

Surprise 291

Chapter 291 Nobody's Getting Away

It wasn't the first time that James wanted to acquire the Hunter Group. Ever since he became the president of Sunhill Enterprise, he had been constantly thinking about this.

Since he was a kid, he had been rivals with Alexander and had always wanted to defeat him. For the past three years, although James endured a lot of humiliation just to make a comeback, he couldn't help but admire Alexander's capabilities. The core of Sunhill Enterprise's culture was essentially due to Alexander's achievements, so if he really wanted his roots in the company, there was still a long way to go.

This was why the acquisition of an up-and-coming middle-sized enterprise could be an important springboard for his career.

One of the reasons he had his eyes on the Hunter Group was because Alexander was working for them. Another reason was because there had not been a worthy successor ever since Lucian's death. James did not believe that Courtney alone could bring the company back to life.

"President Duncan, the location and the time for tonight's dinner has been set. It'll start at seven." The secretary with a nice figure spoke in a sweet voice as she stood next to James' desk.

At the moment, James was relaxed in his chair while his right hand turned the wedding ring on his left. The corners of his eyes tilted and a gentle yet menacing smile appeared on his face.

"Also, I've informed Miss Price about it. She said that she'll be there tonight."

James nodded his head in satisfaction. "Good."

Tonight's dinner was hosted by Mr. Vinsmoke of the Sakura Group.

Alexander was called back to the Duncans' ancestral home by Scott, so Courtney attended the dinner alone.

"Long time no see, President Hunter. You've become even more beautiful." Listening to Mr. Vinsmoke's polite remarks, Courtney nodded her head in response. From the corner of her eye, she saw two familiar figures sitting in the private room. "To make things more lively, President Duncan also brought a friend along. You don't mind that, do you?"

"Of course not. After all, we are all friends." Courtney smiled faintly as she looked at the 'friend'.

"President Duncan really is popular; even the famous Miss Price is willing to accompany him here."

Suddenly, Britney's expression changed slightly but she regained her composure quickly. "President Hunter, if you are still discontented with me because of the past, then I'll just leave so as to avoid everyone from feeling uneasy during the meal," she murmured.

"What's going on? President Hunter, have you met Miss Price before?" Mr. Vinsmoke seemed lost.

Courtney smiled. “We know each other, but not that well. I don’t quite understand what Miss Price is referring to. There has been so much going on that I can’t really remember things that happened in the past.”

Anyone knew what words to say at this sort of occasion but deep inside, it was a whole other story.

Everyone in the same circle knew that James and Britney’s relationship was not ordinary but because James had a wife, everyone was being subtle about it. However, Courtney was surprised to see that James would bring Britney out for a meal so openly without fearing that it would backfire on him.

Besides James, there were also representatives from the Sakura Group and the Hunter Group. On the surface, they were here as a premature celebration of their collaboration but the truth was, Mr. Vinsmoke was obviously introducing them to James.

Even after a few rounds of wine, no one mentioned the acquisition. Alexander called, so Courtney went to the washroom as an excuse to avoid drinking more alcohol.

Everyone teased her, especially Mr. Vinsmoke. “Is it from Young Master Alexander? I can see that something good is headed your way, President Hunter. I assume that we’ll all be receiving an invitation very soon, yes?”

Courtney smiled as she walked away. “Of course.”

The moment she answered the call in the washroom, Alexander’s voice came from the other end. “Did they trouble you?”

“No; they don’t dare to. I’m not some junior salesperson out to talk business.” Courtney leaned on the side of the wash basin. “James brought someone along with him though. Can you guess who it is?”

“Who?”

“Your old partner,” Courtney deliberately said, a sly look on her face.

There was silence on the other end. “Who?”

“How many old partners do you have? Who else can it be?” Failing to tease him, Courtney felt angry instead. “It’s Britney. They came here openly while holding hands. Is this how you men behave after getting married, having one woman at home and another outside?”

“Is that so?” Alexander seemed a little confused. “Most seem to have more than one outside.”

Suddenly, Courtney’s voice deepened. “What?”

There was laughter on the other end. “I, on the other hand, only have one.”

His words finally extinguished the tiny rage that was burning inside her. Just as they were chatting, she could hear footsteps coming from outside.

“I can’t talk to you right now. I think someone is coming. We can talk later on once I get home.”

“Alright. Tonight, I’ll come pick—”

Before he could utter the word ‘you’, Courtney hung up the phone.

The footsteps coming from outside was the crisp sound of high heels clacking on the floor. Courtney lifted her head while washing her hands and she could see a familiar figure behind her.

The reason Courtney was familiar with this woman was because she constantly followed Alexander everywhere in the past and recently, she was always seen at cocktail parties.

As a celebrity in the entertainment industry, she must have had a really broad network for her to have such a good relationship with these elite talents, which explained why she was able to attend this many business parties.

The moment their eyes met through the mirror, Courtney smiled faintly while nodding her head slightly in greeting. Then, she minded her own business and took a piece of tissue paper to wipe her hands.

“You don’t seem happy to see me.” Britney’s voice that came from behind her seemed a bit bitter.

Courtney turned around and threw the tissue paper into the trash can. “There’s nothing to be unhappy about. You are not that important to me.”

Britney chuckled as she lowered her head to look at her bright red nails.

Courtney had already taken a step and was planning to leave but the moment she heard Britney’s laughter, she turned around and frowned. “What are you laughing at?”

“Looks like it has come full circle.”

“What do you mean?”

“Stop asking the obvious. Do you really want me to make myself clear?” Britney’s eyes darkened. “Did you realize that ever since you and Alexander were together, his life has been going downhill? When you first approached him with purpose, you didn’t expect all of this to happen, right?”

Courtney could understand the sarcasm in Britney’s words but she was confused by the meaning of the phrase ‘with purpose’. Hence, Courtney simply assumed that Britney was flaunting herself after climbing the social ladder.

“No one is certain how this will end, so don’t speak too early,” Courtney commented. “You think that you achieved all of this fairly? You are only using others to get what you want.” She glanced at Britney coldly, not bothering to hide the disdain in her eyes.

When Britney pursued Alexander back then, she didn’t think that she was doing anything wrong, but being someone else’s mistress was downright unethical.

“What right do you have to say that I...” Britney’s expression darkened. “If it weren’t for you, Alexander and I would have been married long ago and I could have become the official Mrs. Duncan.”

However, Courtney wasn’t in the mood to explain things to Britney, so she left the washroom straight away.

When I confirmed my relationship with Alexander, the two of them had already broken up.

Then, a sharp voice was heard from behind. “Just you wait and see—what you owe me, I’ll take it all back one way or another. Nobody’s getting off the hook so easily.”

Chapter 292 I Didn't Promise Him

Britney's voice sounded like a high pitch screech to Courtney's ears. The moment she heard it, she furrowed her eyes and kept on walking without arguing with her.

In Courtney's eyes, a person like Britney who pushed the blame right after a break up would only end up hurting herself and others.

Tonight's dinner was surprisingly successful and James didn't use the chance to discuss the acquisition.

At around nine o'clock, everyone at the table proposed to change the venue. Looking at the eyes of the men when their wine glasses clinked, Courtney could easily guess where they were headed to, so she said casually, "I won't be following you all. It's late now; I still need to go home and put the kids to sleep."

"I'll send President Hunter home," James immediately offered.

Tonight, everyone at the table were all drunk but James' mind seemed to be quite clear by comparison. Courtney looked at the wine glass in front of him suspiciously but she couldn't find anything wrong.

"No need for that." She glanced at him. "President Duncan, it's more important for you to send Miss Price home safely. I have my own driver."

"President Hunter, didn't your driver just ask for leave because he has something to deal with?" James stared at her. Even though he said it with a smile, Courtney still felt uncomfortable. "Are you worried because of me? I'm afraid you're overthinking it because I'm not going with you; I'll let my driver send you back. I still need to accompany Mr. Vinsmoke and others for the next round."

He even knows that my driver has left for tonight. Courtney furrowed her brows as she looked at everyone around the table. If I show that I'm on bad terms with James, I'll definitely lose a lot of potential clients here.

After weighing the pros and cons, she finally agreed with him.

Immediately, James smiled as he pushed his glasses up his nose and he announced, "Mr. Vinsmoke, why don't we send President Hunter to the entrance? After all, she is the only woman here tonight so we need to make sure that she leaves safely, yes?"

"Yes, of course."

Everyone quickly agreed. At the moment, they were all a bunch of drunks and even the two middle-level managers that Courtney brought along were now nodding their heads in confusion. As for Natasha, she was furious at the situation and she kept on winking at Courtney.

Although James was letting his driver send her home, who knew where the driver would send her seeing that the relationship between the two companies was so awkward at the moment?

This isn't safe; he can't be trusted at all.

And so, James and Courtney arrived at the hotel's entrance surrounded by a bunch of drunks. James' driver had already driven the deep blue Porsche over. In a very gentlemanly manner, James went up to open the car door for Courtney.

"President Hunter, time to get in the car."

While carrying her bag, Courtney suddenly smiled faintly when she saw the person sitting in the car. "I think you should be the one getting in, President Duncan."

"President Hunter, don't tell me you are suddenly backing out. In business, we can't have people whose words are unreliable—"

"I don't think what you say is reliable either."

A high pitched voice came from the car, cutting James off. Instantly, Britney's face turned pale as she stood behind Courtney.

A pair of burgundy high heels with black soles appeared, followed by a well-maintained woman who got out of the car. Immediately, she slammed the Hermes bag in her hand right at James' face before yelling, "James, do you have no shame? How many times have I warned you to stay away from this sl*t? Do you think you are very smart? How dare you bring her to parties with you? Do you still see me as your wife?"

James' face turned pale and embarrassed as he grabbed hold of his wife's Hermes bag. "Why are you here?" he asked in a panic.

"It doesn't matter why I'm here. What matters the most is why this sl*t is here."

The woman pointed her fingers at the person beside Courtney. The moment she laid eyes on Britney, her eyes were suddenly raging with flames as she pounced right at her.

Throughout the night, only Britney's scream was heard as she was pulled by her hair.

"You sl*t! If I don't tear your face off today, are you going to seduce my man again? Looks like I'll have to tear off all your clothes so that you can seduce everyone on the street!"

"Are you crazy?" Britney shouted as she struggled hard. "We didn't do anything. Let me go!"

"You think I believe you?"

Amidst the chaos, Courtney stood among the crowd. Naturally, the drunks surrounding them couldn't help but laugh out because they drank too much just now; at the moment, they kept on laughing as if they were watching a show.

What a huge embarrassment this is, James thought to himself. Meanwhile, he ordered his driver and assistant with a dark expression, "What are you waiting for? Hurry up and stop my wife immediately!"

Just when Courtney was enjoying the show, a hand reached out from the side and grabbed her wrist. Before she even got the chance to scream, she was pulled away from the crowd.

"Who are—Alexander?"

Courtney took a few steps before she could make out that it was Alexander pulling her along. Before the panicked expression on her face disappeared completely, happiness started to shine through.

After standing still, she laughed. "When did you arrive? Why did you pull me and run?"

At the moment, Alexander was dressed casually in a camel coat, which looked really refreshing. With a joyful spark in his eyes, he gazed at her before approaching her to take a whiff. "How much did you drink?"

"Only half a glass." The light in Courtney's eyes flickered as she whispered, "Natasha took care of the rest for me. That girl can really drink; she can even walk straight after so many rounds."

Alexander removed the grey wool scarf from his neck and wrapped it around her. "You need to give her a raise after you go back," he said in an indulgent tone. After that, he took Courtney's hand and put it into his pocket naturally before walking with her on the side of the road. "Let's walk back home. It'll sober you up."

Courtney followed along and she smiled. "I only drank half a glass; there's no need for me to sober up. As for you, did you call James' wife to come over here?"

"How did you know?"

"I didn't know in advance that Britney was coming and James definitely wouldn't tell others about it. He must have been very secretive about it but suddenly, his wife appeared. Come to think of it, I guess you heard me bringing it up when I called you in the washroom."

Alexander didn't deny her statement but the sudden playfulness in his eyes explained everything.

He didn't like to butt into other people's business and he didn't care how many women James had outside, but he felt that James wouldn't allow Courtney to leave safely from today's dinner.

Lately, Sunhill Enterprise has been pushing the Hunter Group tightly to a corner, which is pretty obvious from the financial aspect. It's better to take a pre-emptive strike than to stand in the enemy's way.

"What did you talk about with your grandfather?" Courtney changed the subject.

"The same old thing. He asked me to come back to the enterprise."

"What about James?"

"Grandpa said that as long as I decide to go back, he'll kick him out and this time, he won't let him return ever again."

"What did you say?"

From Alexander's calm expression, she could tell that he didn't promise his grandfather. Truth was, she was always curious as to why.

"I didn't promise him."

As expected.

Alexander squeezed her hand as he put it deeper in his pocket. Only his deep voice could be heard in the night. "Since we are letting him go, we need to eliminate him completely."

Chapter 293 Subtle

Looking at the side of Alexander's face, Courtney felt assured for some reason. "No matter what you decide, I'll always support you."

Alexander turned his head and gazed at her before reaching out to adjust her scarf. Seeing the once thin figure—who was a head shorter than him—getting more plump in recent days, the corners of his eyes crinkled slightly.

Courtney didn't know what he was smiling at, so she asked, "Is it because I look good in this scarf?"

"Yes." Alexander went against his will and nodded obediently.

Compared to lying about such trivial matters, he was more worried about her crying to lose weight after realizing that she had gotten chubby.

By then, she may lose her touch.

"Why don't we take a look around?"

Courtney blinked while the electronic screen of the mall behind her broadcasted an advertisement for a Christmas limited-edition skin care product.

The hotel, where they had dinner that night, was located in the liveliest place at the city center.

In just a few steps, the two of them reached the streets of the shopping square. Christmas was still a month away but the shops had already hung up all their decorations.

Looking at the lively atmosphere, Alexander had never felt so excited as he held tight to Courtney's hands. Then, they went through the crowd of white-collar men and women, most of whom only had time to come out at night, before entering the building.

"It's been so cold recently. I want to buy a hat but once I wear it, I can't take it off because my hair will be disastrous," Courtney kept on rambling while they strolled around.

Before they reached the fashion section, she was suddenly distracted by the kids' section. She pulled Alexander along to help pick out things and very soon, the shopping cart was filled with lots of items.

"This yellow hat will look good on Jordan. I'll buy another red one for Tina."

While pushing the shopping cart, Alexander chimed in, "Should you get another green one to make a traffic light?"

Courtney stared at him and asked confusedly, "Are you going to wear it?"

For a moment, Alexander was startled and a kaleidoscope of expressions flashed across his face. In the end, he reluctantly said, "Forget it."

Although he liked the things that Courtney bought for him, he really didn't have the courage to go out wearing a green hat.

"There really is a green one; do you want to try it?" Courtney exclaimed. She pulled out a traditionally green woolen hat from a pile of parent-child hats and she tried to put it on his head.

However, Alexander had a height advantage, so he straightened his back slightly and pushed her hand away. There was nothing she could do.

Later on in the middle of the night, the sound of a woman smashing things could be heard from the first floor living room of a three-story villa hidden in the woods, which was located in the middle of General Mountain at the west of Melrose City.

"Don't touch me!"

Britney sat on the couch with a furious expression as she held an ice pack to her face with one hand. Beside her, pieces of broken porcelain were scattered all around the floor. The ancient stamp was still intact on the bottom of the bowl, which showed that this piece of porcelain alone was really valuable.

"Alright. I won't touch you." James stood a certain distance away from the couch but the two obvious nail scratches on his face were exceptionally frightening. "No one could have expected this today. I'll change my assistant tomorrow; it'll stop these talkative people from telling everyone about us."

Britney grunted. "I'm afraid it isn't their fault. The moment you asked the driver to send Courtney home, that crazy woman of yours suddenly jumped out of the car and started biting like a mad dog. If you can't see through this situation clearly, do you really think you are a match against Alexander?"

James furrowed his brows as he suddenly realized. "Courtney tricked me?"

"I've told you that she isn't the same as those silly girls you met before. During dinner, she laughed a lot but she only drank a little wine, and she did it quite subtly too."

"That b*tch!"

"I've told you that if you want to acquire the Hunter Group to strengthen your position, it's basically impossible for you to woo her over to your side. She is an obstacle—if she no longer exists, you may have the chance to acquire the company."

"Are you saying—" James looked toward the couch as he made a cut throat gesture. "—that I should kill her first?"

"That'll be too kind to her." Britney grunted coldly as she flung the ice bag at the coffee table. "Courtney is a very proud person. Since she doesn't want to admit to that incident six years ago, we'll just have to use the same tricks. By the time we expose her, I don't think she'll dare to show her face in Melrose City ever again. Even if she has thick skin, I don't believe that Alexander would still want her."

At this point, James finally understood what Britney was implying. "So you plan to use me to remove this thorn in your side?"

"I can't deny my selfish motives but it won't do any harm to you at all."

“Oh?” James sneered. “Pray tell.”

Britney stood up from the couch and stepped barefoot on the carpet. Her burgundy satin pajamas were extraordinarily glamorous. Swinging her hips as she took two steps, the ribbons on her shoulder slid down. Although she had already applied an ice pack to her face, half of it was still covered in bruises. However, it couldn't conceal her seductive look one bit.

Just by standing there, it was enough to turn James' legs into jelly.

“The Hunter Group is now growing at a steady pace. Do you really think this is all down to Courtney alone? If she really is this capable, how could she not have a place in the Hunter Family since the beginning? It's all because of Alexander's network helping her. If you do things according to my plan, Alexander will break up with her and by then, she'll be all yours.”

There was a malicious light flickering in her eyes but James loved her this way. Usually, he would have pounced on her long ago but this time, he was making her wait instead.

“That sounds great. However, do you know how much risk I have to take to do this for nothing? What if Old Master Duncan finds out about this? Not only will I lose my hold on my position, I'm afraid that I'll be kicked out of the company straight away.”

“You won't gain anything without taking a little risk.” Seeing that he was still hesitant, Britney's eyes rolled as she took a step forward. “Ouch!”

After a scream, she suddenly fell onto the couch.

“What's wrong?” James furrowed his brow and focused all his attention on her.

Turned out her snowy white foot was pierced by bits and pieces of porcelain, causing streaks of blood to flow out. While biting her lips painfully, she lay down on the couch and resisted the pain with all her strength. She looked like a damsel in distress to James.

After taking a few steps toward her, he held her foot and looked at it for a while before saying in distress, “Don't move.” Then, he turned around and shouted, “Where's the maid? Tell her to bring some medicine over.”

“What medicine?” Britney suddenly wrapped her arms around his neck, her hot breath fanning his face as she murmured, “You are my medicine.”

With the beauty in his arms, James was already restless inside. Seeing that she was interested, he immediately carried her up and walked toward the second floor.

When the maid arrived with the medicine, there wasn't anyone left in the living room. Following the ambiguous voice of a man and woman coming from the second floor, she could see a bunch of clothes scattered across the stairs. From head to toe, not a scrap of clothing was left on their bodies.

One could still hear the sweet faint gasps of a woman coming from the bedroom on the second floor. “Ah... James. Now... Ah... Do you believe that what I said is for your own good?”

he hoarse voice of a man could be heard. “You are right, but now, let's see how Courtney deals with the trouble coming her way.”

Chapter 294 How Is a Week Possible?

The night faded as dawn approached.

The alarm beside the bed kept on ringing but even after Courtney reached her hand out from the blanket to turn it off, it just didn't seem to stop. She squinted and realized that it was still dark outside. Then, she turned toward the clock and realized that it was just past three in the morning.

Finally, she realized that it wasn't her alarm clock going off—it was her phone.

"President Hunter, something has happened to the warehouse."

Bill's voice echoed in her ears as Alexander drove her straight to the warehouse. The moment they arrived, all they saw was an ocean of flames in front of them. After the two fire trucks arrived, a huge hose with high water pressure was used to suppress the fire but it didn't work.

How can this happen?" Courtney saw Bill as soon as she got out of the car. Seeing the ashes on his face, it seemed as though he just escaped from the fire.

"At eight o'clock, I left after checking all the products. I asked Bobby and a few others to check the products again tonight. An hour ago, I received a call from Bobby saying the warehouse was on fire so I rushed over here. Right now, we can't figure out the cause of the fire but we are definitely not the ones responsible for it."

"Does it matter who is responsible for this?" Courtney held her forehead, feeling out of breath. Under the pressure, she started to speak carelessly. "There's only one week until the deadline to hand in the products. At first, I wanted to hand in the products today so that we won't have anymore problems, but you insisted on sending it to the warehouse first! I'm afraid it makes you look really suspicious."

Meanwhile, Bill's eyes were bloodshot. After getting embarrassingly yelled at in the face, he remained silent with his head down.

Even Alexander couldn't stand it anymore so he tugged at Courtney's sleeve. "Stay calm. The fire hasn't been put out yet so we still don't know what happened. It's useless to blame anyone. Now, we need to think of a solution."

"What solution do we have?"

She roared at Alexander in frustration before angrily kicking at a cardboard box beside her.

This is Citron's first order but there have been twists and turns from the very start. Finally, we managed to reach the end with just a small step away from completing it but then, the fire started. It's hard for me to believe that this isn't caused by someone.

At first, Courtney was worried that more problems might arise so she proposed to send out the finished products to the Sakura Group first, but Bill insisted on sending it all out at once, which ended in this mess.

After hearing the news, Natasha rushed over and exchanged looks with Alexander before splitting Courtney and Bill far apart so that they would have some space to calm down.

Although Bill remained silent, his current mood wouldn't be much better than Courtney's.

In his previous job, he quit the job in anger because the leaders didn't trust him and tried to put all the blame on him. Now, he was facing an almost similar situation, so no one could understand how complicated his emotions were right now.

"You need to calm down." Alexander pulled Courtney back to the car. Then, he took off his jacket to cover her shoulder. "The situation isn't as bad as you think."

"Isn't it bad enough?" She was now in a sorrowful state as she buried her head between her knees and murmured, "I think the situation is awful. I simply don't have the capabilities to run an entire enterprise. I should have just managed Citron properly in the first place instead of leaving everything to Bill. After all, he isn't some superhuman who can handle everything."

Looking at her right now, Alexander took a deep breath and said seriously, "Listen to me. There are now two solutions for this. One, we can spend some money to buy another's trust. We'll try to negotiate with the Sakura Group to extend the deadline for half a month but for this, we need to pay them a 50% compensation fee at the very least. Compared to this order, we still lose money."

"I'm afraid that even if we lose money, we still can't buy back their trust." Courtney clenched her fists. "James is just waiting for me to lose my money and credit so that he can acquire the company when it can't continue to operate."

"There's a second solution," Alexander explained to her unhurriedly with a calm expression. "We can use money to buy their trust. There's still a week left and Bill said that he only placed half the products here, which means that there is another half in the factory. We can think of a way to hire all the factories in Melrose City with a high price so that they can finish the rest of the products in one week."

"How can they finish it all in one week?"

"How can they not? It all depends on our effort." The moment Courtney saw Alexander's determined eyes, the frustration she originally had inside her gradually calmed down.

The fire went on for a whole night and when it was finally put out, dawn had arrived. Alexander took charge and stationed two people from the technical department at the scene to wait for more news while everyone else left.

Early in the morning, Courtney held an emergency meeting in the company. After that, she was so busy with sending people to Melrose City's major factories to talk about the order that she couldn't find the chance to speak to Bill even though she saw him a few times.

"Bill, President Hunter is just anxious. She doesn't actually blame you for this. You don't need to take it to heart." In the pantry, Natasha stood by Bill's side as she tried to comfort him carefully.

At the moment, his expression was so dark that there weren't any clear signs of emotions.

Just as he was about to leave, he could hear a conversation outside. "I think that the fire is probably caused by someone in the company. Isn't there a rumor lately saying that our company is being acquired by Sunhill Enterprise? President Hunter refused to sell, so they are now going against her."

"Someone in the company? Who is it? You better not talk nonsense."

"I think it's the first person who showed up at the scene last night."

As soon as the person finished his words, Natasha looked toward Bill nervously but she was held back by him when she tried to walk out.

"I don't think that's possible. Can it really be Mr. Dawson?" Sounds of a loud discussion came from outside.

"How is it not possible? Don't you guys know his background? In the past, he did a similar betrayal before so he quit his previous job. Otherwise, why didn't President Hunter treat him better even though he has been living in the company every day while working hard? She didn't even arrange a place for him to stay." The person speaking looked excited, as if he knew everything. "Don't you know about this? Bill sleeps in the company every day. The lounge in the design room is actually his home and it is no bigger than a matchbox. With this kind of treatment, he'll definitely run away if Sunhill Enterprise gives him a little more benefit."

"I'm afraid that Sunhill Enterprise can't even provide me with the treatment I want." Bill's voice was loud and filled with disdain as it came from the pantry. Suddenly, everyone felt a thump in their hearts and they flinched. "I'm staying in the company because I'm working on a design competition lately. As for President Hunter's bad treatment toward me, I'm quite curious about the treatment of all top designers in Melrose City at the moment."

He then looked at everyone one by one with his sharp eyes and said loudly, "Peony Mansion on Lotus Road is a villa given to me by President Hunter. You all can check out the price per square meter of the house by yourselves. I believe that Sunhill Enterprise can afford that, but I'm afraid that the current new president doesn't have the right to approve such a huge sum of money."

Suddenly, everyone went silent.

They all knew that Lotus Road was now a place in Melrose City where housing prices were off the roof because it housed many mansions that couldn't even be bought by money.

"Why are you all surrounding Bill?" A clear voice was heard from behind everyone. Courtney was wearing a dark green suede trench coat along with a white blouse and wide leg-pants, making her look imposing. As she stood straight, she said casually, "In my company, no one gets to live in a villa just by doing nothing and gossiping."

Chapter 295 The Person in Charge Is Gone

No one knew when Courtney appeared behind them. As soon as they heard her voice, everyone's faces turned pale in unison. For a moment, the atmosphere came to a deadlock but suddenly, someone quickly returned to their working position.

“Miss Lilly, I can give you the semi-annual plan for the second half of the year before getting off from work. I can also prepare the annual plan for next year before that.”

Thinking about Bill’s expensive villa, everyone dispersed and returned to their respective work stations quickly. Just like a spring, they sprung back to their usual work as fast as possible.

Standing beside Bill, Natasha looked at them in a daze.

This is probably the power of money! If your workers aren’t working hard enough, it means that you haven’t given them enough money.

After everyone was gone, Courtney and Bill were the only ones left as they stood not more than two meters away from each other. Therefore, it was inevitable for their eyes to meet.

“Are you free? I’ve made a new scented tea in my office. Do you want to try it?” Courtney looked at Bill calmly, as if she had forgotten her frustrations from last night.

Bill’s dark expression finally had traces of joy as he murmured, “Alright.”

Inside her office, the whole place was filled with the warm aroma of jasmine tea.

Courtney pushed the porcelain cup to Bill while she lowered her head down embarrassedly. “I apologize for what happened last night.”

For a moment, Bill was startled and his voice became gloomy. “No need for that. You were right, actually. It was my idea to ship the products to the warehouse first. If it weren’t for my insistence, we would have decreased the loss by half at the very least.”

“Someone is keeping an eye on us as they attack us. Even if you are able to protect one place, there’ll always be another place out of your reach.” Courtney’s words were filled with many implications.

Bill furrowed his brows as he knew what was going on without asking much. “This morning, the fire brigade told me that the fire was caused by the old electrical appliances in the warehouse, and the staff were away drinking at night.”

“We don’t have the time to investigate whether this was really a coincidence or not, but that doesn’t mean we’ll just leave it be. At the moment, we must contact as many factories as we can so that they can redo the entire order within half a month.”

The original deadline for the previous batch of products was a month. The factory head completed it about a week in advance by asking his staff to work day and night. After checking the shortage of products on hand, Courtney estimated the time for completion and realized that it would be difficult for them to finish it within a week; they needed half a month at the very least.

“But the deadline is next week.” Bill looked worried.

“I’ll talk to Mr. Vinsmoke about the delay and compensation.”

Bill pondered for a moment before announcing seriously, “No need for that. I’ll think of a way and I’ll complete the shipment in time.”

Courtney's brows furrowed. "Bill, the possibility is too small. Even if we ask all of the factories in Melrose City to stop what they are doing to complete our shipment, the possibility of them finishing everything within a week is almost zero."

"Even so, there's still a possibility that it will work." Bill stood up. "Leave this to me. I'll take full responsibility for this shipment."

With that, Bill left.

Courtney could see that he didn't touch the cup of tea in front of him at all, which made her frown even harder.

I can see that he is really anxious about this deep down but we can't afford to lose our cool, especially on this matter. He does not have any experience in this profit-driven world, so what plans does he have?

In the evening before the deadline of the shipment, Courtney brought her assistant, Natasha, to the Sakura Group to talk to Mr. Vinsmoke about the order.

However, the moment they arrived at the entrance of the group, they were blocked by a blue Porsche.

Just like lightning, the car swerved and parked between the entrance of the Sakura Group and Courtney's car. If Natasha wasn't quick enough to stop Courtney just in time, the consequences would be devastating.

"President Hunter, are you alright?" Natasha held onto Courtney's hand in fear.

"I'm fine."

As soon as Courtney lifted her head and saw the familiar car, she instantly knew who had arrived.

This is probably what they mean by enemies always crossing paths.

James got out of his car while wearing a black suit and coat, his eyes behind his glasses as hypocritical as usual.

"Long time no see, President Hunter."

Courtney grabbed Natasha's hand to stop her from arguing with him. Meanwhile, Courtney put on a faint smile as she looked at him. "President Duncan, your nose really is better than a bloodhound's. You showed up the moment I arrived. How extraordinary."

Listening to her, James' expression darkened slightly as he sneered, "President Hunter, rather than spending your time mocking me, why don't you focus on how to explain to Mr. Vinsmoke about the shipment's delay?"

"You don't need to worry about me, President Duncan."

After that, Courtney let go of Natasha's hand and straightened her clothes before walking into Sakura Group without a serious expression.

Standing at the entrance, James asked from behind Courtney, "If I were you, I would lower my pride at this moment. With my friendship with Mr. Vinsmoke, you can delay the shipment as long as you want."

Without looking back, Courtney walked straight into the elevator, as if she didn't hear what he said. Natasha followed close behind.

After the elevator door closed, Natasha asked, "President Hunter, even though we don't want to be involved with a person like James, shouldn't we adopt a more relaxed attitude at this time? The backstabbers are usually the hardest to deal with. What if he does one of his tricks behind our backs?"

"Do you really think he won't do that just because we show him a good attitude?" Courtney remained composed. "Otherwise, how do you think this fire started?"

Citron had just started operating so they didn't have their own warehouse, and Courtney didn't want Citron to have any relations with the Hunter Group. After all, it was her mother's company, so when Bill proposed to place the products in a warehouse for the time being, they temporarily rented a warehouse space at the west suburbs of Melrose City.

After the fire, the person in charge of the warehouse faced huge compensation because the space that Courtney rented wasn't the only place that caught fire. There were many other products nearby from other companies that were also destroyed too, so the person in charge turned tail.

During this period, Natasha had been following Bill to deal with the other factories, so she didn't know what Courtney was up to. After listening to Courtney's words, Natasha's expression turned to one of shock.

"He ran away? Then who will be responsible for this matter now?"

"The person in charge ran away, so the owner of the warehouse pushed the blame and chose to ignore it. James really has this planned meticulously."

Hearing that, Natasha was dumbfounded and she frowned.

She was a clever person. Since Courtney had already made her words clear, it would be stupid for Natasha to not understand.

That's why seeing James here today definitely won't lead to something good. No wonder the two of them were so tense at the entrance.

When they arrived at the door of Mr. Vinsmoke's office, his assistant knocked on the door and went in to inform him of their presence before letting Courtney inside.

"Mr. Vinsmoke."

Courtney sat down on the other side of his office desk. Across the huge desk, Mr. Vinsmoke had just put down his pen and a pile of processed documents.

"Today is the day you hand in the shipment, right? Thanks for taking the trouble to come here personally, President Hunter."

Before Courtney had the chance to speak, the door behind her opened and the assistant's reluctant voice was heard. "President Duncan, Mr. Vinsmoke is now discussing business with President Hunter. You can't go in—"

