jason sighed beside me.

“You are encouraging them.”

Nevel of

“Yes.”

nbelievable.”

The children immediately began demanding details all at once.

Did it have secret passages?

Ghosts?

Armor?

Dragons?

“Unfortunately,” Jason interrupted calmly, “before anyone lives in the castle or even spends one night there…”

He looked directly at all of us.

“It needs major renovations first.”

The children groaned immediately.

To my complete betrayal-

I protested first. 1

“But the atmosphere!” I argued. “The dramatic medieval suffering aesthetic!”

Jason stared at me in disbelief.

“The plumbing barely functions, Amber.”

“That’s part of the experience.”

The children burst into laughter instantly.

Even Iris smiled openly for the first time all day.

Jason rubbed his temple slowly.

“I married a woman who willingly romanticizes tetanus.”

“That is slander.”

The call lasted nearly another hour before the children were finally forced toward bed by the exhausted security team back home.

Alice demanded castle-themed bedrooms.

Alex requested hidden defense tunnels.

Rose wanted a library tower.

And Iris quietly asked if they could someday plant flowers in the gardens together.

That request somehow affected me the most.

After the call ended, Jason went to shower while I decided to check on my grandfather before sleeping.

Mostly because he had looked unusually tired throughout dinner.

The hotel hallway outside our suite was quiet.

o quiet.

At first, I did not think much of it while walking toward my grandfather’s room farther down the corridor.

Then I saw movement.

Someone dressed entirely in black stood near my grandfather’s door.

Covered from head to toe.

Gloves.

Mask.

Dark hood.

For half a second, we both froze.

Then I spoke instinctively.

“Hey!”

The figure reacted instantly.

Not entering the room-

Leaving it.

Realization slammed into me immediately.

They had already been inside.

The figure bolted down the hallway at full speed.

“STOP!” I shouted instantly.

At the same time, I lunged toward my grandfather’s room.

The door was partially open.

My stomach dropped the second I entered.

“Grandfather!”

He was on the floor.

Collapsed beside the sitting area near the bed, one hand clutching his chest while he struggled violently to breathe.

Panic hit me so hard I almost stopped functioning entirely.

“HELP!” I screamed. “SOMEONE HELP!”

Bodyguards came running immediately from both sides of the hallway.

Jason appeared seconds later barefoot and still half-dressed from the shower, gun already in his hand.

“What happened?!”

“I don’t know!” I cried desperately while kneeling beside my grandfather. “He can’t breathe!”

e of the bodyguards immediately dropped beside us.

“He’s a doctor,” Jason barked sharply toward me.

The guard quickly checked my grandfather's pulse and eyes before his entire expression darkened.

"...Poison."

The word shattered through the room like glass.

My blood turned cold instantly.

"We need to move now," the doctor ordered sharply. "He needs a hospital immediately."

Jason's face transformed completely.

Cold. Deadly. Terrifying.

And somewhere deep inside me-

I realized this trip had never been about business at all.

We had walked directly into enemy territory.

As the guards carefully lifted my grandfather from the floor, something slipped slightly from his partially closed hand. 1

A card.

Small. Black.

My breath caught instantly.

I reached for it with trembling fingers while chaos exploded around me.

Jason barking orders.

Guards securing exits.

People shouting for emergency transport.

And written across the card in elegant silver lettering-

Was a single sentence.

We never really left.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 222

Untouchable

Amber POV

Time stopped.

And somehow, at the exact same time-

It moved too fast.

One second, I was kneeling beside my grandfather's collapsed body on the hotel floor,.my hands shaking so violently I could barely hold onto him while guards shouted around us.

The next-

Everything blurred into flashing lights, screaming sirens, and black armored vehicles cutting through the streets of Rain City at terrifying speed.

I barely remembered getting into the car.

Barely remembered Jason pulling me against him while speaking sharply into multiple phones at once.

"Lock down the hotel."

"Find the security footage."

"No one leaves the city."

"Contact Emory now."

His voice sounded distant.

Like I was underwater.

The only thing my mind could focus on was the black card still clenched in my hand.

We never really left.

Those four words looped inside my head endlessly.

Over and over and over again.

The Vincents were everywhere.

Not just in our country.

Not just in Sum.

Everywhere.

And they had just tried to kill my grandfather.

By the time we arrived at the hospital, the entire place was already under military-level security.

Police vehicles surrounded the building.

Armed officers secured every entrance.

Government officials crowded the emergency wing.

The governor himself met us outside the operating area looking pale.

Chairman Asher's condition is critical," he informed us immediately. "The poison affected his cardiovascular system extremely quickly."

Critical.

The word barely registered.

I watched doctors rush my grandfather past us on a hospital bed while machines screamed around him.

Oxygen mask.

IV lines.

Blood on the collar of his shirt where someone had ripped fabric away during emergency treatment.

He looked smaller somehow.

Fragile.

I hated it.

“Grandfather!” 1

One of the nurses physically held me back before I could follow them into surgery.

“Miss Asher, please-”

The operating doors slammed shut.

And just like that-

We were left waiting.

The hospital hallway slowly filled over the next hour.

The entire Asher board of directors arrived.

Executives.

Security chiefs.

Government representatives.

Even police commanders moved nervously through the corridors while guards secured every floor.

No one sat down. 1

No one relaxed.

Because if someone powerful enough to poison Chairman Asher inside a secured hotel existed-

Then no one in that hallway felt safe anymore.

I sat motionless near the operating room doors while the world moved around me.

At some point, someone draped a blanket over my shoulders.

At another point, someone handed me water I never drank.

Jason remained beside me the entire time.

Speaking constantly.

Moving constantly.

I could see him talking to officials.

To guards.

To the police.

At one point Emory appeared on one of the secure video calls, his face thunderous while Jason updated him rapidly.

But none of the words fully reached me.

My mind kept circling back to the note.

We never really left.

The meaning behind it felt suffocating now.

Because suddenly the old stories from the castle no longer sounded like history.

They sounded like a warning nobody took seriously enough.

The Vincents had survived exile.

Survived time.

Survived governments.

And somehow, generation after generation, they kept rebuilding the same machine.

Taking heirs.

Manipulating bloodlines.

Embedding themselves inside powerful systems until entire countries unknowingly danced on invisible strings.

A shiver ran through me.

How many politicians belonged to them?

How many corporations?

How many judges?

How many “respectable” families?

My stomach twisted violently.

Jason crouched in front of me suddenly, forcing my attention toward him.

“Amber.”

I blinked slowly.

His hands wrapped around mine carefully.

Only then did I realize how cold my fingers had become.

ook at me.”

I did.

Jason’s expression was terrifyingly controlled.

The kind of calm that only appeared when he was seconds away from becoming truly dangerous.

“They are reviewing the hotel footage,” he said quietly. “The attacker’s face was covered, but we already confirmed one thing.”

My throat tightened.

“The poison wasn’t random.”

Of course it wasn’t.

Jason’s jaw tightened slightly.

“They knew exactly what they were using.”

Military-grade.

Professional.

Organized.

Not impulsive violence.

An execution attempt.

“How is he?” I whispered.

Jason hesitated.

And that hesitation terrified me more than anything else.

“His heart stopped once during transport,” he admitted carefully.

The world tilted sideways for half a second.

No.

“But they revived him,” Jason added immediately. “Amber, listen to me- they revived him.”

I stared at him silently while the meaning crashed into me slowly.

My grandfather died.

Even if only briefly-

He died.

Something inside me broke quietly then.

Not loudly.

Not dramatically.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 223

my grandfather had always felt indestructible to me.

Cold. Brilliant. Untouchable.

The kind of man who bent entire industries through sheer force of will.

And now he was behind those operating room doors fighting to breathe because someone decided he needed to disappear.

I suddenly understood something horrifying.

The Vincents were escalating because we were getting close.

Too close.

The castle.

The alexandrite mine.

The history.

We accidentally stepped into something they considered important enough to kill for.

The operating room doors suddenly opened.

Every person in the hallway stood instantly.

The doctor stepped out looking exhausted beneath the surgical mask hanging loosely around his neck.

“Chairman Asher survived surgery.”

Relief exploded through the hallway immediately.

Several executives visibly sagged against the walls.

Someone behind me actually started crying quietly.

But the doctor raised one hand before anyone could celebrate fully.

“He is not stable yet.”

Silence fell again immediately.

“The poison caused severe cardiovascular distress,” the doctor explained carefully. “We managed to stabilize his heart rhythm, but the next twenty-four hours will be critical.”

Critical again.

That word again.

“When can we see him?” Jason asked immediately.

“Briefly,” the doctor answered. “One at a time.”

The board immediately looked toward me.

+15 Ben

Not toward Jason.

Not toward the executives.

Toward me.

The heir.

I stood slowly, my legs suddenly unsteady beneath me.

Jason immediately moved beside me without a word.

The intensive care room felt unbearably quiet compared to the chaos outside.

Machines beeped steadily around my grandfather's bed while tubes and monitors surrounded him from every direction.

Seeing him unconscious like that physically hurt.

His skin looked pale beneath the hospital lights.

His breathing shallow.

For the first time in my life-

He looked old.

I moved toward the bed slowly before carefully taking his hand.

"I'm sorry," I whispered before I could stop myself.

Sorry for bringing him here.

Sorry for not noticing sooner.

Sorry for walking us directly into this nightmare.

A hand touched my shoulder gently.

Jason.

I closed my eyes briefly, breathing shakily.

Then something inside me finally settled.

Not grief.

Not fear.

Something colder.

Sharper.

Resolve.

Because this could not continue.

Not anymore.

The Vincents poisoned my grandfather.

C +15 @gnus

Tried to erase him the same way they erased countless others throughout history.

Quietly.

Strategically.

Like human lives were merely obstacles standing In the path of their control.

No.

I looked down at my grandfather's unconscious figure while the note burned inside my memory again.

We never really left.

My fingers tightened slowly around his hand.

Then I looked toward Jason.

And for the first time since this began-

I stopped thinking about survival.

"It's time to end them," I whispered.

I kissed my grandfather's forehead gently before leaving the intensive care room.

His skin felt cold beneath my lips.

Not lifeless.

Not yet.

But fragile enough to make something violent settle inside my chest.

The machines continued beeping steadily behind me as the doors closed softly.

Outside, the hospital hallway remained crowded with guards, executives, doctors, and police officers moving in controlled chaos around the secured wing.

The Asher board stood immediately the moment they saw me exit.

Every single one of them searching my face for answers I did not have.

“He’s stable for now,” I said quietly.

Relief spread through the hallway again, though nobody fully relaxed.

Because stable did not mean safe.

Not anymore.

The governor stepped closer carefully.

He looked exhausted now, his suit wrinkled, eyes shadowed from stress and sleeplessness.

“Miss Asher,” he said gently, “you should rest for a moment.”

I almost laughed at that.

Rest.

As if my mind was physically capable of stopping now.

+15 8çnus

My body suddenly felt unbearably heavy.

Like the adrenaline keeping me standing was finally beginning to crack.

“Is there somewhere quiet?” I asked softly. “Just for a little while.”

The governor nodded immediately.

“Of course.”

He personally led Jason and me through several secured corridors away from the emergency wing.

The farther we walked, the quieter the hospital became until eventually we reached a small isolated room hidden near the upper administrative floors.

“It’s one of the protected recovery suites,” the governor explained while opening the door. “Very few people know it exists.”

The room itself was simple but comfortable.

A small couch.

A bed.

Private bathroom.

Secured windows.

Safe.

Or at least safer than the rest of the city currently felt.

“I’ll station guards outside,” the governor added carefully. “No one enters without your approval.”

“Thank you,” Jason answered before I could.

The governor hesitated briefly before leaving us alone.

D

␣

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 224

Amber POV

The moment the door closed, silence filled the room completely.

I stood motionless near the center of the suite while Jason locked the door behind us automatically.

Then he turned toward me slowly.

“This hospital belongs to one of my companies,” he said quietly. “The staff here are loyal.”

A pause.

“My grandfather will be safe here.”

Safe.

The word felt meaningless now.

I looked directly into Jason’s eyes.

Really looked at him.

At the exhaustion buried beneath his calm.

At the anger hiding behind his control.

At the fear he refused to admit existed.

Then I said the thing already burning inside me.

“I’m going to end them.”

Jason went still.

Completely still.

Not shocked.

Not confused.

Just… listening.

I pulled my phone from my pocket and sat down at the small table near the bed.

My fingers moved automatically across the screen while layers of encrypted systems unfolded one after another.

The Vincents had spent generations believing they controlled the shadows.

That no one could see them.

Touch them.

Reach them.

Fine.

I would crawl directly into the center of their empire and burn it from the inside out.

Jason moved beside me quietly while watching lines of code appear rapidly across the screen.

What are you doing?" he asked softly.

"Planting bugs.

His eyes narrowed immediately.

"Into what?"

"Their core systems."

Jason stared at me for half a second.

"Amber..."

"I know."

Because this was dangerous even for me.

Especially now.

The Vincents would absolutely have elite cybersecurity teams protecting their infrastructure.

Probably government-grade protection layers.

Possibly military.

Good. 1

I was angry enough to become reckless.

But not stupid.

Several hidden gateways opened silently beneath my fingers while I moved deeper into encrypted company structures connected to Vincent international holdings.

Shipping.

Finance.

Private investment accounts.

Communications servers.

The sheer scale of it almost made me sick.

They were everywhere.

Jason watched quietly while I bypassed another security layer.

“You’re smiling,” he observed carefully.

I blinked once before realizing he was right.

Not happiness.

Not amusement.

Something colder.

+15 A

“I usually explode systems like this,” I admitted quietly. “Erase barriers. Destroy infrastructure. Leave chaos behind.”

My fingers continued moving steadily across the screen.

“But not this time.”

Jason leaned slightly against the table beside me, his expression unreadable.

“What are you planning?”

I finally looked up at him fully.

“I want them to suffer.”

The honesty in my own voice startled even me.

“I want them comfortable,” I continued softly. “Confident.”

A pause.

L

“I want them to keep believing they’re untouchable while I slowly dismantle everything underneath them.” Jason’s gaze darkened immediately.

Not disapproval.

Understanding.

“I don’t want them to know I’m inside their systems,” I whispered. “At least not until it’s too late.”

A small notification flashed across my screen.

Access point established.

Good.

I inserted the first hidden bug directly into one of the Vincent financial relay systems.

Completely silent.

Invisible.

Designed to collect information slowly without triggering security alerts.

Jason watched the code scrolling across the screen for several seconds before finally speaking again.

“You’ve done this before.”

Not a question.

I exhaled quietly.

“Yes.”

Phoenix Ashes did not grow into a billion-dollar empire because I played fair.

And Cronos certainly didn’t either.

Jason studied me carefully before his hand gently touched the back of my neck.

Warm. Grounding.

Don’t lose yourself doing this,” he murmured quietly.

That almost broke me.

Because he still cared more about me than revenge.

Even now.

I leaned briefly into his touch before looking back toward the glowing screen.

Toward the invisible pathways opening deeper and deeper into the Vincent empire.

“They poisoned my grandfather,” I whispered.

Another hidden access point opened.

“They took children.”

Another bug planted.

“They built entire systems around suffering.”

Another gateway breached.

“They think they own people.”

My eyes lifted slowly toward Jason again.

“So no,” I said softly.

The final line of code executed successfully.

“I don’t think I’ll ever forgive them enough to stop.

+15 Bew

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 225

Moving on

Jason POV

Amber was unraveling.

Most people would trot notice it.

The doctors wouldn’t. The governor wouldn’t. The board members certainly wouldn’t.

To them, Amber looked composed.

Focused.

Efficient.

Productive.

I knew better.

I had seen Amber angry before.

At Oscar. At the White family. At the people who hurt Alice and Alex.

This was different.

This wasn’t anger.

This was grief wearing anger like armor.

Her grandfather was still fighting for his life three floors below us.

Machines were breathing with him.

Doctors were monitoring him around the clock.

And Amber…

Amber had decided the world would pay for it.

The first few hours after we entered the secure room had worried me.

Not because she was screaming.

Not because she was crying.

Because she wasn’t doing either.

She simply sat down.

Opened her laptop.

Opened her phone.

And began dismantling an empire.

I watched line after line of code scroll across her screen.

Watched her plant bugs, access points, back doors, and traps so sophisticated that most cybersecurity teams would never discover them.

Every time a security layer fell, her expression remained unchanged.

Every time she gained access to another system, she simply moved to the next target.

Cold.

Methodical.

Terrifying.

By the time she finished, she had infiltrated more of the Vincent infrastructure than I thought was possible in a single night.

Then she started making calls.

At first, I assumed it was related to the investigation.

Or her company.

Or maybe the castle.

I was wrong.

Completely wrong.

“Yes, I need an assessment team.”

Pause.

“No, not next month.”

Another pause.

“Tomorrow.”

She hung up.

Immediately dialed another number.

“I want structural engineers.”

Pause.

“The best ones.”

Click.

Next call.

“Can you relocate fifty people for a six-month restoration project?”

Next call.

“Yes, I purchased a castle.”

The silence on the other side lasted so long that even I could hear it.

Amber sighed.

“Yes, an actual castle.”

Click.

Next call.

And another.

And another.

And another.

Within two hours she had contacted architects, restoration specialists, construction companies, historical preservation experts, logistics coordinators, security consultants, landscapers, and apparently a medieval historian.

I wasn’t entirely sure why we needed a medieval historian.

When I asked, she looked offended. 1

“It’s a castle.”

As if that explained everything.

Apparently it did.

The calls continued.

Then she moved on to the children.

A video conference with the school administration.

Another with the principal.

Then a meeting with several educational consultants.

The governor had already arranged temporary permits for us to remain in the country.

Apparently Amber interpreted that as permission to reorganize her entire life.

I sat on the edge of the room’s couch while watching her work.

Hours passed.

At some point food arrived.

Neither of us touched it.

At another point one of my executives called.

I answered.

Handled three separate corporate emergencies.

Finished.

Amber was still on calls. 1

Still planning.

Still moving.

+15 8çnus

Still building.

ke a woman trying to outrun grief.

Then came the call that finally made me realize what was happening.

A school administrator appeared on her screen.

“We can facilitate a transfer process for the children.”

Transfer?

I looked up immediately.

Amber nodded.

“Good.”

The administrator continued.

“We’ll need confirmation regarding your expected residency period.”

Residency period.

Something in my stomach tightened.

Amber didn’t hesitate.

Not even for a second.

“We are relocating.” 1

My brain immediately froze.

The administrator smiled politely.

“Wonderful. We will begin the paperwork immediately.”

The call ended.

I stared at her.

Amber opened another document.

Completely unconcerned.

“Amber.”

“Hmm?”

I waited.

Nothing.

She kept typing.

“Amber.”

This time she finally looked up.

“What?”

Telinked.

“Did you just tell that woman we’re relocating?”

She looked confused.

“Yes.”

Like it was obvious.

I stared at her.

She stared back.

Then realization slowly appeared on her face.

“Oh.”

Oh?

OH?

“Jason.”

That tone worried me immediately.

Because it was the same tone Alice used before asking for something unreasonable.

“Jason,” she repeated carefully.

“No.”

“I haven’t asked anything yet.”

“No.”

“That’s rude.”

“No.”

Amber sighed dramatically.

“We have a castle.”

I closed my eyes.

There it was.

The castle.

Everything somehow led back to the castle.

“We also have businesses.”

“We can manage remotely.”

“We have children.”

“They’ll love the castle.”

We have responsibilities.”

“We have Wi-Fi.”

I stared at her.

She stared right back.

Completely serious.

“You’ve thought about this.”

“A lot.”

Of course she had.

I rubbed my forehead.

“When exactly were you planning to inform me that we were apparently moving countries?”

Amber considered that question.

Actually considered it.

Then she smiled sheepishly.

“...Around breakfast?”

I laughed.

I couldn’t help it.

For the first time since the hospital.

For the first time since the poisoning.

For the first time since seeing her grandfather collapse.

I laughed.

Amber looked offended.

“You’re making fun of me.”

“A little.”

She crossed her arms.

“We own a castle.”

“There it is again.”

“We own a castle.”

As if repetition strengthened her argument.

The ridiculous thing?

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 226

It kind of did.

Because while she was talking... 1

While she was planning...

While she was bulldozing through every obstacle in existence...

I realized something.

This wasn't really about the castle.

Not entirely.

The castle was simply the shape her grief had chosen.

Her grandfather almost died.

The Vincents tried to take him from her.

Tried to take her family.

Again.

And Amber's response was the same thing she always did when life hurt her.

She built something.

A company.

A home.

A family.

A future.

Now she was building a fortress.

A literal one.

I watched her return to her laptop.

Already planning renovations.

Already arranging schools.

Already coordinating contractors.

Already preparing for a life she had apparently decided we were living.

And somehow...

I found myself opening my own phone.

“What are you doing?” Amber asked suspiciously.

I looked up.

“Calling my assistant.”

Her eyes widened.

I sighed.

“Someone has to make sure the castle has functioning plumbing.”

Amber immediately launched herself across the room and hugged me.

I nearly dropped my phone.

“You’re agreeing!”

“I didn’t say that.”

“You’re agreeing.”

I looked toward the hospital window.

Toward the city outside.

Toward the country that had nearly killed her grandfather.

And might contain the answers we had been searching for all along.

Then I looked down at my wife.

The woman currently planning a complete international relocation out of pure spite.

And realized something that was both comforting and deeply concerning.

Somewhere along the way...

Without noticing...

Apparently I was moving too.

& goodied of choos

AR

A good kind of chaos

Jason POV

Mr. Asher remained unconscious.

The doctors called it a positive sign that he was stable.

They called it encouraging that there had been no further complications.

They called it promising that his organs were functioning normally.

None of that changed the reality.

He still hadn’t woken up.

Every morning Amber visited his room before touching her phone.

Every night she sat beside his bed before going to sleep.

Sometimes she talked to him.

Sometimes she sat in silence.

Sometimes she simply held his hand.

And every day he remained asleep.

The attack had created another problem as well.

One nobody had anticipated.

The Asher Corporation suddenly had no leader.

A week ago Amber had been formally introduced to the board.

A week ago several executives hadn't even recognized her.

A week ago she had been Chairman Asher's granddaughter.

Now she was the heir.

The acting leader.

And whether she wanted it or not...

The future of the Asher empire.

The board meeting happened three days after the poisoning.

I attended as an observer.

Mostly because Amber had forgotten she needed to attend.

She had been reviewing construction permits for the castle while simultaneously negotiating a mining contract and helping the police trace financial transactions connected to the Vincents.

When her assistant reminded her about the emergency board meeting she had blinked once and asked:

"What board meeting?"

A good eed of chap

The assistant looked ready to cry.

meeting lasted less than twenty minutes.

The board unanimously voted Amber in as acting CEO until Chairman Asher recovered.

Unanimously.

No arguments.

No politics.

No challenges.

Not because she was the heir.

Because during those few days they had watched her work.

I had watched her work too.

And frankly?

It was terrifying.

Amber somehow managed Phoenix Ashes, the Asher Corporation, the castle restoration project, the police investigation, the children's relocation, and the Vincent operation simultaneously.

She operated on four hours of sleep.

Three cups of coffee.

And what I suspected was pure spite.

Conflicts disappeared around her.

Problems got solved.

Departments started functioning better.

Executives who had spent decades fighting one another suddenly cooperated. 1

The more chaos surrounded her...

The more effective she became.

It fascinated me.

Because I was the opposite.

I was built for order.

Structure.

Systems.

Predictability.

My companies thrived because every piece fit perfectly into place.

Amber's companies thrived because she could somehow see patterns inside chaos.

A good red of choos

Watching her manage Asher Corp felt like watching a conductor direct an orchestra while the building burned around her.

And somehow...

The music improved.

I sat in the hospital suite one afternoon reviewing reports while Amber participated in six different meetings simultaneously.

Not metaphorically.

Literally.

Three monitors.

Two phones.

One tablet.

And somehow she was following every conversation.

"No, move the project timeline forward."

Pause.

"Tell legal to reject that proposal."

Pause.

"The castle library stays exactly where it is."

Pause.

"No, I don't care if it's inefficient."

Pause.

"The historical staircase stays too."

I looked up.

“The staircase is falling apart.”

Amber covered one microphone.

“It has character.”

“It has structural issues.”

“Those are different things.”

I sighed.

The architect on the screen looked exhausted.

Apparently everyone had already learned that arguing with Amber about the castle was a waste of time.

The medieval aesthetic had won.

Napod non of choos

A week passed like that.

hospital became our temporary home.

The private suite belonged to one of my medical subsidiaries, which meant security was absolute.

No unauthorized visitors.

No information leaks.

No opportunities for another attack.

The governor visited daily.

Police investigators constantly updated us.

Emory called several times a day.

And throughout all of it...

Amber worked.

Then the children arrived.

The hospital suddenly became significantly louder.

My grandparents brought them personally.

Along with enough luggage to suggest they intended to invade a small country.

Rose ran into the suite first.

“WHERE IS THE CASTLE?”

Not hello.

Not how are you.

The castle.

Of course.

Alice and Alex weren’t far behind.

“We saw pictures!”

“It has towers!”

“It has a moat!”

“It doesn’t have a moat.”

“It should have a moat.”

Frankly, I regretted teaching them critical thinking.

Iris entered more quietly than the others.

But even she looked excited.

+15 Benus

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 227

For the first time since escaping the Beckers...

She looked like a teenager again.

Not a survivor.

Not a victim.

Just a girl excited about living in a castle.

Amber nearly cried when she saw them.

She hid it well.

Most people wouldn't have noticed.

I did.

She hugged every single child.

Then hugged them again.

Then immediately began explaining castle renovation schedules.

My grandparents exchanged amused looks.

The hospital suite felt alive for the first time all week.

And they weren't alone.

Adrian arrived shortly afterward.

With his wife.

Which created another round of chaos because Alice immediately demanded to know when everyone got married.

"Apparently while we weren't paying attention," Alex informed her seriously.

Adrian looked horrified.

His wife laughed.

Amber laughed.

And for a brief moment...

The hospital didn't feel like a battlefield.

The castle renovations had progressed absurdly quickly.

Money solved many problems.

Unlimited money solved almost all of them.

Entire wings had been restored.

Utilities replaced.

Security systems installed.

Ad of choc

Hidden passages mapped.

Historical sections preserved.

Amber had somehow convinced architects, engineers, preservation experts, and contractors to work around the clock.

The castle wasn't finished.

Not even close.

But it was livable.

More importantly...

It was becoming a home.

That evening everyone gathered in the suite's sitting area while Amber projected the newest renovation photos onto one of the walls.

The children gasped dramatically.

My grandmother smiled.

Adrian looked impressed.

And for the first time all week...

I saw Amber truly smile.

Not the determined smile she wore during meetings.

Not the cold smile she used while planning the Vincents' downfall.

A real one.

The kind that reached her eyes.

I watched her standing in front of the projection, enthusiastically explaining restoration plans while the children argued about which towers belonged to whom.

And suddenly I understood something.

The Vincents had tried to destroy her family.

They had nearly succeeded.

Instead...

They had accidentally given her something else.

A kingdom.

A castle.

A company.

A country full of secrets.

And a reason to fight.

The Vincents thought they were playing a long game.

Thought they were moving pieces across a board only they understood.

What they didn't realize was that Amber was already rebuilding faster than they could destroy.

And when my wife decided to build something....

God help whoever stood in the way.

D

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 228

Wait, what?

Amber POV

I was exhausted.

Not the kind of tiredness that sleep fixed.

Not the kind that disappeared after a good meal or a weekend away.

I was mentally exhausted.

Physically exhausted.

Emotionally exhausted.

The strange thing was that I had always thrived in chaos.

I liked impossible deadlines.

I liked solving problems.

I liked looking at situations everyone considered disasters and finding opportunities hidden inside them.

But this...

This was different.

The poisoning.

The hospital.

The Vincents.

The castle.

The investigations.

The companies.

The children.

The country.

Everything felt like too much.

Time had started slipping through my fingers.

Days blurred together.

Meetings merged into conference calls.

Hospital visits blended with construction reports.

I honestly wasn't sure how long it had been since I had slept more than four consecutive hours.

The only reason I was still functioning was Jason.

I knew it.

He knew it.

Neither of us said it out loud.

But it was true.

He was there.

Always there.

An immovable presence beside me.

A constant.

An anchor.

I had never felt more seen in my entire life.

Jason never told me I was overreacting.

Never told me to calm down.

Never made me feel irrational.

When I became obsessed with my grandfather’s security, Jason installed more.

When I worried about the hospital room, Jason upgraded the cameras.

When I insisted on moving my temporary office into the hospital itself, Jason simply had furniture delivered.

Not once did he make me feel crazy.

Not once.

The hospital room had become a fortress.

Cameras.

Security systems.

Biometric locks.

Private guards.

Multiple backup generators.

Jason had personally approved every upgrade.

When I asked why, he looked at me like I was asking the world’s most obvious question.

“Because it makes you feel safer.”

That was it.

No complaints.

No arguments.

No lectures.

Just support.

The

doctors liked him too.

Partly because he listened.

Partly because he asked intelligent questions.

Partly because he somehow remembered every single detail regarding my grandfather's treatment.

Several times I had walked into the room to find Jason talking to specialists.

Reviewing reports.

Discussing medications.

Checking security.

He visited my grandfather even when I wasn't there.

And somehow that affected me more than anything else.

Because he wasn't doing it for appearances.

There was nobody around to impress.

Nobody watching.

He simply cared.

And I loved him for it.

I would always love him for it.

Grandfather still hadn't woken up.

The doctors remained cautiously optimistic.

Which was doctor language for:

We don't know.

The castle renovations continued.

Entire sections were already completed.

The children's wing looked incredible.

The library restoration was underway.

The gardens were being rebuilt.

Emory and Mr. Stait were scheduled to arrive in one week.

One week.

And the deeper we dug into the Vincents, the more terrifying the picture became.

They weren’t a family.

+158gnus

Not really.

They were an organization.

A network.

A system that had survived centuries.

The information gathered from my bugs painted a horrifying picture.

Companies.

Politicians.

Foundations.

Educational programs.

International holdings.

They were everywhere.

And for the first time, I understood something.

We weren’t enough.”

Jason wasn’t enough.

I wasn’t enough.

Emory wasn’t enough.

Not against something this large.

We needed allies.

Real allies.

People we trusted.

People capable of helping.

People willing to fight.

The realization sat heavily inside my chest.

Because asking for help had never come naturally to me.

I preferred solving problems myself.

Always had.

But this wasn’t a problem anymore.

It was a war.

And wars required armies.

The children arriving forced me to realize something else.

+15 Bçnus

I had disconnected.

completely.

The day I booked their plane tickets felt like yesterday.

Then suddenly they were standing in front of me.

Real.

Present.

Here.

The shock alone told me something was wrong.

I should not have been surprised.

I had arranged the flight.

Approved the security details.

Confirmed the arrival schedule.

And yet when Alice launched herself into my arms, I genuinely felt startled.

Like I had forgotten the world existed beyond hospitals and investigations.

That realization hurt.

Even more surprising was Mr. Sun.

The moment he arrived, he didn’t ask about the castle.

Didn’t ask about the trip.

Didn’t ask about business.

He immediately asked to see my grandfather.

Now.

Immediately.

His expression remained calm.

His posture relaxed.

But his eyes…

His eyes reflected something dangerous.

Anger.

Cold anger.

The kind that belonged to powerful men who rarely lost control because they didn’t need to.

Mr. Sun visited my grandfather’s room for nearly an hour.

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Chapter 229

When he came out, he said nothing.

t a single word.

Which somehow worried me more.

Then there was Adrian.

I honestly wasn’t prepared for Adrian.

Partly because I hadn’t seen him in weeks.

Partly because my brain was apparently no longer processing information correctly.

He arrived carrying luggage.

Smiling.

Happy.

Suspiciously happy.

The moment he entered the suite, he wrapped an arm around Clara’s shoulders proudly.

“Good news.”

I stared at him.

He stared back.

Waiting.

Apparently expecting a reaction.

I had none.

Finally Adrian sighed dramatically.

“We got married.”

Silence.

Everyone looked at me.

Waiting.

And the only thought that entered my exhausted brain was:

Wait.

What?

I blinked once.

Then twice.

Then looked at Clara.

My CFO.

My friend.

he woman currently carrying a child.

Then back at Adrian.

Then back at Clara.

Then back at Adrian.

“You’re married?”

“Yes.”

I stared.

“You got married.”

“Yes.”

Another pause.

Then the most important question in human history escaped my mouth.

“Where the hell was my invitation?”

The room exploded into laughter.

Jason nearly choked on his coffee.

Alice fell off the couch.

Even Clara looked guilty.

Adrian looked horrified.

“Amber!”

“No.”

I pointed directly at him.

“No.”

My exhaustion temporarily vanished beneath pure outrage.

“You married my CFO.”

“She’s my wife.”

“Exactly.”

I pointed at Clara.

“My CFO.”

Clara started laughing.

“I was in another country!”

Adrian defended himself.

You have phones!”

“We were trying to keep things quiet!”

“You got married!”

The children were openly enjoying the argument now.

Jason looked entirely too entertained.

And for the first time in weeks...

For the first time since my grandfather collapsed...

For the first time since arriving in Sum...

I laughed.

A real laugh.

Not because anything was okay.

Because it wasn't.

Grandfather was still unconscious.

The Vincents were still out there.

The war was still coming.

But surrounded by family, friends, children, and the man who never left my side...

For one brief moment...

I remembered I wasn't fighting alone.

E

when?

Amber POV

The arrival of Adrian and Clara somehow made the hospital suite feel smaller.

Not physically.

Emotionally.

There were simply too many people now.

Too many voices.

Too many personalities colliding inside what had become our temporary headquarters.

And honestly?

I welcomed it.

For weeks everything had revolved around poisonings, investigations, hospitals, and death.

Seeing people laugh felt almost foreign.

Clara looked beautiful.

Exhausted.

Pregnant.

But beautiful.

I hadn't realized just how much time had passed until I saw her.

The last time we had worked together in person, her pregnancy had barely shown.

Now...

Now there was absolutely no hiding it.

"Seven months?" I asked in disbelief.

Clara smiled while rubbing her stomach.

"Seven months."

I stared.

"How are you still walking?"

Adrian looked horrified.

"Amber!"

"What?"

Clara laughed.

"I ask myself the same thing every morning."

The children immediately surrounded her.

Which, in hindsight, should have worried me.

Alice was the first to notice the obvious.

She pointed directly at Clara's stomach.

"Why is there a baby in your belly?"

Silence.

The room immediately froze.

Every adult suddenly found something fascinating elsewhere.

The walls.

The ceiling.

The floor.

Anything except Alice.

Rose looked curious.

Iris looked uncomfortable.

And Alex...

Alex looked physically ill.

Actually ill.

He dramatically turned toward his sister.

“Believe me.”

He shuddered.

“You don’t want to know.”

The room exploded into laughter.

Even Clara nearly choked.

Alice looked offended.

“Why?”

Alex pointed accusingly at absolutely nobody.

“Because grown-up explanations are horrifying.”

I narrowed my eyes.

“Alex.”

The little traitor immediately looked away.

+15 Bcnus

“Yes, Mom Amber?”

What exactly are you doing knowing enough to say that?”

His expression became deeply suspicious.

Jason immediately joined the conversation.

“Actually,” he said while sipping his coffee, “I’m relieved.”

I looked at him.

“Relieved?”

Jason nodded.

“That’s one awkward conversation we won’t have to have later.”

Alex pointed at him immediately.

“See?”

Jason nodded seriously.

“Exactly.”

I suddenly understood where the children got their chaos from.

It wasn’t me.

It was definitely Jason.

Alice crossed her arms dramatically. 1

“I still want to know where babies come from.”

Every adult immediately looked at someone else.

Iris stood up.

“I’m going to the library.”

“Good idea.”

Rose followed her.

“Excellent idea.”

Clara looked ready to laugh herself unconscious.

Adrian looked like he wanted to disappear into another dimension.

And then salvation arrived.

A doctor entered the suite.

Every conversation stopped instantly.

The room’s mood shifted at once.

Because despite all the laughter…

Despite the castle.

Despite the children.

Despite everything.

We were still in a hospital.

Waiting.

The doctor looked directly at me.

“Miss Asher?”

My heart immediately sped up.

“Yes?”

A smile appeared on his face.

“It appears Chairman Asher will be waking soon.”

For a moment I couldn’t move.

The words didn’t fully register.

Then they did.

And I was already running.

I didn’t remember leaving the suite.

Didn’t remember entering the elevator.

Didn’t remember security scrambling after me.

Only one thought existed.

Grandfather.

The hallway outside intensive care blurred around me.

Doctors.

Nurses.

Guards.

I barely noticed any of them.

The door to his room stood partially open.

Voices drifted through it.

Two voices.

One weak.

+15 Bçnus

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 230

Because I recognized both immediately.

Grandfather.

And Mr. Sun.

I slowed my steps.

Not intentionally.

Instinctively.

Because Mr. Sun sounded furious.

Not loud.

Which somehow made it worse.

The older man rarely raised his voice.

He didn’t need to.

“Do you have any idea how reckless this was?”

I froze outside the doorway.

Grandfather’s voice sounded rough.

Weak.

“You always did enjoy lecturing me.”

Mr. Sun ignored that completely.

“She nearly broke.”

Silence.

My chest tightened immediately.

The conversation wasn’t supposed to be happening.

I knew that instantly.

Neither man knew I was there.

“She is stronger than you think.”

Grandfather’s voice sounded tired.

Mr. Sun laughed bitterly.

“That’s exactly the problem.”

The room fell silent for several seconds.

+15 Bchus

Then Mr. Sun spoke again.

You should have told her.”

I frowned.

Told me what?

Inside the room, Grandfather sighed heavily.

“I was waiting.”

“Waiting?”

Mr. Sun sounded genuinely offended now.

“You were poisoned.”

A pause.

“You almost died.”

Another pause.

“And you were still waiting.”

My stomach twisted.

The conversation felt wrong.

Important.

Dangerous.

Like I had accidentally stumbled into the middle of a secret.

“I needed confirmation.”

Grandfather’s voice was barely above a whisper.

“From whom?” Mr. Sun demanded.

The answer came immediately.

“The archives.” 1

Archives?

Neither man spoke for several moments afterward.

Then Mr. Sun sighed.

A tired sound.

The sound of someone carrying knowledge they never wanted.

“She deserves the truth.”

Grandfather didn’t answer immediately.

When he finally did, his voice sounded older than I had ever heard it.

know.”

Another silence.

Then Mr. Sun delivered the final blow.

“No.”

His voice hardened.

“You don’t.” 1

The room seemed to grow colder.

“Because if you did, you would have told Amber the truth years ago.”

Everything inside me stopped.

The truth?

My hand pushed the door open before I consciously made the decision.

Both men turned toward me immediately.

Grandfather looked pale against the hospital bed.

Mr. Sun looked caught.

Neither expression made me feel better.

My pulse thundered inside my ears.

Slowly.

Carefully.

I looked from one man to the other.

Then I asked the only question that mattered.

“The truth about what?”

the agr

A father’s love

Amber POV

The silence after my question stretched painfully.

The truth about what?

Neither man answered immediately.

Grandfather looked exhausted.

Not physically.

Emotionally.

For the first time in my life, I saw hesitation in his eyes.

Real hesitation.

The kind that belonged to someone carrying a burden for decades.

Mr. Sun looked between us before finally sighing.

“You should tell her yourself.”

Grandfather nodded once.

Slowly.

Then he looked at me.

“Amber.”

His voice was still rough from the poison and the surgery.

Weak.

But determined.

“I need to speak with you alone.”

I froze.

The seriousness in his tone immediately made my stomach twist.

Mr. Sun stood first.

Without argument.

Without complaint.

As he reached the door, he paused briefly.

“The others will arrive soon.”

He looked directly at my grandfather.

“Don’t hide behind half-truths this time.”

+158gnus

Then he left.

Outside, I could hear voices approaching.

Jason.

My grandmother.

The children.

Adrian.

Clara.

Mr. Sun intercepted them before they entered.

“Amber and Chairman Asher need to discuss something.”

No one argued.

Though I imagined Jason wanted to.

The door closed.

And suddenly it was just the two of us.

Grandfather patted the chair beside his bed.

“Come here.”

I moved automatically.

Almost mechanically.

He reached for my hand.

His fingers felt colder than I remembered.

For several moments, he simply held it.

Like he was trying to gather the courage to continue.

Then he finally spoke.

“Do you remember what happened when you were young?”

I frowned immediately.

“What do you mean?”

Grandfather’s gaze lowered briefly.

“The kidnapping.”

My chest tightened.

The kidnapping.

One of the many mysteries surrounding my childhood.

C

One of the many things no one ever fully explained.

hook my head.

“Not really.”

A pause.

“I remember fragments.”

A room.

A nanny.

Fear.

Nothing clear.

Grandfather nodded slowly.

As if that answer hurt him.

“You were very young.”

Another pause.

“Three years old.”

I remained silent.

Something told me I wasn’t going to like where this conversation was going.

At all.

Grandfather took a slow breath.

“Amber…”

His grip tightened slightly around my hand.

“You were engaged at birth.”

The words didn’t register immediately.

I blinked.

+15 Bçnu

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 231

“What?”

Grandfather closed his eyes briefly.

“You heard me.”

I stared at him.

Certain I had misunderstood.

“You mean…”

Naughed nervously.

“A symbolic engagement?”

He didn’t laugh.

Didn’t smile.

Didn’t look amused.

My stomach dropped.

“Oh.”

The room suddenly felt too small.

“Who?”

Grandfather looked directly into my eyes.

And answered.

“Gabriel Vincent.”

Everything stopped.

The hospital room.

The machines.

My breathing.

Everything.

Gabriel Vincent.

The same Gabriel Vincent.

The one currently hunting us.

The one who called Jason.

The one connected to the organization.

The one whose family had poisoned my grandfather.

“No.”

The word escaped me automatically.

“No.”

Grandfather nodded sadly.

“Yes.”

I stood abruptly.

The chair scraping loudly against the floor.

My voice sounded strangled now.

“You’re telling me…”

I couldn’t even finish the sentence.

Because it sounded insane.

“Why?”

Grandfather looked away.

“Because things were different then.”

I hated that answer instantly.

“Different how?”

His expression hardened.

“At the time, many families still refused to recognize daughters as heirs.”

I frowned.

That part, unfortunately, made sense.

Several old families still carried those beliefs.

“Your father fought constantly to secure your position.”

His voice softened slightly.

“Riot adored you.”

My chest tightened.

I barely remembered my father.

Only scattered memories.

Fragments.

But every story I heard about him carried the same message.

He loved me.

Grandfather smiled faintly.

“The Vincent family approached us.”

A pause.

“They offered support.”

I already hated where this was going.

“They promised that if you married Gabriel one day, they would publicly support your right to inherit.”

he room spun slightly.

“They backed you as heir.”

Grandfather’s expression darkened.

“On paper, it was perfect.”

Political support.

Financial alliances.

Protection.

Everything powerful families wanted.

Everything my father wanted for me.

“So what changed?”

Because something obviously had.

Grandfather’s eyes became cold.

“Your father found something.”

The words landed heavily.

“What?”

He shook his head.

“I don’t know.”

That surprised me.

“You don’t know?”

“No.”

His voice sounded frustrated now.

“Riot never told me.”

A pause.

“But whatever he discovered…”

Grandfather looked toward the hospital window.

“It terrified him.”

My pulse quickened.

“He ended the engagement immediately.”

The room felt colder.

+15 Bçnus

“He canceled every agreement.”

Another pause.

“And he started investigating the Vincents.”

I swallowed hard.

Because I already knew what happened next.

Or at least part of it.

“My parents died.”

Grandfather nodded.

“Not long afterward.”

The silence became unbearable.

Then he said the words that truly shattered everything.

“And shortly after that…”

His voice broke.

For the first time.

“You were kidnapped.”

I stopped breathing.

Not metaphorically.

Actually stopped.

Because suddenly…

Everything connected.

Jason.

The Bloom girls.

Iris.

The children.

The old stories from Sum.

The castle.

The Ember family.

The heirs.

All of it.

A terrible realization crawled through my mind.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 232

hey came for me.”

Grandfather closed his eyes.

“Yes.”

The answer was immediate.

Absolute.

No hesitation.

No uncertainty.

Yes.

My legs suddenly felt weak.

Three years old.

Three.

A child.

I remembered flashes.

Tiny fragments.

Being scared.

Being alone.

Being told to behave.

A woman yelling.

The memories were vague.

Broken.

But suddenly they felt real.

“They took me because of the engagement.”

Grandfather shook his head slowly.

“No.”

That surprised me.

“No?”

His expression became grim.

“They took you because your father refused them.”

The words hit like a physical blow.

Because this had never been about marriage.

+15 Bçnus

Never been about alliances.

Never been about politics.

Control.

It had always been about control.

Suddenly, countless pieces began falling into place.

Jason.

The Bloom girls.

Iris.

The children hidden by the Beckers. 1

The stories from Sum.

The castle.

The Ember family.

The heirs.

The Vincents had not been creating alliances.

They had been collecting people.

Shaping them.

Positioning them exactly where they wanted them.

And my father had discovered it.

He had seen something terrible enough to destroy an agreement that should have secured our family's future.

Something terrible enough to risk offending one of the most powerful organizations in existence.

Something terrible enough to get himself killed.

I swallowed hard.

"Grandfather..."

My voice sounded small.

Far younger than I wanted it to.

"Did my father know?"

His eyes closed briefly.

"Yes."

The answer came instantly.

Without hesitation.

"He knew they were dangerous."

Apause.

"He knew enough to be afraid."

The room felt impossibly quiet.

Only the steady beeping of the heart monitor filled the space between us.

My grandfather squeezed my hand again.

For the first time since waking up, he looked uncertain.

Not weak.

Not frightened.

Uncertain.

As if he had reached the part of the story he dreaded the most.

“Amber.”

I looked up.

His expression was filled with regret.

The kind of regret that had been carried for decades.

“There is more.”

My stomach dropped.

Because somehow...

I knew the worst part of the story still hadn’t been told.

x

A childrens castle

Amber POV

I stared at my grandfather in silence.

Every answer he gave seemed to create ten more questions.

For years, I had assumed my kidnapping was an isolated incident. A tragedy. A crime committed by opportunists who saw a vulnerable child and took advantage of the situation.

Now I wasn’t so sure.

Now it felt like another piece of a much larger puzzle.

Grandfather leaned back against the hospital bed, exhaustion visible on his face.

The conversation was clearly taking a toll on him, but he continued anyway.

“When you disappeared, I searched everywhere.”

His voice was quiet.

Painfully quiet.

“You have no idea how many people were looking for you, Amber.”

I swallowed hard.

“I hired private investigators. Security firms. Former military personnel. I contacted every business partner, every government official I knew. I even offered rewards.”

His hand tightened around mine.

“And still, there was nothing.”

The room fell silent.

Only the rhythmic beeping of the monitors filled the space.

“I wasn’t the only one searching.”

That made me frown.

“What do you mean?”

Grandfather looked toward the window before answering.

“The same week you disappeared, Jason vanished.”

My eyes widened.

“What?”

He nodded slowly.

“At the time, we didn’t connect the two events.”

A bitter smile crossed his face.

“Looking back now, we should have.”

Achill ran down my spine.

Jason had been taken.

I had been taken.

Iris had been taken.

The Bloom girls had been taken.

The pattern was impossible to ignore.

“How did they find me?” I asked quietly.

Grandfather’s expression softened.

“That is the strange part.”

The strange part?

Everything about this story was strange.

“It wasn’t one of my investigators.”

I frowned.

“Then who found me?”

“The governor.”

I blinked.

“The governor of Sum?”

He nodded.

“Back then he wasn’t governor yet. He was just a young businessman beginning to make a name for himself.”

That somehow made the story even stranger.

“He found you at the castle.”

My heart skipped a beat.

“The castle?”

“The very same castle you purchased.”

I sat frozen.

No.

That couldn’t be right.

Grandfather smiled weakly at my expression.

“That was my reaction too.”

I tried to process what he was saying.

The castle.

The one we had just purchased. 1

The one connected to the Ember family.

The one tied to the Vincents’ exile.

That castle.

“You were alone.”

His voice softened further.

“Completely alone.”

A strange feeling settled in my chest.

The castle suddenly felt much less like a coincidence.

“The governor told me he found you wandering near one of the inner courtyards.”

I could almost picture it.

A tiny version of myself.

Dirty.

Lost.

Walking through an abandoned castle.

“He said you weren’t crying.”

That surprised me.

Not because I didn’t believe him.

Because somehow it felt familiar.

“He expected you to be terrified.”

Grandfather shook his head.

“But you weren’t.”

“What was I doing?”

A faint smile appeared on his face.

“Eating a peach.”

I stared. 1

“A peach?”

Grandfather laughed softly.

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Chapter 233

absurdity of it almost made me laugh too.

“You were sitting on a broken stone wall, filthy from head to toe, your clothes torn, your hair a complete mess..”

A pause.

“And calmly eating a peach.”

I couldn’t help it.

I laughed.

The image was ridiculous.

“You looked like you belonged there.”

That made me stop laughing.

Something about those words felt important.

“How did he know who I was?”

Grandfather pointed toward a small decorative phoenix on a nearby shelf.

“You were carrying a toy.”

A memory flashed through my mind.

Brief.

Fleeting.

A small carved bird.

Gold and red. 1

“A phoenix.”

Grandfather nodded.

“Your father had commissioned it for you.”

My throat tightened.

“The governor recognized the family crest immediately.”

Of course he had.

The phoenix was synonymous with the Asher family.

“He called me that same day.”

Grandfather’s eyes became distant.

“I drove for fourteen hours without stopping.”

A shaky breath escaped him.

+15 8cnus

“When I arrived…”

voice cracked.

“You ran into my arms.”

Tears burned unexpectedly behind my eyes.

For a moment neither of us spoke.

Then I asked the question that had been bothering me since the beginning.

“How did I get there?”

Silence.

Grandfather looked away.

And suddenly I knew I wasn’t going to like the answer.

Because he didn’t have one.

“We never figured it out.”

My stomach dropped.

“What?”

He shook his head.

“No witnesses.”

A pause.

“No records.”

Another pause.

“No vehicles seen entering or leaving.”

The room felt colder.

“The castle had been abandoned for years.”

I frowned.

“Someone had to bring me there.”

“Yes.”

His answer came immediately.

“Someone did.”

But nobody knew who.

Nobody knew why.

Nobody knew how a kidnapped three-year-old child had somehow ended up inside a castle tied to a family that had disappeared centuries ago. 1

And somehow...

impossible as it sounded...

I had a feeling that whoever left me there had not intended for me to die.

The question was why.

And as I looked at my grandfather’s troubled expression, I had the distinct feeling that the answer might change everything.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 234

Amber POV

I sat quietly beside Grandfather’s hospital bed, trying to process everything he had told me.

The engagement.

The kidnapping.

The castle.

The Vincents.

Every answer seemed to create a dozen new questions.

For a few moments, neither of us spoke.

The steady rhythm of the heart monitor filled the silence between us.

“You know what bothered me the most?” Grandfather finally asked.

I looked up.

“What?”

His expression turned thoughtful.

“You weren’t traumatized.”

I frowned immediately.

“What do you mean?”

A sad smile crossed his face.

“When children are kidnapped, they usually come back frightened.”

A pause.

“They cry.”

Another pause.

“They have nightmares.”

I knew exactly where he was going.

“They don’t trust people anymore.”

Grandfather nodded.

“Exactly.”

His gaze drifted toward the hospital window.

“But not you.”

A strange feeling settled in my chest.

+15 8chus

“You came home dirty.”

Apause.

“Hungry.”

Another pause.

“Completely unbothered.”

I stared at him.

That sounded ridiculous.

“You expected me to be traumatized?”

Grandfather laughed softly.

“Honestly?”

A small smile appeared.

“Yes.”

That made me smile too.

“You were three years old, Amber.”

The smile disappeared from his face.

“Three.”

His voice softened.

“And somehow you acted as though you’d just come back from a vacation.”

I blinked.

“What?”

Grandfather nodded.

“The doctors were confused.”

A pause.

“The psychologists were confused.”

Another pause.

“I was confused.”

The more he spoke, the stranger the story became.

“Did I say anything?”

His eyes narrowed thoughtfully.

“Very little.”

That wasn’t surprising.

You never explained what happened.”

“What?”

Grandfather nodded.

“We asked.”

A pause.

“We begged.”

Another pause.

“We even tried bribing you with ice cream.”

I couldn’t help laughing.

“And?”

Grandfather sighed dramatically.

“You refused.”

That sounded exactly like something I would do.

“What did I say?”

His expression became oddly serious.

“You said it was a secret.”

The laughter died instantly.

A secret.

Something cold slid down my spine.

“That’s all?”

Grandfather nodded.

“Every time.”

A pause.

“‘It’s a secret.’”

The words felt familiar.

Not remembered.

Recognized.

“As you grew older, we hoped you’d remember.”

His gaze lowered.

“But you never did.”

maybe I had.

Maybe the memories were simply buried somewhere too deep to reach.

“What about the Vincents?”

Grandfather’s expression darkened immediately.

For the first time since waking up, genuine anger appeared in his eyes.

“They acted perfectly.”

That answer surprised me.

“What?”

“The engagement was dissolved.”

A pause.

“They accepted it gracefully.”

Another pause.

“They were polite.”

His jaw tightened.

“Too polite.”

I understood immediately.

Because sometimes the most dangerous people smiled while planning your funeral.

“You thought they killed my parents.”

It wasn’t a question.

Grandfather closed his eyes.

“Yes.”

The answer came instantly.

No hesitation.

No uncertainty.

“Your father discovered something.”

A pause.

“He ended the engagement.”

Another pause.

“Then he died.”

N

The room fell silent.

could never prove it.”

His voice sounded frustrated.

“I tried.”

A pause.

“But there was never enough evidence.”

The Vincents were careful.

Of course they were.

People like them survived because they never left evidence behind.

“So why stop investigating?”

Grandfather looked tired suddenly.

Because the answer hurt.

“Jason.”

I frowned.

“What does Jason have to do with it?”

“Everything.”

His gaze met mine.

“When Jason returned.”

Understanding slowly dawned.

The realization hit me all at once.

Jason had been taken during the same period I disappeared.

And he had returned.

Not from another country.

Not from Sum.

From somewhere much closer.

Someone local had been involved.

Someone from home.

Grandfather nodded.

“At the time, I believed we were looking in the wrong direction.”

A pause.

A

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Chapter 235

“If Jason was hidden locally, then perhaps you were too.”

Which meant he shifted his focus.

Away from international conspiracies.

Toward local enemies.

I couldn’t even blame him.

It made sense.

“What about the governor?”

Grandfather smiled faintly.

“That part is almost funny.”

Considering everything else, I doubted that.

“He wasn’t searching for you.”

That wasn’t surprising.

“He was searching for treasure.”

I blinked.

“What?”

Grandfather laughed.

“The mine.”

A pause.

“He heard stories.”

Another pause.

“Legends about rare gems hidden in the mountains.”

I immediately thought of the alexandrite.

The governor had been treasure hunting.

And somehow found me instead.

“He decided to visit the castle on a whim.”

A pause.

“And there you were.”

The absurdity of it made me shake my head.

My entire life had changed because one curious businessman decided to chase a rumor.

“What about the owners?”

+15 Bcnus

Grandfather smiled softly.

The castle belonged to an elderly couple.”

I remembered the contract.

The strange clauses.

The preservation requirements.

“They claimed their family once served the Ember family.”

A chill ran through me.

The Ember family again.

Every road seemed to lead back to them.

“When they learned your story, they became very attached to you.”

I frowned.

“Attached?”

Grandfather nodded.

“They met you several times afterward.”

That surprised me.

I had no memory of them.

“They believed your appearance at the castle wasn’t an accident.”

A pause.

“They called it fate.”

That sounded exactly like something old aristocrats would say.

Grandfather smiled.

“When they updated their estate documents, they added a clause.”

My stomach tightened.

“The land would first be offered to you.”

A pause.

“Or me.”

Another pause.

“For the lowest legal price.”

I stared at him.

The castle.

+15 8çnus

The mine.

The land.

All of it.

Waiting for decades.

Waiting for us.

Grandfather squeezed my hand gently.

“That is why I wanted to come to Sum.”

I froze.

“What?”

A smile appeared on his face.

“The governor contacted me months ago.”

Everything clicked.

“The couple passed away.”

Grandfather nodded.

“And according to their wishes…”

His smile widened slightly.

“You had first choice.”

I sat there speechless.

Now it seemed the castle had been waiting for me all along.

+15 8çnus

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Chapter 236

Microwave a spoon

Amber POV

I sat quietly beside my grandfather's hospital bed, trying to process everything he had just told me.

The engagement.

The kidnapping.

The castle.

The Ember family.

The fact that an entire piece of my life had been hidden from me.

"Why?"

The question escaped before I could stop it.

Grandfather looked at me.

I shook my head.

"No, really."

My voice cracked slightly.

"Why now?"

The hospital room suddenly felt too small.

"Why didn't you tell me before?"

A pause.

“Not when I became an adult.”

Another pause.

“Not when I inherited Phoenix Ashes.” 1

I swallowed hard.

“Not even when you knew we were investigating the Vincents.”

The words hung heavily between us.

For the first time since he woke up, Grandfather looked genuinely guilty.

He sighed deeply.

“I was trying to protect you.”

I laughed bitterly.

The answer was exactly what I expected.

“It never works.”

+15 Benus

MCP5%3ч%

Grandfather smiled sadly.

+15 8chus

A’pause.

“It doesn’t.”

Silence settled over the room.

I stared at the blanket covering his legs.

At the IV line attached to his arm.

At the monitors tracking every heartbeat.

He almost died.

And somehow he had still been trying to protect me.

“You should have trusted me.”

His expression softened.

“I know.”

The answer came immediately.

No excuses.

No arguments.

Just honesty.

“I know.”

For a moment neither of us spoke.

Then Grandfather reached out and placed his hand over mine.

His grip wasn’t as strong as it used to be.

But it was steady.

“Amber.”

I looked up.

His eyes were bright.

“I needed you to know now.”

My chest tightened.

“Why?”

He took a slow breath.

“Because if the Vincents truly decide to move against us…”

A pause.

they decide to finish what they started…”

Another pause.

“You need to know what you’re fighting.”

The room felt colder.

Not who.

What.

An organization.

A system.

Something much larger than a single family.

Grandfather squeezed my hand.

“And because…”

For the first time, his voice faltered.

“I am proud of you.”

My breath caught.

He smiled.

A real smile.

The kind he rarely showed anyone.

“You built your own company.”

A pause.

“You protected those children.”

Another pause.

“You stood against people who were stronger than you.”

I blinked rapidly.

“You kept getting back up.”

His smile widened slightly.

“Even when it hurt.”

I felt tears burning behind my eyes.

“Grandfather…”

“No.”

He shook his head.

et me finish.”

I laughed despite myself.

Even recovering from poisoning, he was still impossible.

“I spent years worrying about you.”

His gaze softened.

“I worried that losing your parents would break you.”

A pause.

“I worried that the kidnapping would leave scars.”

Another pause.

“I worried that inheriting this family would be too much.”

His eyes met mine.

“I was wrong.”

The tears finally escaped.

Because I had spent so much of my life trying to prove myself.

Trying to earn my place.

Trying to be enough.

And somehow...

The person whose opinion mattered most had been proud of me all along.

I stood abruptly and wrapped my arms around him.

Carefully.

Mindful of the machines and wires.

Grandfather froze for half a second.

Then slowly hugged me back.

His hand rested on my head the same way it had when I was a child.

“I’m proud of you too.”

His laugh sounded suspiciously emotional.

“Good.”

A knock interrupted the moment.

The door opened before either of us could answer.

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Mrs. Sun stepped inside.

She stopped immediately upon seeing us.

A knowing smile appeared on her face.

“Am I interrupting?”

“Yes,” Grandfather said immediately.

“No,” I said at the same time.

Mrs. Sun laughed.

“Good.”

She stepped fully into the room.

“The board is here.”

Grandfather blinked.

“The entire board?”

Mrs. Sun nodded.

“Every single one.”

A pause.

“They’ve been driving the doctors insane.”

That sounded exactly like the Asher board.

“They’ve been waiting for you to wake up.”

Grandfather looked genuinely surprised.

“All of them?”

Mrs. Sun smiled softly.

“They were worried.”

That made me smile.

Because unlike many corporations, the Asher board wasn’t made up of opportunists.

They were his friends.

People who had stood beside him for decades.

People who remembered the worst years.

The years when the company nearly collapsed.

The years when investors fled.

The years when everyone predicted failure.

C +15 acrius

And somehow...

They stayed.

Together we made our way toward the private conference room attached to the hospital wing.

Security followed discreetly behind us.

The moment the door opened, every person inside stood.

All twelve board members.

Men and women who had spent most of their lives building Asher Corp alongside my grandfather.

Several of them looked emotional.

One looked ready to cry.

Another immediately pointed at Grandfather.

“You idiot.”

The room burst into laughter.

Grandfather grinned.

“I missed you too.”

The atmosphere shifted instantly.

The tension dissolved.

Relief replaced it.

One of the older directors stepped forward.

“We thought we’d lost you.”

The room fell quiet.

For a moment nobody joked.

Nobody smiled.

Because they all knew how close it had been.

Grandfather's expression softened.

"So did I."

That earned him several disapproving looks.

Then one of the female directors turned toward me.

And suddenly every eye in the room followed.

I immediately became suspicious.

The woman smiled.

"Amber."

"We need to talk about your performance."

Definitely uh oh.

The room exploded into smiles.

"You've been incredible."

Another director nodded.

"A menace."

"Terrifying."

"Unreasonably competent."

"Exhausting."

I blinked.

Were they complimenting me?

"I don't know how Chairman Asher survived you."

The room laughed again. 1

Then one of the oldest directors leaned back in his chair.

“We all wish our grandchildren were like her.”

Several heads nodded immediately.

Another director sighed dramatically.

“My grandson tried to microwave a spoon last week.”

The room erupted.

And for the first time since the poisoning...

For the first time since the Vincents entered our lives...

I saw my grandfather laugh.

A genuine laugh.

Surrounded by the people who had never abandoned him.

And suddenly, despite everything still waiting for us...

For the first time in weeks...

It felt like we might actually win.

+15 Benus

Fast forward

Amber POV

Two weeks later, Grandfather was finally released from the hospital.

It should have been a simple moment.

A happy one.

The end of a terrible chapter.

Instead, it felt like the beginning of something much bigger.

The Vincents had failed.

For now.

Grandfather was alive.

The company was stable.

The investigation was advancing.

And somehow, despite everything that had happened, our lives had continued moving forward.

Fast.

Very fast.

The castle was finished.

Well…

Mostly.

There were still decorative details being installed, artwork waiting to be restored, and a few gardens that needed another season before they would look truly spectacular.

But for all practical purposes, it was done.

And it was beautiful.

The ancient stone walls had been restored.

The towers illuminated at night.

The library rebuilt exactly as I wanted.

The hidden passages preserved.

The children’s wing transformed into something that looked like it belonged in a fairy tale.

I loved every single inch of it.

The children certainly did.

Alice had claimed an entire tower.

Alex had discovered enough hidden corridors to terrify the security team.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 238

kingdom.

And Iris...

And

Iris had started smiling more.

That alone made every sleepless night worth it.

The school situation had also evolved dramatically..

Or rather...

Mrs. Sun had evolved it.

By evolved, I meant she had looked at every school available in the region, declared them inadequate, and built an entirely new one.

Because apparently that was a reasonable solution.

The school was located between the Sun properties and the castle grounds.

Large.

Modern.

Beautiful.

The teachers were personally selected by Mrs. Sun herself.

Which honestly terrified me more than any government inspection.

She had interviewed every candidate.

Personally.

The poor applicants never stood a chance.

The result, however, was extraordinary.

Academic programs.

Sports.

Arts.

Languages.

Technology labs.

Music programs.

Equestrian facilities.

Even Jason had looked impressed.

The standing invitation for Sun and Asher descendants to attend had quickly attracted the interest of several allied families as well.

The school wasn’t just becoming a school.

It was becoming a gathering point.

Aplace where future heirs could grow up together.

A’safer version of what had once existed.

One that the Vincents would never control.

The companies had also finished relocating.

That part still felt surreal.

The main branches of Phoenix Ashes and Asher Corporation now operated from Sum.

Jason had done the same with several major divisions of Sun Corporation.

Entire office buildings had been purchased.

New headquarters established.

Hundreds of employees had relocated voluntarily.

Thousands of local jobs had been created.

And somehow, despite all of it, the transition had gone surprisingly smoothly.

Which was why Jason and I found ourselves standing behind a stage curtain waiting for a press conference to begin.

The media had gone absolutely insane.

Speculation ran wild.

Was Asher Corporation leaving River City?

Was Sun Corporation abandoning its original headquarters?

Had the attack on Chairman Asher triggered the move?

Was there a political reason?

The rumors grew more ridiculous by the hour.

One article had suggested we were secretly building a private kingdom.

I may or may not have framed that one. 1

“You’re smiling.”

Jason’s voice pulled me back to reality.

I looked up.

“I found a very entertaining article.”

His eyes narrowed.

“Should I be worried?”

“Possibly.”

That answer did not reassure him.

The event coordinator appeared moments later.

“Five minutes.”

Jason adjusted his tie.

I reviewed my notes one final time.

Not that I needed them.

The truth was simple.

We weren't running.

We were building.

The curtain opened.

The room beyond was packed.

Journalists.

Investors.

Government officials.

Business analysts.

Dozens of cameras immediately turned toward us.

The flashes started instantly.

Jason and I took our seats.

The moderator introduced us.

Questions began immediately.

"Miss Asher, is it true that Phoenix Ashes is relocating its headquarters to Sum?"

I smiled politely.

"Yes."

The room immediately erupted into activity.

Reporters began writing furiously.

"Why?"

I folded my hands calmly.

“Because Phoenix Ashes has reached a point where expansion is necessary.”

A pause.

“And because I believe Sum represents extraordinary opportunities for future growth.”

! &! f®wV}A{!

Several journalists nodded.

One raised his hand immediately.

“What about Asher Corporation?”

I smiled.

“Phoenix Ashes and Asher Corporation will be merging operationally.”

That created even more chaos.

The room practically exploded.

Questions were shouted from every direction.

I waited patiently.

Then continued.

“The companies will maintain their identities.”

A pause.

“But together, we can create opportunities neither could achieve alone.”

The room quieted slightly.

Most investors looked pleased.

Others looked terrified.

Honestly, both reactions were fair.

Then attention shifted toward Jason.

“Mr. Sun, is Sun Corporation also relocating?”

Jason leaned forward slightly.

His expression remained calm.

Professional.

Confident.

“No.”

The answer surprised the room.

Jason smiled faintly.

“Sun Corporation already operates successfully within Sum.”

A pause.

“The offices located in River City will continue functioning exactly as they always have.”

Several reporters exchanged confused looks.

Jason continued.

am not taking opportunities away from River City.”

Another pause.

“I am creating new opportunities for Sum citizens.”

The room fell quiet.

Because that was the truth.

Factories.

Technology centers.

Research facilities.

Office buildings.

Jason wasn’t moving jobs.

He was creating more.

The governor smiled proudly from the front row.

Several local officials looked equally pleased.

This wasn't temporary anymore.

This wasn't a hiding place.

This wasn't a strategic retreat.

This was home.

Beside me, Jason answered another question while cameras flashed around us.

Outside, somewhere beyond the city, stood our castle.

The school.

The mine.

The future we were building.

I wasn't looking over my shoulder.

I was looking forward.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 239

Jason POV

I wasn't entirely sure whether to be impressed or concerned.

Possibly both.

Actually, definitely both.

I stood beside Amber as my grandmother proudly guided us through the newest addition to our rapidly expanding lives.

The school.

Calling it a school felt inaccurate.

Calling it a small kingdom disguised as a school was probably more appropriate.

The building stretched across several acres between the castle grounds and the Sun estate.

Elegant stone towers rose above carefully landscaped gardens.

Large windows reflected the morning sunlight.

Decorative bridges connected different sections of the campus.

The resemblance was impossible to miss.

My grandmother had built a miniature version of Amber's castle.

Not inspired by it.

Not similar to it.

A miniature replica.

The moment Amber realized it, she looked suspiciously emotional.

My grandmother pretended not to notice.

Everyone else pretended not to notice.

I pretended not to notice.

The children, meanwhile, were openly running wild.

"LOOK!"

Alice pointed excitedly toward one of the towers.

"That one is mine!"

"No it isn't."

Alex looked deeply offended.

"That's the science tower."

Alice crossed her arms.

“It can be both.”

Honestly, I admired her confidence.

Classes were scheduled to begin in three weeks.

Three weeks.

And somehow the entire facility was already operational.

Classrooms.

Libraries.

Laboratories.

Music rooms.

Art studios.

Sports facilities.

There was even an indoor equestrian training area.

Because apparently my grandmother believed moderation was for other people.

I watched her explaining future expansion plans to a group of administrators.

She looked happier than I had seen her in years.

More energetic.

More alive.

Driven.

The entire project seemed to have awakened something inside her.

Even Grandfather Sun looked surprised.

“I haven’t seen her like this since we were young.”

Mr. Asher nodded from beside him.

“She scares me.”

Grandfather laughed.

“Good.”

I couldn’t disagree.

The truly terrifying part came when we reached the nursery wing.

I stopped walking.

Amber stopped walking.

Mr. Asher stopped walking.

The entire group stopped walking.

There, proudly displayed before us, was a fully operational early childhood education center.

Complete.

Finished.

Ready.

There was only one problem.

No babies existed.

Not a single one.

I looked toward my grandmother.

She looked pleased with herself.

“Grandmother.”

“Yes?”

I pointed.

“We don’t have babies.”

She waved dismissively.

“Not yet.”

That answer did not help.

“Clara is due in three months.”

She said it as though that explained everything.

“Three months.”

A pause.

“I like being prepared.”

Mr. Asher nearly choked.

Amber covered her face.

I stared at the nursery.

It could easily accommodate forty children.

Possibly more.

My grandmother had planned for an army.

Not a baby.

“Alex and Iris helped.”

That somehow explained everything and nothing simultaneously.

this point I was no longer surprised when those two became involved in absurd projects.

The real surprise arrived shortly afterward.

It came in the form of Alice.

Who walked directly toward us carrying several printed pages.

She looked extremely proud of herself.

Which immediately made me nervous.

“Grandma!”

My grandmother smiled.

“Yes, darling?”

Alice handed over the papers.

“My future classmates.”

Silence.

My grandmother blinked.

Then blinked again.

Then began reading.

The smile slowly disappeared from her face.

That got everyone’s attention immediately.

“What’s wrong?”

Amber moved closer.

My grandmother simply handed over the papers.

I took them first.

And froze.

Names.

Lots of names.

Dozens of names.

All familiar.

Painfully familiar.

Children from major families across the continent.

Political families.

Bonus

KAL

Business families.

Aristocratic families.

Future heirs.

Future leaders.

Future problems.

I looked at Alice.

She smiled innocently.

Which was always dangerous.

“Why do you have this?”

Alice beamed.

“Oh!”

As though it was obvious.

“I made a game.”

The adults exchanged confused looks.

“A game?”

Alice nodded enthusiastically.

“Online.”

That explanation somehow made everything worse.

“What kind of game?”

She looked proud.

“An entrance test.”

Silence.

Complete silence.

Even Alex looked impressed.

Which was alarming.

Alice happily continued.

“The kids liked it.”

A pause.

“Then they talked to their parents.”

Another pause.

+15 8çnus

“And now they want to come.”

The world stopped.

I slowly looked down at the list again.

Thirty-seven names.

Thirty-seven.

Mr. Asher sat down.

Grandfather Sun started laughing.

Amber looked ready to develop a migraine.

And my grandmother…

My grandmother looked delighted.

Absolutely delighted.

“Wonderful.”

No.

Not wonderful.

Thirty-seven future heirs relocating their families was not wonderful.

It was chaos.

“My darling.”

My grandmother crouched beside Alice.

“Did you really convince all these children?”

Alice nodded proudly.

“They said the school sounded fun.”

Of course they did.

The terrifying part?

I believed her.

Because somehow, against all logic, Alice had accidentally succeeded where professional recruitment teams would have failed.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 240

Cause for alarm

Jason POV

The following hour dissolved into complete madness.

Administrators began discussing expansion.

Housing.

Transportation.

New faculty.

Additional security.

Families were already contacting the school.

Apparently several had expressed genuine interest in relocating.

Relocating.

Entire families.

For school.

My grandmother looked happier with every passing minute.

Then she casually revealed another surprise.

Scholarship agreements.

Across multiple universities.

Several countries.

Prestigious institutions.

All already negotiated.

All already approved.

All already funded.

The room stared.

“You did this already?”

Amber looked stunned.

My grandmother nodded.

“Years ago.”

Silence fell.

For the first time all day, nobody laughed.

Nobody joked.

Nobody spoke.

Even Alice seemed curious.

Grandfather Sun looked at his wife.

And suddenly his expression softened.

“You were serious.”

My grandmother smiled.

A small smile.

A nostalgic one.

“Of course I was.”

Mr. Asher frowned.

“About what?”

My grandmother looked toward the large windows overlooking the school grounds.

Then she answered quietly.

“I always wanted to build a school.”

A pause.

“With my best friend.”

The room grew still.

Everyone understood immediately.

Mrs. Asher.

Amber’s grandmother.

The late Mrs. Asher.

My grandmother smiled sadly.

“We planned everything.”

Another pause.

“The curriculum.”

“The scholarships.”

“The facilities.”

“The programs.”

Years.

Decades.

+15 8çnus

A

All of it.

Already prepared.

Already designed.

Already waiting.

Grandfather Sun squeezed her hand gently.

My grandmother laughed softly.

“I suppose I was just waiting for a reason.”

Then, as if she hadn’t already dropped enough surprises for one day, she looked at the administrators and added casually:

“Oh, and of course it will be a boarding school.”

The room froze.

Amber slowly turned toward her.

“Of course?”

My grandmother nodded.

“Not every family will wish to relocate.”

That actually made sense.

A dangerous amount of sense.

She smiled proudly.

“We have four residence halls already completed.”

I blinked.

Four?

When had that happened?

The administrators looked entirely unsurprised.

Which meant this had been planned for a while.

“A boys’ residence.”

“A girls’ residence.”

“A junior residence for younger students.”

“And a leadership residence for older students preparing for university.”

Mr. Asher stared.

“You built dormitories?”

“Naturally.”

The answer came instantly.

though not building dormitories would have been unreasonable.

“I also contacted several of my friends.”

That statement imtnediately worried me.

My grandmother had influential friends.

Very influential friends.

The kind of people who controlled industries, governments, and family empires.

“And?”

Amber asked cautiously.

The smile that appeared on my grandmother's face should have come with a warning label.

"They loved the idea."

I sighed.

Of course they did.

"They are already planning to send their children and grandchildren."

The administrators looked delighted.

I looked terrified.

Alice looked proud.

Which somehow made the situation worse.

"How many?"

I asked carefully.

My grandmother considered the question.

"Currently?"

A pause.

"Twenty-three confirmed."

Silence.

Complete silence.

Then she continued.

"And another seventeen interested."

Mr. Asher sat down again.