

# Surprise 511

## Chapter 511 That Unknown Man

At Warmorth Hospital in Melrose, Angie had a cold gaze as she kept repeating the scene from earlier.

“Are you Regan’s relative?”

“He’s my uncle.”

“I’m afraid his condition is... not very good. He has advanced stomach cancer. It has been some time since he has been on compassionate release for treatment purposes. He kept refusing us to contact his family, but we have only done it now because...”

The man in the police officer uniform then paused for a bit before changing the subject.

“You should take a look at him. He seems to have something he wants to tell you.”

As the hallway of the hospital emanated wisps of cold air, Courtney tapped on Angie’s shoulder, pulling her back into reality.

“You should go in and have a look.”

Looking up with tears in her eyes, Angie nodded.

The condition of the hospital was not in a great state either as the ward had a slightly moldy smell, making it seem somewhat rundown. Standing at the door, she looked at the man in a daze.

He was struggling to breathe through his mouth while watching the lamp on the ceiling with dull eyes.

Back then, everyone used to call him ‘fatso’ because as his name suggested, he was on the broader side in terms of physique. However, one could only see a shadow of his former self as what lay there was only skin and bones.

This scene made Angie unable to hold back her tears as she covered her face and started to cry.

Hearing a sound, Regan could not help but move his eyeball before shifting his body and head to face Angie, who was still standing at the entrance of the ward. “You’ve come.”

His ghostly face had a weak smile on it and she could even hear that his voice was not as powerful as before. “I’ve come.”

Biting her lips, she then calmed down somewhat.

After all, this was her uncle. Even if he was still alive, it did not really matter even if she only saw him a few times for the rest of her life. Now that she knew that he was about to die, a chilly aura had still gripped her tightly from within.

“Come here.”

As he beckoned, Regan also pointed to a chair beside him. Even though it was such a simple action, it seemed to have taken him a lot of strength to do it. While sitting down beside him, Angie started to tear up again.

"I dreamed of your mother. I've had recurring dreams about her lately. I dreamed that she kept blaming me, blaming me that I brought her to that place. She said that she had missed out on the opportunity the first time, so why did she have to miss out on a second time? She still blames me even now. When I look for her soon, I think she'll ignore me."

Even at this stage, he still gave himself a mock smile.

Angie did not really understand his words since she rarely heard her uncle mention anything about her mother, as her memories of that woman from when she was still small was slowly fading away.

"It wasn't all your fault."

"No. I made many mistakes. I locked her up in her room, not allowing her to look for that man. I even dragged her to the hospital..."

While recalling the past, Regan suddenly coughed badly and tightly closed his eyes due to the pain of his organs being ripped apart while the veins on his forehead popped.

"Stop talking, uncle."

A helpless Angie automatically poured half a cup of water from the jar beside, but Regan only felt nauseous as he reached out to stop Angie, spilling all the water on the floor.

"I even dragged her to the hospital for an abortion back then, but your mother kneeled down and gave me a kowtow to beg me to not do this. Only then did I bring her out. At that time, she already had you for six months and you were a fully-formed baby."

Regan continued on stubbornly while Angie kneeled down to clean up the puddle. Stopping for a while, she then continued her action.

It was a loud yet calm voice.

"Why?"

"Because she was still in university back then. Our Colt Family finally produced a university student. We couldn't let a child ruin our future. But then, I came to realize our mistake as we saw how sweet you were when she gave birth to you. Everyone who saw you adored you."

When she heard him saying that, she had already sat up with a straight posture with a chill emanating from her body. This was the first time in eighteen years of her life that someone had brought up her origins. Yet, obviously, there was a character missing from the story.

"About that man..." She hesitated as she did not know how to define him.

"I've never seen him nor know who he is, but I figured that you have the right to know about this. I've been thinking about this for the last few days, thinking about whether I should tell you this or not. Then

again, I kept dreaming of your mother and I think that she would have liked you to know that she always loved him.”

Angie only felt her mind becoming blank as all kinds of thoughts inside clashed.

Evidently, Regan had said a bit too much as he was lying there, looking very exhausted. Looking at the drawer beside, he stated, “Open the second drawer and have a look.”

Listening to his instructions, Angie then opened the second drawer on her right hand side only to find a small box lined in blue flannel. The pattern of the flannel seemed a bit faded, giving off the aura that someone had kept it for what seemed like eternity.

“This was your mother’s most beloved item. After giving birth to you, she had never worn it since. You should take it.”

When she heard his voice, she slowly opened the box only to see a gold necklace inside. It was a very exquisite piece as the pendant was shaped like the sun with a smiling face carved on it. It was still considered a rare sight ten odd years ago.

On the way back to the hospital, Angie seemed very lifeless as the atmosphere in the car was very heavy. Ignoring the sudden message from her phone, she turned around and looked out the window.

“He’s your uncle after all. I think you should give Elijah a call.”

“Okay.”

Angie’s soft reply made Courtney swallow her words. As Angie’s fingers absentmindedly moved across the necklace on her, she suddenly felt a shortness of breath.

Courtney found something off when she observed Angie’s expression.

“Is there anything?”

“No. It’s nothing.” Angie smiled. “It’s just that there’s a lot of things going on in my university, so I’m just a bit tired.”

The moment she returned to her dorm, she fell into a deep sleep. When she reopened her eyes, it was already dark as she felt for the phone before doing anything else, only to call the number that she had been wanting to do so.

She had a lot of things she wanted to say. All the troublesome matters she wanted to tell a single person, Elijah.

More accurately, she wanted to pour her thoughts onto him.

The phone rang for ages as the other party stared at it for a long time with a cold gaze before proceeding to answer it.

“Hello?”

Stunned for a second, Angie did not know what to say. Even though it was just a short greeting, she was still able to quickly discern who the person was on the other side. Lilian? Why was Lilian answering Elijah's phone?

It was at that moment that cold sweat coated Angie's back.

"Hello, is this Angie?" Lilian sounded very calm as if it was also her job to pick up any calls meant for Elijah.

"I'm looking for Elijah."

"Oh. Elijah is actually taking a shower now. I can help you tell him anything you want to say."

"It's fine."

Without waiting for Lilian to reply, Angie quickly hung up with the feeling that her heart was about to burst out of her chest.

Chapter 512 Not Quite Similar

The mobile phone screen went dark and the surroundings immediately became dark again. Angie's heart was inexplicably calm as she allowed the darkness to swallow her.

After thinking about it, she tapped on the phone screen and saw that the clock on the screen read 9.15AM. The corners of her mouth curled up into a self-deprecating smile. Due to the difference in time zones, it was time for Elijah to get up to take a shower before breakfast.

Yet, they still had breakfast together.

The screen that had just darkened suddenly lit up again. She stared at the message that was sent for the third time today on this phone before tapping on her keyboard to reply.

'Where is it?'

...

At a restaurant somewhere in Manhattan, Lilian watched the little boy feeding the pigeons through the square of the window with a slight smile on her face.

When Elijah came out of the washroom, she had already quietly deleted the call records on his phone. The phone was placed in its original position and everything seemed to be in place.

He raised his wrist to look at the time as he sat down again.

"I have a meeting to chair in a while. Is there a reason for you to look for me?"

When Lilian noticed the impatient look in his eyes, she couldn't help the bitter feeling welling within her. Before she could say anything, the phone on the table rang again.

This made everyone's heart skip a beat.

Elijah frowned. He overlooked Lilian, sitting on the opposite side, looking much more relaxed after catching a glimpse of the caller ID on the phone screen.

“Courtney.”

“Did Angie call you?”

“No.”

On the other end of the phone, Courtney was leaning on the balcony on the second floor with the wind blowing across her face. The strong wind blew her voice away, making it hard to understand her. When she heard Elijah’s response, the worry in her eyes deepened.

“Angie’s uncle is critically ill. I accompanied her from the hospital today, so I thought she would call you because she wasn’t feeling too good.”

Elijah couldn’t help but frown when he heard this. “I see. I’ll give her a call.”

He hung up the phone as soon as he finished talking, seemingly in a hurry. Then, without waiting for Lilian to speak, he rose to his feet, dialed a number, and walked out of the restaurant.

“We’ll talk on the phone if there’s anything you want to say.”

He had only left this sentence for her before she watched him stride away.

She laughed at herself mockingly before continuing to eat breakfast in front of her.

None of Elijah’s calls to Angie got through from 9:30AM to 12:30PM. Finally, after many attempts, he called his assistant to book him a flight before trying for the last time.

“Hello?”

This time, the call was finally connected, but the voice from the other end of the phone didn’t belong to Angie.

Samuel stared at the name ‘Mr. Elijah’ that was lit up on the phone’s screen and patted Angie on the back. However, she just curled her body before continuing to sleep in a more comfortable position.

After a moment of hesitation, he decided to answer the call.

“Where’s Angie?”

Besides Samuel’s voice, the background was filled with chaotic noises and music. Elijah didn’t have to think to know where they were, and he couldn’t help but let his anger seep into his tone.

As Samuel thought that this Mr. Elijah was Angie’s uncle, so he responded respectfully. “Hi, Mr. Elijah. I’m Angie’s classmate. We are having our alumni reunion dinner tonight and Angie drank a little too much. I’ll be responsible for sending her back to her dormitory later, don’t worry.”

Drank too much?

Elijah raised his eyebrow as indecent pictures began to flash across his mind.

He had witnessed Angie getting drunk twice—once at his birthday party and the other time at a restaurant with that kid. After these two times, he had not been at ease with her.

His face turned dark and scary when he thought of this. Don't worry? How could he not worry? "What's the address? I'll send someone to pick her up."

Although Samuel hesitated for a moment, he still ended up sharing the address with Elijah. "We are in room six at Giza Taphouse on Hecklar Lane."

"Take care of her," Elijah urged before hanging up the phone with a sullen face.

Samuel stared at the phone in a daze as Angie began to move around uneasily again. Her clean and gentle face could be seen under her disheveled hair as she was fast asleep on the sofa's edge.

He couldn't help but smile when he saw this and a hint of desire flashed across his face.

Within the small confined space, the beautifully made-up Casey watched everything silently with a hint of resentment in her eyes. A girl in a pink plaid skirt next to her was looking in the same direction as she was and whispered something in Casey's ears.

Then, the resentment in Casey's eyes turned into shock followed by hesitation. She watched as Samuel put the coat that he took off over Angie's body, and the hesitancy in Casey's eyes was immediately withdrawn.

Angie did not know how long she had slept. When she woke up, she felt a splitting headache as she struggled to get up and staggered toward the door. Samuel saw this and immediately followed her.

"Angie, slow down."

Angie leaned against the wall and murmured, "I want to go home."

As she closed her eyes and held the wall, she accidentally bumped her head against the stone pillar used as decoration. Her already dizzy head became even more muddled and she fell backward.

This frightened Samuel, so he jumped forward to catch her and almost missed her by an inch. Ultimately, he managed to grab her falling shoulder as his whole face turned red.

Then, Angie opened her eyes and used all her strength to stand up again. This time, the handsome young man behind her caught her attention. She couldn't help but stretch out with her hands to rub his face and study it.

"It's not quite similar."

Samuel's face was squashed at this point.

"Similar to what?"

"My dad, oh no, my adoptive father."

"Huh?"

The first time Angie saw Samuel, she felt like she was looking at Elijah's shadow. Of course, for the most part, Samuel wasn't as good as Elijah. Samuel wasn't as calm, nor was he as strong as him. However,

when she saw Samuel with that half-smile on his face for the first time, she felt something stir in her heart.

“I feel a little dizzy—”

Before he could ask more questions, the sight of Angie close to vomiting at any time frightened him and he quickly helped her to the bathroom.

Casey’s voice came from behind just as they took two steps forward.

“Samuel, what are you doing here?”

June stepped forward without waiting for his answer and took the giddy Angie from him. “Isn’t she Angie, the beauty queen from your debate team? It seems like she’s going to puke by the way she drank. Leave her to me.”

After saying that, she called out to Casey, “Casey, let’s bring her to the bathroom together. If she vomits here, they will cause a scene. It’s inconvenient for Samuel to help her alone. You can go in first. Everyone’s waiting for you.”

Because of such a turbulent arrangement, Samuel didn’t think anything was wrong. When he realized that it was inconvenient for him to help her, he allowed the two girls to help her in and headed back.

After waiting for a while, he realized the three hadn’t returned. Then, just as he was about to go and check on the situation, he received a message alert on his phone.

“Angie isn’t feeling too good. So, we’ll send her back to the dormitory first.”

Chapter 513 I’ve Not Made Up My Mind

After Courtney’s call with Elijah, she immediately made a beeline to the bar. She had made several calls to Angie on her way there, but it was to no avail, making her anxious. Her car sped down the road in the middle of the night.

She had some lingering fears about being drunk during her college years.

When she arrived at room six of Giza Taphouse, she did not see any traces of Angie. In the room, several couples were hugging as they played the game of Truth or Dare. Samuel was at the corner, staring at his phone from time to time and seeming a little absent-minded.

When he saw Courtney push through the door, he took the initiative to get up and approach her.

“Angie has gone back to her dormitory.”

Courtney looked at Samuel vigilantly as she scanned him from head to toe and said in disbelief, “Wasn’t she too drunk to even answer her phone? How did she go back?”

Her reaction was obviously beyond his expectations.

“The vice president and former student union president sent her back. They just sent me a message saying they’ve reached the dormitory.”

As he said that, he even showed the chat to her.

“Oh, I see. Thank you.”

However, she was still worried. She obviously had to make another trip to Angie’s dormitory. She was hesitant about leaving straight away and decided to ask, “Which of the two people that sent Angie back are you more familiar with? Can you give me their contact number?”

“Yes, of course.”

Samuel quickly looked through his phone and gave Casey’s number to Courtney. Then, as he watched Courtney leave the bar, he hesitated for a long time before he chased after her.

“You don’t seem to feel at ease about Angie.”

Courtney nodded as she continued to walk, with no intention of slowing down.

“I’ll follow you back to the school. I need to make sure that she’s back in her dormitory before I can feel rest assured. After all, I was the one who dragged her out today,” he said as he caught up with her.

Seeing that he did not have any bad intentions, Courtney did not contemplate any longer whether she should bring him or not. Instead, she remained quiet as they strode down the road.

As they walked from the bar to the car park, a few youngsters squatted in the street’s dark corner. Initially, Courtney did not bother much about them. But when she vaguely heard their topic of discussion, she perked up her ears as she felt shivers down her spine.

“Is there something good again today?”

“Yeah, I heard that she has a good body and has been abroad as well.”

“How can you not share something so good with your brothers?”

“Of course not. You’ll get your share with her. I’ve made arrangements with the higher-ups, who said to call at 1:30 AM to confirm the location. There are still ten minutes left. So, be patient, boys!”

“What’s wrong?”

Samuel seemed to not care about the discussion nearby, or maybe it was that he did not hear it at all. He had only noticed that Courtney had stopped walking, and after a long time, he followed her gaze and saw those young men at the corner.

“Is there something wrong?”

“Keep quiet and just follow my lead.”

She was already walking toward the group of men as she said this. She seemed to be in a hurry and had put up an anxious front.

“You don’t have to call anymore. I’ve just dropped the girl at the Sunhill Hotel in room 3208.”

Then, she took a room card out of her bag.

The group leader studied Courtney and had no intention of taking the room card from her.



“Who are you? What room are you talking about? I don’t understand what you are trying to say here.”

When Courtney heard this, she crossed her arms and sneered, “Yo, who would’ve thought you lot are so defensive. How can you take on such a job if you’re so timid? Didn’t you just say you wanted to give me a call?”

With that, she said a string of numbers.

The man looked down at his phone, and the vigilance in his eyes subsided. But at this point, Courtney was clearly impatient already.

“Why aren’t you taking it? You don’t look like a douchebag that will go back on his words to me. I’m not forcing you to do anything here. If you can’t do it, don’t waste my time. I’ll just get myself someone else.”

As she said that, she put the room card back into her bag and turned around to complain to Samuel, who was standing beside her.

“How can you look for these types of people? I’ll give you half an hour to find me a more reliable one.”

Although Samuel was in a daze, he nodded cooperatively and even took out his phone to pretend to make a call. Unfortunately, the young man in front of the group immediately stopped him when he saw this.

“Hey, stop. We’ve already agreed on things. So, why are you changing your mind? I didn’t even say no.”

“Then hurry up and go. Don’t wait until she’s awake and ruin my plan.”

With impatience clearly displayed on her face, Courtney shoved the room card into the man’s chest and turned around to leave with a fiery look.

Samuel followed suit behind her. When the two finally sat in the car, he was still baffled about what had happened. However, he had a deep frown on his face as he had a vague feeling that something was wrong.

“What were those people doing just now, and why does it have anything to do with you?”

However, Courtney did not answer and shot him a stern look before calling Alexander’s number.

“I just gave the room card Eric took from the bag when he reported to you two days ago. A young man with blonde hair and a plaid shirt will show up in room 3208 in a while. Call the cops to arrest him. I’ll explain the rest to you when I come back.”

On the other end, Eric calmly agreed without any question. Once they hung up the phone, he immediately arranged everything accordingly.

In the dark room, a sneer appeared on his thin lips; that woman must be surprising him again.

Once Courtney had hung up the phone with Eric, she immediately dialed the number she had memorized just a while ago. Then, she glanced at the worried-looking Samuel on the passenger seat and put the call on loudspeaker.

The phone rang for a long time, and when it was finally picked up, the voice from the other end of the phone sounded a little rushed.

"It's already half-past one. Have you dropped her off? Which hotel are you at? My buddies are getting a bit anxious."

"Hey, what's wrong with you?"

Casey did not expect a woman to call; hence she was taken aback for a while.

"I thought we have a mutual understanding of our transactional relationship. You give us the money, and we'll settle it for you. Is there something wrong?"

Courtney sounded very authoritative. After all, she had experienced so much more than these young girls who hadn't graduated from college. At this point, Casey was too stunned to speak.

There was a long pause as she hesitated.

"I-I've not made up my mind yet."

"Make up your mind on what?"

"At the end of the day, the damage that will be done to her is unforeseeable. So, I don't think we should go this far. How about we just forget it?"

Courtney's eyes darkened when she heard this.

"Lady, do you think this is a joke? Why did you come looking for us if you haven't thought it through? My boys have been waiting. They've even taken their pants off. And now you're saying you want to call it off? Why don't you take her place if the girl can't make it?"

Her words were highly mean and vulgar, sounding like a street scoundrel. Samuel's face turned pale when he heard this; this indifferent, classy woman didn't seem like someone who could say such a thing.

Courtney wanted to let the person on the other end of the phone know that this world was much more vicious than she imagined, be it just words or actions.

After Casey heard this, all color drained from her face as she was utterly stunned with fear. She hesitated for a moment, and her attitude completely changed.

"That's not what I meant. I'll still pay you, but you don't have to do anything."

"Alright then. Next time, think before you get yourself involved in things like this. Not everyone is as easy to negotiate with as we are. If you're not ready to go to jail for this, don't do it."

Courtney's words served as a strong warning, and she immediately hung up the phone in a hurry when she heard the term 'jail.'

Chapter 514 To Put Yourself in Her Shoes

When Courtney hung up her phone, her indifferent face now had a hint of anger.

"Is this what you meant when you said Angie returned safely to the dormitory?"

At this point, Samuel stayed silent; he was speechless.

His life had been smooth sailing ever since he was born. Even in university, he readily took up the post of the president of the debate club due to his excellent abilities and extensive networks.

He held the belief that everyone could achieve great things in life through hard work and did not expect any troubles like tonight.

Courtney wasn't surprised to see the frustration that was suddenly seen in his eyes. She shook the phone in her hand and said, "I've recorded all the calls just now. Once those thugs are caught, the police will get their confessions out of them. By then, your classmate, Casey, would not only be expelled, but she would also be at risk of going to jail."

She paused for a while before continuing, "To be precise, if Angie wants to press charges, Casey will definitely be in jail. I will make sure she regrets what she did today for the rest of her life."

As she spoke, the fingers that held the steering wheel tightened slightly, and the inconvertible firmness in her gaze put Samuel at a loss for words. The phone in his pocket vibrated just as he struggled to find a word to say.

The moment he saw the caller ID, his eyes sank.

"What's the matter, Casey?"

Casey's voice sounded like she had been crying on the other end of the phone.

"Angie is in room 702 of the J Hotel. I've tried to call June, but she isn't answering her phone. Hurry up and save her."

Samuel felt his heart skip a beat and subconsciously repeated the address out loud. As soon as he spoke, the car's engine roared, and the car sped down the road.

About 15 minutes later, he kicked open the room door of 702, and Courtney rushed in. When she saw the scene on the bed, she subconsciously pushed the boy, who was following behind her, out.

"You wait at the door."

Samuel immediately understood and quickly stepped back.

June, who was holding a camera across the bed, was taken aback by the sudden movement. Then, just as she got up, she was slapped across the face and onto the floor by an angry Courtney.

The camera fell not far away, and the screen was shattered. June, whose face burned from the slap, tried to stand up to fight back but was punched twice in the face instead.

After Courtney threw two punches, she clenched her sore fists and glared at June.

"Have you lost your mind?!" June yelled; the corners of her mouth and eyes were starting to bruise. However, Courtney continued to stare at her and asked coldly, "Why are you doing this?"

Immediately, June snorted and looked at Angie, who was naked on the bed, and grinned proudly.

“A sl\*t like her that seduces someone’s boyfriend deserves this, don’t you think?”

While June was talking, Courtney had already covered Angie with the comforter. At the same time, Courtney picked up the camera on the ground, took out the memory card, and flushed it down the toilet bowl.

She was swift and decisive with her actions, but June seemed unbothered. She had already gotten up from the ground and wiped the faint blood from the corner of her mouth.

“Do you think this is over just because you flush the memory card down?”

As she said this, she took her phone out, which triggered Courtney. She almost went berserk as she reached out to grab the phone from June. However, June sneered, and her following sentence diminished the last trace of patience in Courtney’s heart.

“So what if you take my phone? I uploaded all the photos I took into the cloud. I can retrieve them anytime, anywhere.”

Courtney’s gaze turned cold, and she realized that this was not the solution to the problem, so she decided to call Alexander directly.

“Alex, is everything settled?”

“.....”

June couldn’t hear what this ‘Alex’ said, but she could listen to the other side of the conversation as Courtney didn’t bother leaving the room as she made the call.

“There’s one more thing that I’d need your help with. Send a few men to room 702 of the J Hotel.”

After she hung up the phone, she pushed through her exhaustion and continued in a slightly impatient tone, “This could’ve been resolved simply, but you clearly prefer the harder route. I’ll fulfill your wish.”

At this moment, June seemed to realize that something was wrong. She got up and wanted to leave the room but was unexpectedly blocked by Samuel, who had been standing at the door.

His current face wasn’t a pretty sight. Although he didn’t enter the room, he still heard bits and pieces of the argument between the two. After he thought about it, he knew this was all because of him.

“I’m sorry, June, but I can’t let you leave.”

June’s eyes widened in anger when she heard this.

“You’re stopping me for that girl?!” She cried as she pointed to the bed behind her.

“You and Casey had been under my wing. I know about the relationship between the two of you, and I’ve always been very supportive of it. However, this Angie girl had only shown up for a few months, and look what you’ve become for her? Is this girl that good? Or did I misjudge you from the beginning?”

As she was talking, her eyes started to turn red-rimmed. She seemed to be blaming Samuel for this, yet at the same time, it seemed like she was letting out some emotion that she had repressed in her heart for a long time that had nothing to do with him.

“You didn’t misjudge me. You’ve just misunderstood the relationship between Casey and me.”

“Stop lying to me. How can you not know what she thinks of you? You clearly knew about it yet pretended like you had no idea. Although I’ve retired from the student union, it doesn’t mean that my words have no weight to them. If you’re smart enough, you should take the initiative to step down as the debate club president. Otherwise, I’ll make sure nothing good happens to you.”

After her warning, she grabbed her bag angrily and was about to barge out, but Samuel followed suit and still steadily blocked her way.

“We can talk about the student union later. But for now, I can’t let you go.”

At this point, June was almost choking on her rage. But, since she couldn’t reason with this blockhead of a man, she was going to force her way out.

Not long after, a sound of uniformed steps echoed in the hotel hallway, and a shadow loomed over June’s head. Again, Elijah’s faint smell of cologne crept up her nose; this time, she had nowhere to run.

He glanced at her lightly; she was like a frightened rabbit. Then, in his domineering presence, she seemed to fall silent as she realized that things were moving in a different direction.

Then, he raised his gaze and saw Courtney, who had just appeared behind them.

“Courtney, I’m here.”

Courtney had already dressed Angie by then. As soon as Courtney saw Elijah, she gestured toward the bed lightly. “Send someone to bring Angie back to the Duncan Residence first.”

Then, she pointed at June, who was nearby.

“This person took photos of Angie, which are stored in the cloud. So, she can retrieve it any time.”

Elijah frowned slightly when he heard this and made way for a few of his men to drag June back to the room.

“What are you guys doing? Have you lost your mind? I’m going to call the police!”

June began yelling and kicking her legs in the air, seeming like she had lost control. However, she could not fight back, and her hands and feet were quickly tied to the chair by one of the men.

Courtney glared at her coldly and caught the terrified look in June’s eyes. At this moment, she felt that this whole situation was absurd to the highest degree.

“So you know what fear is as well? If you aren’t put into her shoes, I’m afraid you’ll never learn how hopeless a person could feel when something like this happens to them.”

“Strip her,” Courtney uttered these two words faintly as her eyes turned cold.

This made June scream out threats hysterically; her pink, smug face was now as white as snow. Then, after struggling and failing, she began begging for mercy as she kicked her legs back and forth. In the end, the chair toppled and fell to the ground, bringing her body along with it.

Chapter 515 We’ve Found The Culprit

Samuel, too, did not expect that Courtney's crude solution to this was to strip June.

When he saw things going in this direction, he couldn't help but step in.

"You've said that doing such things will risk jail time. So, doing what she did back to her is probably not the best solution for this matter."

Elijah remained noncommittal as his gaze swept gently over Samuel.

"Jail?"

He sneered.

"Someone has to be willing to report to the police first."

As he said that, he looked at June, who had cried so much that she was in a mess. However, his face remained calm and contemptuous.

"Is she? Even if you want to call the police, she'll do everything she possibly can to stop you."

This man was frigid, and it left Samuel in disbelief. But, he strode forward and protected June, who was now behind him. This situation was just as Courtney expected; a slight smile appeared on her face.

"I don't mind solving the problem this way, but it seems you have a better solution."

"I'll get her to delete all the photos and ensure that not a single photo is left in the cloud."

When June heard this, she began nodding diligently like a chicken pecking at the corn.

Then, Elijah walked over to Courtney. He knew what she was thinking without asking, so he waved his hand lightly, and his men immediately retreated.

What she said next was condescending.

"Do it, then."

Samuel reflexively looked away when he saw June pulling out her phone from her bag shiveringly. After a while, she handed the phone over to Courtney and cautiously said, "I've deleted them."

However, Courtney had no intention of checking it. When she noticed how they'd broken through June's psychological line of defense. She knew that June would absolutely dare not take them lightly.

Before they left, Courtney leaned over slightly and looked at June, who was shaking like a leaf, saying, "I initially wanted you to know how it feels, but you now have someone asking for mercy on your behalf. However, I still want to remind you that you should stay away from Angie from now on. If any harm comes to her, you're the first person I'll go to."

She sauntered away once she was done speaking.

Elijah watched the slender figure walk away as his smile deepened; the exhaustion he felt before going out had somehow dissipated.

Outside the hotel entrance, he pulled Courtney into the same car as him.

All the way home, her face was gloomy, as if she was caught up in a particularly unpleasant memory. As her eyes darkened, her cold fingers were suddenly wrapped in a burst of warmth. When she looked up, she saw Elijah's side profile reflected by the passing neon lights from the street, and she was immediately pulled back into reality.

Although nothing terrible happened in the end when Courtney first encountered that incident, despair and fear of the world forced her to lose sleep all year round, and she would wake up from nightmares every night.

Elijah picked up on her emotions and knew he couldn't discuss the topic easily. After all, it was him who had hurt her back then, and no words could heal this kind of trauma.

After he thought about it, he changed the subject.

"I've found that person's sister."

Sure enough, her gloomy eyes suddenly lit up, and her fingers tightened around his palm.

"Where?"

"In Warmorth Hospital on the outskirts of the city."

"Huh?"

Courtney showed hints of puzzlement in her eyes, but after Elijah calmly mentioned leukemia, she slowly composed herself.

That wasn't a surprise.

After all, most people among the crowd that made a scene at Citron Apparel were the patients' family members. This man was part of them, too, so he must've had his agenda. If it was not because of hatred, then he must've done it for the money.

Elijah's calm narration cleared up Courtney's chaotic emotions gradually cleared up.

"His name is Mike Winom, and his sister is Lila Larson. These two are not biological siblings, nor are they related in any way. However, they met in Vietnam and came back together last year. Lila had been diagnosed with leukemia half a year ago and has been staying at the Warmorth Hospital for conservative treatment."

"Lila isn't part of the laborers at Citron Apparel."

Courtney began to recall the incident as she started making decisions on what to do. After the incident, Citron Apparel presented evidence to deny the relationship between the sick employees and Citron Apparel. However, after privately verifying the condition of the 12 suffering employees, the company still subsidized them. In the end, those people with malevolent intent gradually stopped showing up.

Lila Larson's name was not on the list of the 12 people.

“Lila might not be aware of this, but they’ve found a successful match for her bone marrow, and what they currently lack is the payment for the large sum of the treatment fee. So, we can’t rule out that Mike is doing this just for the money. Lila would be a good angle as a breakthrough for him.”

When Courtney heard this, she nodded her head silently, agreeing with Elijah.

“Then I’ll go to the hospital tomorrow to visit her.”

His eyes were somber as he leaned against the window and mumbled. Then, he closed his eyes as lethargy engulfed him.

The car fell into a comfortable silence as the two decided to rest during the trip back. Courtney leaned her head against her side of the window and looked through the glass, watching the bleak streets in the middle of the night. Her heart also began to feel desolate after the incident today.

Suddenly, she felt a weight on her shoulder. Somehow, Elijah had moved his body and rested her head on her as if it would help him sleep more peacefully.

They had stayed up too late because of what had happened to Angie yesterday. When Courtney woke up the next day, she instinctively reached out to the other side of the bed yet didn’t feel someone’s solid chest as she expected.

So, her eyes immediately snapped open, and she saw it was already 11:00AM.

After she freshened up and went to the dining room, she saw Angie eating toast and milk on the dining table, unaware she was eating breakfast or lunch. When Angie saw Courtney pulling out a chair and sitting across her, she glanced up at Courtney guiltily.

However, Courtney took a piece of toast from her plate and smeared some strawberry jam before she began eating it with relish. It seemed like she had no intention of bringing up what had happened last night.

On the contrary, this made Angie more restless. There were gaps in her memory from the time that she was brought into the hotel by Casey and June, and suddenly, she woke up the next day in the Duncans’ ancestral home.

As she thought about this, she put down the half-eaten toast in her hand and said, “About last night—”

“Are you going to ask about what happened last night? Do you not remember anything?”

Courtney seemed to be a little perfunctory, in addition to her sleepy appearance.

When Angie saw this, she gulped anxiously and replied, “I don’t remember anything.”

“If you can’t remember, drink less when you’re outside next time. It was Elijah that called and told me where you were. He was worried, so he told me to bring you back.”

Elijah.

The name ‘Elijah’ seemed to have an effect on Angie’s heart, and she immediately found the toast in her mouth a little hard to swallow. Then, she got up to leave as she forced a smile on her face.



“I will. I’ll be dropping by the manor first.”

Courtney raised her head to look at her leave.

“Don’t you have to go back to school today?”

“Today’s a weekend. I promised to spend the weekend with Benny.”

Angie was already walking along the corridor in the front yard of the Duncan Residence and toward the gate. When Courtney saw this, she narrowed her eyes slightly before lowering her head to eat the last bite of toast in her hand.

At this time, the servant brought a glass of milk over. When Courtney reached out to take it, her eyes fell onto the bag the servant was holding in her left hand.

“What’s that?”

“Oh, this is something the Young Master told Mr. Reynolds to send over this morning. He said that it was for you. He mentioned that you are going to visit someone later and that you can take this with you.”

Courtney drank the milk as she stared at the massive writing on the box; Maximillian.

“I got it.”

Chapter 516 A Tattoo on the Back of Her Hand

“Lila, there’s someone here to see you.”

In the ward of Warmorth Hospital in Melrose City, Lila was sitting at the table by the window in her hospital gown, peeling apples. When she heard the nurse call, she looked up reflexively and looked toward the door before she could hesitate.

At the door, she saw Courtney wearing an off-white windbreaker. She had a light but warm smile on her face as if they were old friends whom she hadn’t seen for a long time.

Mike had warned her before this; Lila looked at Courtney with apparent scrutiny and precaution.

“Who are you?”

After being sick for so long, Lila’s thin face was dull, and her skin was sallow. However, her eyes still glistened. It was not difficult to imagine what a beauty she must have been before she fell ill.

Courtney did not answer and just lifted the box she was holding.

“Mike said you like the puffs from this place. So, I bought it for you this morning.”

Sure enough, with just one sentence, Lila’s frown loosened, and the suspicious look on her face subsided instantly.

“You know Mike?”

By then, Courtney had already sat beside her and nodded as she put down the dessert box.

“Otherwise, how would I know you are here? Mike often talks about you to us. That is the only time he doesn’t look as fierce.”

Lila let out a puff when she thought of Mike’s default, gloomy face; she couldn’t help but laugh. However, she was one of the few people who had seen a gentle expression on that face of his, which was funnier than his usual frowning face.

“His fierce expression is really quite scary.”

“Exactly! Our boss used to get angry at him whenever the business wasn’t as good, saying that his fierceness scared the customers away.”

As Courtney spoke, she opened the light pink dessert box, which instantly exuded a creamy fragrance. She reached out, took one, and brought it toward Lila’s mouth.

“Are you close to my brother?”

Lila reached out her hand and took it from Courtney before eating it. Lila seemed to have a good appetite. She seemed to have dropped her guard against Courtney and was even enjoying this opportunity of having someone to spend time with.

“We’ve worked together in a store before. Later, Mike was fired by the boss in order to cover for me. I’ve always felt terrible about this. But, I knew that you were the only sister he cared about the most, so I’ve always wanted to come and visit you. It’s also a way to show my gratitude toward Mike.”

The topic of Mike always filled Lila’s heart with happiness, but this time, she was a little taken aback.

“He was fired? He told me some time ago that the boss gave him a raise and even agreed to lend him some money—”

Lila suddenly stopped mid-sentence when she realized something. Then she put the leftover puff on the table, and her face turned gloomy.

She had always had a vague feeling that he was hiding something from her.

Courtney observed the change in Lila’s expression and immediately changed the topic after she came to a realization.

“Oh, what I said was a long time ago. I heard that Mike found a good job later and that the boss liked him, saying that he is capable and smart. I also heard that his new salary is very high.”

“Really?”

Lila’s black orbs flashed in shock, and disbelief was written all over her face. However, there were still hints of anticipation. Courtney paused, hesitating whether to say it or not, but finally decided to take the risk.

“I know that Mike did some detestable things back in Vietnam, but he is a changed man now. All he cares about is to make money to cure your illness.”

When Lila heard this, she was in shock.

“He even told you about his time in Vietnam?”

After she had thought about this matter for a while, she lowered her head again and began to fidget with her fingers in despair.

“It was me who dragged him down at the end of the day.”

“Hey, so what? It’s all a thing of the past. Now that he’s managed to start a new life, you shouldn’t hold onto the past. Anyways, I think Mike is a good man. If it weren’t for my husband, I would definitely marry him.”

Courtney’s face was calm. Today, she was pretending to be a simple-minded woman that would just speak her mind. But, if she were to be honest, she’s rather enjoying this change of pace.

Those words made Lila blush slightly.

“I heard that the two of you met in Vietnam. Let’s hear about how you two met!”

“At that time, I went to Vietnam to seek shelter from my relatives. One day, I was dragged to the bar by a friend I had just met, and I was bullied after I had too much to drink. It just so happened that on that day, Mike happened to help his friend watch over the place, and he came to save me. After that, we gradually became acquainted over time.”

As Lila reminisced, she didn’t realize how prominent the smile on her face was as she spoke.

At that time, she followed him and watched him work on the field. He fought almost every day and lived a thrilling life. While dressing his wound at night, she couldn’t help but tear up, but when he smiled at her, she felt like everything was okay again.

Lilia observed her, and it wasn’t difficult to notice this.

“Do you like him?”

That one sentence brought Lila back to reality. Just as she was about to deny it, she felt a sudden burst of sadness. She had nothing to worry about right now since she had nothing.

“Mmhmm.”

She nodded dazedly, and smiled a self-deprecating smile with a hint of reluctance.

“One day, he received a mission to overthrow this lady boss in a gang, and he was stabbed in the abdomen. He thought he was about to die, so he confessed to me in a pool of blood, saying that he should have met me sooner and how it was just a little too late now.”

“What happened after that?”

As Lila spoke, her eyes gradually filled up with tears. Courtney did not expect to hear such a story when she arrived and visited Lila. Now, she felt a little dumbfounded as she looked at the frail woman in front of her.

“Then—”

Lila’s eyes widened, and the smile on her lips deepened.

“Later, he was saved and didn’t die. But, once he was almost healed, he didn’t want to see me, and didn’t want to admit what he had said to me the other day. When I got angry and tried to reason with him, he was riled up as well and insisted on me being his sister. And just like that, I became a sister to him.”

Courtney’s eyes sank when she heard this.

Her initial purpose was not to hear about all these, but now that she did, she couldn’t help but feel sad.

“He doesn’t want to drag you with him,” Courtney said frankly, and Lila nodded. She was, of course, aware of Mike’s concerns, but at that time, she naively thought that love would overpower life and death and everything the world had to throw at them.

It wasn’t until now, when she was staring at death in the face, that she realized that that was not the case.

“I know that he has been thinking about quitting all these years. He also told me that he would bring me back and find a fishing village to live a simple life, fishing together. Later, something happened to their group, and the police were involved. Before the investigation, there had been infighting already. I heard that it was caused by the boss’ woman, which caused the whole group to dissolve.”

The boss’ woman.

A trace of doubt crossed Courtney’s mind, but Lila’s words interrupted her train of thought.

“Mike saw this coming a long time ago. That’s why he brought me back here in advance. After we returned, we lived in a fishing village for some time. Then, just as I felt that everything was going to be fine, I fell sick.”

As she spoke, her eyes began to turn red, and she began to hammer her thigh as if she was blaming herself.

Courtney couldn’t help but reach out to grab her hand. But, when she touched Lila’s thin fingers, she instinctively tightened her grip on Lila’s hand.

“Didn’t I hear you found a matching bone marrow?”

This didn’t seem to comfort Lila as much as Courtney imagined. On the contrary, worry began to wash over Lila’s eyes.

“Bone marrow transplants are expensive, and we don’t have the money for that. But Mike has been telling me recently that he is about to get rich. I’m very worried. I keep feeling like—”

She suddenly stopped talking once she realized what was wrong.

Courtney pondered for a while before saying, “Now that you’ve mentioned it, I seem to have recalled a woman coming to our store to look for him.”

Right when Lila heard this, she grabbed Courtney’s arm and raised her tone as she asked with fear in her voice, “What kind of woman? What does she look like?”

Due to the topic of discussion, she seemed to have suddenly thought of something, and her eyes widened. Then, she stretched out her right finger, pointed at the back of her left hand, and asked, "Is there a tattoo on the back of her hand?"

Chapter 517 He Can Talk Already?

"N-No."

Lila's current reaction confirmed Courtney's conjecture.

Courtney pondered for a moment. On the one hand, she was worried that Lila would question Mike about the truth. But, on the other hand, she couldn't bear it, so she simply put on a show, acting as if she only denied it after giving it some serious thought.

"The woman seemed to be in her twenties. She dressed quite fashionably, with long curly hair. She was thin and tall. Although I didn't pay attention to the back of her hand, it didn't look like she had a tattoo there."

After Lila heard Courtney's denial, she felt more at ease. Once the nerves had eased, she seemed to realize that she had just been overly emotional and leaned back on the chair again.

"Then, it's not her. That's not her," she murmured with a smile on her face.

Courtney's expression remained the same as if she had not taken Lila's reactions to heart. She got up and slightly brushed the frayed hairs on her temple.

"I've been bothering you for quite a while already today. I need to take my leave first as my shift is starting in a bit. I'll come to revisit you when I have the chance."

Lila snapped out from her thoughts when she heard Courtney's voice, and she got up to send her off. However, just as Courtney walked to the door, she turned around for a quick glance and some emotions stirred up in her eyes.

"You're a very kind woman. Mike is lucky to have met you."

These words were from the bottom of her heart, with no underlying motives. She smoothed out her wrinkled coat as she spoke before turning around and striding away.

She felt that they would meet again soon, under very different circumstances and identities.

— —

...

When Angie rushed back to the manor, Benny was already out at the front, looking around the whole morning. When the little boy saw a figure slowly coming in, his clear eyes suddenly lit up. Then, he broke free from the maid's grip and threw himself on her.

She felt a dip on her leg and looked down to see that the little boy was rubbing his head against her. This coquettish behavior made the 18-year-old Angie overflow with maternal love.

“Benny, what are you doing out here?”

Then, she took his hand and walked toward the tour bus. They were about ten minutes away from the entrance of the manor. She did not expect that he would be here waiting for her.

Nearby, Marianne showed a hint of helplessness on her face.

“Young Master Benny has been waiting here since 7:00AM. If Miss Angie didn’t show up, he wouldn’t leave. So, he just sat by the stone stool and waited all morning.”

She had never expected a five or six-year-old child to be so resilient. She had no choice but to wait with him for about four to five hours and almost fainted out of boredom and mental strain.

Angie was surprised to hear this, and at the same time, she felt a little guilty. When she leaned over to say something, she noticed that Benny’s eyes were filled with excitement and energy. He didn’t seem the least bit angry at all.

Then, she couldn’t help but laugh as she reached out to pinch the little boy’s nose.

“This is my fault. However, I promise I’ll be on time in the future.”

As she said this, she raised her right hand and made a swearing oath. The excited look in Benny’s eyes did not diminish. Instead, he grinned, nodded sharply, and squeezed out a word, “Okay!”

Angie was surprised as she pinched Benny’s face in disbelief; she squished this little boy’s face mercilessly in her joy. The moment she let go, there were two apparent fingerprints on his face for a moment before they disappeared.

Benny patted his face aggrievedly.

“It hurts.”

“He can talk already?”

After she recovered from her initial shock, she looked up at Marianne to confirm. Marianne nodded with a smile on her face.

“The doctor who examined him said that he didn’t speak before because he was used to speaking Vietnamese and didn’t know much English. In addition to that, the pressure on him was too much. Now, it seems that he has adapted, and since he was still young, he has picked up the language faster. He’s learning to talk more after listening to us.”

When Marianne spoke, he looked toward Benny and solemnly nodded at Angie once she was done.

Angie was ecstatic when she heard this.

“Can you understand what we’re saying?”

“Mhmm.”

Benny nodded his head diligently.

Back in Vietnam, he could understand some simple English, but the language was easier to listen to than to speak.

Angie touched his head as she felt relief gushing over her, like a mother to her son. She had decided not to go up the tour bus. Instead, she had a better idea. She looked at Benny eagerly and said, "How about we pay the theme park a visit today?"

She had once seen him drawing a lot of amusement parks in his sketches, and all of these paintings, without exception, had a lonely little boy silently watching by the gates of the amusement park.

Sure enough, as soon as he heard the word 'amusement park,' he was initially stunned. Then, after a long moment, there was a burst of uncontrollable excitement in his eyes as he jumped around Angie for three rounds, seemingly like he was completely immersed in the joyful feeling of being a child.

Angie immediately gestured to Marriane when she saw this.

"Inform the driver to prepare the car. We'll wait here."

When Marianne heard this, she was a little hesitant and couldn't help but set her eyes on Benny.

"Miss Hunter said to not take Benny out when she brought him over just now."

Only then did Angie finally remember after being reminded by Marianne, but she couldn't break the kid's heart when she saw Benny's excited face. She waved her hand and said, "It's okay. We'll just go to the children's amusement park in the western suburbs. There won't be many people there. We'll come back before dinner."

Although Marianne had done her part in reminding her, seeing how persistent Angie was to go, Marianne naturally wouldn't stop her. So, she quickly called the driver after agreeing with Angie.

Angie didn't know the reason why Courtney wouldn't let Benny out. Nevertheless, as soon as Marianne had notified the driver, Benny reached out to tug at Angie's trousers and stared at her cutely before squeezing out two words, "Josie."

"Do you want to bring Josie with you?"

Benny nodded vigorously; he and Josephine had made a pinky promise before. If one of them were going to do something fun, they must invite each other. However, other than just the two of them, Ethan was part of this agreement as well.

Ethan had been extremely arrogant, with his head stuck in the clouds. After he fell into the swimming pool the last time, he blamed Benny for putting the dinosaurs next to the pool, causing him to accidentally trip on it and fall in.

This unreasonable Ethan one-sidedly broke the promise with Benny.

"Bring Josie."

Benny gritted his teeth firmly.

At this point, Angie had no choice but to call her Great-Aunt Alicia.

On the other side, Alicia was worrying over Josephine, who had cream all over her face from eating. She had proposed to send Josephine over to Gale's place, but Josephine refused because Ethan and Fiona had a feud. Josephine had promised Fiona to ignore Ethan for the time being, so she refused to go over.

Ethan, at the side, raised a pair of aggrieved eyes from the mouse cake to look at Alicia pitifully, "Great-Aunt Alicia, Josie is closer to Fiona than with me now."

However, Alicia gave him an even more aggrieved look.

"I will be going to a cocktail party soon. I'm worried that too many people will be there to bring you two. So, I'll just send you to your mum. As for Ethan, are you going to go to Aunt Courtney's place, or do I send you home?"

"Home."

When Ethan thought about Elijah's face, he couldn't help but feel repelled.

Just as Alicia was about to take her bag, the phone in her bag vibrated. When she saw that the caller ID was Angie, Alicia picked up the phone. After understanding what was happening, she readily agreed to the proposed request on the phone.

Then, she hung up the phone with a slight smile.

"Change of plans. Angie will bring you and Benny to the amusement park."

Josephine was so excited that the braids on her hair were almost standing.

"Really? Yay, I haven't seen Benny in a long time!"

When Ethan heard this, he mumbled softly, "I want to go as well."

Chapter 518 Mister, I Want That Mickey Mouse Mask

Angie took Benny to the car and told the driver the address of a dessert shop before telling him to pick Josephine up. Unexpectedly, two figures jumped into the car once they reached the location.

Benny stared at Ethan, who was sticking to Josephine vigilantly.

Only two child seats were prepared in the car; Benny occupied one, and there was an empty one next to him.

The two children didn't know what to do for a while. Ethan was happy to give the seat to Josephine as long as he didn't have to sit next to Benny.

Benny's eyes were fixated on Josephine, and he had one hand unconsciously protecting the seat next to him, fearing that Ethan would snatch it away.

Angie was slightly surprised to see this and immediately got out of the passenger seat and gestured to Josephine.



“Josie, come sit on my lap instead. I didn’t know Ethan was following. That’s why I didn’t prepare more child seats.”

Josephine felt embarrassed. Angie’s words were like a relief to her as she quickly moved to the passenger seat and sat on Angie’s lap.

For a moment, the atmosphere in the car’s back seat was a little awkward.

The two little boys looked at each other, and there were indescribable expressions on both of their pink faces. Then, Benny quietly withdrew his hand, turned his out of the window, and pretended nothing had happened.

Ethan walked to the seat, and the driver who came out picked him up from behind, stuffed him into the chair, fastened the safety buckle, and quickly closed the door.

Then, he lowered his head and played with his fingers while listening to the engine’s roar and Josephine’s laughter. When he turned his head to look at Benny, who was stubbornly ignoring him.

After they had gotten out of the car, Josephine happily followed behind Angie as usual while Benny and Ethan walked side by side, ignoring each other. Angie had noticed the awkward atmosphere between the two little boys, but she didn’t bother much about it. Once they entered the amusement park, the first thing she dragged the children into doing was outdoor rock climbing.

The two little boys couldn’t help but break into laughter when they saw each other with all the pieces of equipment on.

Angie helped Benny and Ethan to get a coach. Initially, the coach wanted to propose that the two compete against each other, but who would’ve expected that during warm-up preparations, a chubby boy staggered and bumped into Benny, who then fell onto Ethan.

This immediately angered Ethan, who waved his little fist, intending to teach the chubby boy a lesson. However, the boy wasn’t scared at all. Instead, he grinned.

“You two are no match for me.”

“Try us.”

Ethan raised his eyebrows to challenge; there was no doubt he had gotten that cynical look from Gale.

On the other hand, Benny was a little scared as he hid behind Ethan, with a grip on Ethan’s leather buckle. Benny thought that Ethan was about to fight the chubby boy, and Benny’s other fist tightened as if ready to rush up at any time.

The chubby little boy had obviously misunderstood. As he rubbed his hands together, he looked at Ethan and pointed to the rock climbing wall on the side.

“Then let’s compete to see who will reach the top first. If you win, I’ll apologize to your friend.”

Benny was dumbfounded to hear this.

The chubby little boy seemed to be half a head taller than Ethan, so he naturally agreed to a challenge with confidence. Before Angie could clearly understand the situation, the competition was about to begin.

This was Ethan's first-time rock climbing. His cheeks were flushed, and sweat dripped down his forehead after just two steps in. Benny looked up at him. Worried, he started to get upset about how Ethan had to flaunt, while his own cheeks turned red at some point too.

Although the chubby boy wasn't very agile, he was still faster than Ethan. When Ethan was halfway up, he inadvertently lowered his head and glanced down. Then, his whole face turned white with fright.

"Kid, if you're scared, you can come down and rest for a while."

The coach who was with him immediately saw through Ethan. The fifty-plus-year-old man suggested gently, but Ethan didn't buy it. He continued to climb up with tears in his eyes without saying a word.

At this time, the chubby boy was clearly exhausted as well and had slowed down. He had to stop and pant each time he climbed a step. When he saw Ethan catching up, he began to fasten his pace. However, he misstepped and fell directly from the middle to the ground.

When Benny saw this, he couldn't help but clap and cheer. His tiny heart had been thumping against his chest; he was so nervous that he found it

The chubby boy that fell to the ground had to start all over, but thoughts of failure infiltrated his mind. Soon, he began to slip off every two steps he climbed, and in the end, he could only watch Ethan reach the finish line, step by step.

When Ethan came down from the top and took off his helmet, everyone saw that sweat soaked his initially soft, fluffy hair. However, he had a smug look on his face when he looked at his competitor.

"You've lost."

The chubby boy bit his lips, seeming like he was mentally destroyed, and shouted a sorry at Benny before running off to an adult not far away.

"Ethan, you're amazing!"

Josephine jumped up and down, applauding Ethan. Every time she jumped, her fluffy tutu skirt also lifted up and down. It was an adorable sight to see.

Ethan wiped the sweat off his forehead. Josephine's praise put him in a good mood, and after hearing Benny say that he was amazing as well, he felt like his whole person could fly.

After that, the three walked hand in hand very tacitly while Angie followed behind like a bodyguard. After a few rounds, although the three little kids were still in high spirits, Angie was exhausted.

"Aren't you three tired? Let's sit down and rest!" Angie exclaimed with her hands on her hips as they followed him around wearily. The long striped cardigan she had on before had already been taken off and wrapped around her waist. Although she was only wearing a short-sleeve shirt, she felt like she was on fire.

“Okay, I want some water.”

When Josephine turned around to say that, her whole face was flushed. As soon as she suggested that, the two little boys couldn't help but agree.

“Me too!”

“You three go sit at the side and rest. I'll buy you some juice.”

Angie's words were like a huge relief to them as she pointed to the juice stall not far away. But, when she returned, the three little kids were nowhere to be found.

At this moment, anxiety filled her body, and her eyes began to burn as she looked around the area anxiously. Just then, she felt herself getting pulled by a small force under her. When she looked down, she saw Benny pulling her fingers, trying to drag her to a stall nearby.

“Josie wants to buy a mask.”

Following the direction of Benny's finger, she saw the other two kids, and her thumping heart gradually calmed down. Angie walked toward them and saw Josephine holding a fluffy princess mask in her hand, looking at it admiringly.

“How much is this, mister?” Josephine asked in a childish voice. Ethan, who had initially taken an interest in the Mickey Mouse mask, immediately picked up the prince mask out of his own will after he saw Josephine had taken the princess one.

“I want this one too.”

When Angie saw this, she passed the juice to them and took out her wallet before she said to Benny, “You can choose one as well.”

However, he didn't seem to be very interested. Instead, he scanned the stall vaguely and finally pointed to one.

“I'll take this.”

The owner of the stall smiled and asked, “Do you want the Mickey Mouse one?”

Benny nodded solemnly before taking the mask from the stall owner and wearing it. Josephine was amused by how the mask looked on him and giggled. Then, she looked up and pondered for a moment before saying, “Mister, I want to change. I want the Minnie Mouse mask.”

.....

...

Ethan, who was holding the prince's mask, saw Josephine hurriedly putting on her new Minnie Mouse mask and felt lost. When they finally left the amusement park, Benny and Josephine had their masks on and held hands. One of them was Mickey Mouse, and the other was Minnie Mouse. Ethan was following suit behind them, wearing a Donald Duck mask. All three of them seemed to stumble a little as they walked.

“Okay, let’s go home.” Angie was already exhausted by now and took the opportunity to say this as it was getting late.

#### Chapter 519 The Food Cart

“Angie, let’s go eat. I’m hungry.”

As soon as Ethan got into the car, his stomach rumbled. As soon as he touched his shriveled belly, he couldn’t help but suggest. Before Angie could speak, Josephine, who was behind him, nodded her head enthusiastically.

“Alright.”

Angie had no choice but to agree and ordered the driver to bring them to a nearby restaurant suitable for children.

The restaurant they went to did not have many people. As soon as they entered, Ethan quickly chose a seat, climbed onto the chair, and stretched his finger to point at the seat next to him, shouting, “Josie, come here!”

Josephine dashed in happily but did not sit down in the chair he expected her to.

She pulled Benny to sit next to her, across Ethan, and Ethan’s eyes immediately showed a hint of disappointment. However, once the waiter brought them the menu, the hunger in his head dispelled the frustration.

“Wow, I want some ice cream.”

Angie sat next to Ethan and flipped through the menu attentively as she reminded him, “Ice cream is a dessert you eat after a meal. You can eat it after you’re done with your meal.”

As she ordered and waited for the meal to be served, Josephine and Benny were bickering with one another, talking about something that Angie couldn’t understand.

“Our food is here. Josie, Benny, take off your masks.”

Angie admired the energy of these little children. After walking around all afternoon, she felt her bones were about to fall apart. Now, she was so hungry that she could eat a horse. She watched the food cart getting pushed over and suddenly felt a growl in her stomach.

Josephine and Benny listened, and the two immediately stopped bickering, stuffed their masks into their small school bags, and turned to look in the direction of the food cart.

As Benny’s favorite food was chicken wings, his eyes were immediately attracted by the plate of chicken wings and prawns on the food cart, and he didn’t notice the cart that had obviously stopped in front of him. Immediately, there was a look of shock on the waiter’s face.

“Did you order us ice cream?”

Ethan persevered, and the three little kids perked up when they heard what he said. Their eyes turned back to the dining table. To be precise, all three children turned to look at Angie inquiringly.

“I’ll get you some after dinner. I’ll even order an extra-large one for whoever eats the most.”

Angie blinked at the three kids as they seemed to have surrendered. This made her feel a little victorious.

“Miss, your food is here. Enjoy.”

As the waiter served their food, Angie nodded, acknowledging before she was occupied with getting the three little kids to eat.

In the restaurant restroom on the other side, Mike was washing his hands in the sink with a slightly complicated look on his face reflected in the mirror.

After washing his hands and drying them, he was just about to take out his phone when a hand pushed him back.

“You’re not allowed to use your phone during work. Do you want your salary to be deducted?”

When he looked up to see who it was, a smile crept up on his face. He reached out to pat the person on the arm while saying thank you in a light tone.

“No worries.”

Then, the other party leaned against the sink countertop, took out a pack of cigarettes and lighter from his pocket, lit a cigarette, and took a big puff before motioning to Mike.

“Do you want one?”

When Mike saw this, he was dumbfounded.

“Isn’t it worse to smoke during work?”

However, the guy did not answer. Instead, he took a few long puffs within the next half a minute before putting out the cigarette and throwing it into the dustbin.

“I can’t help it. I’m a heavy smoker.”

As he squinted his eyes and waved his hands around, trying to disperse the smell of the smoke, a casual voice rang in Mike’s ears.

“What happened just now? Didn’t you like the girl there? Are you too nervous about serving her? It seems like she’s around 18 or 19 years old. Do you think she will take a fancy to you?”

“Didn’t you like a college student as well?”

Mike did not comment as he strode away with a smile on his face.

He only thought about the person he had seen in the restaurant after getting off work. Now, he no longer had the want to use his phone as he did back in the bathroom. Instead, he strolled along the road and put his hand behind his pocket before pulling it back out after a brief thought.

He lowered his gaze as he walked toward his rental house, and the bustling streets behind him became background noise.

A few days later, Mike received a piece of unexpected news about her.

“The people you are looking for are now entirely out of the radar. They seemed to all be laying low and did not want anything to do with Citron. However, now that the regulatory authorities have announced their investigation results, Citron Apparel will come out of it with a clean reputation. Is this the best you can do?”

As the night wind blew the cool air onto his face, Mike quickly tapped on the keyboard with one hand.

“As long as you pay me, I will do anything. Everything will be done according to your requests.”

As fatigue washed over him, he slowly exhaled a foul breath as he looked up into the sky. Right then, his phone rang, and a motorcycle whizzed past him. Alongside the shadow of the passing car, he only heard one sentence, “Go somewhere else if you want to die, don’t block the road!”

As he turned, he had a look of vicissitudes on his face, and he suddenly recalled the person he was many years ago; a motorcyclist that would roar down the street in a jam. When he compared it to where he was now, he couldn’t help but feel dumbfounded.

Then, he began to laugh at himself. His laughter got louder and louder, and in the end, he had to squat down by the roadside with one hand on his forehead and the other on his stomach from laughing too much.

A couple that was passing by slowed down their footsteps from a distance. Their hesitation grew as they approached before the girl finally pulled the boy away and ran away.

“Is he drunk, or has he lost his mind?”

The girl patted her chest as fear still lingered within her. She naturally did not know about the wounds in the man’s heart or that he had been through life and death for the first half of his life. At that time, he had a long knife stabbed right through his stomach, but even then, he did not utter a single sound. Yet now, on an ordinary night like this, he was laughing and crying like a lunatic under the brightly lit street.

After his episode, he finally sat on the spot and leaned against a tree before lighting a cigarette. More and more passersby regarded him as a drunkard and avoided him. However, he ignored it, squinting his eyes as he opened his phone.

“I want Courtney to suffer and wish she was dead. Before you go about doing this, Lila will never make it to the operating table. You should count how much time you have left.”

“What can I do?”

“You have two options—”

As Mike stared at the two short texts on the phone’s screen, he took one last puff of his cigarette before rubbing its butt under his feet. In an instant, he regained a cold and indifferent aura as if the rush of memory from the past had dissipated from his mind.

“For the last time, if you don’t keep your promise, we’ll all die together.”

He got up, patted the dust off his body, and continued to blend into the bustling street.

At the traffic light on the other side of the road was a mother and daughter standing in front of Mike. The little girl had a pink tutu skirt, a small pink waistcoat, and a pair of tiny pink leather shoes. She even had a pink bear hairpin and a pink balloon in her hand.

As he silently watched the little girl from the back, a rare trace of tenderness flashed across his eyes.

“Mommy, how long do we have to go before seeing daddy?”

“We just have to cross this road. Daddy is working overtime today. Shall we get him some food?”

“Sure!”

The girl’s mother was thin and was carrying two bags in her hand. She turned to smile at the girl under her.

“The balloon!”

Just as the woman turned away from the child and back to the opposing traffic light, the pink balloon in the little girl’s hand slipped away. The little girl chased after the balloon unconsciously as she headed for the road.

At that moment, a bus was approaching the intersection at full speed. The driver was so frightened by the unexpected child that showed up that he quickly honked as he floored the break.

“Cadance!”

At this instant, the woman dropped her bag and reached out for her but only managed to grab the corner of the child’s skirt. Her heart almost jumped out of her chest.

Unexpectedly, a dark shadow rushed out from behind the woman quickly and decisively. By the time the woman reacted, the little girl had already landed firmly in a man’s arm.

Mike’s face was calm and indifferent. He did not seem to think that the incident just now was thrilling at all. However, he held the frightened child in his arms firmly as he reminded the woman who had just recovered from the shock, “The light is green.”

Chapter 520 Knit for Me

Once they’d crossed the road, the frightened woman took the child from Mike’s hand. This time, her plain and elegant face was stained with tears.

Then, she squatted down and wrapped her arms around the little girl, seeming like she had exhausted all her strength just to feel her presence. Then, Mike heard a slight whimper and frowned before walking away.

It wasn’t his strong suit to witness a woman’s fragility.

Just as he took a step away, a delicate little hand hooked his finger, and a hint of warmth flowed into his blood along the fingertip.

When he turned his head, his cold face did not reflect the warmth in his heart. The little girl looked at him with big clear eyes, and despite his slight struggle to free himself, her little hand stubbornly grabbed onto his index finger.

“What do you want?”

His tone was not friendly.

“Thank you, mister.”

The little one squinted as she smiled at him. Then, she handed the balloon to him and repeated, “Thank you, mister. My name is Cadance Mint.”

When the girl’s mother finally came to her senses, she looked up at Mike with an apologetic smile. Then, she wiped her tears on her face and reached for something in her bag.

Mike watched her and saw that she was taking out all the cash in her bag after a while. She was about to stuff them into his hand as his face turned gloomy. His hands were just hanging by his side motionlessly.

“Don’t get me wrong. You’re a good person. You’ve saved Cadance, and I don’t know how to express my gratitude. So, this is just a little something from me.”

When the woman noticed the unhappy expression on Mike’s face, she quickly explained incoherently. However, he was in shock when he heard the sentence from the woman’s mouth; he couldn’t hide his panic. ‘You are a good man.’

It was rare for anyone to compliment him like that.

He wasn’t a good guy. His hands are dirtied with blood. He was a demon.

“It’s okay.”

He quickly concealed the emotion in his eyes and spoke faintly. Then, he took the balloon from the little girl’s hand and said,

“This is enough.”

“Mister, I still have something to tell you.”

The little girl tilted her head mysteriously, making Mike hesitate. Although he was not curious, he still asked, “What is it?”

She then hooked her fingers around his again, making him squat down. Suddenly, a warm breath hit his cheek, burning slightly.

“Mommy said that little girls are not allowed to kiss anyone, but I don’t think Mommy will mind if I give you a kiss.”

The little girl gleamed, contrasting with the flustered look on her mother’s face. Her mother quickly pulled the child into her arms and explained with a flustered smile, “She’s still young, don’t mind—”



Mike finally stopped holding back his smile and got up as he touched the little girl's head, interrupting her mother.

"Your daughter is adorable."

After that, as he walked along the street, the wind felt a little warmer, and the street lights seemed a little brighter. He looked up at the city's tall buildings, and a few stars shone in the small portion of the sky overhead.

At this moment, a thought popped up in his mind. He took out his phone and sent a message to the only person he cared about in this city.

"I met a cute little girl on the road today. She's really adorable."

He could imagine the shock in Lila's eyes when she saw his text and how a smile would slowly creep onto her face after she calmed down.

"Have you gotten off work? I haven't had dinner yet."

When Mike received that message, he smiled and kept his phone before he called out for a taxi.

When he arrived at the ward of the Warmorth Hospital, he saw a thin figure sitting on the snow-white sheets from the door's window. Her knuckled hands were quickly and skillfully knitting a sweater.

The dark blue wool was quietly woven into the sweater's sleeves between her fingers. When the woman stopped to compare each side, a delighted smile appeared on her face.

Had it not been for the fact that the hospital gowns on women under the incandescent light were extremely eye-catching, it would've been a serene sight.

Mike, who stood outside the doors, felt his eyes dry. He let out a low cough and heard Lila's flustered voice, followed by rustling sounds.

"Mike, you're here."

Lila was already sitting cross-legged on the hospital bed when he opened the door and went in. The half-knitted sweater was tucked under the pillow, revealing only two slender wooden needles.

"I've bought you beef noodle soup."

Mike's face was calm as he feigned ignorance. He passed the beef noodle soup to her, and she quickly took it. Her mouth began to water.

It was the moment when she took it from him that she saw the scratch on his wrist, and her dull yellow face sank in an instant. Then, she grabbed his arm and lifted his sleeve.

Hidden under the sleeve was an even more shocking wound because it seemed like it had not been treated in time. There was dry blood around the injury, and some blood had stained the sleeve of the white T-shirt.

Lila bit her lips and remained silent as she examined the wound. Instead, she got up and walked out of the room before coming back after a short while with a red ointment and a gauze that she had asked from the nurse in her hands.

Then, she quickly and skillfully lowered her head and cleaned up his wounds. Lila remained silent and buried her head down low. Suddenly, Mike felt two drops of warm liquid on his wrist, and his heart tightened.

"I was waiting at the traffic light on the side of the road. A little girl was almost hit by a car, and I accidentally hurt myself when I rescued her," he explained nonchalantly while his other hand helped pull her messy hair back. Lila's careful movements stopped after she heard this.

"You should've been more careful," she tried to sound angry, but the relief in her tone was evident. Her heart had also calmed down inadvertently.

Because she had kept her head down, she did not notice how he looked at her tenderly. Then, as she continued to clean his wound for him, she threatened angrily, "If you get hurt again in the future, I'm not going to help you clean it. Go to the nurse yourself."

"Okay, I know."

Mike raised his eyebrows slightly and actually nodded in agreement. Right then, Lisa felt like she was punched in the gut. At the end of the day, it was she who suffered internally.

Then, she stuffed the remaining ointment and gauze into his hands angrily.

"You go give it back to the nurse. Also, Lily had just asked me why I haven't seen you in two days?"

At this moment, Lila's face changed. Mike noticed the subtle change in her expression and felt something was wrong. However, he couldn't pinpoint what it was.

"Okay, enjoy your food. I'll be back soon."

As he got up, he thought about all the possibilities and concluded that it was maybe because she was so hungry that she got into a bad mood.

Lila almost collapsed when she saw him get up to leave. She immediately grabbed the pillow beside her and swung it on his back. However, she had accidentally taken out the half-knitted sweater hidden under the pillow. The blue wool rolled from the bed to Mike's feet.

He had pretended to be ignorant for more than a month, but right now, it was hard to put on an act.

"Are you knitting for me?"

He picked up the sweater, and his stubbled face was covered with a shy smile.

Unfortunately, Lila snatched it back angrily and hid it under the quilt this time.

He felt embarrassed when he saw her giving him the cold shoulder. Apart from vulnerability, witnessing a woman's anger was also something that he was not good at.

Lila patiently anticipated for him to say something nice. Who would've expected that instead of hearing his voice, she heard the sound of footsteps getting farther and farther, followed by the sound of the door slammed shut?

This left Liba dumbfounded as she didn't expect him to vacate the room just like that.