

Chapter 90 No.

Caden caught up to her in the marble hallway outside the courtroom, a vast, echoing space that felt as cold and empty as his future. The lawyers were gone. It was just the two of them.

"You did this," he said, his voice a low, ragged whisper. He wasn't yelling. The rage had burned out, leaving behind something colder, heavier.

"You did this, Caden," Eulalie corrected, her voice even. She didn't look at him with hatred, or even pity. She looked at him like a problem that had finally been solved.

"You turned her against me," he accused, taking a step closer. "You fed her lies. You used our daughter to win."

"I used the truth," Eulalie said. "You were the one who taught me that truth is the most effective weapon. You just never imagined it would be used against you."

He searched her face for a trace of the woman he had married, a flicker of the girl who had once looked at him with admiration. He found nothing. She was a stranger, forged in the fire he had set.

"This isn't over," he said, the threat feeling hollow even to his own ears. "The vote is tomorrow. The board will side with me. They won't let you buy the company."

"The board sided with Harrison Sterling five minutes ago," Eulalie said calmly. "He just bought out Vance's controlling interest. The deal is done. Your resignation will be announced in the morning."

The final blow. He had lost everything. The company. The money. His daughter. His pride.

He finally understood. He had been playing checkers while she was playing chess. He had been focused on punishing her, while she had been focused on winning.

"So that's it," he said, a bitter, broken laugh escaping his lips. "You have it all. The company, the code, our daughter. You win."

He said it as an accusation, but it came out as a statement of fact.

Eulalie looked at him then, and for the first time, a flicker of something unreadable crossed her face. It wasn't triumph. It was something closer to sorrow.

"No, Caden," she said softly, the words echoing in the great, empty hall. "Nobody wins this. You lost your company. I lost five years of my life. And Elara... Elara lost the father she deserved to have."

She turned and walked away, her footsteps a steady, solitary rhythm on the marble floor.

Caden stood alone in the hallway, the sound of her departure fading until all that was left was a crushing silence. He was Caden Holloway. A titan of industry. A master of the universe. And he had never felt so small. He had been so obsessed with owning the world that he had failed to notice he had lost the only part of it that ever truly mattered. The Ghost was out of the machine. And he was the one who was haunted.