

Don't Beg for Love Chapter 591

A Spoonful of Sugar: Don't Beg for Love Chapter 591

"Someone bought off the factory, so there are some problems with the machines, and the ones with the biggest problem were the batch that we gave you... It's fortunate that nothing happened during this period of time."

As Hesper listened to Rickard's explanation, she couldn't shake the feeling that he was alluding to something deeper. What did he mean by the batch they gave her having the biggest problem? Was someone trying to target the Duval Group and accidentally ensnared them in the process, or was Lane Holdings being attacked through their affiliation with the Duvals?

Before she could voice her thoughts, Rickard interrupted, "I'm tied up at the moment. I'll contact you when I have a moment. Please investigate the Halwart Factory if you can. I suspect something is amiss with their person-in-charge."

After saying this, Rickard hung up the phone. Hesper was left holding her phone, lost in thought. 'Halwart Factory? Wasn't that the same factory that fell for my bait in the business competition with the Duvals?'

She never imagined that Rickard would work with that factory again after she left.

Without hesitation, she picked up the phone again and dialed her assistant. "Renee, please come to my office immediately. We need to head to the Halwart Factory right away."

"Understood."

*

Those reporters were like a group of dogs that caught the smell of meat. When a large company like Duval Group encountered a problem, apart from their competitors, media workers like them were the biggest beneficiaries. Whoever could get first-hand information would have an easy shortcut to success.

Rickard sat in his office, watching as Benji sneaked out. The company was in chaos with reporters waiting in the lobby for Rickard to come out and answer their questions.

As Rickard examined the machine data on the documents, he noticed significant discrepancies from the blueprints and furrowed his brow.

This factory had been a long-standing partner, and such an incident had never happened before, so the messed-up data must have been intentional. It was evident that they knew this batch of machines was the only one in the entire country that could satisfy this particular technology, and that's why they targeted it.

'Someone must have leaked the information to them, but only a few people knew about this batch of machines, so how did they find out?' Rickard thought to himself.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the office door. Instead of opening it right away, Rickard walked over and asked, "Who is it?"

"It's me! Dick, open the door!" Sophia's panicked voice came from outside the door. Rickard opened the door, and Sophia squeezed in through the gap, panting heavily with a tense expression on her face.

"What's going on? Why are there so many people suddenly blocking the company? Someone recognized me and wanted to catch me!" Sophia was a bit frightened. When she turned her head, she saw that Rickard's face was ugly.

Thinking of the situation outside, Sophia realized that something might have happened to the Duval Group.

"What happened to the Duval Group?" she asked hesitantly.

She did not get an answer from Rickard, so Sophia took out her phone and checked the news, only to find numerous reports about the non-compliant machine data of Duval Group causing the death of workers.

"How could this happen?!"

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Sophia's cry of alarm brought Rickard out of his reverie. He let out a sigh and said, "The company is not very stable now. I'll have the driver take you home in a moment. Don't come out these days. Come back when the company's situation is resolved."

However, Sophia was trembling as she scrolled down to the bottom of the news and saw the machine's serial number.

"What's wrong?" Rickard sensed that Sophia's emotions were off and grabbed her wrist. "Why are you making that face? Do you know about this batch of machinery?"

"I don't!" Sophia denied loudly. Rickard glanced at her suspiciously, but before he could question her, the phone rang.

It was Julie.

He furrowed his brows and answered the call. Without giving him a chance to speak, his mother's surprised and agitated voice came from the other end. "Dick, what's going on with the company all of a sudden? How could the machines cause people to die? Are people outside spreading rumors again? What's happening?"

She bombarded him with questions. Rickard was silent for a moment before saying, "Don't worry about it. Take care of Grandpa and don't go out these days."

Sophia was fidgeting on the side, looking nervous. Rickard did not waste any more time with his mother and his expression turned cold.

Rickard's voice was stern as he took a deep breath and urged Sophia to speak honestly, emphasizing the gravity of the situation. "If you're aware of anything, you should come clean. This is far from a simple matter. If we fail to handle it, the Duval Group will not only face bankruptcy, but those involved could also be imprisoned."

"It's that serious?"

Sophia blinked several times, unable to withstand Rickard's intense questioning. Her eyes welled up with tears as she confessed, "I saw the

machine's serial number marked on the contract given to Hesper before. I took a photo of the data and sent it to Mother. She said she could make Hesper suffer a big loss. I never thought things would be so serious..."

Rickard was taken aback by Sophia's immature reasoning and could not help but chuckle in disbelief. "Sooner or later, the Duval Group will be brought down by your idiocy, Sophia. You must remember for the rest of your life that a worker died because of your actions."

"I hope you're still able to sleep at night," he added in a cold tone.

"It's just a worker! Our family is wealthy and powerful. We can easily afford to compensate and support his family for a lifetime. What else do they want—" Sophia did not get to finish her sentence, as Rickard had slapped her across her face.

Without saying much to Sophia, Rickard recounted the situation to Ernest.

Ernest sighed several times and said, "As long as we find evidence that the factory altered the data without authorization, there shouldn't be any major problems. We just need to apologize properly to the workers."

"Has Hesper already gone to Halwart Factory?"

Although Hesper did not promise anything on the phone just now, Rickard knew that she must've been on her way there. Therefore, he answered confidently, "Yes. She's on her way there."

*

Hesper and Renee got out of the car and looked at Halwart Factory in front of them. Then, they walked straight to the guard's room.

"Let us in. I want to see your general manager," Hesper said to the guard who was peering at them. She confidently opened her phone and dialed the phone number of the general manager of Halwart Factory. After a moment, the call was connected.

"Ms. Lane? It's been a long time!"

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The manager of Halwart Factory greeted them in a fawning tone over the phone, and the guard opened the door astutely. Hesper and Renee exchanged a glance before entering.

“Why did you call me all of a sudden, Ms. Lane? Let me guess. Is it because of the Duval Group?” The director manager of Halwart Factory, George Halwart, was a cunning man. Hesper knew it very well when she interacted with him last time.

Hesper casually confirmed his guess with a relaxed tone, then continued, “I didn't expect that you would resume your cooperation with the Duvals after I left Genecity.”

George knew what Hesper was talking about and chuckled apologetically, “Well, I still have to pay my employees.”

“Hm, you're right. I'm in your factory now. Are you sure you don't want to come down and meet me?” Hesper said. “I've already seen the news about the Duvals today. It's a happy moment when a competitor of mine falls, so of course, I need to be the first one to arrive to watch the show.”

Hearing Hesper's words, George's tone relaxed a bit, but he was still hesitant. “As you know, we have cooperated with the Duvals for many years. Now that they are in trouble, I don't know if our factory can survive.”

“It's clearly the Duvals' mistake. What does that have to do with your factory?” Hesper asked casually. “Our previous cooperation was pleasant, and I thought you were a smart person, Mr. Halwart. If you keep wasting my time like this, I guess we won't be talking about a cooperation today.”

“Don't...” George blurted out, and Hesper knew that her purpose for coming here was likely to be successful. Sure enough, the next moment, George said, “You're a wise person too, Ms. Lane. Come up, and we can discuss it in detail after we meet.”

Hesper and Renee exchanged a glance. Hesper agreed before hanging up the phone.

“It seems that Rickard’s speculation was right. The problem lies in this factory.” Hesper frowned. “It all went too smoothly, and I feel a bit uneasy... Don’t go in for now. Call Isaac and don’t forget to turn on the GPS.”

“Understood,” Renee responded. However, a worried frown creased her forehead. “Are you absolutely certain that you can handle this alone?”

“Don’t worry, I’ve got this,” Hesper chuckled reassuringly. “It’s just an extra precaution, and being cautious never hurts anyone. Let’s not stress too much about it. With a little bit of luck, this may be resolved before we know it.”

Renee remained concerned, but she knew that there was nothing more she could do at this point. Both of them followed the given directions and eventually arrived at George’s office door. Hesper shook her head in a silent gesture then entered the room and closed the door behind her.

Renee quickly sent her location to Isaac, but as soon as she looked up from her phone, the signal strength dropped to zero bars.

“A signal jammer!” Renee exclaimed.

She knocked on George’s door, but no one answered from inside.

“Don’t worry about Hesper,” Carter said, leaning casually against the wall and whistling. “Our boss is just catching up with Ms. Rivera. No need to be too anxious.”

“Nathaniel? Was it you who orchestrated this?” Renee gritted her teeth and inquired calmly. “You’re targeting the Paradise Project and Hesper Lane?”

“Bingo,” Carter chuckled, running his finger along the trigger of his pistol, causing a click to echo through the air. “But unfortunately, there are no rewards for you.”

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Upon entering the office, Hesper immediately noticed Nathaniel seated behind the desk. Realizing that there was no way for her and Renee to escape, she calmly shut the door.

“It’s been a while,” he said.

Hesper looked at Nathaniel. They were friends in the past, but she could barely recognize him now. She eyed the trembling George and smirked. “It seems like you set a trap and have been waiting for me to show up.”

Seeing that they were already busted, George said with a quivering voice, “Ms. Lane, it wasn’t me! I didn’t want to say those things either, but he has a gun!”

Ignoring his excuse, Hesper sneered and said, “Really, Mr. Halwart? If you didn’t give the order, would your staff produce those problematic machines? All of you are the same, so stop pretending to be innocent.”

After that, Hesper turned around to look at Nathaniel. “It really has been a long time since we’ve seen each other, but if possible, I hope we won’t meet again in the future.”

Nathaniel couldn’t help but feel a pang of hurt at her cold demeanor. When he pushed George to the side, something fell to the corner from George’s body.

Getting to his feet, Nathaniel walked toward Hesper.

“Why do you have to be so heartless? We used to be best friends. I like you very much, so you’re the last person I’d harm,” Nathaniel said. He stretched his arm toward Hesper, attempting to help her tidy up her hair like he used to in the past. However, Hesper turned her head sideways and avoided his hand.

Hesper’s expression remained stoic. “If your definition of not harming me includes actions such as hurting my child or scheming against my family, being liked by you is a terrifying prospect.”

Nathaniel paused, considering his words carefully. “I can choose not to harm you, but the condition is that you aren’t one of the Lanes.”

Hesper did not know what he meant by that, but she was in no mood to argue with him. “I must take George with me today. I hope you won’t stop me.”

“I’m sorry, but I cannot allow you to proceed,” Nathaniel spoke gently but firmly. “I’m here to put an end to the Duval Group once and for all, or else it will cause me trouble in Halwanest.”

“What do you want?” Hesper frowned. “While it’s true that your parents died on a mission, the Lanes may not be entirely responsible. Have you ever questioned the truth behind their deaths? And Benjamin...”

“That’s enough,” Nathaniel cut her off. His usually calm and gentle demeanor disappeared as he stared fixedly at Hesper. “You know, Hesper, sometimes I really despise you.”

“I feel the same way about you,” Hesper retorted.

She did not want to waste her time with Nathaniel anymore, but before she could utter another word, Nathaniel spoke up, his voice thick with surprise. “I didn’t expect Renee to send the location so quickly. Even Myriade couldn’t intercept it. It’s such a shame that our reunion has to end so soon.”

Nathaniel lowered his face, his affectionate eyes were now filled with sadness. “I really didn’t want to hurt you. I never instructed 013 to attack you.”

Hesper met Nathaniel’s gaze and said, “What’s the point of explaining this now? You’re a madman. Both Matt and I trusted you, believing you were our friend, yet you used us as pawns in your revenge scheme. You don’t deserve anyone’s affection because you’ve never truly cared for anyone.”

Nathaniel remained silent for a moment before admitting, “Perhaps you’re right.”

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Nathaniel figured that he should not waste anymore time and picked George up from the floor, surprising Hesper. She never expected him to be so powerful despite having a frail appearance.

“See you next time, Hesper,” he said as he walked out the door. Renee quickly walked in and checked if Hesper was injured. Seeing that she seemed to be fine, she breathed a sigh of relief.

“Where’s George?” Renee asked.

Hesper shook her head and said thoughtfully, “There’s no need to chase after them. We won’t be able to catch up.”

Although she was disappointed that the evidence she had obtained was taken away, Hesper did not give up. “Let’s search here first. Judging from how cunning George is, I don’t think he’d leave himself without a way out.”

“Okay.” Hesper and Renee split up to look for more evidence. However, there were no documents in the office, so Hesper turned her attention toward the laptop on the table.

Renee also looked over and frowned. “I heard that Daybreak has someone who’s an expert in information technology. I’m afraid they’ve already deleted everything.”

“Let’s take it back first and have a look,” Hesper said, picking up the laptop from the desk. “Let’s leave this sh*thole first. The phone signal seems to have been restored.”

Renee looked down at her phone and saw that the signal had indeed been restored. Isaac had sent many messages, and the last one was two minutes ago, saying that he had arrived at the door.

In the next second, Isaac appeared downstairs, calling out Hesper and Renee’s name loudly.

“We’re here!”

Hesper waved her hand, and Isaac breathed a sigh of relief upon seeing that they were both unharmed. Rushing up the stairs, he asked, “I was so worried when I received the message... Are you guys okay?”

“We’re fine. It was Nathaniel,” Hesper responded, shaking her head. She had a mixed expression as she added, “Let’s head back for now. Don’t tell Matt what happened today. I know what I’m doing. I don’t want him to worry.”

“Sure.”

Holding the laptop in her arms, Hesper arrived at the hospital. While she knew it was not ideal to seek Renfrew’s help in this situation, she could not think of anyone else who could recover the data on the laptop that Myriade had deleted. Neither the technicians at Lane Holdings nor the Duval Groups could do it.

Despite his deteriorating health, Renfrew appeared spirited when Hesper made her request. He nodded and said, “I’ll give it a shot. Let me take a look first, Mommy.”

After Hesper handed him the laptop, Renfrew examined it intently. He initially nodded, but then shook his head. “The data had been deleted thoroughly. Although I’m familiar with Myriade’s techniques, there’s no way to recover the deleted files.”

Hesper felt disheartened. Then, Renfrew added, “However, I noticed some traces of file transfers in these documents. There should be a backup of these files on a USB drive.”

USB drive!

Hesper took a metal USB drive from her pocket and said, “This USB drive fell off from George. Let’s take a look.”

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When Nathaniel pushed George to the floor, Hesper noticed that something had fallen to the corner. So before she left, she went to search for it at the corner and found this USB drive.

Due to its small size, Nathaniel didn’t notice it and Hesper ended up with it in her hands.

Excitedly, Hesper handed the USB drive to Renfrew and exclaimed, “Quick! Let’s see if the files are in it.”

“Don’t use this laptop.” Renfrew closed George’s laptop and said in a serious manner, “There’s a chance that Myriade is still monitoring it. If the contents of the USB drive are deleted, there will be no way for you to get what you want, Mommy.”

Hesper quickly withdrew her hand, feeling a bit scared. She was indeed too impatient. If Renfrew had not reminded her, she might have lost the evidence in the USB drive.

Hesper would not be so careless in normal times. Renee lowered her head. Although Hesper kept on insisting that she had already moved on from Rickard, her actions belied her feelings.

Renee sighed, but now was not the time to dwell on these issues. Since Nathaniel was behind this, they must not let him have his way.

After getting another laptop, Renfrew searched the USB drive and found a folder containing confidential files from Halwart Factory. Renfrew quickly searched and finally found a folder containing recordings.

“I knew it... There’s no way George would leave himself with no way out.”

With her headphones on, Hesper was able to hear George and Nathaniel’s conversation clearly, where they discussed framing the Duvals and intentionally altering the factory’s data to cause the machines to malfunction. These details were sufficient evidence to prove the Duvals’ innocence.

Nathaniel had intended to bring down both the Duvals and Lanes, for he knew Hesper needed the machines for the Paradise Project. By causing the malfunction, he could harm both the Duvals and Lane Holdings’ branch. It was a killing-two-birds-with-one-stone tactic. However, he did not anticipate that the Paradise Project was lucky enough to escape the fate, giving Hesper enough time and freedom to investigate the matter.

‘Luckily...’

Hesper was somewhat relieved. If there were also problems with the Paradise Project, it would be the end for them. Neither she nor Rickard had the time and energy to investigate the truth at Halwart Factory. By the time others realized the problem and rushed over, the people from Daybreak would have gotten rid of the people in Halwart Factory, leaving no evidence behind.

As she listened to the familiar voice belonging to Nathaniel on the recording, Hesper froze and the realization that Nathaniel had once again deceived her hit her. He was attempting to hurt her again, regardless of the reason.

“Alright, I’ll send the recordings to Benji. They should know what to do,” Renee said, pulling Hesper out of her thoughts. Hesper knew that Renee did not want her to think too much, so she nodded. “Alright, I’ll leave this matter in your hands. Besides, I also heard on the recording that someone intentionally leaked the machine’s data. Check with Benji and see if they have any leads.”

“Yes, Ms. Lane.”

Renfrew obediently listened by the side as Hesper gave her instruction to Renee. As Hesper tended to Renfrew, she felt guilty for being preoccupied with work and not being present when he was ill. “Do you blame me for not being there for you while I was working?”

“No, Mommy!” Renfrew reassured her, shaking his head. “I know you think about me every day, so how could I be angry with you? I’m not worried at all.”

“I’ll definitely find a way to cure you, Renfrew. I promise.”

The more understanding Renfrew was, the more uneasy Hesper felt. She rubbed Renfrew’s head and promised, “I’ll definitely find a cure for you, Renfrew, no matter what the cost.”

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Rickard acted rapidly after he received the recordings from Hesper, and a statement was released by the Duval Group within half an hour. The statement claimed that the incident was a malicious act of commercial competition and that they had handed over the key evidence to the police. Additionally, they offered a remarkably high compensation to the victim’s family.

*

As the situation began to calm down, the stock prices stabilized, and Benji finally breathed a sigh of relief. “We really owe it to Ms. Lane this time.”

If it weren't for Hesper's quick response and confrontation at Halwart Factory, it would have been difficult for the Duval Group to resolve the crisis so efficiently. The company's market value had already dropped significantly in just one morning, and the consequences could have been unimaginable if the situation continued.

The group of reporters refused to leave, but it was no longer a problem to chase them out of the building. Benji went downstairs to get rid of the reporters while Rickard handed a new contract to Hesper.

Hesper's response was prompt and official.

[Hesper: I'll give you a reply after consulting with the legal department, Mr. Duval.]

Although her response was official and they were communicating through a screen, Rickard could still sense a hint of resentment in her words and he could not help but chuckle wryly.

Even though Hesper had acted because the Paradise Project needed their machines, it was undeniable that she had helped them a lot this time.

As a way of thanking Hesper for her help, Rickard prepared a contract with a reduced amount, almost as if it was a loss-making deal.

After he had finished dealing with the company and Hesper, Rickard's gaze turned cold.

“The reporters have already left.” When Benji returned, he saw Rickard's cold expression and asked directly, “Do you want to go back to the ancestral mansion now?”

Since they were both preoccupied with dealing with the company's crisis, they hadn't had time to address Julie and Sophia's situation. As a result, Rickard ordered someone to send Sophia back to the Duval ancestral mansion where both Sophia and Julie were under house arrest.

Despite the troubles caused by Julie and Sophia in the past, Rickard overlooked them as they were minor. However, their latest offense of stealing

crucial company data was the last straw that broke the camel's back, as they nearly destroyed the Duval Group.

Their stupidity not only brought disaster to themselves, but to others as well.

"How's my grandfather doing? Is he mad at them?" Rickard inquired.

Benji shook his head and responded, "Mr. Duval Sr. is fine. When the butler called me earlier, he mentioned that Mr. Duval Sr. let out a sigh and said he would wait for you to return before making a decision. Other than that, he didn't say anything else."

As they arrived at the Duval ancestral mansion, Rickard noticed a Lincoln car parked in the garage.

"What is Hesper doing here?" he asked.

"Huh?" Benji was initially confused until he spotted the car. "Oh, isn't that the car Ms. Lane often uses?"

Rickard's expression turned sour, and Benji trailed behind him. He did not know why Hesper would come to the Duval ancestral mansion during such a tumultuous time, but he hoped she wouldn't exacerbate the chaos that had already befallen the Duvals.

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When Rickard and Benji entered the mansion, they found Hesper and Ernest chatting happily on the couch. Meanwhile, Julie and Sophia were kneeling in front of the wall. As soon as they heard someone come in, they turned their heads towards Rickard.

"You're back." Ernest waved his hand at Rickard. "Come here and have a seat."

Hesper ignored Rickard. Benji felt a suffocating atmosphere even from several steps away and was reluctant to approach this apparent battlefield.

“What are you doing here?” Rickard asked Hesper.

Hesper offered him a smile and leaned against Ernest, saying, “I missed Grandpa and came home to take a look. Is there a problem?”

Rickard fell silent, knowing well that Hesper was here to create trouble. However, with Ernest’s fondness for her, there was little he could do. Rickard knew that one of the reasons Ernest ordered Julie and Sophia to kneel on the side was to teach them a lesson, while the other was to help Hesper get her revenge.

When the realization hit him, he let out a sigh, feeling helpless. Wendy arrived with some tea, welcoming him back. “It’s good to have you back, Mr. Duval.”

“Thank you, Wendy.” Rickard took the tea from her as Hesper sat quietly on the couch, seeming to have nothing to say.

“Well, now that everyone is here, let’s talk about the incident today.” Ernest put the tea on the table and asked Julie and Sophia to come over. He then looked at Rickard. “I won’t comment on this incident. I’ll leave the decision up to you.”

“Grandpa, I…” Rickard began.

Before Rickard could say anything, Ernest interrupted. “You’re better equipped to handle this situation than I am. I’m an old man, and such incidents take a toll on my aged brain, so I believe it’s best for you to make the decision. Besides, you appear to have a better understanding of the matter than I do. I am curious as to why you are still hesitant to do so.”

Ernest’s response was evasive, leaving Rickard with the understanding that he had to make a decision that day.

He looked over at Julie and Sophia, who immediately pleaded for forgiveness in soft tones, acknowledging their wrongdoing. However, Rickard had heard such apologies too many times before, and he sensed that they were not sincere.

Rickard had never been close to Julie or Sophia, as they had hardly spent any time together since he was born. To him, they were essentially strangers with familial ties.

As their family, he should not make a hasty decision, but as the head of the Duval Group, he had already made a firm judgment in his heart.

“Do you have any suggestions, Ms. Lane?” Rickard asked.

Hesper, who had come to observe the proceedings, was taken aback when Rickard sought her input. She was momentarily at a loss for words but then chuckled and turned to Julie and Sophia.

“Why don’t we throw Sophia off a building? I’m curious to see if Julie would jump after her,” Hesper suggested with a laugh.

“Are you insane, Hesper!?” Sophia was aghast at Hesper’s words. “You’re a monster!”

Meanwhile, Rickard simply frowned in dismay.

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Before Rickard could say anything, Hesper blinked twice, looking surprised. “Monster? I can’t bear that... I was just joking. Please don’t tell me that you guys really believed it?”

Ernest’s expression turned cold.

“It’s nothing, I was just joking. I didn’t expect you all to take it so seriously. If Aunt Julie really jumped with her, I would be very confused as well.” Hesper’s icy gaze swept over Julie and Sophia for a moment before she smiled again.

“It seems that nobody likes my suggestion very much. Since this is your family matter, I think I should just keep silent,” Hesper said ruthlessly. She had been acting like a well-behaved girl in front of Ernest, so Rickard did not expect her to say such a thing in front of him. He instantly felt a headache and regretted letting her speak earlier.

Sophia was terrified. Although others thought Hesper was joking, she had seen the way Hesper looked at her. Sophia did not doubt that she really wanted her to die.

“I’m sorry, Dick... I’ll do whatever you say. You want me to get married, right? I’ll get married. I’ll leave Genecity and never come back!” Sophia threw herself at Rickard, clutching his leg tightly as tears streamed down her face. “I’ll leave Genecity right away. Please don’t hand me over to Hesper!”

When Julie heard what Sophia said, she was so shocked that she almost fainted. She pulled her daughter back.

“What the hell are you talking about? He’s your brother. He won’t let anyone hurt you!” Julie had put all her hope on Sophia. She was hoping that her daughter would marry into a good family so that she could live a wealthy life as well.

If Sophia really left Genecity, she would be left with no one to depend on!

Unexpectedly, Sophia struggled desperately and was determined to leave Genecity. Finally, the two of them fought each other.

“Enough!”

Hesper was enjoying the show when she was startled by Rickard. Her hand holding the tea cup trembled, and she looked at him with a hint of reproach in her eyes.

In reality, Sophia could be considered a corporate spy in this incident, but her family background spared her from imprisonment. Honestly, Hesper had not expected Rickard to be so lenient towards his mother and sister.

“You’re my mother, so I’ll go easy on you,” Rickard said as he looked at Julie. “But you have interfered with my life more than once and done many inappropriate things to my wife. Moreover, you have engaged in gambling and sold important company information... Even if you’re my mother, I can no longer let you stay in Genecity anymore.”

‘Wife? Does he know what he’s talking about?’ Hesper turned her head to look at Rickard, feeling annoyed. She had never heard him admit that she was his wife during the time when they were legally married, but now he was saying that she was his wife?

Julie looked at Rickard in disbelief.

“I’m your mother! I gave birth to you, and now you’re chasing me out of the city because of a stranger?!” Julie pointed at Hesper’s nose and shouted angrily, “I knew it! It must be you! You’re a doombringer! Whenever you’re with Rickard, nothing good happens!”

Hesper shrugged nonchalantly. She had learned to ignore comments like this. She did not know if Julie had been living a good life for too long, as she was not as good at scolding others as she used to.

Frowning, Rickard said, “This has nothing to do with Hesper. Both you and Sophia have touched the company’s bottom line. That was a living man, and he died because of you.”

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Sophia had already given up on resisting and was prepared to do whatever it took to avoid Hesper. So, when she was presented with the opportunity to leave Genecity, she eagerly agreed and tugged at her mother’s sleeve, urging her to refrain from speaking further.

However, there was no way Julie was going to accept it. She was so close to achieving wealth and glory. If she left Genecity at this point, even with the monthly allowance Rickard would provide, it wouldn’t compare to what they were currently enjoying.

Once Rickard made up his mind, he was not going to alter his decision.

“Since you both used to be addicted to gambling, I won’t give you too much of a living allowance per month,” Rickard said, shattering Julie’s illusion. “I’ll give you approximately \$1,500 per month. It should be sufficient for both of you.”

“What?!” Julie stood up abruptly, exclaiming in disbelief. “\$1,500 is barely enough to cover a few meals! Are you planning to let us starve to death?!”

It would be better to kill them than let them live like that!

“I’ll give you \$1,500 per month. Take it, or leave it,” Rickard reiterated, calmly standing his ground. He had done his research and knew what he was offering. “You should be grateful that I didn’t ask you to return the \$450,000 that you owe.”

“Alright. Let’s do as Rickard says.” Ernest, who had been silent all this time, broke the deadlock and spoke calmly. “I know about everything that happened in the past. Hesper was mistreated, and there was nothing I could do to help her. However, it seems to me that neither of you have learned your lesson despite everything, so I have the responsibility too.”

Hesper was initially happy to witness the Duvals fighting each other, but Ernest had shown unwavering support towards her, making her feel bad. She hugged Ernest and said, “I know that you love me the most, Grandpa. You didn’t do anything wrong at all.”

Ernest patted her hand, and Rickard nodded in agreement.

Sophia and Julie were taken away, leaving only Rickard, Ernest, and a teary-eyed Hesper in the living room. She suddenly felt an unreal sensation, as she found it hard to believe that Sophia and Julie had been taken care of. She realized that she may never see them flaunt their power in front of her again, but for some reason, Hesper did not feel as happy as she imagined.

It felt like a recently healed wound, so she felt exhausted and aggrieved.

“Hesper, I made your favorite fish tonight.” Wendy walked over, patted Hesper’s head, and smiled with her gentle eyes. “You haven’t been home in so long. Let’s have a good meal at home.”

*

Meanwhile, Matthew was in the study room sorting out the contracts that Hesper needed. He had been busy looking for a suitable bone marrow donor for Renfrew during this period and only had time to return to the mansion that day.

After ascertaining that he had all the contracts, Matthew lowered his head. Just when he was about to put them into a brown paper bag, a photo fell out of a folder.

The photo seemed aged since its back had turned yellow.

Matthew frowned and squatted down to pick it up, flipping it over to the front. It was a picture of two people standing side by side. Then Matthew was stunned, and he looked at the photo more closely.

He recognized one person in the photo as Benjamin. When his parents passed away, Matthew was still very young and had no impression of them. However, there were still many photos of Benjamin in the house, so Matthew was able to recognize him immediately. There was also a woman standing next to him in the photo. Her eyebrows were curved and she was smiling. She was a beautiful, gentle-looking woman.

Most importantly, she looked a lot like Hesper!

“How is this possible?”

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