

### 285: Throwing Herself Over to Protect Her Daughter

The shadow moved silently, creeping to the bedside. With a small flashlight, he flicked on the beam, scanning the sleeping figure.

She truly was breathtaking.

No wonder James had broken protocol for her.

Uesugi's dark eyes gleamed with interest.

His gaze swept to the little girl beside her. But to him, the child was no threat.

Switching off the light, he prepared to strike.

Just then, a gunshot rang out from somewhere outside the estate.

The sharp, jarring sound shattered the stillness of the night.

Caitlin, deep in sleep, was jolted awake. Her mind was foggy with drowsiness, but in the dim room, she thought she saw a shadow standing at her bedside.

"Sebastian...?"

Her voice was groggy, assuming the figure was him.

But in the next instant, an iron grip clamped around her throat, cutting off her breath.

A heavy weight pressed down on her, pinning her to the bed.

Panic shot through Caitlin like ice water.

This wasn't Sebastian.



Sebastian would never treat her like this.

She clawed at the vice-like grip on her neck, but the fingers were merciless, squeezing tighter, suffocating her.

Her free hand scrambled along the nightstand, searching for anything she could use.

Her fingers closed around a power bank.

With all the strength she could muster, she swung it at the man's head.

The blunt impact made Uesugi flinch, his grip loosening for just a fraction of a second.

It was all the time she needed.

Caitlin shoved him away, twisting her body as she threw a sharp kick at him.

She gasped for air, her throat burning, but there was no time to dwell on the pain.

The man lunged at her again.

No time to reach for the light switch—she had to fight in the dark.

From his movements, she could tell he was highly trained. She could only fend him off with sheer determination.

A well-placed kick sent him tumbling back, crashing into furniture. Caitlin grabbed the bedside lamp and hurled it at him.

The sound of shattering glass echoed through the room.

The noise startled Patricia awake.



The little girl sat up, confused and frightened. "Mommy?"

Her small voice quivered.

Caitlin's heart clenched.

In the dark, she saw the man pivot toward her daughter.

Without thinking, she threw herself over Patricia, shielding her with her body.

She kicked out at the attacker, but he caught her ankle, yanking her down.

The door burst open.

Sebastian stormed in.

The moment he saw the struggle, rage exploded in his chest.

With one swift, brutal kick, he sent the intruder flying.

The two men clashed, trading fierce blows.

Sebastian was relentless, pushing the attacker back. Then, with a powerful kick, he sent him crashing through the glass doors onto the balcony.

Glass shards scattered across the floor.

Realizing he was outmatched, Uesugi abandoned his mission.

With a final glance at Caitlin, he leaped over the balcony railing, vanishing into the darkness below.

Sebastian bolted after him, reaching the edge in time to see the figure disappearing down the side of the house.



Wasting no time, he grabbed the drainpipe and slid down in pursuit.

Gunshots rang out in the night.

By the time Sebastian reached the front gates of the estate, the guards had already been taken down.

The intruder had fled.

The open gate loomed ominously. Whoever it was had escaped into the night.

Sebastian clenched his fists, fury boiling beneath his skin.

He had to get back. Caitlin and Patricia were still upstairs.

Turning sharply, he ran back inside.

Upstairs, the lights in Caitlin's room were on now.

She was on the bed, holding Patricia tightly, whispering soft reassurances to calm her terrified daughter.

"It's okay, baby. Mommy made the bad man go away. Don't be scared..."

Patricia sniffled, her small body trembling as she buried her face in Caitlin's embrace.

Sebastian crossed the room in three strides.

"Caitlin! Are you okay? Did he hurt you?"

"I'm fine," she assured him, though her voice was hoarse. "Patricia just got scared."

Sebastian's sharp gaze landed on the red marks on her throat.



His expression darkened.

Gently, he traced his fingers over the bruising.

"Who was it? Did you see his face?"

Caitlin shook her head. "No. I woke up to him already on top of me. It all happened too fast..."

Sebastian's jaw tightened.

He pulled both Caitlin and Patricia into his arms.

"I was right here, and I still couldn't protect you." His voice was rough with frustration. "I'm sorry, Caitlin."

She squeezed his arm. "It's not your fault. He was a coward, sneaking in under the cover of night. If you hadn't arrived when you did..."

The thought made her stomach turn.

"He wasn't just a thief. He was trained. A professional."

Sebastian nodded grimly. "I fought him. His skills... they weren't ordinary."

"This place isn't safe anymore," he decided. "Once Tyler and the others get here, you and Patricia are coming back to The Vanderbilt Family estate with me."

Caitlin didn't argue.

She knew he was right.

Whoever had come for her tonight wouldn't stop. And if word got out about the secret manuscript, more would follow.



She had no choice but to relocate.

Handing Patricia to Sebastian, she quickly packed the essentials.

She wasn't worried about leaving anything valuable behind—because the secret manuscript was never kept at DanCa Estate in the first place.

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Outside, the night was thick with shadows.

Two dark figures tore through the streets, one chasing the other.

After Uesugi had fled, slipping past the guards, James had picked up his trail and taken off after him.

No one knew that the gunshot from earlier had been fired by James—to alert Caitlin and Sebastian.

Seeing Sebastian pursue Uesugi, James was certain that his sister was safe.

But Uesugi had no intention of giving up.

He reached a hidden getaway vehicle and jumped in, gunning the engine.

James arrived just in time to see the car speed away.

He sprinted after it.

As the car roared past, James leaped onto the roof.

Uesugi cursed and swerved violently, trying to shake him off.

The vehicle swerved left and right, nearly spinning out of control.



James clung on for dear life, each sharp turn threatening to fling him off.

But he refused to let go.

If he let Uesugi go tonight, he would only come back for Caitlin again.

And James would never let that happen.

Tonight, it was either Uesugi... or him.