Chapter 1974 Lunatic

Just when Francesca was in deep thought while relaxing in her recliner, her phone vibrated once more. It was Layla trying to reach her. In a haste, she answered the call. "Ms. Layla!"

"Are you back in H City already, Francesca?" When Layla was speaking, Anthony's voice could also be heard rather faintly on the other end of the line. "Let me talk to her. Give me the phone—"

Layla bellowed right away, "Zip it."

"Yes, I just reached," replied Francesca with a grin. "I'm at the beach. It's so beautiful here..."

"Have you contacted your master? When's your surgery?"

As always, Layla cut straight to the subject.

"Gordon will sort that out for me. I told him the clues, so I suppose he'd find out soon enough."

"Soon enough? He ought to get it done at once." Anxious, Layla added, "I've got wind that you-know-who was released from prison already."

"What?" Francesca's visage did a one-eighty at the news. "Wasn't he sentenced to life imprisonment? How did he get out so suddenly?"

"Only God knows how... His organization is still in power, after all," said Layla in a deep voice. "That person's a highly dangerous lunatic. He'll definitely seek you out to have his revenge. You'd better keep your guard up!"

Francesca was stumped for words upon hearing that.

"Hey, Francesca! Are you listening to me?" questioned Layla ever so nervously.

"The Lindberg family has your back for now, so I'm not that worried. This is a critical juncture, so you make sure to dismiss any thought of escaping again. Don't fret. Continue your daily activities under their protection. When Dr. Felch arrives, you can then undergo the treatment. Your recuperation comes first. Everything else can wait, you hear?"

"Yes, I understand." Francesca heaved a sigh. "Even so, I'm the one responsible for that kid's life..."

"Don't think of it that way. It was an accident," consoled Layla hurriedly.

"Every human in this world makes mistakes. Doctors are humans, too. Wait, no... Technically, it wasn't your mistake anyway. You told him before that the surgery's rate of success was eighty percent. That means there's still a twenty percent probability of failure. You're not at fault just because the surgery failed. Not even the best surgeons could guarantee a hundred percent survival rate."

Francesca covered her forehead. A stinging pang of sadness overwhelmed her heart.

"If only she hadn't handed me the candy, she wouldn't have been shot. It was all my fault that she got hurt in the first place. I've given her my word to cure her wound, yet I failed in the end. All I could do was watch her breathe her last in front of me. I... That child's so young and adorable. Her smile's so sweet and innocent. I'm the reason she lost her life..."

Panic-stricken, Layla quickly explained, "You really should stop thinking like this. It was all purely an accident. If you weren't injured in the first place, hardly anyone in this world could lay a hand on you. That said, if you ever pitied that lunatic, you yourself would be in great danger..."

"But... He's gotten into that state due to his daughter's death." Francesca let out a long sigh before continuing, "Maybe... Maybe I should lend him a hand!"

Flying off the handle, Layla fumed, "Are you nuts? You need to come to your senses! He's always been a killer, and he's been the target of vengeance all along. If you weren't there that day, Candice would still end up getting hurt one way or another. For you to have bumped into her and helped her was simply coincidental. In return, she gifted you candy but then got shot in the process."

She paused for a bit before adding, "I understand your guilt and your yearning to save her life. Failing the surgery was also an accident, and it has nothing to do with you. That guy turned himself crazy because of Candice's passing and went on to claim thirteen lives at the hospital. You would've been gone with the wind as well had you not been fast enough to escape."

"Stop... Just stop talking..."

"I insist to!" Layla wanted Francesca to face the hard truth. "That kid's really innocent, I know. I, too, feel so sorry for her. But, no matter what, it wasn't your fault, so don't even think about being a saint!"

Chapter 1975 Another String To Our Bow

Layla went on, "As for that insane fellow, he's already on a killing spree. He's got his mind set on you that you were the root of his daughter's mishap, so he'd never let you off the hook. The likes of him wouldn't be of sound mind. If you run into him somehow, don't waver!"

She stopped to ponder before going on, "If you cave in, you'll be the one who'll suffer in his stead. What would be of Danrique if you were dead? Ever thought of that? And what should we all do by then? How about the children? As long as that person is alive, he'll always be out for blood—"

"Okay, okay! I hear you," interrupted Francesca. She felt that her head was about to crack from all the pain, so she blurted out, "I'm having a migraine right now. I'll talk to you later..."

"All right, I won't disturb you anymore." Layla's heart ached for Francesca. "Get proper rest and remember my words..."

"Okay."

After hanging up the phone, Francesca held her throbbing head as she lay on the recliner, trying to sleep her worries away. Still, sleep eluded her as the scene where Candice got injured popped right back into her head once more.

That past event fired into her mind all of a sudden like a bullet, making her life a living hell.

As she placed her palm on her head, she struggled to make her way back into the bedroom before retrieving the medical kit and opening it up. She fished out the

acupuncture needle and used it on herself so that she could fall into a deep slumber and escape her messy thoughts.

Little did she know that there had been someone in the villa next to her home peeping at her every move via a pair of binoculars.

Meanwhile, Layla and Anthony just got back home in S Nation. They were still on pins and needles, dwelling on the matter regarding Francesca.

"Why won't you let me have a word with her?" Anthony was displeased because he didn't get to speak to Francesca on the phone earlier.

"You son of a—are you a moron? Do you think we're interested in listening to your nonsense at a time like this?"

Layla smacked the back of Anthony's head with all her might as she spoke. She exerted so much force that the latter dropped to the floor from the impact.

Anthony climbed back up to his feet pathetically. His cheeks flushed red like a tomato, hollering, "Danrique always smacked me like this. And now, you, too, followed suit. I'd rather you guys just beat me to death."

"I'll throw you out the door if I hear one more word coming out of your bloody mouth."

Layla wasn't in a good mood that day, so naturally, she would throw a fit.

Feeling indignant, Anthony pouted and held back his tears. He then pulled himself together and cautiously uttered, "I also wished to show her some concern and talk some sense into her..."

"What kind of sense could you possibly offer? You're full of nonsense yourself. Would you ever have anything useful to say?"

A glint of disdain flashed across Layla's eyes as she looked down on Anthony as usual.

"You!" A wave of anger erupted like a volcano within Anthony's heart. "Why do you keep treating me this way since I was a kid? Do I really mean nothing to you?"

"Enough. Save it." Layla was annoyed. "Go video call Mr. Lincoln and tell him to get his butt here at once. I need to discuss with him a plan to deal with all this. That maniac isn't a normal being. He's one of those elite assassins, and he's even backed by the world's top assassin organization. If he really got to Francesca, she'd be in grave danger."

"I'm on it." With that, Anthony hastily went off to do her bidding.

Lighting a cigarette, Layla sat on the balcony and puffed to her heart's content. She then jogged down memory lane to that fateful scene two years ago. Her heart sank to her stomach.

Out of the blue, a bold idea came to her mind. If I tell Danrique everything and let him protect Francesca, wouldn't it be better?

However, she perished the thought almost immediately.

That would make sense, for Danrique might seem to be true to Francesca, but nothing was certain when it came to relationships and feelings. If things were to take a turn for the worst in the future, he would only have gotten dirt on her.

I'd rather not take a risk like that... Bah! Forget it. I'll just handle it myself.

At the thought of that, Layla began running a background check on a direct flight to H City. She was contemplating making a trip there personally. Even so, she had to first wait for that old man to return for a discussion.

In a flash, Anthony rushed back to report to Layla after ending the video call. "Mr. Lincoln is on his way back right now as we speak. He'll arrive tonight."

"That old geezer is always so tardy like a tortoise!" Layla went through the roof again. "Go book us three tickets to H City. We'd better have another string to our bow!"

"All right!"

Chapter 1976 A Warning

Anthony was about to book the plane ticket when the phone rang. It was Lincoln calling to inform Anthony that there was an explosion at the orphanage.

Shocked to the core, Anthony quickly relayed the news to Layla, and she instantly drove over with him.

Fortunately, none of the children were injured. Only two of the staff members were wounded, and they had been sent to the hospital for treatment.

The local police had come and were investigating the incident.

Later, Layla received more and more calls, informing her that there were also incidents happening at other orphanages such as food poisoning and the intrusion of a psychiatric patient to harm the children. What was more outrageous was that there was a truck plowing into one of the orphanages.

Upon hearing the news, she was anxious like a cat on hot bricks. Immediately, Layla, Lincoln, and Anthony parted ways to check on the orphanages and deal with the subsequent matters.

Several hours later, the three of them exchanged information through a video call. So far, there were no child casualties. Although the staff members were wounded, their injuries were not life-threatening. Hence, they felt relieved despite the awful incidents.

Without a trace of uncertainty, Lincoln concluded, "This is an organized and premeditated disruption, aiming to threaten us. I think this is related to that lunatic."

"But how did he know that these orphanages belong to Francesca as well as their addresses?" Layla queried hurriedly. "Francesca has been doing a good job keeping them under wraps. He only met us once back then. I don't think he would know all of these."

"Riz Corporation has infiltrated all corners of the world. They have a professional intelligence agency with the ability to surpass the FBI. Therefore, it's not difficult for them to investigate a person." Lincoln started to analyze the situation logically. "Luckily, Francesca heeds our advice and has not disclosed her identity and the information regarding the orphanages. It's somewhat difficult for them to check, so there are only four orphanages in S Nation affected, and the others are fine for the time being."

"So they've only gotten their hands on a part of Francesca's information and there are still some they haven't obtained?" Layla asked.

"Probably." Lincoln nodded. "Besides, it's possible that the other party issued a warning to distract us so that we won't focus on intervening in Francesca's matters."

"This also serves as a warning to us." Layla's words were laced with solemnity.
"There are no child casualties in the explosion this time, but if he is provoked, we might not be as lucky."

"That's right, so we can't leave. The orphanages need our protection." Lincoln had similar thoughts as well. "Besides, if we go to H City, we might not be of help."

"What about Francesca then? Are we going to not care about her?" Anthony panicked.

"She has the Lindberg family protecting her now, so she is safe." Lincoln was clear-headed. "Even if we go, we can't do anything for her. Moreover, the orphanages are what she cares about the most. If she knows that we insist on meeting up with her while the orphanages are facing trouble, she will blame us."

"But..."

"I'll give her a call and ask for her opinion."

Layla was ready to quit the video call to give Francesca a call when Lincoln stopped her.

"Wait," he said. "Let's not tell her about this first. Judging from her personality, I'm sure that she will give up on the surgery to rush back here if she knows about the incidents."

"You're right..." Layla was a bit uneasy. "What should we do then? She's all alone, and I'm worried for her."

"Call her tomorrow. You need to tell her not to leave the protection of the Lindberg family. As long as she stays put, she'll be fine," Lincoln reminded.

"I've told her about it today, but I'm still feeling unsettled." Worry was written all over Layla's face. "With the protection of the Lindberg family, that lunatic can't get near to her. But what if the people of Riz Corporation help him?"

Riz Corporation was a top-notch assassin organization. The people from the Lindberg family might not be able to fend them off.

Chapter 1977 Did Not Succeed

"You're overthinking." Lincoln replied firmly, "Riz Corporation is very powerful, but they won't offend the Lindberg family."

"Why did Riz Corporation help that lunatic to check Francesca's identity then?" Layla questioned. "Do they know the Lindberg family is watching over Francesca? Her relationship with Danrique has not been disclosed, and the Lindberg family has always been keeping a low profile. They rarely make any public appearance..."

"Once Riz Corporation know Francesca has the backing of Danrique, they won't intervene in this matter, making it a personal grudge of that lunatic. That lunatic is all alone, so he can't hurt Francesca. What I'm worried about is that she'd escaped again impulsively and showed him mercy due to her guilt for Candice."

"I need to remind her again." Layla was a tad fretful.

"Wait until tomorrow. She's probably asleep now," Lincoln responded. "I'm done with the things here. I will head back as soon as possible. Tell us about Francesca and Danrique. If he is serious about their relationship, then I think it's good for them to be a couple."

"Nah, how could a person like him know how to love? I think he's just playing around, craving a sense of novelty..." Anthony quickly replied. "Besides, he is also dangerous. He crashed into Francesca with his car in M Nation, and she was shot because of him..."

"Oh, really?" Lincoln asked.

"I think so, but I don't know about the details..."

"I know he's really dangerous. He's not someone suitable for Francesca, and she doesn't like him. She's always been thinking about escaping. Danrique's keeping her under house arrest..."

"All right. Let's talk more about this when we meet."

With that, Lincoln and Layla ended the video call.

Unsettled, Anthony handled the pressing matters on hand and hurriedly rushed back home to see Lincoln.

The former felt there was a need for him to tell Lincoln and Layla about every mistreatment Danrique had inflicted on Francesca. Besides, he wanted to rush to H City to keep Francesca safe.

Currently, Francesca was fast asleep, not noticing that a figure had sneaked into the villa.

As agile as a monkey, that person jumped over the wall of the yard before he leaped and reached the balcony on the second floor. Just as he was about to barge into Francesca's room, a cold voice came from downstairs. "Who's there?"

With that, several beams of bright light shone onto the person as two bodyguards went after him swiftly.

Realizing that he had been discovered before he could take action, he had no choice but to leave.

The two bodyguards chased after him instantly, and the female bodyguard, Samantha, quickly rushed into the room to check on Francesca. Upon seeing that she was sleeping peacefully, the two bodyguards heaved a sigh of relief.

Nevertheless, the vigilant bodyguards did not leave the room anymore. One of them kept careful watch for possible danger on the balcony while the other one stood guard behind the door of the room. Half an hour later, the subordinates who chased after the suspicious person came back to report to Sloan. "Sloan, that person escaped."

"Check the surveillance footage, and see who it was," Sloan ordered.

"Understood."

"As for the others, be on full alert and keep your guard up. Protect Ms. Felch."

"Noted."

After making those arrangements, Sloan reported that night's condition to Sean and Gordon.

The three of them exchanged information through a voice call. Gordon was puzzled when he got to know of the incident. "This is weird. Who on earth wanted to attack Ms. Felch? Could it be someone sent by Frank or the three great families?"

"If it was them, they wouldn't just send one person." Sean was calm and collected. "Was it Ms. Felch's enemy?"

"How could Ms. Felch have any enemies?" Gordon found it odd. "She's just a doctor, and her identity has always been well-concealed."

"Right..."

"Sloan, keep Ms. Felch safe. I'll send a few people there," Sean said.

"Okay."

After hanging up the phone, Sloan arranged for more people to scan the surroundings of the villa, ensuring their defense was foolproof.

Chapter 1978 Candy

Francesca slept soundly, utterly oblivious to what had happened the previous night. She fell into a daze when she saw Heidi and Samantha in the room by the time she woke up the next morning.

Heidi immediately explained, "Ms. Felch, someone attempted to intrude into your room last night but was discovered by Sloan in time. We are afraid something bad might happen to you, so we decided to stand guard in your room. We hope we did not interrupt your rest time."

"That's all right..." Francesca had yet to wrap her mind around the whole incident. "Are you telling me that someone barged into my room? Who is that?"

"Judging from his silhouette, the culprit appears to be a man. We are still investigating for further details. Sloan ordered his men to chase after the culprit at once but to no avail."

Francesca frowned upon hearing those words. Could it be that person?

Knock! Knock!

At that moment, someone knocked on the door. Kerrie, leading the maid, entered to help Francesca get washed up and dressed.

As Heidi and Samantha exited the room, Francesca expressed her gratitude and reminded them to rest well.

After Francesca finished washing up, she had her breakfast on the balcony. By accident, she found a piece of candy underneath the recliner.

She picked up the candy and saw the familiar wrapping. Her face darkened instantaneously as memories from two years ago flooded her mind.

Francesca and Layla had just gotten off the plane at the airport in Tayhaven and were heading toward the exit. Suddenly, they saw a little girl crying outside the restroom.

The little girl had a cute appearance. As a result of the hysterical cry, her face flushed, and she experienced difficulty breathing, seemingly unable to catch her breath.

Francesca immediately gave the child the appropriate medication. After the little girl's condition stabilized, Francesca asked, "Hello, why are you here alone? Where are your daddy and mommy?"

"I don't have a mommy. Daddy is bringing me home, but I went to the restroom earlier and can't find him now. Boohoo..."

The little girl seemed to be slightly afraid as her petite body trembled.

"Don't be scared. I'll bring you to search for your daddy."

Francesca was planning to bring the little girl to the airport staff. They've only taken a few steps when a man's voice suddenly rang from behind them. "Candice!"

"Daddy!" The little girl ran in that man's direction in excitement.

He lifted the little girl and carried her with one hand while staring at Francesca cautiously.

Francesca's first impression when she saw that man was that his eyes were filled with intense malice.

"Daddy, I had an asthma attack earlier, and this lady saved me. She was even going to help me look for you," Candice hurriedly explained.

"Is that so?" The murderous intent in that man's eyes gradually faded. He left the scene with his daughter after he thanked Francesca.

"He's so weird."

Francesca gazed at his leaving figure from behind, thinking that he was a peculiar man. On the other hand, the little girl, Candice, was very cute and obedient. She waved her hand at Francesca while regarding Francesca with a pair of large, innocent eyes and a sincere look.

Layla said in an undertone, "This man is very dangerous. We must stay away from him."

"Dangerous?" Francesca was curious.

"That's right." Layla wore a solemn expression. "If I am not mistaken, judging by his malevolent aura and heightened senses, he should be a professional assassin."

"Why would a professional assassin have such an adorable child?" Francesca knitted her brows. "Is that little girl really his child? What if he kidnapped her?"

"The child is reliant on him and shows affection toward him. Moreover, he appears to care for the girl genuinely, and he is protective of the girl. I suppose they are biologically related..." Layla sighed. "An outlaw like him should not have children. Sooner or later, something unfortunate will befall the little girl if she continues to follow him around."

"Perhaps he will quit his unlawful occupation for the child." Francesca could not bear to imagine Candice's fate.

"That occupation is like a bottomless abyss. Once he meddles in the business, there's no turning back. Did you notice how vigilant he behaved just now? I think someone may be following him," Layla elaborated.

"I hope the little girl will stay unharmed." Francesca prayed for Candice's safety.

"We can only hope so."