

The Epic BD 521

Chapter 521 Knowing the Truth

Josie woke up from her daze and joked with Arnold. "While I'm reluctant to part with the food here, it's time for me to leave."

Arnold appeared calm and composed. "Josic, I've never encountered a woman who abandons people she took advantage of as efficiently as you do."

Josie laughed and replied. "I must say it's not easy to obtain any advantage from you, Mr. Carter."

Arnold looked at her bag. It seemed empty when she arrived. Thus, it did not contain much when she left.

He was a little absentminded. "Where are you planning to go after leaving here?"

Josie raised her eyebrows. "I'm going for a checkup at the hospital."

It was such a standard answer that Arnold had nothing to respond to.

However, Josie did not lie and went to the hospital as she said. She was concerned about the days when she was weakest and could not care for herself.

Fortunately, the result was all right, and she was recovering well. Still, Josie asked tentatively, "Doctor, will I be able to have children again with my condition?"

"What are you talking about? You're still young. Of course, you can have children."

Josie breathed a sigh of relief.

Meanwhile, the situation was tense in Mason Garden.

Dexter grabbed a teacup and threw it against Calvin's forehead. He did not dodge, and blood flowed from his wound.

"Why didn't you tell me earlier? You should have told me long ago!"

Calvin ignored the pain and remained stubborn. "I believe I've made the right decision. You can't know about this during that situation."

Dexter panted with fury. He pressed a hand on the edge of a table to prevent himself from falling.

Josie was pregnant, and it was an ectopic pregnancy. However, the baby was lost before he had a chance to see her.

Furthermore, she was so stubborn that she did not even try to call him.

"You care too much about Josic. If you had known then, you wouldn't have been able to focus on solving the crisis. Russell Group would have been doomed, Calvin explained urgently.

Dexter searched for Josie upon his return to Wavery but could not find her anywhere. Even his phone calls were answered. He was about to find her through her phone location when Calvin told her what had happened to her.

The revelation left Dexter feeling as if a knife had torn through his heart.

Even though it was an ectopic pregnancy, it was still a living being. Dexter did not dare to imagine her loneliness and helplessness as she underwent surgery to terminate that pregnancy.

“Calvin, you’ve made me a heartless man in her eyes!” Dexter feared this misunderstanding would be enough to drive her to sign the divorce papers.

Dexter began to panic. He never panicked, even while facing the worst of Russell Group’s crisis.

“Josie is an intelligent woman. I believe she will understand.”

“Did she sign it?” Dexter looked up with bloodshot eyes. Panic rose within him.

Calvin frowned and resisted his pain.. “Sign what? Do you mean the divorce agreement? No, Mallory was with her throughout. Although Xanthe met with Josie, she did not sign it.”

Dexter suddenly felt as if a heavy burden had been lifted from him. She didn’t sign it! Thank goodness she didn’t sign it.

Calvin felt conflicted as he saw emotions on his best friend’s face that he had never seen before. He decided to conceal Josie’s car crash from him.

It was because the timing of the car crash was too coincidental, if not peculiar. Dexter would never forgive himself if he knew about it. Calvin could not bear to let Dexter live with such guilt.

“Where is she?”

“L. I don’t know.”

In the end, Dexter resorted to tracking her phone location.

Josie completed her health checkup and left the hospital to find a black car stopping before her. The window gradually rolled down.

The wind suddenly blew at her hair, prompting her to turn her face away.

She knew Dexter would eventually find her.

He stepped out of the car and looked at her pale face. He pushed himself to speak with much difficulty.

“Does... it still hurt?”

They used to be tremendously close. Yet, they now stood before each other like strangers.

Chapter 522 She Was Exhausted

Josie could not describe her emotion as she faced him, but it felt so overwhelming that she could not speak.

Although she did not blame him, he would never understand the despair she had experienced.

Seeing her silence, Dexter snatched her health report from her and deciphered the doctor’s messy handwritten notes on the results of her treatments.

The check-up revealed that she was recovering well.

Josie sighed softly and took the report from him. "There's nothing much. I only have to finish my antibiotics

Dexter and Josie each had an unusual presence. They soon attracted much attention as they stood together.

He could not help but notice that she lost much weight.

"Let's get another check-up to be safe. I should have taken better care of you."

Josie wanted to laugh and soon found herself laughing. "Dexter, I'm fine."

They suddenly became like strangers or dance partners meeting for the first time. Both were unsure about how to face each other or how to dance so that they step on the proper steps.

Dexter was riddled with endless guilt. He carefully lowered his posture and tried to hold her hand.

""Will you please come home with me?"

Josie had missed Dexter in their days apart, but now that they had finally met, she felt lost about what to do.

Can I ignore the hurt and pain I've gone through and pretend that they don't matter?

She could not figure out her feelings. Thus, she shook her head and replied, "I don't want to follow you home yet. Can you give me some time alone?"

Dexter was reluctant. His eyes darkened with thought. He was usually proud and sure of himself. Josie had never seen him so lost and uncertain.

"You"

Josie had never felt as tired as she did now. Being Mrs. Russell drained all her energy

"Sure, you can have some time alone. You can contact me whenever you wish to see me." Dexter gradually let go of her hand.

— He watched Josie gradually walk out of his sight. Her warmth faded rapidly from his hands. It felt like she

had completely removed herself from his life.

Dexter stood still for a long time. The wind blew at his coat. He seemed forlorn standing there by himself.

Josie walked for a long time, unsure where she should go. She wanted to go to her father, but she knew he would ask many questions if he saw her present state. She did not want to worry him.

Thus, she walked around for a while before going to Sousturham. She did not head to Russell Mansion to visit Henry but went to a church instead.

Claudia was surprised to see Josie. "Miss, what brings you here? My goodness. Why have you gotten so thin?"

Josie squeezed out a smile. "Claudia, can I stay with you for a few days?"

"Of course!"

Dexter returned to Russell Group the following day.

Russell Group employees had not seen Dexter for some time and were impressed and comforted by his stern and powerful presence as he walked past them.

It felt like everything would be fine as long as Dexter was around.

"Mr. Russell, you're back."

"Welcome back, Mr. Russell."

"Mr. Russell..."

Dexter glanced at them indifferently and nodded slightly.

The upper management was waiting for him in the office on the top floor. One of them offered his hand and said, "Mr. Russell, like Mark Olsen, you are also someone with the power to save Wavery."

Dexter gave a shallow smile and shook his hand briefly. Then, he took the document his assistant placed on his table and read the details about the Olsen family's situation.

The sky was gloomy today. The faint sunlight landed on his handsome face and reflected on the hint of tears in his eyes.

The members of the upper management connected the dots and guessed why Dexter, who should not have been back so soon, was now seated in his office.

It had to be because of Josie. There could be no other reason.

Chapter 523 You Can't Go

They all knew all too well that nothing would happen to Dexter. In other words, he would never let anything happen to him. Even though he was heartbroken, he would still shoulder his responsibilities without fail. That was everyone's impression of Dexter as the head of Russell Group.

Suddenly, Larry rushed into the office. "Mr. Russell, I've been informed that Mrs. Russell is missing."

Dexter widened his eyes.

"What did you say?"

"A reliable source said she left Wavery."

I should have known she planned to leave me when she said she wanted time alone.

Dexter suppressed his hurt and forced his rational mind to take over. He gave two orders.

They would launch an attack on Carter Group and search for Josie.

Josie had likely left recently. Thus, Dexter ordered immediate and thorough searches at the airport and high-speed rail station.

Then, Dexter withdrew from work and spent some time alone before heading to the airport.

One of the people he assigned to find Josie found many plane boarding passes under her name. It seemed she deliberately did not want them to find her. That further confirmed his theory that she left Wavery.

However, no one knew which flight she boarded.

The airport was always busy and noisy as many people moved about. Dexter stood among the crowd and looked at the boarding passes printed with Josie's name. He fell into a daze.

Does she hate me that much?

He knew he was a step too late. No matter his excuse, it would not change that he should not have been late.

Most of the subordinates with Dexter had been working for him for many years. They had never seen him in such an emotional state. Although he appeared calm, his heart was shattered.

News about Dexter's search in the airport soon reached the airport's upper management. When the person

in charge heard that Dexter wanted to know which flight Josie boarded, he got out of bed in the middle of the night and personally investigated the plane she boarded.

He found her.

It turned out that Josie boarded a flight to Rivodia.

Still, Dexter's frown did not relax. He could not figure out why she would want to go there. At the moment, he guessed she planned to switch flights to make her harder to trace.

Thus, her destination was still a mystery. They had no choice but to continue the search in Rivodia.

Dexter's eyes darkened. "We're going to Rivodia!"

Someone immediately left to make arrangements. At the same time, a clear and bright voice sounded. "You can't go!"

Dexter glanced toward the voice and saw a slightly haggard Laura,

Laura received news about Dexter's search for Josie and rushed to the airport. She was relieved that she caught up with Dexter.

She hurried over and stood before him. She forced herself to ignore her fear of him for the first time and said, "What I mean is you are not fit to go to her!"

Dexter looked at her indifferently. "Why?"

His indifferent tone angered Laura even more. "Don't you feel any remorse for what you have done recently?"

"Did you not feel any guilt when you visited Summer? Dexter, how can you be so unreasonable?"

A group of bodyguards blocked Laura from getting closer and ensured she could not hurt Dexter. Dexter heard her protest and replied flatly, "I will apologize to her in person."

He turned around to head to the boarding area.

Laura's eyes were red as she shouted, "You think an apology is enough to cancel all the hurt you caused? What a joke!"

Dexter did not pause or slow down until Laura screamed. "She nearly died in a car crash because of you! Is that still not enough?"

Dexter stiffened. His eyes were slightly red as he turned around in disbelief. His voice was as cold as ice. "What did you say?"

Chapter 524 Her Sacrifice

Laura's words prompted the bodyguards to clear the way, ceasing their obstruction as she approached Dexter.

With resentment, she said, "You were nowhere to be found during that time, but Josie was desperate to help you. She had gone the extra mile to gather information and ended up in a car accident while trying to locate you. Unfortunately, she lost her baby, but thank goodness, she survived. So, tell me, where were you during her hospitalization? How dare you take time out of your busy schedule and return to the country only to visit Summer Olsen, who was merely running a high fever!"

The mere mention and recollection of this tragic incident resonated deeply within Laura, evoking a profound empathy for Josie and causing tears to stream down her face. However, as she observed Dexter's poker face gradually morphing into anguish, a feeling of solace washed over her.

"Before fully recuperating, she went to great lengths, hauling her weakened body back to Wavery for your sake! She even waited outside the Olsen Residence in the pouring rain all afternoon, tirelessly seeking Mark's help for you! And then ended up falling ill with a high fever!"

I've never seen someone as selfless and faithful as Josie. Despite having nothing herself, she goes above and beyond to help you. Can you imagine where Russell Group would be today without her relentless efforts?"

"Have you any idea she risked her life to secure those funds for you? Have you ever taken a moment to consider her feelings and the effort she put in for you?"

Every word and sentence that escaped Laura's lips struck a chord in Dexter's heart. Prompting a heartfelt overflow of emotions surging through him.

"After failing her again and again, do you still think you deserve to seek her out?!"

The man felt an overwhelming heartache; his body weakened, on the verge of collapsing.

Dexter had no clue that it had unfolded in such a manner. During the most critical moment, it was Josic who orchestrated the financial assistance for Russell Group. In fact, she had selflessly given her all without any hidden agenda.

Tears cascaded down Laura's face like glistening pearls, "Please, just let her be... stop tormenting her. You are the esteemed president of Russell Group, but she is just a regular woman. She can't afford to play your rich man's love games!"

Hadn't Dexter realized he was the reason for Josie's indelible sorrow and departure?

Having said that, Laura no longer cared about Dexter's emotional state. If he felt remorseful, her words would bring him anguish.

Flashback to that fateful day when the sun remained veiled behind heavy and ominous clouds, an unexplainable chill engulfed Josic, shattering her heart into pieces.

Josie told Laura, "Even so, I still wish him well, hoping for his success. Despite any obstacles or hardships he may face, may he overcome them in the end."

Dexter was unworthy of Josie's love!

Ultimately, Dexter chose not to board the plane to Rivodia. Instead, he got into his car and raced along the empty road with the melting snowfall surrounding it. Suddenly, the car skidded and crashed into the roadside barrier, resulting in a minor collision that knocked off the license plate and caused his car to stall.

Dexter weakly gripped the steering wheel, burying his head in it, reliving the rapid heartbeat and anxiety he had just experienced.

Was this the very fear that gripped Josie during her car accident? She must have been terrified! God knows the dreads pain the most!

The highway authorities were on their way upon receiving news about the crash. The tow truck operators who arrived in response were taken aback by the sight of the posh car in such a horrid state.

What on earth happened? How could the driver bear to crash such an expensive car and see it damaged like this?

Then, under the dim light, they caught sight of someone seated in the driver's seat, remaining silent yet emanating a strong aura. The tow truck operators exchanged glances as they observed the person's shoulders trembling uncontrollably...

Is he crying?

They were startled and called out hesitantly, "Uh... Mr. Russell..."

Unbeknownst to them, they had just witnessed an unprecedented event this evening: Dexter crying in a fit.

After an undetermined time, Dexter got out of the car. His face remained stoic and parched with no sign of tears. Before he got into the car delivered by Moses and accelerated away, he instructed Moses, "Resolve this issue and ensure absolute secrecy. No one should ever know or speak of it."

Despite having just experienced an overwhelming emotional release, Dexter managed to stay composed and clear-headed as he instructed Moses to resolve the matter discreetly.

Chapter 525 Praying to God

The church in Sousturham exuded a serene atmosphere, with only a handful of visitors. Those who chose to attend the services and bow before the crucifix were devout in their faith.

For several days, Josie accompanied Claudia in prayers and quiet contemplation at the church, seeking comfort and discovering a sense of inner peace, shielded from the chaos of the outside world.

Sousturham stood majestically, adorned with luxurious mansions owned by affluent families. As a result, most of those who frequented the church held esteemed positions in society. However, their devotion and reverence while kneeling before the cross were equally fervent.

"Auntie, do you think God is real?" Josie fixed her gaze on the flickering candle flames, lost in contemplation.

Having maintained a cynical outlook and never embraced any religious faith, Josie was now reconsidering her perspective after numerous life experiences. She was inclined to the appeal of such a possibility if praying to God could bring about a positive impact or change.

"Miracles happen when you believe Him. So, Jo, do not be wary and stop overthinking." Claudia dressed modestly, wore a serene expression, and spoke with conviction. "You don't have to cling onto what you've lost because God will show you the way out if you truly believe in Him."

Josie pursed her lips and nodded. "Knowing it as a head knowledge is one thing, but fully understanding and embracing it is another."

Josie didn't mention anything about the incidents that caused her to leave her home and be a hermit in Sousturham church. Claudia didn't pry either, but she could tell that Josie had just gone through some harrowing ordeals.

"God will heal you. The sorrow in your heart will fade away with time." Claudia held a rosary in her hand and asked, "Does your family know that you came here?"

Josie was taken aback by Claudia's question.

To pacify her father, she had sent a message stating that she was on a business trip but purposefully omitted any mention of the Russell family. However, she had briefly explained and confided in Dexter that she required some solitary time away from him.

"They are aware."

Claudia picked up a prayer book from one of the pews and handed it to Josie. "You seem troubled. Why don't you pray to God and tell him your concerns and see what it leads to?"

Josie hesitated for a moment but decided to give it a try. She walked forward and knelt before the majestic stained-glass window, holding a prayer book in her hands and closing her eyes.

"God, if you are truly omniscient and compassionate, please comfort my wounded heart and guide me towards healing. Help me find the strength to overcome the burdens of my past. Amen."

After uttering her prayer, Josie carefully placed the prayer book back on the pew.

Claudia observed her and gently took her hand. "Come, let's find solace in the tranquility of the church. This place is perfect for quiet reflection and contemplation."

Despite the woman's hands showing signs of age with wrinkled skin, they exuded warmth. Josie followed

behind her, feeling a sense of companionship and glad to know she wasn't alone.

"Auntie, are your legs feeling better? Does your daughter visit you often? Josie asked.

Claudia smiled warmly, her expression tinged with a hint of wistfulness. "As people grow older, even in good health, it becomes harder for them to venture far. When children grow up, they have their own commitments and responsibilities. Even if they visit, I can't always devote as much time to them. As time passes, their visits become less frequent."

Josie struggled to grasp the situation fully. If she had a mother figure like Claudia, she would never let her spend her days alone in the confines of the church.

With a grateful heart, Josie pried, "Auntie, forgive me for being blunt, but do you also yearn for someone or something that is out of your league?"

Claudia raised an eyebrow, sensing a profound connection with the woman before her. It was as if Josie could peer into the depths of her soul.

"The person I long for is most likely never returning, Claudia forced a smile, her response tinged with sadness.

Josie understood that this person held immense significance to Claudia, driving her to spend her remaining years within the church's walls. Sensing the weight of Claudia's emotions, she refrained from delving further.

"Find solace in this sacred space. If you seek spiritual nourishment, you can immerse yourself in the church's rituals, Claudia whispered, growing fond of Josie's gentle nature.

Josie beamed a heartening smile, Thank you for your company and advice, Auntie. I find comfort and contentment in being here."

Chapter 526 No News of Josie

Since securing the funding, Dexter had practically made the office his second home, spending day and night there. Larry and the other employees had also been working tirelessly alongside him.

"Seriously... he never gives us a break. Mr. Russell is pushing himself and us to the limit," one of the employees grumbled.

"I know, right. Since our company secured the funding, Mr. Russell has lived in the office as if it were his second home.

"Maybe he can't afford to fail again..."

Larry walked in with a stack of documents and caught wind of the employees' murmurs. He furrowed his brow. "Don't you all have work to do? Shouldn't your focus be on your tasks rather than gossiping?"

The room fell into a collective silence as everyone exchanged glances of resignation and helplessness.

"This is a critical period, and it's important for us to stay united and overcome it," Larry began, intending to assure them that everything would improve once Josie returned. However, the words on the tip of his tongue transformed into, "Things will take a turn for the better soon."

Whenever Dexter managed to steal a moment away from his demanding workload, he would lock himself in the seclusion of his private lounge within his office, lost in profound contemplation. Beyond the windows, the city lights painted a vibrant tapestry of countless lives and homes, reminding him of the familial warmth that eluded him.

Never before had he yearned for a sense of belonging, a place to call his own, until he met Josie. In her presence, he discovered a deep-rooted attachment and an earnest longing to build a sanctuary he could finally call home.

How is she doing in Rivodia? What's on her mind at this very moment?

Upon returning from the airport that day, Dexter visited his grandfather at the revered Russell Manor.

Within the familiar walls of their ancestral home, Dexter closed his eyes, allowing the weight of Laura's words to settle upon his conscience.

Regret washed over him like an unyielding tide as Old Mr. Russell confirmed the tragic incident with a knowing nod, "Yes, what you've heard is true."

Though they didn't delve into the specifics, Dexter knew his grandfather keenly understood the situation. Henry's comforting hand gently rested upon Dexter's shoulder, offering solace and guidance. "Josie is a remarkable woman. I find solace in knowing she stands by your side. Yet, in her presence, a twinge of unease resides within me"

Dexter absorbed his grandfather's profound words, feeling their resonance within his soul.

"In the journey of life, striking a delicate balance is key. It's all about striving for personal fulfillment while being mindful of the hearts we touch."

That night, abandoning the comfort of his own bedroom, Dexter sat in the communal study room. Surrounded by the gentle whispers of raindrops on the roof, he embraced the moment for deep contemplation and introspection.

In this very room, he vividly remembered the time when Josie had cried after he had angrily scolded her for accidentally displacing Leanne's photo. Reflecting on his past behavior, Dexter realized how much of a jerk he had been.

In that very moment, he finally realized the profound depth of his feelings for Josie, ingrained in the very core of his being.

Two months later.

With the dawn of a new month, news arrived that lifted the spirits of the shareholders who had invested in Russell Group stocks.

It turned out that a prominent international bank and several investment banks had injected five hundred million into Russell Group.

Economy analysts believed that this substantial investment would expedite the growth of the domestic internet industry and rescue Russell Group from its precarious crisis.

Well, calling it a crisis would be an exaggeration.

After a significant period of absence, Dexter finally made his appearance before the media. He appeared much composed, and with a commanding gaze, he silenced the room.

He addressed the crowd. I welcome formidable rivals and competitors on the condition that their power is genuine and not just empty bravado,”

With that, Dexter succinctly clarified his prolonged silence. Should a battle arise, he would firmly hold his position.

It appeared that the man who had been subdued by life, temporarily concealing his sharpness and astuteness, had now resurfaced with renewed wit and strength.

As he settled into the car, Moses nodded in understanding, fully cognizant of their intended destination.

Dexter was swamped with work. During a discussion with Larry about a business matter, he asked furrowed, “Do you think the Carter Group will continue their attacks?”

“Nope. Russell Group stocks haven’t hit rock bottom. They won’t take action for the time being. Dexter replied, feeling the pressure building.

He had a gut feeling that the Carter Group had meticulously planned their moves and wouldn’t easily back down. They might even escalate their actions.

“Any updates?” Sitting in the backseat, Dexter suddenly asked.

Larry fell silent for a moment. “Not yet. Our intelligence team has been scouring Rivodia, but we haven’t received any news.”

The car came to a halt, and outside the window, the roadside trees displayed a deep shade of yellow.

Autumn had arrived, a season that often evoked a sense of melancholy in people.

Chapter 527 Tit for Tat

On this occasion, a social gathering was underway. Dexter personally hosted a banquet at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, accompanied by the top executives of Russell Group.

Among the attendees were some of the city's most influential and affluent individuals.

Over the past few months, Dexter had tirelessly engaged with numerous influential figures in his quest to revive the economy of Russell Group. Some negotiations bore fruit, while others faltered. Rest was a luxury he couldn't afford, as he was wholly committed to stabilizing the company.

As an outsider, Josie couldn't bear to witness him in a state of despair, especially considering the efforts she had made for him and Russell Group.

Around the bend, a sleek black official car with a distinctive license plate glided into view. Without a hitch, it smoothly bypassed a police checkpoint, evading any need for a breathalyzer test.

Then, the car pulled up before Dexter and the others. The personal assistant sprang into action, alighting from the vehicle and graciously opening the rear door. Stepping into view, a man in his forties or fifties emerged from the shadows, his face sharp and his hair graying gracefully. Leaning on the support of a woman, he greeted Dexter with a firm handshake, "Hi, Mr. Russell."

"We are truly honored to have you join us this evening, Mr. Perkins," Caesar, Wavery's third-in-command, expressed with a smile.

Dexter reciprocated the smile until his gaze fell upon the woman beside Caesar. His smile subtly faded, sensing an unspoken tension in the air.

The woman instinctively averted his scrutiny and gracefully took a step back.

The man and woman proceeded to greet the attendees, shaking hands with the crowd. At the same time, Caesar directed his attention toward the grand hall of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. "Choosing such an exquisite venue, Mr. Russell, are you trying to damage my reputation?"

"Everyone in Wavery knows that Mr. Perkins is renowned for his integrity and transparency. I have meticulously taken care of every detail. The food and beverages comply with all regulations and standards. Even in the event of an investigation, there won't be any issues," Dexter replied with a subtle smile, motioning for Caesar to continue.

Caesar playfully scrutinized him for a moment before following the waiter's lead and stepping forward. "I have witnessed Mr. Russell's capabilities, so I can certainly put my mind at ease."

Dexter had explicitly requested that no entertainment facilities be provided on the hotel's top floor.

After three rounds of drinks, Caesar kept a clear head and disclosed the news Dexter had been eagerly awaiting. "The Carter Group has secured the project in the city. The official announcement is set to be made within the next three days. To prevent any potential mistakes or loopholes that Russell Group could exploit, Mr. Carter has taken the preemptive step of canceling the bidding ceremony and blocking any possible interference."

Dexter raised an eyebrow upon hearing this, showing little surprise, "I understand. After all, Russell Group made mistakes in the previous project, so it's only reasonable for the higher-ups not to choose us."

He casually reached for the teapot on the table and poured tea for Caesar. "Who is Arnold's immediate supervisor in the municipal government?"

Caesar, known for his intuition and sharp senses, shook his head. "We don't have the answer yet. It's still a mystery in Wavery

"A mystery!"

Dexter took a cigarette from the box, not bothering to light it, and leisurely savored its aroma, "It won't remain a mystery for long.

Caesar furrowed, "What do you mean?"

"The office director's retiring soon. He's got his family all sorted for their overseas plans. He's looking to cash in on this project in his final days on the job. The city's putting three hundred million on the table, but from what I've heard, the Carter Group's only getting a slice of up to one-fifty. So, what's happening to the leftover moolah?"

Dexter deftly directed the conversation, observing Caesar's shifting expression.

Dexter tossed the cigarette into the trash bin, keeping his thoughts hidden. "Do you think Arnold can successfully complete the project with a budget of just one hundred and fifty million?"

Caesar got the hint of Dexter's strategy. "Looks like you're gearing up for a direct confrontation."

Dexter neither confirmed nor denied it. He glanced past Caesar at the woman who had silently stood by all along, "Mr. Perkin's assistant seems oddly familiar. I have a feeling I've seen her before."

Chapter 528 Make Sure She's Unscathed

Carsen

He let out a surprised chuckle, "Ah, she used to be Mr. Carter's assistant. I saw her handling things with finesse at an event, so I invited her to join us with Mr. Carter. I'm sure Mr. Riley has crossed paths with her as well

Heather, come on over and say hello to Mr. Russell

Dressed in a sleek business suit today, Heather appeared less disheveled and more composed. She avoided making direct eye contact with Dexter. "Pleasure to meet you, Mr. Russell"

Dexter leaned back, a hint of amusement in his eyes. "Recall Ms. Riley's tea-making skills being quite impressive. Care to showcase your talents for your new bow?"

Heather felt a surge of humiliation at his words, her ears turning beet red.

She bent down to brew the tea, her fair and delicate hands catching Caesar's attention. He couldn't help but appreciate their grace. "I gotta say... Watching young folks excel at their craft is always a pleasure to behold

Dexter maintained his poker face.

"Working for the government **has** its perks. Following Mr. Perkins is a wiser choice than sticking with Mr. Carter

Heather bit her lip. "Uh... Yeah."

Dexter took a quick break during the intermission and headed to the restroom. As he washed his hands, he glanced up and noticed the woman standing behind him in the mirror.

"You've got some nerve. If your new boss were to find out. I can imagine you'll have a tough time," he remarked coldly.

Heather

tightly clenched her clothes, feeling misunderstood and wrongly judged. "Mr. Russell, you've completely misunderstood me. I'm not that kind of person..."

Dexter maintained his unwavering gaze at Heather's reflection in the mirror.

"I was penalized by Mr. Carter for a mistake in the United Kingdom. That's why I ended up working with Mr. Perkins. It's not what you're assuming."

"Why bother explaining it to me? It's your business with Arnold."

"...I just don't want you to get the wrong idea about me." Heather said, her voice trembling as she gathered her courage to raise her head. Her eyes were red and filled with tears.

Dexter's mind flickered

back to that disastrous day when everything fell apart, and a slight headache crept in. He turned around, glanced at her, and silently walked past, leaving her words in the air. "You'll have to face the consequences of your own actions."

As the evening drew to a close, Dexter walked alongside Caesar to his car, with Heather trailing behind, her eyes still shimmering with tears.

The car sped away, and Dexter's gaze drifted into the distance, lost in his thoughts.

Larry caught up, and his voice was filled with concern. "Mr. Russell, should I look into this?"

Dexter gave

Larry a quick sideways glance, pondering his choices. "Conventional methods won't cut it when dealing with Arnold's related matters. Get Moses on it instead."

When delving into covert affairs, unconventional approaches often reveal more valuable insights.

In a sudden burst of inspiration, Larry suggested, "Should we also have him look into Mrs. Russell's case? They had a close bond in the past, after all."

Dexter paused for a moment, a somber expression crossing his face. "Hmm."

Getting into the car, he instructed, "Caesar Perkins never hold back. Keep a close watch on him and make sure she's unscathed."

Caesar's ruthless and unpredictable way of seeking revenge had earned him quite a reputation, making it impossible to predict his next move,

Dexter grappled with conflicting emotions, uncertain if his concern for Heather was rooted in guilt or a burgeoning sense of responsibility that had blossomed after their intimate encounter.

Upon hearing this, Larry was taken aback, realizing that Dexter was referring to Heather, "Uh, okay."

As the car drove a distance and arrived at Russell Manor, they saw a familiar figure waiting at the gate. Uh, it's Ms. Quorn."

Xanthe had been waiting there all night, determined to see Dexter.

She raised her chin defiantly, her eyes filled with intensity as she locked her gaze on the back seat.

Dexter calmly stepped out of the car, displaying an icy demeanor. "What are you doing here?"

Without responding to his question, Xanthe raised her hand, poised to deliver a slap across his face.

But this time, Dexter swiftly caught her hand. "What's gotten into you?"

"Dexter Russell, you're such an ungrateful son! How could you do this to me?! I'm your own mother!" Xanthe seethed with anger, struggling to maintain her composure. "How dare you have someone sabotage my business dealings!"

Chapter 529 Never Thought of Divorce

Dexter shoved her hand away with an annoyed face, "Without evidence, it's best not to *make* unfounded

speculations

But it was evident he had deliberately cut off the suppliers Xanthe had painstakingly established. Now, they all conveniently refused to work with her, making it incredibly difficult for her business to survive.

The suppliers claimed they couldn't trace the source, but Xanthe knew it was the work of Dexter, her supposedly loving son!

She sneered, "Well, look at you now, Dexter, how things have changed. But let's not forget, that it was me who supported you financially when the Russells were struggling Without my help, you are nothing

Dexter glanced sideways, a mocking smile playing on his lips. "And what about before that?"

Xanthe was taken aback by his imposing presence and defensively retreated, "What do you mean?"

“When Russell Group was on the verge of collapse, weren’t you involved in bringing it down as well?” Dexter furrowed, and a sudden realization dawned on him. “Oh, and let’s not forget Yanis too, One is my biological mother and the other is my uncle. You both never hesitated to plot against me, did you?”

Xanthe was shocked, momentarily speechless. How had Dexter discovered the truth about their scheme?

With a disdainful expression, he chided, “You only started trying to cozy up to me after **you** saw that I didn’t give up,”

Dexter saw through all of her manipulative tactics and hidden motives.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about. I haven’t done anything!” She avoided eye contact, her anger palpable.

“What about the divorce papers you sent on my behalf to Josie? Dexter’s voice rose abruptly, and Xanthe was shocked as she stepped back. I never once considered divorcing her. How dare you involve her in this!”

“How could you? Josie had just undergone major surgery. Xanthe Quorn. Your entire existence revolves around manipulating others and inflicting pain!”

The mere thought of Josie coming across the divorce papers while she was already going through so much physical and emotional turmoil filled Dexter with heartache. He never wanted to let her down.

Who were these meddlers with no business interfering in their relationship and creating chaos?!

“Hah. Josie?” Xanthe sneered. “It was for your own good! Russell Group would have been doomed if you hadn’t entered a strategic marriage with Summer Olsen then. Don’t you remember that?!”

“If you hadn’t returned to Wavery and seen Summer, how would I have had the opportunity and guts to manipulate the divorce papers and send them to Josie?!”

“Now, Dexter, you understand what it’s like to have your heart broken. Does that automatically make you innocent and absolve you of any involvement?”

Standing beneath the streetlight, the man emitted an icy aura, his eyes brimming with indescribable pain.

None of this would’ve happened if he hadn’t returned to Wavery to see Summer.

At that time, he had callously disregarded Josie’s feelings, which led to the current chaos.

Dexter loathed himself more than anyone else.

+5 Bonus

Silence hung in the air as Xanthe pressed, “Guess what Josie said when I handed her the divorce papers?”

Dexter's heart constricted as if someone were squeezing it. He responded with solemnity.

Xanthe enunciated every word, "She said she would give it careful consideration."

Dexter was overwhelmed with sorrow. He closed his eyes, trying to envision the moment Josie's heart turned cold and desolate upon seeing the divorce papers.

After briefly pausing, he opened his eyes and gestured for Larry to pass him a folder. He extracted a stack of photographs from within and held them up before Xanthe. "Take a good look at these and never come near me again. Don't disturb Grandpa either."

Dexter tossed the photos at her.

Xanthe frowned, her legs nearly giving way as she glanced at the images. In the photos, a group of burly bodyguards surrounded a frail man, mercilessly beating him while he lay defenseless on the ground.

The pictures were crystal clear and showed evidence of injuries.

That man was left half-dead following the brutal assault

Upon closer inspection, one could discern a resemblance to Dexter in his facial features.

Chapter 530 Leaving Sousturham

No... No! Why did you turn to him?!" Xanthe cried out in anguish, her voice laced with sorrow. "Dexter! How could you!! He's your brother, your own flesh and blood!"

She dropped to her knees, desperately gathering the scattered photos and clutching them to her chest as if embracing her other son.

Xanthe clutched onto Dexter's pant leg, pounding on it. "You ungrateful child!"

Dexter remained unmoved, coldly observing the woman who had abandoned all sense of dignity, consumed by heartbreak. The pain in his own heart grew even more intense.

But his words were cutting and ruthless. "From now on, if you dare to interfere in my affairs, your son will be in even greater danger. Mark my words."

He kicked Xanthe away and smirked. "Don't even think about moving him elsewhere. He will never be able to get away."

Xanthe was taken aback. In her disoriented state, she saw Dexter as nothing less than a devil incarnate!

Meanwhile, at Sousturham Church.

Josie had been living with Caludia in Sousturham for the past two months, finding solace in the newfound

tranquility. Despite her physical distance, she remained dedicated to her work in the studio. She focused on her paintings and communicated with her employees to complete ongoing projects.

There was an unspoken agreement among them to keep her whereabouts secret, as they, too, were unaware of her current location.

Laura persistently inquired, concerned about her safety.

Josie kept her reasons to herself, explaining that she needed time alone. Laura had no choice but to respect her decision. "Take care of yourself. If you don't want to come back here, that's okay. I'll be here at the studio."

Her words had a light-

hearted tone, but Josie couldn't shake the feeling of guilt towards Laura. She knew that Laura was going through a difficult time too. Finding a balance was not an easy task. And so, after two months, Josie packed her things and prepared to leave Sousturham.

Before she left, she said her goodbyes to the priest and Claudia, expressing her gratitude for their care. In return, Claudia gave her a Bible as a farewell gift.

"Last time, I gave you a rosary. I'm giving you a Bible for your quiet moments with Him this time. Find peace in everything you do. You've shown great devotion in your prayers these past few months, and God listens to you and will **protect** you," Claudia said.

Josie's nose tingled, "Really appreciate your kindness, Auntie."

She paused momentarily, asking, "But are you sure you don't want to leave with me? It's been two months. Don't you want to go back home and see your family?"

Every time this topic came up, Claudia would wear a reserved expression. She shook her head and replied, "I don't need to worry about them. I'm staying back. But you, after spending so much time with me, suddenly want to leave. I'm feeling heavy-hearted to see you go so soon."

Josie shared the same feeling. She had never encountered such a nurturing elder before. Claudia had taken care of her like a mother would. So, she looked at Claudia sincerely and said, "How I wish you were my mother, Auntie"

Claudia was taken aback, and her eyes welled up with tears.

Josie gave a bitter smile and said. "Sorry if I startled you with my sentiment. It's just that I've never really known a mother's love, and I've always felt a connection with you."

Claudia was about to respond when her phone suddenly rang, which she always carried along with her. She glanced down, excused herself, and answered the call.

Josie waited for Claudia patiently, understanding that they needed to pause their conversation until she finished the call knowing she had to leave soon.

There were certain people and situations that Josie had been avoiding. Still, she knew deep down that she couldn't avoid them forever.

Claudia's phone call

seemed to drag on, and when she finally hung up, she wore a troubled expression mixed with a hint of anticipation. She smiled at Josie and said, "Remember you've just suggested we *leave* Sousturham together? My daughter just called with an urgent matter that needs my attention. Looks like we can travel together."

Josie was taken aback but also thrilled, "Really? That's great! Let's go together."

Claudia hadn't heard from her daughter in two months, and now she was being called home. It seemed an important matter that only someone like Claudia could handle as an elder.