

Chapter 51

The heavy door of the Maybach thudded shut, encasing them in a cocoon of silent, opulent leather. The chaotic symphony of Manhattan faded into a distant hum, leaving only the soft sound of their breathing in the enclosed space. The kiss had shattered the last remnants of the war, but its aftershock lingered in the electric air between them.

Harding's thumb gently traced the curve of her jaw, his eyes, dark and intense, searching hers. He didn't ask if she was okay. He could see the exhaustion warring with the fierce triumph in her expression. He saw the warrior who had just razed her past to the ground.

Anissa let out a long, trembling sigh, the sweet taste of absolute freedom washing over her. She shifted closer, resting her forehead against his shoulder. The steady, powerful beat of his heart was a grounding rhythm against her palm. "It's finally over," she breathed, the crushing weight of her past life completely lifting from her shoulders.

A low rumble vibrated in Harding's chest. His eyes darkened with a pride so fierce it was almost possessive. "I never doubted you for a second," he murmured, his voice a gravelly caress. "But from now on, you don't fight alone."

He leaned in again, but this kiss was different. It wasn't the desperate, claiming kiss from the street. This was slow, deep, and infinitely tender—a promise. It was the sealing of an alliance that had been forged in vengeance and was now solidifying into something far more profound.

The privacy partition slid up with a silent whir, and the car pulled smoothly into traffic. Anissa leaned her head against his shoulder, the tension finally draining from her body, leaving a hollow ache in its place. The adrenaline of the fight was gone, and the reality of what she had done—the complete annihilation of her former family—began to settle in.

"What happens now?" she asked, her voice small.

Harding's arm tightened around her, pulling her flush against the solid wall of his chest. "Now, we go home," he said simply. He reached for his

phone, his thumb moving with swift efficiency. He sent a single, encrypted text. A moment later, he looked down at her. "I've just initiated the final asset absorption of the Roy Group and the trust fund. By morning every last penny, every stock, every shell corporation will be under your name. Your name alone."

Anissa's breath hitched. She had won the battle, but he was handing her the entire empire. It was a staggering display of trust. "Harding, I..."

"It's yours," he cut her off, his tone leaving no room for argument. "You earned it. What you do with it is your decision. Burn it, build a hospital, buy an island... I don't care. It's your power now."

She looked up at him, at the unwavering conviction in his eyes, and understood. This wasn't a gift. It was a coronation. He wasn't just her husband; he was her partner. He saw her not as a damsel he had rescued, but as a queen he was crowning.

A single tear traced a hot path down her cheek. It wasn't a tear of sadness or victory, but of profound, overwhelming relief. The chains of her past were not just broken; they had been melted down and reforged into a crown. And for the first time, it felt like it truly fit.