

Chapter 1001

I had almost forgotten about Ann. For a fleeting moment, I looked at Amy, didn't know how to answer her. After a moment's silence, I said, "Amy, maybe Ann didn't come to the city. She's married."

"No. Ann said she wouldn't marry that idiot. So, she will definitely make an effort to escape. Ms. Stovall, will you help me to find Ann?"

Amy sounded very insistent on finding Ann. It seemed like she was sure that the latter would escape from her husband.

Unwilling to strike Amy with the truths, I nodded in response and replied, "Of course. I will get someone to look for her. And, I will bring her here if I find her."

Amy nodded when she heard my words. "Yay! I don't need to worry that Ann will get lost when she comes to the city anymore," said Amy as though she had gotten a load off her mind.

She was so sensible that it made me feel sorry for her. Holding her in my arms, I said, "Amy, we have to go to your hometown to visit your parents. Can you go with me?"

At that, she looked at me with her eyes wide opened and queried, "Ms. Stovall, are you trying to send me back? Am I not good enough?"

I shook my head. "No. You are not registered as a citizen yet. So, I want to bring you back and ask your parents to help in this matter. After you've registered as a citizen, you can have the surgery legally."

Upon hearing that, Amy nodded with a clueless face. The way she looked at me told me that she couldn't understand much of what I had said. At that, I smiled at her while thinking about Hailey.

The next day.

I had told Cameron that I wanted to drive myself to Amy's house, which was located in the countryside, beforehand, and she was worried after knowing that. In the morning, just as I stepped out of my house, I saw Boris standing beside the car in the yard.

He was an old man, but his appearance was well-maintained, so he looked middle-aged. When he saw me, he flashed me a faint smile and said, "Mr. Moore was worried about you. He wanted me to bring you there."

I shrugged. "I should have known this."

Without giving more thought to it, I got into his car with Amy. When he realized I brought many clothes and shoes, he frowned and queried, "Will we be gone long?"

I shook my head. "No. These are the clothes that Ashton bought for me every season. I rarely wear them. When the season changes, he will ask his men to send them to the recycling centres. So, I am thinking of giving them to Amy's mother so that the clothes won't go to waste."

Then, he started up the car and said, "You're so attentive, but that woman doesn't deserve it."

Upon hearing that, I frowned slightly and asked with a tone of disapproval, "Do you think that she is by no means a good person because she is cruel to her daughter?"

He nodded as he took a peek at Amy and replied, "She treats her children so badly. She is not fit to be a mother."

Sighing slightly, I said, "When I was a kid, I lived in an alley in R Province with my Grandma. In the alley, there was a family of four. The man of the house was very hardworking. At that time, people in R Province relied on farming to make a living. Every day, the man left early for work and returned home late. Maybe because he had overstrained himself and his body became weak, one day, he fainted at the lake that supplied water for farming. That lake was not very deep, but he drowned. After his death, his wife left with their son, leaving their daughter at R Province. Back then, I didn't understand why that woman did this. The little girl was more thoughtful than the little boy, but why didn't that woman bring the former along? After that, the little girl lived with her grandmother. Her grandmother was a harsh person. She always beat and scolded the girl and starve her. I had seen her crying under the bridge a few times. My Grandma always asked me to bring her some food. But, that was not a good idea because sometimes, she would still have nothing to eat.

"One day, she borrowed some money from me. I gave her all the money that I had, just the two coins. I thought she wanted to buy something that she really wanted. But, never would I have expected that she had bought pesticide with it. She brought the pesticide to her father's grave, drank it, and lay in front of the grave. I remember that she said this to me back then, 'Some people are born without a choice. Everyone wants to show their best side to others, but to some people, life itself is a struggle. They can't even make the effort to put on a show.'"

Hearing that, Boris remained silent. However, after we got on the highway, he suddenly spoke up, "Your parents didn't stay by your side these years. Did you hate or blame them before?"

I was shocked when I heard his question because I was under the impression that he wasn't a person who liked to ask about people's internal affairs.

Then, I smiled faintly and replied, "It's impossible that I don't hate them at all. But more than the hatred is gratitude. I'm grateful that I was raised by Grandma, and I'm glad that

I can marry Ashton. Although our lives are not the best, I am willing to strive hard to live. For these reasons, I should thank them for giving birth to me. Humans are no saints. I think they abandoned me for a reason. Maybe they faced some difficulties back then. So, I don't blame them anymore."

Chapter 1002

Staring at me, he said with remorse, "I am responsible for the incident that happened back then. I shouldn't keep it from Mr. Moore. If he learned of your existence, maybe he would bring you back to the Moore family."

To me, that was all in the past now. Hence, I let out a faint smile and replied, "Boris, there is no such thing as 'if' in this world."

Smiling, he took a quick glance at Amy, who was sleeping on my legs, and said, "This child will have a different life after encountering you."

I shrugged in response and remained silent. It was too early to jump to conclusions now. No one could tell if this was a good or bad thing.

After about eight hours, we arrived at the village. At that time, all of us were exhausted. Although we departed early in the morning, it was late when we reached the destination.

The cold spell hit the village in December, causing a drastic dip in the temperature. Just as I got out of the car, I shivered because the cold wind blew toward me. After a while, Amy woke up and opened her eyes slowly. Looking at the environment that she was familiar with, she said, "Ms. Stovall, we've arrived."

I gave her a nod and grabbed hold of her as we walked toward her house with the bags. Her house was not too far from our car, but the road was not easy to walk. Luckily, there was no rain recently. The soil was dry and hard, so it wasn't that bad.

By the time we reached Ronald's house, the sky was already dark. Hence, I couldn't find the entrance. Looking at the dark house, I was a little worried. It's already nine! Why there's no one here? Where did they go?

Luckily, Amy was familiar with this place. She stood outside the door and called out to her parents. Not long after, someone opened the door slightly. A meek voice was heard coming from the inside, "Amy, is that you?"

After a short pause, Amy replied happily, "Ava, it's me! Ms. Stovall brings me back." At that, she rushed into the house happily.

There was no light in the house. Hence, Boris turned on the torchlight. When he saw a seven-year-old child, he furrowed his brows unwittingly and queried, "Where are your parents?"

Ava held onto Amy's hand and replied, "They work at the farm and haven't come back yet."

At that time, the light from the torch lit up in the house, and I could see a pot of vegetable stew on the cement floor. The dish looked like it had turned cold. Besides, the fire in the coal stove that provided heat to the house was almost extinguished.

I turned to look at Ava, who was trembling from the coldness, and asked, "It's so cold, and you're only wearing so little? Why don't you burn more coal?"

She tugged on Amy's arms and touched the latter's clothes in envy as she replied, "Mom told me not to waste the coal when they are not home. I just need to cover myself with the blanket to keep warm. I will start the fire after they come home."

Hearing that, I was overwhelmed by an inexplicable feeling. I think that doesn't seem appropriate, but I did not say anything else. Then, I asked Boris to take all the food from the car and bring her a heavy jacket. After putting on the jacket for a while, she took off the jacket and kept it.

I was confounded. "Why don't you wear it? The weather is cold. You'll catch a cold if you don't wear a few more layers."

She shook her head and answered, "I want to save it for Christmas. If I have new clothes for Christmas, no one will make fun of me anymore this year."

At that, Boris stood up and passed her the jacket again, and said in a serious manner, "Just keep it on. Ms. Stovall will give you some new clothes too for Christmas."

Upon hearing that, Ava was excited and put on the jacket as instructed.

About half an hour later, a sound came from outside. Ronald and his wife came back from work. Seeing that, Ava started the fire to heat the dishes up while Amy helped the former to add the firewood.

On the other hand, Boris and I walked out of the house. At the sight of us, Ronald was stunned before he could react. After that, he wore a wide grin and nervous expression on his face and queried, "Ms. Stovall, what makes you come here? Did Amy cause trouble to you? Don't worry. Everything can still be discussed!"

I frowned at what he said. It seemed that to them, the children were always wrong. Looking at him, I said, "Don't think too much. Amy didn't cause any trouble to me. We are here to discuss something with you."

Ronald's wife listened to our conversation as she unloaded the dried grass and radish from the car. The children were helping her too.

Upon hearing my words, she heaved a sigh of relief.

As night had fallen, I didn't tell him the purpose of my visit until the next morning.

The next day, Ronald's wife got up very early.

She brought a huge basket and left the house with her children, saying that she wanted to collect radish at the nearby field.

Ronald knew I had something to discuss with him. So he woke up early too. I said bluntly to him, "It's like this. I knew you haven't register Amy as a citizen. So, I want you to get citizenship for her, and we will pay for the fee. This will definitely bring benefits to you and Amy in the future."

Chapter 1003

He was stunned. "Why did you insist on registering Amy as a citizen? Are you planning to use this to threaten me in the future? All the while, the kids who leave our village had never been registered, but their families got paid. I heard if I were to register my child

and got forced to sign some agreement, I won't get a cent even if you harm my child! I'm not a fool!" he declared.

I was speechless at how ridiculous his conclusion was. Frowning, I told him in all seriousness, "Don't you worry. I will pay you what you deserve. I want you to register Amy as a citizen for her own future. She's your daughter. You won't want her to stay in the mountains forever, right? Without a proper status, she wouldn't be able to survive out there."

Ronald remained unfazed. "No worries. She will marry someone from the neighboring village. Why would she need to go out there? This is her life, her fate. I won't register her as a citizen. If you disagree, just send her back to us."

I couldn't understand what was going on in his mind. After a brief hesitation, I offered, "If you agree to register Amy's birth, I'll pay you an extra fifty thousand. Your son is in high school, right? I believe you want him to succeed in the future. If he is capable enough, I can offer him a job so he can make your family proud. How does that sound?"

Clearly, my offer caught his attention. He paused before answering. "No. The girls are going to earn money for me. Well..."

"Damn it! I'll teach her a lesson the minute I find her!" someone was cursing outside. Soon, Ronald's wife hurried in frantically. "Frit's family are saying that Ann killed him after a few days! She's missing now. The Wolfsens are coming to our family to demand an explanation!"

Ronald stood up in shock. "Killed him? Who's dead?"

“Who else? Her mentally retarded husband! Hurry, shut the door. They are coming to kick a fuss up!” Ronald’s wife locked the door to their house hastily.

Worry spread across Ronald’s face. As he sweated profusely, he muttered, “What should we do? She killed him, so they won’t forgive us. We’ve already spent the money. What should we do?”

Seeing how anxious her husband was, tears rolled down the woman’s cheeks. “Damn you, Ann Weeder! You’re nothing but trouble!”

That piece of news took me by surprise. I thought Ann would give in instead of killing her husband and escaping from that household. Looks like I’ve underestimated her determination.

As a commotion sounded outside, the villagers gathered around Ronald’s house brandishing weapons such as sticks and knives. They yelled, “Ronald Weeder, your daughter killed my son! Come out now! I want my son back! If you don’t come out, I’ll burn your house down!”

The deceased’s parents and the rest started hurling curses at Ronald. As they criticized Ronald’s doings, I pieced together bits and pieces of accusations I had overheard.

The deceased’s name was Fritz Wolfsen. He was born with an intellectual disability, so he had a low IQ as an adult. As he was in his thirties without a wife, his parents collected and borrowed around one hundred thousand to buy him a wife from the neighboring village—Ann Weeder. The reason they were willing to spend that much on her was so she could give birth to Fritz’s offspring, but to their dismay, she kicked up a

fuss and even accidentally killed Fritz. Immediately, they hurried to Ann's family to demand an explanation.

Ronald was scared out of his wits. He sat in the chair and bit his filthy fingernails nervously.

Meanwhile, his wife urged, "What should we do? Huh? We've spent all the money they gave us, so there's no way we can pay them back now. That b*tch just spells trouble!"

Ronald had spent a few hundred thousand so his son could go to school in the city.

No wonder he rejected my fifty thousand earlier as it was too little for him. Initially, I wondered why he was so frugal after selling his daughter. It was because he had spent all the money on his son.

I didn't see his son even though I had been here twice. Clearly, he had sent his son away before I even got here. I could understand why, though. Every parent wished only the best for their children. They hoped their children would lead a different life from theirs.

Chapter 1004

As the yells grew increasingly impatient outside, Ronald trembled in fear while holding his hands together.

“What should we do? Are they really going to burn our house down?” his wife inquired uneasily.

Ronald was at a loss now. His gaze landed on me as he implored, “Ms. Stovall, please help us!”

I pursed my lips instead of replying at once. Seeing how jumpy he was, I parted my lips and spoke. “I can help you with one condition. Register your kids as citizens of the country. If you agree, I can pay the money at once.”

Upon hearing my words, he hesitated. His terrified wife took my arm anxiously, but Boris pried her hand off and furrowed his brows. She staggered back in fear before pleading, “Please, Ms. Stovall. You’re our only hope. We have no other choices. Please help us!”

Boris’s lips thinned as he shot them a warning glare. “I believe Ms. Stovall has made herself clear. Nothing is free in this world.”

Ronald pondered for a while before saying, “Ms. Stovall, we’re from different worlds. You might think I’m exploiting my children and destroying their future, but this is their fate for they are born here. No one can change that fact. I can register Amy as a citizen, no problem. But I won’t agree to register my other kids’ birth. You need to give me your word that you’ll pay me in full for Amy after I registered her birth. After that, you can do anything you want. I won’t ask questions.”

I frowned upon hearing Ronald’s answer. Suddenly, it occurred to me that he wasn’t as stupid as I thought he was. He seemed like a foolish but greedy man, but actually, he had his own plans. He was playing the innocent card. If it got leaked out, he would be portrayed as a farmer who got tricked by a businessperson. Everyone would pity him.

Ah, I shouldn’t have underestimated him. I flashed a slight smile. “Why are you so confident that I would agree to your condition?”

After calming down, he explained, "Rich people like you don't like trouble, so you will agree. A few hundred thousand is nothing for you. People like you are willing to spend money to solve the matter. Even if you refuse to pay, never mind. Mr. Dumphy doesn't know about you coming here to ask me to register Amy's birth, right? If I inform him about your arrival, your daughter's operation might be delayed further. I believe you know it better than I do."

Ha!

I chuckled. He's right. I shouldn't have thought he was a fool. Shrugging, I replied, "Well, looks like you have the perfect plan."

He stared at me. "Ms. Stovall, that's all I have to say. We know what we both want, so we should be honest with each other."

Ronald was right. Alas, he didn't know I hated being strung along. Immediately, I responded, "You're wrong. Yes, Amy's bone marrow is a match for my daughter, but she's not the only choice I have. I can afford to wait for another suitable donor to come along. Your situation is different, though. Trouble is already knocking at your door. If you said nothing and accepted my offer, I wouldn't have said anything. But since you mentioned it, I don't feel like going along with your plan. I'm not the one in hot water, anyway."

The people outside were trying to break in by now. The wooden door, which was originally flimsy, fell to the ground after a few burly men threw themselves against it. The villagers outside promptly rushed in with their weapons.

Ronald's wife almost fell to her knees as she pleaded, "Ms. Stovall, please save us. We have no other choice. If you agree to help us, we will agree to your condition. Please!"

I pursed my lips as I couldn't help but sympathize with her. Boris stopped me and stood in front of me in a protective stance. "She can't help you. Yes, we can afford the money, but your daughter had murdered someone. It's useless to ask for her help."

Realization dawned on me when I heard what Boris said. Ann had killed someone, indeed. If it was something else, I could help them with the compensation. However, someone had died here.

Earlier, Ronald's words caused me to focus on the money instead of the matter itself. Fritz's death couldn't be settled by offering compensation.

The Wolfsens wouldn't give up easily as their son was dead.

I heaved a sigh of relief. If Boris hadn't mentioned it, I would've forgotten about Fritz's death.

Chapter 1005

Ronald's expression was grim. "Ms. Stovall, I agree to register my children's birth. I will agree to any condition you state."

With a frown, Boris replied before I could. "No need!"

As we were talking, the crowd scurried into the house. Boris pulled me aside and stood in front of me protectively. As the house was tiny, only a few men stormed in.

“Ronald Weeder, why are you hiding? Your daughter killed someone. Hand her to us before we take action!”

“Let’s not waste time. Find that b*tch now so she’ll pay for killing Fritz!” With that, the men started ransacking the house.

Soon, the house was in shambles. The farmers couldn’t find Ann, so they changed their target to Ronald instead. As Ronald’s house was too small, they brought him out.

Immediately, the crowd surrounded Ronald’s family and began abusing them verbally. Fritz’s mother would’ve given Ronald a beating if someone hadn’t stopped her.

The loud commotion caused the crowd to grow bigger and bigger. Some tried to persuade the Wolfsens to discuss instead of resorting to violence; some supported their decision to avenge their son’s death. It was utter chaos. Ronald and his family were slumped on the ground in dejection.

Life was never perfect, but this hurricane rendered me helpless. Ronald knew there was nothing else he could do to turn the situation around, so he said nothing and allowed the crowd to curse and hit him.

Suddenly, someone grabbed my arm. I looked down and realized it was Amy staring at me pitifully.

“Please, Ms. Stovall. Save my parents,” she begged.

I knitted my brows. “Amy, I can’t.”

Kindness was rare nowadays as most people had ulterior motives for doing something. I wasn't far off. Hearing my answer, Boris sighed in relief and said, "You can't interfere. Remember, you're still pregnant. Don't get yourself into trouble."

I knew that well, hence I rejected her without hesitation.

After venting out their anger, the Wolfsens stopped beating the Weeders up. They sat down and demanded arrogantly, "A life for a life. Ronald Weeder, your daughter isn't here, so you should pay us back. We don't need the money back. In return, give me your second daughter."

Ronald's eyes widened as he roared, "Kurt Wolfsen, how dare you?"

Kurt scoffed. "Your daughter killed my son and escaped. I'm being nice cos I didn't kill your entire family to avenge my son. Why would you think I don't have the guts to do so?"

Ronald's wife hurriedly implored, "Kurt, please spare us. You can have my daughters if you want. My husband will find Ann for you so you can avenge your son. Don't hurt him, please."

My brows furrowed up as I could neither understand nor accept the woman's peace offering.

Kurt seemed pleased at her words. "Your second daughter is fourteen, right? My son's dead, so she shall give birth to my children. Find that b*tch for me. Otherwise, I swear I'll kill you, Ronald Weeder."

With that, he stood up and gazed at the girl protecting her siblings. "You're Alma, right? Your parents gave you to me. Come, follow me home and bear me a son."

The girl, who was still a teenager, blanched as she shook her head profusely. She didn't have a clue what was going on, but her instincts told her a more horrible fate would await her at the Wolfsen household.

Alas, Kurt ignored her wishes and dragged her away by the hair. Immediately, she bawled and cried for her parents to save her.

At the sight, my frown deepened. Clearly, they couldn't be bothered about their children.

"Wait a minute!" It was Boris. He looked straight at Kurt and inquired, "How much did you pay them?"

Kurt Wolfsen was a plump and lecherous man in his forties. He eyed Boris suspiciously before answering, "One hundred thousand. What's wrong? Did you take a liking to this girl, too?"

Boris' lips pressed together in disgust. "I'll pay the money. Release her!"

Suddenly, Kurt guffawed before his face contorted. "Oh, you're trying to be the hero here. Mister, my son died. I want this girl so she can pass on my family name. Are you trying to take her away from me? If you took a liking to her, you can have her. But Ronald has other daughters. Do you think you can save them all?"

Chapter 1006

This was a tricky matter. Kurt was right. If Boris insisted on saving Alma, Kurt could get another daughter from Ronald. After all, it was Ann who got his son killed.

Boris' frown deepened. He was smarter than me, so he knew he should stay out of this.

I grew frustrated. "You can take her away, no problem. I'll call the cops right now. Ann Weeder killed your son, so the cops will arrest her. But if you take any of the girls away or kill someone here, the cops will arrest you, too. We're not here to interfere in your business, but we can still call the cops."

At once, a murmur erupted in the crowd. Many of the villagers didn't register themselves at birth and were without birth certificates. If the cops were to come, many of them would be forced to register themselves and pay a fine.

Kurt sneered. "Sure, go ahead. I'm not scared of you. I'm the one on the suffering end, anyway."

My threat failed to scare the shameless man. Perhaps he thought I wouldn't dare to call the cops.

I stared at Ronald, who huffed, "You're a bully! Ms. Stovall, call the cops. I'll admit to everything."

His reaction took me by surprise. I didn't know he would come to his senses that quickly. Whipping out my phone, I announced, "Indeed. We shall leave this to the cops."

If the cops were to deal with this, neither side would have the upper hand. Both Kurt and Ronald knew that well. They were considering their own benefits.

Indeed, before the call got through, Kurt spoke. "Well, what do you want? This has nothing to do with you, so I want you to stay out of this."

I smiled and nodded. "Don't worry. I too want to stay out of this. However, just like you, I wish to settle this matter ASAP."

Kurt pursed his lips silently and waited to see what I would say next.

After a brief silence, I continued, "It's illegal to take any of the girls with you as they are underaged and protected by the law."

Kurt narrowed his eyes. "My son's dead, and I spent the money without getting anything in return. Are you asking me to do nothing? Do you think I'm a fool? Or are you too innocent?"

Instead of refuting his words, I offered, "Of course not. If you trust me, why don't you listen to my suggestion?"

"Sure, go ahead." He nodded.

"Death cannot be reversed. Your son's dead, and we cannot bring him back to life. The culprit who killed your son should be punished, but as you said, Ann had escaped. Now, we should sit down and come out with a solution in peace. I think the Weeders should give you back the one hundred thousand you paid them. That's the least they should do."

Kurt scoffed. "I'm not in need of money."

I flashed a grin and added, "That has nothing to do with whether or not you need money. About your son's death, I am in the opinion that you should hand all evidence to the cops so they can arrest the culprit. The Weeders can only offer monetary compensation."

With an ugly scowl, he retorted, "Money? How much can Ronald compensate me? My heir is dead! How should he compensate me? By giving me his son?"

Ronald hung his head low and dared not utter a word. Instead, it was his wife who offered, "If you wish, you can have my daughter. She can bear your son. You're only in your forties, Kurt. My daughter might be able to give birth to your son soon. What do you think?"

I got the shock of my life. After what I said, the woman still hadn't changed her mind about giving her daughter away. It didn't cross my mind that she would willingly let her daughter bear a middle-aged man's child.

Ronald said nothing and appeared to agree silently.

Meanwhile, Kurt glanced at the woman, who had remained silent the whole time by his side. She was glowering at Ronald's wife viciously.

Chapter 1007

Suddenly, I realized why Kurt hesitated to take the girl away earlier though he clearly wanted her. He calmed down and listened to me because he was afraid of his wife.

Silence ensued. I thought the woman would disagree, but she uttered, "Sure. My son's dead, so your daughter shall bear Kurt's child. If she gives birth to a son, she shall be free. Otherwise, she needs to stay in our house until she gives birth to a son."

Ronald's wife nodded profusely and offered a smile. "No problem. She can bear children and satisfy your needs."

Her words nearly drove me crazy. I was about to speak when Boris took my hand and stopped me in time. He whispered in my ear, "You can't do anything. The ending will still be the same. The Weeders won't return the money."

Stunned, I glanced at Alma's pale expression as a sense of hopelessness washed over me. No matter what I do, nothing would change their fates.

Seeing my reaction, Ronald's wife offered me a polite smile. "Ms. Stovall, thank you for your concern. This is our family's business, so we won't trouble you."

Huh, how rude.

Indeed, I should stay out of their affairs.

In the end, Kurt led a devastated Alma away. Peace was restored in Ronald's household.

I didn't know what to say by then.

"Ms. Stovall, thank you for your help. We can register Amy's birth later, but you need to pay me a hundred thousand first for that. It isn't easy to bring her up. Also, since she's going to extract her bone marrow, her health would be affected, especially her kidney. There are many things she can't touch. She will have difficulties getting around, too. In fact, she'll be useless. For this, I want an extra five hundred thousand. This isn't expensive, and I believe you can afford it," Ronald declared. "Hopefully you can give me the money after I register Amy as a citizen today. Everything you do after this has nothing to do with me."

I fell silent at his selfish statement. I knew he was right in doing so, but that only heightened my distaste for his selfishness.

After a long pause, I replied, "I'll pay you one million to adopt Amy. We shall deal with the adoption process, and Amy will be my daughter. She has nothing to do with you from now on. No matter what she becomes in the future, you aren't allowed to bother her, get it?"

Ronald was taken aback by my request. He let out a sudden laugh. "Sure, no problem. I didn't expect she would be worth this much." He repeated, "Sure, of course. Let's go now."

I thought he would at least hesitate, but contrary to my expectation, he seemed delighted. My gaze landed on Amy. She was still a kid, but she had seen the entire exchange with her sisters. The scar would remain in their hearts forever.

Next, Ronald followed us to the town and dealt with the necessary procedures. "Ms. Stovall, the money," he reminded me once we were done.

I pursed my lips and gestured for Boris to hand him the briefcase full of banknotes. Ronald was clearly excited to see the money and left without looking back.

Amy was standing right beside me as she watched Ronald leaving with his wife on his motorcycle. They didn't even bother saying goodbye to their daughter.

I took her hand and bent down to wipe her tears away. "Amy, you shall stay with us from now on. Is that alright?"

She gazed at me and nodded with a hint of maturity in her expression. "Okay!"

She fell silent after that.

I brought her to my car, and Boris started the engine. Throughout the entire journey, Amy didn't crane her neck to stare at the scenery in wonderment like she used to do. Instead, she sat quietly without showing any emotion.

I parted my lips to comfort her, but the words died in my throat.

Hence, I stayed silent.

After some time, I noticed we hadn't entered the highway yet. Feeling doubtful, I queried, "Boris, did you take the wrong route?"

In response, he glanced at the rearview mirror and explained, "Ms. Stovall, someone seems to be tailing us."

With a frown, I turned at my shoulder and noticed a grey van behind our vehicle. Surprised, I asked, "How long has the van been tailing us?"

Chapter 1008

"Since we left the village. I thought it was a coincidence, but they are still behind us even though I took a longer route," revealed Boris.

"Could it be Ronald's family?" I asked though it wasn't likely. Ronald wasn't someone who'd do this.

Boris shook his head. "I don't think so."

After a pause, he sought my approval. "Should I lose them?"

Shaking my head, I replied, "No need. Let's just take the normal route home and see how long they will follow us."

Amy remained silent on the way home. I texted Cameron to ask about Summer's condition. Her reply stated that Summer was fine after undergoing chemotherapy. As Summer was then sent to the disinfection chamber, Cameron could no longer take care of her.

I wanted to call Ashton, but I was feeling nauseous from the long car ride. Hence, I gave up on the thought.

Finally, we arrived in A City at midnight. Boris brought a sleeping Amy to her bed and left some instructions before leaving.

I walked him to the door, where he glanced around carefully and reminded me. "If anything happens tonight, give me a call at once."

Clearly, he was referring to the van which tailed us back then. I nodded and watched as he left. After making sure all the doors were locked, I went to Amy's room and made sure she was still sound asleep.

Back in my room, I was about to call Ashton when a call came in. It was from Ashton. When I answered the call, his voice rang out. "What happened? Why were you unreachable the whole day?"

"Boris and I went to Amy's hometown. The line was bad there, and I've just reached home. What about you?" I explained as I made my way to the balcony.

"Mm, it's a little tricky. Nothing serious, though. Joseph is in A City. You can contact him if any problem arises. I'll be back as soon as I'm done."

I glanced out of the window before closing it. "I've adopted Amy legally. Ashton, I still want Summer to get that surgery in the open."

Ashton fell silent at the other end of the line. I thought he was mad at me, but he spoke. "Scarlett, have you ever thought about this? What is the difference between you, the child's parents, and Armond?"

We were the same. Amy's parents and Armond were after money, while I had my own goals.

I tried to convince him. "I adopted Amy, so she'll be treated as my own. Her future will be different now. Just like Summer, she will have both the Moore family and Fuller family behind her. She will have a better future with us."

His reply took me by surprise. "Mm, sounds great."

I was startled, but he immediately added, "But did you ask the child what she wants?"

Knitting my brows, I felt rage bubbling up inside me. "Ashton, Summer isn't your flesh and blood, so it's normal for you to disregard her. I know you think I shouldn't hurt an innocent child, but sorry. I'm a selfish person. I brought Summer up, so I can't bear to see her in pain. I need to do this."

After a long silence, he sighed and replied, "Scarlett, Summer has always been my daughter. I too want to save her life, but we need to make sure how our decision will affect the future."

He might be right, but I could only place my hope on Amy for now.

Ashton was against the idea of Amy donating her bone marrow, so we were at odds.

The next day, I woke up from a restful slumber.

My pregnancy probably made me sleepy. When I opened my eyes, I could hear someone talking in the yard.

After I pulled the blinds open, I spotted Amy in her pajamas, her hair uncombed. She was talking to Nora, which was outside the door. I hadn't seen Nora for some time.

I was confused to see her. Shouldn't she be in K City with Armond now? Why is she back here? I greeted her through the windows before changing my clothes to go downstairs.

The door could only be unlocked using my fingerprint, so Nora couldn't come in. She only walked in after I unlocked the door, her hands full of breakfast and fruits.

Chapter 1009

She was rowdy as usual. "Why did you keep putting your phone in silent mode? I've been calling you the whole morning. How are you recently? Do you feel exhausted? You only woke up after ten."

I glanced at my phone in shock. Indeed, it was already half-past ten. "Have you been here for a long time?"

She nodded. "I've waited for a long time. If I hadn't called Ashton who told me you are still living here, I would've thought you moved away. By the way, who is this girl?"

She walked toward the villa and asked about Amy. I helped her with her stuff and answered, "She's Amy, my adopted daughter. I haven't given her a proper name as of now." I asked her, "I thought you went to K City? Why are you back here?"

“It’s all Armond’s fault!” she complained. “It took me some time to find him in K City, but he told me to come to A City instead. He must be crazy! Is it fun to fool me?”

She opened a box of durians. The smell was too much for her, so she immediately complained, “I can’t believe you like durian. It’s so smelly.”

I was quite surprised. “How did you know I like durian?”

She pouted. “Armond told me you are pregnant, and I was to come to spend time with you. I didn’t know what you like, so I asked him. He said you might like durian, so I brought some along.”

“Didn’t Armond come to A City, too?” I was taken aback.

Nora’s lips thinned. “He’s here. He said so himself, but the house next to yours is empty. I don’t know where he is. Is he that busy? Did something happen to him?”

It was clear that Nora had no clue what was going on. I didn’t press on and brought Amy to the bathroom to teach her how to wash herself up. I washed up and sat down to enjoy my breakfast.

Nora must’ve been bored as she extended an invitation to me. “Are you busy later? If you have time, wanna come shopping with me?”

I shook my head. “I need to go to the hospital. My parents brought Summer here as she needed to be operated on. I’m too busy to go shopping with you.”

“Oh, I see,” came her disappointed reply. “Alright. We’ll see. By the way, have you seen Hailey recently? She won’t pick up my calls. What happened to her?”

Shaking my head, I said nothing. Nora differed from me as she was used to leading a comfortable life. She had neither faced any difficulties nor wanted something really bad in life. Perhaps it would be a good idea to be as heartless as her.

As Nora was free, she followed me to the hospital. I had decided to carry on with the surgery even though I would bear the guilt of hurting Amy for my entire life.

Cameron and Zachary were elated to find out that Amy could donate her bone marrow legally. The surgery's date was set for a week later. Amy was too weak, so the doctor wanted her to rest for a few days in advance. Afraid I would be too exhausted, Cameron hired a caregiver to take care of Amy.

There was nothing for me to worry for they would take care of the children well.

On a Sunday midnight, I received a call from Nora.

The background music was deafening, so I guessed she was in a club or something. Her voice came over the line. "Scarlett, can you come to pick me up? I can't drive. My whole body has gone limp."

I hurriedly agreed. "Where are you? Send me your address. I'll be there soon."

She mumbled in response. I hastily got changed and drove out. It took her some time to send me the address—the famous Imperial Hotel in A City.

Nora liked to have fun, so it was normal for her to be in a nightclub. She was usually alert, so I wondered how someone managed to drug her tonight.

When I arrived at Imperial Hotel, Nora was lying in the club's lobby. There were a few attendants by her side. It seemed that someone had ordered them to keep watch on her.

One of the attendants recognized me and hurried over. "Ms. Stovall, you're finally here. Ms. Oberick is about to tear the place down."

After racking my brains, I still couldn't figure out who this woman was. I asked hesitantly, "Do you know me?"

The woman nodded with a polite smile. "Mr. Murphy showed me your photo and told me to wait for you here."

Huh? My confusion deepened. Armond's here? Then why didn't he send her back himself and asked me to come instead? What is he up to?

Chapter 1010

I glanced at Nora, who had passed out in her booth. My head was throbbing as I came up with a plan. "There are hotel rooms above, right?"

This was a high-end nightclub, so most of the patrons were rich and powerful. The rooms above were designated so they could continue having fun upstairs in the privacy of their own rooms.

The attendant nodded, but she seemed stumped. “Yes, we have rooms, but they have been reserved in advance. Some of the rooms are prepared for our VIP clients and aren’t accessible usually. I’m afraid I can’t get a room for you right now.”

I pursed my lips. Looks like Armond earns a lot of money here. I pondered slightly before asking, “Does Mr. Murphy have his own room, then?”

“Yes, but...”

I dialed Armond’s number, and he answered my call almost immediately. “What’s wrong?” came his soft voice. “Are you missing me at night? Do you need me to accompany you?”

Feeling disgusted, I retorted, “I need a room in Imperial Hotel for Nora. It’s too late for me to bring her home. I’m still pregnant.”

His light chuckled sounded over the line. “Looks like I did the right thing by asking you to pick her up. Let me talk to my staff.”

Looking up, I glanced at the attendant before handing the phone to her. “Armond wants to talk to you.” She accepted my phone hastily with both hands. “Hello, Mr. Murphy!”

The attendant listened to what Armond had to say attentively. Shortly after, she returned my phone to me. “Ms. Stovall, please follow me!”

She proceeded to order the two other attendants. “Bring Ms. Oberick to No. 2806, the presidential suite on the twenty-eighth floor. I’ll help Ms. Stovall check in now.”

The two attendants brought Nora into the elevator while I followed the other attendant to the front desk so she could process my check-in. After Armond talked to the lady, she seemed to be extra careful around me.

I wasn't bothered at all. While we were waiting for the elevator to come, a few tipsy men joined us. This was, after all, a nightclub and a hotel in one building.

The attendant seemed to recognize them and greeted them politely. One man took her arm. "You're Rita, right? I heard you're a manager here. Didn't they say there's a virgin here tonight? I didn't see her anywhere. What's wrong? Are you looking down on us?"

The other men chimed in drunkenly. Rita flashed an awkward smile and replied, "You've gotten the wrong information. That girl is here as a waitress. She's just a peasant from the countryside. I'm afraid that you'll despise her."

"Oh?" The man chuckled. "So what if she's from the countryside? Over ten years ago, we lived in the countryside, too. Peasant girls are strong. Don't forget to bring her to our room later so we can have fun together."

Rita nodded hastily. As the doors opened, she bade goodbye to them and led me out.

After bringing me to my room, she flashed a smile and bade farewell to me. I heard her talking to someone on her walkie-talkie. "Logistics, send Ann Weeder to the sixteenth floor. A client just asked for her. Remember to tell her to be obedient."

I was about to close the door when I heard the familiar name. Stopping in my tracks, I looked out, but Rita had already left.

Sixteenth floor?

I entered the room to see Nora sleeping soundly on the bed. She had passed out, and I couldn't wake her up.

As she seemed to be okay, I took the room card and headed to the sixteenth floor.

After I found the room, I stood outside. The rooms on this floor were karaoke rooms. There were girls heading in and out of the rooms. The girls who came out were obviously wounded with stacks of money in their hands, while the girls who headed in were empty-handed.

I couldn't see what was going on inside the room, so I came out with a plan. After getting prepared, I pushed the door open and staggered in. "Friends, come on. Let's drink!" I yelled, pretending to be drunk.

The people in the room froze immediately when I barged in without warning. When they realized I was drunk, someone stood up to chase me out.