A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 421

3 Days

3 Days

Jason POV

Amber’s numbers had finally stopped falling, but nobody was willing to use the word stable again.

Neither was I.

Emory remained with the critical-care team, working through every result as it came in while I sat beside Amber’s bed with my hand wrapped around hers. Her condition was still critical, and every few minutes my eyes moved automatically from her face to the monitors, as if I could somehow keep the numbers where they belonged simply by watching them.

Mr. Asher hadn’t left either. His phone had barely stopped ringing since he’d discovered that his sister had contacted relatives to announce that her branch no longer wanted to be considered part of the Asher family.

We already knew Adrian was missing, nobody could reach him. His phone wasn’t connecting, he hadn’t responded to company communications, and no one could establish his current location. Mr. Stait’s people were already tracing his movements.

The problem was Clara.

We had tried calling her repeatedly, but she hadn’t answered. With Amber suddenly turning critical and everyone scrambling between her medical emergency and the investigation, nobody had managed to reach Adrian’s wife directly.

Pamela and Marcus were standing just outside Amber’s room when Pamela’s phone rang.

She looked at the screen and immediately stepped inside.

“It’s Clara.”

Every conversation stopped.

Pamela answered. “Clara?”

“Pamela, I’m sorry. I just saw all your calls. Is everything okay? Is this about Amber?”

Pamela looked at us before putting the phone on speaker.

“Clara, Jason, Mr. Asher and Mr. Stait are here with me.”

There was a brief pause.

“Okay.”

Pamela took a breath. “We’ve been trying to reach you because we can’t find Adrian.”

Silence.

Then Clara sounded confused rather than frightened.

“What do you mean you can’t find him? He’s on a work trip.”

3 Days

We all looked at one another.

Asher stepped closer. “What work trip?”

Clara hesitated.

“The one he left for to open an auxiliary branch. He told me he’d be away for a few days. I assumed that’s why he wasn’t answering much.”

My stomach tightened.

“He was supposed to arrive at Sum 3 days ago, but it was cancelled because of Ambers condition” Mr. Asher said.

Clara went completely silent.

Pamela’s expression changed.

“Clara?”

“I’ve been calling him.”

The confusion in her voice was disappearing.

“He wasn’t answering, but I thought he was working. Adrian gets busy, especially when he travels. I wasn’t worried at first because he told me where he was going.”

“When did you last actually speak to him?” Mr. Stait asked.

She gave him the time. 3 days ago, he called her.

“And since then?”

“Messages. A few went through at first. But today I’ve been calling and he’s not picking up at all. That’s why I finally checked my phone properly and saw all of your missed calls.”

Mr. Stait was already typing.

“Send Pamela everything Adrian gave you about this trip. City, hotel, flights, meetings, anything.”

“I will.”

There was movement on Clara’s end, followed by a shaky breath.

“You’re telling me there was no work trip?”

“Not one arranged through Amber or Asher Corporation that we’re aware of,” Mr. Asher said.

“Oh God.”

Pamela leaned against the edge of the table. “Clara, think carefully. Before Adrian left, was anything unusual happening? Anything with his family?”

Clara was quiet for several seconds.

A

3 Days

“His father had been bothering him again.”

Mr. Asher’s expression hardened.

“About what?”

“Leaving the company.”

“Leaving Asher Corporation?” I asked.

“Yes. His father wanted him to resign as vice president and help them build a new company.”

Mr. Asher stared at the phone.

“Who is ‘them’?”

“I don’t know everyone involved. Adrian wouldn’t talk about it much because he wanted nothing to do with them. He hasn’t really been on speaking terms with his family since the Heir Trials.”

That changed the situation.

Mr. Asher had just discovered that his sister was telling relatives her entire branch intended to separate from the Asher family. Now Clara was telling us Adrian had been pressured to leave Amber’s company and join them.

And he’d refused.

“Did Adrian ever consider it?” Mr. Asher asked.

“No. He was furious they kept asking. He said he wasn’t leaving Amber or his position just because his family suddenly wanted to start something of their own.”

Mr. Stait looked at Pamela and Marcus.

“We’re moving Clara and the baby.”

Marcus nodded immediately.

Clara heard him.

“Moving us where?”

“Somewhere secure until we locate Adrian,” Mr. Stait said.

“Wait. You think we’re in danger?”

“We don’t know,” Pamela answered. “And that’s exactly why we’re not taking chances.”

“Pamela-”

“Pack for yourself and the baby. Only what you need. Marcus and I will come get you.”

There was another pause.

Then Clara whispered, “Something happened to him, didn’t it?”

2 Day’s

Nobody could answer that.

Not yet.

Pamela took the phone off speaker and stayed with Clara while she packed. Marcus was already coordinating transportation and security with Mr. Stait before they left the hospital.

By the time they reached River City, Mr. Stait’s people were checking every detail Clara had sent about Adrian’s supposed trip.

Irenined beside Amber.

s nowhere else I could be.

dition was still critical, and every time the monitors changed rhythm, my heart seemed to stop em. Emory moved constantly between Amber’s room, the laboratory and the critical-care team, ing to let anything distract him from keeping her alive.

P

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 422

The Aster Formaly & Done

The Asher Family Is Done

Jason POV

Hours later, my phone rang. The second I saw Marcus’s name on the screen, I answered and put him on speaker so Mr. Asher and Mr. Stait could hear. “Do you have them?”

“Yes. Clara and the baby are with us. We just left the building.”

Mr. Asher exhaled beside me, some of the tension finally leaving his face. It didn't last. I heard Pamela say something sharply in the background, too low for me to understand, and Marcus suddenly went quiet.

"What?" I demanded, already knowing from the change in his silence that something was wrong

"Our rear team just contacted us," Marcus said. Mr. Stait immediately moved closer to the phone as Marcus continued. "Several men entered Clara and Adrian's building right after we pulled away."

"How many?" Mr. Stait asked.

"At least six. Dark clothing, faces covered."

The room fell silent. Mr. Asher pushed himself to his feet while Mr. Stait's expression hardened, his attention completely focused on the call.

"How long after they left?" Mr. Asher demanded.

"Less than a minute."

Clara must have heard enough from the back seat because her frightened voice came faintly through the phone. "What men?"

Pamela answered her immediately, her voice much calmer than it had been seconds earlier. "Stay calm. You're with us, and the baby is safe."

"Were they going to my apartment?"

"We don't know," Pamela admitted.

Mr. Stait took control before fear could turn into panic. "Marcus, do not turn around. Continue driving. I'm changing your route and sending additional security to intercept you. Your rear team observes only. No engagement unless it becomes necessary."

"Understood."

By then, Mr. Asher was already reaching for his own phone. Mr. Stait noticed and called his name in warning, but Mr. Asher didn't even look at him.

"No." His voice was dangerously calm as he unlocked the screen. "My grandson disappears after being pressured to abandon Amber. His wife thinks he's on a work trip that was already cancelled, and now masked men enter their building less than a minute after she leaves with their child. I've waited long enough."

The Asher Formily is Done

He found his sister's number and called. She let the phone ring several times before finally answering With an irritated, "What?"

Mr. Asher didn't bother with a greeting. "Where is Adrian?"

Silence greeted him from the other end, and I watched his hand tighten around the phone.

"Answer me."

"I don't know where Adrian is."

"Your son has been trying to force him out of Amber's company. Adrian disappears on a supposed work trip, and now masked men are entering his home immediately after his wife and child Yeave. Meanwhile you're calling relatives to announce you're separating from this family." Mr. Asher's voice grew colder with every word. "So I'll ask you once more. Where is your grandson?"

"I told you. I don't know."

"Then tell me what you do know."

She didn't answer. The silence seemed to infuriate Mr. Asher more than any denial could have. His granddaughter was lying unconscious only a few feet away, Adrian was missing, and Clara had unknowingly been sitting at home with their baby while men with covered faces were apparently on their way into the building.

"My granddaughter is lying in a hospital bed fighting for her life," Mr. Asher said, his voice shaking now despite his effort to control it. "Your grandson is missing. His wife and baby may have just avoided six masked men entering their home. Stop playing games with me and tell me what is happening."

His sister remained silent for several seconds. When she finally answered, there was no hesitation in her

voice.

"The Asher family is done."

Mr. Asher froze, the anger on his face giving way to complete disbelief. "What?"

"The Asher family is done."

"What the hell is that supposed to mean?"

“It means there is no family anymore.”

Asher stared at the phone as though he couldn’t quite believe he was speaking to his own sister.”

get to decide that.”

Sonnected before he could say anything else.

her remained motionless for a moment before immediately calling her back. The call went Straight to voicemail. He tried again with the same result, and after the second attempt he slowly

The Asher Family Is Done

lowered the phone.

Nobody said anything.

His anger didn’t explode the way I expected it to. Somehow, that made the moment worse. He simply stood there staring at the dark screen, his shoulders rigid, before his eyes slowly moved toward Amber.

“My own sister,” he murmured.

Mr. Stait remained silent, giving him a few seconds before Mr. Asher finally turned toward him. Whatever hurt had appeared on his face disappeared beneath determination.

“Find her. Find her

building.”

ind Adrian. I want to know who those men were and why they entered that

“We’re alre

“And

His

n it,” Mr. Stait assured him.

her added. “I want to know who arranged it and booked it in Adrians calendar.” Amber, and his expression hardened again. “I want to know what my family has

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 423

The Third Toxin

Jason POV

Pamela and Marcus arrived several hours later with Clara and the baby.

They didn't come to the hospital. Mr. Stait had already decided that bringing Clara anywhere near Amber's room would be an unnecessary risk. Instead, they went directly to the castle, where security could control every entrance and Clara could disappear behind walls that had protected my family for generations.

Marcus called long enough to tell us they'd arrived safely.

"She's exhausted," he said. "The baby slept most of the drive, thankfully. Mrs.Sun is having rooms prepared for them now."

"How is Clara?"

"Scared. Trying not to show it."

I understood that better than I wanted to.

"Has she heard from Adrian?"

"No."

That single word carried more weight than anything else he could have said.

"Stay with her."

"We will."

I ended the call and looked toward Amber.

Emory had been in and out of her room constantly since her condition turned critical. She hadn't deteriorated further, which everyone insisted was good, but nobody was celebrating. Her body had already been poisoned twice as far as we knew: the powerful

sedative hidden in her food and the botulinum toxin that had weakened her breathing badly enough that a ventilator now did most of the work for her.

I had started measuring time by the sound of that machine.

Inhale.

Pause.

Exhale.

Then my phone rang again.

Noah

I answered immediately. “What did you find?”

Igut Noah on speaker.

His voice was low. “We heard something.”

That was enough to make Mr. Stait look up from across the room. Mr. Asher was beside him, still working through everything connected to his sister’s branch of the family.

“Jasmine and I are still listening to the room,” he explained. “Different people have been moving in and out. We haven’t identified everyone yet, so we’re not making assumptions about who’s actually in charge.”

“What did they say?”

There was a brief pause.

“Amber’s food contained a third toxin.”

I stopped breathing.

Emory, who had been standing near Amber’s bed reviewing her latest results, turned around immediately.

“What?”

“That’s what we heard,” Noah repeated. “One of them asked whether there was any chance the hospital would find it. Another person said no. They sounded very confident.”

Emory walked toward the phone. “Exact words, Noah. As close as you can remember.”

Noah repeated the exchange carefully. There had apparently been concern that the sedative and botulinum toxin had already been identified, but someone in the room dismissed it. According to what Noah and Jasmine overheard, those two substances weren't the entire plan.

There had been something else in Amber's food.

Something they believed the hospital couldn't find.

"Did they name it?" Emory asked.

"No."

"Describe it?"

"No. They only called it the third one."

Emory's expression changed.

"What else?"

"They said it was too difficult to detect. One of them was certain that even if the doctors knew

TICL

We had assumed that was because her body was struggling with the botulinum toxin, the sedative, pregnancy, emergency surgery and everything else she'd endured.

But what if it wasn't?

"What if that's why she's getting worse?" I asked.

Emory didn't answer immediately.

"Emory."

"It's possible," he said. "It is also possible they're lying, exaggerating or discussing something that never actually reached her. We don't change treatment based solely on an intercepted conversation."

"Then prove they're lying."

His eyes met mine.

"I intend to."

Emory was moving before Noah had even finished the call. He contacted toxicology, requested every remaining blood sample collected from Amber since admission and ordered the original food evidence preserved for additional testing. He wanted the timeline reconstructed from the first sample onward, because if a third substance metabolized quickly, an earlier specimen might matter more than anything they could collect now.

The hospital laboratory reran the toxicology panel.

Nothing.

They expanded it.

Nothing. 1

Emory ordered another analysis using a different method.

Still nothing.

Hours disappeared.

I stayed beside Amber while Emory moved between the laboratory, toxicology and critical care. Every time he returned, I searched his face before he spoke.

We haven't found it."

"Again."

"Jason-"

"Again."

He did it again.

Nothing. 1

The known sedative remained consistent with the original findings. The botulinum toxin was already confirmed. There were expected medications from the surgery and intensive-care treatment, but nothing Emory could point to and tell me was the mysterious third toxin Noah and Jasmine had overheard.

Mr. Stait eventually stepped into the room while Emory studied another report.

"Could they have been bluffing?"

"Yes," Emory said.

“Could the substance already be gone?”

“Possibly.”

“Could you be looking for the wrong thing?”

Emory lowered the report.

“Absolutely.”

That answer made my stomach twist.

He came closer to Amber’s bed and looked at the monitors before continuing. “Toxicology isn’t magic. You find what a test is capable of detecting. If I don’t know what I’m looking for, and the substance isn’t covered by the panels we’re running, a negative result doesn’t prove nothing was there.”

Mr. Asher frowned. “Then how do you find something when you don’t know what it is?”

“By working backward. Symptoms, timing, organ function, metabolites, abnormalities that shouldn’t be there. We use broader analytical methods. We test preserved samples. We test the food itself. And we keep asking whether what we’re seeing clinically can be explained completely by what we already know.”

I looked at Amber.

amed by the sedative and botulinum toxin?”

I it can.”

“That’s not what I asked.”

He rubbed a hand across his face.

“No. Not with enough confidence for me to stop looking.”

The answer chilled the room.

Emory looked back down at the latest report. “If Noah heard correctly, then whoever did this expected us to identify the obvious substances. The sedative incapacitated her. The botulinum toxin compromised her breathing. If there really is a third agent and they deliberately chose something difficult to detect, then finding it may require knowing what effect they wanted it to have.”

My eyes went to Amber’s motionless face.

“What effect other than killing her?”

Emory’s expression tightened.

“That’s what I’m trying to determine.”

He returned to the reports.

Another test was ordered.

Then another.

Nothing.

By the middle of the night, papers covered the table and Emory looked as though he hadn’t blinked in hours. The hospital’s toxicology team had repeated every obvious test and several that weren’t obvious at all.

They still couldn’t find a third toxin.

I sat beside Amber and held her hand while the ventilator continued breathing for her.

Somewhere, Noah and Jasmine were listening to people who apparently believed they’d hidden something inside my wife’s body so well that even a hospital searching specifically for it wouldn’t find it.

So far, they were right.

Comments

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 424

A Pretty Flower

Jason POV

Apparently, Jasmine had run out of patience.

I should have expected it. Leaving an eighteen–year–old who had recently been shot outside a suspicious hotel room with nothing to do except listen to other people talk had

probably been optimistic from the beginning. Noah had been keeping me updated, and for several hours they had done exactly what Mr. Stait wanted: observe, listen, collect information and avoid

confrontation.

Then my phone vibrated.

The message was from Jasmine.

Don’t yell.

I stared at those two words and immediately knew I was going to yell.

Another message arrived before I could respond.

I found something.

There was a photograph attached beneath it.

At first, I didn’t understand what I was looking at. It was a hotel room photographed from an angle that suggested Jasmine had taken the picture quickly. Part of the bed was visible, along with several bottles, discarded glasses and the kind of mess I expected from a room occupied by men who had apparently spent hours drinking.

But in the middle of it all sat a vase of flowers.

Violet flowers.

I frowned and typed back.

Where are you?

Her response came almost immediately.

Technically? Hallway.

I closed my eyes.

Where were you?

This time she took longer.

Nobody questioned me. You should add that to the

I nearly threw the phone.

What happened?” Mr. Stait asked.

I looked up at him. “Your daughter happened.”

That got his attention.

I turned the screen around.

His expression went completely blank as he read Jasmine’s messages.

“She did what?”

“Apparently she decided surveillance wasn’t exciting enough.”

Mr. Stait took out his phone.

“Don’t call her yet,” I said. “She sent me something.”

I enlarged the photograph. Jasmine had taken several pictures, but the flowers appeared in every one of them. They were surprisingly delicate, violet–blue blossoms arranged in a vase that looked absurdly elegant against the alcohol bottles and general disorder surrounding them.

Her next message arrived.

These looked wrong.

Then another.

Not wrong like poisonous. Wrong like why do a bunch of drunk men have a carefully arranged vase of pretty purple flowers in their room? Took pictures. Didn’t touch them.

At least she hadn’t touched them.

That was the first sensible thing she’d done.

Emory walked into the room carrying another toxicology report, and I immediately held out the phone.

“Look at this.”

“I’m busy trying to identify a poison nobody can find.”

“That’s why I’m showing you.”

He took the phone with obvious impatience. For the first second, he looked confused.

Then he stopped.

The change was subtle but immediate.

His eyes narrowed. He enlarged the photograph and studied the fl

ritation disappeared from his face.

“Where was this taken?”

“Room 355.”

Emory looked at me.

“The room Noah and Jasmine are monitoring?”

“Jasmine decided monitoring was taking too long and went inside dressed as housekeeping.

Mr. Stait muttered something I was probably better off pretending I hadn’t heard.

Emory didn’t seem to care about Jasmine’s infiltration anymore. His attention remained fixed on the photograph.

“Do we have a clearer image?”

I opened the next one.

He enlarged it.

Then he went slightly pale.

“Emory?”

He didn’t answer immediately.

“Emory.”

“Those may be aconite flowers.”

The word meant nothing to me.

“What is aconite?”

“A highly toxic plant. Monkshood. Wolfsbane. There are several species, and I’m not identifying one conclusively from a photograph, but the flowers are consistent enough that we need to consider it.”

Mr. Stait stepped closer. “Could that be the third toxin?”

Emory looked toward Amber.

“Yes.”

My stomach dropped.

“Wouldn’t the toxicology tests have found it?”

“Not necessarily. Routine toxicology screens aren’t designed to detect every possible plan

@missed.”

For the first time in hours, Emory wasn’t staring at another negative report.

He had a target.

“Then test for it.”

He was already moving.

I caught his arm before he could leave.

“If it’s aconite, what’s the antidote?”

Emory stopped.

That was when I knew I wasn’t going to like the answer.

“There isn’t a specific antidote.”

I stared at him. “What do you mean there isn’t an antidote?”

“I mean treatment is primarily aggressive supportive care, especially cardiac and critical–care management. But we don’t even know that Amber was exposed yet. A photograph of flowers in a hotel room is a clue, Jason, not a diagnosis.”

“Then find out.”

“I will.”

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 425

The Boys

Jason POV

The moment Emory confirmed aconite in Amber's food, my thoughts went to the babies.

"Check the boys."

Emory looked up from the tablet in his hands. They're already being monitored.

"That's not what I said." I tightened my grip on the arms of the wheelchair Amber ate it while they were still inside her, then they were exposed too. Check them specifically for this."

His expression softened slightly, but he didn't argue.

"I'll speak to neonatology."

"No. You'll make sure they check."

"I will."

The twins had been stable since the emergency delivery. Their heart rates had normalized, their sxygen levels were good, and nobody had found evidence of lasting injury from whatever Amber had been given Until now, that had been enough to let me breathe a little easier.

Now we knew there had been three substances in her food.

A powerful sedative.

Botulinum toxin.

Aconite.

Suddenly, every reassurance I'd received about my sons felt incomplete.

I looked through the glass at Amber while Emory called the neonatal unit. She remained unconscious, the ventilator continuing its steady rhythm beside her. Somewhere else in the same hospital were two trie boys who didn't even have names yet because I had refused to name them without their mother.

They had already survived being cut from her body while she lay unconscious.

I wasn't going to assume they had escaped the poisoning simply because they looked hairty.

Emory returned less than twenty minutes later.

"They're evaluating both boys again."

"What does that mean?"

"Full examination, continuous cardiac monitoring, ECGs, repeat blood work and review at everything recorded since delivery. Toxicology is also discussing what specimens are available for targeted testing"

"Are they showing symptoms?"

"No."

That single word loosened something in my chest.

Emory pulled a chair closer. "Jason, that's important. Neither baby is showing the kind of candierascalar instability we're worried about with significant aconite toxicity. Their heart rates are appropriate, their blood pressure is good, their oxygenation is good, and there haven't been concerning rhythm abnormalities.

"But that doesn't prove they weren't exposed."

"No. It tells us they're clinically doing well."

I nodded slowly.

For once, I accepted the distinction.

Mr. Asher had been standing near the window listening. "Can the toxin cross the placenta?"

"Potential fetal exposure is one of the reasons we're taking it seriously," Emory said. "But we don't have evidence right now that either boy suffered clinically significant aconite poisoning"

I looked back toward the hallway leading to neonatal care.

“I want to see them.”

“As soon as we’re done here.”

“What’s more important than that?”

“My phone call.”

I frowned.

Emory lifted his phone. “I found someone.”

That got my attention.

He had spent the last several hours contacting medical toxicologists and specialists while the hospital continued testing Amber’s samples. Apparently, one of the physicians he’d reached had experience with aconite poisoning and had agreed to review Amber’s case directly with the ICU and cardiology tearns.

The consultation lasted almost an hour.

I hated every minute of it.

When Emory finally returned, he wasn’t smiling, but something had changed in his face. For the first time since Amber’s condition had deteriorated, he didn’t look like a man trying to solve a problem while the building burned arousid him.

He looked like he had a plan.

“Talk.”

“The specialist reviewed her telemetry, ECGs, blood pressure trends, laboratory results, estimated timefine and the toxicology findings.”

“And?”

“He doesn’t think the aconite component of her poisoning is severe.”

I stared at him.

“Say that again.”

“He does not think she has severe aconite toxicity.”

I looked at Amber, then back at him. “She’s on a ventilator.”

“Because she has confirmed botulism and significant neuromuscular weakness,” Emory reminded me.” Those are separate problems. Amber is still critically ill. I’m not minimizing that. But the question we asked him was how much of what we’re seeing appears to be driven by aconite.”

“And?”

“So far, she hasn’t developed the kind of sustained malignant ventricular arrhythmias or refractory cardiovascular collapse we’d expect in the most severe aconite poisonings. She has had blood-pressure instability and some rhythm abnormalities, which we’re taking seriously, but the specialist believes those are manageable.”

Hope was a dangerous thing.

I’d learned that repeatedly over the last few weeks.

Still, I felt it.

“Then she can recover from it?”

“Yes. There is reason to believe she can.”

Mr. Asher lowered himself into the chair beside me.

“Treatment?” he asked.

Emory nodded. “There still isn’t a specific antidote. We’re treating the patient, not trying to neutralize the toxin with a drug that doesn’t exist. Cardiology and toxicology are adjusting the monitoring plan. We’ll correct anything that increases electrical instability, support her blood pressure as necessary, and treat any significant arrhythmia according to what actually appears rather than throwing medications at her prophylactically.”

“So you wait?” I asked.

“We monitor aggressively and intervene when indicated,” Emory corrected. “With aconite, supportive care. matters because the body has to metabolize and eliminate the toxin. Our job is to keep her heart and circulation functioning safely while that happens.”

He looked toward the monitors.

“The encouraging part is timing.”

“What about it?

The floys

“If her exposure happened with that meal, then we’re already hours into this. Severe aconite poisoning usually declares itself early. That doesn’t mean we stop watching her, especially given everything else going on, but the fact that she hasn’t developed persistent catastrophic arrhythmias is reassuring.”

I swallowed.

It wasn’t a guarantee.

Nothing involving Amber seemed to come with guarantees anymore.

But it was the first genuinely good thing anyone had told me since she’d collapsed.

Emory’s phone rang again. He answered, listened for several seconds and then looked at me.

“Neonatology.”

My heart immediately started pounding.

He listened a little longer.

Then he smiled.

Not the careful expression doctors used when they were trying not to frighten families.

An actual smile.

“The boys are fine.”

I couldn’t speak.

“Their examinations are reassuring. ECGs look good/No concerning rhythm disturbances, no cardiovascular instability and nothing clinically suggesting significant aconite toxicity. They’ll continue monitoring them because of the circumstances, but right now, both boys are doing well.”

I closed my eyes.

Two boys.

Two tiny, unnamed boys who had survived everything someone had done to their mother

“Can I see them?”

Einary nodded. “Yes.”

sed toward Amber first.

lonked toward Amber first.

remained closed. The ventilator still breathed for her, and the monitors still surrounded her with

I had learned to fear.

how we knew more than we had yesterday.

The botulinum toxin had an antitoxin to prevent further circulating toxin from binding, even if her nerves still needed time to recover. The sedative would eventually leave her system. The aconite exposure appeared less severe than we’d feared, and specialists now had a plan for managing its effects while her body cleared

There were still too marry things that could go wrong.

Per for the first time in hours, someone had used the word recover without immediately taking it back.

I leaned forward and pressed my lips against Amber’s hand.

“The boys are okay,” I whispered. “You hear me? They’re okay.”

Her fingers didn’t move.

Thadn’t expected them to.

Emory had already warned me that waking could take a week or longer. Her body had been through poisoning, respiratory failure, emergency surgery and childbirth. I’couldn’t demand that she wake up simply because I desperately needed her to.

So I sat there for another moment, holding her hand.

Then I looked at Emory.

“Take me to my sons.

He reached for the wheelchair.

As he pushed me toward the door, I looked back at Amber one last time.

We weren’t winning yet.

But we weren’t losing her either.

And right now, that was enough.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 426

Chapter 247 None Of Us Gets There By Leaving The Other Behind

Ethan

Casper has just interrupted the most important moment of my life, and I don’t know how to handle that.

My eyes open and then close again. Not in pleasure, but in rage. Pure, unfiltered, and possibly murderous rage.

Jade jerks backward so quickly she nearly falls off the sofa. I catch her automatically.

Casper stands in the doorway. He looks at Jade, then at me. His eyes linger on my hand still firmly around her waist, and her hand gripping my shirt.

“Oh,” he whispers.

Jade scrambles away. “Ethan and I were talking.”

I stare at her. I can’t believe what I am hearing.

hearing.

Talking?

Casper’s eyebrows rise. “Obviously.”

“We were,” she says, but her voice is too high.

“I believe you,” he answers.

“You don’t sound like you believe me.”

“No, I do.” He starts backing toward the door. “I’ll just…”

“What did you need?” I ask through clenched teeth.

He stops. “What?”

Chapter 247 None Of Us Gets There By Leaving The Other Behind

“You came out here for something,” I remind him.

Casper looks completely blank. “I don’t remember.”

Jade makes a strangled noise.

“Wonderful.” She stands. “I’m going to bed.”

“Jade,” I call after her.

“No.”

She points at me, then at Casper. Then seems to realize she has absolutely no reason to point at either of us. Her hand drops.

“Goodnight.”

She marches through the door, and Casper steps aside. She doesn’t look at him. The balcony door closes behind her. I stare at it, and I feel like I might explode.

I drag both hands over my face. “Fuck.”

Casper is still standing there.

I look at him. “What?”

“Nothing,” he whispers. “I didn’t do it intentionally. I genuinely came looking for my phone charger.”

I stare. “Your charger.”

“I thought I left it out here,” he says.

“You didn’t,” I snap at him.

“I’ve gathered that.”

I stand. I’m irritated. Painfully irritated, but as I look at him, something stops me. Casper

NO

Chapter 247 None Of Us Gets There By Leaving The Other Behind

Isn’t amused. He isn’t smug. He isn’t even uncomfortable. He looks… Hurt.

He hides it quickly. Almost quickly enough that I miss it, but don’t. I’m trained to notice things.

More importantly… The bond notices.

A dull ache settles beneath my ribs. Not mine, but his. My frustration disappears.

“Casper.”

“I’m going to bed,” he says.

He turns to leave but I stop him. “Wait.”

His shoulders stiffen. I don’t know what I’m supposed to say.

‘Sorry you interrupted me kissing our mate?‘

That seems unlikely to improve the situation.

“You didn’t do anything wrong,” I say instead.

He laughs quietly. “Didn’t I?”

He looks toward the glass door. “I knew this was going to happen.”

“What?”

“You and Jade,” he says, but there is no anger in his voice. It would be easier if there was. “She loved you before this.”

“She never said that,” I remind him.

“She didn’t have to.” His jaw tightens. “And you’ve loved her for years.”

I don’t deny it, but Casper keeps talking.

Chapter 247 None Of Us Gets There By Leaving The Other Behind

“So maybe this is how it’s supposed to work.”

Something about the words bothers me.

“What does that mean?” I demand to know.

“You two figure things out.”

“And you?”

He shrugs. “I don’t know.”

There it is. The man who nearly killed himself trying to remove himself from our lives is stepping backward again.

“Don’t,” i warn him.

His eyes meet mine. “Don’t what?”

“Decide for everyone,” I snap at him.

His expression hardens. “I’m not.”

“You are.” I step closer. “You’re doing exactly what Jade accused you of doing. You see something between us, so you decide it means there’s no room for you.”

“I didn’t say that,” he says weakly.

“You didn’t have to.”

His jaw clenches.

The bond pulses with that strange connection I felt in the training room. It isn’t attraction or desire. It is something else.

Recognition.

He’s part of this. Whether either of us understands what that means yet or not.

Chapter 247 None Of Us Gets There By Leaving The Other Behind

“She sat with you at the hospital,” I remind him. “She worries about you.”

“Ethan…” Casper groans.

“And you almost kissed her last night.”

His eyes widen. “How do you know that?”

“I didn’t,” I reply. “But now I do.”

“Bastard,” he hisses at me.

He shakes his head, but some of the hurt leaves his expression.

Good.

“You should probably find your charger,” I tell him. “It’s beside the bed.”

“Right.” He turns toward the door, then pauses. “For what it’s worth…”

I wait for him to finish.

“I’m sorry.”

“About?”

He gestures vaguely toward the sofa. “Interrupting.”

I stare at him. He tries not to smile, but fails.

“Very sorry.”

“Go inside, Casper.”

His grin grows. “Goodnight, Beta.”

“Now,” I bark.

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Chapter 247 None Of Us Gets There By Leaving The Other Behind

He laughs as he disappears through the door. I remain on the balcony. I look at the place Jade was sitting

I was seconds away from kissing her, maybe less.

But strangely… I’m not as angry as I was a few minutes ago, because something important happened tonight.

Jade told me she wanted me to kiss her. Casper admitted he almost kissed her too, and when I saw the hurt on his face, I didn’t feel victorious. I didn’t feel relieved. I felt his pain almost like it was my own.

Maybe the archives were right. Maybe I’ve been thinking about this bond incorrectly from the beginning.

It isn’t Jade standing between two men. It isn’t two separate relationships forced to coexist.

There are three of us, and whatever this becomes... None of us gets there by leaving the

other behind.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 427

Blood Does Not Make Family

Jason POV

It was difficult to accept how easily a lifetime of supposed connections could disappear once you were forced to see them for what they really were.

You could spend years calling someone family. You could build memories around that word, make excuses because of it, forgive things you would never forgive from a stranger and convince yourself that some invisible connection existed simply because blood said it should. Then one day, you discovered that while you had been thinking of them as family, they had never thought of you the same way.

I believed that was part of the reason my anger toward Mr. White ran so deep.

I still had to consciously remind myself to call him that.

Mr. White.

Not Father.

For most of my life, I’d believed he was my biological father. He hadn’t raised me–not really–but that hadn’t erased the connection in my mind. Even after everything that happened between us, some part of me had continued seeing him through that old definition. He was the man whose blood I thought ran through my veins. The man I thought had created me, however much he might have regretted doing so.

Except he hadn’t.

Connor St. Johns was my father.

Mr. White had known that long before I did.

That was the part I still struggled to swallow.

He had known I wasn't his son when I was a child. The ledgers proved it. He had certified that there was no paternal blood relationship between us and still allowed everyone around me to believe otherwise. He had allowed my grandparents to believe they were dealing with their daughter's child's father. He had helped move me like property and had been willing to sacrifice me for whatever purpose benefited him.

I had been a child.

That thought came back every time anger threatened to consume everything else.

I had been a child.

Whatever plans the adults around me had made, whatever alliances existed between families, whatever they wanted from the Suns, the St. Johns or anyone else, I had been a little boy who didn't understand why the adults who were supposed to protect him kept hurting him.

It was difficult to understand how an adult could hate a child that much.

Harder still to understand how someone could look at a child who believed him to be his father and decide that child was disposable.

Maybe that was why I kept having to correct myself.

Mr. White.

Not my father.

Not anymore.

The call from Mr. Stait came before I could return to Amber's room.

He had spoken with Jasmine and Noah after Jasmine sent him the recordings from the hotel. Whatever they had found was serious enough that he didn't explain it over the phone. He simply told me to meet him in the makeshift office hospital administration had given us.

By the time I arrived, Mr. Asher was already there.

Someone had converted a small consultation room into something resembling a command center. Laptops covered one table, files had been stacked against the wall, and several

phones were charging beside equipment I didn't recognize. Mr. Stait stood at the far end of the table.

He didn't ask how the babies were.

That told me immediately how serious this was.

Mr. Asher noticed it too.

"What did Jasmine find?"

Mr. Stait looked at both of us before answering.

"A lot."

I moved my wheelchair closer to the table.

"Start talking."

He turned one of the laptops around.

"There was more on the surveillance than the conversation about Mr. White's possible location. Jasmine and Noah captured several conversations from that room. We've been cross–referencing names, calls, financial records and communications with information already recovered from the Vincent network."

Mr. Asher's face hardened at the name.

"Does this involve my sister?"

Mr. Stait didn't answer immediately.

That was answer enough.

Mr. Asher slowly pulled out a chair and sat down.

"Tell me."

Mr. Stait remained standing.

"The evidence currently points to your sister as the person who authorized the attack on Amber."

Mr. Asher didn't move.

I felt something cold settle inside me.

“Authorized?” I repeated.

“The intercepted conversations refer to an order coming from her. They discuss the nurse, Amber’s food and the contingency involving Jason.”

My fingers tightened around the wheelchair.

The syringe.

Penicillin.

Something I was severely allergic to, mixed with another substance we still hadn’t completely accounted for.

Amber’s food had contained a sedative, botulinum toxin and aconite.

This hadn’t been one impulsive attack.

Someone had planned layers.

Mr. Asher stared at Mr. Stait.

“My sister ordered Amber poisoned?”

“That’s what the evidence currently indicates.”

Mr. Asher looked as though someone had struck him.

Mr. Stait continued carefully. “We are still verifying every piece before treating it as established fact. But this isn’t based on one ambiguous sentence. The recordings are supported by communications and information we’ve already recovered.”

“And Adrian?” Mr. Asher asked.

Mr. Stait’s expression became even harder.

“We believe her people took him.”

Mr. Asher stood so abruptly that the chair scraped backward.

“Where is he?”

“We don’t know yet.”

“Is he alive?”

“We don’t know.”

Mr. Asher’s hands flattened against the table.

For several seconds, he said nothing.

Then his voice came out low.

“Why?”

“Because Adrian refused to cooperate.”

The room went still.

Mr. Stait pulled another file toward him.

“His father had been pressuring him to leave Asher Corporation and join the company they were building. Adrian refused. Based on what we’ve recovered, that refusal became a problem. His supposed work trip appears to have been used to remove him without immediately raising suspicion.”

Clara had believed her husband was away working.

She had kept calling him.

She had assumed his silence was because he was busy.

Meanwhile, Adrian might never have gone on a work trip at all.

“And the men at Clara’s building?” I asked.

“Still under investigation. We have reason to believe they’re connected, but I’m not going to tell you they were sent for Clara or the baby until we can prove it.”

I appreciated the distinction.

Mr. Asher didn’t seem capable of appreciating anything at that moment.

“My sister,” he whispered.

I looked at him.

There was something in his expression I recognized.

It wasn’t only anger.

It was betrayal.

The kind that came when the person hurting you had occupied a place in your life for so long that removing them meant tearing out part of your own history.

I knew that feeling.

Mr. White had taught it to me.

But Mr. Stait wasn't finished.

"There is something else."

Mr. Asher slowly looked up.

Mr. Stait hesitated for the first time since I'd entered the room.

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That frightened me more than anything he'd said so far

"What?" I asked.

"We've been reconstructing your sister's connection to the Vincent network."

Mr. Asher's face changed.

"She worked with them?"

"She appears to have been working with Mr. White directly."

My stomach twisted.

Mr. Stait continued. "Not recently. The evidence suggests the relationship goes back much further."

"How far?" Mr. Asher demanded.

"Potentially decades."

Nobody spoke.

Mr. Stait opened another file.

“Some of the older Vincent records we’ve recovered contain references we couldn’t place before. Family transfers. Protected identities. Bloodlines. There are repeated references to a male child connected to both the Vincent line and a branch of the Asher family.”

Mr. Asher stared at him.

I already knew I wasn’t going to like where this was going.

“What male child?” I asked.

Mr. Stait’s eyes moved to me.

“We believe there is a possibility that the records are referring to Mr. White.”

Mr. Asher went completely still.

I frowned.

“How?”

Mr. Stait looked back at Mr. Asher.

“Because we’re investigating whether your sister is Mr. White’s biological mother.”

The room became impossibly quiet.

Mr. Asher stared at him as though he’d stopped understanding the language.

“No.”

“We don’t have definitive biological confirmation yet.”

“No.”

“I’m telling you what the evidence currently suggests.”

“My sister has children.”

“I know.”

“Mr. White isn’t one of them.”

“Not publicly.”

Mr. Asher stepped backward.

For a moment, I thought his legs might give out.

I understood.

If Mr. Stait was right, this wasn't simply another betrayal.

It rewrote the family.

Mr. White–the man who had spent years moving between the trafficking families, the man connected to the Vincents, the man who had helped traffic me as a child and later kidnapped me, the man who had hunted Amber's family through generations of secrets–might also carry Asher blood.

Vincent and Asher.

Both.

"How certain are you?" I asked.

"Certain enough to investigate immediately. Not certain enough to call the biological relationship proven."

Mr. Asher looked at him.

"What makes you think he's hers?"

"Dates. Records. References to a protected birth. Payments. Communications. And information Jasmine and Noah captured tonight that makes several older records read very differently than they did yesterday."

Mr. Asher lowered himself back into the chair.

"My sister told me the Asher family was done."

Neither of us answered.

He stared at the table.

"She wasn't leaving the family."

His voice was barely audible.

"She was choosing another one."

I watched him and thought about Mr. White.

About how many years I had spent unconsciously calling him Father in my own head.

About how difficult it had been to stop.

Blood didn’t make someone family.

Apparently, neither did history.

Family required something from both sides.

I had considered Mr. White family because I believed he was my father.

Mr. Asher had considered his sister family because she had been beside him for most of his life. 1

Maybe that was the cruelest part of discovering the truth. 1

The connection had been real to us.

That didn’t mean it had ever been real to them. 1

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A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 428

Overwhelmed

Jason POV

Emory found me sitting beside Amber with my head resting against the back of the chair and my hand wrapped around hers.

I wasn’t asleep. I didn’t think I remembered how to sleep anymore.

Every time I closed my eyes, something else happened. Someone disappeared. Another piece of my childhood turned out to be a lie. Another person who was supposed to be family became connected to something monstrous. Amber’s heart did something it wasn’t supposed to do, one of the children needed me, or a phone rang with another piece of information that somehow made everything worse.

So when Emory walked into the room and stood beside the monitors without immediately speaking, I prepared myself for another disaster.

“What?”

He looked at me.

“Good morning to you too.”

“Emory.”

“Amber is improving.”

For a moment, the words didn’t register.

I stared at him.

“What?”

“She’s improving.”

I looked immediately at Amber as though I expected her to open her eyes because he’d said it.

She didn’t.

The ventilator continued its steady rhythm. Her face remained still against the pillow, her hand limp inside mine.

“What does improving mean?”

Emory pulled a chair closer instead of giving me one of the short answers I’d grown to hate.

“It means the cardiovascular instability we’ve been worried about is settling. We’ve been following the recommendations from toxicology, cardiology and the specialist we consulted. Her blood pressure has been more consistent, and we’re seeing fewer concerning rhythm abnormalities.”

“The aconite?”

“That’s what we’re hoping. The most dangerous cardiovascular effects appear to be moving in the right direction.”

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I stared at the monitor.

I'd spent so many hours watching those numbers that I had started seeing them even when I closed my eyes.

"Is she stable?"

"More stable than she was."

"That's not the same thing."

"No, it isn't."

At least he didn't lie to me.

Emory leaned forward, resting his arms on his knees.

"The important thing is that we're seeing improvement instead of continued deterioration. Her circulation is responding. We haven't seen the kind of persistent malignant arrhythmias we were afraid of, and her blood pressure isn't requiring the same degree of intervention."

"And the botulism?"

His expression became more cautious.

"That's going to take longer."

I already knew that, but hearing it still hurt.

"The antitoxin prevents circulating toxin from causing additional nerve injury," he continued. "It doesn't instantly repair the nerve endings that were already affected. Her neuromuscular weakness has to recover with time. That's why we're not rushing the ventilator."

"So she's still not breathing enough on her own."

"Not enough for me to remove support safely."

I looked down at her.

"But she's getting better."

"Yes."

This time there was no qualification.

Something inside me cracked.

I lowered my head until my forehead touched Amber's hand.

I didn't cry.

At least, I told myself I wasn't crying.

My eyes were burning because I hadn't slept properly in days. My throat hurt because hospital air was terrible. The wetness against my cheek was probably a completely unrelated medical phenomenon that Emory could diagnose if he felt particularly brave.

He didn't say anything.

That was probably why I didn't throw him out.

"I'm tired," I admitted eventually.

It was such a stupid sentence.

Of everything I could have said, that was what came out.

Emory nodded. "I know."

"No. I'm..." I stopped because I didn't even know how to explain it. "I don't know what I'm supposed to deal with first."

Amber was unconscious.

Our sons had been born without her awake to meet them.

They still didn't have names.

Mr. White was somewhere out there.

My entire childhood had been rearranged by documents written before I was old enough to understand what a family was.

Mr. Asher's sister might have ordered Amber's poisoning.

Adrian was missing.

Clara and her baby were hiding at the castle.

Jasmine had been shot and apparently decided recovery was optional.

There were more than two hundred bodies on an island that now belonged to my wife.

There were families still waiting to learn what had happened to children stolen decades ago.

And somewhere beneath all of that was the simple fact that I wanted my wife to wake up.

I wanted Amber to open her eyes, insult me, complain about the babies being nameless and tell everyone else to get out of her room because they were annoying her.

Instead, I sat there holding her hand while machines breathed for her.

“I’m overwhelmed,” I finally said.

Emory was quiet for a moment.

“That would be the normal response.”

I looked at him.

“Don’t diagnose me.”

“I wasn’t.”

“You sounded like you were.”

“Fine. You’re completely well-adjusted.”

“Better.”

He almost smiled.

My phone vibrated before either of us could say anything else.

Mr. Stait.

The message was short.

Mr. Asher is moving.

I knew exactly what that meant.

Mr. Asher had apparently decided grief was something he could deal with later.

With support from the River City military, he had begun tearing through his sister’s life.

Not literally, although I wasn't convinced that option had been completely dismissed.

Her properties were being checked. Old financial records were being compared against information recovered from the Vincent network. Security footage, vehicle movements, family accounts, company registrations and communications were being examined. The military wasn't treating Mr. Stait's theory about Mr. White's possible parentage as proven, but it was enough to justify looking again at records that had previously seemed unrelated.

Mr. Asher was cooperating with all of it.

Every account.

Every property.

Every family connection.

He had apparently told them he didn't care what they uncovered anymore.

He wanted the truth.

I understood that too.

Sometimes the truth hurt less than wondering which parts of your life had been lies.

A few hours later, I was still beside Amber when Jasmine called.

Again.

I stared at her name.

Emory glanced at the screen.

"Should we alert hospital security before you answer?"

"Probably."

I accepted the call.

"What did you do?"

Jasmine sighed. "You need a new greeting."

"When you stop doing things that require that greeting."

"That seems restrictive."

Noah said something in the background.

I couldn't hear the words, but Jasmine immediately snapped, "I was getting to that."

I sat straighter.

"What happened?"

Her voice changed.

The humor disappeared.

"We found Adrian."

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 429

Running Around The Truth

Jason POV

Everything inside me stopped.

"What?"

Emory turned toward me.

I put the call on speaker.

"Say that again."

"We found Adrian," Jasmine repeated.

"Alive?"

A pause.

Too long.

"Jasmine."

“We believe so.”

I closed my eyes for half a second.

“Where?”

“River City.”

That made no sense.

“They took him out of River City.”

“No,” Jasmine said. “That’s what they wanted everyone to believe.”

I looked toward Emory.

“What about the work trip?”

“Fake.”

Noah took over.

“We’ve been going through the surveillance information with the team. Once we knew what to look for, we started tracking movements connected to Adrian’s family instead of trying to follow the supposed travel itinerary.”

“And?”

“They never left River City.”

I gripped the phone tighter.

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“None of them?”

“Not the people we’re tracking,” Noah said. “There are records designed to make it look as though some of them moved around, but the physical surveillance doesn’t match.”

Jasmine came back onto the call.

“Adrian didn’t go on a work trip, Jason.”

I already knew what she was going to say.

I still didn’t want to hear it.

“His family has him.”

The room went silent.

“Explain.”

“We found a property connected indirectly to the family,” Jasmine said. “Not under the obvious surname. Noah found vehicle movements between that location and people connected to the hotel.”

Noah interrupted. “We don’t have eyes inside yet.”

That distinction mattered.

“Then how do you know Adrian is there?”

“We have surveillance from outside,” Jasmine said. “And audio.”

“What audio?”

There was another pause.

Then Noah answered.

“Adrian’s voice.”

I looked toward Amber.

Alive.

Adrian was alive.

At least, if the recording was current and they were right, he had been alive when it was captured.

“Does Mr. Stait know?”

“Obviously,” Jasmine said.

“Mr. Asher?”

“No. Mr. Stait wanted to verify before telling him.”

That was smart.

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Because Mr. Asher was already furious enough to personally tear River City apart brick by brick.

“How long have they had him?”

“We don’t know yet.”

“Why keep him there?”

Jasmine was quiet.

Then she said, “Because nobody was looking for him in River City.”

That sentence hit harder than it should have.

Clara had believed her husband was traveling for work.

Asher Corporation had no record of the trip.

We had been looking for movement, flights, hotels, meetings-anything that would tell us where Adrian had

gone.

Meanwhile, he might never have left home.

“They created a destination,” Noah said, “so everyone would search away from where he actually was.”

I tightened my grip on Amber’s hand.

“Do not go inside.”

Jasmine made an offended sound.

“I’m serious.”

“So am I.”

“No housekeeping uniforms. No windows. No vents. No pretending you’re delivering food.”

“I wasn’t planning any of those.”

“That answer isn’t reassuring.”

Noah laughed quietly.

“Mr. Stait has already told us to hold position,” he said. “A recovery team is being organized.”

“Good.”

I looked down at Amber.

Her blood pressure was better.

Her heart was settling.

My sons were safe.

Are Not The Truth

And Adrian might still be alive.

For days, every answer we’d found had opened another hole beneath our feet.

This time, something was different.

We had found someone before they became another body.

Maybe. 1

I wasn’t going to turn hope into certainty before Adrian was standing safely in front of us.

But I allowed myself to feel it anyway.

Amber was improving.

Adrian was alive.

And Mr. Asher’s family hadn’t escaped River City.

They had stayed.

They had hidden behind false trips, false identities and the assumption that nobody would think to look for them in their own backyard.

The River City military was already moving against them, and whatever protection they might once have expected from the Asher name was gone. Mr. Asher wasn’t going to shield his sister. Amber certainly wouldn’t protect the people who had tried to kill her,

and Adrian's disappearance had destroyed whatever possibility remained of believing this was nothing more than some ugly family dispute. 1

They were on their own now.

But finding Adrian was only part of it. There were still too many questions, and the biggest one centered on Mr.

Asher's sister.

Mrs. Wyatt.

Was she really Mr. White's biological mother?

Mr. Stait had been careful when he told us what they'd uncovered. The records suggested the possibility, but possibility wasn't proof. Until there was biological evidence or something more definitive in the Vincent records, we couldn't simply decide a decades-old family secret was true because several pieces appeared to fit.

And if the rumor wasn't entirely true, then what was?

What was the real connection between Mrs. Wyatt and Mr. White?

Why had she suddenly decided that her branch would separate from the Asher family? Why had she told Mr. Asher that the family was finished as though she'd been waiting years to say it? More importantly, what could possibly make a grandmother participate in the kidnapping of her own grandson after he refused to abandon Amber?

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 430

What a family

Jason POV

Adrian was her grandchild.

That fact kept circling through my mind.

Whatever disagreements existed between them, whatever Adrian had done during the Heir Trials, he was still her grandson. Yet someone had created a fake work trip, removed

him from his wife and baby and hidden him somewhere in River City while Clara continued believing her husband was away on business.

Then there was Amber.

Her own blood.

Mrs. Wyatt had allegedly gone even further with her.

Someone had arranged access to Amber's hospital routine, compromised her food and used a nurse who had already earned our trust. Amber had been given a powerful sedative, botulinum toxin and aconite, while another part of the plan had apparently included a syringe containing penicillin–a substance capable of killing me because of my allergy.

That wasn't anger.

It wasn't a family argument that had gone too far.

It was an operation.

And that left one explanation that made more sense than the others.

The Wyatts hadn't suddenly become involved with the Vincents.

Maybe they had been involved all along.

I looked at Amber while the thought settled heavily inside me.

We had spent months uncovering pieces of the Vincent network: trafficking routes, false identities, marriages arranged like transactions, children transferred between families, companies used as fronts, people hidden beneath new surnames and bloodlines manipulated for power. Every time we believed we'd reached the edge of it, another layer appeared.

Maybe Mrs. Wyatt wasn't betraying the Asher family to join that network.

Maybe she was protecting a network she had already belonged to.

That would explain the desperation better than money ever could.

It could explain why Adrian refusing to leave Amber's side became dangerous enough that his own relatives removed him. It could explain why Mrs. Wyatt's branch suddenly wanted to separate from the Ashers once the Vincent operation began collapsing. It could even explain why Amber had become such an urgent target.

But it still didn’t tell us the truth about Mr. White.

If Mrs. Wyatt was his mother, then Mr. White carried both Vincent and Asher blood, and a secret that

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enormous had been buried for decades.

It she wasn’t, then whatever connected them might be even more complicated.

Either way, I was beginning to believe Mrs. Wyatt hadn’t walked away from the Asher family because of something that had happened recently.

Something much older had finally caught up with her.

A few hours later, Mr. Stait walked into Amber’s room looking like a man who was trying very hard not to murder an eighteen year old. That expression had become surprisingly easy to recognize. I was sitting beside Amber, watching the monitors while holding her hand. Her numbers had remained better throughout the afternoon, and Emory had finally convinced me to eat something, although I’d managed barely half of it before deciding hospital food was a crime nobody was investigating seriously enough.

“What did Jasmine do?” I asked as soon as I saw him.

Mr. Stait stopped and stared at me. “Why do you automatically assume Jasmine did something?”

“Because you’re making the face,”

“What face?”

“The Jasmine face.”

His expression somehow became even more irritated, proving my point. He exhaled slowly through his nose before pulling out his phone. “She ignored my orders.”

“Of course she did.” At this point, surprise would have required more energy than I possessed.

“I specifically told her and Noah to maintain surveillance until the recovery team was in position,” he explained. “Apparently, she decided visual confirmation was more important.”

I closed my eyes for a moment. I didn’t even have the strength to be angry anymore. “Is she hurt? Is Noah hurt? Did she get caught?”

“No, no, and no.”

“Then I’ll save the lecture until after you tell me what she found.”

The irritation disappeared from Mr. Stait’s face as he approached me and held out his phone. “She confirmed Adrian is there.”

My entire body went still. “Confirmed how?”

He didn’t answer immediately. Instead, he turned the screen toward me, and the photograph explained everything.

It wasn’t particularly clear. It looked as though Jasmine had taken it through a narrow opening or from somewhere she absolutely had no business being. Most of the image showed the interior of what appeared to be an old warehouse, with a concrete floor, industrial shelving, scattered crates and poor lighting. It took me only a second to find the person lying near the far side of the photograph.

Adrian.

He was on the floor.

For one horrible second, my mind refused to process anything beyond the complete stillness of his body. He was lying on his side with one arm partially trapped beneath him. His clothes were dirty and wrinkled, and even through the poor image quality I could see something around one of his wrists.

“Is he breathing?”

“Jasmine says yes.”

I enlarged the photograph with shaking fingers, searching for anything that might tell me what condition he was in. “Why is he unconscious? Is he injured?”

“We don’t know yet.”

I looked up sharply. “Then get him out.”

“The team is moving.”

“How long?”

“Soon.”

“That’s not a time.”

“It’s the answer I have, Jason.”

I hated that answer, but I knew pushing him wouldn’t make the recovery team move any faster. My attention returned to the photograph. Clara had spent days believing her husband was away on a work trip. She had continued calling him, probably assuming every unanswered call meant he was busy somewhere else, while Adrian had apparently never left River City at all.

“Does Mr. Asher know?“!

“Not yet.”

“Why?”

“Because I’m waiting for confirmation that the recovery operation is moving before I show him a photograph of his unconscious grandson lying on a warehouse floor.”

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A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 431

Silenced

Jason POV

Mr. Asher was already furious enough to personally tear River City apart, and I wouldn’t have been surprised if seeing that photograph resulted in him trying to commandeer a military vehicle.

“Are the Wyatts definitely connected to the property?” I asked.

“Yes.”

There was no hesitation in Mr. Stait’s answer this time. He took the phone back and explained that they’d established connections through the property’s control structure, vehicles and personnel associated with the Wyatt branch. Jasmine’s photograph had now given them something even more important: confirmation that Adrian was physically being held at the location!

“So they kidnapped their own family.”

“That’s what the evidence indicates.”

I looked toward Amber. Mrs. Wyatt had allegedly ordered her poisoned, and now we had photographic evidence that her own grandson had been left unconscious inside a warehouse connected to the family. Adrian had refused to abandon Amber when his father pressured him to leave Asher Corporation. Apparently, that refusal had been enough to make him a problem.

Whatever this was, it had moved far beyond some ugly family disagreement.

“Where is Jasmine now?”

“Back where I ordered her to be in the first place.”

I almost laughed. “You believe that?”

“No.”

“Neither do I.”

Mr. Stait rubbed a hand across his face. “I’m beginning to understand why raising her required several adults.”

That managed to pull a small smile from me despite everything. “Did Noah go inside with her?”

“He tried to stop her. According to Noah, she disappeared while he was speaking to the recovery team.”

“How?”

“I have deliberately not asked yet.”

Probably wise. Knowing Jasmine, the answer would only increase his blood pressure.

Mr. Stait’s phone vibrated before either of us could say anything else. He checked the message, and every trace of exhausted amusement vanished from his face.

“The team is in position.”

“Go.

He nodded and turned toward the door, but before he could reach it, the door opened and Pamela walked in.

One look at her face told me something else had happened.

She wasn’t panicking. That almost would have been easier. Instead, she looked stunned, her phone clutched tightly in one hand as she looked from me to Mr. Stait.

“Jason.”

Mr. Stait stopped immediately. “What happened?”

“There’s a news notice.”

After everything we’d survived, those four words were enough to make my stomach tighten. “About what?”

Pamela looked toward Mr. Stait before answering. “Alexander Vincent.”

I frowned. Alexander was in secure custody. He’d been convicted, had begun cooperating and had provided names and information connected to the Vincent network in exchange for a reduced sentence and

protection.

“What about him?”

Pamela swallowed before answering.

“He’s dead.”

For several seconds, I simply stared at her because the words didn’t make sense. Alexander Vincent was surrounded by guards. He was inside a secure facility specifically because there were people who might want

to silence him.

“What?”

“It was just reported. Alexander Vincent was found dead inside his cell.”

Mr. Stait crossed the room in seconds and held out his hand. “Give me the phone.”

Pamela passed it over, and he read the notice without speaking. His expression hardened almost immediately.

“How?” I asked.

“It doesn’t say much yet,” Pamela answered. “The first notice only says he was found unresponsive in his cell and that his death is being investigated. Another report is already saying authorities suspect homicide”

Mr. Stait shook his head. “We don’t rely on news reports for this. We verify directly.”

He was already reaching for another phone.

I barely heard him.

Alexander was dead.

The last time I’d thought seriously about him, he’d been cooperating. He’d been giving names and filling

holes in the investigation. He had helped point us toward places nobody else had known to search, and despite everything he’d done, he’d eventually given us information that had helped expose parts of the Vincent operation.-

Then another thought hit me.

Oliver.

Alexander’s son.

“Does Oliver know?”

Pamela shook her head. “I don’t know.”

“He doesn’t hear about his father from television.”

“I’ll contact the team protecting him.”

Mr. Stait was already speaking quietly into his phone, requesting direct confirmation from the people responsible for Alexander’s detention. I looked at Amber while trying to understand how everything could possibly be happening at once.

Adrian was lying unconscious in a warehouse because he’d refused to abandon Amber.

Alexander had just been found dead inside a supposedly secure cell after cooperating against the Vincent

network.

The timing was impossible to ignore, but timing wasn’t proof. We’d made too many discoveries lately to start turning suspicion into certainty simply because the pieces looked as though they belonged together.

“Could the Wyatts have done it?” I asked.

Mr. Stait covered the phone. “We don’t know.”

“Could Mr. White?”

“We don’t know.”

“What about the Vincent network? If people know everything is collapsing, could someone be getting rid of anyone who can identify them?”

His expression changed slightly. “That is one possibility.”

One possibility. Not an answer. Not yet.

I looked down at Amber’s hand inside mine. Alexander Vincent had done terrible things. Cooperating later didn’t erase them, and helping us didn’t rewrite what had come before. He still needed to answer for what

he’d done.

But he had started talking.

He had given names. He had helped expose a network that had survived for generations by burying children, identities and entire families beneath secrets.

Now he was dead inside a cell that was supposed to keep him alive long enough to answer for all of it.

My phone vibrated.

For one irrational second expected another disaster. Instead, it was a message from Jasmine.

Recovery team moving. Adrian still breathing. And before you ask, I’m outside. Mostly.

I stared at the screen for several seconds.

Of course.

Despite myself, relief moved through me. Adrian was alive. Whatever condition he was in, he was still breathing, and the recovery team was finally moving to get him out.

Alexander was dead.

Amber was still fighting.

Mr. White remained missing.

And somewhere in River City, the Wyatts had finally run out of places to hide.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 432

Missed you too

Jason POV

Several hours passed before the recovery team finally returned to the hospital. I had been expecting a call the entire time, but when the doors at the end of the corridor finally opened and I saw Mr. Stait walking in with several soldiers around a stretcher, my heart immediately started pounding. Jasmine and Noah were with them, both looking exhausted, and between them was Adrian.

He was unconscious.

For one horrible second, I thought he was dead. Then I saw his chest move beneath the blanket. Barely. His breathing was shallow and irregular, and an oxygen mask covered his face as the medical team rushed him toward the nearest treatment room.

“What happened?” I asked.

Mr. Stait stopped only long enough to answer. “He was alive when we found him. He hasn’t regained consciousness.”

“Why isn’t he breathing properly?”

“We don’t know yet.”

Before I could ask anything else, Emory appeared and took control of the medical team surrounding Adrian. He immediately began issuing instructions, barely acknowledging anyone around him as they rushed Adrian into the treatment area. The doors closed behind them, leaving the rest of us standing in the corridor.

Mr. Asher remained completely still for several seconds, staring at the closed doors. Then his expression

hardened.

“Where is my sister?”

Nobody answered immediately.

“And her son?”

Mr. Stait finally looked at him. “Missing.”

Mr. Asher’s jaw tightened. “All of them?”

“Every person we’ve been able to connect directly to her branch is gone.”

The words seemed to hit him harder than I expected. They had found Adrian. They had found evidence. They had found the warehouse. But the moment the military moved in, the entire Wyatt branch seemed to have disappeared. Properties were empty, phones were disconnected, vehicles had been abandoned or moved, and people who had been living ordinary lives only hours earlier had vanished.

It wasn’t a retreat. It was an evacuation.

They had known we were coming.

Mr. Asher’s hands clenched at his sides. “My sister knew.”

Missed you too

Mr. Stait didn’t deny it. “Someone warned them.”

Mr. Asher looked toward the treatment room where Adrian had disappeared. “And my grandson?”

“We’ll know more when Emory finishes examining him.”

Mr. Asher’s expression hardened even further. “If they hurt him…”

He didn’t finish the sentence. He didn’t need to. I understood exactly what he meant.

Hours later, I was finally able to leave Amber’s room for a little while. The doctors had assured me that her condition remained stable, and I had two very important reasons to go: I needed to see my sons, and Alex had been asking when he could visit them again.

We made our way to the neonatal unit together. Alex walked beside my wheelchair with his hands tucked into his pockets, and after a few moments he glanced at me.

“Are they still nameless?”

I looked at him. “Temporarily.”

He frowned. “That’s a long temporary.”

“Your mother and I are going to choose their names together.”

Alex nodded thoughtfully. “Mom would probably choose good names.”

“She would.”

“Better than yours?”

I stared at him.

He smiled innocently. “I was just asking.”

“You’re becoming more like your mother every day.”

“I know.”

That made me smile.

When we reached the nursery, I looked through the glass at the two bassinets. Baby A and Baby B. My sons. Alex pressed closer to the glass, his expression softening as he watched them sleep.

“They’re sleeping.”

“They do that a lot.”

“When do they wake up?”

“Whenever they want.”

Alex nodded as though that made perfect sense. We stayed there for several minutes, watching the boys sleep, and for a brief moment everything felt almost normal.

Missou you too

Then we heard running.

Fast footsteps echoed through the hallway behind us, followed by the hurried voices of medical staff. I turned just as several nurses and doctors rushed past. Then Emory appeared, moving quickly enough that I barely recognized him.

“Emory?”

He didn’t stop.

My stomach dropped.

“Emory!”

He finally turned, his expression serious. “Jason, stay with the babies.”

“What’s happening?”

“I need to get back to Amber.”

My blood ran cold. “Why?”

He hesitated for half a second before disappearing down the corridor.

I didn’t think. I turned my wheelchair around so quickly that Alex nearly collided with me.

“Dad?”

“Come on.”

“But the babies-”

“We’re going back to Mom.”

The trip back to Amber’s room felt endless. By the time I reached the corridor, there were doctors everywhere. Nurses moved in and out of the room, someone was reviewing the monitors, another physician was speaking rapidly to a nurse, and a third was adjusting something on the ventilator.

My heart stopped.

“No.”

I pushed forward, but one of the doctors stepped in front of me.

“Mr. Sun-”

“What happened?”

“Please stay back.”

“What happened to my wife?”

My voice echoed through the corridor.

Emory appeared from inside the room.

“Jason.”

1 looked at him. “What’s happening?”

“She’s okay.”

I stared at him. “Then why are there twelve people around her?”

“Because something changed.”

My heart hammered against my chest. “What changed?”

Emory stepped closer. “Jason, I need you to calm down.”

“Don’t tell me to calm down.”

“Listen to me.”

I forced myself to stop. Emory looked directly into my eyes.

“Her vital signs are stable.”

I glanced past him toward the bed. “Then why”

“Because she woke up.”

Everything stopped.

I stared at him, convinced for a moment that I had misunderstood.

“What?”

Emory stepped aside.

The doctors slowly moved away from the bed, giving me a clear view.

And there she was.

Amber

Her eyes were open

For several seconds, I couldn’t move. I couldn’t breathe. I couldn’t even believe what I was seeing. Her eyes slowly found mine through the crowd, and although she looked exhausted, confused and impossibly weak, she was anal

“Amber?

Her gaze remained fixed on me.

Her lips moved slightly, but no sound came out.

fmory gently moved the nearest doctor aside so i could get closer. I rolled forward until I was beside her bed and reached for her band.

Missed you too

Her fingers were weak, almost weightless in mine, but then they moved.

Slowly, they curled around my fingers.

I laughed.

I didn’t even realize I was crying until a tear landed on the back of her hand. I lowered my head for a moment, overwhelmed by the simple fact that I could feel her holding me again.

“You came back.”

Her eyes remained on mine. Then, with enormous effort, she blinked once.

I pressed my forehead gently against her hand.

“You’re awake.”

Her fingers moved again.

I looked up at her, and something inside me finally loosened. For weeks, I had been afraid of the possibility that

I would never see those eyes open again. I’d imagined every possible future except this one–the one where she simply looked at me again.

“I’ve been waiting.”

Her eyes softened.

I laughed through the tears gathering in my eyes.

“You took your time.”

Her eyebrows moved slightly, and even through her exhaustion, I recognized the expression.

That was Amber.

Still stubborn.

Still annoyed.

Still herself.

I smiled and squeezed her hand carefully.

“Yeah,” I whispered. “I missed you too.”

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 433

Safe

Amber POV

The first thing I noticed when I woke up was the tube in my throat. For several seconds, I didn’t understand what I was feeling. My mind was heavy and strangely distant, as though I were trying to wake from a dream I couldn’t quite remember. Then I felt the hard plastic pressing against the back of my throat and the strange sensation of air being forced into my lungs, and panic immediately tried to take over. My first instinct was to reach up and pull it out. I wanted it gone. I didn’t care what it was or why it was there. I just wanted to breathe on

my own.

My body, however, refused to cooperate. I tried to lift my hand, but it barely moved, and the effort sent a wave of exhaustion through me before my arm dropped back onto the bed as though someone had tied weights to my wrist. I forced myself to stop fighting. I had no idea how long I had been unconscious, but some distant part of my mind understood that fighting the machine wasn’t going to help me. So I concentrated on breathing and tried to relax my muscles, even though every part of me felt impossibly heavy.

Then I realized I wasn’t alone. There were doctors everywhere, at least four of them standing around my bed while they checked the monitors, adjusted equipment, and spoke

quietly to one another. I couldn't understand everything they were saying, but I recognized the urgency in their movements. My eyes moved slowly across the room until I saw someone I knew.

Emory.

He was standing near the foot of my bed, staring at the monitors, but the moment our eyes met, his entire expression changed. Relief washed over his face so quickly that I almost didn't recognize him. For a moment, he simply stared at me before a smile slowly appeared. It wasn't his usual professional smile. It was the expression of someone who had been terrified of losing me and had just been given permission to breathe again. I tried to say his name, but nothing came out. The tube made that impossible.

My eyes moved around the room again, searching for someone else. Someone more important. Someone who should have been here. When the doctors finally shifted aside, I saw him.

Jason.

He was only a few feet away, and the moment I saw his face, something inside my chest tightened. He looked exhausted, paler than I remembered, with red eyes and an expression that made my heart ache even though I barely had the strength to move. He looked like he was trying very hard not to cry. I stared at him for several seconds, trying to understand how much time had passed and what had happened while I was gone.

Then another thought hit me.

The babies.

My hand instinctively moved toward my stomach, or at least I tried to make it move. My stomach felt different. Empty. The realization sent a wave of fear through me, and I tried harder to move my hand, but my body felt like it had been made of steel. Every muscle seemed impossibly heavy, as though gravity had multiplied while I was asleep. Even turning my head required more effort than I thought I could manage.

Jason noticed immediately. Of course he did. His eyes followed the tiny movement of my hand toward my stomach, and his expression changed.

Safe

"The babies," he said softly.

I stared at him, willing him to understand the question I couldn't ask.

He took a step closer to the bed. "They're okay."

I wanted to believe him. I needed to believe him.

Jason swallowed hard before continuing. “We had to do an emergency C–section, Amber.”

My heart dropped as I stared at him, trying to process the words. C–section. Emergency. Babies. I hadn’t known. I hadn’t been awake. I hadn’t been there.

Jason seemed to understand exactly what was happening inside my head. “They were born safely,” he said quickly. “Both of them.”

My eyes filled with tears.

Both.

The word echoed through my mind, and for a moment I could barely breathe around the tube. Both babies. Alive. Safe.

I closed my eyes briefly, overwhelmed by relief.

Jason reached for my hand carefully, as though he was afraid even touching me might hurt. His fingers wrapped around mine, and although I could barely feel them through the strange heaviness consuming my body, I knew he was there. That was enough.

“They’re beautiful,” he whispered, his voice breaking slightly. “Both boys.”

Two boys.

My sons.

I tried to smile, but even that felt like too much work. Then another thought came to me, and I looked at Jason

again.

Their names.

He understood before I could even ask.

“They don’t have names yet.”

My eyebrows lifted slightly.

Jason gave me the smallest smile as he squeezed my hand gently. “I refused to name them without you. I know you missed the birth. You missed their first cries, and you missed holding them for the first time. I wasn’t going to take their names from you too.”

Tears slipped down the sides of my face.

For the first time since waking up, I felt something other than fear.

Sate

Warmth.

I couldn’t speak. I couldn’t sit up, and I couldn’t even properly move my hand, but I could look at him, and Jason knew exactly what I was trying to say. He leaned closer, his eyes fixed on mine.

“We’ll name them together.”

I closed my eyes again, letting the words settle somewhere deep inside me. Two boys. Two sons. Somehow, despite everything that had happened, they were waiting for me. Jason was waiting for me. My family was waiting for me.

I had no idea how long it would take before I could hold them. I didn’t know when I would be able to speak, and I didn’t even know when this unbearable heaviness would finally leave my body. But I was awake, and after everything I had been through, that alone felt like the greatest gift anyone could have given me.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 434

Lucas And Ethan Sun

Jason POV

Amber fell asleep not long after she woke up, and for the first few minutes, I couldn’t bring myself to move away from her bedside. I kept watching her chest rise and fall beneath the blankets, listening to the steady rhythm of the monitors while Emory checked her one more time. When he finally stepped back, he gave me a reassuring look. “She’s okay,” he said quietly. “She’s just exhausted. Her body has been through an incredible amount of stress, and waking up after everything she’s been through has taken what little energy she had left.” I nodded, but I still couldn’t stop looking at her. After everything that had happened, hearing the words she’s okay felt almost impossible to believe.

The doctors decided that she was strong enough to breathe without the ventilator. They carefully removed the tube from her throat while I stood beside the bed, watching every

movement. Amber barely stirred, too exhausted even to fully wake, and once the tube was gone, the medical team monitored her breathing closely. Her oxygen levels remained stable, and eventually Emory gave me another nod. She was breathing on her own. I released a breath I hadn't realized I had been holding.

Once I knew she was stable, I made a decision. "Bring the babies here." The neonatal team began preparing everything they needed almost immediately. Two small bassinets were brought into the room and positioned beside Amber's bed, close enough that she would be able to see them the moment she opened her eyes again. The nurses helped arrange everything so the babies could remain there while Amber recovered. For the first time since the emergency C–section, the room felt less like an intensive–care unit and more like a family room.

Alex had stayed with me through everything. He hadn't complained once, hadn't asked to leave, and hadn't taken his eyes off Amber for more than a few seconds at a time. Now, as the nurses finished settling the babies into their bassinets, I noticed tears quietly slipping down his cheeks. He wiped them away quickly, almost embarrassed that I had noticed, but I reached for him anyway.

"She's going to be okay?" he asked softly.

I nodded. "She's going to be okay."

His shoulders relaxed immediately. I pulled him onto my lap and wrapped both arms around him, holding him against my chest. He leaned into me without hesitation, and for several minutes we simply sat there together, watching Amber sleep. I rested my cheek against the top of his head and closed my eyes for a moment. I didn't know how many times I had imagined hearing those words, she's going to be okay, but now that they were finally true, I found myself afraid to breathe too deeply in case the moment disappeared.

Eventually, I picked up my phone and started sending messages. One by one, I contacted everyone who had been waiting for news. Grandmother. Grandfather. Mr. Asher. Pamela. Marcus. Jasmine. Noah. Everyone who needed to know. I kept the message simple: Amber had woken up, she was stable but exhausted, and she had fallen asleep again. The replies began appearing almost immediately, some filled with relief, some with prayers, and some with questions I promised to answer later. I knew everyone wanted to come running to the hospital, but I also knew Amber needed rest more than she needed a crowded room.

When the messages slowed down, I put my phone aside and looked toward the two bassinets. My sons were sleeping peacefully, completely unaware of how much their arrival had changed all of our lives. I stared at them for a long time before the thought I'd been avoiding finally returned.

Their names.

Lucas And Ethan Sun

Amber and I had talked about names before, but only casually. We had discussed one boy's name that we both liked and one girl's name that kept coming back into our conversations. We had laughed about other possibilities, rejected some immediately, and argued over others, always assuming we'd have plenty of time to make the final decision.

We hadn't expected the decision to arrive like this.

I looked at Amber sleeping in the bed.

She had already lost so many moments because of what had happened to her. She had missed the birth, her children's first cries, and the first chance to hold them. I wasn't going to take another first from her by deciding their names without her.

So I started thinking.

Really thinking.

By the time Amber woke again, I had already gone through dozens of possibilities in my head.

Her eyes opened slowly, and for a moment she looked confused. Then her gaze moved across the room and stopped on the two bassinets beside her.

The babies.

Her eyes widened immediately, and tears began slipping down her cheeks.

I moved the bassinets closer so she could see them without having to strain herself. "They're here," I whispered.

Amber stared at them, her expression changing as she took in every tiny detail she could see. She couldn't speak much yet, but she didn't need to. I could see the love in her eyes, along with the sadness of everything she had

missed.

I gently wiped a tear from her cheek.

"Do you want to name them?"

She looked at me.

I smiled. "We can take our time."

Amber blinked slowly before giving me a tiny nod.

I pulled my phone closer and began showing her the names I had been considering. “What about Daniel?”

She frowned.

I laughed quietly. “That bad?”

She shook her head.

“Just not right?”

Another shake.

Lucas And Ethan Sun

“Okay.”

I moved to the next name.

She frowned again.

“Michael?”

She gave me the same look.

I sighed dramatically. “You’re difficult.”

Her eyebrows lifted.

I immediately laughed. “I missed that expression.”

She tried to smile.

We went back and forth for several minutes. I suggested names, she rejected them. Sometimes she gave me the faintest nod, sometimes a tiny shake of her head, and sometimes nothing more than a particular movement of her eyebrows that I was slowly becoming very good at understanding.

“William?”

No.

“Alexander?”

She hesitated.

I raised an eyebrow. “That hesitation means maybe?”

She shook her head.

“Fair enough.”

I looked at the babies again, trying to think of something different.

Before I could suggest another name, Emory’s phone rang.

He glanced at the screen and stepped a little farther away from the bed. “Excuse me.”

He answered the call and began speaking quietly with someone on the other end.

I wasn’t paying much attention at first. My focus remained on Amber and our sons, but then Emory mentioned the name of the doctor he was speaking with.

“Lucas, I need you to send me the updated toxicology results.”

Amber’s eyes suddenly widened.

I looked at her.

She was staring directly at Emory.

Ter And In Sun

Then she looked at me.

I followed her gaze and immediately understood.

I couldn’t help the small laugh that escaped me.

“Lucas?”

Amber nodded.

I looked at our second son, then back at her. “You like Lucas?”

She nodded again, more firmly this time.

I smiled.

“Okay.”

I looked toward the tiny baby sleeping peacefully in the bassinet.

“Lucas it is, then?”

Amber nodded.

I laughed softly. “All right. Lucas.”

I reached over and gently touched the baby’s tiny hand through the blanket.

“Lucas Sun.”

Amber’s eyes remained fixed on him, and I could see how much she liked the name. 1

Then, after a few seconds, she slowly lifted her hand.

It took an incredible amount of effort.

Her arm trembled as she tried to raise it, and I immediately leaned forward, ready to help her.

But she wasn’t reaching for me.

She was pointing.

At Emory.

I stared at her finger.

Then at Emory.

Then back at Amber.

For several seconds, I had absolutely no idea what she was trying to tell me.

Then realization slowly dawned.

I blinked.

“You want to name the other one Emory?”

Amber nodded.

I couldn’t stop the surprised laugh that escaped me.

“Emory?”

She nodded again, more insistently this time.

Emory, who had been finishing his phone call, glanced over when he heard his name. He ended the call and walked toward us, looking slightly confused.

“Did I hear my name?”

I pointed toward Amber.

“She wants to name our other son after you.”

Emory stopped.

His expression softened immediately.

He walked over to Amber’s bedside and looked at her for a moment before smiling.

“Amber, I’m honored.”

She watched him carefully.

“But I have to warn you,” he continued. “I don’t actually like my name very much.”

Her eyebrows rose. (1)

Emory laughed quietly. “It was difficult when I was in school. Kids always found ways to make fun of it, so for the first half of my life, I actually went by my second name.”

Amber stared at him.

“What was it?” I asked.

Emory smiled.

“Ethan.”

Amber’s eyes widened.

This time, I saw the reaction immediately.

She liked it.

Really liked it.

She looked at me, then at the first baby, then back at Emory.

“Ethan,” I repeated.

Lucas Acid Ethan Sun

Amber nodded.

I smiled.

“Ethan and Lucas.”

I looked down at our two sons.

One name from the man who had saved Amber’s life.

One name from the doctor who had helped save mine, had stood beside Amber through the worst moments of her poisoning, and had given us hope when we were terrified there might be none left.

I looked at Emory.

“I like both.”

He gave me a small smile.

I reached for Amber’s hand and gently intertwined our fingers.

“They’re both from people who saved our lives,” I whispered. “People who gave us a reason to keep hoping.”

Amber’s eyes filled with tears again.

I squeezed her hand.

“So I think they’re perfect.”

She nodded.

I leaned down and kissed her forehead before looking at our sons again.

“Welcome to the family, Ethan and Lucas.”

For the first time, they weren’t Baby A and Baby B anymore.

They had names.

Names we had chosen together.

Names that carried a little piece of the people who had helped bring us back from the edge.

Ethan.

Lucas.

Our sons.

And their mother was finally awake to meet them.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 435

Hurt By My Own Blood

Amber POV

Waking up had been a miracle, but staying awake was proving to be considerably harder. I had been conscious for perhaps twenty minutes, and I was already exhausted enough to feel as though I had run a marathon. Every part of my body felt heavy, weak, and unfamiliar. Even lifting my hand required concentration, and whenever I tried to move my legs, they seemed to belong to someone else entirely. I hated it. I hated lying there unable to do anything, unable to sit up properly, unable to hold my own children, and unable to even speak for more than a few words without feeling like my entire body was demanding that I stop.

Jason noticed my frustration almost immediately. “You need to rest.” I glared at him, and he gave me an apologetic smile. “I know. You hate hearing that.” I tried to speak, but my voice was still weak and rough from the ventilator. “I hate... this.” His expression softened as he moved closer and carefully adjusted my pillows. “I know.”

Lucas and Ethan were sleeping peacefully in the bassinets beside the bed, and I kept looking toward them every few seconds as though I needed to reassure myself that they were actually there. My sons. Lucas and Ethan. I still couldn’t quite believe it. Jason followed my gaze before looking back at me. “There’s a lot you need to know.” I frowned, and he immediately added, “Not all at once. You’re still recovering.” I gave him a look that clearly told him I wanted him to tell me anyway, and he sighed. “I knew you’d say that.”

He took my hand carefully and began explaining everything that had happened while I was unconscious. He told me about the emergency C–section and how the babies had been

born safely. He told me about the botulinum toxin, the sedatives, and the aconite that had been found in my food, explaining that the antitoxin had stopped the toxin from continuing to spread but hadn't immediately reversed the damage that had already been done. He told me about the specialists Emory had contacted and the treatment they had started when my condition became worse. I listened silently, trying to absorb everything while my exhausted mind struggled to keep up.

Then he told me about Adrian.

"Adrian?" I whispered, and Jason nodded.

"He was found alive."

Relief washed through me so quickly that for a moment I almost forgot everything else. Then Jason continued. "He was being held by your family's branch. The Wyatts."

My relief disappeared.

"The Wyatts?"

He nodded again. "Jasmine and Noah found him in one of their warehouses. He was unconscious and having trouble breathing. The recovery team brought him back, and Emory discovered that he'd been poisoned too.

My stomach twisted. "Poisoned?"

Jason squeezed my hand. "Yes."

I closed my eyes for several seconds, trying to process it. My own family. The same family that shared my

bloodline. The same people I had once been expected to consider relatives. They had kidnapped Adrian, poisoned him, and nearly killed me.

When I opened my eyes again, anger had begun replacing the exhaustion

"My family."

Jason didn't answer.

"They poisoned me," I whispered, my voice trembling with disbelief. "They tried to kill me."

His fingers tightened around mine. "I know."

"And Adrian..."

“Was their prisoner.”

I shook my head slowly. I could accept enemies. I could accept people wanting power. I could even accept betrayal from people who had never cared about me. But this was different. My own family had almost ended my life, and I couldn’t understand how people who shared my blood could look at me and decide that my life meant so little.

“You said the records suggest my grand aunt might be Mr. White’s biological mother.”

“That’s what the evidence seems to suggest.”

“I don’t believe it.”

Jason looked surprised. “Amber-”

“No.” I shook my head as much as my weak body allowed. “Something is wrong with that.”

He remained silent, letting me think.

“I know my family,” I whispered. “Or at least, I thought I did. But even after everything we’ve discovered, something about that doesn’t fit.”

Jason raised an eyebrow. “You think the records are wrong?”

“I think we’re missing something.” I looked toward the window, trying to organize the thoughts running through my exhausted mind. “My grand aunt being involved with the Vincent family? I can believe that. Her working with Mr. White? Apparently that’s possible too. But being his mother?” I shook my head. ” Something doesn’t make sense.” (1

Jason nodded slowly. “We’ll find out.”

Before I could answer, the mattress shifted beside me. I looked down and saw Alex carefully climbing onto the bed. He moved slowly, obviously afraid of hurting me, before settling beside my hip. I immediately wrapped my arm around him, even though the effort left my muscles trembling. I didn’t care. Alex buried his face against me, and I could feel how tightly he was holding onto my hospital gown. 1

My heart broke.

He had always tried so hard to be brave. Too brave. I could see it now. The fear was still there beneath everything he had been pretending not to feel. He had been through the bombing, the kidnappings, the

poison, and the terrifying experience of watching me unconscious while everyone around him struggled to keep me alive. Now he had woken up to the knowledge that people from our own family had been responsible for what happened.

I kissed the top of his head. ‘I’m here.”

His arms tightened around me.

Then he suddenly lifted his head. “Mom?”

I looked at him. “Yes?”

He glanced toward Jason with a completely serious expression. “Dad told everyone the babies looked weird.”

I stared at Jason.

Jason froze. “I did not say that.”

Alex nodded confidently. “You did.”

“I said they looked weirdly small.”

Alex shrugged. “That’s still weird.”

Despite everything, a weak laugh escaped me. Jason looked genuinely betrayed.

“I was talking about newborn babies.”

Alex looked at me. “He said they looked like little aliens.

Jason closed his eyes. “I was exhausted.”

I laughed again, although the movement made my body ache. Alex smiled before burying his face against me once more. I held him tighter, feeling the tremble in his shoulders, and suddenly understood just how deeply everything had affected him. He wasn’t simply happy that I was awake. He had been terrified that I wouldn’t wake up.

I kissed his hair again. “I’m not going anywhere.”

He nodded against me.

The door opened a few minutes later, and I looked up as the rest of my family entered. Alice came first, and the moment she saw me, her eyes filled with tears. “Mommy.” She hurried toward the bed, and Jason quickly helped her climb up beside me. I opened my arm, and she immediately threw herself against me.

Then came Iris and Rose, both trying to stay composed and failing miserably. They crowded around the bed, touching my arms and shoulders as though they needed physical proof that I was really awake. I smiled weakly and whispered, “I’m okay.”

Iris shook her head. “You scared us.”

“I know.”

Rose moved closer, her eyes already filling with tears. “I thought you weren’t going to wake up.

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My heart clenched. I reached for her as much as my exhausted body allowed. “I did.”

Then Mr. and Mrs. Sun entered. She immediately covered her mouth when she saw me, her eyes filling with tears as she crossed the room and carefully embraced me.Mt Sun stood beside her, visibly struggling to maintain his usual composure, before leaning down and kissing my forehead.

“Welcome back,” he whispered.

I smiled at him.

Finally, my grandfather entered.

He stopped the moment he saw me. For several seconds, he simply stared at me, and then his expression crumpled. He walked toward the bed and reached for me. I opened my arms, and he hugged me carefully, his hands trembling against my back. I could feel his tears against my shoulder.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered.

I closed my eyes. “You didn’t do this.”

“I should have known.”

I shook my head. “No.”

He held me tighter.

Around me, my family gathered together. Jason, Alex, Alice, Iris, Rose, Grandmother, Grandfather, and Mr. Asher were all there, surrounding my bed and refusing to let me

face the aftermath alone. I looked toward the two bassinets beside me, where Lucas and Ethan were still sleeping peacefully, completely unaware of

the fear and chaos that had surrounded their arrival.

For the first time since waking up, I allowed myself to breathe without fear. My blood had almost killed me, and that realization still hurt more than I could put into words. But as I looked around the room at the people who had stayed, the people who had fought for me, and the people who had refused to let me disappear, I finally understood something.

Blood wasn't what had saved me.

Family had.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 436

Hurt By My Own Blood

Amber POV

Waking up had been a miracle, but staying awake was proving to be considerably harder. I had been conscious for perhaps twenty minutes, and I was already exhausted enough to feel as though I had run a marathon. Every part of my body felt heavy, weak, and unfamiliar. Even lifting my hand required concentration, and whenever I tried to move my legs, they seemed to belong to someone else entirely. I hated it. I hated lying there unable to do anything, unable to sit up properly, unable to hold my own children, and unable to even speak for more than a few words without feeling like my entire body was demanding that I stop.

Jason noticed my frustration almost immediately. "You need to rest." I glared at him, and he gave me an apologetic smile. "I know. You hate hearing that." I tried to speak, but my voice was still weak and rough from the ventilator. "I hate... this." His expression softened as he moved closer and carefully adjusted my pillows. "I know."

Lucas and Ethan were sleeping peacefully in the bassinets beside the bed, and I kept looking toward them every few seconds as though I needed to reassure myself that they were actually there. My sons. Lucas and Ethan. I still couldn't quite believe it. Jason followed my gaze before looking back at me. "There's a lot you need to know." I frowned, and he immediately added, "Not all at once. You're still recovering." I gave him a look that clearly told him I wanted him to tell me anyway, and he sighed. "I knew you'd say that."

He took my hand carefully and began explaining everything that had happened while I was unconscious. He told me about the emergency C–section and how the babies had been born safely. He told me about the botulinum toxin, the sedatives, and the aconite that had been found in my food, explaining that the antitoxin had stopped the toxin from continuing to spread but hadn't immediately reversed the damage that had already been done. He told me about the specialists Emory had contacted and the treatment they had started when my condition became worse. I listened silently, trying to absorb everything while my exhausted mind struggled to keep up.

Then he told me about Adrian.

"Adrian?" I whispered, and Jason nodded.

"He was found alive."

Relief washed through me so quickly that for a moment I almost forgot everything else. Then Jason continued. " He was being held by your family's branch. The Wyatts."

My relief disappeared.

"The Wyatts?"

He nodded again. "Jasmine and Noah found him in one of their warehouses. He was unconscious and having trouble breathing. The recovery team brought him back, and Emory discovered that he'd been poisoned too."

My stomach twisted. "Poisoned?"

Jason squeezed my hand. "Yes."

I closed my eyes for several seconds, trying to process it. My own family. The same family that shared my

bloodline. The same people I had once been expected to consider relatives. They had kidnapped Adrian, poisoned him, and nearly killed me.

When I opened my eyes again, anger had begun replacing the exhaustion.

"My family."

Jason didn't answer.

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"They poisoned me," I whispered, my voice trembling with disbelief. "They tried to kill me."

fingers tightened around mine. “I know.”

“And Adrian…”

“Was their prisoner.”

I shook my head slowly. I could accept enemies. I could accept people wanting power. I could even accept betrayal from people who had never cared about me. But this was different. My own family had almost ended my life, and couldn’t understand how people who shared my blood could look at me and decide that my life meant so little.

“You said the records suggest my grand aunt might be Mr. White’s biological mother.”

“That’s what the evidence seems to suggest.”

“I don’t believe it.”

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“I think we’re missing something.” I looked toward the window, trying to organize the thoughts running through my exhausted mind. “My grand aunt being involved with the Vincent family? I can believe that. Her working with Mr. White? Apparently that’s possible too. But being his mother?” I shook my head. “Something doesn’t make sense.” 1

Jason nodded slowly. “We’ll find out.”

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bombing, the kidnappings, the poison, and the terrifying experience of watching me unconscious while everyone around him struggled to keep me alive. Now he had woken up to the knowledge that people from our own family had been responsible for what happened.

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Iris shook her head. “You scared us.”

“I know.”

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My heart clenched. I reached for her as much as my exhausted body allowed. “I did.”

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Hurts My Cown Back

I closed my eyes. “You didn’t do this.”

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I shook my head. “No.”

He held me tighter.

Around me, my family gathered together. Jason, Alex, Alice, Tris, Rose, Grandmother, Grandfather, and Mr. Asher were all there, surrounding my bed and refusing to let me face the aftermath alone. I looked toward the two bassinets beside me, where Lucas and Ethan were still sleeping peacefully, completely unaware of the fear and chaos that had surrounded their arrival.

For the first time since waking up, I allowed myself to breathe without fear. My blood had almost killed me, and that realization still hurt more than I could put into words. But as I looked around the room at the people who had stayed, the people who had fought for me, and the people who had refused to let me disappear, I finally

understood something.

Blood wasn't what had saved me.

Family had.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 437

A Presidents Deceit

Amber POV

The next two days passed quietly, at least by the standards our family had become accustomed to. I spent most of my time resting, but I was finally able to stay awake for longer periods, and the nurses no longer watched every movement I made with the same urgency as before. Lucas atid Ethan remained close by, and having them in the room made everything feel a little more normal. For once, there wasn't an emergency unfolding every few minutes, although Adrian's condition remained a constant concern because he was still unconscious.

Emory had spent most of those two days trying to determine exactly what had been done to him. When he finally came to my room with the latest results, I immediately knew there was something important in the folder he was carrying. He sat beside my bed and explained that Adrian hadn't been given the same dose of aconite that I had. In fact, his dose had been considerably higher, enough to cause severe toxicity, and the fact that he had survived long enough for them to bring him back was remarkable. I stared at Emory, troubled by the information, because the difference didn't make sense to me. If the same people had poisoned both of us, why had they given Adrian such a much larger dose?

“That’s what I’m trying to understand,” Emory admitted when I asked him. “The substances are similar, but the quantities are very different.”

I looked toward the window, my thoughts already racing. Had they wanted Adrian dead more quickly? Had they been afraid he would expose something? Or had someone else been responsible for poisoning him? None of the possibilities made me feel better. “I don’t like that,” I finally said, and Emory gave me a serious nod.

“Neither do I.”

Meanwhile, my grandfather had taken control of Asher Corporation while the investigation continued. He didn’t trust anyone to take advantage of the chaos surrounding the family, so he had personally begun overseeing the company’s most sensitive operations. Suspicious transactions were being investigated, financial records were being examined, and access to certain accounts had been restricted. It wasn’t simply about protecting the company anymore; he was making sure no one could use the situation to move anything behind our backs while everyone was distracted. Considering what we had already uncovered about my family, I couldn’t blame him for being cautious.

For the first time in days, the room was relatively quiet when the door opened. Jasmine stood in the doorway, but she didn’t come inside immediately. I looked at her and smiled, motioning for her to come in, and she finally stepped inside and closed the door behind her. Something about her expression immediately caught my attention. She looked nervous, but not in the usual Jasmine way. This was different. She looked almost afraid.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

She shoved her hands into her pockets and looked down. “I thought you might be angry with me.”

I frowned. “Why?”

“Because I didn’t follow orders.”

I couldn’t help smiling. “That’s what you’re worried about?”

She gave me a small shrug. “I went into the warehouse.”

“I know.”

“I found Adrian.”

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My expression softened. “I know that too.”

She looked at me for a moment before continuing. “I wasn’t supposed to go in.”

“You found my family,” I reminded her. “You found Adrian when we didn’t even know where they had taken him.”

She nodded quietly.

I reached for her hand and waited until she took it. “You also took risks to protect your family. You went looking

for Adrian when you knew it was dangerous. You went into places you had been ordered to stay away from because you thought someone we loved might be there.” I squeezed her fingers gently. “You didn’t just find Adrian, Jasmine. You helped bring him home, and I will always be grateful for that.”

Her eyes immediately dropped, and I could see the emotion building in them. “I was scared,” she admitted quietly. “I thought if I didn’t go, we might never find him.”

“And you were right to be worried,” I said. “But you were also brave.”

She looked back at me, and I smiled. “I could never have asked for a better little sister.”

Her head snapped up. “Little sister?”

I laughed softly. “Yes. You don’t get to reject the position.”

A tiny smile appeared on her face. “I wasn’t going to.”

“Good.”

I pulled her into a careful hug, and after a moment of hesitation, she wrapped her arms around me. When she finally pulled back, some of the tension had disappeared from her expression.

“I thought you’d be angry,” she admitted.

“I could never be angry at you for trying to protect us.”

“Even when I disobey?”

I raised an eyebrow. “Let’s not push our luck.”

She laughed softly, and for a moment, the room felt lighter.

Then her expression changed.

“There is something else.”

I looked at her. “What?”

“The signal I placed in the caves.”

My smile faded slightly. “I remember.”

“They blocked it.”

Before I could ask anything else, my phone vibrated on the bedside table. I reached for it and saw Mr. Stait’s name

on the screen. I opened the message and read the first line, then read it again because I couldn’t quite believe what I was seeing.

Jasmine immediately noticed my expression. “What?”

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I handed her the phone.

She read the message silently, and her face slowly lost its color. Her eyes moved across the screen before she whispered, “The Sum president.”

I nodded slowly.

Mr. Stait had discovered that the order had come directly from the president of Sum.

Jasmine stared at the screen for several seconds. “He knew?”

“Apparently.”

Neither of us spoke. The simplicity of those two words made the discovery more disturbing than a long explanation ever could have.

The door opened, and Jason walked in with his phone still in his hand. “I just got a message from Mr. Stait,” he said, looking between us. “He says we need to stay away from the Sum president.”

Jasmine handed him the phone without saying anything. Jason read the message, and his expression hardened almost immediately.

“The order came from him?”

“Apparently,” I replied.

Jason looked at Jasmine. “The one from the caves?”

She nodded.

“He blocked it.”

Jason’s jaw tightened, and for a moment, none of us spoke. I looked from him to Jasmine, feeling the weight of the discovery settle over me. Whatever the Sum president’s reasons were, Mr. Stait clearly believed they were serious enough to warn us personally.

The president of Sum had just moved from being a distant political figure to someone directly connected to what had happened to my family. And suddenly, I wasn’t wondering whether there was more to this. I was wondering how deep it went.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 438

Amber POV

It didn’t make any sense.

The president of Sum was the same man who had supposedly found me all those years ago. According to my grandfather, he had discovered me when I was a little girl, alone and unable to remember where I came from, and had helped make sure I was returned safely to my family. I had no memory of his face from that day, no memory of his voice, and no memory of the place where he had supposedly found me. Everything I knew about that part of my childhood had come from the people who had been there.

And one of those people had been the president of Sum.

I stared at Mr. Stait’s message again, trying to reconcile the two versions of the same man. How could someone who had supposedly helped save me as a child now be the person who had ordered Jasmine’s signal blocked?

There had to be an explanation.

At least, that was what I wanted to believe.

I decided to speak to my grandfather before I made any conclusions. I called him and waited until he answered, then went straight to the point.

“Grandpa, I need to ask you something about the president of Sum.”

His voice immediately became more serious. “What about him?”

“Mr. Stait discovered that he ordered the signal Jasmine placed in the caves to be blocked.”

There was a long silence on the other end.

“Are you certain?”

“That’s what he told us.”

I took a breath before asking the question that had been bothering me since the moment I saw the message.

“You always told me that he was the person who found me when I was a child. Is that still what you believe?”

“Yes.”

“How well did you know him back then?”

My grandfather sighed. “Very well.”

“How well?”

“He wasn’t the president of Sum at the time,” he finally said.

I sat up straighter.

“What?”

“He wasn’t an important political figure when he supposedly found you. He had ambition, but very little

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influence outside a small circle. He was intelligent and well connected, but he wasn’t powerful.”

“Then how did he become president?”

“With help.”

I already knew the answer before he said it.

“My help,”

My grandfather didn’t deny it.

“I believed he had potential. I introduced him to people who could help him establish himself, supported some of his early initiatives, and helped open doors that would otherwise have remained closed to him. His influence grew over the years.”

I stared at the wall.

“So when he found me, he wasn’t already powerful.”

“No.”

“Then why was he there?”

My grandfather was quiet for several seconds.

“I don’t know.”

That answer bothered me more than anything else.

After we ended the call, I remained staring at my phone. Jason had entered the room sometime during the conversation, but he hadn’t interrupted me. He was standing near the window, watching me with the same quiet patience he always had when he knew I was thinking through something complicated.

Finally, he walked over.

“What did your grandfather say?”

I looked up at him.

“He wasn’t powerful when he supposedly found me.”

Jason’s expression changed immediately.

“What do you mean?”

“He wasn’t an important political figure yet. Grandpa said he had ambition, but very little influence. Grandpa actually helped him build his career.”

Jason sat down beside me.

“So your grandfather helped the man who eventually became president of Sum.”

“Yes”

All along

“And that same man is now the one Mr. Stait says ordered Jasmine’s signal blocked.”

I nodded.

Jason leaned back, thinking.

“That’s a problem.”

“It’s more than a problem.”

I looked at him.

“Jason, start thinking about every interaction we’ve had with him.”

He frowned.

“I already have.”

“No. From the beginning.”

Jason studied my face before nodding.

“Okay. The property was one of the first.”

“Exactly.”

“He told us only you could buy it.”

“At the time, I thought he was helping us understand the legal restrictions.”

“But he knew the restrictions.”

“Too much about them.”

Jason’s eyes narrowed.

“Then he helped get us out of River City.”

I nodded.

“And that was where the real investigation was happening.”

Jason became quiet.

“Which means getting us out of the city didn’t just remove us from danger.”

“It removed us from the investigation.”

“And gave whoever was behind everything more room to work.”

I felt a chill move through me.

“Exactly.”

Jason leaned forward, resting his elbows on his knees.

“Then there were the mines.”

“He gained control of them while everything was happening.”

“And he always seemed to know where we were going.”

I nodded slowly.

“That was what bothered me most. He didn’t just know what we had already done. He seemed to know what we were planning to do next.”

Jason looked at me.

“Which means someone was giving him information.”

“Or he was getting it himself.”

Neither of us spoke for a moment.

Then Jason’s expression hardened.

“Sum.”

I nodded.

“The political situation.”

He understood immediately.

“He used the hatred toward the Vincent family to strengthen his position.”

“Yes. Every time the Vincent name became more hated, he looked more like the man protecting Sum from them.

Jason slowly leaned back.

“But if he was connected to the Vincent situation somehow...”

“He could benefit from both sides.”

“The Vincent family’s downfall strengthened him politically.”

“And whatever happened to us created more opportunities for him to increase his influence.”

Jason was silent.

I could see the same memories moving through his mind.

“The charities,” he finally said.

Inodded

“The public appearances. The donations. All those times he presented himself as an ally.”

Jason & Jaw tightened.

“We thought he was building goodwill.”

“What if he was building trust with us?”

He looked at me.

“And with everyone else.”

I swallowed.

Then another piece fell into place.

“The attacks.”

Jason’s eyes darkened.

“Against you and me.‘

“The hacker attack.”

“The information leaks.”

“The people who always seemed to know where we were.”

He looked toward the window.

“We’ve spent so long assuming we had too many enemies that we never stopped to ask whether one person was connecting them.”

I stared at him.

“Maybe that’s exactly what happened.”

Jason turned back to me.

“Let’s say you’re right. The property, River City, the mines, the political situation, the charities, the attacks, the hacker incident. If he was behind all of it, then he wasn’t reacting to us.”

“He was directing us.”

Jason nodded slowly.

“He kept giving us choices.”

“But they weren’t really choices.”

“Because every path he gave us led somewhere he wanted us to go.”

The realization settled between us.

I looked down at my hands.

“Then everything we’ve been calling help…”

“May have been manipulation.”

My throat tightened.

“Everything we’ve trusted him with.”

Jason reached for my hand.

“And every time we believed he was protecting us…”

“He was making sure we stayed exactly where he wanted us.”

We sat in silence for several seconds.

There was still one part that refused to fit..

“Jason.”

He looked at me.

“If he really has been behind all of this, why?”

“Power?”

“Maybe.”

“Money?”

“Possible.”

“The mines?”

“Possible.”

I shook my head.

“None of those feel big enough.”

Jason frowned.

“Then what does?”

I looked at him.

“My past.”

His expression immediately changed.

“The day be supposedly found you.”

I nodded

For years, I accepted the story because I couldn’t remember anything else. But now we know he wasn’t powerful at the time Grandpa helped him build his career afterward.”

lason’s fingers tightened around mine

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“Which means his connection to you came before the political power.”

“Exactly.”

He stared at me for several seconds.

“Amber, are you thinking that he didn’t simply find you?”

“I don’t know.”

“But you think he may have known where you were.”

I looked away.

“I think it’s possible.”

Jason didn’t dismiss the idea.

That frightened me more than if he had.

“Then we need to find out what happened before he supposedly found you,” he said quietly.

I nodded.

“For the first time, I think that might be the most important question we’ve ever asked.”

Jason squeezed my hand.

“And if the answer connects him to your past…”

I looked back at him.

“Then we’ve been investigating the wrong part of the story.”

The room fell silent again.

For years, I had thought the president of Sum was simply a powerful man who had somehow become involved in our problems.

Now, Jason and I were looking at something much more disturbing.

A man who had been there before the power.

Before the political influence.

Before the mines.

Before the attacks.

Before we even knew there was anything to investigate.

And suddenly, the question wasn't whether he had betrayed us.

It was whether he had been waiting for us to remember him all along

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 439

All along

Amber POV

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“What did your grandfather say?”

I looked up at him.

“He wasn’t powerful when he supposedly found me.”

Jason’s expression changed immediately.

“What do you mean?”

“He wasn’t an important political figure yet. Grandpa said he had ambition, but very little influence. Grandpa actually helped him build his career.”

Jason sat down beside me.

“So your grandfather helped the man who eventually became president of Sum.”

“Yes.”

“And that same man is now the one Mr. Stait says ordered Jasmine’s signal blocked.”

I nodded.

Jason leaned back, thinking.

“That’s a problem.”

“It’s more than a problem.”

Nooked at him.

“Jason, start thinking about every interaction we’ve had with him.”

He frowned.

“I already have.”

“No. From the beginning.”

Jason studied my face before nodding.

“Okay. The property was one of the first.”

“Exactly.”

“He told us only you could buy it.”

“At the time, I thought he was helping us understand the legal restrictions.”

“But he knew the restrictions.”

“Too much about them.”

Jason’s eyes narrowed.

“Then he helped get us out of River City.”

I nodded.

“And that was where the real investigation was happening.”

Jason became quiet.

“Which means getting us out of the city didn’t just remove us from danger.”

“It removed us from the investigation.”

“And gave whoever was behind everything more room to work.”

I felt a chill move through me.

“Exactly.”

Jason leaned forward, resting his elbows on his knees.

“Then there were the mines.”

“He gained control of them while everything was happening.”

“And he always seemed to know where we were going.”

I nodded slowly.

“That was what bothered me most. He didn’t just know what we had already done. He seemed to know what we were planning to do next.”

Jason looked at me.

“Which means someone was giving him information.”

he was getting it himself.”

Neither of us spoke for a moment.

Then Jason’s expression hardened.

“Sum.”

I nodded.

“The political situation.”

He understood immediately.

“He used the hatred toward the Vincent family to strengthen his position.”

“Yes. Every time the Vincent name became more hated, he looked more like the man protecting Sum from them.”

Jason slowly leaned back.

“But if he was connected to the Vincent situation somehow...”

“He could benefit from both sides.”

“The Vincent family’s downfall strengthened him politically.”

“And whatever happened to us created more opportunities for him to increase his influence.”

Jason was silent.

I could see the same memories moving through his mind.

“The charities,” he finally said.

I nodded.

“The public appearances. The donations. All those times he presented himself as an ally.”

Jason’s jaw tightened.

“We thought he was building goodwill.”

“What if he was building trust with us?”

He looked at me.

“And with everyone else.”

I swallowed.

Then another piece fell into place.

“The attacks.”

Jason’s eyes darkened.

“Against you and me.”

“The hacker attack.”

The information leaks.”

“The people who always seemed to know where we were.”

He looked toward the window.

“We’ve spent so long assuming we had too many enemies that we never stopped to ask whether one person was connecting them.”

I stared at him.

“Maybe that’s exactly what happened.”

Jason turned back to me.

“Let’s say you’re right. The property, River City, the mines, the political situation, the charities, the attacks, the hacker incident. If he was behind all of it, then he wasn’t reacting to us.”

“He was directing us.”

Jason nodded slowly.

“He kept giving us choices.”

“But they weren’t really choices.”

“Because every path he gave us led somewhere he wanted us to go.”

The realization settled between us.

I looked down at my hands.

“Then everything we’ve been calling help…”

“May have been manipulation.”

My throat tightened.

“Everything we’ve trusted him with.”

Jason reached for my hand.

“And every time we believed he was protecting us…”

“He was making sure we stayed exactly where he wanted us.”

We sat in silence for several seconds.

There was still one part that refused to fit.

“Jason.”

He looked at me.

“If he really has been behind all of this, why?”

“Power?”

“Maybe.”

Money?”

“Possible.”

“The mines?”

“Possible.”

I shook my head.

“None of those feel big enough.”

Jason frowned.

“Then what does?”

I looked at him.

“My past.”

His expression immediately changed.

“The day he supposedly found you.”

I nodded.

“For years, I accepted the story because I couldn’t remember anything else. But now we know he wasn’t powerful at the time. Grandpa helped him build his career afterward.”

Jason’s fingers tightened around mine.

“Which means his connection to you came before the political power.”

“Exactly.”

He stared at me for several seconds.

“Amber, are you thinking that he didn’t simply find you?”

“I don’t know.”

“But you think he may have known where you were.”

I looked away.

“I think it’s possible.”

Jason didn’t dismiss the idea.

That frightened me more than if he had.

“Then we need to find out what happened before he supposedly found you,” he said quietly.

I nodded.

“For the first time, I think that might be the most important question we’ve ever asked.”

Jason squeezed my hand.

Bonus

“And if the answer connects him to your past…”

Nooked back at him.

“Then we’ve been investigating the wrong part of the story.”

The room fell silent again.

For years, I had thought the president of Sum was simply a powerful man who had somehow become involved in our problems.

Now, Jason and I were looking at something much more disturbing.

A man who had been there before the power.

Before the political influence.

Before the mines.

Before the attacks.

Before we even knew there was anything to investigate.

And suddenly, the question wasn't whether he had betrayed us.

It was whether he had been waiting for us to remember him all along.

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Chapter 440

Before The Storm

Amber POV

The first time I visited Adrian, I wasn't prepared for what I would see.

I had known he was in critical condition, and Emory had explained that the aconite in his system had caused severe toxicity, but hearing the details and seeing the reality of it were two very different things. Adrian lay in the middle of the hospital bed, surrounded by equipment that monitored almost every function of his body. Tubes wires, monitors, and machines filled the space around him, each one serving a purpose I could barely understand. The steady beeping of the monitors was the only indication that his body was still fighting. For a moment, I simply stood at the doorway, struggling to reconcile the man I knew with the fragile figure lying in front of me

It was difficult to imagine that he was still alive.

I slowly approached the bed and pulled a chair beside him. His face looked pale, and he hadn't moved since they brought him back from the warehouse. I wanted to reach for his hand, but I hesitated when I noticed the medical equipment attached to him. Eventually, I settled for resting my fingers gently against his.

"You're making a terrible habit of worrying everyone," I whispered.

He didn't respond, of course.

I tried to smile, but my throat tightened before I could manage it. Adrian had spent years helping me protect Asher Corporation, taking on responsibilities that most people would have struggled to manage. He had been loyal even when his own family turned against him, and he had never abandoned the people he loved. Now he was lying in a hospital bed because someone had decided that his life was expendable.

I couldn't stop thinking about what might have happened if Jasmine and Noah hadn't found him..

What if they had arrived too late? What if the warehouse had been abandoned before anyone discovered where he was being held? What if the people responsible had decided to make certain that he never left that place alive?

I squeezed his hand carefully.

“I’m glad we found you,” I murmured. “You have no idea how glad I am.”

My eyes burned, and I lowered my head for a moment. I had survived my own poisoning because Emory and the medical team had acted quickly, because Jason had refused to give up on me, and because so many people had worked tirelessly to bring me back. I was painfully aware that Adrian’s recovery might not be as straightforward as mine had been. Still, I was grateful for every person who had fought for both of us, for the people who had searched when there seemed to be no answers, and for the people who had refused to accept that we were beyond saving.

When I finally stood, I looked at Adrian one last time.

“You’re coming back to us,” I told him, even though I knew I couldn’t promise him how or when. “Clara and the baby are waiting for you. Rose misses you, and Asher Corporation is going to be a nightmare without you.”

I gave his hand another gentle squeeze.

“So you’d better wake up before I have to manage everything myself.”

It was a ridiculous thing to say to an unconscious man, but somehow, it made leaving a little easier.

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dave brought a different kind of challenge.

Every day, Jason and I attended physical therapy. Nobody ever tells you that when your body has been seriously ill

injured, recovering isn’t simply a matter of waking up and deciding to return to normal. Your body has to remember how to work properly, and sometimes even the simplest movements become exhausting exercises in patience. Standing for too long could leave me tired, while walking across a room required more concentration than I cared to admit. Jason had his own frustrations, although he was considerably better at hiding them than I

was.

Unfortunately for him, I had become very good at recognizing when he was pretending to be fine.

One afternoon, after he struggled through an exercise and tried to act as though nothing had happened, I raised an eyebrow at him.

“Are you going to pretend that didn’t hurt?”

Jason glanced at me. “Are you going to pretend you weren’t counting how many times I had to try?”

“Of course. I’m a very supportive wife.”

“You look far too pleased with yourself to be supportive.”

I smiled sweetly. “I’m simply happy to see that your competitive spirit survived.”

He shook his head, but the faint smile on his face told me he wasn’t particularly offended. The truth was that we both needed these moments. There were days when the progress seemed painfully slow, when I became frustrated with my own limitations and Jason grew impatient with his recovery. Having someone beside me who understood that frustration made it easier to keep going.

We were learning to be patient with ourselves, even when neither of us particularly wanted to be.

At least, we were trying.

The twins were doing well, and their presence had quickly become the most comforting part of my days. Lucas and Ethan stayed with me whenever the medical staff allowed it, and I had become accustomed to their tiny noises, their sleepy expressions, and the way they seemed perfectly content to rest against me. Sometimes I would look down at them and struggle to believe how much had happened before I was finally able to hold them properly. I had missed their birth and their first moments of life, but I was determined not to spend the rest of their childhood mourning the time I couldn’t get back.

Instead, I focused on the moments I had now.

Alice, Alex, and Rose visited every day after school. Alice usually arrived first, eager to tell me everything that had happened during her day, while Alex tried to appear more mature and insisted he was only there to check on the babies. Rose was quieter, but she always found a reason to stay close to me. Their visits gradually became part of our routine, and I looked forward to them more than I could explain.

One afternoon, Mrs. Sun arrived carrying her phone with an expression that immediately made me suspicious.

“I have something to show you,” she announced.

I glanced up from Ethan, who was sleeping against my chest. “Should I be worried?”

“That depends on your opinion of your daughter.”

She sat beside me and held out her phone. The photograph showed Iris sitting on the floor with her legs stretched in front of her, glaring furiously at Jasmine, who stood nearby with the unmistakable expression of someone who had absolutely no intention of apologizing. A few training mats were scattered across the floor, and Iris’s hair looked as though she had recently survived a small natural disaster.

I stared at the picture before slowly turning toward Mrs. Sun.

What happened?”

Mrs. Sun looked delighted. “Apparently, Jasmine decided Iris needed to learn self–defense.”

I looked at the photograph again. Iris’s expression suggested that she was considering several creative ways to murder her instructor.

“That looks less like self–defense training and more like a family dispute.”

Mrs. Sun laughed. “Jasmine says Iris has excellent instincts but terrible defensive habits.”

“Did Jasmine actually say that?”

“Those were her exact words.”

I sighed, trying very hard not to laugh loudly enough to wake Ethan. “And Iris?”

“She informed Jasmine that she was going to remember this for the rest of her life.”

I couldn’t help it. I laughed.

Poor Iris. She had probably expected an ordinary afternoon and instead found herself on the floor, being lectured about footwork by a girl who considered rules a personal challenge. Knowing Jasmine, she was probably convinced she was doing Iris a favor. Knowing Iris, she would spend the next week plotting revenge.

“At least she’s learning something useful,” I finally said.

Mrs. Sun nodded. “That’s what I told her.”

I returned the phone and adjusted Ethan carefully against my chest. For a little while, we talked about the children, school, and the small things that had continued happening outside the hospital. It was comforting to hear ordinary family stories again, especially

after so many days when every conversation had revolved around injuries, investigations, and the people who had tried to destroy us.

But there was one person whose absence I couldn't ignore.

The president of Sum hadn't appeared once.

Not to ask about our recovery. Not to offer an explanation for the blocked signal. Not even to make one of his carefully worded appearances in which he presented himself as a concerned ally.

He had simply disappeared from our immediate circle.

I couldn't decide whether he was hiding because he knew we were beginning to suspect him or whether he was quietly preparing his next move. Either possibility was troubling, and the fact that we still didn't understand his motives made it worse. Jason and I had discussed the evidence repeatedly, but suspicion wasn't proof. We needed to know how much he had done, who had helped him, and what he had been trying to accomplish from the beginning.

Until we had those answers, we couldn't afford to assume he was finished.

That evening, Jason had just returned from therapy when his phone rang. He glanced at the screen, and his expression changed as soon as he saw who was calling.

"Mr. Stait," he said, answering immediately.

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I watched him from the bed while he listened. At first, his face remained unreadable, but then his shoulders stiffened, and he moved closer to the window. I couldn't hear everything Mr. Stait was saying, yet I knew from Jason's expression that this wasn't an ordinary update.

"What did you find?" Jason asked.

He listened for several seconds before speaking again.

"You're certain?"

Another pause followed.

"Send me everything you have."

Jason ended the call and remained still for a moment, staring at his phone. I put the book I had been reading aside.

“What happened?”

He turned toward me.

“They found traces of Mr. White in the warehouse where Adrian was being held.”

My heart sank.

“Mr. White was there?”

“That’s what the evidence suggests. Mr. Stait’s team found traces connecting him to the location, and they’re investigating how recently he was there and what role he played.”

I thought of Adrian lying unconscious in that hospital bed, surrounded by machines that were keeping his body functioning while he fought to recover. I thought of Jason, of everything Mr. White had already done to him, and of the possibility that the same man had been involved in what happened to Adrian.

“Do they know why?” I asked.

“Not yet.” Jason slipped his phone into his pocket. “But Mr. Stait believes this is significant. If Mr. White was connected to the warehouse, we may finally have a lead that connects him directly to the people who held Adrian.”

I studied my husband’s face. “And the president of Sum?”

“Mr. Stait hasn’t established a direct connection between him and the warehouse yet.” Jason sat beside me, his voice growing more serious. “But with the signal, the political interference, and now this discovery, he’s expanding the investigation.”

For a moment, neither of us spoke. We had spent so long trying to understand who was moving the pieces around us that the possibility of finally getting closer to the truth felt almost unreal. At the same time, I knew better than to mistake a lead for an answer. Mr. White had always been dangerous, and if he had returned to the center of this investigation, then we needed to be careful about what we did next.

Jason reached for my hand, intertwining our fingers.

“They’re getting closer,” he said quietly.

I looked at him, then at Lucas and Ethan sleeping beside me. Somewhere beyond the hospital walls, our children were waiting for us to come home, Adrian was fighting to wake up, and the people responsible for everything we had endured were still out there.

“Then we make sure they find the truth,” I replied.

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Jason squeezed my hand.

This time, we weren’t going to let our enemies decide how the story ended