

Surprise 221

Chapter 221 Why Are You Blushing?

“Sis, it’s been quite chaotic lately. I don’t think you should go to Anna’s funeral.” Shay’s voice, fused with a voice tuner, came through the phone.

“Maybe if I didn’t know about it. But, since I’m aware, I don’t have a reason not to go. I have to pay my respects. She’s dead. It’s not something to argue about.”

She straightened out her black blouse and black wide-leg pants in front of the mirror, then tied her hair up at the back of her head. Through her wireless earphone, she heard Shay sigh. “You be careful. I still have work to do here so I can’t leave yet, but I might be able to make it. I’ll just be a bit late.”

“Okay. Be careful on your way here,” she exhorted and hung up the phone.

Even outsiders claimed that Anna’s suicide was unexpected. After asking a few directors who were present at the time, however, they found out she did jump off herself. According to the statements, it was very chaotic at the scene. Not to mention, the source of that chaos was Susan.

Anna was already gone. At least, her uncle had taken it upon himself to arrange her funeral and contact anyone who could be reached, including Courtney.

Aside from the flower wreath, the only two colors left at the funeral were black and white. So few people had attended that Courtney almost thought she came at the wrong time. Well, after such a big scandal at Hunter Group, who would want to forge connections with them?

After bowing in front of the grave, she walked up in front of Anna’s uncle. “My condolences.”

“Mm.” He nodded his head, his eyes slightly red. “Anna might have had a bad temper, but she was a sweet girl.”

Courtney could not agree to that completely, but since she had to show respect to the dead, she did not say anything else and simply nodded. With that, she turned around and started to leave.

“Wait,” Anna’s uncle called out abruptly. “Anna jumped because she could not bear the pressure of dealing with the company’s problems. Now that the company has turned out this way, shouldn’t his children be responsible for it?”

Courtney frowned. Taking the place they were in into consideration, she suppressed her temper and explained, “I don’t own any shares at Hunter Group. My father didn’t put my name under any of his inheritance in his will. The situation the company is in has nothing to do with me. If you don’t get it, you can ask Mr. Morrison.”

“I’m not going to look for some lawyer; I’m just looking for you.” The middle-aged man was slowly getting angry. “Lucian left us with such a big mess. You’re his daughter. You can’t just turn a blind eye to everything.”

Finding it rather amusing on the inside, she retorted, “When the will was read, I don’t remember you people being this outspoken about injustice.”

“That’s a different matter.” His face sank. “You have to come clean in front of Anna today, and give us an explanation. This is your family’s company. If you don’t manage it, then who will?”

“Whoever wants to!”

Shay’s voice traveled across the crowd and landed clearly in everyone’s ears. Courtney was still in a daze when a hand pulled her back. Looking up, she saw Casey who was following closely behind Shay.

“Get my sister out of here first,” Shay instructed. Taking off his sunglasses, his eyes swept across everyone with an unpleasant expression on his face.

After Casey took Courtney away, she heard Shay’s voice in the distance. “Birds of a feather flock together. I should’ve known you people didn’t notify my sister of the funeral for any good reason. Why? Are you picking on her because she doesn’t have anyone around her? Are you planning on dumping this huge mess on her? During the allocation of property, why didn’t any of you remember that Lucian also had another daughter? Since this problem broke out, you’re suddenly aware now. How could something so miraculous happen? You’re all just taking advantage of her.”

“We can’t leave Shay alone in there. Those people—” Courtney was in a slight panic.

“Don’t worry.” Casey did not even look back as he shoved her into the MPV. “He has people with him.”

She followed his gaze into the distance where she saw a group of people crowded together.

“How dare you speak to me like that?” At that moment, Anna’s uncle’s shameless attitude shone through. In a harsh voice, he sneered, “Shay Spencer, was it? You’re just a mutt the Hunter Family picked up and brought home. What right do you have to be here and meddle in the Hunters’ affairs?”

Those words got Courtney worked up, but she only saw Casey lean against the car door outside. His formal attire made him look smart. Without a clear expression, he said, “The one who ridiculed Shay earlier. His mouth is too foul.”

As soon as he said that, a sharp scream sounded from among the crowd. Despite not being close, the indistinct sound of bones crushing could also be heard in the middle of the scream.

“Don’t hesitate. I’ll take responsibility for everything. Beat him up.”

Among the crowd of people in the distance, shrieks were coming in one after the other. When Anna looked at Casey in astonishment, she realized that he was wearing a black wireless earphone in his right ear. The few hefty men in black on the other side were men Casey left behind to protect Shay. No wonder they were so ruthless.

As she looked at the man being beaten into a lump, she let out a sigh, thinking it was sad but also funny at the same time. Susan and Anna spent their entire lives scheming. They brought all the good-for-nothing children from their maternal family into the Hunter Group. Now that Anna was dead, and Susan was missing, they were still desperate to bring the Hunter Group back up instead of looking for Susan. They wanted to continue to sit idly and enjoy the fruits of someone else’s labor.

From the cemetery, Casey drove Courtney back to her place.

"It's better not to associate with those people in the future. They're all crazy." Sitting on the couch, Shay continued to urge her softly, "If I hadn't made it in time today, it would have been a catastrophe."

The ability to tell right from wrong and weigh the pros and cons were within her. She admitted that she had not reached the brain-damaging level of 'who else would go to hell if not me' yet. Nodding lightly, her gaze shifted onto Casey.

"I've been seeing Mr. Lewis with you a lot lately. Are you two..."

Shay's expression shifted. He almost spat out water from his mouth. "It's not what you think. We're just... regular friends."

"Really?" She eyed Casey curiously. Shay was always the bashful one. If she wanted to hear the truth, she had to get Casey to speak.

Glancing over at Shay, Casey answered, "Yes. You can say that."

"What do you mean by that?" Courtney pestered.

"Everyone defines a friend differently. We're friends if he says we are."

She was slightly confused, "Can you elaborate?"

"He's my only friend."

Oh, so that's it. Courtney smiled vaguely at Shay. She watched as his face went from a pale pink to bright red. She had a mischievous thought and deliberately asked, "Why are you blushing, Shay?"

"I'm not." Sulking, he insisted, "I just feel hot."

"It's almost fall now. How can you still feel hot?" she teased.

"I just feel hot, alright? Your house is too hot. I don't want to be here anymore. I'm leaving..."

Shay just got up from the couch, but Casey looked like he was already prepared. Standing up, he straightened his suit and said nonchalantly, "I'll drive you."

From Courtney's perspective, she could clearly see Shay's face turn even redder.

## Chapter 222 Daughters Should Be Raised in Abundance

After Shay and Casey left, Courtney called Alicia. "Aunt Alicia, where's Tina?"

"She just had her lunch. Your uncle put her down for a nap." Alicia's voice was heard from the other side of the phone. Her voice was much gentler than before.

"Uncle William is with her? Is he not working today?"

"Oh, we haven't told you yet. He officially retired last week. At first, he went to Mayberry to attend an event held by the Calligraphy Association. But, when he heard that Tina was coming, he came back as soon as the event was finished. I told him he couldn't take care of kids, but he insisted that he was good. Look at this man."

Upon hearing Alicia's complaint, Courtney let out a chuckle. "Uncle William has just retired. He's probably just trying to keep himself busy."

"That could be true." Alicia grinned in response. "By the way, there'll be a gathering this Friday night. The whole family will be having dinner together. No outsiders; just us and Stephen's family. You should come too."

Courtney hesitated for a moment. "We haven't met for so many years. I don't think I should go."

"Why? You don't want to get close with your grandpa's family anymore?"

"That's not what I meant, Aunt Alicia."

"Come, then. I'll pick you up at your place this Friday."

Since Alicia insisted, Courtney couldn't reject her again. Besides, the only family she had nowadays were the uncles from her maternal side.

She could actually understand Alicia's effort.

On Friday night, Alicia came on time to pick Courtney up to bring her to the hotel for dinner.

A low-key black Rolls-Royce came to a stop in front of the apartment. The moment Courtney got into the car, Tina plunged into her arms. "Mom, why did you take so long to come down? I'm hungry."

Helplessly, Courtney caressed her little head. "Okay, okay. Sit down properly. The car is going to move."

After Courtney took her seat, she looked up and greeted her uncle who was sitting in the passenger seat.

"Mom, what do you think about my new dress? Is it nice?" Although Tina had already sat down, she couldn't stay still. Lifting the hem of her veiled dress, she showed it to Courtney. "There are stars on it."

She was dressed in a small powder-blue veiled dress, a small leather jacket, and a pair of brown leather shoes. She also had a pair of white socks with their hems laced. Because of the company, Courtney had been researching a lot on the fashion shows held during spring and autumn. If she were not mistaken, the outfit was from the latest line of children's clothing released by BV this year.

Although she might not be able to estimate the price of the outfit, she still noticed the double-G logo on Tina's crossbody bag.

"Aunt Alicia, you can just buy anything for Tina to wear. There's no need to dress her up so fancily."

However, Alicia disagreed with her. "This is your only daughter. How can we not doll her up? Daughters should be raised in abundance. Otherwise, they would be snatched by boys very easily in the future."

"Agreed." William's voice was heard from the passenger seat. "Girls should be raised rich. Even so, we're not pampering her. We're merely trying to train her to be strong."

Courtney felt a little headache.

Alicia and William had no children, so they were very fond of Tina. Tina is so young, yet she wears branded items all over her body. How is this not pampering? They might even promise her the stars and the moon.

“Aunt Alicia, I... I don’t think you should extol her to the skies. You should be more strict...”

“If you want me to bring her up under pressure, you can stop talking now. I grew up under pressure, so I know that it’s not good to be too temperamental.”

After listening to her, Courtney was stunned.

This was the first time she heard Alicia saying that she was bad-tempered. From the rear-view mirror, she could see that her uncle was surprised too. Vaguely, he said, “What a rare sight.”

Nevertheless, Alicia had sharp ears. Immediately, she turned around and glared at him. “There are so many rare things in this world. Isn’t it rarer for someone to abandon their wife and child and end up with a broken family compared to my honesty?”

Her words touched something inside Courtney’s heart.

Tina was probably the only one in the car who didn’t understand what Alicia was trying to say.

“Enough. How can you say something like that in front of a kid?”

“There’s nothing I can’t say.” Alicia’s expression was cold. “Although Tina is still young, children have their own ability to distinguish the bad and the good. There is no need to create the illusion that everything in this world is beautiful.”

“Enough, Alicia...” William sounded helpless.

Obviously, Alicia wasn’t content with his attitude. Frowning, she was about to explode, but Courtney quickly stopped her. “Aunt Alicia, the past is in the past. We don’t have to keep on mentioning it. Tina is all grown up. She understands everything. Am I right?” As she said that, she gave Tina a glance.

Cooperatively, Tina nodded. “Yeah. Mom, Great-Aunt Alicia, Great-Uncle William, I know everything.”

Finally, Alicia’s expression softened. Staring at Courtney, she said, “Don’t involve yourself in the Hunter Group’s mess. Hide as far as you can. Don’t go looking for trouble.”

Nodding, Courtney held back the faint trace of bitterness behind her eyes.

Ever since Anna fell to her death, the internal financial shortfalls of the Hunter Group were quickly spread amongst the public. It even made it to the headlines in various media. People had different opinions. Soon, the Tax Bureau and Bureau of Commerce intervened to carry out further investigations. All projects of the company were temporarily suspended.

Nonetheless, the suspension of estate development projects meant that hundreds of migrant workers lost their jobs.

The route to Melrose Hotel—the place where Courtney was heading for dinner—had to pass by the head office of the Hunter Group. Anyone could easily guess what the entrance of the head office would look like without looking out the window.

Migrant workers had put up an enormous banner written with clichéd lines of ‘Give Us Back Our Money, Unscrupulous Developer’. The entrance was drenched in the smell of lunch boxes that only cost five dollars each. One could also see social news reporters at every corner.

Even though the police had intervened to control the situation, it was of little effect.

“Stop staring,” Alicia yelled at William. “The owner isn’t a good person. How can you expect his company to be good too? How bold of them to evade taxes.”

“No one knows what exactly happened yet. We cannot draw a conclusion so easily.” William’s gentleness was his usual personality. His many years of experience in the political world had nurtured him into someone who liked to look at things from an objective point of view. He was also very tender even in private.

At first, Courtney didn’t want to check on the company. Yet, the traffic slowed down the moment they entered the city center. The noise from outside became louder and louder. As soon as she saw the fire truck coming from a distance, she knew something was wrong.

From the window of the car, she could see that the entrance of the Hunter Group’s head office was crowded. Everyone was staring with their heads inclined.

Through the bustling crowd, a path was created. The cordon was quickly pulled up, and firefighters in amber outfits were setting up a safety air cushion urgently.

All of a sudden, Courtney realized something. At that very moment, she heard someone outside saying what she was thinking right now.

“Someone is going to jump down from the building...”

Immediately, her expression changed. Her heartbeat skipped almost instantly. For some reason, she recalled seeing the scene of Anna falling from the building on the television at the cafe that day. Without thinking, she blasted, “Stop the car.”