

Reborn 571

Chapter 571 Martina's Revenge (4) Manuel's Here

In the abandoned warehouse, Martina let loose her true colours, fierce and terrifying.

She roared, "Shut your damn mouth! You don't get to say that!"

Susan endured the burning pain in her cheek, staring at Martina with her teeth clenched.

That was a stinging slap.

Although resenting Manuel, Martina didn't allow anyone to say anything bad about him. She must love him so much.

"Susan Phillips, you're such an idiot to choose Henry Parker instead of Manuel. Did you get a clue what kind of person Henry is?" Martina burst out laughing, seeming to have thought of something that would bring her great satisfaction.

Susan looked at the woman who had got mad.

"Sadly, I won't tell you!" said Martina fiercely, "You'll never know how stupid your life was!"

"Martina, What the hell do you want!" Susan had no idea and cared little about what she was talking about. She was just well aware that she would be driven crazy if Martina kept doing that.

"What do I want? Kill you, of course, and torment you before I kill you!" said she viciously.

"You're crazy!" Susan couldn't hold back her fear any longer. She didn't want to die, at least not at such a young age. "You know it's against the law, right?"

"Against the law?" Martina sneered dismissively, "I've broken it many times, okay? Let me put it this way. My brother and I planned a lot in secret. We even tried to kill Sarah Collins. Do you think I'm afraid to kill you?"

Her words chilled Susan, who had known she was a wrongdoer but did not expect that she was insane to the extent that when talking about killing someone she acted like it was not a big deal.

"Impressive, huh?"

"You lunatic!" cursed Susan.

"Do you know what I hate the most in my life?" Martina said through gritted teeth.

"Manuel doesn't love you!" Susan shouted back.

But who was to blame? It was her fault!

"That's just one of them." Martina watched Susan falling apart, with apathy. "I still can't figure out how my brother fell at Hannah's hands! Have you heard of what he's done to her? How did she get away from him!"

"Good prevails over evil!" Susan gave her a hard stare, "You think you've got it all covered, but God won't let you get away with it! It's only a matter of time before you lost to Hannah!"

“Enough!” It was beyond her endurance.

She might let go of the fact that Manuel wasn't into her and put it down to his fidelity to her love for Susan. But she couldn't take it anyway when it came to losing to Hannah. Once did, it'd mean that their family was indeed intellectually inferior to Hannah, which however, went against the Sawyers' abiding sense of superiority and the belief that they were the smartest, the most calculating, and that everyone was no match for them. Yet unexpectedly, they were defeated, completely.

The more she thought about it, the angrier she became, while Susan was feeling much better.

Fortunately, Hannah saw through their ruse, otherwise who knew what kind of hell Hannah would've been through?

“Susan, that's enough patience for you!” Martina's face darkened all at once. A murderous gleam appeared in her eyes by which Susan was instinctively frightened even though she got herself all psyched up. She bit her lip and scowled at her.

“Since I can't kill Hannah, your death can also serve as revenge for her!” said Martina balefully.

Susan was trembling all over on hearing this.

“Before I kill you,” Martina looked her over from head to foot, with cold eyes.

Susan stiffened her body, trying not to lose in total breakdown.

“I'd like to see what it is about you that he is attracted to!” Martina said evilly, “I've been thinking about it, and the only thing that occurs to me is your body. I must say, it's quite seductive.”

Susan's pupils dilated and her body was shivering uncontrollably with dread.

“You two!”

The men behind Martina came to her immediately.

“Strip her naked!” she ordered.

“Martina!” Susan couldn't believe she would do such a thing to her.

She was unmoved by Susan's crack-up. What's worse, she was in perverted interest to see her humiliated. It must feel wonderful-no, excellent to see that!

Martina watched them going up to Susan and stripping her clothes off without hesitation. They were about to rip off her clothes when suddenly there was a loud bang at the warehouse gate.

Martina turned pale right away.

How did Manuel get here so fast?

She was now at a pier on the very edge of Kensbury City, and suppose he started from the nearest part of the city, it would take him at least half an hour to get here, and more than 20 minutes if he was faster.

But now, he got here less than 15 minutes after she had called him.

Manuel must love Susan so much that he was so desperate to save her life.

Martina's face grew darker at the thought. She had anticipated that he would see how badly Susan had been treated on arrival and she would see him suffer and regret.

She gritted her teeth and glared at the huge iron gate that was being kicked hard.

"Plug up her eyes, ears and mouth!" Martina ordered.

She didn't want Susan to know Manuel came to her rescue lest she took it as a source of pride in front of her. Susan was doomed to death today anyway, but Martina wanted her death to be miserable.

Susan was blindfolded, put on a headset to block out the sounds around, and gagged with a strip of cloth. Still, she sensed that someone was there, who might come to save her. Her heart was beating so fast with a mixture of terror and expectation that pushed her to the brink of collapse.

At length, the gate was crashed open. It was unimaginable that a huge iron gate was smashed by him bare-handed.

Seeing Manuel, Martina was almost certain that he was the one who had got Sarah out of her hands.

Chapter 572 Martina's Revenge (5) Make the Choice

Martina never thought he was that powerful. The Manuel she knew was just an average Joe, weak and aloof. Today, however, she wouldn't have recognized the man wearing a black mask if she didn't know him well.

Even up until this moment, she had suspected that man might be a mercenary, a super-killer or something, and now she was one hundred per cent sure it was him.

She watched Manuel walking up to her. That was a Manuel she had never seen-there was no gentleness or humility in him but hostility and wrath, as horrible as a furious lion.

Martina had a twitch in her throat when she realized that he was truly riled up and lost control of himself, only because Susan was in danger.

But, why. Why did Susan deserve his love while she didn't? She loved him that much, why couldn't she win his affection?

The jar that suppressed her emotions got cracked, with her eyes scarlet. As Manuel was getting close to her, the black pistol in Martina's hand abruptly pointed at Susan's head.

Manuel stopped in his tracks. He looked indifferently into her desperate red eyes, in which a burning hatred gleamed.

Then he fixed his eyes upon Susan, whose eyes, mouth or even ears were all got stuffed up. He saw her body shivering with fright.

"Feel bad for her?" Martina asked.

He only looked at her once but kept gazing at Susan with concern.

Beneath her ice-cold shell, her heart was bitterly broken. She could never understand why under such circumstances he still set his sight on Susan.

Was she the one who was hurting the most right now? She lost her family, wealth and fame-she got nothing. Didn't he feel any pity for her?

"Let her go," Manuel said with an icy voice.

"For what?" Martina smiled sadly, with tears flowing down her cheeks.

"Why should I? I hate her guts! Why should I make it easy for her? Since I'm going to die, why don't I take her with me?"

"You don't want to die," Manuel told her straight.

"Like I have a choice."

"If you leave right now, you have. I didn't call the cop or any Collins. You're free to go now!"

Martina wore a sarcastic smile. Then what? She ended up with nothing but her living shell.

"Martina Sawyer, do not make me regret I had let you go today." He said slowly.

"You finally admit you're the man."

"I am."

"Who are you?" Martina got to falling apart-the man before her was by no means the Manuel she knew for more than ten years.

"Who I am is immaterial," said he blandly, "what counts is that it's only a matter of time before your family ended up like this."

"Why!" Martina couldn't take it anymore. If it weren't for him, the tragedy of her family wouldn't have happened. If Sarah died, what they had done wouldn't have been unearthed and they could've staged a comeback.

"Because you messed with the wrong person."

"Who? Don't say it's Hannah." Martina spoke with heavy irony. She still despised Hannah, thinking that she merely happened to be able and tried to be smart, but that was all she got-she couldn't manipulate everything, especially those under the table.

"Oscar Wells." Manuel didn't want to hide from her any longer, and had no need to-she was useless now.

Martina stared at him in disbelief. Upon hearing the name, a thrill of alarm ran through her. It was rather an instinct like the name was a lethal weapon that scared her off.

"Who is he? Who the hell is he!" Martina was almost driven out of her mind.

Oscar was the last man the Sawyer family cared about, and the only reason they had intended to get rid of him was that he was getting in the way. They had never thought about he might be somebody and have a powerful background.

Martina even wondered whether all these things were just a deep pit, an abyss, that Oscar had designedly dug waiting for them to jump in.

“He’s an untouchable for your whole family.”

“Who is he!” snarled Martina.

As the voice that laid bare her total derangement pierced Susan’s headphones and reached her ears, she shuddered in panic. That caught Manuel’s attention and then he said to Martina, “Does it matter? What do you care if you know who he is? You and your family were dead at his hands after all.

“I hate to take this!” Martin was in a complete nervous breakdown.

She didn’t care how her family lost the game. She was just overwhelmed by the fact that her family was left with nothing! And this was it.

“That’s natural selection.” Manuel remained cold-hearted, “Your only way out is to leave Northfield.

“You’re not gonna kill me?” she asked.

Manuel pursed his thin lips.

“You’re from his side, why don’t you kill me since he wanted to get rid of us?”

He didn’t answer.

“Is it in part because you don’t have the heart to do that?” she asked him expectantly.

Manuel swallowed and said, “It is.”

Tears welled up in her eyes instantly.

“Manuel, did you ever have affection for me, even a little bit? Was there a moment when you may have feelings for me?” Martina couldn’t wait to confirm her position in his heart.

“I did.”

She laughed with her tears pouring down.

So, he did have a feeling for her. Given a little more time, a little more, she could’ve made him fall in love with her.

Martina was getting emotional, “Manuel, leave with me.”

His eyes moved slightly.

“You leave Northfield with me, I’ll let her go!” Martina made it very clear.

Would he trade himself for Susan’s life?

Manuel didn’t answer, not for a long time. And Martina did not urge him, just waited and waited.

She was willing to wait for him forever.

Chapter 573 Martina's Revenge (6) Deal

She stared at him, with undisguised expectation. Wordlessly, Manuel met her gaze.

"Deal."

He agreed.

He denied his love for Susan yet he seemed willing to do anything for her. That left Martina in a daze and unsure whether to be sad or happy-Susan was the only reason Martina had him.

"Will you lie to me?" she asked him, with her eyes reddish.

"I won't," Manuel replied.

Martina bought him for he never went back on his word. She reached out and tried to hold him, but he raised his hand and dodged.

"You let her go first."

"What if you run away?" as she said, Martina fastened her eyes upon him.

A subtle change of expression crossed his face.

"She'll stay. The smuggler boat will arrive in half an hour. And when we get on board, I'll let someone pick her up." Martina put it plainly, "Manuel, you are not in a position to negotiate with me, provided you want her to live."

Manuel's eyes widened as he focused on the black pistol in her hand. With the slightest distraction, she could have shot Susan.

He swallowed hard and looked away from the frightened Susan to meet Martina's gaze. "Fine."

Martina's smile was barely able to hide her disappointment deep down, the feeling that she chose to ignore. As long as she had him around, she could care less how much he loved Susan.

She reached out again to hold Manuel and he didn't dodge this time. Holding his hand tight, she put down the black pistol and said, "let's go then."

Manuel glanced back at Susan who couldn't see or hear anything yet sensed that they left. A greater fear loomed over her.

Susan thought they were about to kill and bury her. And she wondered whether the man came to save her or to support Martina. She couldn't figure it out while being tortured by her fear. She didn't want to die in her beautiful years and at Martina's hands somehow. Tears poured down her cheeks. She wished for someone to get her out of there, desperately.

The iron door was shut. Martina and Manuel reached a hidden corner of the dock, waiting quietly for the boat to arrive.

About half an hour later, a battered ship in the distance with only one light on it was seen coming slowly this way, looking lonely and depressed.

Having been used to a life of glory and wealth, Martina wasn't reconciled to leaving just like this.

Manuel watched calmly the boat moving nearer and nearer until it was anchored.

An old plank was placed at their feet, and they had to step on it to board and get out of Northfield.

Martina took Manuel by the hand and got on board, while the two men with her didn't, for that was not a part of their mission which was only to keep her safe.

As the ship was ready to sail, Manuel broke away from Martina and ran to the edge of the boat.

"Manuel!" Martina seemed to have anticipated his backtrack and aimed her pistol at him, shouting, "If you get off, I'll kill you for real and we'll die together!"

He halted. The ship was drifting away from the shore.

"Sure enough, you're still lying to me." Martina sneered, with the rims of her eyes red.

Yes, he lied. There was no way for him to leave with Martina as he didn't love her. What he had felt about her was nothing but pity, for they had both been hurt so hard by someone they loved. That, however, was not love.

It was Martina's dedication to him that made him conscious of what his love for Susan meant to her—a burden.

Manuel looked back at Martina and said, "I won't go with you."

She gave a slight, ironic smile, the only look she could make at the moment.

"You have to leave, but I don't. My home's here. I have no reason to go with you." He couldn't be clearer.

"It's for Susan in the end," Martina muttered. She knew it in the first place, but she kept giving herself hope.

"Nothing to do with her."

"Then why save her?"

"That's out of kindness," he explained, "I would do the same for you."

"Oh?" She didn't believe him at all, "Now, will you save me?" She suddenly turned the gun against her head as she finished her words fiercely.

Manuel got pale a little.

"If I say I'll die in front of you once you leave, would you come with me?"

He clenched his fists.

"Would you?" Martina pushed him.

"I wouldn't." He said with his throat slightly moved.

"So, is that what you mean by saying you'll do the same thing for me?" Her eyes were misted with tears, "Manuel Johnson, I love you so much, I love you so, so much. What on earth do you love about her?"

"I didn't come because I love her. It's just she's innocent in our relationship and she doesn't deserve your seeking revenge." Manuel exposed her lies, "Besides, you wouldn't let her go."

There was a visible change in her look.

"When we leave, you'll have her killed instead of released," Manuel asked her affirmatively, "am I right?"

"You're right!" Martina confessed.

There was no reason for her to keep Susan alive, whose existence was no more than a threat to her. As long as Susan was alive, he would never get over her. So Martina wanted Susan dead, and that would be the only outcome for her today whatever Manuel decided.

What she didn't expect was that he had seen through it yet played along with her. So what Manuel did was just to give Susan a few more minutes to live, wasn't it?

It didn't matter to Martina anymore. The worst that could happen to her was that all three of them would die here together.

Now that she had nothing, if dead, she'd be relieved, whereas Susan's death would be a pity. It was worth it anyway. She broke into demented laughter.

Manuel cast a sharp glance at her and while she was distracted, he stepped forward at a gallop and took the gun out of her hand before she knew it. He was so fast that she didn't even know how he did it.

Chapter 574 Rescue

Manuel turned around to leave.

"Manuel!" Martina screamed. She didn't expect it would end up like this, but Manuel just had it effortlessly, which had broken her.

"Take care!" Manuel said instead of stopping his steps. It was the last sympathy he had for her.

Martina just watched him jump off the ship, suffering from the agony of being abandoned.

Tears blurred her eyes. She couldn't understand why Manuel would do that to her. Couldn't he feel her love for him?

She went up to the side of the ship step by step. She had never thought of living alone. Just standing on the deck, she watched him swimming hard towards the shore.

"It's useless! Manuel, you won't be able to save Susan." She thought to herself.

She smiled complacently. At least, she would have killed Susan even if she died and lost everything in the end.

Since now there was no reason to keep her alive anymore, she would wait for Susan in the afterlife, and perhaps Manuel would come with Susan too.

Thinking of this, Martina climbed up to the guardrails. She fixed her eyes on the man in the sea and kept laughing wildly. Anyway, she had gained a lot even if she died. It was worth it.

There was a splash, with a shape falling into the sea abruptly.

Manuel, who was swimming towards the shore, turned around to glance at the ship. He saw splashes on the sea but it was covered by the sea waves the next second as if it had never existed.

“Someone overboard! Someone overboard!” there came some screams from the ship. All people on board were on the run. So, they were numb to the life and death of other people. A few of them talked about it, then they fell into silence again.

Manuel swallowed a little. But he went on to swim fast towards the shore. He had imagined Martina would kill herself. But it wasn't his responsibility. It was her choice. He'd given her quite many opportunities to live, and he'd done his best.

Manuel swam back to the shore as fast as he could and made it to the warehouse.

He pushed the gate open and found Susan curling herself up there on the floor. She was frightened and her mind was wandering. She had earplugs in her ears and couldn't hear a sound. Nor could she feel anyone there.

Manuel didn't feel relieved until he saw her. He even imagined he was going to find a dead body. But Surprisingly, she was still alive, though she had been scared to death.

So, Manuel's feelings were changing little by little.

Did he misunderstand Martina? Did he think too bad of her for she did not kill Susan?

Suddenly, he felt like crying and recalled Martina's desperate face when she jumped off the ship.

Manuel managed his emotions and went over to Susan step by step.

He squatted down. But Susan trembled abruptly when he just touched her.

“Mm-mm...” Susan wanted to say something.

Manuel was about to pull out the cloth from her mouth, but he was stunned the next second-he saw Susan squatting on the floor with a time bomb on her ankle.

For one second, he'd thought he was wrong about Martina.

Manuel clenched his fists and his face looked extremely twisted.

Susan was twisting her body, trying to struggle out of fear.

He managed to calm himself down and checked the bomb on Susan's ankle.

There were five minutes left. Susan would be bombed to ashes if he failed to remove it within five minutes.

Martina was cruel. Maybe she had expected Manuel would eat his words. That was why she set the bomb on purpose. Once Manuel came back for Susan but gave her up because of the bomb, Susan would be a dead body. If not, he'd die together with Susan.

Until the last minute of her life, Martina was still trying to prove how much Manuel loved Susan.

He was sweating like hell, and checking the bomb with his shaking fingers, trying to confirm the type and find the wires.

Susan couldn't calm down out of fear, and she tried hard to make a sound. Unfortunately, she failed.

She didn't know who exactly it was. She could only feel someone beside her ankle.

All she remembered was that someone came here again to tie something to her ankle. Since her hands were tied in the back, she was unable to touch it and find out what it was. It didn't cause her any pain but it was a little too heavy.

But, what on earth was it? She was so scared that she dared not think on the bad side.

The clock was ticking.

Manuel found two wires, a red one and a blue one. And he just needed to cut one of them to stop the timer. Gritting his teeth, he took out a portable Swiss army knife from his pocket.

Normally, it was the blue one. But most people didn't play by the rules. So, it could be the red one as well. It was a 50% chance. But they would be 100% screwed if he picked the wrong one.

Manuel began panicking bit by bit. He raised his eyes to look at Susan, who was extremely scared with her face turning deadly pale.

At this moment, he wondered if he should take off her blinder. He wondered if he should let her see his face.

He reached out his hand and tried to take off the blinder, but just froze it there right before her eyes. Life and death were in a second. He wasn't sure whether he wanted Susan to remember him for a lifetime or just forget him.

Suddenly, Susan stopped trembling.

She had just been freaking out a moment before and shaking with fear, but at that moment, she calmed herself abruptly.

Susan could feel someone staring at her deeply, and had a strong feeling that she knew him very well and she could even smell the familiar scent on him. Although she couldn't be sure who it was, from the bottom of her heart, she believed it was Manuel.

"Mm-mm, mm-hmm..." Susan was trying to say something again.

She wanted to call Manuel's name. She got so desperate that she burst into tears, which dropped down from the blinder to her cheeks.

Manuel put his fingers on her cheek softly. Susan was touched by the sudden body contact and she got a feeling welling up inside her.

Chapter 575 Susan's Change

What he did made Susan more sure about her answer-the man ahead of her was Manuel. But the touch was gone abruptly the next second. And she could feel he'd stopped staring at her.

How she wished she could call his name loudly! The man seemed to have been further and further away from her.

She was afraid Manuel was going to leave her and give her up. Insecurity haunted her at the time.

She even couldn't tell whether she was afraid of being killed the next second or she was afraid that Manuel would just leave her there. She began struggling crazily.

At this moment, Manuel seemed to have chilled out by then. Led by instinct, he picked the red wire. He would die with Susan if he picked the wrong one.

He lifted the knife and cut the red wire with strength.

Suddenly, the ticktock of the timer stopped. He made it! The bomb didn't blow up.

Manuel was sweating like hell again and was all wet. He just slumped on the floor when he realized the timer had stopped counting.

Indeed, he'd assumed the worst that he'd be bombed to ashes together with Susan if he cut the wrong wire.

He gasped heavily and helped Susan take the bomb off her ankle, then tried to leave with Susan in his arms.

Suddenly, the timer, which had stopped, began counting down with that ticktock again.

Manuel was frozen. He turned around to look at the bomb again. This time he'd got 30 seconds.

Unbelievably, it was a serial time bomb. That was to say, the timer would be triggered again ten seconds after he cut the wire. And, he couldn't cut the wire to stop the explosion this time.

Manuel picked up the bomb and ran out of the warehouse as fast as he could. Susan could only feel someone running fast away from her like a gust of wind.

Was something wrong?

Susan had no idea what she'd been through from the very beginning until she heard a big noise like an explosive sound, which was not so far or close to her.

The big noise was very scary and the warehouse was shaking, but she wasn't injured at all.

Susan was falling apart.

What on earth had happened? And where had Manuel been?

She tried hard to stand up but she was tied up and couldn't move at all.

It felt like ages. Suddenly, someone took off the blinder for her. Finally, she could see again.

She fixed her eyes on the man in front of her.

It was Henry.

How could it be Henry?

Where was Manuel?

Shouldn't it be Manuel?

"Susan? Susan?" Henry saw Susan and got scared out.

How come she was kidnapped in the middle of the night?

How come she'd been abused like this?

He saw her face was deadly pale, and she had bruises all over. Henry stared at her anxiously and pulled out the cloth from her mouth and took out the earplugs from her ears.

It took quite a while for Susan to come back to earth. She looked around, trying to find Manuel. But where was he?

"Susan," Henry was scared by Susan's frightened face, "There. There. It's OK. I'm here. I won't let you get hurt again. Don't be scared, my love."

Henry held Susan into his arms, but he just couldn't warm Susan, who was still cold.

She was still looking for Manuel, for she was so sure that he had just been there with her.

"It's OK. I'll take you home." Henry held her in his arms for a while and tried to carry her out of the warehouse.

"Where's Manuel?" asked Susan.

Henry was stunned and stared at her without a blink.

"Did you see Manuel?" Susan looked at him and asked.

"You're alone here." Henry said immediately, "Did Manuel kidnap you?"

'No! Manuel saved me!' she thought in mind.

"I'll call the police." Henry picked up his phone.

Susan grabbed his hand and asked, "How did you get here? How did you know I'm here?"

She asked Henry all at once. She wanted to know if it was Manuel who told him that.

"I've got a call from an unknown number and he told me you are here. I doubted it, but couldn't reach you on the phone. So I came over to check it out and fortunately, you are here! What happened?" Henry said anxiously.

Hearing it, Susan got upset, since she started doubting the identity of the man who had saved her life.

“Let me take you home first.” Henry carried Susan up from the floor.

Susan didn’t struggle again. She lay in Henry’s arms and looked at his anxious face.

She lowered her eyes. Somehow, she was sad but she couldn’t tell why.

Henry took her home directly. Before that, he’d planned to take her to the hospital instead, but Susan knew it was unnecessary since she wasn’t seriously injured.

Henry stayed by her bed and tucked her in tenderly.

Closing her eyes, Susan couldn’t help thinking of Manuel and the man who had saved her. Consequently, she failed to sleep.

“Henry,” Susan called him with closed eyes.

“Yes? I’m right here.” Henry held her hand tightly.

“You can go now. I’m fine.”

“Susan...”

“I’m fine. You’re having an important company meeting tomorrow, right? Go home and have a good rest.”

“I can’t just go and leave you here alone.”

“It was just an accident.” Susan said lightly, “Just go.”

Although he didn’t intend to go he didn’t want to bother her, either.

He could feel Susan didn’t want him to be there at the moment. So, he stood up and said, “Sleep tight. Call me if you are scared. I’ll come for you, any time.”

“Okay.” Susan nodded.

Anyway, Henry left. He got furious the moment he got out of her house.

He could feel that Susan didn’t depend on him as much as before. By then, he remembered that Susan had been looking for Manuel in the warehouse, looking very nervous and worried, as if she was afraid of losing him.

Clenching his fists, Henry suspected it was Manuel who had kidnapped Susan and planned it all and he got annoyed since he know nothing about what had happened tonight.

Chapter 576 Misunderstanding

Susan found it harder to calm herself after Henry left.

She seemed to be agitated about something.

Tossing and turning, she finally sat up on the bed and reached out for her phone unconsciously. But she found it had been taken away by Martina.

Henry told her to call him if she was scared but he knew that she’d lost her phone.

Susan bit her lips, wondering if Henry loved and deserved her. She told herself not to overthink it. Then she got dressed and left home.

Actually, she was still in a panic but somehow, she went out in the middle of the night, and she even drove by herself. The car had been in the garage for a long time.

She sat down on the driving seat, took a deep breath, started the car and stepped on it. She had to talk to Manuel to figure it out.

She was driving at an average speed, and her heart kept beating very fast. Susan parked the car and went up to Manuel's apartment. Staring at the door, she suddenly felt like chickening out.

Nervous, she wanted nothing but the truth.

She was supposed to pay him back or thank him appropriately if he had saved her tonight. She would drag herself out of the wishful thinking if it wasn't him.

Susan took a deep breath and finally input the password. But it said wrong. Manuel had changed the password. Susan didn't feel hurt but she got complicated feelings in mind.

Then she rang the doorbell.

It rang several times but nobody came to open the door.

Was Manuel still out? Or, did Manuel have anything to do with that explosive sound? Was he in danger or injured?

A sudden fear freaked her out, and her face turned deadly pale.

At that moment, the door was abruptly open, and Manuel stood there with an impatient face.

She wasn't welcomed here, Susan thought.

She got stunned for a second and couldn't say a word for a long while.

"What's the matter?" Manuel said lightly and broke the silence first.

"You were home?" Susan came back to earth and asked.

"Any problem?"

"You've been home all the time?" Susan asked again.

"Yeah."

"Did you..."

"What do you want?" Manuel said impatiently.

Susan bit her lips. In her eyes, Manuel was always so cold to her.

"I think you've met me tonight." Susan was a little upset.

"I don't know what you're talking about." Manuel said coldly, "It's late. I must go to bed."

“Wasn’t it you tonight?” asked Susan. Somehow, her eyes were red with tears and she even didn’t know what the disappointment was for. She just felt so bad.

“Did you have a nightmare?” Manuel raised his eyebrows slightly.

Susan simply stared at him. Before she could say anything, Manuel blurted out, “You’ve come to the wrong place. Henry doesn’t live here.”

Susan looked at him without a blink and saw how little he cared about her.

His attitude to her showed everything. It couldn’t be him who had come to save her life tonight, since the man in her mind wasn’t as cold and heartless as him. She must have made a mistake.

Manuel put on a straight face and looked at her facial expressions carelessly. Susan seemed to have got nothing to say. So he said bluntly, “I must sleep now.”

Saying it, he was about to close the door. But Susan stopped it while it was closing, with her hand caught in the door. It hurt so much that she even cried.

Manuel took his hand off the door immediately. He then looked at her red and swollen hand, looking kind of worried.

“It’s late. Can you drive me home?” Susan swallowed the pain and said.

“Can’t you go back by yourself since you’ve come here on your own?” Manuel held back his emotions and said.

“No,” Susan stressed the word.

“You can call Henry.”

“I don’t have my phone.”

“I can call him for you...”

“Tell me. Did you call Henry and tell him to save me earlier tonight?” Susan said bluntly. She just wanted to confirm it was Manuel. She had a strong feeling that it was Manuel.

Meanwhile, Manuel was in silence.

Desperate, Susan couldn’t understand why Manuel would have refused to admit it.

Was he afraid she would bother him for the rest of his life?

But she just wanted to pay him back. She hated to owe a favour to anybody.

Manuel remained silent for a moment, while Susan simply kept looking at him, hoping to hear a positive answer from his mouth.

“No,” Manuel said neatly and clearly.

Susan was lost for words. She suddenly laughed, with tears in her eyes.

Manuel seemed calm to see Susan's mood swings, and said, "Hold on. Let me get dressed and drive you home."

So, he'd like to compromise to drive her home rather than admit he was the one who had saved her life tonight.

In tears, Susan watched him turn around and go into the room. She stared at his back, getting helpless.

Anyhow, she plucked up the courage to run after him. She had thought of doing it in the warehouse tonight. She had no idea why Manuel had left her, but she just wanted to hug him and feel the warmth in his arms.

However, Susan was suddenly frozen.

She found a woman lying in his king-size bed. Glued to the spot, Susan looked at the woman under the blanket with her bare arms out. She must be naked, Susan thought. And the woman was nobody else but Tia, the young servant who she had hired when she just married Manuel.

She'd ask Justine to hire a young and pretty servant since she intended to create some chances for Manuel to have an affair with Tia. And she'd got what she wanted now. Out of her expectation, Manuel had started an intimate relationship with Tia after she broke up with him and moved out. She thought he'd been single.

She once thought Manuel would be with Martina, but not with Tia. To give it a second thought, Manuel was really nice to Tia in the first place. He would teach her with patience no matter what she wanted to learn. The two of them spent lots of time together, and it was reasonable that they fell in love with each other and started a relationship.

Chapter 577 Love Was Gone for Good

"Miss Phillips," Tia called her in a low voice and looked a little timid.

Susan came back to earth and suddenly put on an exaggerated smile.

"Um... Sorry. I didn't mean to... I mean I didn't know you were together. I thought that... Well, forget it. Sorry. It seems I've interrupted you."

"No..." Tia wanted to explain but dared not say anything because Manuel was warning her with his sharp eyes. And Susan didn't notice that.

"Well, I shall leave and let you guys continue."

"Don't you want me to drive you home?" Manuel asked in a deep voice.

"Nope. Actually, I was just being unreasonable. I could make it here and of course, I can get myself back home." Susan said, trying to smile naturally.

Manuel just looked at her, seeing her squeezing out a smile.

"Do you want me to call Henry?" he asked.

"No." Susan turned it down immediately, "I don't want him to misunderstand anything."

Manuel pressed his lips and nodded slightly.

“Gotta run. Bye!”

She had tried to say something else or make fun of Tia, but she simply couldn't speak a word. And she just fled away from Manuel's apartment.

She ran back to her car and slammed the door. Grabbing the steering wheel hard with both hands, she didn't start the car.

Susan couldn't understand why it broke her heart. With tears shedding down her cheeks, she was very confused. She thought she must be too embarrassed about the mistake.

Manuel was with Tia tonight. How could he have shown up in the warehouse?

After all, Martina could do anything for Manuel. Besides, she was very familiar with that inexplicable feeling. So, she deemed it was Manuel.

But that wasn't true. She must distinguish between imagination and reality. She tried hard to chill out. However, she couldn't get rid of the scene where Tia was lying in Manuel's bed, naked.

There was no forever love. Once love was gone, it was gone for good.

Susan started the car and drove away.

Manuel stood by the French window and watched her drive away slowly. Several butts were scattered around him. Probably, he was trying hard to stop himself from going after her. And he didn't run after her, in the end.

He'd never expected Susan to be guilty of him, nor did he want to weaponize gratitude to hold onto her. Now that he'd given up his love, there was no turning back. He just hated to be a burden to anyone.

That was he hadn't gone back for Susan in the warehouse after he ran out with the bomb tonight.

He got blown away for meters when he threw it out at the gate of the warehouse. And it took a long while for him to wake up again. After that, never had he thought of leaving with her.

He didn't want Susan to know what he had done for her.

Thus, he called Henry with his phone, in which he'd installed software to hide his number and change his voice. He didn't get back to his car and left until he saw Henry leave with Susan in his arms.

His back was seriously injured by the explosion. He knew very clearly that Martina's death and the explosion in the warehouse would attract the local police's attention and they'd begin the investigation.

To avoid unnecessary trouble, he went straight home instead of going to the hospital. And he needed someone to clean the wound for him at home.

Since Theodore was away, and Oscar and Hannah were in the hospital, Tia was the last person he could think of and rely on. Out of question, he couldn't tell his mother, who would be freaked out. He hated to be a burden since he was little. So, he called Tia to come over and clean the wound for him. Surprisingly, Susan stopped by.

He thought Susan couldn't feel him in the warehouse because he knew she was a careless girl and she couldn't think much under that circumstance. But she did come for him.

Even so, he hadn't thought of telling her the truth, for he didn't want Susan to feel guilty.

He'd realized that his love would be Susan's trouble, which was learned from Martina's love for him.

Manuel knew how it felt.

Therefore, he had asked Tia to lie in his bed, only to make Susan misunderstand that they'd been together the whole night, which would remove all her doubts.

"Mr Johnson," Tia called him behind his back.

Manuel blinked his eyes slightly, put out the cigarette end and turned around.

"I saw Miss Phillips was heartbroken when she left. Would you like to explain..."

"No." Manuel gave her a quick no.

Tia couldn't understand why Manuel pushed Susan away since he still loved her so deeply.

"Please help me clean the wound on the back." Manuel changed the topic.

Tia nodded immediately.

Susan's knock had interrupted them. Tia couldn't help panicking when she thought of the wound on Manuel's back, wondering what had happened and how he'd got so badly injured.

The next day, Hannah opened her eyes.

She had stayed in the hospital with Oscar last night. Possibly, it would be her routine for a long time.

Stretching herself and turning over, she happened to find Oscar staring at her.

"Good morning, honey." He said with a pretty smile.

"Why didn't you wake me?"

"I couldn't do that. You were sleeping like a baby girl."

Slightly blushed, Hannah couldn't stand his sweet words.

"What time is it?" she sat up on the bed.

"It's past eight."

Usually, she would wake up naturally at around 7 AM. Undoubtedly, she'd been exhausted recently.

"Honey," said Oscar.

Upon hearing he addressed her as 'honey', Hannah was over the moon inside.

"Yes?" Hannah said and acted to be calm as usual.

"Put on your gown." Oscar reminded.

Lowering her head, she saw the hospital gown which was not dressed properly on her and was flushed again abruptly.

Oscar had been admitted to hospital urgently yesterday. She hadn't had much time to pack her stuff, so she put on the hospital gown.

The hospital gown was way too big and loose for her. Under it, her breasts were exposed. Hannah wrapped herself tight with the gown, covering her breasts.

"I'm afraid I can't help myself," Oscar said.

"It really tortures me to look at the sexy beauty but can't do anything," Oscar said slowly.

Hannah saw his eye glittering with sexual desire. He was hot and horny.

She instantly got out of bed and said, "I need to wash up now."

Damn it!

They'd been married for years and had sex a lot. Somehow, she still fell for his flirtation, which made her red in the face.

Chapter 578 Martina's Pathetic Ending

Hannah sat on the toilet with a red face. Her heart was just pounding away.

Hannah murmured to curse Oscar.

Fortunately, she had the habit of going to the toilet with her phone. That would help to calm herself down.

By chance, a piece of news caught her eyes.

It read, "Martina Sawyer's body floated on X Beach, salvaged by the local fishermen."

In no time, she clicked the title to read the news content and saw several pictures. She could recognize the swollen dead woman was Martina, even though the body had been blurred.

Martina died last night.

How did she die?

When Hannah sent Manuel to save Sarah, she thought that Manuel would spare Martina.

She hated Martina badly. But she would respect Manuel's choice if he wanted Martina alive. After all, Martina loved him so much. Manuel might not have the stomach to kill her.

So, she didn't get to the bottom of it when Charles and Loretta were under arrest but Martina just disappeared.

Martina's death was beyond her expectation. She had died even before Charles and Loretta were sentenced.

What had happened?

Did the Collins family find her and finish her first?

With a thought, Hannah decided to call Manuel.

Manuel was getting dressed. It was Tia who was helping him since he was seriously injured.

Tia, the servant, had stayed there for him last night.

Manuel's back was wrapped with gauze.

With her hands moving slowly, Tia was afraid to touch his wounds. She could still remember how terrible Manuel's wounds were.

She couldn't help to say, "Mr Johnson, maybe you should ask for a day off today. It's inevitable to rub the wounds when you put on the shirt. What if they open up again?"

"I'm fine. No biggie." Manuel said. By then, he had put on the shirt and buttoned the shirt by himself.

Tia didn't think that a man like Manuel, who was well provided for, needed to work so hard.

He had been super rich without his salaries from Phillips Bank. Why must he be so mean to himself?

At the thought of it, she wanted to convince him again, but Manuel's phone rang suddenly.

"Hello, Hannah." Answered Manuel.

"Hi, Manuel. Did you read the news?"

"About what?"

"Martina is dead." Hannah said straightly, "The local fishermen found her body on the seashore of X Sea."

"I see," Manuel said.

"Aren't you surprised?" Hannah frowned, but she was enlightened the next second, "You knew it already?"

"Yeah."

"Did you get something to do with Martina's death?"

Manuel didn't keep it from Hannah and told her what had happened last night.

"So, Martina committed suicide, for you." Hannah concluded.

Manuel didn't deny it.

"She thought Susan would be dead, too, but it turned out that you've saved Susan." Hannah went on speaking, wondering whether it would drive Martina crazy if she knew Susan was still alive.

Surely, Hannah had no chance to witness her anger at that moment. But it was a piece of exciting news for her. Manuel would take pity on Martina's death, but she wouldn't, considering all those terrible things that Martina had done to her in her previous life.

“How are you?” Hannah asked.

“I’m OK.”

“Are you sure you’re not gonna tell Susan?”

“Mm-mm.”

“Maybe Susan would be moved if she knew the truth.” Hannah reminded.

“I don’t need that, and I don’t want her to be moved.” Manuel said decisively, “I’ve never thought of getting back together with her since I decided to let her go. I hope you can keep the secret.”

“Really? Are you so disappointed with Susan?” Hannah sighed.

Manuel gave up the chance as a bargaining chip in exchange for Susan’s love so easily, which surprised Hannah.

“I’ve tried once. I don’t want to try it again or make it a burden to both of us. Martina’s love for me gave me a better understanding of my love for Susan.”

“But I always believe Susan loves you. In the previous life...”

“Hannah,” Manuel interrupted her.

Hannah pursed her lips. She still wanted to fix them up from time to time though she knew Manuel had gotten over it.

Hannah heaved a sigh, “OK. I’ll stop. After all, love is between two people only.”

“Hmm.” Manuel changed the topic, “How’s Oscar today?”

“Um...” Hannah thought of it and answered, “well, in HIGH spirits.”

Manuel smiled lightly and thought Hannah’s words meant something else.

“Good. Take good care of him. Bye.”

“Take care of yourself.” Hannah reminded.

Frowning, Manuel put down the phone.

The pain in his back was almost too great to endure. But he tried to put on his suit jacket.

With the car key in his hand, he was about to leave.

“Tia,”

“Yes, Mr Johnson.” Tia stayed behind him and answered instantly. She couldn’t help shivering with fear when she saw his back.

“Can you drive?”

“I got the driving licence only a couple of days ago,” Tia answered.

There was a lot of free time left since she just needed to cook for Manuel here. And she was well paid, thinking that she could save a little more money to pay the down payment of a new car. Thus, she took the driving test and got a licence.

“Drive me to the office.”

“But I haven’t hit the road yet.” Tia was a little scared.

“You can seize the chance to practice.”

Tia was at a loss for words but she couldn’t say no.

Then she left with Manuel and drove him to the office.

The car was running very slowly on the driveway but Manuel didn’t rush her. Tia was so nervous that she sweated like hell. Finally, she made it to the gate of the Phillips Bank Building.

Tia parked the car.

“Drive the car back home. Come pick me up after work. I’ll tell you if I work overtime.”

“OK.” Tia nodded.

“Steady. Just follow the traffic rules.”

“OK.”

“Remember to turn the lights on when you turn.” Manuel bent down to point at the button. Tia was listening carefully.

Manuel pointed out the problems one by one for her, and then he opened the door and got off.

The moment he went out of the car, he saw Susan standing there and looking at them. Manuel closed the door and said, “Be safe.”

“OK.”

After that, Manuel went into the building.

Susan stared at his back without a blink.

It’d been at least ten minutes since Tia parked the car till Manuel got off. Susan had no idea what they had been talking about like a sweet couple.

What on earth did she care about?

Chapter 579 An Impossible Task for Manuel

In the senior meeting room, there gathered all the company’s cadre employees and Susan Phillips, whose position didn’t matter much.

Susan sat around and listened to her father analyzing the current situation with a straight face, which sounded quite serious. Sadly, it couldn’t strike a chord with her because she’d never devoted herself to her job.

Her eyes swept around the meeting room, and she found everyone was wearing a serious face. And finally, she kept her eyes on Manuel, who was sitting next to her father.

Compared with the others, Manuel looked extraordinarily composed.

He listened carefully to Edward narrating the effects, which International Sway Bank might bring on Phillips Bank after it entered the market here, and from time to time, he lowered his head to mark the keywords. He hadn't uttered a word from the beginning, whereas others sighed with emotion from now and then, showing their concerns about the company's current situation.

Henry was one of those many others. He looked anxiety-ridden and glanced at Manuel frequently, intentionally or otherwise.

To sum up, the arrival of Sway Bank would surely bring a big impact on Phillips, which meant they would start a competition in taking up market shares. As a result, Phillips Bank's turnover for the year would drop sharply.

Manuel had promised in front of all the senior leaders that he would increase Phillips Bank's turnover by 50% within half a year. There were only two months left. Probably, Manuel would fail to keep his promise.

At the thought of it, Henry was very excited inside. He couldn't wait to see the day when Manuel had to pay for his bold words.

Suddenly, he noticed that Susan was looking at Manuel.

For a long time, he'd got a feeling that Susan drifted apart from him and she had kept him at an arm's distance. It seemed that she didn't love him as much as before.

Henry clenched his fists. The first thing he would do after he kicked Manuel out of the company was to marry Susan, he thought.

As long as Manuel left the company and he married Susan, he'd have Phillips Bank sooner or later, not to mention his shares in Phillips Group.

If it weren't for Edward, his family wouldn't have died. So, he had good reasons to do anything to the Phillips family.

"I think all of you've got it." Edward gave a detailed explanation of Sway Bank and continued, "We're gonna have a long tough time! I hope all of you can go all out to face up to it just like I do. Sway Bank would have a difficult time developing in Kensbury City if it didn't have a good beginning. So, all of us should do our jobs well and no one should idle around."

Everyone took their stands immediately.

For the first time, Susan admired the way her father handles the situation.

She used to think Edward was obsessed with Justine and had lost himself in her charm, thus, she had shown contempt for him. But now, she found her father's charisma as a leader in the workplace.

After the pep talk, Edward assigned the work and got ready to leave the meeting room.

“Mr Chairman,” One of the board members spoke.

Everyone else looked towards him.

“Sway Bank will enter the market soon, which will have a great impact on us. Certainly, we’ll do all we can to keep the market shares of Phillips Group.”

Edward frowned slightly. Honestly speaking, he didn’t think much of the empty talks and he even thought it was a waste of time. So he didn’t say much in response.

“Now I’d like to confirm one thing.” He went on talking.

Edward thought he would put forward the matter of working extra hours and pay raises. If so, he would accept the suggestion right away. Phillips Group had never mistreated its employees.

The board member cut in when Edward was about to speak, “I still remember Mr Johnson promised to increase Phillips Group’s turnover by 50% within half a year. Now I’d like to confirm if Mr Johnson will still keep his promise.”

Edward pulled a long face.

“Does it matter now?” Edward asked coldly.

“My apologies, Mr Chairman. I hate to bring it up at this crucial moment, and I don’t want to cause more trouble, either. But seriously, many of the board members and senior leaders of the company didn’t think Mr Johnson should hold such an important position in Phillips Bank. We were convinced and compromised to it only because Mr Johnson has made that promise. But now something has happened, and I just want to know if Mr Johnson will still keep his promise.”

Edward was trying to explain it away, while Manuel, who had been taking notes, raised his eyes and said peacefully, “A promise is a promise.”

For Edward, Manuel was still young. He could have explained it away with a reason that something unexpected had happened. But he had just put himself in a difficult situation by speaking with his heart and not his head.

There had been a long debate about the position in which Manuel was. And Edward had turned a blind eye to it. But Manuel had screwed it up this time.

“Are you sure?” the board member asked.

“Yes.”

“In the past four months, Phillips Bank’s turnover has gained a year-on-year growth of 8% only, which is quite far away from the goal. Given the facts at hand, do you believe you can reach your goal?” the board member questioned with satire, trying to piss Manuel off.

Manuel was cool and said, “My word is my bond. I didn’t say I would give up on it if something happened. Mr Simonds, rest assured. There are two months left. I’ll take the blame and resign if I fail to reach the goal.”

“Good!” Bob Simonds said excitedly. Obviously, his little trick worked. Then he acted to be righteous and said, “You’re young and capable. I’ll bet on your ambitions and can’t wait to see how you’re gonna surprise us all.”

He said so only to give Manuel no turning back once he failed to reach his goal in the end.

Manuel just nodded slightly and looked much calmer.

People began discussing in the meeting room.

Sitting aside, Susan could tell from others’ reactions that it sounded like an impossible task for Manuel.

Chapter 580 Conversations in the Offices

The meeting was over.

People left the meeting room.

Henry went back to his office. He hadn’t been so happy in a long time. Bob Simonds and a few other board members followed him back to his office. As soon as they closed the door, they smiled evilly.

“Manuel won’t be able to turn the table no matter how capable he is!” Bob said delightfully, “What the hell does he think he is? Increase the turnover by 50% in half a year? It’s a tough task even when nothing’s wrong. Now there is a Sway Group, it’ll be a pie in the sky to reach his goal. I’ve made inquiries. Sway Group would come to Kensbury City in a week, tops. According to their business routine, they’ll start by taking up the market by minimizing their profits. They’ll surely take some of the market shares from Phillips Bank. To estimate, Phillips won’t have a growth in the turnover in the coming six months. And, it’ll probably drop by 10%.”

Hearing it, Henry couldn’t be more excited. He thought he could kick Manuel out of Phillips Bank within two months.

“Well, it’s a real coincidence.” Bob said with enthusiasm, “For Phillips Bank, Sway Group will surely bring us great losses, but there’s always competition in the market and we can’t always take the lead. It’ll happen sooner or later. Surprisingly, it comes at such a perfect time. I just can’t wait to see Manuel be kicked out of the bank. I’m looking forward to it!”

Compared with Henry, Manuel was an untouchable leader who set firm limits for himself in his tenure, while Henry was a smooth one who always played all sides. Thus, Henry won more favour than Manuel among the board.

“We should take it seriously. Manuel is a real piece of work!” Henry reminded.

“So what! What can he do at this point?” Bob smiled and said, “Henry, we’ll count on you in the future.”

“We’ll help each other.”

“Look. You’re way too modest...”

His office was filled with flattering voices, which had excited Henry a lot.

Now there was a clear plan-he would take over Phillips Bank as long as he kicked Manuel out and won Edward's trust again.

Manuel returned to his office.

He must admit it was a big challenge for him this time.

Some time ago, he made a great effort to figure out the operation mode of Phillips Bank and find out how he could work to increase the turnover. Indeed, it was hard to carry on with his plan now since the advent of Sway Bank.

He needed to keep the existing market shares, which was more difficult for a mature business operation. Manuel went absent-minded and didn't look as calm and cool as he'd appeared at the meeting.

Suddenly, someone knocked at the door. Manuel blinked his eyes slightly and said, "Come in."

Susan went in.

They looked at each other, cool as cucumbers.

"My father sent me for you. He wanted to see us in his office. It's something important."

"OK." Manuel nodded.

After passing her words, Susan turned around to go out, while Manuel wasted no time and stood up to catch up. They went in an elevator together. Both of them were quiet as if they were strangers.

Susan had figured out last night that she was flattering herself when she was caring about how Manuel treated her. She should have known her place. So she looked quite peaceful now.

The elevator door opened. Then they went into Edward's office one after the other and sat down in front of the office desk.

"I want to discuss the matter on Sway Bank with the two of you," Edward said in a heavy voice.

Susan frowned and complained, "Just talk to Manuel. I don't have any opinion on something like this. I can't even understand..."

"Then learn SOMETHING!" Edward said seriously.

Susan became upset, complaining about Edward's quick temper at work inside. She was never a girl who would just grin and bear it. So she yelled at Edward, "Why must I learn? I didn't want to work here! You made me!"

"Can't you just be a little more ambitious? How can I trust and leave the company to you?"

"It's enough that Henry is capable. Right! Why didn't you send for Henry?" Susan was annoyed.

Edward was mad because of her words.

"Why didn't you send for Henry instead of Manuel? Manuel is not family!"

"Because I deserve to be trusted more." Manuel cut in.

“Hell no!” Susan retorted, “He’s here for Phillips Bank only. He wants to have the company all to himself.”

“I would like to see that happen,” Edward said bluntly.

Susan glared at Edward.

“Listen or just get out!” Edward felt helpless, knowing that he could do nothing to alter Susan’s personality.

Susan was about to leave. Anyway, she had never prepared to be part of it in the first place.

But she paused her steps when she arrived at the door. She would never know what her father would talk about with Manuel if she left like this.

She was afraid that Edward would just hand the whole company to Manuel because he was too mad at her.

She no way would let this happen!

Thinking about it, Susan suddenly turned around and sat down again.

Edward stared at her in anger.

“Well, I’m up to nothing. Anyway, I’ll just stay to kill time.” Susan said casually.

Manuel spoke, “I’ve thought about it. If we want to stop Sway Bank from taking up our market shares in Northfield, the only, the best and the harmless way is to find their weaknesses and control them.”

Edward was attracted by Manuel’s words and stopped being mad at Susan.

“Do you have any good ideas?”

“I know something about them. Normally, it isn’t the best time for them to enter the market of Northfield. Since they’re doing it so rashly, I think we should figure out the reasons first.”