

Chapter 75 The Truth

"Should I show her respect?" Diana retreated in distress. "What if I say no?"

"Then I won't see you again."

"Are you truly serious?" Diana was shocked.

"Yes." Disappointment was evident on Eliam's face.

"Fine, I don't care. I just hope you won't regret this." Diana pushed the door open and ran out.

Rhonda glanced over and caught a fleeting smile on Richard's face.

She suddenly remembered that Diana had been annoyed by Richard after he tossed a tissue roll at her earlier. Had he done that intentionally?

Eliam approached and stood in front of Richard, appearing remorseful.

"Grandpa, I'm sorry for putting you through this."

"It's not too late to realize your mistake now," Richard responded gratefully.

"Grandpa, are you feeling better?" Only then did Rhonda notice that Richard had been pretending to be sick all this time.

When did Eliam know it?

Eliam turned to Rhonda and asked her to buy some food.

Sensing that they needed a private conversation, Rhonda obediently left the room.

As soon as she left, Eliam couldn't contain his curiosity any longer. "Grandpa, I need to know the truth about that year."

Richard sighed.

"I didn't want to tell you because it involves your uncle Charlton."

Eliam frowned, but he didn't interrupt him.

"Charlton is an ambitious man. As soon as he joined Sloan Real Estate, he demanded ten percent of the shares. I agreed to his request for your mother's sake, but then he demanded an additional five percent. He always wanted more and was never satisfied!"

"What happened afterward?" Eliam couldn't believe his uncle could be such a person.

"Later, he proposed a partnership between a developer and Sloan Real Estate. We signed a contract to develop a large residential complex together. Less than a month into construction, the developer swindled Sloan Real Estate of three hundred million dollars and disappeared. Your father was so distressed that his hair turned grey overnight. He searched everywhere for leads. Finally, three months later, he located the developer, who had been arrested for another crime."

"So my parents went to confront him?" Eliam had a faint memory of the event.

"Yes, after discovering his whereabouts, they questioned him about the missing funds. The man claimed he was just a pawn and that your uncle had transferred the project funds overseas."

"Did my parents relay this information to you directly?"

"Yes, they called me before heading back. I never anticipated that something would happen on their way back."

"Do you think my uncle conspired with the developer to steal the money? Why didn't you call the police?"

"After your parents' accident, I was preoccupied with their affairs. Once their funeral was handled, I went to see the man, but the police informed me that he had been bailed out and subsequently vanished. Later, Charlton planned to emigrate, and Diana wished to go with him. I felt sorry for you, having just lost your parents, and thought Diana's presence would comfort you. To ensure she stayed by your side, I struck a deal with Charlton."

"What was the agreement?"

"I gave him fifteen percent of the shares in Sloan Real Estate."

"Grandpa, how could you do that?" Eliam understood the value of Sloan Real Estate's shares and was astonished that Richard would make such a sacrifice for him.

"Everything I have will eventually belong to you. I'm willing to give up anything for your sake, even Sloan Real Estate."

"Grandpa!" Eliam's eyes welled up with tears.

"I've made my decision. It's time to pass Sloan Real Estate to you. But your parents' deaths have always weighed on my heart. Over the years, I've suspected that their death was no accident and that your uncle was involved. I feared he would exploit your relationship with Diana to deceive you, and possibly seize control of the entire Sloan Corporation, not just Sloan Real Estate."

Had Richard shared this information with Eliam earlier, he might not have believed him. However, after witnessing Diana's actions since her return, Eliam realized he wasn't as good at discerning people's true nature as his grandfather.

"I never thought Diana would change so much after living abroad for a few years. I shouldn't have let her go to Esmesh."

"You're terribly mistaken." Richard sneered, continuing, "It's true that I sent someone to force her onto the plane. You believe Marvell corrupted her because Diana rejected him, right? While the Hawkins family members are unconventional, they never cross the line. It was your uncle who was responsible."

"What? How is that possible?!"

"You can't believe it, can you? I was shocked as well. He enlisted your cousin, Steven Leslie, to make the arrangements. He blackmailed Diana with her nude photos, demanding she investigate the current investment situation of Sloan Real Estate. Charlton has always suspected something was amiss with the bankruptcy back then. The present Sloan Real Estate is a new company formed after the merger of the bankrupt

one. As a shareholder of the old company, the fifteen percent of shares he held were now worthless. Naturally, he couldn't accept this reality."

"Did she uncover anything?"

"She cracked open my safe, which contained numerous shareholding agreements. Luckily, I caught her before she discovered them. She pleaded for my forgiveness, and I promised that as long as she was truthful, I wouldn't tell you about it. I didn't expect that Steven would actually post her nude photos online. I couldn't bear the thought of her being with you any longer, so I sent her away."

"She is also a victim." Eliam's eyes held a hint of compassion.

"Do you feel sorry for her?" Richard scoffed, "She's opportunistic, and that's why others used her. You don't have to pity her."

Eliam nodded.

"I understand, Grandpa."

Seeing Eliam take his words to heart, Richard felt reassured.

"I'll have James meet with you tomorrow. I want to transfer all the shares of Sloan Real Estate to your name and appoint you the new CEO in the process. That way, the authorization letter Diana coerced me into signing yesterday will be rendered void."

"What kind of authorization letter is it?"

"It's from a law firm called Weller Law Firm. I suspect she intends for the firm to use my authorization to investigate Sloan Real Estate's affairs."

"That's the law firm owned by Steven." Eliam had heard of it from Diana.

When Rhonda returned with the midnight snack, the two had finished their discussion. Richard urged Eliam and Rhonda to head back and rest early.

On the way back, Eliam remained silent, his face somber. Although he had always suspected his parents' deaths were no accident, he never imagined it could be connected to his uncle.

Moreover, Diana's recent behavior profoundly shocked him.

He felt as if he had lost two family members overnight.

Rhonda, however, remained unaffected by his mood. In any case, she considered herself a tool for Eliam, someone who would fulfill his desires. Half a year later, after repaying Eliam, she planned to leave him.

