

## The Fox 331

### Chapter 331: Conflict

Mr. Rayne was extremely angry about this, and the consequences were dire. So, one morning, near the recruitment point, while a group of workers were explaining how humane and conscientious the new contract and rules of the "Rayne Textile Factory" were, a group of factory guards suddenly rushed out wielding large clubs, attacking the workers ferociously.

The sharp sound of police sirens pierced the air as numerous officers emerged from various street entrances, seemingly appearing as though they sprang from the ground.

"Stop the fight! Get down on the ground now, and don't move!" The police shouted loudly while brandishing batons, shields, handcuffs, and revolvers.

"It's the police, run!" shouted some of the workers.

The workers began to scatter, but the police blocked them. The front line of officers shielded them and then ruthlessly started striking them with batons.

"Get down immediately! Hands on your heads, first warning!"

"Quick, get down!" yelled a representative from the London Union of Textile Workers. He knew that under British law, when facing such a group brawl, the police needed to issue only three warnings before they could shoot!

"Second warning!" shouted the police.

"Get down, quickly, they'll shoot!" more representatives yelled.

Many workers hesitated, preparing to crouch. However, the factory guards with white towels tied around their arms paid no heed and continued wielding their clubs against the workers.

"Third warning! Fire!"

The command to "fire" almost immediately followed the "third warning," hardly giving anyone time to react. A worker representative was shouting, "Get down..." when several bullets struck him. Blood instantly flowed from his body, mouth, and eyes. He staggered and collapsed to the ground. However, he didn't die immediately; he struggled to prop himself up with his hands.

A factory guard wielding a large stick swaggered over and struck him on the head and body, causing his demise.

Forced to crouch on the ground, the workers faced the factory guards wielding their clubs under the police's guns. If any worker dared to rise in resistance, the police, having issued three warnings, would mercilessly shoot... blood painted the ground.

"So much blood, the blood of our brothers!" Barkley wept. Since Barkley witnessed his foster father, the former head of the Fekin, being hanged, he hadn't cried like this.

"Barkley, don't cry, what about the others?" Fekin asked.

"First, the factory guards beat them, then the police arrested both them and the guards. They weren't in for five minutes, but the guards came out, our people were all locked up—this world won't let any of us live!"

"If they won't let us live, then we'll take them down with us!" the butcher gritted his teeth.

"I heard other textile factories are planning to revise contracts, reducing wages," Oliver spoke up.

"We need to spread this news; we have to rally all textile workers in London for a strike," Fekin said. "Also, we can't let them get away with this; we must teach them a lesson!"

Early in the morning, Sinclair got out of bed, stretching lazily. His wife had already prepared breakfast and was waiting for him. Sinclair's salary was decent, but the work was hard, long hours. After paying rent and other middle-class necessities, what was left was limited. But at least, every day, lifting the lid of the pot would reveal a lamb chop. It wasn't a bad life at all.

After breakfast, Sinclair kissed his wife and child goodbye, heading out.

It was still early, the air outside thick, causing Sinclair to cough. He reached the public carriage station, waiting for a carriage.

Sinclair considered himself respectable, but a lowly respectable man like him couldn't possibly own a private carriage; he had to wait for the public one—a far better situation than the workers. Do those poor workers know what it's like inside a carriage?

Thinking this, Sinclair felt a bit proud. He believed that with effort, he could send his son to a private school, securing a higher-paying job for him in the future. Even his grandson might have the chance to become a real respectable man, thanks to accumulated wealth and becoming a boss...

"This is great!" Sinclair thought, spotting a public carriage approaching in the distance.

Holding his briefcase, observing others also waiting at the station—now his rivals—he had to defeat them to get on this ride; otherwise, the next public carriage would mean being late for work, resulting in a pay cut.

Of course, he could take a hired carriage, but it was much costlier than the public one. Saving money wherever possible mattered.

As the public carriage stopped, everyone rushed in. Sinclair, holding his briefcase in one hand, reached for the door handle to board. But out of nowhere, a hand snatched his briefcase, hurling it far away.

Sinclair had no choice but to release the other hand, hurriedly fetching his briefcase. Some documents had scattered, and he needed to check if any were missing... then... the public carriage departed.

"These people, they have no decency!" Sinclair muttered under his breath, scanning around, hoping to spot a passing hired carriage.

Fortunately, a hired carriage turned up, coming towards him.

"Stop, stop!" Sinclair waved and shouted towards the approaching carriage.

The carriage slowed down, and the driver asked, "Where to?"

"To the Rayne Textile Factory!" Sinclair replied. He knew this carriage probably already had a passenger, but there might be room for one more. If it was on the way, the driver might take him and earn some extra money.

The carriage gradually slowed down and stopped in front of him.

"Get on!" the driver spoke with a heavy Scottish accent.

"Okay, okay," Sinclair nodded and quickly boarded the carriage.

Seated inside, closing the door, the carriage set off again. Sinclair finally had a chance to assess the situation inside; there were two people sitting opposite him, both staring intensely.

"Hello, nice to meet you..." Sinclair began to greet them when the two suddenly lunged at him. Sinclair tried to call for help, but a foul-smelling cloth gagged his mouth. He struggled, yet their strength overwhelmed him, and in no time, he was bound tightly, resembling a giant dumpling.

The carriage continued without stopping for a while before halting. Then, the two hauled the wrapped Sinclair—ah, considering the cultural background, let's say bound like a mummy—off the carriage, viciously throwing him onto the ground. Sinclair's chubby face hit the ground, small stones causing him intense pain.

Sinclair attempted to struggle, but a foot instantly pressed onto his back, crushing his ability to breathe. Then, a hand grabbed his hair, yanking his face up. Sinclair saw an angry mob of workers surrounding him.

He knew they were in the slums, a place where the police would never come. He realized, even if he screamed himself hoarse, no one would come to save him.

"Wuwuwu..." Sinclair's Adam's apple bobbed continually, attempting to plead, but the gag stifled him, rendering him voiceless.

"You scoundrel! You helped Rayne, killed so many of us! Your hands are stained with the blood of our brothers! Do you think a few pleas will save your life?" a

worker cursed while kicking Sinclair's face, swelling one side instantly.

Another worker reached out, tearing off the foul cloth from Sinclair's mouth.

"Have mercy! Brothers, spare me! I had no choice; Mr. Rayne ordered me to command the shooting! I had no choice... Brothers, I have elderly parents, a wife, children to support alone. I dare not disobey Mr. Rayne's orders, brothers, spare me, I promise to turn over a new leaf..."

"Nonsense! Who's your brother?" a worker shouted.

"When you helped Rayne, when you ordered the factory guards to shoot, weren't you grand then? You, a scumbag like you, should have died long ago!" a worker seized Sinclair by his shirt, hoisting him up. "When you ordered the guards to fire, didn't you show off your power? You, this kind of scum, should have died long ago!"

Having said this, he suddenly caught a strange smell, sniffed, then sneered, "Brothers, this dead dog — he's wet himself, hahaha!"

"Get him, get him, get him for revenge, brothers!" the crowd chanted.

Someone fetched a large stone.

"What are you... what are you going to do?" Sinclair was both terrified and flustered.

Ignoring him, they tied the large stone to him.

"What... what are you doing?" listening to the Thames River's water, Sinclair already understood their intentions and couldn't help but shout, "Help! Help!"

"Shout all you want; even if you scream until your voice breaks, no one will come to save you. You, a capitalist lackey!" a worker shoved the foul cloth back into his mouth, then grabbed his neck, dragging him towards the riverbank.

"After your wife dies, your son will be old enough to work in the factories. He'll join Rayne's textile factory as a child worker, and in five years, your family will be reunited."

Sinclair's eyes widened, bloodshot veins almost popping out, he struggled desperately.

"Alright, stop wasting your energy; it'll be over soon." A worker grabbed him and heaved him. Sinclair fell into the Thames River, then, bubbling, sank beneath the surface.