

Surprise 286

Chapter 286 I Have Met Him

I received a phone call from Shay half an hour ago. Shay mentioned that Courtney left the banquet hall and that her phone was engaged. That's why he's calling to ask whether she has returned home. Then, he repeated what had happened in the cocktail party to me. "Fortunately Shay and Casey were present to smooth things over. They didn't let things get overly embarrassing for Courtney." Oliver wore a complicated expression as he stared at Alexander and probed, "Are you telling me that you believe what they said?"

Alexander's gaze darkened. He seemed to be deep in his thoughts and he did not hear what Oliver said.

"In any case, I do not think it's true." Oliver answered his own question. He held his tea cup as he stood up from the couch. Then, he made his way to his room while speaking to Alexander meaningfully. "Sometimes, you may not witness the strange combination of coincidences in person, but you can't be sure when fate unknowingly binds you with somebody else's path."

Alexander did not pay attention to Oliver's words. Once the living room fell silent again, he walked to the master bedroom entrance. He was about to knock on the door, but he froze halfway as his hand hung mid-air for the longest time. Although I do not know what happened in the banquet hall, it is not difficult to guess. When the farce was taking place, I was answering a call from Mr. Harry in the washroom. Then, I bumped into Kelly when I was stepping out of the facilities. That explains why she said those things. I can't believe I didn't even bother to ask where she heard that story from.

He felt utterly upset and remorseful, especially when he recalled the vow he made to Courtney last night—he had promised to protect her well under those complex and horrible circumstances. He could not help but feel ashamed of himself.

After her shower, she stared at her room door as she dried her hair with a towel. Nevertheless, it was exceptionally quiet. She could not sleep for the entire night; instead, she tossed and turned on the bed. The moonlight shone through the gap between the curtains from outside, making the air seem cold.

The temperature has steadily decreased now that the month of October has come and gone. In reality, Courtney already felt the chill during the walk to the building after leaving Isaac's car. In any case, compared to how cold my body feels, a human's heart is even colder. I think a person's heart is a scary thing. It doesn't matter how much time has passed because those people from the past don't seem to change. If I think I've changed, it might be because I haven't known them well enough in the past. Isaac is timid whereas Vanessa is evil. Therefore, they are still involved in those matters, which includes the little-known accident that happened six years ago. I try to use time to bury the secret, but it remains there in silence. In fact, it is almost as if it is waiting for the right time to destroy me. I am not sure whether Alexander knows about what happened at tonight's cocktail party. If I have a choice, I hope that he stays oblivious to this incident. Once it involves the incident six years ago, it will cause the most sensitive issue I currently face to arise.

The early winter rain lasted all night.

It was still dark when Courtney woke up the next morning. The temperature had dropped drastically by 10 degrees, causing her to wrap herself with a thicker woolen coat.

The minute she was done with her shower, she walked out of her room. She had originally planned to avoid Alexander by leaving the house earlier than usual, but she unexpectedly saw a figure on the couch.

Truth to be told, it was a sorry sight to see him asleep on a two-seater couch in his six-foot frame. His legs were dangling off the armrest of the couch and he only covered himself with a woolen blanket. He did not even change the clothes that he wore last night. In fact, she felt chills just by looking at him.

After a moment of hesitation, she approached him to shake his shoulder. "Go back into the room to sleep."

However, Alexander remained motionless, as though he was sound asleep.

"Alexander." Courtney frowned and she jabbed at his shoulder. "I don't have the time to fool around with you. I need to leave now. You have to get up and sleep in the room." He still did not react to her words.

She was stumped for a while before she suddenly reached out to check his forehead and her heart clenched painfully. He's burning up. The temperature dropped 10 degrees last night. How could he not freeze in his sleep since he's barely wearing anything warm?

She woke Oliver up and the two of them managed to drag Alexander into the master bedroom.

Once they were done, Oliver sat on the carpet to catch his breath. "Hang on, I did not lock the door last night. I have to give it to him—he refuses to sleep on a bed and instead, he chose to sleep on a couch. Besides, why didn't he switch on the heater?"

He swung his arms while complaining loudly since he barely did any physical activity to start with. He almost spent all of his energy after dragging Alexander, who was almost as tall as he was, from the living room to the bedroom. In fact, he felt as though his bones were about to break into pieces.

Courtney glanced at him while tucking Alexander underneath the blanket. "That's enough. He might not even know where the heater is if you were to ask him. I need to head to the company later. Give him this medication when he's awake later. Please help me to keep an eye on him."

Oliver nodded while mumbling to himself, "I am really a nanny now."

"What do you mean by being a nanny? Can't you treat him like an older brother?" She was merely making a casual comment, so she did not notice the sudden strained expression across Oliver's face. He was staring at Alexander with a complex expression.

After the door in the living room was closed, the house fell into silence once again.

Oliver stood up from the carpet. After straightening himself, he stood tall while looking down at Alexander from above. He seemed as if he was trying to figure something out from Alexander's face.

The vibration from Oliver's pocket pulled him back from his thoughts. "Hello? Mom," he lowered his voice. After that, he walked out of the room before closing the door behind him. "I am busy with school. I'll head home when the winter break starts."

The gentle voice of a woman answered him over the phone, "You haven't been home for six months now. I can't even contact you through your phone in the last two months. What have you been up to? I asked your teacher and she claims that you are often not at school."

"I have been conducting an investigation and survey off campus," he lied without missing a beat. "Although I am doing my Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Doctorate in one go, I still have to write my thesis. Otherwise, I won't be able to graduate. Furthermore, I will have to study abroad next year. I can't possibly leave at ease without completing my thesis."

"Each time I ask you to come home, you will use your thesis as an excuse to silence me. Fine, I will stop asking you. If you are happy to stay on your own, it's fine by me then. I can't be bothered about you."

"Mom, do you miss me?" Oliver softened his tone. He reassured her with a rare childish and loving attitude. "If you miss me, I'll head home tomorrow."

"That is not necessary. Who wants you home? Didn't you mention about falling for a girl previously? I am fine as long as you take her home for an introduction during your winter break."

At the mention of that, Oliver answered bitterly, "That might pose a challenge because she doesn't fancy me. She already has a boyfriend now."

There was a pause over the line. "Well, I suppose that is expected. You are sloppy and you can't even coax a girl. It would be strange if she falls for you."

"Mom, am I your biological son?" He had mixed feelings at that point.

"You are adopted."

He was at a loss of words at her response.

After chatting about mundane daily stuff, Oliver turned to look at the master bedroom door and asked tentatively, "Mom, do you want to celebrate the New Year's in Melrose City?"

"Why are you asking this out of the blue? I do not want to go there. Haven't I told you that in the past?"

"Well, don't you want to meet him?"

There was silence on the other end of the line before the voice answered, "I have already met him."

## Chapter 287 I Can't Force the Child

The other end of the phone went silent for a long while.

Oliver was suddenly a little anxious. "Mom, please say something. I didn't do anything and he doesn't know about my identity either. I'm just wondering whether you would like to meet him. I feel that he doesn't seem like a cold-hearted person."

"No need for that." A sorrowful and gentle voice was eventually heard on the other end. "I've already met him during the summer."

"You've already met him?" Oliver was startled. "When did that happen?"

“My soup is still brewing in the pot and I have guests in the inn waiting to drink it. I can’t talk to you now.” After that, the call ended.

Upon looking at the name ‘pretty mom’ on the top of the contact list of his phone, he took a deep breath as he was panicking. Everyone has a past that they selfishly hide deep inside their hearts. However, the moment the past shows up in front of our eyes, most people will usually panic and feel at a loss.

Oliver could not clearly remember why he chose Melrose City in every selection without hesitation when he was filling his university application back then. However, he still remembered that when he arrived in Melrose City, there was always a force pulling him toward a person. Yet, he never expected to be by the person’s side in such a manner.

After that day, the news in Melrose City for the entire week was on reminding the citizens about the recent flu infection. At first, Alexander ran a temperature before catching a cold after that. The flu had arrived so suddenly that even Oliver was immediately infected after taking care of Alexander for two days. Just like that, the only manpower left in the house had fallen.

As Courtney disinfected the house with a mask on her face, Oliver continued to cough while being wrapped under a blanket on the couch. “I have a lecture to listen to tomorrow,” he said. “There is a professor who is coming from abroad.”

“You need to stop for a while.” She glanced at him. “If you accidentally infect the professor, it’ll be your fault. You should stay at home for the next two days and not go anywhere. Stop infecting others with the flu.”

“What about Tina and Jordan?” On the other side of the couch, there was Alexander’s voice. Due to the severity of his cold, his voice was now particularly hoarse and deep.

“I’ll send them to Aunt Alicia’s house later.” Courtney helplessly sighed. “It’s just that I received a call from Uncle William saying that his two maids at home are also down with a cold. They have stopped working and the whole house is now being disinfected.”

“The flu might have already spread,” Oliver interrupted. “Why don’t you change to another place?”

“Where else can they go?” She straightened her posture while holding onto a mop. “Cameron and Gale have both gone to America. As for Bill, he has been working on his designs every day in the company. Besides, he doesn’t know how to take care of children. Don’t even mention Shay and Casey.”

“Why not? Aren’t the two of them quite suitable? They even have maids in their house.”

“The two of them went to Bali.”

He tutted twice. “They went on a honeymoon?”

Then, Courtney placed the mop in the washroom before she removed her apron and gloves. After wearing her jacket, she shouted at the bedroom. “Jordan, Tina, it’s time to go.”

Immediately, the two children ran out the moment they heard her voice. For the fear of them being infected, she had already asked them to wear their medical masks. After donning their tiny yellow hats, only two pairs of huge eyes were left on their faces.

“I’ve already mentioned in the morning that you’ll be living in Aunt Alicia’s house for the next two days. Once everyone in the house has recovered from the flu, I’ll bring you two home.”

The two children were obedient as they held her hands on each side while they dragged their tiny luggage. The moment they entered the elevator, her phone rang. As soon as she saw the name on the phone screen, she was startled before she answered the call. “Mr. Harry, what is it?”

Three minutes later, she brought the two kids downstairs. There was a black Rolls-Royce parked on the side of the entrance to the building. Due to the cold weather and the contagious flu, not many people were walking around the community. Even though it was not dark in the evening, the place was already as quiet as a graveyard.

Harry was standing in front of the car. When he saw Courtney coming out with the kids, he quickly walked up to her. “The flu has been spreading around Melrose City for the past few days, so Master is really worried. He has asked me to bring the Little Master back home.” The moment he opened his mouth, she could feel something tightening around her leg—it was no doubt that Jordan hugged her leg again as he refused to let go.

“Mr. Harry, it’s not that I’m not allowing you to bring Jordan away, but you can see that he isn’t willing to follow you back. I plan to send both of them to Aunt Alicia’s house. They won’t be infected there.”

“I heard that two of Mr. Somerfield’s maids have fallen ill in his house.”

Upon hearing him, Courtney furrowed her brows. Mr. Duncan really has eyes everywhere. He even knows who is infected with the flu in Aunt Alicia’s house.

However, at that point, it showed that Scott was determined to bring Jordan back with him. Since she could not force Jordan to stay with her, she pulled his hands away and tried to persuade him. “Jordan, do you hear that? Someone in Aunt Alicia’s house is sick, so why don’t you head back with Mr. Harry?”

Upon listening to her, he was shocked as he immediately shook his head and spat out a clear word from his mouth. “No.”

With an aggrieved face, Courtney responded, “Mr. Harry, I can’t force him to do something that he doesn’t want. I know that Mr. Duncan dislikes me, but on this matter, I really can’t force the child.”

“Miss Hunter, Master won’t trouble you on purpose for this matter.” Harry hesitated for a few seconds. “If he wanted to do so, he wouldn’t have personally come here. On the subject of Young Master Alexander, he doesn’t actually blame you much for it. After all, you did nothing wrong. He is just upset with Young Master Alexander.”

“Is Mr. Duncan here?” She was surprised as she looked toward the Rolls-Royce by the entrance.

Sure enough, she could faintly see a familiar face through the car window. It was a cold face that experienced the vicissitudes of life, but it was still warm and caring when he gazed at the two children with an indescribable kindness in his looks.

After a moment of hesitation, Courtney lifted her head and said, “Mr. Harry, please tell Mr. Duncan that I have something to say about his dissatisfaction with Alexander. As long as he hears me out, I’ll think of a way about Jordan.”

Harry was slightly startled for a moment. “Miss Hunter, have you talked to Young Master Alexander?”

“Don’t worry about it. I know what has actually happened.” After listening to her words, he quickly nodded before turning around and running toward the car. Then, he opened the car door and said something to Scott before trodding toward her a while later. “Miss Hunter, it’s freezing outside. Let’s bring the two children into the car first. Then, we’ll find a warm place to talk.”

Courtney nodded and caressed the hats on the two children’s heads while taking a deep breath. “Let’s go.”

They found a Japanese-styled teahouse near the community where she lived—there were not many diners there and the place had a children’s playground area. She and Scott sat opposite each other on the tatami floor with a pinewood tea table between them as the room was filled with the fragrance of tea.

“Although I don’t think there’s much credibility in your words, Harry told me that if I don’t listen to what you have to say, you won’t allow me to bring Jordan back. Is that true?” Scott’s tone showed that he was obviously displeased.

#### Chapter 288 Do You Want to Know the Truth About Three Years Ago?

Courtney drank her tea with her head down and smiled faintly after listening to Scott’s question.

“Jordan is your great-grandson. I believe I do not have a say in it.”

“Good that you know.” Scott harrumphed. “But I feel that if we don’t settle the problem between you and Alexander sooner, the kids will have a hard time getting stuck between the two of you. They don’t need to suffer. Harry has told you everything, right?” He then glanced at Harry, who stood off to one side.

Although Harry remained silent, Courtney’s calm demeanor had said it all.

“Mr. Harry only hopes that I can be the peacemaker of all this. After all, Alexander and you are a family.”

“Do you think you are capable?”

“No,” she answered him openly. “That is why I refused.”

Scott furrowed his brows and his face calmed down a lot more as compared to before. “I also feel that there’s nothing to talk about. For the past few years, I’ve said nothing because I only wanted peace but now, he has really crossed the line.”

“Are you talking about him being together with me against your will?” Courtney went straight to the point. “If I remember correctly, you were the one who was constantly pushing us to be together at the start.”

Scott made himself clear as he stared at her. “If I knew you weren’t divorced, I wouldn’t have brought you and Alexander together.”

“I’ll explain that to you in a while.” Courtney still remained composed as she asked him unhurriedly, “What’s most important now is your relationship with Alexander. Do you want to know the truth about what happened three years ago?”

Scott focused on her. “What did Alexander tell you?”

“He didn’t tell me anything. I found it out myself.” She then opened the file saved on her phone before pushing it on the coffee table toward Scott. “You can take a look yourself. This is the text version of a recording I asked someone to obtain from Jordan’s two maids back then in Elmsbury. I have the actual recording if you want to listen to it but it isn’t here with me.” As Scott read the content on her phone, his expression gradually became tense. “Initially, Sarah and Maria accused a young master of instigating them to use the drug. I also thought that it was Alexander. I guess you obtained the same confession at first but I would like to ask you something.”

“Go ahead.” Scott’s brows frowned.

“From the time Jordan was born until the accident three years ago, did Alexander visit your house often?”

Suddenly, Scott’s expression darkened, as if he wasn’t willing to answer her.

Beside him, Harry murmured, “Young Master Alexander didn’t return home. During those two years, he was angry with Master.”

Due to the ambiguity of Jordan’s birth, Scott refused to fulfil his promise of handing over the enterprise to Alexander directly. Because of that, the two of them were angry at each other for almost two years.

“Then, how could the young master that Sarah and Maria mentioned be Alexander?” Courtney pointed out the most crucial point straight away. “Also, they said that they’ve met the young master a few times in the ancestral home. Although they didn’t see him frequently, he still left a lasting impression on them. The servants who worked in the house for a long time called him Young Master.”

Immediately, both Scott and Harry’s expressions changed.

“Master...”

“Do you need me to continue?” Courtney asked. “I’ve asked someone to show Sarah and Maria two pictures for them to identify, but their memories from before are blurred.”

In the entire Duncan Family, the person who looked the most similar to Alexander was James. If one were to remove their glasses, the two of them would have been almost identical. After three years, who would have remembered clearly which young master was the one who instigated them to place the drug?

The truth is often right beside us.

Scott’s expression visibly darkened.

“That b\*stard.”

A moment of silence later, Courtney spoke in an attitude that was neither humble nor overbearing. "It's not appropriate of me to ask about the Duncan Family's affairs, so I didn't inform you of this even though I'd found out about it a while ago. Today, you came here to pick Jordan up, which means that you still care for him and Alexander, so I don't want you to be kept in the dark."

Naturally, it was embarrassing for the family to have its affairs exposed by an outsider.

For a while, Scott did not utter anything and his expression remained dark.

Reading the situation, Courtney changed the subject. "It's going to be difficult to convince Jordan to go back with you but if you are willing, you can take Tina as well. With her tagging along, Jordan will surely be willing to follow you back."

"That's even better," Harry said. "Everyone in the ancestral home loves Tina very much and even Miss Hannah misses her every day. If Tina goes back with Little Master, the house won't be that quiet."

Scott stared at him. "Harry, you have been quite talkative lately."

Courtney smiled silently while lowering her head to take a sip of her tea.

After leaving their seats, Courtney accompanied Scott outside the safety net as they watched the two children play on the slides in a colorful ocean of balls.

Suddenly, he asked, "Just now, you mentioned that you'll explain why you aren't divorced. Why didn't you continue with your explanation?"

Courtney was slightly startled. "I thought that you wouldn't want to hear it."

"Why would I not want to hear about what kind of a person the woman my grandson is with?" Scott furrowed his brows, looking displeased. "Are you now trying to be too clever after following that little brat for so long?"

Of course, that little brat Scott referred to was none other than Alexander.

For a moment, Courtney felt a bit resigned.

I have been held as a business genius by the outside world but in front of him, I'm being seen as acting too clever.

"The marriage between me and my current legal husband is only a formality. We are actually just friends. Tina is my daughter and she has nothing to do with him."

However, Courtney only explained half of it and she kept the other half to herself.

She knew that Scott didn't hate her that much anymore when he asked her this question.

Maybe he is starting to believe that I'm in this marriage for a personal reason and he is using the question to give me a chance to explain myself while giving himself a chance to back down.

Scott looked at her thoughtfully and asked, "Does Alexander know about this?"

"Of course he does." Courtney felt surprised. "Do you really think your grandson would get together with a married woman given that he is such an arrogant man?"

For a moment, Scott was startled but moments later, he reverted back to his serious expression as he grunted. "Who knows? There may be times when he is muddled in the head."

Far away from them, Tina went down the slide, her bell-like laughter ringing the whole way. After diving straight into the sea of balls, she rolled around to the edge of the safety net.

Scott smiled and reminded her, "Be careful, little girl."

Upon hearing his voice, Tina sprouted out of the balls and glared at him. "I don't need your concern, bad Grandpa! Hmph!"

Scott was dumbfounded as he was given the cold shoulder by the kid that loved him the most. "How did I become a bad grandpa?"

Tina stood amidst the colorful sea of balls with her arms akimbo. "You are bad and you don't like my mommy. My mommy has lots of people pursuing her and we don't want your family anyway. You have forgotten about our agreement where you said that you'll find your own granddaughter-in-law and I'll find my own daddy. You're a liar; a big liar!"

"What agreement?" Standing off to one side, Courtney looked confused.

#### Chapter 289 How Can a Man Stay at Home Every Day

Facing Courtney's question, Scott and Tina looked at each other for a while across the safety net. Just as the child was about to say something, Scott started coughing intensely.

Cough! Cough! Cough!

Beside him, Harry immediately understood his intentions, so he quickly went up and asked concernedly, "Master, are you alright?"

Courtney also asked about his condition, automatically forgetting the query she had just now.

"I'm fine. It's just a bit cold outside. It'll be dark soon so let's go home."

After all, Scott was old now so it was reasonable for him to have such a request.

Courtney then called the two children out of the playground and gave them some advice before letting Harry and Scott take them away.

When leaving, Tina still looked reluctant to leave but through the car window, Courtney could see Scott conjuring a box of chocolates that the two of them loved, much like a magician.

Almost instantly, the little girl was smiling again.

What a greedy little kitten.

Resigned, Courtney shook her head before hailing a cab at the side of the road.

"Sir, please head to Greenville."

After Courtney left, only the two sick patients—Alexander and Oliver—were left in the apartment. Compared to Oliver’s nonsensical talk, Alexander was much easier to take care of.

“I feel that Courtney is still reluctant to talk to you.” On the couch in the living room, Oliver poked his head out of the blanket and blew his nose before throwing the tissue paper into the trash can. “Don’t you plan to do something? After all, you are at fault for this. Don’t think that it’ll all go away just because you are sick. Courtney won’t want to argue with a sick person.”

However, Alexander didn’t look like someone who was sick. Instead, he was now standing behind the kitchen’s marble table in full spirits while serving himself a cup of tea. Upon listening to Oliver’s words, he replied without even lifting his head, “Mind your own business.”

“You can’t fake your illness forever, can you?” Hearing that, Alexander glared at Oliver while taking two glasses of water out of the kitchen. Then, he placed one of the glasses in front of Oliver, along with the medicine. “It’s time for my medicine again?” Oliver sighed. “Why do I feel worse after eating the medicine you give me?”

“You should have this before your meal. If you don’t want to eat your meal, you can take the medicine later on,” Alexander said flatly. “Also, I’m not the one who gave you these medicines; it’s the doctor who prescribed it to you.”

“Why didn’t the doctor prescribe some to you?”

“He did.” Alexander looked at him profoundly.

Due to the flu, Oliver’s brain couldn’t quite function properly but when he saw Alexander’s expression, he finally understood. Then, he reached out into his blanket and grabbed a bottle of pills before popping them down his throat. After taking a gulp of water, he muttered, “Pretend I didn’t ask.”

Actually, Alexander’s cold was cured long ago. Even if he stopped taking the medicines, the period of his flu infection was already long gone. Moreover, he even took the medicines for a few days. If Oliver didn’t find out afterward that Alexander threw the pills into the trash can, no one would know that he was faking his illness.

As a form of returning the favor for not telling Courtney immediately about Oliver regaining his memories, Oliver pretended as though nothing was off.

Suddenly, the sound of the door opening came, causing Alexander’s initially straight posture to bend over as he lay down on the couch. All of these happened before Oliver even had the chance to realize it. Alexander even snatched away Oliver’s blanket and covered himself.

“You really are something!” Oliver gave him a look.

The next second, Courtney opened the door and came in with two huge grocery bags from the supermarket.

“We are having hot pot tonight.”

Oliver sniffed and he raised his hand slightly. “No objections.”

As Courtney changed her shoes, she could see the sick duo lying on the couch. “Oliver, you aren’t wearing enough clothes. Why don’t you cover yourself in a blanket?”

Listening to her, Oliver glanced at the person on the opposite end.

I was covering myself in that warm blanket but someone took it by force to fake his illness.

Just as he was about to say something, an intense cough was heard on the opposite side.

Cough! Cough!

If Courtney weren’t here, Oliver would have given Alexander a big thumbs up.

What great acting skills; breathtaking, to say the very least.

“What is it? Are you alright?” Immediately, Courtney went over to ask Alexander while reaching out her hand to his forehead, checking his temperature. “It has been a week but your cold isn’t getting better. Shall we go to the hospital?”

Alexander shook his head while deepening his voice. “No need for that. I can just rest at home.”

When saying these words, he glanced at Oliver with the corner of his eyes, warning him not to say anything.

Oliver pouted his lips and crossed his arms as he went back to his room.

I’m not having any of this.

“That won’t do.” Courtney withdrew her hand and carried the two bags into the kitchen. “Your grandfather picked up Jordan just now and I can see that he wants you to return to Sunhill Enterprise.”

“I’m not going back there.” Alexander’s voice came from behind.

Then, Courtney placed the two bags on the kitchen counter before taking the items out one by one.

“Why not? Are you still angry at your grandfather? It’s normal for an elderly to be stubborn. Since he has given you a chance to back down, you should do so quickly.”

“I feel that this is quite a nice life.” While covering himself with the blanket, Alexander’s floral shirt collar was revealed—Courtney had bought it for him in bulk—as he turned around to look in the direction of the kitchen, his eyes gentle.

“How can a man stay at home every day?” Courtney mumbled. “You know what? Do whatever you want; it’s your business anyway.”

Listening to her words, Alexander’s expression changed slightly as his once gentle eyes started to harden. “Are you still angry about the party that day?”

Courtney stopped washing the vegetables and answered him without raising her head, “No; it was such a long time ago; you are thinking too much. You’d better get some rest.”

However, Alexander mistook the restlessness in her eyes as her still being angry at him, so he quickly explained, “I’ve told you that what Kelly said to me that day was what Vanessa told you in front of those

people. I only wanted her to shut up. At that time, I didn't know that it had already happened at the party. I just didn't want you to hear those words."

"You've already told me that." Courtney continued washing the vegetables with her head down. From the corner of her eyes, she noticed that Alexander had stood up from the couch. The flowery shirt and casual beige shorts weren't enough to conceal his perfect body as he walked toward her.

Truth be told, Courtney didn't care much that Alexander and Kelly came out of the lounge together at the party. However, she was in a bad mood that day at the party, so she made a huge fuss out of it.

She didn't take it seriously but Alexander seemed to be worried about it the whole time.

"Why do I get the feeling that you still seem to be upset?" He walked to the kitchen door and gazed at the side of her face in concern. "Ever since you came back from the party, you always look troubled inside. Is there anything that you want to tell me?"

"Can you not mention what happened that day? I don't want to hear it." Courtney took a deep breath while feeling nervous inside.

"They framed me."

"But what if they didn't?"

## Chapter 290 I Like You as You Are

Courtney's words were enough to make Alexander's eyes focus as he cast an inquiring gaze at her.

"It's nothing, really. I just don't want to hear about what happened that day. You don't need to keep on reminding me about irrelevant things that irrelevant people said." She kept her head low as she explained, her tone light.

She wasn't afraid that he would believe what Vanessa said about her being sent to sleep with four or five men by Anna six years ago. Instead, when trying to refute Vanessa, Courtney was afraid that she herself would accidentally slip up and reveal that she went into the wrong room and bed six years ago.

If Alexander connects the dots of what happened that night six years ago, the consequences will be devastating.

That was why she wanted this incident to be over quickly.

It's best not to mention this ever again.

However, Alexander misunderstood her.

As his brows furrowed together, he stared at Courtney, who was still washing the vegetables, for a long time while his expression grew darker.

After dinner, Courtney went to clean herself up in her room while Alexander made a call on the balcony. On the other side of the line, Josh's aggrieved voice could be heard.

“President Duncan, it happened six years ago. Also, Anna is already dead so I can’t even find the mastermind behind all this. Where will I find her men?”

With a dark expression, Alexander remained unfazed as he said coldly, “I will only give you three days. No matter what you do, I want you to find all the five people without missing out any one of them. You know what to do afterward.”

As soon as the call ended, Josh collapsed on the couch while letting out a long sigh.

Back when Alex was working in the enterprise, he didn’t have this much private matters to deal with but now that he isn’t in the enterprise, he will ask me to handle some matters for him quietly from time to time. Not only that, the tasks also get more difficult one after another. Before I get the time to finish one, there’ll be another one coming. I’m pretty sure my hair will become white before long.

At night, Courtney was held in someone’s arms the moment she went to bed.

For a moment, her back stiffened as she reminded him, “You have a cold. Are you planning to infect me as well?”

“I was cured a long time ago.” A deep voice came from behind her as its owner nuzzled her neck, sending a tingling feeling through her.

“You lied to me?” Immediately, Courtney came back to her senses.

No wonder; and here I was being puzzled as to why can’t he recover from a small cold even after so many days. His fever is gone and he looks quite energetic, yet he is still sick.

Before she could turn her head around, he tightened his arms around her waist. “It’s because I miss it.”

“What do you miss?”

“I miss the times when you were always thinking about me.”

“Have you had a spoonful of honey today?” Courtney tried to look behind her but Alexander’s chin blocked her forehead, preventing her from seeing his eyes.

“Courtney.” Today, he was extremely gentle to a point where even his cold voice had some traces of warmth. “I like you as you are. No matter what you experienced or encountered, it will never affect my love toward you.”

For a moment, Courtney was dumbfounded. However, she wasn’t stupid; she could hear the many implications in his words.

When she connected it with what was happening recently, she could easily guess which incident he was talking about. With little thought, she knew that he might have misunderstood something but she couldn’t explain it to him.

After a moment of silence, she asked, “Have you ever thought that everyone in this world is actually wearing a mask? What if the me that you face every day is just my mask?”

“What is it? Are you hiding something from me?” Alexander said in a casual tone, as if he was making a joke.

However, Courtney knew that he was the last person on earth to crack a joke.

“Most people can’t accept the truth. What if I’m not the person you think I am?”

“There is no doubt that I’m looking at you in your truest form.”

“Are you that confident?”

“Honesty is your biggest strength; other than that, you are nothing in my eyes.”

Before Courtney got the chance to feel happy, her face immediately darkened after hearing what he said.

As expected, a person like him will never have a silver tongue. If one were to mistakenly think otherwise, there’ll definitely be poison underneath that layer of honey.

After lowering her head to endure his scorn for a while, she bent her knee slightly before suddenly slamming it upward.

Bang! Someone fell from the bed to the floor while moaning in pain.

“Courtney, what are you doing?” As Alexander held onto his waist, he took a deep breath and gazed at the bed.

With her back facing him, she wrapped the blanket tightly around herself and growled, “Basically, I’m nothing. That’s the truth.”

Upon listening to her words, Alexander was startled for a moment. As he sat below the bed and gazed at that angry figure, the corners of his eyes crinkled and he revealed a loving smile, all the while feeling resigned.

Early in the morning, Courtney arrived at the Citron factory with Bill to check on the progress.

After checking a batch of goods, Bill patted the thread in his hand. “I’ve checked all of these carefully. Basically, there aren’t any problems. Most of the defective ones have been removed for reworks. When the last batch is finished tonight, we can finally send all of it to Sakura Group’s warehouse.”

“I can see that there’s quite a lot here. You can send the finished goods over first.” Courtney looked at the pile of products at the corner. “If we wait till tonight, I’m afraid there won’t be enough space here.”

“Why don’t we send those to our warehouse for the time being?” Bill had a serious expression as he commented, “I want to confirm everything with my team first before sending out the products. If a problem crops up, it won’t be good for us. Besides, the transportation and warehouse fee doesn’t cost much.”

However, Courtney still hesitated for a moment as she was inexplicably worried but in the end, she still nodded her head.

“Alright. It’s safer to check it a few more times. We’ll do it your way.”

“By the way—” Bill lifted his head from the product list. “—Natasha called me just now. She wants me to remind you about the dinner with the Sakura Group tonight. Based on her tone, I assume you’re not going?”

“James will be there.” Courtney felt angry the moment she mentioned him. “Don’t you know? Ever since we accepted the order from Sakura Group, I keep on seeing him during business meals. It is obvious that he is showing me how popular he is in Melrose City.”

“What’s wrong? Did he harass you?”

“No.” Courtney furrowed her brows. “If he dares to harass me, I’ll call the cops. He is just trying to talk me into an acquisition.”

“He wants to buy Citron?”

He wants the whole Hunter Group.” Courtney frowned. “He really is greedy. By the looks of it, he is planning to do something big to impress Mr. Duncan, so he is now targeting the Hunter Group.”

“There are many medium-sized enterprises in Melrose City that are much easier to negotiate to than the Hunter Group, so why has he got his eyes on it?” Bill was confused.

“It probably has something to do with Alexander.” Courtney’s frown deepened as she murmured, “You also know that Alexander is now the head of finance. James is trying to hit him when he is down—if he can kick Alexander out of Sunhill Enterprise and buy out the company he works for, it shows that James really is capable. He just wants to humiliate Alexander so that he can boast to Mr. Duncan on how much better he is.”

Her words made the situation sound dangerous and Bill was initially worried about her, but seeing how calm she looked, he let out a sigh of relief. “You don’t look worried at all,” he commented with a smile. “Do you already have a plan?”

“Of course. I have something up my sleeve too.”