

Chapter 110 No.

The victory was short-lived.

At noon, a convoy of black Lincoln Town Cars rolled up the Bradford driveway. They weren't police. They weren't Penningtons.

They bore the Holloway crest.

"Oh no," Caden whispered, looking out the window.

The front door opened before the butler could reach it. Grandmother Holloway swept in, leaning on her cane, looking like a general inspecting the front lines. Behind her, four maids carried Louis Vuitton trunks.

"Grandmother?" Caden asked. "What are you doing?"

"I am moving in," Grandmother announced. She took off her gloves. "This place is a sty. The drapes are dusty. And I hear you are running a criminal enterprise involving the power grid."

Eulalie stepped forward. "Mrs. Holloway, with all due respect, this is my house."

"And that," Grandmother pointed a shaking finger at Elara, "is my great-granddaughter. And as long as there are maniacs with strobe lights across the street, I am not leaving her unprotected. I have decided to invoke my privilege as the matriarch. I am staying."

She looked at Caden. "And you. You look like a raccoon. Have you slept?"

"No," Caden said.

"Good. Guilt is a good alarm clock." Grandmother turned to the maids.

"Prepare the Blue Guest Suite for me. The one with the garden view. It's the only one with decent light."

"That's... that's the best guest room," Eulalie said weakly.

"It will suffice," Grandmother said. "And since I require the adjoining room for my wardrobe, Caden, you and your wife will have to consolidate."

"Consolidate?" Caden asked, horror dawning on him.

"You will take the East Wing guest suite," Grandmother commanded. "Together."

"We can't," Eulalie said quickly, her voice sharp. "There is a restraining order. If Caden sleeps in the same room as me, he goes to jail. Miller will have to report it."

Grandmother waved her hand dismissively. "Nonsense. Fix it."

Eulalie pulled out her phone. She dialed her lawyer, Helen. She walked to the corner of the room, speaking in hushed, urgent tones. Caden watched her, holding his breath.

"Helen, I need a conditional waiver. Now. Just for the premises of the Manor. Just for... cohabitation under duress. Yes, Grandmother is here. No, I'm not dropping the divorce. Just... draft it so he doesn't get arrested for sleeping in the guest wing. 48 hours. Fine."

She hung up and turned back to them. "It's being filed. A temporary suspension of the distance clause, strictly for security purposes."

"Excellent," Grandmother said. "Now, off you go."

"The East Wing guest suite..." Eulalie hesitated. "Grandmother, my staff is currently using the other rooms for storage during the renovation of the west wing. There is only one bed in there."

"Then you won't fall out," Grandmother snapped. "You are married. Act like it. I will not have my family scattered in different rooms like strangers in a boarding house."

"We are divorcing!" Eulalie protested.

"Not yet," Grandmother said. "And until the ink is dry, you will present a united front. Especially with her across the street." She gestured vaguely toward the Pennington house.

She walked over to Elara and softened instantly. "Hello, my darling. Did you know I brought chocolate truffles?"

Elara's eyes went wide. "Real ones?"

"The best." Grandmother took Elara's hand and led her away, leaving

Caden and Eulalie standing in the hallway amidst the pile of luggage.

Caden looked at Eulalie. "I can sleep on the floor."

"You'd better," Eulalie said. "Because if you touch me, I will hack your smart phone."

She grabbed her bag and marched toward the East Wing. Caden watched her go. He was exhausted. He was terrified of his grandmother. But as he picked up his pillow to follow his wife into forced confinement, he couldn't help but feel a tiny, dangerous spark of hope. ①

He was in the house. He was in the room. Now, he just had to get back in her heart.

