Chapter 1999 Surgery

Before she could finish, Chrono yanked on the safety clip of the bomb. Sam vaulted from Danrique's arm and sank its fangs into Chrono's hand. There was a sharp pain, and Chrono loosened his fingers, dropping the bomb before Danrique kicked it away from them.

A loud bang resounded, and the bomb detonated without injuring anyone. However, the explosion rattled Francesca, and it felt like a blade of agony was splitting her head. Blood started to trickle out of her ears.

Chrono moved to seize her again, but Danrique clamped his hand around Chrono's neck in a chokehold, snarling, "How dare you touch a hair on her? I'll send you straight to hell myself!"

Chrono could only groan, and his eyes nearly rolled back in his head. Noticing that Danrique was almost choking the life out of him, Francesca remembered the bomb in the orphanage and immediately stopped Danrique. "Stop it!"

Danrique released Chrono, who slumped to the ground. Sam wound itself around his neck and gave him another vicious bite. A shrill scream pierced the air as he fumbled wildly to rip Sam away.

"Tell me where the bomb is in the orphanage," Francesca demanded. Chrono drew out a small pistol and took aim at her head. "Careful!" Danrique jerked her aside, and the bullet struck him in the arm, blood splattering everywhere.

Sean and his men moved to grab Chrono, but he swung the pistol to aim at them, causing them to recoil instinctively. He seized the window of opportunity and fled.

Sean and his men were hot on his heels, with the police not far behind them. Danrique immediately led Francesca into a car and left the scene.

Her headache had sharpened to an unbearable degree in the car, but she clutched his sleeve and urged anxiously, "You have to find Chrono and the bomb in the orphanage..."

Immediately, Danrique gave Ben instructions to comb the place.

At that moment, he realized that she did have a weak spot too.

Gordon called with an update that Dr. Felch had arrived at the notable Kindness Hospital in H City. Everything was in order and he would be ready to perform the surgery after taking a short rest.

Danrique immediately turned the car around and drove to Kindness Hospital.

When they were a few minutes away from the hospital, Sean reported his findings at the orphanage, "Ms. Felch founded hundreds of orphanages and contributed to the Lovely Care Foundation. Three of her S Nation orphanages were blown up, most likely by Chrono."

Danrique was taken aback. He always thought Francesca was a mere doctor and that her avarice was a woman's nature. Now he knew she had done it for the orphanages.

Those orphans were her Achilles' heel.

"I'm still investigating the feud between Chrono and Ms. Felch. The S Nation police have located the bomb hidden in the orphanage with the help of two supervisors half an hour ago."

Sean sighed. "So Ms. Felch was in danger because of those kids."

"At least she's fine now." Danrique's gaze softened as he looked down at Francesca in his arms. "Get in contact with S Nation and have them keep an eye on the orphanages. Send a few of our more savvy men to surreptitiously stand guard."

"Yes, sir." Sean was about to leave when he thought of something and added, "Right, Mr. Lindberg, remember how I mentioned that Ms. Felch seems to have a history with Dr. Felch? She seems particularly disinclined to Dr. Felch discovering her identity."

"Got it." Danrique ordered Sloan, "Get me Gordon."

"Yes, sir."

Danrique carried Francesca into the operating theater, where Helen did a cursory examination and cleaned her wounds.

He observed from the doorway with a frown knitting his brows when Gordon rushed over. "Mr. Lindberg."

"Where's Dr. Felch?" Danrique asked.

Chapter 2000 Trust

"Still resting," Gordon answered quietly. "He said he only closes up surgeries and leaves the rest to others. Thus, I contacted Dr. Wright to be on standby. A female doctor would be more appropriate to tend to Ms. Felch."

"Good." Danrique nodded. "Cece does not want her face to be seen by anyone. Relay the instruction to Helen."

"Huh?" Gordon was stunned for a moment but quickly recovered and nodded hastily. "Yes, sir."

Gordon informed Helen, and despite her confusion, she did as told. After all, she had accepted a handsome amount of money from them.

She asked Gordon and Danrique to leave the room when the surgery was about to begin, but Danrique was unwilling to leave. Hence, he had someone put up a screen and sat behind it.

Soon, the room was cleared, leaving Gordon and two female bodyguards standing behind Danrique, awaiting orders.

Helen prepped everything, and an elderly man with white hair entered the room slowly with the help of a young man.

Danrique caught a fleeting glimpse of the elderly through the carved screen. Despite his advanced years, he was sprightly and dressed in traditional garb, exuding a saintly air.

His appearance resembled that of the quack traditional medicine doctor Danrique had hired in Summerbank, casting doubt on whether he was a charlatan incapable of performing surgery.

Helen too had similar doubts.

She stilled after noticing Dr. Felch and questioned in Ustranasion, "Doctor, this is an extremely complex surgery. Even I'm not confident in my skills. Are you certain that you can pull it off?"

Another female doctor translated her question and regarded Dr. Felch with a skeptical look.

Dr. Felch took no offense and replied lightly, "I'm not entirely certain. I have declined to perform this surgery, but you pressured me to do it."

"Uh..." The female doctor was aghast.

Helen pressed the female doctor to translate what he said, and a look of shock came across her face. "Goodness, are you kidding? This is a person's life on the line, not to mention Ms. Felch is Mr. Lindberg's fiancée."

The female doctor was about to translate for Helen when Dr. Felch interrupted, "What did you call her? Ms. Felch?"

Dr. Felch's command of Ustranasion wasn't fluent, but he had treated a few foreign patients and understood simple words. He had clearly heard Helen addressing the patient as Ms. Felch.

The female doctor interpreted Dr. Felch's question to Helen.

"Ah, about that-" Helen was about to answer when she suddenly remembered Gordon telling her not to let anyone know Francesca's name and face, so she backtracked. "We're running out of time. Let's perform the surgery first."

She paused before continuing, "Are you sure, Dr. Felch? If this surgery fails, the consequence will be dire."

"Dr. Felch, Dr. Wright said-"

"We have to try. I haven't performed surgery in years." Before the female doctor could finish, Dr. Felch put on his reading glasses, rolled up his sleeves, snapped on a pair of gloves, and lifted a scalpel to commence the surgery.

Helen saw Dr. Felch needing reading glasses for surgery and dissolved into hysterics, repeating, "Oh, my God. Oh, my God."

The female doctor hurried to the screen to consult Danrique's opinion.

A frown marred his forehead, and his expression was troubled as he had reservations about Dr. Felch's skills.

"Ms. Felch mentioned that only Dr. Felch could treat her illness. We shouldn't be too concerned."

Gordon opened a text on his phone and showed it to Danrique.

Francesca had indeed sent it to Gordon, and the timestamp indicated that it was delivered last night. That meant she had sent the text before Chrono abducted her.

Danrique said, "I trust Dr. Felch. Give him all reins over the surgery."

"Yes, sir."

Chapter 2001 This Is Good

Relief flowed over the doctors at Danrique's words, and Helen moved to give the spot of the lead surgeon to Dr. Felch. Dr. Felch looked at the short-haired, unconscious girl on the bed, and his eyes clouded with emotions.

Without further ado, he examined the wound and the X-ray images on the screens before starting. Helen and the rest of the staff assisted him at his side.

Dr. Felch didn't utter a single sound or raise his head throughout the two-hour procedure. He finally finished removing all the metal shrapnel from the wound and did a final examination before cleaning and closing up the wound in one fell swoop.

Helen could not help but express her admiration after the surgery. "Dr. Felch, you have superb skills. You didn't have to look to know where the shrapnels were, and you removed them immaculately. Your control and strength were flawless even when a fragment was pressing on a nerve below her brain. There was simply no room for error."

"Yes, that was amazing!" the other doctors praised, and the female doctor translated what Helen said to Dr. Felch. He removed his mask and said blandly, "No need to translate. Save the adulation and take good care of the patient."

His gaze was drawn to Francesca on the bed, the stormy look returning to his eyes. He wasn't even aware when Sam called out for him.

"Dr. Felch... Dr. Felch!" He only snapped out of his reverie after Sam repeated his name several times. "What?"

"We should leave now," Sam reminded politely.

"Okay." Dr. Felch removed his mask absentmindedly, his gaze flicking to the screen, and he asked, "The person behind the screen, could you step out for a word?"

Meanwhile, Danrique was donning an isolation gown before going to Francesca. His hands stilled when he heard Dr. Felch, and he motioned for Gordon and the bodyguards to keep an eye on Francesca.

He said, "After you, Dr. Felch."

Gordon mentioned that Francesca insisted Danrique treat him with respect as a father figure. Danrique had dismissed that request with a "Nonsense," but now that he was in Dr. Felch's presence, Danrique found himself regarding him with deference.

Sam assisted Dr. Felch out of the room, and Danrique followed suit.

Although it was their first meeting, there was a peculiar sense of familiarity, as if they had met somewhere before.

They both took a moment to size each other up before recognition lit up their eyes.

"It's you?"

"It's you!"

Memories from seven years ago rose unbidden in their mind, and surprise twinkled in their eyes.

Francesca had saved Danrique seven years ago, and he had spent half a month convalescing in the mountains and met Dr. Felch briefly.

She pointed to Dr. Felch's silhouette at the time and remarked that he was the only loved one she had in the world.

Dr. Felch was aware that she had saved someone and that they had developed feelings for each other.

However, Francesca was still young, and Dr. Felch strongly opposed their budding love and limited her interaction with the outside world. He told her to keep her identity private and not reveal her true name to anyone.

Thus, Danrique was kept in the dark about Francesca's situation, but Dr. Felch remembered him.

Danrique had changed since seven years ago, so Dr. Felch spoke in an incredulous tone, despite being able to recognize him.

Danrique was convinced that Dr. Felch was Francesca's only loved one.

"I didn't understand why she believed you were the only person who could treat her, but now-"

"Good, good, this is good!" Dr. Felch cut him off and exclaimed vehemently before taking his leave with his head bowed, as though he had nothing to say or ask and was contented.

Chapter 2002 The Truth

A complicated expression flashed across Danrique's eyes as he stared at Dr. Felch's back as he walked further away. Gordon rushed over and asked in a low voice, "Mr. Lindberg, could he be Ms. Felch's—"

"He is her master," Danrique replied. He had already guessed the man's identity.

Despite her young age, Francesca possesses incredible medical skills. Therefore, she must have been under the tutelage of an expert. That person is Dr. Felch. He isn't just Francesca's master, he is also her only loved one left in the world.

Gordon finally had a grasp of the situation. "I see. Should we go after him?"

Shaking his head, Danrique said, "That won't be necessary. Both of them seem to be avoiding each other. Perhaps it's not the time for them to be reunited yet."

Gordon nodded in agreement. "That's right. Maybe Ms. Felch wants to achieve something in her life before she goes back to see her master. As for Dr. Felch, perhaps he's waiting for a better opportunity for their reunion."

"Maybe you're right. Send someone to protect Dr. Felch. When Cece's condition is stable, I'll personally send him back," Danrique instructed.

"Understood."

Dr. Felch walked slowly down a long corridor for several minutes.

Seeing Dr. Felch's complicated expression, Sam thought he was exhausted. Sam carefully supported him and suggested, "Dr. Felch, we should return to the hotel early and rest."

"No. We should head back to Phoenix City," Dr. Felch said in a hoarse voice.

There was a tinge of sadness in his voice.

Sam was taken aback by the suggestion. "We're leaving now? We haven't settled our medical fees yet. Ah, Dr. Felch, why are your eyes bloodshot?"

"Something got into my eyes because of the wind," answered Dr. Felch.

He fell silent afterward.

"It's quite windy in H City. After all, we're by the sea," Sam muttered.

In the ward, Helen was examining Francesca's condition. With a look of delight, she announced, "The operation was a success. She will be under observation for another twenty-four hours. Everything will be fine if there are no complications."

"That's wonderful!"

The team of medical staff was overjoyed. Furthermore, some people whispered about seeking advice from Dr. Felch.

The ward plunged into silence the moment Danrique returned. Everyone immediately stepped aside.

After listening to Helen's update in Ustranasion, Danrique instantly felt relieved. Sitting by the bedside, he held Francesca's hand and quietly accompanied her.

Soon, Sloan brought the news that Dr. Felch wanted to leave to return to Phoenix City as soon as possible.

"Ask Dr. Felch to stay for another twenty-four hours. He can leave after the observation period is over," Danrique instructed.

Sloan immediately went to relay the message.

Time ticked by as everyone waited for the doctor's update anxiously.

Danrique stayed at the hospital until noon the following day. Francesca's condition had improved after a day.

"She's no longer in danger. She will be back to normal after recuperating for the next few months," explained Helen.

Upon hearing the doctor's words, Danrique finally let out a sigh of relief. He instructed Gordon and the others to protect Francesca. Then, he brought Sean to visit Dr. Felch at Garden Villa.

Nevertheless, Dr. Felch had already packed his luggage and was determined to leave. Furthermore, he made it clear that he refused to meet with Danrique by asking the bodyguards to inform him not to visit him.

The bodyguards did not dare to stop him nor show disrespect. Hence, they hurriedly called Sean to report the situation.

Danrique smirked upon hearing Sean's explanation. "He's so stubborn. They're indeed a family."

Smiling, Sean said, "We're almost there. It's right in front. The private jet is ready. I heard Dr. Felch has also brought his dog. Mylo is currently discussing with the airport management to allow the dog to board the jet."

"Remember to fulfill Dr. Felch's every wish," Danrique ordered.

"Understood."

At that moment, a car drove up on the other side. After poking his head out of the car window, Sean informed, "That's the car escorting Dr. Felch to the airport."

"Okay." Danrique gestured for his subordinates to open the car door.

Just when Danrique was ready to send off Dr. Felch on the roadside, the barking of a dog could be heard coming out from the other car.

"Be quiet, Cece!" Dr. Felch growled, seemingly displeased.

Danrique tensed up upon hearing that. What on earth is going on?

Chapter 2003 Take Care

Pfft! Sean could not hold himself back and burst into laughter. Upon receiving Danrique's death glare, Sean lowered his head, not daring to breathe out loud.

Danrique's expression darkened at once. The Cece I had longed for seven years was a dog! A freaking dog! He was seething with rage at that moment. Francesca, how dare you fool me like that?

Memories from seven years ago flashed across Danrique's mind. When he was being chased by his enemies, he fled to the mountains and was rescued by a young lady. She hid Danrique in the cabin where she took a respite from herding. Moreover, she also treated him and served him meals every day.

Danrique developed an innocent crush on the young lady after they spent half a month together. However, she refused to tell him her name at first. One day, she told him after being annoyed by his pestering. "My name is Cece!"

Nevertheless, Danrique did not have time to ask more questions as his enemies were breathing down his neck. To prevent dragging Cece into the matter, he fled in a hurry.

Alas, the two of them had lost contact since then. Nevertheless, Danrique still held on to that name dearly in his heart after many years had passed.

After getting himself to safety, he sent people back to Mount Wisteria to search for Cece. Unfortunately, all the efforts to locate her were in vain.

Perhaps Francesca and Dr. Felch moved to Mount Phoenix back then. Or maybe they were only temporarily staying in Mount Wisteria and that was why we couldn't find them. However, the most important right now is...

Looking at the dog, Danrique felt a sense of familiarity.

The brown dog has a missing ear on one side. It's wearing a bell around the neck. Isn't it the same dog Francesca had seven years ago? I can't believe the puppy is all grown up now.

When Danrique asked Francesca for her name that time, she smirked and looked at the dog beside her. "I'm Cece," she uttered. The dog also wagged its tail at her.

Back then, he did not think much besides as Cece was a beautiful name.

After thinking about it, Danrique felt like he had been tricked.

Da*n it!

A vortex of anger swirled inside Danrique. Nevertheless, there was nothing he could do at that moment. I can't possibly drag Francesca out of the hospital bed and punish her, can I?

"Mr. Lindberg, Dr. Felch is getting off," Sean reminded him from the side.

Snapping back to reality, Danrique raised his head and looked at Dr. Felch, who was getting out of the car. He was followed by Sam while holding the dog, Cece.

Cece bared its teeth and barked at Danrique. Upon receiving his stern glare, the dog became frightened and hastily hid behind Sam, wagging its tail timidly in silence.

"Mr. Lindberg, you don't have to do this. She's still in the hospital. You should stay by her side," said Dr. Felch.

"It's fine. She's no longer in danger. I came here because I wanted to tell you the news personally. She asked me to treat you with the same respect as my father. Therefore, I have to see you off in person," Danrique said politely.

Danrique also had a relative whom he respected, Isabella. He could understand Francesca's feelings toward Dr. Felch.

As a result, he had to do that on Francesca's behalf.

"All right."

Dr. Felch nodded without saying much. Before leaving, he added, "I'm glad you're here. Now, go back and stay with her."

"All right." Nodding, Danrique helped him get into the car.

After sitting down, Dr. Felch added, "She's weak. So, you must take care of her!"

"Don't worry. I will take good care of her."

Danrique did not mull over Dr. Felch's words. He thought the latter was merely talking about Francesca's poor health after her operation.

"Goodbye!"

"Take care, Dr. Felch," Danrique uttered loudly.

Looking up at Danrique, Dr. Felch slightly moved his hand that was holding the cane. His worried gaze brightened up at once.