

# Surprise 401

One Night Surprise Chapter 401 Don't Worry About the Money

"If one person costs that much, then 100 people would be..."

After calculating the cost, Lil' Mackaque stared at the blond-haired rascal in disbelief. "Are you kidding me? Do you know how much that portion is going to cost you?"

"Of course I know." The blond-haired man chuckled rowdily. "Bro, I know what you're thinking. Do I look like someone who can't pay up?"

"Yeah, you do."

"This isn't for me; it's for my boss."

The rascal raised an eyebrow, looking all smug. "My boss is a successful businessman in Melrose. He has many friends who are into this, so he had me come out here to get some for him. He even said to stock up on it if the quality's good."

Lil' Mackaque stared at him with a look of suspicion. "What exactly is your boss' line of business?"

"He owns nightclubs."

"Don't you know that many nightclub owners have been arrested recently precisely because of this? The situation is tense these days."

"Yeah, I know. But my boss isn't going to sell them; he's just giving them out. Those arrests were mostly because they'd involved too many people. We're going to settle it privately, so there'll be no problems at all."

His words sounded quite convincing to Lil' Mackaque, and the latter almost had the urge to agree. "Let me go back and think about this. You're asking for too huge of an amount, so it won't be easy to bring them out here."

"Alright, fine. You can contact me anytime."

"I probably won't in the next two days. Let me mull it over." Then, he turned and left toward the other end of the dark alleyway with his bag under his arm.

The blond-haired man stood in front of the alleyway, and the lazy and unruly look in his eyes slowly returned to a normal one. Tessa's voice filled his ear as it rang from his hidden earbud. "You can call it a day. I'll follow up from now on."

Tessa followed behind Lil' Mackaque up until he arrived at the entrance of the subway station. With her own eyes, she saw him pick the pockets of a few passersby in the crowd before he happily took a card out of one of the wallets. Then, he swiftly entered the subway.

As the train approached the final station, there weren't many passengers left.

Tessa and Lil' Mackaque were a compartment away from each other when she followed him out of the train. Seeing that he was leaving the subway station from Exit 2, she quickly went the other way and exited through Exit 4 on the opposite street.

She could see Lil' Mackaque heading toward a real estate agency from afar.

How could a drug dealer have the guts to buy a house in Melrose City? Tessa thought to herself with a frown. When she looked closer, though, she realized that the man hadn't gone inside. He was simply smoking a cigarette outside. After some time, a stout guy came outside with a brochure from the property company in his hand.

"How did it go? Did you find anything you like?" Lil' Mackaque asked, smoke escaping his mouth as he spoke. "Don't worry about the money. If you need more, we'll help you out for sure."

Fatso seemed indifferent. He casually put away the brochure before he replied, "I took a liking to one of them. I already made my down payment."

"Huh?" Lil' Mackaque almost snapped the cigarette into two as he stumbled at the sound of that. "Fatso, you do know you're buying a house, not groceries, right? How can you decide on one just like that?"

"I don't have much time to look around anymore. This house is great, so I've handed in my down payment and I'm waiting for it to be launched now. They said that they'll definitely help me seal the deal, so I'll just come over to pay the balance when the time comes."

"That means you still have to come out here, right?"

"Yeah."

"That's good, then..." Lil' Mackaque sighed in relief. "Remember to take me along, alright? I'll give you a bonus. Whatever it is, I can't have Dawn's house lacking a few pieces of good furniture, can I?"

"The house is up for sale in three months. Dragon will probably be coming out by then, so you don't have to tag along."

"What?" Lil' Mackaque's expression took a drastic change yet again. "Three months?"

How can I afford to wait for three months to secure the business? If I have to wait, the business will belong to Dragon for sure. Once he becomes head, the money will have to be split among the 20 or so people under him. How am I supposed to earn a profit when I only get a measly share?

By the time he came to, Fatso had already walked quite a distance. Lil' Mackaque quickly caught up to Fatso and begged him to bring the former along the next time he had to come outside.

After a three-hour drive all the way to the outskirts of Melrose City, a Santana came to a stop in an old fishing village. Fatso and Lil' Mackaque got down from the car and carefully threaded through the abandoned village that was overgrown with weed. They pulled out a small boat that was tied to the dock.

Tessa silently recorded everything she was seeing and sent the footage to the monitoring room.

“The car plate is fake.”

Back in the Duncans’ villa, Gale had just looked into the car plate of the Santana in the study. “They probably change a car plate every time they head out to avoid being captured. Judging from the fishing boat’s route to Riverark Island, though, those are Dragon’s lackeys for sure.”

“The next time they’re planning to meet up with us, we’ll arrange our people to follow them to the island.”

...

By the time Fatso and Lil’ Mackaque came back, it was already well into the wee hours of the night.

Neither Poppy nor Courtney were sleeping soundly. Poppy was especially sensitive; she rolled over and ran to take a peek out the window the moment she heard noises outside.

Courtney sat up as well. When she saw the complicated expression on Poppy’s face, she knew her plan had failed.

“He’s holding some grocery bags and a few gachapon capsules. They must’ve been to the city, so I bet he won’t come to me anymore.” Poppy spoke in a whisper, but it was loud enough to fill the small and cramped room.

“Yeah,” Courtney said. “But nothing’s impossible. Let’s not give up.”

“I don’t want to wait anymore.”

Poppy took a deep breath and turned to Courtney in all seriousness. “You can stick with your plan, and I’ll stick with mine. I want to leave this island, but the longer I’m tortured by those people, the more I feel like ending my life together with Britney’s. I have to do this before I leave, or I’d rather not leave at all.”

It was easy to be blinded by hatred. Poppy hated Britney, up to the point where it had exceeded her desire to live.

Since Poppy already put it that way, Courtney knew that she wouldn’t be able to persuade the woman otherwise. Thus, she didn’t say anything more.

The next day, Reggie, the man who proposed to start a new life with Poppy, told Dragon about that. Then, he came and brought Poppy out of the cabin.

Aside from Buffy, Fatso, and the other three that never left the island, everyone else had a home elsewhere. So, since Poppy was leaving, she would no longer be staying with the few of them. Indeed, that would save her from a lot of harassment.

The cramped room suddenly became a lot more spacious. Courtney got lost in her thoughts by the bed as she let out a sigh. Since Poppy wasn’t willing to cooperate, she could only think of another way.

Glancing at the window behind her, she made sure that no one was keeping an eye on her before she carefully loosened a nail on top of it and plucked it out with ease. She grabbed the wooden plank that

was binding the window shut and slowly tore it off. Then, she used the nail to pry the other plank loose...

While she was busy at work, the door creaked open behind her. Courtney tensed up immediately. She hastily pushed the nails and planks off her bed and swept it underneath before turning back in a hurry.

A skinny figure came in, the bright sunlight masking his identity as it cast an overlay from behind. As he approached her, his face became clearer, and Courtney could make out the creepy expression he was wearing.

“Hey, girlie. There’s no one else here now, eh? You’re all alone now.”

Courtney’s face stiffened. “Why did you come in? Get out.”

“Tsk tsk...” Lil’ Mackaque studied her from head to toe, his tone suggestive and dirty. “Since you’ve disguised your beautiful face like that, those dumb fellas couldn’t tell that you’re actually a hottie. They truly are blind, aren’t they? Anyway, none of them are here today, so don’t mind if I have some fun with you alone!”

One Night Surprise Chapter 402 Couldn’t Care Less

Fear was written all over Courtney’s face and she couldn’t help but shriek. “Don’t touch me...” she whimpered.

She had been putting on this hideous disguise ever since she was brought here, so the hooligans who were patrolling the place had never seen how she looked when she was clean. They ignored her presence since she looked messy and unkempt all the time. They simply assumed that Britney had found an ugly maid to keep her younger cousin, Poppy, company.

However, Lil’ Mackaque and Fatso knew what was up. They were the ones who had brought Courtney to the island, so they’d naturally seen her real face before.

Previously, there were many people around, so he wasn’t able to get his hands on her. He was afraid that he’d get himself some unwanted competition, but today, the moment he had been waiting for was finally here—there was nobody else around on the island.

“Aren’t you going to pay me back for looking after you all this time?” The man pounced on her without warning.

Overcome with panic, Courtney grabbed the wooden plank from under the bed and smashed it against his head.

A loud scream filled the room, and Lil’ Mackaque collapsed to the ground as he clutched his bleeding head. He cried in disbelief, “How dare you hit me, you b\*tch?”

Courtney mercilessly whacked his head for another ten more times or so. When she saw that he had gone limp and unresponsive, she began to panic. It was then that the door suddenly opened. She didn’t have much time to think before she stumbled toward the outside of the house.

She was just a step out of the house when she crashed into someone. Her body bounced back from the impact and she fell to the ground at once.

“Who is it?”

An angry and threatening voice came from above her head. “Who’re you?”

Courtney was trembling all over. The moment she looked up, a tall and burly figure came into view; it was as if there was a mountain in front of her. The man had a beard and he looked ferocious and intimidating. He even had an eyepatch over an eye.

Her face gradually paled. This was the first time she was seeing Dragon up close ever since she was kidnapped here.

“How did you end up on this island? Who brought you here?” Dragon clutched her shoulder tight, his expression ghastly.

What? He doesn’t know that I’m here?

In her haste, Courtney quickly brought herself up to speed before she said, her voice quivering, “It was you guys who’d kidnapped me here. I’ve been here for almost two weeks. I don’t know how I came.”

“Did you say it was us?” Dragon’s expression darkened at once. “Who brought you here?”

Courtney pointed a trembling finger at Lil’ Mackaque who was lying on the floor inside. “It was him and a fat guy.”

Dragon seemed to be thinking about something with his forehead furrowed. He suddenly flung Courtney away and bellowed, “You dumbf\*cks!”

Five minutes later, Courtney pretended to shiver in fear as she cowered by the corner of the house. Lil’ Mackaque was groveling at Dragon’s feet, shivering uncontrollably with his bleeding head.

For once, Britney had come downstairs. She wasn’t looking too good; it seemed like she hadn’t fully recovered.

The moment she saw Courtney cowering miserably by the corner, though, a triumphant look filled her face, and she looked a lot better all of a sudden. She leaned close to Dragon with her head against his shoulder and said tenderly, “Is this really worth your time to be so angry, Dragon? It’s nothing serious! Since Lil’ Mackaque likes her, just let him take her. Didn’t Reggie just take Poppy away a few days ago?”

“I’m not asking about whether or not he’s interested in this woman. I want to know why this woman’s on the island.” Dragon’s face was red with anger. He looked like he wasn’t planning to leave without getting a solid explanation.

Lil’ Mackaque was trembling all over as he crouched on the ground. “It wasn’t me! Britney told me and Fatso to kidnap them here. I don’t know anything!”

Hearing that, Britney’s face gradually went pale. “What are you talking about? You were the one who wanted to kidnap her and bring her here. Why are you putting the blame on me?”

“J-Just ask Fatso if you don’t believe me, Dragon. He went with me the other day. He wouldn’t have done something like this with me without orders from you or Britney.”

Dragon’s eyes became murky with suspicion. He glanced at Fatso who had been standing by the side. He said, “Tell me what happened.”

Fatso calmly eyed Britney and replied frankly without adding any unnecessary details, “Lil’ Mackaque’s right.”

Britney looked petrified at once.

Dragon clenched his fist and swung it toward her head with no reservation for her delicate skin.

“It seems that I’ve been treating you too well, so much that you even have the guts to order my people around now. Not only that, but you even brought people after people to the island. Are you that desperate for me to get caught?”

Britney sniffed as tears gushed down her cheeks. She wrapped her arms around his bare ankle and begged desperately, “Dragon, I just wanted to teach her a lesson for you! This woman... She’s Alexander’s wife and Oliver’s sister-in-law! Their whole family is the reason you’ve lost so many brothers.”

“Since you care so much, why didn’t you kidnap Oliver and the other motherf\*ckers too?” Dragon bellowed as he grabbed her long hair. When she started shrieking in agony, he unhesitantly landed a slap on her mouth, sending blood trickling down the corner of her mouth.

Courtney’s heart sank as she watched the gruesome scene unfold in front of her.

It was as if this man couldn’t care less about who the woman was to him. He’s willing to beat the living hell out of the woman who sleeps next to him every night, so what will happen when it comes to me? If we’re talking about family relations, I’m still indirectly considered an enemy to him. This is it. I’m finished.

Britney was lying weakly on the ground after being slapped by Dragon. She couldn’t even speak properly anymore. All of a sudden, she thought of something and quickly pointed at Courtney. “Dragon, I’ll kill her and end it all right now. This was my mistake; I’ll never do it ever again.”

Dragon glanced at Courtney when he heard that. The cold look in his eyes made her feel like she was nothing but an insignificant ant that could be killed with just a step.

“We have to kill her, of course. Not only that, but we must clean the deed up carefully as well. Increase the preventive patrols for the next two days. We don’t want to attract the dogs.”

“Dogs” was a secret code among them—it meant the SWAT.

Courtney felt her limbs going cold at once. There was a lump in her throat which took away her ability to speak.

“Fatso, you’ll handle this.”

Dragon shot an icy glare at Britney as he gestured toward the wooden cabin by the side. "I've underestimated your abilities. How dare you order my people around like they're yours? Don't come to my house ever again from now on. Since you love stuffing this cabin full of people, go ahead and stay there yourself."

Britney immediately groveled at his feet as she broke into desperate sobs, but the man was completely unfazed. He kicked her away mercilessly and went back to his house without looking back. Britney bit her lip and got up to chase after him.

Lil' Mackaque only looked up after trembling on the ground for a long time. He glanced at Courtney with a look of relief on his face after escaping a round of torture. "So, Fatso... How do you plan to deal with her?"

Courtney's face paled even more when she heard that. She simply couldn't tell if Fatso was a good person or not. After all, even a good person on this island had had their hands bloodied before, so they couldn't be fully trusted no matter what.

"I'll kill her behind a hill then bury her body." He gave a short and casual answer before glancing at Courtney. "Come on."

At that moment, she felt like Fatso was Death himself who was speaking to her with a scythe in hand. She could almost hear the rattling of chains in the background, and a knot formed in her chest.

"Why don't you let me handle it?" Lil' Mackaque stopped Fatso all of a sudden. "I mean, she did beat me up so badly, so I should at least..."

Courtney went white at once.

One Night Surprise Chapter 403 Isn't He Your Father?

"Dragon said to kill her off, not to hand her over to you. Why don't you try asking him if you really want that?" Fatso stated emotionlessly as he turned his eyes toward the second floor of the cabin.

The sound from the whip of a belt sounded rather rhythmic, followed by a woman's horrified shrieks. At that, Lil' Mackaque shivered. "Ah, f\*ck it. Wouldn't wanna risk my 'hard-earned' life on this woman. Take her away. What a pain in the eye."

Fatso snickered at his response before glancing at Courtney.

And so, Courtney followed Fatso into the mountainous forest. They walked for so long the day had already darkened, and eventually, they arrived at a stream. Not far at the opposite side of the stream was a gravestone that agitated Courtney at the sight of it. He's not going to drown me here and bury me afterward, is he?

Leaving her behind, Fatso crossed the stream toward the gravestone before removing the weeds around it.

Suspiciously, she observed him. After some time of wondering, she seemed to have an idea, blurting, "Is this your... wife's?"

Fatso was surprised and at the same time annoyed. "That's not something for you to ask."

Immediately, Courtney kept quiet. Hell's wrong with this fatty? Is he actually notifying his wife before killing someone? Gosh, I'd rather die than to suffer from this wait. Just kill me already!

"Who said you could touch my mother!" A clear voice sounded from their four and persisted to echo through the woods.

Subconsciously, Courtney turned around, only to find a skinny little girl running appearing and running toward the gravestone before violently shoving Fatso away. Fiercely, she yelled, "I told you, no one on this island except for me is allowed to touch my mother!"

Fatso, despite falling to the ground, was not irritated in the slightest. Yet, there was obviously sadness in his eyes. After a while, he stood up and brushed the dirt off his garments and wordlessly turned to Courtney. "Let's go."

When Courtney saw him looking so depressed, her survival instinct immediately burst forth. Thus, she ran to the little girl and asked, "Did you like the capsule I gave you last time?"

The little girl froze as she stared blankly at her.

Enraged, Fatso tugged Courtney's arm. "Who said you could speak? Keep walking."

As Courtney was being dragged away, all she could feel was anxiousness as she intensely prayed for a rescue.

"Hold it." Once again, the little girl projected her treble voice, stopping Fatso and Courtney. "Who is she, and where are you bringing her?"

"Mind your own business, kid." Fatso leered at the girl viciously.

"That's what you told me before mother left home." Intimidatingly, the little girl dashed toward the adults. Being three feet away from them, she coldly yelled, "I'm taking her!"

"No."

"Then you can forget about seeing me anymore. I'll eventually leave this hell hole anyway."

Fatso was visibly shocked.

In an attempt to save her own life, Courtney stuttered, "S-Since there's nowhere I can run to anyway, why don't you execute me when you're leaving? Letting me live for a couple more days wouldn't hurt, right?"

Hearing that, Fatso hesitated.

Despite that, the little girl ignored him and grabbed Courtney's arm. "Follow me." Quickly, she dragged her out of the forest into a cave on the island.

From outside, the cave seemed nothing out of the ordinary. However, it wasn't until Courtney entered the cave that she was astounded by how fully furnished it was. Bed, tables, chairs, wooden bucket, mirrors—nothing that weren't crafted with adept skills. In the bucket were three wooden ducklings, and they were the same ones she caught Fatso crafting outside the window. That fatty seems to love his daughter, but why does she treat him like her worst enemy?

"I'm Dawn. What's your name?" The little girl introduced herself right after she brought Courtney into the cave. She was rather amicable and didn't at all mind talking to a stranger.

"Courtney. Courtney Hunter." Having escaped death temporarily, Courtney heaved a sigh of relief and revealed a cordial smile to her. "Thank you so much for saving me."

"You're welcome, but that's all I can do now. He'll definitely come back for you once I turn around. He's just one of Dragon's obedient lap dogs doing whatever to lick his boots."

Courtney was slightly shocked. "Isn't he... your father?"

"No, he's not." The little girl instantly frowned.

Although she was Fatso's daughter, she did not resemble him one bit, especially her notably puffy, dusty cheeks. Her dark hair—as scruffy as a bush—seemed like it was never trimmed and was messily tied behind her head with a rubber band. On the other hand, her clothes and shoes—clean and tidy—were of popular sports brands.

"A man like him doesn't deserve to be a father or a husband. I've never seen a man stand idly, silently watching as his own wife got insulted and tormented. He's the scrub among scrubs." Concisely, Dawn revealed her reason to disdain her father and showed no restraint while doing so.

Hearing that, Courtney was stupefied. Even though she had guessed that Fatso's wife must have had some conflict with Dragon, she never expected it to be this deep. She didn't know what to feel other than her sympathy toward Dawn.

"Oh, right. The capsules you gave me last time were really fun! These are what were inside." Dawn shifted her thoughts rather quickly, as if she didn't keep what she just said in her mind, showing off two figurines on her dresser. "What are these? I put them together according to the instructions. Are these monsters?"

Courtney took a look and subtly beamed. "They're not monsters. This one's Bumblebee, and that one's Spiderman."

"Bumblebee and Spiderman?"

"They're comic book superheroes."

Courtney then briefly told Dawn stories about comic book superheroes, which obviously attracted her attention. "Wow, there's more like them? I only know about Batman, which I read at home before coming to this island."

"How old were you when you came here?"

“About four, or five? I don’t quite remember.” The little girl looked rather naive. She revealed an unmindful expression someone of her age wouldn’t normally make. “It’s only a matter of time until I leave this island anyway. No one else would talk to me except for the box.”

“The box?” Courtney was baffled. “What box?”

With a mysterious face, Dawn presented her with her precious “box.”

“I’d talk to it whenever I get bored, though sometimes I don’t really understand what it’s saying. But you should know, right, Miss? You came from the outside world, didn’t you?”

Looking at the old radio, Courtney couldn’t help but be entertained by the name Dawn gave it. After staring at it for a while, she suddenly realized something. “Wait, when do you usually hear it speak?”

With that, Dawn pointed outside the cave at the sky as excitement surged in her eyes. “We just gotta climb to the top of West Mountain and it’ll start speaking! Gods always gotta live somewhere high up, don’t they?”

One Night Surprise Chapter 404 Don’t Wander Around at Night

The direction that Dawn pointed in was the north-western part of the island. The mountain on the island was no more than a hill, really, and it had no name either. To Dawn, since it was in the east, it was the East Mountain, and the mountain to the west was the West Mountain.

Courtney questioned, “Do you always bring your radio up that mountain?”

“Radio?” Dawn might not be involved with the outside world at large, but she was quick to pick up on things. She pointed at her beloved box and exclaimed in excitement, “So this is called a radio?”

Courtney nodded.

“I always bring this up with me to the top of the West Mountain. When I press this button, it starts making noises. But it only works when the weather is clear. It doesn’t work when it’s raining.”

Courtney’s eyes instantly lit up.

“Hey.” Dawn waved a hand in front of Courtney’s eyes, summoning her back to reality. “You’re from the outside world, right? Tell me what it’s like.”

Courtney’s gaze fell upon the young girl’s face. After a few moments of thought, her eyes glittered.

“The world outside is far more interesting and amazing than this place. Take those two capsules I gave you for example: this is a kind of toy that kids aged three to five love...”

Dawn listened rapturously. She continuously pestered Courtney to tell her more stories, unwilling to sleep even when the night continued to drag on. Courtney also managed to get a lot of chatter out of Dawn.

Dawn was about four or five when Fatso brought her and her mother over to this island. She didn’t know the reason why, but in any case, Dawn and her mother were the only ones on the island. The

island's inhabitants cared about them to some extent, so Dawn's mother helped them to do their laundry and other miscellaneous tasks of her own volition.

Once, the head of the island—a man called Dragon—seemingly closed a huge deal, and so he called over all his buddies for a night of drinking. When everyone was completely passed out from the alcohol they imbibed, Dragon then dragged Dawn's mother into a room. The next day, Dawn saw with her own eyes her mother hanging on the rafters in the room, dead.

As the man running the show on the island, Dragon's word was law. To him, human lives weren't worth anything much, so he simply gave Fatso some money as compensation for his loss. Fatso didn't dare to let Dawn stay with the other rowdy men on the island after that. That was why he ended up having her stay in such a secluded cave.

"So, you've been living here for the past seven or so years?" Courtney surveyed the place. A dim, yellow light shone by the entrance, illuminating the various hand-made items of furniture in the cave. The sight was actually a somewhat homely one.

Dawn sat cross-legged on the bed, seemingly saddened when she heard that. "Yeah. Actually, Fatso should have sent me away from this place after my mom died, but he insisted on making me stay inside here instead."

"You were so young then; how could he have sent you away?"

"I heard that there's a place called an orphanage in the outside world. They take in lots and lots of children, and they have food, toys, and many other things. It sounds like such a nice place. Why didn't he send me there?"

"Only unwanted children or children with no parents get sent to the orphanage. Simply put, children with hard lives."

"But I don't have a mom. I have a dad, but he pretty much isn't around all the time. I still have to watch out for wild beasts and other things every day while staying on this island, so I guess I have a hard life too, huh? An orphanage sounds great. I really want to go."

Dawn looked so serious about living at an orphanage that it made Courtney feel a myriad of feelings.

When it was nearly morning, Dawn ran out of steam at last and slowly nodded off. Courtney looked at the sky outside and tiptoed her way out of the cave, groping her way up to the peak of the West Mountain.

After a few buzzes from her phone in the dark, Courtney's phone turned on. It only had 30% of its battery left. Courtney was a little worried about this. She lifted her phone and walked around the mountain, attempting to find a spot with signal reception. However, her phone automatically turned off after she had only taken a few steps.

As she stared at the dark screen of her phone, Courtney mentally sighed. She then stowed her phone back into her pocket and retraced her steps back to the cave.

Dawn didn't have a regular sleep schedule, having slept through the later parts of the night and still remaining asleep even though it was already way past mid-morning.

Although the cave wasn't lavishly furnished, it seemingly had everything one would need. There was a large tub set in a corner, and to the side of the cave was an electric kettle. Courtney used the kettle to boil some water before she searched around the cave for something to eat. When she heard footsteps outside, she nearly choked.

The unexpected newcomer was Fatso, and he had an insulated lunchbox in hand. He placed it on the wooden table inside.

Courtney stayed far away from him, wariness showing on her face as she eyed Fatso.

"Wake her after this and tell her to eat the food." After saying that, Fatso leveled a meaningful look at Courtney. "Don't wander around at night. Wild beasts aren't the only things lying in wait around the mountains. No one will be able to save you then."

Courtney's heart juddered for a second there. Did he find out I went up to the mountain last night?

Not long after Fatso left, Dawn woke up, rubbing her eyes. With well-practiced movements, she groped her way over to the table and sat down to open the lunchbox. After glancing at its contents, she put the lid back on again. "It's always the same food every day. I'm so sick of this."

A young girl in the throes of puberty would get irritated at the sight of anything. Dawn's yearning for the outside world was the sole exception, and Courtney understood this very well.

"Dawn, do you want to leave this island?"

"Of course," Dawn said distractedly as she shoved chunks of bun into her mouth, chewing as though she was eating some waxy facsimile instead. "I even think about it in my dreams. I don't even just wish to leave anymore; I even made a raft in secret once. But in the end, the raft didn't float, and I don't know how to swim either. Even if I knew, I don't know where I should go."

"Why don't you take me to see your raft?"

"You want to escape." Dawn opened her eyes a little wider and glanced at Courtney. "I'm telling you now: I'll be fine even if I run and they catch me. You, though—you're gonna die if they catch you when you're escaping. Anyway, I ended up breaking the raft when I was fiddling around with it. I don't want to bother with it anymore."

"So you don't want to leave this place?"

"I've got you here to talk with me. If you tell me more about the outside world, I can pretend that I've actually been there."

Courtney was baffled. Could she possibly have lost her curiosity about the outside world because I talked too much about it last night? She refused to give up. As she stared at the bun in Dawn's hands, her eyes lit up. "Do you know what people in the outside world eat?"

"Buns? Pickles? Braised pork? Wild rabbits and chickens?"

"Those are all main courses. Do you know what desserts are?"

"The box mentioned them before. What are they? Something sweet? Like sugar water?"

Courtney's eyes glittered as though she had just found herself a lifeline. She fished out a piece of chocolate that had already become squished from her coat pocket and handed it over to Dawn. "Try this."

She was used to carrying chocolate around with her because both Jordan and Tina loved the same brand of chocolate. Fatso hadn't starved her since her arrival at this island either, so this chocolate remained uneaten in good condition. All preteen girls love sweets!

One Night Surprise Chapter 405 As Long as You Agree to One Condition

Dawn studied this dark little lump. Initially, she didn't want to eat it regardless of what it was. "What's this? It looks like poop!"

"Try it, it's really good. Here, I'll taste test one." Courtney pinched off half a piece of chocolate and placed it in her own mouth. After a lot more coaxing and cajoling, Dawn awkwardly made herself try a bite.

The girl's expression shifted slightly. Not long after that, the inner side of the chocolate wrapping was licked clean. "So good... Do you have more?" Dawn rifled through Courtney's pockets, but she didn't find another piece of chocolate.

"If you want chocolate, you can have as much as you like once you leave the island. And, there are also so many other things that are tastier than chocolate." Courtney proceeded to describe the various tasty foods that could be found in the outside world, from hot dogs and meat skewers from roadside stalls, to fried chicken, burgers, and doughnuts, and even nicer, luxurious treats such as steak, foie gras, and lobsters. Dawn could shouldn't stop drooling from her descriptions.

"There's really lots of delicious stuff out there, like you said?"

"Why would I lie to you?"

"I knew it; I shouldn't have listened to Fatso. He keeps telling me that I'll starve to death outside so that I'll give up on leaving."

"You'll definitely starve to death if you go alone, but if you come with me, I guarantee you can try all those things that I mentioned."

"For real?" Dawn's eyes glimmered, her dark and dirty face lighting up with a smile. "What are we waiting for, then? I'll take you to see that raft I made."

"Where is it?"

"There's a bamboo forest behind this cave."

The two then made their way to the bamboo forest.

...

"We got a hit from Courtney's phone," Oliver sprang up and yelled to the others outside when the radar displayed a signal. "I got her location. Courtney's phone had reception for a moment."

Instantly, a huge crowd streamed in from the living room.

Alexander was the first one to rush inside, with Elijah, Cameron, Gale, Bill, and Natasha following right after him, along with the few Blue Eagles Reserve Forces members that Tessa had brought along. All of them had looks of disbelief on their faces.

“When was this? Why would her phone have reception?” Alexander pressed Oliver, his words tumbling out of his mouth. “Where is she?”

“Just now. We got a hit for just a moment, but there’s no signal now.” Oliver was also frantic, unsure of what to do with the device.

Elijah pushed Oliver away before his fingers flew all over the device, tapping away at the apparatus with its complicated-looking cabling. When he saw the red marker marking a position, he revealed a look of delight. “Yes, it’s a signal from Courtney. Now that we know where she is, we can send people out to rescue her.”

Alexander was practically beside himself with excitement. “Gale, inform the criminal investigation team that the drug lord has been located. Get them to send some men out to the island to mount a rescue mission.”

“I’ll do that now.” Gale hurried off to call the criminal investigation team.

Cameron, meanwhile, was on the verge of tears. After their first deal, Tessa and the others hadn’t dared to follow Lil’ Mackaque and Fatso’s boat to search for the island in order to not give themselves away. They had decided to wait for the next transaction instead, but after waiting for two days, they still hadn’t received any news from Lil’ Mackaque. From the looks of things, the deal had fallen through.

And just when things were looking bleak, Courtney’s phone gave off a signal.

While Gale and company were tripping over themselves, Courtney followed Dawn and saw the battered and broken raft that was tucked away in a spot on the island.

“I hadn’t gotten a chance to leave when Fatso found out about my raft. He made me take it apart. I tossed it here and left it alone after that.” As she spoke, Dawn gave the raft a kick. “Looks like it’s useless, huh?”

Courtney surveyed her surroundings. “It’s okay. We can make another one. It’ll be done in two days at most.”

The bamboo forest, of course, had no end of bamboo for them to use. With Dawn here to help cut down the needed bamboo, it wouldn’t be difficult to finish a raft within a day.

As for why Courtney said they needed two days, she actually had no real intentions to bring Dawn along with her for her escape. Although the young girl was not happy with her life on the island, she did actually have Fatso protecting her. Courtney was unsure whether she could even get off the island and go back if she took the raft with Dawn, and on another hand, she was worried that Fatso would chase her to the ends of the world to get her back if he discovered that both of them had left.

In order to escape Fatso’s notice, Courtney and Dawn returned to the East Mountain when it was nearly nightfall. They even grabbed some foliage to cover up and hide their half-finished raft.

When Fatso brought dinner for them later, Dawn didn't grumble about her food due to her exhaustion from the labor earlier; she tore through her food, gobbling down every morsel, not even caring that Fatso was still inside the cave with them.

Courtney sat a distance away from Fatso, eating her food with small bites while she sneakily shoved two buns under her clothes. She had better stow some rations away, for she had no idea how long it would take for the raft to reach shore.

"What do you want to eat tomorrow?" Fatso asked.

"Braised pork..." Dawn answered. All of a sudden, she glanced at Courtney through the corners of her eyes before piping up again. "And buns. Gimme more buns."

"Why the sudden liking for buns?" A look of confusion came over Fatso's face.

"Buns are yummy."

"Yummy?"

"Oh come on, why all the questions? Are you gonna bring it or not? If you won't, then forget it."

"Fine, fine, I'll bring some for you tomorrow," Fatso replied good-naturedly. Before he left, he stared hard at Courtney, making all her hairs stand on end.

The wind howled outside the cave when night finally fell. Dawn fell asleep after listening to more of Courtney's stories, snoring as she slumbered away. Courtney pulled a blanket over the sleeping girl and then tiptoed her way over to the bamboo forest.

In reality, they had more or less completed the raft earlier during the day. There was only one simple step left now. Courtney carefully tied the rope before using every ounce of strength she had in herself to drag the raft down to the river to see if the raft would float.

And it actually floated. It seemed that the raft was functional. Courtney then attempted to stand on it, but the raft began to sink before she could even gain her footing properly. The river water was bone-chillingly cold when it touched her feet. Slapping a hand over her mouth, she pulled herself back up using the rope that she had tied to a nearby tree on the shore.

If she ended up in the water for a long period of time, she would freeze to death if she somehow didn't drown.

Behind her was a wolf's den, and in front of her was the unknown waters. Which one should she choose?

After hesitating for a moment, Courtney gritted her teeth and prepared to get back to the water.

Just then, a cold, eerie voice rang out from the bamboo forest as a dark figure made its way over.

"Planning to leave like this?"

Courtney instantly paled. "Who's there?"

Fatso walked out from the shadows of the bamboo forest. The moonlight dragged his shadow out, making it seem unusually long. He leveled Courtney with a cold stare, as though he was looking at a lamb that was about to be slaughtered.

Courtney forced the corners of her lips up. "Fatso, I... I wasn't actually planning to escape. I was just—I was just helping your daughter to test this raft to see if it floats. She wants to leave this place. What if the raft doesn't work?"

Fatso gave a cold chuckle. "You think anyone would believe your words?" After all, her logic was confusing and riddled with holes.

Courtney was drenched in cold sweat now as she said through clenched teeth, "I can pay you however much you want, as long as you release me."

"I don't want money." Fatso's expression was tight. "I can let you go, as long as you agree to one condition."

At this, Courtney's heart skipped a beat.

One Night Surprise Chapter 406 Three Months Pregnant

Courtney followed Fatso through the bamboo forest over to the northern side of the island. Neither of them spoke throughout their trek.

She was perpetually nervous. At first, she wondered if Fatso planned to find a spot where no one could find her before killing her. But then she remembered there was hardly anyone on this island. Couldn't he just kill her anywhere?

As her mind ran through those scenarios, Fatso said, "We're here." She then stopped in her tracks.

In front of them was the shore of the river. A fishing boat was tied up among the reeds in the water. There was a skinny, unmoving figure on the boat as well. When Courtney got closer and took a look at the figure, her expression shifted. "Dawn?"

Fatso had an even look on his face as he said blandly, "Your raft isn't usable. It'll sink before it reaches shore. If you want to leave, you'll have to use this boat."

"You want me to take your daughter along?"

"If you want to leave, then you'll have to take her." Fatso's face was blank. Courtney couldn't make out much of what he was feeling. "I've packed some items for her on the boat. Once you two leave, don't ever come back. If she ever asks, say that I'm dead."

Courtney stiffened up a little, unable to understand what was going on. "I thought you wouldn't let her leave the island?"

"She can't possibly live the rest of her life here. She can't end up like her mother. I cannot allow her to end up like that either."

They were running out of time; the sun was about to come up. Courtney didn't dare to keep questioning him. After she got on the boat, Fatso pushed the boat away, and the vessel proceeded to float toward the middle of the river.

Courtney watched Fatso from where she sat on the boat, a mixture of feelings welling up inside of her. However, it was only for a moment. After all, her heart was still thumping in joy from being able to leave the island. She couldn't feel much of anything else now.

Not long after the boat left the island shore, Courtney could see smoke rising from the island in the distance. Soon, golden flames engulfed the entire island, burning their way up into the sky. Her heart stopped for a moment, and she stood up on the boat. What on earth is happening on the island?

Just as she was wondering about that, the sounds of engines could be heard in all directions.

Bam!

Courtney had no idea where that gunshot came from, but it had shot a hole right through their boat, making the boat shake violently. Courtney gasped in shock, at a loss as to what to do as she watched the water gush into the boat.

"Dawn, Dawn!" She hastily tried to wake Dawn up, but the girl slept like a log; maybe Fatso had drugged her. Even though Courtney had repeatedly tapped and lightly smacked Dawn until the girl's face was red, she still didn't respond.

The boat quickly sank. Courtney grabbed Dawn's hand, choking on the water rushing into her mouth as she sank into the river.

Through the haziness of her consciousness, she heard some familiar voices. "They aren't drug dealers; those are two females."

Right after that, there were several splashes as people jumped into the river. The surface of the river was instantly abuzz.

Courtney continued to sink downward. In all her confusion, it felt like she was falling into someone's embrace. She was instantly entranced by this feeling of familiarity that she hadn't experienced in a long time, and she gave up struggling. She simply closed her eyes and fell into a dream. There, she dreamed of blue skies littered with fluffy white clouds, where two children freely ran to their hearts' content in a field.

"Mommy? Mommy, where did you go? Why did you only come now? Jordan already taught me how to solve a Rubik's cube." Tina came running over to her, her clear, childish voice ringing by Courtney's ears.

"Where's Jordan?"

"Isn't he here too? Hey Jordan, come here." Tina waved at Jordan from a distance. "Mommy's back."

Courtney crouched down and opened her arms to coo at the little figure in the distance. "Here, Jordan, come to Mommy."

Jordan, who usually loved clinging to her, suddenly seemed hesitant. He refused to come over from where he was several feet away.

Courtney pulled out some chocolate. “Jordan, here’s your favorite chocolate. Come over here and I’ll give you the chocolate.”

Jordan was hesitant as he took a few steps forward. However, he didn’t take the offered chocolate. Instead, he looked up and asked timidly, “Mommy, where’s Daddy?”

Courtney’s expression froze. Instantly, she was dimly aware of something. He’s right. Where’s his daddy? Wait, no. Me and Alexander broke up, and our wedding was canceled. Alexander’s still in a lawsuit with me, and he forbade me from seeing Jordan again. Just as all of those thoughts went through her head, the scene before her began to warp. Gray clouds immediately crowded the sky, and her two adorable children vanished without a trace. Courtney was left to stand alone in the heavy storm, lost.

“Ah!” She sat right up, drenched in cold sweat.

A large pair of warm hands grabbed her own, the owner unable to hide the joy in his voice. “Courtney, you’re awake!”

Courtney blearily turned her head. Slowly, the person in front of her came into focus. “Elijah.”

“Yes, it’s me.” Elijah held her hands and asked in concern, “Do you feel unwell? Does your chest hurt?”

All Courtney could sense was a headache. After she withdrew her hands from Elijah’s grip, she placed a hand to her forehead and asked hoarsely, “Where is this place?”

“Twin Peaks Manor. You were hospitalized for two days after you fell into the water. The hospital later said that we could bring you home to rest. I was worried about giving your Aunt Alicia a fright, so I made the decision to bring you here instead.”

The room seemed familiar. Courtney’s mind slowly came back online, and she nodded pensively. “I fell into the water. That’s right, I fell in.”

“When you left the island on your boat, the criminal investigation team thought that you were a fleeing drug dealer. They didn’t dare to just approach you because of that, so they opened fire and sank the boat,” Elijah explained.

Courtney remembered now. She had just managed to escape the deserted island, only for the boat to capsize after a bullet came out of nowhere and sank it shortly after she and Dawn left the island shore. The both of them then fell into the water.

“Where’s Dawn?”

“Huh?”

“The little girl who was with me.” Courtney gestured, suddenly anxious. “She’s about this tall, about twelve years old—she was unconscious the whole time, and like me, she can’t swim. Where is she? Did you guys save her?”

“We did save her, so don’t worry.” Elijah picked up the glass of water by the side and handed it to Courtney. “That girl’s hardier than you are. After we pulled her out from the water and performed CPR on her, she was fine. She’s currently having her statement taken at the police station.”

Courtney drank some water, soothing the parched feeling in her throat. "That's good to hear."

Elijah studied her, and after a moment's hesitation, he said in a low voice, "There's something that I think you should know."

"What is it?"

"You're pregnant." Elijah had a complicated look on his face. "The doctor said that you're already three months along."

At that, Courtney's hand shook. Fortunately, Elijah had quick reflexes, catching the glass in time and preventing the water inside from splashing out. "Are you okay?"

All Courtney could hear was a buzzing sound in her head, as though something had just blown up inside it. Everything was just a blank white.

The future was unpredictable. Just when one thought that they'd escaped from being forced off a cliff, fate would decide to toss another obstacle in their path. They were then forced into yet another thorny situation, just to struggle.

One Night Surprise Chapter 407 Who Was the Woman Who Died?

In the end, Courtney ended up finding out about what had happened at the deserted island from Cameron. Apparently, on the day of her escape, the criminal investigation team, the Blue Eagles Reserve Forces, and even Elijah and his men had surrounded the island.

"And, do you know what's the weirdest thing? There was infighting on that island that night; they didn't even have a single person out on patrol. So, all three forces just charged in, and before they could do anything, they realized that the den was on fire. That fire was huge. Like, it burned down the entire forest. The island was on fire the whole night. When Tess and the others brought in the cleanup crew, they realized that over twenty people had died inside the house."

Courtney's heart was in her throat from listening to all that. "Over twenty people?" Dragon had twenty or so men under him on that island. Did they all just die in that fire? "Who started the fire?"

"Who knows?" Cameron had a look of lingering fear on her face. "You're lucky that you ran when you did. If you still had been inside that house, you probably would have burned to death too."

"Were there no survivors?" Courtney clearly remembered that the fire had just started when she left, but Fatty had still been at the shore then.

As expected, Cameron said, "I heard that they've brought in this fat guy. He spilled everything once he was at the station."

"What did he say?"

"He said that a woman lit that fire and burned everyone to death."

"A woman?" Courtney asked, "Who?"

“You’re really gonna believe his weird nonsense?” Cameron blinked. “They retrieved twenty or so male corpses and one female corpse when they were cleaning up the place. Are you telling me that this woman burned everyone before killing herself in the fire?”

“A female corpse?” Courtney’s forehead creased slightly. A vague notion made its way into her head. “Only one?”

“Yeah.”

“Then, the only one brought in alive was that fat man?”

“That’s right.” Upon seeing the complicated look on Courtney’s face, Cameron realized something was up. She then asked, “What is it? Is something wrong?”

“Other than me and Dawn, there should be two other women on the island: Britney Price and Poppy Waller. Who was the woman who died?”

Cameron froze up for a second. “The corpse was burned really badly. All that’s left of it is some ashes and bone chips. The forensics department is still running tests on the remains, but they haven’t found out anything yet.”

Courtney frowned pensively.

Regardless of what had happened, one of the two women had escaped. However, there was practically no way to escape from the island with just a woman’s strength alone. Thus, the escaped woman must have had help from someone else.

“Someone else ran too?” Cameron snapped back to reality, unaware that she had frozen up for a bit. “That’s bad. We have to tell the police about this quickly. Are we just supposed to sit here and wait for that escapee to get revenge? I’m going to give Oliver a heads-up.” With that, Cameron left Courtney behind, rushing off to call Oliver.

Courtney’s kidnapping by a drug dealer had left everyone in a panic. The only way they would finally calm down was to take out every last person in the drug ring.

After Cameron left, Courtney leaned back in bed to eat her porridge. She also decided to take the pregnancy supplements that had been given to her. At the sight of the word ‘pregnancy,’ her mind came to a stop.

Almost everyone had come by to visit her the last few days when she had been resting at home. Even Fiona had come to visit her on behalf of the Duncan Family. Only Alexander hadn’t come to see her even once.

Later that evening, Elijah brought Alicia over. Bill and Natasha arrived a little after that, along with Cameron and Gale. Shay, on the other hand, was late. They all took up the entire table.

The servants loaded the table with a feast. Courtney also finally had the strength to get out of bed and celebrate her escape from the island with her friends.

Shay had been abroad the whole time; he had only just flown back this morning. By the time he reached the house, dinner was already underway. When he stepped inside, he was tearing up. "No one told me about this because I was overseas. That jerk Casey hid everything from me."

"So, you didn't bring him with you as punishment?" Courtney blinked, a look of derision on her face.

"Me? Bring him here? I didn't even tell him that I flew back. Let him handle a concert without a singer in another country by himself."

Shay had ditched his European tour to come back. As soon as Courtney heard this, her expression immediately changed. This was a huge disaster. Shay's fans had already bought tickets and entered the concert arena. And if the organizers suddenly announced that the star of the show wasn't there? Refunds were easy enough, but things would get out of hand if news about this got out.

As the concert organizer, it was just Casey's bad luck to be saddled with a star like Shay.

"That's at least 70 million in losses." Courtney mentally crunched the numbers before she added, "And that's in US dollars too."

"His fault." Shay was grumpy when he mentioned Casey, his pale face turning to stone. "If he ends up in debt from the losses, he's got himself to blame."

Cameron and Courtney exchanged long, meaningful looks with each other. Cameron then clicked her tongue. "You're the first person I've seen venting your anger on your own income. So this is what it means to have enough money to say 'screw the rules.'"

Shay kept grumbling about Casey. After everyone had left after dinner, he wanted to stay behind. However, no sooner had he expressed this wish, Elijah's butler came in, announcing Casey's arrival. "I'm afraid that you won't be able to stay here any longer. Your manager has come to pick you up."

Shay looked up from his mobile game to order the butler to get Casey to leave. "I'm not leaving. He can go get someone else for the concert." He then stretched before flopping down onto Courtney's bed. "You're the host. It won't be a problem to arrange a guest room for me, yeah?" he asked Elijah, who was sitting on the couch across from him.

Elijah's lips pulled themselves up into a smile as he sipped his tea, saying in amusement, "Getting a guest room ready is no problem. However, I think that the chances of you staying the night here are slim. Don't torture my servants before Casey finally decides to leave. Courtney doesn't like to have a lot of servants on hand, so the household has always been understaffed."

There was nothing about Elijah's words that could be used against him, but Shay still wrinkled his nose in annoyance and looked at Courtney. "Hey, get Casey to leave."

"That's out of my jurisdiction." Courtney and Cameron couldn't stop giggling. "I can't do anything about him. You didn't discuss things with Casey?"

"I don't want to talk to him."

Seeing how Shay was being unreasonable, Courtney became exasperated. "If things are just going to stay in this stalemate and he waits for you the entire night downstairs, are you sure you can still sleep well, knowing this?"

“Yeah, I can.”

“He probably won’t even let you sleep here.”

The words had just left Courtney’s mouth when the butler came back. “Mr. Lewis said that he has a few things he wishes to tell you, Miss Hunter.”

“Me?” Everyone in the room was stunned. “Are you sure it’s me, and not Shay?” Courtney asked, confused about the matter.

“That’s correct. Mr. Lewis said that he came here specifically to see you.”

Now that was awkward. Shay told the butler earlier to chase Casey away. Didn’t that make him look very self-important?

Courtney eyed Shay. His face was glowing. What a fascinating sight to behold.

“I’ll go see him, then.” Courtney stifled her laughter. As she walked off, she attempted to salvage Shay’s pride. “Maybe he feels embarrassed because you ordered him to go away. Maybe he thinks that I’m easier to talk to, so he decided to use this as an excuse. I’ll be back soon.”

One Night Surprise Chapter 408 The Children Will Go With You

Casey was in the living room, sipping on tea. The dining table hadn’t been cleared yet, so it was in a state of disarray.

Courtney went downstairs and explained to him, her tone a little bashful, “You came at a slightly bad time; we just finished dinner. If you had come a little earlier, you could have joined us.”

Casey, however, didn’t bear a grudge against her. “If I did arrive earlier, then he wouldn’t have been able to have that dinner. It’s better for him that I arrived later.”

“So, you’re here to get Shay.” Courtney immediately spelled out Casey’s purpose for coming. “Why did you call me down then? I haven’t been feeling well the last few days. You’re torturing a sick person here.”

Casey didn’t look too bothered. “There’s something that I want to tell you.”

Courtney was all ears.

“When I found out that you were kidnapped, Shay was still abroad for his concert tour. The tour was already underway, and he wouldn’t be able to do anything even if he came back. That’s why I didn’t tell him.”

“Smart move.”

“However, I’ve also been constantly monitoring the progress of the case. I even personally sent personnel out to try and find a way to save you. In the end, you didn’t need my help. Alexander’s a capable man.”

At the mention of Alexander, Courtney’s face stiffened. “What does this have to do with him?”

“Looks like I made the right choice to come here.” Casey put down his teacup, still looking as polite and mild-mannered as ever. “That depends on whether you want to know the truth, or if you want to continue lying to yourself for the rest of your days.”

“What do you mean?”

“Alexander was the first one to find out about your kidnapping. He was also the one who coordinated the entire rescue plan; it had nothing to do with the criminal investigation team initially. Later, once the criminal investigation team took action, he was worried their actions might alert the kidnappers and in turn cause harm to you, so he arranged for the Blue Eagles Reserve Forces to come with him to discreetly strike a deal with the kidnappers, even though the Blue Eagles were still wet behind their ears. That’s right: he went on the island operation too.”

Courtney stayed quiet.

“But for some reason, he didn’t get to meet you. After Alexander’s return from the island, he went back to work at Sunhill Enterprise, and he’s been working around the clock, going on business trips. If it wasn’t for him being late for yesterday’s summit, I wouldn’t have known about all this either.”

Courtney’s expression was complicated. After hearing Casey’s story, it seemed that Alexander had been busy running himself ragged for her. But why hasn’t he come to see me?

“He actually wasn’t late; he got a high fever on his way, and he lost his marbles because of that. His assistant couldn’t bear to see him in that state, so he sent Alexander straight to the hospital. The tests showed that he had pneumonia, so he was directly admitted for a stay.”

At that, Courtney’s expression froze. A high fever? Pneumonia? So he’s actually the one who saved me from the waters that night?

“I have no ulterior motives, telling you all this. I just thought that most of your friends decided to hide the truth about a lot of details, since they think that they’re doing you a favor. They probably didn’t want you to overthink it, but I personally like it when people just say things as they are and tell me everything. I think that you have the right to know the truth.”

“So you’re not here to make me help you talk to Shay?” Courtney asked.

Casey pushed up his gold-rimmed glasses. His fingers were extraordinarily light and pale. “That’s all I want to say. I can resolve the matter between Shay and me myself. I’ve never needed someone else to help me with matters like this.”

Courtney frowned. She could pick up on the underlying meaning in his words.

Casey was mocking her for always relying on others when it came to things with an emotional component. Everyone around her would always help her to make decisions without her input, and she was left in the dark, left ignorant about what she didn’t know.

After Casey had taken Shay with him, Elijah brought her to her bedroom and left as well. Courtney was left in the bedroom with Cameron for company. The two women laid on the bed together, gazing at the starry night outside the window and chatting.

Courtney told Cameron about what Casey had told her, and she also asked Cameron to confirm his words. After all, she couldn't just take Casey's word for it. Who knew if he was telling the truth?

Cameron said nothing to that. It was a tacit affirmation. "Actually, I just felt that you didn't have to know about it. He was the one who caused your kidnapping in the first place."

Courtney turned her head to glance at Cameron. "Passing the buck after breaking up isn't a good look either. He may have a hand in causing the kidnapping to happen, but it's not to the point that he's entirely responsible for it," Courtney reminded.

"Fine, let's just roll with that." Cameron shrugged. "What about the children, then? Are we just going to forget about Jordan's situation? And what about the baby in your belly?"

At the mention of that, Courtney's face stiffened. She pressed her lips together and thought for a long while. "You didn't tell Gale about this, did you?"

"Nope."

"Good." Courtney took a breath. "Keep this between us for now."

"Why? You don't want the baby?"

"I haven't made up my mind yet." Courtney was being truthful. This time, the power to decide the baby's fate was in her hands. There was no one forcing her to sign some contract. But, this was different from the situation six years ago. She definitely hadn't decided whether she wanted the baby or not.

The next morning, Courtney went to the hospital. Just as Casey had said, Alexander had indeed been admitted to hospital. When she knocked on his door, preparing to walk in, she found Fiona sitting by his bed. Alexander looked awful, his thin lips pale and drained of color. He coughed as he signed the document that Josh held out to him. "Take this back to the board of directors..."

(T/N: there's a paragraph that says that Courtney walks in later)

Josh took the signed document and left the room, and he ran right into Courtney, who had been watching everything by the door for a while now. "Miss Hunter..."

The ward immediately went quiet as two gazes fell upon her.

Courtney forced her lips up into a smile. She used the bouquet of flowers she was holding to block Alexander's gaze. "I just found out that Alexander was admitted into hospital. I'm sorry for taking so long to visit."

"No, no, you weren't late at all." Fiona hurriedly came over to greet Courtney. "Weren't you supposed to be at home, resting? Why did you come all the way here? Come, sit down. I'll get you some tea."

"You don't have to, madam." Courtney walked into the room. "I'll be leaving soon."

Fiona was at a loss. Hesitant, she shifted her gaze over to her son on his bed.

"Could you leave us alone for a while?" Alexander said, his voice hoarse.

"Then, have a nice chat, you two."

The room returned to being quiet. Even the air felt a little stagnant.

Courtney placed her flowers aside. She stood by the end of the bed, keeping a distance away from Alexander. After a long while, she spoke at last. "You saved me."

Alexander's eyes were dull, and they didn't change upon hearing her. "Not really. There were many other people there during the rescue mission. Even if I hadn't saved you, someone else would've."

He was right.

There was nothing wrong with what Alexander said, but for some reason, it troubled Courtney. Even after ruminating for a while, she still couldn't think of anything to say.

"I've already thought about the children's custody issues," Alexander suddenly said, his low voice reverberating around the room. "Tina grew up with you, and Elijah is also her father on paper, so you have the power to decide who she will follow. You also gave birth to Jordan. Louis had mistaken you for someone else years ago, and you were coerced into signing that contract, so it is null and void. That's why Jordan will also go with you."

Courtney froze, staring at Alexander in shock.

He was skeletal, and his features were even harder and more angular than they used to be. However, his gaze was even duller now. She couldn't get a read on his emotions at all.

"I already told Grandpa about this, and he had no objections. Someone will send Jordan over later this afternoon."

Courtney silently clenched her fists. She felt inexplicably suffocated.

One Night Surprise Chapter 409 When Are You Leaving?

"When are you leaving?"

Alexander's voice pulled Courtney back from her reverie. His words struck her. She initially hadn't thought about that matter, but from the sound of Alexander's tone, it seemed that he was already sure that she would leave Melrose City.

For some reason, she ended up saying, "I brought a girl back from the island. Once her adoption papers have been signed, I'll leave."

Alexander nodded contemplatively. A pause later, he said casually, "If you need any help, just look for Gale." After all, Gale's background would speed up the paperwork process.

He really wants me to leave that badly, huh? Courtney unconsciously dug her nails into her palms. She just felt her hands and feet go cold. All the words that she wanted to say had disappeared in an instant, having been forgotten. After remaining there for a while, she could no longer bear it and left the hospital.

It wasn't until she reached the entrance of the hospital that Courtney remembered she had been wondering if she should tell Alexander about her pregnancy when she visited him. In the end, however,

she had even forgotten to ask after him. And from how he behaved—how he seemed sure that she would leave—she couldn't open her mouth and tell him. Courtney stroked her lower abdomen, her eyes filled with self-ridicule.

True to Alexander's word, the Duncan Family's butler, Harry, brought Jordan to Twin Peaks Manor later that night.

"Miss Hunter, the little master will be under your care in the future."

Courtney suddenly felt a sense of guilt at the sight of the awkward look on Harry's face. "Mr. Harry, what did Grandpa say? Is he actually willing to let Jordan stay with me?"

Scott only had a single great-grandson, and he had pinned all of his hopes for a future heir on Jordan. Logically speaking, he wouldn't have agreed to let Courtney take Jordan with her.

Harry let out a sigh. "Mr. Duncan initially refused, and he even got into a fight with Young Master Alex. Even now, he refuses to visit Young Master Alex at the hospital."

Courtney just listened.

"Later on, Young Master Alex said—" Harry suddenly paused for a few seconds to look at Courtney hesitantly. "He said that after he has handed custody of Jordan over to you, he will agree to marry whoever Mr. Duncan arranges for him, and have children with said woman. He will have as many children as Mr. Duncan wants."

Courtney felt like her heart had been struck by a screeching-hot bar of iron upon hearing that. She couldn't catch her breath for quite some time, and the color slowly drained from her face.

"It's getting late. I shall go back now. If you have a heart, please bring the little master back often to visit Mr. Duncan." With that, Harry left the manor.

Jordan sat on the couch, his short legs dangling above the floor. He didn't seem to understand what the two adults had been talking about. All he did was look at Courtney anxiously. "Mommy, Great-Grandpa said that I can see you every day now. Is that true?" His speech was far more fluent than it used to be, but there were still occasional pauses, making his speech sound a little stilted.

"That's right." Courtney squeezed out a smile. "You can stay with Mommy for as long as you like from now on."

"And Tina too?"

"Yep, and Tina too."

"What about Daddy?"

An expected question. Courtney clenched her fists. "Daddy, huh? I'll bring you back to see him if you ever want to in the future."

"Is Daddy not coming with us?"

"Daddy has his own things to do."

The words had just left her mouth when Jordan's gaze instantly dulled. A look of disappointment came over his face. "Why?"

In life, there were many things that couldn't be explained properly. Courtney had no intention of explaining this matter in detail to the two kids. They were still children, after all, and the world that children lived in was different from adults. Perhaps they would get over things in the future once more time had passed, including her breakup with Alexander.

By the time Elijah brought Tina back from Alicia's home, both children had seemingly forgotten about Alexander as they stacked towers of Lego in the playroom.

Meanwhile, downstairs in the living room, Elijah handed over an auditing student application for a famous foreign medical university to Courtney. "I've already thought it over. I'm worried that you won't be able to instantly get used to living in the States if you give up everything and come with me. So, why don't you do something that you're interested in?"

Courtney was stunned. When she opened the letter, the moodiness and frustration nestled between her brows eased up considerably. "But I haven't finished my university studies. Is it really okay for me to study there?"

"Yeah," Elijah gently encouraged her. "I attached the thesis that you wrote while you were still in the US with the application. The dean thought that you have a solid base in this area after he read it, so he was willing to break the rules and admit you. You can attend as an auditing student for half a year. After those six months, if you pass their exams, you can be promoted to a regular student. There won't be any difference between you and your fellow classmates."

Being a doctor was Courtney's childhood dream. Although she hadn't personally seen her mother bleed to death during childbirth, by piecing together Alicia and her grandfather's stories, she knew about the doctors' cruelty back then—they ended up missing the best window for her mother's survival. Later on, her grandfather abruptly died from stomach cancer, and this weighed heavy on her mind.

In reality, she had never given up on studying medicine. However, the barrier of entry was high. After she had to give up her dream six years ago, she didn't dare to hope for a chance to reenter this field. And yet, Elijah had paved her this road behind her back. Courtney couldn't voice all the gratitude she felt then.

"If you don't want to go, you can give other universities here a try..."

"No." Courtney took a deep breath before she slowly said, "It wasn't easy for you to make an application on my behalf. This is a renowned medical school that scores of medical students dream of. How can I refuse?"

"You're willing to leave behind everyone and everything here?"

"Even if I'm not, I have to." A self-deprecating look appeared on Courtney's face. "Besides, I don't really have anyone here to miss anymore. Citron Apparel has already been handed over to Cameron and Bill. All that's left now is Dawn's adoption. Once her adoption is finalized, I can leave."

“That won’t take too long.” Elijah nodded contemplatively. He didn’t bring up the baby growing in Courtney’s belly. Since she still wanted to go with him after coming back from the hospital, that meant she and Alexander weren’t tied down again because of the child.

To Courtney, this one year was the closing chapter to the accident that happened six years ago. One always had to pay their dues and scrub their life clean before they could truly start over.

Not long after that, the stragglers of Dragon’s gang on the island were wiped out. The police then sent Dawn back to Courtney. To Dawn, who had just started living at Twin Peaks Manor, everything was a new experience, and she got along with the other two children well.

After dinner one day, Courtney brought Dawn’s pajamas to the girl’s room. Dawn called to her.

“Courtney, that old guy in the manor said that you’re going to take me to a different country?”

“You don’t want to?” Courtney sat down by Dawn’s bed. “I’m planning to leave this place. You can’t possibly stay behind alone, right?”

Dawn blinked. “Are you going with that old guy?”

One Night Surprise Chapter 410 You Look Good in Anything

“Old guy?” Courtney stood there for a few moments before she realized that Dawn was referring to Elijah.

Elijah was nearly forty; it was understandable that a young girl who was about eleven or twelve would call him old. However, Dawn had never referred to Courtney in a similar way. She made it seem like Elijah was a whole generation older than Courtney.

She couldn’t stifle her laughter. “Yes, we’re going with him, but we won’t be living together with him. You don’t have to worry.”

“Huh?” Dawn suddenly looked disappointed. “We won’t be living together?”

“What’s wrong?” Courtney didn’t understand as she looked at Dawn with a probing guess. “You look pretty disappointed.”

“How can I not be? He was the first person I saw since getting off that island. He saved me.”

On the day they made their escape from that island and sank into the waters after their bullet-ridden boat capsized, Alexander had been the one to save Courtney. Meanwhile, Dawn had been saved by Elijah, who had jumped into the water at the same time. When Dawn woke up, he was the first person she saw. Over the last few days, Elijah had sent people to take care of her, and he also personally went to the police station during the few times they needed him. It was normal for Dawn to feel attached to Elijah.

Courtney began to grasp the situation. “We may not be living together with him, but the place we’ll be staying won’t be far from his. We can meet up with him often,” she explained.

After hearing that, the disappointment on Dawn’s face eased up a little.

“Okay, don’t overthink it. I’ll get someone to show you around Melrose these few days. Once your adoption papers have been finalized, you can leave this place with us.”

Dawn nodded. After assuring Dawn, Courtney walked over to the door, but she suddenly thought of something then. She turned to look at Dawn. “Before we leave, do you want to see your father?” she asked.

“No.” Dawn wrinkled her forehead before she resolutely elaborated, “He’s not my dad.”

Courtney didn’t chastise Dawn or affirm her. She simply nodded and closed the door.

Out of the twenty-plus people on the island, Fatso was the only one to escape with his life. Currently, he was being held in jail. Once the court had made its decision, he would at the very least be facing a life sentence. There was little chance of him ever leaving the inside of a prison cell for as long as he lived.

On the day of the island escape, Courtney had the feeling that Fatso had been holding his tongue. He seemed to have more he wanted to say to her, but he hadn’t gotten the chance to. Maybe there was some kind of misunderstanding between Dawn and Fatso?

Cameron and Gale’s wedding was to be held at the end of the month. It was a little too rushed, but Gale insisted on having it as soon as possible—something about unlucky happenings being more likely to crop up if they delayed the wedding any longer. Gale probably got scared by what had happened before Courtney and Alexander’s wedding.

Inside the Citron Apparel store, Cameron was having a wedding gown fitting while Courtney tried on her bridesmaid dress. The wedding gown was a piece that Cameron had made as a graduation piece; Bill sent it to her six months ago.

“I made this for my graduation ages ago. I’ve put on some weight since then. If I don’t get it altered, the seams might just burst during the wedding.”

Inside the dressing room, two attendants helped Courtney and Cameron to spruce up their hair and smooth out their skirts. Courtney lifted her arms so that the attendant could help her tighten her corset. As she did so, she glanced at Cameron. “So long as you can squeeze into the dress. It’s already been almost half a year since you were unemployed; if you weren’t eating, you were sleeping. Being able to retain such a figure is already pretty great. People who get fat at the sight of food are going to give you a good wallop if they hear you say that.”

“That just won’t do. Anyway, I got to lose weight. I don’t want to look like a short and stout teapot at my own wedding,”

“Why? Are you worried that Gale will be disgusted?”

“Will he even dare to be?”

Seeing how serious Cameron was, Courtney felt relieved.

“By the way, that girl that you brought with you—are you really going to bring her to the States with you?”

“Yeah, I already promised her father.”

“You’re unbelievable—you’re not running a charity or orphanage here. Isn’t two children already enough work for you? I’m warning you now: a twelve-year-old, and one raised in an environment like that, isn’t going to be easy to raise.”

“It’ll be okay.”

“Geez, so, she’s probably registered under Elijah’s name, yeah?”

“Yes.”

“You’re lucky that you haven’t signed the divorce papers with Elijah.” There was an underlying meaning to Cameron’s tone. “Or you probably wouldn’t have been able to carry out the adoption.”

Courtney nodded. “Yes, it’s all thanks to Elijah.”

After the police had confirmed Dawn’s identity, they initially planned to send her to an orphanage. Courtney couldn’t just adopt Dawn right away just because she wanted to either; she still had to follow the adoption process as laid out by the orphanage. And Melrose Orphanage’s adoption process stipulated that the adopting person had to be married, preferably without children.

In the end, Dawn’s adoption was registered under Elijah’s name, and he was also the one who renamed her. She was now Angie Grant, in hopes that she would always have a guardian angel looking after her in her new life.

“It’s nice that Elijah is willing to adopt an older girl like her too.”

“He’s just helping out. Once we’re overseas, she’s going to be living with me.”

“Enough with that; you think I don’t know that you’re going to go to med school?” Cameron smiled. “Are you going to bring all three kids with you while you go to class? Even if you’re willing to do that, Elijah will definitely make the kids stay behind so that you won’t get distracted.”

Courtney was speechless. What Cameron said was definitely something Elijah would do.

“I can see that Elijah is very thoughtful and considerate toward you. Why haven’t you considered living with him?”

Courtney was at a loss as to how to answer her question.

Just then, the attendants finished fussing over their hair and dresses. “Your dresses are ready, Miss Hunter, Miss Miller. Please take a look.”

The curtains of the dressing room were pulled aside from the outside. Cameron held Courtney’s arm.

“Do I look pretty?” she asked Gale, who was yawning repeatedly from where he sat on the couch.

“Beautiful.” Gale put down his book. “You look good in anything.”

That deep, loving, passionate gaze was enough to make Courtney break out into goosebumps.

“What about Courtney? How does her bridesmaid’s dress look?”

Gale’s gaze sharpened at that, as though he was faced with some terrifying enemy. “I cannot pass judgment on my wife’s best friend, not if I value my life.”

"I can barely bring myself to ask you that anyway." Cameron rolled her eyes as she pulled Courtney over to a mirror for her to see herself. The bridesmaid dress that Courtney was wearing was something that Cameron had personally designed herself. It matched perfectly with the wedding gown that she had on.

"Looks great, huh?"

"It does." Courtney grinned. "When do any of your designs look awful?"

As she spoke, she heard the attendant speak behind her. "Welcome."

Gale spoke up as well. "Alex, I've been waiting for you since forever. Why did you only come now?"

All at once, the smile on Courtney's face stiffened.

Of course, it was Cameron and Gale's wedding. She was Cameron's best friend, which was why she was the bridesmaid. And Alexander was Gale's best friend. Naturally, he would be the best man.

Actually, Cameron had told her about this before. Courtney had also thought that she had already mentally prepared herself, but her heart still raced like no tomorrow as she heard Gale and Alexander's voices behind her.

Letting go of someone was truly not an easy task.