

Surprise 216

Chapter 216 Where Is That Man?

The soft patter of rain was heard outside. In front of the French windows at the duplex apartment, Elijah was holding a cup of floral tea that Courtney had made for him. "Things have been so hectic lately. I had someone look after Tina for a couple of days. When you have time, I'll bring her along and treat you to a meal."

"I always have time."

The man looked especially gentle with a pair of glasses on while he sat on the gray fabric couch. He had the stability and confidence befitting his age. The way he spoke and carried himself also gave off a sense of security.

"We can't bring the dead back to life, Elijah. You know I don't like to worry too much about things that can't be changed." Courtney looked weary as she massaged her swollen temples.

She had not slept properly over those two days.

Her father's passing was questionable. It wasn't that she did not have any suspicions of her own, but given her identity, it was not appropriate for her to dig any further. Otherwise, it would be hard to avoid criticism from people who would claim that she was only trying to find trouble because she was unsatisfied with her father's unfair division of property. Personally, she did not mind the criticism, but she did not want people to gossip about Tina.

"Technically, you should have the right to half of the Hunter Family's inheritance."

"This really isn't important to me."

Elijah sighed and had a disheartened expression. "You just can't be bothered. I'm not forcing you to go all the way with this, but you're not even thinking about trying to do something."

"There's nothing wrong with that. I want to live a more simple life."

"Are things simple now?" Elijah's tone sounded profound. "In a big family like the Duncans', a family feud is never a simple matter."

Courtney was taken aback. "You know about that?"

"It's impossible not to know." His expression was subtle. "You're in the spotlight of business news headlines in Asia. Nowhere in the news is your relationship with him a secret anymore."

Resting all her weight against the couch, she chuckled. "Are you that certain? There's actually another part to it which I believe Cameron told you about previously, didn't she?"

He did not answer her.

Cameron had always gladly passed on various information to him. When Courtney first met Cameron in America, she and Elijah had already registered their marriage. At the time, he had just passed the bottleneck period in his career. Apart from rising steadily, he also provided financial support to Cameron who was still a design student and struggling with financial hardships.

Hence, she was in his debt.

At the thought of Cameron, Elijah frowned. "Cameron is not in a very good state. I suggest letting her stay at a hospital for treatment. That guy called Gale might not have the ability to look after her properly."

"Don't worry. He's devoted to her."

She waved him off, but he still looked concerned.

After letting out a long sigh, he pressed, "Being devoted to her is one thing, but being able to care for a person with depression is another. Aside from specialized nurses, no one can keep their eyes on a patient all day long. There will be times when they need to go out. If something happens while they're out, who is going to take responsibility? The housekeepers at home?"

His words made her doubt herself. "I will bring up the idea to him then."

"Okay. I've already contacted the best rehabilitation center for treating depression in America. For the sake of her recovery, I recommend sending her there."

"America?" Courtney was dumbfounded. "I don't think Gale can accept that."

They would be separated by an ocean and time difference. If they really sent Cameron away, he might lose his mind.

"Then we will see if he's only doing this for himself or if he's genuinely doing this for Cameron's sake."

Elijah's reasoning was harsh. He did not consider Gale's feelings one bit.

Nonetheless, Courtney understood. After all, he did not know Gale personally and was only speaking for Cameron. He couldn't tend to everyone at once.

"Okay, I'll talk to him," she agreed with a serious look on her face. It might have been easy to say that but would prove harder to do later.

They talked late into the night. By the time Courtney sent Elijah off, it was already pitch black outside. Lillian waved at her in the dark, signaling her to go back.

Courtney nodded. Tightening the shawl around her, she turned back around and went inside. When the doors opened, a breeze blew past and a storm began all of a sudden. She shrank her shoulders and thought that the weather had gotten cooler.

The elevator took her up.

With a 'ding', the doors slowly opened. Courtney lowered her head and headed toward her house. When she was putting in her passcode, the beeping sound was exceptionally clear in the corridor. Stepping inside, she noticed the fragrance of the flower tea was still quite strong.

She went to the kitchen to boil water for herself again. While she was staring at the kettle, a man's voice suddenly came up from behind her, scaring her half to death.

"What are you thinking about?"

She cried out in alarm and turned around with a hand on her chest. A tall and big figure was standing under the incandescent lights in the living room, producing a long shadow on the ground. She could not see his face clearly, but she was able to identify him.

It was Alexander.

“You scared me to death.” She pressed down on her rapidly beating heart. “What the h*ll? When did you get here? Aren’t you supposed to be in Shanghai?”

With a blank expression, he answered, “The project ended. When I heard about your father, I came back right away.”

There was a huge storm in Shanghai over the last couple of days. All the flights were delayed, and roads were blocked because of an increase in accidents on the highway. It dragged on until this morning when flights began operating again.

Courtney had not recovered from the shock she received earlier. Her hands were still shaking as she held onto the marble table for support. Her breaths were coming in a rush. “No, I mean, shouldn’t you have at least called when you came back? You almost scared me to death by showing up at my house without a word. I really regret giving you the passcode now.”

She was only grumbling from being surprised, but she did not realize that those words left a bitter taste when they reached his ears.

“I’m sure that isn’t the only thing you regret.”

Step after step, he closed in on her while dripping water on the floor. The pool of water was mixed with traces of mud.

Only then did she realize that he was drenched from head to toe.

“What happened to you? How did you get caught in the rain? Where’s Mr. Reynolds?”

It was as though he did not hear her. With the big marble countertop in the kitchen between them, he glared at her and asked in an icy cold voice, “Where is that man? Did you send him off already?”

He did not dare to believe that she could still act as if nothing had happened in front of him at this moment. She could still stand tall and face him after sending another man out of her house.

His question made her heart sink slightly.

“What man?” she responded automatically, but she already guessed that Alexander had seen Elijah.

“Are you asking me?” He found it funny. Ridicule and contempt filled his cold gaze as he stared at her in disappointment. “Are you not going to explain your relationship with that man unless I tell you everything I saw first?”

“Elijah and I are just friends. You’re mistaken.”

She cradled her forehead as she finally knew why Alexander was so aggravated all of a sudden.

“Friends?” His chilly laughter rang clearly through the big house.

Chapter 217 Someone Tried to Rape Me

“A man and a woman alone together at this late hour. Do you think you can give a clear explanation for what you two did?”

Alexander had an apathetic gaze. His overbearing demeanor seemed to lower the temperature in the house and make it feel like an icehouse.

Courtney frowned as she stood firmly on the ground with the support of the table. “Calm down. Elijah and I really are just friends. I don’t know what misunderstanding you have. He just returned from America and helped me resolve a dispute at my father’s funeral. When he gave me a ride home, I invited him up for a cup of hot tea and a chat. What’s wrong with that? If you don’t believe me, then it would be useless for me to give any explanation, wouldn’t it?”

She did not think that he was such a petty person. For him to be this angry after simply seeing Elijah seemed like a deliberate provocation.

“Just friends. Can you look at me and say that one more time?”

“We’re really just friends.”

Clenching his fists with an already sour expression on his face, he pulled out the information on his phone and slammed it down on the table. The collision of the back cover of the phone against the marble countertop produced a loud crash that echoed clearly inside the house.

As Courtney looked at the content in the photo, her expression slowly changed.

“Did you do a background check on me?”

All her information in America, including her marriage history, was being presented before her. There was even a family picture with Elijah in it.

“If I hadn’t checked, I wouldn’t have known that you had such a deep love you were still holding onto till this day.” He had lost his sense of rationality as he ridiculed, “To you, being friends with a man means you can sleep around with him and even have children with him. You are so loyal to your friends.”

“Alexander Duncan, what are you saying?” Her face grew pale. She did not dare to believe the foul words she had just heard.

“Can’t you understand what I’m saying? Wasn’t that man the ex-husband you always talked about? No wonder you never told me anything. I thought you were hurt because of your failed marriage, but it turns out I was the one who got fooled by you two!”

His loud voice reverberated inside the house.

“That’s not the case at all!” she stressed. “Can’t you hear me out? Even though Elijah and I got married, nothing happened between us. We’re just...”

“Just what?”

“I only did it to get a green card so Tina and I could settle in America,” she pressed. Despite being angry, she tried to explain clearly to stop his misunderstanding from getting any bigger.

He let out a scornful laugh and had a look of disdain in his eyes. “You went to that extent for a green card. Is there anything you can’t do?”

“You don’t believe me?” Seeing the expression on his face, her limbs started to go cold.

He took a deep breath as though he was trying to control his rage. “Didn’t you write a draft before you lied to my face? Don’t you think there are too many loopholes here? You’re just friends with Elijah, and you only did it for the green card. Who is Tina’s father then? How many men have you married already?”

A chill entered her bones and slowly seeped into every part of her body.

She shut her eyes. The anger she had tried hard to suppress was now boiling in her chest.

Who is Tina’s father? How dare you ask me that question?

A raging storm was taking place inside of her. Alexander never found out, and it only made her more miserable. The frustrations that had built up all these years were let out in seconds as she loosened her clenched fist and raised her hand.

That slap was supposed to land on his face, but his reaction was much quicker. He grasped her wrist with one hand, gripping her so hard that she yelped in pain. It almost felt as though her wrist was about to shatter.

“Are you that angry and ashamed just because this fact was exposed?” He scoffed. “Here I thought you were quite capable, but it looks like you don’t know how to talk your way out of your lies anymore.”

“Alexander, you b*stard!” The harder she struggled to free her hand, the tighter his grip became.

“Aren’t you able to do anything for your own benefits—even give birth to a child?” He pulled her in. “I’ll help you increase Citron Apparel’s market share. Have my child too. How about that?”

“Get out of my house!”

Furious, she used her other hand to hit his chest frantically.

But it all seemed like a hopeless battle.

Alexander was provoked by her aversion and resistance. Gripping her wrist unsympathetically, he dragged her out of the kitchen like a mop and threw her onto the couch in the living room.

“Let me go, Alexander. You b*stard!”

She yelled out all the curse words she could think of at him.

All she did, however, was make him even more infuriated. Sitting on her waist to pin her down on the couch, he used one hand to pull her hands up above her head and put some strength in the other to rip off her blouse. Her buttons popped off and fell all over the ground.

During her struggle, she kicked over a standing lamp next to the couch, causing the lamp to shatter. The incandescent light above her head made a few short flickering sounds before the whole living room turned into darkness.

Alexander hesitated for a moment then felt a sudden pain coming from his lower body.

“Ah...” he groaned and fell on the couch. “Courtney, you...”

In a panicked state, she used all her strength to push him off and stumbled her way into the bedroom. She locked the room door and sat paralyzed behind it.

After a while, she heard him tap against the door.

“Come out, Courtney.”

A cold shiver rushed down her spine. With all her might, she screamed at the door, “Get out of my house! I don’t ever want to see you again!”

It became quiet outside.

She was not sure whether he had left yet or not. As the rage inside of her had nowhere to go, she started to shake all over. Unable to control her emotions, she reached for the phone next to her bed.

“911? I-I want to make a report.” She paused, then continued, “I’m at Four Seasons Garden, on the... on the 22nd floor. Someone is trying to rape me.”

Outside, Alexander had already left. When he saw Courtney run frantically into her bedroom to escape from him, he felt remorseful for showing this horrendous side of him to the woman he loved.

But he did not regret losing control of himself. He had never loved a woman as much as he loved her before, but she was keeping him in the dark with poorly made-up lies that failed to convince him.

A while later, the police blocked his Range Rover at a traffic light intersection.

“Mr. Duncan, someone alleged that you tried to rape them. Please come with us.”

The police took photos inside the room for evidence while a female officer was spending some time trying to appease Courtney in the bathroom.

“Miss Hunter, I need to ask you something. Are you and Mr. Duncan in a romantic relationship?”

With her brows furrowed together, Courtney gave a nod.

“This...” The female officer was in a tight spot. “This might not be easy to resolve. We will do our best to help you work this out, but you have to prepare yourself mentally.”

“There’s no need to work things out. I won’t see him again,” Courtney replied clearly.

Chapter 218 I Stand With People, Not With Reason

“Are you okay, sis?”

As soon as Shay got the call, he rushed over without even changing out of his attire. Dressed in a blue-sequin tuxedo, he showed up looking weary and with Casey following behind him.

The police already left her place. With an exhausted look on her face, she opened the door and let them in. "I'm okay."

While the two cups of hot tea on the coffee table were still bubbling, she briefly told them what had happened without going into detail. She simply said that her breakup with Alexander did not go smoothly and needed police intervention when he tried to harm her.

"I'll move in here." Shay pulled his brows in tightly. "I don't trust him. If he dares to step foot in here again, I will break his legs."

"You don't have to." Beside him, Casey spoke in a deep voice. "Alexander is not the type to stalk. Since he's already left, he won't come back again. If he really wants to get back at someone, he won't do it himself."

"Didn't he do this himself? Look at my sister's neck."

There was obvious bruising on her neck that Alexander had inflicted during the struggle. It could have been an accident or a moment when he lost control of his temper, but that was the most obvious bruise and evidence of his crime.

If Casey did not hold Shay back, Shay would have run to the police station to beat Alexander up.

"There is no need for that. I called you over because I had some other things to talk to you about."

"What is it?"

Courtney glanced at Casey.

Ever since he came into her place, he did not see himself as an outsider. Even now, he was sitting leisurely on the couch without taking a hint.

"I know how to keep secrets. I'm also Alexander's business rival. I don't think there's a need for you to keep me in the dark. I might even be able to help you."

When it came to having thick skin, no one could beat Casey at it.

Shay rolled his eyes at him. "It's between me and my sister, and not related to you. You can leave first. I'll be staying here tonight."

"No," Casey refused right away. It was clear that he had no intention of leaving anymore.

A frown appeared on Courtney's forehead. She was not in the mood to get in the middle of their quarrel.

"It's okay. I don't plan on concealing this secret any longer. Taking this chance, I will draw the line with him once and for all, and request for custody over Jordan again."

As for how the police were going to deal with Alexander this time, she did not have any demands. She only called the police so he would leave her place. After the police stopped by, the first thing she did was change the passcode at her front door.

It was not the first time. Whether there was a misunderstanding or not, she could not approve of his violent behavior. It did not matter how angry or confused he was; it did not justify forcing her against her wishes.

This time, she would not forgive him again.

“Yes, you should draw the line with him. But, custody... What custody?” Dumbfounded, Shay assumed that Courtney was not thinking straight because of her anger. He started carefully, “Sis, even if you love Alexander’s son, you can’t get custody over someone else’s child.”

“Jordan is my son.”

With a grim look on her face, she had her fist clenched so tightly that her nails were almost tearing into her skin.

From her expression, it did not look like she was joking.

Besides Shay, even Casey who was usually calm and composed was shocked by the news.

No one would have imagined that the mother to Alexander’s little prince, that no one in the city could identify, was Courtney.

Shay walked out of Courtney’s place with a serious expression.

Getting in the car, he looked at Casey in the driver seat and urged, “You can’t tell anyone about my sister.”

Casey rested his slender fingers on the steering wheel. Between his fingers, a logo of a galloping horse in a shield reflected on his serious and steady face. “I don’t have that much time to waste. Didn’t she say so herself? This will not be a secret for much longer.”

At the mention of that, Shay grew even more serious. “Alexander’s son is so important to him. He won’t give him up to my sister that easily. When the time comes, he will make use of all his connections. I’m worried my sister will lose Tina in the end, too.”

“I find it more interesting how Alexander didn’t even know who the woman beside him was before he slept with her six years ago.”

“Shut up.” Shay rolled his eyes. “I thought you were going to help. Now that you know about it, what do you plan to do?”

“I can help.” Casey glanced at him. “But you still have to give me a reason. Oh, that’s right. I stand with people, not with reason.”

Shay furrowed his brows together and fell silent. When he understood what Casey meant, mixed reactions spread across his face.

“Do you want to die, Casey?”

Ever since he got tangled up with Casey, Casey had become impossible to shake off and wanted to intervene in everything. Indeed, he did help Shay straighten out a number of matters, but the price of

that was constantly being taken advantage of with words. He said anything he wanted without even thinking through it first.

“I’m not in the mood for jokes. Just take me home for now.”

“Sit tight.”

When Casey stepped on the gas pedal, the engine roared to life, attracting the attention of pedestrians on the streets. The streamlined car looked like a rocket as it quickly made it onto the high-speed beltway.

The night was restless with all the secrets that it knew. Currently, the whole city was stuck amid the misty rain. Thunderstorms continued to sweep the streets as if they wanted to erase the traces of the past and start over.

At daybreak, sunlight seeped through.

Outside the police station, a car screeched to an abrupt stop. A young man in a suit and leather shoes got out of a white sedan swiftly and ran off with a sense of urgency. When he stepped inside the station, he grabbed ahold of a female officer and demanded, “Where’s Alexander?”

The female officer shot him a glance before sticking her mouth out in the direction of the detention room. She snapped, “There. He’s been waiting all night for his family to pick him up. Why are you only here now?”

“My apologies. My phone ran out of battery and was switched off last night.”

Josh was sweating buckets. He had always been cautious and conscientious in his work. Last night, it just so happened that his phone ran out of battery and had been switched off. When he woke up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom, he looked at his phone out of habit and realized that he had gotten a call from the police station when his phone was turned off. He broke out into a cold sweat right away.

His boss had spent almost the whole night at the police station and called him several times but he did not pick up. Wasn’t he just asking to be fired? He still had to make money to buy a house in Melrose City and get a wife!

After the police asked Josh a few simple questions about his relationship with Alexander, they let him in to talk to Alexander.

“What do you mean? Are you saying I still can’t take him back yet?”

“Of course not. Do you think he will be let off that easily after a rape allegation?” The female officer was quite irritated. “This isn’t so simple. We’ve submitted a report to the higher-ups with all the evidence against the accused. He needs to be held in custody for now. We will have to wait until tomorrow morning to see whether the victim is ready to present evidence for a lawsuit.”

“How is that possible? Miss Hunter is President Duncan’s girlfriend. They’re going to get married soon. It was just a lovers’ quarrel. It’s not what you think...”

“Really?” The female officer closed the record book in her hands and looked at him. “But the accused himself has denied being in a relationship with the victim.”

Chapter 219 Why Did You Have to Kill Dad?

“What?” Josh could not believe his ears.

“The victim admitted to their relationship, but strangely, the accused denied it. If you don’t believe me, you can ask him yourself.”

As she said that, she also had a troubled expression on her face.

After working at the police station for so long, though, she had met all kinds of people before and was not surprised by anything unusual anymore.

The visitation time was not long. When Josh entered the detention room and saw Alexander, he was filled with anger but he still maintained his composure. “President Duncan, I will find a way to handle this matter. I’ve contacted your lawyer; he’s on his way here now.”

“Okay.” Alexander gave a sullen nod.

“You and Miss Hunter just had a fight. Why are you holding a grudge? Why on earth did you deny—”

Before he finished talking, Alexander’s overwhelming gaze fell on him and made him freeze on the spot.

A boss would always remain a boss. Talking behind his back already felt disconcerting, let alone to his face.

Josh felt like his back was already drenched in cold sweat.

But Alexander simply looked at him and instructed, “Make sure my lawyer doesn’t say anything. Don’t let Old Master Duncan hear about this. As for my detainment here, look for Gale. He will find a way.”

It seemed as though Josh had found his savior. He nodded his head hurriedly. “I’ll get right on it.”

“Hold on.”

“Is there anything else you need me to do?”

“Do a background check on that man called Elijah and see what he’s been up to since he returned to the country.”

Josh hesitated. “Will do.”

Regardless of what he says, isn’t it clear that he still can’t let Miss Hunter go?

It felt like troubled times had arrived at Melrose City. That same night, restlessness still took over the minds of people.

At the Hunter Mansion, the nanny heard the doorbell and went to open the door impatiently. As soon as she did, a heavy stench of alcohol greeted her, making her pinch her nose. “Miss Hunter...”

Nonetheless, she was not surprised by the sight before her. She yelled for the housekeepers on duty and had them carry Anna to the couch.

The person who sent Anna home was the bartender. It was already the third time this week. Just like before, the nanny gave him two hundred and sent him away. "If Anna goes to the bar again tomorrow, don't let her drink this much again. What do we do if something happens to her? Our young lady will be wedded soon."

The bartender kept nodding. "Don't worry. Even if Miss Hunter gets drunk, I will make sure to get her back safely."

Wouldn't he be a fool if he didn't take advantage of this easy money?

As soon as the nanny sent him off, she heard the sound of someone throwing up in the living room followed by the shocked cries of the other housekeepers. It did not take much to figure out the unsightly situation that was taking place inside.

"Why are you shrieking instead of cleaning up this mess? Go get some hot water. You go make some hangover soup, and you go to the storage room to get a new carpet."

While they were all busy moving around, an exasperated voice came from upstairs, "Anna! What happened to you? Why did you drink so much again?"

Susan pattered down the stairs. Seeing the vomit on the couch, she grimaced and became even more agitated. "Aren't you ashamed of turning yourself into this mess? If your in-laws ever find out about this, you're done for. Do you still want to get married?"

Despite being very drunk, Anna had heard her mother scolding her very clearly. Staggering to stand up from the couch, she looked like she was crying and laughing at the same time. "I'm not getting married. You can get married and give me a stepdad. I don't mind!"

Slap! The clear sound resounded in the living room.

Susan's trembling hand was still in the air. "You must be out of your mind to say such absurd things."

Cradling her face, Anna was somewhat sober now, but she was even more persistent. "Hit me all you want. I hope you end up killing me too. That way, I won't become an accomplice in murder. I won't lose sleep at night or see dad whenever I close my eyes."

A deathly silence fell inside the living room.

The housekeepers were glancing at one another.

Susan turned pale from the shock. Glaring at the housekeepers, she chided, "What are you all looking at? Is it that entertaining to watch Anna have a drunken fit? If word gets out about what happened today, you all better be prepared to pack up and get out of here."

After that, she dragged Anna along and staggered up the stairs.

Anna was flung onto the bed. Her long hair covered her face messily as she lay there motionlessly like a zombie.

“Have you lost it?” Susan was beside herself with anger. “Do you have any idea what you just said? Will you only be at peace once you send your mother to prison?”

“I’m not the one sending you to prison. It’s you, Mom; you’re sending me to hell.”

She pushed herself to sit up in bed and cried, “Didn’t you see? Dad left all his inheritance to us, but you still doubted him. Because of that unnecessary doubt, you poisoned him and ended up killing him.”

“Keep your mouth shut!”

Susan clenched her hands into fists. “All this should have been ours in the first place. Appointing us in his will just shows that he has a conscience. But if we let him live and ideas start filling his head, how do you know he won’t change his mind?”

“That’s not it!” Anna cupped her face in her hands and cried through a muffled voice, “It was your greed. You wanted to have everything, so you killed someone. You killed Dad.”

As Susan closed her eyes, welled-up tears fell from the corners of her eyes. It was an undeniable sense of remorse.

If she had known that Lucian would do that for them, why did she have to commit such a treacherous act? Since things had come to this point, however, she could only live on shamelessly.

“Anna, listen to me; that is in the past now. It cannot be undone. You can’t keep thinking about it anymore. Your father passed away from an illness. It has nothing to do with us.” She sat down on the edge of the bed and held Anna in her arms. “Tomorrow is the day you take on the role as president of the company. You should be happy. I’ve been looking forward to this for so many years, and it’s finally happening now. Isn’t that right?”

Anna continued to shake her head helplessly and sob.

Ever since she found out that her father had left the majority of his inheritance to her and her mother in his will, she could not turn a blind eye to her mother’s past actions anymore.

Every night, whenever she closed her eyes, she would see her father’s loving glance, but he eventually turned into a vicious devil and grabbed her throat.

“My dear daughter, I was so good to you. Why did you have to kill me?”

“No! No! It wasn’t me, Dad!”

After having nightmares all night long, she woke up drenched in cold sweat. The time and date were indicated on the electronic calendar by her bedside. She stared at it for a moment, then remembered that it was the day she would succeed the role of president at the company. They were going to announce the shareholding and have the board of directors elect the president through votes.

“Anna, are you awake? Hurry up.”

Her mother was pestering her from outside the door. The unconcealed excitement in her voice made Anna’s stomach churn with an overwhelming feeling of nausea.

Chapter 220 The Real Cause Of Death

"I'm coming," she answered in low spirits, then dragged her tired body into the bathroom to wash up.

There was a lot of work to do at the company. Before she took over this position, she had no idea that her father had to deal with so many things each day. She had only experienced it for a few days and was already at her limit.

At the thought of the referendum during the board meeting today, she felt even more disconcerted.

It was evident that her father had left that position for her a long time ago. Due to her mother's intervention, however, it felt like she had stolen it, and it constantly put her on edge.

It finally stopped raining. Early in the morning, Courtney invited her late father's personal lawyer, Jeremy, out for a cup of coffee.

Jeremy was an old friend of her father's. He was quite reputable among lawyers in Melrose City. Even though he had always worked in defending business lawsuits, Courtney felt like he was a trustworthy person. Thus, she decided to consult him regarding her custody of Jordan.

To her surprise, Jeremy handed her an insurance policy before she even began speaking.

"Mr. Hunter bought this insurance in Hong Kong when he was still alive. It has already been paid for five years. You're the beneficiary, Miss Hunter."

She was taken aback to see the huge title at the top of the insurance policy that read, 'Critical Illness Insurance'.

"Why did my dad..." What prompted him to buy this insurance policy?

After all, who would anticipate their own death from developing a critical illness?

Jeremy grew serious. "He bought this insurance very early on. It was probably the year before you went abroad, Miss Hunter. Mr. Hunter was still very healthy at the time and even had a health certificate from the hospital. To be honest, I didn't exactly know how he thought of buying this insurance back then either, but looking at things now, he was truly a man of foresight."

"What do you mean?"

"Previously, while Mr. Hunter was admitted to the hospital, I kept helping him revise his will and sort out the issue with property ownership. After looking into it, I would say that I have a clear understanding of 90%, if not 100%, of the financial situation at Hunter Group. Haven't you ever wondered why your father did not leave anything for you, Miss Hunter?"

She seemed to have picked up on something. "What's wrong with the company?"

"There's not much of it left. Mr. Hunter has gradually been yielding his power over the years. The subsidiary company had an internal strife that resulted in a huge deficit. On the surface, the Hunter Family has a lot of real estate, but there was not one that wasn't mortgaged to the bank. Every year, they only fell into more debt. The company is already having difficulties operating."

"How did this happen?" Courtney was astounded. "My dad never told me any of this."

“Mr. Hunter knows you have no intention of succeeding the company, and he doesn’t want you to get involved in these muddy waters either. He already made all the arrangements for the succession of the company before his passing.”

“Arrangements?” She did not comprehend. “What arrangements?”

In the middle of their conversation, the LCD television hanging on the wall of the café suddenly broadcasted the latest social news.

“It’s ten in the morning in Kyoto. Twenty minutes ago, the city headquarters of a family business corporation was suddenly shut down by the court and is undergoing a police investigation. The board members of the company are in a dispute. Miss Hunter, the newly appointed female president of the company, unfortunately, fell off the building and was pronounced dead on the spot. Amid this chaos, the Vice President, Madam Yves, has gone missing.”

Crash! Courtney’s hand trembled and lost grip of the coffee mug, spilling coffee all over herself.

The waitress quickly rushed over to clean up, but Courtney was still fixated on the television screen. She was shocked, bewildered, and perplexed.

A while later, she heard the waitress apologize to her, and slowly pulled her focus back. “It’s okay. I’ll clean this up myself.”

Sitting back down in a befuddled state, she asked, “What is going on with the company, Mr. Morrison?”

Jeremy did not spare a glance at the television and had a calm expression. “If my guess is right, someone reported the Hunter Group for tax evasion. They are facing a huge fine and need someone to step up to take responsibility. With that amount of money, it’s not possible to avoid jail time.”

“Someone reported them?” Courtney looked dazed. “Who?”

Jeremy looked at her meaningfully then revealed, “Your father.”

Everything was planned from the start; everything was planned perfectly.

After spending so many years in business, Lucian’s brain was not just for show. He knew exactly how each person in his life treated him. Even toward the end of his life, he still feigned ignorance just for this last fight that no one saw coming.

Speaking about being ruthless, his tactics were still the worst. He did not give any leeway.

Courtney thought it was funny.

In a marriage where they both only schemed against each other, Lucian had even left a big trap for her in his will after death. He did not show mercy to his own wife and daughter. In contrast, Courtney once believed that her father was a kind-hearted man.

Among people who do business, none of them actually invest all their feelings into it. It’s only for show.

At noon, Jeremy left the café and walked a few hundred meters along the street before he swiftly got into a black Ferrari that was at the side of the road.

The rearview mirror reflected the warm gaze of the man sitting in the backseat. His tailored suit made him overflow with charisma.

“Did you talk to her?”

Jeremy nodded. “Following your orders, I only told Miss Hunter about the problems at the company, and the plot behind the will. I did not tell her that Mr. Hunter knew about Susan and Anna poisoning him.”

“Okay.” The man let out a sigh. “My assistant will work out the remuneration with you accordingly.”

Jeremy grinned. “Don’t worry about that. I’ve received my remuneration from Mr. Hunter. He doesn’t want Miss Hunter to know too much, either. He only hopes that once she gets the insurance money, she’ll be able to live a smooth and steady life. In a way, he’s making up for what he owes her. In any case, my job ends here.”

With a nod, the car slowly pulled up to the side. After Jeremy got off, the car went back into the flow of traffic.

“I don’t understand, Eli. Why can’t we tell Hunter the truth? Doesn’t she have the right to know about her father’s real cause of death?”

“Courtney isn’t someone who likes to dig into the cause and effect of an issue that can’t be changed. Telling her about this will only add to her stress. Seeing that Lucian deliberately hid it from her, I’m sure it’s not for the sole reason of keeping her out of misery.”

The way he spoke poured out naturally like the spring water in the mountains that aren’t too rushed or too slow; it was easy on the ears.

“What else could there be?” Lilian could not understand.

“The company.” He shot her a glance. “Lucian is using this method to tell Courtney that he knows about everything and that she doesn’t need to do anything else. He even misled her to think that he had intentionally left a company in ruins as a ticking time bomb to get back at Susan and Anna. He doesn’t want her to be trapped by family bonds and be tied up in company matters.”

Moreover, the truth was that the Hunter Group had gone past the point of recovery a long time ago; it could not be saved anymore. The tax evasion issue was the last straw.

“Keeping her in the dark would be for the best. She’s been too stressed out lately. I will handle these miscellaneous things for her.”

Gazing out the window, Elijah’s usually gentle eyes grew more profound.