

Chapter 104 No.

Three days later, the power was back on across the street, but the construction had stalled thanks to the "permit issues."

Gussie Pennington decided to try a different tactic.

Eulalie was in the library, monitoring the perimeter cameras on her laptop. The "Ghost" system flagged a pedestrian approach at the main gate.

It was Gussie. She was wearing a floral dress and a wide-brimmed hat, carrying a wicker basket tied with a ribbon. She looked like a character from a Southern gothic novel, masking poison with sugar.

"Target at the gate," Eulalie said into her headset.

"I see her," Harrison's voice came back.

Eulalie looked out the window. Two black SUVs were parked in the driveway. Harrison had insisted on leaving a security detail after the kite incident.

But another car was pulling up. A silver Porsche. Caden.

He got out of the car just as Gussie reached for the intercom button.

"Lost?" Caden asked. He slammed his car door.

Gussie turned, a saccharine smile plastered on her face. "Caden, darling! I was just bringing some apology cookies. For the noise the other night. Neighborly love."

"We don't want your cookies, Gussie," Caden said, walking up to her. He towered over her. "And we don't want you."

"It's a free country," Gussie sniffed. "I have a right to ring the bell."

"Actually, you don't."

Harrison stepped out from the guardhouse shadow. He was flanked by two men who looked like they ate concrete for breakfast.

"Mr. Sterling," Gussie faltered. Her smile slipped. "I didn't know you were... visiting."

"I'm not visiting. I'm guarding," Harrison said. He held up a piece of paper. "This is a temporary restraining order. It covers Eulalie, Elara, and Delmar Bradford. It mandates a distance of five hundred yards. You are currently standing at three yards."

Gussie paled. "On what grounds?"

"Harassment. Intentional infliction of emotional distress. And," Harrison nodded at Caden, "trespassing."

Caden stepped forward. He reached out and slapped the basket of cookies out of Gussie's hand.

The basket flew. Cookies scattered across the asphalt.

"Oops," Caden said. His face was stone. "Clumsy."

"You... you rude little—" Gussie started.

"If you step one foot onto this property again," Caden interrupted, leaning down so his face was inches from hers, "I will make it my personal mission to audit every shell company Grady has in the Caymans. I know where the bodies are buried, Gussie. I helped dig some of the holes."

Gussie looked from Caden's furious eyes to Harrison's cold legal document to the massive bodyguards. She realized she was outgunned.

"You're making a mistake, Caden," she hissed. "Adalynn won't forgive this."

"Adalynn is next," Caden said.

Gussie turned and scurried back to her car, her heels clicking frantically on the pavement. She drove off, tires screeching.

Eulalie watched from the library window. She saw the two men standing at the gate. The ex-husband and the new partner. They looked at each other.

Caden straightened his jacket. "I didn't need your help."

"I know," Harrison said, folding the paper. "But it's more fun in stereo."

Eulalie opened the front door. She walked out to the driveway. She looked at the scattered cookies, then at the two men.

"You made a mess," she said to Caden.

"I'll clean it up," Caden said.

"Leave it," Eulalie said. "Let the crows eat them. It's fitting."

She looked at Caden. Really looked at him. "You threatened Grady's offshore accounts. That implicates you, too."

"I know," Caden said. "I don't care anymore."

Eulalie felt a strange sensation in her chest. It wasn't forgiveness. But it was respect.

"Come inside," she said. "Both of you. Dad is asking for tea."

