

Surprise 231

Chapter 231 Remove Him From His Position as President

After being angered by Gale, Courtney returned to the office to work an extra night shift. The next morning, she was still tired when Elijah invited her out for breakfast. At half-past seven in the morning, the breakfast stall was not yet at its rush hour. Still, when the time came, no one sat there leisurely eating their food like Elijah and Courtney.

Taking in her washed-up appearance, Elijah placed a peeled egg on the small plate in front of her. "Why are you so tired? Didn't sleep well last night?"

"I didn't sleep." Courtney gave a dismissive wave of her hand, then yawned. "I slept for a while at five in the morning, but the office environment is too shabby, and the sofa isn't comfortable. I was already awake before you called me."

"You have to take your time while starting a business. Don't overexert yourself from the beginning," Elijah advised earnestly, having experienced it himself.

However, Courtney didn't appreciate his comments. "Oh, give me a break. When I was a cleaner at your company five years ago, I saw you work overtime all the time, or rather, I rarely saw you not working overtime. The lights in the boss's office stayed on all night. At that time, we all thought you might be a robot."

"Robots need to be recharged too." Elijah laughed, not minding the mention of the past. "Besides, you've seen a living negative example, haven't you? After all the hard work, the company still suffered a shortage of funds, and we almost went bankrupt. If you didn't save me in time, I'm afraid I would be sleeping in a subway station in America now."

"Then, America must be harboring many talents." Courtney sipped on her soy milk. Despite being in a bad mood, she still had the strength to joke around. "How about we go there and see if we can dig up a few hidden talents?"

"If you're still capable of cracking jokes, it means that your morale isn't totally wrecked yet." Elijah studied her, then gave her a warm smile. "Aren't you going to ask me why I called you out so early in the morning?"

"Why did you?" Courtney asked lazily, not concealing her perfunctory behavior.

Elijah didn't mind it, so he carried on lightly, "I think that you should spend more time with Cameron during this period. After all, in a couple of days, she's going to America with me. It won't be as easy for you to see her then as it is now."

"What?" Courtney was shocked. "You're bringing Cameron to America? Who agreed to this?"

"It wasn't so much as agreeing. Ultimately, it was her boyfriend who came to me and asked if I could help."

This surprised Courtney even more. "So you're saying that Gale contacted you on his own and told you that he decided to let Cameron go to America to receive treatment?"

“Yes.”

His affirmative answer left her speechless. Isn't this masochism? He didn't take me seriously when I spoke nicely to him, but after I got all emotional and upset with him, even going so far as to scold him, he finally decided to take the initiative and ask for help. Is he asking for a beating?

“When are you leaving?” Courtney asked grimly after composing herself.

“Before the end of the month,” said Elijah. “So that you and Cameron can have some time to say your farewells.”

“Me? I'm afraid a certain someone doesn't intend on leaving any time for me to interact with her.” Courtney bit into her egg; her expression was faint.

“Who? Gale?” Elijah gave a playful chuckle. “You're overthinking it. He plans to go with Cameron.”

“What?” This time, Courtney was truly astounded. Her mouth was opened so wide that an entire egg could fit in it. “Are you serious?”

“Of course. Otherwise, why would he come find me personally? His main reason was to ask me if the mental health facility that I arranged for her would allow family members to stay together.”

“He plans to stay with her in the hospital?”

Back when she was at Gale's house, she personally saw him raging about how mental institutions and rehabilitation centers weren't fit for living, and that any sane person would come out a psychopath. Yet, he was now willing to endure it all for Cameron.

Elijah was going back to America at the end of the month, so the date for Cameron's hospitalization was set during that period as well. Although she didn't properly reconcile with Gale, during the days after she met with Elijah, Courtney still brought bag after bag of things to his house. When she was free, she would go over to help them with the cooking. With Cameron around to smooth things over, Courtney and Gale weren't that awkward with each other anymore.

During dinner that day, Gale got a phone call, and the usually laid-back man returned with a serious look on his face.

“What happened?” Cameron asked worriedly.

“It's not a big deal.” Gale glanced at Courtney. “Something happened with Sunhill's board of directors. They want me to go back and vote.”

“Vote?” Surprised looks appeared on Cameron and Courtney's faces.

Sunhill Enterprise was a family business, and Alexander was a man of his word. No decision ever necessitated the votes of others. Only a handful of matters would require everyone on the board to vote.

“They want to remove Alex from his position as president.” Gale's face was contorted. He looked like he was about to speak, then shot Courtney one last glance before leaving in a hurry.

For a family business, the most important deciding factor for who held the leading position of the business was the shareholders meeting. The five largest shareholders would be ranked according to the shares they owned, and the board of directors would vote to make the decision. The same went for the removal of a board member.

At the board meeting at Sunhill Enterprise, Gale was the only one to arrive late, and his was the last remaining vote. It was currently a tie between those who agreed to his removal and those who didn't. Gale voted for the opposition without hesitation.

When the results were revealed in the conference room, some people were happy while some were upset. After it was over, Alexander announced that the meeting was dismissed and left the office without another word. He didn't even stay behind to have a word with Gale.

Gale acted fast and grabbed Josh, who was trailing after his boss. "What happened? Why the sudden no-confidence vote?"

Josh sighed. "Previously, the Elmsbury project failed, and it made Old Master Duncan unhappy. The board of directors then added salt to the wound by saying that a professional manager would be better for the company, and they wanted to change the business model of the family business. That's why they suggested his removal."

"Where's Alex going now?"

"I think he's going to his ancestral home."

Clutching the documents in his hand, Josh said, "Mr. Langley, I have to drive President Duncan, so I'll take my leave now." With that, he turned and hurried away.

In the blink of an eye, the car had stopped in front of the Duncans' ancestral home. Alexander felt chilly. As soon as he walked into Scott's study, he increased the temperature of the air-conditioning by several degrees.

"Grandpa, did you agree to the plan for a professional manager?"

"Yes. Is there a problem?" Scott was practicing his calligraphy, so his entire demeanor was tranquil.

"Not at all." Alexander's face took on an unpleasant expression. "But, why would you appoint James as the professional manager? What's the meaning of that? Have you already forgotten what happened three years ago?"

At the mention of the incident three years ago, Scott's face suddenly paled.

At this moment, the sounds of chasing and playful shrieks came from outside. "Jordan, wait for me! Don't run so fast!"

Jordan, however, had no voice to respond.

Chapter 232 Why Can't I Suspect You?

Alexander's question silenced Scott, who was still holding onto his brush.

As he spoke, Alexander's powerful voice resounded through the study. "Three years ago, if you didn't place so much trust in James, his mind wouldn't have strayed and he wouldn't have harmed Jordan. Back then, you said that you wouldn't pursue the matter for the sake of family. But, now that I know what happened, I didn't think that you would use him again."

His tone obviously showed how disappointed he was in Scott.

Essentially, Scott was a force to be reckoned with, and he was always fair with his awards and punishments. He wasn't the kind of person to neglect wrongdoings for the sake of family.

In fact, the person who was behind Jordan's almost-murder was nearly uncovered. If it wasn't because Scott didn't allow Alexander to continue investigating, James would be in prison by now.

"What happened three years ago may not have been James' doing, and there wasn't any tangible evidence in the first place." Scott frowned, his eyebrows knitting together in anger.

"What do you mean no tangible evidence? Grandpa, I've shown you the evidence, but you told me not to pursue it anymore. You taught me to distinguish right from wrong. Deep down, you know the truth of the matter. Otherwise, why would you say such a thing?" Alexander's face darkened. "Perhaps your mind is muddled because you're getting older."

The last few letters of a quote that he was writing turned into a giant stain. The old man's deep voice, thick with fury, rang out in the room. "I may be old, but my mind isn't muddled. Alexander, do you really want me to make it clear to you? Do you really think that I don't know who nearly caused Jordan's death?"

Alexander's brows furrowed. "What do you mean by that?"

Scott's face was cold, and the majestic aura that he exuded was so oppressive that it left Alexander breathless. "Back when I wanted you to get married and have children, you refused. You wanted to infuriate me, so you came back with Jordan. Tell me; have you ever carried out your responsibilities as Jordan's father? There are many questionable points in the incident that happened three years ago. During that period, James wasn't the only person that Jordan's nanny was in frequent contact with."

Anyone would have suspicions about this unsettled matter, but Alexander didn't expect that his grandfather would doubt him.

"Are you suspecting me?"

"Why can't I suspect you? At that time, did you really consider Jordan as your own son? For you, is there anyone or anything that can't be used?" Scott's face was extremely gloomy.

Alexander clenched his fists. After a brief silent stand-off, a voice that was colder than the last sounded in the room. "From tomorrow onward, Sunhill Enterprise will be handed over to James. You don't have to remove me; I quit."

As soon as he finished speaking, the clear sound of the study's door opening and closing could be heard, the sharpness of his actions leaving no room for anyone to react. The next instant, Alexander's figure was gone from view.

The butler chased after him and tried to say a few kind words, but Alexander remained indifferent and simply walked away.

“Young Master Alexander.”

“Harry, come back here.”

Harry wanted to go after him, but a voice from the study halted his footsteps. In the end, he sighed helplessly as he watched Alexander’s figure slowly retreat, then he turned and walked into the study.

“Master, why did you make such a fuss with Young Master Alexander? He’s already an adult.”

When Harry entered, Scott was wiping his hands; the piece of paper with the ruined characters was strewn across the floor. The brush made from weasel hair that was broken in half clearly showed its owner’s rage from earlier.

“Is he an adult? He doesn’t even have basic feelings and emotions.”

Scott was frowning, still looking furious. “I really don’t know who he took after. He sees nothing but benefits and conditions.”

“I don’t think that’s the case. He really respects you, and he takes good care of Little Master. Not to mention, isn’t he progressing well with Miss Hunter? Isn’t that what you wanted?”

Everything was fine before he mentioned Courtney, but once he did, Scott’s scowl deepened even further.

“I don’t want to hear any mention of this matter anymore. This time, my misjudgment is to blame.”

Harry was taken aback for a moment. “Old Master, are you mindful of the fact that Miss Hunter has yet to divorce her ex-husband? After all the investigations we’ve made, we found that they have been separated for a long time, and their marriage has long only existed in name.”

Although Scott was no longer involved in the business world, all of the changes in Melrose City’s business circle didn’t escape his sight. Naturally, the news of Elijah looking for partners in Melrose City to expand his business got to him as well.

After a simple investigation, it was discovered that he had a close relationship with Courtney. Scott found out that Elijah was actually her ex-husband, and the two of them were not divorced, just separated.

But this was not the root cause of the old man’s sudden opposition. He cast a glance at Harry, then asked, “About the failure of the Elmsbury project, what was the explanation Alexander gave to the board of directors?”

“The young master said that he made a mistake during the negotiations.”

“That’s an excuse.” Scott’s voice was laced with anger. “I’ve asked the people at the Elmsbury branch, and they said that he left before the negotiations were over. Do you know why? He left because something happened to the Hunters. Courtney’s father, Lucian, died of illness, so Alexander went straight to the airport.”

“That’s... human nature,” Harry explained helpfully. “After all, Miss Hunter and the young master are in a relationship.”

“Nonetheless, he shouldn’t have been so impulsive. The weather was bad that day, and he ended up staying at the airport for two whole days, waiting to catch the first flight back.” The more he thought about it, the more furious Scott got. All of a sudden, he slapped the table. “It’s plain nonsense.”

Alexander was cold-natured, and his actions were usually on the extreme side. Even though Scott always hoped that he would get married and have children like everyone else, he was more worried about Alexander getting involved in complicated relationships, which would cause unmanageable consequences.

Courtney’s presence had undoubtedly derailed Alexander’s originally monotonous life toward a disastrous direction.

Harry wanted to say something more to persuade him, but upon seeing that the old man was still boiling with rage, he figured that anything he said now would be adding fuel to the fire, so he gave up.

Meanwhile, Alexander had gone to the courtyard where Jordan was playing. A servant had packed up a few of his personal belongings and was taking him away.

Jordan was playing with Hannah, but when he heard that Alexander was bringing him home, he immediately fished out his little board and scribbled a few words. “What about Mommy and Tina? Are they going back too?”

Upon seeing this, Alexander’s face turned somber. “There’s no Mommy, and there’s no Tina; there’s only you and me. In the future, our life will be the same as before.”

“No,” Jordan blurted.

His hoarse, childlike voice echoed throughout the courtyard.

Alexander froze for a moment, feeling surprised because Jordan rarely spoke. Then, his expression softened and he persuaded patiently, “Come back with Daddy. You’ve been staying here for too long.”

Jordan’s head shook like a rattle drum. He hurriedly wrote down another line of words. “Tina told me to wait here for her. She said that she will be back soon to play with me.”

Seeing how determined Jordan was only enraged Alexander. Without another word, he picked Jordan up and strode toward the entrance of the courtyard.

Chapter 233 He’s Getting Engaged to Someone Else?

As he struggled, Jordan’s drawing board dropped to the ground with a loud crash.

“Ah...” Leaning on Alexander’s shoulder, the little boy let out huge sobs, attracting the sympathy of the servants in the courtyard.

As she couldn’t bear it any longer, Hannah plucked up her courage and quickly ran over to block Alexander’s path.

“Where are you bringing Jordan?”

The crisp voice sounded from the mouth of a thirteen-year-old girl. Her bravery was certainly praiseworthy.

Alexander shot her a look. “Move aside.”

Hannah gritted her teeth. “I’m your aunt.”

Things turned for the worse as soon as she mentioned this. Alexander’s expression turned as black as coal. “Are you looking for trouble, Hannah?”

Upon hearing this, Hannah immediately lost her courage and stepped aside while mumbling, “I was just joking. You can carry on your way. I was joking.”

Not bothering to spare her another glance, Alexander strode away.

Looking at the cracked drawing board on the floor, Hannah felt a little glum. When she bent down to pick it up, she heard the servants whispering in the corridor.

“I heard that Old Master Duncan intends to get Young Master Alexander engaged to Miss Lewis.”

“Huh? Didn’t they introduce Miss Hunter to their friends and family already?”

“Didn’t a lot of bad things befall the Hunters recently? Besides, it seems like the young master has broken up with Miss Hunter. Also, didn’t you hear? Old Master Duncan has handed the company over to Young Master James. If Young Master Alexander doesn’t marry Miss Lewis, what would happen to his career?”

“You’re right. Men value their careers, and this is Young Master Alexander we’re talking about.”

Hannah heard the servants’ gossip word for word. She picked up the drawing board, then disappeared into her room. Taking out her notebook, she dialed a number and made a phone call.

“Hello? Tina, it’s me. Is your mom there?”

“No, I’m not looking for her. I’ll just tell you. Ask your mother to give Alexander a chance; otherwise, she’ll lose him really soon.”

After hanging up the phone, melancholy overcame her.

She was a nobody among the Duncans. Although on paper she was Scott’s daughter, she was still just an adopted child. After the age of eighteen, she would no longer be under his care.

She may be young, but she had previously stayed at an orphanage, so she knew how to assess the risks in her surroundings.

Scott was old, which meant that he didn’t have much time left to look after her. In the future, Alexander was bound to be the patriarch of the Duncan family. She was incapable of getting close to him, so in times like this, her future lay in the hands of the lady of the Duncan household.

She liked Courtney’s gentle temper, and she got along especially well with her daughter. Compared to the young lady of the Lewis family who only knew how to act spoiled, Courtney marrying into the

Duncan family was obviously the better choice for Hannah. Therefore, she stood on the same side as Tina.

However, Tina's behavior on the phone just now was unlike what she had anticipated. Has that little girl really just changed like that?

It was now noon.

For the past two days, Tina didn't go to school because she had caught a cold.

After she was done cooking, Courtney called her out to eat, only to see her walk out with a sullen expression.

"What's wrong? Are you feeling uncomfortable?" Courtney touched her forehead on instinct. "There's no fever."

Stretching out her arms, Tina spoke in a childish voice that was made stuffy by the cold. "Hug me."

This made Courtney laugh. "Are you pouting? Are you being like this because you're sick? Or is it because I haven't spent time with you for too long?"

Tina sniffled, looking as if she was sulking.

After Courtney picked her up, she laid her head on her mother's shoulders. "Mommy, if you don't marry Mr. Alexander, will Jordan still be able to come and be with us?"

Patting her back, Courtney said, "Why are you asking this all of a sudden? Mommy will think of a way."

"Weren't we fine without Jordan? Mommy, I don't want to stay here anymore. Can we go back to America?"

Tina's words caused Courtney to fall silent for a brief moment. "What's wrong, sweetheart?" She frowned. "Isn't it good here?"

"It's not." Tina sniffled once more. "The people here aren't nice at all; they all bully Mommy. You finally found someone, but he turned out to be a big baddie."

Courtney froze. Releasing Tina from her embrace, she looked at her daughter and asked, "What do you mean 'big baddie'?"

Talking in low mutters, Tina recounted the details of Hannah's phone call. "He said that he was going to marry you, so why is he suddenly engaged to someone else? He's so rotten, Mommy. The people here aren't nice. Let's go back to America. It's better for you to be with Daddy."

"Did you say that he's engaged to someone else?" Courtney was a little baffled. "With whom?"

"That lady, Miss Lewis." Tina then began to rant angrily, "She isn't even as pretty as you. She's all grown up, but all she does is act spoiled. Jordan and I don't like her."

She had described it in vivid detail, and the phone call was from Hannah, so Courtney believed that it was all true.

Mikayla and Alexander were childhood sweethearts. If Alexander didn't lie to her and truly regarded her as just a sister, then there must be no other person in this world that Alexander would be willing to marry.

Mikayla was considered a potential spouse, and Courtney was unsure if she was too.

Even if she was, it was a thing of the past.

The situation had already turned into the mess that it was today. The way they could get closure in their relationship was already a problem, let alone restarting her relationship with him and trying to properly develop it. She couldn't accept his distrust, but she couldn't get herself to be completely honest with him. It was truly a dilemma.

Whatever the case, the relationship shouldn't have started in the first place. A complex expression was painted on Courtney's face. "When Mommy gets custody of Jordan, I'll bring you both to America, okay?"

Tina nodded dully, still immersed in the tragic news that the Mr. Alexander that she respected and loved was going to marry someone else. She was so sad that she couldn't extract herself from those thoughts.

She was angry as well, and she had the urge to tell Jordan that he should get himself a new father too, just like she did.

Courtney's company, Citron Apparel, was operating well, garnering both online and offline sales at the same time. Since its opening, a total of three series of clothing had been introduced, and they were sold out each time.

As the saying went, 'the bird that takes the lead, takes the bullet'. When a company was progressing well, they were bound to face competition from people of the same industry as well as brand infringement issues.

When Courtney's assistant delivered the latest batch of clothing samples from Ivory Apparel and Designs to her, she was discussing with Bill about attending a fashion magazine reception in Shanghai.

"President Hunter, everything about this dress from Ivory Apparel and Designs—from the colors to the design—is nearly identical to the 'Spring and Autumn' set from our second release. The only change they made was giving it a boat neck. It's just a plain copycat of our product."

Taking the comparison chart from her, Courtney frowned. "Where's our lawyer? We should get our lawyer to handle this."

"It's no use." Bill didn't even look at the chart, but his voice was calm. "Imitation in fashion has always been a problem. This is just how the industry works. When a company comes up with a new product that sells well, there will soon be countless imitations. Filing lawsuits won't work, and it'll just be a waste of time."

"But, we can't just ignore it, right?" Courtney's frown deepened. "Do we just let them copy us?"

"Unless you're willing to make things ugly and offend them." Bill shot her a knowing glance. "Ivory Apparel and Designs belongs to Sunhill Enterprise."

Chapter 234 Two Rivals See Red the Moment They Meet

Courtney was taken by surprise. "They belong to Sunhill?"

"Yes." Bill turned around and began to sketch down some designs on the blackboard. "In the early years, Sunhill Enterprise's clothing company was involved in a scandal. After suffering damage to its reputation, the entire clothing company went bankrupt and was liquidated. Later, they wanted to join the clothing industry again, but the impact of the previous damage was still fresh, so they could only give the company a name that seemed to have nothing to do with Sunhill."

If they thought about it, it was just a way to clear the air and confuse the public.

Usually, most people wouldn't think to find out which company was the main source of the product they were buying. Sunhill Enterprise had used this practice to their advantage and managed to form a new clothing company.

This thought didn't even cross Courtney's mind. If it wasn't for Bill, she would have thought that the company called Ivory Apparel and Designs was just another incompetent business.

"Even if they're under Sunhill, we still have to report them. At the very least, we must let them know that we're not someone to be messed with," Courtney said with a frown.

So what if the matter was related to Alexander? She found it ridiculous that a company as dignified as Sunhill Enterprise would profit off such an unseemly clothing company.

Bill gave a noncommittal raise of his eyebrow. "It's up to you. We won't be producing the clothes from the previous season anymore anyway. If they want to copy, they can only copy the outdated outfits."

Obviously, Bill didn't bother with these imitations. After all, elites didn't busy themselves with mundane affairs. It was normal for him to be unwilling to argue with others about such trivialities.

Courtney, on the other hand, could never turn a blind eye to misconduct, so she ordered her assistant to arrange for a commercial lawyer to send a letter of demand to the companies that imitated their creations, including Ivory Apparel and Designs.

On Friday night, Courtney flew to Shanghai to attend a business banquet.

Her purpose was clear. Among those who attended the reception, the general manager of Sakura Group's eastern branch was one of them. Sakura Group wanted to order a batch of staff uniforms, and this man was responsible for this matter. If her efforts were successful, she would be walking away with an order worth one hundred million. It would be a great help to Citron Apparel's early stages in the market.

At the cocktail party, the elites of Shanghai and Melrose City's clothing companies could be seen at every corner.

Courtney got to know about the party through Leila Marshall, the chief editor of Shanghai's beauty and fashion magazine, VV. Elijah had introduced her to Courtney before he left Melrose City.

Leila was an utterly straightforward lady. The manner in which she spoke and acted was as swift as the wind. "Mr. Graham has helped me multiple times in the past. I knew that he was married, but I didn't expect his wife to be so young."

Courtney smiled and went along with her, not elaborating on her relationship with Elijah.

There was no need to explain much about her and Elijah's situation to irrelevant parties, and it was hard to clarify anyway.

Leila brought her around the party and got her acquainted with a number of other guests before bringing her to Dominic Willis, the general manager of Sakura Group.

"President Willis, this is President Hunter of Citron Apparel that I told you about on the phone."

Courtney stretched out her hand. "Nice to meet you, President Willis."

"Nice to meet you too." Dominic politely shook her hand, appearing completely at ease.

Evidently, Leila had given him a brief introduction of Courtney's company prior to the banquet; otherwise, he would have been asking about why he had never heard of Citron Apparel before.

"President Willis, it's a little noisy here. Why don't we go over there to have a chat?" Courtney took the initiative to strike up a conversation with Dominic. She was a businesswoman after all, and no one came to the reception looking to relax. They were all here to engage in business interactions, so she might as well be more direct.

Dominic briskly agreed.

With Leila tagging along, the three of them moved to the lounge of the banquet hall.

At a corner in the banquet hall, a lithe figure holding a champagne glass was watching Courtney, seemingly lost in thought. Her eyes were sparkling with a dark gleam.

"Hey there, pretty lady. What are you doing here all alone? Don't you have anyone to accompany you?" A man's voice sounded from beside her.

Britney cast the man a sideways glance.

The voice belonged to Tobias Crane, Shanghai's famous playboy. He had been pursuing her for more than two years now, and he was extremely willing to spend money on her. But, he always had women around him, and she was still pining for Alexander, so she never really gave him a second thought.

If anything, he was just a diversion for when she was bored.

As a matter of fact, she was just feeling bored when he approached her. He was the one who invited her to tonight's reception, and it just so happened that she was in Shanghai shooting an advertisement. She had some spare time, and she was bored, so she agreed to attend.

"That's right." Britney laughed. "Someone invited me to be his guest but ditched me as soon as the party started to flirt with other girls. Doesn't that leave me without a companion?"

“Whoever it is, he must be blind. How could there be anyone at this party more attractive than you?” Tobias was a true sweet talker; he didn’t even hesitate to insult himself.

Playing along, Britney chuckled, then pointed with her delicate finger. “There; that woman over there is rather good-looking. Her beauty is comparable to mine.”

“How could that be?” Tobias said while casually looking in the direction she was pointing at. When he caught sight of Courtney, he couldn’t tear his eyes away from her.

If Britney was an ice cube, then the woman standing in the distance dressed in a burgundy halter neck evening gown was a ball of fire. Her long, wavy hair hung loosely across her shoulders, and the young woman’s mature charm carried with it a rare sense of purity.

Who’s this rare beauty?

Tobias figured that there was an eighty percent chance this woman was one of the boss’ mistress.

“Can’t take your eyes off of her, can you, Mr. Crane?” Britney teased from beside him, but her eyes glinted darker. “If you like her, judging from your charm, it shouldn’t be a problem to take her to bed tonight, right?”

Coming back to his senses, Tobias shook his head. “Forget it. I’m not walking into the lion’s den; I’m not looking for trouble. That’s Sakura Group’s general manager, Dominic Willis. I don’t have the guts to mess with his girl.”

“I don’t think that’s the case,” Britney said, acting doubtful. “That woman is Courtney Hunter. I know her. She came with Leila Marshall, the chief editor of VV. It looks like Leila is making business introductions. I don’t think Courtney has ever met President Willis prior to this.”

“Really? Business? What business?”

“A clothing company that she just started. Courtney is Alexander’s ex-girlfriend. She started her business after they broke up. It seems like she has rather good connections; she’ll be a good match for a nobleman like you.”

Tobias liked the sound of this, and he couldn’t help but look at Courtney a couple more times.

“You said that she’s Alexander’s ex-girlfriend, right? Aren’t you his ex as well? It’s normal for rivals to see red the moment they meet. Do you want me to take revenge for you?”

“I guess it’s out of the question.” Britney took a lazy sip of her champagne. “Alexander and I haven’t had any contact in a long time. As for Courtney, I had some grudges against her last time. But, rather than taking revenge, I’m just hoping that you can have a good time tonight.”

Tobias enjoyed being flattered, and Britney’s words were particularly pleasant to his ears. He was bursting with joy. “Don’t worry, Britney. Since you’re being so thoughtful of me, while I enjoy myself tonight, I’ll also punish her on your behalf.”

Looking at Tobias' perverted smile, Britney felt utterly revolted and cursed him inwardly, but she kept a warm smile on her face, appearing highly respectful. "Mr. Crane, from what I know about Courtney, you can't approach her too directly. You have to..."

After listening to Britney's suggestion, Tobias nodded thoughtfully. "That's not a bad idea. If this works out, I'll get you whatever you want, Britney. Just say the word."

Britney laughed. "Isn't that what you've always been doing?"

As she watched Tobias leave, she emptied her champagne glass in one gulp, a sinister gleam shining in her eyes. She had been feeling a little dejected lately, so it was entertaining to finally have something to do.

Just as she was setting down her champagne glass, a familiar voice spoke from behind her. "Miss Price, it's been a while."

Britney's back stiffened. As soon as she turned around and saw the man in the suit behind her, her expression changed. "What are you doing here?"

"Should I not be here?" As usual, the man's gentle expression was mixed with a hint of malice. "It seems that your schedule has been so full lately that you're not even aware of Melrose City's current affairs, Miss Price. The tides have turned, didn't you hear?"

Britney's face hardened. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"My new name card. Keep in touch?"

A golden card was handed to Britney; the gilded words on it were particularly eye-catching. She couldn't help but read the words aloud. "CEO of Sunhill Enterprise, James Duncan... You..."

"I may not be talented, but after being gone for three years, I'm rising again."

James' eyes twinkled coldly. "I must say; you seem quite desperate now, Miss Price. Even an unworthy playboy like Tobias has caught your eye?"

Britney paled visibly upon hearing this. "He's just a pastime."

"Are you free to talk somewhere else?" The corners of James' lips curled up into a smile, but there was a certain sharpness hidden beneath his tenderness that made it hard for Britney to refuse his offer.

Her fists were clenched, but she managed to force out a smile. "Of course. It's been a long time, after all."

Meanwhile, under the moonlit sky, a silver MPV came to a stop in front of the hotel entrance. Josh got out of the car and opened the door.

"President Duncan, you don't usually attend small business parties like these, so why did you decide to come this time?"

"Isn't James here?" Alexander tidied his cuffs; his expression was frosty. "He has already gotten the position of his dreams, and yet he's here attending this small-scale cocktail party. Why do you think that is?"

Josh was puzzled. "Why?"

"The scale of the company's development is too large. The more distantly related the subsidiary, the easier it is to be overlooked and not be controlled by the headquarters. Why do you think James got the position of CEO so easily this time?"

"Isn't it because he has Old Master Duncan's support?"

"Grandpa gave him the position, but he has to have the capabilities to perform."

With Alexander giving his mind a little nudge, Josh finally understood his meaning. His eyes widened as if he had just been enlightened. "Are you saying that James has always been in contact with the company's subsidiaries?"

No response came from Alexander as the two of them arrived at the banquet hall.

Although it was just a cocktail party for Shanghai and Melrose City's clothing companies, it wasn't just a simple gathering, as the attendees consisted of a variety of people.

As soon as they entered, they bumped into several acquaintances.

While Alexander exchanged pleasantries with the other guests, his eyes signaled for Josh to look for James.

"President Duncan, I didn't expect you to attend our small reception. It's truly a great honor." The head of the organizing team came over to greet him with a fake smile plastered on his face.

Everyone in the industry knew that Alexander was no longer the president of Sunhill Enterprise. If it wasn't because he received the invitation one month before he left the company, he might not be able to attend the party now.

With a cold expression, he sipped his wine and was done with the greetings. He began to wander aimlessly around the banquet hall, and he barely took two steps before he caught sight of a familiar figure. The figure dressed in burgundy stood out like a delicate rose at the reception, and she was currently chatting with someone at the lounge not far from where he was.

Alexander's eyes darkened.

After giving it some thought, he figured that it wasn't hard to imagine why she was present.

Courtney, however, was completely unaware that a few people had their eyes on her. With great enthusiasm, she introduced Dominic to Citron Apparel's team of designers and talked about their performance since they launched.

With Leila facilitating the interaction, their conversation went smoothly. Although Citron Apparel wasn't very well-known in the industry, they were still a decades-old enterprise, so their roots ran deep. They may have once been a subsidiary of the Hunter Group, but now, they had nothing to do with them whatsoever.

Leila was clever, and she knew how to play to Citron Apparel's strengths. Judging from the look on Dominic's face, there was an eighty to ninety percent chance that they had secured the deal.

“President Willis, if you have time, do come and check out Citron Apparel. You can consider it an on-site inspection to see if what I said is true.”

Courtney’s generosity brought a smile to Dominic’s face. “President Hunter, you don’t seem like someone who’s just starting out in business. My daughter has been training with me for several years, but she’s still a little timid. You’re much better at talking and doing things than my daughter is.”

You flatter me, President Willis,” Courtney said with a modest smile. “We’ll end it here, then. I’m sure you have many other businesses to attend to tonight, so we won’t bother you any longer.”

After exchanging a few polite remarks, Dominic left.

Courtney breathed out a sigh of relief. “Thank you, Leila.”

“You’re welcome.” Glancing at the time, Leila said, “I still have some matters to handle. After this, you can arrange for someone to communicate with President Willis. Come find me if you have any questions.”

“All right.”

Standing up to see Leila off, Courtney took a glass of juice from a waiter’s tray. After taking a sip, she looked up, and her eyes met with a familiar gaze.

She couldn’t believe that she actually ran into Alexander here.

From somewhere not far away, someone was walking toward her with a glass of wine in hand. Alexander’s gaze was fixed on her, showing no intention of looking away. Yet, she couldn’t see any emotion in those eyes; he was just watching her.

Courtney felt her legs disobeying her commands as she couldn’t help but take a step forward.

“President Hunter of Citron Apparel?” A figure came to stand in front of her, blocking her way and obstructing her view.

Courtney was taken by surprise. When she recovered, she saw that a young man wearing a royal blue suit was blocking her; the gaudy color of his suit was so piercing that it made her feel restless.

For a moment, she couldn’t recall who he was. “You are?”

“Allow me to introduce myself. I’m Tobias Crane, vice president of Amethyst Group.” Tobias took a shiny golden card out from his business card holder and handed it to her. “I noticed you as soon as you walked in just now. You seem to be well acquainted with President Willis of Sakura Group. Do you two know each other?”

Courtney did not wish to deal with this young man who was clearly a good-for-nothing. She gave a brief nod. “I don’t know him well; we just met. Please excuse me; I have something to do over there.”

Tobias smiled. “Don’t worry. You may not be familiar with President Willis, but my father is close with him. If you’re looking for a collaboration, I can help you pull some strings. I’m sure Mr. Willis would do me this favor.”