

Billionaire's Regret: Finding Her

Chapter 467

Earlier, Sebastian had led his men to deal with an issue concerning Counterfeit VFBA designs being sold on the black market, **Callie** stem had trare batch of near perfect VERA knockoffs that had been smuggled in from overseas, priced at a fraction of the originate

The same dress design that cost tens of thousands from VERA could be purchased in knockoff form for just a few thousand. Many won Women, landete in afford the real thing, sought out these imitation channels for a taste of luxury.

Sebastian took a document from Tyler. "This is an order receipt from the counterfeit market in Chinatown. It shows you placed an order for så copy at **the** exact dress 40 minutes ago. You paid \$1,800.

"Then you deliberately damaged the counterfeit and brought it here to this flagship store, hoping to exchange it for a full refund.

"What do we call that? Fraud. Extortion. I could have you arrested right now. Do you understand that?"

His cold stare drilled into Reese like a blade. His voice was frosty, heavy with menace.

“... I...” Reese stammered, completely at a loss. She had never imagined that Sebastian would be able to trace a purchase she made anonymously

How did he even find out?

Everyone around them could see her name printed clearly on the backend transaction record, matched with the timestamp and item details.

“So she really did buy a fake to scam the real store?”

“She paid \$1,800 for a knockoff and tried to exchange it for a \$100,000 dress. If that worked, she’d basically get the real deal for pocket change.

Shameless!”

“Who even thinks of stuff like this?”

The crowd murmured in disbelief. Reese scanned the room, desperate for help—but Jillian was nowhere in sight.

Unbeknownst to her, Jillian had slipped away unnoticed the moment Sebastian arrived. There was no way she was sticking around to face him.

The whispers, the judgment, and Sebastian's crushing presence—Reese couldn't take it. Flustered and humiliated, she grabbed the fake and turned to

flee.

“Stop right there!” Caitlin's voice cracked like a whip. Reese froze.

“Miss Nguyen, did you forget our little wager? If we proved your dress was a counterfeit, you agreed to compensate us tenfold for damages and publicly apologize.”

There was no way Caitlin would let her walk out so easily. If troublemakers like this were allowed to pull stunts without consequences, it would destroy

their business.

“Fine, I admit it. I did it on purpose. You caught me. But ten times the price? Isn't that just robbery?”

Reese knew she'd lost and wanted to cut her losses—but she wasn't about to throw away that kind of money.

“If you hadn’t tried to scam us, we wouldn’t have demanded it. Everyone here saw what happened. This is called accountability.

“You made a bet, and *now* it’s time to pay up. If you’re thinking of backing out, I’ll just call your cousin Virgil. I have his number.

“He’s a public prosecutor—fighting fraud and crime is part of his job. Let’s see how he’d respond.”

Caitlin pulled out her phone, pretending to dial. Reese panicked and shouted, “No! Don’t call him! I’ll pay! Okay?”

Her family might be rich, but the scandal would be far worse than just coughing up money. If Virgil or her uncle found out, she’d never hear **the end of** it.

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With a sour face **and** under the watchful gaze of a dozen customers, Reste reluctantly paid the **tanfoli comentation Myana** handle white Caitlin added coldly.

“Don’t **act** like you’re doing us a favor. Calculate how much you cost us in lost sales, brand damage, and wasted **time**. This doesn’t even begi lector

“t paid. What else do you want?” Reese snapped as she took back her card, her tone brimming with resentment.

“You still owe us an apology,” Caitlin reminded her.

“Apologize,” Sebastian growled the word through gritted teeth. The weight of it made Reese shudder.

She looked around. Caitlin had Sebastian backing her up. His men looked intimidating, and the customers were now impatiently urging her to own **up**

“Fine, I’ll apologize. I’m sorry. Happy now?” she said, her tone full of unwillingness.

Caitlin suddenly mimicked Benjamin’s voice, deadpan, “That attitude’s all wrong. Where’s the sincerity? Where’s the 90-degree bow? A proper apology requires both. Do it again.”

Reese froze. That was exactly what Benjamin had once told her. How did Caitlin even know that? This felt worse than a slap to the face.

“Sorry!” she barked, bending at the waist in a begrudging bow. When she straightened, she turned to leave.

But Caitlin called out again, “Miss Nguyen can go, but the counterfeit stays. We don’t allow fake goods to be taken out from our store.”

“I paid for it!”

Reese snapped, unintentionally confirming that she’d bought a fake.

“We hope Miss Nguyen will support original design in the future,” Caitlin said coolly. “And refrain from leaking anything online. Our store has full surveillance footage of today’s incident. But out of respect for consumer privacy, we won’t be making this public.

“You’re still welcome to shop at VERA... if you dare.”

It was a clear slap in the face—a firm warning not to cause trouble again unless she wanted to be humiliated.

With no other choice, Reese hurled the counterfeit on the floor and stormed out.

She hadn’t just failed to stir up drama—she had been utterly disgraced and lost a million dollars in the process.

Even though she had a real VERA dress now, she swore she’d never wear it. Ever.

The storm passed. Customers chatted about the incident with excitement. Caitlin instructed Ulyana and the staff to resume normal operations. The counterfeit was destroyed.

Caitlin's handling of the situation didn't just restore order—it won public trust, strengthening VERA's brand reputation.

Once everything was wrapped up, Caitlin and Sebastian left the store together. She had planned to head home, but he had other ideas.

“We're not going home?” she asked.

“What's the rush? We're already out. Let's catch a movie. My treat.”

Sebastian's handsome face wore a rare, gentle smile. He had already bought the tickets—wasting them would be a crime.

“Sounds good!”

The two of them laughed as they headed toward the elevators. But just as they reached the corridor, a figure who had been lurking **nearby** suddenly rushed out and lunged toward Caitlin.

Date night was **about to be** crashed—with more chaos and drama **on** the way.

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Luckily, Sebastian reacted quickly and kicked **the** attacker away before she could reach Caitlin, Tyler and the others immediately **stepped** in to se

them.

The woman hit the floor with a pained cry. Caitlin looked closely—it was Megan.

“Ugh...”

Megan climbed back up and rushed forward again. “Caitlin, I came here just to find you!”

Caitlin signaled for Tyler and the others to stand down. She stared at the woman on the floor and asked, “What do you want from me?”

Megan clasped her hands together in a pleading gesture. “I’m here to beg you. Please, I’m begging you, show some mercy and let my son **go, Caitling**

So she was here to plead for Joshua.

After hearing her out, Caitlin replied flatly, “Your son committed a crime. The police will deal with him accordingly. There’s nothing I can do.”

Megan was nearly in tears. “Caitlin! I know I treated you horribly before! I deserve everything that’s happened to me!

“But Joshua is my only son. If he goes to prison, what am I supposed to do with the rest of my life?

“Please, for the sake of the fact that we were once family—can’t you pull some strings with the police and help him out? I’m begging you!”

Caitlin shook her head. “I already gave him a second chance when I reclaimed LIG. If he had chosen to live honestly, he wouldn’t have ended up getting

arrested.

“I didn’t go after him—he teamed up with others to set me up. He chose this path, no one else. He brought this on himself.

“I said it before—anyone who wrongs me won’t get away with it. You just didn’t listen.”

“So you really won’t help him? My poor boy...”

Megan’s glamorous life was long gone. With no background to rely on, she was now miserable and desperate. Hearing Caitlin’s harsh words, she covered

her face and sobbed.

“Is your son really that pitiful? I’d say people like him are only pitiful because they’re hateful. This is what happens when you don’t raise your child properly.

“Actually, it’s better that he’s locked up. He can keep Jonathan company. Makes visiting day more convenient for you.”

As Caitlin finished speaking, the elevator arrived. She stepped inside with Sebastian and the others.

Megan collapsed to the floor in despair. Her daughter had vanished without a word, her son was in custody, and now she was all alone. What was left for

her?

Just as Megan sank deeper into her hopelessness, a man with a low-brimmed hat appeared in front of her.

“If you want to get your son out, I can help you.”

Megan lifted her head but couldn't see the man's face. Still, in her desperation, he looked like a lifeline.

“Really? You can save my son? You really can help him?”

“I can. But I need you to do something for me.”

“Yes! Anything! Even if it's a hundred things, I'll do it!”

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Then come with nie

Megan wiped her tears, scrambled to her feet, and quickly followed the man.

Upstairs, the movie was about to start.

Wendy had been dragged here by Benjamin. She'd tried to slip away a few times, but he kept catching her. She was still angry about what **he'd said** before and didn't want to be near him at all.

Benjamin had bought snacks and handed her a big tub of popcorn. "Here, hold this, Pudding."

"I have **a** name. Use it."

Wendy huffed. Every time he called her "Pudding," she remembered that ridiculous comment about liking girls with curves. It made her skin crawl

"Alright, I'll call you by your name from now on, okay, Pudding?"

Wendy glared daggers at him. If looks could kill...

Benjamin didn't care in the slightest. He slipped his arm around her and ted her into the theater.

He'd only bought tickets today because Sebastian had mentioned taking Caitlin to a horror movie. According to him, girls always got scared **and** snuggled into their guy's arms during scary films.

So naturally, Benjamin wanted to test the theory with Wendy. Maybe she'd get scared and jump into his arms. He was looking forward to it.

As people settled into their seats, Sebastian and Caitlin arrived at the same theater, holding popcorn and drinks, fingers intertwined.

Tyler, Xavi, Zinnia, and other staff members followed to ensure their safety. They all filed into the auditorium together.

“Caitlin!”

Wendy waved excitedly when she saw her. “I’m over here!”

Caitlin waved back at her and Benjamin, but their seats were further back, not near the center.

Wendy turned to Benjamin. “I want to switch seats and sit with Caitlin.”

As she started to get up, Benjamin shoved her back down. “Sit still! They’re a couple. Why would you go bother them? Unless you want our boss **to** kick you across the room.”

Fair point.

Sebastian wouldn’t be thrilled.

Wendy sulked but stayed in her seat.

The back rows had been secured for Sebastian and his team. Once seated, they waited for the movie to start.

The most excited person might've been Xavi, who was sitting next to Zinnia. Even though the whole team was present, he pretended it was just the two of them watching a movie. Not a bad setup.

He'd already heard from Mr. Vanderbilt that they were watching a horror movie—something girls usually found terrifying. Would Zinnia **get** scared **and** hide in his arms?

He liked the idea.

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The previews ended. **The movie began.**

The surround **sound** amped up **every** eerie note. The film really was terrifying

Screams erupted in the audience from time to time.

Benjamin **kept** sneaking glances at Wendy. While other women were shrieking and clutching their partners, Wendy looked laser focused—wide eyed and completely captivated.

He leaned in and whispered, “Pudding, aren’t you scared?”

“What’s there to be scared of?”

“It’s a horror movie. You’re supposed to be scared,” Benjamin muttered.

“This is awesome. So thrilling!” Wendy replied, munching on popcorn, fully engaged.

Benjamin rubbed his chin, baffled. This wasn’t how it was supposed to go.

She was supposed to cuddle up to him. Why wasn’t she following the script?

He couldn’t help but glance back at Sebastian and Caitlin. What about them?

How did Caitlin react to horror movies?

One look, and he snapped his head back forward.

Even during a horror movie, they were all lovey-dovey.

Disgusting.

Whenever a scary scene came up, Caitlin would shut her eyes.

“Are you scared?”

Sebastian shifted his broad frame to completely block her view of the screen. Their faces were inches apart.

In that close proximity, their breaths intertwined.

Caitlin opened her eyes but couldn't see the screen—only felt his *lips* hovering close, his warm breath washing over her.

“What would I be scared of?” Her heart skipped a beat.

Sebastian gently brushed *her* cheek. “Don't worry, Caitlin. I know how to take all your fear away.”

Cover your eyes)~t~

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don't need that

Caitlin pushed Sebastian away, fully aware of the mischief he was up to.

“You do.”

Sebastian didn't care whether she thought she needed it or not. Watching a movie was just an excuse his real goal was to steal kisses and smuggl

“People are watching!”

Caitlin blushed furiously, reminding him to behave himself in public.

“Who’s watching us?”

Sebastian casually glanced around. Their team members had all been staring curiously in their direction but immediately turned away the second he caught them.

Some stared at the ceiling, others looked down at the floor, and a few even pretended to be asleep—everyone scrambled to avoid his sharp gaze.

“See? No one’s watching.”

He leaned in again and stole a kiss.

The dim lighting of the theater and the distraction of the movie allowed him to deepen the kiss without anyone noticing.

The heat and sweetness between them formed a bubble of intimacy, immune to even the creepiest horror sound effects.

While most girls found horror movies terrifying, there were exceptions—like Wendy, and Zinnia.

For someone like Zinnia, who had crawled through real corpses in the past, this film was child's play.

She watched the screen calmly, but just as a terrifying scene played out, the audience erupted in screams—and Xavi got so startled that he instinctively dove into Zinnia's arms, clutching her tightly while yelping like a scared child.

Zinnia froze, completely caught off guard, not daring to move.

Unbeknownst to Xavi, every bodyguard behind them turned to stare. When he looked up and met all their stunned eyes, he quickly pulled away.

“Sorry!”

Xavi hurried back to his seat, mortified. He wanted to slap himself.

How could he do something so embarrassing?

What would Zinnia think of him now?

What would everyone else think?

He'd just destroyed his entire image with one terrified hug.

The horror film finally ended. Wendy stretched looking fully satisfied, her tub of popcorn empty.

“That was awesome. Can we go now?”

She turned to Benjamin—only to find his face darker than the horror film villain's.

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“Let's go.”

Benjamin growled the word, stood up, and warmed out of the row. Wendy quickly followed, but not without glancing 697) Cath and the intent

At people rose to leave, Caitlin shoved Sebastian.

“okay, that’s enough!”

She whispered sternly, blushing with a hint of playful scolding

Sebastian didn’t even know what the movie had been about he’d spent the whole time kissing her and was very satisfied

“Let’s go home,” he said, helping her to her feet with a grin.

“Great movie, by the way.”

“Really?” Xavi muttered under his breath. “Mr. Vanderbilt, did you even watch a single scene? Do you even know what it was called?”

Their group left the theater.

At the entrance, Wendy grabbed Caitlin's hand excitedly.

"Caitlin, that was a great movie! The pacing, the atmosphere—just perfect. You saw it, right? Super thrilling!"

"I saw a little bit. It was decent."

Caitlin really had only seen a little—the rest of the time, she'd been otherwise occupied by a certain someone.

"Let's go home now!"

Wendy was ready to leave. Benjamin, however, wasn't done yet.

"Sebastian, Caitlin—how about late-night snacks? My treat!"

"You two go ahead. I'm heading home," Wendy cut in, committed to her diet and determined not to fall into Benjamin's food trap.

"Not tonight. We have work in the morning," Sebastian added, eager to get Caitlin home for more one-on-one time.

“Rain check, then. Benjamin, please make sure Wendy gets home safely. Thanks!” Caitlin added.

“I don’t need him! I’ll call a cab!”

Wendy waved them off, wanting nothing more than to get away from Benjamin.

Seeing how she avoided him only soured Benjamin’s mood further.

Everyone went their separate ways.

Wendy darted out of the mall and headed for the curb to catch a ride. But before long, a car pulled up—Benjamin’s.

Wendy turned to run, but Benjamin didn’t say a word. He got out, grabbed her like a sack of flour, shoved her into the passenger seat, and drove off.

Wendy could only sigh in frustration.

How the hell was she supposed to shake off this guy who was clearly obsessed with her curves?

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Caitlin followed Sebastian back to the estate, surprised to find the place quiet.

“Where are the kids? It’s pretty late.”

“Larranged for them to stay in the Carriage House. Harrison, Quincy, Faith—they’re all over there. Just you and me here. Our private time,”

The household staff had all retired, the gates were shut, and Sebastian wasted no time pushing her onto the couch.

He’d been holding back since the movie and wasn’t going to waste another second.

No more talking—his kisses came in waves, passionate and deep.

They got lost in their own world.

Did that satisfy your craving for fluff?

They spent the whole night wrapped in each other's arms.

The next morning, both headed off to work.

Since taking on the role of Global CEO at KM International Group, Sebastian had spent some time accompanying Caitlin in Silverstone and was now backlogged with work.

Caitlin was just as busy. She had to oversee the renovation of TIG's flagship store and scout locations for VERA's new headquarters.

That was why she was attending a major land auction being held downtown today.

Coincidentally, she ran into Zora and her team at the event.

Caitlin wore an icy blue suit—elegant, regal. Zora had chosen a striking orange gown, bright and flamboyant.

When the two crossed paths, both came to a halt.

“Didn't expect to see you here, Caitlin. Don't tell me we've both set our sights on the same plot of land again?”

Zora's tone carried a hidden edge.

Caitlin replied coolly,

"I believe getting something takes timing, harmony, and a bit of fate. If it's meant to be yours, it'll be yours. If not, no amount of scheming will make it

so."

Their eyes locked in a silent showdown before they brushed past each other, neither backing down an inch.

Three parcels were up *for* auction today. Caitlin gave her team some quick instructions before heading into Auction Room One.

Sure enough, Zora's team entered the same hall—they were eyeing the same property.

Once the auction began, several bidders drove the price of Plot #1 up through two rounds **of** competitive bidding. The current price stood at \$2 billion, with each raise increasing by \$50 million.

Caitlin raised her paddle—Number 7.

“\$2.05 billion.”

But the moment she did, Zora raised her own paddle, voice sharp and clear,

“\$2.1 billion!”

Caitlin turned and met Zora’s gaze—one filled with blatant provocation:

So, this **was** no coincidence,

Zora was here to challenge her head-on.

Fine.

Let her try. Let her learn what it costs to pick a fight she can’t win.

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Caitlin raised her paddle again.

“Number 7 lady bids 2.5 billion!” the auctioneer announced loudly.

“2.55 billion!”

Zora shot her a defiant look. She wasn't here to lose. With a powerful backer and fresh investment behind XEG, she finally had the capital **to** compete head-to-head with Caitlin.

She had her eyes on Plot 1 for XEG's expansion, determined to crush Caitlin with her own strength in the business world.

“2.6 billion!”

A new voice joined the fray. Sitting slightly behind Caitlin, a man raised his paddle.

She turned to see it was Abel. Dressed sharply, he nodded and smiled at her like a gentleman. Caitlin returned a slight nod, then calmly raised her paddle again.

“3 billion.”

No point in incremental bidding. Caitlin wasn't here to waste time—and certainly not short on cash. Anyone trying to outbid her on price was asking for

humiliation.

The bid jumped to 3 billion, already far exceeding market value. The crowd turned to stare at Caitlin.

Zora's eyes blazed. She raised her paddle again.

“3.05 billion!”

More gasps followed. Zora had long forgotten her mother's advice not to go head-to-head with Caitlin. She was set on crashing into that wall, no matter

the cost.

“3.5 billion!”

Caitlin's paddle went up again. Her eyes locked with Zora's—daring her to continue.

Several real estate moguls joined in briefly, pushing it to 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 billion. Then Zora threw down the gauntlet:

“4 billion!”

Now the plot had gone into extreme overvaluation. Even the wealthiest bidders backed off. A wave of exclamations swept through the room, All eyes were now on Caitlin and Zora.

Zora stared straight at Caitlin, daring her to raise the paddle again. She figured if Caitlin went as high as 5 billion, she'd bow out—leaving Caitlin to waste a fortune and suffer a major loss.

But Caitlin sat motionless.

The auctioneer started looking around the room.

“Any higher bids? Going once... going twice... going three times—sold!”

“Congratulations! Miss Harris, bidder number 12, wins the rights to Plot 1!”

Applause followed.

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Zora was a **bit** surprised that Caitlin hadn't followed through but then her face lit up **with** smug satisfaction.

Finally, she'd stolen the spotlight from Caitlin. Finally, she'd won!

As the crowd trickled out of Auction Room 1, Caitlin and Zora crossed paths again.

"Well? I got Plot 1! Looks like you couldn't beat me this time!"

Zora's smile stretched triumphantly across her face.

"Congratulations, Miss Harris. That was a bold win."

Caitlin responded with a polite, chilly smile, then walked away without a second glance.

Zora blinked. Something didn't feel right. Since when did Caitlin ever act this gracious in defeat?

What game was she playing?

Suddenly uneasy, Zora instructed her team to finalize the contract before Caitlin had a chance to change anything,

Outside the auction hall, Abel caught up with Caitlin.

“Didn’t expect to see you here, Caitlin. You were aiming for Plot 1 too, right? Why didn’t you push further? You could’ve easily won.”

Caitlin stopped and looked at him.

“I could’ve, but I’m not dumb enough to overpay by double.”

Her meaning was clear—she’d done her homework. Plot 1 was a good piece of land, but at a 100% premium, the ROI would tank.

“Smart as always. You really know how to play the long game.”

Abel looked at her with admiration. He understood that winning over a woman like Caitlin would take more than wealth—it would take strategy and patience.

Just then, a staffer rushed past and accidentally bumped into Caitlin's back, causing her to lose her balance. Abel quickly caught her.

"You okay?"

"I'm fine, thanks."

She steadied herself, glancing briefly at the man who'd bumped into her, unaware of the glint **of** calculation in Abel's eyes—or the hidden camera shuttering from a corner.

Moments later, the transaction results appeared on the digital board in the lobby. Abel glanced up and froze.

Plot 3...

Winner: Caitlin.

"You... when did you win Plot 3?" he asked, stunned.

"Just now."

Caitlin answered flatly.

Zora's team arrived just in time to see the results. Their team name beside Plot 1. Caitlin's beside Plot 3.

Seeing Caitlin's name next to Plot 3 made Zora's brain short-circuit for a second.

"You... you bought Plot 3?"

"Since you got Plot 1, I had to settle for second-best."

Caitlin replied indifferently.

Though Plot 3 was a little farther from the city center, its area was comparable to Plot 1—and Caitlin had only paid 1 billion.

Zora had dropped 4 billion.

Suddenly it clicked.

“You planned this! You never intended to buy Plot 1, did you?! You used me as a decoy while *you* quietly snagged Plot 3 for a fraction of the price!”

Her voice rose with fury.

She thought Caitlin had gone into Auction Room 1 to fight over Plot 1—but it was all a ruse. Meanwhile, her team had quietly snapped up the real prize for a bargain.

Zora felt like spitting blood. This woman didn’t follow

“Miss Harris, have you been reading too many novels?”

any script!

Caitlin’s lips curved coldly, her eyes gleaming with disdain.

“You’re not even going to deny it! You deliberately drove the price up to 4 billion just to trap me into wasting my money!”

Zora’s perfect face was flushed with rage.

“I trapped you?”

Caitlin’s gaze turned sharp.

“Did I force you to bid 4 billion? You made the call. I just stopped. That’s not a trap—that’s your own ego.

“You crash into a tree and blame the tree for being in your way? Trip over your own feet and curse the ground for being uneven? How does that make sense?”

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Caitlin’s words teht Zora completely speechless.

“Caitlin, you

She pointed a trembling finger at her, too furious to form a full sentence.

“Don’t point at me!”

Caitlin slapped her hand away without hesitation. “I think Miss Harris not only suffers from delusions of persecution but also has a few screws loose. You should go buy more walnuts for that brain of yours.”

Without sparing Zora another glance, Caitlin led her team straight out of the trading hall.

Zora was so furious she could barely breathe. She had never been humiliated like this before. Caitlin actually said that in public, not sparing her the

slightest bit of dignity.

She was practically about to explode from rage.

Abel’s gaze lingered on Caitlin’s back until she disappeared out the door.

Zora turned and glared at Abel, snapping, “Don’t tell me you’ve fallen for her too?”

Abel looked away, a faint smile tugging at his lips. He leaned in close and whispered in her ear, “How could I? You’re my sweetheart.”

“But you haven’t made any progress at all,” Zora complained, clearly running out of patience. She didn’t know how long Abel’s charm offensive would

take to work.

“Who said there’s been no progress? Give it a little more time—you’ll see results soon enough. Just be patient.”

Abel straightened his suit collar, his confident smile unfazed as he strolled leisurely **out** the door.

Sitting in the car, Caitlin called James to check on the plans for the day.

“I’m here at the amusement park with Quincy and the kids. They’re having a great time.”

James stood just outside the amusement park entrance, glancing back at the children laughing and playing inside. The place was packed today, full of kids and laughter echoing throughout the park.

“Thanks for taking care of them!”

“Taking care of these little ones? It’s nothing. *You* go take care of your business—we’ve got the kids, no worries.”

Before Caitlin could reply, a deafening crash thundered through the phone.

She immediately heard the shrieks of children, mixed with the screams of panicked adults.

“What happened? Harrison?” Caitlin’s voice rose sharply in alarm.

James turned around to see that one of the amusement park structures had malfunctioned. The roof had collapsed, and sparks and smoke were starting to rise—it looked serious.

s had an accident! I’m going in to find the kids!”

“Something’s wrong! The park’s I

He hung up and rushed into the chaos with Quincy, Faith, and the others.

Caitlin, now in full panic, ordered the driver to get them to the park as fast as possible. Her heart was pounding—**what** if the kids were hurt? Sensing her

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anxiety, Zinnia tried to reassure her.

“Caitlin, don’t worry! They’re going to be fine!”

hope so...

Her hands trembled as she quickly dialed Sebastian.

“What? An accident at the park? I’m on my way!”

Sebastian, in the middle of a meeting, hung up at once, dismissed the room, and rushed out.

When the executives heard about the amusement park accident, they figured out quickly that the CEO’s kids must be involved

“I’m coming too!” Vincent said, catching up to Sebastian and heading out at full speed.

This was the largest indoor amusement park in the city—and now it was total chaos. No one could have predicted such an incident today

Parents swarmed into the park, frantically searching for their children. The noise was overwhelming—crying kids, shouting adults, chaos everywhere

The collapsed roof blocked many exits, so people had to join forces to lift the debris. Staff and security guards joined in to help with the rescue.

Outside the park, parents who couldn't get in were calling the police in droves. The entire scene was a mess.

“Arthur! Bruce! Howard! Patricia...”

Faith climbed over debris from another side, scanning for the kids in panic.

Many children had been trapped under the collapsed ceiling. She found a little boy, bloodied and crying for his mom. Faith picked him up and handed him off to be taken to safety. No one cared whose child was whose anymore—as long as they were children, they were rescued first.

“Faith!”

Before she could find the others, Arthur spotted her first. He was stuck in the middle of a group of kids, unable to crawl out.

“Arthur!”

Faith’s eyes welled up the moment she found him. She pulled him free and quickly checked him over.

“Are you hurt, Arthur?”

Out of all the kids, Arthur was probably her favorite—a sweet, thoughtful little guy.

“I’m not hurt. Don’t cry, Faith!”

“Where’s your brother? And Patricia? Did *you* see them?”

“They’re inside—further back.”

“Okay, you go out first. I’ll get them!”

Faith handed Arthur off to their team and turned right back to search for the others.

Soon after, police, firefighters, and ambulances all arrived on the scene.

By the time Caitlin and the others arrived, the large section of collapsed ceiling had already been lifted by rescuers.

More and more kids were being pulled from beneath the debris.

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“Arthur!”

Caitlin **spotted** her son and ran over, wrapping him in a tight hug.

“Mommy...”

“I’m so glad you’re okay. Where are the others?”

“They’re still inside!”

Zinnia and Xavi joined in, helping to search for the other children.

Not long after, Quincy and James came out, each carrying a child—it was Howard and Bruce.

“Howard! Bruce!”

“Mommy!”

Caitlin pulled both boys into her arms, heart aching. The two were clearly terrified and clung tightly to her.

Seeing they weren’t hurt, Caitlin finally breathed a bit easier.

Just then, Sebastian and Vincent arrived with a team, running over the moment they saw Caitlin and the kids.

“Caitlin! How are the kids?”

“Daddy...”

All three boys turned to him.

“They’re okay! No injuries, thank god!”

“Where’s Patricia?” Sebastian asked, quickly realizing one was missing.

“They’re still searching for her. She must still be inside!”

Without a word, Sebastian rushed straight *into* the mess.

“Patricia! Patricia!”

Everyone scattered to help search.

The collapsed structure had trapped many, but thankfully, parts of the equipment held up, creating enough space to keep the kids from being crushed.

By the time the rescue ended, around seven or eight children had been injured to varying degrees. The rest were safe.

Parents slowly reclaimed their children, while the injured were taken away by ambulance. Cleanup was underway.

But when Quincy and James came back, both shook their heads.

“No sign of Patricia.”

Caitlin’s face paled.

“How could Patricia be the only one missing? Where could she be?”

Billionaire's Regret: Finding Her

Chapter 472

“Could she have been taken by mistake?”

Faith made a guess. After all, the scene earlier was complete chaos—parents and kids all jumbled together.

“That’s possible. Keep looking!”

Caitlin forced herself to stay calm, but inside, she was spiraling into panic.

She had gone through hell to get her daughter back. If she lost her again, how could she go on living?

“Search every corner. Leave nothing unchecked!”

Sebastian issued the order, directing his people to widen the search perimeter. He also sent James and Quincy to the park’s security office **to** check surveillance footage at the entrance—maybe someone had mistakenly taken Patricia.

James and Quincy ran off at full speed.

Apart from Caitlin’s group, all the other families had accounted for their kids. Police and park management were still on site.

When word got out that a child was missing, the police relayed the news over their radios, and the park staff used the loudspeakers to make **a** missing child announcement.

Patricia's name echoed throughout the entire park, but as more time passed, the tension mounted.

"Wait—we can track Patricia's location!"

Caitlin nearly smacked herself for forgetting the most important detail.

She quickly opened her phone and pulled up the GPS tracker linked to her daughter.

The signal was still showing inside the park.

"She's still here! Patricia is still in the park!"

Hope sparked again. Caitlin and Sebastian followed the signal immediately.

"She should be right here... but there's no one."

Caitlin's hands were clammy with sweat. Her heart felt like it was made of ice. She followed the signal, but there was no sign of her daughter.

"Patricia! Patricia! Where are you?!"

She called out, struggling to keep it together.

Sebastian suddenly spotted something in the bushes a small object with a panda cartoon on it.

“Caitlin! Look at this!”

“That’s Patricia’s!”

“It was tossed in the bushes!”

Sebastian’s expression darkened. He already knew what this meant.

“Someone clearly used the chaos as cover to take Patricia. They ditched her tracker here to throw us off. I’d bet anything **she’s already been taken out of** the park.”

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Chapter 472

Xavi—clearly not reading **the room**—blurted out, “Could it be traffickers?”

Sebastian **shot** him a look that could freeze fire. Xavi instinctively shrank back. Had he said something wrong **again**?

Right now, the last thing anyone wanted to hear was that. No one wanted to even consider their child might have been abducted.

“**No... no**, no! What do we do? What if we can’t find her?!”

Caitlin was breaking down, her chest tight with fear, her eyes burning.

“We’ll find her! We will! Don’t panic—we’ll get her back!”

Sebastian gripped her arm, trying to calm her.

Just then, James and Quincy came running back.

“We found Patricia on the footage!”

Everyone’s spirits lifted at once. But Quincy’s next words hit like

a

bucket of ice water.

“She was taken by an older woman—looked like she was in her sixties or seventies. Judging from the footage, this wasn’t a mistake. It looks like a deliberate abduction.”

Sebastian and Caitlin stared at the video footage. On the screen, a white-haired old woman was seen sneaking Patricia away while everyone was

distracted.

Another camera angle showed her removing the tracker from Patricia’s wrist, tossing it into the bushes, and exiting through a different gate—vanishing completely from view.

There was no doubt now: Patricia had been abducted.

Caitlin’s heart sank. Her daughter was so trusting, so innocent—it wouldn’t be hard to lure her away. The thought made her blood run cold.

Sebastian immediately sprang into action.

“Get the kids home first. Everyone else—move out!”

“Yes, sir!”

Sebastian led the team toward the gate where the woman had exited.

If this really was a trafficking case, the woman would be trying to move Patricia fast. They needed to check every major road, surveillance feed, and suspicious vehicle immediately.

Finding the child was now the highest priority. Police forces mobilized across the city.

At headquarters, Felix had just received word of the incident and The Vanderbilt Family’s missing daughter. He took a team of officers out personally and ordered traffic surveillance rooms to begin combing through footage.

The massive indoor amusement park incident was already making headlines, drawing widespread attention.

When news reached The Vanderbilt Family that Patricia had been taken, the entire household was on the verge of collapse.

Patricia was the family's little princess, adored by everyone. After so much effort to reunite with her, this was the last thing anyone expected.

Beatrice was nearly shouting. "Eliza, Raymond! Go! Go find her now! You must bring Patricia back to me!"

"Don't worry, Mom. We're on it!"

Chapter 472

Raymond and Eliza **rushed out** the door, Meanwhile, **Simon got** wind of the news and immediately **contacted Molly**. The moment she bora za missing, she headed **straight** to the scene.

The Vanderbilt family launched a full-scale search.

At a hospital room...

Ximena was peeling an apple for her son when Zora walked in.

Though Zeke had never acknowledged her as his sister, it didn't change the fact that she was.

Zeke's face darkened when he saw her.

"I heard you went to the land auction today?"

Though he hadn't been discharged, his sources kept him well-informed.

"Didn't I tell you not to mess with Caitlin?"

"You picked a fight with Caitlin again?" Ximena frowned at Zora.

"Mom! I just went to the auction. It had nothing to do with her."

Zora, in a good mood, changed the subject with a smirk.

"Oh, right. You guys probably haven't seen the news yet? There was an accident at the New York amusement park. A lot of kids were hurt. I heard Caitlin's kids were caught up in it—and one of them is still missing."

"What?!"

Zeke's heart tightened instantly. He threw off the covers and sat up in one swift motion.

“Zeke! What are you doing? You’re still injured-” Ximena tried to stop him.

“Don’t stop me!”

Ignoring his pain, Zeke grabbed his phone and stormed out of the room.

“He’s insane! Absolutely insane! It’s not even his kid—why’s he freaking out?” Zora sneered.

“Shut up!”

Ximena snapped and ran after him.

The police continued reviewing traffic *feeds*, but based on the direction the suspect left the park, they hadn’t yet found any trace *of* the woman.

Officers were dispatched to *the* surrounding streets to find witnesses, but leads dried up quickly. The woman and child seemed to have vanished into thin air.

Caitlin played the surveillance video over and over again, until suddenly, her expression changed.

She gasped.

“Wait—something’s wrong with this video!”

“What is it?” Zinnia leaned in.

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*This isn’t **an** old woman at all! Her build and the way she walks it’s nothing like someone elderly.

Caitlin narrowed her eyes as she rewatched the surveillance footage. A person’s age could often be guessed from posture and gait. This on called—afilari **lady** had white hair, yes, but her movements were far too steady and energetic.

Something clicked.

“And I know that silhouette... That’s Megan! No wonder she looked familiar!”

“Megan? You mean that woman who was begging you in the mall to spare her son?” Zinnia asked.

“Yes! It must be her. She’s trying to use Patricia to threaten me, force me to let her son go.”

The more Caitlin thought about it, the more convinced she became. Megan had clearly reached the point of desperation.

She immediately called Sebastian to report her theory.

Sebastian and his team were still reviewing vehicles that had passed by the park entrance when he got Caitlin’s call. Upon hearing her suspicion, he ordered an immediate investigation into Megan’s whereabouts.

Meanwhile, Zeke had left the hospital and was anxiously heading to the scene. Ximena pulled up in her car, waving for him to get in.

After a brief hesitation, Zeke opened the door and got in. Without a word, Ximena drove straight toward the amusement park.

They arrived to find Caitlin. When she saw Zeke standing there in slippers and a hospital gown, she stared at him in **shock**.

“Zeke, why are you out here like this?”

“I saw the news. I heard something happened to the kids—I had to come. What’s going on?”

Moved by his concern, Caitlin told him the truth.

“Arthur and the boys are fine. It’s Patricia... she’s missing.”

Ximena had just caught up and immediately asked, panicked, “What happened to Patricia? Caitlin, what happened?!”

She had helped raise Patricia—how could she not care?

“She was taken during the chaos. We’re all doing everything we can to find her.”

Caitlin pulled up the video and showed it to them. Ximena took one look and gasped.

“That’s Imani, isn’t it?”

“Imani? You know this woman?” Caitlin asked, surprised.

“She’s our housekeeper at the estate. That outfit, that hairstyle—it’s her! Why would she take Patricia? I’ll call her right now!”

Ximena immediately tried to contact Imáni.

Caitlin stared at the footage again, beginning to doubt her earlier conclusion. Could it really be the Vanderbilt estate’s housekeeper and **not Megan in** disguise?

But moments later, Ximena got a call back from the head butler at the estate, who confirmed Imani hadn’t left **all day**.

“It’s not her. Imani’s at the estate—she’s never left. So who is this woman?”

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Chapter 473

“**Someone must’ve** dressed up **like** imant to trick Patricia, Caitlin said. “It’s the only **explanation**. Patricia **would** never follow a shanger dit be

“Oh god... what **do we do**?” Ximena was nearly in tears. Zeke, overwhelmed and helpless, called his team and ordered them to join the renter

Ten minutes later, a new lead emerged.

A witness came forward, claiming to have seen an older woman walking with a pretty little girl outside the amusement park just after **the** incident. They got into a black van. The witness remembered that the license plate ended in the number 8.

Surveillance footage confirmed that it was the same pair.

This was a breakthrough.

Sebastian relayed the info to the police, who began checking black vans with plates ending in 8.

Meanwhile, James had traced Megan’s phone. GPS records showed it had indeed been near the amusement park at the exact time of the incident.

The timeline matched perfectly—it was almost certainly Megan in disguise.

“We’ve got her location!”

James pinpointed Megan's coordinates through her phone, but just two minutes later, the device was powered off and the signal vanished.

Then Felix called in from the police department.

The van's movement had been tracked—its

led toward a construction site on the outskirts of the city.

That location was within the same area where Megan's signal had last pinged.

The suspect was confirmed.

“Everyone, move out!”

Sebastian led the team personally. On the way, he called Caitlin.

“Caitlin! It was Megan! A witness confirmed it. We've got her location and we're heading there now.”

“Send me the address—I’m coming too!”

Caitlin, Ximena, and Zeke all jumped in their car and sped toward the site.

The black van had stopped outside an unfinished construction site.

Megan pulled Patricia from the vehicle. The little girl looked around in confusion. This wasn’t the Thompson Residence.

“This isn’t Grandma’s house... Where’s Grandma?”

Megan, dressed to impersonate the estate’s housekeeper Imani, had used that disguise to trick Patricia into leaving with her.

Now, faced with the child’s questions, she kept up the act.

“She’s upstairs, sweetie. I’ll take you *to* her, okay?”

A man in all black, with a baseball cap and a mask hiding his face, stepped out of the van. He pulled on black gloves and walked toward **Patricia**.

The girl instantly sensed something was wrong and struggled against Megan's grip.

*Hall want **to** go back! I want my **mommy!**"

She yanked her little hand free and made a run for it.

*Come back! Don't rum!"

Megan couldn't let her go—this child was her only chance of getting her son back.

But she couldn't keep up with Patricia's tiny, quick legs. The man in black, however, moved like lightning. He lunged forward and scooped Patricia up tucking her under his arm like she weighed nothing.

"Put me down! I want Mommy! I want Daddy!"

Patricia cried out, kicking and flailing, but it was useless.

The man carried her like a sack, climbing the metal stairs of the skeletal building.

Megan followed, breathless but eager. “Sir, I brought her. When can I get my son back?”

“Soon.”

That was all the man said.

But even that was enough to make Megan’s heart race. She followed him higher, eyes burning with hope.

“Mommy... Daddy... please...”

Patricia’s cries echoed through the empty shell of the building. She was like a terrified little chick in the grip of a wolf.

On the fifth floor, the man tied her to the edge of the scaffolding. There were no railings or safety features—just crumbling concrete and open air.

He opened a black duffel bag.

Inside was a small explosive device.

He began strapping it to Patricia's body.

Someone save this little angel-before it's too late.

Chapter 474

Once everything was in place, the man stood up and tossed Megan a knife. His voice was cold and emotionless.

"You can call Sebastian and Caitlin now. Lure them over here. As long as they give in, your son lives."

Megan nodded eagerly.

"Okay, okay. I know what to do."

The man walked off down the stairs, disappearing into the shadows. It was clear he was handing over control of the situation to Megan now.

Megan had already gone all-in. If it meant saving her son, she was willing to risk everything. She took out her phone, ready to call Caitlin and tell her: her daughter was in her hands.

If they didn't bring her son out, she wouldn't give Patricia back. Simple as that.

"Imani... Imani..."

Patricia cried helplessly, looking at the woman she believed had always cared for her.

Why would Imani lie to her?

Hadn't she always been kind?

Megan's patience was long gone.

"Stop crying! I'm not your precious Imani!"

She ripped off the white wig and peeled away the fake skin mask from her face.

"You're not... you're not Imani..."

Patricia gasped, tears falling in sobs as she realized–this wasn't her nanny. This was a complete stranger.

“Hmph. Little fool. This is what happens when you're too trusting.”

Megan jabbed her finger into Patricia's forehead.

“If you want to blame someone, blame your mother. She's the real monster. A heartless woman. You got that?”

“My mommy's not a bad person... you are...

..you're the bad one...”

Patricia sobbed out a protest. But all it earned her was a harsh slap.

“Aah... uhh...”

Her cries grew louder, red fingerprints blooming across her pale cheeks.

And that wasn't the end of it.

“You better behave. Or you're in for a whole lot worse.”

Megan tore off a strip of black duct tape and sealed Patricia's mouth. Finally, the room was quiet.

She pulled out her phone–previously powered off–and turned it back on. Scrolling through the contacts, she found Caitlin's number and

In the speeding car, Caitlin had already called Megan several times, but her phone had been off.

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Now, unexpectedly, it lit up with an incoming call,

“It's Megan!”

“Answer it!” Zinnia urged, her voice tense.

Caitlin took a breath, forcing herself to stay calm as she picked up.

“Megan? is my daughter with you?”

“That's right. She's with me. You want her back? Get my son out. Do that, and I'll tell you where your daughter is.”

So it really was about her son. Caitlin gritted her teeth. Megan had gone completely insane.

They had already pinpointed Megan's location. She didn't need to tell them anything—they were on their way to the abandoned site now.

But Caitlin knew she had to keep her talking.

“How do I even know you're telling the truth? I haven't heard my daughter's voice. For all I know, she's not with you at all.”

“Fine. I'll let you hear her.”

Megan tore the duct tape from Patricia's mouth.

“Mommy... mommy...” Patricia sobbed, her voice hoarse and full of fear.

Hearing her daughter's voice, Caitlin's heart felt like it was being crushed. Tears rolled uncontrollably down her cheeks.

“Patricia! Don't be scared. Mommy's coming. I'm on my way!”

Megan slapped the tape back over the child's mouth.

“Now do you believe me?”

“Megan! I'm warning you—if you lay a single finger on her, I'll make sure you never see the light of day again.”

“You want your daughter? I want my son! No son, no daughter—simple as that.”

Megan had nothing left to lose. Caitlin had no choice but to play along.

“Don't do anything crazy. I promise you—I'll call Felix right now. I'll get them to release your son.”

“You've got thirty minutes. If I don't see him by then, you can start planning your daughter's funeral.”

She hung up.

Caitlin quickly called Sebastian.

His convoy was still racing down the road. On James's laptop, Megan's GPS had popped up again.

“Megan's signal is back—same location. She hasn't moved.”

“Good. How much longer until we arrive?”

“Less than ten minutes.”

Caitlin's call came through just then. Sebastian listened carefully, then reassured her.

“Don’t panic. We’re almost there.”

Sebastian’s group was pushing top speed—they’d reach the site ahead of Caitlin,

Because Patricia’s life was on the line, Caitlin contacted Félix immediately and requested that Joshua be brought in as bait to buy time

Felix and his task force cooperated fully. With Joshua in custody, they began transporting him to the location

Following the GPS, Sebastian and his team approached the abandoned construction site.

Tyler spotted something first.

“Mr. Vanderbilt. That’s the van.”

Everyone’s eyes locked on the black vehicle parked ahead. If the van was still there, the girl was almost certainly inside the building.

And if they came in a van, Megan wasn’t working alone. She had help.

“Stop here.”

Sebastian ordered the convoy to halt. They parked behind the van and checked it—empty.

“They must be in that building.”

He led the team toward the unfinished structure nearby.

“Someone’s on the fifth floor!”

James had spotted a head ducking back from the edge.

Sebastian signaled, and everyone stormed up the stairs.

At the top, they saw Patricia tied to a scaffold—her small body suspended dangerously. Megan was perched nearby, seated at the edge of the platform.

“Megan! Let my daughter go!”

herseling

Sebastian’s heart nearly stopped at the sight. Patricia was dangling in mid-air, and one wrong move could send her plunging five stories down.

Megan

stood up and screamed,

“Don’t move! Any of you! One step closer, and I cut the rope!”

She held the knife to the cord tied to Patricia’s body. If anyone pushed her, she could end it all in a second.

Everyone froze.

Sebastian forced himself to stay calm and looked toward Patricia.

“Patricia, don’t be afraid. Daddy’s here. I’m going to saye you.”

Patricia looked up with teary eyes. She couldn’t speak, but the relief on her face said everything.

Sebastian turned his icy stare on Megan.

“If you hurt her, I will make sure you pay for it with your life.”

“You forced me into this!”

Megan’s voice was hoarse with rage.

“Sebastian! Get Caitlin to release my son. If she does that, I’ll give your daughter back!”

*Tine. I’ll get your son. Just let my daughter go first!”

Sebastian had no choice but to stall her, giving James, Tyler, and the others time to look for another way to get to Patricia. They changed i glances, silently splitting up in search of a way to break through.

Billionaire's Regret: Finding Her

“I don’t see my son, **I’m** not letting anyone go!”

Megan stood her ground, eyes fierce and unyielding.

Sebastian raised his phone.

“Fine. I’m calling the police now. You’ll see him soon enough.”

He dialed Felix, who was already en route with his team—but it would take them at least another twenty minutes to arrive.

Meanwhile, Caitlin and the others reached the site. She and Zinnia rushed out of the car and sprinted toward the abandoned building

Ximena and Zeke followed behind, everyone racing up the stairs together.

On the fifth floor, Caitlin saw Sebastian and ran up, breathless.

“Sebastian! What’s happening?”

“Patricia’s with her.”

Caitlin’s eyes followed his gaze to the edge of the scaffold—and there was her daughter, bound tightly with ropes, Megan crouched next to her with a knife at the ready, poised over the rope.

The sight of her daughter’s tear-streaked face hit her like a blade to the heart.

“Patricia... Mommy’s here...”

Ximena gasped when she saw the scene, her heart clenching.

“Patricia!”

Seeing familiar faces, Patricia cried even harder.

Zeke, unable to help with his injuries, stood by with clenched fists, anguish written all over his face.

“What do we do? How do we get her out of there?”

Caitlin didn’t dare act recklessly. One wrong move and Megan might take her daughter down with her.

“She wants her son,” Sebastian explained.

“Felix is bringing Joshua now. Just a little longer.”

They exchanged a quick look. Caitlin stepped forward, trying to stall for time.

“Megan! Your son is on his way right now. Just wait another twenty minutes—he’ll be here. Then we’ll trade. Him for Patricia.”

That was exactly what Megan wanted to hear. She wouldn’t budge until she saw Joshua with her own eyes.

Not far off, in the trees on a nearby hill, a man in black clothing watched the scene unfold through a pair of binoculars. He picked **up** his phone and **spoke** in a chilling monotone.

“Target in sight. We’ll be able to avenge the Second Commander soon.”

From the other end, Black Shark–Raze–replied,

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Chapter 475

Good. Make sure Sebastian **and** the others are wiped off the face of the earth

The call ended. The man, Phantom, toyed with a small detonator in his hand. He could trigger it at any **moment** but he was waiting for **the** perfect timing.

Meanwhile, James and Tyler were circling behind the building, searching for an entry point. But the structure was exposed and **unstable**. **Any** direct approach risked being spotted by Megan, which could end in disaster.

After a quick discussion, they decided to descend to the fourth floor and attempt a rescue from below.

Tension built in the air, every second dragging on like an eternity. Caitlin and Sebastian could hardly bear the sight of their daughter tied up, in danger.

Then came the sound of police sirens.

“They’re here!” Caitlin cried out.

Megan turned to look down. Two police cars screeched to a stop, and officers poured out. Moments later, Joshua was brought out from the back.

At last, she saw her son.

“Joshua!”

Joshua looked up and spotted his mother teetering on the edge of the fifth floor.

“Mom! Get down from there!”

Seeing her son alive and well, Megan’s tension

a little.

The officers raised a loudspeaker.

“Megan! Your son is here. Let the hostage go!”

“Are you really going to free him? He won’t go back to jail, right?”

She couldn’t trust Caitlin or the cops–this might still be a trick.

–

M

While Megan stalled, Sebastian began inching closer. Below, James and Tyler had finished tying a rescue rope, James was ready to descend.

“Look! His handcuffs are off—we’re not lying,” one officer called out.

The police made a show of unlocking Joshua’s cuffs in full view.

Megan’s eyes lit up. She’d gotten what she wanted. She began to step away from the edge-

but misjudged her footing.

Her heel slipped. She tumbled off the scaffold, grabbing at whatever she could—her hand clamped down on the rope tied to Patricia.

“Ahhh! Help!”

Her scream rang out as she dangled midair.

But the rope yanked taut—and Patricia’s small body was jerked violently. A rush of pressure hit her chest. She couldn’t breathe.

Seconds later, the rope snapped.

Megan and Patricia plummeted together.

Everything happened too fast. The police below hadn’t even deployed the safety net.

Chapter 475

Tatrical

Caitlin and Sebastian screamed **as** they rushed to the edge.

Sebastian reached out—and barely caught her shirt.

Rip-

She was safe.

James had caught her just in time.

Caitlin and the others bolted down to the fourth floor.

Patricia was shaken but alive.

Megan, however, wasn't as lucky.

She plummeted five stories, hitting the cement with a sickening crack.

Thud.

The police net hadn't been set up in time.

Blood poured from the back of her skull in a dark pool.

“Mom! Mom!”

Joshua ran forward, collapsing to his knees in front of her lifeless body.

She didn't respond.

She couldn't.

He wailed, heartbroken.

Now he truly understood. If it weren't for him his mother wouldn't have done any of this. She wouldn't have died.

But it was too late for regret.

There are no do-overs in life.

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13:07

Chapter 475

Megan had paid the price for everything she'd done.

Back on the fourth floor, James and the others pulled Patricia up. Sebastian took her in his arms while Caitlin, her hands **trembling**, removed **and tape** from her daughter's face.

“Patricia...”

They held her tightly, unable to let go.

“Mommy... Daddy...”

Her voice was barely a whisper, softer than a kitten's mewl.

“You're okay now, baby... You're safe... Daddy and Mommy are here. Don't be scared...”

Caitlin wept as she rocked her daughter.

Zinnia and Ximena stood behind them, eyes full of tears. Everyone had the same thought:

Thank God the child was saved.

Felix arrived at last, just in time to see the emotional reunion. He breathed a sigh of relief.

But in the woods above, the man in black deemed it the perfect moment.

He pressed the detonator in his hand.

The tender moment shattered in an instant.

Caitlin froze. Her fingers touched something strange under Patricia's clothing—and then she heard it:

Beep. Beep. Beep.

Her face went pale.

She turned her daughter's body and lifted her shirt.

Strapped across Patricia's back was a small explosive device.

The LED screen had already activated.

A countdown had begun:

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Chapter 476

"It's a bomb!"

Caitlin screamed, and everyone else froze in utter shock.

It was too cruel—unspeakably vile.

Not only had they kidnapped the child, but they'd strapped explosives to her tiny body. It was beyond evil. Megan might have carried it out, but Sebastian knew—this level of planning, this kind of method—wasn't her style. She didn't have the capability. Someone else was pulling the strings from behind the scenes.

But there was no time to dwell on that now.

Sebastian snapped, “We’ve got just over two minutes left! Everyone clear the area! Caitlin, that includes you!”

He started evacuating the floor, but Caitlin shook her head, refusing to leave.

“I’m not leaving Patricia!”

Her daughter trembled in her arms, sobbing. Sebastian dropped to his knees beside them and began inspecting the explosive device strapped to her back, searching desperately for a way to disarm it.

Felix rushed up, handing over a pair of pliers. “We’ve contacted the bomb squad!”

“There’s only two minutes left—they won’t make it in time! Start clearing people out!”

Felix nodded and began ushering everyone down the stairs.

Caitlin looked at Sebastian, her voice tight.

“Can you do it? Can you stop it?”

Sebastian was sweating, his hands visibly shaking. There was a cold helplessness in the air. The countdown ticked steadily forward, each second a hammer blow to his chest.

He wanted to save his daughter—more than anything.

But he didn't *know* the first thing about bombs.

And this one wasn't anything standard. If he misjudged and cut the wrong wire, it could detonate everything on the spot.

One minute left.

Caitlin and Sebastian were both at a complete loss. James and Tyler paced anxiously behind them, powerless.

Then, suddenly, Zeke burst back up the stairs, ignoring the blood gushing from his reopened wound.

“Let me try!”

Everyone turned to look. Zeke was still in his hospital gown, his arm soaked in blood. He pressed a hand over the injury, grimacing in pain.

“Let me try to disarm it,” he said, breathless.

“You know how?” Sebastian asked.

“I... I’ve studied it.”

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K=92%

Zeke had always been fascinated by destruction, once obsessed with the precision and power of explosives. He’d spent years studying bomb mechanisms—not for any noble purpose, but out of a dark personal thrill.

But that twisted curiosity might just save a life today.

He’d never dared let Caitlin—or anyone else—know about this part of him.

Caitlin, hearing his words, looked at him like he was a miracle.

“Zeke, if you know what to do—please! Please save my daughter!”

He stepped forward. Despite the pain in his arm, he pushed it aside and crouched next to the child.

Everyone held their breath.

Sebastian steadied Patricia, pressing her gently to his chest. Caitlin, with tears clinging to her lashes, kept her arms around her daughter’s body, watching Zeke work with trembling intensity.

Zeke took the pliers and began his inspection.

Time ticked away—10 seconds... 9...8...

Caitlin’s breath hitched. She didn’t know if Zeke would make it in time. Her heart beat so loudly she couldn’t hear anything else.

Which wire?

Which line would end it, and which would end them?

3 seconds. 2.1.

Snip.

Caitlin shut her eyes and hugged Patricia tight, bracing for an explosion-

-but none came.

The countdown hit zero.

The device powered off.

No blast. No sound.

Zeke had done it.

Sebastian exhaled, chest heaving. They'd made it. Patricia was safe.

Caitlin opened her eyes and stared at the lifeless device in disbelief—its lights were off. No ticking, no warning beeps. It was over.

“She’s safe. We’re safe. We’re all safe.”

She burst into tears again, this time from relief.

Sebastian and Caitlin wrapped their arms around Patricia, overcome with joy.

Zeke sank to the floor, every muscle drained.

He'd won **the** gamble,

Sebastian gently removed the rest of the device from Patricia's body. Caitlin wiped away her tears and helped lift their **daughter** to her **feet**.

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Sebastian turned to Zeke and offered his hand.

Zeke looked up, then gripped it.

Sebastian pulled him to his feet.

“Thank you. You saved my daughter. You saved all of us. Thank you.”

Caitlin echoed softly, “Thank you, Zeke. You saved Patricia.”

“No need to thank me. I... it’s what I had to do.”

Zeke was overwhelmed. For the first time in his life, he felt redemption. The thrill of destruction had once given him pleasure—but saving someone... that gave him something far deeper.

Peace.

Downstairs, everyone had been waiting, praying. Megan’s body had already been taken away. Joshua had been escorted by police. But the building remained tense, unsure.

No explosion.

Did that mean...?

Then Caitlin, Sebastian, Patricia, and Zeke descended the stairs together.

Everyone rushed forward.

“It’s over! It’s over!”

Vincent and James immediately ran to them.

“Patricia! Patricia!”

Ximena, eyes red, touched the child’s face.

“Patricia..”

The little girl lifted her arms to her.

“Grandma...”

That one word made Ximena burst into tears. She hugged Patricia tightly, covering her with kisses.

Felix approached.

“Mr. Vanderbilt, that was too close... Your daughter is blessed to be alive.”

Sebastian nodded and said loudly, “If it weren’t for Mr. Preston, we’d all be mourning today.”

Everyone looked at Zeke.

Ximena’s gaze was filled with pride. Zeke simply shook his head.

Sebastian’s expression darkened slightly.

“I think today’s incident and the amusement park collapse are connected. Megan had help. She wasn’t working alone.”

Felix nodded.

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“We’ll do everything we can to investigate. Whoever is behind this—we’ll find them.”

Caitlin gently lifted her daughter in her arms.

“We need to get Patricia checked at the hospital. Zeke, you too. Your wound’s opened up again.”

“I know...”

Somehow, the concern in her voice made Zeke feel... less pain.

Felix waved them off.

“You go. We’ll take care of things here.”

Just as everyone was preparing to leave, James narrowed his eyes at a flash of light coming from the nearby woods,

It looked like a glint—like sunlight reflecting off glass.

Something clicked.

Without a word, James bolted in that direction.

“Where’s James going?” Caitlin asked, noticing her brother suddenly sprinting off.

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“Maybe he saw something. Tyler went after him too.”

Sebastian glanced toward the two figures who had taken off running.

“My guess? The person behind all this—the one pulling the strings—was hiding nearby in those woods, watching everything unfold.”

“They’d better catch that bastard,” Caitlin said through clenched teeth.

“They will,” Sebastian replied firmly as he carried Patricia into the car. They needed to get her to the hospital.

On the way,

Patricia clung tightly to Caitlin. Her little body was still trembling.

Caitlin’s heart shattered all over again. When she saw the bruises on her daughter’s arms and torso—marks left from the ropes—her tears wouldn’t stop.

She gently wiped them away and asked softly,

“Patricia, can you tell Mommy what happened? How did you end up leaving the amusement park?”

“Imani said... she said she’d take me to see Ximena... I missed Ximena...”

Patricia's voice trembled, her lips quivering before she burst into tears.

Caitlin stroked her back and gently cradled her head. Her cheek pressed to her daughter's forehead, and she finally understood—Patricia hadn't been careless. She'd just missed someone she loved.

That love had been used against her.

“She wasn't Imani... she was a bad lady... she hit me...”

Caitlin and Sebastian felt like they'd been stabbed. Their daughter was their world—they couldn't even bear to scold her. And Megan had hit her?

Caitlin pushed back Patricia's hair and saw the red welts blooming across her soft little face.

“Patricia...my baby...”

Her heart ached so deeply she couldn't speak.

“If that woman hadn't already fallen to her death, I swear I would've made her wish she had,” Sebastian said through gritted teeth.

Megan was gone now, her punishment dealt. But there was something Patricia needed to understand.

Caitlin said gently,

“Patricia, from now on, besides Mommy, Daddy, and the people we tell you to trust—you can’t go with anyone else, okay? Strangers might lie to you and take you away, and that’s very dangerous. Do you understand?”

Patricia, eyes still brimming with tears, nodded.

In the woods, James sprinted like a shadow through the trees. The man in black had seen that his plan had failed—and now someone was chasing him. He tossed the detonator aside and vanished deeper into the forest.

James zeroed in on the fleeing figure and pushed harder, wind roaring past his ears. His mind was laser-focused on one goal:

Catch him.

Tyler, not far behind, spotted the discarded detonator on the ground.

It was real.

This hadn't been a desperate act—it was a calculated, premeditated attack.

Without hesitating, Tyler charged into the trees, right behind James.

At the hospital, Simon was already waiting. When Caitlin and the others arrived, he had a pediatrician ready to examine Patricia.

After a full check-up, Simon came out to give them the results.

“She’s okay. *No* internal injuries, just some bruises from the ropes. But she’s had a serious fright—she’s going to need some psychological support.”

Both Caitlin and Sebastian finally exhaled in relief.

Simon’s expression darkened.

“The people who did this are monsters. Even children... they don’t spare children! They deserve to be torn limb from limb.”

Molly rushed in soon after. The moment she saw Patricia, her face fell with heartbreak.

“Patricia, my little sweetheart—are you okay? I was so worried! Can I hold you, baby?”

But Patricia flinched, clinging tighter to Caitlin’s neck. She wouldn’t let go. Not even for Molly.

Seeing her like that, Molly was devastated. Her eyes welled with tears, her anger toward the kidnapers burning even hotter.

She was almost glad to hear Megan had died. It felt like justice.

To comfort Patricia, Caitlin said gently,

“Let’s go see Ximena, sweetheart. Would you like that?”

Patricia didn’t resist.

They walked her down the hall to Zeke’s hospital room.

His wound had been re-dressed, and he lay resting on the bed, with Ximena sitting nearby watching over him.

When Caitlin walked in with Patricia in her arms, both Zeke and Ximena looked up.

“How’s Patricia doing?” Zeke asked, concerned.

Ximena stood to meet them.

“Did she finish her check-up? Is everything alright?”

“She’s okay. Just shaken.” Caitlin replied, then explained how Patricia had been tricked.

Ximena sighed deeply.

“I can’t believe they used my name—and Imani’s love for the child—to manipulate her like that.”

She reached out.

“My poor Patricia...”

Patricia hesitated only for a moment before letting Ximena hold **her**. She laid her head on her shoulder and let out a soft **sigh**.

There, there, sweetheart... it's okay... you're safe now..."

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Watching this tender moment, Caitlin felt a swirl of emotions.

Despite everything, she couldn't deny the bond between her daughter and Ximena. Without those five years of care, this connection wouldn't exist.

In a way, she owed Ximena. If Ximena had ever mistreated Patricia, they wouldn't have gotten back a daughter so whole.

After spending some time there, Caitlin once again thanked Zeke from the bottom of her heart. Then she took Patricia back to The Vanderbilt Family

estate.

Béatrice, Eliza, and the rest of the family were waiting in the living room. Howard, Bruce, and Arthur were already running toward the driveway when they heard the car.

Caitlin stepped out, carrying Patricia. The three boys came running.

“Patricia! Patricia!”

“Mommy, is Patricia okay?” Arthur asked, looking up at her with worried eyes.

“She’s fine now. Let’s go inside, I’ll explain everything.”

In the living room, the whole family surrounded them.

Beatrice and Eliza were already wiping away tears.

“Patricia, my sweet girl... Don’t be afraid. Beatrice is right here.”

Eliza reached to take her but Patricia didn’t want to let go of her mother, resting quietly on Caitlin’s shoulder.

“She must be exhausted. Let’s get her cleaned up and let her rest,” Eliza suggested.

“Alright.”

Caitlin excused herself, took her daughter back to Vanderbilt Manor, and ran a warm bath for her.

As she gently bathed Patricia, she saw the rope burns on her daughter’s tender skin—and it felt like someone was clawing at her heart.

After the bath, Caitlin lay down with Patricia, keeping her close. To help her daughter recover emotionally, she used gentle hypnosis to guide her into peaceful rest.

When Sebastian walked into the room, Patricia was already sound asleep.

“She’s sleeping?”

“Mmhmm.” Caitlin’s voice was soft.

Sebastian moved quietly and lay down beside them, joining her.

“It’s my fault... I got our daughter caught in all this,” he said guiltily, brushing a kiss onto Patricia’s forehead.

Caitlin looked at **him**.

“Don’t say that. It’s not your fault. If anything—it all started because of me.”

Sebastian turned toward her, eyes serious.

“You know what **I** found out?”

“What?”

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“The amusement park incident wasn’t an accident. It was planned.”

Caitlin had suspected as much.

“I figured. They wanted to create chaos to cover up the abduction.”

Sebastian nodded, but his eyes were grim.

“It’s more than that. After digging into Megan’s background, we found she’d been contacted by an unknown man. Everything that happened today—he was likely the one behind it.”

He continued analyzing with a heavy tone.

“He used the existing tension between you and Megan. The whole thing was a setup. And his real target... was me.”

Caitlin’s brows furrowed.

“So the reason the explosive on Patricia’s body activated the moment we rescued her—wasn’t a coincidence?”

“Exactly. He wanted me dead, and Patricia got caught in the crossfire.”

Sebastian’s face was tight with guilt. This was his battle, yet it had nearly cost his daughter her life.

Caitlin reached out and took his hand.

“Enough, don’t blame yourself. What matters now is catching the person behind all this.”

She paused, then asked,

“Any word from James?”

“Not yet. We’ll know once they return.”

In the tangled forest-

James was still in pursuit. Step by step, he gained on the man in black.

There were no more than twenty meters between them now. The man continued sprinting, but James wasn’t letting up.

Then, as if fate were lending a hand, the terrain ahead ended in a steep ravine.

The man in black skidded to a halt at the edge, nowhere left to run.

He turned around—and James was right behind him.

“Now let’s see where you go.”

James was drenched *in* sweat, eyes blazing as he stared the masked man down.

The man wore a face covering, only his eyes visible—cold, calculating. He moved with trained precision and powerful agility. This wasn’t a common thug. This was a professional.

Trying to shake James off, the man kicked a rock from the ground and launched it at him.

James dodged, barely missing it, and charged forward.

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They collided in a flurry of fists and kicks right at the edge of the cliff, dry leaves and dirt flying in every direction.

The fight was intense. Move for move, the man in black matched James perfectly. They exchanged blow after blow, neither side yielding.

James finally landed a solid kick, knocking the man down. He lunged to grab him—but the man drew a knife, slashing upward.

James twisted away, but took a hard kick to the stomach. He hit the ground, winded.

The man sprang to his feet, ready to drive the blade into James.

But-

Bang!

A gunshot rang out.

Tyler had arrived and fired from a distance, hitting the man's hand. The knife clattered to the ground.

James flipped over, springing up.

The masked man, now outnumbered, made a snap decision—he turned and leapt off the cliff.

But his right sleeve flicked out midair, triggering a hidden mechanism. A grappling hook shot out and latched onto the opposite cliff face.

In one smooth motion, he swung across and descended the slope, disappearing into the dense forest below.

Tyler fired again, but it was too late.

“He used a grappling hook to escape? This guy’s not just dangerous—he’s elite,” James growled.

“Whoever he is, he’s even deadlier than Black Hawk,” Tyler muttered.

Empty-handed, they returned to The Vanderbilt Family estate and reported back to Sebastian.

“I’ve got a theory,” Sebastian said, his voice low.

“That assassin... I believe he’s from Black Wolf Fortress.”

James and Tyler exchanged a look but said nothing. Sebastian continued.

“After Jasper’s identity was exposed, Black Wolf Fortress sent assassins to kill him. They used explosives then too. Same strategy. Same methods. This guy could be from the same unit.”

Tyler nodded slowly.

“It makes sense. Since we wrecked their base last time, I doubt Raze and what’s left of Black Wolf Fortress would let it go.”

Sebastian’s jaw clenched.

“And now we’re in the light, while they’re in the shadows. That killer—he has Black Hawk’s brains, maybe even better combat skills. If he’s still in New **York**, there won’t be peace.”

“Then let’s strike first. I’ll take him out,” James said, full of resolve.

“**No.**” Sebastian’s voice was **firm**.

“We don’t **act** recklessly. Not this time.”

After a pause, he ordered,

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“James, start a covert search in New York. That man failed today—he won’t leave yet. He’ll be planning his next move.”

“Got it.”

“Tyler, contact HQ.” Sebastian pounded the desk with his fist.

“Mobilize our forces. We’re going to wipe out Black Wolf Fortress for good. We find Raze. We eliminate him and every last one of his people. Only then will

this end.”

“Yes, sir!”

With their orders clear, James and Tyler went into action.

The amusement park incident made headlines, triggering massive public attention.

To avoid widespread panic, The Vanderbilt Family coordinated with the authorities to release a public statement declaring it a simple accident.

As for Megan, who had kidnapped Patricia and died from the fall—her body was cremated the next day.

No funeral. No ceremony. Nothing.

Megan, who had spent her life chasing status and grandeur, died alone. Not even her own children were there to send her off..

In the days that followed, Caitlin stepped away from work and focused solely on her daughter.

Patricia, deeply traumatized, wouldn't let Caitlin out of her sight at first. But with time—and Caitlin's gentle hypnotic guidance—she began to recover.

Her emotions settled day by day.

Her three older brothers doted on her constantly, doing everything they could to make her smile. The entire Vanderbilt family surrounded her with love

and attention.

Even Kyle from The Xenos Family came to visit every day, always bringing snacks or stories to cheer her up.

Surrounded by so much love, Patricia slowly found her smile again.

In the garden, the children played games together—tag, hide and seek, red light green light—their laughter echoing under the blue sky.

At the window, Caitlin and Sebastian watched them.

He wrapped his arms around her from behind, resting his chin on her shoulder.

“She’s getting better.”

Caitlin nodded.

“Yes. We don’t have to worry about her anymore. But that man., he’s still out there.”

“We’ll find him. Sooner or later.”

Sebastian knew–no matter how clever the fox, its tail would show eventually.

But so far, the assassin had gone silent. The storm had passed, **but the threat** still loomed.

And as for Black Wolf Fortress–when their agents returned to its northern hideout, they found **it** abandoned.

Raze and his people had vanished.

No one knew where they’d gone. It meant danger still lurked, unpredictable and unrelenting.

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They could only stay vigilant.

“Don’t think about it too much, Caitlin. Think about me instead...”

Sebastian lowered his voice, his breath warm against her skin.

Worrying would solve nothing. Right now, all he wanted was to treasure the peace they had.

Their quiet moment was shattered by a crash—Xavi burst in, wild-eyed.

“Mr. Vanderbilt! We’ve got a situation—uhhh, never mind! I didn’t see anything~~~!”

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The intimate moment was instantly ruined.

window.

92.1

G. instinctively pushed Sebastian away, her cheeks tinged pink as she turned her head to look out the

Sebastian, face darkening, turned toward the intruder. His eyes—sharp as knives—landed on Xavi, who visibly flinched under the weight of his **glare**.

Seriously?

Did he really have to barge in at that exact moment?

“What is it?”

Sebastian’s voice dropped a few degrees in temperature. Among all his subordinates, if there were an award for being the most clueless at critical

moments, Xavi would win hands down.

“Uh... it’s kinda hard to say.” Xavi stole a glance at Caitlin, clearly hesitant.

“What can’t you say?” Sebastian’s brows furrowed, tightening with impatience.

Xavi scratched his head, still silent.

Caitlin quickly picked up on the awkwardness and guessed it might be something inconvenient to say in front of her. She turned and said calmly,

“I’ll go check on the kids. You two talk.”

Once Caitlin left, Sebastian gave Xavi a look that could kill. His face clearly said, Do you realize how shady you just made me look?

As if Caitlin might think he had something to hide.

Sebastian dropped onto the couch with a cold snort.

“Spit it out already.”

Xavi stiffened and stepped forward.

“Mr. Vanderbilt, something’s come up... It’s about the young madam. A scandalous post was almost released—but we intercepted it just in time.”

“What scandal?”

“You should see it for yourself.”

Xavi handed over his phone. He hadn’t wanted to bring this up in front of Caitlin because the content was... borderline indecent, and he didn’t want to upset their relationship.

Sebastian took the phone and stared at the screen. His face darkened immediately.

The headline accused Caitlin of having an affair with another man, accompanied by several photos.

The first showed her in a seemingly intimate embrace with a man. The others were dimly lit, grainy bed photos.

“What the hell this?!”

Sebastian’s fury exploded. He nearly smashed the phone in rage.

Xavi quickly caught it.

“Whoa whoa! Mr. Vanderbilt, calm down! Luckily, we intercepted the post before **it** went public. **No one** outside **knows.**”

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O

Thank God Sebastian had previously installed a media firewall—anything related to Caitlin required internal review before public release. **Thanks to that**, this scandal hadn’t made it to the headlines.

Otherwise, the internet would already be tearing her apart.

“Find out which outlet pushed this story. Ban them. Permanently.”

Sebastian’s voice was ice.

He didn't care whether the story was real or fake—the fact that someone tried to smear Caitlin publicly was enough to set him off. No one made his wife

look bad. No one.

“We've already taken control on that front,” Xavi reported.

Sebastian scowled.

“Where the hell did these photos come from?”

He zoomed in on the man in the first photo.

“Do you recognize this guy?”

Xavi stepped forward.

“Yes, that one's from the land auction. The man is Abel. Caitlin was just chatting with him when someone accidentally bumped into her, and Abel caught her. Someone snapped a photo at just the right moment.”

He paused.

“But we were all there. We can vouch—Caitlin never did anything inappropriate.”

“Abel?” Sebastian repeated coldly.

“Yeah, him.”

Sebastian’s eyes narrowed further.

“And the rest of these bedroom photos?”

“Most likely fake. Photoshopped,” Xavi guessed.

Sebastian didn’t rely on guesses. He went to his study, downloaded the images, and ran them through forensic software.

As expected, the last few images were artificially edited. Only the first one—the photo with Abel—was genuine.

“Someone’s deliberately trying to smear Caitlin.”

This wasn’t a coincidence. This was planned.

Sebastian traced the digital footprint of the leak.

“It’s from an overseas IP address.”

Xavi’s face fell.

“If it’s coming from international servers, we might not be able to control the spread...”

Just then, Bruce appeared **at** the door.

D

“Daddy.”

The little guy had already heard about the scandal online. He'd come looking for Sebastian to help fix it—but now he realized they were already **on it**.

“Bruce? What are you doing here?” Sebastian asked.

Bruce walked in, his little face serious.

“I saw it. Someone is trying to smear Mommy online. The

best

solution? Do weirs

site.”

“Oh? And you know how to do that?”

Bruce lifted his chin, full of five-year-old confidence.

“Let me try.”

Sebastian pulled him into his lap and watched as his son's small fingers flew across the keyboard.

Xavi stood frozen in awe.

This little guy was actually hacking-like, real hacking. Not only did Bruce track down the IP source and identify the original site, but he also broke in and deployed a chain virus.

No matter how many times they tried to fix or re-upload the content, the virus would destroy it all.

“Holy crap... Bruce, you're incredible!”

Xavi was utterly blown away. The Vanderbilt kids really were on another level—each one a genius in their own way.

“All done, Daddy.”

Bruce turned back with a grin.

“You're amazing.” Sebastian kissed his cheek and gave him a proud thumbs-up.

Bruce hopped down and skipped away, satisfied with his mission accomplished.

“Don’t let Mommy find out,” Sebastian warned gently.

“I won’t, Daddy!” Bruce called back before dashing out the door, happy just to earn his father’s praise.

Though the problem was handled, Sebastian wasn’t ready to let it go.

“Xavi, start digging into Abel.”

“Abel? Isn’t he a friend of Yates? Why look into him?”

Xavi blinked, confused as always.

“Think,” Sebastian said slowly, as if talking to a particularly dense student.

“Why would a scandal like this suddenly surface? Caitlin’s not a celebrity. Who benefits from defaming her?”

Xavi opened his mouth... then closed it.

“And why Abel? Of all people? If I’m not mistaken, Abel recently returned **from** overseas.”

Xavi’s eyes lit up.

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“Ohhh—I get **it** now! You think someone orchestrated this behind the scenes?”

Sebastian patted his shoulder.

“Congratulations, Xavi. You finally used your brain.”

Was that a compliment or a dig? Xavi wasn’t sure—but he’d take it either way.

He turned to leave, only to be stopped again.

“Wait. There’s one more thing I need you to do.”

“What is it, Mr. Vanderbilt?”

AD

Comment

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“Push the story out.”

Xavi took the file and scanned through it before nodding.

“Got it. I’m on it right away!”

In a private apartment...

After an intense round of passion, Zora slipped on a silk robe and stretched lazily.

“I thought you said everything was in place. When are we making our move?”

“It’s already started. Come here, take a look.”

Abel picked up his phone, and Zora climbed back into his arms to view it with him.

According to their plan, by now the scandal should’ve exploded online. With a quick tap into the news feed, they should’ve seen Caitlin’s name all over the hot topics.

Abel refreshed the page. Again. And again. Nothing.

“Wait... what?” he mumbled, confused. “Where the hell is it?”

Zora frowned. “Are you sure the dirt on her actually went out?”

“I’m sure! It was pushed through international channels. Why hasn’t anything dropped yet?”

“Could it be a time zone issue?”

“Let me check.”

Still expecting to go viral and grab attention, Abel had secretly hoped to be the scandal’s male lead. But now? Not even a ripple.

He made a call to his contact overseas—only to learn that the site hosting the leak had been taken down.

Worse, any post even mentioning Caitlin triggered a chain-reaction virus, corrupting the entire system and locking the user out.

“Shit!”

Abel swore under his breath, a cold sweat forming on his brow. The deeper he thought about it, the scarier it seemed.

Zora, after learning what happened, sighed in frustration.

“Unbelievable. Even this failed? Is it really that hard to take Caitlin down?”

“This woman is something else. What the hell is her background?”

“What background? She’s just got Sebastian covering her back,” Zora snapped, still convinced Caitlin’s power came solely from her man.

Just then, Abel scrolled and suddenly shouted,

“Zora! Look!”

1/3

“What now?”

Zora leaned in. On the screen **was a breaking news story** about disaster relief in Florida after a **recent hurricane, Leading the donation list were none**

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other than Caitlin and Sebastian—each pledging \ \$100 million.

The post was already going viral, with major news outlets hailing them as a philanthropic power couple.

Even though they hadn't officially announced getting back together, public opinion already viewed them as an inseparable pair.

Zora nearly threw the phone across the room.

"Damn it! No wonder the scandal didn't get out—she planned this! That woman's a damn *fox!*"

Turns out Caitlin had deliberately cleared the online space, crushing every negative headline before releasing a well-timed, high-profile donation.

With disaster coverage dominating the headlines, public sentiment now favored those stepping up for the nation. And Caitlin and Sebastian? Heroes of

the hour.

Not only that, Caitlin had PE donate \$50 million in Yates' name, organizing relief supplies to be delivered immediately.

To polish Yates' public image, she insisted he personally accompany the convoy and serve on the front lines.

Yates added \$30 million of his own money. The combined \$80 million in aid made waves. Working side-by-side with other volunteers, Yates ate, slept,

and toiled *in* the disaster zone.

The media praised him as the first A-lister to personally lead frontline efforts. He quickly became the face of the disaster relief.

The world forgot his past scandals. Supporters returned. His popularity skyrocketed.

Once back from the frontlines, Caitlin arranged for a major TV interview. His grounded, genuine demeanor captured audiences again.

Riding that momentum, PE launched his delayed film, *Euphoria Voyage*. Backed by loyal fans and newcomers alike, the movie shattered records- grossing over \$500 million at the box office.

Yates was back on top.

And it was clear-Caitlin wasn't just business-savvy. She was a force. Her vision and execution were elite-tier.

What others couldn't pull off in years, she turned around in weeks.

To celebrate, Yates booked a private lounge at Club No.8, inviting Caitlin, Sebastian, and close friends—including, ironically, Abel.

Then, in front of everyone—and especially in front of Sebastian—Yates didn't hold back. Holding a bouquet of roses, he got down on one knee.

“Caitlin, thank you for pulling me out of hell. I have nothing to repay you with... so I offer myself to you!”

Caitlin burst out laughing. The whole room howled in delight.

A few guys turned toward Sebastian, joking loudly,

“Dude! He's going after your woman!”

“Boss, he's openly challenging you!”

“Someone's got a death wish!”

If **this** had happened before, Sebastian might've kicked Yates across **the** room.

But now? He calmly wrapped his arm around Caitlin's shoulder and said smugly,

"You've **got no** chance. This woman? She **only** loves me."

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With that, he planted a kiss on Caitlin's cheek—a blatant mark of territory.

Yates, not missing a beat, stuffed the bouquet into Caitlin's arms.

"Not fair! I want a kiss too! My beautiful, brilliant Caitlin—I love you!"

Only a true brother could confess like this—playful, open, and without deceit.

He lunged toward Caitlin like he was going to steal a kiss.

Sebastian reached out and palmed his face, shoving him back.

“Back off, punk.”

Yates tumbled dramatically onto the couch, clutching his chest like a theater actor.

“Ahhh! You stole my Caitlin! My heart... it’s shattered...”

His antics sent the whole room into another fit of laughter.

Sebastian grinned and yanked Caitlin closer into his arms.

“This woman’s mine. You single dogs can only watch while I get all the kisses!”

Billionaire's Regret: Finding Her

Sebastian cupped Caitlin's face and kissed her hard on the lips, boldly showing their affection in front of everyone.

The single guys started hooting and jeering around them, the atmosphere turning wildly festive.

Yates, never one to miss a dramatic beat, added fuel to the fire by throwing in an exaggerated heartbroken expression as they kissed—like a lover being tragically torn away. His Oscar-worthy reaction had the whole room cracking up.

When Sebastian finally let go, Caitlin's cheeks were flushed red. Their eyes met, filled with deep affection.

“Even I'm starting to get jealous,” Benjamin said with a sigh.

“Don't you have your little Pudding?” Nolan asked with a smirk. “What's going on with that?”

“Not great. She's ignoring me.”

Benjamin sighed again. Just thinking about Wendy gave him a headache. He had no idea how to fix things between them.

“No way. Don’t tell me that chubby girl turned you down? Seriously?”

Nolan laughed like he was enjoying Benjamin’s misery. In his eyes, another brother had fallen-hard. So many gorgeous women out there, and Benjamin had to go fall for her. And now the girl didn’t even want him? Not just heartbreaking-humiliating.

“Who said that? I’m not even into her like that. If she’s ignoring me, that’s her loss. I’m not exactly lacking in women, you know.”

Benjamin refused to admit he’d been rejected. He was still clinging to his pride and bruised ego.

“Man, that’s just pride talking. You’re gonna suffer for it,” Nolan said, shaking his head. “You’ll never win her over if you don’t swallow your pride.”

The room was buzzing with laughter and music. The party was in full swing when the door to the private room opened—and Wendy stepped inside.

“Wendy! You finally made it!” Caitlin stood up excitedly and pulled her into the room.

Wendy hesitated when she saw the group—especially Benjamin—and immediately turned to leave.

“Come on, you’re already here. Sing a song before you go!”

Caitlin had deliberately invited Wendy to give Benjamin a chance to redeem himself.

As soon as Wendy walked in, Benjamin sat up straight, put down his drink, and locked his intense gaze on her.

Caitlin led Wendy to the sofa, seating her right next to Benjamin. If he didn't take this chance, Caitlin would never forgive him.

Wendy could feel Benjamin's eyes on her. She glanced over, and their eyes met.

"What, you're too busy to meet up with me, but Caitlin calls and suddenly you've got time?" he asked, his tone slightly bitter.

She'd said she was busy when he invited her out, but now she was here the moment Caitlin asked?

"Caitlin's my best friend. If she asks, I'd walk through a storm to show up. Other people... not so much."

Wendy didn't even try to hide her double standard. Deal with it.

Benjamin took a deep breath. There wasn't much he could say—he had no leverage here.

Why was **it** that when it came to Wendy, he seemed to lose every ounce of his charm?

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“Sebastian, Caitlin! Let’s drink!” Yates called out, lifting a glass toward them.

“I’m off alcohol,” Sebastian declined immediately.

“Come on, just one! This is a toast from the heart!”

Yates was sincerely grateful. Every drop in the glass carried his respect, but Sebastian was firm—his wife was right beside him, and he needed to stay in

control.

Caitlin didn’t want Sebastian drinking either, but refusing Yates might come off rude. So, she stepped up instead.

“He really has quit drinking. I’ll drink for him.”

She downed her own glass—and then finished Sebastian’s as well.

Sebastian looked at her, bewildered. He leaned in and whispered in her ear, “Weren’t you the one telling me not to drink? Now you’re downing two. What if you get drunk?”

Caitlin smirked, her lips brushing his ear. “If I get drunk, aren’t you here to take care of me?”

With Sebastian by her side, she had nothing to fear. Even if she got tipsy, he’d take her home safe. She wanted him to experience how it felt when the person you loved drank a little too much.

Tonight, Caitlin was letting loose. She clinked glasses, drank with friends, pulled Wendy into singing and dancing with her.

Maybe it was the alcohol, or maybe it was just the vibe, but the usually cool and elegant Caitlin lit up the room with a fiery, magnetic energy.

Her moves were hypnotic, her dance alluring—every man in the room was blushing and unable to look away.

Who would've guessed Caitlin could dance like that?

Wendy's dancing wasn't bad either. She'd slimmed down quite a bit recently, and her movements were surprisingly nimble.

The two women sang and danced with full confidence, pushing the party into a frenzy.

Sebastian was starting to lose it. He kept yelling at the others, "That's my wife! Eyes off! I'm serious—don't look!"

He didn't want any other guy seeing Caitlin like this. That side of her? It was for him only.

"Relax! We're appreciating respectfully. No one's trying to steal your wife!" Nolan laughed, applauding with the rest

He nudged Benjamin. "Dude, your little Pudding can move! If she keeps trimming down, she's gonna knock guys

Benjamin felt the same way Sebastian did—he suddenly regretted letting her dance in front of all these guys.

After the performance, Caitlin returned to Sebastian's side and kept drinking with the group.

“Caitlin, you’re drunk. That’s enough,” Sebastian said gently.

Then he turned to the others. “My wife’s had enough for tonight. No more toasts.”

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Caitlin finished her dance.

d left and right.”

Caitlin was already leaning against his shoulder, lulled by the sound of his heartbeat. She **felt** safer than she had in years.

It was the first time she’d truly let go and indulged herself. All because Sebastian was there. With him, there was **no** fear.

When Wendy returned to her seat, Benjamin leaned in close and muttered, “No more dancing like that again. You hear me?”

“**I wasn’t** stripping. What’s **it** to you?” Wendy snapped back without missing **a beat**.

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Benjamin was left speechless. What right did he have to tell her what to do?

This girl was getting bolder by the day.

Sebastian didn't let Caitlin drink anymore. When the party ended, he wrapped an arm around her and said goodnight to everyone before taking her

away.

He helped her into the car. The convoy rolled out.

"Let's go home," he said gently, letting her rest on his shoulder.

Caitlin, tipsy and flushed, wrapped her soft arms around him, her voice laced with playful seduction.

“I don’t want to go home.”

Now tell him—who could possibly resist that?

Sebastian’s breath grew heavier. He lowered his head, his voice low and rough, “Not going home? Then where do you want to go?”

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