

Surprise 341

Chapter 341 Owe Her an Apology

Ever since she was a child, besides her grandfather, no other family member had shown Courtney love and care. When she was young, Alicia would always treat her coldly, so her only sense of familial affection was from her grandfather.

Scott was an indifferent and serious person—which was completely different from the loving person that Courtney’s grandfather was—but deep down, he was an elder who deeply cared for the younger generation.

Although the meal didn’t end on a good note, Scott didn’t have many unspoken worries, and when he left with the kids, he even told Courtney not to take it to heart.

She didn’t want to take it to heart, but she was afraid that the strong-willed Alicia had already taken it personally.

Late at night, the bedroom was filled with the fragrance of shower gel.

Alexander got into bed after taking a shower and had casually picked up the financial magazine beside his bed to pass the time.

A sigh sounded from beside him.

Still looking at the magazine, Alexander chuckled and said, “You’re not still brooding about dinner, are you? In fact, you’re not close with your Uncle Stephen and his family, so it’s fine if you don’t keep in touch with them in the future.”

“I’ll be a pig if I have any more contact with them.”

Courtney turned over and looked up at Alexander. “I’m worried about Aunt Alicia. She must be furious now, and I don’t know what thoughts she would have after going back. She’s already suffering from high blood pressure.”

“She’ll be fine. If you’re really worried, just go visit her tomorrow.”

“I’ll definitely go back to check on her.”

Courtney let out another sigh. “I still have a bad feeling, though.”

At this point, Alexander couldn’t continue reading the magazine anymore, so he simply put the book back on the bedside table and hugged Courtney before laying under the blanket together.

“Don’t think about it anymore. Get some sleep.”

However, Courtney couldn’t sleep. In fact, she knew that Alicia didn’t want her to marry into the Duncan Family, but her aunt didn’t know about her relationship with Alexander. She always felt that it wouldn’t be good for her to be a stepmother, and that a partner who had his own child wouldn’t be able to treat Tina wholeheartedly.

She planned to confess this matter to Alicia before they got married, which didn't call for much concern. Instead, the thing that was bothering her the most now was for her to confess to Alexander first.

"There's something I need to tell you."

After hesitating for a long time, she finally spoke.

Hugging her from behind, Alexander rested his chin on her shoulder and replied lightly, "Yeah?"

"About Jordan's birth..."

At the mention of this, Courtney felt the embrace around her tighten a little, which made her nervous and stop talking.

After a long while, Alexander's low voice sounded from behind.

"I didn't do the proper thing in the past. You don't have to think about Jordan's birth. I don't plan to find that person anymore. Jordan only has one mother, which is you, and that's enough."

He thought that Courtney still cared about what happened with Belle last time. Everything had happened consecutively, and he didn't have time to explain to her, so he truly owed her an apology. Now that she had mentioned it, he had a chance to say it.

Courtney, on the other hand, had mixed feelings.

Alexander saying this made it hard for her to continue.

She asked softly, "What happened to Belle after that? What did she say after being exposed?"

"I never found her." Alexander rubbed his chin on the back of her head and spoke casually. "I left it to Josh to handle."

Courtney's heart tightened. "What are you going to do with her?"

"Why do you care so much about that woman?" Alexander's voice contained a hint of suspicion.

"N-Nothing." Courtney held her breath. "I was just wondering."

Alexander wanted to ask something else, but she hurriedly pulled the blanket up. "I'm sleepy. Let's sleep. I'll go to Aunt Alicia's house tomorrow morning."

Upon hearing this, Alexander turned off the light and said nothing more.

Courtney heard the steady breathing sound around her and felt the steady beating of a heart on her back. She could also feel Alexander's satisfaction with the current circumstances.

If it weren't because her lies were snowballing, she wouldn't be so torn.

It was a story that spanned six years, so she couldn't just explain it with a casual remark.

It was getting dark, but the bars in Melrose Center were still buzzing like it would during the day, with men and women shaking their heads and swaying wildly to the music amidst the lights.

In the luxurious private room of the bar, Britney stood in front of the electronic screen wearing a gaudy fishnet garter while singing a song by a Korean girl group. She sang and danced, looking extremely sexy.

Before the song was over, a thin man on the sofa in the private room applauded.

When the track stopped, the man's eyes were a little sinister. "You dance well. You're very suitable to be the female lead of this movie."

"Thank you, Director Braun." Britney hurriedly straightened up and bowed to the man, a smile plastered on her face.

After James was imprisoned, her network resources had plummeted. If she wanted to make money, she had to film, and if she wanted to film, she had to participate in various social activities. Usually, she never participated in this kind of wine parties, but now, she had to do it for a role that paid ten million.

"But, you're still lacking something."

The man studied her. "Do you know what it is?"

Britney was stunned for a moment. "What is it, Director Braun?"

"You're not bold enough." The man blew out a puff of smoke, looking extremely chill. "The protagonist of the movie is a prostitute, so she has no sense of shame about her body. What you just did wasn't ambitious enough."

Having been involved in the entertainment circle for so many years, Britney had long understood these people's characters. His remarks sounded like artistic guidance, but in fact, what he meant was for her to take it all off.

She slowly raised her head. Her red lips were alluring, and her eyebrows were raised while she had on a charming smile. Slowly pulling the straps off her shoulders to expose her fair shoulders, she said softly, "Then, Director Braun, I'll try again."

In the early morning, the bar gradually became quiet. Outside the private room, the bottle girl dressed in a Playboy Bunny costume was dozing off against the wall. When the door opened, she jolted awake, then yawned sleepily.

"Britney, you're done?"

When Britney heard this, her face turned pale, and she gave the girl a fierce glare.

The bottle girl immediately covered her mouth. "I didn't mean it that way, Britney..."

There was a chill in Britney's eyes.

"Keep in mind that I'm here today thanks to Alexander and Courtney, that wretched couple. One day, I'll get back everything I lost."

The bottle girl shuddered and followed cautiously behind her.

"I didn't dare to go out today. Alexander's people are nearby, and it's been going on every day for a long time. It looks like they want to catch me. Britney, what should I do? I can't spend my entire life selling wine here."

"What are you panicking about?"

Britney threw her an impatient glance, and a cold gleam flashed across her eyes as she sneered, "So what if he catches you? Can he kill you? He wants to catch you, doesn't he? Then, let him. After he catches you, let him hear what he wants to hear. I'd like to see how he would react when he finds out the woman he loves has been lying to him."

Chapter 342 Jordan's Birth

Early the next morning, Courtney went to Alicia's house with fruits and flowers.

Because William had to go work in Kyoto, he left during the night. When Courtney went over, only Alicia was in the living room trimming a pot of bonsai.

"Miss Hunter is here."

The servant opened the door and led Courtney in. "Oh, Miss Hunter, how nice of you. You always bring so many things when you visit."

Before Courtney could speak, Alicia's voice sounded from the living room.

"You bring fruits and flowers every time you visit. Anyone who doesn't know better would think that you were visiting a patient."

Hearing this, Courtney hurriedly gave a dismissive wave of her hand, then walked over and huffed, "Aunt Alicia, you really have no sense of taboos when you speak. You're going to jinx yourself."

Alicia grimaced. "Although you went to the United States before finishing college, you were still a medical student. How are you still so superstitious?"

Courtney chuckled and sat down on the sofa. "Isn't it better to be superstitious? I just want you to be healthy and live a long life."

"You not angering me to death is already good enough."

As soon as Courtney entered the house, Alicia hadn't been in a good mood. Her pot of bonsai, which initially looked to be in good condition, had been trimmed bald. Looking at the wrecked plant, Courtney silently mourned it for a few seconds.

"Are you still angry about what happened last night?" Courtney squatted beside the coffee table and watched Alicia mess with the horrific-looking pot of bonsai. "It's not worth it getting angry over such a trivial matter, Aunt Alicia."

"Is it a trivial matter?"

Alicia's brows furrowed.

“It was the first time our two families were meeting, and the Hunter Family doesn’t have a good reputation in the first place. I was afraid that you would be scorned by the Duncans after you get married. Everyone from your Uncle Stephen’s family really doesn’t know better. I was already ashamed of them, and now, we’re completely humiliated.”

Alicia was only behaving like this because she was concerned for her, which made Courtney feel moved. She took Alicia’s arm and leaned on her shoulder affectionately.

“Aunt Alicia, you’re so impressive, so how can you be humiliated so easily? And don’t you already know what kind of people Uncle Stephen and his family are? If Old Master Duncan were to run a check on them, he’d probably find out about their personality too. But, Alexander and Grandpa aren’t such people, and they already know that I’m not close with Uncle Stephen’s family.”

“Look at how they behaved last night. Did it look like they wanted nothing to do with you?”

When Alicia spoke of this, she got angry. “Before even greeting anyone, they were in such a hurry to ask you to do errands for their family. They’re simply terrible.”

“Didn’t I say no?”

“Even if you said yes, I wouldn’t allow it.”

Alicia raised her eyebrows. “Who do they think they are? If your grandfather didn’t adopt him because he pitied him, he would’ve been farming in the countryside now. He’s just a b*stard who has nothing better to do in life.”

As Courtney listened to Alicia rant, she found that her tone was the same as when she was a child. She was fluent when she complained, and she never repeated the same thing twice. When she was young, she used to be afraid to hear her aunt chew someone off, but now, it felt comforting.

“Aunt Alicia.” Courtney held back her laughter. “If you continue trimming, your plant will be bald. It’s looking less and less like a plant.”

Alicia looked down at her plant, then glared at Courtney. “Foolish girl, I realize that you actually have a big heart. I really can’t be bothered anymore.”

“That won’t do.” Courtney leaned on Alicia’s arm and shook it, acting like a spoiled child, which was something she rarely did. “You have to plan my wedding. If you don’t bother about me, then what about the wedding?”

After being shaken by her, Alicia’s anger dissipated. “Why is it that you’re turning into more of a child now that you’re getting married? You’re not as composed as when you were young.”

She was complaining, but deep down, she was filled with warmth.

One could tell whether a woman was doing well from her state. A happy woman would tend to behave more like a child, as she didn’t have to worry about anything.

“It would be great if Alexander didn’t already have a son. I really don’t want you to be someone’s stepmother. Anything you do would be wrong, and since they’re a wealthy family, you’ll be held responsible for anything disastrous that happens in the future.”

At this point, a small portion of the joy in Courtney's eyes dimmed while she said solemnly, "Aunt Alicia, there's something I want to tell you. Don't be shocked."

"What is it?"

"It's about Jordan." Courtney pursed her lips. "Jordan's birth."

"....."

...

It was already evening in Oreus, and Oliver was helping the worker tidy up the tables, chairs, and benches of the inn. During winter vacation, more tourists had come to Oreus for a holiday, so the place was easily turned into a mess.

"Mr. Oliver, has the madam not recovered from her cold yet?" The worker chatted with Oliver while wiping the table, a worried look on her face. "I haven't seen her for several days. Even if you have a cold, you can't stay in the room all day, right?"

Oliver frowned and glanced toward the second floor. A locked wooden door could be seen through the gap between the wooden stair railings. It was the door to his mother's room.

"The weather's gotten too cold again, so we're keeping it like this so her condition doesn't get worse from the wind. Ask the chef to cook some bland dishes later. I'll send it up."

"Okay." The worker nodded, then asked, "Wait, Mr. Oliver. Why did you come back with the madam? I didn't ask you then. Didn't you say that you were busy with school and could only come back around the mid-winter holidays?"

Oliver simply answered, "I'm not busy anymore."

"Then—"

"Mia, why do you have so many questions today?" Having grown impatient with her questioning, Oliver grabbed the rag from her. "Just go and clean up the reception desk. I can handle it here. My ears hurt from your constant chatter."

"I can't be bothered to ask either."

Mia wasn't angered by this. She just sighed and rolled her eyes before going to the front desk.

"It's no wonder the madam is always worried that you won't be able to find a girlfriend. With your temper, only a daft girl would fall for you."

At the moment, Oliver wasn't in the mood to argue with her. Since returning from Melrose City a week ago, Fiona had locked herself in the room and had never once stepped out. He or a waiter would deliver all three meals to her, but she didn't eat much either. When he went to visit her at noon, he noticed she had lost a lot of weight.

The sky was getting darker. Today was Oreus' Folk Festival, so most of the guests had gone out to release lotus lanterns by the lake, which was why the inn was deserted.

Mia, who was working the front desk, was dozing off with her head propped up on her chin when she suddenly heard the ringing of the wind chimes on the curtain at the door.

“Is this Hostel D’Amour?”

A male voice sounded, causing Mia to wake up abruptly. “Yes. Are you checking in?”

“Yes.”

“Have you made a reservation?”

The man, who was wearing a black wide-brimmed hat and had a DSLR with him, shook his head. “No. I’m in a hurry. Do you still have a room?”

“Hold on for a second. I’ll check.”

Mia tapped away on the computer for a while. When she looked up again, she showed her signature smile.

“It just so happened that one room checked out at noon, but since it’s close to the holidays, the room hasn’t been cleaned yet because the cleaners have all left. Please wait for a moment.”

The man nodded.

“Okay.”

Chapter 343 Kept It Locked up for Twenty Years

The man found a seat by the window and sat down, then placed his backpack with the DSLR on the table. As he assessed the interior of the entire inn with interest, there was a complicated gleam in his eyes.

“Have some water to warm up first. I’ll be done in ten minutes.”

Mia gave the man a cup of tea. “By the way, may I know what your last name is?”

“Foster.”

“All right. Please wait a moment, Mr. Foster.”

With that, Mia went upstairs to tidy up the empty room.

After taking a sip of tea, the man took the DSLR out of the bag, then pointed it around the lobby of the inn before extending the lens and pointing it in the direction of the second floor.

He slowly moved his camera around until it was pointed at the end of the corridor on the second floor. A wooden sign embellished with dried flowers hung on the door, and after zooming in, he could clearly see the words on the wooden sign—‘Boss’ room. Please knock before entering.’

The man’s lips suddenly curled up into a smile.

Inside, the room was dimly lit.

Fiona sat by the bay window reading a book. She was wrapped in a brown blanket, and her long hair draped over it, cascading like a dark waterfall. Despite being in her fifties, she still had the aura of a young maiden.

Oliver stood straight with a dinner tray, and he had already been standing for about ten minutes.

“Mom, if you blame me, then hit me and scold me. Don’t just stay mad. You still have to eat proper meals.”

“Just leave it,” Fiona responded faintly, her eyes not leaving the book.

Oliver was a little anxious. “Ever since you came back from Melrose City, you’ve been eating only a little bit every day. Even Mia can see that you’re not in a good mood. What do you want me to do?”

At that, Fiona frowned, then she closed the book and looked up before saying, “When you went behind my back and investigated the Duncans, why didn’t you think about what would happen to me?”

Dumbfounded, Oliver was rendered speechless.

Fiona stared at him for a long time. He bore such a resemblance to him, and he had a slight bookishness about him as well. Oliver was basically the same as him. She lamented why she enrolled him into the Public Security University, thinking that he wouldn’t bump into the Duncans because Melrose City was huge enough.

Now, Alexander just didn’t sense anything after seeing him. But if Scott saw Oliver, she wouldn’t be able to hide what happened years ago.

After a long while of studying him, Fiona sighed and reopened the book.

“Just leave it there. I’ll eat it later.”

Oliver studied his mother as well. Despite how gentle and kind she looked, she was firm. There was no point in trying to persuade her, so he placed the dinner tray on the side of the coffee table before saying, “Then, you must make sure you’ll eat. If the food gets cold, call me and I’ll heat it up for you.”

Fiona murmured assent, but no longer looked at him.

In fact, Oliver wasn’t deliberately trying to hide the fact that he was attempting to approach the Duncans in Melrose City. Several times when he called her, he even asked if she wanted to try meeting Alexander, but at that time, she probably thought he was just spewing childish nonsense.

With mixed feelings, Oliver turned and walked out of the room, not staying any longer.

Once he stepped out of the room, he heard the clicking sound of a camera shutter, so he subconsciously covered his face and exclaimed displeasely, “What are you doing?”

He dropped his hand and stood behind the wooden railing on the second floor, then saw the man in the lobby on the first floor.

“Who are you?” Oliver was in a bad mood, so although he knew that most of the people in the inn were guests, he couldn’t suppress his anger at this moment and reprimanded the man. “Who said that you can take pictures as you like?”

The man downstairs was in his fifties, and he was quite tall, seemingly around six feet. Wearing a black sweater and holding a DSLR, he looked up at Oliver with some confusion.

“Am I not allowed to take pictures here? No one told me that.”

Having been reprimanded by Oliver, the man wasn't angry, but said nicely, “If it's not allowed, then I'll delete the pictures.”

Mia happened to finish tidying up the room, so when she saw Oliver, she glanced at the room door behind him. “The madam still wouldn't eat?”

Oliver frowned. “Yeah.”

Mia knew not to pursue it. Catching sight of the man in the lobby out of the corner of her eye, she introduced him.

“By the way, Mr. Oliver, that's Mr. Foster, our new guest. Mr. Foster, this is our sub-boss.”

The man gave a slight nod, then cast a probing glance at Oliver. “Why is he called the sub-boss?”

“Oh, the inn is owned by our main boss, and Oliver is her son. He can't be considered the main boss, so we call him the sub-boss.”

Mia had always had a loose tongue, and Hostel D'Amour didn't have many restrictions about what could be said, so she was allowed to just talk.

“You entertain him. I'm going to my room. There's something I need to deal with,” Oliver interjected, looking displeased, then turned around and went back to his room.

The man stared thoughtfully at his retreating back, his gaze lingering on him for a long time.

“Mr. Foster, you can check in now. Please give me your ID card.”

“Okay.”

As Mia entered the check-in information on the computer based on his ID card, she murmured the guest's name—Felipe Foster.

“Mr. Foster, your room is the second room to the left on the second floor. If you need anything, just tell the front desk. There'll be someone here twenty-four hours a day.”

“All right.”

When it was approaching midnight, the guests who had gone out to play with the lotus lanterns began to return amidst the gathering dusk. For a while, the inn was bustling with activity before the guests went back to their rooms.

On the right side of the end of the second-floor corridor was Fiona's room. The old record player was still squeaking and playing a folk tune; the light voice of the female singer gave off a sense of melancholy.

Under the glow of the table lamp, Fiona took out the dusty photo album that had been kept in the safe for many years.

Even Oliver had never seen it before. In order to bid farewell to the past so that she could draw a clear line with the Duncans, she destroyed everything twenty years ago. This photo album was the only thing she couldn't give up, so she kept it locked up for twenty years.

The first page was an old-fashioned black-and-white photo of a boy who was almost at the knees of the young man beside him, while a woman was carrying a swaddling cloth. The woman was smiling and appeared kind, but the young man had little to no expression.

That year, the Duncan Family's only son, Jeffrey, had just turned a week old, while she had just been born and was abandoned at the entrance of the church. If the lady of the Duncan Family hadn't found her, she might've frozen to death in the winter cold.

The Duncans' had saved her life and nurtured her, and everyone treated her as if she were a proper young lady, so she grew up with the best life she could possibly have.

The Duncans even gave her a husband like Jeffrey, who loved her even till death.

Fiona's eyes watered. She flipped to a random page of the photo album. A boy and girl who had already turned eighteen years old stood side by side, smiling with the same natural intimacy as before.

A caption was written at the bottom of the photo—'Fify's coming-of-age ceremony'.

The ink-blue fountain pen handwriting was clear and firm; it was his handwriting.

The name 'Fify' completely awakened a memory that had long been kept in the dust, and thousands of memories rushed back to her like a tidal wave.

All of a sudden, knocks sounded on her door.

Chapter 344 He's My Son

Coming back to her senses, Fiona wiped her tears away and asked in a muffled voice, "Who is it?"

After a long while, there was still no response. Fiona froze for a moment before repeating, "Who is it?"

It was already 1:30AM. At this hour, even if the guests had any problems, they would go directly to the front desk. They would only come to her when the front desk couldn't solve it. No one answered the door, so she was just thinking she had misheard when the knocks sounded again.

"Who is it?" She got up and walked toward the door.

The inn received all sorts of guests daily, and every room was built with a peephole, so she took a glance, but found that there was no one outside. She was just feeling suspicious when a dark shadow covered the door. Fiona's expression changed, and she stumbled backward.

The knocks on the door turned into loud raps. A piece of paper slid under the door and rested against her toes. That feeling almost made her scream.

On the paper was a sentence written in large letters, 'Fiona, is our son doing all right?'

Fiona's face paled abruptly, and she was in a daze for a long time. Her legs grew weak, and she fell to the ground.

Oliver was awakened in the middle of the night by the sound of knocking on the door. He was a light sleeper, so he wouldn't be able to sleep if there was any activity at night. When he heard the continuous knocking in the corridor, he became somewhat uneasy and rolled out of bed, then opened the door while still in his pajamas. However, there was no one in the corridor.

Downstairs, the receptionist on duty had dozed off. The door was closed, and the doorbell was quiet, so it seemed like no one had come in. Oliver hesitated for a while before walking to his mother's room and knocking on the door.

"Mom, are you asleep?"

After a moment of silence, from inside the room came Fiona's somewhat muffled voice. "It's so late. Is anything wrong?"

"Oh, nothing's wrong." Oliver breathed a sigh of relief. "It's just that I just heard someone knocking on the door in the hallway, but no one answered. Did you hear it?"

"Really? I didn't hear it. You must've misheard."

"Okay. Get some rest, then."

"Okay." Then, the sound of Oliver's footsteps gradually faded away.

In the bedroom, Fiona stood by the door under the dim light. Two meters away from her was the sofa by the window, and the man in his fifties was sitting on the sofa, a cold smile on his face.

"What are you afraid of? I've already met him. All these years, it must've been hard for you to raise our son alone, right? Why didn't you come to me?"

"Shut up."

Fiona interrupted him, a cold expression on her face. For fear of being heard, she lowered her voice. "Felipe, listen to me carefully. Oliver is not your son and has nothing to do with you."

"Oh?" Felipe raised his eyebrows, causing the wrinkles at the corners of his eyes to move, and the look in his eyes was extremely malicious. "That boy doesn't look like he was born around that year; he's a little too young. So, I guess the one from the Duncan Family is my son, right?"

"You wish."

Fiona gritted her teeth. "My sons have nothing to do with you whatsoever. Didn't you go abroad? Why'd you come back? Why'd you come to find me?"

"Your temper is still the same as it was back then."

The man sighed and seemed a little regretful. "You're too direct. You don't even give people the chance to exchange pleasantries with you. It's kind of hurting my feelings."

“Feelings? What feelings are there between you and me to talk about? You only wanted to be with me in the first place because you want the Duncans’ family fortune. How many years have you lied to me? You’re a scumbag.”

“You can’t say that. If it weren’t for me, how would you have found out that Jeffrey actually loved you so much? Didn’t you always want the kind of romantic love where the man would be willing to die for you? Although I didn’t do it, I inspired another man to do it, didn’t I?”

“You b*stard.”

At the mention of the incident back then, Fiona’s face was ashen, and her body was trembling. “You were the one who plotted the scheme back then, and Jeffrey’s death was also your fault, yet you still dare to come back.”

“Why wouldn’t I dare to come back?” Felipe sneered. “It’s been twenty years, and the litigation period of the case has long passed. Besides, I don’t believe that you’d actually have the guts to sue me.”

“You don’t think I’ll really do it, huh?”

“Do it, then. It’ll be best if it becomes so high-profile that the whole world knows that the high and mighty Young Master of the Duncan Family actually has no blood relation with the Duncans whatsoever, but is my son instead...”

Before Fiona could retort, the room door was violently pushed open, and the spare key that was inserted in the cylindrical door lock gleamed. Oliver strode in and rushed toward the man on the sofa while demanding in his deep voice, “Repeat what you just said.”

Fiona’s face was as pale as a sheet. She had forgotten that her son was a person with extremely sharp senses. She figured that she exposed herself when she coaxed him to leave just now, and she was certain that Oliver had heard her entire argument with Felipe.

Felipe stood up from the sofa, and there was a hint of contempt on his slightly wrinkled face. “Oh, you know how to eavesdrop. Quite capable, I’d say. Didn’t you already hear everything? What do I need to repeat?”

“Shut up.”

Fiona was extremely troubled, and she wanted Felipe to leave, so she shouted angrily, “Get out, or I’ll call the police!”

“Call the police?”

Felipe took a deep breath, and when he raised his head, he slowly exhaled and snorted, “I’m afraid you don’t have the guts to do that. You’d rather leave the Duncan Family with this little b*stard than ruin their reputation, wouldn’t you? Now, you’re trying to use the police to frighten me?”

Once Oliver heard his remarks, his expression changed abruptly. “My mother may care about the Duncan Family’s reputation, but I don’t. Where did you come from, you rascal? Do you think there are no police stations in Oreus?”

With that, he reached for his phone and was about to dial 911. However, Fiona stopped him.

“Mom—”

“You can’t.” Fiona snatched his phone, and she was almost out of breath from her anger. Barely calming down, she looked at Felipe and hissed, “What the hell do you want?”

At this point, Felipe’s lips curled up, revealing a grim smile. “So, you’re not stupid after all. This would be over if you had started off by asking that. Did you really think I was here to catch up with you?”

“You...”

Oliver wanted nothing more than to rush forward and give him a punch, but Fiona held him back in a death grip. From behind him came his mother’s gloomy voice. “Spit it out. What exactly do you want? But, let me remind you that I have nothing besides this inn, and I’m no longer a member of the Duncan Family.”

“20 million.”

Felipe’s equally gloomy voice rang out. “I don’t care if you’re still in contact with the Duncan Family. Within one week, I want to see 20 million.”

“Are you crazy?” Fiona stared at him incredulously, almost wanting to eat him alive. “Where am I going to find so much money?”

“That’s your problem.”

Felipe lit a cigarette, then squinted at her through the smoke. “If you can’t get the money, I’ll go to the Duncans and tell my son that his old man has been short of money recently and that he should take the initiative to be filial to me.”

Chapter 345 I’ll Bring It to My Grave

As soon as Felipe said that, Oliver responded first without waiting for Fiona to react.

“In your dreams!”

Oliver picked up the chair next to him and threw it at the man in front of him.

A loud crash sounded in the room, awakening the guests in the entire inn.

“What happened?”

“What’s that noise?”

“Do they have no concern for others?”

“.....”

“Who is it?”

At the entrance of the inn, the glass door was smashed by burly men holding steel pipes from outside. The girl at the front desk was so frightened that she got under the counter, and all the guests who came out screamed and fled back to their rooms.

“Let go of Oliver!”

Fiona was nearly screaming her lungs out, and she refused to let go of Felipe’s clothes.

With one hand, Felipe covered the bleeding spot on his head with a towel and shoved her away with the other, then said gloomily, “Originally, I planned to have a peaceful discussion with you, but now, it seems like that’s unnecessary. This kid will stay with me for a few days. If you bring me the 20 million after a week, I’ll return you to him in one piece. If you don’t, then don’t blame me for being hostile.”

Fiona gritted her teeth. “Felipe, you’re a monster.”

Felipe seemed to have gotten used to hearing such things, as he simply laughed coldly and replied, “You’ve just realized that now?”

With that, he left with the group of fierce burly men as they carried a weak Oliver away.

The group of people smashed everything in their path, leaving the entire inn in a mess as they left.

— —

...

It snowed again early the next morning, so the roads weren’t in a good condition.

It was almost noon when Courtney arrived at Citron Studio. The studio had just opened, so she didn’t have much financial matters to handle at the beginning of the year. She just came over to take a look and announce the news about the mid-winter holiday.

“Everyone, you’ve only got another half month of hard work before you can all go on vacation.”

As soon as Courtney said this, all the employees buzzed with excitement and disbelief. “President Hunter, you’re not kidding, right? Doesn’t the mid-winter holiday start later?”

Courtney gave a bright grin.

“If I only let you guys off then, would you really have time to go back to your hometown? Half of your time would be wasted on the road. If you leave work without enough energy, you’ll be even more drained when you come back for work. It’s better to give you twenty days for your break and let you avoid the heavy traffic. Afterward, come back and perform well for me. “

“Well, of course we will.”

Someone took the lead to speak up, and the sound of assurances sprang up one after another like mushrooms after a rain, making the atmosphere in the whole studio lively.

“Okay, let’s get back to work. That’s enough flattery. It’s not the holidays yet, so hurry up and carry on with your work.”

Bill’s expression was as nasty as usual, and as soon as he spoke, everyone seemed to have lost their voices as they hurriedly avoided him and returned to their respective workstations.

On the way back to the office, Courtney teased Bill. “Bill, I think you’re more like the boss of this company than I am. How about I sell the company to you?”

"I'm not interested."

Bill remained calm. "I don't want to do anything besides designing. Even if you give it to me for free, I don't want it."

"Dream on."

Courtney glanced at him. "Why would I give you the company?"

Bill looked at her with an indiscernible expression.

"Then, why did you give the Hunter Group to Sunhill?"

Hearing this, Courtney was stunned, and she frowned.

"You already know about that?"

"It's not hard to find out, is it? Who doesn't know about Sunhill's acquisition of the Hunter Group?"

"And you don't think it's a good idea?"

"I don't have any opinions." Bill's expression was plain and emotionless as usual. "I just think that, if you want Citron Studio to develop well, you might as well take over the Hunter Group. You're a major shareholder, so if you really want it, it's far easier than letting Alexander acquire it."

"Really?"

Sitting down behind the desk, Courtney smiled.

"I don't think it's easy. The Hunter Group is full of corruption. I've worked there for a period of time, and even though Alexander helped me, I often felt powerless. So, we must always take our time when handling anything. Nothing happens overnight."

Seeing that she had made up her mind, Bill didn't continue persuading her and simply handed her documents to sign.

"It's fine if you've already made up your mind. You should have nothing else to handle until the holiday after signing this, so you can prepare for the wedding with peace of mind."

"There's nothing to prepare for the wedding." Courtney had a complicated look on her face. "I want to go to Oreus these two days; can you help me hide it from Alexander?"

Bill had never dealt with Alexander before, so he readily agreed.

"....."

"Okay. I'll bring it to my grave."

Fiona was speechless upon his reaction.

After Fiona and Oliver left the hospital, Courtney's phone calls to Oliver had gone unanswered. When she asked his school, she found out that he had already handed in his final paper, which meant that he was all right, but she was still a little worried.

Fiona was definitely hiding something about what happened 20 years ago, and Oliver must've had his reasons for his firm attitude.

At the entrance of the hospital the other day, she heard what Oliver had said to Alexander, and even until today, she still got the jitters. "One day, you'll regret what happened today."

That wasn't a warning; it was more like a reminder.

When she opened the door upon getting home in the evening, Courtney was taken aback by the scene before her.

In the corridor of the bedroom, Alexander seemed to have gotten a folding ladder from somewhere, and he was standing on it. The ceiling above his head was covered with small pink wind chimes, which looked beautiful.

"I only asked you to put a 'Newly Married' sticker on the wall." Courtney walked over and looked up helplessly. "What are you doing with these decorations?"

Alexander was already done, so he got down from the ladder and clapped his hands, then said sternly, "Gale sent me a lot of videos of people picking up their brides from their homes. I saw that when other people got married, the bride's house would have all these things. Besides these decorations, there are also balloons, but it seems like that one should be done later because the air will leak."

"Where did I get the good fortune to have such an attentive boyfriend?"

Courtney had on such a wide grin that her eyes had turned into slits. She grabbed Alexander's waist like a koala, then followed him from the bedroom door to the kitchen, not letting go even when he washed his hands.

"I only hung that piece because I was afraid you'd fall if you did it," Alexander suddenly said after washing his hands. "You can do the rest yourself since you can reach them."

"I'm busy."

Courtney blinked. "Can you do it for me?"

"You're busy? Busy with work?"

"Yeah." Courtney avoided his gaze, then said guiltily, "I'm super busy. The company's going to be liquidated at the end of the year, isn't it? I have to work overtime too, so I don't have time to accompany you during the day."

"I'll be waiting for you at home every night."

"That won't work either." Courtney hurriedly refused. "My aunt said that you can't live with me before marriage. You should go back to your own house."

Alexander frowned. "I can just go back the night before the wedding."

"Oh, that's not good." Courtney suddenly held his hand. "Actually, I'm very reluctant to part with you too, but those are the rules, so you should just agree."

Alexander remained unmoved.

Courtney pursed her lips and used her trump card. Twisting her waist slightly, she shook his hand and dragged her voice.

“Hubby...”