

Surprise 332

Chapter 332 What Did She Instruct You to Do?

Then, Fiona frowned.

Even though Fiona was a senior citizen, Courtney suddenly realized that a beauty like Fiona was still exceptionally elegant with a frown.

Fiona gradually raised her head. "I wouldn't have allowed him to come if I knew about it."

After hearing Fiona's words, Courtney was caught by surprise. "That means he did it behind your back?"

"Not exactly." Fiona heaved a sigh and explained, "Initially, he kept it a secret from me, but when he applied to enroll in the Public Security University, I suspected that he was still fixated on this matter. The thing is, he has been behaving well all these years and never made any irrational move, which is why I never asked him for sure. However, not long ago, he told me that he had met Alexander."

"Oh, okay." Then, Courtney sighed in relief.

Everything would be fine as long as it wasn't Fiona's suggestion for Oliver to approach Alexander. In the future, no matter what happens, I can still explain this to Alexander. In fact, Courtney's impression of Fiona was that Fiona was a kind woman who wasn't as bad as Alexander had described. Perhaps the rift in their relationship could be mended as well.

"Oliver doesn't have any ill intentions." Fiona seemed to be able to gauge Courtney's concern and she explained, "Actually, I have always kept the fact that he has a brother hidden from him. However, he has always been a sensitive kid since young and somehow he found out about this. I'm not too sure how he did so. When he was in junior high, he suddenly asked for a reason why I abandoned his brother and grandpa to move to Oreus for a new life. It was then when I realized he had peeked at my diary and discovered some old photos."

Although Fiona had never mentioned a thing about the past and the reasons for her departure from the Duncans to Oliver, he had never given up and merely continued to investigate the incident from the past.

"I don't know how much he has found out, but despite everything he knows, he would never ever lay a hand on Alexander."

Her assurance sounded convincing, so Courtney couldn't help but to trust her words.

"Then, will you visit Alexander since you're already here?"

Upon hearing Courtney's words, Fiona was taken aback. She then withdrew her hand that held the coffee cup before replying sadly, "No, I won't."

At that point, Courtney felt a burst of emotions rising within her. "Madam, I hope you won't take offense, but can I ask you a question?"

"Sure."

"Oliver and Alexander's fathers are not the same person, right?"

Ultimately, this was the main reason for the conflict between Alexander and his mother. His father had passed away from a car accident whereas she subsequently fell pregnant with a child. If that unborn child came from his father, it was evident that Alexander wouldn't have kicked his mother out of the house.

She doesn't look like a person who would have an extramarital affair, though. Courtney arrived at that judgment after observing Fiona's speech and behavior. Besides, she had raised her child by herself and never remarried all these years. Was there a misunderstanding back then?

Fiona remained silent for a few seconds before finally nodding her head. Her response eventually caused Courtney's heart to sink.

"Okay, I'm sorry for being rude then."

"That's fine." Fiona smiled. "It's all in the past. Since Alexander has been living well all these years without me, I wouldn't want to disrupt his life then. Oliver will be moving abroad next year, so I'll explain everything to him and get him to stop intentionally reaching out to Alexander."

Meanwhile, Courtney didn't have anything to say.

When they came out of the cafe, she offered to send Fiona back to the hospital out of courtesy.

They arrived at the entrance of the hospital and saw Oliver glancing around his surroundings.

As soon as he saw Courtney and Fiona walking together toward him, his expression was rather awkward. "Courtney..."

Meanwhile, Fiona was stoic. "I'll be upstairs in Miss Reid's ward. You guys can continue with your conversation."

It was bitterly cold at the hospital entrance with mounds of snow gathered at the side of the doors, which caused the ground to be muddy as well.

Now that she had been standing in the cold for the longest time, Courtney could no longer suppress her impatience. "Are you going to say something? If not, I'm heading home now."

"Hang on!" Oliver grabbed hold of her sleeve before hesitantly asking, "Courtney, are you aware of everything?"

"Do you mean the fact that you feigned your illness and lied to me? Or, the fact that your mom owns Hostel D'Amour? Or, the truth that you and Alexander are half-brothers?" She was beyond furious.

She had treated him like her own brother over the course of time to the point where she even provided him with a spare key to her house. She even regarded him as her own family member, but he kept so many secrets from her. If she hadn't discovered the truth for herself, there was no knowing how much longer he would have maintained the facade.

"I'm sorry, Courtney." Oliver's brows were furrowed while his face was scrunched up. "I didn't mean to keep this a secret from you."

“Oh? Then, why don’t you start explaining yourself?” Courtney sniffled. “You have five minutes to talk. I need to pick Tina up from school.”

He was nervous and after some hesitation, he tightly formed a fist with his hands and spoke up, “If I had any ill intentions, then I would’ve informed Alexander from the beginning that Jordan’s your biological child. I wouldn’t have kept this a secret for such a long time and pretended not to know anything.”

When she heard Oliver’s words, her expression changed as she looked at him in shock. “How did you know this?”

“It’s a long story.” He had an awkward expression. “I brainstormed a lot of ways to approach the Duncan Family previously. I’m sure that you’re aware of what I specialize in and I’m skilled at helping people uncover inconvenient matters that might not be suitable to be made public. As for your matter, it was Britney who requested me to investigate it.”

“Britney?” Courtney’s expression darkened.

She connected his revelation to the incident involving Belle not long ago and the truth dawned upon her soon enough. It’s her.

“What did she instruct you to do? Did you orchestrate the incident involving Belle?” Courtney coldly interrogated and the distant look in her eyes made him anxious.

“No.” Oliver hurriedly explained, “It has nothing to do with me. After investigating the matter, Britney was worried about Alexander discovering your association with him, so she tried to kill me off. I was also dragged into this and I haven’t even settled the scores with her on this yet, so how could I possibly help her to orchestrate the incident with Belle? Besides, I was busy on campus preparing for training during that period of time. You’ll have to trust me!”

At the moment, Oliver’s nervousness resembled a kid who had just committed a mistake.

The vibe around them suddenly became tense.

The numerous cars on the road drove past them and Melrose City maintained its bustling, busy atmosphere while the city was brightly illuminated. However, no one spoke a single word as they stood by the hospital entrance.

Courtney suddenly clenched her fist after some time. “If you want me to trust you, you’ll have to tell me everything in detail about what you’ve done for the past two years to approach Alexander. Otherwise, I won’t be able to trust that you had no other intentions for approaching the two of us. By then, I might consider whether to temporarily keep your identity a secret from Alexander or not.”

After all, it would be quite bothersome if Alexander discovered Oliver and Fiona’s relationship.

As Alexander was generally suspicious of others and already displeased with Fiona, if he learned of Oliver’s true identity and realized that Oliver had kept their association a secret from them, he would most likely react in the strongest manner.

The distant look in Courtney's eyes made Oliver wriggle in discomfort. Then, he tightly clenched his fist and decided to reveal everything after hesitating for a while. "Okay. Courtney, if you trust me, can you follow me somewhere?"

"Where do you want to go?"

"Once you arrive there, you'll understand what I've done all these years to approach the Duncans. You'll have all your answers there."

As a result of the snowfall, it caused the roads in Melrose City to be muddy. She drove carefully and entered a housing estate that was close to the Public Security University campus. Then, she alighted from the car and trailed behind him, after which they took the stairs and entered a unit on the fourth floor.

It was a studio unit that came with bare furnishings. Apart from the bed and a study table, the room was filled with stacks of books, which were scattered all over the floor. However, there was a shelf on the wall that contained files and journals with labels on them.

"This was my home when I previously worked as a private investigator." Oliver yanked off the blanket that covered the bed and instantly, there was dust all over the place. "I haven't been back here in ages, though."

Then, Courtney looked around the place. Indeed, there was a thick layer of dust in the room and it looked like it had been empty for at least half a year. Furthermore, it was also likely that no one had set foot inside for the longest time ever.

"That bookshelf there contains all the information that I collected on the Duncans. If you go by sequence from the left to right, you'll see everything that I have gathered since I was thirteen. My mom has never mentioned a word about the Duncans, so this came from my own investigation."

Upon hearing those words, she was significantly stunned and hesitantly walked toward the bookshelf. Then, she randomly selected a hardback journal from the shelf. The date on the journal itself showed that it had been recorded three years ago when he enrolled in university as a freshman.

The first page of the journal was a newspaper clipping where it read, 'The chief executive officer of Sunhill Enterprise—James Duncan—has stepped down from his position, paving the way for the only son of the Duncan Family—Alexander Duncan—to be his successor.'

There was also an exclamation mark highlighted in red next to the news heading with the words—'Family feud of the upper echelons'. This particular tabloid newspaper seemed to have adopted the bad habit of sensationalizing each piece of news.

Courtney continued to flick through the pages and found that most of them contained articles with interviews of Alexander. On some of the pages, Oliver made his own annotations and also included some of his own analyses on Alexander's character.

His initial analyses were mainly confined to words such as, 'callous', 'shrewd', 'a flair for business'. However, over time, it gradually included terms like, 'protective', 'not too unfeeling after all' and 'can be annoying'.

All these came from a teenager's murmurs over time as he had no one else to share this secret with. He had silently focused his attention on his elder brother, who had the same blood coursing through his veins, on his own all these years.

In fact, Courtney was quite moved by what she read as she finally flipped to the last page. She returned the journal to its original position on the bookshelf and turned to look at Oliver. She maintained her gaze on him before asking, "What was your initial purpose of doing all these? There must be a reason. You've never met Alexander before, so why did you suddenly think of getting to know him?"

"Because of my mom," he replied without hesitation. "When I was young, my mom kept crying whenever she looked at a specific photo and she would often call out his name in her dreams. Initially, I didn't know what was going on and I wasn't sure what she said either. However, I slowly realized that there was such a person called Alexander Duncan. He was her son and he had kicked her out of her home when he was thirteen."

Each individual had their own different perspectives for every matter that they handled. Courtney could accept Oliver's stance of standing up for his mom. However, she also had to observe things from Alexander's perspective and acknowledge the pain he had suffered as a result of Fiona's actions in the past. It is an unresolvable matter.

"Do you plan to help your mom and Alexander reconcile?"

"Yea."

"That would be quite difficult to achieve," Courtney immediately responded. "There are some matters that you might not be aware of, so that's why you have such a notion. However..."

"My mom would never have an affair," Oliver suddenly interjected.

Meanwhile, her expression took a turn as her eyes met his confident expression.

"I know what you're about to say. My mom would never ever have anything to do with another man."

Then, she frowned. "Oliver, your mother has admitted that you and Alexander aren't from the same father, though."

Those words were something that she found arduous to say, but he was overly stubborn and didn't seem to be easily convinced. If Courtney didn't manage to discourage him from the notion of reconciling Alexander and Fiona, she was worried of the consequences that could arise. In short, the boy's actions might lead to a catastrophe.

After all, in an attempt to approach Alexander, Oliver even resorted to becoming a private investigator and learned so much information about the Duncans, which made him a ticking time bomb.

"Courtney, do you think that I'm an illegitimate child too?"

Oliver's expression gradually darkened as he tightly clenched his fist. "Since I was a kid, my mom said that my father's name was Jeffrey Duncan."

Courtney was taken aback by the sudden revelation.

Jeffrey Duncan was Old Master Duncan's only son and Alexander's dad. When Alexander was thirteen, Jeffrey had died in that car accident, which also caused Fiona to be kicked out of the house as a result. From then on, Fiona and Alexander had never crossed paths with each other for the next twenty years or so. Yet, Oliver was claiming that Jeffrey was his biological father?

"Courtney, do you know why I was given the last name of Ford?" Oliver gradually calmed down as he stared at Courtney. "My mom was told by the Duncans as she left the house that she was no longer part of the family, so her unborn child wasn't allowed to bear the family name. As she was an orphan adopted by the Duncan Family, her last name was also Duncan. Besides, she didn't know of any living biological relatives, so what other last name could she give me? In the end, she chose Oliver Ford. It doesn't sound that great, but when I asked her for the reason behind such a name, she said that she got the idea from her favorite hang-out spot when she was a kid: the ford of the river."

Oliver Ford. That's a very meaningful name. She suddenly had mixed emotions.

There was no way for Courtney to validate everything that occurred in the past. Besides, Fiona clearly refused to divulge anything too. However, she felt that there was something else that they were unaware of. "If that's the case, why did Madam leave back then?"

As soon as Courtney brought this question, Oliver frowned. "I'm still investigating this matter, but I'm confident that it wasn't because of an affair. The allegation of an affair was fabricated."

She was tempted to trust his words, but she also felt a strong obligation to stand by Alexander's side. After pausing for a moment, she glanced at Oliver. "Oliver, have you ever thought that maybe your mom has a reason for adamantly refusing to say a word about the past? Perhaps it was a difficult decision that she was forced to make and she had no choice but to leave the Duncan Family."

He was slightly shocked. "A decision that was forced?"

"I trust your words that there are no issues with your parentage, but do you realize that this is such an easy thing to validate? However, she chose to leave with you, deny you the Duncan Family name, and never set foot in Melrose City all these years either. Why is that so?"

Courtney was quite confident that he would not lie to her since the situation was already at this stage. Her first instinct was that Fiona was telling the truth and based on all of the information she had on hand, she made a bold assumption, yet she couldn't quite bring herself to mention it aloud.

As he was clueless about what was going on, Oliver stared at her with a confused expression.

"Let's leave it at this for now. There's nothing much we can do about this for the time being. Anyway, at this point of time, don't let Alexander know about you and your connection to Madam. That's the safest option right now."

She couldn't bring herself to explain further, so she could only advise him as much as possible while fervently hoping that the adverse situation would take longer to manifest.