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Chapter 391 Let's Get Them Home

At that, Elise finally smiled. She squeezed Alexander's hand on her shoulder and nodded seriously. "Okay."

"Really?" Alexander looked at her, pleasantly surprised. "You are willing to marry me? There's no need for more observation?"

"You want me to refuse?" she joked.

"Of course not," he said before he carried Elise. When she reacted, she was already lying on the bed. Then, Alexander attempted to remove her clothes, but he violently stopped and rose from Elise's body.

Looking at her flushed cheeks, he couldn't help but wish he could take her right now. However, he could not. The last time was an accident and from now onward, he would not simply do anything with her as she deserved perfection.

"Not yet," Alexander said. "We have a long road ahead of us."

With that, he carefully rearranged Elise's clothes and retreated from the bed.

"I'll wait for you outside."

Afraid that Elise would be embarrassed, he took the initiative to open the door and walked out. Only then did Elise sit up on the bed, covering her hot cheeks and recalling the intensity of what happened earlier. In fact, if he wanted to, she would have given herself to him. However, it was also because of his self-control earlier that her bitter heart became unusually sweet all of a sudden. Then, she straightened her clothes and tidied her hair to quickly calm herself down.

Now that the matter of Elise being the daughter of the Anderson Family had come to light, Faye wouldn't be able to sit still. Even if Elise did not fight with her for the assets, Faye would not allow her to exist like that next to her, which meant that Elise had to immediately stabilize the situation and think of a good way to deal with everything.

Thus, the two of them reentered the main hall together.

"Elise." As soon as Jeanie saw Elise come in, she rushed forward in excitement while wringing her hands together. She did not dare to touch Elise, but only deliberately lowered her body to make herself slightly hunched over. "I've thought it over and everything is up to you. Whether you want to return or not, as long as it's your wish, I'll support you. I don't want anything other than just to live with you. Can I stay with you?"

Elise looked at Jeanie's already wrinkled face. She suddenly thought that even though she hadn't seen Jeanie when she was younger, she could also imagine that Jeanie must have been a sight to behold.

"Mom," Elise called softly.

Jeanie was surprised and as if she was afraid of mishearing Elise, she quickly asked, "What did you just call me?"

"Mom," Elise called out again as a smile gradually appeared on her face.

"Ah!" An excited Jeanie looked at her as her eyes moistened at once. Even though she wanted to hug Elise very much, she forced herself not to. She knew that Elise wasn't used to her presence yet and had not fully accepted the reality that they were mother and daughter. Until Elise had done so, she would not get used to physical contact with Jeanie, which was something Jeanie didn't mind. She could wait; she had been waiting for more than ten years anyway, so what did it matter? As long as Elise was her daughter, even if she had to wait for a lifetime, she was willing to do that.

As she looked at Jeanie's restrained look, the corners of Elise's mouth were unconsciously lifted. She seemed to be able to feel Jeanie's happiness at this moment. Blood ties are really something wonderful, Elise thought. Maybe it's not so bad to suddenly have another mother and another identity. Since the matter has come to this and it can't be changed, why not graciously accept it?

In the evening, all of them sat together and ate a pretty good meal. After sending Alexander away, Elise logged on to the SK Group's intranet. Although Laura seemed to have recovered, only Elise knew in her heart that the toxins in Laura's bloodstream were like a time bomb. Once it exploded, nobody could cure Laura. Before that could happen, Elise had to think of all the ways she could try to resolve the problem.

After bypassing the organization's istrators, she directly contacted 'Aldric', who was known as a miracle doctor. 'Aldric' was just a codename and the other party's real name was Claude Strike.

'Urgent. Return at once.'

Claude's name was taboo and banned in the country, and even if one was just searching it, the undercover police hidden within the internet network might capture the offender. If one was captured, one would be thoroughly investigated. Of course, it was something Elise would not involve herself in.

Claude, who was far away in Fornd, heard the message alert and stopped almost immediately to take out his phone to check.

'Send the details.'

Elise immediately sent Laura's medical records. He leaned against the wall, and after a moment of cursory reading, he had a rough judgment of what was going on

'Blood exchange transfusion. Will live a few more years.'

The surgical procedure of blood exchange transfusion was extremely complicated and doctors who were not 100% sure would not dare to do so. However, for Claude, it was only a small matter and not a big problem. Even so, his message told Elise that the toxins still could not be completely removed. In any case, it could only resolve the immediate situation first.

Then, Elise sent him the home address. 'Can you return as soon as possible for the surgery? Name your price.'

Claude didn't even think about it and replied directly. 'See you next week.'

After sending that, he placed the phone back into his pocket with a smile of satisfaction.

As she closed the chat window, Elise looked up information about the Anderson Family, and other than finding basic company information and the family members' relationships, there was one column that caught Elise's attention: the family members' blood types.

Faye's blood type was Type O when Jeanie's was Type A and Austin's was Type B. Thus, their combination could never produce a child with Type O blood. Elise remembered that from the first time she met Faye, Faye had always stressed that she was Jeanie's own daughter. At that time, when Jeanie's mind was not lucid yet, the woman had vaguely mentioned that Faye was someone else's child. Elise had not taken what Jeanie said to heart, but now it seemed that everything made sense.

Faye was not a member of the Anderson Family at all. When Elise remembered the unconscious Austin and Trevor, she immediately closed the computer and walked to the main hall with a serious expression.

"Mom, do you know which hospital my father and my brother are staying in?" Elise asked with a serious expression.

"Yes, do you want to go see them? But I don't think it's possible to see them. The hospital wards are guarded by Faye's men, so it is impossible for us to go," an unhappy Jeanie replied.

"Let's go get them home!"

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Chapter 392 It Managed to Slip Through You

At Pinewood Hospital, Elise and the others were blocked outside the hospital gates.

The guard, who stood in front of the iron gate, spoke in an aggressive manner, "Sorry, without the consent of the patient's family, you can't enter!"

"We are the family members of the patients who live here. We want to see Austin and Trevor Anderson. Why can't we enter?" Jeanie asked.

"I'm not sure about this, but we have rules here. Anyone who wants to enter has to obtain the approval of the hospital director! Nothing else matters," the guard responded unfeelingly.

"What a load of crap!" Jeanie no longer cared about her image. With anxious red eyes, she continued, "Why should I need your approval to see my husband and son? You're not a hospital but a private prison!"

She wasn't far from the truth. The hospital had a reputation for expensive medical care that discouraged ordinary folk, but the middle and upper classes continued to admit people here. The hospital had implemented militarized management and those who were sent in were folks like Austin and Trevor—unconscious or paralyzed.

Other than palliative care, there was nothing the hospital did and there was no patient who had ever healed and left the place. On the surface, it was a nursing home for the terminally ill, but in reality, it was a powerhouse for the famous and powerful to fight for power and benefits. Some people had also tried to save their loved ones from Pinewood Hospital and they even reported to the police in an attempt to have the hospital searched, but the police found that there was no violation of law on the hospital grounds. In the end, because the patient's guardian didn't agree for the patient to be discharged from the hospital, the rescue attempt had failed.

Thus, those who frequented this place were mostly the winners of conflicts over fame and fortune and they were also cold-blooded beasts who did not care for blood kinship at all.

"Whatever you say. Anyway, without the director's approval, no one will be able to get in!" The guards were overly inflexible as they gripped the electric batons in their hands, as if they were about to raise the batons next and subdue those who had no ability to resist.

"You're illegally confining them! Do you no longer observe the law?" Jeanie roared and tried to fight with the guards. As the guards were all huge and tall and had obviously underwent a lot of physical training, a light push from them was enough to send Jeanie staggering backward whereupon she almost fell down. Luckily, Elise was quick to grab her in time.

[&]quot;Are you okay?" Elise asked.

"I'm fine." Jeanie shook her head with a sigh. "Yoyo, you see, we can't enter. These guards not only have electric batons, but the hospital security guards are all armed. I tried a few years ago to get Trevor and Austin out, but as a result..."

"Oh? There are guns here, huh?" Elise suddenly became interested. She released Jeanie and blocked her from the guards before walking up to them to have a word. Then, she asked sharply, "If I remember correctly, the guns in our country are controlled and you are not from the military hospital either. Where did you get those guns?"

"No comment!" The guard's mouth was sealed and he completely refused to say anything more. He raised his chin as if he was looking down on them.

In the office of the hospital director of Pinewood Hospital, Faye was leisurely sipping hot coffee with her legs crossed and her expression calm. While Elise and the others were still enroute, Faye had received the news and rushed over in advance. She explained to the hospital director before giving him a sum of money, which made him so happy that he even ordered for the reserve guards to come over to deal with Jeanie and the others.

Now that the gates were locked and the guards were armed, there was no possibility for Elise and the others to rescue the patients unless they grew wings.

Knock knock.

An abrupt knock on the door made Faye raise her eyebrow.

"It's all ready." Johan stood at the door, his face calm.

After having lost the Olson Family as his backer, although he still retained the status as Faye's fiancé, in reality, it was no different from being her senior assistant.

"Got it." She casually placed the cup on the coffee table before she rose to her feet to walk toward the door. Her gaze was cool and indifferent while her every step was steady. He fell behind her; as he looked at her straight back, a trace of cunning flashed under his eyes.

This woman is ready to even sacrifice her own father and brother. As her fiancé, how long can I survive? Right now, she wants me to help her deal with Austin and Trevor, which is why she still cares about me. What about after this matter has passed, though? Now that she has already started looking for what I have against her, I must make preparations in advance.

Outside the gates, Elise's expression was ugly. She impatiently took out her phone and glanced at the time before her face eased up thereafter. "They should be arriving soon."

No one knew what she was talking about and only the guard responded, but with little patience, "I advise you not to wait. You can't get into this hospital as there are some powerful people above the hospital director, understand?"

"Oh." Elise responded with little emotion. In the next second, they could hear the sound of cars parking behind them. Everyone turned to see several cars slowly coming to a stop. One of the car doors opened to reveal a handsome, middle-aged man in glasses getting out of the vehicle. Then, he pushed through the crowd and walked over to Elise, after which he complained, "It's been so long since you have returned, yet you didn't even come to see me?"

"I was busy." Elise only said three words.

"Again?! There is always time to have a meal, no matter how busy you are. Your aunt has often nagged you about that. You must find some time this month to return with me!" he said again.

"We'll talk about this later." Elise lifted her chin in the direction of Pinewood Hospital. "Let's settle this first. This place is under your jurisdiction, yet it managed to slip through you."

She had a strange tone, which made the man pursed his lips. "I just took office less than two months ago. I can't do everything at once."

Elise shrugged and didn't answer. The man also did not say anything but turned to look at the secretary behind him and gave a signal. Then, the secretary directly approached the guards.

"Who is in charge here?" the secretary asked.

"Me!" The guard in charge puffed out his chest.

"Open the gates. Mayor Bull wants to enter for inspection."

"Mayor Bull? I'm the mayor too, you know! No proof, no talk!" The guard didn't believe it.

The secretary did not say more, but merely turned around and pointed at a group of men whom he had brought. Then, he nodded. The group of men came straight forward before two of them suddenly took out their guns and aimed at the quard's head.

"Now, will you open the gates?" the secretary questioned in a deep voice.

The guard was so scared that his legs were as soft as jelly. His eyes were fixed on the two guns above his head as his voice trembled. "Y-Yes, yes of course. Keep the guns away first and I'll open the gates for you."

The secretary inclined his head and the two men with the guns took a step back. As he recovered from the shock, the guard held his heaving chest and immediately knelt down. "I was insolent, Mayor Bull. Please forgive me, I'm just a guard. What's inside has nothing to do with me!"

When Jeanie saw this situation, she couldn't help but pull Elise aside to ask in a whisper, "Yoyo, how did you know Mayor Bull?"

"Ah..." Elise responded, feigning confusion. "I'm not familiar with him. I just reported the situation."

Jeanie looked at her strangely as she was obviously not convinced. If anyone could directly call the mayor's phone, his life would be chaotic from the incessant phone calls from the public.

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Chapter 393 Save Lives First

Besides, considering how kindly Mayor Bull had spoken to Elise, it was obvious that their relationship was closer than what Elise had made it out to be. However, now was not the time to talk, so Jeanie didn't dare to ask more questions either. She looked at the hospital gates, which were as strong as the city walls, slowly open and tightly clutched the corner of her coat as her hopes were once again ignited. Under Mayor Bull's lead, Elise and Jeanie, along with Alexander's men, smoothly entered the hospital. The hospital director heard the news and intercepted them at the entrance of the inpatient department. "You're the mayor, Simon Bull, right? It's a pleasure to have you here. Welcome!"

The man had greeted them with smiles and even extended his hand toward Simon, trying to curry favor. Simon's expression did not change as he nodded and simply let the other party's hand hang in the air while asking flatly, "Where are Austin and Trevor Anderson's wards?"

"Uh..."

After awkwardly withdrawing his hand, the hospital director replied with some difficulty, "Mayor, our hospital has its own rules. Without the consent of the patient's family, outsiders are not allowed to visit the patient."

Simon inclined his head to look at Elise. "Do you agree?"

"Of course," she answered indifferently.

He nodded and looked at the people whom he brought. "Go in and search the place."

With that, more than a dozen armed men swarmed into the inpatient building. The hospital had only two security guards with guns and they were immediately taken by Simon's men before having their own guns unloaded. Five minutes later, Faye and Johan were forcibly removed from the building too.

"Mayor, we've found the patients in question. When we went in, their oxygen tubes were removed and these two people were in the wards at that time."

"What?!" Jeanie almost fainted when she heard this. "Where are the patients? Are they still alive?"

Austin and Trevor relied on the machines to support their lives and after so many years, they had long been dependent on the machines. If the oxygen tubes were rashly removed, it might cost them their lives.

"We've already called for help." The person who spoke earlier paused before looking at the hospital director with disgust. "This is such a large hospital, but there is not even one professional doctor on duty! You're playing with the lives of your patients!"

As soon as he finished, Jeanie rushed toward the inpatient building, shouting anxiously as she ran, "Trevor, Austin, I'm coming! You must hold on!"

Simon's gaze burned as he eyed the hospital director and commented, "Look at what you've done!"

Elise was about to enter the ward to check the situation when Simon suddenly called after her. "Elise, come here and carefully tell me. What is going on?"

"Not now," she responded. "We have to save lives first!"

With that, she ran into the inpatient department and ran up the stairs as Alexander followed her. When they entered the ward, Jeanie was lying on top of Austin and sobbing, "Austin, hold on. The doctor will be here soon. Don't leave me! Don't leave me and Yoyo. Our daughter is back, so you can't leave us!"

Even though Elise felt that she was emotionally strong, she still couldn't control her tears after seeing this scene. She stopped at the door of the ward and looked at the two men on the hospital beds from afar with an indescribable feeling in her heart. Although she had already seen their photos on the computer, her feelings were different from before now that she saw them with her own eyes.

"Elise." Alexander's voice had jolted her back to her senses. She walked quickly to Austin's side, took out the set of needles prepared long ago, and began to ister the needles on him. Then, Alexander silently walked to the other side and helped Jeanie to the side.

Elise was so focused on using the needles that she was unaware of Simon and his secretary entering. Although Simon was aware about Elise's identity, he was still surprised when he saw her professional needle techniques. How many weird things had she learned behind my back?

The time in the ward seemed to slow down during the whole quarter of an hour. Elise's strength diminished bit by bit just as the number of silver needles dwindled from her bag as well. When the last needle was inserted into Austin's temple, the man, whose breath was weak, violently opened his mouth and sucked in a large mouthful of air.

He opened his eyes in the next second and looked at the ceiling in shock. When Jeanie and Alexander saw that, they rushed over almost simultaneously.

Jeanie hugged Austin and cried with joy. "Austin! You're finally awake!"

Elise had almost collapsed due to excessive physical exertion, but fortunately Alexander moved quickly and steadily caught hold of her.

"Are you okay?" His pair of thick eyebrows were tightly wrinkled while his eyes were full of heartache.

"I'm fine. I just used too much energy." Her voice was full of exhaustion. "He is already fine, but he has been unconscious for too long, so his body is extremely weak and he cannot get out of bed. Wait for me to rest for a while before I—"

Before she could even finish, she passed out.

"Elise? Elise!" Alexander hurriedly carried her, walked out of the ward, found an unused empty room, and let her lie down to rest. He sat by the hospital bed and reached out to cup her cheek, his fingertips feeling the contours of her face, wishing nothing more than to suffer on her behalf.

"You just can't stop trying too hard, can you?" he complained in a low voice. However, Elise had slept peacefully, perhaps because he was around and soon the sound of even breathing sounded. He felt amused, yet he had no choice but to accompany her.

On the other hand, Faye and the others were also brought into the ward. The hospital director knew that everything was over for him, so he limply collapsed onto the floor as he gazed vacantly ahead. Faye, however, was still high and mighty and she shrugged off Simon's men with disgust when she came in.

Yet, when she saw that Austin had regained consciousness and was even talking to Jeanie like a normal person, she instinctively trembled as if she had seen a ghost. She froze for some time before she reacted and rushed straight in, falling on her knees in front of Austin's hospital bed.

"Dad, you've finally woken up! I've missed you so much!" Faye buried her face in the quilt and tried to squeeze out her tears.

"You beast! Murderer! Get out of here! Don't act in front of us!" An agitated Jeanie pointed at Faye and cursed.

"What's going on here?" As he had never seen his wife look like this before, he was a little confused for a moment. In his impression, Jeanie was the gentlest woman whom he had ever known and she never argued with anyone. Why was she behaving like she was a different person now?

"Austin! Did you know that after you and Trevor were involved in the car accident, it was this woman who wanted to prevent you two from receiving medical care? I

stopped her, but they locked you guys up here instead. Do you know what this place is? It's the Pinewood Hospital where people come to die! If it weren't for Yoyo, you and Trevor would have died in this woman's hands earlier! Trevor is still receiving emergency aid in the ward as we speak!"

Austin's mind quickly went through what Jeanie said and he grabbed the most critical keyword before asking, "Who are you talking about? Yoyo? Isn't she dead?"

At the mention of Elise, Jeanie finally calmed down. As she tightly held his hand, she answered happily, "She's not dead. She's still alive and well! She saved me and our whole family!"

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Chapter 394 The Dispute

"Really?" Austin was still a bit overwhelmed. As far as he could remember, his daughter Yoona had died at an early age, and now she was back from the dead? It was just like a dream. He could not wait to do something to prove that it was not a dream, so much so that he squeezed Jeanie's hand extremely hard, but he didn't even realize it. However, as Jeanie knew that people who had been in a coma for a long time would have difficulty adapting to reality, she didn't scream in pain. Rather, she gently patted the back of his bare hand instead to soothe her husband's emotions.

Austin had taken over the Anderson Family long before his accident, and as a calm head of the family, he soon recovered.

"Get up first," he said flatly as he looked at Faye. "If you keep crying, who will help me to understand the truth?"

He had roughly remembered Jeanie's words. Since Faye could send him to the Pinewood Hospital, it was clear that she had long controlled the Anderson Family, which made it difficult for him to regain control of the family. Thus, he had to make long-term plans, and the first thing to do was to dispel Faye's worries.

The reputation of Pinewood Hospital was excellent and so, the probability for evidence left against Faye was extremely low. In that case, having a falling out with her wouldn't help anything; it was better to take this opportunity to have her lower her quard.

At the moment Faye heard that Austin was going to give her a chance to defend herself, she immediately stopped sobbing and looked up at him with tears in her eyes. "Dad, I didn't! I didn't do those things! It was those elders of the Anderson Family. They forced me! If I didn't send you here, they were going to take over the Anderson Family's estate! They know that I am a girl, so even if I hold the position as the head of the family, it will not pose a threat to them, so they deliberately forced me to make a choice, Dad. I had no choice but to agree in order to protect you and my brother, and to protect our family!"

Jeanie listened to Faye's nonsense, then couldn't help but point at her and curse, "You lie! It is obvious that you imprisoned me and your grandmother before forcibly taking away the family's assets. How dare you put the blame on others! Well, even if you explain all this, what about earlier? The Mayor's men saw with their own eyes how you pulled out your father's oxygen tube! How do you explain that?"

"It wasn't me! When I came in, the oxygen tube had already fallen out and I was about to go to the nurse when those people barged in and grabbed me!" Faye cried out in unhappiness. "If you don't believe me, ask them whether they saw me yanking the oxygen tube off! You ask them!"

She remembered clearly that when those people came in, she was admiring the way her father and brother had slowly stopped breathing, and it was the hospital nurses who pulled out the tubes, leaving no substantial evidence of the crime at all. Moreover, Austin obviously still cherished their father and daughter relationship, so he would not believe it. This gave her even more strength to argue. As long as it was said sincerely enough, what was false could become true.

Maintaining her unhappy glance at Jeanie, Faye stood up and wiped her eyes before she angrily walked toward Simon Bull, the mayor. Then, she questioned, "Mayor Bull, please have your men come forward and tell everyone whether they saw me pulling off those oxygen tubes."

Lowering his eyes, Simon sized up the woman in front of him. It only took 10 minutes for her to calm down from the panic she had felt when she was caught, and now she was questioning others instead. She was indeed right, though; to convict her, someone really had to witness her in the act. As he thought about this, he turned to look at the men at the door and said, "Tell the truth."

The man who saw what happened originally thought that Faye was going to kill the two patients to silence them, but now that she had just said so, he was really confused. He really didn't see her pulling the oxygen tubes after all, but he knew very well that in this situation, if he told the truth, the woman would definitely be free from suspicion. However, since the mayor had spoken, he could only reluctantly open his mouth and elaborate, "When I came in, I really didn't see anyone pulling out the oxygen tubes, but the only people in the ward were only her and her fiancé, and the two did not look like they were trying to save the patients!"

"What should I look like for you to believe I am trying to save them?" Faye asked rhetorically. "How do you know we weren't going to save them? Maybe we were just waiting for the nurse and doctor to come? You don't know anything, so how can you say I'm a murderer? Those are my dad and my brother. They're my family and I owe them everything, so why would I kill them?"

"I..." The man stopped talking. He only knew how to protect people and fight criminals, so he was terrible at debating.

"You what? You barged in indiscriminately and almost delayed me to search for someone to rescue my father and my brother. If they die, can you afford to pay

for this?" The more Faye said, the more agitated she became and even she believed she was innocent.

Johan, who hadn't dared to speak, was astonished to see this situation, but in a flash, a brilliant idea came to mind. Such an eloquent woman! Even if he couldn't be himself for the rest of his life, it won't do him any harm to follow her around. He made up his mind at that moment that he had to take Faye again, both in person and in heart.

The man looked embarrassed after hearing Faye's question. He lowered his head and did not dare to speak, as if he had really done something wrong.

Thus, Simon was not able to make a judgment for a while.

"All right." At this time, Austin spoke. "Since it was a misunderstanding, and Trevor and I are fine, there's no need to bother so much. I am exhausted and need to rest, so this matter will end here!"

With that said, Faye also didn't continue to argue. After all, it was a family matter and now that victim had chosen to let the matter slide, Simon couldn't force his decision on anyone. After saying a few more words, he left the ward and turned his head to look for Elise.

When Simon entered, Elise had just woken up. He went over and instructed her to lie down. "No need to get up. Look at how weak you are! Properly lie down. There's no need to get up for me."

"Well, I have to try," she joked weakly.

A helpless Simon looked at her before he changed the topic and asked with a grave expression, "Are you really the Anderson Family's daughter?"

Elise nodded and laughed. "I just found out not long ago."

He sighed. "The Anderson Family has a lot going on. If you want to get involved, I'm afraid you'll get into trouble."

"I've caused a lot of trouble in the past anyway," she calmly reminded him.

"You've suffered a lot too!" Simon admonished, but with a doting tone. "All right, I'm just reminding you. Be careful, and if there is anything, you can find me and your aunt. Don't be shy, understand?"

"I'll think about it." Elise didn't say yes or no.

He knew her nature, so he did not force her to make a decision. Now that he had left his home phone number and personal number, he made a move first. He had only just left when Jeanie walked in with Austin.

"Yoyo, your father and I are here to see you!"

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Chapter 395 I Don't Agree to the Marriage

Finally, Elise allowed Alexander to help her sit up. Then, Austin sat on the chair next to the hospital bed while Jeanie stood behind the chair. The three of them were seated facing each other, and there was some silence for a while.

Alexander felt that Elise was a little squirmy, so he also dragged a chair and sat down on the other side, and his big hand gently squeezed her palm and rubbed it softly. Elise felt his attentiveness, so her body relaxed, and the corners of her mouth held a smile. When Austin watched the exchange between the two, his face showed a gratified look.

"I heard Jeanie say that you two are engaged?"

Jeanie did not introduce much about Alexander, only saying that he was the son of the Griffith Family in Tissote.

"Yes." Alexander took the initiative to answer. "Elise has agreed to marry me, and we are considering when best to hold the wedding."

Austin was now a bit anxious and frowned. "Elise is not yet old enough to get married, right?"

This brat looks like an upright man and is good-looking, so there should be no shortage of interested women. Why is he interested in my daughter?

"Let young people decide their own business," Jeanie said comfortingly. She was delighted with Alexander.

"How can this be?" Austin complained. "Yoyo has been on her own for more than ten years, and she just came back. She hasn't spent much time with her family yet, so how can she get married? Besides, a girl's destiny is not necessarily to get married and have children!"

"You old thing!" Jeanie laughed. "Then why did you marry me right away as soon as I reached the legal age of marriage? If we didn't get married and have children, how would Yoyo and Trevor be born?"

When Austin heard that, his face was a bit embarrassed as he said, "We're not the same. Now we are talking about our daughter, so don't you interfere."

"How can I not interfere? Yoyo is my daughter..."

The two of them argued back and forth. Yet inexplicably, Elise felt sweet instead of aggravated when she listened to them argue. It seemed that family problems did not seem so terrible after all.

Alexander knew Austin could not bear to let Elise go, but he did not wish to retreat as well. So, he said with dominance, "Elise has agreed, and I've already had people arrange the wedding. As for marrying her legally, I can only wait. But please rest assured that after the wedding, my assets will all have her name on them."

"Didn't I agree only today? You have given out instructions?" Elise was confused and felt that she had fallen into his trap.

However, Alexander was honest and looked innocent. "This is the digital era. Since you've agreed, I've already gotten Cameron to prepare for the wedding. There's nothing wrong with making early preparations; we can resolve problems earlier too."

In fact, he had long started to prepare for the wedding and had even changed several wedding planners. So far, they were still bidding for the best wedding program. Since it was for Elise, it must be the best without any compromise.

"Okay, you can just decide whatever you like. Don't ask for my opinion, though." Although Elise had never been married, she knew that planning a wedding was troublesome. She hated making decisions and overthinking about all this.

"Don't worry. It won't bother you." Alexander promised in a good-natured way.

It was so difficult to get her as his wife, so he would not ruin their lifelong happiness because of some minor issues.

Austin was still arguing with Jeanie, but when he saw Alexander and Elise's sweet interaction, he felt something was blocking his heart in an uncomfortable way. No matter what Jeanie said, he stopped listening.

"No, I do not agree." Austin's face darkened, and so the atmosphere in the ward instantly tensed up.

Hearing that, Jeanie froze for a moment, then opened her mouth to persuade him, only to hear Austin continue, "Yoyo is my daughter and the treasure of the Anderson Family. It is impossible for me to agree to marry her off so casually!"

Alexander was taken aback for a moment, not expecting Austin to overreact. Elise knew little about Austin, but she felt resistance from the bottom of her heart to this kind of hard discipline.

"This is my life; I can make my own decisions."

Elise stubbornly looked at Austin. The resentment buried deep in her heart seemed to be triggered. When she met Jeanie, she had feelings of loss and resentment from being discarded and forgotten, which were now suddenly set off from Austin's unexplained misogynism. She naturally would not let her emotions flood in and affect her, but it did not mean she would accept the reality and obediently be their doll.

"At such a young age, you haven't seen clearly how big the world is, so what decisions can you make? When deciding who to marry, you should not listen to men's superficial words and think you've seen through them!" Austin said, glaring at Alexander.

"You're not a man?" Elise asked flatly.

"How can I be the same?" Austin furrowed his brows. "I am your father and the only man in this world who won't hurt you!"

"That's not necessarily true," Elise said. "If you will not hurt me, why was I alone and stranded out in the world?"

"T-That was an accident, Yoyo." A moment ago, the man who was still full of energy deflated like a balloon, and all of a sudden, he looked like he aged more than ten years. In the face of Elise's ruthlessness, he was just a father who had made his child suffer for more than ten years and was heartbroken over it. No father could withstand such blame, so after he finished, his eyes watered before Elise could react. As if he wanted to atone, he began to cry hoarsely.

Seeing this, Alexander hurriedly spoke up. "Let's put the past aside for the time being. Mr. Anderson, how do you intend to deal with Miss Faye?"

Austin hurriedly sniffled and tried to compose himself to maintain his decency. Just when he wanted to open his mouth, Faye barged in.

"Elise. mv dear!"

She walked to the hospital bed with a concerned face and said agitatedly, "Are you better? It's been a hard day for you. Thanks to you, Dad was able to wake up again, and Trevor is already awake too. Just rest well and don't worry anymore!"

Elise looked at her in silence, her expression indifferent. Faye was really good at playing up the act, and Elise felt that everyone from such large families was a natural actor.

"Elise will naturally be well!" Jeanie said in annoyance.

"Mother, why do you talk to me in this tone again? I explained to you that those were all misunderstandings before. I had to do certain things to protect this family. Now that my sister just came back, you are so eager to remove me from this family?" Faye said, looking as if she was about to cry.

"Humph, you're just an adopted daughter, anyway. You're no longer useful—"

"Enough!" Austin interrupted with a dark face and said, "What adopted daughter? Faye and Yoyo are our own daughters and are our family! I think you are mistaken! What nonsense are you saying?"

"You're the one who's mistaken! You're confused from your coma! Yoyo saved you, yet you do not defend her and defend a murderer instead!"

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Chapter 396 No Intention to Go Back

"I know what I'm doing," Austin said unhappily. "Anyway, from now on, no one is allowed to mention that Faye was adopted."

"You! I'm done arguing with you!" Jeanie couldn't win against Austin, so she simply shut her mouth and felt resentful.

I don't understand what happened. Before the coma, Austin was a man who could distinguish between right and wrong, so how could he be so unwise in this matter?

Elise watched all this with cold eyes, but she was not too surprised. Even Alexander also understood that the problem had no solution now. The superficially well-behaved, perfect adopted daughter who had been raised within the family for more than ten years juxtaposed against the sudden appearance of the biological daughter, and Austin had obviously made his choice between the two.

"I'm tired, so please leave." Elise's longing for her family suddenly dissipated, and her tone was cold and icy.

"Right, you take a good rest," Austin said. "Your sister has already made arrangements. There is a car outside waiting for us, so we will go back first, and when you are well-rested, you can have someone send you back to the Anderson Residence."

With that, he stood up. Holding the arm of the chair, he turned around to prepare to leave. As he turned around, Elise's icy cold voice resounded from behind. "No need, I already have a home. I'll leave the Anderson Family to you and your precious daughter."

When Austin heard this, he slowly turned around in confusion and snapped, "What do you mean you have a home? The Anderson Residence is your home. You are the eldest daughter of the Anderson Family, and since you have come back, you should live in the Anderson Residence and wait for the welcome back ceremony we'll hold for you. How could you live somewhere else by yourself? That's inappropriate!"

"Let Elise decide these matters on her own!" Jeanie already felt guilty about Elise, and she did not want Elise to suffer again. "All of us live in the same city and are not far away from each other. We can see her at any time we want. Let's give Elise a little time, Austin?"

After thinking about it, she added, "The people who raised Elise are an old couple. Elise owes them for raising her all this while. We can't ask her to be ungrateful and leave them behind without care like that, can we?"

Austin thought about it and was persuaded, so he nodded and said, "Then when you go back this time, explain the situation to them, then officially move back. If the old couple has no one to support them, they can live in the Anderson Residence too. Their kindness is worth supporting them for the rest of their lives."

"I have no intention of going back," Elise refused sharply.

"What?" Austin didn't hear clearly for a moment, so he looked at her weakly and asked again.

Jeanie understood more or less about Elise's nature. Fearing that the father-daughter duo would clash again, she hurriedly interjected, "Nothing. Let's just go according to what you said. Elise knows how to handle things, and you are also tired, so let's hurry back first!"

Austin nodded slightly and did not refuse. Only then did the group leave. Even so, the atmosphere in the ward didn't get better. Alexander knew Elise was angry at Austin and would not listen to any explanation at this time. In fact, he knew that just now, even if Austin showed malice toward him on the surface, he did not feel that it was wrong at all. He knew that it was just a father trying his best to defend and protect his daughter. A father's love is perhaps more internalized, Alexander thought.

Then, Alexander accompanied Elise and stayed at the hospital for another two hours before returning to the Sinclair Residence. When Laura saw that only the two of them had come back, she couldn't help but ask, "Did you save them?"

"Mm." Elise's response was light, and after she finished, she walked toward the side door. "I'm a bit tired; I'll go back to my room first."

Laura instinctively sensed that something was wrong, and when Elise was far away, she grabbed Alexander to ask about the situation. "What's going on here? She was all excited when she left. Who has upset my Elise again?"

"She's okay, Grandma. Elise was saving people and expending too much energy, so that's why she's like this." Alexander didn't want to make the older woman worry too much.

"Is that so?" Laura looked at him with doubt.

"Mm." Alexander nodded and changed the topic. "Grandma, Elise has agreed to marry me today, so we are ready to get married. I hope you and Grandpa can give us your blessing."

"You've thought it through?" Robin came out of the house.

"Definitely," Alexander said. "From long ago until now, from the beginning to the end, the only one I want to marry is her."

"In that case, then go and prepare. Everything must be done according to tradition, and my granddaughter must have the best of everything."

"Thank you, Grandpa! I promise you I will give her the best!"

"Mm." Robin didn't say anything else but lowered his head to think about Elise.

If they succeeded in saving Elise's real father and brother, the Anderson Family should be grateful and escort Elise home. Why did she come back by herself instead? It seems that this Anderson Family, too, is no good! Humph, since they despise my precious granddaughter so much, it's better for her not to go back!

Meanwhile, at the Anderson Residence, the news that Austin and Trevor had woken up had spread, and by the time the two arrived home, they were already blocked by a bunch of relatives. It took a while to finally get rid of all the people. Austin just got into bed when Jeanie wanted to talk to him about Elise and Faye, but he raised his hand and asked the maid to call Faye over.

Faye came quickly with a well-behaved look. "Dad, you wanted to see me?"

"Mm." Austin nodded and said in a serious tone, "Get the preparations done. Tomorrow, hand over the company to me and your brother. All these years that we are not here, you've taken over the company's affairs alone. I'm sure it has been very hard for you. In the future, just stand behind your brother and me, and be a carefree little princess."

As soon as Faye heard this, her expression became a bit unpleasant, but she hid it well and did not show it too obviously. "Dad, you just woke up, and your body has not recovered yet. What I mean is that I am already familiar with all those businesses anyway, so it doesn't matter if I do it for a day or two more. Why don't you and Trevor take a break for half a month first, and I will continue to take care of the company for the time being? If you two fall ill any further, I will feel bad." Faye pretended to be worried.

"I think that you simply do not want to hand over the control!" Jeanie was extremely exasperated with Faye. "Let me remind you, this company is still under your father's name, so if you do not want to be thrown out of the family, then hand over everything right now!"

"Jeanie!" Austin spoke impatiently again. "Why do you always use this tone with Faye? Did you forget that when Yoyo didn't come back, it was Faye who accompanied us? Without her, how sad we would be during those days! I've said before that the matter of the adoption cannot be mentioned again, and that we are all family. You are not allowed to hold a grudge against Faye because of that misunderstanding again."

Jeanie's face was dark, and she didn't answer.

After a long time, she remembered Bertha, who was imprisoned, and with a sudden flash of inspiration, she grabbed Austin's hand and said, "If you don't believe me, call your mother and ask her! Then the truth will come out!"

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Chapter 397 She Might Change Her Mind

Austin waved his hand. "That's not necessary. Mom is old, so let's not bother her."

"For now, I just want to return to the company as soon as possible. It's a sizable enterprise, so I cannot allow it to die in my hands!"

"How are you so stubborn?" Jeanie was fuming at Austin's conservative outlook. "You've really gone blind!"

With that, she sent Faye a death glare before stomping out of the room. A grin crept into the corners of Faye's mouth, betraying her inner thoughts.

My dear mother, it's still too early for you to be going up against me.

"Faye." Austin suddenly called her name.

"What is it?" Faye was so caught up in her delight that she almost forgot to respond.

"I'll be off to take over the company tomorrow, so you don't have to go. If you find staying home a bit boring, you can hit up the others in the family for the preparations to welcome your sister to the family. She has been through a lot out there, so make sure that every part of the ceremony is the way it's supposed to be. Make it as grand as you can so that she will be given due justice."

"For sure. I look forward to her return as well." Faye readily agreed, but she was still a little reserved about handing over the company. "Still, the company has undergone drastic changes recently, so I think I should serve as your assistant. The shareholders have gotten more powerful lately, and they're starting to get ahead of themselves. I fear that if you face them alone, you'll get so worked up you might not be able to take it."

"It's not a bad idea. We'll do that, then." Austin dropped his persistence, while Faye sighed in relief. After a few exchanges laced with fake concern, she went out and closed the door behind her.

In the room, Austin gazed in the direction Faye went, the look in his eyes gradually getting fiercer.

The next day, Austin returned to the company as promised and took over the president's office once again.

On the other hand, Faye stood in front of the desk with a man and a woman by her side, making introductions. "Dad, I've appointed them as your assistants. If you have any plans you need to carry out, you can give them the orders, and they'll make it happen."

Austin gave them a nonchalant look, then nodded. "Good. That's very thoughtful of you."

Faye's smile was innocent, but she was actually sneering in her heart. The president's position and Austin's return didn't matter to her; after all, all the employees in Anderson Pharmaceuticals still obeyed her, so it wouldn't matter whether she still held the position.

Hah! My poor and innocent father will soon have a taste of how hard it is to do things without me. As she was entertaining her thoughts, a secretary came knocking on the door behind.

"President Anderson, someone by the name of Mr. Alexander Griffith is here to see you."

"Let him in." Austin nodded, then looked at Faye and said, "You can leave with them first. I want to have a good look at your sister's future husband."

"Understood."

Faye didn't question anything as she turned around and left. At the door, she passed by Alexander and exchanged meaningful glances with him.

In the president's office, as soon as Faye went out of sight, the smile disappeared from Austin's face. When Alexander came in, he was greeted with the sight of a stern and steady president.

"Good day." Alexander took a seat in front of him.

Austin quietly examined him for a solid two seconds. "I heard you cut ties with the Griffith Family, and you're working alone now? And you took over Frazier Pharmaceuticals, right?" he drawled.

"Just a little something on the side," Alexander said lightly.

"With your qualifications, you could've looked for someone better than Elise. Why are you in such a hurry to get married?" Austin asked.

"She's the one, so it has got to be her." Alexander was straightforward.

Austin half-closed his eyes as he remained silent, as if contemplating the truthfulness of those words.

After a long while, he spoke up. "It is true that the Fraziers' net worth has risen considerably, but you must understand that the pharmaceutical industry is one of

the country's pillars. The Anderson Family has remained steadfast in this field for years, so it is still fundamentally different from the Fraziers. I'm afraid this is not enough to ask for my daughter's hand."

Alexander smiled faintly as he took those words in his stride. "Name your price. I promise I won't ask for discounts."

"What, I'm selling my daughter now?" Austin's expression turned cold.

"No, of course not." Alexander remained calm. "I just want to express my sincerity. I would sacrifice everything I have for Elise."

With that, the two faced off for a long while before Austin finally decided to break the silence.

"Show me your sincerity, then. In one month, you have to join Anderson's board of directors on your own. If you can do that, I will agree to your marriage with Elise."

"One month?" Alexander raised his left eyebrow as he asked.

"What's wrong? Too short for you?" Austin responded.

"No, that's not it," Alexander said lightly. "It's too long a time, and I simply cannot wait that long. What about one week? You don't understand Elise; if I drag it on for too long, I'm afraid that she might change her mind."

Austin was surprised, but he quickly recovered himself and nodded in satisfaction. "All right, one week it is. Let's see how great my future son-in-law is."

"I will not let you down."

...

At Dawn Villa, Nathan York sat on the couch, swirling some blood-red liquid in a wineglass he was holding. The irresistible scent of the liquid was continuously emanating from the glass.

In the corner of the room, Elise was engaged in a game of darts. Her gaze seemed to meld with the dart in her hand. A few seconds later, she swiftly threw the dart, landing on the bullseye and knocking out another dart before it.

"Oof, who pissed you off this time, Elise? You're feral," Nathan commented as he took a sip of the wine.

Elise didn't even bat an eye as she raised her arm, taking aim once again.

"Let me guess. I heard your good old father took in a daughter he shouldn't have, and when he woke up, he didn't take it up with Faye, nor did he blame Pinewood

Hospital. I'd say he's more forgiving than a saint." Nathan's voice was light, but every word he spoke was laced with mockery.

The next second, Elise turned around, and the dart in her hand flew right at him. Almost immediately, a figure dashed out from a door at the side and blocked off the dart right before it touched Nathan.

Nathan turned around, realizing the situation all too late. He was so frightened that he jumped up and screamed, "What the f*ck! Are you trying to kill me?" With that, he took the dart from the man in front of him and said, "I thought you're only good with needles, but I never knew you're so adept with darts as well. Does A play this too?"

"You're trying too hard to get information from me," Elise narrowed her eyes and said warily.

"Heh... If you were more open about it, I wouldn't have to go to such lengths, would I?" Nathan grinned, completely ignoring the fact that he was breaking character.

"Flisel"

Just then, Danny ran in, only to witness Nathan's behavior.

"You're Nathan York?" Danny asked in confusion, for he had heard from the news that Nathan never smiles.

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Chapter 398 You're on the Losing End of the Deal!

"Do I not look the part?" Nathan shrugged.

"No," Danny replied in an ever so monotonous sounding tone. With that, he went right over to Elise and announced dramatically, "Elise, you're the only one who can help me now!"

"What's the matter?" Elise always preferred to cut to the chase.

"Help me look for someone with your genius computer skills!" Danny said.

Elise simply looked at him as she awaited his next words.

"Claude Strike!" Danny began to explain, saying, "You know I'm busy trying to join SK Group these days, right? Just now, the recruiter sent out the entrance exam, and the task is to locate Claude, the legendary doctor!"

Claude himself was part of SK Group, so his tracks were hidden by the group themselves.

Wouldn't it be counterintuitive to ask newbies to take on this challenge? "What's the other task?" Elise asked, trying to keep her hopes up.

"What other task?" Danny looked extremely confused.

Elise was speechless, and her eyelids dropped. This guy doesn't even know that the entrance exam for SK Group always has two options to choose from! Well, it's not like I can do anything about it. "Never mind that. Where did you get the exam information from?"

"Someone in the field. It's like an endless hierarchy, very complex stuff. I had to pay 200,000 to register."

Elise had never been so speechless in her entire life. He's on the losing end of the deal! Does this guy even think? He paid them money and promised to help them look for Claude free of charge!

"Can you still contact the person who took your registration fee?" Elise looked at Danny, exasperated.

"Yep." Danny nodded innocently. "He gave me a private number."

Elise crossed her arms and said in annoyance, "Call him up."

"What for? I haven't even found the guy."

"I have," Elise replied, irritated.

"Really! Whoa, you truly have mad skills, Elise! I'm calling him up right now. Haha! I'm going to be the only person who joined the group this year! You know, once the task was announced, everyone immediately went to team up and stuff..."

As he spoke, he took out his phone and managed to find the person on his contacts list. He then proceeded to make the call before the other person picked up.

"Hello, I found Claude!" Danny exclaimed excitedly.

Meeting! Set up a meeting! Elise stood opposite him and tried to get her message across by mouthing her words.

Danny didn't get the message. He covered the receiver with his hand and leaned over to ask, "What?"

Elise sighed, exasperated. "I said, get him to meet you in person," she hissed.

"Oh, all right, okay!" Danny was stunned, but he gave her an 'OK' sign before going outside with the phone.

A few minutes later, he jumped in excitement and announced, "Done! We're meeting at The Waterway Restaurant!"

As soon as Danny finished speaking, Nathan couldn't help but burst out laughing. Then, he put a hand to his mouth in an attempt to hide his subsequent laughs.

"What are you laughing at?" Danny realized that the news wasn't so reliable after all. They had claimed that Nathan never even smiled, much less laughed, but the reality was proving otherwise.

Also, Danny felt that Nathan laughed like a wicked man, and he really wanted to just send the latter a punch across the face.

"Nothing." Nathan held back his laughter though he appeared to be hiding something.

At this point, Elise couldn't stand by and watch anymore, prompting her to challenge the man, asking, "Do you believe that people from SK Group would reveal themselves at The Waterway Restaurant so easily?"

"What's wrong with The Waterway Restaurant?" Danny couldn't even begin to comprehend. "Big business deals are made at The Waterway Restaurant all the time. That place is good with privacy!"

Nathan laughed even louder now, and he was still chuckling as he got up before walking to Elise. Patting her shoulders, he said, "Your friend is a little, uh, naive." bAfter saying that, he strode outside with the expressionless man who had rushed into the room just now.

"What does he mean by that?" Danny glared warily at Nathan's figure. He must be looking down on me.

Elise decided not to answer the question and changed the topic. "What time did you agree on?"

"Tomorrow evening at 9," said Danny.

"Got it," Elise replied before throwing the remaining three darts in her hands. The darts landed steadily on the target.

Danny's gaze followed the darts to their target, and by the time he had come to, Elise was gone. He scratched his head in confusion, muttering to himself, "What's going on? So weird..."

• • •

By the time Elise returned to the Sinclair Residence, it was already 11 at night. Joshua and his wife were trying to flatter Robin and Laura by washing their feet for them.

When they saw Elise walk in, they said mockingly, "Elise, remember, you're still a girl. How can you be outside all day and only come home at this hour? Our reputation might be ruined if word gets out!"

"Exactly! Your grandmother recently got discharged from the hospital, so you should stay here and take care of her more often!"

Elise pretended not to hear them as she walked in and reached out to feel Laura's pulse. "Grandma, do you still feel palpitations?"

"Once in the afternoon, I think. I'm feeling much better now, compared to before. Don't worry too much about me, and don't take your uncle's words to heart," Laura answered.

"I've never," Elise said calmly. "I'm going back to my room now."

"Go ahead," the two elders said simultaneously.

"Okay," Elise responded, then went back to her room. Seeing her calm countenance, Robin and Laura couldn't help but feel worried.

However, Joshua failed to react to the situation as he chastised, "Look at her! It's just as expected of an outsider. See who's helping you do all the dirty work at the most important times—me, your own son!"

Hearing that, Robin immediately kicked over the basin they were using to wash feet, and the water splashed all over Joshua.

"Dad! What are you doing?" Joshua shot to his feet and wiped away the water on his body with a used towel.

"Elise isn't someone you can lecture!" Robin said in exasperation.

"Just because of that?" Joshua complained gloomily. "Did I say anything wrong? Am I not the person looking after you and taking care of you? Your old age is getting to you, Dad. You should know who's closest to you!"

Robin looked away and didn't even bat an eye. "I'd rather have you hire a care worker!"

"Mom, did you hear what Dad said?" Joshua turned to Laura, injustice written all over his face.

"Why? What did he say?" Laura wasn't the least bit considerate as she barked, "If you keep picking on Elise, the two of you will have to leave as soon as you can!"

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Chapter 399 Elise Will Not Be Marrying You

It was early in the morning the next day when Austin visited the Sinclair Residence with Jeanie. They were getting along well at first, but when they talked about where Elise should belong in the future, Robin and Laura started to take on less friendly behavior.

The atmosphere was tense for a long while, then Austin broke the silence.

"Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair, you have taken good care of Elise all these years. However, she must return to where she came from. She has Anderson's blood running in her veins, and no one can change that. We wish for her to come back to us, but it doesn't mean that she has to cut off ties with the Sinclairs. We just want to fill in the missing parts of her life. I hope you can understand."

Robin nodded, for there was nothing wrong with Austin's words. However, when he thought of Elise's lonely return home yesterday, he wasn't quite willing to let go.

As soon as Elise left their line of sight, they wouldn't know of her sufferings or anything that happened to her among that den of snakes.

Laura cut to the chase as she said right out, "Mr. Anderson, according to what I know, your second daughter isn't easy to get along with, correct? How can you guarantee that Elise would be safe when she goes over to your place?"

Austin nodded. "I understand your concerns, but Elise is our biological daughter. She has gone through so much suffering, so we'll give her all the love we can when she returns. We'll take extra care of her, and we'll treat her way better than her other siblings."

"A sensible calculation." Laura refused to believe him as she asked, "The Sinclairs have everything that Elise needs, so if she continues staying here, she would be the only precious daughter of the Sinclairs. However, if she returns to the Andersons, she'll have to compete with her other siblings and counter all the plots they'll pit against her. She's better off remaining as she is!"

"I... am afraid that's not possible," said Austin. "I have already sent orders to prepare the ceremony where she would be recognized as an Anderson. Soon, the whole city, even the whole country, will know that Elise is my daughter. If she continues to stay outside, people might think that we're treating her unfairly."

"It's a matter within the family, so you shouldn't care about what others think. In the end, you're just trying to benefit the Anderson Family." Robin waved his hand. "That's enough talking. You cannot have Elise, and that's final!" The atmosphere was tense once again, and Joshua took the opportunity to barge in on the conversation.

"Dad, why are you so stubborn? Elise is just a child you picked up, and she's not even a real Sinclair. Now her own family is coming to take her back, and they have every right to do so. Why are you holding on to her so firmly? You have taught me to be a good person, but now, you're just like a bad guy who has taken someone else's belongings and hidden them!"

"Be quiet!" Robin reprimanded, "You have no right to speak here. Just the sight of you drives me mad, so get lost!"

"Stop telling me to get lost! I'm your only son, and you can't just dispose of me when you feel like it!" Joshua retorted. He couldn't care less about his pride. As long as he stuck around with the Sinclair Family, its property would fall into his hands, eventually.

"You... You b*stard!" Robin was so worked up that he was at a loss for words. He hit his cane on the ground, which produced two heavy and muted knocks. Seeing this, Austin knew that his chance had come.

"Mr. Sinclair," Austin stated, "I know I shouldn't talk about the circumstances in your family, but I can see that Elise won't be entirely happy even if she stays here. Since it's the same on both sides, it's only reasonable that she stays with her biological parents, yes?"

As he spoke, he looked toward Joshua, as if hinting that with Joshua's presence, this family would still have its fair share of troubles.

"You don't have to worry about me!" Elise suddenly walked in from the side door. The look in her eyes was cold, and it roused feelings of guilt within certain individuals.

She walked in and looked around at the people gathered in the room, then she raised her voice and announced. "Since everyone's here, I'll say this one last time. No matter how my identity changes, as long as Grandpa and Grandma are alive, I will forever stay with the Sinclairs. This decision will not be swayed by any person or any matter!"

"Yoyo, I mean, Elise, please calm down. Your father means well; he just wants you to have a part of the family. You know well that it belongs to you in the first place!" Jeanie was a little anxious because she didn't want to lose her long-lost daughter again soon after finally finding her.

Jeanie didn't care about anything else; she just wanted to be with her daughter. Elise looked at Jeanie calmly, but she didn't say anything.

Just then, Austin's phone suddenly rang. He frowned as he unlocked his phone, immediately jumping to his feet when he read the message he received. Jeanie leaned over to look, but Austin quickly turned off his phone and put it in his pants pocket.

"Who is it from?" Jeanie asked. She knew something was up from the way Austin reacted.

"Nothing, just some spam mail." Austin steeled his expression as he spoke.

With that, he looked toward Elise, frowning and hesitating. Then, he finally said, "Since you wish to live with them, we'll let you have your way. However, we still expect you to be there for the ceremony. This is your responsibility, all right? I'll be waiting for you, Yoona." He strode out as soon as he finished his words.

When Austin stepped out of the hall, Elise's cold voice rang behind him. "There's no need to wait. I have no interest whatsoever in the Andersons. I welcome your visits, but I will never go to you."

Austin turned around to glance at her. A million emotions rushed through his head, but he stayed silent till the end and left without looking back.

Jeanie, however, was less willing to leave. She looked at Elise and clasped her hands together, saying humbly, "Yoyo, if you don't want to go back, can I stay here with you? I don't know what's wrong with your dad. He still refuses to chase Faye away. I really don't want to stay another second in that house!"

"Sure," Elise responded calmly.

Outside the Sinclair Residence, Austin sat in the car and took out his phone. He had a complicated expression as he stared at the scandalous photo of Matthew and Elise in bed.

Elise was engaged to Alexander. If this photo got out, Alexander would still be fine, maybe get joked about for a while, but Elise would face far worse consequences simply because she was a girl.

He was more worried that the owner of this photo would leak it during the ceremony.

Now, he could do nothing but cancel the marriage between Alexander and Elise. Hence, even if this incident was leaked, they could claim that it was just young people in love. Then, when everything blew over, they could make a statement to clarify the situation, so they wouldn't be affected too much by the chaos.

At that thought, Austin dialed Alexander's number again.

Alexander was checking the proposal for the wedding, and he immediately picked it up when he saw that it was a call from Austin. "Mr. Anderson, I think we're still a long way from the deadline we agreed on," Alexander said.

"I had a change of mind," Austin said. "Elise will not be marrying you."

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Chapter 400 My Enemy

"I don't understand." Alexander's expression was frozen on his face.

Austin thought for a while, then tried dropping hints. "Matthew is one of the Griffiths, and there's this thing between him and Elise... Well, anyway, with that sort of relationship, she mustn't be married to any of you. As her father, I have to ensure that she stays unharmed."

Alexander went silent for a while, after which he blocked the receiver of his phone as he told everyone in the office, "We'll take a break for 15 minutes. Everyone out."

Within a minute, everyone else had already left the room. It was only after that when Alexander returned to his call with Austin. "You mean that photo with Matthew and Elise?"

Austin was stunned, for he didn't expect Alexander to know about this.

"Since you already know, there's no reason for me to hide. If anyone learns of the history between your brother and Elise, the only one to be hurt will be Elise, and you know it. If you're a gentleman, you would call off the wedding," Austin said.

"Impossible." Alexander then repeated his vow, claiming, "I have to marry Elise!"

"So you're saying that you want to go against me?" Austin's voice turned cold. "Do you think you're qualified enough to fight me just because you have Frazier Pharmaceuticals and that measly amount of money you got from the stock market?"

"You are Elise's father, so I won't hurt you. However, anyone who dares stand in the way of my union with Elise will be my enemy!" Alexander said gravely, every syllable laced with warning.

"All right, then. We'll see how you spout nonsense when you get in trouble!"

With that, Austin hung up. In the office, the look in Alexander's eyes grew cold. He was lost in his own thoughts as he tried to guess where Matthew was at the moment.

Just as expected, I should've gotten to the root of the problem while I had the chance. New problems will keep popping up if this does not end well.

Alexander had to think of a way to lure Matthew out. As he was thinking, his phone vibrated again. It was a message from Brendan telling him that Adam was hospitalized. He gave it a quick glance, then took his phone with him as he left the meeting room.

Elise had received the news at the same time, so the two of them were headed for the hospital simultaneously. However, Alexander got there before Elise did.

In the ward, Adam lay on the bed, and Madeline was accompanying him. Alexander hadn't seen them in a few days, but Madeline seemed to have aged considerably. A few strands of her hair were turning white, and there were wrinkles at the corners of her eyes.

Even though Adam was the one on the hospital bed, he appeared to be in better health than Madeline.

When Alexander walked in, he called lightly, "Dad."

Hearing his voice, Madeline got up in excitement as she waited for him to greet her. In the end, however, Alexander didn't seem like he would open his mouth again, and Madeline was terribly heartbroken by that.

Does this mean that he was serious when he said he wanted to cut off ties with me?

"You're here." Adam acknowledged his presence before he turned to look at a chair beside him. "Sit down."

"It's fine." Alexander's face was cool, without much emotion. "How did you end up in the hospital?"

Adam let out a long sigh, as if unwilling to recount the events.

Madeline did Adam's job instead. "It's all because of those relatives! My goodness, all of them gathered at our house and claimed that if the Griffiths went bankrupt, they would die right in front of us! Some of those in power even pointed at your dad and told him that his own son abandoned him, then your dad got so worked up that he fainted."

Madeline adjusted the blanket for her husband, then turned to Alexander and complained, "And you. If you knew that Frazier's stocks would rise, why didn't you tell the Griffiths? I don't mind if you don't care about those distant relatives, but how are you willing to watch your own family die?"

Alexander was indifferent as he looked coldly at her and retorted calmly, "You're the one who asked me to choose."

"But I never thought you'd choose that woman! What spell did she put on you? What sort of son would abandon his family for a woman?" Madeline accused. "You are my son, and you have my blood running in your veins. Blood is thicker than water, is it not? Please come to your senses, Alexander. We're the people closest to you! Don't you see the suffering we're going through?"

Just then, Elise had already arrived and was standing outside the door. However, when she heard Madeline's voice, she stopped dead in her tracks.

"One has to pay the price for one's decisions." Alexander's voice rang calmly in the ward, and no one could hear any emotion in it.

"Elise is my woman and fiancée. If you keep badmouthing her, I'll have to take my leave," Alexander said coldly.

Adam sighed hastily. "What did I tell you? You shouldn't have forced him!"

"You know nothing. This is all Elise's fault! She brought misfortune to all of us. Grandpa Griffith is dead because of her, and we're next on the list! She also brought ruin to our family, but she's still clinging on to Alexander like no one's business! I can't rest in peace as long as they're still together!"

Alexander's expression was frightfully dark. In the end, he inhaled and turned around to leave.

"Alexander," Adam called to him in a frail voice.

Alexander could abandon his mother, but he couldn't cut ties with his father.

"Dad, if there's anything you want to tell me, just go ahead and talk," Alexander said.

"I... Well, I don't know how!" Adam's face was guilt-ridden as he hesitated, unable to humble himself.

Alexandar, however, could guess what he wanted to say. He spoke calmly, saying, "You want me to fork out some money to help the Griffiths through these trying times, is that right?"

Adam didn't respond, silently admitting.

"It's only proper for you to give us money. Alexander, when you took over the company, you were also in charge of the whole family. You are responsible for the survival of the Griffiths, so you can't just stand by and watch. If you aren't willing to give us even one cent, how would you be able to face your family in the future? We're asking you to do this for your own good," Madeline cut in.

Alexander ignored her and continued to ask, "Dad, is this what you want?"

"Alexander, oh, Alexander! Just let me live for a few more days, please. Our home has turned into hell, so if you don't do anything about it, your mom and I would have no place to call home." At this point, Adam seemed to be out of choices.

"All right." Alexander agreed almost immediately because it was his duty as a son, after all.

"Then you agree to come back and cut ties with that woman?" Madeline asked in delight.

"No," Alexander replied coldly. "I will be marrying Elise very soon. I can give you my money and my life, but as long as I am breathing, I want to stay by Elise's side. I want to be someone she can depend on all her life."

"W-What sort of son are you?! You'll be the death of me one day!" Madeline shouted in anger and disappointment.

Alexander remained silent, for he didn't want to worsen the conflict. Even if the whole world disapproved of his relationship with Elise, he would still stay with her.

He lowered his gaze as he contemplated, but then quickly caught sight of a small figure entering his field of vision.

"Why are you here?" Alexander was shocked by her presence.

"If I weren't here, how much longer do you plan on being bullied?" Elise said, then walked right past him to look Madeline in the eyes.