

310: Zeke's Other Identity

"This attack—what if Teresa taking the bullet was just a setup? A classic play for sympathy and trust?"

Caitlin nodded. "It's possible. After what happened with Patricia, I confronted them. Things got tense between us. When they came to New York to find me, I turned them away.

"They might've done this to regain my trust. Thankfully, we caught something suspicious this time. Who knows what their next trap would've been."

Whether or not Sienna and Teresa were the culprits, Caitlin knew she could no longer trust them. She deeply doubted their motives.

Sebastian seemed to hesitate, then said, "Caitlin, you might not like this—but I have to say it. If Sienna and Teresa really are the killers, do you think Zeke had anything to do with it?"

Caitlin fell silent.

That was the one connection she didn't want to make.

Zeke had always treated her and the kids with care. In all these years, she had never seen him cross a moral line.

Could it really just be Sienna and Teresa acting alone?

After a moment, Caitlin finally said, "No matter what, we have to start digging. I'll find a way to test Sienna and Teresa at the hospital. Until we have solid evidence, it's better not to tip them off."

"Agreed."



Sebastian knew they had to investigate Zeke more thoroughly. Aside from being the heir to the Shadow Moon Pavilion and possibly the son of an earl from S Country, very little was known about him. 1

Some people weren't as simple as they appeared. Even Caitlin might not truly understand who Zeke really was.

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There was some good news: Sebastian's father was finally coming home.

Caitlin had promised to go to the airport with him, along with all four children.

At the Vanderbilt estate, the kids were ready. The three boys wore identical outfits, sharp and handsome, while little Patricia wore a matching dress, cute as ever.

They were excited, buzzing with curiosity about the grandfather they had never met.

"Let's go, kids. Time to pick up Grandpa!"

Sebastian took the boys by the hand, and they all linked up. Patricia didn't forget to grab her mommy's hand too.

"Mommy, you have to come too."

"Of course."

The family of six set out together. Back at the house, the rest of the Vanderbilts were anxiously waiting.

Beatrice, who hadn't seen her eldest son in eighteen years, was overwhelmed with emotion. Every time she thought about him, she

teared up.

Eliza stayed home too, waiting for her husband, gently comforting the elder woman. "Mom, don't cry. Today is supposed to be a happy day."

"I know, I am happy," Beatrice said, even as tears slipped from her eyes.

Jasper stayed close by, keeping his mother company as they waited for Raymond.

Richard, Willa, and their family were also on standby, the whole Vanderbilt clan bustling in anticipation of Raymond's return.

The family convoy arrived at the airport, taking a private route to wait inside.

According to the flight plan, a private, non-commercial jet finally broke through the clouds and landed smoothly on the designated strip.

The kids erupted in cheers.

"He's here! Grandpa's here!"

Sebastian and Caitlin looked toward the aircraft. Soon, the cabin door opened and two rows of uniformed guards disembarked. They were from The Obsidian Order, escorting Raymond home.

Then, Vaughn and King appeared, flanking Raymond as he stepped into view.

He paused at the cabin door, letting the breeze from home wash over him. He took a deep breath. His lungs stretched as if they hadn't breathed freely in years.

He was home. He had survived—and he was finally home.



"Grandpa! Grandpa!"

The children's voices echoed. Raymond looked down and spotted his son Sebastian, a young woman, and four little kids.

That must be Caitlin—his son's beloved—and his four adorable grandchildren.

He'd already seen their photos, but nothing compared to this. Seeing them in person made his chest tighten with emotion. He waved, then slowly made his way down the stairs.

Sebastian rushed up, his voice thick. "Dad, welcome home."

"Sebastian..."

Father and son embraced, their emotions barely held in check. When they pulled apart, Raymond turned to Caitlin.

"You must be Caitlin."

"Hello, sir. I'm Caitlin," she said warmly. "Welcome back home."

"Thank you. Thank you..."

Raymond looked down again, his eyes catching the matching little heads of the boys. His heart almost burst with joy.

He wiped away a tear. "My sweet grandkids... all of you."

"I'm the eldest, Howard," said the first.

"I'm Bruce," said the second.

"I'm Arthur," the third added.

Not to be left behind, Patricia shot her hand up high. "And me, Grandpa! I'm Patricia!"

"Wonderful, wonderful. This is the best gift I could've asked for..."

Tears flooded Raymond's eyes again. He had never imagined he'd live to see this day—back on home soil, surrounded by his family, with four beautiful grandchildren.

Patricia, ever the curious one, looked up and asked Sebastian, "Daddy, why does this Grandpa look so much like the other Grandpa at home?"

"Because they're twins, sweetheart. Just like you and your brothers, Grandma Beatrice gave birth to both of them."

The little girl nodded, then stared more intently at Raymond. "I think this Grandpa is a bit skinnier."

That was no surprise—after years in Black Wolf Fortress, Raymond was lucky to be alive, let alone healthy.

Raymond chuckled, looking down at the kids with affection. "They're all so sweet... I wish I could pick them up, but my body's still recovering."

"No rush, Dad. Let's wait till you're fully healed."

Raymond still had broken ribs that hadn't fully healed, but his longing to see family couldn't keep him away any longer.

"I didn't have time to prepare fancy gifts... but I did carve something special for each of them. I hope they'll like it."

"Grandpa, your health is the best gift!" Arthur piped up sweetly.

Raymond's heart swelled at the little boy's words.



He nodded to Vaughn, who handed over a bag. From it, Raymond took out three hand-carved ebony knives for the boys and a small crystal-embedded wooden wand for Patricia.

"They're beautiful! Thank you, Grandpa!"

Though simple, the carvings were intricate and full of care. The children adored them.

"Dad, let's head home. Mom and Grandma are waiting for you," Sebastian reminded him.

"Yes..." Raymond's voice trembled with emotion as they helped him into the car.

Commented [Ma1]: