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Chapter 524 "Brittany? Brittany!" Although Brandon wanted to chase after her, he was still worried about Alexander. After all, he came here intending to apologize to Alexander properly and to prevent tension between the two families.

Two days ago, Brittany came home sobbing. Initially, her parents were furious when they discovered that someone had beaten her, and they wanted to avenge her. Later, they felt a little apprehensive when they discovered that she got beaten because she was looking for Alexander's fiancee, and Brittany was the first to strike.

After all, they knew what kind of person Alexander was. They could still seek justice if Brittany were the only one who got hurt. However, their daughter had taken the initiative to provoke the other person, and they had no idea if the other person was hurt, putting Brittany's parents in a sticky situation.

After much deliberation, they decided to let Brandon take Brittany along to apologize and clear up this matter. After all, if the two children went to apologize, the Oakleys could still maintain their reputation.

Ultimately, Brandon stood up and bowed before solemnly saying, "Alex, i know my sister is at fault this time, so I'm here to apologize to you and Ms. Christian on her behalf. However, I'm sure you've seen that Brittany has also gotten injured.

"On top of that, Ms. Christian is unscathed. I hope you can spare Brittany this time for the sake of her love for you for all these years. I promise she'll never bother Ms. Christian again in the future." Brandon had put aside his jokes and was very serious. It was clear he was also trying to defend his sister. Then Alexander turned to look at Lily. "What do you think?"

Lily was perplexed. 'How can this man throw the question back to me?!'

She stayed quiet as she thought for a moment before gracefully answering, "Although I caused this incident, the one that got hurt isn't me, but my friend. You should also direct your apology to her. You're right, Brittany got injured too, but we can't call it even just because both of them got hurt.

"There is a cause and effect to all things in life. Brittany wouldn't have gotten hurt if she didn't come knocking on someone's door to provoke them. My friend simply fought back in self-defense."

"What do you mean, Ms. Christian?" Brandon glanced at her and asked. "It's simple. I'd just like an apology." After a pause, Lily continued again before Brandon could speak "However, seeing how Ms. Oakley reacted, there is no way she'd apologize. I can see that you're very sincere, Mr. Oakley, and I am willing to believe you are.

"I will pass on your apology to my friend. Also, since my friend has gotten injured, I initially wanted to have you compensate for the medical expenses. However, we'll call it even now that I've seen that Brittany also got hurt."

After saying that, she glanced at Alexander as is trying to say, "Look how reasonable I am in handling this!"

Alexander did not understand her gaze and said, "You'll still have to compensate."

"That's not a problem!" Brandon answered without hesitation. "We're willing to foot the bill for the medical expenses, and we'll also not demand Brittany's share. We hope this won't affect our family's relationship since it's been going strong for many years. I hope we can still work together in the future." Alexander nodded. "All is well as long as you don't cross the line"

"I understand!" If Brandon did not know how important this woman was to Alexander, he knew now. Then Brandon bowed again. "I'll take my leave now, then." He was still worried about his sister and wanted to look for her. Alexander Waved him off, and Brandon strode out in a hurry.

"Are you satisfied with how we handled this matter?" Alexander asked once Brandon left. "Did you arrange all this on purpose?" Lily asked "I'm just trying to prove a point. No one can hurt you." Alexander held Lily's hand gently and promised.

However, Lily's focus was on something else. "By the way, why does he call you Fourth Russel?

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The Russells were prosperous and prominent compared to other families. There were many descendants from Alexander's father's generation. Alexander's grandmother was still around but was old and could no longer manage family matters.

Alexander was responsible for deciding the family's big and small matters. In other words, his uncles, aunts, and other family members needed to listen to him on the Russell family's matters.

However, Lily did not know he had any siblings, so she wondered why Brandon suddenly addressed Alexander as "Fourt Russell."

Alexander gently patted Lily's lead, "That's because I am the fourth child."

**Huh?" Lily was surprised, "How did I not know about this?"

"Members of the Russell family can't mention this matter, so not many outsiders know. However, those who know no longer mention it since many years have passed. We've gradually forgotten about it, too," Alexander said nonchalantly

Life came and went. One would meet many people and forget many more in one's lifetime. How many would still remember and not forget one after one died?

"If so... your brothers and sisters..." She asked carefully. It must be sensitive since the family could not speak of it.

"My brother." Alexander answered lier, "I had three elder brothers, but..." Alexander paused his sentences and turned to look at Lily with his deep eyes. "They are all dead."

'W–What?!' Lily widened her eyes in surprise. Although she was mentally prepared, his words still caught her by surprise. 'He had three brothers, but they're all dead?!"

"Were they...sick?" Lily thought of a possibility. After all, the Russells were powerful and should be able to protect their descendants.

"My eldest brother died when he was very young. My second brother was carefully raised but died at six due to a car accident. As for my third brother, he died of illness, or so I heard. I was still young at that time and didn't know much." Alexander's tone was calm, and his demeanor natural. There were not many strong emotions in his voice.

However, Lily felt heartbroken at her husband's calmness and subconsciously hugged Alexander around his neck tightly. His three elder brothers were all dead. It must liave been tough for him to grow up safely. Indeed, he had endured a lot of pressure.

Lily thought that her childhood was terrible enough. Little did she expect that Alexander's childhood would be worse.

"My mother couldn't withstand the leartbreak and died soon after. My lather followed suit two years later. I guess they've reunited in the afterlife," Alexander scofled at the last sentence.

"Alex, I..." Lily softly called him as she felt piercing pain in her lieart. She never knew the Russells had such tragic secrets. It turned out his closest family members were no longer around. No wonder he did not care and was indifferent on this matter.

"You have me," Lily responded in a gentle voice, Alexander turned around and gently kissed Lily's forehead, "There's no need for you to care too much about this. It luas long passed, and I don't feel sad anymore." "I won't, but I'll be here with you." Lily wanted to be by Alexander's side forever

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"Of course you'll be by my side. Could it be that you want to run away?!" He chuckled, "You can't run away even if you want to. Have you gotten lazy? I heard the Southbank soap's progress is nearing its end. Is that right?"

Lily knew he wanted to change the topic but did not expose his intent. She went along with him, "How could there be a boss like you who demands his staff to continue working after hours? I'll go on strike if you keep pressuring me!" "You won't. You still have to make essential oil for your grandfather." Alexander smiled and continued, "Southbank soap is a new attempt. There should be more new projects if the results are promising. It'll be easier for us to open up the Westwood market."

He was a businessman who had a long-term vision. Lily did not know much about business matters, but she knew how to make perfume and understood it well. Therefore, she knew expanding to the international market was not easy.

"This is the same as any ordinary soap. However, the ingredients used in Southbank soap are a little special and easily alter the smell. I've been trying to find a balance in it. It would not be difficult to add in other aromas once this balance is found."

Lily had been researching it lately and spoke with authority, "I think I have found the balance and will soon be successful."

"I know my wife is the best!" He cupped her cheek and planted a loud, smacking kiss on her forehead.

Lily blushed deeply at his declaration and gently pushed him away, "Stop flattering me! I'll make the essential oil for my grandfather immediately after I settle this. There's also Lisa's

request for an exclusive perfume. I've been swamped lately!" "Before that..." Alexander bridal-carried her, "You need a good rest!"

The red-brick front and red-tiled rool made this a conventional but welcoming home. As opposed to how it looked from the outside, the inside of the house was a total mess. The floor was littered with empty wine bottles. There was a person sleeping on the bed off to one side. He stared at the ceiling with lifeless, dull eyes while holding a bottle in one hand.

The wine bottle was rolling around on the floor, and lie kicked it away. There was a loud clunk when the glasses collided into one another. The individual, however, remained in the same place and showed no response to the noise. He tipped his head back and gulped down some of the liquid, but after two more swigs, the bottle was dry. He turned around and tried shaking the bottle, but nothing came out. With disdain, he tossed it away. Crash!

It made a loud noise as it shattered.

Arianna frowned at this and walked through the mess. She stood in front of him and asked," How long do you intend to keep drinking?" "Have you felt heartache?" He opened his eyes, glanced at her, and sneered. He then picked up

a can of beer next to him, opened it, and gulped it down. "I've said it before. You can continue drinking as you like! It's up to you to stay in this hell, as it's your choice. You can always look for me if you want to stand up again."

There were empty wine bottles and glass shards around her where she stood. Arianna was wearing a black cashmere coat and looked extravagant and delicate. She seemed out of place.

"Look for you... what can you do? Can you lielp me save my company? Can you turn back time?" He wanted to rewind the clock if it was possible. There were many things that he regretted. However, there was no curc (or regrets in this world.

"Of course..." Arianna paused for a moment and continued, "Not!

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"If that's the case, why are we even having this conversation?" He sneered, a rhetorical question as he clearly knew the answer. Arianna's expression remained calm as she looked at his depressed appearance. She smiled ironically, "I can't turn back time, but I can lielp you make a comeback! The company cannot be saved, but you can start over!"

"What an easy thing to say. Start over!" He laughed.

He shook his liead and said, "Did you know how difficult it was for me to start the company? I started from nothing, and gradually, it became what it is today. Every table, every chair, and every bit of everything was my blood and sweat. Start over? I have nothing to start over now!"

"That's why I'm here to help you!" Arianna faced him with her hands on her back. She looked like a princess, devoid of any dust and dirt.

"You're here to help me?" He opened his eyes to look at her and smiled mockingly, "Forget it! Your life in the Tanner family is not as good as it seemed. What do you have that can help me?!"

He somewhat knew the situation in the Tanner family. Even though Arianna was the only daughter of Joseph Tanner and Eloise Neville, Joseph was a man who favored his son over his daughter. Therefore, he might love his daughter but would not let her inherit the family business. Moreover, Joseph had an illegitimate son. He would likely leave his inheritance to that child instead of Arianna.

Arianna was not angry at his ridicule. "That's right! My situation within the Tanner family is indeed not ideal. However, I'm the legitimate daughter of the Tanner family. I'm not like you, an illegitimate child."

"You..." Her words hit his sore spot and made him angry. "I still have more capital at my disposal than you, no matter what. Therefore, I'm not joking when I say I can help you. I can do as I say. What do you think? Would you consider cooperating with me?" Arriana offered him a hand and believed he would grab it. "Why do you want to cooperate with me?" He was full of doubts, "I'm no help to you at all with

my current situation. If you are looking for a partner, there are plenty of candidates!" "There are indeed many candidates, but... you're the most suitable person!" Arianna looked at him and said with certainty.

"Is that so?"

"I don't want to admit that you're my brother if possible. However, there's nothing I can do. Mother already liad you before she gave birth to me. It's not like I can push you back into her womb. We should work together as we have the same mother. Don't you think so?"

Arianna kept her distance and did not go nearer as he smelled pungent. She left him there after she picked him up that day. She arranged for a reliable person to take care of him. He spent his days between being drunk and sleeping as though he wanted to drink to his death. She felt that now was the right time to come and talk to him.

"Stop lying. Do you think I'll believe you?" He turned away and laughed. He threw the can

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away and patted his body with both hands to look for something. When he did not find anything, he turned back to her and asked, "Do you have a cigarette?"

Arianna took out a cigarette box from her bag and pulled one out. She threw it at him, along with a lighter. "Thanks!" He thanked lier, lit the cigarello, and took a deep purl. Then he narrowed his eyes and exhaled slowly.

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"Whether we're willing to admit it or not, we're blood relatives." Arianna continued.

Her mother thought she did not know. It was not just Arianna, either. Her father also knew her mother had another son out there. A son with her ex-husband.

They kept quiet and pretended they did not know since they knew the Tanners needed a matriarch to run the household and deal with family issues. Of course, they did it to maintain the facade of the great Tanner family, so they would not be ridiculed. Since her mother handled it carefully and did not intend to bring her son back by her side, her father turned a blind eye.

Nathaniel Hall disagreed with Arianna, "In that case, why don't you go to your younger brother? At least he has the same father as you." Nathaniel was not convinced by Arianna, who tried to use the 'family card' on him. Even siblings harm each other all the time. It did not mean anything.

"I know you don't trust me, and I'll be honest with you. Yes, I come to you for this collaboration not just because you are my brother, but also because you pose no danger to me.

Nathaniel and Arianna were indeed related. Both were similarly suspicious of each other and knew each other all too well. "Oh?" Raising his eyebrows, Nathaniel took a puff of his cigarette and gestured to Arianna to continue.

"You know that my other, younger half-brother... We have the same father. I might as well tell you that my father intends to bring him back to the Tanner family so that he can legitimately take over the family's business. Do you think I would wanna work with him?" Nathaniel was a little surprised. He did not expect that Joseph would do that. Even so, he concealed his surprise, shrugged, and said, "Who knows? You might be happy to have a little brother."

"What the h*ll are you talking about?" At this moment, Arianna lost her composure.

She grabbed Nathaniel's collar and pulled him closer, staring at him fiercely, "Once that b* stard joins the family, the next would be his sk*nky mother. At that point, I'll lose my status in the Tanner family

and our mother... Do you think she'll still be able to sit firmly? If she loses in this battle, Nathaniel, don't even think about having a chance to turn your life around!

Seeing the dazed look on Nathaniel's face, Arianna let go of him in disgust and pushed him down, "Oh, I forgot! Maybe you don't want that chance in the first place. Maybe you just want to be a coward, hiding in your dark corner, getting drunk in your sorrows all day long." "Another thing, I forgot to tell you... Is Lily Christian your ex–girlfriend?" Hearing Lily's name, Nathaniel's eyes lit up.

"She's going to marry the president of La Beauté Group, Alexander Russell. What about you? You can do nothing but sit in the corner and cry. I despise you." Arianna brushed her hands as

if they were dirty from pulling Nathaniel's collar. She turned around proudly and said, "Okay, you can go on like this, but if one day, mom is forced out of the Tanner family, there'll be no liding place for you anymore."

Looking around, Arianna had the most contemptuous smile on her face

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"Fine! I'll do it!" Nathaniel suddenly thundered.

Arianna stopped and turned around. "I'll do it. I'll work with you," Nathaniel repeated and struggled to get up from his bed as glass bottles around him fell to the floor. "What do you want me to do?" Arianna smiled. "Don't worry. I have something good for you." She turned and walked toward Nathaniel. "I have a group of henchmen who sort out matters for me. It's sort of like an organization. However, some things are inappropriate or inconvenient for me to discuss now. I'll need your help with those."

"To put it bluntly, you want me to do your dirty work," Nathaniel said with a chuckle. He did not expect a soft and gentle girl like Arianna to handle things this way. If she had not said it herself, he would not believe it. "Don't say that. Who's to say what's dirty and what's not? As long as you can achieve your goals, nobody cares llow you do it," Arianna said disapprovingly, "Look at how great the Russells' empire is now. Do you think Alexander's hands are clean? This includes the Tanners or the Richards in Kingsland, who dares say they're all innocent?"

"Okay, I'm not arguing with you about that, and I didn't say no, but why do you need me since you have a group of people to do it for you?"

'It's not easy to lead a group of henchmen. Would she feel at ease handing over such power to me?'

As if seeing through what Nathaniel was thinking, Arianna said, "You don't have to worry about that. Since I'm giving it to you, I'm confident I have everything under control. It's just that I have too many things to do, and I always need someone to help me." "What's in it for me?" Since it would be a collaboration, there must be some benefits for both sides. No one would collaborate without benefits.

"Well, although there are not many people in my organization, they're elites. Apart from conveying my orders, you can use them as long as it's manageable. Of course, i'll give you some of the Tanner family's assets when things get done. Isn't this much better than starting over from scratch?"

Indeed, Arianna's offer was very tempting, but Nathaniel was still skeptical. "You're willing to share the Tanner family's assets with me?"

"If I can get everything, there's no big deal with sharing some with you." Arianna shrugged. "You want everything?!" Nathaniel was shocked. He thought she just wanted a part of it. It was common for those in wealthy families to fight for family assets, but he did not expect the extent of her greed. With a sarcastic smile, Arianna turned around and said unhurriedly, "Since I have decided to fight, of course, I'll go all out. Otherwise, what is the point of all my efforts?" She continued, "What's wrong with being a woman? They don't think women can handle the family business. Well, I want to prove that I can do it and do it better!" Her eyes shone with vindictive light.

Since childhood, she had been excellent in her homework and had developed many good ideas for the company, but those were nothing in her father's eyes. Joseph never saw her efforts because she was a

woman. Since that was the case, she wanted to take everything so that her father's little b*stard would not get a dime.

Not just him. There was also Arianna's uncle's ungrateful loser son, who only knew how to carve wood. Arianna wanted everyone to see her strength. "Either way, it will be good for you if you hielp me," she said confidently, "Wouldn't it be easy to turn your life around once you have the means?"

After pondering, Nathaniel asked cautiously, "Aren't you afraid I'll rob you of your family business just like them?"