

He Stole My Ticket, I Flew Private: Revenge Served Sky_High Novel

Chapter 21 "Nicolas..." Rachel started to speak, but suddenly everything went dark as something warm and soft crashed against her lips. Nicolas's kiss was hungry and demanding, stealing every breath from her lungs. She tried to push him away, but he pressed her firmly against the door, his body caging her in. "Stay still," Nicolas whispered against her mouth, his voice rough with amusement and something darker. "What if he hears us?" From outside, Jaxon's voice echoed: "Rachel, where'd you go?" Rachel froze, her heart hammering so loud she was sure he'd hear it through the door.

She felt Nicolas pull back just enough to speak, his lips still brushing hers as he watched her with predatory eyes. Then his mouth was on hers again-harder this time, more possessive, like he was claiming something that had always been his. Right then, Jaxon came back to the door, standing outside looking confused. "Uncle Nick, have you seen Rachel?" He stepped closer, and Rachel could hear him just inches away. Nicolas's hand slid to the back of her neck, his thumb stroking her pulse point as he kept her pinned there, completely at his mercy.

"Just opened a window," Nicolas replied smoothly, his voice completely steady even as his eyes burned into hers. "Problem?" Jaxon laughed awkwardly and started to leave, but his footsteps stopped right outside again. Rachel's breath hitched as Nicolas's free hand traced down her side, slow and deliberate, making her shiver. Just as Rachel thought her heart might actually explode, the door handle turned and the door swung open. Nicolas had somehow moved across the room in seconds, casually leaning against the bed, scrolling through his phone like nothing had happened. Jaxon smiled sheepishly.

"Uncle Nick, you sure you haven't seen Rachel?" Nicolas barely looked up. "What am I, her babysitter?" Jaxon shut his mouth and backed off. Everything went quiet, but Rachel's pulse was still going insane, her lips still tingling from his touch. Nicolas walked back over to her slowly, like a predator stalking prey. He leaned down, his mouth inches from her ear: "Think this counts as cheating?" His voice was pure sin, dripping with challenge and raw desire. She tried to step away, but he caught her waist, pulling her flush against him.

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She could feel the heat radiating off his body, smell his cologne mixed with something uniquely him. "Admit it," Nicolas whispered, his lips grazing her neck, "this is way more exciting than anything you ever had with him. You and Jaxon's uncle... wonder what he'd think about that?" Rachel's face burned as her body betrayed her, responding to

his touch despite her mind screaming at her to run. "You're insane," she breathed, but her voice came out breathy instead of angry. Nicolas chuckled low against her throat, the vibration making her knees weak. "Maybe.

But that's what makes it so damn good." His fingers traced along her jawline with maddening slowness, his thumb brushing across her bottom lip. When she unconsciously parted her lips, his eyes went dark with want. "Scared?" Nicolas asked quietly, his voice a dangerous whisper. Rachel felt like she was drowning, her heart pounding so hard she couldn't think straight. Every rational thought was being burned away by the way he was looking at her. "Stop..." she whispered, but even she could hear how unconvincing it sounded.

Nicolas smiled—a slow, wicked curve of his lips—and suddenly stepped back, leaving her cold and breathless against the door. "I just wanted to see how long you'd keep lying to yourself." And with that, he walked out like nothing had happened. Rachel stood there shaking, her whole body still humming from his touch. She was starting to think reaching out to Nicolas might have been the most dangerous decision of her life. But there was no going back now. She'd opened this door herself. In the dining room, Charles was absolutely delighted that Rachel had stayed for lunch.

Rachel sat quietly at the table, barely able to focus on anything except the memory of Nicolas's hands on her. Jaxon kept looking at her with genuine concern. "Rachel, try this—I remember it used to be your favorite." Jaxon smiled as he put food on her plate. Nicolas suddenly cut in coldly: "Jaxon, you're really going all out taking care of Miss Leroix." Jaxon blinked, then smiled. "Rachel's going to be my wife.

Looking after her is my job." Nicolas let out a bitter laugh: "Funny thing is, Miss Leroix doesn't seem too excited about that arrangement." Rachel's stomach dropped as she gripped her chopsticks tighter, refusing to meet Nicolas's eyes. Jaxon picked up on the tension and went quiet. The whole table got awkward fast. Charles cleared his throat, clearly sensing something was off. Nicolas felt his control slipping and stood up abruptly. "I'm done here. You guys enjoy." He headed straight for his room without looking back. Rachel stared down at her plate, her mind still reeling.

Jaxon noticed her mood shift and asked gently: "Rachel, you okay?" Rachel forced a smile. "Yeah, just tired." She turned down his offer to drive her home. Up in his room, Nicolas stood by the window watching Jaxon walk Rachel to her car. He lit a cigarette, his hands not quite steady. Nicolas laughed at himself, shaking his head. "Nicolas Rothschild, you've really lost your fucking mind." He crushed the cigarette and ran his tongue across his bottom lip, still tasting her.

Chapter 22 When Rachel got back to the Leroix house, she went straight to her grandfather's courtyard. Donald Leroix was the only person in the family who truly loved Rachel, so she decided to be honest with him about marrying Nicolas. After a long silence, the old man finally sighed. "Well, at least that boy can protect you." Later that evening, Rachel followed Donald to the main house to see the family. Everyone was

busy with their own things, the atmosphere perfectly harmonious-as if they were the real family and she was just an outsider.

Her father, David Leroix, blamed her for damaging the company's reputation with her prison stint, so he'd been pursuing a smart home ecosystem partnership with Nicolas. That's why they were attending tonight's gala-to make a good impression on Nicolas Rothschild. The next evening, Arthur was dressed in a sharp black suit, carefully adjusting his cufflinks, while Sophie wore a champagne-colored gown, touching up her makeup. Both looked perfectly prepared for the gala, clearly confident about tonight.

Rachel came down the stairs wearing a simple cream-colored dress, her hair casually swept up, looking fresh and natural. She hadn't planned to attend, but Donald insisted she go and "see how things are done." Sophie glanced at her and frowned, instantly annoyed. How dare she look so effortlessly elegant? What a manipulative little fox! At the gala, Arthur and Sophie were quickly surrounded by business acquaintances, making small talk and networking. Rachel stood off to the side with a glass of champagne, scanning the crowd, clearly out of place.

She didn't enjoy these events, but since she was here, she'd have to grit her teeth and deal with it. Just as she was looking for a corner to hide in, a familiar voice came from behind her. "Rachel Leroix? You're out of prison?" The voice was all too familiar. Rachel didn't even need to turn around to know who it was. Sienna Devereux, daughter of the Devereux Tech empire. Technically, she was Jaxon's cousin. Back when Rachel was still the Leroix princess, she'd been bold and outspoken, and she and Sienna had never gotten along.

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When Rachel was chasing after Jaxon, Sienna had always looked down on her, thinking she wasn't good enough for him, constantly talking shit about Rachel to Jaxon. Now, Rachel was no longer the arrogant princess she'd once been, but Sienna was still the same entitled Devereux heiress. Sienna walked over, wearing a stunning red gown and sky-high heels, chin slightly raised, her eyes full of disdain. "Didn't think you'd have the nerve to show your face at an event like this. What, three years behind bars got you feeling desperate?" When Rachel didn't respond, Sienna pressed on.

"I heard the Leroix family took quite a hit because of your little situation. What, hoping tonight's gala will save your asses? How pathetic." Her voice wasn't exactly quiet, drawing the attention of nearby gossip-seekers. Rachel finally looked up, her gaze ice-cold as she met Sienna's eyes, a slight smile playing at her lips. "Miss Devereux, I don't know how to thank you for staying so invested in Leroix family business." Sienna blinked, not expecting Rachel to fight back. Her expression shifted, but her tone stayed challenging.

"You actually have the balls to talk back to me?" The contempt in her eyes deepened. Rachel's voice was steady, but every word was sharp as a blade. "Three years ago, all

you did was talk behind my back. Today you're just putting on a show. Miss Devereux, looks like you've picked up some new tricks over the years." Her words drew even more attention, and Sienna's face went blank for a moment, clearly thrown off. Rachel continued with a cold laugh. "But someone who's always relied on family name and daddy's money-how could you possibly understand what growth and resilience mean?"

You think you're hot shit, but really you're just another spoiled brat your family created." Sienna was completely blindsided, never expecting to get destroyed by Rachel after all these years. Staying would only give everyone more to laugh about, so she turned and stormed off, shooting Rachel one last death glare. That bitch was so infuriating! She couldn't beat her three years ago, Rachel went to prison for three years, and she still couldn't beat her! After Sienna left, things quieted down around Rachel, and the rubberneckers dispersed.

But she'd barely taken a few steps when someone called out behind her. It was Anita Morgan! "Rachel Leroix, please, I'm begging you, leave me alone! I was wrong to mess with you in prison-please have mercy and forgive me!" Rachel stopped dead, her brow furrowing. She turned around to see Anita rushing toward her, stumbling in her desperation. Her face was full of panic-completely different from the arrogant bitch she'd been before. "Anita?" Rachel was genuinely surprised. "What the hell are you doing here?" Anita finally reached her, her voice shaking. "Rachel, I... I know I fucked up.

I shouldn't have given you shit in prison. Please... please just leave me alone!" Rachel looked at her, confusion flickering in her eyes. "Leave you alone? I have no idea what you're talking about." Anita's face went even paler. She bit her lip and whispered, "I know you're the Leroix princess. One word from you could destroy my life. But I never meant to hurt you in prison-if I hadn't joined them against you, they would've come after me too. I had no choice! Please, just let it go..." A crowd of gossip-hungry onlookers gathered again. People always loved drama.

Some weren't sure what was happening, but others were piecing together the story from Anita's words. "Sounds like the Leroix princess is getting revenge on her former cellmate." "This is wild! Her old prison buddy came here to beg for mercy?" The murmur of voices rose around them, everyone pointing and staring at Rachel. Rachel paused for a moment, then realized what was happening. She shook her head gently, her voice calm as she explained, "You're mistaken. I never had my family go after you, and I'm not planning to." Anita clearly didn't believe her.

Something terrifying seemed to cross her mind, her expression twisting with fear. "Bullshit! Wasn't it you who had someone break my hand? Please, I know I was wrong-stop torturing me!" reek my ha Even Rachel wasn't stupid enough to miss what was happening now. She'd been played-this was obviously a setup someone had orchestrated for her!

Chapter 23 Anita's crying continued, drawing even more attention. Some people remembered Rachel's previous online scandal and that anonymous poster. Someone

had posted anonymously claiming to be Rachel's cellmate, saying that after getting out, Rachel was so ashamed of her prison record that she had someone break the poster's hand. The Leroix family had quickly shut down that controversy, but that didn't mean people forgot. Soon, everyone started connecting the dots. Could the anonymous poster be this woman right here?

"I didn't want to come here, but-" Anita stammered, looking around in terror. Suddenly something occurred to her and she screamed, "But Rachel threatened my parents!" The crowd gasped. Rachel had left that club first that day and didn't know what happened after, but she could guess Arthur had been behind breaking Anita's hand. But why was she saying her parents were threatened? Arthur wasn't stupid enough to do something like that. Someone else had to be pulling strings. Rachel looked down at the woman on the ground. Anita was staring up at her, and the fear in her eyes looked genuine.

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She tried to help her up, but Anita seemed determined to make a scene and wouldn't budge. "Get up first. This has nothing to do with me, but I'll help you figure out what's going on." Anita wouldn't move, just kept begging for mercy. Outside the crowd, Sophie swirled her wine glass with a cold smile. Her gaze cut through the crowd to Rachel and Anita, her heart full of satisfaction. Perfect. Thank god Anita had posted anonymously online before-otherwise she never would have found such a golden opportunity. A chance to completely destroy Rachel's reputation.

Just as Rachel was half-dragging Anita to her feet, Sophie suddenly stepped forward, blocking their path. "Sister, what's going on? Why did you make her cry?" Rachel shot her a cold look and ignored her, walking around her. But Sophie wouldn't let it go, following and raising her voice: "What, feeling guilty? Or did you do something you're ashamed of?" Rachel stopped and turned back, anger flashing in her eyes. "Enough! Stop stirring up trouble." Sophie laughed lightly and shrugged. "Me? I'm just concerned. She's your former cellmate.

Don't you think you should explain why she's here like this? After all, sister, you represent the whole Leroix family." Right then, a sharp female voice cut in: "Well, well, looks like the fake princess has turned into a real phoenix!" It was Sienna, back for round two. She strutted over like a preening peacock and looked at Anita with disgust. "They're letting just anyone in now? Where's security? Get this person out of here!" Rachel stepped protectively in front of Anita. "Sienna, we don't know the whole story yet. She can't just leave like this." Sienna crossed her arms dismissively.

"Are you kidding me? Three years ago you were this arrogant bitch, and trash like her couldn't even get near you. Have you really gotten this pathetic?" Sophie played peacemaker again: "Sienna, Anita is my sister's guest. Let's let sister handle this." Sienna raised an eyebrow. "Guest? I don't remember seeing her name on tonight's guest list. Unless she snuck in? Who gave her that opportunity?" Just then, a deep male

voice cut through the chaos: "That's enough." Everyone turned to see Arthur emerging from the crowd, with Jaxon and Nicolas behind him.

"Tonight is a tech summit gala, not a place for arguments," Arthur said coldly. "The Leroix family will handle this matter." Sophie immediately rushed toward Jaxon like an excited bird. "Jaxon! You're finally here!" Sienna rolled her eyes at the performance, then glanced at Rachel, who stood there like a statue, showing no reaction at all. Sienna sidled up to Rachel and elbowed her. "Hey, your replacement is openly stealing your fiancé and you're just gonna stand there like a zombie?"

Chapter 24 Her voice was quiet-only Rachel could hear her. Rachel gave her a puzzled look. Hadn't Sienna always been the one bitching about Rachel chasing Jaxon? Always saying she wasn't good enough for him? They'd had screaming matches over it. What was with this sudden personality transplant? Catching Rachel's stare, Sienna rolled her eyes and glared back. "Don't get any ideas. I still think you're trash for my cousin, but that Sophie chick? She's even worse!" Ah, there was the Sienna she knew. Looking down on literally everyone except her precious cousin Jaxon.

"Your family's completely fucked up," Sienna continued casually. "Treating the adopted kid like a princess while treating their actual daughter like garbage. That takes some next-level dysfunction." Rachel had heard Sienna's venom before. Three years ago, she would've thrown hands over a comment like that. Now? She actually thought Sienna was right on the money. When Rachel didn't bite back, Sienna looked bored. "God, you really have changed. How depressing." She started to leave, then paused. "Seriously though, grow some balls.

This whole doormat thing is gonna eat you alive." She gave Nicolas a polite nod as she passed, shot one last disgusted look at Sophie draped all over Jaxon, and strutted off. Nicolas's eyes found Rachel, who was just standing there like absolutely nothing had happened. Something dark twisted in his gut. This wasn't right-she shouldn't be this... dead inside. She should be raising hell, fighting back. He'd deal with whatever shitstorm followed. Not standing there like some broken doll. "Mr. Leroix," Nicolas said, his voice sharp with irritation, "that deal we talked about?"

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Your call." Arthur went stiff as a board. He'd just spent the last hour trying to negotiate with Nicolas, who'd dropped a bombshell of a demand. "I... I need time to consider it," Arthur managed. Sophie looked curious but Arthur shut her down with one look. With Nicolas looming nearby, the rubbernecks scattered fast. Arthur grabbed Anita and hauled her away, his grip vicious enough to leave marks. Once they were alone in a deserted hallway, Arthur's civilized mask completely slipped. "Anita," his voice could have frozen hell over, "I told you to stay the fuck away from Rachel.

Did you think I was bluffing?" Anita collapsed to the floor, shaking. "I'm sorry! It wasn't my idea-Rachel made me do it! She wanted me to blow up the truth about three years

ago and destroy Sophie!" Chapter 24 Arthur's expression turned murderous. Meanwhile, Rachel found herself a quiet corner by the windows, avoided by everyone like she was radioactive. Her phone buzzed with a text from Sophie: Sister, meet me by the pool downstairs. Need to talk about the Leroix-Rothschild deal. Rachel frowned. Why would Sophie want to discuss business she wasn't supposed to be involved in?

What had Nicolas and Arthur talked about? She shot a quick text to Nicolas: What did you tell Arthur? No response. Rachel headed downstairs, unease building in her chest. The hotel's lower level had an ornamental koi pond surrounded by elegant landscaping. Sophie was waiting there, her back turned. "You know what Nicolas's condition was?" Sophie asked without turning around. Rachel assumed it was about money or percentages-the usual business negotiations. Sophie laughed-a sound that was completely unhinged. "He wants me to marry him!"

Chapter 25 "He told Arthur that if I agree to marry him, he'll do business with the Leroix family and guarantee we'll be set for life," Sophie said smugly. Rachel glanced at her phone-still no reply from Nicolas. She couldn't believe he'd actually make such a condition. "You heard him say this yourself?" Sophie scoffed. "Do I need to? Arthur was right there during their meeting. What, you don't trust your own brother?" Rachel studied Sophie's self-satisfied expression. "Have you even met Nicolas?" "Well, no... but so what! Maybe it was love at first sight.

God, this is such a dilemma-should I marry Jaxon or Nicolas?" Sophie pretended to agonize over her options. Rachel realized how clueless Sophie was being played. "You might want to get a reality check. Maybe Arthur heard wrong. Don't gift-wrap yourself just to get sent back for false advertising." "You're full of shit!" Sophie's voice went shrill. "Maybe he really is into me! And anyway, Jaxon's been super sweet to me too." Rachel's phone buzzed: Will explain later. - Nicolas She ignored it, sick of his runaround. "Sister!" Sophie suddenly grabbed her arm.

"Look, I don't get Nicolas's deal, but guys like him have women throwing themselves at them constantly. Maybe he's just testing how serious we are." Rachel yanked her arm away in disgust. "And your point is?" "My point is I'm still marrying Jaxon. You're just his ex who got tossed aside. The Leroix-Rothschild engagement is happening, but I'll be the bride!" Before Rachel could respond, Sophie let out a bloodcurdling scream and both women plunged into the koi pond.

As they hit the freezing water, Sophie whispered in Rachel's ear: "Since you won't give up on Jaxon, I'll make you." Rachel instantly understood the setup-Sophie was going to frame her and destroy her reputation completely. Jaxon and Arthur both dove in, but they swam straight past Rachel to rescue Sophie, completely ignoring her struggling nearby. Rachel managed to haul herself out, dripping wet and shaking with rage. She watched Jaxon tenderly carry Sophie to safety while Arthur fussed over her. "What the hell happened?" Jaxon demanded, staring accusingly at Rachel. "I slipped." "Bullshit!

You were both just standing there when I got here!" Rachel felt that familiar crushing weight of their automatic disbelief. "Jaxon, we've known each other for over twenty years. Do you really think I'm just some pathological liar?" "This isn't the time for this, Rachel. Sophie's traumatized and needs medical attention." "Traumatized? I almost fucking drowned and none of you even looked at me!" "You can swim, Rachel. Sophie can't. You were never in any real danger." "I can swim?" Rachel stared at him in disbelief. "When have you ever seen me swim?"

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"I've been terrified of water since I was a kid!" Jaxon's certainty wavered for a moment, doubt flickering across his face. Arthur stepped forward, clearly done with the situation. "Rachel, how long are you gonna keep this tantrum up? I know exactly what you did. Anita told me everything-you orchestrated this whole thing!" "What are you talking about?" "Cut the act! You brought Anita here to cause drama, then staged this accident to frame Sophie!" The crowd murmured, some people clearly uncomfortable with what they were witnessing.

"Three years ago you betrayed me, and nothing's changed," Rachel said quietly. "How pathetic." Sophie quickly interjected, "Sister, let's not bring up the past. Can't we just be a happy family?" She reached for Rachel's hand with fake sisterly affection. . "Family?" Rachel jerked away like Sophie had burned her. "The moment you sent me to prison, this stopped being my home." Sophie deliberately stumbled backward from the force, letting Jaxon catch her in a perfect damsel-in-distress moment. "Sister, this is all my fault!"

I know you think I stole your place in the family, but I swear I never meant to compete with you! I've always seen you as my real sister!" She sobbed convincingly while Arthur rushed to comfort her. "Sophie will always be part of this family," Arthur declared, glaring at Rachel. "She's sweet and grateful, unlike some ungrateful people who bite the hand that feeds them!" Rachel turned to leave, but Arthur's voice stopped her. "Don't you dare walk away from me!" Before she could react, Arthur shoved her hard. Rachel lost her balance and crashed back into the pond with a massive splash.

This time the icy water was a complete shock. She surfaced, gasping and coughing. "If you're gonna disown your family, then stay the hell away from the Leroix house! You're not welcome there anymore!" Some bystanders finally spoke up: "This seems way too much..." "She's still your sister..." But Arthur ignored them, waiting for Rachel to apologize. When she managed to stand in the chest-deep water, she looked up at him with pure defiance. "1. Did. Nothing. Wrong." Her voice carried across the water, crystal clear and absolutely unrepentant.

"You'd rather believe strangers than your own sister. You don't deserve to be my brother! My brother would be a hero who fights for justice-not this blind, deaf fool!" Arthur kicked her back into the water. "Then stay in there until you admit your mistakes!" The cycle repeated-Rachel struggling toward shore, Arthur kicking her back in. Each

time, she refused to break. Finally, exhausted, Arthur demanded: "Do you admit you were wrong or not?" Rachel's eyes had lost focus, but when she looked at his familiar face, she barely recognized him.

"Hahahahaha..." She burst into wild laughter that echoed across the courtyard. When she finally stopped, her voice was ice-cold: "Hey Arthur, funny thing-you've got your facts mixed up. That necklace you flew halfway around the world to buy at auction? That was for Sophie, not me. My 'gift' was just a fucking candy apple you grabbed from some street vendor!" She pointed at the expensive necklace glittering around Sophie's neck.

"It's right there if you want to refresh your memory!" Arthur's gaze followed her gesture, and for the first time, real doubt crept across his face as suppressed memories came flooding back. "Thanks for the education," Rachel continued, her voice cutting through the stunned silence. "Really opened my eyes about how much family loyalty is worth. Spoiler alert: absolutely nothing." The finality in her tone made Arthur's blood run cold. Just then, a new voice sliced through the tension: The the thy sy by y "Well, well. Mr. Leroix publicly beating up his own sister-real classy.

This how elite families handle their business?"

Chapter 26 The voice belonged to Nicolas. The crowd immediately parted to make way for him. His security team moved swiftly, diving into the pool without hesitation to pull out an exhausted Rachel. She was soaking wet, pale as paper, barely breathing-clearly having exhausted all her strength. Nicolas stood at the pool's edge, his expression cold and detached. One of his bodyguards wrapped a fresh blanket around Rachel's trembling form. "Mr. Rothschild..." Arthur stepped forward nervously. "This is just family business.

My sister was out of line, so I had to discipline her." "Family business?" Nicolas's voice was ice-cold. "Beating the shit out of a woman fresh out of prison-real classy, counselor. Especially since you should know the penalties for assault better than anyone." Nicolas crossed his arms, studying the shivering woman on the ground. "Your family certainly knows how to make headlines. First you send your real daughter to prison for three years, then try to sell her off to scum like Quincy Rock." Everyone knew about the recent Quincy scandal that had rocked Manhattan.

"Now you're publicly abusing your biological sister while treating an adopted daughter like precious cargo. It's like watching a nature documentary about hyenas." Arthur was sweating bullets. "Mr. Rothschild, this is all a misunderstanding..." "Misunderstanding?" Nicolas let out a cold laugh. "The Leroix family values reputation above all, yet you let a woman take the fall to save face. That's some next-level dysfunction." He casually unfastened his cufflinks. "I was considering an eighty billion partnership with Leroix Industries, but...

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companies with questionable family values make unreliable partners." "Mr. Rothschild! Business is business-we can still negotiate!" Sophie suddenly found her courage. "Mr. Rothschild, I know what you really want. If someone has to sacrifice their happiness for a marriage alliance, then I'll do it!" Jaxon stared at her in shock. "Sophie, what the hell are you talking about?" But Sophie ignored him, staring at Nicolas with determination. "Don't punish Arthur for this.

I'll give Rachel back her necklace-this whole thing is my fault!" 16:11 Ila Clola My Plebat & Play Volunto Devenge Ruvrend oky Minh 22.5% Chapter 26 She started pulling at the expensive jewelry around her neck, but Arthur stopped her. Meanwhile, Rachel slowly struggled to her feet, declining help from the bodyguard. Her legs shook as Nicolas watched, something flickering in his eyes. "You having some kind of breakdown?" Nicolas's voice cut through Sophie's dramatics. "When the fuck did I say I wanted to marry you?" Sophie's face flushed red.

"But you told Arthur you wanted a marriage alliance with the Leroix family!" "The old man won't shut up about me getting married. I remembered there was an existing engagement between our families and figured I'd honor it. But here's the thing-are you actually the Leroix heiress?" The question hit Sophie like a slap, publicly exposing her as an imposter after years of carefully building her identity.

"Look, counselor, whether we're talking marriage or business partnerships, I think we need to have a serious conversation about everything." Nicolas glanced at Rachel, who hadn't spoken a word throughout the ordeal. A gust of wind made her cough up water. He almost reached out to adjust her blanket but stopped himself-too many people watching. "Can you walk?" She nodded weakly, water still clinging to her lashes. As she took a step, she stumbled, and the bodyguard quickly steadied her. "Rachel!" Arthur called out desperately as she left with the security team.

Something told him if she walked away now, she'd never come back. But Rachel didn't respond. Nicolas picked up a pearl earring that had fallen during the struggle, his fingertips stained with blood from the pool water. "Your sister didn't shed a single tear when she broke two ribs taking the fall three years ago." He flicked the earring right at Arthur's forehead. "You know how heavy a soaking wet prison blanket gets in winter?" Police sirens wailed in the distance. Nicolas straightened his suit jacket as he turned to leave. "Oh, forgot to mention-I called the cops for Rachel.

We law-abiding citizens don't like watching scumbags get away with assault." 16:11

Chapter 27 Chapter 27 Nicolas strode toward the waiting Maybach. He gently placed Rachel in the back seat and wrapped his suit jacket around her trembling body. "Hospital. Now," he ordered, his voice tight with barely controlled fury. Rachel curled up on the leather seat, soaked hair plastered to her face. When Nicolas brushed the wet strands from her forehead, his fingers found skin burning with fever. "So cold..." Rachel unconsciously pressed closer to him, her lips completely drained of color. He pulled her against his chest, barking at the driver to crank up the heat.

His hands moved carefully over her face, wiping away water droplets like she was made of glass. As the car raced through the night, Nicolas couldn't take his eyes off her. Every shallow breath she took felt like a knife twisting in his gut. Maybe she didn't remember, but seven years ago when she'd intercepted that drugged drink meant for him, she'd collapsed in his arms exactly like this-broken and defenseless. That was the moment his world had shifted on its axis. But she'd never seen him. Always chasing after Jaxon like a lovesick fool.

When she was framed and imprisoned three years ago, he'd been too weak to save her. The guilt had eaten him alive. After her release, he'd kept his distance, terrified she'd blame him for failing her. Then one night, his phone had rung. He'd stared at her name on the screen in disbelief: "Nicolas, want to get married?" "Nicolas..." Rachel's broken whisper pulled him back to the present. She clutched weakly at his shirt. "Thank you for helping me." Nicolas's chest tightened. He didn't deserve her gratitude, Before she could say more, he leaned down, his breath warm against her skin.

A ghost of a kiss touched the corner of her mouth-so soft it might have been imagined, but it made Rachel's entire body shiver. She stared up at him with wide, unfocused eyes. Nicolas stayed close, his lips brushing her ear as he spoke: "Rachel, listen to me. You never have to thank 16:11 He Stole My Ticket 1 Flew Private: Revenue Served Sky High 23.4% Chapter 27 anyone for anything. Ever." His voice cracked slightly as he looked down at her. "I'm sorry I took so long. I should have been there sooner." She tried to speak, but he pressed a gentle finger to her lips. "Shh.

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Don't waste your energy." His jaw clenched as he thought about what could have happened if he'd arrived even minutes later. The image of Arthur repeatedly kicking her back into that pool would haunt him forever. Never again. He'd burn the world down before letting anyone hurt her again. At the hospital, medical staff rushed out with a stretcher. Nicolas carried Rachel from the car as she slipped into unconsciousness. "Severe hypothermia-we need to get her core temperature up immediately!" Nicolas followed the stretcher until nurses blocked his path at the emergency room doors.

He stood in the hallway, his hands shaking with rage and something deeper-pure, devastating fear. "Sir," his assistant arrived, "the Leroix family-" "Get them here," Nicolas cut him off, his voice deadly quiet. "All of them. When she wakes up, we're ending this once and for all." When the emergency room lights finally dimmed, the doctor approached: "She fainted from severe emotional trauma combined with physical exhaustion and hypothermia." Nicolas nodded, his gaze fixed on Rachel through the observation window.

Once alone with her, he took her pale hand in both of his, bringing it to his lips. "I swear," he whispered against her skin, "no one will ever hurt you again." Rachel woke to antiseptic smells and muted sunlight. Her entire body ached from being repeatedly slammed into that pool. "Miss Leroix?" Nicolas's assistant looked up from his

paperwork. "How are you feeling?" "Where's Nicolas?" "Meeting with your father." Rachel struggled to sit up despite feeling like she'd been hit by a truck. The assistant helped her into a wheelchair, understanding she wouldn't wait around.

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The conference room upstairs was packed with Leroix family members surrounding Nicolas, who looked like he was restraining himself from committing murder. Rachel's eyes immediately found her grandfather, and suddenly all the pain she'd been holding back crashed over her. "Grandpa..." Donald Leroix sat at the head of the table, his walking stick hitting the floor with sharp cracks. "You fucking animals!

"I'm not dead yet and you're already destroying Rachel!" Seeing her wheeled in, his weathered face crumpled with concern. "Jesus, sweetheart, what did they do to you?" He reached for her hands, his own trembling slightly. "Don't you worry about a damn thing. Grandpa's gonna fix this." Rachel looked around the room at the sea of guilty faces, finally settling on Arthur and Sophie. Sophie was already crying-because of course she was-and Arthur immediately moved to console his precious fake daughter. "I'm okay, Grandpa," Rachel lied, not wanting to add to his stress.

"Okay?" Donald's cane slammed down hard enough to make everyone jump. "You call getting beaten and nearly drowned 'okay'?" His furious gaze landed on Arthur like a laser. "This is how you protect your sister?" 16:11 He Stole My Ticket 1 Flow PrivatOL
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Chapter 28 Chapter 28 Arthur had never seen Donald this furious before. The old man was clutching his chest, struggling to breathe from pure rage. Rachel immediately wheeled closer, gently patting his back. "Grandpa, I'm sorry for worrying you again." David's face was dark as storm clouds. "Arthur, you better have a damn good explanation for tonight's disaster." Arthur's jaw clenched. "Dad, this is really just family business-" "Family business?" David shot to his feet, roaring. "Do you have any idea how many reporters were there tonight?

"You've completely trashed the Leroix name!" Arthur went quiet, shocked. Even when he'd personally sent Rachel to prison three years ago, David had just sighed and called it "Rachel's fate." Joanne rushed to Arthur's side, her voice breaking. "Tell me you didn't mean to hurt Rachel. Please tell me this was just a mistake!" Arthur stared at the marble floor, remembering the photo frame Rachel had broken three years ago-their skiing trip in Switzerland, shattered like everything else.

"If Rachel hadn't bribed Anita to destroy Sophie's reputation, none of this would've happened!" Arthur finally exploded. "She pushed Sophie into the pool first-I was just returning the favor!" "Shut the hell up!" David's fury was volcanic. "You're still making excuses? Anita's already disappeared-we're searching for her now. Didn't anything about her story seem sketchy?" Arthur hesitated but refused to admit he'd been wrong. "So what if I disciplined her in public? I'm her brother-when she screws up, it's my job to correct her!" David's kick sent Arthur crashing to his knees.

"You worthless piece of shit!" Sophie burst into tears. "Daddy, don't blame Arthur! He was just protecting me!" "Work stress?" Rachel looked at Arthur and Sophie clinging to each other-they looked more like real siblings than she ever had with Arthur. "So work stress justifies pushing your sister into a pool three times?" A cold chuckle cut through the tension. Nicolas was spinning the ring on his finger, the serpent insignia catching the light-the mark of Rothschild 16:11 He Stole My Ticket 1 Flew Private: Revenge Served Sky High 24.3% Chapter 28 power.

"Funny, Arthur didn't seem emotionally unstable when he lost six million gambling last month." "Mr. Rothschild, this is Leroix family-" David started. "This became Rothschild business the moment our families got engaged," Nicolas cut him off coldly. "I don't care which Rothschild man honors it, but only Rachel Leroix can marry into our family." His meaning was crystal clear-he only recognized Rachel as a legitimate Leroix daughter. Sophie was nobody. Sophie's face crumpled as reality hit her. Not only had Nicolas never wanted her-he'd made sure only Rachel could enter the Rothschild family.

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"Look what you've done!" David turned his rage on Arthur. "You've destroyed our family's reputation!" "But Sophie acts more like family!" Arthur suddenly screamed, his tie hanging askew. His eyes burned with resentment as he stared at Rachel. "You never learned to be obedient! If you'd just quietly taken Sophie's place in prison back then-" A crystal ashtray exploded against the wall inches from Arthur's head. Donald was shaking with rage. "You fucking monster!"

You were the one who begged Rachel to take the fall!" Rachel stood frozen, watching these people she'd once considered family reveal their true, ugly nature. "Enough!" Donald's cane slammed the floor. "I should let you all deal with the police!" David's face twitched. "Rachel, the company's already suffering. If this scandal gets out, it'll tank our stock price." "Yes, Rachel," Joanne jumped in desperately, "Arthur lost his mind temporarily. I'll make him do penance.

But if word gets out about you being pushed into that pool, think about what that'll do to our reputation." "Reputation?" Rachel's laugh was ice-cold. "Arthur didn't care about my reputation when he was humiliating me in public. Why should I care about the family's reputation? After all, my dear brother personally declared that the Leroix family has no place for me!" Suddenly, Donald clutched his chest, gasping with harsh, labored breaths. Rachel was the first to notice.

Ignoring her own pain, she stumbled from the wheelchair toward him, her stiff legs nearly giving out, "Don't just stand there!" Joanne pushed Rachel aside, trying to lift Donald. "Help me get him into recovery position!" 16:11 He Stole My Ticket 1 Flow Private: Doyongo Sorved Sky High 24 59 Chapter 28 "Don't move him!" Rachel snapped. "Heart attack patients shouldn't be moved!" Her fingers found the medication in Donald's pocket with practiced efficiency-she'd learned about his heart condition years ago.

As she administered the pills, Rachel realized with cold clarity that none of them had moved to help. Arthur stood frozen while Sophie cowered behind him. 'Get a doctor!' Rachel's fury burned hotter than her own betrayal. "Now!" After the medical team rushed Donald away, Rachel slumped back into the wheelchair, her palms bloody from her own fingernails. Joanne approached nervously. "Rachel, sweetheart, your grandfather's in emergency care and you're not well either.

Maybe you should rest in the VIP room?" I'll wait until Grandpa wakes up." That's ridiculous!" Joanne's voice climbed higher before she caught herself. "Your body can't handle this after three years in prison and tonight's trauma!" Nicolas's quiet laugh held dark amusement. "Mrs. Leroux seems very concerned about Rachel's wellbeing all of a sudden." Joanne's carefully applied makeup couldn't hide her nervous twitch. Rachel finally relented. "Fine. But when Grandpa wakes up, we're settling this properly." Back in her hospital room, Nicolas handed her a glass of warm water.

"Drink this." When their fingers brushed, Rachel couldn't suppress a shiver at his warmth. She took the glass with trembling hands. Nicolas sat on the edge of her bed, watching her intently. "They're not worth your energy." Rachel gripped the glass tighter, nodding silently. The water's warmth spread through her body, but it couldn't match the heat from that brief touch of his fingers. 'You've had enough for one day,' Nicolas said softly, standing to leave. "Get some rest." Rachel almost reached out to stop him but caught herself. What was she thinking?

After he left, she buried herself completely under the blankets. Exhaustion finally overcame her, and she fell into troubled sleep. In her nightmare, she was back in prison. The inmates held her down, forcing her to her knees, demanding 16:12 He Stole My Ticket. I Flew Private: Revenge Served Sky-High 24.8% Chapter 28 she bark like a dog. When she refused, Arthur's face appeared, his mouth moving silently before his foot slammed into her stomach- "Shit!" Rachel jolted awake, drenched in cold sweat. The door burst open as Nicolas's assistant rushed in, panic written across his face.

"We've got a problem! Your grandfather's taken a turn for the worse!" 25.0%

Chapter 29 Rachel rushed to the surgical wing in panic when Donald's condition crashed. Her hair was disheveled, she looked half-insane, but she didn't care. Nicolas was already there. His assistant chased after her with a wheelchair, but Rachel was too frantic to sit still. 'What the hell happened? He was fine when I left!' Joanne avoided her eyes, guilt written all over her face. After what felt like forever, the doctor finally emerged. "He's stable, but he can't handle any more shock." Rachel was having none of their bullshit. "He was perfectly fine when I left.

What did you people do to him?" Arthur jumped to Sophie's defense. "Sophie was just trying to take care of him! She said something by mistake-she didn't mean anything by it!" What. Did. She. Say?" Rachel's voice could have cut glass. Sophie stammered like the fake she was. "I just... told Grandpa about what happened at the pool. He was so worried about you, so I thought..." Rachel shot up from the wheelchair. "You fucking

planned this! You deliberately triggered his heart attack!" Before Arthur could play human shield, Rachel's hand cracked across his face hard enough to snap his head sideways.

"That's for Grandpa." A second slap followed immediately, even harder. "And that's for three years ago." Sophie tried to play the victim, but Rachel's eyes were pure murder. "Don't worry. You're next." Just as Rachel was about to destroy Sophie, Jaxon grabbed her wrist. "That's enough." Sophie immediately collapsed dramatically behind Jaxon. "I'm so scared... she's completely lost it." Rachel broke free and lunged at Sophie, grabbing a fistful of her perfectly styled hair and slamming her head against Donald's window repeatedly. Sophie's fake eyelashes started sliding off as she truly panicked.

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"You brought Anita to that party to destroy me, didn't you?" Rachel hissed in Sophie's ear. "I was planning to leave this toxic family behind, but congratulations-you just changed my mind. Let's see which one of us 16:12 No Stole My ticket t How Dee DovewO SHEVC Sky Hloh 25.2% Chapter 29 survives this." Rachel's hands found Sophie's throat-so fragile, so easy to just squeeze a little harder... "Okay, that's enough." Nicolas's voice cut through her rage like ice water.

Sophie escaped to Joanne's arms while the whole family rushed off to fuss over their precious fake daughter. Jaxon stopped beside Rachel with a cold warning. "If Sophie gets seriously hurt, I'm coming for you." "Go fuck yourself," Rachel muttered under her breath. Nicolas knelt beside Rachel in the empty corridor, carefully treating her self-inflicted wounds with antiseptic. The hospital's harsh fluorescent lights cast twisted shadows as Rachel remembered the family photo Sophie had once "accidentally" broken-and the new one she'd seen after prison with everyone except her.

"Does it hurt?" Nicolas asked, his shadow falling over her. Rachel turned away, swallowing the emotion trying to claw up her throat. "Doesn't hurt at all." "Same thing you said the night they sent you to prison," Nicolas said quietly, applying a bandage to the crescent-shaped wounds in her palm from clenching her fists too hard. "They're not worth it," Nicolas said suddenly, his fingertips tracing the pale blue veins visible beneath her paper-thin skin.

Chapter 30 Chapter 30 "Worth it?" Rachel considered Nicolas's words. For her, it wasn't about worth anymore-if something felt good, it was worth it. Nicolas left his suit jacket around her shoulders before departing, its cedar scent enveloping her like a protective embrace. The moonlight through the blinds cast shadows on her face, reminiscent of prison bars from three years ago. David arrived to find Nicolas standing by Donald's window, his presence radiating cold authority. Mr. Rothschild..." David wiped sweat from his forehead, his shirt clinging to his back.

He'd heard what happened-Sophie had upset Donald with her thoughtless words, triggering his heart attack. But Sophie hadn't meant any harm. This couldn't be entirely her fault. If Rachel hadn't caused such a scene at the gala, none of this would have

happened. She was the real instigator. I'll handle this situation-" Handle it how?" Nicolas's voice was arctic as he turned. "By throwing Rachel under the bus again? Making her the scapegoat for your family's failures?" David's throat went dry, cold sweat breaking out across his forehead.

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Nicolas had built an empire and crushed competitors twice his age. This wasn't a family friend peaking-this was the head of the Rothschild dynasty. Sophie caused this mess, so Rachel deserves justice. Period." Sophie's young and made a mistake..." Twenty four is young?" Nicolas's laugh held no warmth.

"I was running billion-dollar deals at twenty four." Rachel's attack on Sophie was brutal," Nicolas said, his tone deceptively calm, "but compared to three years ago when Sophie murdered a pregnant woman and made Rachel take the fall-this is mercy." David staggered against the wall as suppressed memories flooded back. That storm soaked night, Sophie had stumbled home reeking of alcohol, barely able to stand, collapsing in pure terror. Her first words: "Dad, Mom, I killed someone..." 16:12 26.19 Chapter 30
Their solution? Tell her not to worry, then sacrifice Rachel.

Rachel had silently taken the blood-stained license, walking into that police station like condemned prey. "Sophie was only twenty-one then..." "Old enough to bribe a medical examiner to falsify autopsy reports?" Nicolas's voice cut like a scalpel. "That baby was eight months along-died from cord compression, not the impact." The hospital's antiseptic smell suddenly became suffocating. David remembered burning the original report in his study while jasmine bloomed mockingly outside.

Your family's dysfunction isn't typically my concern," Nicolas said, each word precisely measured, "but watching you destroy an innocent woman for three years? That ends now. You represent the Leroix name, yet you and your children behave like common criminals." David couldn't meet his eyes. Nicolas commanded respect from world leaders and Fortune 500 CEOs. His displeasure could destroy entire companies. Rachel spent three years in hell because you were too weak to protect your own daughter. That guilt should at you alive every single day." Nicolas left without another word.

Later, David confronted Sophie and Arthur. Under pressure, he assigned them laughably light punishments-Sophie would spend three hours in her room "reflecting." Walking to Rachel's room, David saw her sitting quietly by the window, staring out at nothing. The image hit him like a punch-when she was born, their only dream had been for her to grow up happy. When had her smiles disappeared? He couldn't remember the last time he'd seen genuine joy on her face, 26.6% 16:12 He Stole My Ticket Hew Private Revenge Served Sky High