

Chapter 82 No.

The summons arrived not by courier, but by email, a cold and impersonal PDF that landed in Caden's inbox with all the subtlety of a guillotine. A temporary restraining order. He read the words, but his brain refused to process them. Eulalie Bradford, Petitioner, vs. Caden Holloway, Respondent. It was a legal declaration that he was a threat. To his own wife. To his own child.

He was in his office at Holloway Capital, or what was left of it. The trading floor below was a ghost town, the screens dark, the phones silent. The only sound was the hum of the servers that were now nothing more than very expensive space heaters.

"She can't do this," he whispered, staring at the document. The order prohibited him from coming within 500 feet of Eulalie or the Seaport District loft. It set a date for a preliminary hearing. It effectively severed his access to his daughter, pending a judge's review.

Grady Pennington stood by the window, his face ashen. "Our lawyers say it's standard procedure in a high-conflict filing, Caden. A tactic. They're trying to establish a narrative of you as aggressive and unstable."

"I am not unstable!" Caden roared, slamming his fist on the mahogany desk. The sound echoed in the cavernous, empty office. He felt a tremor of pure, unrestrained fury. She had not only taken his company; she was now taking his home, his child, his very identity as a father.

"The media narrative isn't helping," Grady said, gesturing to a tablet on the desk. The Forbes article was still trending alongside a dozen others praising the "Ghost." Worse, the TMZ story about Adalynn's plagiarism scandal had completely discredited their affair narrative. They hadn't made Eulalie look like a cheater; they had made Adalynn look like a fraud and him look like a fool.

His rage curdled into a cold, reptilian focus. Acknowledging her legal acumen meant acknowledging his own miscalculation, and that was a failure he could not afford. If he couldn't attack her work or her fidelity, he would attack the foundation of her new life.

"Get the private investigators back on the phone" Caden said, his voice dropping to a low, dangerous growl. "The ones who handled the senator's divorce. I don't care about rumors anymore. I want proof. I want photos. I want Jory Stark's life taken apart, piece by piece. Bank records, travel manifests, old girlfriends. Find something. Anything. If she wants to build her empire with him, I'll burn his life to the ground so she has nothing left to stand on."

Grady hesitated. "Caden, that's going to be expensive. And messy. If it backfires..."

Caden turned, his eyes hollow pits of fury. "We are already hemorrhaging money! We are already messy! My wife, my housewife, just crippled a ten-billion-dollar company and is trying to serve me with a restraining order. Do you think I'm worried about it getting messy?"

He snatched his coat from the back of his chair. "I'm going to see my daughter."

"You can't," Grady said, his voice small. "The order. It's effective immediately. If you go there, she can have you arrested."

Caden froze, his hand on the doorknob. The reality of his powerlessness hit him with the force of a physical impact. He, Caden Holloway, who could move markets with a whisper, could be arrested for trying to see his own child. He was a king trapped outside the walls of his own castle. The cold armor of rage was the only thing holding him together. Underneath it, for the first time, was the chilling touch of fear.