

Chapter 779 Stardom Among The Evans Family's Younger...

Shortly after breakfast, Elliana and Cole made their way back to the Evans family manor.

The instant Elliana stepped through the door with her daughter cradled in her arms, the younger generation of the Evans family descended upon them like a tidal wave, forming a breathless circle around mother and child.

"Is this Beatrice? Let us see her!"

"She's absolutely stunning! This little one is going to shatter hearts when she comes of age."

"Look how cute she is! That little face, those chubby arms and legs, the long eyelashes... I've never laid eyes on such a lovely baby!"

"She's captivating even in sleep. Wait until she wakes and reveals those luminous eyes—she'll have every single one of us dancing to her tune!"

The chatter rose in waves, their animated voices transforming the living room into a symphony of excitement.

Elliana surrendered to their enthusiasm, standing with a radiant smile as they jostled for a better glimpse.

Moments before, Cole had positioned himself right beside Elliana, but the crowd surged forward as though he'd become transparent, sweeping him to the outermost edge of the gathering.

Cole observed the spectacle unfold before him, irritation and amusement warring across his features. Elliana had ascended to stardom among the Evans family's younger ranks, while his own standing as the family head seemed to diminish with each passing day.

Jason, who had sustained grave injuries the night Elliana brought Beatrice

Jason, who had sustained grave injuries the night Eliana brought Beatrice into the world, was finally recovering his strength. Though still somewhat fragile, he had descended the stairs at first light, burning with eagerness to meet his niece. But with the entire family mobbing Beatrice, he couldn't penetrate the wall of bodies.

As the family's honored protector, Jason couldn't very well bulldoze his way through the crowd. He resigned himself to lingering at the periphery, waiting for the crowd to thin.

When Jason spotted Cole similarly relegated to the sidelines, an entertained smile flickered across his lips. "Cole," he called out in greeting.

Cole cast a sharp glare at the crowd before pivoting toward Jason with genuine concern etched on his face. "How are you holding up?"

"Considerably better," Jason answered and then steered the conversation elsewhere. "How did things go in Delta?"

Placing absolute faith in Jason, Cole laid out the entire account without reservation.

Jason absorbed every detail, his expression brightening with relief upon hearing that everything had proceeded without complication.

Cole then directed his gaze toward his uncles and grandfather.

Bertram and Emmanuel had planted themselves within earshot, quietly absorbing the full exchange.

"Cole," Bertram ventured, "now that you've located your mother, shouldn't you share this news with your father? Discovering she's alive would flood him with happiness. It could work miracles for his recovery, wouldn't you say?"

Cole pressed his lips into a tight line, wrestling with how to formulate a response. His mother had been unyielding in her stance—she refused to let his father witness her current condition. But if his father caught wind of her whereabouts, he would race to Delta without hesitation. One was starving for reunion, while the other barricaded herself behind locked doors. The arrangement would torment them both beyond measure. He simply couldn't determine whether revealing the truth to his father was the right path forward.

Detecting the conflict brewing within Cole, Emmanuel probed gently, "Cole, what's troubling you?"

Cole released a measured breath. "There are complications I still need to untangle, so I can't reveal my mom's whereabouts to my dad just yet.

We'll need to exercise patience a bit longer. Please, guard this secret for now."

Bertram and Emmanuel signaled their agreement with synchronized nods. Though they couldn't grasp Cole's full reasoning, they honored his judgment. As the family head, Cole wielded ultimate authority over all significant family decisions, particularly those entangling his own parents. Whatever course he charted, they possessed no grounds to challenge.

Cole then rotated toward Ruben, preparing to brief him on recent developments, but discovered Ruben's attention had wandered completely.

What commanded Ruben's focus so thoroughly? He was attempting to muscle his way through the younger family members, hell-bent on securing a view of his great-granddaughter.

Louisa fluttered anxiously at his side, bracing him with both hands, terrified he might lose his balance.

Since her catastrophic breakdown, Irene had been transferred to a nursing facility equipped with specialized medical staff, so she no longer haunted the corridors of the Evans manor.

Watching Ruben's determined campaign, everyone wrestled to contain their laughter.

In truth, when Elliana had crossed the threshold with Beatrice nestled in her arms, Ruben had been the very first to spring to his feet, his excitement rivaling that of any youth in the room. But the weight of years had hobbled him, and his legs betrayed his intentions. Even wielding his cane, he had failed to compete with the stampeding crowd. Before he'd managed more than a handful of steps, Elliana had vanished behind a fortress of young people.

Trapped on the outside gazing in, Ruben had practically vibrated with impatience. He'd calculated that he would simply wait for the younger generation to satisfy their curiosity and scatter, but the youngsters had displayed zero inclination to yield their positions. After enduring what stretched into an agonizing eternity, he still hadn't claimed his opportunity.

Eventually, Ruben's patience evaporated completely. "You insufferable brats, clear a path this instant!" he thundered, emphasizing his command by brandishing his cane and delivering sharp raps to the shins of those unfortunate enough to stand closest.

Flinching from the stinging crack against their calves, the few whirled

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around in surprise. The others, jolted by Ruben's explosive voice, twisted their heads to identify the source of the disruption.



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Chapter 780 The Family's Most Treasured New Source Of Joy

The living room surrendered to silence.

"Grandpa, what's wrong?" Taylor's voice carried confusion.

Ruben released a sharp snort. "A bunch of brats! Crowding around my great-granddaughter this entire time—how am I supposed to catch even a glimpse of her?"

Understanding dawned on everyone at once—Ruben's impatience stemmed purely from wanting to see Beatrice. They scattered quickly, opening a clear path before him.

With an unobstructed view of Beatrice at last, Ruben's harsh expression melted into something softer. He cleared his throat, gripped his cane, and began moving forward.

But Jeff shot past Ruben before he'd taken three steps.

The earlier chaos of pushing bodies had worked against Jeff. Too small to muscle through the packed crowd, he had waited on the periphery, frustration mounting with each passing second. Now, seizing the opening Ruben had carved, he launched himself toward the baby.

In one fluid movement, Jeff swept Beatrice from Elliana's arms. The instant he glimpsed her face, a gasp escaped him. "Wow, Beatrice!"

Jealousy rippled through everyone watching. They'd all hovered near Elliana, desperate for a peek at the baby, yet none had possessed the courage to actually hold the baby, worried Elliana might take offense. Yet, Jeff had just scooped Beatrice right up. Why did Jeff have the guts to do so? The answer was simple—his bond with Elliana ran deeper than anyone else's.

Dismissing the envious stares burning into his back, Jeff cradled Beatrice as though she were spun from glass and starlight, murmuring about her

beauty and pressing kiss after gentle kiss to her tiny face.

Words tumbled from him in an eager stream. "Beatrice, you need to grow up fast! I'll play with you and buy you mountains of fun toys and all the candy you could ever want. And if anyone even thinks about bullying you, I'll knock their block off!"

The eight-year-old had transformed into a little guardian, holding the baby with surprisingly practiced confidence. He'd clearly been rehearsing this moment in secret. His profound admiration for Elliana extended seamlessly to her child. He was prepared to surrender his entire heart to Beatrice.

Elliana watched the scene with a fond smile, happy to let him have his moment.

Then came Ruben's turn to fume. His brows knitted, and his voice rumbled. "You cheeky boy! It's my turn now—how could you just snatch my great-granddaughter away?"

Jeff looked up, clutching Beatrice protectively, and took two small steps backward. "Grandpa, you're... kinda old. What if your hands shake? You might drop her."

The audacity! Ruben's face turned the color of an overripe tomato. He lifted his cane, ready to give the boy a good scare—but froze midway. His eyes landed on the baby's peaceful face. The thought of startling her drained the fight right out of him.

The fury drained from Ruben's weathered features, replaced by a strained smile that looked almost painful to produce. "Jeff," he said, his voice softening to something almost tender, "I can manage it perfectly well."

The transformation happened in a single heartbeat—from fearsome patriarch to doting grandfather.

Ruben understood with perfect clarity that raising his voice would only frighten Jeff, and he couldn't risk Jeff's grip faltering on the baby.

Jeff didn't pause to question the abrupt shift in his grandfather's demeanor. Still genuinely concerned that Ruben might fumble and drop Beatrice, he glanced toward the waiting sofa. "Grandpa, why don't you sit down first? Once you're comfortable and properly settled, then I'll give

her to you."

Not daring to push further, Ruben obeyed without protest. The man who had charged forward moments ago now retreated meekly to the sofa, pride swallowed whole.

After lowering himself firmly onto the cushions and setting his cane within easy reach, Ruben extended his arms toward Jeff with unmistakable yearning written across his face. "There. All arranged perfectly. Now, hurry up and let me hold her."

Running out of reasonable excuses, Jeff reluctantly surrendered Beatrice to Ruben's waiting, trembling arms.

The instant Ruben received Beatrice, years seemed to fall away from him like shed skin. He lavished her with praise, celebrating her beauty, her thick crown of hair, her impossibly smooth skin, and her perfectly shaped eyebrows. In his eyes, she embodied absolute perfection.

He cooed and praised without pause, pressing kiss after enthusiastic kiss to her velvet cheeks until all the devoted attention finally roused her from peaceful sleep.

A clear, piercing cry suddenly sliced through the living room's comfortable warmth.

A collective gasp rippled through the gathered family. Beatrice was crying! Everyone froze in place like statues, uncertain how to comfort her distress.

But Ruben merely smiled, utterly untroubled. He patted Beatrice's back with gentle, rhythmic strokes, murmuring near her delicate ear. Almost miraculously, her cries faded into blessed silence. A moment later, she wasn't simply quiet—she was beaming with delight.

Witnessing her radiant smile, Ruben burst into delighted laughter that filled the room. "Look at that precious sight! She's smiling at me! Oh, you precious little darling, you've completely melted this ancient heart of mine!"

The family converged again like moths to flame, eager to witness the baby's smile for themselves.

Elliana watched them with quiet amusement dancing in her eyes. Her



daughter, it appeared, had become the family's most treasured new source of joy. Her smile lingering on her lips like a sweet aftertaste, she searched the room for her son. After days away from him, she had missed him with an intensity that surprised even her own heart.

Felix had been resting with Paulina earlier, but Cole had since gathered him into his own protective embrace.

Elliana crossed the room quickly and lifted her son from Cole's arms, drawing him close against her chest where he belonged.

Just then, a fresh explosion of exclamations erupted from Ruben's corner of the room, pulling everyone's attention back to Beatrice.