

EXCLUSIVE BONUS EPILOGUE

The
BILLIONAIRE'S
RUNAWAY
NANNY



SOME SECRETS
CHANGE EVERYTHING.



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Exclusive Bonus Epilogue

The Billionaire's Runaway Nanny

by Alison Reid

Twenty Years Later...

Sophie almost ignored the email entirely.

The ancestry results had taken weeks to process, and honestly she mostly did the stupid DNA kit because one of her university friends insisted it would be “fun.”

Family origins.

Genetic traits.

Potential relatives.

Nothing serious.

Now she sat cross-legged on her bed inside the penthouse with her laptop balanced against her knees while Manhattan glittered beyond the windows.

At twenty-one she technically lived downtown near campus now, but she still came home constantly. Some habits never changed. Especially when home still felt like safety.

Sophie clicked the results casually. European ancestry percentages appeared first. Then genetic matches. Immediate Family Matches. Her eyes skimmed automatically.

Liam Wolfe — Half Sibling.

Sophie frowned slightly.

Half sibling?

That didn't make sense.

She clicked the profile again.

Shared maternal DNA.

No paternal match detected.

A strange cold feeling slid slowly through her stomach.

No.

That had to be wrong. Her pulse accelerated sharply as she scrolled farther.

Expected paternal match: *No match found*.

The room suddenly felt very quiet. Sophie stared at the screen without blinking. No match found.

No.

No, no, no.

Her hands started shaking slightly over the keyboard. Maybe Dad never submitted DNA. That had to be it.

Except Liam had.

Which meant—

Her breathing turned shallow instantly. Another name appeared farther down the page. A man she didn't recognise. Close biological relation. Potential paternal connection. The blood drained completely from her face.

“No.”

The whisper sounded tiny inside the room. This had to be some mistake. Some glitch. Her chest tightened painfully.

Dad.

The word echoed strangely through her mind now. Every memory suddenly replayed differently against her will. Charles teaching her to ride a bike in Central Park while running beside her for hours. Charles sitting beside

her hospital bed after she broke her wrist at fourteen. Charles helping her move into her dorm freshman year while pretending not to cry afterward.

Her father.

Except apparently not.

Sophie shoved the laptop away from herself suddenly like it burned. Tears filled her eyes instantly. Not because of biology. Because panic had already started spiralling somewhere deeper and uglier.

Did he know?

God.

Did everyone know except her?

Her throat tightened violently.

Half-brother. Not full.

And Dad—

No.

Charles.

Her chest physically hurt at the thought.

Had he stayed because he loved her?

Or because he felt obligated to?

The distinction suddenly felt devastating. A knock sounded softly against her bedroom door.

“Soph?”

Liam.

Sophie wiped quickly at her face before he could walk in. Too late. Her twenty-three-year-old brother stepped inside already holding a bottle of water and immediately frowned.

“Whoa. You okay?”

Sophie looked at him. Same grey Wolfe eyes as Charles. The same eyes everyone always said she didn't have. God.

How had she never noticed before?

"Sophie?"

Her breathing hitched painfully. Liam crossed toward her instantly now, concern replacing confusion.

"What happened?"

She looked at him helplessly before whispering—

"We're only half related."

Silence. Liam blinked once.

"What?"

Her hand shook as she turned the laptop screen toward him. He stared at it. Read it again. Then looked back at her.

"Soph..."

Tears spilled finally down her cheeks.

"And Dad isn't my biological father."

The words shattered something inside her the second she said them aloud. Because suddenly she felt untethered from her own life. Like the foundation beneath twenty-one years of certainty had cracked open without warning.

Liam stared at her for several long seconds. Then immediately—

"Okay, first of all, he's still your dad."

Emotion closed painfully around Sophie's throat.

"You don't know that."

"Yes I do." Liam looked genuinely offended now. "Are you insane? He worships you."

A broken laugh escaped her through tears.

"That's not the point."

“It literally is the point.”

Sophie looked away sharply. Because deep down she was terrified of one thing more than the DNA results themselves.

What if Charles only stayed because he had to?

* * * * *

Zara was in the kitchen when they found her.

Friday afternoon sunlight poured through the penthouse windows while soft jazz played quietly from hidden speakers. She stood near the marble island arranging flowers into a crystal vase, reading glasses sliding slightly down her nose.

Home.

The sight almost made Sophie cry again. Because suddenly she felt like she no longer knew where she belonged inside it. Zara looked up at the sound of footsteps. Immediately her expression changed.

“Mmm. Why do both my children look emotionally unstable?”

Normally the teasing would have made Sophie laugh. Today she just stood there clutching her laptop against her chest while Liam hovered protectively beside her. Zara straightened slowly. Concern sharpened instantly in her eyes.

“Sophie?”

That was all it took. Tears filled Sophie’s eyes again.

“Oh sweetheart.”

Zara crossed the kitchen immediately. Always immediately. She reached for Sophie automatically, pulling her into a hug before Sophie even realized she was falling apart.

“I’m sorry,” Sophie whispered brokenly against her shoulder.

“For what?” Zara asked softly, already smoothing a hand through her hair the same way she had since Sophie was little. Liam exhaled heavily beside them.

“She did one of those ancestry DNA tests.”

Zara stilled. Only slightly. But Sophie felt it. Her stomach dropped instantly. Slowly Zara pulled back enough to look at her face.

“What did it say?”

Sophie’s hands shook as she opened the laptop again.

“I thought it was wrong,” she whispered. “But Liam showed up as my half brother and...” Her voice cracked. “Dad isn’t genetically related to me.”

Silence filled the kitchen. Not shocked silence. Not confused silence. And suddenly Sophie knew.

“Oh my God, mum.”

Pain crashed through her chest.

“You knew.”

Zara closed her eyes briefly. Not denial. Confirmation. Sophie stepped backward instantly.

“How long?”

“Sophie—”

“How long?”

“Since before your father and I got married.”

The words hollowed Sophie out completely. Liam stepped closer immediately like he expected her to bolt.

“You all knew except me?”

“No,” Zara said quickly. “Only your father and I.”

That stopped her.

“Dad knows?”

Zara's expression softened instantly at the word dad. Because neither of them called Charles anything else.

"Yes," she said quietly. "He's known since you were a baby."

Sophie physically sat down at the kitchen island like her legs stopped working properly. Her mind spiralled violently now. Dad knew. Her entire life. Every birthday. Every school event. Every hug. Ever I love you. And somehow that made the fear worse instead of better.

"Why didn't he tell me?"

Zara moved slowly toward her. Carefully. Like she understood Sophie's entire world felt unstable right now.

"Because to him," Zara said softly, "you were simply his daughter."

Emotion tightened painfully in Sophie's chest.

"But I'm not."

The second the words left her mouth, Liam reacted instantly.

"Bullshit."

Sophie looked at him sharply.

"You are absolutely his daughter," Liam said firmly. "DNA doesn't erase twenty-one years."

Tears burned behind Sophie's eyes again.

"But he stayed because he had to."

"No."

Zara's voice cut through the room immediately. Certain. Unshakable. Sophie looked at her. And suddenly Zara looked emotional too.

"He stayed because he loved you," she said quietly. "There's a difference."

Sophie shook her head weakly.

"How do you know?"

A sad almost-smile touched Zara's mouth.

“Because I watched that man fall in love with you while I ever fell in love with him.”

The kitchen went very quiet. Sophie looked between them helplessly.

“How was this even possible?”

Zara exhaled softly before sitting beside her at the island. Carefully. Like she understood this conversation could change everything.

“Your biological father was Charles’s best friend,” she said quietly.

Shock flashed across Sophie’s face.

“What?”

Zara nodded once.

“Camille had an affair with him while she was married to your father.”

The words landed heavily in the room. Liam swore softly under his breath. Sophie stared at Zara in disbelief.

“And Dad knew?”

“He found out after the accident.”

Emotion tightened visibly through Zara’s expression now.

“When Camille died, both of them were gone. And your father...” She paused briefly. “He was devastated. Betrayed. Hurt in ways I don’t think anyone fully understood at the time.”

Pain climbed slowly into Sophie’s chest.

“So why did he stay?”

Zara looked genuinely startled by the question.

“Sophie.”

Her voice softened immediately.

“He never considered leaving you.”

Tears filled Sophie’s eyes again.

“But wouldn’t it have hurt him to look at me?”

The second the words left her mouth, Zara's face broke slightly.

"Oh sweetheart, yes. In the beginning sometimes it did." Her honesty was gentle but unflinching. "Not because he blamed you. Never that. But because he was grieving and betrayed and trying to survive something awful."

Sophie looked down quickly. Zara touched her hand.

"But those feelings were about Camille and Daniel," she said firmly. "Not you."

Liam nodded immediately beside them.

"Dad's been obsessed with you my entire life. Honestly it's excessive."

Sophie let out a weak tearful laugh. Zara smiled faintly before continuing softly.

"Your father struggled because two people he trusted hurt him deeply. That's human. But Sophie, he loved you from the very beginning. Those two things existed together."

Emotion clogged painfully in Sophie's throat.

"Then why didn't he tell me?"

"Because eventually it stopped mattering to him," Zara said simply. Silence settled again.

"He made a decision very early that you were his daughter. Completely. Legally. Emotionally. Publicly." Zara's eyes softened. "And after that, neither of us saw any reason to tell anyone differently."

Sophie blinked rapidly against fresh tears.

"You really mean that?"

Zara looked almost offended.

"I married a man who would burn the world down for his children." Her voice gentled again. "You included."

The words hit Sophie straight in the chest. Because suddenly she realised something she had never questioned before. Charles Wolfe had every opportunity to walk away. And he never did. Not once.

* * * * *

The penthouse doors opened just after seven.

Charles stepped inside loosening his tie with one hand while scanning automatically for his family the second he crossed the threshold. Twenty years later and he still did that. Still searched for them first. Home remained the only place where Charles Wolfe fully relaxed.

“Zara?” he called.

“In here.”

Her voice carried softly from the living room. Charles followed it immediately.

Zara stood near the windows holding a glass of wine, soft lamplight warming her features while Manhattan glittered behind her. Time had changed both of them in quiet ways, but not this. Not the way his chest still tightened when he looked at her.

Charles crossed the room without hesitation and pulled her gently against him. His mouth brushed hers once. Twice. Slow. Familiar. Loved. Zara smiled softly into the kiss before resting her hands against his chest.

“Hello to you too.”

“I missed my wife.”

The deep affection in his voice still affected her after all these years.

“It’s been ten hours.”

“A tragedy.”

A quiet laugh escaped her. God. That sound still felt like peace to him. Charles kissed her once more before finally noticing the tension lingering beneath her expression. His instincts sharpened immediately.

“What happened?”

Zara hesitated briefly. Then softly—

“Sophie knows.”

Every trace of warmth disappeared from his face. Not panic. Not fear. Understanding. Charles went completely still.

“The DNA test,” Zara explained quietly. “She found out this afternoon.”

A long silence followed. Then Charles exhaled once slowly and nodded.

“Where is she?”

“In her room with Liam.”

Something almost painful crossed his expression briefly before he smoothed it away. Not anger. Sadness maybe. Regret. Charles loosened his tie completely before setting his briefcase aside.

Then quietly he asked, “Is she okay?”

The question nearly broke Zara’s heart a little. Because even now, that was his first concern.

“She’s frightened,” Zara admitted softly. “Not about biology. About losing you.”

Pain flickered openly across Charles’s face.

“Jesus Christ.”

Zara touched his arm gently.

“She needed time to process it.”

Charles nodded once. Then after a brief silence—

“Did you tell her the truth?”

“Yes.”

Another nod. No hesitation. No shame. Because they decided long ago Sophie would never carry the burden of Camille's betrayal. Footsteps sounded softly behind them. Charles turned immediately. Sophie stood near the hallway entrance with Liam beside her. Her eyes looked red from crying.

The sight visibly affected him. For one awful second Sophie looked uncertain. Like she didn't know whether to walk toward him anymore. That alone nearly destroyed Charles. He crossed the room first. Always first.

"Sophie."

Her throat tightened instantly.

"Dad..."

The word cracked apart halfway through. Charles stopped directly in front of her. Then without hesitation he cupped her face gently in both hands the same way he had since she was little.

"Look at me."

Sophie did. And whatever she saw in his expression shattered the last of her composure completely. Tears spilled instantly down her cheeks.

"I'm sorry," she whispered brokenly.

Charles looked genuinely stunned.

"For what?"

"I didn't know."

His face tightened painfully.

"Oh sweetheart."

The endearment wrecked her completely.

"You never apologize for something someone else did."

Sophie's breathing shook.

"But I'm not really—"

"Yes," Charles interrupted immediately.

Absolute certainty filled his voice.

“You are.”

Silence settled heavily through the room. Charles kept his hands gently against her face.

“You are my daughter.”

Not hesitation. Not qualification. Fact. Emotion climbed violently into Sophie’s throat.

“But biologically—”

“I do not care.”

The force behind the words startled even Liam slightly. Charles’s eyes never left Sophie’s.

“Biology is not what made me your father.”

Tears slid faster down her face now.

“I was there for your first steps,” he said quietly. “I taught you how to swim. I sat through every terrible school concert.” A faint smile touched his mouth briefly. “I held your hair back when you got drunk at seventeen and thought I didn’t know.”

A watery broken laugh escaped Sophie. Charles’s expression softened further.

“I loved you long before you even understood what that meant.” His voice roughened slightly now. “And I will love you long after both of us are gone.”

The room fell completely silent. Sophie broke first. She threw herself into his arms suddenly, and Charles held her instantly and tightly against his chest.

“My girl,” he murmured roughly into her hair.

Liam looked away briefly before crossing the room toward Zara.

“Mum.”

His voice softened immediately when he saw the tears in her eyes. Zara laughed shakily when he wrapped an arm around her shoulders and pulled her into his side.

“You’re crying more than Sophie,” Liam murmured gently.

“She’s my baby too,” Zara whispered emotionally while watching Charles hold Sophie against his chest.

Liam kissed the top of her head affectionately.

“Yeah,” he said quietly. “Dad picked all of us, didn’t he?”

That nearly finished Zara completely. Because he was right. This was the real truth of Charles Wolfe.

Not blood.

Not biology.

Choice.

Later that night, Charles slipped quietly into bed beside his wife.

The penthouse had finally gone silent hours earlier after emotional conversations, tears, and Liam loudly insisting the entire family needed therapy despite being “weirdly functional for billionaires.”

Now only soft rain tapped against the windows while dim city light spilled faintly across the bedroom.

Zara stirred slightly the second the mattress shifted beneath his weight. Always aware of him. Even after all these years. Charles smiled faintly in the darkness before reaching for her automatically.

She moved into him just as instinctively, warm and sleepy beneath soft sheets as his arm wrapped around her waist pulling her against his chest. Home. The thought still hit him unexpectedly sometimes. Not the penthouse. Her.

Zara tilted her head slightly so he could kiss her. Slow. Familiar. Intimate in a way that still occasionally stole his breath after two decades together.

“You okay?” she whispered softly against his mouth.

Charles looked down at her for a long moment. Beautiful. Still beautiful enough to affect him instantly. Still capable of quieting every restless fractured part of him with one look. Still the woman he fell hopelessly in love with somewhere between thunderstorms and dinosaur pancakes.

“I love you,” he said quietly.

The words came easily now. Not guarded anymore. Not feared. Simply true. Emotion softened Zara’s face immediately.

“I love you too.”

Charles brushed his thumb gently along her cheek before kissing her again, deeper this time. Not urgent. Not rushed. But full of twenty years of love and affection and enduring desire that never truly faded between them. Zara smiled softly against his lips.

“You’re very affectionate tonight, Mr. Wolfe.”

“I’m always affectionate with my wife.”

“Mm. Not always this distracted by her.”

A low quiet laugh escaped him. Because she still knew him too well. Charles rested his forehead briefly against hers. Tonight shook him more than he expected. Watching Sophie question whether she belonged to him hurt in ways he still couldn’t fully explain. But then he looked at Zara standing beside their children. Their family. And all he could think was how close he once came to losing this life before it ever truly began.

His hand slid slowly along her waist beneath the sheets. Warm skin. Softness. Love. Desire still flickered low and steady between them exactly as it always had. Maybe stronger now. Because time stripped away performance and left only intimacy behind.

“You know,” Zara murmured sleepily, fingers tracing lightly across his chest, “our children are emotionally exhausting.”

Charles huffed a quiet laugh against her hair.

“I hope you’re not exhausted,” he teased softly before kissing her deeply.

Zara melted into him immediately, warm and familiar beneath his hands.

“Never when you kiss me like that,” she murmured against his lips.

A slow mischievous smile curved his mouth instantly.

“I intend to do a lot more than kiss you.”

Zara laughed softly as he rolled her gently beneath him. Even after twenty years together, the movement still sent warmth spiraling low through her body. Her arms slid around his neck automatically.

“I was hoping that would be the case.”

“Oh, were you now?”

He kissed her again before she could answer, slow at first, then deeper when her fingers slipped into his hair.

God.

He still loved the sound she made when he kissed her properly. Still loved the way she touched him like she never stopped wanting him. Charles braced himself carefully above her while Zara smiled up at him with sleepy affection and unmistakable desire.

His wife.

The realisation still struck him sometimes with quiet force. Not because he doubted it. Because he appreciated it. Everything they survived. Everything

they built. The family sleeping safely down the hallway. The life neither of them believed they deserved once upon a time.

Zara brushed her lips lightly against his jaw.

“You’re thinking too much again.”

“Mm.” His mouth ghosted slowly down her throat. “You should distract me.”

A soft laugh escaped her.

“That sounds suspiciously manipulative, Mr. Wolfe.”

“I’m a billionaire. Manipulation is one of my core skills.”

Zara laughed properly then, the sound warm and intimate in the darkened room. Charles kissed her again just to feel it against his mouth.

“I love you, Charles. More than anything.” Her fingers brushed gently through his hair. “I will always love you.”

Emotion flickered across his face instantly. Even after all these years, hearing those words from her still affected him.

“I love you too,” he murmured against her lips.

Then there was no talking for a very long time. Only slow kisses in the dark. Familiar hands. Soft laughter between touches. The quiet intimacy of two people who had survived enough to understand how rare real love truly was.

Rain continued tapping softly against the penthouse windows while Manhattan glittered beyond the glass. And wrapped in each other’s arms, Charles and Zara loved each other exactly the way they always had—

Completely.

Without fear. Without conditions. Without end.

— The End —

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