

The Epic BD 701

Chapter 701 Clinging to the Photograph

Before leaving the studio, Josie countered Laura's assumption. "Do I really care about him? I wouldn't have even cared if he were on the brink of death!"

Recalling the times Arnold had played games with her, her anger was palpable.

Back at Mason Garden, Paul was seated at the dining table, engrossed in his meal. Spotting Josie's return, Julie hastened to take her coat. "Madam, you're back so soon."

"Yes, just had to handle some minor matters." Josie approached the table, casting a glance at her father's meal. "What's on the menu?"

Her attention shifted as she noticed her father clutching a photograph frame tightly, his gaze distant. "Dad? What's that you're holding onto? Dad?"

Extending her hand, she gently shook her father's arm, snapping him out of his reverie. "It's your photograph, Jo."

Josie was taken aback. "Photograph? Which photograph?" She couldn't recall placing any framed photo of herself.

Julie approached with a concerned expression. "...Madam, since you left, he's been holding onto that photograph, insisting it's yours. I've tried explaining, but he wouldn't listen."

Puzzled, Josie furrowed

her brows. Her father's memory had become less reliable since his recovery, and moments of confusion weren't uncommon. She hadn't paid much attention to

"What photograph?"

Julie hesitated, leaned in, and whispered something into Josie's ear.

The expression on Josie's face

changed dramatically upon hearing it. She swiftly moved forward, intending to take the photo away. "Dad, give me the photograph. It's not me. You're mistaken."

However, Paul clung to the photo, refusing to release it, his frustration mounting. "What are you saying? This is my Jo, don't touch it!"

Josie's anxiety intensified. "It's not me! I'm right here in front of you. Look at me, Dad!"

But Paul persisted, thinking she was trying to snatch the photo from him. His eyes appeared unfocused, and confusion further clouded his gaze.

"Dad!" Josie applied more force, but her attempt led to a fall as she stumbled backward. The photo slipped from her father's grasp, landing on the floor with a snap as the frame shattered.

The broken frame revealed the picture within.

Josie's heart quivered. The photo depicted a smiling little girl. For some inexplicable reason, a wave of sorrow washed over her. She drew nearer, wanting to retrieve the picture, but a piece of glass cut her hand, and a droplet of blood fell.

Julie's voice held concern as she exclaimed worriedly, "Madam, be careful!"

The sight of blood snapped Paul back to reality. He trembled, rushing to support Josie. "Jo! What are you doing? Get up quickly!"

Josie remained motionless.

A deep male voice echoed from behind, "What's happening here?"

Dexter had just entered the room and witnessed the chaotic scene. Josie was kneeling on the floor, and he hastened forward. "Jo?"

Drawing closer, he noticed what she was holding- and the fresh blood staining the photo. Josie quickly used her sleeve to wipe it away, a look of panic in her eyes as she glimpsed at him. "I'm sorry, Dexter, it was an accident."

It was a look that blended appeasement with fear. Josie rarely displayed such an expression, and in an instant, Dexter felt a pang in his chest. His fingers quivered as he gently halted her actions. "Stop, you're hurting yourself."

Josie seemed momentarily puzzled, then quickly spoke, "My father didn't mean it. He's just confused. And I, I didn't mean it either. Please don't misunderstand."

Dexter remembered when he had lost his temper merely because she had gazed at the photo a bit too long. She understood the photo's significance, and it clearly frightened her.

Within Dexter, a whirlwind of emotions raged. Gently, he took the photo from her hands. "Jo, this doesn't matter."

"Come on, stand up, and let's fix your wound." He consoled her with a soft voice.

Chapter 702 Throw Them Away

Dexter's comforting gaze offered Josie some solace as she reluctantly rose to her feet, her fingers still tainted with blood.

Dexter

fetches a tissue and gently wiped away the blood, then took a cotton swab dipped in iodine from a nearby servant. His movements were composed and practiced, yet a faint quiver in his hands betrayed the depth of his emotions. His eyes had a shadow of darkness, and his tone carried a hint of displeasure. "Is the photo more important, or are your hands? What if your hands were injured to the point that you couldn't draw anymore?"

A gentle smile graced Josie's lips, reflecting her happiness at the knowledge that Dexter cared about her, even if it was mainly for her drawing ability. She was anxious about damaging the photo, afraid of being wrongly implicated alongside her father, and concerned about unintentionally hurting his feelings.

A tinge of bitterness danced on her tongue. When she looked up, her father stood beside her, his anxiety and guilt evident in his demeanor.

It seemed he had regained his clarity, yet he refrained from speaking.

"Dexter... My father didn't mean to hurt anyone. Please, don't hold it against him," she pleaded again.

Dexter's expression turned somber as she spoke, a hint of dissatisfaction flickering in his eyes due to her doubt and fears.

After he had attended to her wound and discarded the used cotton swab, he pronounced, "Get rid of this photo and the others in the box, all of them."

Almost taken aback, Josie questioned, "You mean..."

"These things are far less important than you." He held her hand firmly. "You shouldn't put yourself through pain over them. Do you understand?"

Josie shook her head and then comprehended his point. "You're right, you have found Leanne, these old photos of her aren't important anymore. I'm sorry, I overreacted"

Dexter's frown deepened, his grip on her hand unwavering. "Even if Leanne hadn't returned today, I would have said the same."

His words came from his heart; this was all genuine.

Josie's furrowed brows smoothed as she glanced at her father once again.

"Dad, don't worry. No one blames you," Dexter spoke first. "Just stay here, alright?"

Paul appeared torn. "I'm not sure why I was so disoriented earlier..."

Josie swiftly reassured him, "Dad, please rest. Everything is okay."

After a moment of hesitation, Paul, laden with apologies, returned to his room, allowing them privacy.

As he left, Josie withdrew her hand. "Let's keep these photos. What if Leanne wants them in the future?"

Dexter's brows knit as he scrutinized her expression.

"I genuinely mean it. No need to look at me like that," Josie reassured him.

He affectionately pinched her cheek. "My Mrs. Russell isn't usually this generous. Be honest, were you jealous?"

Josie's brow furrowed. "You were away for quite a while today. What were you discussing with them?"

Dexter was about to respond when she added, "Could it be you were reminiscing about the past?"

She was half right. Dexter was about to reply when she used her finger to halt him. "You don't have to tell me, and I have no desire to hear it."

In a swift motion, he drew her onto his lap and leaned in for a kiss.

The kiss was both fervent and lingering, and Josie had to lean back to endure it. She held onto his neck, sensing his urgency and a hint of perplexity within the kiss.

“What’s bothering you?” Josie asked, concern tingeing her voice.

“I’m just returning the favor, silencing Mrs. Russell the way she almost silenced me.”

A soft sound of disapproval escaped Josie’s lips, showing her displeasure at his evasion of her inquiry.

Sitting more upright, Josie looped her arms around his neck. Just as he was about to speak, they both spoke in unison, “Russell’s...”

Their

eyes

locked.

Dexter gestured for her to continue.

Chapter 703 Keeping Leanne Close

“Is Russell Group planning to restructure the Design Department?” Josie probed.

Dexter’s arm, which was snug around her waist, slackened slightly. “You’ve managed to piece it together.”

“To be more precise, Russell Group has its eyes on restructuring the entire construction division, which would inevitably involve the Design Department,” Dexter explained.

A frown graced Josie’s forehead. “But hasn’t the real estate market in Wavery already reached its saturation point? Didn’t they decide to step back from that?”

Dexter’s eyes held a veil of mystery. “Plans can change. The real estate market might have reached saturation, but profits won’t dwindle. Carter Group took a hit, yet they still have seven construction sites lined up, ready to begin work. Once those projects kick off, profits are guaranteed.”

Russell Group aimed to carve out a slice of that profitable market.

Josie comprehended the situation. She sighed helplessly, momentarily lost for words.

Dexter’s fingers played with her cascading hair. “What’s troubling you?”

“I’m scared, Dexter.” Josie met his gaze with vulnerability. “I saw someone die under the rubble for the first time. It was horrifying. I don’t want to witness anything like that ever again.”

Unspoken in her words was the plea to shield him from situations resembling the Arnold incident.

However, she was also well aware that over the past years, Dexter had risen amidst a sea of unspoken murders and concealed deaths. Detaching him from such complexities was near impossible.

Dexter's silence hung in the air, his gaze serene as it rested upon her. His words mirrored that tranquility.

"I promise you, that won't happen again. Even if Arnold dares to confront me."

While his tone was composed, his determination was evident, leaving Josie taken aback. "Are you trying to reassure me?"

"I've promised no more lies between us," Dexter replied with a tender look.

Josie's chuckle carried a sincere trust in his words.

Feeling much lighter, she cast aside worries about Russell Group's reorganization affecting her studio's operations.

"Oh, by the way, what were you about to say earlier?"

Her vibrant smile was captivating, reminiscent of a fresh and irresistible pear tree blossoming under the night sky.

Dexter's gaze lingered on her. In that fleeting moment, his words remained caught in his throat.

"It's nothing important. I've forgotten, Dexter finally responded.

Josie harbored no doubt, playfully winking at him. Then I'll go freshen up with a shower first."

As the graceful form of the woman vanished from view, Dexter found himself enveloped in silence. His lips still held a trace of a smile, but gradually, his expression turned solemn as she ascended the staircase. Once she was out of sight, the smile on his face slowly faded.

Mark Olsen had called an hour earlier. During the call, he quickly cut to the chase. "You're well aware of Leanne's situation; suddenly introducing her into my company isn't ideal. Given your relationship since childhood and her trust in you now, why not have her work closely with you?"

He was merely a few words away from exposing her role as a planted spy.

"Mr. Olsen, Russell Group isn't open to just anyone, Dexter stated with a hint of suppressed impatience in his voice.

"I know, but Leanne is an exception. You've had a close relationship since childhood and always looked out for her."

Dexter maintained his silence, not entirely pleased with Mark's insinuations.

"She was in tears earlier. Did you say something to her?" Mark inquired further.

Dexter's grip on the phone tightened. "Mr. Olsen, have her visit Russell Group tomorrow."

Mark Olsen's goal was attained with this decision, and he hung up, his satisfaction apparent.

Larry, who had overheard the conversation, expressed his apprehensions. "Is this wise? What if Madam finds out..."

Dexter closed his eyes briefly. He had debts about Leanne, and Mark Olsen had seized vulnerability upon that

After contemplating, he spoke seriously, "Starting tomorrow, you'll be reassigned to the construction division."

Larry's expression mirrored his confusion.

"Are you suggesting... that you want Miss Olsen to work alongside you?" Larry's voice was laced with uncertainty.

"The Olsen Family desires this, and I'll accommodate them. Whether she's capable of standing her ground, time will tell." Dexter's response was tinged with a mix of determination and caution.

Chapter 704 Three Years and Nine Months

The weather was fine the next day. It finally came the day Yanis' case was brought to trial.

Josie was helping Dexter with his tie under the morning sun's rays. "Is it gonna be a tough case?"

"We just have to go through the necessary procedures. It'll be over soon."

"How many years do you think he'll be sentenced to?"

Dexter smirked. "His status is extraordinary. Even if he's sentenced to ten years in prison, he'll only lose his freedom but still be treated well."

Josie couldn't help wondering if Arnold's father would become like Yanis too.

"He..."

"My uncle hasn't suffered his whole life. It'll be a special experience to spend his remaining years in prison." Dexter said with a cold smile, which could send a shiver down one's spine.

Josie was reminded of Wyatt, who had not appeared for some time, and she wondered where he was.

When Josie sent Dexter to his car, she saw only Moses. "How strange. Mr. Peeple is not here today."

Dexter patted her shoulder and did not explain further.

In the court, the procedures were carried out accordingly. Dexter sat in the public seating as the defendant's family member and closed his eyes to rest,

As the lawyers presented evidence to the court, their speech was loaded with legal jargon.

About two hours later, the judge announced the verdict. Yanis was sentenced to three years and nine months in jail.

Dexter slowly opened his eyes to see Yanis glaring bitterly at him. Dressed in a jail uniform, the white-haired man had lost his usual, composed aura.

Dexter curled his lips as he finally got revenge on Yanis.

Provoked by the crooked smile, Yanis struggled frantically and pointed at Dexter with his handcuffed hand. "You ungrateful brat! How dare you send your uncle to jail! Just wait, Dexter Russell. You'll this!"

pay

for

The prison guard immediately pinned him down. "Silence!"

Yanis spat fiercely in Dexter's direction, but the latter remained still, sitting calmly while watching Yanis lose his cool. Victors never need to say much.

The court session was adjourned after Yanis was taken away.

Moses walked up to Dexter and whispered in his ear. Dexter stood up immediately and walked out of the courtroom while buttoning his suit.

Xanthe was waiting outside.

Standing under the sun, she looked gloomy and hostile.

"What is it?" Dexter stood before her.

"Yanis is imprisoned. Is it my turn next?" Xanthe's question was laced with sarcasm.

Dexter withdrew his gaze and answered coldly, "You have a good sense of self-awareness."

"Whether you admit it or not, the fact is I'm your mother. If you dare to come after me, you'll bear the stigma of an ungrateful child. As the great president of the Russell Group, you wouldn't want your reputation to be affected, would you?" The wrinkles around Xanthe's eyes became more observable as she spoke. Her tone was cold and emotionless as she had her guard up against her own son.

She didn't expect him to be so ruthless, even to the extent of sending his uncle to jail.

Dexter raised his hand and pointed in the direction of the courtroom. "I've sent him in, so I might as well send you in."

Intimidated by Dexter's frigid aura, Xanthe subconsciously shivered. "Do you really dare to?"

Dexter became impatient. He looked into the distance and saw a slender figure standing beside his car.

Suddenly, he blurted, "Do you know Liana is back?"

Startled, Xanthe frowned. "So the rumors are true?"

"After you abandoned me back then, that woman rescued me."

Chapter 705 Seems Like a Lover

Xanthe had heard of the relationship between Liana and Dexter, so she took special care of Summer, who was Liana's family, hoping to please Dexter by doing so. Little did she expect Liana to return at this time.

Dexter wore a mocking smile. "Would you like to meet her?"

Xanthe instinctively avoided his gaze, guilt-stricken. "I don't know her, so it's unnecessary to meet."

Dexter's eyes were filled with intense ridicule when he perceived Xanthe's guilty conscience. He didn't expect Xanthe to still have a trace of conscience and feel uneasy about abandoning him.

One was the destroyer, while the other was the rescuer. So, Xanthe didn't dare to meet Liana.

As Xanthe left, Dexter watched her walk away and felt strange. Mother and son should have a strong connection, but he had never felt a tinge of motherly love from Xanthe despite their numerous interactions.

Is she really my mother?

Dexter had become emotionally numb.

"Dex!"

Heather, who had been waiting at the car for some time, called out to Dexter as he walked down the stairs. outside the courthouse. She was dressed in a blouse and jeans, which gave her a youthful appearance.

Dexter walked up to her. "What brings you here?"

"Father said I should do a good job on the first day of work." Heather smiled sweetly.

Moses was about to open the car door but was stopped by Heather. "Mr. Chakov, you can leave this to me from now onwards."

Moses was shocked by Heather's sudden action. He cast a glance at Dexter before saying. "Please don't say that, Ms. Olsen. This is my job."

Dexter tapped Heather's head and got into the car. "You're the eldest daughter of the famous Olsen family. How can I make you open the car door for me? Are you kidding me?"

Heather was embarrassed. "Please don't say that. This used to be my job, wasn't it?"

The response reminded Dexter of the old memories. "You don't have to anymore." He mumbled with downcast eyes.

Upon arriving at the company, Dexter personally brought Heather to the secretary's office. "This is Heather Riley, She'll be joining the team from now on. Take good care of her."

The staff exchanged glances as they didn't expect Dexter to escort Heather to the office. Such special treatment was surprising.

After Dexter left, Heather organized her stuff in her seat. Someone approached her carefully and asked, "Ms. Riley, are you Mrs. Russell's friend or relative?"

Heather paused her action. "Why do you ask?"

"Mr. Russell never appears with other women, except Mrs. Russell. We thought he personally brought you here today because of Mrs. Russell."

Heather put on a sarcastic smirk and continued organizing her stuff. "Should all women in his life only be related to Mrs. Russell?"

Her colleagues were baffled. Some perceived her response with respect, while others with disdain. It seems like she's Mr. Russell's lover...

Dexter trusted the new assistant greatly. He hadn't assigned her official matters yet but entrusted her with his personal affairs.

Unlike Josie, Heather never mistook the tea Dexter liked. However, Dexter felt as if something was lacking when he drank it.

"You make good tea. Who taught you the skill?"

Looking awkward, Heather answered honestly, "It's Mr. Carter..."

Arnold Carter.

Dexter nodded. "I guess he has never imagined the assistant he personally trained is actually the daughter of the Olsen family."

"Dex, I never thought of myself as someone prestigious."

Dexter nodded. "I'm just kidding."

"Does your wife know I'm working here? I don't mean anything. I'm just afraid she might misunderstand."

Chapter 706 Summer, Don't Mess With Her

Heather spoke cautiously and softly, afraid of saying the wrong thing.

Dexter didn't give a direct answer. "She doesn't care about these things."

Heather smiled. "I know she has a big heart."

When it was about time to get off work, Summer came. She went directly to the top floor and entered Dexter's office. "Hi, Dexter, I'm here to pick up sis."

Dexter lifted his eyes and smiled. "You're very concerned about your sister coming all the way to pick her up despite your busy schedule."

Summer wore a pencil skirt, which exposed her long legs. Looking poised like the head of a family, she answered, "I can't help it. We have spent a great deal of effort searching for my precious sister, so of course, I have to look after her. What if something happens again?"

Just then, Heather walked in with a cup of coffee and was stunned to see Summer, "Ms... S-Sum, what brings you here?"

Summer looked at Heather with a smile. "I'm here to pick you up from work."

"I can go home on my own. You didn't have to come." Heather quickly placed the coffee on Dexter's desk.

"It's on the way, so don't worry about it." Summer leaned against Dexter's desk. "Sis, I'd like an Americano. Can you get me a cup, please?"

"Sure." Heather answered without hesitation.

After Heather left, Dexter continued reading his documents and commented without lifting his head, "She's your sister. You shouldn't cross the line."

"What do you mean?" Summer was confused.

"Although she hasn't been with the family for more than ten years, she's still the young lady of the Olsen family. It's inappropriate to order her about like this." After finishing reviewing the documents, Dexter kept them aside.

"Oh, I see." Summer pretended to come to a sudden realization. "It slipped my mind. But she has been doing this for the past ten years."

Dexter's expression turned solemn. "Not anymore from now on."

As the atmosphere turned intense, Heather came in with an Americano. "Here you go, Sum."

Summer and Heather were raised in different environments, so their temperaments were different. Heather appeared extremely cautious in front of Summer.

"I suddenly don't feel like drinking it. Sis, you can take it back."

Summer cast a provoking glance at Dexter.

Just as Heather was about to bring the cup out, Dexter said, "Just leave it. You may excuse yourself first."

Heather did as she was told. Tears welled up in her eyes.

With that, only Dexter and Summer were left in the office. Dexter stood up and placed one hand on the table. Looking down at Summer, he lifted her chin with the other hand. Summer's body stiffened when she felt Dexter's breath, and her ears turned red.

Dexter's overpowering aura stirred her desire.

"You..."

"Previously, I didn't care if you picked on her." Dexter took up the cup of hot coffee and placed it near Summer's lips. Slowly, he poured the coffee into her mouth. "But now, she's Liana. You shouldn't mess with her anymore."

His gaze was resolute.

The coffee was so hot that Summer struggled to break away from Dexter while letting out a muffled sound.

Dexter gripped her cheeks, forcing her to open her mouth and drink the whole cup of Americano.

“Now, I’m here for her. Do you understand?”

Steam rose from Summer’s mouth, which was scalded. Her face reddened. The moment Dexter released her, she clutched her throat to vomit the coffee. However, it was too late she had lost her voice.

“D-Dex...” Her voice was hoarse and unpleasant.

Dexter stared coldly at the miserable woman.

After this lesson, she had to understand the situation, even if she didn’t want to.

Chapter 707 You Know How to Control a Man

Heather was shocked when she came in and saw Summer’s reddened face and the coffee spat on the floor. “Sum...”

Summer shook her head, grabbed Heather’s hand, and pulled her out.

Dexter closed his eyes and made an intercom call. “Send someone to clean my office.”

“What happened?” Heather held Summer’s hand and asked anxiously after entering the lift.

Summer stared fixedly at her, trying to glean something from her expression. Then, she took out her phone and started typing. ‘Dexter is very nice to you.

Heather frowned. “Y-Yeah. But that’s only because of the past...”

“You know how to control a man.

Heather lowered her head and didn’t answer.

Summer smirked and continued typing. I verified his feelings for you at the cost of my voice. Are you happy now? It must feel good to be protected.

Heather shook her head immediately, afraid of annoying Summer.

“Shall we go home?”

‘Go to the hospital!’

Summer was exasperated.

Temperatures bounced back as spring arrived. Paul just couldn’t stay at home any longer and insisted on heading out for a walk.

Josie was worried about his safety, so she instructed the servants to bring him for a stroll in the neighborhood.

Paul complained sulkily, “I’ve been walking around the neighborhood every day. I even know the number of trees here. It’s so boring.”

Josie was amused. She glanced at the draft on her laptop and said, "I'm free tomorrow. Let's go to the beach, shall we?"

Paul pushed for more. "Can't we go today?"

"It's getting late now, and the seaside will be cold."

Paul sat down pitifully and mumbled, "Okay. You have to bring me there tomorrow. Promise?"

Josie continued working on the laptop and readily agreed.

At night, Dexter sent a message saying he needed to stay overnight in the office to finish some work. Then, he sent a video of his empty office.

Josie didn't require him to report everything to her but was pleased when he did.

She replied by text. 'Mr. Russell, do you feel lonely? If you'd like your wife to come and accompany you, please press I

Dexter replied immediately. '1111111'

Josie chuckled and took a picture of herself working. I can only accompany you virtually!

She only finished her work and went to bed before the break of the day. At one in the afternoon, she was woken up by a call from Alice.

"Hey Jo, remember I told you the Russell Group was going to restructure its design department? I saw Claire's job application."

Josie was jolted to her senses. Claire was the one who framed her numerous times. Why is she still at Wavery?

"She's blacklisted by the company. I doubt her application will be successful."

"That's hard to say. The company has a complex organizational structure. There might be a new batch of staff in the department by now. Besides, they plan to set up an individual construction company. It's possible for Claire to sneak in. I'm just giving you a heads-up so you can be cautious." Alice explained.

Josie understood her intention. After hanging up the call, she couldn't fall asleep again. So, she went to wash up and made a call to Dexter.

However, no one answered.

She called again, and it was picked up this time, but a woman's voice emerged. "Hello."

Josie was startled. "Who is this?"

"Oh, I'm from the secretary's office. Mr. Russell is in a meeting."

Josie was relieved, thinking that made sense. "Please ask him to call me back after the meeting."

"...Sure."

Just then, Paul knocked on Josie's door. "Hey Jo, it's past noon already. Quickly get up and take me to the beach."

Chapter 708 How Could I Make a Mistake

"Hey, Pop," Josie leaned out the door, a quizzical expression on her face. "why the sudden tantrum? Missing those spring outings, don't you?"

The old man frowned, clearly upset. "You said you would bring me!"

She chuckled softly. "Alright, let's do this."

Before leaving Mason Garden with her father, Julie told Josie, "Mrs. Russell, take it easy on the road and drive carefully, okay?"

Josie nodded, her mind already concocting a plan.

Mason Garden was just a stone's throw away from the beach, offering a laid-back and spacious atmosphere. without the usual crowds.

Josie remembered how Paul always enjoyed places buzzing with activity and people.

After contemplating, she decisively pressed the gas pedal and steered off course,

The day was an absolute beauty; the weather couldn't be more perfect, and the sea stretched out in a mesmerizing shade of blue.

Kids were building sandcastles under their parents' watch, and couples were unwinding by the shore. It was then that Josie realized it was the weekend.

No wonder the place was swarming with people!

Meanwhile, Paul had discovered a comfortable spot. He sat down and let the waves lap at his feet. A serene smile etched on his countenance.

"Jo, remember when you were little, I used to take you to the beach all the time. Like those kids, you played in the sand and collected seashells."

Josie settled down next to him. "I recall bits and pieces. But as I grew older, the whole beach scene lost its appeal."

She only sought out the beach when stressed and needed a quiet spot to sort out her thoughts.

Paul grinned, the sunlight making him squint. "You hadn't even seen a beach before I brought you from Rivodia. It was a whole new experience for you."

Josie couldn't recollect anything about Rivodia, so she quipped, "Pop, your memories are playing tricks on you again."

Paul brushed it off, faking a pout. "Did Dexter give you a hard time about that thing the other day?"

Upon hearing that, Josie shook her head with a soft smile. "Don't worry about me."

Paul took her hand, holding it in his own, giving it a gentle pat while a hint of sadness flickered in his eyes.

"I understand being Mrs. Russell comes with its challenges. As long as you're genuinely happy in it, I'll be content."

Josie's tone turned earnest. "It's definitely not a walk in the park, but for him. I'm ready to face whatever comes."

Paul seemed to recall something, hesitant. He motioned toward the children playing nearby. "So, when's the plan for you two to have a little one?"

Oops, Pop's diving into family planning....

Josie was caught off guard by the question; her cheeks instantly flushed. "Dad..."

Paul chuckled, a twinkle in his eyes. "It might be time to consider it. Welcoming a new member to the Russell clan would surely bring joy to Henry and Dexter."

Josie wasn't entirely sold on the idea. She suddenly asked, "What about you? Would you be happy about the prospect?"

Paul hesitated, his smile wavered, "To be honest, happiness might not be the first thing that comes to mind. Having a child means navigating challenges. I'm not so keen on that."

In this world, genuine parental care comes from the heart, whether they are biological or not.

Josie felt a warmth spread through her chest.

The sea breeze danced, and Paul brought up, "You know, that news about the Olsen family finding their daughter? I looked at those pictures later at home; they looked so much like that person. Turns out, it wasn't you. Goodness, I was quite mixed up."

His thoughts had settled now, and Josie sighed, "You're right. It was a misunderstanding."

Paul studied Josie's face seriously, and his aged eyes tinged with a hint of sorrow,

"But how on earth can I be confused about..."

The sea breeze picked up, drowning out his words. Josie asked him to repeat, but Paul waved his hand dismissively.

After a bit, Josie guided her father back to the car. Before heading home, she still hadn't heard back from

Dexter.

Then, an idea struck her.

"Hey, Pop, I'll be right back in fifteen minutes. Can you wait in the car?"

Paul nodded obediently, "Oh, okay."

With a nagging worry at the back of her mind, Josie locked the car and paced a short distance away. Yet, a sudden change of heart urged her to double back and undo the lock.

She needed a breather.

And conveniently, a construction project by the Russell Group was nearby.

Chapter 709 Pop Is Missing

Dexter had once shared the exact location with her; it was somewhere around this area. Following his pointers, she navigated the surroundings and reached the office building. Upon opening the door, Thomas' voice sounded from inside.

He was assigning tasks to the employees, who were all engrossed in their work. Josie knocked on the door, and Thomas' gaze snapped up, his eyes locking onto her as he uttered, "...Mrs. Russell? What brought you

here?"

Josie's gaze swept over him, "I could ask you the same thing. Why are you here?"

Thomas' eyes shifted subtly, "Mr. Russell asked me to oversee this project, so here I am."

"Is that so?" Josie's tone held a touch of suspicion.

Among the

many people, only a few garnered Dexter's trust, and Thomas was his confidante. There were tons of responsibilities and tasks awaiting Thomas at Russell Group; it just seemed odd for Dexter to relocate Thomas here.

Her dubious expression caused Thomas to wipe a bead of sweat from his forehead. He couldn't help but notice how, under Dexter's influence, Josie's casual yet commanding manner mirrored that of Dexter.

"Indeed, I've been transferred here.

Unconvinced, Josie cast a cursory look around the office.

Thomas inquired, "Mrs. Russell, what's the reason for your visit today?"

With no particular reason for suspicion, Josie shifted the topic to Claire, "Look into that as well."

Thomas jotted her words, "Absolutely, I'll make sure she doesn't slip past us."

With that said, Josie had no other tasks at hand, so she departed. Just before entering the elevator, a thought struck her. "If you're not here, then who's with him?"

Thomas was momentarily taken aback, then promptly replied, "There are a few others in the secretary's office ready to assist."

Knowing Thomas didn't lie, Josie nodded in agreement and directed her steps straight to her car.

As she opened the car door, she called, "Pop..."

Her voice trailed off, her realization hitting hard the car was vacant; Paul was nowhere in sight.

A surge of unease washed over Josie.

She rushed to the back seat and found a handkerchief belonging to Paul.

It bore marks of being clenched tightly, evident in the wrinkles and creases etched onto the fabric.

Her heart kicked into high gear immediately.

She swiftly scanned the street, asking the passersby, "Excuse me, have you seen an elderly man with a cane about this height?"

However, none of them had seen him.

Josie navigated through the bustling crowd, searching repeatedly. After searching for half an hour, there was still no sign of Paul anywhere.

No, this couldn't be happening. Pop wouldn't just vanish like this!

Panic surged, and she phoned Mason Garden, "Has my father returned?"

The servant's voice held a surprise, "No, Mrs. Russell."

"Please keep an eye out for my father around Mason Garden!"

Josie hung up abruptly and ran her fingers through her hair, her anxiety escalating. The idea of going to the police station crossed her mind, but she dreaded the thought of Paul returning and not finding her car.

Immediately, she dialed 110.

After briefly explaining the situation, Josie demanded directly, "I need access to the nearby surveillance footage."

In less than ten minutes, a police officer arrived on the scene. He stood tall and lean, a middle-aged man named Scott Buncho. "Good afternoon, I'm Officer Buncho. How can I assist you?"

Josie gripped his hand, her back damp with sweat, and said, "My father's memory tends to falter due to a previous botched surgery. Most of the time, he's unable to think clearly or make logical choices. I'm genuinely concerned..."

Scott patted her shoulder, posed a few concise questions, and quickly guided her to nearby stores to present identification and request access to the surveillance footage.

However, the store owners explained, "The surveillance system in this area is down."

Scott's expression shifted, and the store owner added quickly, "I'm not lying; it's not functioning. If you're skeptical, you're welcome to come and see. We notified the maintenance company a while ago, but no one has come to fix it."

The surveillance footage was pitch-black, confirming its dysfunction.

The coverage scope around this area was notably inadequate, with only one camera monitoring the entire

street.

Josie's heart sank with each passing moment.

Something dreadful had happened....

Chapter 710 This Meeting Ends Here

"This is now an official police record. Please take a moment to think carefully about where your father might have gone. In the meantime, we'll have some officers search the nearby area, Scott tried to reassure Josie.

However, Josie couldn't shake off her unease. "Officer Buncho, my father couldn't have just lost his way like that. He was in the car..."

Scott's extensive investigative experience triggered a thought, "Do you know of anyone who might hold a grudge against him?"

The notion of enemies sent Josie's thoughts spiraling.

She couldn't pinpoint them even if there were indeed any adversaries. Among the people she could recall, none of them seemed to have any direct animosity toward her father.

Josie pursed her lips, "Let me think again. I'll let you know if I recall anything."

Scott nodded.

As he was getting ready to enter his car, a colleague patted him on the shoulder and said. "Relax, Buncho. You're out here on duty for a reason. Why's still the long face? Don't worry. They wouldn't keep you waiting for an eternity."

Scott responded with a teasing glance before addressing Josie, "Do you need a lift?"

Josie's focus snapped back suddenly, "...No, thank you."

Having said that, she briskly walked to her car, pressed the gas pedal, and drove away.

As Josie sped away, the police officers exchanged hushed murmurs. One asked, "Officer Buncho, are you handling this case, or...?"

Scott's usually furrowed brow etched an even deeper line, "I am. Her background is more complex than it

seems.

"Oh? Who is she?" Another officer queried.

Scott disclosed, "She's Dexter Russell's wife."

His colleagues immediately grasped why Scott had assumed personal responsibility for the case.

Josie drove straight to Russell Group. Amid the rush hour traffic, her driving was reckless and daring, as if she had no fear of consequences.

Navigating through the flow of people leaving work, she headed for the VIP elevator and swiped her card, gaining entry. She rode it to the top floor without hesitation.

Even at this point, Dexter did not return back the call.

“Mrs. Russell?”

The employees in the secretary’s office were taken aback by Josie’s hurried arrival. Observing that Josie seemed to disregard them, they hastened to add, “Mr. Russell’s meeting is still ongoing. He’s not in the office right now...”

Josie clenched her fists, her expression taut as she shifted her course and headed directly to the conference room.

“Mrs. Russell, you can’t enter. Mr. Russell is in a board meeting now!”

The room was filled with all departmental directors of the company, all wielding significant influence. They were engrossed in discussing critical matters concerning the company’s future trajectory.

Yet, undeterred, Josie stormed into the conference room, causing a stir among the attendees, who all raised their heads in unison.

Seated at the head of the table, Dexter reviewed his files, his countenance bearing the cold seriousness befitting a business discussion devoid of his usual warmth.

He closed the folder.

One of the assistants from the secretary’s office promptly clarified, “Mrs. Russell insisted on entering, and I couldn’t stop her...”

The directors exchanged knowing glances, their expressions conveying their collective sentiment. As Mrs. Russell, she was expected to observe protocols, and her abrupt intrusion wasn’t taken lightly.

Josie stood her ground at the entrance of the conference room. She turned slightly and raised her voice, “This meeting concludes now. Mr. Russell and I have an urgent matter to discuss.”

Her words carried resolve and fearlessness, though, upon closer scrutiny, faint beads of sweat were visible on her forehead.

The directors exchanged looks and eventually directed their gaze at Dexter.

He closed his folder and spoke composedly. “Didn’t you hear her? The meeting is over.”

With his directive, everyone had no choice but to rise and exit the conference room, passing by Josie.

“Now that it’s just us, what’s the matter?” Dexter inquired gently. His tone was devoid of reproach; instead, a hint of warmth was restored.

Josie's previously steady posture began to waver. With Dexter, she had no need to feign strength. She uttered helplessly, "Pop is missing."

Her revelation jolted Dexter, his expression taken aback.