

Surprise 223

Chapter 223 You'll Get the Money if You Catch Her

The car was already stuck in the traffic, crawling slowly like a bug on a crowded street. However, when the traffic was gradually clearing up at the front and vehicles could finally move faster, the driver, Liam, was puzzled when he heard Courtney.

"Huh?"

Whether it was Liam, William, Alicia, or Tina, everyone was startled.

Alicia was the first to return to her senses. Immediately, she grabbed Courtney by her arms. "What are you doing? Don't forget that you just promised me that you won't get yourself into this mess."

Frowning at her aunt's words, Courtney tried to observe the situation outside the window through the corners of her eyes. Anxiously, she said, "Aunt Alicia, someone's life is at stake."

She was not a saint, but it was her empathy that drove her reaction. She felt that no one's life should be treated so lightly.

The red light in the front was counting down. Liam was a little lost. When he noticed William's gaze, he understood the situation and pulled over slowly by the road.

Yet, Alicia grimaced. "Courtney, do you think that the kid from the Duncan Family has your back and that's why you have nothing to fear? This is a company. Do you understand that if there is a loophole in their finances, it is basically a bottomless pit? How are you going to fill it up?"

When Courtney heard the word 'Duncan', she was lost in her thoughts for a moment.

Alicia still didn't know that she had broken up with Alexander. She never had the chance to tell them.

"Aunt Alicia, do you really think that it is a good thing to let the Hunter Group go bankrupt?" Calming down, Courtney stared at her aunt solemnly. "This isn't just my dad's career. It's a result of my mom's hard work too."

Instantly, Alicia's grip on Courtney's arm froze.

It had been so long that Alicia had almost forgotten that the company that was named after the Hunter Family was actually inextricably linked to her best friend. Instead of saying that she had forgotten, she was actually trying to deny it.

Back then, when Lucian was just starting his business, his company was funded by his first wife, Cecilia. Even the ideas to promote the company came from her too. It could be said that Cecilia had half of the credit for the rise of the Hunter Group.

Initially, Cecilia was also one of the biggest shareholders and a major member of the board of directors. After she died in childbirth, the Somerfields hated Lucian to the core. Even the shares of the company were considered a stain to the family. Therefore, they sold it out at a low price.

"I paid two hundred thousand down payment for the new property developed by the Hunter Group. It was the money I borrowed from my friends and relatives. How can they simply abandon a project like

this? Now, even my girlfriend ran away with someone else. My dad suffered a stroke and he needs money every month for hospital bills. Yet, it has been six months since I was last paid.”

On the roof on the 35th floor, the autumn wind was rustling. The man was dressed in a worn-out black leather jacket. His lips were dry and cracked. Because he was very stirred up, his face was flushing. Angrily, he was blaming the Hunter Group for every unfortunate event he had encountered. He shouted, “If you don’t pay me my money, I’m going to jump down from here and end everything. I won’t let anyone working in this building off the hook even after I die.”

As if being encouraged by his words, the migrant workers downstairs were agitated.

At this moment, a thin figure passed through that group of people. After explaining the situation to the firefighters, the figure entered the building.

“The bosses of the Hunter Group are b*stards. After everything that happened, how can they not come out and say something? I know I won’t be able to get my money back. I’ll jump down from here now.”

“Please calm down! We’ve sent someone to contact the directors of the Hunter Group.” The firefighters on the roof were still five to six meters away from the man in a leather jacket. Staring at the shaky figure on the roof, all of them were nervously trying to figure out countermeasures. “You can earn more money even after you’ve lost it, but if you lose your life, everything is over.”

“Without money, why should I live?” Apparently, their advice wasn’t effective enough to persuade the man. He was so infuriated that one could see his blue veins bulging out on his temples. “Don’t come closer. I’m counting down to three. If the Hunter Group still hasn’t given me an answer, I’ll jump immediately.”

“They are on the way.”

“One.”

“You have to calm down.”

“Two.”

“Team 2, please be prepared. Position the safety air cushion...”

“Three.”

“Don’t jump.”

Just when the man shouted the number ‘three’, Courtney came out from the stairs. Panting at the entrance of the roof, she waved at the man that was facing the rustling wind.

“Please don’t jump. I... I’ll give you the money.”

The man was obviously stunned. “Who are you?”

“Aren’t you looking for the person in charge of the Hunter Group? That’s me.”

“You must be kidding me. Do you guys think I will believe it if you simply got someone here? We’ve met the bosses of the Hunter Group. You weren’t there.” The man looked irritated. “You should have gotten someone that looks like them. Who are you trying to lie to by getting this little girl here?”

After Courtney got her breath back, her heart calmed down too. Calmly, she looked at the man. “My name is Courtney Hunter. Indeed, you’ve never seen me. In fact, most people in the company have never seen me. But, this does not change the fact that I’m Lucian Hunter’s daughter. As his daughter, I have the responsibility and duty to handle the company. Didn’t you say that you want your money? I’ll pay you.”

Instantly, the man’s expression changed. “Are you being serious?”

“This is my ID card. If you don’t believe me, come and take a look for yourself.” Courtney took out her ID card and held it in the air. “If what I said earlier is false, I’ll be struck by lightning.”

Standing by the tuyere, the man hesitated for a moment. He stared at the ID card in Courtney’s hand, and slowly, he walked down.

In an instant, the firefighters, who had been prepared for a long time, lunged toward him. The man was pressed onto the ground as he screamed in horror.

“Let go of me. Let me go...” He struggled and yelled furiously, “You cheated me. You lied to me.”

Not far away, Courtney breathed out a sigh of relief.

When the man, who was held tightly by the firefighters as if they were escorting a prisoner, walked past Courtney, his gaze was so vicious as if he was going to swallow her alive. Yet, when his gaze swept across her hand, he froze and his expression became complicated.

Noticing his reaction, Courtney was puzzled and she wanted to ask him. However, a clear voice was heard from behind.

“Thank you so much. Which police district are you from? Why haven’t I seen you before?”

As soon as Courtney turned around, her eyes met with a young firefighter.

Does he think I’m a plainclothes police officer?

Quickly, she shook her head. “No, I’m not. I was just passing by and saw what happened. So, ...”

“Really? Then, you act really fast.”

“My reaction wasn’t fast. I was telling the truth.”

When Courtney went down the building with the firefighters, the entrance was already crowded and blocked by migrant workers and spectators.

Apparently, the police officers were afraid that the man in the leather jacket would do something out of their expectations. Therefore, they put him into the ambulance without loosening their grips on him. They were probably trying to send him to a psychological counseling session. Judging from his incoherent speech earlier, he might have been mentally ill.

When they were going down the stairs, one of the firefighters told Courtney that the man didn't have a girlfriend and he didn't even pay the two hundred thousand down payment.

The second before the man was sent into the ambulance, he suddenly turned around and shouted at the crowd, "She's Lucian Hunter's daughter! Catch her and you'll get the money."

Chapter 224 You're the One With a Useless Brain

This sudden move was out of everyone's expectations.

Even the police officers who were holding him didn't know how to handle the situation. After all, he neither wounded anyone with violence nor committed suicide; all he did was merely say something.

Nonetheless, the crowd went into an uproar. They started rushing toward Courtney like maniacs.

"I saw her ID card earlier. She's Courtney Hunter, the second daughter of Lucian Hunter. Catch her and get her to pay us the money," added the man desperately. He was trying to add fuel to the fire.

Things started to go haywire.

In the meantime, Courtney was standing in the middle of the crowd. Subconsciously, the young firefighter beside her quickly protected her with his arms. Yet, he couldn't keep her away from the pulling, cursing, and kicks that came from every direction.

"Get her. Pay back the money."

"Give me back my money..."

Demands and insults were the only things that were audible.

Just when the head of the police team was trying to get reinforcement, a row of black Porsche came to a halt by the side of the street in a neat fashion. Even the sound of their brakes was surprisingly consistent.

Dozens of muscular men got out of the cars. Before the police officers could return to their senses, those men separated the crowd, creating a pathway.

A young man in a suit and leather shoes walked down the pathway at a fast pace. When he emerged once again, he was carrying the woman, who was being attacked by the crowd, in his arms.

Courtney did not have the chance to witness the miraculous arrival of her savior. Before she was rescued by him, she was hit by a blunt object thrown by someone and fainted.

By the time she woke up, it was already late at night.

The decoration of the room was very laid-back, yet there were luxurious details. On the bedside table, someone lit up a sandalwood candle that had a soothing effect, calming whoever was there.

Courtney sat herself up with her elbows on the pillow. The blanket slipped off her body, revealing the pink silk pajamas she was wearing.

“You’re awake?”

She heard a familiar voice. Looking up, she saw Elijah’s broad figure standing by the door of the bedroom. He was holding a brown wooden tray in his hands.

There was meat porridge and pickles on the tray. It was a simple meal. For someone who had slept for a long time, that was no doubt the most delicious thing they could eat.

“Why are you so stingy? You live in a big villa located in such an expensive place, yet you can only give me porridge?”

While Courtney sat on the bed and drank the porridge, Elijah was sitting on the chair opposite her, flipping through a travel magazine. Upon hearing her complaint, he said helplessly, “If I were to give you bird’s nest and shark fin soup, could you even eat them?”

“Nope.”

“Quite honest, aren’t you?” He shook his head. As if he was coaxing a child, he persuaded, “Finish up the porridge first. After you warm up your stomach, I’ll treat you to something delicious. But, the doctor said you need to avoid irritating food because of the injury on your head.”

When Courtney heard what he said, she looked up and saw herself in the full-length mirror opposite her. Her head was gauzed up and she looked like an incomplete mummy. Instantly, she wasn’t pleased. “Why am I wrapped like this? I wouldn’t know if you didn’t say something.”

Helplessly, Elijah answered, “You can only stop the criticism by posting a picture of you wrapped up like that on the Internet.”

Sadfishing was the most useful thing one could do these days.

Pouting, Courtney began fiddling with the gauze on her head. She had accidentally poked on her wound, so she was now groaning in pain.

“Don’t move.” Immediately, Elijah’s brows furrowed, looking distressed.

Looking at his solemn expression, which was rare, Courtney was startled. Pursing her lips, she hummed in response to his warning. Then, she remembered that she wanted to confirm whether it was him who saved her. “Did you save me?”

Fixing his serious expression, Elijah stared at her curiously, “Are you disappointed because it wasn’t Alexander Duncan?”

The moment Courtney heard the name, the porridge in her mouth went tasteless and she said irritably, “I can’t believe you’re bringing this up. You’re so well informed, so don’t you know that I’ve broken up with him?”

This time, Elijah’s gaze finally moved away from the magazine completely. He stared at her face and said with a profound tone, “If I didn’t know, I wouldn’t have arrived there on time today.”

“What do you mean?” Courtney frowned. “Can you please go straight to the point? It’s hard to understand.”

Instead of explaining the meaning behind what he just said, Elijah changed the subject of the conversation. "Everything was so well-organized and planned. Don't you think that they were waiting for you to show up?"

Courtney frowned deeper at his words. Puzzled, she said, "How is that possible? Waiting for me to show up for what? I have nothing to do with the Hunter Group."

However, Elijah did not agree with her. "Someone is worried that they couldn't get rid of the hot potato. You are the second young lady of the Hunter Group. Although you might think that the company has nothing to do with you, in the eyes of the others, this might not be the case."

That's reasonable. Courtney suddenly recalled the incident back at Anna's funeral. Tentatively, she asked, "Is this related to Anna's uncle?"

"It seems like your brain is still pretty useful." Though his words were harsh, he sounded gentle. Therefore, Courtney couldn't get fed up with him.

Discontented, Courtney rolled her eyes at him. In the end, she could only retaliate weakly, "You're the one with a useless brain."

After the meal, Courtney changed into a new outfit and left the house as she followed Elijah. When they were walking around the villa area, she finally knew what happened before and after she fainted.

When Elijah brought his men over and saved her, he was afraid that the migrant workers would come looking for trouble at the hospital. Therefore, he had to bring her back to his villa for treatment.

"What about Tina? Did you see her?"

Many things had happened these days and she didn't even have the time to arrange for Tina to meet up with Elijah.

Although the marriage between them was fake, to Tina, Elijah was supposed to be her biological father.

"I saw her from afar, but the scene was too chaotic. So, I only sent Lilian to inform your aunt that I was taking you with me."

"I see." Courtney nodded, signaling that she understood his action. Under that kind of situation, how would he be able to take care of other things? "Then, I shall arrange for Tina to have a meal with you another day."

"You said that before." Glancing at her, Elijah said helplessly, "If you're the one making the arrangements, I'm afraid that my holiday will be ending soon and I'll have to return to America. You're so tied up; you won't find the time to do that. You're definitely much busier than the President of America."

"What I'm saying this time is true. Otherwise, you can decide the time. I won't disagree."

"If you say so."

"Yes, you have my word."

In the small garden, Elijah's gentle voice was heard. There was a hint of wickedness in his tone. "Let's make it this afternoon then."

"President Duncan, just like what you thought, this man, Elijah Grant, is in contact with many companies in Melrose City. It seems like he's looking for a partner to develop and promote an artificial intelligence product."

"What are the companies he has been in contact with?"

"They are all here." Josh placed the materials on Alexander's desk. Seeing that Alexander was studying them so seriously, he hesitated for a while before adding, "President Duncan, did you read today's news?"

"No. What happened?"

"Someone wanted to jump off from the Hunter Group's head office building."

Alexander's fingers that were flipping the pages stopped for a second, yet his expression was normal. "Then?"

"Then, Miss Hunter showed up midway. Her identity was exposed and the crowd went into an uproar. I heard that she was attacked by the migrant workers and was injured."

Inexplicably, Alexander's fingers that were holding the folder tightened and his gaze darkened.

Chapter 225 Ungrateful

"Luckily, she's safe," explained Josh when he noticed that his boss' expression was off.

Frowning at his words, Alexander coldly commented, "She overestimated herself." A few seconds later, he closed the folder and stood up. As he put on his coat, he asked, "Which hospital?"

"Huh?" Josh was puzzled. His mind went blank. Instantly, he wished he could go back in time and slap himself before he said all that. Am I looking for death?

"Which hospital is she in?" Alexander stared at Josh and repeated his question impatiently.

Hesitating for a long moment, Josh muttered, "Miss Hunter isn't hospitalized."

"Not hospitalized? Where did she go?"

"S-She was taken away by Elijah Grant."

As soon as he said that, Alexander's face sank after he digested the information.

"President Duncan..." Josh observed his expression cautiously, "are we still going?"

Clenching his fist, Alexander answered, "Of course."

"But, where?" Josh couldn't understand. "Miss Hunter isn't in the hospital. Are we going to Elijah's house? I don't think this is appropriate, President Duncan. Why not give Miss Hunter a call first?"

“Do you think I have nothing else to do when I go out except to look for her?” Alexander’s voice was cold and his gaze was murderous. It was as if he wanted to chop Josh up.

Quickly, Josh flashed him a flattering smile. “That’s not what I meant, President Duncan. Your beauty is obvious to every woman in Melrose City. How is it possible that you can only look for Miss Hunter? Where are you going, then?”

“You don’t have to follow. Just stay here,” said Alexander angrily as he left the room.

In a famous French restaurant in Melrose City, the well-known Blue Danube was heard in the lobby.

Before Courtney left the villa, she had already removed the gauze on her head and replaced it with a waterproof bandage. Her hair happened to cover up most of the bandage, so the wound was not obvious.

“Didn’t I tell you not to buy her too many expensive gifts? She already has enough toys.”

Nonetheless, Elijah grinned gently. He reached out and pinched Tina’s cheek. The girl was unwrapping her gifts. “It doesn’t matter whether it’s expensive or not. All I know is that if I don’t treat my princess better, she will run away with someone else.”

Hissing in response to his words, Tina heartlessly said, “We meet so rarely because you’re always out. If you do this again, I don’t think it’s bad if Mom decides to find me another dad.”

“What an ungrateful kid.” Pretending to be annoyed, Elijah shot her a single glance.

“Oh, it’s my Elsa!” Tina jumped around as she held the newly unwrapped gift in her arms. She was so overjoyed that she did not take Elijah’s words to heart.

“Why are you saying that? She’s very big-hearted.” Speechless at her daughter’s action, Courtney rolled her eyes. Turning around, she said to Elijah, “Don’t you know? When we just came back, she actually registered an account on a blind date website with my picture. I was utterly speechless. I really don’t understand how she figured out the registration process on the website. She can’t even recognize words.”

“Blind date?” Elijah frowned in response. “Do you even need that?”

“Of course, I don’t,” Courtney answered with certainty.

Nevertheless, Elijah’s expression was incomprehensible. What he meant was totally different from what Courtney thought. It looked like it would take him a lot of effort for her to get his message.

During the meal, the pair reminisced about their time spent together in America. When they talked about their awkwardness at the first meeting, both laughed heartily. It had been such a long time since Courtney last smiled so much.

However, on the other side of the restaurant—at a blind spot where Courtney couldn’t see—Alexander and Mikayla were having their lunch too. The two tables were separated by a huge lobby and a pianist playing the piano. None of them had noticed the other.

Mikayla was dressed decently. Her black Audrey dress complimented the French restaurant that was full of crystal chandeliers. After she took her seat, she hesitated for a long time before she began, "Alex, how is Jordan doing lately?"

"Pretty good." His reply was paltering and indifferent.

Instantly, the atmosphere fell silent again.

Seeming to realize what had happened, Alexander quickly added, "Since Jordan was discharged, he has been staying at Grandpa's. There are nannies and housemaids looking after him, so he's having a good time."

In fact, it was far more than good. The last time Alexander went there to visit Jordan, he could already manage to say two sentences. Yet, the two sentences were the most he would say and he never opened his mouth again.

At that time, it was Tina who had pulled Jordan to him. As if she was claiming credit for her success, she said, "Mr. Alexander, I have a surprise for you. But, you must first think about what rewards you're going to give me in return."

She then showed him a Jordan who could speak. It was very touching. Even after such a long time, the scene was fresh in his mind.

"Jordan is adorable and I adore him very much. Still, I think he prefers Courtney better."

The mention of Courtney's name pulled Alexander back to reality. Subsequently, his brows furrowed. If Jordan didn't like her back then, there was no way she would be able to get close to me.

"Alex, there's something I've always wanted to tell you. I've been thinking about it for a very long time, but I didn't have the courage. Yet, I don't think I can drag it any longer." Mikayla sounded muffled. As if she had gathered a lot of courage, she didn't even dare to look into Alexander's eyes.

"What are you trying to say?" He looked back at her and remembered the purpose of this meal.

After he left the company in wrath, he wanted to find Gale. However, the moment he got into his car, he received a call from Mikayla. She asked him out for lunch and said that she had something important to tell him.

Mikayla hesitated for a while. "The fire at the hotel back then... was related to me. But, I didn't mean to do it. I..."

When she was saying that, she didn't notice that Alexander's attention wasn't on her. His gaze passed through the pianist—who stood up in the middle of the lobby and thanked the audience—and fell on the dining table on the other side.

From afar, it looked like a family of three.

He saw a constant bright smile on the face of the woman he hadn't seen in a long time. The smile on her face was also something he hadn't had the chance to see a lot. It was a pleasant smile that was completely relaxed.

“Alex, I—”

“Let’s not talk about the fire anymore. I know what happened back then.” Before Mikayla could finish her words, she was interrupted by Alexander. The figure in front of her moved and disappeared in a blink of an eye. Quickly, she looked up in the distance in disbelief.

“Alex, where are you going?”

Alexander’s long legs strode across the performing area in the middle of the lobby. He pushed past the waiter, who was in his way, unceremoniously. With a look of hostility, he marched toward the table, leaving Mikayla an aloof, yet arrogant back. It was as if her existence was just a foil.

“What are you doing here?”

The sudden and familiar voice froze the trace of a smile on Courtney’s face. Looking up, she saw Alexander who was trying his best to contain his anger. Even though he was questioning her, he sounded justified and bold.