

Chapter 1011

I narrowed my gaze and scanned the room carefully. There were around five to six men in their forties accompanied by at least a dozen hostesses.

Ann stood out among the girls. It wasn't because she was pretty. She had lived in the village until a while ago, so her skin was slightly tanned. Her head was lowered as she studied her surroundings anxiously.

Today, she was dressed in a sexy and revealing outfit that seemed too large to be hers. She kept covering her chest and tugging at the short hem of the minidress.

The contrast between Ann's snowy white chest and her tanned neck was too obvious. She was also quite busty. After putting makeup on, she was both innocent and attractive.

"Are you crazy? What are you doing here? Scram!" A man grabbed my arm to tug me out forcefully.

I stood up and grumbled in response. Upon meeting my gaze, Ann's pupils constricted in disbelief. She hurriedly regained her composure and looked down.

I allowed the man to drag me out of the room and slumped down on the ground. The men couldn't be bothered and left me alone. After they closed the door behind them, I took out my phone to call Joseph. I explained everything and sent him the address.

The clients in the nightclub enjoyed thrilling stuff. I stood at the door and watched as a few men brought an enormous fish tank around a meter long into the room. Immediately, my heart sank.

I leaned on the door, but I couldn't hear anything. As the attendants came out, I stopped them and grabbed one of the attendant's arm. "Hello, may I know why you brought the fish tank into the room? It sounds fun. How exactly does that work? My husband enjoys thrilling stuff, too. We are here tonight to have some fun, but couldn't make up our minds. Why don't you give us some recommendations?"

The attendant I stopped was stunned, while the others laughed out loud. "Madam, you're here with your husband? How unusual."

I flashed a shy smile. "Ah, married life is too boring. We're here to spice things up."

The attendants thought I was a loose woman. "The clients inside are wealthy men from A City. They like to play games to abuse people. Madam, this isn't for you. Mr. Hanks likes to see people on the verge of dying. He will ask someone to enter the fish tank. We don't recommend that as it's too dangerous."

Their explanation caught me off guard. Why would someone like to see someone struggling on the brink of death? What kind of fetish is that?

I was still in a daze when the attendants walked away. At once, I pushed the door open and stalked in. The men were standing around the fish tank curiously, so no one noticed my arrival.

A middle-aged man standing beside the fish tank placed a stack of bills on the table. "This is fun. Ladies, will you play a game with me? As long as you please me, you can have one hundred grand."

The girls fell silent as they knew what Dillan was like. The man grew impatient and frowned. "No one? Why are you standing here, then? Imbeciles!"

I knitted my brows at how rude the man was.

Everyone in the private room dared not say a word. Dillan scanned the crowd and noticed Ann, who was cowering behind a few girls. "You! Come here!" he ordered.

At once, everyone stared at Ann. She trembled in fear and went to Dillan meekly.

"Go in there for a while, and the money will be yours. Entertain us while we're in a jovial mood." Dillan placed the money in front of her.

Ann hung her head low. I was standing quite a distance away from her, so I couldn't see her expression though she was obviously shaking. I thought she would cry and asked the man to let her off.

Suddenly, she spoke. "Two hundred thousand!"

"What?" the man responded in shock. Everyone else was also baffled at her reaction.

Ann repeated. "Two hundred thousand. I'll go in if you agree."

After a brief silence, Dillan broke out into laughter. "Interesting. Sure, two hundred thousand. You shall spend five minutes in the tank. Don't worry. If you die, I will give you double the money to pay for your lowly life. That shall be enough."

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With that, he took out another stack of bills from his bag.

Ann took one last glance at the money and climbed into the fish tank. The minute she entered the tank, the men shut the lid.

Dillan flopped on the couch and lit a cigarette to enjoy Ann's performance.

The fish tank was only one meter long, so it wasn't that big. Ann covered and held her breath while someone else started the countdown.

Someone started singing to liven things up. The other ladies came to Dillan and entertained him.

Among them, I was especially conspicuous. Someone spotted me and asked, "When did you come in again? Who are you? Why are you here?"

I grinned and replied, "I'm enjoying myself. This is too exciting not to watch!"

"Please leave!" Dillan uttered icily.

I scurried to him and said, "You must be Dillan, right? I'm so lucky to have run into you. Come, let's drink."

With that, I poured myself a glass and finished it in one gulp.

Initially, the man was confused, but he gradually relaxed. "Oh? You know who I am?"

I nodded profusely. "Of course. You're famous in A City, Dillan. Everyone knows who you are!"

As he was no longer suspicious, I glanced at Ann who was holding her breath in the fish tank. "Dillan, you're so adventurous, huh? I don't think that woman is good at holding her breath. It's too dangerous for her to hold her breath for five whole minutes."

"Ha!" the man scoffed. "I'm not afraid. I've already paid for her life."

Ann was at her limit. Bubbles appeared in the tank as she struggled before opening her lips to breathe in. Alas, she only gulped the water down.

"Pfft, less than two minutes. That's no fun at all," the man uttered disinterestedly. He glanced at Ann and forgot about me.

Seeing how Ann was struggling, I panicked instantly. However, I couldn't find a way to save her. I was pregnant, and any mistake would cause our lives.

If I insisted on saving her alone, I would be dragged into this mess as well.

At that thought, I held my phone tightly and prayed that Joseph would arrive soon.

"I don't think she knows how to swim," a woman sitting beside Dillan spoke worriedly.

Dillan gazed at a struggling Ann, his eyes shining with excitement. He ignored everyone else beside him.

Ann was about to drown, so I couldn't wait any longer. "Dillan, she's about to drown. Should we ask someone to release her?"

Dillan merely glowered at me. "Scram!"

At once, two men grabbed my arms and led me toward the door. I immediately yelled, "Get your hands off me? I called the cops before I came in. They will be here soon!"

Dillan glared at me menacingly. "You called the cops?"

I nodded as I watched Ann gradually going limp in the tank. "You'd better release her now. Otherwise, you'll go to jail!"

The man found my words hilarious and burst out laughing. "Did she say I'll go to jail? Ha! No one has ever warned me that I'll go to jail!"

The rest laughed along as I pursed my lips in confusion.

"Drag the girl in the tank out, then throw this lady into the tank. If the cops come, tell them I'm here. If they refuse to comply, tell them to talk to Derek Watson in the police station."

"Yes!"

When Ann was brought out, she was already unconscious. I dashed over to see how she was doing, but the men took the opportunity to push me into the tank. I immediately choked, but before I could scream for help, they pushed my head into the water.

After swallowing the icy water, my throat was hurting. I had to swallow the water if I wanted to breathe. "H-Help..."

I tried to scream for help, but the burly man holding me captive refused to budge. Soon, my body went limp as my stomach began throbbing dully. My eyes widened at the thought of my child.

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"There's blood! She's bleeding!" An ear-piercing scream sounded from a side while my head was pounding. My baby...

A man laughed. "How thrilling! I never thought I'll get to toy with a pregnant woman. This is so exciting!"

The excruciating pain inflicted upon my body made me feel suffocated and I passed out, feeling weak.

Death would always come unannounced. In midst of my coma, I dreamt of a lot of things and met many people. The darkness was endless and I couldn't find my path. All I could hear were people's voices around me, but I couldn't escape from the world I was trapped in.

Finally, I regained my consciousness. Opening my eyes, my vision was blurry as my surroundings were bright. I blinked my eyes and figured out I was in the hospital later on. I tried to glance around, but as soon as I moved, immense pain crept up my body and it felt like my body had fallen apart.

Hiss. I couldn't hold back my squeals, as it was too painful.

Immediately after, I heard rushed footsteps approaching, while someone was shouting, "She's awake! Quick! Call the doctor." The voice was from a stranger.

After getting used to the surroundings, I snapped out of my daze and finally recognized the girl who walked into the room. She was Ann.

When the girl saw me, her eyes were red. "You're finally awake... Finally."

I opened my mouth to express my thoughts, but I only felt pain in my throat. Soon after, a group of people came in. They were Cameron, Zachary, and Joseph. I heaved a sigh of relief when I noticed Ashton wasn't there. Hearing what Ann said, I initially thought I had been in a coma for long.

Cameron's eyes were swollen from crying, and she wore a pain-etched expression looking at me. I reached out to tug on the hem of her shirt and shook my head, assuring her.

Realization dawned on me suddenly, and I thought of my baby. I touched my lower abdomen gently and felt pain spiraling from within. Unsure of what happened to my baby, I looked at the people standing beside me, and asked, "Is my baby... okay?"

Everyone had different reactions, but none of them looked at me in the eyes. Cameron started crying with muffled sobs. Zachary sighed. Ann lowered her head and stayed silent while guilt and sorry were written all over Joseph's face. I was stunned for a moment, but I knew what they meant. My baby's gone.

As the bitter truth sank in, pain washed over my heart like waves of a tsunami. My body started trembling as I felt suffocated. I pursed my lips and tried to hold back my screams, but it only made me look contorted.

Tears rolled down Cameron's cheeks vigorously as she hurriedly took my hands in hers. "She heaved a sigh and pleaded, "My dear, don't be like this, please. Your body hasn't recovered yet, so don't do this to yourself. You'll get better. Please, I beg you. Don't hurt yourself."

My body reacted to the sorrow on its own, so I couldn't control it. I clenched my fists tightly, and my head was throbbing in pain as if it was about to explode.

Overwhelmed by grief, I heard someone screaming, "She's biting her tongue. Quick! Stop her!"

I didn't even notice I was biting my tongue. I couldn't even feel my body. It was just pain all over.

Joseph called the doctor immediately, and a few doctors rushed into the room. When they saw the situation, they panicked. "Hurry! Give her some tranquilizer."

Right when the doctors were busy injecting the tranquilizer, a loud bang could be heard from the entrance and the door was swept open. A figure dashed to me, pushing Cameron and Zachary aside before taking me into his arms. His voice sounded hoarse and low. "Don't be afraid. I'm here. I'm with you."

It was Ashton. The pain in my head started dissipating as I gazed at him in a daze. It seemed he had a lot of work in Moranta, given how he seemed to have lost weight.

Perhaps it was because of the tranquilizer that I was getting tired. I wanted to look at the man I had longed for, so I tried to keep my eyes open, but I fell asleep.

The days I was consumed by grief felt like forever to me, but I made peace with it and days went by quickly. It was during this period of recovering from sorrow that I realized nothing lasted forever, and we would lose the things we held dear no matter what. There was an old saying that went, if we could bear losing everything, we wouldn't have any regrets in this life.

The saying was true. After being discharged from the hospital, I looked at the bright sun in A City and started accepting everything calmly.

Ashton parked the car and looked at me. "What would you like to eat? Let's eat something before going back."

I nodded and thought for a while before answering, "Seafood!"

The man furrowed his brows slightly, but nodded soon after.

In the seafood restaurant, I went pale as I stared at the water tanks. Ashton looked at me in concern and asked, "Should we eat something else?"

I shook my head and insisted, "No need. It's great here." Staring at the sea creatures swimming and crawling in the tanks, I turned to Ashton and asked, "Do they serve live food?"

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Ashton frowned at my question before giving in and nodded. He led me to a table and ordered some live food.

When the food was served, I looked at the fish and crabs on the table and turned to the waiter. "Can you get me a sharp knife and a spoon?"

The waiter looked at me with an odd expression and nodded before giving me what I wanted. I made sure the crab stayed in place before tearing off its legs and shell. Using the knife and spoon, I dug out the flesh bit by bit. The flesh of hairy crabs wasn't that delicious, but it tasted alright.

To enjoy dissecting living creatures was rather extreme. However, Ashton didn't stop me from torturing the sea creatures. Instead, he just watched as I continued eating my meal.

After a while, I grew tired and placed my cutlery down. I looked at Ashton and said, "Back then, I've always thought of sending the people I hate to prison to make them suffer for their sins. Now that I think about it, sending them to prison isn't enough."

Ashton looked at me and asked after a while. "What do you want to do?"

I pursed my lips. "Do you still have him locked up?"

"Yes." The man nodded, and I was truly delighted when I heard his answer.

Smiling faintly, I said, "Ashton, you'll let me do as I please, right?"

He pursed his lips and kept quiet while I smiled and didn't ask him again.

Then, he got up and said, "Come. Let's meet that person."

Ashton drove me back to the villa in the suburbs. After he stopped the car, Joseph came out from the villa and looked at me with guilt written over his face. "Mrs. Fuller, how are you feeling?"

I smiled faintly and nodded. "I'm feeling great. Is he inside?"

Joseph hummed a reply before leading me and Ashton into the villa.

Dillan wasn't a big shot. He only got rich because of his family assets as his family ran coal mines. Later on, his sister married a civil servant. That person was Derek. All these years, he used money to gain his status and power, and since things like this weren't uncommon, so everyone got used to it.

Derek invested a sizable amount of money into building his status, so he got promoted and had a rather high income. While Dillan, a good-for-nothing, could only rely on Derek to live a high life in A City. Just because the man had money, he could carry out his absurd hobby and humiliated many girls.

The man was tied to a chair with his head hung low and his face was beaten to a pulp as blood dripped onto the floor. I clicked my tongue and looked at him. "Dillan, what a coincidence!"

He lifted his head and looked at me. Squinting his eyes, he tried to focus his vision and saw that it was me. Immediately after, he widened his eyes in surprise and pleaded, "I'm sorry. I didn't know you're Mr. Fuller's wife. I'm really sorry. Please spare me, I didn't do it on purpose. If you let me go, I'll give you any amount you want. Please, I beg you."

I scoffed at his disgusting behavior. Looking at the grey sky outside, I smirked and looked at Joseph. "Mr. Campbell, is there an open swimming pool here?"

The man nodded and glanced at Ashton's sullen face. "There is. It's at the rear house."

"That's great!" I spoke as I watched Dillan. "Since we don't see each other that often, let's play together."

With that, I headed toward the rear house. Ashton glanced at me as if he knew what I was going to do. "Keep him alive."

I raised a brow at him and headed toward the swimming pool. I found myself a comfortable place beside the pool to sit and watched as Dillan was dragged toward me. "Dillan, you must like to play with water. How about having fun in the pool now?"

Dillan looked at me in wariness. "What are you planning to do?"

I shrugged. "What can I do? I'm just a woman." With that, I glanced at the two men behind him. They received the signal and dragged him toward the pool before pushing him into the water.

Watching him letting out muffled screams in the water, I was emotionless. He was tied up, so he couldn't save himself from drowning. At some point of seeing him struggling in the water helplessly, I started laughing when I saw his pathetic face.

After a while of struggling in the water, Dillan started sinking to the bottom. Upon seeing this, Joseph advised, "Mrs. Fuller, he's going to die."

I smirked and folded my arms as I looked down at the man in the water. "Yeah, take him out of the water and get a doctor here. After he's awake, throw him into the water again. Make sure he remembers the scent of fluorine and the feeling of being suffocated."

Joseph nodded and gestured for the men to pull him out of the water.

After watching the show, I lost all interest to continue. When I got up, Ashton came to me and blocked my path. "Where are you going?"

I was rather exhausted. "I'll rest here for a bit. Dillan will be awake after a while, so I'm planning to toy with him later."

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Ashton frowned slightly, but he didn't say anything.

Ann showing up here was rather a surprise to me. I didn't plan to meet her, but since she came to me, I had no choice but to let her in.

I was slightly taken aback at meeting her this time. She had been visiting me at the hospital, but I didn't really pay attention to her. Now that she was here in front of me, I collected my thoughts and looked at her closely.

How should I phrase this?

She was rather different from the first time I saw her in the cattle sheds. At that time, her eyes were filled with timidness and she looked dazed. However, this time, it seemed her timidness was replaced by determination.

I looked at her and stayed silent for a while before asking, "What's the matter?"

She lifted her gaze at Ashton, and her eyes flickered. I was all too familiar with her gaze. The girl must be stunned to see the handsome man. I knew how attractive Ashton was, so I didn't bother to stop her.

Ann turned to me and pondered for a while. "Ms. Stovall, thank you for saving my life. I'll remember what you did for me, and I'll repay your kindness."

I pursed my lips and waited for her to continue.

As expected, she fell silent for a while before continuing, "Ms. Stovall, I'm grateful to you. I know your daughter is waiting for surgery, and I heard you adopted my sister. I hope you can treat her well and hopefully she can help your daughter."

I frowned as she was beating around the bush. Pursing my lips, I urged, "Stop wasting time and get to the point."

She froze and took a deep breath before kneeling down on the floor. "Ms. Stovall, I know I shouldn't look for you, but I don't have a choice. I don't know who I should find except you."

I furrowed my brows. "Get up. I cannot accept your kneel." To be honest, most people disliked people kneeling down in front of them and begged them for something. I was not one of those lunatics who enjoyed being worshiped by others.

She got up from the floor and said, "Ever since Mr. Fuller cleared the Imperial Hotel, my friend was taken away. I figured he might be sold off, so I went to the police, but they couldn't do anything about it. He had been in the Imperial Hotel for many years, so there's no way they can't find him."

Listening to her vague words, I furrowed my brows slightly in bewilderment. "Aren't you always living in a village? How do you get yourself a friend here so quickly? Didn't you kill Fritz? I think you misunderstood what I meant. Back then, I saved you because I have some questions to ask you. Fritz's body is still in the Wolfsen residence, so your sister could still be tortured. Ann, I don't think I'll help a murderer like you for a second time."

The girl was stunned and was at a loss as she looked at me.

Looking at her, I said, "Tell me. How did you kill Fritz and escape? Plus, how did you go to work at the Imperial Hotel?"

I wasn't that kind-hearted as she thought I was. Back then, I saved her because I had some questions to ask her. Seeing how she was humiliated by Dillan, I couldn't help but pity her. However, I paid the price of losing my baby. I could only blame myself for being foolish.

Ann pressed her lips and told me everything that happened these few days. She was taken away from Ronald's house to the Wolfsen residence and was forced to marry Fritz. She was reluctant, so she tried to commit suicide, but failed.

Then, she was sent to an old doctor's house in the village for treatment. She thought of ways to run away during the treatment period. However, she bumped into Fritz when she was about to escape from the village. He grabbed her while she struggled to break free. In midst of pushing and pulling, she accidentally pushed him down from the second floor. The man fell down in a head-to-ground position and died.

Ann knew she had to run away. Or else she would be dead. Hiding in the mountains for a few days, she took the offerings from the graves to curb her hunger. Later on, Kurt couldn't find her, so he went to Ronald's house looking for trouble.

Seizing the chance, she escaped from the village. Hidden away in the shadows, she saw everything unfold in front of her eyes. Alma was taken away by Kurt.

I pondered for a while before looking at her. "So, you're in the white van that followed us that day?"

She nodded and explained, "I stole some money from the Wolfsen residence and hired someone to follow you guys. I just wanted to know where Amy was. If I become successful in the future, I can reunite with her."

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I frowned slightly and asked, "Why did you think of working in the Imperial Hotel?"

She lowered her head and explained, "I came here alone. All I can do was to fill up my stomach so I can live. I've said it before. Some children who came to the city in the past

returned, but some didn't. For those who didn't, they were either dead or became the toys of the customers in Imperial Hotel. I wanted to live, so I had no other choice."

I asked, "What is the name of your friend? How old is he?" How depressing... Could it be that Armond forces them to work in the Imperial Hotel?

The girl said, "He is Jody. Jody was brought to the city at fourteen, as a wealthy family wanted to adopt him. But after meeting him, they felt he was too old, so they refused to take him."

"Does he not have relatives in the village?" I furrowed my brows in confusion. Aren't boys precious in villages? Why is he sent here?

Ann kept her head hung low. "He was sent to the village since he was young. After he grew up, Mr. Dumphy took him back to the city. Most of the girls working in the Imperial Hotel were from the orphanage, following Mr. Dumphy and his men."

I was puzzled. Why is the orphanage involved in this?

I looked at the girl and asked, "So you're asking me to help you look for Jody?"

She nodded. "Jody said that there were many illegal activities in the nightclub, so he wanted to quit the job. I went to look for him, but I couldn't find him anywhere. He must be trapped because he knew many things about Mr. Dumphy and his men. They'll torture him. Please, Ms. Stovall. I beg you. Save him."

The girl was putting her hands together and begging me for help, but I didn't promise her. I glanced at Joseph bringing Dillan, who was on the verge of death into the room, and smirked. "It seems I have some work to do."

Seeing how I didn't give her a response, Ann tugged on the hem of my shirt and started sobbing. "Ms. Stovall, please save him. If he's locked up by them, he'll die. Please, save him."

I furrowed my brows, as I was slowly getting impatient. Lifting my gaze at Ashton, I said, "Ann, have you heard of the law of conservation of mass? Saving your friend doesn't benefit me at all, so stop wasting your time on me."

Her eyes were reddened as she opened her mouth, wanting to say something. However, I didn't spare her any glance and walked toward Dillan. Looking at the pathetic man in front of me, I smirked. "I had always been nice to others, and I tried to help those in need. However, I figured that not only was my kindness useless, it got me into trouble as well. I was finally pregnant, but you took my baby away from me. All these days, I had been thinking of how to torture you to vent my anger."

Dillan looked at me with his fear-filled eyes. "Ms. Stovall, I didn't know you're pregnant. I didn't know you're Mr. Fuller's wife. I'm sorry. Please let me go."

"Haha!" I laughed out loud and raised a brow at him. "Let you go?"

People mustn't be too kind. I learned this after going through all sorts of ups and downs. I looked at him and grinned widely. "Dillan, do you know how it feels to lose the most important thing in your life?"

He shook his head and kept on begging me for mercy. I rolled my eyes as I was reluctant to hear the man's ongoing pleads.

Suddenly, I received a message from Boris. After replying to the message, I turned to Dillan. He was nowhere pitiful in my eyes, as he had to pay for his sins.

About five minutes later, Boris brought a woman into the room. There was a slight bulge in the woman's belly, so I figured she was five or six months pregnant.

When the man saw the woman, he struggled and yelled, "Why are you here? Go back home!"

The woman was startled by his loud yells. Scanning her surroundings, she looked at Dillan in fear and was at a loss. "Dear, what's wrong? What happened? Why are you..."

Suddenly, Dillan glared at me with anger and wore a serious expression. "What are you thinking of doing?"

I felt exhausted to explain everything to him, so I sat on the chair and looked at him coldly. "Your wife should experience what I went through. Besides, I'll give you the chance to experience the pain of losing your unborn child, which you waited expectantly. What do you think?"

The man widened his eyes at me and growled, "No! You guys can't do this. This is illegal. You can't do this."

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I felt like laughing. "You did many illegal things too." As I spoke my words, I glanced at Boris. "Boris, there's a pool at the rear house. Take this woman there and throw her into the pool."

Dillan started flailing around madly, but he couldn't do anything as he was pinned onto the ground by Joesph and the others. With his face touching the ground, he could only let out muffled screams in protest.

Boris took the woman to the rear house while the latter was crying and pleading for help from Dillan. Seeing how tears were flowing down Dillan's cheeks as he felt powerless, I didn't know why, but I felt amused as I smirked.

"Scarlett, do you really have to take it this far?" Ashton's voice sounded from behind. His voice was low as usual with a tinge of surprise.

I didn't want to explain, so I gave a brief reply. "He deserves this."

The sound of water splashing and ear-piercing screams of the woman came from the rear house. Upon hearing this, Dillan's eyes reddened with anger. "What do you guys want? Come at me and leave her alone!"

I felt amused as I looked at him. "Then what's up with you laying your hands on those defenseless girls? You were merciless to those girls you drowned in the water tank. Dillan, it's only been a few days, but it seems you've forgotten. Let me remind you. Your aquarium was dyed red with my blood. It's only fair that your wife's going to do the same to my swimming pool."

The man stopped struggling as he collapsed on the ground and broke down in tears. Everyone had a weakness. No one was strong enough to care for only themselves.

He crawled in front of me and begged, "I was wrong. Come at me with whatever you want to do. Please don't hurt my wife. She did nothing wrong. I beg of you, Ms. Stovall. Let my wife and the baby go. They knew nothing. I'll accept everything you do to me. Just spare them."

I pursed my lips and remained unbothered. Ashton glanced at Joseph. It was obvious that he was trying to hint at the latter to save the woman. However, I insisted, "Ashton, leave if you can't agree with my doings, but you can't stop me."

He looked at me with a cold, yet helpless expression. "Scarlett, the pregnant woman is innocent and you know that well. I understand that your hatred and I won't hinder you from doing whatever you want to him. However, I can't sit by and just let you become someone evil like him. Stop now. The pregnant woman did nothing wrong."

I pursed my lips and took in a deep breath. Looking at Dillan with determination, I announced, "Not only do I want your child's life, I'm going to take your wife's too. Everything that I have suffered, I'll make sure you go through them too."

Dillan broke down, while Ashton's eyes narrowed and looked at me with a pain-etched face. "Scarlett, you..."

I interrupted him and continued, "Tell me everything, and I'll think of sparing your wife. Don't think that the person behind you can protect you. You know it well, don't you? The fact that I can find your wife and take her here means that you're just a pawn waiting to be disposed of."

Dillan was stunned by my words. He stopped shouting and looked at me in shock.

I didn't mind how he looked at me, as all I wanted was information. So, I waited for him to tell me.

Ashton was taken aback. He turned to me soon after and asked, "When did you know all this?"

I shrugged. "Ever since I woke up in the hospital. Nora getting drunk, letting me hear about Ann and telling me the number of the private room; these consecutive events are too much of a coincidence."

After I was sent to the hospital, Nora didn't come to visit me. This meant that she was indeed drunk that night. I didn't know if she knew Armond's intention of laying out this trap, but now it seemed she had a vague idea of it.

Depressing screams came from the swimming pool and got more and more miserable as it went. Dillan started panicking as he looked at me with reddened eyes and shouted, "Tell them to stop. I'll tell you everything I know."

I pursed my lips and looked at him coldly. "Don't worry. She won't die that quickly. They'll stop after you're done talking."

Dillan hurriedly blurted out, "Mr. Dumphy's behind all of this. He instructed me to throw you into the water tank. I didn't know you're pregnant and only thought of choking you for a bit. I never thought things would turn out like this."

I glared at him as I was rather unsatisfied with his answer. Then, I sat on the chair and asked, "Who's Mr. Dumphy? I don't know him."

Dillan explained, "He's Brandon Dumphy. The general manager of the Imperial Hotel."

I was rather surprised. It seems Brandon's quite capable. Otherwise, Armond won't leave so many matters to him.

After keeping silent for a bit, I asked, "Do you know who's the boss of the Imperial Hotel?"

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He nodded. "I know, it's Armond from the Murphys in K City. That being said, he seldom goes to the Imperial Hotel. All of the things in the Imperial Hotel are handled by Brandon."

I nodded. "How much do you know about Brandon?"

He glanced at both Ashton and me before answering, "I don't know much. The reason I helped him was because of the copious amounts of money he offered."

I narrowed my eyes. "Are you still short on money?"

He shook his head. "No, but I don't want to have to depend on my brother-in-law anymore. I needed the money just so I could escape his grasp and finally be free again. My sister has suffered a lot being with him. I've been wanting to take her away from him for a while now."

I pursed my lips and stopped myself from prying more into his current situation. I gazed at Boris, who was standing outside by the pool, before uttering, "Boris, bring her in!"

Dillan let out a sigh of relief as he saw that the woman who was brought in unharmed. Her clothes were not even wet. He paused for a bit and glared at me with a surprised look. "You..."

I pursed my lips. "You can take her and leave now. The people outside must be quite flurried after waiting for so long. However, since I treated your wife with care, I expect you to return the favor by helping me out with something."

He looked at me vacuously and queried, "What do you need my help with?"

"Find a way to retrieve a kid named Jody from Brandon. It should be an easy task for you, right?"

Ann, who looked despondent before, suddenly stared at me with her eyes lit up. I took a glance at her before directing my eyes back to Dillan as I waited for his response.

Dillan nodded and replied, "Okay, I'll find a way to get that kid into your hands."

I nodded. "Okay, you may leave now!"

Dillan, who was all beaten up, took his wife and strode carefully toward the exit. Ashton walked to my side and wrapped his arm around my waist. "You should go back home and rest if you're tired."

I nodded and leaned on him as we walked out of the villa. After exiting the villa, Ashton stopped and turned around to gaze at Ann. "What do you plan to do with her?" he asked.

"Just let her be!" She can follow us if she wants to.

On the car, Joseph was driving while I was resting on Ashton's shoulder. I uttered softly, "Ashton, do you blame me?"

Our first child's death was an inevitable accident. However, our second child's death was caused by my negligence and incompetence. Even though I knew that it was perilous to go into the private room, I did it anyway. I was jejune enough to think that I could help Ann when I couldn't even protect myself.

He embraced me and gave me a few pats on the back to ease my emotions. "You don't need to blame yourself too much. A lot of things are predetermined by fate. Not to mention, this was all because of my inability to protect you. How can I pin the blame on you?"

I sighed as I knew that he was only trying to console me. Having pondered for a while, I uttered, "What is Armond planning to do exactly?"

He went quiet for a while before responding, "He wants the management right of the ports in Moranta."

I was confused. "I can't believe he would deign to do such a thing just to earn more money. Why is he so obstinate about this?"

He lowered his head to give me a kiss on the forehead before replying, "The profitability of the ports isn't the tempting aspect to own the ports. It's the authority to manage the

ports that makes it so tempting. With full authority over the ports, he'll have more freedom to do what he wants."

I drew my lips together. It's true that the ports are the gateways for exports and imports. If they are managed well, the profitable aspect wouldn't only limit to the ports themselves anymore. That's why Armond is targeting Ashton. If anything happens to Ashton, the Fuller Corporation will crumble. He would then achieve his goal.

No wonder he would make such a bold move. He's waiting for us to take the bait.

Out of the blue, the phone rang. Seeing that the caller was Cameron, I quickly picked up the phone. "Scarlett, where are you guys? Summer's illness is exacerbating. The doctor said that the cancer cells are spreading rampantly and so she needs to undergo surgery immediately. You guys must get back here now."

I was stupefied for a while before directing my eyes at Ashton. Ashton immediately turned to Joseph and instructed, "Go to the hospital now!"

My hand was shaking as I responded, "Mom, there's no need to be so agitated. We'll be there in a sec. In the meantime, you must keep Amy by your side. And also, help me ask the doctor about Amy's health report. Ask him what I need to do to make sure the two of them are safe."

Cameron nodded profusely on the other end of the call as she was still in a panic.

After hanging up the phone, I was in a bit of distress. Ashton grabbed my arm and comforted, "Don't worry, everything will be fine."

I glared at him and murmured, "I'm sorry for making the precipitous decision to adopt Amy all by myself. I know I should've discuss with you first, but I didn't want to drag the Moore family into this."

Chapter 1019

He nodded. Since things have already escalated up to this point, we can't turn back anymore. I'll do my best to make it up to Amy once Summer's life has been spared.

Having arrived at the hospital, Zachary rushed toward us and asked, "Did you guys see Amy?"

My heart skipped a beat. "Amy? I thought I told Mom to make sure she stays beside her. What happened?"

Zachary was getting flustered. "Just now, the doctor asked your Mom to do the necessary paperwork in order for Amy to stay in the hospital. When she came back, the kid was missing. I arrived at the hospital not long ago to look for her, but to no avail."

I was stunned in place. It must be Armond who took Amy away. He took advantage of the fact that we were too busy to look after her. Damn him!

Ashton glared at Joseph, who was catching up to us, and ordered with gravitas, "Use whatever means necessary to seal off the highways in and out of A City. Also, hack the hospital's surveillance cameras and see if you can locate the kid's whereabouts."

He then went silent for a while before aligning his eyes with Zachary's. "Summer's surgery should proceed as planned," he uttered.

I was tensed up after hearing his statement. I stared at him uttered, "Ashton, without the bone marrow and the kidney, Summer's surgery will have no probability of succeeding. We must find Amy first, or else..."

Zachary interrupted me, "Don't worry, Scarlett. We know what we're doing. It'll be fine."

How can I not be worried?

I shook my head as my face turned pale, "No, this is way too risky. I've already lost my own kids. I can't afford to lose Summer too."

I tried to stop Joseph but Ashton was holding me back. He gazed at me consolingly. "Don't worry, Summer will be fine, and so will Amy. Trust me on this, okay?"

I stared at him doubtfully. "You..."

"Just trust me, okay?" he insisted.

I stayed quiet and nodded.

Thus, Joseph hastily went to hack the surveillance cameras. Meanwhile, Zachary seemed like he had made preparations of his own. He made a certain phone call and uttered, "Do it!"

After hanging up the phone, he glanced at me and said, "I'm going upstairs to see your Mom!"

When it was just me and Ashton left in the lobby, I blurted out asking, "Did you know beforehand that Amy was going to be abducted?"

He embraced me and helped me to a nearby bench to rest. "Don't worry. All the pain that you've suffered, I'm going to pay them back twofold."

When Joseph came back, he took a few glances at me but was reticent to say anything. Perhaps it was something that he couldn't say in front of me.

I gazed at Ashton and uttered, "I'm going for a walk outside!"

I got up and headed toward the exit of the hospital. On my way out of the hospital, I saw an ambulance dropped off a patient who was severely wounded at the emergency area. The nurse beside the patient shouted, "It was a car accident. He suffered a serious concussion. The nerves connecting his legs are damaged."

A group of nurses and doctors rushed to the patient and took him to the ER immediately. It seemed like his injury was rather serious.

I then overheard two men talking about the incident. "There was an accident on the Sunny Highway. A black passenger car flew off the highway and crashed under the bridge. A family of three was on the car. Unfortunately, the mother didn't survive. The kid on the other hand, only suffered a minor injury thanks to his father protecting him."

"God can be cruel and callous. Look at what happened to a nice family like them!"

Out of curiosity, I opened my phone to look at the news. There was indeed news about a car accident. I roughly went through the news article and noticed that the black car in the accident was a Mercedes-Benz.

The number plate of the car was way too familiar to me. No one else uses a pair of the same number "eight" as their number plate other than Brandon. Back then when I went to Amy's house, I inadvertently saw his number plate. I only thought that he was an ostentatious person upon seeing it and didn't pay much attention to it then. That being said, I didn't expect to see it again in this manner.

So were Brandon and his family the ones who got into a car accident?

Thinking back, Joseph did try to hide something from me. Could it be? Without thinking too much, I dashed back inside the hospital. Ashton was still talking with Joseph in the lobby. Upon seeing me, Joseph immediately stopped talking.

I glared at Ashton and blurted out, "Does the car accident that happened to Brandon has anything to do with you?"

Unperturbed by my question, he gazed at Joseph and instructed, "Go and deal with the aftermath."

After Joseph left, I stared at Ashton intently as I waited for his response. He dragged me over to him and sat me down by his side. "You were just discharged from the hospital recently, so you must take it easy, okay? Originally, you weren't even supposed to get out of the house. But since you're already out here, promise me that you won't think too much, okay? You must take care of your body."

I scowled as I retorted, "Ashton, you're changing the topic!"

Chapter 1020

He was feeling helpless. “What do you mean? I’m just worried about you.”

Peeved, I furrowed my eyebrows. “Did you hurt Brandon and his family?” This couldn’t have been a coincidence.

He narrowed his eyes and remained taciturn.

My heart was aching as I looked at him and uttered, “Ashton, I know that Brandon is the one who hurt me. Honestly, I want him to suffer as much as you do. However, what you’re doing is too dangerous. If you were to get caught, you’d be put in prison.”

He glanced at me and replied, “His wife’s bone marrow is compatible with Summer’s.”

I was stunned in place after hearing what he said. “You...” The news said that his wife died on the scene. Does that mean...

The atmosphere was engulfed in silence for a while until he uttered, “Summer’s illness will recover. The kid that you’ve adopted will also be fine. Our whole family will be fine. Trust me.”

My eyes turned red as I gazed at him. “Ashton, do you even realize the consequences of doing such a thing?”

If he gets caught, he'll be put behind bars. I'm cognizant that he's being discreet about all of this. However, since he was brought up in an army, I know for a fact that he'll get the impulse to kill his enemies. Although Brandon is indeed an abhorrent man, killing him is still too much for Ashton to bear. He'll be haunted by this forever.

Seeing as my face was pale, he let out a faint smile and embraced me. "Don't worry, I'm acutely aware of what I'm doing."

Zachary, who had just come down the stairs, informed us, "Summer's bone marrow is confirmed to be compatible with a deceased woman's. With that, there's hope for Summer to recover now. You guys don't have to worry anymore."

Pursing my lips, I felt as though my heart was suffocating. After my incident, I was relieved to see that Ashton didn't do anything. He could've just succumbed to his anger and torture those who have hurt me, but he refrained from doing so, which I'm glad about.

That being said, I'm different from him. I'm inherently a bad person. Even if I've killed a person, I won't feel bad about it. But that's not the case for Ashton. He has always lived his life by abiding to the law and his responsibilities. No matter what happens, he'll choose a gentler approach to the problem. That's his belief.

But this time, he was willing to break his own code of living. Because of me, he set up an accident to hurt Brandon and even had the impulse to kill him. This is not the Ashton that I wanted to see. They say that lovers help each other to grow and improve, yet I'm only impinging on him...

Joseph came back again and he seemed rather impatient. Instead of avoiding me like last time, he directly reported, "Mr. Fuller, there's an issue pertaining to the port in Moranta. Illegal drugs and military weapons were found among the imported items there. The local police are starting to take action."

Ashton frowned and replied, "I understand!"

Zachary paused for a bit before saying, "Seems like the Murphys are making their move. I'll handle all the things here. You should head to Moranta as soon as possible. This war will be an onerous one to win."

Ashton turned toward me and embraced me before he murmured, "No matter the circumstances, your own safety comes first. Understand?"

I nodded and hugged him tighter for I didn't want to let him go.

Seeing he was about to leave, I offered, "Let me see you off!" Although we had parted ways before, but I really didn't want to see him go this time.

Seeing as I followed him, he smiled and pulled me onto the car. "Why are you behaving like a child?" he teased me.

I paid no heed to his teasing and embraced him tightly and said, "I don't want to see you go. After the mess in Moranta is dealt with, promise me you'll spend more time with me, okay?"

He smiled and caressed my hair. "Okay, you have my word. In return, promise me you'll take good care of yourself."

I nodded while still clinging on to him.

Time does tend to pass faster when we are saying goodbye to someone. In the blink of an eye, we were already at the airport. Joseph had sorted everything out in advance so

that they were able to leave immediately. I couldn't help but hug Ashton again before he boarded the plane.

He hugged me back and exhorted me to take good care of myself in a gentle voice. He told me to eat at regular intervals, to close the windows before I sleep, to not stay up late, to not eat or drink anything cold...

As he was rambling on, I hugged him even tighter than before. As time was running out, Joseph called out to Ashton. Then, I let him go reluctantly.

Watching him walking further and further away from me, tears started flowing out of my eyes. "Ashton, you better come back soon. I'll be waiting at home for you!" I exclaimed.

He turned around and gave me a soothing smile.