

Mr. Chairman's Devious Wife by Brey Mitchylle

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Chapter 21

“Miss, the Annual Shareholder’s meeting will be on Friday. Are we not going to do anything about this?” Miss Amores frowned as she handed the tablet to Sofia. It had been a day since the accusations started. A day since people started bashing her because of this bullying issue.

By now, they had already received a few calls from people working with LH Group and LH Design; most of them were asking about the bullying issue. Many reporters tried to reach her, but she simply declined all invitations for an interview to clarify the situation.

Right now, she had told them that she was talking to her legal counsel about the matter and decided not to leave her office.

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“No need,” she smiled. She was waiting for the final move. The thing that was supposed to kill her career.

Miss Amores nodded. “How about the chairman’s **calls?**” she asked.

“Don’t answer them,” Sofia smiled. She knew that this **was** a deliberate **plan** that was supposed to make her panic, and when she didn’t, the calls started coming.

Perhaps whoever did this thought she would waste her time calling them, asking for support. And she would have done so if she did not know what those people had done.

She looked at her phone. There was another call from Daniel, but since she didn’t answer it, he quickly left a voice message and sent her another

message.

She had barred them from entering the office, and by now, they must have realized that something was wrong—something was terribly wrong.

“Miss, there are already fans of Miss Caroline outside... they are currently disrupting our employees.”

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“Call the police,” Sofia said. She would not release those photos if she was not confident that she could handle everything that they would throw at her.

LH GROUP MAIN OFFICE

“She is still not answering any of our **calls**. We received news that Miss. Lockhart did not leave the company last night. She had barred her family, even Mr. Daniel Beaumont from the building,” Lawrence’s secretary Min said. “Director shall we-“

“There is no need to call her again. I will personally visit the building,” Lawrence said. Despite everything, he still had a smile on his face. “Cancel all my meetings today. It is time that we play the role of a caring father.”

“But our meeting today is with the Beaumont Empire...”

“They will understand,” Lawrence said.

“Yes, Director.” Min nodded.

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“Ah... bring the flowers that she likes the most. Perhaps some cake too.”

“Yes, Director.” Min nodded.

Soon enough, the two of them were already outside of LH Design. Seeing the people outside of the building, most of them were holding some sort of large signs about bullying. There were also some police and obviously, the media.

Lawrence sneered. He never thought that Sofia would not answer any of his calls. However, Sofia had always been independent in everything that she did.

She was always firm with her decisions—firm yet a little soft when it comes to her family.

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“Min?” he called out. “You already know what to do.”

“Yes, Director.”

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The moment Lawrence walked out of the **car**, flashes of the camera immediately welcomed him.

“Mr. Lockhart, what can you say about the bullying issue?”

“Mr. Lockhart, is it true that your own daughter had been bullied by Miss Lockhart?”

“Mr. Lockhart, say something for Caroline.”

“Mr. Lockhart, **is** it true that Miss Lockhart had stopped producers and directors from hiring Miss Caroline?”

“Mr. Lockhart-

“Mr. Lockhart-

Lawrence’s expression changed when he heard those words. He stopped in his tracks and immediately looked **at** the reporters. “Please stop spreading fake news without verifying everything. I trust that the media knows how to do their job.”

As expected, his words immediately caused more clamor from the reporters. However, Lawrence took this opportunity to walk past them and into the entrance of

LH Designs. The security did not dare stop him as he walked inside and into the elevator. Soon enough, he was already standing outside of Sofia’s office.

However, Lawrence did not have to knock as the door suddenly opened, revealing Miss Amores’s smiling face.

“Chairman, please come in... Miss Lockhart is waiting for you.”

Lawrence said nothing. He walked inside and found Sofia standing next to

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her table. She was staring through the wall-to-ceiling glass and into the people outside of the building.

“You have not answered any of my calls,” Lawrence removed his coat and gave it to Min who followed inside.

“Did you know?” Sofia asked.

“Know what?”

“That her fans would suddenly make up some crazy stories about bullying?” Sofia slowly turned towards him.

“Isn’t this **just** some ants clamoring for some attention?” Mr. Lawrence stood next to Sofia. He shoved his hands into his pockets and looked down. “Soon the chatter will die.”

“Yet it will ruin my reputation,” Sofia said.

“How could they ruin the reputation of a Lockhart?” Lawrence said. “We all know the bullying is not true. It was Charlotte who wanted to change her name because she did not want to associate with us. She was the one who wanted to build her own brand.”

Sofia said nothing.

“You are upset,” Lawrence stated.

Again, Sofia said nothing in response.

“I understand why you would feel this way. After all, the meeting is going to happen in just a few days.” Lawrence reminded her. It was a subtle dig, a warning. He was giving her two ways.

First, she could maintain her silence and let it all pass. People forget, and since she was not a public figure, no one would care about her name- except for the shareholders.

Second, she could say something, anything. She could deny the issue, clarify things, or worse make Charlotte evil and reveal that Charlotte changed her own name because she wanted to be independent from the Lockharts. Then Lawrence would release another devastating blow that would not only tarnish Sofia's reputation but ruin her career.

The way Lawrence saw it, this was a war that Sofia could not win.

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"You wanted me to keep my mouth shut?" Sofia suddenly turned towards him. Then she smiled. "Father, do you really want them to ruin my reputation because of unfounded accusations?" she asked.

"The lawyers will handle everything. I have already asked the IT department to track the ones who made the accusations online," Lawrence said. He had expected this reaction from her.

"So, you simply wanted me not to say a word..." Sofia muttered.

"At the end of the day, everything is still up to you."

"You are not giving me that many choices," Sofia smiled.

Lawrence pursed his lips. Sofia was not dumb. She probably knew that she did not have that many options. However, Lawrence **was** confident that she would only choose the first option **as** she truly cared for Charlotte. Still, Lawrence wanted her to choose the second option.

"However, that will affect how the shareholders view your name. With the Annual shareholder's meeting happening in just a few days, it is too risky to let this issue continue," Lawrence spoke. Just as he expected, Sofia's gaze shook.

"I am not a public figure..." Sofia said.

“This issue will affect the clothes that you design. Soon enough, someone could spark something and tell everyone else to boycott your clothes and the brand itself; we cannot let that happen,” Lawrence said: “You can do what you want. I am simply trying to tell you the possible outcome of your move.”

“If I say something, some people might start another rumor about my sister,” Sofia frowned. “I know how hard Charlotte had worked for her career. I cannot let a rumor ruin her.”

Lawrence was pleased to hear that answer. Either way, he can still release what he has on her. However, it might not have the effect that he wanted. It was said but... it is what it is.

The effect would still be the same.

“Very well... I am giving you the time to decide.” Lawrence said. “I will stand with you no matter what.” Seeing Sofia’s teary eyes, Lawrence patted her shoulder before he took his coat and left the office. He always knew that Sofia would be **soft** against Charlotte, so Lawrence chose to use Charlotte for his schemes.

At first, Charlotte did not want to do it, but soon, she was convinced that Lawrence was only doing this for her own good.

However, the moment he left the office, Sofia’s sad expression vanished. She stared at the now-closed door for a few seconds before turning her attention towards the people downstairs.

Right now, she was certain that Lawrence was waiting for her to issue a statement, and say something about this matter. Then he would release the plagiarism case against Sofia.

Lawrence was really creative with his plans so far and Sofia could not help but applaud the man’s efforts.

If Sofia had been alone, she would have easily fallen into his traps, but she wasn’t. She balled her hands into two tight fists **as** she thought about the email that Alexander just sent her. Slowly she turned towards her laptop and read the email for the second time.

Attached to it was the same information that Karina was able to secure a few days ago. It was about Doctor Mulach and his past stint in South East Asia. However, this was more detailed; it included a lot of things that Karina had missed, like sealed cases in Indonesia.

“Lawrence...” Sofia gritted her teeth. Lawrence had actually worked with a

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murderer and asked this very same murderer to take care of her mother?

How could he be so heartless?

Sofia’s mother loved him. She – worshiped him!

Eunice Lockhart had given Lawrence everything that he could ever ask for, and yet he would do something like this?

That man deserves to rot in the deepest part of hell!

“Miss, the Chairman has already left,” Miss Amores said.

Sofia turned her attention to her secretary. Alexander told her that Miss Amores should be clean. However, she had asked Karina to do a thorough background check. So far, Karina has not found anything that would tie Miss Amores to Lawrence. The same cannot be said for the rest of Sofia’s

team.

Lawrence had

a few people on his payroll. One of them is Mrs. Phelps, the current Production Manager. Another one is working on HR. Her driver should be one of those people, but she already fired him. From her initial investigation, Mrs. Phelps had given some of her designs to Lawrence. Soon, these designs would be used in the plagiarism issue.

To try and cover up her tracks, she would openly talk to Mr. Oh about production among other things. She would then use this meeting as a way to prove her innocence- after all, if she was a spy, then she would not openly talk to Mr. Oh and *try* to hide her tracks.

Right now, Sofia was still trying to understand the reason why Mrs. Phelps thought this would work. There should be another reason why she had been openly talking to Mr.

Oh sadly, Sofia does not have a way to read the woman's mind.

Still, she was thankful that she was able to trace some leaks. This prompted her to be very careful about her future designs and find out

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who she could and could not trust.

"I am going to break up with Daniel..." Sofia said, her voice almost like a whisper.

"Miss?" Miss Amores had a surprised look on her face. It was as if half of her was not expecting her to suddenly open up about her love life while the other half could not believe what she just heard. Miss Amores

awkwardly stared at her. "Do- Do you need me to get some more wine?"

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Sofia blinked. "No. Thank you. I only told you this because I don't want him in the building."

"I know what to do," Miss Amores said. She nodded, her face bobbing up and down as if she *just* thought of something important. Then she promptly excused herself, leaving Sofia alone inside the room.

A sigh escaped Sofia's lips.

If Miss Amores was indeed Lawrence's spy, then... she could expect a few phone calls from Charlotte and maybe even from Daniel very soon. At the moment, those two wanted her to give her shares to Daniel, and that would not happen if she broke up with him.

So, Sofia waited and waited but did not receive a call from Daniel or from Charlotte. Aside from a text from Charlotte asking her if she wanted her to clarify the issue and Daniel asking her if she was alright, Sofia did not receive anything else.

However, this only made her more suspicious. The answer to her: confusion only arrived hours later when she was enjoying a glass of wine at home.

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Sofia stared at the news on the tablet. Alexander had warned her that this would happen, but reading the news was enough to disturb her.

[Breaking: LH DESIGNS Interim CEO Sofia Lockhart Faces Allegations of Bullying and Design Theft]

[Controversy Surrounds LH GROUP: Interim CEO Sofia Lockhart Under Fire for Alleged Design Theft and Bullying]

[LH DESIGNS in Turmoil: Interim CEO Sofia Lockhart Faces Accusations of Bullying and Intellectual Property Theft]

[Exclusive Report! LH GROUP's Sofia Lockhart Accused of Design Plagiarism and Workplace Bullying]

[LH DESIGNS Interim CEO Sofia Lockhart Grapples with Allegations of Bullying and Design Theft]

[Sofia Lockhart, Interim CEO of LH GROUP, Faces Backlash Over Design Plagiarism and Workplace Bullying]

[Design Scandal Rocks LH DESIGNS: CEO Sofia Lockhart Accused of Bullying and Plagiarism]

[LH GROUP Shaken by Scandal: Sofia Lockhart, Interim CEO, Accused of Stealing Designs and Workplace Bullying]

[Breaking News: LH DESIGNS CEO Sofia Lockhart Entangled in Allegations of Design Plagiarism and Bullying]

She turned her tablet off and stared at the wine on the table, then towards the man sitting opposite her. Before she could say a single word, her phone started ringing. It was Daniel.

She answered it but chose not to say a word.

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“Where are you? Why aren’t you answering the door?” Daniel’s voice reverberated against her ears. “I know you are inside. Give me the password; let me in.”

“Do you believe the news?” Sofia asked.

“What are you talking about?” Daniel asked. “Why would I believe something that stupid?”

Sofia said nothing.

“Now open the door. I brought food... your favorite.”

Still, Sofia said nothing. Daniel had **always** been the first one who would comfort her in times like this. Who would have thought that he was only doing this because of her shares?

A part of her wanted to ask him if any of it was real but ended up sighing. “Please leave. I need to finish some designs. I will talk to you tomorrow.”

“Babe-

” Daniel tried to say a few more words, but Sofia ruthlessly ended the call without waiting for his response.

“He is outside,” Sofia said. “I believe it is time that I change residence.” She glanced at Alexander, who sat at ease on her couch. His legs were casually propped up on the couch, dressed in gray sweatpants, and a loose robe draped over his upper body. Folders and his tablet lay casually on the coffee table.

The man was really too good at treating this as his own home,

“Josef bought it... I hope you do not mind?” he uttered when he noticed her staring at her robe.

She shook her head.

“I have already prepared the guest room for you. The lock combination is naturally our wedding anniversary.”

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“...” Sofia did not know if she would take that word seriously.

“I am serious.”

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...” Was it really the date of their wedding? She looked at him in disbelief.

Seeing this, he chuckled. “You should probably call that father of yours, no?”

Sofia shrugged. Logically, she should **call** that man to avoid suspicion. However, she was not going to do that now. Instead of picking up her phone, she poured some more wine into her glass. Twirling the glass, she watched as the velvety scarlet liquid moved, reflecting the fireplace in her living room.

“Thank you,” she uttered after a few minutes of silence.

“Thank you?”

“I know you are busy.” It was not a coincidence that he immediately arrived just a few minutes after her arrival. He must have canceled a few meetings just to come here. Perhaps, he already knew that Lawrence would release the news today, so he chose to accompany her.

“Are you certain you would be alright?” he asked, lifting an eyebrow. “I could accompany you to your bedroom if that would make you feel better.”

Unable to stop herself, she smiled. “Right...” Who would have thought that the Chairman of Beaumont Empire had a hobby of making people smile? She never thought that this would be possible—not even once.

“Why are you planning to leave that jerk?” he asked.

“Soon...” she answered almost immediately. Then she narrowed her eyes on him. “Is something the matter?” She had actually forgotten to ask his feelings about everything.

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“As your husband, knowing that you have a boyfriend is naturally making me uncomfortable,” he said. “Besides, Aunt has been wanting to meet with you again. She wanted to talk about the wedding.”

“The wedding?”

“I wanted one for you, for us.” he chuckled. “She was excited when I told her perhaps she could help you plan it.” He leaned towards her, took her empty wine glass, poured some wine into it, and finished it before Sofia could say another word.

“A wedding for me?” Sofia frowned. She thought about that when she signed those papers but didn’t delve deeper into the matter as she was busy with the company.

“You do not want one?”

“No, I-

“This was The Jenny Thomas! She was well known for her fashion sense and elegant style! Who wouldn’t want her to plan a wedding for them? If anything, she did not know what to say.

For some reason, she could only feel warmth in her heart. She wanted to tell him how excited she was, but once again, her phone vibrated, interrupting the conversation between them.

She looked at it. “It’s Lawrence...” Sofia said. She quickly answered it. “Father?”

“Have you seen the news?” Lawrence asked. Sofia chose not to answer for a few seconds before she said. “Hmmm... I did.”

“Don’t worry, I already asked our team to issue a statement about this matter. For security purposes, it would be best if you come back to the mansion. I have already sent people to get you. You-”

“No...” Sofia interrupted him.

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“Pardon?”

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“I will not be coming back to the mansion,” Sofia said, her tone suddenly changed when she realized what this man was trying to do. Just weeks before her birthday, a scandal like this was made to tarnish her name and reputation. On the outside, the scandal seemed simple. However, after hearing Lawrence’s words, she was certain that this man was brewing something else.

He wanted to take advantage of this issue to let her go back home and live in the same house as him!

How could Sofia not know that this man must be planning to control her every move just before her birthday!

He did not want her investigating things or talking to reporters. He would then use this reason to record all of her calls and the people that she would be seeing.

If she was right, he would use this opportunity to completely isolate her from the outside world under the pretense of keeping her safe from the one who had been targeting her! This was all a trap!

She met Alexander’s cold gaze, and she involuntarily shivered.

If she had not met Alexander then... she would have fallen into this trap!

Lawrence would have easily convinced her to give her shares to Daniel, and Charlotte would be with her as she signed those papers.

It was too cruel—they are too cruel.

“What are you talking about? You are alone. This scandal will—”

“I have plans. There is no need to concern yourself with this matter, Father. I will not let this go.”

There was a brief silence on the other line, so she added, “The Annual

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Shareholders meeting is coming. Father. I apologize for making you worry, but there is no need to concern yourself with matters like this. I am going to handle this.”

“Sofia...”

“I know you are worried about me.”

“I promised your mother that I would take care of you.”

“And you did...” Sofia’s voice softened. “However, there are things that I need to face on my own.” She forced her anger down. “I can assure you, father. I will get to the bottom of this and make those who wanted to tarnish my name... suffer.”

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“Workplace bullying, in general, is not only bad for LH DESIGNS but can easily affect LH Group,” Mr.

Randy Thompson, the legal counsel of LH GROUP, let out a sigh. “I would advise Miss Lockhart to avoid the media for now. We are going to do our best to take care of things. We have already followed all the proper protocols **in case** something like this happens, and we are confident that we can resolve this matter soon. Please, Miss Lockhart, the best possible thing you can do now is to **stay** inside this mansion where you are **safe**, surrounded by your family.”

“Is this the reason why you asked me to come?” Sofia looked at Lawrence, who was silently sitting next to Mr. Thompson. “I thought we already talked about this.”

Since she discovered **that** these people had been fooling her for years, this **was** the first time that she agreed to come to where Lawrence and her mother used to live—the very same house that contains all the memories she had growing up.

In the past, she frequented this house despite living on her own. She shared meals with Lawrence and her mother and would sometimes spend the night here.

However, since she discovered their betrayal, she had avoided this place like a plague. She did not want to recall her past. It would only remind her that she was but a fool—a gullible fool.

She couldn’t help but look around the meeting room. The room was only one of the many rooms inside this mansion. However, unlike most rooms, this one had a cozy vibe—not too big, not too small.

A decent-sized rectangular table sat in the middle, where Sofia accidentally bumped her head once trying to surprise her mom. It doubled as a library and a meeting spot, filled with familiar bookshelves lining the walls.

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The place smelled a bit like old books and memories—the kind Sofia used to cherish before discovering the betrayal.

Large windows let in enough light to brighten the room, and heavy curtains hung by the sides. The walls were adorned with some classic paintings, nothing too flashy.

The floor was covered in a soft rug, and a couple of comfortable chairs were scattered around the table. It was a room that witnessed countless conversations and shared meals, but now it felt different, tainted by the past she wanted to forget.

“I want you to hear the thoughts of an expert about this matter,” Lawrence calmly spoke. “I know you wanted to prove your capability, but I promised your mother that I would take care of you. As your father, I would never let those people go. Mr. Thompson is the head of the legal counsel, and **he** is working with our PR team on a statement in an hour. Is that right, Mr. Thompson?”

“Yes. Please listen to the chairman Miss Lockhart. Right now, I would suggest that you stay inside this mansion. We simply cannot risk it.”

“I already found a place to stay,” Sofia calmly spoke. She leaned back and met Lawrence’s gaze. “Everyone knew that I grew up in this mansion. If someone truly wanted to harm me, then this would be the first place *that* they are going to infiltrate.”

“I would never let any harm-”

“Father,” Sofia interrupted Lawrence. She fought the urge to start puking. How could she call this man father? Right now, she could only blame herself for everything.

If she had not been too complacent, then perhaps she would have noticed something amiss and told her mother. Her mother would have listened to Sofia and avoided this man.

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“I do not want to stay here,” she uttered.

“Leave us,” Lawrence said.

Mr. Thompson and two other people promptly left the room, leaving them alone.

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“Is this about your mother?” Lawrence asked. “I knew you were always in a bad mood when-”

“I just want to be alone,” Sofia said. She immediately got up, intending to leave the room too. She found the current atmosphere stifling,

suffocating. Just hearing this man talk about her mother was enough to rile her up.

All she wanted was to slap him, ask him how he could do something like this to them! She had trusted this man with all her life!

She had treated him as a father, a friend, a confidant, and a mentor. The betrayal truly hurt her, and she was forced to acknowledge that now.

“Where are you going to stay?” he asked.

“Far away from the media,” Sofia uttered. She had already accepted Alexander’s offer to stay in his house; the security in his building was top-notch. Sofia’s hesitation did not last long. She could not possibly read Lawrence’s mind. She did not know what this man would do just to achieve his goals.

So, when Alexander offered a security detail, she accepted it without having second thoughts. She was not stupid enough to ignore her security.

“Sofia-”

Lawrence’s words were interrupted when the door suddenly burst open. “Sister...” Charlotte’s irritating voice echoed inside the room. She stood in front of Sofia with her pink frilly dress and took both of Sofia’s hands. “Are

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you alright? If you want me to help, just please tell me. I would do everything to fix this situation.”

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“Charlotte, what are you talking about?” Lawrence immediately frowned. “This is not something that you should say. The company can handle the news. There is no need to involve yourself in this matter. You should leave...”

“Was it because I am not a Lockhart?” Charlotte asked; her eyes were already full of tears. Despite her accusatory tone, she did not let Sofia’s hand go. Instead, she tightened her grip around Sofia’s hand. “I know I am not supposed to involve myself in the company since I am not a Lockhart, but they are hurting Sofia. How could I let them do that?”—

Lawrence narrowed at her. “That is not true.”

Charlotte looked at Sofia, her face full of worry. “How about you stay with me instead? My agency has offered security, and my house—”

“I don’t think we need that,” Sofia smiled. She slowly wriggled her hand out of Charlotte’s hand. “I am leaving.”

“Are you not going to stay in the mansion?” Charlotte asked, confusion apparent in her eyes.

“No.”

“But You are safe here.”

“I am not some superstar. I don’t understand why this would become a threat to me.” Sofia looked at Lawrence. “Isn’t this just a small scandal? People forget, father. Is there a need to panic? The meeting is going to happen, and I will be there to join everyone.”

With that, Sofia walked out of the room, leaving the father and daughter on their own. The moment she walked out of the mansion, her expression changed. She almost could not hide the disgust and anger inside her. She

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had to walk away, or she would have slapped that woman.

The scandal started because of Charlotte, yet she sounded as if she had nothing to do with it. Did she think Sofia was a fool? Sofia could not

help but slam her hand on the steering wheel. Then she took some time to calm herself down.

She was confident that Lawrence would not do anything to hurt her right now. After all, he should be aware that if Sofia dies before her birthday, all the shares would be given to some charities. So, Lawrence had to wait for her birthday.

Soon enough, she realized that she was wrong.

The moment her car got out of the parking lot, she heard a loud sound.

The sudden impact jolted Sofia's car, sending a sudden shiver through the vehicle. The screech of tires and the harsh collision echoed through the air as another car forcefully rammed into the back of hers.

The force was enough to make Sofia grip the steering wheel tightly, her heart pounding in surprise and anger.

She peered into the rearview mirror, trying to catch a glimpse of the culprit. The driver of the other car remained obscured, hidden behind the twisted metal and shattered glass that now marred the back of Sofia's vehicle. The mangled bumpers and broken taillights painted a chaotic

scene.

Caught off guard by this unexpected assault, Sofia took a moment to collect herself. The immediate rush of anger from the earlier confrontation with Charlotte was now replaced with a more pressing

concern.

She carefully assessed the damage, her frustration growing as she realized that her already difficult day had just taken a turn for the worse.

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"The driver died," the police informed Sofia as she sat in the living room of the mansion. The incident still left her shaken, and hearing that the driver had actually died made her heart jump. Her hands started trembling.

Seeing this, Charlotte immediately grabbed Sofia's hand, but she pushed Charlotte's hand without having second thoughts.

"Sis-

"How?" Sofia ignored Charlotte's reaction.

"We are investigating this matter, but our initial findings suggest that he was already unconscious before he hit your **car**- in fact, the reason he hit your car might be because he lost consciousness."

Sofia's heart raced; her palms started sweating. For some reason, she could not believe that this was just an accident. The fact that the driver died means something else is going on here.

Sadly, she does not know what it is.

"We will let you know once we come up with something," the police said.

"Sister, you should stay here. I know you are too shaken up to drive," Charlotte said. "I believe Father already asked the maids to prepare your room."

For a while, Sofia said nothing. She couldn't help but think about the driver of that **car**. He was a man in his late forties or perhaps early fifties. He must have had a family, perhaps a wife, kids, and maybe even grandkids. She swallowed.

When she said nothing, Charlotte tried to speak. Again, she **was** trying to convince Sofia to stay.

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Logic would dictate that she stay in the house. Even if they had other cars, she was not confident that she could still drive in her current state. Without saying a word, she got up and started walking outside. "Where are you going?" Lawrence asked. He swiftly blocked her way. "If you think I will let you drive while you are in this state, then you are wrong. You need to stay, Sofia."

Again, Sofia said nothing. Instead, she turned towards Lawrence, her gaze blank. "A car is already waiting for me outside." Then she slowly pushed him away and left the mansion without saying another word.

The moment she got out of the mansion, she immediately saw the black Volvo waiting for her. She got into the Volvo, and the car immediately left. the mansion.

"Who is that?" Charlotte asked, frowning. She and her father could clearly see the Volvo from the mansion. However, it was tinted, and it was already late outside. They had no way of knowing who was driving the car.

Lawrence said nothing in response. He merely walked back to his office, his hands in his pockets.

"Father-

"Go back to your room..." Lawrence said.

"But what about that car? Daniel is not in Illinois; his brother sent him to Vegas. That can't be Daniel," Charlotte said.

However, her father did not answer her question. Instead, he looked at her. "Go back to your room..."

Charlotte immediately pouted. Disbelief flashed in her eyes before she stomped her feet and ran towards her room. Seeing this, Lawrence merely shook his head and started walking towards his study. The moment he walked in, he immediately spotted two people inside.

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"Dr. Mulach..."

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“I hope you do not mind me drinking your whiskey,” Dr. Mulach smiled. “A small sip of whiskey is nothing,” Lawrence smiled as he sat in his chair. “It is already so late at night. I am grateful that the good doctor would come at this hour.”

“How could I ignore my employer’s request?” Dr. Mulach asked. He then finished the whiskey in his glass and placed the glass on the table. “Is there something that I could assist you with?” he asked.

“The driver is dead,” Lawrence said. “I am going to assume that the police would not be able to prove anything?”

“Of course,” Dr. Mulach smiled.

Lawrence nodded. He then took a thick envelope from one of his drawers and handed it to Dr. Mulach. “Reliable as always.”

“I am going to take that as a compliment,” the Doctor beamed as he took the envelope and put it in his jacket pocket.

“You are not going to count it?”

“Do I need a reason to?”

“No,” Lawrence smiled. “However, I would like you to take care of something else.”

“Was it that woman?” Dr. Mulach asked. “Is it finally time?”

“Yes,” Lawrence said. “That time has finally come. As promised,” he took another envelope and pushed it towards the good doctor. “Double.”

“Good...” Again, Dr. Mulach took the money and placed it in his jacket pocket. Seeing this, Lawrence smiled. He got up and poured both of them some wine.

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“After this year, you will finally have the thing that you want the most,” Dr. Mulach said. “I would like to congratulate you in advance.”

Lawrence said nothing. He only gave the glass to the doctor before he finished his drink.

The two of them said nothing as they sat inside Lawrence’s study.

Meanwhile, Sofia finished the bottle of water that Alexander handed her the moment she arrived inside the car. She said nothing and took another bottle of water, chugging it down until she finally felt refreshed.

She expected him to start asking questions about the incident. But he didn’t. Instead, he simply drove the car without saying another word. Sofia sighed. She was grateful for the silence, but she needed to speak to someone she could rely on. “The driver died,” she uttered. “I knew this was Lawrence’s plan.” She knew that man was scheming, but it seems that she still underestimated him.

“You believe he did this because he wanted you to stay in the mansion?” he asked, his eyes on the road. She did not know what he was currently thinking as his face was devoid of any expression.

Sofia thought about it. Right now, that was the only thing that she could come up with. “He wanted me isolated before my birthday,” she uttered. “This must have something to do with my grandmother.”

“She is coming back?” Alexander asked.

“From Europe... yes,” Sofia said. Sofia had grown apart from her grandmother because of her grandmother’s dislike of Lawrence and Charlotte. However, her grandmother never missed her birthday.

Now that she was about to receive her inheritance, her grandmother would surely come.

“That man is truly something...” Alexander said. This time, Sofia

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maintained her silence. She had been blinded for so long. This gave Lawrence so much time to scheme and gather some allies.

Sofia bit her lower lip. This was no longer about her inheritance. If she wanted her mother or herself to live then... she needed to fight back.

“I have already sent my people to investigate that man,” Alexander assured her.

“Thank you.”

“Not yet,” he said.

“What?”

“You should not thank me yet.”

Sofia turned towards him and stared at his handsome side profile. She could not help but wonder what he was thinking. She then lifted her eyebrows. “What are you planning to do?” she asked.

However, her question never received an answer.

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Dr. Mulach adjusted his tie, ensuring its perfection before he smiled at his reflection and exited his car. Stepping out into the parking lot across Tranquil Haven Rehabilitation Center, he took a moment to appreciate the serene surroundings.

The dim glow of street lamps cast long shadows on the asphalt, and the crisp Illinois air hinted at the approaching dawn. The sky transitioned from the deep hues of night to a soft palette of purples and blues.

The reason Dr. Mulach chose this place was his love for the cold. Growing up in a location without snow, living in Illinois had always been a dream.

He tapped his jacket, ensuring the cash was still there before proceeding towards the rehabilitation center.

However, just before reaching the center's door, he heard another car nearby. Turning, his eyes widened at the sight of a police vehicle.

"Dr. Mulach?" a man in a black uniform called out.

"Yes, good morning, officers. How may I help you?" The officer paused, scrutinizing Dr. Mulach.

"Please come with us.

"What?" Dr. Mulach's face immediately turned ugly.

—

It was almost noon when Sofia woke up. After a quick stretch, she took a bath. Currently staying in the guest room of Alexander's house, she didn't want to go to the office right away after the incident that left her shaken. However, she knew she had to face recent events.

After donning decent office clothing, she grabbed her things and made her

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way to the kitchen for something to eat.

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"Eh?" she froze upon seeing Alexander in the living room, talking on his phone.

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Why was this man here? She thought he would be at his office, considering it was a workday. As the chairman of the Beaumont Empire, he must be busy.

Luckily, he didn't notice her as he was facing the floor-to-ceiling windows that offered a view of the city. She quickly turned around, not intending to disturb him.

"Ah, glad that you're awake," she heard him say.

She turned towards Alexander; it seemed his call had already ended.

“Are you going to the kitchen?” he asked.

“Y–Yes.”

“Just reheat the breakfast that I made. I did not wake you up. I know you. were not able to have a good night’s sleep last night.”

She stood there, unable to understand what he was trying to say. He made breakfast for her and even stayed at home. Was it all right for her to assume he did this all for her?

“Ah, before I forget... Dr. Mulach was arrested last night.”

Almost immediately, her expression changed. “What did you say?”

“Dr. Mulach is a wanted criminal in more than five countries. It is only right that the police would take him in.”

“Then what about my mother?” She quickly checked her phone, finding missed calls from Lawrence, Charlotte, and Daniel. She had forwarded all business calls to Miss Amores and turned her phone silent.

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When she woke up, she assumed the calls were related to what happened last night. She thought they wanted to convince her to stay in the mansion, so **she** didn’t bother opening their text messages.

“Do not worry... I already sent a team of doctors under your name.” Seeing her reaction, he quickly said, “I apologize for overstepping...”

“No. 1-”

“I received some disturbing news last night. I chose not to tell you those things because of how shaken you were... however, instead of waiting. I had to make a move.”

She frowned, not understanding what he was trying to say. What move? They agreed that this marriage was self-serving. Both of them had their goals. Why was he doing something like this?

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“My mother died after I was born...” Alexander said. He walked towards the long couch and picked up a tablet, then handed it to her. “It took me long time to realize that she did not die of natural death. She had been poisoned... slowly.”

Sofia read the contents of the file that he opened. “This poison...”

“Only available in Asia. To be more specific, its source was only available in Vietnam. Smuggling can be very difficult if one does not have a connection. For years, I have been searching for any clues of the one who poisoned my mother. To no avail.”

She continued reading the contents. “The poison was detected?” she asked.

“Three months **ago**... it was detected in Vancouver. Then in Alaska. As far as I know, it was already in the US.”

“And you think that

“We found **traces** of it **in the** underground market in **Illinnic And** right

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now, there is only one Asian doctor in this part of the state that has a connection to the underground market.”

“Dr. Mulach,” she uttered. “This poison....” After reading the first symptoms, a part of her felt her limbs go numb. She swallowed. “These symptoms...” It was similar to her mother’s symptoms!

She found herself on **the** couch with him sitting beside her as she read the contents of the file for the second time.

Violet Slumber Blossom. This flora can only live within dense jungles. It has earned its notorious reputation for its potent yet deceivingly slow- acting toxicity. Locals, well aware of its danger, refer to **it** simply as “Lingering Lotus.”

Transporting this perilous plant is strictly prohibited, as its lethal potential unfolds in stages. A moderate dose induces a gradual descent into a coma- like slumber, leaving the unsuspecting victim ensnared in a web of silent danger.

Meanwhile, a higher dosage could easily kill someone. It does not have a particular smell or taste, and one can **easily** grind the petals of the plant. and dissolve it in water.

“Do you think that he used this-” She swallowed her nonexistent saliva. “It said that it cannot be cured?” she asked.

“At the time they published this article, there was no antidote- yet,” he said.

“Then... what about now?”

“We found something that could neutralize it, but I cannot guarantee you that it would wake up someone who was already in **a** state of a coma. Perhaps it could help someone who just ingested the poison.”

Sofia clutched the tablet. She stared at the violet flower on the tablet and

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clenched her teeth. What **a** cruel plant!

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Sofia had always been hesitant about how **to** approach Dr. Mulach, fearing he might do something crazy. Moreover, she did not want Lawrence to detect anything.

“I need to know if she was given the same poison...” She got up and looked at him. “Will you help me?”

“There is something else...” he too got up and took the tablet. “To induce a coma, it has to be given in very small doses over ten years.”

Sofia’s mouth dropped. She covered her mouth with her trembling hands. Ten years?

What if...

She quickly made a decision. “I need you to check my blood too...” Sofia said as she closed her eyes. How could they be so cruel?

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“Where is she?” Lawrence inquired the moment she answered the call. “They informed me you sent doctors and took her...”

“Have you heard the news?” Sofia asked. “That doctor is not someone we could trust.”

“Sofia...”

“My mother is safe,” Sofia stated, her voice cold. She stared at the fireplace in the living room. She chose not to work this time and simply stayed in the house with him. Tomorrow, the meeting would happen, and Alexander suggested that she stay at home instead of going to the office. The arrest of Dr. Mulach would make everything more dangerous, **as** it would make Lawrence suspect that she knew something.

“Please do not expect me to trust you after what happened, Father. It was you who recommended Dr. Mulach. You cannot blame me for doubting you,” Sofia said.

“I, too, was not aware that he is someone like that.”

“I heard that he had arrest warrants all over the world,” Sofia said. “It’s hard to believe that you knew nothing about it.”

“Sofia-”

“I only asked my doctors to test my mother’s blood,” Sofia said. “If I find something... Dr. Mulach will rot in prison!” Sofia hissed. Then she ended the call without waiting for Lawrence to say another word. She placed her phone **on** the coffee table as she balled her hands into fists, trying her best to stop them from trembling.

Since Lawrence came into her life, this was the first time she had raised her voice at him. This was the first time that she actually talked to him like this. The experience was jarring. She could not stop her lips from

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trembling, and her heart was racing like a horse. **Yet**, it was necessary. She held her other hand and closed her eyes.

She knew her face had already lost its color.

“You want one?” a mellowed deep voice interrupted her stupor. She lifted her gaze and found Alexander standing nearby, a wine glass **in** hand.

“I need something stronger...”

He smirked and then handed her his glass. “Whiskey?”

“Better...” Sofia downed it in one go, letting the spicy alcohol warm up her insides. “I didn’t know that the great chairman of Beaumont Empire would offer me some whiskey in broad daylight.”

He snorted as he sat beside her. “Only when I am with a beautiful woman.”

She arched her eyebrow. She knew that he was only trying to calm her senses, and she appreciated that. “Strange...”

“What is?”

“I never knew that you like beautiful women...” Daniel never told her anything about Alexander. Aside from the fact that he had a terrible brother who was out to get him, Daniel never once talked about Alexander’s private life.

However, the fact that Alexander was never linked to a woman made his private life a little... mysterious.

Sofia recalled Karina telling her that Alexander might be into men. Karina had gossiped about this man a thousand times because the firm that she was working with handled a few things concerning the Beaumont Empire.

Somehow her words made him chuckle.

“Strange...” he uttered.

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“What is?” she asked in return.

“I didn’t know you were listening to gossip about me, Miss Lockhart...”

“I was not,” she immediately said.

“Really?”

“Really... why would I listen to **gossip** about you? I already have a lot on my plate,” Sofia said.

“Is that so?”

She pouted and grabbed the wine glass that **was** still in his hand then she drank its contents too. She could already feel her cheeks heating up. “Some people talk...” she uttered. “I must have heard it somewhere, but then again, there is no smoke without a fire.”

He chuckled. “Heard what?” his lips lifted into a sexy smirk as if... as if he was waiting for her to embarrass herself further.

“I- Nothing.”

“Heard what, Miss Lockhart?” he leaned closer. Almost immediately, the smell of his aftershave and a subtle hint of his perfume filled her senses. She swallowed, blinking at him.

“I— you are too close.” He was getting closer and closer, leaving her breathless. For some reason, she was tempted to push him, but her hand refused to move. Her already calmed heart once again started drumming against her chest.

“What did you hear?” he asked, his voice sending shivers down her spine.

“That you have no interest in women,” she blurted out, feeling the tension thick between them.

“And do you believe them?” he asked, his gaze locked onto hers, making

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her feel exposed.

“I—”

“Do you believe that I have no interest in women?”

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Sofia did not know what to say. In fact, a part of her believed it. The fact that he was the one who approached her, asking her for a marriage of convenience, made it so suspicious. “I would not judge someone just based on their preference,” Sofia said, trying to maintain composure. Then she realized how close he already was. “You are still my husband.”

For a while, he only stared there, the charged silence hanging between them. His eyes bore into her green eyes, and the air crackled with an unspoken desire. His breathing was calm, but the intensity in his gaze told a different story. It

was as if he was searching for something, perhaps an emotion, or a glint of something sinister.

Slowly, Sofia's gaze lowered down to his tall nose and traced the contours of his perfect skin. She couldn't help but notice the way his lips glistened, and the proximity made her acutely aware of his moistened lips.

Unknowingly, she swallowed before her gaze darted back to his eyes. "Find something interesting?" he smirked.

Just as she was about to snap back, she heard someone clearing his throat nearby.

Sofia's eyes widened as she pushed Alexander away and turned towards Josef who stood not too far away from them. Her eyes then landed on the man standing behind Josef. Blond, blue eyes, and a smug smirk. She found him quite familiar.

"I apologize for disturbing you, but the doctor is here..." Josef said before he looked at his boss. "Dr. Moore is here..."

Dr. Moore?

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Sofia frowned as she got up and straightened her clothes. "Dr. Hugo Moore?" she asked.

"My... I never thought that my humble name would reach the ears of such a beautiful lady," Dr. Moore smiled. He walked towards her and was about to grab her hand when Alexander got up.

"You are about to examine her blood. Why are you going to kiss her hand?" Alexander slapped the doctor's hand, his face ugly. "It seems that you already heard of his name; then there is no need for a fancy introduction. Sofia, this is Hugo Moore."

Hugo beamed. "Please call me Hugo. Here is my-"

"Hugo, this is Sofia..." Alexander interrupted his words. "My wife."

"Huh?" Hugo froze, confusion flashed in his eyes. He looked at Sofia then towards Alexander. "Wife? What wife?"

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“So, you got married, and I was not invited?” Hugo Moore glared **at** Alexander . “And here I thought I was your closest friend!”

“We were in a hurry...”

Almost immediately, Hugo’s eyes landed on Sofia’s stomach.

“How long?” Hugo asked.

“When is your due date?” he added.

“No, I meant...” Alexander wanted to explain when Hugo held his hand toward s his friend’s face.

“She’s pale, too skinny, she looked weak. The least that you could do is take care of your wife and child.”

“I am not pregnant,” Sofia said. “Are you not here to test my blood?” she asked. Hugo Moore was someone who changed the medical industry **at** the tender age of twenty—one. He was a genius surgeon and had published so many journals that helped the medical community.

The reason why Sofia has heard of his glorious name is because of her mother. She tried to locate him in the past, but for some reason, no one knew where he currently lived. Many had suspicions that he was currently working with the government **in** a secret facility, but no one could pinpoint his exact location.

When her mother had become comatose, she did everything to know his whereabouts, but she failed.

Hugo’s expression turned solemn when he heard her voice. He quickly asked Josef to bring his tools. “I have studied Violet Slumber Blossom for years. Sadly, being poisoned by this plant would not show any signs. immediately. However, the moment it would show signs meant that it

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would be too late.”

Sofia swallowed.

“We call it Lingering Lotus **as** it would linger in the victim’s bloodstream for as long as it could before showing its claws,” Hugo said. “Are you scared of needles?” he asked.

Sofia swallowed. “No.” She sat on the couch, and soon, Hugo was already taking her blood.

“It would take two to three days at least...” Hugo said.

“What about my mother?” she asked.

“I need your consent if you need me to take her blood too.”

“Then please do it,” Sofia said. “If you confirm that she took that poison, then... what would happen?” she asked.

“Unfortunately, we cannot wake her up. Yet,” Hugo said, his tone calm yet somehow, she could not sense any emotion in it. “I believe Alexander already told you that there **is** no cure for the poison. However, we can only stop the symptoms. The earlier we diagnose a patient, the better it would be for them. However, there is no need to worry too much about this matter. If you do not know it yet, your husband has been donating a huge amount of money for research. Soon enough... I would-”

“Please let me donate too...”

“Oh?” Hugo beamed at Sofia. He looked at Alexander, who was sitting next to his wife. Then he gave him a smug smirk. “Your husband donated ten million for the initial research I-”

“Then I will give you ten million as well,” Sofia said. “Just please do everything to find out to develop a cure.”

“Of course,” Hugo beamed. “Your wish is my command...” he suddenly

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took her hand and kissed the back of her palm. “My lady.”

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For some reason, this gesture made Sofia shiver. What was wrong with this man? However, she quickly pushed her questions out and focused on the current situation.

LH GROUP Main Office

Lawrence frowned as he stared at his phone. He had been waiting for Sofia to call him, but the latter seemed upset.

“Were you able to call her?” he asked his daughter, Charlotte, who was sitting on the couch not too far away from him. Despite Dr. Mulach’s arrest, Lawrence still went to his office and decided to go on with his schedule.

This was a deliberate act so the authorities would not suspect him.

“No. Daniel said she was not answering her phone too,” Charlotte said. “Father, do you think this has something to do with her birthday?” she asked. Sofia had always been emotional around this time because it was said that her father died around her birthday. Now that her mother was in a coma, she might have been feeling a bit more down.

“She had been avoiding Daniel too...” Charlotte pouted. Lately, all Daniel could talk about was Sofia and Charlotte did not like that! “You know how much I need that song, and she had stopped writing songs too.” Charlotte rolled her eyes before she started playing on her phone.

“Leave...”

“Huh?”

“You heard me.”

Charlotte looked at her father in disbelief before she grabbed her bag and

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got out of her father's office. Seeing Charlotte gone, Lawrence's face instantly turned darker. He dialed a number on his phone.

"Were you able to find out who reported him?" he asked the moment someone answered his call.

"Unfortunately, the source was anonymous. It would have been easier for us to cover him if they did not report him to the FBI," a woman answered.

"FBI?" Lawrence's face contorted.

"Yes. Before those pieces of evidence were sent to the police force in Illinois, the FBI was already informed. With how things are going..." the woman said. "We cannot let him talk."

"Tsk." Lawrence gritted his teeth. This case already attracted the attention of the media. There is no going back now. "Do what you must. Do not let him talk."

"Hmmm... I already know what to do."

"Ah..." Lawrence said. "I want you to find where Sofia Lockhart is staying."

For a few seconds, the woman on the other line did not answer. "What do you mean?"

"She has been acting differently lately," Lawrence said. This was no longer the Sofia that he once knew. That Sofia would immediately listen to his words. She might be smart, but she was still ignorant. Lawrence was confident that he could take care of Sofia, so he had been delaying his plans as he did not want to make it seem like he had something to do with the demise of the mother and daughter. "Search all the hospitals in and outside of the state. Find both Sofia and Eunice."

"You mean, her mother is missing as well?" the woman asked.

"Yes."

“Then if she **is** missing, then we should immediately check the flights that left the country after Dr. Mulach was arrested.” The woman said.

“Do what you need to know. I just want you to find that woman,” Lawrence said.

“I see... what about the payment?”

“I will wire it to your account.”

“Double it,” the woman said.

“What?”

“This dance just has become more dangerous. I want you to double the payment this time.”

Lawrence gritted his teeth but he could not say a word to rebut the woman. Indeed. Dr. Mulach’s arrest has just made everything more complicated.

Right now, he was not sure who was behind Dr. Mulach’s arrest. Therefore, he cannot make a careless move.

“Alright,” he said. “I will wire it to you.” He then ended the call and leaned back on his swivel chair. Times like this made him wish that he had listened to his instinct and killed Sofia when he had the chance.

Sadly, he had read the will and knew that Sofia’s death would immediately turn the situation worse. He pressed a button. “Min, I want you to prepare the car. We are going somewhere.”

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“If Eunice knew that you were here, she would raise hell...” the old man smiled as he leaned back in his ornate, mahogany chair, its polished surface reflecting the soft glow of the antique chandelier hanging above. His slender fingers, adorned with heavy gold rings, clasped together over a monogrammed handkerchief.

His weathered face turned away from the steam of the tea in front of them, turning towards Lawrence. “Tell me... what did you need from this old man?” he asked.

“Now, why would you assume that it was I who needed something from you?” Lawrence calmly said. Not many people knew this, but he was currently talking to someone who used to be a member of the Lockhart Family—William Clarence.

Despite being a Lockhart, the seventy-year-old man was forced to change his surname when the Lockhart family kicked him out decades ago.

“If you came here to ask me to help Sofia, then I’m afraid I no longer have the power to do that,” William said, his gaze clear. “I am no longer a Lockhart.”

“Now, isn’t it too much for you to assume that I came here because I wanted you to help Sofia?” Lawrence smiled. “I came because I want to cooperate.”

“Cooperate?” the old man’s white brow immediately raised. He narrowed his eyes at Lawrence. “You wanted to ruin the Lockhart Family?”

“Surprise?”

“Are you not Eunice’s dog?” William snorted. “What made you change your mind?”

“Dog?” Lawrence snorted. “I have never been her dog to begin with.”

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The old man nodded, understanding flashing in his eyes. Then he took a sip of tea. Seeing this, Lawrence also took his tea and tasted it, giving the old man some time to think.

Decades ago, William did something terrible to another member of the Lockhart Family. While Lawrence did not have specifics, he knew that it was terrible enough, as the Lockharts did not hesitate to kick William out to protect their name..

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However, it was not just a simple kicking of someone who was already down. The Lockhart Family removed him from their family registry. They revoked his trust fund, warned other companies not to accept him, and did not grant him any inheritance that all Lockharts would receive when they reached a certain age.

Because of this, William was forced to leave the United States and work abroad. Years later, William was able to establish his own company in Russia and found a bride. He had his own family, children, and years later, his very own grandchildren.

When Eunice's father died, William chose to silently return to the place where he was born. From the information that Lawrence gathered, William wanted to die and be buried next to his parents. Eunice had granted this wish. Because of this, William is now back in Illinois.

"What kind of help does an old man like me give you?" William asked after a few minutes of silence. "I have already given my company to my children. I am but a useless old man waiting for his death."

"Eunice will never wake up again," Lawrence said.

"What did you- " the old man narrowed his eyes.

"There is no need for me to repeat my words," Lawrence said. "Once I become the new head of the Lockhart Family and LH Group, I am willing to give you two percent of Eunice's shares."

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"Sofia Lockhart is still alive," William said. "Isn't it too early for you to count your eggs?"

Lawrence snorted in response. "I can take care of Sofia."

"So the scandal that has been happening..."

"It is exactly a part of my plan."

The old man nodded. "Then it seems that you already took care of everything."
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“I still need something else.”

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“What is it?” the old man asked before letting out a series of coughs. The butler standing a few meters away immediately handed him a glass of water.

“Is it the best time to talk about business?” Lawrence asked. “I can see that you are currently- ”

William only raised his palm towards Lawrence. He straightened his back and looked at the younger man. “Continue.”

“I need you to use your sources in the underground. I want to know who reported Dr. Mulach.”

“The doctor who was actually the wanted Doctor Tan?” the old man asked.

“It seems that you are still well aware of the current events in the country.”

The old man snorted in response.

“Dr. Mulach is the one who poisoned Eunice,” Lawrence said. While this was far-fetched, he had a hunch that something else was going on behind the scenes.

His instinct was telling him that someone—another predator—was

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watching him. And he dislikes the sensation of being watched—especially if he does not know who is watching him in secret.

“The man is a wanted fugitive in more than three countries. Did you really think that someone reported him to get to you?” the old man snorted. “Aren’t you being too self-absorbed?”

“If you do not want to help me, then there is no problem-“

“I will help you,” William said. “On one condition.”

“Condition?” Lawrence snorted. The fact that the old man thinks he is in a position to make conditions is irritating, but he still chooses to listen to him. “Go on ...”

“I need access to the old woman’s vault.”

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Lawrence’s expression immediately changed. The old man that William was talking about should be Sofia’s grandmother, who is currently traveling around the world. She is Eulanda Lockhart, Eunice’s estranged mother.

Eulanda never liked Lawrence. She was against their marriage and even forced Lawrence to sign a few documents before he was able to marry Eunice. He truly hated that woman.

However, the fact that Eulanda is connected with some important figures all around the world makes it harder for him to get through to her. So, he did the next best thing that he could do; use Sofia.

Despite Eulanda hating her own daughter, she never hated Sofia. To her, Sofia was a treasure—the most beautiful, the smartest, and the kindest granddaughter that she had. So, Lawrence slowly poisoned Sofia against Eulanda. And he succeeded.

Despite this, Eulanda had always cherished Sofia. “I heard she does not have any cash in her vault.” Lawrence narrowed his eyes. “I am going to

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assume that you want something inside. A piece of jewelry? Or a painting?” he asked.

“That is none of your business.”

“Eulanda is something else; it would not be that easy to handle that woman,” Lawrence said.

“I will help you.”

“What?”

“Sofia Lockhart’s birthday **is** coming. If my guess is right, Eulanda would come join her on that day,” William said.

Hearing this, Lawrence smiled. For some reason, he found his initial judgment about this man wrong. William Clarence is actually not as helpless as he looks.

“If you can handle Eulanda, then I am giving you three percent-

“Six,” William said.

“I can’t-”

“The Lockhart Family took my six percent when they kicked me out all those years ago. The least that I deserve is the share that was supposed to be mine.”

Lawrence pursed his lips. He only

came here because he knew that the old man had connections with the Russian Mafia. He never thought that William Clarence would be this... bold.

Obviously, Lawrence liked the current situation very well. “Then, I can only wish that we have a happy cooperation.” Lawrence smiled as he got up and held his hand towards William. In response, William Clarence

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accepted Lawrence’s hand and smiled.

“To a happy cooperation.”