

Chapter 491 Liam Hit The Big Time

After the truth was exposed, the policemen returned to the station.

Emmitt quickly said his goodbyes to Liam after realizing that the man had no time for a catch-up.

"Mr. Hoff, remember to drop by the Beluga Hospital when you have free time."

Liam nodded once in response.

Meanwhile, a commotion had broken out among the reporters Clarence had summoned. After a short while of griping, they left the vicinity.

"How could he spread such a ridiculous rumour? Liam merely need a copy of his medical license to prove him wrong."

"Damn, coming here was a waste of time. I even got into trouble."

Neither Clarence nor Dennis ever thought that Liam possessed any actual medical expertise.

Soon, only the reporters invited by Liam

were left on the road.

Only then did he motion for everyone to start recording his speech.

He started by introducing himself. "Hello, everyone. I'm the CEO of Kingland Group, Liam Hoffman. I'm sure you already know me, as I've been the center of attention lately. Just recently, a video purportedly exposing my wrongdoings was uploaded to YouTube under the username 'Mr. Schultz, a seeker after the truth.' However, all of that isn't true. As a matter of fact, his full name is Sherwood Schultz and he came to me yesterday. He insisted that I didn't have a license to practice medicine, and I honestly don't know where he got that idea from. He demanded three million dollars from me and threatened that he would file a formal complaint against me for practicing medicine without a license if I didn't give the money to him. However, all he got was false information. For this reason, I'm going to take legal action against Sherwood for defamation and demand compensation for the harm done to my reputation and the emotional distress he has caused me. Furthermore, I have strong suspicions that the stories he reported previously were also

fabricated. Rome wasn't built in a day. The malevolent nature of the rumor he published about me indicates he has engaged in criminal behaviors of a similar nature in the past. Therefore, I will employ every lawful measure available to me to render him incapable of repeating his criminal behavior."

Video clips of his passionate speech quickly went viral online.

Once again, the facts swayed public opinion, and criticism directed toward Sherwood flooded several social media platforms.

Eventually, Sherwood was unable to take the anger from the public any longer and deleted the statement and the video from his channel.

He then posted a statement on Facebook.

"I am posting this to apologize for my mistake. I uploaded the baseless statement and video without investigating the whole situation. I sincerely apologize to Mr. Hoffman of Kingland Group and to anyone else I may have offended. I will remember this mistake and apply the lessons I've learned from it in the future."

However, no one believed anything he said anymore.

He was originally a blogger who exposed injustice, but it would be difficult for him to make a living now that his content had been shown to be made of false information.

Netizens continued to bombard his social media accounts with comments calling out his dishonesty.

"Do you really think this matter is over just because you apologized? Do you think that's enough? No way. In your dreams, maybe."

"You'll apply the lessons you've learned from this in the future, you say? You should worry more about how long you'll be locked up."

A number of people claiming they had been blackmailed by Sherwood before also went public one after another.

They shared their own stories of suffering, saying that the influencer had extorted a large amount of money from them.

Sherwood did have some intel on these people.

Now that he was a public adversary, nobody would believe his claims anymore.

This was their chance to vent their pent-up resentment at him, so they took it.

The backlash he was receiving online

terrified Sherwood.

He knew that there was no way out of this issue and that Liam would really throw him in jail.

His only hope now was his employer, Clarence.

With that in mind, Sherwood quickly dialed his number. "Mr. Norris, you've seen the criticism I'm getting online, right? Can you please do something to stop it?"

Sherwood flinched when he heard the sound of something being smashed from the other end of the line.

It was followed by Clarence's angry voice. "You idiot, did I ask you to blackmail Liam? How dare you do something so brazen without my permission? Was the money I gave you not enough? Well, what's done is done. Your only option now is to go to jail. Consider yourself lucky if you're still alive by the time of your release. Don't you dare tell the police about my involvement in this, or else I'll kill your whole family."

With that, he ended the call.

Sherwood's phone slipped from his hand. His eyes watered as the weight of his

impending ordeal sank in.

A few minutes later, the police barged into his place and took him away in handcuffs.

"You're going to the police station with us."

Once the situation with Sherwood was resolved, the attention of the netizens refocused on Liam.

However, this time, things were looking up for him.

The fact that Liam had saved the girl's life began to sink deeper into people's minds.

In addition, aside from being the CEO of the Kingland Group and a young, highly skilled doctor, he was also handsome.

People started gushing over his many talents and accomplishments.

The netizens had also discovered Liam's personal Facebook account.

Countless people began following him on his account, and some even sent him messages.

He garnered admirers who either made him their role model or considered him a potential husband.

In an instant, Liam's personal account had ten million more followers.

Then, a certain topic became trending online.

"What sort of woman would Liam consider dating?"

A long list of Liam's accomplishments was provided; each one was remarkable in its own way.

Instantly, the list made him every woman's dream man.

Chapter 492 Obtaining Evidence

In the Kingland Group's CEO's office, Julie wrapped her arms around Liam's neck, smiling playfully. "I had no idea you were a world-renowned doctor. I just checked your Facebook account and noticed a lot of people from different countries interested in marrying you."

With a humble grin on his face, Liam stated, "I honed my medical skills so that we can stay healthy and together till we're a hundred years old. As you already know, I'm very popular right now, so you have to treat me very well." ¹

Julie gave his ear a light-hearted pinch.

She then said in a rather imperious manner, "You've gotten quite sure of yourself, haven't you?"

With that, Liam had no choice but to concede defeat.

Following some light-hearted ribbing, Julie leaned back on Liam's chest and said, "You successfully eliminated the menace. I had no

idea that a popular YouTuber could be that kind of person. He even had the nerve to threaten you."

Liam's eyes flickered, and a smile tugged at the corners of his mouth.

He then asked meaningfully, "What if someone else was behind his decision to come after me?"

Julie cocked her head in confusion.

Then, she asked in disbelief, "Are you saying that he was only acting under someone's order to ruin your name?"

Liam's voice was slightly condescending as he stated, "He's just a YouTuber. He wouldn't have the guts to threaten the CEO of the Kingland Group on his own. Someone definitely instructed him to do it. I'd put money on Clarence being the culprit. He had tried to set me up several times before, but it ended badly for him each time. This is just one of his many failed attempts to destroy me."

Julie nodded in agreement.

She had only known Clarence for a short time, but she was certain this was something he would do.

"After what happened last time, I didn't think we'd hear of him again so soon. What are you going to do this time?" Julie asked.

Liam already had a plan in mind. He declared, "This time, I'll take Clarence down by acquiring the Riley Group."

Later, Liam and Julie drove to the police station from the Kingland Group headquarters.

As soon as they arrived, Liam confronted the police officer in charge of the team sent to his company. "I think this isn't simply about some YouTuber trying to improve his channel. There are other people involved here, and I suspect that the one behind this is one of my enemies. I need to speak to Sherwood to find out who it is. I promise to tell you everything I'll learn so that you may put an end to this immediately."

The police officer stared at Liam in a daze.

His request was quite unusual.

However, Liam was Hoff, and he had a teacher-student relationship with Emmitt, his benefactor.

The police officer was hesitant at first, but he eventually gave in to Liam's request.

He cautioned, "Mr. Hoffman, I can take you to see him, but only for a limited time. It's against the rules, so you should get out as soon as you're done."

Liam nodded in understanding. "I understand. Don't worry. I'll be quick. Thank you."

Soon, he entered the interrogation room and saw Sherwood again.

The man's normally confident demeanor had been replaced with a look of fear and panic.

As soon as he caught sight of Liam, he rushed forward to apologize, saying, "Mr. Hoffman, I'm really sorry! I was foolish. Please spare me just this once. I promise to do anything you want if you do."

The sight of him made Liam sick.

However, he did not show it on his face because he needed information from Sherwood.

"I know you were hired by Clarence to do what you did. He should be the one in jail, not you. If you can provide evidence against Clarence, you'll be able to get out of here."

Sherwood suddenly went quiet.

He wanted to hand over the evidence to Liam

in exchange for forgiveness.

However, Clarence's threats kept echoing in his head.

After some internal debate, he finally asked, "Mr. Hoffman, can you guarantee the safety of my family? If you can, I'll tell you everything."

Liam's expression hardened into one of resolve.

"Tell me."

Sherwood took a deep breath before confessing everything he knew.

"Clarence did hire me to do his dirty work. I have a voice recorder pen in my house, which recorded our conversation. I also have documentation of the monetary transaction between us. Mr. Hoffman, I already know that I did something wrong. Please spare me this time. I promise I'll change for the better."

However, Liam just turned and left.

Principles were not something he should discuss with scum like the man.

He exited the interrogation room, leaving Sherwood wailing and begging for mercy.

Chapter 493 Threat

In Sherwood's house, Liam and Julie started looking for the evidence against Clarence that Sherwood had mentioned.

Liam was able to crack the computer's password with little effort.

Shortly after, he discovered screenshots of monetary transactions between Clarence and Sherwood.

On the other hand, Julie found the voice recorder pen under the nightstand.

Smiling, Liam transferred the voice recorder pen's content to his phone.

He then forwarded a copy of the audio to Clarence with the instruction, "Give the Riley Group to me. You won't be able to avoid imprisonment with this evidence."

On the top floor of Riley Group headquarters, Clarence buried his head in his hands and let out a frustrated groan. He had no idea that Liam was a doctor, and a world-renowned one at that. That man had humiliated him and stolen the spotlight from him once again.

With a sullen frown on his face, he considered his next course of action.

Suddenly, an email alert sounded, pulling him out of his thoughts.

Clarence clicked on it absentmindedly, then trembled in anger upon reading its contents.

"Damn you! Go to hell!"

In a fit of wrath, Clarence slammed his hands on the desk and growled, "Sherwood, you bastard! Since you've decided to take Liam's side, don't blame me for what I'm about to do to you. You brought it upon yourself."

He then replied to the email with a sense of resolve. "Send me to prison if you have the nerve. A mere CEO can't defeat a family worth trillions of dollars. If you think you can acquire the Riley Group, you're dreaming."

His response surprised Liam. Given how poorly things had gone for Clarence, he had not anticipated such obstinacy.

Julie scowled upon reading Clarence's response. "People like him deserve to be in jail! He's so full of himself. You know what? Let's just go ahead and give the evidence to the police."

Liam smiled and waved his hand.

With a calm expression, he said, "We can deal with Clarence later. Let's focus on acquiring the Riley Group first."

Liam compiled the evidence and sent a copy to the current head of the Norris family.

Afterward, he dialed the number he had obtained from Theo.

As soon as the call connected, Liam greeted the person on the other end of the line. "Hello, Mr. Preston Norris. I'm sure you already know what's happening right now. Your beloved grandson has finally pushed me too far, and now, I have to punish him. If the cops get their hands on this evidence, he'll end up in prison. If that happens, the reputation of the Norris family will be tarnished. You don't want that, do you?"

Preston's expression darkened, and his voice dropped as he asked, "Tell me what you want."

A sly smile bloomed on Liam's face, and he answered meaningfully, "It looks like your grandson is not making good use of the Riley Group's shares. You should take them back as a form of punishment." ①

The frostiness in Preston's eyes deepened.

It was obvious from Liam's tone that he was suggesting a lack of discipline within the Norris household.

He bit back his frustration and said, "Go straight to Clarence. I'll see to it that he hands over the shares to you. You'd best keep your word. If my family decides to attack you, you won't be able to take it."

Liam smiled faintly and then disconnected the call as if he did not hear the threat.

He jumped right into getting ready for the acquisition.

"Miss Greyson, draft a contract for the acquisition of the Riley Group."

"Yes, sir."

Soon, the contract was ready; all that was needed was Clarence's signature.

Liam did not waste any time going to the Riley Group headquarters. Julie did not go with him as she had to address the issue of buying the factory.

As the couple left, Vivian stared longingly at Liam's back.

The speed with which Liam had acquired the Riley Group astounded her.

Vivian's admiration for him grew even stronger.

Such a perfect man should only be with her.

Her attention then turned to Julie, who was walking beside Liam. Vivian grimaced and muttered in a sinister tone, "You and Mr. Hoffman are from completely different worlds. One day, you two will drift apart, and your paths will never cross again."

Chapter 494 Acquisition

The once-grand CEO's office in the Riley Group headquarters was now more like a disorganized construction site.

The floor was littered with shards of glass, and every piece of furniture and appliance had been destroyed. Even a forced demolition site would look better than the current state of the office.

Clarence, enraged to the point of insanity, was swinging a golf club and smashing everything in sight.

He let forth a wild yell of frustration.

"Liam, I'll never let you live your life in peace! You're nobody, and yet you've dared to trample on me! I'm going to kill you, you bastard!"

Just then, the one person Clarence despised the most walked through the door of the office.

Liam smirked as he leaned against the doorframe, clutching a document in his hand. "Such a violent temper, Clarence. You're going to hurt yourself if you keep doing that."

The sight of their grave enemy sparked fury in both of them, but one of them was better at controlling his emotions than the other.

Clarence barely managed to calm himself down before asking, "What do you want, you useless trash? If it's the Riley Group, you'd better leave. I won't give it to you."

With a sardonic smile, Liam tossed the acquisition contract onto Clarence's mangled desk.

"Take a look at the mess you've made of Riley Group. Just hand it over before it goes bankrupt."

"I'd rather let it go bankrupt than give it to you." Clarence kept his chin raised as he sneered. "Who do you think you are? You're just a lowly worker of the Kingland Group. I'd still be a billionaire regardless of what happens to Riley Group. Don't put too much stock in Funbuy's victory over Rileymart. I won't give my company to you, even if it goes bankrupt. Dream on, you bastard!"

Instead of reacting angrily, Liam shook his head in mockery. "The Norris family is doomed to fail as long as there is a fool like you in it."

Clarence opened his mouth to retort angrily,

but his phone suddenly rang.

He answered the call with the intention of shouting at the caller.

However, the person on the other end of the line beat him to it.

"Hurry up and transfer the shares of the Riley Group to Liam! After that, you're coming back to the capital. You're going to stay here from now on, and you're not allowed to leave until I say so."

Incredibly perplexed, Clarence hissed, "Grandpa, this man is just the CEO of the Kingland Group! He's no one! We're the Norris family; we shouldn't submit to someone like him."

It was outrageous. "Didn't you hear what I said? Sign the damn contract now!"

Hearing his grandson's objection made Preston even more enraged. "Did your father spoil you so much that you turned into a complete moron? Listen here, you brat. As long as I am alive, the Norris family won't be under your control. Now, sign the document and get back here!"

He then abruptly ended the call.

Clarence looked at his phone in disbelief

before shooting Liam a fiery glare, wishing he could rip him apart.

It was the first time his grandfather had spoken so authoritatively to him. He had been made to feel like a fool several times because of the man in front of him. He would be a robot if he did not hate him after all that.

"You should listen to your grandfather." Still smirking tauntingly, Liam asked, "Mr. Norris, do you have anything else to say, or are you going to sign the document now? I'm a very busy person, you see. I don't have a lot of time to waste on you."

The color left Clarence's face. His grandfather had ordered him to sign the document, so he had no choice but to do so. His grandfather's words had the same weight as a royal decree in the Norris household. Even his father followed his orders without question.

"You trash, you win this time."

Clarence signed the document grudgingly, with such force that he nearly tore the paper.

"I'm warning you; the Norris family fortune isn't going to be so simple to steal. Just wait; things aren't over between us."

After Clarence shattered a large shard of glass in frustration, he stormed out of the office.

As Liam examined the transfer document now bearing Clarence's signature, he nodded in satisfaction.

With this, Rileymart and Funbuy's long-running rivalry had finally come to an end. The Riley Group was now a part of the Kingland Group, and the latter's influence in the e-commerce industry had grown to unprecedented heights.

Now, Liam could move on to the next stage of his plan.

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Chapter 495 The Market Value of 50 Billion

When he returned to the Kingland Group headquarters, Liam immediately called a meeting to discuss the company's acquisition of the Riley Group.

The announcement of the successful acquisition contributed to an increase in employee morale and had the staff applauding enthusiastically.

After a lengthy discussion with the employees, Liam made the final decision.

In addition to incorporating Rileymart into Funbuy, the Riley Group's resources would be used to launch a new business unit aimed squarely at middle- and upper-class consumers. In this way, they would create a multiplicative effect and bring in more money than either one could on its own.

The next day, a press conference was held at the event hall in the Kingland Group headquarters.

There, Liam officially announced the company's acquisition of the Riley Group.

It did not take long for the news to spread throughout Salem.

As a result, investors flocked to buy the Kingland Group's stocks, and the company's market value skyrocketed to fifty billion dollars overnight.

With this number, half of Liam's target had been reached.

At this rate, it would not be long until he returned home with Julie by his side.

On that particular day, Liam's phone was constantly buzzing with congratulations from the residents of Salem.

On the other hand, Clarence refused to go back to Invone, the capital. The hatred he felt for Liam was too much for him to endure. He had to act on it.

After disobeying Preston's orders, he was stripped of his status as the heir to the Norris family.

Whatever happened to the Riley Group had nothing to do with him now.

Everything that Clarence had was given to him by the Norris family. Now that he was no longer the heir, he felt as if he were a bird without wings, helpless and powerless.

This kind of humiliation was too much for him to bear.

After much thought, Clarence decided to put his last hope into a phone call.

"Sir, I failed. I couldn't bring the Kingland Group down, and Liam even took the Riley Group from me."

He was barely done talking when the person on the other end of the line spoke.

"I already know."

The man snorted coldly before continuing, "What a waste. You couldn't even complete such a simple task. You're so worthless."

Clarence was reprimanded and insulted for two whole minutes. He remained silent throughout it, despite his confrontational personality.

"Well, what's done is done," the voice said at the end of his speech.

Clarence asked through gritted teeth, "Are we just going to let Liam off the hook?"

The person on the other end of the line hissed, "If your personal grudges aren't going to help me, keep them to yourself. Focus on your task and keep stirring up problems for the Kingland Group, as I had instructed. My

men will come and help in a few days. Don't you dare mess up again if you don't want me to erase the Norris family from the face of the earth!"

Clarence's chest constricted, and bullets of sweat began to form on his forehead.

He immediately squeaked out, "I promise I won't let you down this time!"

After the call ended, Clarence inhaled deeply. His expression was grim, and he knew exactly what he had to do.

It was his last chance to get even with Liam. This time, he would make sure that the man suffered a lot.

Chapter 496 Chief Executive Officer's Live Stream

Two days later, in the chief executive officer's office of the Kingland Group.

The team that had been sent to Riley Group to handle the fusion between Rileymart and Funbuy returned after completing their task. One after the other, they gave Liam a report of their work.

Vivian knocked gently on the door and came in, holding a document in her hands.

"Mr. Hoffman, the planning department wants to know if you want to hold some activities and give out special offers to draw in the users of Rileymart. This is in case they don't plan to continue using Rileymart after its fusion with us. They drew some preliminary plans and asked me to show you," she said, giving him the document.

Liam took the document with a nod and leafed through it. Shortly after, he closed it and set it aside, uninterested.

The plans were good, but they didn't have any fire. They didn't have what Liam was

looking for.

Luckily, he already came up with plans of his own.

He looked up at Vivian and ordered, "Ask the research and development department to quickly add the live broadcast function in the Funbuy app. They should also include links to the goods sold in the live stream. Tell them I want this done before six o'clock tonight."

Vivian knitted her eyebrows in confusion. She had no idea what Liam wanted to do.

Then again, he was the boss. So, she nodded and went out to comply.

Liam's plan was actually quite simple. Live commerce had surged up recently, and if he jumped in on this, it would give Funbuy more popularity.

Live streaming and online shopping at the same time, and with the influence of celebrities and the unique discount given only in Funbuy, the sales would be explosive.

As soon as Liam thought of this, he knew he had to try it.

With Liam at the head of this live stream, it was bound to be a success. After all the

scandals and lies concerning him were rectified, Liam had become quite popular and liked by the public. Not only was he a handsome chief executive officer of the powerful Kingland Group, but he was also a highly-skilled international doctor. All the women fawned over him. His number of fans on his Facebook account had set a record.

With this amount of popularity, he was going to have a huge audience during the livestream. That much was certain.

To get this rolling, Liam logged into his Facebook account and released a statement and preview about the upcoming live stream.

The statement read, "See you tonight at eight o'clock in the live stream of the Funbuy app. You will have many pleasant surprises. Thank you once more for your constant support of the Kingland Group."

Before long, his statement was spread on all pages on the Internet. Comments were coming in as quickly as the statement was being posted.

"Oh my God! My idol is finally going on live!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, my idol will be on live tonight. Check it out and make sure to

support him."

"I don't think there is any other software as generous as Funbuy. I'm definitely going to be there."

Some comments were more on the negative side, slandering both Liam and the Kingland Group.

"Now he wants to make money through live streaming? These idiots look for the easiest way to make money."

"You know what I think? He is just a puppet being used by the Kingland Group to increase their fame. Now that I think of it, he must have initiated all those scandals, just to solve them and gain popularity."

There was a huge argument in the comment section between Liam's fans and haters.

Others that were not really involved in the argument also spoke up, supporting Liam.

Liam was completely oblivious to all that was going on. He was busy preparing the goods and setting things up for the live stream.

This was the first live stream they were going to do. Everything had to be perfect. Both the quality and the prices of the goods

had to be perfect.

Everyone was ready for the new event. The staff was ready, and Liam was ready too.

As announced, the live stream began at exactly eight o'clock.

At the centre of the camera, Liam smiled at it and said, "Welcome to my live stream."

Chapter 497 An Absolute Success

Liam's appearance seemed to be a catalyst. As soon as he appeared, the number of viewers in the live stream room shot up to almost a million.

Comments floated across the screen in their numbers.

"Oh my goodness! Mr. Hoffman is really on the live! He looks even better than in those videos."

"The CEO of Kingland Group is actually on the live. This is huge!"

"Today is certainly a big day. The mighty CEO of Kingland Group leading the live?"

Liam was very calm and composed in front of the camera. After all, he was used to attending grand occasions and addressing crowds. After exchanging a few pleasantries to lighten the mood, Liam went down to why he was there.



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continuous support. That said, I'm going to present the first gift."

After a short pause, Liam presented the gift. "Ten latest plasma TVs from PeachByte Group. The ten lucky winners will be decided through a random draw."

Just as soon, the comments went wild again.

"I want that TV. Oh, please let me win!"

"I want that TV too. You're the best, Mr. Hoffman!"

"Kingland Group is really generous. I only came to admire Mr. Hoffman, but now I have a lot to win!"

The first round of drawing began as the comments flooded the screen.

People were sceptical about it at first, but as soon as the first round ended, the lucky winners received private messages from Kingland Group.

Once again, the viewers went crazy with excitement, comments never ending. By then, the number of viewers was close to five million.

The TVs were sent to the winners privately, while the live stream went on. Amidst excited comments, some negative

comments popped up too.

"Tsk, here they go with their fake advertisements again. They probably paid some fake accounts to claim they won. How do we know any of this is true?"

"I agree with you, brother. I already saw this coming."

"Right! This is definitely fake. Giving out TVs? Ridiculous!"

Liam ignored these comments. After all, there were always going to be haters.

However, when it grew in a short time, turning from a few haters, to a large crowd, he couldn't close his eyes on it anymore.

Liam found that some IDs repeatedly appeared on the screen, saying the same things. They seemed to be Internet trolls hired to ruin the live.

It wouldn't have been that big of a deal, but when some viewers who didn't win the prize began to believe them, it became problematic.

"Somebody is trying to bring us down," Liam said. One name came to mind; Clarence.

Who else could it be? However, he couldn't deal with it right now. He needed a quick

solution before this night turned into another disaster.

Thinking fast, Liam said to the camera, "I can see that some of you have doubts about how true this is. To dissolve your doubts, we will stop giving the products away. Instead, they will be sold at a 50% discount. The promotion is unlimited until the end of the live stream."

Comments popped up rapidly again, overcrowding the screen.

It was okay if they lied about giving things away. But selling fake products was illegal.

As the links appeared on the screen, the negative rumors were instantly forgotten.

The comments were more positive as the trolls couldn't cause any more chaos.

The live stream went on for two hours, and finally ended at 10 p.m.

After compiling the statistics and the sales, the staff was shocked.

In just two hours, despite having sold the goods at half the price, the Kingland Group still managed to generate over a hundred million!

Liam himself was shocked. He couldn't imagine that it would turn out this well. At

least, his non-stop talking for two hours had been worth it.

Liam stood up with a smile on his face and announced, "Each staff member that participated in the live stream today, will receive a bonus of one hundred thousand dollars."

"You rock, Mr. Hoffman!"

Liam smiled at them. If today was so successful, it was thanks to the work that everyone put in. It was only right that they were rewarded.

While the staff cheered and celebrated, Liam opened his Facebook page.

The live stream had just ended, but beyond all expectations, Liam and Funbuy's products and brands were the most trending topics. They were the focus of the Internet.

Everyone was talking about them, their feedbacks all positive. They praised the event as a bold and innovative decision. It really was an absolute success.

Chapter 498 Julie's Attempt

At the Grace Garment Factory.

Julie was working with the personnel, ensuring that the boxes of clothes were loaded onto Kingland Group's logistics trucks.

These days, she made sure to be personally involved in every little detail of the task just to avoid quality issues.

Thankfully, the Funbuy app helped with the sales of Grace's clothing. However, it wasn't nearly enough to resolve their urgent problems.

One of their problems was the large inventory of the clothing, and the other, was the fact that the brand was barely known.

Even the online sales weren't of much help.

So, Julie was still under a lot of pressure, and it didn't seem to be getting better.

As if he heard her silent cry, Liam's Porsche suddenly pulled up in front of her.

"What's with the frown on your face?" he asked with a small smile. "You know I'm here for you. Come on, let's go back home."

Twenty minutes later, Julie collapsed on the sofa. She hadn't been this exhausted in a long time.

Liam sat down close to her, rubbing her hair gently and trying to let her relax. "What's wrong? Is it the factory?"

Julie nodded with a heavy sigh. "Grace is already a struggling old brand. No one knows it. Trying to boost the sales is literally impossible. It is like reaching for the sky. I wish you could help me and sell them in live stream. It could really help with the sales. But alas, it's against the rules."

Liam chuckled a little and said, "It's just live stream, Julie. You don't need me to do it. All you need is a celebrity hosting the live, and you'll get the same effect. People will flock to be on it."

"Really?" Julie's eyes lit up after she thought about it. Liam was right.

She suddenly felt lighter. She finally felt like things would get better. Slowly, her eyes drooped and she fell asleep in Liam's arms.

Liam looked down at his beautiful woman's face. Carefully, he carried her into the room, trying not to wake her up.

Three days later.

Julie had thought about Liam's suggestion and put it into action. In just three days, she found a celebrity to host her live selling. ①

It was Zoe Ramos, the center of the most popular female idol group.

Now that she had a host, the next step was promotion.

Julie negotiated with Funbuy's marketing department which soon came up with a full page of Zoe's live stream teaser, and posted it on the front page of the Funbuy platform.

It created a good impact. The team managing Zoe's live stream was very happy. They got to deal with something different, and it was exciting. They actively started promoting the event on major forums.

With Zoe's fan base and live selling having been trending lately, the number of subscription for Zoe's live stream reached one million in a day, and it was still growing.

Julie was so relieved when she saw this. If it went on this way, the number of viewers in the live stream on the official day of the event could easily surpass the record Liam set with his.

Chapter 498 Julie's Attempt

Julie was reassured. If Liam was very successful with his live selling, there was no way that this one could flop.

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Chapter 499 Honest Talk

While Julie was happy and excited, one person was decidedly sad and worried.

Vivian hadn't forgotten the deal she made with Julie.

If this live stream was a success and Julie successfully got all the clothing sold, it would already mean success for her... And success for Julie meant her return to the Kingland Group.

Vivian couldn't let that happen. Lips set in a firm line, she took out her phone and dialed a number.

"I need your help with something. I'll give you the details later. Also, order me a cake," she said into the phone and hung up.

In the evening, at the Kingland Group's live stream room.

Julie was busy preparing for the live stream that was going to take place soon.

In the midst of doing this, the door was slowly pushed open and Vivian came in with a shy smile on her face and cake on her

hands. She stood in front of Julie and said, "I hope the preparations are going well, Julie. You've been so busy I'm sure you haven't had anything to eat. I thought of you and bought your favourite cake. You should have some. I hope your live stream goes well tonight."

Julie was taken aback by this sudden display of affection from Vivian.

She glanced down at the cake, and indeed, it was her favourite cake.

It felt like she was travelling down memory lane, back to the time when Vivian was just a young girl beginning her carrier. She was often clumsy, and Julie was always present to criticize and put her back on track. The young lady had a good heart and was thoughtful.

It was because of this that they got so close and developed a deep bond.

Julie had always considered her as her younger sister.

After they had been in the cold for so long, Julie couldn't remain indifferent when Vivian clearly cared about her and made the first step. She felt like nothing had changed between them.

Eyes blurred from tears, and with a voice choked with emotion, Julie said roughly, "Why don't we sit in the lounge for a moment?"

She held Vivian's hand and led her to the lounge, where they sat facing each other.

They both ate the cake in companionable silence until a tear rolled down Vivian's cheek.

"What's wrong?" Julie asked, worry etched in her voice.

"No, it's nothing." Vivian shook her head sadly before saying, "It's just that I recalled the period when you lost your memory. It was really difficult for Kingland Group. I can say it was the most challenging period the Kingland Group had to cross. Mr. Hoffman handled everything on his own. He dealt with all the big and small events. And when he wasn't handling things, I would see him staring at your picture, lost in thought and looking miserable. It was obvious that he was in immense pain. I could almost feel it. Every time people would question him, I would be the one to answer when he couldn't. I stayed by his side all through. We were the ones that brought Kingland Group

back to its feet. It was at that time that I fell in love with Mr. Hoffman. So, yes, I lied when you asked me. I just wanted Mr. Hoffman to be mine, and I was very selfish. But what did you do? I mean, you were part of the reason why the Kingland Group went through hell. Yet, the moment you returned, Mr. Hoffman still treated you very well and offered you the position of vice president. I'm going to be honest. I no longer give a damn about any of this. You just have to leave Mr. Hoffman, and I'll happily give up my seat as vice president. Heck, I can even leave Kingland if you want. Julie, please... You have to do this one thing for me. I've always treated and considered you as my sister. I hope you can do this for me."

Vivian cried as she spoke. But instead of pulling sympathy from Julie, all she got was an icy glare.

Julie's fingers went numb and the spoon in her hand fell.

She quickly came to and hit the table hard with her fist.

She took a deep breath for control. The disappointment she felt was so intense that it made her body tremble. She looked down

at Vivian and said in a cold voice, "I stupidly thought you finally saw your errors and came to your senses. I treated you like my younger sister from day one! That's why I just let you be without confronting you. I did it out of consideration for our friendship. Don't tell me this is the only reason you showed up today with my favourite cake in hand!"

The door suddenly creaked open and Liam came in.

As soon as they saw him, their expressions changed drastically.

The expression of Liam's face made it obvious that he had heard every single word of their conversation.

Liam quickly walked to Julie and pulled her into his arms, wiping her tears away gently.

"Miss Greyson, the marketing department has many potential partners to consider. They seem to be overwhelmed. Maybe you should go and focus on that instead. Julie and I can handle everything else," Liam said, his meaning obvious.

Then, he walked out with Julie, their hands intertwined.

Vivian bristled with jealousy and hatred as she watched them go.

In that moment, all gratitude and affection she felt for Julie completely faded away. She was going to be heartless.

"I gave you a chance, Julie," Vivian murmured softly to herself. "Now that you insist on being stubborn, I'll do what I have to do, and you can't blame me." 2

Chapter 500 I'll Do It

In the live stream room.

Everything for the event was already in place when Liam and Julie entered.

All that was lacking right now, was today's host, Zoe. As soon as she showed up, the show would begin.

The clock ticked, and Zoe was a no show.

Julie became increasingly restless, glancing at her watch every few seconds.

"It's almost time. Why on earth isn't she here yet?" Julie couldn't keep calm anymore.

Finally, she took out her phone and called Zoe's manager.

When the man picked up, his words drowned Julie in an ice cold ocean.

"Miss Fiber, we're at Grace Garment Factory. Where are your staff members?"

What?

Julie almost went crazy. "Did you say Grace Garment Factory? Why are you there instead of here in the live stream room as we convened?"

The manager paused, sounding just as puzzled. "I don't understand. You told us that the location had changed."

Julie's breath hitched. Someone had messed with her plans.

"No, it never changed. Who exactly told you this?"

The manager took a moment to think about it before answering, "It was someone named Cordell. He claimed to be from the Kingland Group's marketing department."

Julie was already feeling light-headed. This couldn't be failing like this.

Liam quickly sent out orders, and the culprit was found.

This Cordell was indeed from the marketing department of the Kingland Group, but he was only an intern that had been working for less than three months.

He shouldn't, and couldn't have been involved in such a high-level affair.

Julie gritted her teeth and spat out, "Who told you to do it? Who asked you to call and change the location?"

Cordell touched his head awkwardly and said, "I'm sorry. I might have made a mistake."

Yeah, right. The lamest excuse ever.

"You're fired!" Julie shouted. "Pack your things and go to the finance department to settle your salary."

Liam and Julie knew who was behind this, but they just had to hear it.

They couldn't take care of her right now. The live stream was much more pressing and important. It was going to begin in one minute.

Zoe wouldn't be here in time. It would take at least one hour to get to the company from Grace Garment Factory.

As soon as the clock struck the hour, indicating the beginning of the live stream, no one was in front of the camera.

Millions of fans were waiting in the live stream room, wondering why there was no one in front of the camera.

"Is Zoe not supposed to be here? It seems like no one is in it at all."

"Maybe they are still preparing."

The fans decided to exercise some patience. But after more than ten minutes passed and nothing happened, they exploded.

"Is this a scam?"

"No one has appeared after so long. I knew it from the start. Why would Zoe show up in such a lame live stream room?"

"Fraud! Kingland Group is deceiving us and using us fans."

Pressure seemed to weigh everyone down, both in the comments section and physically.

"Miss Fiber, should we just close the live stream room for now while looking for a solution?" someone asked, seeing the situation taking a turn for the worst.

Julie clenched her fists. Closing the live stream now meant damaging and destroying the Kingland Group's reputation.

It would also ruin all chances of the long awaited live streaming helping out.

Time was ticking away and Zoe wasn't here yet.

The fans grew increasingly restless and ended up leaving, the number of viewers dropping.

They had been patient enough.

After hesitating, Julie bit her lower lip and said, "We can't just shut it down. I'll do it."

Chapter 501 Julie's First Live Stream

"Come on now. You might feel a little awkward at first, but you'll get used to it after a while," Liam encouraged, grasping Julie's hand and squeezing it.

Julie took a deep breath before walking slowly in front of the camera.

The live stream's comments section continued to flood with viewers' complaints.

"Hey, you're not Zoe! Who the hell are you?"

"Where is Zoe? Did you fool us?"

"Get out of there! We want to see Zoe!"

Julie drew another deep breath before facing the camera, ignoring the screen that was showing the hate-filled comments.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sorry to inform you that Miss Ramos is still en route due to unanticipated delays. At the moment, I'll have to be the one to show you what's on sale for today!"

Despite the enormous pressure she was under, Julie managed to keep her cool and

her composure.

The staff immediately brought over a floral sundress, and Julie smiled as she introduced and showcased the product's features one by one.

The steady stream of criticism in the comments section, however, made it clear that the viewers were still dissatisfied with her.

"What the heck? That dress is so ugly. I wouldn't even use it as a rag!"

"Yeah, it's so outdated. How dare they try to sell this?"

"They'll just do anything for money, won't they? The patterns of the dress are so unpleasant to the eyes. What a trashy brand!"

Due to Zoe's absence, the viewers had already concluded that the live stream was a money-making ruse. They did not even look properly at the dress before they started throwing criticism at it.

It was this type of comment that Julie could not ignore.

"To all the viewers, please calm down. As someone who works in the apparel industry, I have first-hand knowledge of the

challenges involved in manufacturing clothes. Please don't be too quick to dismiss a brand or a piece of clothing."

After making her point, Julie grabbed the dress and headed off-camera to the dressing room, where she changed into it for the demonstration.

When she appeared before the camera again, the criticism stopped abruptly.

It was because of Julie's breathtaking beauty. The dress, which at first looked simple and even a little bit old-fashioned, underwent a tremendous transformation when Julie put it on.

With the right lighting and Julie's complexion, the dress's flowery patterns started resembling fluttering butterflies.

"The dress looks quite unique. It looks good on her."

"Have any of you noticed how stunning the host is? I didn't realize it earlier because I was too busy spamming the comments section."

"Yeah, I've just noticed that she's as gorgeous as Zoe, and she doesn't seem to be wearing any makeup."

As time went on, the comments became more subdued, and the viewers finally began to focus on the dress.

The situation started to improve.

Julie took the opportunity to introduce the story behind the dress.

"Do you know that the designer of this dress had been with her lover for eight years at the time she created it? Sadly, her boyfriend died of an illness around that time. They were high school sweethearts. The boy was a member of the photography club, and he was known for his love of taking photos of butterflies. On the day they met, the girl was in a flower field surrounded by butterflies, and the boy took a photo of her. After they started dating, they traveled together, photographing various species of butterflies. However, just as they were preparing to get married, the boy suddenly became gravely ill and died. The girl was distraught by his passing and his absence, and as a way to honor him, she designed this dress with butterfly patterns."

Chapter 502 A Big Success

Julie's speech deeply moved the viewers of the live stream.

After all, everyone had at least one truly unforgettable love in their lives.

Some viewers reflected on their own experiences with love, recalling the naivete and immaturity of their youth and the regrets they had.

Needless to say, the touching story and the breathtaking visual impact of the dress on Julie won them over.

Soon, a member of the staff signalled Julie with a hand gesture from behind the camera.

It meant that the live stream's first sale had been made.

Julie's racing heart finally calmed down, and a relieved smile bloomed on her face.

Two more purchases were made almost immediately afterward.

"I've just placed my order, ladies. This dress is surprisingly cheap. Considering the discount they are offering, it's almost as

good as free!"

"Indeed! It's much cheaper than the clothes I usually buy."

"Oh, Grace! I remember this brand! I've bought clothes from them before, and they're all of great quality."

As more and more people clicked the link to watch the live stream, the atmosphere in the studio changed for the better.

The high quality of the clothing and its low pricing attracted many customers.

Some people started flooding the comments section, asking Julie to model the clothes that caught their interest.

Julie complied eagerly and tried on each item of clothing.

She had a better figure than Zoe, and she could make even the most unremarkable outfits look extraordinary.

The Kingland Group's data-monitoring team was all smiles behind the camera. The number of orders kept rising exponentially, exceeding their expectations.

Meanwhile, Zoe had finally arrived at the studio.

Her heart sank when she saw that the live

stream had started.

Because she was late, she risked offending not only her fans but also the employees of the Kingland Group, which was detrimental to her status as a celebrity.

Zoe quickly approached the monitoring team and was shocked when she discovered how many people were watching the live stream.

It seemed things were not as bad as she had feared.

Zoe took advantage of the cheerful atmosphere and quickly got her makeup done before joining Julie in front of the camera and sitting next to her.

"Hello, everyone! I'm Zoe. I'm so sorry for my late arrival; traffic has been terrible today. I'm sorry for the trouble I've caused, and I want to thank Miss Fiber for covering for me. As an apology, I'm going to buy a hundred of the products we have here today and give them away for free to the viewers. I'll also sign the clothes as a thank you to the viewers for your patience."

The already lively live stream was brought to a fever pitch by her words.

Both Zoe's fans and those who were not

started placing a lot of orders.

After just two hours of streaming, a quarter of the Grace Garment Factory's stocks had been sold.

With this kind of momentum, clearing the inventory would be a piece of cake.

The live stream ended, and as soon as the camera stopped rolling, Julie walked past the staff members and raced into Liam's arms.

Tears of joy streamed down her cheeks as she hugged her lover.

It was the scene Vivian witnessed as she stood outside the studio.

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Chapter 503 Unexpected Visitor

When Julie saw Vivian, her expression darkened. "Don't bother with excuses. You won't be able to fool anyone with your nonsense. This is the last time I'm going to put up with your antics. If this happens again, don't blame me for retaliating."

Because she knew she was the guilty party, Vivian was unable to respond to Julie's accusations.

Julie shot her a cold look before linking arms with Liam. Together, the couple made their way to the elevator with the intention of leaving the building.

Vivian gritted her teeth in frustration as she watched them leave.

In an attempt to forget her anger and sorrow, she went straight to a bar and ordered a round of shots.

As the liquor began to take effect, she found herself thinking about Julie's words from earlier and recalling warm memories from the past.

Conflicting emotions of denial, resentment, and guilt all coalesced in her heart, nearly driving her insane, and she could only dull the pain by drinking.

She did not know how to face Liam and Julie now.

However, her feelings for Liam ran so deep that she could not stomach the thought of giving up on him.

The unfulfilled longing in her heart was torturing her, and she had to do something about it.

What should she do now, though?

How could she win Liam's heart?

What could she do to prevent Julie from returning to the Kingland Group?

Most importantly, what should she do to permanently separate Liam and Julie?

Vivian felt like she was being sucked into a black hole, and she was groping blindly for a way out.

Suddenly, she felt a tap on her shoulder, snapping her out of her reverie.

She turned her head, and it took her a while to figure out who tapped her because she was drunk.

It was Yolanda.

Vivian's eyes narrowed warily as she asked, "Why are you here? What do you want?"

Yolanda giggled. "I'm here to help you, Miss Greyson."

Vivian was taken aback by Yolanda's response, but after a second, she scoffed and returned her attention to her drink, showing that she had no intention of talking to the other woman.

Despite her cold response, Yolanda sat down next to her.

"I'm Liam's ex-wife, Miss Greyson. I can help you snag him."

Upon hearing Liam's name, Vivian sobered up a little, and she hissed, "What do you want?"

Instead of answering the question, Yolanda smirked and stated, "I know you like him. Unfortunately, though, his heart belongs to that vile woman right now."

Yolanda's words hit a raw chord in Vivian, but she managed to keep her cool.

Downing her drink in one gulp, Vivian finally turned to Yolanda and declared, "I have nothing to talk about with you. Now, get out

of my sight!"

Though Vivian yelled at her, Yolanda's smile grew wider.

She moved close to Vivian like a slithering snake and whispered in her ear, "Miss Greyson, think about it carefully. As long as Julie is around, Liam will never look your way. But what if... something were to happen to Julie?"

"What do you mean?" A shiver ran down Vivian's spine, prompted by the malice in Yolanda's tone.

Chapter 504 Vivian Lost Her Virginity

Yolanda added, "We have something in common, you know? Liam is special to both of us, but I hate him, whereas you love him. My goal is simple: I want to cause Liam pain by getting rid of Julie. Once I succeed in that, Julie will be out of your hair, and Liam will eventually fall in love with you. It's a win-win situation. Don't worry. I'll take care of everything. You won't have to do a thing."

Yolanda's words sent another shiver down Vivian's spine like a poisonous snake's venom.

It was true that she wanted to be with Liam, but she had never thought of getting rid of Julie.

Vivian pursed her lips together thoughtfully. Even though she was silent, it was clear from her expression that she was feeling conflicted.

Yolanda saw how deeply she was thinking, so she said nothing more and only smiled mysteriously before leaving her business

card on the counter.

"It's alright, Miss Greyson. You don't need to make a decision right away. Take your time to think about it, and then give me a call once you've made up your mind."

Before she left, Yolanda taunted, "What's the point of worrying about your morals now? Haven't you done enough awful things to take Liam away from Julie? Adding this to the list of your evil deeds won't make much of a difference."

Even after Yolanda had left, her words kept echoing in Vivian's mind.

It was true that she harbored bitter animosity toward Julie as a result of her desire to be with Liam. She had wondered before if the man would fall in love with her if Julie was not in the picture.

However, her mind kept bringing up the beautiful times she had spent with Julie in the past, which prevented Vivian from harboring any ill will against her.

"Why, Julie? Why do you have to compete with me for Liam?"

Ignoring the burning pain in her stomach, Vivian continued to drown herself in alcohol

in an attempt to escape reality.

"I didn't want it to come to this!"

Soon, the alcohol began to weaken her sense of alertness, and Vivian could not stay awake any longer. She sagged over the counter and promptly dozed off.

Time passed as customers came and went into the bar.

Eventually, a familiar face entered the establishment.

It was none other than Kevin.

He was with three other men. They walked into the bar with confident strides and sat at the counter next to Vivian, seemingly oblivious to the drunk woman's presence.

Kevin did not recognize the person sitting next to him at first.

That was, until Vivian, who was slouched over the counter, turned her face toward Kevin.

"Hold on a second. Doesn't she work for the Kingland Group?"

His friends frowned in confusion.

What was she doing there?

Kevin approached Vivian, and surprise

flickered in his eyes when the pungent smell of alcohol attacked his nose.

"Is she drunk?" He leaned in closer to examine Vivian's beautiful face, which was now flushed and alluring because of the alcohol.

A surge of wicked desire rose in Kevin, and he immediately gave in to it. Without further ado, he lifted Vivian from her seat.

He gave his companions a malicious grin. "Guys, I'm leaving first. I've got something to take care of tonight."

Half an hour later, on the top floor of the Royal Hotel, Kevin carried an unconscious Vivian into a suite and tossed her on the bed.

At the moment, Vivian's mind was completely clouded. She had no idea where she was or danger was looming over her.

Kevin stared lustfully at Vivian, his gaze following every curve of her body.

"Gorgeous."

He cupped his crotch. "You're in luck tonight, buddy."

After saying that, he proceeded to remove his and Vivian's clothes. He did not bother showering first before pouncing on the

woman.

Kevin gave a powerful thrust with his hips. Vivian scowled in discomfort, but the alcohol in her system was preventing her from fully regaining consciousness.

Suddenly, Kevin felt resistance from where he was connected with the woman. He knew what it meant because he had slept with a lot of women.

"No way! She's actually a virgin."

Kevin's face lit up with delight, and his movements became gentler.

"I'm really lucky tonight."

Chapter 505 Making Up Her Mind

The next day.

The sun rays coming through the curtain hit Vivian's face, waking her up.

She felt dizzy and a little disoriented as she slowly woke up. She turned over on the bed and felt a pain from her lower body that instantly sobered her up.

"Ouch! What happened?" she murmured and turned her head, seeing an answer to her question.

There was a naked man right next to her. "Ahh!"

Vivian screamed, then screamed even harder when she realized that she was naked too.

She wasn't a fool.

She was naked with another naked man on a very messy bed. She didn't have to be an expert to know what happened last night.

Vivian was horrified. She had never dated anyone before. She had spent more than

twenty years saving her virginity for a man like Liam, just for this to happen!

Anger and resentment welled up in her heart.

She got out of bed with difficulty, her eyes darting about the room until she found a pair of scissors in the cabinet.

She had to do it. She had to cut off the bastard's dick.

Vivian held the scissors with determination and turned over the naked man, fully intending to cut his dick off.

However, when she saw his face, her hand froze.

"No! Not you!" She gasped, her hand covering her mouth in disbelief.

It was Kevin, the first child of the head of the Evans family.

She couldn't do this and offend the Evans family.

She didn't care if they made her pay for it, but she knew that they would also go for her family. She couldn't put them through that.

Her rough man-handling of the young man slowly woke him up. Kevin opened his eyes and was met with Vivian holding a pair of

scissors above his privates.

Scared to death, he scrambled to the other side of the bed and curled up, covering himself and stuttering, "No, don't do this... Let me explain. You were so drunk last night that I kindly offered to drive you to the hotel. As soon as we got here, you threw yourself at me. You were the one that asked for this." Vivian just stared at Kevin, at a loss for words.

The young man swallowed in fear, feeling regret.

This was not his first time doing something like this. Usually, he would leave as soon as he was done with the sex.

But Vivian looked so hot lying there that he couldn't resist staying for a little longer. Not only was she a virgin, but she had a high status, after all.

He had planned to only spend a little more time with her, but he ended up falling asleep.

After a long time, Vivian finally threw away the scissors.

She had to think of her family and let this go. She had to pretend that it didn't happen.

"Just get the fuck out of here, and remember,

this never happened! If I hear it anywhere, I'll kill you!" Vivian threatened coldly.

Without another word or glance at him, she put on her clothes and left.

It was only after she left that Kevin let out the breath he was holding. He didn't think she was going to let it go with the fierce look she had on her face.

For some reason, a strange feeling that he had never felt surged up within him as he thought of her.

Kingland Group.

In the vice president's office.

Vivian was in a trance. She couldn't focus on work.

Someone suddenly knocked on her door, came in and handed her a document.

"Miss Greyson, this document needs Mr. Hoffman's signature."

Vivian took it with a curt nod and walked towards the CEO's office with it.

She raised her hand to knock on the door, but stopped midway, her face hardening as she heard the sounds coming from inside.

Julie and Liam seemed to be having a lot of

fun.

Why? She clenched her fists.

Why did Julie get to stay with the man she loved? Julie was living a happy life while she had just had her virginity stolen by a total and disgusting stranger.

Jealousy filled Vivian, stronger than ever before.

Standing in front of the office, she looked desperate and frustrated.

Meanwhile, in the office, Julie was very happy.

It had been long since she smiled this much and hard. She was relieved now that the live stream was a success.

"We finally crossed the hurdle," Julie said and smiled sweetly at Liam. "'Thank you. I wouldn't have made it without your help."

Liam patted Julie's head softly and said, "It's a good start. The next live stream will be much easier."

Julie nodded and said reluctantly, "About that, I have to go back to the Grace Garment Factory and keep an eye on the recent orders. I won't be at peace if I don't supervise them myself."

Liam nodded as she reached out and caressed his face intimately.

Liam held her tightly in his arms and said, "Go ahead. Work is the most important right now. Once we're done with this, we will go on a trip."

Julie nodded and reluctantly moved away from Liam's embrace.

When Vivian heard the door opening from the inside, she quickly hid in a corner.

From there, she watched as Julie left happily.

This scene only helped make up her mind.

She took out her phone and sent a message to Yolanda.

"She's headed to the Grace Garment Factory. She is alone."

Chapter 506 Kidnapping

In the living room of the Evans' villa, Clarence was agitatedly pacing back and forth. Dennis and Yolanda were sitting in the seats behind him.

After the Kingland Group acquired the Riley Group and Rileymart, Preston ordered him to go home as soon as possible to accept his punishment.

Clarence, however, remained unyielding.

For the past few days, he had been keeping an eye out for a chance to get back at Liam.

Yesterday, his backer finally dispatched reinforcements to help him.

The leader of the reinforcements was a member of Black Spider, and his code name was Scorpion. His status was superior to that of the now-deceased Shadow Assassin.

Scorpion was interested in Liam and had been wanting to meet him for a while now.

He wanted to know just how skilled the person who killed Shadow Assassin was.

Suddenly, a soft "ding" echoed in the room.

Yolanda pulled out her phone to read the new message. When she saw the sender, her expression brightened.

She knew Vivian would cave eventually. She immediately shared the information she received with everyone.

The people in the room sprang to their feet, their hands clenching into fists. All of them had murderous looks on their faces.

In particular, Clarence's expression became extremely menacing. He could hardly wait for Liam's demise.

He beckoned Dennis to his side and ordered, "Go to the Kingland Group headquarters to meet Liam. Then..."

In the factory located on the outskirts of the city, Julie was currently monitoring the clothes being sent out of the warehouse.

From a place she could not see, a group of muscular men in black were stealthily watching her.

Once they were certain no one was looking, they sprang out of their hiding spot and dashed to Julie.

It was clear from their movements that they were excellent fighters. Before Julie could

identify her attackers, she received a blow to the neck that knocked her unconscious.

However, because employees were everywhere in the factory, one of them eventually noticed something unusual. He turned to where Julie was previously standing.

"Hey, what are you doing?"

Soon, the other employees also noticed something was off. Some of them immediately dropped what they were doing and hurried over to try to save Julie.

A fight broke out in the factory. However, despite the employees' advantage in number, they were still defeated in less than five minutes.

They were no match for the group of outlaws because they were just ordinary people living their ordinary lives. They could only watch helplessly as the men carried Julie out of the factory.

Annie, hiding somewhere nearby, caught sight of the scene and quickly followed them.

The group of strong men carried Julie into a car.

Annie knew she had to do something, so she

shouted, "Hey, let her go!"

The burly men turned to her. One of them took in her small frame before saying scornfully, "Mind your own business. Get out of here now if you don't want us to take you with us."

Annie scowled and concluded that it would be pointless to try to reason with them. She raised her leg and kicked the man nearest to her. Caught off guard, he fell to the ground.

The other men gaped at Annie, surprised at her strength. Together, they got over their haughtiness and attacked the woman.

However, Annie's combat prowess was far superior to theirs. In under a minute, they were all reduced to a groaning mess on the ground.

The only person who could still move was terrified. He weakly crawled back to the car to inform Scorpion of the situation.

A second later, a man stepped out of the car. He glared at his defeated minions.

"What a bunch of losers."

Annie examined her opponent from head to toe with a scowl.

The man was bald, and he had a realistic

scorpion tattoo on his head. The scorpion's tail reached up to the middle of his forehead, giving him a menacing appearance.

Scorpion gave Annie a once-over before licking his lips in an obscene manner. "You're quite good at fighting, miss. I bet you're also good in bed. Ordinary women died before they could satisfy me. I wonder if you can handle me for a few nights."

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Chapter 507 Being Defeated

"You are not worthy of me!"

Infuriated by his words, Annie kicked Scorpion in the face.

She didn't show him any mercy as she used all of her strength on him. She was confident that she could cripple the bald man with her powerful kick.

When her foot almost connected with his face, Annie felt a resistance.

She frowned and looked down. Scorpion was holding her leg with one hand.

She didn't even realize it when he acted.

"Nice leg," Scorpion commented, looking at Annie's leg with lust-filled eyes. "I can only imagine the many difficult positions these legs can take when we are having sex."

"I'm going to kill you!" Annie roared, pressing her weight on the leg Scorpion was holding and kicking the other one out.

This move was more powerful than the previous one with Scorpion holding one of her legs. And with his face that was so close,

it was impossible to miss.

"Don't be so impatient, chick!"

Somehow, he still managed to dodge it, loosening his hold on Annie's leg and kicking his towards her.

"You won't hold me accountable for this, right? Don't worry, I'll take all your pain away when we'll be in bed."

Annie had planned to risk her life to win this fight. She just didn't expect the man to be so fast and agile.

Before she knew it, she was kicked back with force.

Scorpion was so fast that he stood by her before she landed on the ground.

The next second, instead of giving her another blow, the man held her head and kept her from getting hurt.

Annie wanted to fight back, but the man was too fast for her. She was still in shock when he threw several punches at her.

He was far more stronger than she was. Annie didn't even have the strength to fight back anymore.

"I still have something to take care of. I don't have the time to play with you," he said and

knocked Annie out with a karate chop on her neck. An obscene smile playing on his lips, he dragged her into the car.

The car drove out of the city and stopped at an abandoned building in the west of the city.

Annie and Julie were hung in the air, both of them unconscious.

Clarence ordered that Julie be woken up with cold water.

She woke up with a gasp and started struggling instinctively. But she was tied up and couldn't move.

Clarence and others laughed as they watched her lame struggle, the sound of their laughter sending a cold chill down Julie's spine.

Her eyes moved around until they fell on Annie who was also tied up next to her.

Why was she here?

Liam must have sent Annie to protect her.

Now that both of them were trapped here, Julie felt like there was no escaping this.

She only had her mouth to help her out. She plucked up her courage and threatened, "How dare you kidnap me? You really have

some nerve. Should I remind you of what happened to the Seymour family? You seem to have forgotten."

The words were barely out of her mouth when Clarence walked up to her and slapped her hard.

"Shut up, you bitch! You dare to threaten me in your position?"

Clarence scoffed. "What was the Seymour clan? It's insulting that you would mention it and my name in the same sentence."

Clarence then pinched Julie's cheek. "You see, that loser you claim to love has not only offended the Norris family, but another clan with assets worth trillions of dollars which is behind me. Just you wait and see. He will soon join you here."

Lust brimming in his eyes, he let his hands explore Julie's body. "When he gets here, I'll rape you in front of the loser. I can already see the beautiful scene."

Julie struggled to get away from his wandering hands and spat out, "I'd rather die than let you touch me. Even my dead body wouldn't want you."

The look on Julie's face after she said that

made Clarence feel like she could actually bite off her tongue and commit suicide.

"Not on my watch!" Clarence grunted under his breath and stuffed a towel into Julie's mouth.

He smiled at her and said provokingly, "Don't be so impatient. When that loser comes, I'll rape you in front of him. It won't be too late for you to die then. Just a little bit of patience."

Chapter 508 Threatening Liam

In the CEO's office of the Kingland Group.

Now that Rileymart and Funbuy had completely fused, Liam had a lot of work to do. He spent most of his days working with documents in his office.

While he was working, the landline in his office rang.

"Hello?" he said into the phone.

"Mr. Hoffman, a certain Mr. Caldwell is here for you, but he doesn't have an appointment. He says he's your friend and wants to see you."

Liam frowned suspiciously and asked the person to send Mr. Caldwell up.

Not long after, there was a knock at the door, and the assistant came in with the guest.

Liam narrowed his eyes at Dennis after the assistant left and asked, "Why did you want to see me?"

Dennis' lips curled up into an evil smile. "It's nothing serious. I just wanted to show you

something."

Dennis took out his phone and launched a video call to Clarence, placing the phone in front of Liam.

Liam was confused until Clarence picked up and he saw Julie on the screen.

"Liam, I want you to watch how I torture your woman," Clarence said through the phone and laughed victoriously. He picked up the long whip on the table and slashed it across Julie's skin.

He repeated the action a few more times, each time, earning a shrill scream from the woman.

Her skin was swollen and stained with blood. She was only a weak woman and couldn't endure this sort of torture. She was already losing consciousness.

As blood dripped from her skin, Julie's screams sounded lower and lower. She was hurting so much that she almost fainted again.

Liam clenched his trembling fists, a wave of anger and rage overwhelming him.

"Julie, Julie!" he shouted.

Julie seemed to have heard the frantic voice

of her lover as she struggled to raise her head and look at the phone. However, with the towel in her mouth, she could not make a sound.

"Bastard!"

Liam hit the phone on the table and grabbed Dennis harshly by the neck, lifting him up until his toes could barely touch the floor.

Dennis' eyes turned red, and his hands grappled at his neck as he struggled to breathe.

Liam didn't budge, holding him in the same position until Dennis was about to die. That was when he loosened his grip on Dennis' neck.

Then, Liam looked at Clarence on the screen and said threateningly, "You're asking for death."

Clarence wasn't deterred. He took the whip and whipped Julie again, saying arrogantly, "You shouldn't be arrogant. You're not the one in an advantageous situation. You even dared to hurt my sidekick?"

Liam gritted his teeth until he felt like they would break. He stared intently at Clarence, thinking of how he was going to kill the man.

Chapter 509 Insatiable Greed

Clarence was so angry and resentful that even cutting Julie and Liam to pieces wouldn't dispel the hatred in his heart.

The extremely powerful clan helping him out didn't care about his personal sentiments.

They only helped because they valued the business of the Kingland Group and wanted it for themselves.

The only way they could get it, was by destroying Kingland Group first.

Kingland Group already had such a large commercial impact. They just had to find a way to turn the company into theirs.

That was how things worked in this life. Everyone only did something that would benefit them.

"Liam, if you want your woman to live, you'd better listen to me," Clarence said arrogantly. "Now, you're going to publicly admit the authenticity of the previous rumors and the

scandals Kingland Group has been involved in, and you will do that as the CEO of the company."

At the same time, Dennis threw a document in front of Liam.

"Sign that too."

Liam looked down at the document and saw Sherwood's signature on it.

It was an employment contract.

The contract basically stated that Liam hired Sherwood who under his boss' orders, made up all those things to deceive the public.

It also stated that after the incident, Liam was to put up bail for Sherwood. The contract just basically said that everything was just for attention and to get fame for Kingland Group.

Clarence smiled cunningly at Liam and said, "Did you think you were the only one that can use Sherwood? Do you still remember that you promised to protect his family? Well, you didn't keep your own end of the bargain seeing as I killed his parents and I now have his brother. You really do not know what it means to offend a villain. A villain won't rest until they have taken revenge on

you. Now sign it quickly before I destroy your woman's face."

As if to make a point, Clarence laughed and brought the fruit knife awfully close to Julie's face.

Liam took a deep calming breath and signed the damn document.

Then, he posted a statement on his Facebook account, taking responsibility for all the scandals the Kingland Group had been involved in.

While Dennis was distracted with the signed document, Liam quickly sent a help message to Theo. ¹

With a smug smile on his face, Clarence threw away the knife he was holding and logged in to Facebook.

Liam was so famous that a lot of people paid close attention to him and his pages. As soon as his statement came up, it caused a huge uproar on the Internet.

Clarence smiled with satisfaction as public opinion quickly shifted away from Liam and the Kingland Group. The comments were mostly curses. Liam's statement was shared and reposted on many pages.

In less than one day, it was going to make it to the hot search list.

Liam then looked at Clarence through the screen and said, "I've done what you asked for. Now, let her go."

Clarence laughed even more wickedly and said, "Liam, don't tell me you thought it was going to be that easy."

After a short pause, he continued more fiercely, "I don't just want to ruin your reputation. I want your total ruin. If you behave well, maybe, just maybe, I'll show some mercy and let her go."

Chapter 510 The Twist

"Now listen closely, here's what you're going to do. Stab yourself with a dagger!" Clarence sneered.

With a wicked grin, Dennis tossed a dagger in front of Liam.

Liam's face remained cold, but he had no choice. He wanted to save his sweetheart's life so he had to pick up the dagger from the table, take a deep breath, and brace himself as he was about to stab it into his arm.

Watching anxiously from the other end of the line, Julie couldn't help but release a shaky breath.

Clarence's face darkened, and he slapped Julie hard.

"If you keep making noise, I'll kill you!"

He then turned back to Liam and threatened, "Hurry up and get it over with! Or I'll kill her!"

Faced with this terrifying ultimatum, Liam didn't hesitate. He drove the blade into his arm without a second thought.

Since Julie was in the enemy's grip, Liam

couldn't afford to show any mercy to himself. He almost pierced his arm through with the dagger.

Blood gushed out from the wound and stained almost every part of Liam's clothes red.

Pale and weakened from the loss of blood, Liam's condition alarmed Julie, causing her to break down emotionally.

Even after enduring so much torment from Clarence, Julie had managed to hold back her tears. But now, her face was soaked with them.

Looking at the screen, Clarence laughed maniacally, "This is what happens when you mess with me! Next, I want you to stab it into your belly!"

Dennis smirked with satisfaction after getting his revenge, relentlessly pushing Liam at his side.

"Come on! Hurry up! Stop being indecisive. Do you want your woman to stay alive or not?"

Liam's demeanor remained cold, but he had no other option. As long as Julie was safe, he feared nothing, not even death.

He slowly directed the dagger towards his abdomen, took a deep breath, and was ready to go through with it.

However, in a jaw-dropping twist, Annie, who had been suspended in the air motionless on the screen, suddenly sprang into action. She moved her hands, and the hemp rope binding her fell off.

Clarence and the others were caught off guard, so before they could react, Annie kicked Clarence to the floor, sending the mobile phone crashing as well.

As the signal was cut off, the screen went black.

When he saw this, Liam's face contorted with worry. He was concerned about the safety of Julie and Annie.

At that moment, a much-awaited response arrived from Theo. It contained Julie's current location!

Liam quickly checked the message, but Dennis' face turned dark.

"Loser, what are you doing? Hurry up and stab yourself!"

With the phone's screen facing Liam, Dennis had no idea of the chaos unfolding with

Clarence. He had no clue that the situation had spiraled out of control.

Liam shot Dennis a cold glance and delivered a hard slap across his face.

The loud, resounding slap left a red, swollen mark on Dennis' cheek. He covered his face in shock at first, then erupted in fury.

"Mr. Norris! This loser has resisted! Teach him a lesson!"

Fuming with anger, Dennis yelled and jumped, but he got no answer from the other end of the line.

Liam couldn't be bothered to talk to him anymore. Without a second thought, he delivered a swift karate chop to his neck, sending him crumpling unconscious to the floor.

Minutes later, Liam hauled the unconscious man to the parking lot, chucking him into the trunk of a car.

He then turned on the navigation system!

With a cold face, Liam pressed down hard on the gas pedal and the car roared to life, heading straight for an abandoned building on the western side of the city.

As Liam sped along, he dialed Jaxtyn's

number.

"Get everyone who can move to the west of the city. We've got a crucial mission!" Liam said with authority, his voice cold and commanding.

On the other end of the line, Jaxtyn was taken aback. Liam's tone sent shivers down his spine.

Even through the phone, Jaxtyn could feel the intensity of Liam's killing intent.

It was the first time he had heard Liam speak so terrifyingly.

Without wasting a moment, Jaxtyn responded, "Yes, sir!"

When King issued an order, Jaxtyn knew better than to hesitate. He instantly rallied the troops and raced towards the western part of the city!

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Chapter 511 Escaping

In the abandoned building on the western side of the city.

After Clarence received a swift kick from Annie, she flipped over, rushed to Julie's side, and swiftly used the concealed sharp blade in her shoe to cut the ropes binding her.

The wicked bunch barely had time to react as Annie rolled over with Julie in her arms, leapt out of the corner window to seek refuge in another abandoned building.

In truth, Annie had already awakened when she saw Julie being lashed.

Originally, her plan was to buy time until Liam could rescue them.

However, seeing Liam being forced to harm himself by Clarence, she couldn't bear it any longer and took the initiative to attack him.

Before her attack, Annie had already thought ahead, devising a safe route to flee.

Based on her observations, snipers lurked around the abandoned building, and the only blind spot was the diagonal rear, which she

could use to escape for now.

Annie's move was swift and seamless. By the time Clarence got back on his feet and regained consciousness, Annie and Julie had vanished from his sight.

"They're gone! They escaped! Get them back!" Clarence cried out in shock.

His shout alerted Scorpion and his henchmen in the next room. They rushed out and found the empty ropes. Scorpion couldn't help but get furious.

"Damn it! You're nothing but a failure! You couldn't even watch two women!"

Clarence seethed with anger. Not fearing Scorpion's rage, he retorted, "Why are you still standing here? They've already escaped. Hurry up and go after them!"

Scorpion's eyes flickered, but he managed to keep his temper in check.

He licked his lips and said with cruelty, "Why the rush? Where could they possibly go? My people surround this place. They can't escape my grasp. Since these two chicks want to play a game, I don't mind relishing the thrill of hunting them!"

With that said, Scorpion looked at the

window through which Annie had escaped and casually jumped out of it.

The abandoned buildings in the area were quite vast, and the terrain was intricate. Yet, everything had already been surrounded by Scorpion's snipers. The arrangement was initially meant to deal with Liam when he arrived, but it came in handy sooner than expected.

Under Scorpion's command, the snipers pressed forward. Building after building was methodically searched, and they quickly closed in on the hiding place of Annie and Julie.

Carrying Julie on her back, Annie cautiously maneuvered between the abandoned buildings. They were now at the very center of the enemy's encirclement, and they couldn't afford any rash moves.

Especially with Julie seriously injured and unconscious, Annie had to move slowly, mindful of the lurking snipers in the shadows and the formidable Scorpion, who could pounce on the two women at any moment.

Annie found herself trapped in a hidden corner, burdened by Julie on her back,

desperately hoping that Liam would arrive before their enemies did.

As the sun dipped below the horizon, darkness shrouded the surroundings.

Annie's ears caught the ominous thud of Scorpion's heavy footsteps, getting nearer by the moment.

Even though she had picked a well-hidden spot, it was no match for the likes of the formidable warrior, Scorpion.

"I've checked all the other places. Baby, you have to be around here somewhere, right?!" His voice playfully echoed, with just a wall between them.

"Honey, you better hide real good. Don't make it too easy for me to find you. Ha ha."

Annie's heart raced, and her face tensed. She knew they'd be found soon.

In that moment, she steeled herself to fight Scorpion until the very end.

Still, she couldn't deny the truth. Facing someone as powerful as him meant her chances of survival were slim.

In her heart, Annie fervently prayed for Liam's swift arrival.

Chapter 512 The Failure Of The Sneak Attack

With each step drawing near, Annie's heart raced. She felt trapped with no way out.

Liam's face consumed her mind as tears streamed down her cheeks.

But amid her desperation, Annie's eyes were suddenly filled with determination.

Since there was no place to hide, she'd face Scorpion head-on, fighting till death.

Crouching in the shadows, Annie gently set Julie down and clenched her teeth tightly when she saw Scorpion's figure.

Scorpion's imposing figure loomed before her. He was still unaware of her presence, and his overconfidence became her advantage.

Gathering her courage, Annie burst from her hiding spot, her shoe blade aimed straight for Scorpion's neck!

Her attack struck like lightning, catching Scorpion by surprise. By the time he came to realization, Annie was already close to him.

His face immediately turned dark. As he had been fighting for years, he had sharp instincts and was able to dodge the attack.

The sharp blade was aimed to pierce through his throat, but only grazed his neck, drawing blood but not causing any serious harm.

Scorpion gasped heavily, acknowledging his narrow escape. If he was even slightly slower, he would have been a dead man already.

Annie's heart sank as the sneak attack failed. She had missed the last chance to turn the tables!

As Scorpion regained his composure, a twisted smile appeared on his face. "Damn! You almost had me. That was thrilling. I like it," he said with a sinister air.

His diabolical grin persisted as he delivered a hard kick to Annie's abdomen.

The impact sent a surge of blood up her throat, and she was thrown aside.

The sight of Annie's pain seemed to further ignite Scorpion's cruel fascination.

With a loaded pistol in hand, Scorpion fired off two shots that struck Annie's wrists, causing blood to pour out from the wounds,

and rendering her powerless to fight back.

Just in the nick of time, Clarence and the rest of their group arrived. Seeing Annie's capture, they felt an overwhelming sense of relief.

Meanwhile, Scorpion noticed Julie still lying unconscious in the corner.

"This whole thing initially had nothing to do with you." He jeered at Annie with a wicked grin. "It looks like you care a whole lot about this woman."

With his pistol now aimed at Julie, he issued a despicable command, "Crawl over here and lick my feet like a dog, or I'll put an end to her life."

Scorpion's face contorted with malicious delight as he sought to dominate this defiant woman before him.

Clarence's brows furrowed, and he firmly said to Scorpion, "You can't kill her. She's still useful."

"I didn't get an order from my superior to keep her alive. It's not your business!"

Scorpion paid no heed to Clarence's authority, reveling in the pleasure of his own power, and resistant to any attempts at

persuasion.

Frustration and anger bubbled up inside Clarence as he directed his pent-up anger towards Dennis, who was yet to show up.

"Damn it! I sent him to handle a simple matter, but he's taking forever to show up with that loser!"

Cursing under his breath, Clarence attempted to video call Dennis.

He tried over and over but no response came through.

A gnawing feeling of unease crept in.

This left him wondering if something unexpected had also happened to Dennis as it did with them.

persuasion.

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Chapter 513 Taking The Bullet For Julie

As Clarence pondered the situation, a sinking feeling gripped his heart. He turned to Scorpion and said, "Dennis didn't pick up the phone. I'm afraid something unexpected might have happened to him. Perhaps Liam is on his way here!"

Scorpion's expression turned serious for a moment, but then he burst into laughter.

"Oh, come on! My men got this place covered. Dealing with one more corpse won't be a problem later!"

Seeing Scorpion's confidence, Clarence felt a bit reassured.

True, the deserted buildings were crawling with snipers, and Julie and Annie were under their control, with the formidable Scorpion calling the shots.

Even if Liam showed up, he wouldn't stand a chance against them.

Yet, despite the apparent safety, Clarence couldn't shake his uneasiness.

Scorpion seemed unconcerned about Liam's possible arrival.

He turned back to Annie. Clearly more focused on the spirited woman before him, than the potential threat of Liam.

"Alright, my patience is wearing thin. Let the countdown begin! Five. Four."

Annie raised her head defiantly and stared at Scorpion, not willing to give in.

"Three. Two. One."

As the countdown reached its end, Scorpion wasted no time shooting Julie in the leg.

The intense pain snapped Julie back to consciousness, and her screams filled the air.

Blood splashed all over the dark concrete.

And Julie looked at Annie in anguish!

"Crawl over, or not?!" Scorpion threatened again, pointing his pistol at Julie's head.

He had run out of patience and had no intention of repeating the countdown. As long as Annie resisted, Scorpion would pull the trigger with no hesitation.

Annie's gaze started to lose focus.

She was torn, but in the end, she gave in.

Not for Julie's sake, but for Liam!

Julie was Liam's sweetheart, and Annie understood that better than anyone.

She knew that if Julie died, it would devastate Liam.

Annie was proud.

But for Liam's sake, she was willing to swallow her pride and even... Let go of her dignity.

Annie slowly inched her way toward Scorpion. But just as she was about to get to him, a wicked smirk crept across Scorpion's face.

"I've had a change of heart!" he declared with an evil grin. "I'd rather see you in despair than have you bow down to me now. Whether you obey or not, she will die!"

With those bone-chilling words, Scorpion raised his hand and fired at Julie.

In a split second, Annie leaped up with all her might, shielding Julie from the bullet.

The impact of the bullet sent Annie flying. Blood spilled from her mouth, and she was left unable to move.

"Wow, how touching!" Scorpion sneered. "Did you really think she'd be spared just because you took the bullet for her? You're

naive. You could've been useful to me and survived, but now both of you are doomed!"

Again, Scorpion aimed the gun at Julie.

Despite her injury, Annie struggled to stand, but the bullet had taken its toll, and she was on the brink of death. She no longer had the strength to protect Julie.

"Before you meet your end, I'll let you witness her death with your own eyes. Let's see how desperate you'll become. Ha ha!"

Despite her grave condition, Julie crawled over to Annie and cradled her in her arms.

As she looked at Annie's pale face, tears streamed down Julie's face.

"Annie! Annie, don't die!"

Julie held Annie close, and let out a desperate roar.

Chapter 514 King Arrived!

Liam had already arrived at the area of the abandoned buildings.

But he didn't know the area well, which made finding Annie and Julie a tough challenge.

Just as he was being cautious, a gunshot rang out.

This guided him to where Scorpion and his crew were stationed. And shortly after, he entered into the abandoned building where Scorpion and the others were.

It was then that Liam saw a heart-wrenching scene. Annie had taken a bullet for Julie.

She was left in a sorry state, covered in blood.

The sight of Annie's suffering stirred a whirlwind of emotions in Liam, and a tear escaped his eye.

Fueled by rage, he swore that that night, he'd make those responsible pay with their lives. ①

With his sharp perception of things, he could detect the positions of all the snipers around,

even in the pitch-black night.

Moving as stealthy as a cat, Liam glided through the beams of the buildings with incredible grace and precision. His every step was as hushed as the gentle fall of autumn leaves, rendering him practically invisible.

The wind blew, bringing a thin cloud to mask the moonlight, and in that moment, Liam merged with the darkness, becoming an inseparable part of it.

Behind the first sniper, Liam stood ready, practically breathing down the sniper's neck, yet the sniper remained oblivious to his presence.

In a flash, Liam's hands closed around the sniper's neck and broke it.

His eyes were still fixed on the sniper gunsight when he died quietly. If he didn't lower his head, one would have thought that he was still alive.

The second sniper met a similar fate.

Then Liam swiftly turned his attention to the third.

The cloud that covered the moonlight had hastily dispersed, revealing the moonlight, and Liam's figure emerged on the rooftop. In

just one minute, he swiftly eliminated all snipers, leaving them all lifeless in his wake!

Liam's grip on the long sniper rifle was unyielding, as he aimed it at Scorpion.

In that moment, the air crackled with tension, and Scorpion took perverse pleasure in the despair flickering in Annie's eyes, his wicked desires reaching fruition.

Looking at Annie, Scorpion jeered, "Little beauty, why did you choose to suffer this? Are you waiting for that loser, Liam? Unfortunately, you won't be seeing him again!"

He then laughed and continued, "The truth is, I really want that loser to come sooner so that you can watch me kill him. But too bad, I am already weary of playing games with you today!"

Then he aimed his gun at Julie, sealing their fates.

Annie's eyes welled up with tears as the gravity of their dire situation hit her.

Julie noticed Annie's lips slightly open, sensing she had something important to say. Reacting fast, she moved closer, allowing Annie to whisper in her ear.

"Help... Help me tell him I have done... my best. If there's an afterlife, I want to know him sooner!"

After she said that, Annie closed her eyes as she lost consciousness.

Julie trembled, her face a mix of emotions as Annie's words struck a chord within her.

Scorpion reveled in the miserable spectacle before him, enjoying it like a monster. His fingers bent slightly as he slowly pulled the trigger, relishing the idea of giving both women a final shot.

On the rooftop, Liam remained immovable, the sniper rifle becoming an extension of his very being. His aura melded with the weapon, inseparable as if they were one.

The crosshair in the gunsight which was zeroed in on Scorpion's forehead, trailed down to his wrist.

Even in the darkness, Liam keenly sensed Scorpion's subtle movements and understood his imminent pull of the trigger.

To Liam, Scorpion's motion seemed as sluggish as a sloth's.

As King of the Dark Night Organization, Liam held dominion over everything shrouded in

Chapter 514 King Arrived!

darkness.

Once Liam set his sights on a target, no one could escape his watchful gaze.

Bang!

The gunshot echoed through the night!

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Chapter 515 The Wrath Of King!

The sharp crack of the bullet shattered Scorpion's wrist.

This sent shockwaves through everyone present. Of course, except for Liam who responsible for the shot.

He had deliberately aimed away from Scorpion's head, wanting the man to suffer a bit longer, enough to quench his own anger.

With his injured wrist, Scorpion helplessly dropped his pistol to the floor, rendering him powerless and no threat to Julie and Annie.

Now, Liam had a new plan in mind, which was to make Scorpion suffer before dying!

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Each relentless gunshot echoed, finding its mark with precision. In a matter of seconds, Scorpion was immobilized as his limbs and lower body were pierced by the sniper's bullets.

Clarence, witnessing this horrifying scene,

found himself cowering in a corner, paralyzed with fear.

His fear became evident as a pool of yellow liquid seeped from his trousers, a result of overwhelming terror.

After emptying the clip, Liam tossed aside the sniper rifle and swiftly descended from the rooftop, standing before them.

Scorpion, now resembling a defeated animal, lay on the floor and looked up at Liam. Though he had never met the man before, he knew that the man was Liam and the same person who had shot him.

Although it was a long-range attack with the sniper rifle, Scorpion's instincts should have sensed the danger.

But he failed to notice anything unusual before the sniper struck. Fear gripped him as he gazed upon the stranger.

He was convinced that he was looking at a true monster!

Scorpion pleaded, "Please, let me go. I'll do anything you want, anything at all! With my skills, I can be incredibly useful to you! Please spare my life!"

But Liam paid no attention to his pleas.

Scorpion was now crippled, and even if a god were present, they couldn't restore him.

Yet, Liam had no intention of granting a quick death.

In that moment, Jaxtyn and his men finally arrived at the scene. They found everything sorted out, leaving only the aftermath to deal with.

"Annie!" Jaxtyn's emotions got the best of him when he spotted Annie lying in a pool of blood. Despite his desperate cries, she remained unconscious.

"King, what's happening?" Confused and with teary eyes, Jaxtyn turned to Liam, wanting an explanation.

Liam quickly explained the whole incident, leaving Jaxtyn fuming with anger. He reached for his gun, ready to kill Scorpion.

But Liam stopped Jaxtyn in his tracks.

With a cold tone, he declared, "I'll handle him myself."

With that, Liam directed the others to kill all of Scorpion's henchmen, sparing only Clarence and Scorpion himself. They were taken away and locked up alongside Dennis.

Amidst the turmoil, Liam's heart ached

painfully as he gazed upon Julie's battered body and Annie teetering on the edge of death.

A mix of emotions swirled within him, fueled by a burning desire to seek vengeance on Clarence and Scorpion immediately. But his priority was to save Julie and Annie.

If he should lose any of them, the weight of her death would haunt him forever, and he wouldn't be able to bear that burden of guilt.

He would do everything to ensure that didn't happen.

Jaxtyn wasted no time and arranged for a private ambulance and then Liam took the two women to the hospital.

Liam knew he had to handle Annie's operation himself if he wanted her alive.

Her injuries were too severe, and leaving her to anyone else meant risking her life without a doubt.

Scorpion was now crippled, and even if a god were present, they couldn't restore him.

Yet, Liam had no intention of granting a quick death.

In that moment, Jaxtyn and his men finally arrived at the scene. They found everything sorted out, leaving only the aftermath to deal with.

"Annie!" Jaxtyn's emotions got the best of him when he spotted Annie lying in a pool of blood. Despite his desperate cries, she remained unconscious.

"King, what's happening?" Confused and with teary eyes, Jaxtyn turned to Liam, wanting an explanation.

Liam quickly explained the whole incident, leaving Jaxtyn fuming with anger. He reached for his gun, ready to kill Scorpion.

But Liam stopped Jaxtyn in his tracks.

With a cold tone, he declared, "I'll handle him myself."

With that, Liam directed the others to kill all of Scorpion's henchmen, sparing only Clarence and Scorpion himself. They were taken away and locked up alongside Dennis.

Amidst the turmoil, Liam's heart ached

painfully as he gazed upon Julie's battered body and Annie teetering on the edge of death.

A mix of emotions swirled within him, fueled by a burning desire to seek vengeance on Clarence and Scorpion immediately. But his priority was to save Julie and Annie.

If he should lose any of them, the weight of her death would haunt him forever, and he wouldn't be able to bear that burden of guilt.

He would do everything to ensure that didn't happen.

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Chapter 516 The Operation

At the heart of Salem was the Central Hospital.

Salem boasted two top-notch medical facilities that dominated the city's healthcare scene. Beluga Hospital held the crown among private institutions, while the Central Hospital proudly claimed the number one spot among public ones.

Its reputation was built on a foundation of top-tier medical resources and impressive achievements that reverberated throughout the medical community.

Liam stepped into the Central Hospital armed with his international medical license, which prompted the staff to make special arrangements for him to operate on Annie, whose condition was nothing short of critical.

The ambulance ride had been a race against time, with Annie's heart rate slowly declining. Fortunately, the life-saving device in the ambulance kept her hanging on until they reached the hospital.

With no hesitation, Liam began the high-stakes operation.

Annie's injuries were two-fold. One set was from her fight with Scorpion, including serious but non-fatal wounds on her wrists from the bullets.

However, the most worrisome injury was caused by a bullet that grazed her heart. Although it caused no harm to her heart, it inflicted damage to her lung.

Liam knew he had to carefully extract the bullet from Annie's body.

With each precise move of the scalpel, he felt sweat trickling down his brow. Even though he was handling the operation himself, he knew it was a very tough one.

Liam made an incision into Annie's chest. The bullet was deeply embedded within her body. With careful precision, he wielded the scalpel, leaving no room for error in his movements.

He knew the stakes were high. Any further damage to her lung or heart during the bullet's extraction could mean an instant loss of Annie's life on the operating table.

Despite the pressure, Liam fought to

maintain his composure, performing each step of the operation with utmost focus.

"Annie, you have to pull through! You can't die! I won't allow that to happen!" he muttered to himself.

Time seemed to slip away as the minutes ticked by.

Seven hours later, Liam finally emerged from the operating room, utterly drained. Collapsing to the floor, he gasped for breath, having poured his heart and soul into the challenging procedure.

A pure smile crossed Liam's face, relief flooding over him.

"I know you can pull through," he murmured to himself, knowing the operation had been a success.

Despite the severity of Annie's injuries, Liam had given it his all, and the operation turned out successful. Her condition had improved from critical to serious.

Taking a deep breath, he struggled to stand up, already thinking about the second operation he'd perform for Annie once her body had time to recover.

After attending to Annie's wounds, Liam

made his way to Julie's ward.

She also had some significant injuries, but aside from the gunshot wound in her leg, most were just minor bruises. The hospital staff had done their best to treat her, but she needed some time to rest and recover fully.

When Liam pushed the door open and walked in, he found Julie wide awake.

Tears welled up in her eyes at the sight of him.

It tugged at his heartstrings, and he approached her and said in a soft, comforting tone, "I blame myself for what happened to you. But don't worry. I'll make sure those jerks who hurt you will feel the pain they inflicted on you."

Julie gave a slight nod and asked, "Where is Annie? She was badly hurt. How is she doing now?"

Compared to punishing Clarence and the others, her top concern now was Annie's safety.

"Don't worry," Liam said softly. "She's out of danger now. While she won't be in any more danger, there might be some after-effects that we can only confirm after the second

operation."

Hearing that Annie's life was no longer at risk, Julie felt a bit relieved, but guilt gnawed at her heart.

The last words Annie spoke had stirred her feelings, making her realize the depth of her love for Liam.

And she couldn't forget that it was Annie who had saved her life.

This made Julie so troubled.

For a moment, she felt torn and uncertain about what to do next.

Liam couldn't fathom Julie's inner turmoil. Noticing her empty gaze, he assumed she was merely frightened.

Now, he had to leave her so she could have a good rest.

Understanding this, he comforted Julie again and departed from the Central Hospital.

With the most crucial task taken care of, Liam had other matters to attend to.

Outside the hospital's gate, his eyes turned cold as he thought of Clarence and Dennis.

No amount of vengeance could satiate his anger. Even if they were to die a thousand

Chapter 516 The Operation
times over!



Chapter 517 Punishments

In the dungeon of the Dark Night Organization in Salem.

Liam had said that he would personally take care of these evil men, but Jaxtyn just couldn't hold himself back.

He couldn't forget how miserable Annie looked thanks to them. He didn't even know if she would make it out alive.

Unable to keep his anger in any longer, he tortured them mercilessly. He had to pour his anger out somehow.

Scorpion took most of the hits. By then, he already knew that even if he came out of this alive, he would be crippled. So, he didn't bother begging for mercy anymore. Instead, he seemed to fall into a state of shock and madness, provoking Jaxtyn even more.

"Haven't you eaten yet or what? Be a man and use some strength!" Scorpion said with a hysteric laugh as Jaxtyn whipped him some more.

"I went harder when I hit that bitch. Come on, hit me hard and avenge the bitch!"

The more Jaxtyn whipped Scorpion, the more the crazy man insulted Annie and provoked Jaxtyn.

On hearing the name the man was giving Annie, Jaxtyn saw red. He ignored Liam's order, took out a sword and swung it at the man's arm, cutting it off with a clean cut.

"Ah! Fuck you!"

Scorpion cursed and screamed in pain.

"Just kill me! Do it right now!"

In a blind rage, Jaxtyn retorted, "Do you think I can't do it?" He held his sword in a firm grip and was about to bring it down on the man's neck when Liam came in.

Jaxtyn's hand froze midway. Then, he threw the sword down angrily. He was still very angry, but he fought to control his impulse now that King was here.

"I'm sorry, King. I just couldn't help myself," Jaxtyn said apologetically.

Liam looked down with sympathy at Jaxtyn's red eyes. He patted his shoulder comfortingly and said, "Annie is alive. She's out of danger and is stable."

Jaxtyn's tense shoulders sagged in relief when he heard this.

"Julie and Annie are in the hospital now, but I don't feel quite confident leaving them in the care of the others. You should go to the hospital and join them while I take care of everything here."

Jaxtyn nodded obediently and left after shooting one last death stare at the men on the floor.

After the door closed behind Jaxtyn, Liam looked down at the unrecognizable Scorpion on the floor, his face hard and cold.

"You won't have such an easy death after what you've done." He pointed at one of his men and ordered, "You, come and cut off his other arm."

The man complied instantly, coming up with a sword. The next second, blood pooled around Scorpion as his other arm fell off.

Scorpion was howling and screaming on the floor, rubbing himself in his own blood. Glassy-eyed, Liam said, "Hang him up above a fire and grill him slowly to death from his feet to his head."

"Yes, sir!"

Clarence's mouth almost dropped to the floor.

He swallowed loudly, looking at Liam in fear and disbelief. Liam wouldn't actually do such, right?

That was by far the most painful death one could have. It was literally lynching, if not worse.

Clarence could already tell that he would probably have it worse than Scorpion. After all, he was the one that set this up and put it in motion.

"Mr. Hoffman, Mr. Hoffman!" Clarence and Dennis knelt down and kowtowed, desperately pleading their cases.

"We know what a generous man you are. We were stupid and obsessed for no reason. But if you spare us today, we are ready to serve you and be at your beck and call. Make us your loyal stooges, Mr. Hoffman. We will do everything you ask of us."

Liam looked down at the men who were already acting worse than slaves would. "Do you really want to live?" Liam asked coldly. On hearing this, the two men felt like they had a way out and were beginning to feel better. Before they could even nod, Liam's next words made their hearts drop again.

"It's impossible. Did you really think it would

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"It's impossible. Did you really think it would

be that easy? I don't need two stooges. Only one of you can walk out of here alive and serve me."

Liam nodded curtly at one of his men who immediately understood. The man came over, untied the two scared men and threw two daggers at them.

"This is the only chance you're going to get," Liam said casually, as though it wasn't matter of life and death. "You're going to fight. Whoever kills the other first will stay alive."

Chapter 518 The Struggle Of Trapped Beasts

Liam then clapped his hands as a signal for all his men to go out. He followed right after them.

After the click sound of the door closing, all the lights in the dungeon went off.

Everywhere was dark, but for the flickering light coming from the fire grilling Scorpion's feet.

As the fire grilled Scorpion, he would scream for a long time, then faint from the pain. The same pain would wake him up again. He would scream again and end up fainting. Only death could end his suffering, but it was still far away.

Clarence and Dennis looked at each other doubtfully. Then, as if remembering what they had to do, they suddenly scrambled for the daggers in front of them and ran to different corners of the dungeon.

Each person thought of how to kill the other and survive.

Clarence stared at Dennis from across the dungeon and said arrogantly, "Don't forget who I am. I'm a member of the Norris family. If I die by your hands, even if you do get out of here alive, you won't be able to live long. Once you'll be taken care of, my family will go after your father and the whole Caldwell family. Do you really want that to happen?"

As fear visibly gripped Dennis, he walked towards Clarence and knelt before the man, startling and confusing him.

Voice trembling with fear, Dennis said in a low voice, "I'll die for you. But you have to promise that you will look after my family."

Clarence's heartbeat slowed at this. He felt relieved that he wouldn't have to fight.

With a confident smile on his face, he held his dagger in a firm grip and stepped closer to Dennis.

"Of course, I'll take care of the Caldwell family. You shouldn't worry about that," Clarence said, raising his hand.

At the same time, Dennis looked up at him, the dangerous and determined killer look in his eyes taking Clarence aback.

"You..."

Dennis swiftly stabbed Clarence in the heart before he could finish talking.

"You can't... How dare you..."

Clarence stuttered his last words through the pain and fell to the ground with a thud. Until the very last moment when the life drained out of him, his eyes remained wide open in shock and disbelief.

Dennis pulled out the dagger from Clarence's body and dug it in again and again, grinning hideously as he did so.

"The heir of the Norris family, huh? How dare you take my woman from me! You bastard! Fuck you! Where are you now? Can you still do it? You were such a bastard, treating me like a dog. Who did you think you were? Look at you now! Why aren't you doing anything? Get up! I'd like to see if you can keep beating and scolding me. Oh, Mr. Norris, I've dreamt of doing this for a long time."

Dennis stabbed Clarence so many times with all his strength. He stabbed Clarence on every viable part of his body until he was unrecognizable even to his father.

Once he had exhausted all of his anger and energy, Dennis collapsed weakly on the

ground in front of the stairs. He wanted to go up and knock on the door to announce his victory and claim his freedom.

However, he couldn't move. He opened his mouth to shout, but no sound came out. Then, he started feeling as if he was being suffocated.

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Chapter 519 Dismissing Vivian

Liam looked at the closed door with a sneer. Both Clarence and Dennis should be dead by now.

He was still angry, but the hatred he felt had reduced a little.

He had gotten rid of all his enemies, but he still felt like something was lacking. There was one last branch that had to be cut off.

Glancing at his wrist watch, he found out that it was almost time for Annie to have her second surgery. After tidying up himself, Liam rushed to the hospital.

Annie's second surgery didn't take as much time as the first one did. He was done in three hours.

The surgery was a success, but Annie needed a lot of time to rest and recuperate. He couldn't tell exactly how well she would recover until she respected her period of rest and recuperation.

Once he was done with Annie, Liam went to

Julie's ward.

Julie was still sleeping when he went in. Liam pulled a chair close to her bed and sat down, holding her hand in his.

Julie felt it and soon woke up. When she saw Liam, her first instinct was to sit up and hug him, but she recalled her condition and controlled herself.

They chatted in low voices, talking about the functioning of the company, Annie's health and other insignificant issues.

After a while, Liam suddenly fell silent. Then, he looked up at Julie and said hesitantly, "I found out who gave your whereabouts to Clarence. It was Vivian."

Julie went numb. "I don't think I heard you right. Did you say Vivian?"

The pain from her wounds seemed to get worse as she heard this. She broke into a cold sweat, her face turning pale.

Then, all of a sudden, she started laughing, mocking herself.

She and Vivian had been friends for so many years. It hurt to think that her friend wanted her dead.

Tears escaped her eyes and rolled down her

cheeks in two lines. Her sadness was so great that she buried her head in her hands and cried bitterly.

Liam clenched his fists in anger. It was heartbreaking to watch his beloved go through so much pain.

He had known that she would react this way to the news, but that didn't mean he was ready for how it would affect him.

All he could do however, was comfort her.

Some time after, Julie calmed down. Liam looked intently at her and asked, "What do you want to do with her?"

Julie was overwhelmed with mixed feelings. She couldn't make a decision.

Finally, she sighed and said, "Let her leave the city. I never want to see her again."

Liam nodded immediately.

This wasn't how Liam wanted things to end, but alas.

If Vivian had let go and didn't let her inner demons control her, things would have never come to this. They would have found a way to make things work.

Julie had taken the best decision.

In the meeting room of Kingland Group.

After finalizing the acquisition of the Riley Group, Liam called for another meeting of all the senior executives of Kingland Group.

This time, he made it clear that no one was allowed to be absent. Presence was compulsory.

Vivian sat in her seat at the table, feeling quite uneasy.

She already heard that Julie was taken to the hospital. That meant that her plan with Yolanda had failed.

To make things worse, she had been unable to reach Yolanda for the past days.

The silence only made her more nervous.

She had an idea of what today's meeting was all about. Her doubts were soon answered as Liam said loudly, "Ladies and gentlemen, I called for this meeting for one reason only."

Liam cleared his throat and fixed his gaze on Vivian who could see how indifferent he was.

"I stand on my position as the CEO of Kingland Group and declare that as from today, Vivian is relieved from her function as the vice president of the Kingland Group.

This takes effect immediately, and she is never allowed to set foot in Kingland Group again."

As soon as he finished, Liam strode out of the meeting room without another word.

Those who didn't know what was going on started discussing heatedly, wondering what was happening. Everyone in the room looked at Vivian, as if waiting for answers.

Meanwhile, Vivian was in a daze. All the color drained from her face.

She was a little relieved that Julie was at least alive.

But Liam's cold attitude toward her filled her with despair and fear.

Chapter 520 A Dying Patient

After he finished dealing with Vivian, Liam began restoring order at the Kingland Group. It did not take much work on his part. The entire scene of Dennis and Clarence threatening Liam was captured by the three cameras in the CEO's office.

It was difficult to discredit the authenticity of the recording of their conversation because of its superb quality.

As soon as the Kingland Group's PR department forwarded the evidence to the authorities, both of them wasted no time in putting an end to the rumors circulating online.

The police also issued an arrest warrant for Dennis and Clarence.

However, the authorities failed to track down the two men.

After the police released a statement, the public's opinion of the situation immediately changed, and a lot of them began to take the Kingland Group's side.

"I knew the Kingland Group wouldn't do such an outrageous thing. It's a big company, after all."

"As time goes by, the competition in the business world is getting more covertly cutthroat."

"The Kingland Group has our support!"

The netizens were already used to how fast situations changed, so they were quick to switch sides. After this, any future attempts to frame and destroy the Kingland Group's reputation would be met with more scepticism.

That was why this incident could not really be considered a bad thing.

Once he was done dealing with everything, Liam went straight to the hospital.

In her ward, Julie looked much better.

As he held her close, Liam whispered, "I've taken care of everything and have dispatched someone to follow up the purchase of the Grace Garment Factory. You don't have anything to worry about. You can go back to working for the Kingland Group once you're better. I've got everything worked out so that you can restore your

position as vice president."

Julie nodded and snuggled up to Liam. At last, she was able to relax and process the emotions she was feeling.

The next few days were uneventful.

Both Julie and Annie were recovering well. Annie was still not awake, but her vitals were holding steady, and she was expected to regain consciousness soon.

The employees of Kingland Security who had been injured by the members of the Dragon Gang gradually returned to work. Liam spent the following days in the hospital, taking care of Julie.

He had not been anywhere or seen anyone outside of the facility.

That changed when he received an unexpected phone call.

"Mr. Hoffman, it's me, Emmitt."

Liam's eyes widened a little. He was surprised to hear the man's voice.

Emmitt stated in a respectful tone, "I'm sorry if this is going to inconvenience you, but this is an emergency. A dying patient was admitted to our hospital today. Her condition is complicated, so we didn't want to act

rashly. To cut the story short, Mr. Hoffman, we're wondering if you'd be available to come to our hospital right away to perform the necessary surgery on her."

As he waited for Liam's response, Emmitt grew more nervous. It was rude to call someone suddenly to ask them to do something quickly, but he would not do this if it was not an emergency.

With a thoughtful frown on his face, Liam regarded Julie. She looked healthier now.

"Okay, I'll be right there." After much deliberation, Liam agreed to Emmitt's request.

He explained the situation to Julie and instructed the hospital's security to guard her well before hurrying to Beluga Hospital.

Emmitt was already waiting outside the aforementioned hospital when he arrived.

The two men immediately made their way to the emergency room.

However, when he walked inside, Liam's pupils dilated.

The person lying on the operating table, connected to a ventilator, was none other than Vivian.

Chapter 521 Jaxtyn's Declaration Of Love

Liam stared at Vivian's unconscious form on the operation table with a perplexed look on his face. In a low voice, he inquired about her condition with Emmitt, who was standing beside him.

"The preliminary diagnosis suggests that the patient has taken a significant quantity of sleeping pills, which has led to both her slow heart rate and the damage to her central nervous system."

"Have you performed gastric suctioning on her?" Liam asked with a frown.

Emmitt heaved a sigh and replied, "The sleeping pills were already in her system for a long time before she was brought to the hospital. Gastric suctioning won't work on her anymore. What she needs for her heart and brain to survive is surgery."

He then gave Liam an expectant look.



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even Emmitt felt confident in his ability to carry out such a risky procedure.

He would not have dared to trouble Liam so readily if the patient were not in terrible condition.

Emmitt hesitated for a while before adding, "If it's okay with you, Mr. Hoffman, I'd like to have a couple of our doctors watch the operation. With your skills, they will definitely learn a lot from you, even from the sidelines."

Liam remained quiet as if he did not hear Emmitt's request.

At the moment, he was debating whether to save the woman in front of him because of her significant contribution to his company or to let her die because of his animosity towards her for almost causing Julie's death.

After much deliberation, he let out a sigh.

In the end, he decided to save her.

Regardless of what had happened, Vivian was the one who stuck by his side and the Kingland Group when things got tough for them. It was her feelings for him that prompted her to do something so terrible.

Additionally, it was abundantly clear that

Vivian tried to end her life because she regretted what she did, so Liam decided to save her.

As soon as Liam agreed, Emmitt began making arrangements for the surgery. Soon, some doctors from Beluga Hospital arrived to watch the operation.

Liam's hands were as quick as lightning but as steady as a rock under the glare of the operating room lights.

The entire process ran smoothly and quickly. He did not show any fear as the scalpel made its way into the brain or heart.

The other doctors in the room were virtually stunned by how well he performed the surgery.

They had no idea scalpels could be utilized in such a manner.

Everyone watched the procedure in dazed astonishment. They did not take too much away from the operation, even if they were there to witness it in person.

However, what they learned was enough to benefit them for a lifetime.

Soon, the operation was over.

Emmitt offered Liam a towel, and he used it

to dab the sweat from his forehead. The operation was successful, and Vivian was no longer in any danger.

"Mr. Hoffman, you are indeed a miracle worker who can revive the dead. If you devote yourself to medicine, you'll definitely be remembered as one of the most renowned medical professionals of all time for at least a hundred years."

Liam raised his hand to stop Emmitt from gushing over him any further. He turned to leave, but Emmitt stopped him.

Emmitt swallowed nervously before saying, "Mr. Hoffman, I'd like to resign as director of the Beluga Hospital and give the position to you. Please accept it."

Liam immediately refused the offer, as he was not interested in working in hospitals.

However, Emmitt was persistent.

Eventually, Liam accepted the position of honorary director at the hospital, only to keep Emmitt from pestering him further about it.

With this, he was allowed to assist the hospital in treating patients in critical conditions that they could not handle on

their own.

Back at the Central Hospital, Annie, who had been in a coma, slowly began to open her eyes. The first person she saw was Jaxtyn, who was sleeping with his head buried in his arms that were resting on the bed.

He had barely left the hospital during the time she was unconscious.

Annie felt a great sense of relief at the sight of her friend by her side.

Nonetheless, she continued to feel a little hollow because she had yet to see the person she missed so much.

The slightest movement she made was enough to rouse Jaxtyn, whose nerves were already frayed due to recent happenings. His face brightened the moment he realized Annie was awake.

"Annie, you're finally awake! Oh, thank goodness."

Jaxtyn, giddy with delight, clutched Annie's hands. He immediately let her go, though, when he realized he had used too much strength.

The two of them began to chat. Then, Annie noticed how exhausted Jaxtyn looked.

"I'm already fine now. You should go get some rest," Annie suggested.

For a moment, Jaxtyn was silent. Then, he looked her straight in the eye with a determined expression on his face.

Right then and there, he had made up his mind.

"I've been keeping something from you, Annie. The timing isn't great, but if I don't say it now, I might never get another chance. I like you. I have for a long time now. Even though I know you're already in love with someone else, I still can't help but like you."

Chapter 522 Julie's Outburst

Annie found herself caught off guard by the sudden declaration of love, unsure how to react.

Meanwhile, just at the door, Julie hurriedly stepped back after she entered the ward.

Her recovery was quicker than Annie's. And now that she could walk, she decided to go and check up on Annie.

To her surprise, Julie witnessed Jaxtyn pouring his heart out to Annie.

The room was filled with tension as both Jaxtyn and Julie anxiously awaited Annie's response.

Memories of Annie saving her life and the words she had wanted to say to Liam before facing death flooded Julie's mind.

The three of them were silent.

The ticking clock on the wall was the only sound in the room.

Though Annie remained silent, her silence spoke volumes.

She turned him down.

Jaxtyn understood her message, and so did Julie outside the door.

Seeing Annie's countenance, he felt a bit awkward and scratched his head. "I didn't mean to burden you with my feelings. I just wanted to be honest with you. There are no hidden motives, I promise. Oh, by the way, you just woke up and the doctor hasn't examined you yet. I'll call the doctor immediately!"

Jaxtyn stuttered while he spoke. Then he stood up and rushed out of the ward. On his way out, he ran into Julie, greeted her, clearly embarrassed, and then rushed away even faster.

Annie also heard Jaxtyn greeting Julie so Julie couldn't hide her presence anymore.

She walked into the room slowly. Looking at Annie's weakened state, she felt a mixture of gratitude and guilt. Words failed her, so she had no choice but to sit beside Annie in silence.

After a moment of silence, Julie said sincerely, "Thank you so much for what you did. If you hadn't taken that bullet for me, I wouldn't be here."

"You're welcome. I'm just glad I could help."

Annie forced a smile.

Curiosity gnawed at Julie. "Why were you there that day? Had you been secretly watching over me all this time?" she asked.

Annie gave a subtle nod, confirming Julie's suspicion.

Julie found herself still grappling with numerous questions swirling in her heart, unsure of how to approach them.

Both of them skirted around Annie's last words that day, as if they were never said.

Although Annie was awake now, she remained weak and in need of rest. Julie didn't want to bother her too much, so after a brief chat, she returned to her ward.

A little later, Liam returned. Worried, she asked, "What's the matter? Was the operation tough?" Julie couldn't help but notice something off in his expression.

She was aware that Liam had gone to the Beluga Hospital to perform an operation, but she was not aware that the patient he operated on was Vivian.

As it turned out, Liam had chosen to keep it a secret from Julie, not out of deliberate intent to hide the truth from her, but rather

because he feared it would only add to her sadness if he told her the truth.

"It's nothing. I'm just a bit tired." Liam put on a smile, and tried to shrug off any concerns.

Julie furrowed her brows, sensing that he was holding something back, much like how he had kept the truth about Annie's task of protecting her hidden before, which made her very uneasy.

This unease filled her with a torrent of unanswered questions and emotions, and she couldn't keep them at bay.

In a cold tone, she confronted Liam. "You know Annie has woken up, right?"

Liam nodded and explained, "Jaxtyn told me. I'm glad she's awake. I'll drop by later."

Her tone growing colder, Julie probed further, "That's it? You don't have anything else to share with me?"

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Chapter 523 Returning To The Cortez Family's House

At this time, Liam finally noticed that Julie's tone was somehow off.

He awkwardly rubbed his nose and said, "You mean, I sent Annie to protect you? I did it because I was worried about your safety."

"And that's all?" Julie's countenance didn't improve.

This left Liam very confused.

He wasn't sure what she was getting at.

Could it be about Vivian?

How on earth could she know about that?

Before Liam could confess anything, Julie's words turned icy. "Annie likes you. Are you completely clueless about it? Don't you think it's absurd to have someone who loves you protect me. She took a bullet for me in a life-or-death situation, and her last words were a farewell to you. How am I supposed to face her now? Should I see her as a benefactor or a rival in love?"

Her words came out in a rush, leaving Liam

stunned and at a loss for words.

To say the truth, he had asked Annie to protect Julie simply because she was reliable and skilled. He didn't give much thought to it.

As for Annie's feelings for him, he had already taken them as nothing, but he didn't expect Julie to find out about it.

Liam tried to explain, "You've got it all wrong. Annie and I are just friends. I chose her to protect you because she's good at fighting, and it's more convenient since she's a woman. There's no other reason behind it!"

Julie gazed at the sincerity in Liam's eyes with her lips pursed.

She never doubted his love for her, but she didn't know how to handle this situation.

"Enough. My mind is a mess right now. I would like us to end this discussion."

Julie's eyes turned dark suddenly, and she continued, "I don't want to remain in the hospital either. I would like to be discharged as soon as possible."

Seeing Julie's distressed expression, Liam felt both sorry and puzzled. He couldn't fathom why she was suddenly feeling this

way.

Julie pursed her lips and said softly, "Hold on. I... I'll call my father."

Liam listened quietly as Julie made the phone call.

A few minutes into the call, she told her father about her decision to return to her parents' place.

At that time, Julie's father, Ulises, and her mother, Yesenia, were still living at the Cortez family's house. After the incident at Julie's birthday party, they faced hardships and exclusion from others.

Ulises had considered leaving the Cortez family due to the conflict between Yesenia and Julie. However, Yesenia threatened him with divorce, forcing him to stay there.

After Julie decided where she wanted to go, she swiftly went through the formalities at the hospital. Then Liam personally drove her back to the Cortez family's home.

As they reached the gate, her father, Ulises, who had been waiting for her at the gate for some time, was deeply worried when he saw Julie's pale face.

He didn't say a word to Liam, but his

expression spoke volumes. It was the second time his daughter got hurt while with Liam.

"Why bother coming back?"

As the noise from the gate reached her ears, Julie's mother, Yesenia, rushed outside. The moment she caught sight of Julie's face, she couldn't hold back and scolded her immediately.

"Leaving your mother all by herself and deciding to run off with an outsider! I thought you were living your best life!"

Ulises's face darkened, and he interrupted Yesenia. "Our child is in such a bad condition. Can't you stop needling her?"

Liam's expression also turned grim, but he didn't say anything. He just shot a cold glance at Yesenia.

As the family of three entered the house, Julie suddenly turned around and stared at Liam with a mixed expression in her eyes.

"I need some time alone. Please don't visit me during this period," she said, leaning on her father, who walked her in.

Yesenia, seizing the opportunity, couldn't resist needling Liam since she couldn't do it to Julie.

"Do you actually believe that you're better than Mr. Norris just because you defeated the Riley Group? I warn you, stop bothering my daughter. If it weren't for you, she would have married a wealthy man, and we'd be living a comfortable life!"

Yesenia's words echoed in Liam's mind as he chose to ignore them, climbed into the car, and drove away from the Cortez family's house.

Gazing at the receding image of the house in the rearview mirror, Liam experienced a whirlwind of emotions, but he couldn't quite pinpoint exactly what he was feeling.

He held onto something deep in his heart, restraining himself from expressing it in that moment.

It was a mix of sadness, frustration, and above all, a feeling of helplessness.

This wasn't how he had anticipated things to unfold with his normal arrangement. The situation had taken an unexpected turn.

Chapter 524 The Assassination

At the place where the dark team of the Black Spider gathered.

Rennes Duncan paced restlessly in the hall. He was in charge of the dark team and didn't show up if there was no serious issue at hand.

He had just issued an emergency summoning order. Soon, all the skilled members of the dark team who weren't on missions assembled in the hall.

From an elevated platform, Rennes scanned the assembled dark team members and said in a low voice, "You all know Scorpion and Shadow Assassin went on a mission in Salem, and we lost contact with them. Frey and Scarlett vanished there too. The ones responsible are the Dark Night Organization. We've kept our distance from them, but now they've underestimated the Black Spider by attacking our own! We need a team leader to show them our strength."

As he finished, a cloaked man stepped

forward.

"I'll go for the mission."

Glancing at him, Rennes recognized that this person was Disguiser, one of the deadly assassins of the dark team.

With a cold, hoarse voice, Disguiser added, "It's been a while since I last killed someone. It'll be fun to teach them a lesson!"

The people wore different expressions. Disguiser was renowned for his mastery of disguise, able to invisibly blend in with any crowd, infiltrate the target's ranks, and torment them to their demise.

Rennes was confident in his abilities and immediately approved his request.

Early in the morning, silence enveloped the Central Hospital.

At this time, the patients and caregivers had retired to bed, leaving only the vigilant nurses patrolling the wards.

In Annie's hospital room, a nurse rolled in a trolley to check up on her.

It was a daily routine for patients in serious conditions like Annie.

The examination was quick, and the nurse changed her infusion bottle.

Annie had been stuck in bed lately, sleeping most of the day and getting all active at night.

But tonight, after the checkup, she felt totally exhausted and soon fell asleep.

With a sinister glint in his eye, the nurse next to her pulled off his mask, revealing his true self.

It was none other than Disguiser!

"This is so boring! I finished the job too easily. Not even a hint of excitement," Disguiser muttered disdainfully.

Having known everything about the Dark Night Organization in Salem, he sent his people to attack their barracks.

Coming to the hospital alone, he never expected completing his plan to be such a breeze. Instantly, boredom washed over him.

Twirling the scalpel in his hand, Disguiser wore a fierce expression and gently began to cut Annie's belly.

Blood oozed out, and a sinister grin crept across Disguiser's face.

He reveled in the pleasure of the blood!

But then, out of nowhere, a formidable aura emerged, catching Disguiser off guard!

Boom!

A powerful punch sent Disguiser stumbling back several steps. From behind the next bed's curtain, Jaxtyn swiftly stepped out and stood protectively in front of Annie.

Jaxtyn had been glued to Annie's side for the past few days, keeping watch without ever sleeping too soundly. He'd check on her condition from time to time.

So he had foiled Disguiser's plan.

His face turning dark, Disguiser found himself being far too careless this time.

"Alright!"

Disguiser growled and remained composed. "Since you're here, I'll get rid of you too!"

Chapter 525 Winning With One Blow

Disguiser and Jaxtyn became locked in an intense brawl, exchanging punches and kicks as if there was no tomorrow!

A chaotic scene unfolded, with Disguiser attacking Jaxtyn at lightning speed.

Their fists clashed, and their swift movements sent tables and chairs flying, creating a whirlwind of chaos.

However, the tide soon turned against Jaxtyn.

The slender Disguiser matched Jaxtyn's power and outpaced him, leaving Jaxtyn struggling to keep up.

When Jaxtyn threw a punch, Disguiser would attack with about two punches. Every time they fought, Jaxtyn was at a disadvantage.

Despite Jaxtyn's brave efforts, being a lowest rank member in the Dark Night Organization, he found it tough to rival Disguiser's skills.

Yet, even in the face of adversity, Jaxtyn stood his ground, fiercely protecting Annie and denying Disguiser any chance to reach

her.

Disguiser seemed to relish the one-sided battle. He knocked Jaxtyn down repeatedly, taking his time.

When Jaxtyn could no longer stand, Disguiser stepped forward and put his foot on him.

"Is that all you've got?" Disguiser mocked. "I wonder how someone like you managed to kill Scorpion and Shadow Assassin."

"Do you really want to know?"

A cold voice sent shivers down Disguiser's spine. He quickly retreated, fixing his gaze on the door where the voice came from.

Liam walked in slowly!

As Jaxtyn lay on the floor, he breathed a sigh of relief. He had secretly managed to send a message to Liam when he saw Disguiser closing in on Annie, and Liam arrived just in the nick of time.

Liam's eyes locked onto Disguiser. He looked so grim and a strong killing intent shrouded the whole room.

Bam!

Disguiser's pupils contracted, and the room shook as a mighty force crashed into

Disguiser's gut, shoving him to the other side of the room.

"Ah!"

With just a blow, Disguiser suffered an extremely serious internal injury. Blood sprayed from his mouth, leaving him stunned by Liam's lightning-fast attack.

In the blink of an eye, Disguiser found himself sprawled on the floor, despite the distance between them before the clash.

Quick as a whip, Disguiser yanked a concealed hook from his arm and flung it out the window.

Liam lunged forward, but it was too late. Disguiser had escaped to another building, using the hook's rope to swing away.

Disguiser's parting words lingered like a haunting threat. "This is not the end! Crossing paths with the Black Spider means your own destruction!"

With that ominous warning, Disguiser vanished into the darkness.

Liam halted his pursuit, realizing that Annie and Jaxtyn needed urgent attention for their injuries.

Thanks to Jaxtyn's timely intervention,

Disguiser's assault to Annie hadn't caused irreparable harm. Though Annie's wound wasn't too severe, Jaxtyn's injuries were very concerning. Fortunately, both were fine after treatment.

As the first light of dawn crept in, everything became more distinguishable.

Despite the harrowing events and Liam's exhaustion, he was wide awake.

The recent events had made him acutely aware of the relentless revenge that both the Norris family and the Black Spider sought.

Liam knew he couldn't face these adversaries alone. His strength was simply not enough. The Dark Night Organization's dependence on just him exposed their vulnerability.

The power of the Black Spider was on a whole other level, far beyond what ordinary forces could handle. They'd stop at nothing to exact their revenge on the Dark Night Organization.

Today's events served as a stark reminder. If it hadn't been for Jaxtyn messaging Liam in time, Jaxtyn and Annie would have been done for.

If the Black Spider launched an all-out assault, Liam would be swamped with a myriad of challenges. He couldn't afford to focus solely on defense. That would only play into the Black Spider's hands, allowing them to pick off his team one by one.

With all these thoughts swirling in his head, Liam reached a decision in his mind.

Chapter 526 The Development Of His Force

At sunrise, Liam immediately called the authorities.

After learning that someone had attacked the Central Hospital, the local police decided to provide round-the-clock protection for Jaxtyn and Annie.

For the time being, the two did not have to worry about being attacked.

After all, not even the Black Spider was courageous enough to act boldly in front of law enforcement.

Shortly after, Liam learned that the Dark Night Organization's barracks in Salem had been attacked.

He scowled. A storm was brewing, and he could tell because of the sequence of events.

Liam immediately contacted Aikin upon his return to the Kingland Group headquarters.

"Mr. Hoffman, what can I do for you?"

With the gravity of the situation in mind, Liam cut to the chase and said, "I want you

to choose ten of the best fighters working for Kingland Security. I plan on having them go through specialized training. Our current level of strength is lacking, and we must work to strengthen it immediately."

The specialized training Liam was referring to would be carried out at the Dark Night Organization base. The training in the Dark Night Organization was divided into two types.

One was to train elites. They trained people by dispatching them to different parts of the country to complete missions. However, training the best of the best like that required a lot of time.

So, Liam opted for the more effective method. He would have the security guards of Kingland Security undergo training that was conducted as a team.

They would be able to enhance their capacity to function together with the aid of modern weapons. If the team members were able to master the art of working together, they would be unstoppable.

Aikin agreed with Liam's plan. He might have been dubbed the "underworld emperor" in Salem, but the title was largely nominal.

There were still a lot of people he could not afford to offend.

His troops were no match for a very formidable opponent, which meant he also needed to get stronger.

After some discussion, they agreed on who would be included on the final roster. With Liam's suggestion, Kylo and Tyson made it to the list.

Following the confirmation of the candidates, Liam contacted Theo. The next procedure would be handled by professionals, so Liam did not have to worry about it anymore.

Once everything had been dealt with, Liam sighed with relief.

Just then, there was a knock on the door.

Keanu Diaz, the new head of the Kingland Group's marketing division, walked in.

He beamed at Liam and informed him, "We're having a lot of success with our live sales, Mr. Hoffman. Many companies have approached us with the hope of increasing their revenue by having us sell their products. They want to work with the Kingland Group. I received so many requests for business meetings that I couldn't even

accommodate all of them. Mr. Hoffman, I'm here to ask for your instructions. What are we going to do next? We still need you to draft the requirements before we choose the brands to work with."

The new information did not come as a shock to Liam. Everyone knew that his two live streams made a tidy profit from product sales. By definition, businesspeople were profit-seekers. If they saw a way to make money, they would seize it without hesitation. It was the reason why so many companies were suddenly interested in partnering with him.

They wanted to sell their products online and in live streams, and they needed a platform for it. At the moment, Funbuy was the only one that could offer both, so they had no choice but to work with the Kingland Group.

After some consideration, Liam finally answered, "Let's hold a party and invite all the brand owners who are interested in working with us. We'll discuss everything there. Also, we're going to start our own entertainment agency, so we'll have to convince some celebrities to sign management deals with us. We'll try to

cultivate our own stars as well. We will start venturing into the entertainment industry by having our signed artists host our future live streams. It'll definitely help with the company's growth. We need to do everything in our power to grow our industrial chain and secure control of the necessary inputs. This way, no one will be able to restrict the growth of our company."

By the time Liam was done explaining his ambitious business expansion plan, Keanu was gaping at him. He knew now why people called the man a business icon.

After recovering from the shock, Keanu went to carry out Liam's instructions.

Following Liam's directive, the Kingland Group contacted all the wealthy families and company owners in Salem within two days to invite them to a party.

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Chapter 527 The Party Of The Kingland Group

There was much buzz about a certain topic among Salem's business elites.

The Kingland Group and Funbuy had been receiving a lot of attention lately. It became widely known that they were making a killing, so a lot of influential people were vying to work with them.

When word got out that Liam was going to hold a party, all the big shots in Salem immediately viewed it as a chance to convince him to work with them.

The Cortez family was one of them.

In the courtyard of the Cortez family's residence, Kohen approached Julie, who was still recuperating from her injuries.

"Julie, dear, how are you doing?" Kohen inquired as he stopped in front of his granddaughter.

Of course, he was not really concerned about Julie's well-being. He was only interested in the party the Kingland Group

would hold.

After exchanging the usual pleasantries with her, Kohen stopped beating around the bush. "Julie, Liam will be my grandson-in-law, right? Why don't you represent our family at the party and convince him to work with us? I'm sure he'll agree to it if it's you. A partnership between us will also improve your relationship. It's like killing two birds with one stone."

Beside him, Yesenia chimed in, "Once we've worked out the details of our partnership, you two are free to get married and do whatever you want. I won't stop you. What do you think, sweetheart?"

It was so unlike Yesenia to say something like that. She was trying her best to persuade Julie to agree with Kohen because the old man had promised her heirship to the family once more.

Ulises was the only one who kept his mouth shut and did not try to sway Julie's decision. Julie smiled thinly at them before declaring, "I'm not going to the party, and you can't make me, so please don't bother me about it anymore."

Yesenia did not give up, however. "What are

you talking about, you silly girl? You're a member of the Cortez family. It's not too much to ask that you do something for your family, right?"

Her mother tried to reason with her, but Julie remained unmoved.

"I said, I won't go. I'm not obligated to do anything for this family."

In an instant, Yesenia's expression darkened, and she bellowed, "You ungrateful brat! I brought you up, but I can't even ask you to do something so small. I can't believe I wasted my time on you."

Kohen also scowled. His voice dropped dangerously as he asked incredulously, "Julie, are you seriously going to do this to us?"

Julie did not utter a word, but the defiance in her eyes said it all.

"You are really inconsiderate! The Cortez family doesn't have a place for someone as ungrateful as you. From now on, I'm no longer your grandfather. Get out of here right this instant!"

With that, Kohen walked away, his face red with anger.

Tears of disappointment and anger welled

up in Julie's eyes, but she managed to hold them back.

She had long since realized the true colours of her family. Cutting ties with them would be good for her, so there was nothing to be sad about.

Without saying anything more, Julie packed her luggage and left the Cortez family's house. She did not even look back as she did so.

The party held by the Kingland Group started off without a hitch, and everyone invited showed up on time.

The typically arrogant big shots brought gifts of great value with them to give to Liam, and they all behaved politely in front of the Kingland Group employees.

Liam greeted the guests politely, but his eyes kept darting to the entrance.

Why hadn't she shown up yet?

Based on what Liam knew about the Cortez family, he was confident that Julie would be coerced into discussing cooperation with him.

It was the only reason why the Cortez family received an invitation to the party. In fact, Liam had already drafted the contract they

would sign.

They were Julie's family, after all, and he hoped to use this opportunity to smooth things over with them.

As time passed, the majority of invited guests arrived, and the initial large crowd at the entrance thinned off.

Liam shook his head and chuckled. It seemed that Julie still did not want to see him.

Well, if she did not really want to attend the party, no one would be able to make her do so.

Liam was well aware of how stubborn she could be.

When it became clearer that Julie would not show up, Liam finally gave up and turned to go to the banquet hall. It was then that someone rushed through the entrance.

It was Yesenia.

Chapter 528 The Trouble Maker

Soon, the party began.

Yesenia approached Liam.

In her usual condescending attitude, she said, "I must say, you're hosting quite an impressive party. I guess I'll give you a chance to work with our family. Aren't you glad? Now, you're going to see my daughter again. After all, without this partnership, there's no way I'll let you two meet again."

Liam's expression soured when he heard that.

He had already decided to become business partners with the Cortez family whether Julie showed up to the party or not. He even had the contract ready.

They were Julie's family, after all. It would serve him better to get along with them than not.

However, the Cortez family just had to send Yesenia, whom Liam despised more than anyone else in the family, to the party.

She even threatened him by using Julie.

Liam's revulsion toward her was amplified, but he said nothing. He then decided not to talk about the contract in the meantime.

His silence made Yesenia scowl, and she growled, "You're a fool if you think the Cortez family will submit to you over a contract. To tell you the truth, I think investing in live commerce is a complete and utter waste of time and money. I'm only here because my family wants to give you some face, not to beg you to work with us. Do you understand?"

A lot of guests' ears perked up at the sound of Yesenia's piercing voice.

Even though the upper-class circle was large, many people recognized her right away.

"Oh, my. Why would the Cortez family send that dimwitted woman to this kind of event?"

"She's not only dimwitted. She's crazy, too. Oh, the Cortez family is done for."

"Hey, you're at an upscale event. Stop acting like a shrew. Get out of here if you're not interested in discussing business with anyone."

Yesenia might be a thick-skinned woman,

but she could not help but flush in embarrassment after hearing the accusatory and disdainful remarks that were being aimed at her.

She glared at Liam and bellowed, "You'll never get to marry my daughter. Remember that!"

With that, Yesenia stormed out of the banquet hall.

Suddenly, there was a lot of space around Liam.

The other guests saw it as an opportunity and immediately crowded around him to have a word with him.

Liam responded to each one of them with politeness.

About an hour and a half later, he had already uncovered several families' financial stability.

However, there were too many people at the party for him to handle on his own, so he delegated the task of selecting business partners to Keanu.

Liam then went to a secluded corner and began drinking by himself. Because there was no expression on his face, no one could

guess what he was thinking.

Not long after Yesenia left, there was yet another commotion at the entrance of the venue.

A group of people showed up to the party despite not being invited.

Liam frowned when he saw the face of the man leading the group.

It was Kevin.

Everyone knew he had a grudge against Liam. If he was at the party, did that mean he also wanted to work with him?

Someone chuckled and commented, "Mr. Evans, don't you own some hotels? What are you doing here? Do you also want to earn money by doing live selling?"

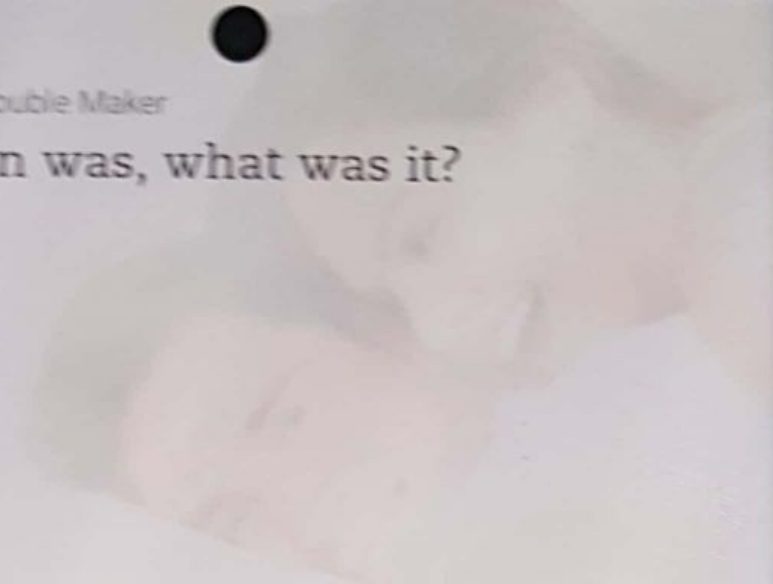
In an instant, laughter erupted in the crowd. Kevin's face darkened, but after a while, his lips formed a smirk.

Instead of losing his cool and causing a scene, he calmly approached the host and took the microphone from him.

Liam did not stop him, but his eyebrows knitted together.

Kevin was definitely up to something.

The question was, what was it?



Chapter 529 The Revenge Of The Norris Family

"Listen up, everyone. I'm not standing here today on behalf of the Evans family. I'm representing the Norris family."

Kevin's voice travelled throughout the hall, his eyes darting around until they fell proudly on Liam.

The mention of the Norris family got him the attention and respect of the big shots in the room. They stopped teasing and stood attentive to listen to him.

Glad that he had gotten their full attention, Kevin smiled more complacently and said, "As we all know, the Riley Group has been bought by the Kingland Group. However, keep in mind that the Norris family doesn't need the Riley Group to be as powerful as it is. Before siding with the Kingland Group and signing those contracts, make sure you can survive standing against the Norris family."

He wasn't directly threatening them, but the meaning behind his words made everyone

pause and think.

The peaceful atmosphere suddenly became very heavy.

All the while, Kevin was looking at Liam with a smug, triumphant look on his face.

The Norris family had definitely given him an irrational confidence.

His words had created an effect, and now, the guests were divided into two groups.

Many people were indeed scared of standing against the Norris family and having problems later on.

However, there were still some people who weren't intimidated by Kevin's words. They stood with the Kingland Group. They believed that the Hoffman family which was behind the Kingland Group was more powerful than the Norris family.

In any case, Kevin's appearance had successfully caused a tear in the beautiful evening.

Liam handled the situation simply and coldly.

All of a sudden, the loud sound of a slap quieted down the noisy hall.

Kevin was on the floor, off the stage, with his horror filled face in his hand.

Liam looked down at him with a smile, feeling much better after that satisfying slap. He had been very annoyed lately and had nowhere to pour out his anger and frustration. Unknowingly, Kevin had provided him with just what he needed; a place to vent his anger.

Kevin was still in shock. He couldn't believe that Liam would actually have the guts to hit him even after hearing that he was representing the Norris family.

"How can you still act so arrogant when you are soon going to die? Just you wait. The Norris family will ruin you."

Liam stared down coldly at the man and said casually, "Make sure you transmit this message to your master, Fuller. I can just as easily deal with him like I did with his son."

The security guards rushed in in this moment, forcing Kevin to leave quickly. He knew he had no power to stand against them now.

Liam stared at the man's retreating back until he couldn't see him anymore. He had to get rid of the Norris family and Black Spider once and for all. If not, he would never get a second's peace.

Liam's action and serious expression seemed to help make up the minds of the bigwigs that were swayed by Kevin.

Before long, a majority of the suppliers signed contracts with the Kingland Group.

By the end of the cocktail party, they had reached their target and signed a good number of contracts. The party ended up being a success despite the interruption.

...

In the VIP room on the top floor of the Evans household.

Kevin barged angrily into the room, then stopped in his tracks and changed his attitude when he saw the old man sitting on the sofa.

The old man was Fuller, Clarence's father.

"How did it go?" Fuller asked. Kevin's angry entrance was a good explanation that his visit to the party didn't go as planned.

Kevin reported everything to Fuller who got angrier the more he heard. After he finished reporting, Fuller threw a teacup to the floor in anger, the ceramic breaking into pieces.

"Son of a bitch! That bastard thinks he can challenge me!" Fuller broke into curses. He

knew that Liam and his son had some beef with each other, and he hadn't been able to get in touch with his son for some time now. It seemed that he was missing, or had been killed.

One thing he was certain of, was that Liam had something to do with it.

"Since he is so arrogant, let's see just how powerful he is."

Chapter 530 What Happened To Ulises

In another part of the city, Julie just moved into her newly rented apartment.

"Without Liam, I'm helpless and unable to stand on my own," she muttered bitterly to herself as she looked around her new place.

Not only was she making things difficult for Liam, but for herself too.

It wasn't Liam's fault after all. It was her fault for not being outstanding enough to be worthy of him. Maybe that was why she was so afraid of losing him.

She had to change that fast. So, she made up her mind that she was going to start her own business.

The idea came to her when she was working with the Grace Garment Factory. She wanted to set up a clothing brand of her own.

She had thought long and hard about it, but she didn't have the means, nor the resources to open a company of her own. Most importantly, she couldn't rely on Liam

again. She didn't want to.

After giving it some more thought, Julie thought of her father's Beauty Cosmetics Company.

Granted, the company was not big, but it already had its loyal consumers.

She could set up a new clothing business as an extension of the company. That seemed like a good start.

A lot was going on in the Cortez family at the moment.

Her mother, Yesenia, found Kohen and recounted everything that happened at the cocktail party in anger.

"Dad, you won't believe it. That bastard, Liam, thinks he is king now just because he is the CEO of Kingland Group. What an ungrateful brat! I decided to put aside my dignity and give him the chance to cooperate with us. Do you know what he did? He dared to act arrogant in front of me. You should have seen the self-righteous look on his face. Do you know what I think? This live commerce is just a way of camouflaging the illegal money he gets. Signing a contract with him will eventually lead to our fall!"

Yesenia cursed, pacing angrily. She didn't even notice that her father's expression had changed.

"I hope for your sake that this isn't the way you spoke to Liam about cooperating with him," Kohen finally said coldly.

"Why not?" Yesenia answered without thinking. "Who is he? We don't need to beg him!"

The words were barely out of her mouth when Kohen stood up and slapped her heavily across the cheek. He had tried, but couldn't hold back his anger.

"You stupid asshole! You had a rare opportunity in front of you and you let your stupid pride take it away!" Kohen was shouting at this point. He was really pissed off. More than he had been in a while.

Like a reflex, he slapped her two more times. His eyes were cold. They held no warmth or affection as he said, "Let me be crystal clear so it seeps into your subconscious. If you can't make this right and sign that contract, consider yourself exiled from this family. You won't get even a cent from the Cortez family! You can kneel, grovel or whatever... I don't care how you do it, as long as you

apologize to Mr. Hoffman and bring me a signed contract."

Yesenia held her face in her hand, her arrogant and proud self gone. She shivered, scared and humiliated. She was even scared to breathe too hard.

Anything she did now could make her father more angry. So, she nodded and ran back home as fast as she could.

As soon as she entered the living room, she bumped into Julie's father, Ulises, the perfect person on whom she could vent her own anger.

"This is all because of you and your daughter. Now, I can't even go back to my parents' house. Marrying you was the worst mistake of my life. You better find our daughter and bring her back here today or I'll divorce you right away!"

Instead of cowering in fear like he always did, Ulises looked at her in disgust and anger.

He couldn't even count the number of times that Yesenia had threatened to divorce him.

He had just finished talking to Julie on the phone when she came in. She asked to set up a clothes company under his cosmetics

company, and he agreed readily.

Looking at this woman in front of him, he didn't think he could support her and her nasty attitude anymore. He stared down at her and retorted, "I've had enough of you. Let's not waste any time anymore. Let's divorce now."

With a loud snort, he walked out of the house, slamming the door behind him.

Yesenia stood in shock for close to a minute. What happened to Ulises? To the man who was always so weak?

Yesenia was filled with despair. Everything was going wrong.

She had lost her original family, her daughter, and now her husband.

Unending tears streaked down her face as a sense of abandonment consumed her.

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