

Surprise 321

Chapter 321 Believe and Protect Her

The contract for the transfer of the shares had been drafted, and James placed the two documents in front of her. "As long as you sign the documents, I'll pretend that I've never seen the photos and all of these never happened today."

The lounge fell into a long silence.

James had been wearing a slight smile the whole time as he looked at Courtney with contempt and sarcasm in his eyes, as if he had full control over the entire situation. This woman is nothing special after all.

After a long while, Courtney picked up the pen and put her signature at the signing page. She had to use the other hand to hold her wrist to stop her hand from trembling, as if the pen was as heavy as lead.

James took the two documents from her hands and quickly put down his own signature. After placing one of the documents on the table, he tapped on it twice. "I'll transfer the money to your account after I sort out the cash flow. You don't mind, do you?"

In other words, she wouldn't get even a single cent. Upon hearing that, Courtney gritted her teeth so hard that they were nearly crushed to pieces.

"Do as you please." With the indecent photos in his hands, she was no different from a sitting duck. There was nothing she could do other than complying to his demands.

"It was a pleasure working with you." The corner of James' lips etched upward into his usual wicked smile as he said that.

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In the evening, at the Duncans' villa in Westpark, Josh placed a stack of documents on the desk in the study. "President Duncan, I've investigated the entire incident. The lady named Belle Smith is not a child psychologist. Her credentials belong to someone else and that person does not go with this name."

Alexander's expression fell. "Carry on."

"Her name is Poppy Wallace. She was a factory worker for a clothing factory in Melrose City. Two months ago, she suddenly quit her job. The other factory workers said that she seemed to have found herself a rich man. After that, when I found her, she was taking care of her husband in a hospital."

"And her husband?"

"Fake as well." As Josh spoke, his confidence diminished and his face paled. "Now, both Poppy and the man in the hospital who pretended to be her husband have fled. I don't know how they did it but it's as if they disappeared from the face of the Earth."

With a thunderous expression, Alexander questioned, "How did she know about Jordan's background?"

“This... uh... maybe...” Large droplets of sweat appeared on Josh’s forehead as he fumbled for the words. “Maybe Louis revealed it at Oreus last time and he was killed because of this as well. I thought that it was an accident since Louis didn’t have many enemies, but—”

Thud! All the documents on the desk fell on the floor. One of the files flew out and hit Josh’s calf, but he dared not make any sound; he endured the pain with his teeth gritted.

“Put down all the ongoing tasks that you have and focus all your attention on investigating what happened years ago, Louis’ death, as well as the identity of the person who set all this up. Say that you are doing this under my instruction if anybody questions. How could you not notice anything when someone set up something as large as this?”

Alexander, who was usually taciturn, seldom lost his temper although he was cold in character. On this day, however, he was enraged.

Upon hearing that, Josh nodded his head repeatedly. “I’ll investigate the matter. I’ll definitely get to the bottom of it.”

“One more thing—have you looked into that man named Leon?” Alexander balled his fists tightly at that.

“Yes, he boarded the plane this morning and returned to Melbourne.”

Alexander’s eyes were filled with darkness that resembled a bottomless abyss when he coldly instructed, “I’ll give you three days to bring him to me.”

Josh had no choice but to nod and agree to that; he dared not plead for more time although three days was barely sufficient for a return trip to Melbourne.

“Get lost,” Alexander uttered two simple and concise words that sent chills down Josh’s spine.

Josh immediately left the study, leaving Alexander sitting alone behind the desk. Staring at his email inbox, the latter had a terrifyingly dark expression.

It turned out there was an anonymous email with a few sentences.

‘I know that I did something unforgivable on the night of 24th December, but I assure you that nothing happened between her and I at Melrose Hotel. You should trust her and protect her.’

The words ‘protect her’ were like an eye-sore to Alexander, resembling two sharp thorns that pierced his eyes.

Truth was, he had a gut feeling that the incident last night wasn’t as simple as it seemed and it might be related to everything that had happened around him lately. At that thought, he furrowed his brows.

Ever since the accidental death of Louis at Oreus, many strange occurrences had happened one after another. The incidents were obviously targeted at both Courtney and Alexander, and this time was no exception.

Suddenly, an urgent ringtone rang. “Alexander, are you able to get in touch with President Hunter?” Bill’s flustered voice was heard from the other end of the line.

“When I was on a call with Natasha just now, I heard a loud collision sound and the call ended. The news reported that an accident happened at the elevated bridge, which is the road that President Hunter and Natasha took to head to the location to sign the papers.”

“What did you say?”

“I can’t be sure, but I can’t reach both Natasha and President Hunter.”

Without a moment of hesitation, Alexander instantly rose up from his seat and ran out without even wearing his coat.

Josh had barely gotten into the car outside the entrance of the villa and was about to start the car when the door of the back seat was suddenly opened, and he saw Alexander’s face with a horrifying expression appear in the rear mirror.

“Drive!”

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The hospital emergency unit was packed like sardines.

Due to the snow, the serial car accidents that happened on the elevated bridge had resulted in severe casualties.

“This is a real-time broadcast at Melrose City. Due to the rain and snow falling in the city, a serial car accident happened at the elevated bridge that connects the outskirts to the city. The cause of the accident was a faulty handbrake of a truck. At present, the list of casualties has yet to be tabulated, but there are three confirmed deaths... At this moment, all the hospitals nearby are continuously sending ambulances to the scene.”

The car drove past almost all the red lights on the way to the hospital. Meanwhile, all the entrances of the hospitals nearby were in a mess.

Even before the vehicle stopped, Josh heard the sound of the car door being opened from behind him, which scared the hell out of him. It turned out that Alexander ran out of the car before the former could say anything.

“Sorry, the person you are trying to reach is not available.”

Both Natasha and Courtney’s phone were not picked up. And so, an anxious Alexander surveyed his surroundings, only to see stretcher after stretcher being pushed in and out of the emergency treatment rooms.

“Make way! Make way!”

“Dr. Reid, his pulse. Quickly—”

“Contact the family members to mentally prepare for the worst. There’s no need for any resuscitation. Let’s check out the other patient.”

It was bustling with people in the hospital but Alexander’s loud voice was especially attention grabbing at the reception.

“I’m here to look for Courtney Hunter.”

The nurse flipped through the name list. “The name’s not here. Names that are not on the list are those heavily injured patients whose identity we couldn’t identify. Sir, you may look for the person at the operating theaters.”

At that moment, a surgical trolley happened to be pushed past him, the crimson blood stain on the white garment particularly appalling. With a hand holding onto his forehead, Alexander felt as if his strength was draining away and he was on the verge of breaking down emotionally.

Grave horror swept over him at that instant, causing him to run toward the operation theater with his fists clenched.

“The patient is bleeding heavily. Is her family here? Is anybody here a family member of Courtney Hunter?”

The name ‘Courtney Hunter’ echoed in Alexander’s ears, and he abruptly pushed away the few people standing in front of him and dashed over like a madman.

Chapter 322 She Is My Life

“Anyone here is a family member of Courtney Hunter?” The nurse’s voice resonated in the hallway. An unprecedented weight that felt as heavy as lead bound Alexander’s feet, making it hard for him to even lift a foot. After a while, he finally returned to his senses. “Over here! I’m here!” He cut through the crowd and muttered in a trembling voice, “I’m Courtney’s family member.”

Holding an operation consent form in her hand, the nurse was rather indifferent as she was used to witnessing death.

“The patient’s left part of the chest was punctured by rebar. It’s very near her heart, so it will be a high-risk operation. At the moment, the doctors are giving her emergency treatment in order to save her life. Please put your signature here.”

Upon hearing her explanation, Alexander felt as if a bomb had exploded in his head. He froze on the spot as he couldn’t begin to imagine how it was like to have rebar in a person’s chest.

“Sir? Sir, are you alright?”

Alexander’s signature on the papers seemed stiff, and the noise around him seemed to fade into the background as if he was no longer part of everything. He stared at the gap of the operation theater’s doors with reddened eyes, as if staring would enable him to see the situation inside.

Ten minutes after the nurse had entered the operation theater, there was some noise coming from around the corner of the hallway.

It turned out that Bill, Shay and Casey had all rushed to the scene.

“How is my sister?” Shay asked in a panic.

With pursed lips and slightly trembling brows, Alexander stood still like a statue. After a moment, he repeated what the nurse had told him earlier.

“How could this happen?!” Shay’s eyes reddened and he suddenly grabbed Alexander by the collar. “Alexander, you were supposed to take care of my sister!” he yelled.

“Maybe the situation is not that terrible.” Casey held Shay’s arm and frowned as he looked at the timer above the operation theater that showed the duration of the surgery. “Don’t worry, nothing is certain yet. She is now undergoing emergency treatment.”

Shay, however, tightened his grip around Alexander’s collar, as if he didn’t hear a word that Casey said. “Alexander, remember your promise to me back then? That’s my sister inside!”

Alexander slowly raised his head and looked into Shay’s eyes. The former’s usual cold and indifferent eyes were now completely bloodshot. If it wasn’t for Shay who was causing a ruckus, Alexander didn’t even have the intention to speak.

“She is your sister but to me, she is my life.”

Everyone was stunned at his words.

Casey then pulled Shay’s hand back and consoled, “Calm down. The operation is still going on inside. Stop causing a ruckus. Let’s wait until the operation is over.”

Thirty minutes later, the light of the operation theater extinguished and the attending doctor was the first person who exited the room. Upon seeing the large crowd at the entrance, he removed his face mask and bowed at them. “Sorry, but we’ve tried our best.”

Shay’s feet gave in. If Casey didn’t support him, he would have slumped on the floor. “Sis!”

The surgical bed was then pushed out from behind the attending doctor. Shay pounced at the bed and clutched the white cloth tightly in his hand, but he lacked the strength to lift the cloth. Tears rolled down his face uncontrollably.

Bill’s eyes reddened as well and Casey, who had always been cold and indifferent, had tears brimming in his eyes.

On the other hand, Alexander stood blankly at one side like a lost child. He dared not get close to the surgical bed as he was unwilling to believe that the person under the white cloth was Courtney.

At that moment, he was filled with regret. He regretted arguing with her that morning, regretted for being unable to control his temper and blamed her although he knew that she couldn’t possibly betray him, and even regretted hiding his deep feelings from her and never having the chance to confess his love.

“Why are you all here?”

A crisp voice came from the right side of the hallway. Carrying two bags of food, Natasha was shocked to see the five men that had been swallowed by grief. Puzzled, she asked, “What’s wrong with you all?”

Bill, who stood the nearest to her, frowned and answered in a hoarse voice, “Don’t ask. We lost her.”

Natasha was stunned when she heard that. Her gaze landed on the surgical bed that was covered with a white cloth. With her eyes lowered, she sighed. "President Hunter and I tried our best to send her to the hospital as soon as possible. We really tried our very best."

Bill nodded as well, but he suddenly realized that something was off. He abruptly turned to her and asked, "What did you say?"

"Huh?" Natasha was stunned. "I said, President Hunter and I tried our best—"

When Bill was questioning her, Alexander finally came to his senses. With a large stride, he went over to the surgical bed and lifted the white cloth—lying on the bed was a plump middle-aged woman whose face was as pale as a sheet.

Shay took a step back in horror and even tripped and fell into Casey's arms. "She's not my sister!"

Alexander's hand that clutched the white cloth trembled slightly and the storm that had been raging inside him gradually calmed. After covering the white cloth on the dead body, he went up to Natasha and asked as calmly as he could, "Where's Courtney?"

"I wanted to ask the same question. I've just returned from buying supper. We haven't had our dinner." At that, Natasha scratched her head and looked around.

"The hospital is short-staffed. Since President Hunter used to study medicine, she volunteered to help for the time being."

As soon as Natasha said that, a gust of cold wind swept past her and the very next second, Alexander was nowhere to be seen.

Bill glanced at his leaving figure before asking the nurse to send the patient who didn't survive to the morgue. Then, he bowed at the woman to apologize for the disturbance.

A confused Natasha raised her head and asked, "What's going on?"

As Josh had been around the whole time, he was the most suitable candidate to explain the entire misunderstanding.

Upon seeing that everyone was looking at him, Josh gave it some thought and hesitantly replied, "The nurse came out and said that the name of the patient inside is Courtney Hunter. She even asked for the family member of the patient to sign the consent form. So, President Duncan thought that..."

"Oh—I see." Natasha finally understood the situation and explained, "It was President Hunter and I who sent the patient here. In case the hospital personnel couldn't find us, President Hunter asked the nurse to call for her name if they needed to look for the patient's family member. I reckoned that the doctors and nurses must have been so busy that they got them mixed up."

"Then, what do we do now?" Josh's brows were tightly knitted.

"Let's go home and do whatever we need to do." Natasha seemed helpless. "The car that President Hunter and I were in had hit the guardrail, so it has been sent to the workshop to be repaired, but we are totally fine."

Everyone heaved a sigh of relief upon hearing that, especially Shay, whose face had been pale the whole time. At that moment, he felt as if he was finally able to breathe. Taking a deep breath, he leaned against Casey while rubbing his eyes hard. "Alexander's gone mad!" he mumbled.

Casey stroked his tousled bangs at his forehead and asked, "Do you still want to meet your sister?"

"No." He shook his head. "It's late. Let's head back. I have to rush for an appointment tomorrow morning."

After Shay and Casey had left, Josh went about his business as well, leaving Natasha behind. Carrying the supper in her hands, she was left standing in the hallway in an awkward situation.

"Let's go. I reckon that Courtney now has someone to get her dinner." Bill cast her a glance. "I need your help to look at some designs back in the studio. Would you like to check it out?"

"Yes!" Natasha's eyes lit up at that.

He glanced at the meal boxes in her hands and said, "It just so happened that I haven't had my dinner as well."

Alexander searched high and low in the entire hospital and finally spotted Courtney at the entrance where the ambulances were parked. At that moment, she was helping the doctors and nurses to receive a patient. Her pink coat was stained with crimson blood, but she seemed composed among the messy crowd, calmly keeping the situation under control.

The tightness in his chest gradually eased and his heartbeat returned to normal when he saw that.

"You don't need to put in too much strength. Save your strength as this will be a long night," a doctor uttered with a smile as he looked at Courtney. He squatted in the ambulance while wiping his sweat. "Speaking of which, are you a new intern? I've never seen you around."

Chapter 323 There Are Some Things That I Can't Find Out

As the male doctor spoke, he handed Courtney a white handkerchief. "This is clean; it hasn't been used."

Courtney thanked him and took the handkerchief to wipe her face before she explained, "No, I just sent an injured person over, so I thought to stay and help."

"But you seem rather skillful at it. Are you a medical student?"

Courtney looked young, but her pink coat and her hair that was put up when she was helping around made her seem especially like a student today.

Upon hearing that, she shook her head and denied, "I'm not a medical student." The light in her eyes dimmed when she said that.

"I don't think so." On the contrary, the male doctor had a gleam in his gaze. "You must have studied medicine. Judging from your skills and the way you assessed the patient's injuries, I'm a hundred percent positive that you studied medicine. Which hospital are you working in? We are in the industry where we save lives, so any hospital makes no difference."

"I'm really not a medical student," Courtney repeated helplessly. "I supposed that those who got injured in the accident at the elevated bridge are all here. I should leave. You should head in to assist them."

Only then did the doctor return to his senses and hop off the ambulance. After taking two steps, he suddenly turned and asked, "Do you mind giving me your number?"

Before Courtney could even answer, a deep male voice was heard from behind the doctor. "Courtney, I've been looking for you for some time. Let's head home."

Stunned, the male doctor looked back and found a slender figure that was taller than him by at least half a head. Although the man was half a meter away, he exuded an imposing aura.

Well, this is not surprising. A beautiful and kind woman like her must have been taken! The dispirited male doctor then sighed and left the scene.

Meanwhile, Courtney, who was standing at the back door of the ambulance, felt a tightness in her chest the moment she laid her eyes on Alexander and she instantly straightened her back.

She had a shocked look in her eyes as she didn't expect him to show up here. "Why are you here?"

Alexander stepped forward and didn't explain much. "Let's go home. We can talk after you get changed and eat."

Courtney lowered her head and saw the blood stains on her clothes, so she nodded.

The two of them avoided bringing up the disagreement that had happened in the hotel that morning, keeping quiet throughout their way home in the cab.

As soon as they arrived home, Courtney took a set of clean clothes and entered the bathroom. The smell of hospital disinfectants and blood on her coat was gradually replaced by the fragrance of the shower gel in the bathroom.

Warm water rinsed away the foam on her back, and she seemed to fall in a daze.

She suspected that Alexander might want to talk to her about breaking up, since he had mentioned before he left the hotel in the morning that whether they break up or not would be his decision to make.

When Courtney opened the door to exit the bathroom after showering, she was greeted by the smell of food. She was stunned for a second before she headed out of the room while wiping her hair.

There were many dishes on the dining table.

"Sit down and eat." Alexander took two bowls from the kitchen and served her a bowl of soup.

Bemused, she raised her head and glanced at the clock that had both hands at the number twelve. "It's 12.00 AM. Are we having supper?"

"It's dinner." He handed her a fork and a spoon as he asked, "Have you eaten dinner?"

She shook her head, quietly sipping her soup with her head bowed before she mumbled, "How did you know?"

“Natasha told me.”

“That girl is quite loquacious, isn’t she?” Courtney frowned and added, “What else did she tell you?”

“She said that the patient who died in the operating room after the doctors failed to save her isn’t you.”

Courtney froze. She slowly lifted her head.

The ceiling lights were not switched on, so the only light source was the standing light beside the dining table. The dim lighting, coupled with the fact that Alexander had been keeping his head bowed the whole time, caused her to not realize that his eyes were bloodshot, resembling someone who had been staying up for a long time without resting.

“What happened?” She was confused, but she could roughly gauge the reason he had shown up at the hospital.

Alexander drew a deep breath. “Eat first. We’ll talk after you eat.”

“Talk about what?” Courtney was anxious as she thought, About us breaking up?

“About all the problems we have had between us ever since we met. We’ll talk things out and everything will be fine.”

“What if things don’t work out between us?” She sat up straight, looking at him with her brows furrowed. After a moment of hesitation, she blurted the question. “Are you going to break up with me?”

Her gut instincts told her that Alexander was acting way too calm at the moment, and his extreme calmness made her feel scared.

The words ‘break-up’ were uttered in a loud and clear manner, causing an obvious crease to appear between Alexander’s brows as he tried to conceal the hint of rage in his eyes.

“Eat first.” He wanted to talk to her about everything but breaking up.

“I’m not hungry.” She frowned, insisting on listening to what he had to say first.

However, the moment she said that, Courtney could hear her stomach uncooperatively making a weird sound. It sounded particularly clear in the empty room, so she coughed once awkwardly.

Alexander darted her a glance and turned to serve her a bowl of rice. “Eat.”

Screw him and whatever he has to say! Courtney sighed inwardly. Let’s break up, then. I’m tired of explaining. Filling my stomach is my top priority now.

Her body was so honest that it exposed everything. She had skipped her lunch at noon and James had pissed her off later in the afternoon, so she had been starving for quite some time now. Hence, she gobbled down the food on the table and almost cleared all the food and even the soup.

Burping, she looked down and rubbed her tummy in satisfaction. “I’m full. You can say whatever you want to say.”

Upon hearing that, Alexander looked at her. “You should know that if I wish to know anything, I don’t have to ask you directly, because I can find out anything I want.”

His attitude made Courtney frown and a hint of displeasure bubbled inside her.

He had always been arrogant and opinionated ever since she first knew him. The concept of 'respect' was insignificant to him as he seemed to not have the term in his dictionary.

"However, I don't wish to find out about you from others." The twist in this conversation was rather unexpected. Feeling rather surprised, she looked at him.

"To be honest, when it comes to things that involve you, I'd prefer that you personally tell me and share everything with me. I won't investigate the matter even if you're unwilling to tell me, although there are certain things that I won't be able to find out even if I do so."

Courtney balled her fists, suddenly feeling anxious.

"Whether you have ever loved any man other than me, how much you care about me, or why the first thing you consider whenever something happens is to give up on our relationship—these are questions that I couldn't find out the answers to."

At that moment, Alexander was sitting opposite her. He had always maintained a cold expression that made him seem perfectly calm and composed. Nonetheless, tiny cracks appeared in his gaze at the moment.

The cracks signified the love of his life, and they were his only weakness that he willingly revealed to the world.

"You asked me what I want to talk to you about. I think that the answer that you considered the most is breaking up, but this topic that keeps lingering in your head is the only thing that I've never considered."

Courtney's expression tensed when she heard that. Staring blankly at Alexander, she was unable to say even a word.

Chapter 324 I Don't Know Anything

It was only after a long time that Courtney found her voice. "Why are you suddenly telling me this?"

She did not know about Alexander's drastic mood changes before he met her in the hospital. Though he was usually a man of few words, he used up his entire reservoir of patience when it came to her to try to stabilize their already rocky relationship.

Looking at her, he asked, "If I didn't tell you this, what would you say to me? That we should break up?"

Courtney was at a loss of words yet again.

He's right. Every time when both of us encounter any issues, my first reaction is to retreat.

The golden principle of her life was to cut her losses as early as possible, and she had been doing that for the past two decades.

She wanted to weigh the pros and cons, and between Alexander and her two children, she chose the latter.

Between her career and him, she chose the former.

In the future, if she would need to make such a decision between him or family and friends, she would choose the former without any hesitations.

Alexander was her love life, but to her, love was the least prioritized.

What is the cause of this?

After pondering this for a long time, Courtney finally replied, “The truth always hurts and reality is always ugly. Sometimes, lying to ourselves is also something good. But if you really mind this, I’m sorry to tell you that be it Tina or my friends and family, to me they are more important than lovers. It’s the same for you when you can’t compare Jordan with me. Please don’t take such matters to force me to make a choice. There’s no meaning to this.”

“What if I don’t mind?”

Alexander looked at her, but his expression had never changed from the beginning.

Ever since he prepared himself for this conversation, he was already mentally prepared. After all, he knew very well what Courtney was like.

All the rules that he would not break, he had broken all of them when it came to her.

Courtney froze, and she was even slightly flustered and uneasy. “W-What did you say?”

“I don’t mind that I’m the least prioritized, but you must have me in your life.”

He looked arrogant and haughty, the same way he had looked when he first helped her out in the elevator, but Courtney did not understand what he just told her.

Staying still, Alexander looked at her and waited for her reply.

When it came to love, the rules that he once thought were rigid turned out to be breakable for her, apart from one—he must be present in her life. He could not compromise on this.

“I got it.”

Courtney’s initial cold limbs slowly became warmer and warmth filled her eyes as she looked back at this man in front of her.

No matter how many misunderstandings and problems they had, she knew one thing for sure—she was really important to him.

“Are you certain?”

Alexander looked at her.

“Yeah.”

“Then why don’t you come closer?” His low voice reverberated in the room.

Courtney froze for a moment before the chair slid across the ground and she walked to him. Alexander then pulled her into his arms.

It feels really nice to be pulled into a warm embrace by surprise in this cold winter.

Three days later, after Alexander sent Courtney to the office, he received a call from Josh.

“President Duncan, I brought him back.”

In three days, Josh went to Melbourne without any breaks and used up all his connections. Finally, he found Leon and ignored all of the other man’s protests, successfully bringing him back to the country.

“Bring him to the warehouse to the west of the city,” Alexander instructed coldly. After hanging up the call, he slammed his feet onto the accelerator and entered the highway to go to the west side of the city.

Even though Courtney had not told him what happened that night, the surveillance cameras from the hotel showed Leon sending her into a room. Not long after that, he was the only one walking out of the room. Hence, no matter what he did or what he was about to do, Leon definitely knew something.

The west warehouse was a deserted warehouse used to place some unwanted stuff from Sunhill Enterprise. There was a deep basement underneath the warehouse which was damp and dark. Under the flickering light, a man with chestnut colored hair found himself being splashed with cold water.

He jolted and came to his senses.

“Who are you guys?”

He cowered backward in trepidation as his entire body shivered.

Two men, who looked like fighters, were wearing black jackets. One of them had a bucket in his hand while the other had an electric baton. They blocked most of the light.

“Who are we?” The man who was holding the bucket laughed coldly and maniacally. “The devil.”

“No matter how much money you want, I’ll give it to you. Did Mr. Corbyn instruct you to do this? Was he the one? But I already returned all the money.”

“Mr. Corbyn?” The man holding the electric baton stared at him and crouched as he poked his waist with it.

“Who is Mr. Corbyn?”

Leon was so startled that he let out a scream. “If you guys are not sent by Mr. Corbyn, what grudges do we have with each other?”

“You know how to return money to the people you owe, but some things can’t be settled by money. You are extremely unlucky.”

The burly man threw the bucket aside and it landed with a loud thud. As the dust rose from the ground, the door of the basement was opened with a click. A brightly polished shoe then stepped on the concrete staircase.

Panicked, Leon quickly looked in that direction. When he saw the latest arrival, he looked utterly defeated.

“It’s you...”

Alexander stood in front of Leon, looking down at the latter as if he was as insignificant as an ant. “It seems like you know me.”

Leon shivered when he heard that.

“You’re Alexander Duncan, the ex-president of the Sunhill Enterprise and the young master of the Duncan Family. Who doesn’t know you?”

The burly man next to him took a clean chair over, but Alexander raised his hand to indicate that there was no need for this. And so, he stood aside silently.

Josh then walked over from behind Alexander and shot a glance at the two burly men. “You guys can leave now. I’ll handle this from here.”

“Okay.” They nodded. “Call us if you need anything.”

“Alright.”

The door of the basement was closed again. Under the dim lights, shadows were moving on the ground.

“Do you know why you are here?” Josh squatted in front of Leon and pulled the strings that tied him up firmly.

Leon gritted his teeth. “I don’t know. It’s illegal for you to kidnap me.”

“In Melrose City, everything that the Duncan Family says is the law.” Josh looked at him coldly. “Since I can get you here from Melbourne, do you think I’ll be afraid of this? You better come clean to us and answer our questions honestly.”

“I don’t know. I did nothing.”

Leon was so cold that his face looked grayish.

It was winter in December, but he only wore a T-shirt and shorts. It was obvious that he was brought here in a rucksack from the sunny Melbourne, and he was already numb from the cold.

“Didn’t you send the email?” Josh continued to stare at him fixedly. “What happened that night?”

Leon’s heart sank and his gaze became nervous.

Thinking back to what James had warned him, he gritted his teeth and denied vehemently, “I don’t know anything.”

Upon seeing his stubbornness, Josh stood up with indifference and pointed at the chair.

“Do you know what this is?”

Leon remained silent.

“I can answer that question for you. You are going to sit on the chair with your lower body firmly on the ground. Then, you are going to be showered in cold water and electrified. How long do you think your legs can last below the freezing point?”

Chapter 325 Settle the Old and New Grudges Together

Leon arduously raised his head to look at the chair that was only a meter away from him.

He could not see what material the chair was made of, although he noticed that it was silver with colorful wires. On its right were two pipes that were connected to a bucket of water.

Almost instantaneously, his facial expression changed. "What are you doing?"

"You are a model who has to walk on stage. If you lose your legs, what else can you do for the rest of your life?"

Josh's face was dark as he grabbed Leon by the collar and dragged the man to the chair.

"Let me go!" Leon screamed and thrashed violently. However, he was wrapped like a cocoon with a rucksack and some ropes. As he could not move an inch, he could only allow Josh to drag him for around half a meter.

"Alright, alright. I'll say..." Leon yelled in panic as his voice echoed in the entire basement. "It was James who asked me to go to Courtney's place and take a few pictures to illustrate that she slept with me. Nothing happened between both of us, though. I only drugged her so that she would fall asleep and took the pictures thereafter to send them to James."

Josh frowned and turned to look at Alexander.

There was no need to question James' motive for such an action—he clearly wanted to snatch the shares of the Hunter Group from Courtney.

Alexander's expression was extremely cold in the dim lights as he took a few steps forward to step on Leon's face. "If you did something to her, you won't even be here to speak."

"Let me go. I'm also being forced to do this."

"President Duncan."

If Leon was killed, Josh was worried that it could spell more trouble for them, so he tried to warn Alexander. "Since we already have our answer, let's forget it."

After withdrawing his foot, Alexander coldly answered, "You don't need to do anything. Just hand him over to the two guys outside. They'll know what to do."

Josh heaved a sigh of relief. As long as he didn't have to do it with his own hands, it was fine.

After all, Leon was not a good person either.

Moments after they walked out of the basement, they instructed the two fighters inside on the next course of action. A tragic scream was heard shortly after before the place quickly became silent again.

As to what the two fighters had done to Leon, it was something Josh didn't even dare to imagine.

"President Duncan, what should we do now?"

Alexander was seated in the backseat of the vehicle. The rearview mirror reflected his indifferent expression as he slowly expressed, "We'll settle the old and new grudges together."

In the past, he was doing Scott a favor by feigning that he was unaware of the things that James had done. Apart from that, Alexander didn't have the time to manage the company, hence he didn't have any problem handing the business to James. However, now that James had touched someone whom he shouldn't have, the situation was different

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Now that New Year's Eve was around the corner, the Public Security University within the Campus City of Melrose had officially started their training.

After Oliver obtained his badge number, he sewed it on the inside of his uniform solemnly. In case of any accidents during the training, it was the only way to confirm his identity.

"Hey, weakling."

Tessa's voice rang from behind him. Before he could even return to his senses, a strong hand patted on his shoulder and the force was so strong that he almost spat out some blood.

Cough...

She acted as though she didn't hear it and continued with her words seriously, "Once we are out of the military region, just follow behind me."

It took Oliver a lot of strength to push her aside. "Who will be following behind you? And what did you call me? Do you even remember my code name? I'm Phoenix."

Tessa looked at him in disdain as she slung a practice gun over her shoulder. "Oh, forget it. Just accept that you are a weakling. Even when I'm on my menses, my record of doing a cross country run with weights is still better than your best record. The information from your intel group is pretty much useless for training like these. I mean, Melrose City is such a small place—we can just conduct a full search by brute force."

He was annoyed upon hearing that. "Sure, you can do that in Melrose City, but when it comes to war, try searching the entire world without our intel!"

As she arched her eyebrow, she responded, "I don't disagree with that, but this time around, you can just follow me."

"I won't." Oliver shook her off. "I have something else to do this time. Since you guys don't need the intel group, I'll just do my own thing then."

"Oh, no. This can't work." Tessa chased after him. "You can't leave the team like this."

"Aren't you going to conduct a manual search? I'll take East Melrose. You can arrange for others to head somewhere else."

“There’s nothing to look for in East Melrose. There are too many people there, so you won’t locate anything. Go to Westpark.”

“I insist on going to East Melrose.”

Upon seeing Oliver’s insistence, Tessa looked puzzled. “Why do you insist on going there? Is there something going on in East Melrose?”

“Of course.” He raised an eyebrow. “There is a drug cartel hiding there. Do you believe me?”

“Nonsense. If there really is, why didn’t you report it?”

“I suspect they have relations with the narcotics, so I plan to attack them myself and ambush all of them.”

When Tessa first heard his words, she thought Oliver was pulling her leg. However, as he provided her with more details, her expression slowly changed. “You are fooling around.”

“No one’s doing that with you.”

“No, I’ll have to report this.”

“Hey, you are not allowed to do that.” He pulled her back. “I already told you that you can’t do that. I have to do it myself.”

“Are you nuts?” Tessa’s face darkened. “This is only a training and the few spots that they have arranged are fake. We don’t even have real bullets in our guns. What if something happens? Don’t forget that we still have other team members apart from you. What if they attack the real hiding spot of the drug cartel and think that it was a part of the training?”

“That’s why I asked you to let me handle East Melrose,” Oliver said seriously. “Once we are assigned to each district, they won’t simply enter other people’s districts. Apart from that, I have confidence that we are about to catch the head of the drug cartel. I’m not looking for credits; I just want to catch them once and for all.”

Upon hearing his words, she froze. When he spoke, she couldn’t help following his train of thoughts each time. When they had asked the outstanding students to give a speech at the beginning of the semester, it was his speech that made her notice him.

To her, even though Oliver was quite weak and couldn’t even win a fight against a woman, he was a real man.

“Sure.” Tessa frowned. “I have a request, though.”

“Say it.”

As she was their team commander, his plan could be considered half a success if he gained her approval. His eyes immediately brightened as he never expected that it’d be a piece of cake to convince her.

“I’ll head to East Melrose with you.”

With that, Oliver’s expression froze.

Tessa continued, "After we have arrived at East Melrose, you'll need approval for all of the actions that you want to take. You have to take my orders. You know the nature of the army—you must follow all orders, no questions asked."

He frowned. Even though he didn't like this, he unwillingly nodded in agreement.

After the pep rally, the students involved in the current training went their separate ways. She arranged the different areas for her teammates and selected two more people to follow her and Oliver to East Melrose.