

Chapter 821

In between running around after Ashton's needs and my own duties, I felt worn out pretty quickly.

As I emerged from his office after helping him dispatch documents, Leedon approached me with a bottle of water. "Looks like Mr. Fuller is here to keep an eye on his wife!"

"You've misunderstood, Leedon," I said hurriedly as I blushed. "He hurt his hand yesterday and it's inconvenient for him to do many things, that is why he's here today."

"I don't think so," he said with a wink. "Or he wouldn't call you away when Mr. White started a conversation with you!"

I was taken aback for a moment and joined in the laughter as well.

Leedon was right, though. Whenever Marcus started speaking to me, Ashton would interrupt with a call and I would have to attend to him, leaving Marcus in mid-sentence.

"It's going to be a long day of work for you," Leedon teased.

Well, I'd say!

As we conversed, Marcus distributed a bag of fruits amongst the employees. “Scarlett,” he said as he approached me. “My assistant had brought over some fruits. Take a break and have some!”

Before I could reply, my phone rang shrilly.

Leedon failed to stifle his laughter. “Ms. Stovall, looks like you’re wanted.” He helped himself to an apple.

I sighed. True enough, it was Ashton who called.

“I want some water,” came Ashton’s low voice on the other end.

I smacked my forehead in exasperation. “Didn’t I leave a glass on your table?”

“I’ve finished it!”

“Alright, I’m coming.”

I hung up and looked at Marcus. “I’m so sorry, I have something to attend to.”

Without waiting for his reply, I turned to head to the office.

Ashton leaned back lazily in his chair with his earpiece; his meeting was still ongoing. I glimpsed at the untouched glass of water on his desk.

I was speechless with indignation. “You haven’t touched it! Why did you summon me for?”

He’s like a child.

Ashton glanced up at me. “Joseph poured me a glass after I called you,” he lied shamelessly. “He’d brought some cakes too. Why don’t you cut me a slice?”

“Why couldn’t he prepare everything for you before leaving?” I grimaced.

“He’s busy!” Ashton said and resumed his meeting.

I was speechless but complied with his request.

“Here you go,” I said, pushing a slice before him.

“You’re not having any?”

“I’m on a diet, aren’t I?” He said that I was fat earlier today, but he still allowed me to have sweet things like cakes?

“Alright, meeting adjourned,” Ashton said to the screen.

He removed his earpiece and glanced up at me. “What would you like to eat?”

Me? What?

“Ashton, I’m still at work!” I said, outraged.

“No problem, I’ll have Joseph deliver something.” He nodded, unfazed.

“I’m not hungry!” He’s such a troublemaker.

Ashton said nothing of my obstinance. He left the cake before me and typed away slowly on his computer. He wasn’t as fast as he usually was with an injured arm.

I opened my mouth but had nothing of use to say that would be helpful to him.

A knock sounded on his door. “Come in!” Ashton called.

It was Rebecca who had a lunchbox in her hand. At the sight of me, she stopped in surprise. Recovering herself within seconds, she gazed at Ashton's arm in concern and said, "Oh, Ash, what happened to your arm? I've made some broth for you."

As she spoke, she strode to the side of his desk and opened the lunchbox for him in a gentle and loving manner.

"It's nothing, thank you for your concern," Ashton replied politely but firmly.

Rebecca tried a different tactic. She conjured an expression of guilt and said, "It was all my fault. I shouldn't have thrown a tantrum when you were driving. I promise you I won't do it again."

"It's nothing," Ashton repeated coldly.

Rebecca stood with her arms folded and watched him type an email slowly. "Ash, are you sending an email?" she said quickly. "Why don't you have some broth and I'll finish typing that for you."

She approached Ashton with the intention of pulling his keyboard toward her, but he snatched it away.

"This is a work matter," he said sternly. "It is inappropriate for outsiders to handle them. These are confidential!"

Rebecca's outstretched arm froze. She withdrew it slowly and smiled stiffly. "You're right. I shouldn't have tried to interfere. I'm sorry, Ash. I acted rashly."

"It's fine." Ashton's voice was cold.

I took the opportunity to slip away back to my own work now that Rebecca was here. Before I could do so, Ashton looked up and caught me. "Scarlett, come over here and help me type out this email!"

Chapter 822

"Oh, I'm not a fast typist," I replied, startled.

"That's fine. I'll dictate, and you type," Ashton said impatiently as he stood up for me to take his seat.

He pulled me to his chair before I could protest. "Fuller Corporation and its subsidiaries..." Ashton began his narration.

After a few paragraphs, I couldn't take it any longer. "These are your work documents, so it's not appropriate for me to be looking at inside information of the company."

"My arm is injured," he said stubbornly.

I didn't know what to say to that, so the only thing I could do was what he wanted.

Rebecca stood at the corner of the room, her exquisite face looking pale.

After a continuous couple of days of frantic activity for the Lavelian Village project, we finally had the chance to take a break.

To our surprise, Harvest Festival was almost upon us. Back in the city, I racked my brain for a way to apply for a leave from Armond for a trip back to K City.

I had been on the phone with Summer every night for the past couple of days. She told me that she missed me, and my eyes welled up with tears every time I heard that.

On a Saturday afternoon, Ashton had invited Armond for a discussion regarding the next phase of the Lavelian Village project. Since I had nothing to do, I planned to return to the villa to pack and head back.

However, Rebecca's phone call was unexpected. "Scarlett, do you have a moment?"

I had a bad feeling about it and rejected her outright. "I'm sorry, Ms. Larson. Now is not a good time. You can say what it is you need over the phone."

"It's nothing important," she laughed lightly. "It's just that I have heard you had a near-death experience in a freezer, and I would just like to offer my sympathy."

I froze. How did she know about that?

"Thank you for your concern, Ms. Larson."

"Such a pity that you're busy at the moment, Ms. Stovall," said Rebecca. "I was thinking of talking to you about that incident. Perhaps another time, then."

Ashton was supposed to investigate the matter. It had been such a hectic few days that I had completely forgotten to follow up with him. And now Rebecca called me out of the blue to discuss this. Does this have anything to do with her? Or could it be...?

"Rebecca, what exactly do you mean?" I asked impatiently.

“Oh, it’s nothing. I didn’t want Ash to tire himself out over you, so I hired someone to do a little digging on my own and I’ve found something interesting. If you’re busy today, forget about it.”

“Text me the venue,” I said and headed straight to the bedroom and grabbed a coat.

She agreed to and hung up.

The venue was a café which wasn’t hard to locate. Rebecca was already seated when I arrived and was admiring the scene outside the window with an elegant air.

She knew that I was here but did not deign to look at me at first. She narrowed her eyes and took another sip of her coffee. “It tasted its best when it was bitter. It’s not the same after adding sugar.”

I did not respond to that. I did not enjoy anything bitter whether it was food or life.

I ordered a glass of juice for myself. Rebecca remained silent the entire time. “Ms. Larson, are we here for the pleasure of my company?” I asked with impatience.

“Of course not!” she laughed.

Rebecca took a few more sips before looking at me again. Her gaze fell onto my neck and a smirk played on her lips. "Ash paid for two necklaces the other day. I was wondering who the other one was for. Apparently, it was for you!"

I touched the necklace absentmindedly. It was gifted to me by Ashton the other day over a meal.

I did not egg her on. I knew exactly what she wanted to say and was determined not to give myself a reason to be unhappy.

"Why don't you ask me how I knew about that?" she said with a wicked smile.

"I have no interest in knowing," I snapped as I took a sip of juice. It tasted too sweet to be freshly squeezed.

Rebecca shrugged as if she was unperturbed by my rudeness. "I had planned on inviting you out for crabs, but I've had so many of them over the last few days. How were the crabs that he'd brought back for you? Did they taste good?"

The glass in my hand shook at the mention of that. I looked up and found her leering at me.

So that was why he did not come home the past couple of days. He has been having dinner with her.

I did my best to control myself. “So, are you here to gloat at me or what?”

“Of course not. But I really do like crabs since I was a little girl. Ash remembered all this time. When I arrived at A City the other night, he took me straight for crabs. I do apologize for the ordeal you went through that night though. It was completely unexpected. Thank goodness you are fine.”

It sounded insincere and hollow. “It has nothing to do with you,” I said with an indifferent laugh. “I am thankful for the incident because it showed me just how much Ashton loves me.”

Chapter 823

Her smile froze on her face and slid off a moment later. “I am curious,” she continued as if I had said nothing. “With what kind of a person you’ve managed to offend to make them want to kill you. And in such a manner too! Straight to the morgue. That’s pretty cold if you know what I mean.”

I shrugged. “Yes, I stay up all night thinking about it too,” I replied nonchalantly. “What did you manage to uncover, Ms. Larson?”

Rebecca was visibly irritated at not being able to upset me thus far, but she obliged me nonetheless. “I did not discover much, or it could be that Ash had been looking in the wrong direction. After you were brought out of the

lift, the person who brought you into the morgue was not the same person who drugged you. That person may not even be a man.”

I frowned at her words. “I’m curious, Ms. Larson. Where did you get this piece of information from?”

“That doesn’t matter,” she said coldly. “What matters is that you shouldn’t let Ash get into trouble again for you.”

“What do you know?” I asked sternly.

Rebecca seemed to have lost her cool demeanor from earlier. I leaned closer. “Rebecca, if you meant what you said about doing all of this for Ashton, you owe it to him to tell me everything you know.”

Her plan of making things difficult for me had gone awry and she looked sour about it.

“Scarlett, you’re pretty selfish, you know,” she reprimanded. “You’re constantly letting Ash place himself in danger for you. Don’t you love him? You’ve left him twice, and both times did you fail to find a man who’s more willing to spend his money on you than he is. At the end of the day, you go back to him. Don’t you feel ashamed?”

I was deeply offended. What the hell did she mean by not being able to find a man who wants to spend on me?

“Putting himself in danger for me?” I said, losing all pretense. “Rebecca, do you know why he chose me despite the greater compatibility he shares with you?”

I took a deep breath. “Because you are a despicable creature. How many times have you placed his life in danger? And always in a car too! Do you want to harm him because you can’t get him? And speaking of him spending his money on me: I’ve always thought that you would at least have some semblance of decency, but it appears that you are severely lacking in that department. You’re always somebody who buys what you want without ever working for it. Who is the one to pay for your branded goods? Your house and car? Isn’t it all from Ashton? You’ve used your brother’s death to guilt him into paying for all your expenses, not to mention instigating Cameron to harm her own child and nearly destroying his marriage. Don’t you think that you are taking his kindness for granted? Do you think that your brother would be ashamed of how his sister is behaving? Rebecca, if you had some dignity, you wouldn’t harass him shamelessly like you’re doing now. I feel pity for you, hence my tolerance for his generosity towards you. Don’t think that you are entitled to inherit everything with the Fuller name on it. Even if your name is Ms. Fuller, it’s high time that you start earning your own living instead of being the parasite that you are.”

At the mention of “parasite”, Rebecca slammed her fist down on the table. “Scarlett!”

She was livid. Her pretty eyes flashed viciously as if she would like to devour me. “You think I have no shame, don’t you?” she asked through gritted teeth.

I looked her in the eyes and nodded. "That's right."

I've never enjoyed quarreling with others, and I certainly did not feel comfortable putting them in their place. But Rebecca had gone too far today.

In retrospect, she probably regretted telling me what she knew about that night. But that didn't matter to me even if she didn't. She was a woman who wouldn't concern herself with these things. The things that she did know probably came from Joe anyway.

I figured that I'd better corroborate what she'd said with Ashton. I grabbed my purse and prepared to leave.

My tirade did not sit well with Rebecca. The shame and anger she must have felt was released at the sight of my departing back. "Scarlett, as high as you think of yourself, just know that Ashton is merely infatuated with you temporarily. Don't forget that the Moore family is aware of your dirty past and will expose you at any given time."

I laughed derisively and did not bother to wait for her to finish.

When I stepped out of the café, I breathed a long sigh of relief from having finally left the toxicity behind. Suddenly, my eye fell on a signboard not far away. It was a restaurant for hairy crabs. At the sight of that unpleasant trigger, my heart began to thump wildly again.

Ashton called me but I did not feel particularly eager to pick up. After a slight hesitation, I hung up on him. To return now would only make me feel worse.

It was at that notion that I'd decided to wander aimlessly on the crowded streets.

I had lost track of time. It was a foggy night, with thunder rumbling ominously overhead. Before I registered the fact that it had begun to rain, my clothes were already soaked.

Chapter 824

I did not even know where I was; it appeared to be a small alley.

I made up my mind to return only to realize that I couldn't locate the route from which I came. I descended into a mild panic.

I paced for a little while and was about to use the GPS on my phone when I became aware that somebody was standing behind me.

I whipped around and was frozen with shock for several moments. I recognized him; my mind whirred for a name. A foreign-sounding name. Danny!

What is he doing here?

I clutched my shirt to force myself to remain calm. “Long time no see, Danny!” I said with as natural a smile as I could muster.

Danny stared at me with his bottomless dark eyes. After a long pause, he returned the greeting.

It was a deserted part of town. I’d be lying if I said that I wasn’t frightened.

Besides, I did not know his intentions of approaching me. As hard as I tried to calm myself, my hands betrayed me by trembling visibly.

“When did you return to the country? Have you had your dinner?” I probed, in response to his silent stare.

Lightning flashed across the sky as rain sprayed over us like a fine mist.

“Stay indoors, will you? Abe is in the country. The houses in Venria were burned down and our goods were exposed. He had sustained heavy losses. If he finds you, you will be in deep trouble,” Danny said, ignoring my question.

When he finished, he turned and walked away. The thin clothes on his broad shoulders were already opaque from the rain. He looked a pitiful sight.

“Danny!” I called without realizing it.

He stopped but did not turn around, as if he was waiting for me to say something.

“How have you been?” I did not know what they were doing in the country. His dark skin was at odds with the rest of the population in this city and it made him stand out but not in a good way. He looked very different from when I last saw him. He was currently disheveled.

“Good!” he answered shortly. At that, he turned and left, with no intention of staying.

I stood in the alley for a little longer while the rain worsened. Before long, the bodyguard who was tasked to tail me had appeared. He held an umbrella over my head.

“Has he been following me for a long time?” I asked.

“Yes, quite some time,” he answered.

“Does Ashton know?”

“Mr. Fuller only knows that you are being followed, but he does not know who the person is.”

I nodded without enquiring further.

The bodyguard held out a phone to me. “Mr. Fuller wants to speak to you.”

“Please take me back,” I ordered, ignoring the phone.

He was startled but obeyed me. I was led out of the alley and into the car.

It was dark when we arrived back at the villa. It appeared deserted but I recognized Ashton’s Bentley in the yard.

He was home.

I took a deep breath before going in. I changed into my slippers in the hallway and turned on the lights.

Ashton sat grimly in the living room. It was hard to tell but he looked angry.

I glanced at him and caught his eye. Looking away casually, I went upstairs without a word.

Before I entered the bedroom, Ashton came after me and grabbed my wrist. “Why didn’t you pick up the phone? Who did you meet with today?” he asked quietly.

I was tired and drenched from the rain. “I met an old friend, and my phone was off,” I said blandly, without the intention of pursuing the conversation.

I shook off his grasp and headed into the bedroom to gather up my bathrobe. However, Ashton blocked me with his slender frame. “Scarlett, we’ve talked about this. We can’t have arguments when you give me the silent treatment.”

“I got caught in the rain earlier. Can we talk about this after I have a shower?”

“Go on, then,” Ashton said after a pause.

Without another word, I entered and shut the door. The September rain was chilly, plus the night was colder than usual. I felt a headache coming after my shower. I was probably already falling sick.

As I exited the bathroom, Ashton stared at me like he expected us to talk about the day. I blew dry my hair and wiped my face but was feeling worse by the minute. When Ashton went in to brush his teeth, I promptly fell asleep without waiting for him.

In my drowsiness, I vaguely heard someone calling me, but I was too tired to respond.

When I awoke the following day, my cold intensified to the point where even my throat hurt. Ashton was nowhere to be seen.

I had planned to return to K City. After I got up and tidied up for a bit, I went to Murphy Corporation to meet Armond.

Nora called before I arrived there. "Scarlett, are you free? Let's have lunch!" she chattered.

"Sure, what's up? Why the sudden invitation?"

"It's Laurel. She wants to have lunch with us before everybody goes home for Harvest Festival."

Chapter 825

She was right, Harvest Festival is just around the corner.

“That’s a good idea. I will be going back to K City for Harvest Festival anyway; thus, I won’t have the time to meet you girls. Now is a perfect time.” I suddenly recalled the encounter with Danny.

“Nora,” I said after some hesitation. “Please be careful when you leave the house. I ran into Danny yesterday. He told me that Abe is in the country. We may not be safe!”

“What?” she exclaimed in shock. “How did Abe get in here? Grandpa said that the cops from A City and Venria had joined forces to apprehend him, but he was hidden in the mountains at the border. I can’t believe that he’s here at A City!”

I was startled at this piece of news. “Are you saying that Abe can’t survive in Venria anymore?”

“Yes. I didn’t manage to tell you this before. When we returned from Epea, I told Grandpa about this. He then contacted the cops from A City and Venria to arrest him for all the crimes that he had committed over the years. I think his good fortune is coming to an end.”

Nora’s news explained Danny’s disheveled appearance. It was tough being on the run from the law.

I ended the call with Nora and entered the building of Murphy Corporation.

I knocked on Armond's door.

"Come in!" came his voice.

I pushed open the door and found him buried in some documents, his brow furrowed in concentration. At the sound of my footsteps, he looked up. "Weren't you going to rest for a couple of days? What are you doing back here?"

I helped myself to the seat in front of him. "The Lavelian Village project is almost completed so far," I reported. "We're good to go with some last-minute inspections. As Harvest Festival is almost upon us, I would like to take off for a couple of days to return to K City."

Armond nodded. "I was thinking of heading back there too. As for the inspection, you need to be there ahead of time with the third party. Bring someone from Fuller Corporation if need be, to go over all the safety measures again. I'm worried that it'll be too late to make any changes if the authorities suddenly show up and find something not in order. It will look better on us if we ascertain that everything is in order and report it as such."

I nodded. The project's most vulnerable points are its hidden dangers. If something were to happen over the holidays, the project would be delayed yet again. It would be wise to inspect it beforehand.

“Alright, I’ll notify Fuller Corporation and the third party tomorrow to visit Lavelian Village and go over everything one more time,” I declared. “Oh, by the way. You’re heading back to K City for Harvest Festival?”

“Of course, I’m going back,” he said, turning around to glance at me. Speaking of which, you need to fulfill your promise and give me that sandalwood box when we get back to K City.”

I nodded. I had promised him back in Venria that I would give him the sandalwood box as a token of my gratitude if he was able to bring us back to the country. Due to work and other personal matters, I had put this off for quite some time now.

I recalled my encounter with Danny and was hesitant on telling Armond about it. In the end, I decided against it. “You should be careful when you leave the house. There’s a possibility that Abe is in A City being on the run from the law. I’m worried that he may exact vengeance on all of us.”

Armond, who was toying with his pen absentmindedly, froze at my words. “How did you know that he’s here in A City?” he demanded.

“You knew about it?” I said, startled.

He sat up straight to face me. “I used to be in a similar business,” he said with a laugh. “Of course, I would know.”

I nodded and said no more. He was a man surrounded by bodyguards. Abe wouldn't risk it.

After saying what I came for, I had no reason to extend my stay. I returned to my office and tidied up. It was supposed to be a day of rest for me today. I came to the office just to inform Armond that I intended to return to K City.

Having done that, I packed my things and prepared to return to the villa.

I had planned to spend my day out and about today, but I couldn't help feeling anxious with Abe lurking somewhere in the corners since running into Danny that day. Who knows what might happen at any given time?

I did not drive, and the lobby of the building was not ideal to hail a cab. Therefore, I had to walk a little further out to be able to get a cab.

A City was a city of extreme wealth inequality, probably caused by the high prices of property and low wages of workers. An apartment costs thirty thousand on average, and a worker brings home about three to five thousand. With the high prices of consumables, many living in the city were not able to afford an apartment, much less have any savings. They just lived one day at a time.

Despite all that, people were willing to fight for a spot here because of the four seasons and relatively fresh air.

