

Chapter 66 No.

Saturday afternoon. The air in Aspen was thin and sharp, smelling of pine and money.

Caden stood on the balcony of the Holloway chalet, looking out at the ski slopes. The chalet was a massive timber and stone structure that had been in his family for three generations.

Inside, Grandmother Holloway was directing the staff.

"Put the lilies in the foyer. No, not those. The white ones. And make sure the chef knows Adalynn is allergic to shellfish. Or pretends to be," Grandmother muttered the last part under her breath.

Caden turned. "Is she here yet?"

Grandmother sighed. "Your... 'friend'? No. She texted. Her flight was delayed. Apparently, her luggage required its own car. She is an extravagance we can no longer afford, Caden. Not with the company bleeding."

Caden rubbed his temples. He was already exhausted. He had come here to network, to secure the deal with Liu, to solidify his standing before the Summit. Instead, he was managing a domestic circus.

"And speaking of appearances," Grandmother asked sharply, her focus shifting to him, "where is your wife?"

"Ex-wife," Caden corrected automatically.

"She is still your wife on paper, Caden. And she should be here. It looks bad. The press is already asking questions about why the 'perfect couple' is splitting. A man who can't control his own house can't be trusted to run a company. Fix it."

"She's... busy," Caden said.

"Busy doing what? Launching a corporate raid from her new fortress?"

Just then, the front door opened.

Adalynn swept in. She was wearing a white fur coat that looked like she had skinned a polar bear. She had oversized sunglasses on, even though it was indoors.

"I have arrived!" she announced striking a pose.

Grandmother looked at her with the expression one might reserve for a dead rodent on the carpet.

"Charming" Grandmother said dryly.

Adalynn ran to Caden and threw her arms around him.

"Babe! The flight was a nightmare. They ran out of sparkling water. Can you believe it?"

Caden hugged her, but his eyes were open, looking over her shoulder.

"I'm sorry, Adalynn. Go get settled."

Adalynn pulled back, pouting. "You look grumpy. Are you thinking about her?"

"No," Caden lied.

He was thinking about the text he had just received from his PI.

Subject has left the residence. Took a cab to BOS. Destination unknown

Where was she going?

Seaport District was her fortress. Why would she leave?

Caden felt a prickle of unease.

Meanwhile, a few miles away, a generic rental SUV pulled up to a small, cozy cabin on the outskirts of Aspen.

Eulalie stepped out. She was wearing jeans and a thick parka. No fur. No diamonds.

She opened the back door and helped Elara out.

"Is this the secret base?" Elara whispered, looking at the snow-covered cabin.

"Yes," Eulalie whispered back.

They went inside. It was simple. A fire was already crackling in the hearth, courtesy of the owner Jory knew.

Eulalie unpacked quickly. She set up her laptop on the wooden dining table.

Jory walked in from the kitchen, holding two mugs of hot chocolate.

"So," he said. "The lion's den is just up the hill."

Eulalie blew on her cocoa.

"Let them enjoy the view," she said. "I'm interested in the foundation."

She opened her laptop. The screen glowed.

"Have you located Liu?"

Jory nodded. "He's having dinner at the Caribou Club tonight. Private room. Your meeting is confirmed for 9 PM."

"Can we get in undetected?"

Jory grinned. "I know the sommelier. We're in."

Eulalie smiled. It was a dangerous, sharp smile.

"Good. Let's go deliver the warhead to Teacher."

