

Surprise 501

Chapter 501 Like a Lost Lamb

After asking around the nearby markets, Courtney then started to check the nearby stall one by one until she finally found the familiar silhouette in East Borough Market on Vine Street an hour later.

Not far away, she could see a middle-aged man fish a fat carp out from the tank before descaling before he took out its guts and placed it in a black plastic bag. Handing it to an old woman, he took the money at the same time to complete this motion in one swift motion.

After receiving the money, the man was so busy that he did not have the time to wipe his sweat as he quickly attended to his next customer.

Standing from afar, Courtney watched all this in silence. If not for the recognizable tattoo on the back of the man's neck, she would have a hard time linking this honest and hard-working man to the same evil man that walked out of Old Master Duncan's room.

Taking her phone out, she then took a photo of him.

Not long after that, the man received a phone call only to hang up with a heavy expression. After telling the person beside him, he removed his waterproof overalls before heading to the market's exit.

Just as Courtney was about to follow him, her phone rang at this moment, which surprised her, after which she shut her phone off while rejecting the call at the same time.

From the west exit of the market was a small park nearby. As the man hastily walked there, he would occasionally turn back and be alert as he looked around, making Courtney, who was hiding and sneaking around, nearly lose him.

After he had crossed the road, he went into the park's side entrance. While she hid under the thick greenery, Courtney finally knew why the man came.

She immediately took her phone from the bag only to realize she had shut it off, just as she wanted to take a photo. Yet, it was this slip of attention that gave the two people the chance to disappear.

Feeling a sense of unease, Courtney was about to leave when she felt a person appear behind her. After that, a dull pain spread from behind her head as she tried hard to properly stand up. She still slumped onto the ground in the end.

Right before she lost consciousness, she could see from her blurry vision that a shadow approached her and took away something from her hands.

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Eric, who came out from Sakura Restaurant, reported to Alexander upon getting into the passenger seat.

“A female waitress said that Mrs. Duncan came here an hour prior, but she didn’t manage to find the person she was looking for. On top of that, she said that she might have gone looking at a nearby market...”

As Alexander used his hand to support his forehead, his rationality had been overwritten by panic since he wanted to turn the whole city upside down just to locate Courtney and Tina at any cost.

“Eric, you...”

Just as Alexander was about to take action, a message was sent to him, making his phone ring.

“The shrubbery at the west entrance of Vine Park.”

Reading this message, the few words were enough to make his blood boil.

“Go to Vine Park.”

When Alexander found Courtney, she had already been dragged to the deepest parts of the park. Finding her first, Eric then pointed to an unconscious Courtney leaning against a huge rock before he shouted, “She’s here!”

As Alexander stopped at that moment, his tall stature suddenly slumped in the sea of greenery.

Eric, who had been ecstatic to find her, was shocked when he turned back to see that Alexander’s bloodshot gaze had turned into one on the verge of tears. The man’s usually cold expression was replaced with one that looked like a missing child that was feeling helpless and lost.

“President Duncan—”

Standing on the spot in a daze, Eric then looked at Alexander approaching Courtney with heavy footsteps before leaning over to carry her, as the blood flowing from behind her head dyed his white shirt red.

“To the hospital.”

Alexander almost could not say anything with a hoarse voice.

Inside the ward of the Melrose City Hospital, Linda had her hands in her coat with a stern expression. Shaking her head, she asked, “What did Courtney get herself into now? Why does trouble never stop looking for her after the day you two married?”

Alexander, who was beside her, shuddered a bit upon hearing this as he recalled his recent memories. Now that he thought about it, it was not just after they had married as it seemed like nothing had gone her way the moment he met her.

“You should go on first.”

Staring at the pale face on the bed, Alexander had regained his usual composure without any hint of panic and unrest on his face.

Nodding, Linda was about to exit the ward when she suddenly turned around and stated, “Courtney might not wake up tonight, but you sure need a rest.”

Her words fell on deaf ears as it echoed around the room. After looking at the statue-like man, she then paused for a second before leaving.

Caleb was waiting for her with two lunch boxes at the entrance when she was scared by the bodyguards that were positioned beside the door by Alexander. Clutching her chest, she then stared at both of them before saying, "I think you two should go in and persuade him to rest. Your president seems to be on the verge of collapsing. After all, he has already arranged for such a tight security detail, so what does he have to be afraid of?"

Linda then took the lunch box and happily smiled when she saw the butter prawns she had been craving for.

Placing his hand around her shoulder, Caleb walked with her in the direction of the doctor's office before his voice echoed in the long hallway of the hospital.

"I heard something that happened between them. If you've heard it, then maybe you wouldn't be so puzzled too."

"Then, how about you tell me that?"

Caleb's words were unheard as they faded into the distance.

As the two disappeared from the hallway, the door to Courtney's ward was opened once again with Cameron coming in with teary eyes and an apologetic look while holding her hand from under the blanket.

"The doctors said that it was nothing major as the person who attacked her had controlled their force."

"Who is it and why?"

Alexander did not know how to reply to her as he still did not find any useful leads, making him tighten the hands that were on his legs until the veins popped.

"She must have been attacked because she managed to find something, but..."

"But what?"

"The person who attacked her should be the same person that sent me her location."

This was something that Alexander did not understand, as every incident that happened seemed to be targeting the Duncan Family or Courtney. From the incident where Natasha fell down the stairs to Tina going missing, these were all very cruel and direct methods. Only this time, they let Courtney off, even though this was the perfect opportunity to strike.

Cameron frowned upon hearing all this as she paced around the ward with unease and even cursed quite a lot. Frustrated by her actions, Alexander was about to say something when he saw Courtney turning her head in distress.

Hurriedly, he then grabbed her hands.

"Alex..." As Courtney mumbled, she then suddenly opened her eyes. Seeing a light above her, she felt a bit dazed.

“Courtney.”

Cameron and Alexander calling her name at the same time made her snap back to reality.

“It’s Raymond.”

The moment she opened her eyes, Courtney could feel the sweat in her palms as she kept recalling the scene she saw just before she collapsed.

Chapter 502 The Nightstalker

“Courtney, you’re awake!”

Staring at her, Cameron had a hint of happiness before it was replaced with anger as she crossed her arms and chided Courtney. “I thought we had agreed to wait for Alexander to return before discussing. Why did you run off by yourself just as I happened to doze off? You were lucky this time. If anything else happened, then I would’ve died with you!”

Waking up to hear Cameron scolding her like this, Courtney blinked somewhat innocently with her pale lips.

“I’m sorry, Cameron. I was wrong.”

As Alexander coughed lightly, he glanced at Cameron impatiently before saying, “You’re a bit loud.”

“I—”

In disbelief, a livid Cameron then pointed at her own nose.

“Nothing would’ve happened if you hadn’t dozed off,” he added calmly.

“Alexander Duncan, are you trying to find excuses for your wife right now?”

He did not reply to this.

Since Courtney saw that the situation was worsening and felt that it might escalate, she quickly changed the subject before Cameron lost her cool.

“Even though I did pay the price, it’s not like I didn’t gain anything either. I saw Raymond in the park too. Looks like this person is involved in this whole mess.”

Thinking back, Courtney then started to piece together some incidents that did not seem to be correlated, such as the reason for Raymond’s sudden appearance at the press conference to criticize her company and the fact that Jimmy was also adopted by the World Vision Orphanage.

As she recalled all these, she gripped Alexander’s hand while speaking in a hurry, “I think that Tina’s disappearance might have something to do with him.”

Nodding, Alexander stood up to arrange the pillow for her to sit up gently before reassuring her, “Just let me handle this. Before you recover, I’ll handle everything for you.”

He did not scold her, and he did not even show her a hint of anger either.

However, this only served to make Courtney feel even more guilty as Tina was on her mind when she went out this afternoon. Even though Courtney had promised not long ago to be by his side forever and for always, she did not consider Alexander's disposition one bit.

If this small incident was enough to make her lose all sense, then what damage would she cause to him if the assailant did not end there?

"I'm sorry, Alex."

Holding his hand with hers, she opened his hand up before tracing his palm with her fingers. She wanted to remind herself how grand his love was to her, and that she was not willing to lose this feeling again.

As a lovey-dovey atmosphere started to spread from between them, Cameron interrupted as she looked at Alexander's breathing becoming more ragged.

"Hey, hey, hey, there's still a living, breathing person here. Could you two at least acknowledge my existence?"

Hearing this, Alexander replied, "It's getting late. I'll let Eric send you back first."

Cameron, who saw Courtney stick her tongue out to her, gave an expression that went along the lines of Courtney betraying her before she started to walk to the door. Yet, before she left, she called Gale.

"Honey, come and pick me up. I need you."

Then, Cameron turned and commented, "You two are disgusting."

Slamming the door, she left with the sound of her high heels striking the floor filling the atmosphere.

When they saw this, Courtney and Alexander both laughed out loud before he stood up and gave her a peck on the forehead.

"Just rest for now. I'll keep you company."

Since she knew she could not chase him away, she only nodded but suddenly remembered something as she was about to lie down. Then, she hurriedly asked, "Where's my phone?"

"I have it."

Alexander took out the phone from his pocket and gave it to her, after which she quickly opened her gallery only to find the previous photos she took had been deleted. She already expected this, so she placed the device on the table.

"What's wrong?"

"I felt someone taking my phone when I was unconscious. Looks like it wasn't a hallucination. The photos I've taken are all gone."

After he nodded, Alexander then opened their conversation page.

"The location was also sent from your phone."

This shocked Courtney as she looked at him with an inexplicable expression only to recall something.

“At Sakura Restaurant, I said I was the man’s sister only to find out that coincidentally, he really did have a younger sister. Besides that, they apparently have quite a close relationship. I think that this could also be a lead.”

He frowned as he replied, “I’ll go and check it out.”

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As Melrose City saw rapid development within these few years, innumerable skyscrapers appeared out of nowhere thereafter. Yet, nobody cared to notice that smacked dead in the center of this bright city was an old residential unit that was spared from demolition.

The six-story residential unit was completely surrounded by the various taller buildings as its faded walls revealed depressing black-colored molds under it. Combined with the cramped stairwell and the smell of mold everywhere, this place did not fit in with the vibrant city at all.

It was in this cramped space that Mike Winom’s face was illuminated by the light coming from outside. Staying in the darkness, his deep gaze had a terrifying look to them.

Pinching the soon-to-be finished cigarette, he subsequently took a very long drag with all his might before throwing it into the ashtray that was almost full.

Clink. Tilting his head subtly, he lit another cigarette as the light revealed his troubled expression.

Finally, his phone screen brightened as he unlocked the screen with peering eyes, revealing a conversation log in front of him.

‘It was a perfect chance today. Why didn’t you do it? Don’t tell me that you became soft-hearted?’

‘There were people there. It wasn’t wise to do so.’

‘Alexander Duncan will soon find you. You don’t have much time.’

‘I know.’

‘Did Raymond get exposed?’

‘Yup.’

‘Looks like we can only cancel our original plan then. I’ve some other arrangements that I would like you to do. Raymond has messed up, so he needs to pay for his mistakes. I will keep my promise after this matter is done.’

Staring at the phone, Mike was seemingly hesitant at the message as the smoke from the cigarette covered his face and masked his features.

Then, he started to type on his phone. He repeatedly wrote and deleted his words before he replied, ‘Okay.’

Extinguishing the final cigarette, he went to the balcony and dialed a number.

“Are you asleep, Lila?”

“Nope. Why didn’t you come over today?”

“I was delayed at work and afraid that I might disturb your rest.”

His excuse only elicited a nonchalant response from the other side, as the girl tugged on the blanket with a heavy heart.

The two suddenly went silent.

After a long while, Mike suddenly forced himself to say, “I might have to leave the city these two days, so I’ll visit you tomorrow. What do you want to eat?”

“I want some cream puffs.”

“Cream puffs again?” As he laughed out, he dotingly replied, “Alright. Cream puffs, it is then. I’ll go queue at Maxmillian’s Cream Puffs tomorrow.”

Before he hung up, Mike’s smile disappeared as he stood on the old balcony leaning over while looking at the city with a dazed expression.

“I’ll be rich soon. You just have to wait for a while. It’ll be very soon.”

Keeping his phone, he then felt the night breeze blowing him with a hint of iciness in it, making him awake all of a sudden. Turning around, he then went to his bedroom and laid on his bed.

He never switched on the lights because he was already used to the darkness and loneliness. Staying alone in this big city, he wore a disguise and feigned like he was like any other man when in fact, his heart had been hollow for a long time to the point where he could only seek solace from this place.

He knew he could never walk out of this building and city ever again.

Chapter 503 You Are Hugging the Wrong Leg

After communicating with Alexander, Josh packed his things in a hurry to return, but it was at this time when something went wrong with a deal that was already settled. So, Josh could only stay back and address the matter while faxing the information to Eric.

Once Eric had compiled all the information, he then drove to Purple Peak Mountain estate on the west side of the city using GPS. When he boarded the bus at the estate’s entrance, it took him ten minutes to reach the courtyard.

Angie and Hannah were playing tennis not far away. Both of them were exhausted and radiated the energy only a teenager had, making Eric feel hot-blooded.

Coughing lightly, he then waved to Alexander, who was sitting at the spectator spot.

Alexander was wearing a pair of sports attire today that showed off a different temperament and elegance. After seeing Eric, he pointed at the bus and walked over.

“Mommy, you can’t be biased.”

Josephine and Jimmy were each hugging Courtney's legs while climbing up on her as if she was a slide at the playground.

Turning around, Alexander said sternly, "Do not bully my wife."

As Jimmy slid down from Courtney, Alexander watched as the boy cautiously hid behind Josephine before leaving in satisfaction.

The bus then drove toward a tea plantation deep inside the mountain as the autumn wind blew, bringing along the refreshing feeling of nature with it. On the way here, Eric's expression had turned from astonishment to disgust after what he saw.

"President Duncan, when did you buy Purple Peak Mountain?"

There was silence on Alexander's part. Just as he felt speechless, the bus stopped. Shooting an inexplicable glance at Eric, Alexander then got off.

Now that they sat in a gazebo built in the middle of the plantation, both men regained their usual stern demeanor, making the atmosphere somewhat heavy.

"This was what Josh sent me. Five years ago, he found out about an important lead. Lucian apparently died of liver failure five years ago, but autopsy reports indicated that they couldn't find out whether it was due to poisoning or it occurred naturally. From this, we can deduce that someone probably did this to him since only long term ingestion of microdosed poison can cause this."

Alexander did not say anything as he leaned on the chair with his arms crossed. Staring at the table, he hinted at Eric to continue.

Eric cleared his throat and added, "Josh then managed to find a type of drug that caused the same death as Lucian once the person used it for three to five years. Also, an autopsy could never find out the cause, but this drug is banned in our country, as one can only purchase this through the underground network abroad. The kicker is that Susan had been purchasing this drug continuously for the last three years before Lucian passed away."

After stating that, Eric then passed a document to Alexander.

"This was Susan's personal transaction. She bought this every six months, totaling up to her buying this five times in the span of three years."

As he leaned forward, Alexander took the piece of paper. Yet, for some reason, he felt it was extremely heavy as he knew a simple deal was not enough to charge Susan for murder. So, he leaned back once again.

"What else?"

Eric then hesitated before observing his expression and stated, "About the other leads... Because you did not let Josh continue to investigate, so he..."

When Alexander looked up with a cold gaze, his heart then skipped a beat before the anger in his eyes subsided. Thinking back, he had stopped the investigation, even though he did not know why he did that in the first place.

Seeing this, Eric quickly added, "But, we've obtained something after following Susan these few days. She had been meeting with this person, Anon Jenkins, quite frequently. He's a lawyer."

"A lawyer?"

Alexander was puzzled at this.

"Yes. I've investigated this person. He came from the same village as Susan and they were even an item when they were younger. They still kept in contact these few years after Lucian's death and seemed very intimate recently."

Alexander's face darkened when he heard this as Eric paused before continuing, "They met with Lucian's insurance agent at a cafe yesterday. After that, we did not obtain anything useful from the agent either. Since I thought that this definitely has something to do with his insurance money, I slipped a listening device inside his bag when Anon went to the toilet. We should have a basic view of the situation within these two days."

He then placed a couple of photos in front of Alexander.

Glancing at them briefly, Alexander stood up and tore those to pieces before tossing the shredded pieces onto the table.

"Continue investigating."

"Understood."

Peering, Eric then exited the gazebo with Alexander.

When they came back from the plantation, Alexander's solemn expression was already gone. Gale and Cameron, who had arrived earlier, were substituting Josephine and Hannah as they had a heated battle.

As he approached them, Alexander felt his leg becoming heavier. When he looked down, he saw a tanned face gazing at him.

"What are you doing?"

With an icy expression, he then marched forward only to find the child following his actions. As a result, he conceded and carried the child to the open lunch table while warning, "You've hugged the wrong leg. Only Courtney likes abandoned children."

After stating that, he then left Jimmy beside the table. Jimmy looked like he did not understand Alexander's words and spaced out after sitting down for a while. Then, he took out the digital drawing board that Courtney gave him and started to seriously draw on it.

Courtney had arranged for an open barbeque, so they all crowded over when the servants hung the meat on the grilling rack after being attracted by the delicious smell.

Josephine and Ethan, who had just returned from the artificial beach, were sent to wash their hands by Cameron while Jimmy had kept his drawing board away. Huddled in a corner, he was enjoying his food and closely watched Josephine before accidentally glancing at Gale, converting his gaze of envy to one of alert.

Sitting by Jimmy's side, Alexander subconsciously added more meat to his plate.

At the table, Gale looked at Jimmy before lowering his voice to ask, "So, this is the child you brought back?"

Courtney nodded.

"Didn't he have mania with a slight tendency of self-harm? He doesn't look like he suffers from that."

The current Jimmy was completely different than when he was first picked up from the hospital. Now, he did not need to rely on tattoos to differentiate people as he could also get close to most of them.

"Mr. Elijah has hired a professional child psychologist from abroad to treat him. Actually, Jimmy's case wasn't as serious as we thought," added Angie. Ever since Jimmy was discharged from the hospital, she was the one taking care of him. After she went to school, she would still find any chance she could to come back, which was why the person Jimmy relied on the most was her.

At the mention of this, Courtney then looked at Gale with an unhappy expression.

"Was this why you made Josephine and Ethan play at the beach to leave Jimmy all alone?"

Cough, cough, cough. "Let's just eat."

Courtney exposing Gale nearly made him cough his lung out in surprise.

Chapter 504 He Knew Her True Feelings

After eating halfway, Josephine and Ethan went to play while Jimmy disappeared from climbing down from his chair.

"Jimmy, let's build some sand castles together. If you don't know how to, I can teach you."

When she saw that Jimmy followed her, she gave a slight frown as she stopped and reached out to him.

Exchanging glances with her, Jimmy was full of joy after carefully observing her. On the other hand, Ethan was obviously not happy at this development as he crossed his arms while pouting, looking as if a formidable enemy had arrived.

While Josephine was holding hands with Jimmy, Ethan intentionally slowed down and followed them from behind. Turning around a few times, Jimmy then reached out to him after hesitating for quite a while.

"Hmph. I'm not friends with you."

Pouting, Ethan did not want to get closer to him.

"Ethan, hurry up."

Seeing Josephine urging him, the little boy still ran over and held her left hand in the end.

"Ethan, did you not wash your hands after eating the wings? It's so oily."

Ethan did not answer this.

Soon, the trio arrived at the beach. Before they had even built a castle, Ethan was already playing around and accidentally knocked over the sand princess Josephine made while they were running around. In a fit of rage, she chased them with the toy shovel, making them run in fear.

The joy they were having made Ethan and Jimmy forget about their little spat earlier.

On the contrary, the adults were slowly enjoying their meal when Josephine came running to them all of a sudden just as a plate of roasted meat was being served.

“Daddy, Mommy, it’s bad. Ethan has fallen into the water and Jimmy jumped in too.”

Josephine ran until she was out of breath and fell onto the ground around 100 meters from where the adults were and did not rise to her feet. Seeing this, Alexander ran as fast as he could and carried her up before giving her to Courtney, who had followed him.

Gale was scared out of his wits as he almost felt his heart stop on the way to the beach. When they had arrived at the pool beside the beach, they found the two children already floating to the middle of the pool. Ethan was slowly sinking while Jimmy was running out of strength even though he was still flailing his arms.

Jumping in at the same time, Gale saved Ethan while Alexander rescued Jimmy.

On the other side, Courtney had already informed the family doctor as the doctor arrived soon after the children were sent back to their room. After diagnosis, it was found that there were no major issues on both of them.

“You had saved them in a timely manner, so their conditions are still relatively stable. It’s just that they had ingested some water in their lungs. Also, watch out and make sure they don’t catch a cold.”

Even the usually strong Cameron was teary-eyed now. Gale, who could not keep calm, was chased out the room by her and was scratching his head helplessly.

Then, he saw Alexander coming down in a clean set of clothes, making him blurt out, “I had said not to let Ethan get together with this Jimmy. Who knows where he came from? Look at what he did in this short span of time! If anything really happened to him, Cameron would kill me.”

A still drenched Gale was dripping water, no matter where he walked, making Alexander a bit unhappy as he shoved a set of clothes to him.

“Whatever it is, change your clothes. Then, we’ll talk.”

“I’m not in the mood to change right now, Alexander. I’m just worried whether Cameron would change her husband.”

Sitting on the genuine leather sofa, Gale then made a wet patch in the shape of his bottom soon enough as Alexander watched with a frown.

“Both Ethan and Jimmy fell into the pool, so you can’t just blame it all on him.”

“Alexander—”

Finding what he heard hard to believe, Gale saw Alexander hinting at his body while saying, "Courtney is very protective of Jimmy right now, so you best not let her hear what you said. Otherwise if she throws a fit, she might make you pay her for a new sofa. Then, you'll really be at a loss."

"Aren't you looking down a bit too much on me? It's just a set of couches..."

"Well, it isn't that expensive. It's worth about half the house you have in the city area."

"Is this sofa made out of gold?"

Hearing this, Gale immediately shot up from the sofa and ran upstairs to change. When he came down, Cameron and the others had also come out.

Acting obediently, he then raised his right hand and swore beside Cameron, "I'm sorry, my wife. I will follow Ethan wherever he goes from now on and also tell him to stay away from Jimmy."

Rolling her eyes at him, Cameron heard Josephine defending Jimmy as Josephine said, "Mr. Langley, it was Ethan who fell into the pool when he tried to pick the shovel up himself. It has nothing to do with Jimmy. Besides, Jimmy only jumped in because he wanted to save him. Sir, I think you have some prejudice against Jimmy."

While pouting unhappily, Josephine stared at Gale with big eyes.

"Hear that? I told you that we should've sent our son to swimming lessons, but you didn't want to. Otherwise, this wouldn't have happened. You're even blaming Jimmy in this," Cameron snapped angrily at him.

"Josie also said that Ethan and Jimmy are getting along well now. Gale, I think you're too overprotective," Courtney added.

Before he could even react, Gale had found himself the common enemy of the people there as he glanced at Alexander to plead for help. Yet, it was at this exact moment that Alexander's phone rang, making Gale watch his one and only savior walk away.

Walking to the side hall, Alexander saw that it was Eric calling him.

"President Duncan, we've news on Raymond. He went to meet that man at a cafe this morning. After coming out, he had been driving toward the south side of the city. I think that Tina might be there."

"Inform the police and keep track of him. I'll be there immediately."

His tightly furrowed brow finally relaxed a bit as Alexander found Gale still not out of trouble when he returned to the living room. Looking through the chaotic situation, he managed to meet Courtney's gaze.

As if they had exchanged information, she could see the comfort and joy in his eyes. Understanding something from his gaze, she then felt tears rolling down her face uncontrollably.

Courtney blocked out the noise and heard a single voice instead. "I got a lead."

It was his voice. It was these few short words that cleared Courtney's cloudy heart.

“What? You’ve got a lead on Tina?” Gale, who had seen the silver lining, asked sincerely while shifting the flow of the conversation.

Nodding, Alexander then embraced Courtney, who was crying like a child by now, much to everyone’s shock and disbelief. After so many days, the emotions in her heart had finally burst as she cried loudly against his chest.

After the incident had happened, Courtney carried on with work and life as usual. Even when Cameron was feeling strange about this, only Alexander knew what she was thinking about and knew his woman’s pain.

“Wait for me,” Alexander said with conviction while kissing Courtney’s forehead.

Chapter 505 I’m Out

Ever since the day Raymond returned from the park, he had been in constant fear as he kept messaging Mike to make sure that everything was alright, fearing that they might find out Mike was involved.

With a cigarette in his mouth, Mike had been perusing the messages he received from Raymond. It was from asking politely to texts with curses in the end, which only made him smile at this. After noticing that Raymond’s message was, ‘I’ll drag you down with me,’ Mike then replied with a, ‘10.00AM. Cafe Solace.’

Raymond had been waiting for him at the cafe since 9.00AM. These few days, he found himself not having any appetite and staring out into space often. When Mike arrived, he had already finished two pots of tea.

“What is the meaning of this? Are you thinking of burning the bridge now?”

Mike had barely sat down when Raymond slammed the table using his hands, shaking the pottery. Without panicking, Mike then poured a cup of tea and sipped from it leisurely.

“Do you think that I wanted to meet you for tea?”

Raymond’s veins were about to pop out of his head.

“Raymond.” Putting the teacup down, Mike then smiled somewhat devilishly before remarking snarkily, “In the beginning, it was you who actively sought our help in setting up Citron Apparel all because you wanted the donation. In the end, you didn’t get the donation either due to you losing Jackie. After that, as a show of apology, you promised to help us kidnap Tina...”

Mike intentionally said the final sentence slowly, scaring Raymond and making him stand up. Wishing that Mike could shut his mouth, Raymond finally relaxed a bit upon ensuring that nobody was near them.

Snearing, Mike then continued, “So tell me, how is this me burning my bridges?”

His words made Raymond annoyed as he was angry. “Whatever! I’m not doing this anymore! I’m out!”

“Are you sure?”

“What am I not sure about? I was going to use this donation to make the orphanage be selected as the example for the province. This opportunity would’ve propelled me to the next level. Now, excluding that next level, I’m about to go into the next life! You guys are just gangsters!”

As Raymond grew angrier, Mike frowned upon listening to his words as he recalled unwanted memories.

Before he was thirty years old, Mike had been living like a gangster and more as he would be even more violent and bloodthirsty. This was why even though he had an ordinary face, the special aura he emanated differentiated him from normal people.

“Alright.” He then slowly continued, “If you’re sure about stopping this, we won’t force you either. You can go back and release that brat now. From now on, the things that’ll happen will not concern you, but the donation that we’ve agreed on will be revoked too.”

“Are you sure?”

Raymond had a hard time believing that things could be solved this easily.

Mike smiled.

“Of course. But, if you dare say even a word to anyone about our dealings, this is what you’ll end up as.” While saying that, Mike had raised the teacup in his hand up high. Letting it go, a loud shatter was heard as it reverberated around their ears, making Raymond tremble in fear.

“I won’t. I won’t say anything.”

Trembling, Raymond had almost curled up into a ball.

Still smiling, Mike then shook his jaw. “Go then. What are you waiting for?”

He had just finished his sentence before Raymond ran out.

As Mike slowly poured himself a new cup, he drank from it while observing the white car that was following Raymond from before with an inexplicable expression.

After finishing that cup of tea, he set the money for the tea and the broken cup before walking out leisurely.

Driving away from the cafe, Raymond made a beeline toward the south side of the city as he accelerated at breakneck speed without even noticing the car tailing him.

Raymond’s old house was there as there was another ancestral home in the city, which Tina was being kept in.

He had asked the relatives there to help send food to the house everyday, stating that a daughter’s friend had gone crazy and suffered from a delusional disorder. So, he could only place her there under extreme circumstances. As the people there were all considered naive, they did not suspect much either.

When he arrived back at the old house, the woman from next door had just sent lunch over and greeted him passionately.

“Are you here to see the child, Raymond? I think that the child is quite sick as I always heard her saying that she is kidnapped everyday I sent food to her. How about you bring her to the city to get looked at?”

Wiping the sweat from his head, Raymond then smiled and nodded. “I was just about to bring her back. Her father has found a hospital to treat her.”

“That’s good.”

Seeing the woman enter her house, he took out the keys to open the door. Inside, Tina had heard the commotion for a while now, so she took a rolling pin from the kitchen and hid behind the door before beating the person that came in, making him plead for mercy under this sudden assault.

“Stop hitting me, I beg of you. I’m here to let you out.”

However, why would Tina listen to him? After beating Raymond senseless, she took the chance and ran outside, but she had not predicted the neighbors to congregate and blocked off the stairwell to stop her from leaving.

Tina panicked and was on the verge of crying when she yanked a woman’s arm and begged. “I was captured by this man here. I was kidnapped. Please, help me call the police. My father will come save me.”

That woman looked at her pitifully, obviously treating her words as gibberish, as they forcefully dragged her inside the house.

“Mr. Newman’s going to bring you to the hospital to get treated now, so just stay quiet and don’t run around. No one is kidnapping you.”

At that moment, Tina felt what despair was as all the words were stuck in her throat since only more and more people dragged her back to where Raymond was.

Even though Raymond, who had crawled back up, was livid, he could only touch the bump on his head and say gently, “I’m going to send you back to Melrose. Send you back home.”

He emphasized the last four words.

Tina did not believe this at all, as which kidnapper would send her back after trying so hard to kidnap her? So, she kicked the man’s crown jewels.

Rolling on the floor in pain, he could not hold it in anymore and raised his hand, about to slap Tina, but before he could manage to do that, a sound that he feared reached his ears.

It was the siren of a police car.

“What happened? Why would there be a police car here?”

As the crowd started to feel uneasy, Raymond’s face was completely pale. Looking left and right, he ran straight for the staircase. Since the traditionally designed houses had staircases on the outside, he had already climbed onto the outer railing of the staircase before anyone could react and jumped while closing his eyes.

“Ahhhh!” There was a terrible shout.

After finally breaking free from the crowd, Tina ran to the staircase only to see that Raymond had limped away and drove off.

“Tina.”

All of a sudden, she thought he heard Alexander’s voice. As she turned around, she could see a tall silhouette standing in the middle of the staircase as the backlight made him seem a bit unreal. Maybe such a vision was caused by the tears welling up within her.

Tina trembled as she found herself finally having the courage to relax a bit after tensing up for ten odd days. “Daddy.”

Running right into his embrace, she felt a sense of safety and happiness she had never felt before enveloping her.

Chapter 506 A Guilty Conscience

Tina had already fallen asleep on the way back. On the way back, Tina had already fallen asleep. Hearing her mumbling right before she slept, Alexander knew that she had not dared to sleep or eat for the duration that she was kidnapped. When she was tired, she would take a short nap by the door and boil some water when she was hungry. It was only if she was starving that she would take a bite or two of the food delivered to her.

Alexander’s calm gaze began to darken upon hearing this as he waited until Tina was in deep sleep before calling Eric.

“I want you to find Raymond faster than the police.”

Then, he hung up after saying that without giving the other party any explanation or questions that he could, not caring whatsoever how helpless Eric was feeling.

“What? If I were to do it faster than the police, why don’t I just join them instead?”

Even though Eric grumbled, he still put his foot to the floor and drove like mad to the central business district of Melrose City.

Back at the Duncans’ ancestral home, Tina was still asleep as Courtney had gotten an IV drip from the hospital. Her pale complexion only improved after the drip was finally used up.

At around 8.00PM, Alexander received a call from Eric, saying that he had found Raymond.

Eric was obviously hesitating because he did not know how to convey the news, so he paused for a bit before adding, “I did manage to find him, but... he’s dead.”

Alexander was not all shocked by this.

After hanging up, he took a coat from the wardrobe before going out. His presence vanished together with the fading sound of the engine in the courtyard. Standing on the first floor balcony, a visibly fatigued Courtney adjusted her blouse.

Raymond had died in his own apartment. By the time Alexander arrived at the scene, the police had already cordoned off the area and even though the entrance of the apartment was wide open, one could still detect the thick smell of gas inside.

Eric, who was being questioned by the police at the side, was the first one to discover this and informed the police thereafter.

“I came to look for Mr. Newman due to some personal affairs. When I arrived at around 7.00PM, I knocked on his door, but nobody responded. So, just as I was about to leave, I felt something off as I smelled a whiff of gas. That was why I kicked the door down to find him already unconscious. Then, I called the cops.”

Scratching his hair, Eric had messed his slick and shiny hair into more of a bird’s nest as the image of Raymond foaming at the mouth with rolled eyes still frightened him.

While Eric was being questioned, Alexander used this chance to stand at the entrance to take in the general situation. Looking inside, he saw that there were a lot of pills scattered across the floor and he knew they were sleeping pills at one glance. Seemed like he really was determined to kill himself, even taking sleeping pills before opening the gas.

“Officer Lennox, I found something!”

A young police officer suddenly came running out of the apartment with a computer in his hands and an excited gaze.

Hearing this, a middle-aged man turned around and smacked the officer’s head with a newspaper, saying, “How many times have I told you to be calmer? Steady yourself!”

“I found something big, though!”

“What did you find?”

“There was a will in the deceased laptop. It seemed like he was forced to commit suicide by a company called Citron Apparel.”

Officer Lennox was the young police officer’s superior and did not say anything.

As the young officer’s voice was obstreperous, Alexander had heard it all, which caused his expression to darken. He was stopped by the authorities just as he wanted to step forward.

“This is a restricted area. You cannot enter.” After that, the said officer looked at Alexander suspiciously.

“What are you doing here?”

At this point, Alexander was getting a bit impatient, but Eric, who had just finished giving his statement, spotted him and went to embrace him in an unexpected twist of events.

“Alex, you’re finally here. I was so scared. You are here to pick me up, right, my brother?”

When Alexander heard those words, he had goosebumps as he lowered his head and stared fiercely at Eric. Since this was his first time being embraced by a man like this, he was feeling a bit queasy inside.

“He’s your brother?” the confused police asked.

Seeing this, Alexander squeezed out the stiffest smile anyone had seen. "Yes. Did he finish giving the statement? I'm here to pick my brother up so that we can head back to eat."

After that, they left the building.

Moments after getting into the car, Alexander then removed his coat and threw it to the side in disdain. "Brother? You couldn't have made up a less convincing tale if you tried. How do I look like your brother?"

Feeling wronged, Eric scratched his already messy hair and smiled. "It was in the heat of the moment, so please simmer down, President. I was afraid that if you clashed with the police, they might suspect that you had other motives—"

It was at this point when Eric noticed that he had slipped up, so he shut his mouth in a hurry.

The aim of Alexander wanting Eric to find Raymond before the police did was easy to see, but no one would have predicted Raymond to turn up dead at night when he had just escaped in the afternoon.

"But this doesn't add up..." Eric then thought of something. "If Raymond really chose to take the easy way out, then why did he still risk it and jump down from the staircase to run away?"

Alexander then shot him a glance. "Who said that he committed suicide?"

"He didn't?"

Seeing Eric tussle his hair into an afro, Alexander knew that he must be fatigued, so he chased the man out of the passenger seat. "I'll drive home by myself. Do the same too. Take the day off tomorrow. I'll see you back at work the day after tomorrow."

Finishing his statement, Alexander disappeared into the traffic of Melrose City, leaving Eric to take in what he heard just now as he was silently grateful to his employer.

As Alexander had expected, all the big news agencies had released articles and reported on how Citron Apparel was breaking the law and using illegal dye the next day and how after the dean of the World Vision Orphanage complained to no avail, so in a desperate measure, he kidnapped the daughter of the apparel company. After being exposed, he was then forced to commit suicide.

To this, Eric had contacted the police, but they had confirmed that it was not them who leaked this information.

After the news came out, it was undoubtedly another blow to the company as even though Citron Apparel had received a certain amount of evidence on their side, the latest incident was starting to tilt the opinion of the masses.

Yet, this was nothing as the true cause that made Alexander so mad was the slander inflicted upon Courtney and Tina.

Sitting in his office, he sifted through all the negative comments as his blood boiled while calling Eric without hesitation.

Eric, who was about to sleep again when he had just woken up, was thoroughly awakened by his phone. Knowing that he needed to give up on sleeping in, he also awakened from the lie about him having a day of rest by Alexander.

“Make those news agencies that are trending right now rescind their articles within the hour. From now on, forbid those agencies from ever working with us again.”

“Understood, President Duncan.”

Eric started to look through the trending articles in a sleepy state, only to feel the same way after reading all of them.

The use of such dirty, disgusting words to describe a child who had been saved from a kidnapping made Eric feel revolting, after which he left a comment before getting up to work. ‘Sheeple. You keyboard warrior.’

Within one hour, all the articles concerning this topic had disappeared. Yet, not only were the comments not suppressed, they even got more out of hand as some dissatisfied individuals started to use this to comment about the power imbalance in society and how twisted humans truly were.

This had also affected the date of inspection for Citron Apparel since the original date was meant to be next week, but it was brought forward due to the comments blaming the mismanagement of the regulatory authorities. This was why they were forced into producing results as quickly as they possibly could.

After confirming the latest time of the inspection, Courtney called Ruby to tell her to prepare all of the necessary information, samples and inventory. Once she had instructed all this, she went into the bedroom only to stumble upon Tina looking at her in a pair of thin pajamas while standing at the balcony’s door.

Chapter 507 This Is Our Secret

“Mom, did I sleep for very long?”

Not waiting for Courtney to reply to her, Tina had already hugged her and rubbed herself on her chest.

Courtney patted Tina’s head while mumbling, “Yes. You did. You slept for a long time.”

As Tina could no longer suppress her emotions, she silently cried on Courtney’s shoulder because she saw a familiar silhouette that made her a bit absentminded when she stood there earlier.

Gurgle. Gurgle.

“Mom, I’m hungry.” Feeling her own stomach, Tina smiled sweetly at her mother.

“I’ll call your dad to bring Jordan back. We’ll have dinner together, so do you have anything you want to eat?”

Pouting, Tina then ordered a restaurant’s worth of food.

When night came, the table was filled with all kinds of dishes as among them was grilled lamb chop, spicy beef soup and what not were all bought by the servants under Alexander's order.

Tina, who was also the happy-go-lucky type, looked like everything that happened earlier was like a dream after she woke up since she was wolfing down the food.

Even though Courtney knew how Tina felt, she chose not to expose her daughter since a mother knew her child the best. She knew that Tina had fully inherited her stubborn trait.

"Why are you looking at me like that, Jordan?"

Holding onto a piece of lamb chop with an oily mouth, Tina saw that Jordan was looking at her with a weird expression, so she took a piece of tissue and wiped her mouth.

Jordan quickly looked elsewhere and continued his meal while seemingly blushing.

Even though the siblings did not share everything among themselves like five years ago, he still felt responsible for his sister as he had decided upon this when he was twelve.

"How about you stop attending university? Come to Sunhill. I'll guide you."

As he absentmindedly ate something, Jordan tried his hardest to make this important statement as casual as he could.

Tina, who could not resist the delicious lamb chop, refused him with a mouth full of meat. "I'm not interested in managing a company. I'm more interested in studying."

Jordan did not continue to force her either as he replied, "Then, from now on, I'll pick you up after school."

"But—"

"No buts. Just finish your meal."

Even though Tina wanted to reject Jordan, he had outrightly refused her. After that, she figured that it was rather nice to have her brother pick her up, so she stopped talking.

After dinner, Tina was resting on the couch while watching television with a huge belly and saying to Courtney lazily, "Mom, my phone was thrown into the river by Raymond. Could you get a new one for me tomorrow?"

"Sure."

Pausing for a split second, Courtney then continued to arrange her documents before agreeing to Tina's words. Not seeing anything wrong, Tina noticed Jordan's head peeking from behind his laptop and looking at her in a daze.

"What are you doing, Jordan?"

She climbed toward him on the sofa, but before she could lay her eyes on the screen, he had already slammed the device shut.

"Stocks. You won't understand."

His proud demeanor was just like his father. Watching her brother head upstairs with his laptop in hand, Tina blinked before saying to Courtney, "Mom, is Jordan in a relationship?"

"Huh?"

"I feel like there's some incredible secret hidden in his laptop," Tina stated before she stood up and stretched, after which she headed to the study located in the back of the courtyard.

The whole study was illuminated by only a desk lamp as half of Alexander was shrouded in darkness while he stared emotionlessly at the neverending comments on his phone, anger filling his gaze.

Knock, knock, knock.

Tina suddenly came in, making him close his screen immediately and showing a gentle smile.

"I have something I want to talk to you about."

Pulling a chair up, she then sat in front of his desk before drawing circles on it, not knowing how to start the conversation all of a sudden.

Taking his glasses off, Alexander looked at Tina's pale face through the dim desk lamp before asking calmly, "Do you want to tell me the incident where you bumped into Susan?"

"Wow, Dad, can you read minds or something?"

Tina found this a bit hard to believe while nodding profusely as this father of hers became even more impressive in her opinion.

Tina's sincere praise lifted Alexander's mood a bit as he smiled unknowingly.

"I know that you saw Susan in the dessert shop just before you went missing. You two haven't met each other in five years, though, so even if you did bump into her, you wouldn't stalk her for no reason unless you overheard something." Alexander went right into the topic as he wanted to know what Tina had heard to make her follow them.

"I heard that she was talking about Grandpa's insurance payout back then. They seemed to have said that Grandpa had bought accidental death insurance, but the insurance company did not pay them due to Grandpa dying of sickness. I think they were planning on how to take the money."

Thinking back, Tina frowned as she could remember that the company had paid the money, but she thought that she might have thought it wrong due to her still being so young at that time.

"They kept discussing how they could claim the money, but they suddenly left in the middle of the conversation. I wanted to hear what else they would say, so I followed them. It was when I followed them into an alleyway that I was rendered unconscious. When I woke up, I found myself in that old house."

Alexander's gaze darkened. "So, the one who made you unconscious was Susan, but the one who kidnapped you was Raymond. You and Susan happened to bump into each other, but Raymond had been waiting for you."

Remembering that Raymond was dead now, Alexander loosened his fist and comforted Tina. "I've already made quite the progress on the investigation, so I think that I'll be able to solve this puzzle soon. You just need to keep this secret between us and not let your mother worry any further."

Tina blinked in acknowledgement. "Don't worry. This is our secret."

She then stood up and exited the study.

Heading back to her room, Tina found herself tossing and turning, unable to sleep. One of the reasons was because she had slept for too long while the other was terrible memories would come to her once she closed her eyes, making her very frustrated.

Tossing and turning some more, she sat up from the bed and took her blanket and pillow out the room.

Knock, knock, knock.

Jordan closed his laptop immediately upon hearing someone knock on his door.

"Who is it?"

"It's me, Jordan."

Getting off the bed, he then opened the door to be greeted with Tina holding her pillow and blanket while looking at him pitifully.

"Jordan, can I sleep in your room?"

Looking at the pitiful Tina, Jordan was unable to reject her as he went inside to open his wardrobe, taking out a spare blanket and setting it on the floor before moving his own pillow to the said blanket and laying on it.

"You should sleep on the bed," he said stuffily.

Chapter 508 My Sister Needs to Go Home and Change

The next day, Tina was already awake and ready to go to school. Even though Courtney wanted to persuade her to rest for a few more days, she was afraid that her daughter might recall unwanted memories, so she did not stop Tina either.

After the family had their breakfast, Alexander silently waited for Tina to grab her bag while Courtney suddenly understood his intentions and felt a lot more relieved.

Just before she went out, Alexander took Tina's bag as his voice echoed in the living room. "From now on, I will send Tina to school and Jordan will be responsible for picking her up."

After that, Jordan and Alexander walked beside her and entered the car.

Jordan's car had already been waiting for a long time at the entrance of the school by the time evening came. When the bell rang, a bunch of teenagers wearing uniforms ran out at the same time. As he was playing sudoku on his laptop, he still did not hear the sound of the door opening even after two rounds.

Jordan's driver, Malcolm Gorn, had half of his body stuck out of the window as he looked for Tina before asking in worry, "Little Master, the students have all almost gone home now, so why isn't the Little Miss coming out? Could it be that something has happened to her?"

This sentence made Jordan frown as he had already opened the door while keeping his laptop away. Stepping out, he wore a dark expression. "I'll take a look."

While walking in the main hallway to the direction of where Tina's classroom was, Jordan caught a lot of girls taking a second look at him on the way. If he was still in school, he would be in middle school by now, but as he had been following Alexander for these few years, it resulted in an aura that did not match his age.

As Jordan walked past the girls, he could hear a loud commotion outside the hallway of the classroom from far away. He unknowingly quickened his footsteps when he heard foul language.

Standing at the entrance of the classroom, he saw Tina curled up in the corner and drenched with a patch of water surrounding her. In front of her was a chubby boy who threw the red bucket on the floor and bellowed, "Since you're always acting so high and mighty, why don't you just die there?"

Then, a lanky girl appeared in front of Tina with her arms spread open as her face was red with anger. Even though she was still moving backward against her own will, she still mustered up the courage to protect Tina.

"Fetty Link, don't think that you can bully the opposite gender just because your family is a bit rich. Who doesn't know that you failed to court Tina and are exacting your petty revenge right now?"

Fetty snorted at this.

"Sherlane Dunn, I really see you everywhere. Why are you butting into our conversation? Do you think that I would like such a girl with such a shameless mother? You stupid b*tch, you must be dreaming!"

After he said that, he laughed loudly, making the boys following him laugh out loud too.

Sherlane was on the verge of crying after his words, but she did not have the guts to make a move. Looking back, she found Tina trembling and grinding her teeth as if she was about to explode.

"Calm down, Tina. Don't listen to his nonsense."

When she saw that the situation was heating up, Sherlane quickly hugged Tina with the fear that she would rush straight at Fetty. If that happened, then Tina would lose for sure.

Just as Sherlane was about to lose control of Tina, she heard a clunk coming from behind her followed by a shout from Fetty.

When she had discovered what happened, he was already drenched in water with the red bucket covering his head. However, before Fetty could remove it, Jordan had already sent him flying with a kick.

A dumbfounded Sherlane saw a handsome boy kicking Fetty, making him cry out in pain for his mother, as he rolled on the floor. At that moment, her heart was beating wildly with her eyes shooting love signs.

Rubbing his somewhat reddened fist, Jordan glared at those boys without a word, causing them to scamper out of the classroom.

Turning around, he then looked at Tina with pain in his heart.

Her brash personality before meant that she was not one that would be easily bullied. but today was different as the thing that defeated her was not the bucket of cold water or Fetty's fat fists. It was a thing that she had not encountered for the twelve years of her life—a human's cruelty.

Tina, who was still twelve, could not digest those toxic comments that stemmed from a person's darkest desires.

"Tina Hunter." Jordan had a glacial tone as he looked at her.

Looking up with bloodshot eyes, Tina slightly relaxed upon meeting with her brother's gaze.

"Let's go home."

Taking off the light blue suit jacket, he held it in one hand while extending his other hand to Tina.

Tina managed to stand up with Sherlane's help, but a wave of warmth traveled from her fingertips to the rest of her body when her cold fingers touched Jordan's palm.

"What are you all doing?"

Jordan had covered Tina with his suit jacket and was planning to leave the classroom with her when a person with a round body blocked the door all of a sudden.

It was a fifty-year-old man with a beer belly in question. Wearing a blue shirt that seemed to almost burst at his belly button, he placed his hands behind his back and looked very imposing.

A frightened Sherlane hid behind Jordan while mumbling quietly, "We're done. It's the head of discipline."

While peering at the man, Jordan had no change in his expression as he was not familiar with the school rules, so naturally, he did not know the fear this person instilled in the students. "The head of discipline?"

Before Jordan could ask any further, he felt a chubby person rush past him toward an older chubby adult.

By the time he looked closer, Fetty had already hugged the rotund teacher and started crying. "Someone hit me!"

At that moment, Sherlane mumbled again, "Oh god, we're done. The head is Fetty's uncle."

"Who amongst you hit Fetty?"

"I did."

The livid teacher was made angrier at Jordan's nonchalant gaze. "Which class are you from? Call your parents here now!"

Tightening his grip on Tina's hand, Jordan said impatiently, "My sister needs to go home and change now, so if you have anything, just tell me. I can deal with my sister's matters."

The head of discipline nearly fainted from anger. "This isn't concerning your sister. It's concerning you right now. Is this how you talk to your teachers?"

"Then, how should I talk to you?"

Sherlane felt her heart almost leaping from her mouth, but this time it was not because of love, as she tugged on Jordan's shirt from behind.

"Speak more respectfully. The head of discipline likes people praising him."

Jordan paused before he replied, "I heard you like people kissing your *ss, right? I apologize, but kissing *ss is something that I don't know how to do."

She almost fainted upon hearing this as it was without surprise that the teacher would shout the sentence that every student feared. "Hand over your parents' phone number!"

A thought then flashed across Jordan's mind before he smiled and nodded. "If you really want my parents to come, then I have nothing to say, but I think you should also call that brat's parents too."

Now that Fetty had the teacher's backing, he obviously became a lot braver as he spoke with a jiggly jaw, "You all can wait to be expelled now!"

Not caring about any of this, Jordan turned and called Alexander while reminding to be faster after a short conversation. "Also, bring a new set of clothes for Tina."

"Okay."

Through this short reply, one could already hear Jordan's unexposed anger. Hanging up, Alexander seemed to have an almost unnoticeable smirk.

Chapter 509 The Darling of the Duncan Family

"Are you all savages? Look at how badly you've beat my son!"

Half an hour had passed since school was dismissed. Inside the office of the head of discipline, a middle-aged woman with thick makeup slammed the office table while her fat face wobbled as she screamed.

Lowering his head, Fetty was acting like an absolute saint while being as pitiful as he could be.

Hearing this, Jordan then looked at Fetty. Besides the bruises on Fetty's face, Jordan did not land hard blows. At least if he had known that this would happen, he would have kicked Fetty a few more times.

Seeing Jordan act so nonchalantly made the woman almost die of anger. "Expel him! Why are you still letting him be a student here?"

"It was Fetty who attacked me first."

Tina had composed herself by this point. Even though a puddle of water had formed under her and her hair was still wet, which made her look like a mess, she had a clear gaze that indicated her unwavering support for Jordan.

Naturally, the woman did not trust her words as she slowly crossed her arms with a smug face.

“So, you must be Tina Hunter? Even after you and your mother’s scandal is awash on the Internet, you still dare to show your face at school, huh?”

Before the woman could say more vicious things, Tina had stepped back as her hands formed into fists and were shaking slightly.

Jordan rose to stand in front of Tina to protect her. Just as the woman was high on her horses and wanted to continue with her words, they heard the door being opened with a bang.

As the office door was kicked open, tens of men in suit and tie rushed in as the first one had a bucket in his hands before he splashed it on a dazed Fetty with everyone still not reacting to what had transpired.

Standing at the side, the woman was also splashed by the water since her pair of red high heels were soaked. Not only was she wide-eyed, she was also in total disbelief.

“Who are you all? What are you doing?”

The men then parted from the middle and left a walkway. Slowly appearing from the crowd, Alexander leisurely adjusted his cufflinks.

“I heard that you were looking for me?”

Ignoring the haughty woman, he landed his questioning gaze on the head of discipline who was drinking tea at that moment.

As his pupils dilated, the man spit his tea back into his cup after seemingly being scared out of his wits. It was after a long time that he snapped back to reality while wiping his mouth with his sleeve.

“Yes. Are you... one of Tina’s parents?”

“I am. You’ve found the right person.” Alexander replied coldly, “Are there any problems?”

The teacher then wiped his sweat. “It’s like this. Tina’s brother had beaten one of our school’s students. H-He also had a very arrogant attitude. So, for such a serious case as fighting, I, as the head of discipline, have the right to ask the parents to let them know about this.”

While nodding, Alexander first handed the clothes he bought at the mall over to Tina before sitting down on the sofa.

With a solemn expression, he waited for Tina to exit the office before he slowly opened his mouth. “Now, I would like to hear what you know about this as the head of discipline.”

Adjusting his glasses, the teacher then tried his best to display a neutral attitude. “Things went down like this. Fetty and Tina did have a clash today after school with Fetty having the upper hand. So, when Tina’s brother had rushed there, he beat Fetty without any explanation. Even now, you can see the child has some obvious bruising on him.”

Following the direction of the finger, Alexander glanced at Fetty, who was shaking like a diesel generator after being splashed with water once again and not daring to even raise his head.

Seeing this, Alexander revealed a look that seemed to agree with the teacher. "Then, how do you think that this matter should be solved?"

"It's quite simple." The head of discipline pushed on his glasses again and seemed to sit straighter than earlier. "As long as Tina's brother apologizes to Fetty and you pay for the expenses for Fetty's hospitalization, we'll consider this incident to be a thing of the past."

Alexander nodded again at his words. Seeing this, the teacher smiled smugly, but before he could smile any wider, he heard a deep voice.

"What if I don't agree?"

"Um... For students like Tina, we can only expel her, but as you know, our school is the best in Melrose City. So, if Tina gets expelled, I'm afraid that no other school would accept her from here on out."

"I understand." Standing up, Alexander patted any invisible dust from his attire and said, "Then, Tina will be going through with the transfer procedure."

He then headed for the exit with the head of discipline still in a state of shock. He slowly turned around after stopping. "Oh, right, I heard that you're Fetty's uncle, right?"

"What do you mean by this?" The teacher suddenly became alert.

"Not much. Just a reminder that the moment Tina gets transferred, you will be fired by the school on accounts of malfeasance. As for you..."

He pointed at the trembling boy.

"As my daughter, if she really wanted to go to school, I, Alexander Duncan, can simply build a school for her whereas for you, Fetty Link, I can guarantee personally that no institution in the whole of Melrose City will dare to accept you, be it from middle school all the way to university."

After stating that, he then left.

The head of discipline looked like he had been struck by lightning as the light in his eyes faded while he mumbled, "Alexander Duncan. Is he the Alexander Duncan?"

Taking a deep breath, Jordan replied, "Yes, he is the Alexander Duncan."

"Hey, handsome boy, don't leave first. We can still talk this out. We didn't know that Tina was President Duncan's daughter. We know our mistakes now, so what will it take to appease you?"

Composing herself, the chubby woman grabbed Jordan's arm and stopped him from leaving, but his expression only darkened and he paused for a moment. Then, he responded, "I'll have to ask Tina about that. After all, she's the darling of the Duncan Family."

As he fell down the seat, the head of discipline was full of cold sweat upon hearing this. Did I just offend the darling of their family?

Chapter 510 The Matching Couple

Tina saw a lot of people crowding at the plaza on the second day she went to school. Pushed by the masses, she noticed that Fetty was standing at the center under the flagpole and shouting, "Tina, I'm sorry!"

He was obviously shouting this unwillingly as the increasing crowd made his face redder and redder. Thinking that this was meaningless, she pushed the crowd apart and made her way to the classroom.

Just as Tina sat down, Sherlane approached her and explained, "Fetty is scared this time. I heard that he'll be transferred to the fifth class in two days. Apparently, he did not want to come down this morning and that it was his mother who forcefully dragged him down. He will also read out his apology letter to you at Monday's flag raising ceremony."

Tina was confused by all this. "And how do you know?"

"The principal stopped by with the head of discipline to say this. The head of discipline even scolded Fetty until he cried. I think he only transferred Fetty to the fifth class on purpose due to him having offended a lot of people there."

This turn of events baffled Sherlane too since she could not sleep after arriving home yesterday with the thought that Tina was in for a stern punishment.

Yet, she did not think that Principal Yorn would bring the head of discipline as well as Fetty's mother to take Fetty out of the classroom.

Suddenly, Tina recalled something.

When she was in Jordan's room yesterday, she opened her eyes at midnight only to see a dim light coming from a laptop beside her bed. She then voiced her opinion of quitting school with a hoarse and timid voice, but the laptop screen went dark soon after when Jordan replied to her words.

"You can quit school, but don't do it because of others. When trouble finds you, escaping is not a solution."

After everything returned to silence, she heard him continuing in a gentle manner, "Do you remember you used to protect me when I was being bullied when we were in kindergarten? Back then, I thought that I wouldn't let others bully you when we grew up."

"Hey, what are you thinking about?"

Sherlane's face closed in on her. "Is the handsome person from yesterday your brother? Could you give me his phone number?"

Tina had been taking her items one by one from the bag when she was snapped back to reality and stared at Sherlane in shock upon hearing this. "What do you want?"

Sherlane suddenly blushed. "Didn't you know how dreamy your brother looked when he was fighting because of you yesterday? If we are friends, then asking for his phone number isn't too much, right?"

Stuffing her emptied bag into the drawer, Tina thought about Jordan and Alexander's similar looks and traits before reminding her, "It's exhausting to date someone like my brother. I think that you and Sunny actually look quite good together."

Rolling her eyes, Sherlane happened to see Sunny Cole entering the classroom with a meat bun in his hand.

"Hey, Sherlane."

Sunny was waving at her when his nose suddenly became itchy and made him sneeze, which caused the meat in his mouth to splatter on Sherlane's uniform.

"Sunny, could you be more disgusting?" Sherlane almost cried.

A pale-faced Sunny quickly wiped it with his oily fingers only to immediately show a palm stain on her white uniform. "This... is an accident. It's an accident."

Seeing the situation not in his favor, the boy quickly threw the bun away and disappeared.

...

That day, Angie was preparing for a debate in the school when a senior suddenly tapped on her shoulder and pointed beside her.

"Hey, your phone's ringing."

When Angie saw who the caller was, she stopped for a while before answering the call as her expression sank rapidly.

"Understood. I'll be there as quickly as I can."

After hanging up, she quickly packed her things before proceeding to head out of the meeting room.

Just as she was about to leave, she bumped right into the vice-president of the debate club, Casey Jenkin. Casey was wearing a navy blue suit complemented by her pair of heels that made a clear sound as it landed on the ground. She reached out and blocked Angie's path while emanating a strong smell of perfume.

"We're about to start the meeting, so where are you going?"

Casey did not have a friendly tone as she even looked at Angie with hostile intentions.

Angie ignored her and was about to dodge Casey, but Casey had already made it clear to block the path. She sidestepped to where Angie was about to go—a clear indication that she was not letting Angie leave this easily.

"I'm taking leave. I'll send a message to Samuel later with my reasons."

Even though Angie maintained a neutral attitude, Casey was pissed upon hearing this as she thought Angie was intentionally making her mad.

"Samuel? When did you become so close to him? Isn't your tone a bit appropriate, seeing how he's your senior?"

Not denying or agreeing to her words, Angie replied, "You can ask him that then. Also, please tell him about me taking a leave for today."

After stating that, she walked on and pushed Casey aside, after which Casey hit the wooden door.

"Angie Hunter!"

Shaking with anger, Casey turned only to see that Angie had already left in a hurry. After pausing momentarily, she then took her phone out and contacted someone.

'I seemed to have sprained my ankle. Please take me to the infirmary. Also, we can discuss the details of the debate contest on the way.'

Moments after sending the message, Casey seemed to have calmed down a bit before she announced to the members in the meeting room with pursed lips.

"Not all members are here today, so we'll be pushing back the date of the discussion. Everyone, please return and await further notices."

Just as she stated that, the whole meeting room started to go into heated discussion, as someone even slammed the table and questioned, "Why didn't you all say that sooner? I've been waiting here for an hour and even rejected my date."

Hearing this, Casey then walked back to the meeting with a smug face.

"Are you a freshman?"

Stunned by her words, the girl then nodded.

"Hm, a freshman. You can also learn from Angie Hunter, who has ignored the announcements of the student board to deal with her personal affairs and caused everyone to waste their time waiting around for nothing because of her. Of course, the precondition is you have to have the skills to win people over like her." After Casey said that, she lowered her crossed arms and disappeared from their vision, with only the sounds of her clacking heels left and the young girl in a daze.

The girl then tugged on her roommate's sleeve, who was sitting beside her. "What did she mean by that?"

Her roommate showed a compassionate look through her sleepy gaze. "It means that she has vented her anger on you by asking these types of questions."

Confused, the girl still did not know what she meant. "I still don't understand."

"Apparently, this Angie Hunter character is the only freshman who is being actively scouted by our senior, Samuel. Casey is only targeting her because of their special relationship."

"Hasn't Angie just entered the university for a few months, though?"

"I only know on the first day of orientation, Samuel had participated in the welcoming event and the last student he welcomed was Angie. That time, the student board had captured a photo of them two. You can still see it on the university's forum. It has thousands of comments by now. They actually look quite nice together..."

They had finished packing their stuff while talking.

“Let’s go and get some fried chicken at the west exit.”