

Chapter 851

I had thought that Ashton had already forgotten about the matter of having our own kid. But little did I expect, he would bring this up again when he was drunk. Obviously, a kid was something, or someone rather, that would be with you your entire life. Who wouldn't want their own flesh and blood?

After a long silence in my own thoughts, I went and lay down beside Ashton. "Ashton, do we really need our own child?" I asked with a hoarse voice.

I couldn't be sure whether he had heard me or not since all he gave in response was a subtle wiggling of his eyebrows amidst his slumber.

He really did have a lot to drink.

The next day, the morning light had already shined through the yellowing leaves onto the ground when Ashton woke me up.

I slowly opened my eyes and saw him laying next to me, with a smile on his face.

"You're awake!" I hoarsely exclaimed after rubbing the sleep from my eyes.

"Yup!" he answered with a nod and a smile.

"Does your head still hurt?" I asked as I couldn't get what happened last night out of my mind.

He reassured me with a slight shake of his head and scooted closer to me. “Did you help me undress?” he whispered.

“Yeah, what’s wrong?” I queried with some confusion.

I couldn’t help but follow his gaze onto his well-sculpted body. To my surprise, he was only dressed in his boxers and nothing else.

On top of the silence, my flushed cheeks didn’t do me any favors in hiding the awkwardness radiating from me. Trying to break the awkward atmosphere, I muttered, “Don’t get your hopes up. Nothing happened between us last night, and I didn’t do anything to you. You…”

“What about now?” he interrupted with a mischievous look on his face. Time felt like it stood still while he stared deeply at me with his jet-black eyes.

My heart skipped a beat, and without waiting for a response, he put his giant palm on my waist and got on top of me. I knew he would do this!

As for what happened next, let’s just say that Ashton’s vigor in the morning really was outside the realm of my expectations.

After I had woken up for the second time that day, I caught Ashton coming out of the bathroom in a superbly jovial mood. “So, will you come with me to the office later?” he said.

“I can’t. I promised my Mom that I would bring Summer to the hospital for a checkup as she has been getting recurrent fevers that won’t go away!” I said begrudgingly while still on the bed.

“I’ll go with you!” he responded with furrowed brows.

“It’s alright. It’s just a checkup at the hospital. Just head on over to the office yourself. I’m sure there’s a lot on your plate over there, and you don’t need to be distracted right now,” I persuaded. Even though I only said it so that we could finally get a move on with our day, I knew that all I said was true. Things at the Fuller Corporation hadn’t settled down, and I had a nagging feeling that bigger and worse things might be waiting for him.

Ashton was deep in thought contemplating what I had just said, and after a brief pause, he nodded his head in agreement.

“OK. But what about...” he tried to ask before being interrupted by his phone ringing.

I motioned for him to answer his phone, and with a curt nod, he gave my forehead a quick peck before answering his phone on the balcony. Seeing as he was occupied, I took this chance to head on over to the bathroom.

After I finished my morning routine, I noticed that Ashton had left the clothes from the night before in the bathroom, so I picked them up and took them to the laundry room. However, upon placing his clothes into the washer, I heard a clanking sound coming from his pile of clothes. After a brief investigation, I found the source coming from his trouser pocket and found what appeared to be some vitamins.

Upon closer inspection, I saw that they were vitamin A tablets. Why is he taking vitamins? Has he been feeling unwell lately?

Thinking it was nothing of big importance, I returned to the bedroom only to find Ashton hurriedly putting on his clothes halfway out the door. "What's wrong? Did something happen?" I asked instinctively.

"It's nothing. It's just something at the office. Nothing to worry about!" he reassured with a smile.

After finishing his piece, he resumed his exit through the door, but not before doing a double-take. "I'll come back for dinner! Wait for me!" he said cheekily.

Seeing him leave in such a hurry only worried me further, so I decided to call Joseph to ask what actually had happened. However, try as I might, his phone was constantly engaged.

After contemplating my options, I decided to give Rachel a call. However, my phone rang before I had even dialed the first number. It was Emery.

"Are you OK? Where are you?" she asked immediately after I picked up.

"I'm at home right now. Why? What happened?" I answered with confusion.

"Heavens! Do you never check your phone? The entire web is abuzz with the news about Fuller Corporation, and you're still in the dark?" she practically screamed.

Checking my phone was not a habit that I had, so I really was in the dark about anything and everything that morning.

However, her hysterics made it clear that I should check my phone now, so I did.

The headline on the news website could not be any clearer: Listed company caught infringing! Will the law treat the powerful Fuller Corporation the same as everyone else?

The headline got me in a daze, and I subconsciously clicked on it. What I found inside was that during the Lavelian Village project, the trending AI technology that was exhibited by Fuller Corporation had actually debuted in Western Europe a month before the exhibition by Fuller Corporation. Their unveiling was not well-received by the mainstream audience only because they were a small company.

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However, Fuller Corporation's AI technology had been hyped up in its initial stages, and everyone had thought that it would send Fuller Corporation which was already at its peak to an even greater stride. Now it seemed like everything was not as simple as we had thought.

Their press conference was over a month ago. This meant that Fuller Corporation would allegedly be sued for plagiarism. Normally, a hefty fine would be imposed under these circumstances, but that would only be a minor problem. The major problem would be whether Fuller Corporation's reputation could survive this crisis.

Ashton had ventured into AI to diversify the projects that they could take on in the future since the market was an ever-changing tapestry. The real estate market that George built his empire upon was already a red ocean. The best that they could do was only to sustain the business and, at best, earn meager money from it. Ashton foresaw that it would be near impossible to achieve greater strides in the same sector. Hence, Fuller Corporation's investment in AI technology aimed to better serve the ever-developing market.

There was no time to explain everything to Emery. I hung up the phone and went over to Fuller Corporation immediately.

Once there, I noticed that reporters from various different media outlets were already crowding the Fuller Corporation building. It was impossible for me to drive past the crowd. Hence, I got off the car and planned to sneak inside the building.

However, to my dismay, someone in the crowd suddenly exclaimed, "It's Mrs. Fuller! She's here!"

The exclamation sent the crowd into a frenzy. Before I could react, blinding flashlights hit my face as the reporters began to throw questions at me.

"Mrs. Fuller, are you aware that Mr. Fuller had plagiarized the product of CBU?"

"Is this Mr. Fuller's doing, or is the whole Fuller Corporation also involved? How much do you know about this?"

"Mrs. Fuller, it's rumored that you're not working in Fuller Corporation, but your company is collaborating with your husband's company for this project. Did the two of you conspire to anticipate huge earnings in the local market after the AI technology has been launched?"

“Mrs. Fuller, rumor has it that you’re managing all assets registered under Mr. Fuller’s name. I’d like to know, given that you’re the wife of the man who tops the billionaire rankings every year, does he extort it all from the public?”

The questions got increasingly crude and demeaning. Swarmed by the reporters, it was impossible for me to make my way through the crowd. Exasperated at the flashing cameras that were hurting my eyes, I could no longer hold myself in. “Please do not accuse my husband and me of anything without any concrete evidence. Otherwise, I will give everything in my power to sue every single one of you for defamation!”

Seeing that my path was blocked and that there was no place else to go, I could only use my hands to shield myself from the glaring flashlights. Unfazed by my threat, a reporter provoked, “Is that your guilt talking, Mrs. Fuller? Even though we do not have any concrete evidence in hand, there is no smoke without fire. If Mr. Fuller is truly innocent, then he’d have no fear of us accusing him of such, unless he’s truly done something that he shouldn’t have. Are you putting up a farce because you know you’re in the wrong?”

Someone in the crowd pushed me, and I was knocked to the ground. Before I could react to the sudden turn of events, my hand was stepped on by someone, and I gasped from the pain.

There were just too many people around. I tried to get up as I feared being trampled over. However, no matter how hard I tried to stand back up, it was as if the swarm of people was united in their attempt to keep pushing me back down each and every time.

After a few tries, I was trampled over and suffered a few kicks here and there. All of a sudden, the reporters swarming me fanned out, and the air grew still.

I lifted my head in response and fixed my gaze on the entrance of Fuller Corporation. Ashton walked out of the entrance with a cold, hard look on his face, flanked by the top management of Fuller Corporation.

As the reporters had fanned out all at once, I was left sprawled on the ground in everyone's plain sight. It wasn't hard to imagine how disheveled and shabby I looked to him and everyone else.

The surrounding temperature dropped several degrees with the frigid look on Ashton's face. The man was burning with fury as he approached me. He shot his icy gaze at the reporters surrounding us, eliciting gasps from the crowd.

He pulled me up from the ground and held me in his arms. His usual gentle voice rang in my ears, "Are you alright?"

I nodded. "I'm fine!"

He nodded as well before he scanned the surroundings with his dark eyes. It was apparent that he was demanding retribution from the demeaning crowd.

"I am very honored that you guys had taken the time and effort to crowd the building of my company. However, there is no good reason for all of you to inflict injury on my wife, and I expect an explanation from all of you for that. Please go back. You guys are only qualified to interview me when you have a job." Ashton did not raise an octave, nor were his words crude, but it was obvious that his words were a warning to them. Even though I did not quite understand what he meant, I could tell that the lot of reporters had picked up on what he was trying to say judging by the looks on their faces.

With that, Ashton took my hand and headed for his office. he then ordered Joseph to fetch him a first aid kit. He got me to sit on the sofa and tended to my wound in silence.

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My knees and arms were bloody from being knocked to the ground, and my body was covered in dust.

I was lucky that these were only superficial wounds. Ashton lowered his head and tended to my wounds. There was a hint of anger on his perfectly sculpted face. His anger became even more obvious when I flinched as he was sanitizing my wounds with iodine solution.

He lifted his head and looked at me as he asked in a low voice, "Does it hurt?"

I shook my head and managed a slight smile. "Not really!" I wasn't lying. After all, they were just external wounds, so it was nothing unbearable.

He pursed his lips and continued to work on my wounds. I knew he was mad at me for not staying at home.

Ashton had not said a single word even after he was done with my wounds. Just then, Joseph sent over some clothes for me to change into. He tried to say something but he bit his tongue at the sight of his boss.

Ashton turned to look at me. "Can you change on your own?"

I nodded. Of course I can.

He hummed in acknowledgement and said nothing else.

I turned around and headed for the private restroom. Soon after, Joseph's voice rang. I could still hear him as the private restroom was quite near.

"Mr. Fuller, I've done the investigation. The things that CBU had launched last month came directly from Fuller Corporation. They made no changes to the machinery after taking it from us. So far, they have not launched any other new machinery."

I paused after listening to him and recalled that a lot of things had been stolen from the base of the Lavelian Village project not long after it had been launched. However, no further follow-ups ensued. Ashton and Armond did not seem like they were interested to get to the bottom of things either.

On the contrary, Fuller Corporation simply decided to rebuild another machinery. I had thought that that would be the end of the problem, but now it was clear as day that someone was looking to set Ashton up.

Otherwise, how would CBU be able to launch such a big-scale AI exhibition, showcasing its sophisticated technology without stirring up any response both locally and internationally? Everything about it did not make any sense to me.

Ashton replied, "Hmm. Get someone to make a statement to conclude that it would be difficult for us to assemble the AI without the core technology. Then, spread the word that Fuller Corporation had been ransacked in A City, and list out everything that we were about to exhibit back then."

Joseph nodded and fell silent for some time before saying, "By the way, about Mrs. Fuller's injury today, I've contacted the person in charge of those media outlets. We have identified all reporters who had gotten too close, or hurt Mrs. Fuller in any way through the security footage at our entrance. They have all promised that the identified personnel will never be employed in any media outlets and TV stations in all of K City."

"Good."

Then, the room fell silent. It seemed like Joseph had left.

I changed my clothes, and since my wounds were already taken care of, I was fine.

After heading out of the private restroom, I was greeted by the sight of Ashton working. Glancing at me, he asked, "Does it still hurt?"

I shook my head. "No. It's nothing."

Hesitating for a moment, I parted my lips and asked, "What will happen to the reporters?"

He stopped writing and looked at me seriously. "All media outlets and TV stations in K City will never employ them." There was not a trace of emotion in his voice.

I nodded and said nothing else. I knew that it wasn't easy for reporters to climb the ranks in K City's media industry, especially to the ranks of being able to get firsthand news and to get the chance to mingle among the rich and powerful, much less to be able to interview these people. It must have taken those people decades of work just to get to where they were.

However, one order from Ashton was all it took to put an end to their careers. The reporters must have been indignant at the implications, to say the least.

Judging by his calm and composed manner, I could tell that Ashton must have come up with a way to deal with the current situation. I initially came here to help, but it did not seem like he needed any. "Ashton, is someone deliberately trying to stir up trouble this time?"

He raised his brow and poured me a glass of water. "Are you so worried about me that you've come all the way here?" He was not answering my question.

Stumped, I nodded solemnly. "Yes."

His lips curled into a smile, and he seemed pleased. "Don't worry, I'm doing fine."

I heaved a sigh of relief at his response. "That's good, then. The Murphys pitched in for the Lavelian Village project as well, but they've been awfully quiet."

I initially thought that the investigation would not have been so thorough. However, the reporter downstairs had implied that they knew the connection between the Murphys and the Lavelian Village project. But if that's the case, why are the Murphys being so quiet about it?

He put down the pen in his hand in silence and said, "No rush. We have all the time in the world."

I could sense that there was another meaning to his words. I was about to inquire further but thought better of it. Recalling that I still had to take Summer to the hospital, I turned to him and said, "It seems like I'm not much of a help to your problems. I'm going

to take Summer to the hospital later. Mom said that she's been having fever a lot lately, and asked me to fetch her for a check-up."

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Ashton nodded. "We'll go home together later. Are you craving any particular food?"

"No." I shook my head.

He merely stared at me, as if protesting my answer. I pursed my lips and relented as I blurted, "Alright, I want to eat lobster, steamed fish, and pork ribs..." He smiled as I prattled on a long list of food, seemingly not paying any attention to my nonchalant request. Seeing that, I shrugged and stopped talking.

Because I was in a rush to take Summer to the hospital, I left right after I had taken my bag.

After heading out of the office, I bumped into Ashton's secretary near the elevator. She was holding on to a lot of files and seemed like she was in a daze. She did not even realize when something fell off her hands.

"Hello!" I said.

It wasn't until I repeated myself that she turned around to look at me. I waved the file that she had dropped at her and said, "You dropped something."

Stumped, the woman bowed and thanked me for my help before retrieving the file.

“Sasha, what’s the matter with you?” A man who came out of the elevator asked her, “Is something wrong? Not only did you send the wrong documents, but you’re also losing things. And now, you’re even bumping into people. Are you alright?”

Sasha shook her head, her eyes were red-rimmed. Joseph headed out of the elevator and noticed that I was staring at the secretary. “Mrs. Fuller, what’s the matter?”

I said nothing as I shook my head. A feeling of uneasiness washed over me as I looked at her.

However, everyone was in a rush, so nobody cared to pay attention to someone who was unrelated to them.

Some of the reporters were still waiting for Ashton downstairs. They were waiting for him to head out of the building and hoped that they would be able to get him to answer some questions.

Thinking that I might bump into the reporters again if I exited the building via the main entrance, I decided to take the other exit at the back. Right then, I got a call from Cameron.

I searched for my keys as I picked up her call.

“Letty, are you at Fuller Corporation?”

“Yeah.” After locating my keys, I said, “But I’m leaving now and will reach home soon. How’s Summer? Is she still having a fever?”

“No, her fever’s subsided, but it’s been on and off for her.”

“Okay, I’m heading there right now. You…”

Bang! A loud noise cut me off and I subconsciously turned around to trace the origin. In the next moment, my eyes widened in horror.

Before me was a mangled woman whose face was indiscernible to me because of the blood that was pouring out of her head. I was only able to identify her as a woman through her long, bloodstained hair.

My legs turned to jelly as my mind went blank. My instincts were telling me that she had jumped off a building.

“Letty, what’s the matter?” Cameron’s voice came through from the other end. Stunned, I tried to speak but no words came out of my mouth.

I was so shocked to the extent of losing my voice.

“Someone’s jumped off the building. Hurry! Call the police!” someone nearby shouted, fear and shock apparent in their voice.

Time went by and people started to crowd the scene. By now, I was standing in an ever-increasing pool of blood.

One glance was all it would take for some things to be forever etched in one's mind. What was worse was that the ghost of the image will continue to haunt one's dreams.

From what level did she jump off? What kind of impact could make her head and body split into a bloody mess of flesh like that?

"Mrs. Fuller, are you alright?" A voice rang in my ears. I was still too stunned to speak. I stared blankly at Joseph who had appeared by my side and shuddered uncontrollably.

He looked worried and said, "Mrs. Fuller, let me send you back to Mr. Fuller's office."

He supported me and led me all the way back into Ashton's office. At the sight of Ashton, I felt all energy drained from my body as I slumped to the floor.

Ashton was quick to respond and managed to catch me in his embrace. Furrowing his brows, he turned to Joseph and asked, "What's the matter?"

Joseph sighed before saying, "Mrs. Fuller exited the building via the back exit and witnessed Sasha Brooks committing suicide by jumping off the building. I reckoned Mrs. Fuller just got the shock of her life."

Sasha Brooks?

Was she the woman whom I bumped into just now?

But why did she jump off the building?

My brain was rife with questions.

Ashton's brows creased as he said, "Alright. Inform the PR department to deal with this matter immediately. Then, investigate everything about Sasha, her family, and her relationships. I want to know why she's committed suicide. Do not let the media go wild with speculation."

Joseph nodded solemnly and left.

The door was closed and Ashton circled me in his embrace as my mind went numb. No words came out of my mouth as I looked at him. He sat me on the sofa and poured a glass of water for me. Then, he looked into my eyes and said, "Don't be scared. I'm here."

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I gulped down a large mouthful of water before taking several deep breaths to calm myself down. After my heartbeat had slowed down somewhat, I turned stiffly to look at Ashton and asked in a small voice, "Is she dead?"

His arms tightened around me as he nodded. "Yes. You're fine. I'm here with you, you're okay now."

I couldn't stop my hands and body from shaking, and it took me a long while before I felt normal again.

I stared blankly at my surroundings, my body slowly releasing its tension when I realized that I was in a familiar place with familiar people. Ashton was still holding me in his embrace, repeating words of reassurance over and over again in a gentle tone.

I cleared my throat and licked at my dry lips before glancing up at him. "I saw her at the elevator when I was heading out earlier. How did she..."

He shook his head. Just then, Joseph walked into the room again, his expression solemn as he told Ashton, "Mr. Fuller, the body has just been taken away. The police have also asked to look at the scene to figure out the cause of her death, and the exit downstairs has already been sealed off."

It made sense that the police would want to carry out an investigation of someone falling to their death from such a tall building. Ashton nodded before he turned to me and said, "Be a good girl and stay here. I'll be back soon."

As the chairperson of the company, he was obliged to handle the situation personally.

I nodded, and he and Joseph left the office. Finding myself unable to sit still in there alone, I got up and headed toward the employee section of the office. Everyone was understandably shaken up by Sasha's suicide and was unable to go about their daily tasks like usual.

Some police officers were looking for where Sasha might have jumped off the building from, and others were busy interviewing employees in the office. As a result, everyone's hearts were in their throats.

It was a long time before Ashton finally sent the police away. Spotting me in the area, he waved me over, and we retreated to his office together.

Joseph furrowed his eyebrows. “Mr. Fuller, this couldn’t have been a coincidence.”

Ashton’s expression was blank. He was deep in thought for a moment before replying, “Contact the victim’s family and try to placate them as soon as possible.”

Joseph nodded and immediately left.

“Is everything going to be okay?” I couldn’t help but fret.

Ashton gave me a faint smile, but the darkening circles under his eyes were dead giveaways of exhaustion. “It’ll be fine. Don’t worry.”

I knew that he usually wouldn’t share too much information with me because he didn’t want me to get worked up over nothing. He had a habit of wanting to shoulder everything by himself, and refused to let me share any of his burdens.

The realization dawned upon me abruptly, that he and I were very similar. We both cared for each other deeply, and we both needed each other. Perhaps it was exactly because we cared for each other too much that we wanted to protect the other in our own ways so that the worry we had for each other would be alleviated.

That would explain why we were always unwilling to verbalize our true feelings when facing a dilemma, even if we were frantically panicking on the inside. We didn’t want to add on to the other person’s stress.

Unfortunately, this would only serve to make the other person feel even more worried and helpless.

I stared at him in silence for a minute, then got up and poured him a glass of water. Taking a deep breath, I fixed him with a stern look. "Ashton. You might think that I won't be of any help in solving your problems, so you keep your worries to yourself in an attempt to protect me from your suffering. But have you ever considered what the largest difference is between your spouse and a normal friend?"

"People get married because they need each other. Spouses need to share the burden of their pain and concerns. Even just giving each other a hug is an act of helping to shoulder the burden. So, I'm asking you to please stop keeping everything to yourself and covering up all your negative emotions. I want to be able to share your stress and feelings, and I want to be the person in this world most needed by you. Understand?"

I could see him visibly start to relax, and I knew that my words had gotten to him.

He seemed completely caught off guard by me suddenly bringing this topic up. The moody aura that had been emanating off of him dissipated, and the corners of his lips quirked up into a smile as he pulled me into his arms once more. "You silly woman. You've always been the person I need most in this world, and you always will be."

I let him hold me as he continued murmuring in his low, gravelly voice. "I just never tell you the truth about my feelings because I know that you will always be my source of strength as long as you're with me. As long as you're by my side, I know that I can overcome anything."

I stared at him fondly. "Digging out the past, plagiarism, and now, death... Just who is this enemy of yours, Ashton? Is it Abe? I heard that he's back in the country and staying in A City."

"I'll be the one to find out who this person is," he promised. "All you have to do is take care of your own health."

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Ashton still seemed reluctant to let me interfere with the situation at hand. After a pause, I nodded and kept quiet, letting him hug me for a while longer.

Sadly, he couldn't stay for very long, and he soon left to call a meeting of directors while I searched for Joseph. I was able to find him quickly. Cutting to the chase, I asked, "Can I take a look at the spot where Sasha jumped off the building?"

Slightly stunned, he nodded in agreement after a while.

The company building had more than a hundred floors. Sasha had chosen the fortieth floor, approximately twenty meters above the ground. There was no way she could have survived a fall from that height.

I swept my gaze over the scene of the crime before I gave Joseph a sidelong glance. "What did the police say?"

"They found broken pieces of metal railing as well as shards of glass where she fell. Preliminary findings point to an accidental fall, but they're still in the midst of conducting an autopsy. We'll need to wait for the full autopsy report before we can make the final conclusion." Even in the face of such a horrible incident, he still managed to remain calm and collected.

I nodded, not saying anything further. I didn't want to jump to conclusions before the results of the autopsy came out.

After leaving the company, I called Cameron to tell her that I wouldn't be able to take Summer to the hospital. Too many things were happening at once at Fuller Corporation,

and I didn't have the time to include Summer in my daily schedule for now. Cameron reassured me that Summer's fever had gone down and that she was doing alright.

Back at the villa, I phoned Nora and asked her about Abe.

She proceeded to rant on and on for what felt like hours, but my ears pricked up at a certain piece of information. "Wait, Danny was the one who contacted you first?" I interrupted her. "Did you meet him?"

"Nope!" she replied. "He just called me up, telling me to remind you to be more careful, and said that Abe is targeting you and Ashton specifically."

After a brief moment of hesitation, I decided to tell her about everything that had been happening recently.

"Has Abe's reach really expanded that far?" she gasped in shock. "Oh! By the way, Armond recently returned to K City. If you find yourself in trouble, you can contact him at any time. He might be able to help."

I assumed that she was only offering so in order to be polite. As such, I made some noncommittal sound of affirmation and hung up on her, remembering what I had promised Armond last time. I had yet to return the item to him and had been thinking about taking some time out of my schedule specifically to do so.

The eventful day caused me to toss and turn in bed, failing to get a single wink of sleep. Ashton didn't come home for the entire night either, most likely because he was swamped with work.

The next morning, I woke up, made some breakfast, and packed it up before heading straight to the company.

I had barely reached the main lobby when I caught sight of a group of people screaming and crying for Fuller Corporation to return to them their daughter. It was currently the beginning of work hours, so there were also many employees crowding around the entrance.

A middle-aged couple dressed in all black were sobbing the loudest, calling out Sasha's name over and over. I'm guessing they're her parents. There was also a young child around five years old with them, standing stiffly as she looked around in a daze.

Just then, Joseph came downstairs with horrible dark circles under his eyes. After sending away the employees that should be clocking in for work, he did a double-take when he saw me. "Mrs. Fuller, are you looking for Mr. Fuller? We had a meeting that went on throughout the night, and he just ended it."

I kept an eye on the old couple in the lobby as I inched closer toward him. "How long have they been here for?"

"Since last night. They keep demanding compensation, but the official police report hasn't come out, so we can't promise them anything yet." Joseph's eyebrows knitted together.

Humming in acknowledgment, my attention was drawn toward one of the staff members at the front counter complaining loudly, "God, I've had enough of them. Mr. Fuller has already issued a statement asking them to wait for the official police reports, and that the company will take responsibility regardless of whatever the results are! They're obviously just trying to ruin the company's reputation by causing a commotion on purpose!"

The words took me aback. “Mr. Campbell, is the amount of compensation for an accidental death and a suicide the same?” I inquired.

He shook his head. “No. If it was an accidental death, we would need to pay much more, and the entire company’s security system would need to undergo restructuring. If it was a suicide, the company only needs to pay a small part in reparation fees as more of a moral obligation than anything else.”

I could understand why the old couple was making such a fuss now. With the Fuller Corporation having to deal with this sudden accident, the victim’s parents were likely trying to cause an uproar in the hopes that Ashton would give them the money to go away.

But they had been going at it for such a long time, and yet, Ashton showed no signs of coming downstairs. He had probably also decided to wait for the police report to come out before taking any actions.

I glanced at the old couple again, whose eyes were red and swollen from crying. They appeared especially frail and weak after having stayed up through the night.

The young child beside them also looked worryingly pale. Turning to Joseph, I told him, “Mr. Campbell, please get someone to buy some breakfast and snacks for them.”

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Joseph frowned. "Why? They're clearly here to cause trouble."

"They look hungry and pitiful... especially the child. Please do as I said."

"Alright." He didn't sound convinced, but nodded and went off anyway.

Entering Ashton's office, I spotted him reading a document. I placed the lunchbox that I brought right in front of him on his desk. Snatching the pen and document in his hands away, I chided, "I know you're a workaholic, but you've just burnt the midnight oil. At least eat some breakfast and then take a nap on the bed." I was acting angrier than I truly felt.

The faint hints of a smile grew on his face as he pulled me to sit in his lap. "Why are you here so early in the morning?" He sighed deeply and buried his face in my hair. "Did you not sleep last night?"

The sight of his stubble starting to poke out of his chin pulled at my heartstrings. "Enough about me; have you seen what you look like? That's it, no more chit-chat. Eat your breakfast and then take a nap!"

I climbed off of his legs and opened up the lunchbox for him.

Surprisingly, he obediently ate the food in silence, and then insisted on having me sleep beside him. I was unwilling at first, but he looked so serious when he said, "I can't sleep without you."

Thus, I had no choice but to lay down in his embrace and closed my eyes.

Soon after, I heard the sounds of his even breathing. He must be exhausted after pulling an all-nighter.

The echoes of footsteps rang out from the office. Taking advantage of Ashton's deep sleep state, I slowly tiptoed out of bed and left the private restroom. The first thing I saw once I was back in the office was Joseph pacing back and forth looking worried.

Upon seeing me, he quickly asked, "Mrs. Fuller, is Mr. Fuller currently taking a break?"

I nodded. "Did something happen?"

Joseph sounded slightly apprehensive as he explained, "The situation with Sasha's family is getting worse. They've rounded up a large number of distant relatives and are continuing to be a disturbance. The lobby is a complete mess, and it's starting to affect the employees' work."

"Didn't Ashton asked you to investigate Sasha's relationship with her family yesterday? Did you find out who the kid is?"

"Yes, the child is her four-year-old daughter. Sasha was a single mother who had gotten pregnant when she was a university student. No one knows who the child's father is. Both of Sasha's parents were local laborers and had now retired. They're not very poor, but Sasha has an older brother with a gambling addiction who stole their parents' retirement savings and rent savings. Now, all her parents have left is a rented house that's fifty square feet large. They're going through a relatively hard time."

That was the reason why Sasha's parents were so desperate for money after her death. After all, her entire family had been dependent on her income solely and had already been living a frugal life before this. Now that she had suddenly passed away in a freak

accident, it was near impossible for two senior citizens and a young toddler to survive on their own.

After pondering for a long while, I told Joseph, “You haven’t slept at all, have you? Go and take a rest in the office. I’ll handle the situation in the lobby.”

“N-No, I’m fine...” he stuttered.

“Joseph, I know I haven’t been a consistent employee of Fuller Corporation, but that doesn’t mean that I don’t know anything,” I insisted. “Besides, the issue downstairs is just a civil dispute and not something that requires special knowledge. I can handle it myself. So relax and go take a rest, alright?”

He opened his mouth as if to argue further, but his phone suddenly rang out from his pocket. Awkwardly excusing himself to answer the call, I heard what sounded like his wife on the other side of the phone. “Hubby, the baby has a fever, please come home quick!”

His expression swiftly changed upon hearing that. Turning to me, he stressed, “I’ll leave things in your hands, Mrs. Fuller. I have an emergency at home, but I’ll come back as soon as possible.”

I nodded, reminding him to take care of himself once more.

I went downstairs to the lobby at the same time that Joseph left the building. It was still working hours, so there was only a group of about ten or more people of all ages standing around in the lobby. They had somehow gotten hold of a huge banner and had written the words “A life for a life! Repay your debts!” across it. They seemed quite serious about the message, too.

The receptionists were all cowering in fear behind the counter, deathly afraid that one wrong word would unleash the family's wrath upon them.

I couldn't help but feel thankful that Sasha's body had been taken away prior to this by workers from the funeral parlor. If they hadn't, her relatives might have carried her coffin case all the way here as a part of their demonstration.

There were security guards stationed at the elevators to prevent them from barging into the upstairs offices and disrupting the employees' work.

I immediately caught sight of the group that seemed to have run out of energy as I exited the elevator. Heading for the front counter, I asked one of the receptionists, "Have the reporters been here today?"

Logically speaking, there should have been more reporters today than yesterday, but there was not a single one to be seen.

The receptionist did a double-take after seeing me, but she quickly regained her composure. "They usually come by during noon or at night. That's when the lobby is filled with people, and that's the only time that Mr. Fuller will pass through the lobby."

Chapter 857

Joseph frowned. "Why? They're clearly here to cause trouble."

"They look hungry and pitiful... especially the child. Please do as I said."

"Alright." He didn't sound convinced, but nodded and went off anyway.

Entering Ashton's office, I spotted him reading a document. I placed the lunchbox that I brought right in front of him on his desk. Snatching the pen and document in his hands away, I chided, "I know you're a workaholic, but you've just burnt the midnight oil. At least eat some breakfast and then take a nap on the bed." I was acting angrier than I truly felt.

The faint hints of a smile grew on his face as he pulled me to sit in his lap. "Why are you here so early in the morning?" He sighed deeply and buried his face in my hair. "Did you not sleep last night?"

The sight of his stubble starting to poke out of his chin pulled at my heartstrings. "Enough about me; have you seen what you look like? That's it, no more chit-chat. Eat your breakfast and then take a nap!"

I climbed off of his legs and opened up the lunchbox for him.

Surprisingly, he obediently ate the food in silence, and then insisted on having me sleep beside him. I was unwilling at first, but he looked so serious when he said, "I can't sleep without you."

Thus, I had no choice but to lay down in his embrace and closed my eyes.

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Chapter 858

I finally understood that the reporters' main objective was Ashton, and Ashton only. As for the victim's relatives, the reporters would likely just snap a few pictures and then try to compete with each other for who could write the most heart-wrenching news article.

I took several thousand out of my purse, telling the female receptionist, "I need you to get someone to buy some fruits and snacks, the more expensive and higher quality, the better. After that, arrange for it to be delivered to them. Buy some toys and give them out to the kids here, too. It would be best if you could start up a conversation with them and find out why they're going to such lengths, and perhaps ask if they're acting on someone else's orders. Also, call up some more reliable reporters and tell them to come over to take pictures."

She looked shocked as she received the money, nodding numbly. To my surprise, the young woman worked efficiently, swiftly giving out water bottles and snacks to everyone in the lobby. She also instructed some of the other security guards to help with her errands, and they naturally mixed in with the crowd and started talking.

It just so happened to be lunchtime. Reporters filtered in slowly but surely. However, they seemed to have learned from their previous lesson and were acting a lot more reserved than last time.

After a while, the female receptionist ran over to me excitedly. "Mrs. Fuller, those people aren't Sasha's family! Someone is paying them a hundred per day to come here just to make a fuss! All of them are simply retirees who jumped at the chance of earning money, and some even dragged along their grandchildren to make it look more realistic."

My mouth fell open. I had thought that these people would at least have some relation to Sasha, but it turned out that all they wanted was to cause chaos and confusion.

Falling deep in thought for a minute or so, I then instructed her, “Think of a way to get an audio recording of that confession, then pay them twice the amount of money to send them away. Apart from that, instruct them to tell outsiders that Sasha committed suicide. As for everything else... Let them add as many ‘saucy’ details as they wish, as long as it doesn’t affect Fuller Corporation negatively.”

She nodded and walked away, leaving me to wonder, who would go to such lengths to ruin Fuller Corporation’s reputation? What do they want from us?

The lobby was slowly clearing out, and the receptionist approached me to show me that she had recorded a video. “I’ve asked them all to leave, Mrs. Fuller. The only ones left are Sasha’s actual parents.” She shook her head in awe, exclaiming, “You made everyone calm down and caused the reporters to come all the way here for nothing. You even helped promote our company along the way! You’re amazing!”

I laughed lightly, my gaze settling on Sasha’s daughter out of the corner of my eye. The little girl appeared a little worse for wear, and for some reason, I had a feeling that she wasn’t just an ordinary child.

I turned back to the receptionist. “Thank you for everything you’ve done today. Give me your number so that you can send the video file to me. By the way, what’s your name?”

Her cheeks flushed at my request before shyly exchanging numbers with me. “My name is Stella Collins, Mrs. Fuller. You can just call me Stella! I’m glad to have been of assistance.”

I smiled politely back at her. Minutes later, she sent me the video file through WhatsApp.

“Help! Someone, help!” Suddenly, the peace and quiet of the lobby was broken by someone’s screams.

Glancing up, I saw Sasha's parents sobbing and shouting desperately for help. "Go over and see what they need," I ordered Stella.

She rushed over, pushing through the small crowd that had formed around Sasha's parents as I followed closely behind her.

The young girl that had just been playing on one of the sofas in the lobby had passed out, her face was as pale as a ghost with blood streaming down from her nose. It didn't seem like she was suffering from an external injury.

Her grandparents were panicking, cradling the child in their arms as they cried.

At a loss for what to do, Stella turned to stare at me in confusion.

No one had any understanding of the child's condition. She had stayed here for the entire day, and I had only just instructed people to give her and her family snacks. If anything happened to her, people would find a way to somehow blame it on Fuller Corporation.

Clearly, the other staff was also thinking the same thing I was. Stella became even more frantic, as she had been the one to personally buy the snacks and hand them out.

The young woman in question was nearly in tears as she stared at me. "What should we do, Mrs. Fuller?"

Taking a deep breath, I forced myself to calm down and think rationally. "Hello, Mr. Brooks, Mrs. Brooks," I greeted them. "I'm Ashton Fuller's wife. If you're willing to trust me, will you hear me out?"

The old couple was already frozen in shock because of their grandchild. When they looked up at me, it was as if their eyes suddenly lit up with hope. Clutching onto my arm, Sasha's mother pleaded, "Madam, please help her! I'm begging you, please help!"

I nodded, trying my best to soften my tone in order to reassure her. "Please listen carefully. The most important thing now is saving this child's life. We will call an ambulance to send her to the hospital, but you have to agree to settle everything else only after we've confirmed that the child is no longer in danger."

Chapter 859

The middle-aged couple froze for a second and exchanged glances with each other. After a moment of hesitation, they stared at me and said, "Okay, we believe you, but don't you try to fool us. No matter what, Fuller Corporation has to compensate for my daughter's death."

I nodded, having no time to think things over. Then, I gave Stella a meaningful look, and she called for an ambulance right away. However, seeing that it would take a while for the ambulance to come over, I had no choice but to drive them to the hospital.

After sending the child to the ER, a nurse approached us and asked, "Who is the child's family?"

"We're the child's grandparents. How is she now?" the middle-aged couple answered in unison.

The nurse nodded politely at them. “We’re unsure of the child’s condition yet. Please go to the first floor for registration and payment. Once the result is out, we’ll inform you immediately.”

The couple was stunned by her words. Seeing the look of embarrassment on their face, I said, “Give me the child’s identification card. I’ll settle the registration and payment.”

The two were dumbfounded. In the next second, their eyes turned red-rimmed as they gazed at me. “Mrs. Fuller, we can’t thank you enough.”

I didn’t say much. Taking the necessary documents, I headed to the first floor to register and pay the admission fee.

When I came back, I returned the medical records and identification card to them. Staring at me with reddened eyes, the woman thanked me again.

I simply nodded in acknowledgment. My phone had rung several times just now, but I was too busy to pick it up. Now that I was free, I fished out my phone and unlocked it. It was Ashton who called me earlier.

He sent me a few texts as well: Where are you? Why didn’t you answer my calls?

I replied: You should rest more. I’m at the hospital. Sasha’s daughter passed out all of a sudden, so I gave them a ride. Sleep for a little longer. Your health is more important. Don’t worry, I’ll manage this issue properly.

Afterward, I kept my phone in my bag. The woman glanced at me while asking, "Mrs. Fuller, do you think that we're too unscrupulous for doing this?"

Stupefied, I gave no comment.

She chuckled dryly. "We've never been in such dire straits before. Some children are here to bring joy, while others bring despair. My husband and I have two children. The one who's here to bring joy has kicked the bucket, while the other is racking up so much debt that it's forcing us to a corner. Isn't it funny? Still, no matter how desolate we are, we have to survive. Only then we can hope for better lives and see our granddaughter grow up."

As I listened to her in silence, a sense of sorrow welled up in my heart. In life, there were many twists and turns. People had only a few reasons to be happy, but there were thousands of instances that could make people miserable. As for the couple who were over their fifties, their granddaughter was their only reason to live.

A few moments later, the ER door opened, and a doctor came out. The couple hurriedly approached him and asked, "Doctor, how's the child now? Is she alright?"

Glancing at the couple with his brows drew together, the doctor contemplated for a few seconds before saying, "Please come to my office for a discussion."

I grasped the meaning of his words at once. It seemed that the child had a critical medical condition.

Later, in the doctor's office.

The couple squirmed nervously in their seat while staring at the doctor. Having experienced similar situations countless times before, the latter sighed and handed a medical report to them.

In a daze, Sasha's mother took it, but she couldn't understand the content, so she passed it to her husband.

After a while, the middle-aged man gaped at the doctor in disbelief. His voice quivered as he questioned, "Leukemia? Doctor, did you make a mistake? How can she have leukemia? She's such an obedient and sweet child. I can't believe it..."

While speaking, he broke down, and tears started trickling down his face unceasingly.

The woman's body went stiff at the news. Staring at the doctor with widened eyes, she tried hard to choke back her tears. "Doctor, did you get it wrong? Maybe she hasn't rested well these days, but there's no way our granddaughter has leukemia. She's only four years old. This is impossible!"

Looking at the couple who seemed to have grown much older within seconds, the doctor sighed helplessly. "I wish the child was well as much as you do. We've performed a full-body medical checkup for her. Now that the results are out, I hope you can stay rational and positive. You need to be prepared because her upcoming treatment and chemotherapy aren't going to be easy. Apart from that, a bone marrow transplant is the only way to cure leukemia. I'm guessing that you're the child's grandparents? You must talk to her parents and get them ready for the operation."

All of a sudden, Sasha's mother burst out crying, wailing so hard that she could barely speak. Her husband quickly consoled her. However, words meant nothing to the couple who were utterly devastated by the news.

Chapter 860

I turned to look at the doctor and let out a sigh. “Doctor, other than bone marrow transplant, is there any other method?”

The man shook his head. “Our technology isn’t that advanced now, so there’s no alternative. Besides, the success rate of a bone marrow transplant is only around eighty percent, not one hundred percent. The child’s leukemia is likely an inherited disease, which means either her father or mother carries the gene of leukemia.”

“No! That’s impossible!” Sasha’s mother shouted in a croaky voice. “Both my husband and I have no blood disease, and the same goes for my daughter. How can Renee get it?”

The doctor’s forehead puckered. “It could be her father who has the gene. Nevertheless, the incidence rate of this disease is low. Even if one carries the gene, the disease won’t manifest unless there’re external triggers.”

Immediately, the woman fell silent. I continued talking to the doctor to get a better understanding of the child’s condition.

Stepping out of the doctor’s office, Sasha’s mother suddenly knelt before me, sobbing while pleading, “Mrs. Fuller, I beg you. Please help my granddaughter. Now that Sasha has passed away, Renee is our only hope now. She’s only four and has never seen the outside world before. Life has been cruel to her. Since birth, Renee has had no father, and her mother was always busy working. Despite her age, we have not sent her to a kindergarten, because we couldn’t afford it. Why does she have to face such a hardship when she’s still an innocent little girl? Mrs. Fuller, please have mercy on her. I’m willing to do anything to repay you. Please!”

Her sudden action befuddled me. I reached out to hold her up, but she refused to stand up. The corridor was packed with passers-by. Having no other choice, I squatted on the

floor and looked at the woman. “Mrs. Brooks, I truly sympathize with you. I’ll definitely help you if I can. So please, don’t do this.”

The woman’s face was already drenched in tears as she stared at me and said, “Please, Mrs. Fuller. We don’t have a job. After Sasha’s gone, our financial support was cut off. That’s why we had no choice but to stay put at Fuller Corporation day in and night out to ask for compensation. We need money to survive.”

I nodded at her. My heart was filled with compassion for the family. Bad luck often haunts the unfortunates. Now that their granddaughter was diagnosed with a critical disease, their lives would only get even harder.

After paying Renee’s operation and medical fees, Ashton called and asked what time I would be home.

After the chaotic day, I was worn out. The only thing I wanted to do was to see him and nestle myself in his warm embrace.

After hanging up, I drove away from the hospital and headed home straight away since Ashton was already home.

Back at the villa.

There was an unobtrusive black Maybach parked in the yard when I arrived home. I pulled over next to it and when I walked into the living room, I saw Ashton reading on the couch.

Hearing the sound of me coming in, he glanced up at me. The corner of his lips quirked up. “You’re home.”

I nodded in response. Sauntering over to the couch, I sat by his side and wrapped my arms around him. "Have you solved the issue in the office? Why aren't you resting in the bedroom?"

He held me in his arms with a smile on his face. "You've helped me settle the issue so well. It's only fair that I come home and spend some time with you."

Tilting my body to lean against his shoulder, I sighed lightly. "Ashton, has the police done investigating Sasha's case?"

He pursed his lips slightly. "What's wrong?"

I thought about it for a while before I decided to tell him anyway. "Sasha's daughter has been diagnosed with leukemia today. I know I have to deal with it rationally. After all, no one can escape sickness and death. However, I've met them when they're in need of help. I'll feel so bad if I choose to turn a blind eye to them."

"Mmm." The man gazed at me calmly. "So what are you planning to do?"

I shook my head, feeling lost while staring at him. "I don't know what to do. That's why I'm asking for your opinions. What do you think I should do?"

He gave it some thought before replying solemnly, "I think you should help them, but treating leukemia is like throwing money down a bottomless pit. There's no guarantee that it could be cured."

I nodded in agreement. I know that money didn't grow on trees. Moreover, Fuller Corporation was dealing with a series of scandals, which caused the company to suffer heavy losses. Sasha's death was a crushing blow to the company, whether it was a

suicide or an accident. According to the law, once Fuller Corporation compensated them, the family would have nothing to do with the company anymore.

Breathing out a sigh, I stood up and looked at him. "Okay, let's drop the subject. What do you want to eat? I'll cook you a delicious meal tonight."

He flashed me a smile. "Anything's fine!"

He paused for a moment and asked, "Can you come with me to Moranta in mid-October?"

Moranta?

I was puzzled. "Why? Did something happened?"

He nodded. "Yeah. One of my Grandpa's comrades-in-arms is at death's door. We have to make a trip there on behalf of my Grandpa."