



283: Risking His Life to Protect Her

Jasper lay back down, his gaze fixed on the woman before him, the fading bruises on her face making his heart ache with guilt.

"I'm sorry, Eliza. Please forgive me for all the wrongs I've done to you..."

Jasper's eyes turned red. The one thing he had never given Eliza was an apology.

Years ago, when he returned to The Vanderbilt Family in Raymond's place, he had to face the woman who had once been deeply in love with his brother. For him, it was an unbearable torment.

He could never betray Raymond. His only choice was to push Eliza away, rejecting her relentlessly.

Her repeated doubts, their endless arguments, his cruel words—he had broken her heart time and time again, until she finally fell from that cliff.

He had reached out, tried to grab her hand, but she had slipped through his fingers. Watching her plummet, he had felt like a sinner condemned.

Even when she returned after eighteen years, alive against all odds, he had not welcomed her home. Instead, he had ordered people to drive her away.

Now, thinking back, all he felt was overwhelming guilt.

Eliza's eyes welled up with tears at the memories, but she quickly wiped them away.

"It's over, Jasper. The past is in the past. Let's not bring it up again.

"Everything was a part of Black Wolf Fortress's scheme. They ruined



Raymond's life and yours, too. Now that the truth is out, you and Raymond can both reclaim your places. That's all that matters.

"I don't want anything else—I just want to spend the rest of my life peacefully with Raymond. You belong with The Vanderbilt Family, and I belong with my husband. Let's leave the past where it belongs."

Eliza never said whether she forgave him. She simply chose to let it go.

Silence stretched between them, both lost in their own reflections.

After a long pause, Jasper finally spoke. "When will Raymond come home?"

"I don't know," Eliza admitted. "But I believe it will be soon."

The Vanderbilt Family was waiting. They were all waiting for the day Raymond would return.

After finishing her visit at the hospital, Caitlin left for The Vanderbilt Family. However, after driving for a while, she noticed a car following her.

She instinctively sped up, but the car behind her matched her pace.

She took a sharp turn. The car followed.

It was clear—she was being tailed.

Remaining calm, Caitlin calculated her next move. She pressed the accelerator and turned onto a highway leading toward the coastal road—a wide-open space where she could maneuver more freely.

Meanwhile, Sebastian, preparing to leave The Vanderbilt Family estate, checked Caitlin's location.



His brow furrowed.

She had told him she was heading straight to the estate. So why was she speeding along the coastal highway instead?

Something was wrong.

Without hesitation, he got into his car and set off in her direction.

On the highway, the black car chasing Caitlin wasn't alone. Another vehicle—a sleek white sports car—was now in pursuit as well.

From her rearview mirror, Caitlin noticed something strange.

The white car wasn't just following—it was aggressively intercepting the black car, swerving to block it and forcing it off course.

They weren't just chasing her.

They were fighting each other.

Did she misunderstand the situation?

She wasn't the target after all?

Caitlin didn't dwell on it. Taking advantage of the chaos behind her, she floored the gas pedal and sped off, putting significant distance between herself and the two warring vehicles.

By the time she emerged from a tunnel, the cars behind her were nowhere in sight.

Meanwhile, back on the highway, the battle between the two pursuers continued.

The black car slammed into the white one, forcing it toward a rocky



embankment. Sparks flew as metal scraped against stone.

James gritted his teeth, gripping the steering wheel with fierce determination.

He had been monitoring Uesugi's presence in New York for days. Unlike James, Uesugi had no patience for subtlety—he didn't intend to manipulate Caitlin or gain her trust.

He had one plan.

Kill Caitlin, then take the codex.

James would rather die than let that happen.

He wasn't going to let anyone hurt her.

Another sharp maneuver, another calculated strike—James sent the black car skidding into the highway barrier.

Uesugi reacted swiftly, slamming his own wheel and retaliating with a hard shove.

Their cars were barely recognizable now, battered from the high-speed collision.

Then, with a sudden burst of speed, James accelerated and veered his car sideways, positioning himself directly in Uesugi's path.

A final, desperate blockade.

Uesugi slammed his brakes, tires screeching against the asphalt.

The black car came to a violent halt, mere inches from James's front bumper.



At that moment, Sebastian, who had been racing toward Caitlin's last known location, reached the coastal highway.

A wreck on the roadside caught his eye—two battered vehicles, still smoldering from the impact.

It looked like an accident.

But Sebastian didn't stop.

His focus was on Caitlin.

He checked her GPS signal again. She was slowing down, heading toward the city.

He called her.

"Hello?"

"Where are you?"

"I'm on my way to The Vanderbilt Family," Caitlin replied.

"You were on the coastal highway. What the hell were you doing there? Are you hurt?"

Sebastian's voice was tense.

"How do you know where I was?" Caitlin asked, surprised.

"You and I share a location tracker," he admitted. "I saw you heading in the wrong direction. I knew something was off, so I came looking for you. I'm on the coastal road now."

So that was it.



"I'm fine," Caitlin assured him. "Meet me at the estate."

She gave him her location, and he immediately changed course.

Back on the deserted road, the tension between James and Uesugi was palpable.

Dressed in black leather, Uesugi stepped out of his wrecked car, removing his sunglasses. His expression was menacing, his eyes brimming with malice.

James also got out, facing him without fear.

Uesugi's voice was laced with annoyance.

"James, do you have a death wish?"

Before James could answer, Uesugi raised his hand.

A gun gleamed in his grip.

The barrel aimed directly at James's temple.

