

Chapter 1051

“I just met an old acquaintance, so we chatted a bit,” I answered. “Come on. We have to go to Uncle Louis’ later tonight, too!”

Summer clung to me during the entire car ride. The poor thing had become so fragile that she was nearly just skin and bones, and it felt slightly unnerving when she hugged my arm. “Mommy, are you guys going out on a business trip again? Can you take me with you this time? I don’t wanna be alone again. You’ve been so busy that you never come to visit me. Do you not want me anymore, Mommy?”

Her words reminded me that she was still an innocent and naïve child. Running a hand over her smooth scalp, I smiled wryly as I responded, “I will never abandon you, Summer. It’s just that I still have a lot of tasks left unfinished. When everything is over and done with, we’ll stay in K City with you every day, okay?”

Puffing her cheeks out indignantly, she nodded in acknowledgment and tightened her grip on my arm. When we arrived at the Moore residence, her caregiver helped bring Summer into the house before Ashton and I left for the Stovall residence.

“Did Jared get out of jail early?” I asked while on the way there.

“Why do you bring him up so suddenly?” Ashton was stunned as he looked at me out of the corner of his eye. “What happened?”

“Nothing. He just randomly came to mind.” I shook my head. “Knowing the Crest family’s influence, I thought that they’d try to get him out as soon as possible. After all, he’s one of them.”

Ashton didn’t seem as sensitive regarding the topic anymore. Perhaps he would feel relieved and even happy if Jared could get out of jail sooner rather than later. After all, they used to be best friends. Even though there had been some arguments, he had likely chosen to forgive and forget and let time heal his wounds.

“I’m sure the Crest family will take care of Jared’s situation,” he said, keeping his eyes on the road. “Besides, he might be going to W City in the future, so we’ll probably fall out of contact with each other.”

I pursed my lips. Ashton’s resentment and hatred towards Jared had all disappeared by then.

I turned and fixed him with a solemn stare. “If I didn’t want him to come out, and prefer him to stay in there forever until he dies alone, would you be against that?”

I wasn’t even sure what my own answer to that question was. “Is it because of Summer’s illness?” He glanced at me in confusion. “You resent him and don’t want him to come out because you want him to suffer more?”

“Yes, but not completely.” If I had only felt shocked by Jared initially, those feelings had all turned to detest by then. Everyone had a dark side to them, even the most angelic and righteous of people. Some were just better at hiding it from others.

Jared was especially despicable because he appeared to be a good person, but there was not a single trace of kindness to be found in his heart at all. If Summer's illness was an accident, then Kristina's couldn't have been an accident too.

He was clearly out to commit murder. I didn't know what he did to Kristina to cause her to be diagnosed with lung cancer, but I was absolutely sure that he had placed Summer in the chemical plant with the intention to make her sick.

It couldn't be a coincidence that Kristina and Summer had both stayed in a chemical plant before, and both had gotten sick. That meant that the rest of the employees at that plant also had to be suffering some side effects from working there in order to earn money for their families. Unfortunately, those employees might now have to live with a crippling sickness for the rest of their lives.

The blatant disregard for other people's wellbeing was exactly why I resented Jared so much. After leaving the hospital, I couldn't stop thinking about how much I wanted him to remain in jail forever, and about how I would never let Summer near him ever again.

Ashton's eyebrows knitted together as he stayed silent for a minute. "What do you want to do?"

"Have you ever thought about investigating the chemical plants in W City registered under the Crest family name?"

He frowned. "Exactly who did you bump into today?"

"It's Kristina. She is diagnosed with terminal stage lung cancer!" I was aware that my way of handling this problem might have been a little extreme, but I couldn't think of any other methods to go about it.

Ashton wasn't dumb. He understood what I was implying, deep in contemplation before saying, "I'll instruct someone to go and investigate for you. If Jared really has something to do with this, I'll contact the police and get them involved. You don't need to get your hands dirty or think about matters that have nothing to do with us anymore, Scarlett. We're just normal people now. All we can do now is protect those we hold dear to us, you understand?"

His words took me aback, causing a wave of unrecognizable emotions to rise within me. It was as if I had suddenly realized the true nature of the person I was in love with. He had a point—we were all just a small part of this huge world, and being able to care for those around us was good enough. We didn't have an obligation to sacrifice our time and energy to interfere with other people's lives.

Chapter 1052

Hannah and Chandler were already at the Stovall residence when Ashton and I arrived. Clearly excited to be with Kiki after a long while, Hannah was holding her son in her arms as they played together in the child's room while Chandler watching over them warmly. The whole image looked very heartwarming.

I had a sneaking suspicion that John might actually be a masochist of some sort. He knew that he would be upset by the sight, yet insisted on making up random excuses to keep going to Kiki's room to take another look at them, and then returning to the living room and plopping down on the sofa in a daze. Even Louis couldn't stand it anymore after watching this process repeat itself over and over, scolding him outright, "Get ahold of yourself! Didn't you invite Ms. Lyons over? Go out and welcome her in; this house is too large for her to find her way around."

"There are servants at the door that will help lead the way, so why should I go?" John kicked back and leaned against the sofa lazily.

“Greeting people at the door is the very basic manners of the Stovall family!” Louis shouted at him. “You know damn well why you should go greet her!”

Silently admitting defeat, John slumped away to the main entrance to wait for Emma to arrive.

Ashton then started up a conversation with Louis while Kiki started sticking by Chandler’s side, insisting on playing with him and him only.

Realizing that she was being left out, Hannah left the bedroom and sat down beside me. “I can’t believe I spent ten months fretting and worrying over my pregnancy only to give birth to a traitor,” she joked. “I couldn’t even get a good night’s sleep, but look at my son now.”

“Kiki kept looking for you these past few days, though,” I pointed out, laughing. “And his Uncle Louis has already been tormented enough. Kids are born mischievous and playful, so don’t blame him for it. He’ll come back to you when he gets tired and sleepy.”

She nodded and sighed. “I think Kiki stopped drinking breastmilk way too early. I’m a little worried whenever I see that his body is smaller compared to other kids his age. Did Summer not drink much breastmilk as well?”

“Macy left right after Summer was born,” I explained. “At that time, there were too many things happening at once and I was unable to take care of Summer, so Jackson and Nick essentially raised her. I did consider later on feeding her breastmilk, but it loses nutritional value after it expires, so I never ended up doing it. She used to be smaller than what Kiki looks like now, actually. Afterward, I brought her to live in R Province for a few years, where the environment was great and clean. She was getting better and

healthier, and then I brought her back to K City again. Looking back on it now, my neglect and failure to plan ahead was a large reason why Summer fell sick.”

“There’s no way you could have planned for this, so don’t blame yourself,” she argued. “Besides, Summer still has a chance at growing up healthily if she just focuses on recovering right now. By the way, I heard from Uncle Louis that there are more guests coming?”

“My brother invited his blind date, a woman from the Lyons family. I think you’ve heard of her.”

Hannah nodded. “The Lyons family have a reputation in K City for being made up entirely of scholars, and their children have all studied literature. But, why would the Lyons want to arrange a marriage with the Stovalls?”

“The woman is around thirty years old, and this would be her second marriage. She doesn’t have any children because she’s physically unable to give birth to any. Maybe they agreed to let John marry her purely because they were afraid no one else would. On the other hand, John already has a child, so he doesn’t need to produce any more heirs or anything; he just wants to get married solely because he wants someone to stay at home to take care of the children and Uncle Louis. When Uncle Louis eventually grows old and weak, there will be a lot of chores at home that need a woman’s help.”

“Oh.” Hannah glanced at me. “But John is such a prideful guy. Do you think he’ll agree to the marriage?”

“Uncle Louis told him that it’s all up to him. Besides, John was the one who invited Ms. Lyons over, so he clearly knows what he’s doing. We don’t have to worry about him.”

John and Emma had entered the living room during our conversation. Emma had changed into an outfit with softer textures and warmer, lighter colors, and had also removed some of her makeup to appear kinder than usual.

Hannah and I both stood up, smiling politely at her. "Welcome to the Stovall residence, Ms. Lyons!"

I had already met Emma once before, so she greeted me casually. When she turned to Hannah, something flashed through the depths of her eyes. "Are you Hannah?"

Wow. She came prepared.

Hannah's mouth fell open at the sudden question but quickly regained her composure. "Yes. It's nice to meet you."

John stayed silent in front of Hannah like he always did, gazing at her with a cold stare that had hints of regret and pain.

It seemed like he was determined to marry Emma.

Now that everyone was accounted for, Louis called for the maids to serve the food. Chandler carried Kiki in his arms as he came downstairs, giving Emma a polite smile as a greeting.

Chapter 1053

After everyone was seated, Louis invited everyone to begin eating. Emma sat right next to me and I spotted her gaze darting back and forth between Hannah and Kiki. "What a beautiful pair," she finally remarked, looking at John, "You guys were a family, right?"

John was stunned for a moment but quickly regained his calm. "You can say so," he admitted without shying away.

I thought Emma would be affected by John's forthright answer, but instead, she shrugged indifferently. "Serves you right. You should've treated them nicely when you still had them by your side. You only have yourself to blame since you're the one who had an affair."

Her comment took me by utter surprise.

John would have lashed out at her on usual days, at least that was what I expected, but I got it all wrong. John looked back at her nonchalantly and emulated her shrug. "If you say so," he replied shortly.

I really could not get my head around those two. How they interacted with each other was just beyond me.

Everyone stayed back for a little chat after the meal.

Kiki was already fast asleep and everyone was getting ready to leave when a loud ruckus sounded from the outside, so Louis asked someone to go check it out.

The housekeeper returned and walked right toward John. "Mr. Stovall, someone's looking for you."

"Me? Who is it?"

The housekeeper looked stumped. "It's the lady who came over with you last time, Ms. Wilde."

"I don't know her. Tell the guards to throw her out before she dirties this place," John replied coldly.

The housekeeper stared at him uneasily for a second and went back outside to do as John said.

Since it was getting late, Hannah and Chandler decided to make a move first. Louis asked John to send Emma back since Ashton and I was also leaving.

When all of us were at the front gate, we saw Yvonne outside, with a few security guards blocking her way. She looked frail and weak in her hospital gown.

She was wailing and shrieking at the top of her voice, accusing John of being cruel toward her. If a random stranger were to pass by, they might well mistake John for being a heartless brat.

As for Emma, I did not worry for her at all. I was sure she would not take Yvonne's behavior to heart.

What I worried about was Louis' reputation if Yvonne kept shouting outside like this.

"You should at least do something. Uncle Louis won't be able to sleep in peace tonight," I told John.

John pursed his lips impatiently as he walked outside, glaring at Yvonne, who was throwing a tantrum in front of the guards.

When Yvonne finally saw John, the dissatisfaction on her face disappeared and she quickly put on a pitiful look. "Please don't chase me away, John. I really can't live without you. I'll do anything you want me to, so just let me stay by your side. I know you'll marry a woman from a wealthy family, but I don't care. I don't expect anything from you. Just let me stay with you. I really love you, John, so please don't make me leave," she implored with tears welling up in her eyes.

I did not like Yvonne, but for what reasons, I was not sure myself. Maybe I started disliking her back when John and I helped her. She was materialistic and greedy. "You have no loyalty." I came forward and berated her, "You're with so many men at the same time, and you still cling to John shamelessly when you know he's already engaged. You came all the way here to make a huge fuss just so people think he's a jerk who has wronged you. Now you're telling me you love him? You've got to be kidding me, Yvonne Wilde."

I finally knew why I hated her. She did not deserve to be loved.

A glint of anger shone in her eyes when she heard my voice. "You again? What did I do to make you hate me so much? Why do you keep coming in between us over and over again? What did I even do to you? Why can't you just leave me alone?" she shouted at me.

“Watch what you’re saying. It’s true that you’ve done nothing to offend me, but neither have I done anything to break you and John up. You know full well that he doesn’t love you at all, but you still can’t get over him. It’s your greed that’s stopping you from letting him go. He’s already compensated you enough, so you should just take the money and lead your own life. But of course, you can keep hounding us, but don’t say I didn’t warn you. You’ll regret it when I decide to get rid of you on my own.”

“What do you mean?” She glared at me, holding her arms as she shivered in her thin clothing.

“You know what I mean. The Stovalls are not people you want to mess with unless you don’t want to live in K City or continue mingling in the rich circle anymore. By the way, didn’t you run a background check on that little boyfriend of yours, Franklin, before you guys got together?”

Chapter 1054

Yvonne stared at me in fright and disbelief as her body shook more intensely.

Looking at her disconcertment, a gush of thrill welled up in my heart. “From what I gathered, he’s a womanizer through and through. He hooked up with rich women and also those with questionable backgrounds. I heard he ended up having some kind of disease, so both of you have better have a heart-to-heart talk. You might want to do a thorough check at the hospital too. I think you’ll need it.”

“Scarlett Stovall! Watch your tongue!” she bellowed, “I don’t even know who Franklin is!”

I shrugged indifferently and let her have her say before turning toward the guards. “Send her out. It’s already late and everyone needs to rest. Call the police if she refuses to leave.”

With that said, I left with Ashton and Hannah.

Hannah finally spoke when we reached the car park. “You did a background check on Yvonne?”

“Yeah. She’s too greedy for her own good. The Stovall family will never accept someone like her.”

“Thanks, Scarlett,” Hannah said, her voice suddenly becoming serious. “I’ve wanted to discuss Kiki’s custody with Uncle Louis because I thought John would marry her. I’d never let someone like her come close to Kiki.”

A smile spread across my lips as she thanked me. “Don’t mention it. The Stovall family helped me before, and John had supported me through my hardest time. Although I’m angry with what he’s done, I still don’t want his marriage to end on a bad note.”

“I’ll give John my blessing if he’s able to meet someone suitable. Kiki is his child, and no one can ever change that. If he meets someone he likes and they have a family together, I’ll still be happy for him,” Hannah replied with a hint of resignation in her voice.

Ashton drove the car over and I bid Hannah goodbye before hopping on. I fell into slumber not long after the car drove off. It had been a long and tiring day.

By the time I woke up, we were already back at the villa. It was not until I saw Ashton packing his stuff that I remembered we were going to A City tomorrow.

“They have clothes and toiletries over there, so just bring our travel documents and ID,” I said, squinting my eyes as I looked at him.

He turned around at my voice with a gentle smile on his face. “Did I wake you up?”

I shook my head and looked at the clock. It was already past midnight. “What time is our flight tomorrow?”

“Nine. What’s the matter?”

“We still have time. Could you help me bring my ID? I need to renew my passport soon. I’ll stop by J City and get it reissued after our trip to A City.” After we got married, I changed my address to J City, so I would need to go back there to get my passport renewed. It would also be a good chance to go see Macy, grandpa, and grandma. It had been a long time since I last saw them.

“Where did you put your ID?” Ashton asked after a slight pause.

“Hm, good question. I can’t remember. It’s either in the drawer or in my bag. Oh wait, it should be in that pastel color bag. I remember using it during the donation event for Sasha’s mother. It should be there. That’s the last time I used it.”

He went over to the wardrobe and took out the bag, ruffling through the content. “I didn’t know you keep a journal.”

“Come on, a lazy bum like me will never keep a journal.”

Ashton took out a small journal and looked at me. "What is this then?"

I stared at the book in confusion before I finally recalled something. "That's Sasha's. Renee gave it to me when she was at the hospital. She said it belonged to her mother."

"So this is Sasha's diary?"

I nodded and Ashton flipped through it. I got out of bed and took a curious look. The journal seemed painfully ordinary, and I figured there would not be anything exciting. After all, it was written by someone who had already passed away.

"I don't think there'll be anything interesting. I should probably return this to Sasha's mother. I think she will appreciate having something in remembrance of her daughter."

But beside me, a frown settled on Ashton's brows as he closed the book. "I finally know why Abe was suddenly in charge of Imperial Hotel after you saw him dead in Moranta. This is why Armond gave you all the evidence without holding back although he knew you were investigating him. The truth is, he already had everything planned."

Chapter 1055

I could not get my head around what Ashton just said, so I took the journal and started looking at it myself.

It took me a while for what came to my sight to register. I did not spend much time thinking about why Abe still appeared at Imperial Hotel after I saw him dead with my own eyes. It turned out that he had a twin.

“So is the person at A City’s prison Abe or Sasha’s husband?” I solicited Ashton’s opinion.

He lowered his gaze as he looked at the man in the photo. The man looked exactly like Abe, but he looked just like an ordinary lad without the uncanny gleam in his eyes. His complexion was fair and his gaze was tender as he held Sasha in his embrace.

If Sasha had not mentioned the man’s elder brother in her diary, I would have mistaken the man in the photo for Abe.

“We can only be sure after we meet the guy in A City,” Ashton said carefully as he closed the book. “You should just stay at K City tomorrow. Go back to Moore Residence. Holden will go over to K City in two days’ time. He’ll bring you around the city then. If the company needs my signature, you can just sign in my stead.”

I blinked my eyes at him blankly. “I thought we’ve already decided to go to A City together? What’s with the change of mind?”

“We can’t be sure if the corpse you saw at Moranta is Abe’s if the guy in prison is not him. He’s a wanted criminal now, so none of us can say for sure that he’s not concocting some evil plan. You need to stay in K City. At least you’ll be safe staying with the Moore family. They don’t dare to do anything to you over there. Besides, judging from the situation now, Armond is already fixed on giving up all the assets in A City, so he won’t be in A City. Chances are he’s gonna stay with the Murphys in K City. I’ll sort out everything in A City and get back real quick. You just wait for me in K City, alright?”

I calmed down and thought about his suggestion before finally nodding. “You stay safe, okay? Keep me updated.”

He nodded and pulled me into his arms with a sigh. "Everything will be okay soon."

"Promise me something?" I asked, looking up at him.

"What is it?"

I suddenly did not know how to bring this up to Ashton. It was really not the time to bring up in-vitro fertilization. I pulled back and looked at him in the eyes reluctantly. "Ashton... Let's talk about this after you get back. I'll go take a shower first."

I really did not have the courage to bring this up to Ashton. I was scared, and my desire to have a child had waned off. Taking care of Summer and seeing her grow up was already good enough for me. It was just that the Fullers was an influential and wealthy family. I felt like I needed to have a child to inherit the family business. That was the least I could do for George and Ashton. I had already lost two children because of my own carelessness.

Over in the bathroom, I looked into the mirror and pondered about this for a long time. Ashton and I had a good life and we were blessed to have each other. Not everyone got to have the people they loved in their lives, like John and Rebecca. Life was full of challenges and difficulties, and no one could foresee the future.

All we could do was to appreciate and love the people by our side, and hope that they could remain safe and sound for the rest of their lives.

When I finally got out of the bathroom again, Ashton had already packed everything. When he saw my wet hair in a towel turban, he clicked his tongue impatiently. "How

many times have I told you to dry your hair immediately after taking a shower? You're gonna catch a cold like this. Come over here and dry your hair."

I nodded quietly and sat on his lap like I always did. "Is Joseph going with you tomorrow?" I asked, cuddling in his embrace.

"Nope. His wife is pregnant with their second child and she might deliver anytime soon, so he has to stay with her," he said, rubbing my hair dry with the towel.

I was surprised to know that Joseph and his wife were already having their second child. That could be us. I could not help but shoot Ashton a guilty look. "I'm sorry, Ashton."

A sweet smile played on his lips as he replied, "There's nothing to be sorry about. I'm responsible for what happened too. I should've taken better care of you, so you don't have to feel bad. We have Summer now and that's enough for us. Don't you always want to apply for grad school? You should prepare for it and take the entrance exam next year."

I was glad Ashton still remembered I wanted to further my studies. "Sure. I'll go ask Hunter for more information soon. Make sure you come home as soon as possible, okay? Should you just ask Boris to go to A City with you?"

"It's okay. I can handle it myself. He should stay at K City and unwind a little. It's almost new year already, so I think he'll be preparing to go back to Moranta."

Boris' family was in Moranta. Since he had always been at K City, he must miss his family dearly.

Chapter 1056

“By the way, my mom mentioned Nick is in K city. We should find some time and have a meal together. After all, we’re a family and I’m his sister. We should really have a meetup.”

“Sure. You can go ahead and make arrangements. We’ll travel down south after I get back from A City. It’s winter and it’ll be nice to go to the beach. You’ll love it.”

I nodded slightly at his proposal. His movements were gentle and light as he blew dry my hair. I snuggled in his embrace and started to doze off.

When he was finally done, he tucked me in and went to take a shower himself. I could sense him coming over to the bed and pulling me into his arms after he was done showering. I was so tired I just let him do whatever he wanted.

“Scarlett?” his breath tickled my ears as he mumbled my name. “Uh-huh,” I replied without opening my eyes.

His hands started fondling my body before he asked for permission. “Can we?”

I opened my eyes slightly when I understood what he was implying and met his compelling gaze. “It’s been a long time,” he added.

A hot flush spread across my cheeks, looking at him. “Well…”

I could not bring myself to say anything. It was not like I needed to say anything explicitly. Our actions were already enough to show what we both wanted.

Night passed and morning came.

I was aware that Ashton woke up early, but after a passionate night, I really could not get out of bed to send him off. I lay in bed and watched him wash up and gather his luggage.

Before he left, he stopped at the door and turned back with a smile on his face. "I almost forgot!" he said, dashing back to the bed and planting a kiss on my lips. "Rest well. I'll be back soon."

Seeing me nodding shyly, the smile on his face widened.

We had been married for years, but sometimes I still felt embarrassed in front of him. I continued sleeping after Ashton left. It was not until my phone rang that I woke up again.

It was Cameron. "Letty, you up? What time are you coming over for lunch? I've just sent the driver over to pick you up, so go get ready."

"I'll just eat something at home, mom. You don't have to send the driver over. I'll go to your place later in the afternoon."

"Ashton already called me this morning. It's almost noon already. Get out of bed and come over. You can sleep all you want after you have lunch."

“He called you in the morning?” I sprang up and looked at the clock. It was already twelve in the afternoon. I must have slept for a long time.

After hanging up the call, I got out of bed and got ready to leave.

Ashton’s flight took off at nine in the morning and he had not reached yet. I quickly packed some stuff and went over to Moore Residence. Emery and Hunter were already there when I arrived.

Xavier had grown a lot when I saw him sleeping in Hunter’s arms. Emery was cooking in the kitchen. She shot me a smile and asked me to wait while she got lunch ready.

I went over to Hunter and asked him about applying for graduate school. “Hunter, sorry to bother you about law school again, but do you happen to have anything I can study to prepare for grad school?” Since I had some free time at home, I decided to do some revision and prepare for the entrance exam next year.

He was surprised I brought up the matter. “I thought you weren’t keen on applying anymore since you didn’t take the exam the last time. Anyway, sure, I can go get you something to study tomorrow. Hopefully, I’ll be able to find you something helpful.”

I thanked him with a forced smile on my face.

Hunter realized the change in my expression and comforted me. “Summer seems to be doing well. We should really plan an outing together and bring the kids along. You should discuss with Mr. Fuller and see if you guys can make time.”

We actually did have time for vacation, but we would have to wait until Ashton was back from A City.

“What are you guys talking about? Mind if I join?” Emery asked, walking out of the kitchen with a plate of fruits in her hands.

“We’re talking about grad school. Hunter is getting me some stuff to read through before I take the exam.”

“I see. I’m sure you’ll be able to ace it,” she remarked, taking over Xavier from Hunter. “I’ll take Xavier upstairs and tuck him in. Nick is coming later, so you go get the door later.”

Before I could even process what Emery said, the sound of a car engine came from the outside.

Mom came out from the kitchen and saw me in the living room. “Go get Nick, Letty. I think he’s here with his friend.”

I nodded and went out to the yard. From the black buster came a tall and slim man dressed in a grey suit. I could not recognize him at first sight, but after taking a closer look, I knew it was Nick.

Chapter 1057

After he got off the car, he went over to the passenger's seat and opened the door before he escorted a lady out. I was totally not expecting him to bring a woman—an elegant woman, to be precise. I thought he would come with Jackson.

I lost myself for a second, looking at the lady.

But I quickly collected myself and went ahead to greet them. "It's been a long time, Nick. You're still as dashing as ever."

Nick smiled back at me politely. The childishness in his manner was long gone already. "It's been a long time. You've gotten thinner."

"Aren't you going to introduce your friend to us?" I asked, looking at the lady beside him.

He nodded and held her hand. "This is Rose, my girlfriend," he said, before turning toward the woman. "Rose, this is my sister, Scarlett."

Sister! The word really sounded stiff and distant coming from Nick.

Rose looked at me and put on a sweet smile. "Nice to meet you, Scarlett. You're just as beautiful as Nick described."

"He must have exaggerated. Come on in. Lunch is almost ready."

I ushered them into the house and asked them to take a seat. There were some burning questions I wanted to ask, but I did not. I wanted to know what happened to Jackson. I wanted to know if Nick intended on marrying this woman since he brought her home.

I never asked Nick about Jackson since I figured their relationship was not as simple. I thought both of them would continue seeing each other, but it turned out that was not the case.

When mom was finally done cooking, dad had reached home after work. Everyone sat at the table and Nick introduced Rose to everyone. "Mom, I'm planning on marrying Rose. This is why I brought her with me today. Her family's from K City, so I guess it'll be easier if we let you take charge of our engagement since you know this place best."

Cameron was taken aback by Nick's direct statement, but it was not like she did not see this coming. "I'm glad you're finally settling down. I'll make sure the engagement ceremony turns out perfect. Let me know if both of you have any preferences."

Nick smiled warmly and shook his head. "We don't have any preference, mom. Something simple will suffice. Maybe just get the two families together for a meal."

A satisfied smile broke out on Cameron's face as she listened to Nick. She was glad to see her children finally settling down and getting married. This was what every parent hoped for their children.

Everyone had a good talk over lunch. I could not help but realize there was something off between Nick and Rose. They looked so rigid and polite around each other. If someone had not told me they were a couple, I would not have thought so.

After dinner, Cameron brought Rose upstairs. I figured she must have a gift for Rose.

As for me, I went outside and saw Nick in the backyard with his face downcast. "I heard mom said you're moving the company to K City? Are you planning on staying in the city in the future?"

He turned around and nodded. "Mom asked me to come over and manage Anderson Corporation with you. I thought that's a good idea. After all, it's always better to be around your family."

I nodded and hesitated a little before I continued, "Did Jackson come to K City with you? I still can't reach him after such a long time. Did he change his phone number?"

Nick froze at the mention of Jackson, but he quickly recollected himself. "I'm not sure. We haven't been in touch for some time already. He probably went to M Country. He's spent some time there before."

"What happened? Did you get into a fight with Jackson?" I felt something was obviously wrong.

Nick stopped for a while before shaking his head. "We're good. There's nothing to be worried about. How have you been? I haven't heard from you for such a long time. I heard from mom that Summer was sick some time ago. How is she now?"

Jackson and Nick took care of Summer for quite some time. If Nick were asking about a random child, I would have understood his casual tone, but it was Summer we were talking about. He and Jackson took her as their own daughter. There was no way Nick would talk about her in such a detached manner.

“Nick, I know what happened between you and Jackson is your privacy. But I’m your sister, and I’m also Jackson’s friend. You have to at least let me know what’s happening. Do you have any idea how sick Summer was? She had acute leukemia, and she almost died because of it. I have no idea what happened between you and Jackson. I texted and I called, but none of you picked up. If both of you still take me as a friend, you will let me be in the know. I don’t understand why you guys are suddenly so cold to Summer and me—so much so that you would ignore us when we needed you all the most.”

Chapter 1058

Nick was genuinely shocked when he learned about Summer’s illness. It was apparent that Cameron did not fill him in on the details.

He fell into silence for a while before he looked at me again. “How is Summer? Is she okay?”

“She did a bone marrow and kidney transplant. She’s feeling better now but they’re still putting her under a five-year observation. If there is no sign of rejection from her body, then she doesn’t need to go through another transplant. But Nick, we’re not talking about Summer now, I want to know what happened between you and Jackson.”

Nick held his hands and tried to control his emotions. “He got a girl pregnant and went back to M Country with the woman,” he said after some time.

Nick sounded apathetic, but I was totally caught off guard by his statement. “What happened? I thought you liked him?”

Nick pursed his lips and looked at me in the eyes. "Do you find me disgusting?"

I shook my head in determination. "I believe all relationships are equal. The reason I asked is that I could see there was something between you and Jackson. I know both of you care for each other a lot. I had no idea what happened between the two of you, but now that I know, I just hope you guys find your happiness. Meeting and parting are part and parcel of life, but I really want to see each of you finding where you belong."

"I think it's best we both go our separate ways," Nick said with his gaze fixed on the ground.

I could hear the regret and sorrow in his voice. After some thought, I asked him another question. "Do you like Rose?"

No one was perfect. We could not do everyone justice by giving them the affection they were due, but we could at least try our best and be accountable to ourselves.

"Rose is gentle, kind, and beautiful. She reminds me of you when you were younger. She's a little stubborn and conflicting sometimes, but I think she's the right person to spend the rest of my life with. If she is the one to marry, I'll have no regrets for the rest of my life."

I was surprised Nick would say that. Since he had made up his mind, I decided to respect his decision.

When Cameron and Rose came back down again, she was holding a set of jewelry in her hands. It was not something of an exorbitant price, but it was apparent that Rose liked her gift.

The lot stayed back for some chit-chat after lunch until evening. Hunter had a gathering with his colleagues at night, so he, Emery, and Xavier went home before dinner time. Not long after they left, Nick and Rose took leave too.

Just as I was thinking about spending some time with Summer, Camelia called. I almost forgot her as she had not contacted me in a long while.

“Hey, Camelia.” I hesitated and picked up the call.

“Hey, Scarlett. Are you busy? Down for a drink?” She sounded tired.

“Sure, where are you?” I replied without a second thought.

“I’ll send you my address,” she replied before hanging up.

I planted a kiss on Summer’s head and said sorry before leaving for the bar.

I wonder what happened to Camelia?

I made my way into the bar and spotted her right away. She was dressed in a stylish punk fashion. No one would imagine she was already a mother.

“What’s up, Camelia?” I asked. I was taken by surprise when I saw her heavy makeup.

From her drowsy look, I could tell that she had drunk a lot before I arrived.

“Hey, Scarlett, take a seat!” she greeted and pulled me over to the seat beside her.
“Brandy, please. Thanks,” she told the waiter.

“Just a glass of juice would do,” I hastily told the waiter.

“You’re not drinking? We’re at a bar,” Camelia said.

“Well, it’s not a must to order spaghetti if you’re at an Italian restaurant.”

“True. And it doesn’t mean you’ll find love if you’re married,” she said dejectedly.

I knew something must be bugging her. “So, why did you call me over? Not just for a drink, I suppose?”

Camelia gulped her drink and coughed furiously. She was breaking out in tears and started choking badly. “I’ve tried everything I could to become just like you, but he still doesn’t love me. I’ve changed how I talk, how I behave, and even what I like and dislike, but it just doesn’t work. What should I do?”

Chapter 1059

A frown settled on my brows when I finally knew why she called. Marcus was really a difficult character. He must have put the woman through a lot of ordeals for her to become this haggard.

“Scarlett, can you tell me how you made him fall in love with you?” she asked again.

I looked at the desperate woman before me and recalled how attractive she looked when I first saw her on the plane.

She looked at me intently with an imploring gaze, and it broke my heart to see her in this state. “Just leave him, Camelia. Do you still remember how you used to be? You were happy and confident.”

“What did you say?” Camelia looked at me, befuddled.

She was making my heart break. “Do you still remember how you were when we first met? Your blonde hair was shining and you were absolutely stunning. You’re attractive just the way you are. You don’t have to become anyone else. Don’t throw away your unique self just to mimic other people. When you find someone worthy of your love, that person will bring out the best in you, so why give up on yourself for someone who doesn’t even appreciate you?”

Camelia looked lost and helpless. “But I have no one else besides him. Where can I go without him? We already have a child together.”

It was unimaginable how a fruitless relationship could eat away the charm of a woman. “Camelia, you are your own self. If you’re willing to take charge of your own life, you can still find yourself again and be the spirited woman you used to be. Your child should not be your excuse. The White family can take good care of your kid. What you need to think of is how to regain the confidence you’ve lost.”

There were two things women should never stop doing throughout their life. The first was to stay beautiful. They should do everything they could to make themselves attractive. Not for anyone else, but for themselves. The second was to enrich themselves. Women should earn their own money and keep improving themselves. No matter how harsh life was, no one should stop feeding their soul so they could become stronger and more independent.

I didn’t mean to say that women should never believe in true love. The love we were after should be one that made us better, not worse.

I was not sure if Camelia would take my advice seriously. She was wasted and kept complaining about how unfair Marcus was treating her. After all these years, Marcus had even given up on making up lies to her.

When I came to think of it, men were really fascinating creatures. They would always dwell on things they couldn’t get their hands on. However, when they got what they wanted, they would not appreciate and take care of it. They ended up being alone because they stubbornly clung to the love they could not have and pushing away the love they had always had.

Marcus was not John. I could not tell if Marcus would fall for Camelia one day. All I could do was to encourage her to love herself. Regardless of whether she would earn his love one day, one should always care for her own wellbeing before anything else.

Life wasn’t perfect. There were bound to be many regrets in life. Not being with the person we loved as one of those regrets was not a big deal. After all, it was not like romantic love was the only thing in our life.

All of us had to tread down the path of life whether or not we had someone by our side.

I had to say Camelia could really drink. I even lost count of how many glasses of brandy she took before she lay on the table, still muttering for more drinks.

Right after I got her out of the bar, we were met with unwelcomed guests. K City was really not a safe place.

Two drunkards approached us when they saw two of us stumbling out of the bar. "Hey there, sweeties. Craving some company after a drink? How about some fun tonight? I'm sure you'll be begging for more."

As the spoke, two of them reached for us.

"Keep your filthy hands to yourself!" A woman's sharp voice pierced through the night.

I was startled at the woman's voice. It took me a while to recognize the woman with her heavy makeup on. It was Kristina. Her wig sat awkwardly on her head, and she looked far from appealing.

The two men smirked when they saw her. "Mind your own business before I kill you, ugly hag!"

Kristina glared at them coldly. "Kill me? I dare you to."

The two men exchanged uneasy looks and spat at her. "I'm not gonna get my hands dirty touching you. You're disgusting."

Chapter 1060

With that said, the two men turned and left.

I watched them leave before looking back at Kristina. It was then that I realized she had a name card in her hand.

I wondered what that was, but the question was not pressing enough for me to ask her about it. Instead, I thanked her in all seriousness.

She did not reciprocate my affection. "This is not a safe place, so just stay away."

I wanted to ask her why she was here.

Yet before I could say a word, she held out her name card to a man who just came out of the bar with a lascivious smile on her face. I was stunned by her sudden change of expression. The man threw the name card on the floor and I caught a glimpse of it. There was a picture of an attractive woman printed on it. Beside the picture were her phone number, address, and a price tag.

It did not take much effort to recognize the person in the photo. It was Kristina herself. I was at a loss for words. I wanted to say something, but I had to try so hard to swallow my emotions back in. "Do you need money?" I asked without much discretion.

My brutal question elicited a painful expression on her face as she pursed her lips. "Of course I do. Who doesn't need money? No one can live without money."

“You know I don’t mean it that way.” I tried explaining myself.

She clenched her name cards tighter and shook her head. “It doesn’t matter. Just leave before you meet another drunkard.”

I stood where I was, refusing to leave. “Is it because you have to do chemo?” That was the only reasonable explanation I could think of. She had lost her hair and she looked battered. Even her face looked pale.

She covered her face with thick makeup and even had a wig on. I knew she was a prideful person. There was no way she would stoop so low just to earn money. It must be because of the expenses for chemotherapy.

“You mind your own business. Stop getting in my way. I need to get customers,” she said coldly.

What I heard about her illness must be true. She must have lung cancer.

I knew she had her ego. There was no way she would accept my help. “Since you want to do business, you’ll have to do as your client wants you to. You’re coming with me tonight,” I said with a commanding tone.

She fixed her gaze on me. “What do you want, Scarlett?”

“I’m your client now, so just do as I say,” I repeated.

“I only take male clients. I don’t have time for you if you’re just here to shame me. If you’re getting revenge on me because of that kid, karma has already hit me hard enough, so just leave me alone,” she said with a hint of remorse in her voice.

“Just follow me, please. I know you feel guilty toward Summer, so you’re obliged to listen to me. You must live nearby. Bring me over to your place,” I said with a sigh.

Kristina looked at me for a while before she finally relented. “Follow me.”

She led Camelia and me down an alley. Before long, I stopped and cried out, “Kristina, don’t you think you should help me out a little?” Camelia was already so wasted she could not even walk properly.

Kristina looked back at me. “I can’t carry her. Walking itself is already difficult enough for me. This is the truth, whether you believe me or not.”

I smacked my lips and shrugged helplessly. “Just lead the way then.”

It was not like I could force her to carry Camelia.

We finally reached after some time. “You should just go back to J City. I’m sure Dr. Ludwick will do everything he can to cure you. You can’t just stay here all on your own. You’re gonna get more sick.”

“We all die someday. I’d rather die somewhere I want to. I’ve been striving so hard my whole life just to go up the social ladder. If there was an afterlife, I hope I would be born in this city, so I can be nearer to the things I’ve always wanted to achieve,” she said, pouring me a glass of water.

Kristina was really a woman I could never understand. She came from a relatively good family, but it was her worldview that I could never understand. She had always wanted to pursue wealth and status. Ashton was her first target, but when she knew there was no hope with him, she turned to Jared instead. Her motivation was clear as day—she wanted to marry a rich man. But why, I could not tell.

Was it because of money?

Her family lacked nothing.

Power?

Ashton and Jared had money but not power.

Love?

That was impossible. If it were love she wanted, she would not move on from one person to another so easily.

“Both of us need to stay overnight here,” I said, “I’ll pay you at your rate, but you’ll have to stay here with us. Also, stop taking customers. You know what sort of men come in and out of the bar. Your body won’t be able to take it. What if you get STD? Do you want to die earlier?”