

### 244: The Undeniable Truth of His Parentage

James couldn't quite explain the feeling he got when he looked at Caitlin. It was a strange familiarity, a sense of *déjà vu*, yet at the same time, she was a complete stranger to him.

They had only met once before.

Maybe he was just overthinking things.

He didn't linger and continued on his way, still searching for any trace of his lost family.

At eight years old, a chemical explosion in his adoptive father's laboratory had wiped out large chunks of his childhood memories. The only thing he was certain of was that his real name was Harrison Lee, and he vaguely recalled having family in the US—possibly a mother and an older sister.

But their names? Their faces? Everything else was lost to him.

His adoptive father had known the full story, but he had long since passed away.

With no solid leads, how was he supposed to find them?

After saying her piece to Madison, Caitlin withdrew her sharp edges and turned to Felix.

"Sorry for dragging you into this mess, Felix. I'll go check on Jasper now."

Without another glance back, she walked away. Madison, still stunned by Caitlin's words, didn't cause any more trouble, though she did issue an ultimatum.

"You're coming with me to the 50th-anniversary gala tonight," she snapped at Felix.

"Fine," Felix replied, though he had no interest in attending such events.

#### At the Hospital Room

Jasper lay unconscious on the hospital bed, his face pale. The listening device and the bullet had both been successfully removed.

Vincent sat by his bedside, staring at the man who had, for years, been a father to him—regardless of his true identity. His emotions were tangled in a complex web, memories of their past flashing before his eyes.

Tears welled up despite himself.

No matter what name he went by—Jasper or Raymond—the truth remained: he was Vincent's biological father.

Knowing that he had endured two decades of suffering, forced to suppress his true identity, unable to reunite with his family...

How painful must that have been?

Caitlin entered the room, and Vincent quickly wiped away his tears.

Seeing Jasper's condition, she offered some reassurance. "Once Sebastian returns, everything will come to light. Your father will be able to reclaim his rightful place in the Vanderbilt family."

Vincent exhaled deeply. "I hope so."

"I'll leave him in your care, then. I have some things to take care of."

"Alright."

Caitlin left the hospital and met up with Blake as planned.

#### Meeting with Blake

She drove to the Xenos estate, where Blake was already waiting for her at the entrance.

"Caitlin, what brings you here today?" he asked, surprised.

"I wanted to check in on you. See how you're doing."

Blake chuckled. "Well, I just switched jobs. I'll be starting at VEG on Monday. Sebastian set me up with a great position."

"That's good," Caitlin nodded approvingly.

Then, she casually brought up Xavian and his past.

When they got to the topic of Blake's mother, she asked, "Blake, you really don't know anything about your mother?"

"My father never told me anything. I don't even know her name."

"I do."

Blake's eyes widened in shock. "You know? You know who my mother is? Is it something my father left for you?"

It was obvious that Blake had always yearned for answers.

Caitlin gave him a gentle smile. "I figured out the truth by accident. But yes, I found your mother. Would you like to meet her?"

For a brief moment, Blake's excitement was evident. Then, just as quickly, his expression darkened.

"Forget it. She abandoned me back then. Why would I go looking for her now? She's probably remarried, living her own life with a new family. I don't need some half-siblings I've never met."

"She didn't abandon you," Caitlin said firmly. "She was caught up in something much bigger—wrongfully imprisoned for eighteen years. But she never stopped thinking about you. She loves you, Blake. She always has."

She kept the details vague, but the weight of her words was enough.

Blake's eyes shimmered with unshed tears.

He wiped them away with his sleeve. "Caitlin, take me to see her."

#### The Reunion

Caitlin took Blake to a rehabilitation center in New York, where Octavia was undergoing physical therapy.

Determined to be strong for her son, Octavia trained hard every day, pushing herself through recovery.

She wanted to walk to see him when the time came.

Inside the rehab room, several patients were going through various exercises.

Blake scanned the group, searching for a familiar face.

"Which one is she?" he asked.

Caitlin smiled. "Why don't you try and find her yourself? She's been training harder than anyone else—because she wants to stand on her own two feet when she meets you."

Blake's gaze swept the room again.

There were several women among the patients, but one in particular caught his attention—a frail, thin woman whose clothes were soaked in sweat.

A physical therapist stood beside her. "Octavia, time's up. You should rest now."

"Please," Octavia pleaded, her voice trembling. "Just one more time. Let me try again."

"You're already exhausted. Recovery takes time—you can't rush it."

"I know," she said, determination etched into her face. "But I need to keep going. I need to be able to walk... so I can see my son."

Her words struck deep.

Blake's breath hitched.

At that moment, Octavia noticed them.

At first, she couldn't see his face clearly—the light behind him obscured his features. But as he stepped closer, his face became unmistakable.

The young man standing before her was the one she had been waiting for all these years.

Tears welled in her eyes.

Blake, too, was overcome with emotion.

For years, he had believed his mother had willingly left him behind.

Now, he realized how wrong he had been.

Neither spoke a word. They simply stood there, gazing at each other with misty eyes.

Caitlin finally broke the silence. "Octavia, this is Blake. He came to see you."

"Yes... yes...!" Octavia's voice cracked as she tried to wipe away her tears, but they wouldn't stop falling.

Blake swallowed hard and took a step forward. "Mom. I'm Blake."

The single word *Mom* shattered whatever composure she had left.

Her sobs turned uncontrollable.

"I'm so sorry..." she whispered, trembling. "I'm so, so sorry..."

She had been young, foolish, and selfish. She had made the wrong decisions, ones that had stolen years away from both of them.

"Mom..."

Blake stepped forward and pulled her into a hug.

Her frame was too thin, too fragile—it only made his heart ache more.

But none of that mattered now.

She was here.

His mother was alive.

And from this day forward, he would never let her be alone again.

Octavia clung to her son, crying as if trying to make up for all the years they had lost.

Around them, other patients and staff looked on, some moved to tears themselves.

Caitlin watched them, her own eyes misty.

She thought of Xavian.

She had never been able to save him.

But at least now, she had reunited his son with the woman who had once loved him.

Maybe... this was a way to atone.

Leaving the rehab center, Blake decided to visit his mother every day. Once she fully recovered, he planned to bring her home.

Caitlin left them to their moment and headed out.

Just as she stepped outside, Quincy pulled up in his car.

"Caitlin," he called out, rolling down the window. "The BH 50th Anniversary Gala is tonight. Are you attending?"