

#### 42: Don't Force Me to Take Action

"She wouldn't let me follow her, said I should come back first."

Sebastian didn't know what to say. "Of course she wouldn't want you following her if she's out with a man. Next time, you'd better follow her to see who she's meeting."

"Got it, Mr. Vanderbilt!"

"Go on," Sebastian grumbled, slamming his fist into the bed. Although it was a contractual marriage, he still didn't want to feel humiliated by her.

This woman... she was utterly reckless, and he had foolishly tried to help her.

The Bentley sped down the road, heading towards Silver Willow Town. The town, located on the outskirts of New York, was a quaint, old-fashioned village, not too far from the city. After about an hour, they arrived at their destination.

Caitlin had come to find Una, who had once been her mother Kelly's personal maid. After Kelly married into The Lewis Family, she had helped Una find a husband, and Una moved to Silver Willow Town. After Kelly's illness, Una returned to care for her until Kelly passed away. So, if Caitlin wanted to uncover what had really happened to her mother before she died, she needed to find Una.

Following the address Una had provided years ago, Caitlin and Quincy made their way along the cobblestone path to Una's house. Quincy knocked on the door, but there was no response. He tried the handle, and to their surprise, the door opened easily.

"Someone should be inside. Let's go in and take a look."

Caitlin nodded and, without hesitation, walked in with Quincy.

"Is anyone home? Una, are you here?" Caitlin called out as they entered.

"Una? Una?" Caitlin called again, but the house seemed eerily quiet.

Just as they were about to turn back, they heard a faint noise from the back room. They rushed towards the sound and entered to find a scene that made Caitlin scream in shock.

"Ah..."

Quincy was equally shocked. They hadn't expected to find Una lying in a pool of blood on the floor.

She wasn't completely dead—her eyes were still open, staring at the door. The noise they had heard earlier was from her trying to hit the ground in her last moments.

"Una! Una!" Caitlin rushed forward. When she confirmed it was indeed Una, she was struck with disbelief, rushing to her side. "Una, what happened? What's going on?"

The scene was horrific, and Caitlin's tears started flowing uncontrollably. Una still had a faint pulse, and as Caitlin spoke to her, Una's eyes began to tear up with blood, and she opened her mouth, as if trying to say something.

"Una, what is it?" Caitlin asked, gripping her hand and leaning in close, trying to hear her last words.

"Leave... leave the city..." Una whispered faintly, before her head tilted to one side.

"Una! What about the city? Una!!!" Caitlin cried out in desperation, but it was too late—Una had passed away in her arms.

Caitlin felt a deep pang of grief as she watched Una die with a look of regret on her face. Her last words remained a mystery. What did Una mean? What was she trying to warn her about?

As Caitlin wept, a small piece of crumpled paper slipped from Una's hand. Caitlin carefully opened it, and inside was an old, torn photograph of a young girl. Caitlin's heart stopped when she saw it—the girl in the photo was unmistakably her mother, Kelly, in her youth.

"What is this?" Caitlin wondered aloud, holding the half-picture. Her mind raced—what was Una trying to tell her? And why was it linked to her mother?

As Quincy began inspecting the scene, he quickly deduced that Una had died from a sharp instrument—a deep wound in her neck, with blood flowing from there. Given the way she had died, it seemed likely the killer had only been minutes ahead of them. However, there were no signs of a struggle: no fingerprints, no shoeprints, and the door and windows were all intact. That meant the killer might have known Una.

"Who did this?" Quincy muttered, shaking his head.

"We need to find the killer!" Caitlin was filled with sorrow, but also confusion. She instructed Quincy to contact Felix immediately. Felix, the head of the NYPD's homicide unit, was someone Caitlin had a personal connection with. She had worked with him on her mother's case in the past, and he had promised to assist her whenever necessary.

An hour later, Felix arrived at the scene with the coroner and a few officers. Seeing Caitlin with blood on her hands, her head bowed in

silence, he looked worried. "Miss Lewis, what happened?"

Caitlin raised her head, her tear-streaked face meeting his. Felix, a man from a wealthy family who had chosen a career in law enforcement, wore a khaki-colored casual suit and his police badge with pride. He was a rare example of a rich young man who decided to serve his community as a detective.

"Felix, I came to find Una, my mother's maid from back then, and found her dead in her home," Caitlin explained with a heavy heart.

"I'll check the scene first," Felix said, and motioned for the coroner to follow him. The officers set up a perimeter, beginning their investigation.

After a while, Felix emerged with a grim expression. He went through routine procedures, asking, "When you arrived, was the victim already dead?"

"No, she was still alive when we got here."

"Did she leave any messages or clues?"

"She said something about 'leaving the city,' but I didn't quite catch it. After her death, I found this half-torn photo in her hand," Caitlin replied, handing Felix the bloodstained photograph.

Felix examined the photo and asked, "Who is the woman in the picture?"

"It's my mother. A picture of her when she was younger."

"That's strange. Why would Una hold onto a photo of your mother before she died?" Felix asked, his brow furrowed.

That was exactly what Caitlin wanted to know.

Felix nodded, placing the photo carefully aside. "Don't worry. We'll figure this out. You can go back for now, and we'll continue investigating. We'll contact you if we find anything new."

"Thank you, Felix," Caitlin replied, grateful for his support. She left the crime scene with Quincy, feeling a mixture of sadness and frustration.

After returning to Silver Willow Town, Caitlin didn't go back to The Vanderbilt Family mansion. Instead, she asked Quincy to take her to the third funeral home.

Una's death had shaken her, and she couldn't rest until she had answers.



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