

## Chapter 991

I nodded. Amy must be talking about the time when Ronald had some doctors do a check-up and blood test for her and her siblings.

Feeling sorry for the little girl, I wrapped my arms around her. Summer's condition had become worse. If I still couldn't make up my mind, I was afraid it might be too late to save her life. Yet, if Amy was to go under the knife, she needed to donate both her bone marrow and her kidney. I had no idea of the risk of the operation Amy might be facing. I would be the one who caused her death if anything happened to her during the operation.

Half an hour later, Zachary and Cameron arrived at the hospital. Meanwhile, Summer, whose vein was cannulated with an IV tube, was wheeled into the ER. The little girl's arm was full of hematomas from chemotherapy.

Anger boiled within me whenever I saw my daughter suffering from the side effects of chemotherapy. Each time, the urge to kill Jared grew more intense. All humans had dark sides, yet we had the ability to eschew evil, which explained why Jared still survived until now.

Soon after, Zachary ordered the doctor to do a checkup for Amy. My mind was a mess as I held the little girl in my arms. "Dad, why don't we wait until we ask Summer's doctor about her condition?"

Knowing I would go soft, Zachary persuaded, “We are just going to do a full-body check-up for this kid. They said her bone marrow is a match for Summer, but we are not sure about it. We’ll discuss it after the doctors perform the check-up. Alright?”

Zachary was right. As reluctant as I was, I had no choice but to nod my agreement.

When the doctor took Amy away, the little girl kept turning his head to look at me. I knew it was her instinct to feel scared. “Amy, don’t be scared. It’s just like taking an injection. It won’t hurt, and you’ll be fine.”

She nodded and followed the doctor quietly.

I waited agonizingly for Amy’s return.

An hour had passed, the little girl still hadn’t come back. Feeling panicked, I decided to look for her, yet Cameron halted me. “The doctor is with that kid. Summer is still in the ER, and you should stay here.”

I nodded. Still, I paced back and forth as I couldn’t cast my worries away. Meanwhile, a nurse showed up. “Miss, the patient, Hailey Webster, has regained consciousness. We’re transferring her to the ward now, and a family member is required to take care of her.”

I told Cameron about Hailey before I went to check on her.

In the ward, the doctor informed me of the things I needed to pay particular attention to during the patient's preoperative care and aftercare.

Since I had no idea of Hailey's health condition, I went after the doctor and asked, "Doctor, what happened to her? Why did she suddenly collapse?"

The doctor looked at me doubtfully while he asked, "So, you're not the patient's family member?"

I nodded. "I'm her friend. I only found out about her health issue today."

The doctor nodded before he stated, "The patient underwent a heart transplant surgery a year ago. Transplant rejection is common during this period, and it can occur anytime. If the patient gets emotional, that might trigger episodes of acute rejection. Thus, you need to pay attention to the patient's emotional changes."

I remembered Hailey telling me about her having a heart transplant before she collapsed. Shouldn't she be grateful that she is still alive? Why does it seem like she is aversive to the donor's heart?

Back in the ward, Hailey still couldn't move her body under the effect of anesthesia. Nevertheless, she was conscious. She wore an oxygen mask and looked at me as if she had something to say.

Sitting next to her, I spoke up, "I know you have something you wanted to tell me. Perhaps we'll talk when you feel better."

Hailey shook her head. The next moment, she said under her breath, "Don't sacrifice someone to save another's life. They are innocent, and they will die. Those who survive won't be happy either."

I was dazed. "What do you mean?"

In a barely audible voice, she explained, "I have congenital heart disease. Over the years, my heart deteriorated. My father told me I could live for a long time if I get a heart transplant, but it was just too difficult to find a matching heart. After many years of searching, my father finally found one. They told him the girl was sick and that she couldn't live long. After she died, she could donate her heart to me. So, my father adopted her. For many years, she was the one who kept me company when I felt lonely or sad. Unfortunately, my condition was getting worse. Yet, surprisingly, she became fit and healthy as time passed."

Hailey let out a bitter smile. "My father soon found out they had lied to him. In fact, she was not sick. Her parents had abandoned her, so they made my father adopt her. At that time, I was in a critical condition and I was dying. Unfortunately, she was the only one who could save me. Having no choice, my father trampled with the vehicle that she would be using that day."

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After a short pause, she continued by saying, “When she died, her face was disfigured, her body was covered with blood. My father told me it was an accident, and I have always persuaded myself to believe in his words. However, that girl is deeply rooted in my memory. I lived every passing day, tortured by the feeling of guilt and agony.”

Tears rolled down from the corner of her eyes as she pleaded, “Don’t make the same mistake again. Don’t sacrifice that kid.”

I fell into silence. No wonder she became emotional when she saw Amy.

Just then, Cameron called. “My dear, where are you? The kid has done with the check-up. She is now crying and asking for you.” For some reason, she sounded cheerful over the phone.

I uttered a response and ended the call. Gazing at Hailey, I uttered, “This is not a major surgery, and it won’t risk the kid’s life. I only wanted to save my daughter. If I had a choice, I wouldn’t let the kid go through this.”

Hailey was choking up while crying helplessly. I pressed the call button and let the nurses take care of her before leaving the ward.

Outside the ER, Amy was done with her check-up. With her eyes reddened, she pointed at her pelvic area. “Ms. Stovall, it hurts!”

The doctor didn't perform a bone marrow biopsy. Instead, he only collected blood samples to test the compatibility of Amy's bone marrow with Summer's. Hugging the little girl, I comforted her, "That must hurt a lot. I'll buy you snacks later."

Cameron shifted her gaze back and forth between us. "Summer has been transferred to the ward. You should go and check on her now."

I nodded and then followed her to the ward. The doctor was communicating with Zachary while Summer was lying on the bed, still under the effect of anesthesia.

As the doctor left the ward, I quickly went after him. "Doctor, I want to know more information about the bone marrow and kidney transplant surgery. Will that have any negative effects on the donor?"

The doctor nodded. "Well, the extraction of bone marrow and hematopoietic stem cells won't cause major harm to the human body though it could be painful. As for kidney donation, that will definitely cause some side effects to the donor. It is just like our fingers. If you lose one of them, it won't lead to death, but it will definitely cause a loss of functional hand movements."

My face turned pale at his words. "If a kid donates her kidney, will that have any impact on her health?"

The doctor nodded. "Of course. Well, it won't cause death, but debility is inevitable."

I didn't ask further questions since the doctor had cleared my doubts.

In the ward, Amy was sitting by the bed, looking curiously at Summer. Upon seeing me, Cameron asked, "What's wrong?"

Zachary knew about my worries. He took a glance at Amy as he said to me, "I have considered all the possible risks of the surgery. The possibility of death is little to none. Scarlett, you know how hard it is to find a matching donor. We will take good care of that kid after the surgery."

I knew Zachary was right.

I was glad that we wouldn't have to risk Amy's life. Still, I couldn't help feeling guilty for harming an innocent kid to save my own daughter.

Since Summer had just finished her chemotherapy while Amy's test result was not out yet, we could only wait in the hospital. Meanwhile, I had Boris bring Amy with him so that the latter need not stay in the hospital.

When I went to check on Hailey, the effect of anesthesia had worn off. Her face still looked pale, yet she was visibly relieved after I told her of both Summer and Amy's conditions. "It's great that you don't need to risk the kid's life. However, even if the transplant is successful, cancer recurrence might occur during the five-year postoperative observation period. If that

happens, your daughter will need to receive a second transplant surgery. So, what are you going to do with that kid?"

I mulled over her words for some time. Soon after, I spoke up, "Her parents are treating her like their money tree. If I send her back to her parents, I'm afraid they will force her to marry a random guy for a dowry when she grows up. Actually, my parents wished to adopt her. She can go to school with Summer and live at the Moore Residence. She can decide her own future and live the life she wants."

My words brought a smile onto Hailey's face. "If she gets adopted by the Moore family, she will definitely have a brighter future than growing up in that village. That way, you can repay her by providing her a better life. Well, I bet she couldn't ask for more."

Well, that is the best way we could think of. I sighed. Yet, we still needed to wait until Amy's test results came out. After the surgery, I would bring Amy back to the village and let her cut ties with her terrible parents. After that, she could start her new life in the Moore family.

Hailey brought her hand to her chest. In a sorrowful tone, she murmured, "If only I could also choose at that time."



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I felt sorry for the young lady. She must have suffered a lot after knowing that her survival cost the life of another girl.

After a while, I asked, "Do you know anything about Armond?" That day in the cowshed, Ann told me that some of the children never returned to the village after they were taken away.

I was not sure if it was what I think it was.

Upon the mention of Armond, Hailey's clenched the blanket, her face darkened. After a long silence, she finally said, "That man is Satan! He has blood on his hands just for money. I suppose many people have died at his hands."

I furrowed my brows. "You have never met him before. How are you so sure that he has something to do with the organ trade?"

She looked up at me and uttered, "I have never met him, but I knew that guy. My father was imprisoned because of him. Initially, my father only wanted to find me a matching heart. That man brought the girl of my age to my father. He told my father that her illness was incurable and that I could get a heart transplant after she died. As time passed, my health

deteriorated, only then did he tell my father the truth. He asked for three million for bringing the girl to my father. After the girl died, he blackmailed my father and demanded a tenfold increase in the price as hush money. Having no choice, my father embezzled the company's money. In the end, he was charged and imprisoned. It's all because of him! That man is evil! You need to be wary of him."

I was stunned by her revelation. "Did that girl really die?"

Hailey clenched her fists, her eyes reddened. "Yes. My dad told me he had buried her, but..."

The young lady burst into tears.

Seeing that, I stopped asking further questions and decided to leave her alone. Those children that never return to the village... Did they die just like that girl?

Hailey's words made me realize that Armond must be hiding something. As soon as I left the ward, I made a call to Brandon.

His gruff voice was heard over the phone, "Hello, what's the matter?"

“The kid’s test result is out. If the kid is to donate her organ, I need her identity card and her parents to sign the consent form. How are you going to solve this?” Hailey told me that the hospital wouldn’t perform surgery without the necessary documentation. I wondered how Brandon was going to deal with this.

After a while, the man said, “You don’t need to worry about that. As long as you agree with the surgery and pay us the money, we will take care of it.”

Since we hadn’t discussed the price yet, I asked, “How are you going to charge me?”

“Well, you will have to bear the costs of the operating room, the doctors, the medication, and also the money for the kid’s parents. Why don’t we meet up and discuss this? This is a serious matter, and I bet you wouldn’t want to discuss it over the phone.”

“Alright. You decide the time and the place.” I shuddered at the thought that the organ trade was rather systematic and well-coordinated. It seemed like the kids in that village were not the only victims.

When I was back in the ward, Summer had woken up. She hadn’t met a girl of her age for a long time, so she was chatty with Amy.

Meanwhile, Cameron was reading a project proposal. Although she had handed over most of her work in the company to Nick, the latter, being inexperienced, still needed her guidance.

Since Zachary was nowhere to be seen, I asked, “Mom, where is Dad?”

Keeping her eyes on the proposal, she answered, “He’s gone to meet his friend. Oh, he asked me to ask you from where did you find the kid? She’s healthy and fit. It doesn’t seem like she’s from the orphanage.”

I frowned. “Orphanage?”

Cameron nodded. “Your father has contacted an orphanage before. Now, he wanted to donate to the orphanage where the kid lived as a token of gratitude. But, it seems like that little girl came from a village and not an orphanage. Boris told me it took you guys more than seven hours to travel to that village where you found her. Who gave you the address of the village?”

I suddenly understood the reason Ashton became mad at me yesterday. The man knew from Zachary that the latter had contacted an orphanage. Hence, he knew I was lying to him, for Amy was obviously not from an orphanage.

I started to feel the throbbing in my temples. If Ashton knew I was the one who turned to Armond for help, it would be a disaster.

I gave Cameron a seemingly convincing answer. “I got it from a friend of mine.” I was relieved that Cameron was absorbed reading the proposal that she didn’t ask further.

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I didn't return to the villa that night after my fight with Ashton. That wasn't the main reason for my absence, though. Summer and Hailey were both in the hospital, and Hailey didn't have any family. I couldn't ask my Mom to stay with her at the hospital, so I went there instead.

The hospital was shrouded in a gloomy aura; I ended up sleeping fitfully that night. Cameron and Zachary dropped by early the next morning with some breakfast.

Hailey was recovering well, as was Summer. After greeting Cameron, I left for my appointment with Brandon.

We met at a heritage eatery that was neither big nor grand. When I arrived, I spied Brandon sitting in the corner of the eatery. Seated, his posture made him seem shorter and fatter.

He looks just like a wobbly man toy.

He waved and hollered when he saw me. Then, he caught the attention of the eatery owner and ordered a few oily dishes. I sat down in front of him, not in a rush to speak.

He didn't appear to be in a rush either. He'd ordered more than ten dishes for the two of us, and he ate most of the food. He didn't question my lack of appetite. I guess he's probably used to it. He devoured his food so quickly I

half-suspected that he barely chewed at all. He only spoke to me after we finished the meal.

Now that the food was gone, he wiped his oil-stained mouth and said, "Take a look at the contract. If there aren't any issues, you can sign it now."

He passed a thick stack of papers to me. I was blinded by the rows of complex legalese on the sheets. I frowned, unable to understand much of the contents of the contract.

At least I could understand the sums in the contract. I counted the number of zeroes and knitted my brows. "Why is the cost of the surgery suddenly increased to a million?"

He pursed his lips before cleaning his teeth with a toothpick. "Ms. Stovall, I heard from Mr. Murphy that money isn't a concern to you. Plus, this is a private operation. The operating theatre, doctors, the equipment; everything has a price. I'm sure you know how expensive these things are. And hey, what about compensation for my efforts? I also need money to settle with that kid's parents. Please, that one million I quoted you is a discount already."

I held in my laughter. He'd managed to make a life-or-death operation sound like a business deal. Still, I wasn't in a hurry to sign. I looked at him directly and said, "You're right. It's actually not a big sum. I do have one request, though. Since this isn't a legal procedure, I want to see the operating theatre, the equipment, and meet the doctor beforehand. There are two children's lives at stake here, one of which is my daughter. I'm sure you understand my concern."

He frowned slightly. After some thought, he replied, "I need to think about this."

I nodded. "Sure."

Our discussion ended here. I supposed he had to discuss my request with his boss before he could give me a firm reply. If Hailey was right, then Brandon was probably acting under Armond's orders.

After saying goodbye to Brandon, I walked into an alley. After waiting for a short while, I came out of the alley and followed him. Sometime later, I saw him get into a black Accord. The driver wore a pair of shades, and he looked vaguely familiar. After a brief greeting, the car moved.

I couldn't walk closer to the car, but luckily the driver rolled down his windows as the car drove off. I was stunned when I realized who he was.

Dante! Why is he hanging around Brandon? Did he end up working for Armond after Abe's death?

I only managed to collect myself after the car was out of sight. From what I know about Dante's character, he wouldn't hang around Armond since he had a hand in Abe's death. All these men are sticklers for loyalty. Abe treated Dante like his own brother when he was still alive. So why would Dante be chummy with one of Armond's lackeys? Unless Dante himself is involved in the black market?

Suddenly, I sensed someone behind me. Nerves taut, I broke out in a cold sweat when I realized that I had nothing to defend myself with.

“Scarlett!” The gruff, familiar voice turned my surprise into joy. I turned and saw Danny behind me.

I smiled happily at him and asked, “Why are you here? Are you ok? How have you been?” I’d tried to track him down when I was in A City, but he’d hidden his tracks well as if he was trying to avoid me. I learned nothing about him and had never expected to bump into him here.

He appeared to have lost some weight, looking much thinner than his usual muscular self. The angles on his face were sharper as well. With a fairer complexion and a buzzcut, he blended right in with the residents of this city.

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Faced with my slew of questions, he replied, “I’ve been well. But how do you know Brandon?”

“Do you know him too?” I asked, surprised.



He nodded. "Yeah, Dante works with him. I've met him a couple of times. They operate in the black market, so why are you meeting him? Are you sick?"

I shook my head urgently. "No, I'm not sick. But my daughter is."

Shocked, he said, "I see. It's better to steer clear of them if you can, though. If you get involved in the black market, it's hard to get them off your record."

I didn't quite understand his warning but nodded. "Ok, I know."

Since he didn't have more to say, I spoke up again. "Since you're here, shall we grab a bite together?"

He shook his head. "No, I have other things to do. I'll be off then."

Seeing that he was ready to leave, I called out to stop him. "Danny, how should I keep in touch with you next time?"

He turned his head back to look at me. "I'm very grateful for how you've helped me in the past. If you have any questions for me, you should ask them now. I'll tell you everything I know, and then we're even."

This statement confused me. His brows were furrowed in impatience as he watched me. I couldn't help but wonder if I'd underestimated the complexity of our history.

After a pause, I asked, "What are you doing in A City? Do you know about Abe's death?"

He pursed his lips before replying, "I know what happened to Mr. Langston. As for my job in A City, it's exactly what Dante is doing."

I frowned. "But it's illegal!"

He mumbled an agreement but continued matter-of-factly, "I know, but I gotta do what I gotta do to survive. A City isn't a good place to make a living for us foreigners. At the end of the day, we need money to live."

I didn't know how to respond to that. I couldn't deny the truth in his words. We are but slaves to the money that governs our lives in this world.

"Is it true then, that as long as there's money, you can carry out a perfect crime?" I blurted.

He knitted his brows uncomprehendingly at my question. A moment later, he said, "You should go home. It's not safe out here."

I had more questions to ask but he'd already walked away.

If Hailey is telling the truth, then Armond is really engaged in shady dealings. I couldn't imagine the number of innocent lives they had harmed each year.

I was caught in a dilemma. If I pursued this to the end, I was worried I wouldn't be able to accept the consequence. After all, I was a willing participant in an illegal deal, and losses and gains always came hand-in-hand. My decision to seek out Amy in the countryside was entirely due to my wish to save my daughter.

Hailey's father could bring himself to harm a perfectly healthy child to keep his daughter alive. It's hard to pin the blame on anyone, but someone was undeniably killed in the exchange.

I knew I couldn't sort out these dilemmas alone. I called Ashton when I was in the car. The phone rang for a while before he answered. I could hear his clear voice through the receiver. "What's up?"

Ashton was still angry at me over the name card incident. I sighed before asking, "Where are you? I miss you."

My words seemed to surprise him, and there was a pause before he replied, "See you at home."

He hung up on me. Perplexed, I stared at my phone. Why did he just hang up on me like that?

I put down my phone and headed straight for the villa. Ashton was sitting in the living room when I arrived, looking like he'd just reached home not too long ago. His dark eyes showed a hint of surprise as they landed on me.

He pursed his lips and put on a somewhat petty air. "Why did you call me?"

So he's still angry at me then. I walked toward him and said gently, "I did meet Armond when I was in K City; you knew about that already. When I came to A City to find Amy, it was based on information that Armond had given to me. Ashton, I wasn't lying to you. I just didn't want you to overthink things. That's all."

Sensing the cloud of anger around him, I let out a frustrated sigh. "I know this is my fault. I shouldn't have lied to you. Will you please stop being angry at me? Ashton, we shouldn't be upset at each other over such small things. I suspect that Armond has dealings in the black market and probably the deaths of countless people on his hands. I don't know anymore if I can proceed with Summer's surgery. Can we stop arguing and start discussing more important things?"

He frowned slightly as he stared at me. "Black market?"

I nodded. "I found out from my contact that they have their own operating theatre and equipment. On that note, do you remember how we met a girl named Hailey at the public tender in the Oasis Hotel? She has heart

disease. Her father colluded with Armond to kill someone so that she could get a heart transplant, though he ended up in jail later on after he misappropriated some funds for his company.”

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After some thought, he asked, “I have some recollection of her. How did you get in touch with her?”

“Actually, she looked for me. We already knew each other after meeting on a few occasions. Now, I’m worried about Summer. What if Armond betrays me after Summer gets the kidney from Amy? We’re not the only ones who need to bear the consequences. My parents will be dragged into this mess as well. I can’t let Summer’s affairs disrupt their newfound peace.”

Though Summer’s situation wouldn’t involve something as heinous as murder, as in Hailey’s case, it would be hard to predict Armond’s actions after the operation. He forced me down this path, claiming we wouldn’t be able to proceed with a normal, legal operation. But he could always turn around and threaten us with Amy’s existence. If he fabricates a story to the press, it’ll be a huge blow to the reputation of the Fullers and the Moores.

I looked at Ashton, who’d pursed his lips as if in deep thought. He looked at me and said, “I think we should postpone Summer’s operation and follow the legal procedure. We shouldn’t touch Amy if we can. You should also

look out for your parents. I'll do my best to find a suitable donor ASAP. I'm sorry, but I think Summer will have to wait a while longer."

I frowned slightly. Though this went against every instinct I had as a parent, I nodded and agreed with Ashton. I couldn't drag two whole families into the mud to satisfy my own wishes.

"We'll stick with our original plan then. Try not to give away too much information to anyone else." He then pulled out his phone and called Joseph.

He seemed to be discussing some matters about Moranta with Joseph. I wasn't in the mood to worry about such things. My mind was fixated on my proposed visit to the hospital with Brandon tomorrow.

The next day, Ashton rushed to Moranta on company business. He had left in a hurry, saying that there were problems at a few ports in Moranta that were recently acquired by the Fuller Corporation.

I stayed in A City to continue working on Summer's affairs.

Brandon sent me a text containing the address of the hospital as well as our meeting time. Before I left, I gave Cameron a call. She sounded like she'd barely slept the night before. She answered in a hoarse tone, "Scarlett, what's going on?"

“Mom, do we have the results of Amy’s health checkup? Did the doctor mention when they can arrange for the operation?”

“Not yet, I think the results will only be out at noon. Yesterday, the doctor told us that they couldn’t find her personal information. They need to log her identification details in the hospital’s system before they can carry out the operation. Could you contact her parents and get them to send her information over? If it’s possible, we can send someone to bring them here so they can sign off on the operation,” Cameron said, sounding exhausted.

I paused for a moment before answering her. “Mom, Amy doesn’t have any form of identification. Her parents had eight children and she was the only one who wasn’t registered. If they need that information, it’s going to take a long time to iron out all the paperwork, and Summer’s operation is going to be delayed. This was something I overlooked at the beginning. I was hoping you could help me find a solution.”

My answer stunned her. “She doesn’t have any form of identification? They have eight kids; how could they just forget about one of them? What about her future? Oh dear, we need to think of something quickly. How about you ask Boris to bring her home? We can give them some money and get her registered.”

I mumbled an agreement and hung up.

Amy’s lack of an official identity wasn’t the only problem at hand. I couldn’t elaborate on my plans to investigate Armond, so I could only delay the operation with this excuse.

Even if Summer needed that operation, we had to follow the legal procedure. If we committed to an illegal operation, we'd be inviting trouble for ourselves in the future.

After I hung up, I took a car ride to the address that Brandon had given me. The car came to a stop at a large factory located just outside the suburbs.

I was surprised when I saw the deserted building. This isn't a hospital. It's more like some abandoned factory!

There was an elderly man in the security booth near the gates of the factory. As I walked toward him to ask about my location, my phone rang with a call from Brandon.

As soon as I picked up, he said, "Just come in. You don't need to ask him anything. He has Alzheimer's and can't remember a thing."

Taken aback, I turned and saw the elderly man smiling at me. I returned his smile and walked into the factory grounds. Just like Brandon had mentioned over the phone, there was a two-story house behind the factory. He asked me to wait for him outside.

He came down five minutes later. He opened the metal doors to the house. He wore a leather jacket over his floral print shirt, though his protruding belly made for a rather unflattering display. He looked around behind me and confirmed that I was alone. He arched a brow in mild surprise. "Ms.



Stovall, I thought you'd at least have some company. I didn't expect you to really come here alone."

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I chuckled, "We're only here to take a look at the hospital and the medical equipment. We're not here to tear down this place. Why did you bring so many people?"

He chuckled and replied, "Let's go. The doctors and equipment are up there. You should take a look at them so you'd feel more assured. Rich people like you tend to be more cautious."

I followed behind him and let out a soft chuckle. "I have no choice, she's my precious daughter, and I want to give her the best."

His laughter echoed in the lift. Upon arriving at the second floor, I followed him past a metal gate that led to a fifty square meters big office. There were five doctors donned in their white gowns.

After an exchange of greetings, Brandon announced, "Alright. Since everyone knows each other, let's jump straight to the equipment. Please

explain to Ms. Stovall their functions and attend to her queries as soon as possible.”

They all nodded.

I was not in a rush to look at the equipment, so I asked, “Mr. Dumphy, I’m not an expert in this field, so there’s no point in me trying to know more about the equipment. However, I have a request. I hope you wouldn’t mind.”

He smiled at me and replied, “Of course I wouldn’t mind. I have no reason to reject your request as long as it’s logical and legal.”

Logical and legal?

I let out an awkward chuckle. Would my request be logical and legal?

I looked at him and continued, “I’d like to look through the doctors’ credentials. To be qualified as either a clinical or surgical doctor, one needs to attain certain qualifications. I hope you all don’t mind letting me take a look at them.”

A few of the doctors’ faces froze while Brandon was puzzled. “Ms. Stovall, I believe you know that such information is confidential. Rest assured that our doctors are all experienced and capable, and they all graduated from top universities. We’ll definitely do our best for your daughter.”

I furrowed my brows and was hesitant. “Mr. Dumphy, there are two major factors that can determine the success rate of surgery – a safe operating environment and the doctor’s capabilities. Since I’m not an expert in the medical field, it doesn’t make sense for me to measure the safety level of the equipment. However, I would be able to verify the doctor’s qualifications. Since they’re from top universities, can I take a look at their certifications?”

It seemed like my request was ridiculous to them, as none of them intended to show me their qualifications.

I looked at the doctors, then at Brandon, and smiled slightly. “Mr. Dumphy, I don’t think I’m making a difficult request. I believe this would form the basis of the trust I have with you all. If I’m unable to trust your doctors, I would rather engage the surgery somewhere else. I don’t wish to bet on my daughter’s life.”

Brandon frowned and replied, “Ms. Stovall, you know the significance of this surgery very well. We share the same purpose of saving your daughter’s life. It’s not that we don’t want you to look at their qualifications, but if you were to leak such information, it would ruin their career. After all, they do not have a perfect record on their portfolio.”

I nodded slightly and did not refute his words any further. “Indeed. Since you want to protect your doctors while I want to save my daughter, let’s come to a compromise.”

“What are your thoughts?” he asked me impatiently.

“You could rent the operating theatre to me. Since you won’t be able to show me their qualifications, I won’t be able to trust them with my daughter’s surgery. Hence, I would get other doctors to perform the surgery. Despite that, I’d still pay the same amount.”

It was a logical offer, so he had no reasons to reject it. He thought about it for a moment and replied, “Your request is not impossible. However, we need to bring it up to the senior management for approval.”

I nodded with a smile. “Please bring it up to them as soon as possible. As you know, time is running out as my daughter is in critical condition.”

He nodded profusely.

It was not easy to flight a taxi in the suburbs. I was calling someone while pacing around the factory. I wonder if Hailey did her surgery here as well.

## Chapter 998

Upon a thorough look at the factory, it had nothing special about it. There was not much human traffic around. If someone were to walk past, they might think that it was an abandoned building. No one would have guessed that there would be an operating theatre there.

On a closer look, several rooms on the second floor showed signs of being cleaned. Those might be the wards where the patients stayed in. Most patients here were likely from wealthy families.

“Ms. Stovall, you’re...” Brandon came down to check on me, squinted his eyes, and asked, “Are you taking a stroll?”

I chuckled lightly and replied, “I was just walking around while waiting for a taxi.”

He chuckled and said, “This place is in the suburbs, so there won’t be many taxis around. Since I’m also heading back, I can give you a lift.”

“Thank you for your kindness, Mr. Dumphy.”

He chuckled and replied, “You’re welcome. Please wait at the entrance. I’ll go get the car.”

I smiled and nodded in response.

It was noon as I walked past the doorman having his lunch. “Hi Miss, you’re heading back now?” he greeted.

I nodded in reply. I walked over to him and asked, “How long have you been working here? It’s so isolated here. Did your family send you lunch?”

He laughed. “I’ve been working here for several years. My wife has difficulties walking, so she’s currently staying at home. These were made by her last night. I heated it and brought it here for lunch.”

I nodded. “That makes sense. Do you live far away from here? Is it convenient for you?” I asked while I glanced at his legs.

He took a mouthful of food and replied, “Not far. I live in the village across. I may appear old, but my legs are still strong!”

I chuckled. “Since there are not many people that come here, and your house is nearby, why don’t you head home for lunch and return after?”

He looked at me and smiled. “It may appear to be quiet, but there are many vehicles that drop by daily. Since the boss ordered for me to deny entry to unauthorized vehicles, I’d have to obey the order.”

I got curious and asked, “This building looks very old. Why are they so strict on entry? Are there other offices located within this building as well?”

He shook his head. “I don’t know. It has always been the same few cars. I find it weird that people are going in and out of this place too. I’ve walked around but did not spot anything unusual. I heard that the boss had set up a live stream studio, and there have been young girls and kids coming here to work. However, due to my poor eyesight, I couldn’t catch a proper glimpse of them.”

I nodded slightly. It seemed like they were tight on security. Though they hired an elderly to guard the entrance, they enforced strict rules.

Since I knew the location of the operating theatre, I could easily gauge the location of other hidden places too.

Brandon drove over and waved at me. I got in the car and had a light chat with him.

It was afternoon when we arrived in the city. My stomach grumbled loudly as I had not eaten anything that day. I entered a restaurant, ordered my meal, and took out my phone. As I was about to call Ashton, I noticed I had several missed calls.

Out of habit, I had placed my phone in silent mode. The calls were from Ashton and Hailey.

Ashton probably called to check if I had eaten lunch, so I decided to call Hailey first.

Ashton called before I could dial Hailey's number. I picked up the call and chuckled. "Mr. Fuller, I feel very honored to receive your call despite your busy schedule."

He scoffed at my mocking. "I'm guessing you missed your lunch. Why didn't you pick up my calls earlier? What were you busy with?"

This man seemed to grow more protective as the days pass. It seemed like I might need to start reporting to him every hour.

"I told you that I had an appointment with Brandon to view the operating theatre. That appointment ended, and I was about to feed your baby and myself."

## **Chapter 999**

He sighed with worry. "What about the breakfast that I've prepared for you this morning? Did you skip it?"



I scratched the tip of my nose and replied, “I ate, and I got hungry again soon after. I plan to eat more later.” The truth was, I did not eat breakfast as I was in a hurry.

He sighed once more helplessly. “You’re already a mother, yet you’re not taking good care of yourself. Should I get a nanny for you?”

I immediately rejected his offer. “We don’t need a nanny for now. I’m fine. I’m only two months pregnant. It would be better to wait till Summer’s recovery and at a later stage of my pregnancy. What do you say?”

He agreed as he knew that it would not be easy to convince me otherwise. “Sure. On the condition that you would start taking good care of yourself and our baby.”

I smiled, knowing that it was out of his concern for me. “Okay, I’ll take note. Let’s put this aside for now.”

While the waiter brought out the dishes, I took a bite and continued, “Do you know where the hospital is located? It’s within a factory in the suburbs. That building looked abandoned, but they built an operating theatre on the second floor of it. They had five doctors and a few wards as well. It’s inconspicuous – no passerby would’ve guessed it.”

“Hmm. An operating theatre in a factory – inconspicuous and could be shifted easily. It was indeed the perfect place. However, our focus now is to be careful. There had been several issues that occurred at the ports of Moranta. It seemed like the Murphys had intentionally caused the delay. Please be careful. Joseph will arrive within these few days. Keep in mind, safety first.”

I nodded in agreement. I had guessed that Armond had been keeping his eyes on the Fullers. He did not seem like the type to give up after one failure.

We chatted a while more before Ashton hung up, and I gobbled the food down. I planned to look for Hailey after.

If Armond chose to act up in Moranta while I create some trouble for Ashton in A City, he might not have sufficient energy left to deal with the issues at Moranta. Furthermore, Ashton had taken over the ports not long ago and need some time for things to settle down. Our plan had a high risk of falling through if Armond were to sabotage.

All of them were looking out for their own benefit. The illegal operating theatre was not a piece of substantial evidence to bring Armond down. We need to find a witness and the family members of those who supplied medical equipment to them as soon as possible.

At the hospital.

Upon arrival at the hospital, I saw Hailey packing while wearing a fur coat. I frowned and asked, "Why are you in such a hurry to leave? What did the doctor say?"

She turned and was stunned to see me. "I'm fine. I've had this illness for quite some time already. I prefer to rest at home. I don't like to be in the hospital."

I sighed as I failed to convince her. "You need to take good care of yourself, especially now that you're all alone. We have to accept that some things cannot be changed and carry on with our lives. You have to hang in there."

She stopped her movement, turned to look at me, and replied, "Her name is Carmen."

I was taken aback for a moment before I regained my senses and asked, "Did you manage to contact her parents? To compensate for the guilt you hold, why don't you help to take care of her parents?"

She shook her head while her eyes started to turn red. "No. She's an orphan. Dad brought her back from the orphanage. Her parents abandoned her at a young age, so Dad decided to let her stay with us."

Orphanage?

Could it be that the child that Armond had been searching for came from the orphanage instead?

“Do you know which orphanage she came from?” That could be a clue as there would be records of the adoption at the orphanage.

She went through it in her head thoroughly and nodded. “Carmen never told me about it. She only briefly mentioned that she was from an orphanage.”

“Does your Dad know?” Hailey’s father might have gotten in touch with Armond. It could save a lot of trouble if he could stand in as a witness.

## **Chapter 1000**

Hailey shook her head. “That, I don’t know.”

I stared at her in silence and asked, “Hailey, do you hate Armond?”

She was startled by my question. She looked at me with utter confusion.

“We must get the criminals arrested. If we do not report him, there might be countless victims in the future. You want the same too, right?”

She thought about it for a moment. “What are you planning?”

I knew that we had to keep certain things to ourselves. However, it’s only right for people to pay for their crimes. “Could you bring me to your father? He could be a critical witness.”

Her face turned pale. “No way. If he confesses everything, he might never be able to get out of jail for the rest of his life. I don’t wish to ruin his life. Neither should you.”

As she narrowed her eyes, I pursed my lips and said, “I totally understand how you feel. However, deep down, you know that your father is in the wrong, and he has to take responsibility for it somehow. If he keeps silent, Armond will continue to harm more kids. Do you want another incident like Carmen’s?”

“Please leave. I don’t wish to hear more of what you have to say. Scar, you’re too selfish; you only think for yourself. He’s still my father, and I can’t bear to let him stay in jail for the rest of his life. Leave! I would never agree to it.”

She was getting emotional and shoved me out of the ward. I had no chance to speak.

I understood that it was hard for her to face something like that. She was right. I lacked consideration for her feelings. Furthermore, the only family member she had left was her father.

I returned to Summer's ward. I was startled as she was not there. I tugged at Cameron's sleeve and asked anxiously, "Mom, where's Summer? Did her condition worsen again?"

Cameron patted my shoulder, hinting for me to calm down. "Don't worry. She's fine. The doctor suggested for her to be quarantined in the disinfected chamber. We can visit her once in the morning and once at night."

I let out a sigh of relief. My heart ached as I saw Amy asleep at the bedside. She must have been anxious since the day she had first been there. I felt apologetic towards her as I had no energy and time to be there for her.

"Have you contacted the child's legitimate guardian? The hospital would require their signature before proceeding with the surgery. It had not been easy to find a suitable donor. Let's hope to resolve this quickly." Cameron whispered, "This child is too skinny. I'm worried that she might not be able

to recover from the surgery. We need to nourish her to prevent any side effects post-surgery.”

I pursed my lips, nodded, and looked at Cameron. “Mom, we might need to postpone the surgery. Firstly, Amy’s body is too frail. No matter how much we love Summer, it’s not fair for us to make use of another child like that. I bought a house in A City and hired a nanny who is a great cook. Let’s wait for her health to improve before we even consider the surgery. Secondly, I need to find a way to register her birth. For that, I need to head to the village. It’ll take some time, so we need to postpone the surgery.”

“But will this affect Summer’s illness?” Cameron asked in a worried tone.

I was worried too, but we should not look back since we already reached this stage. “Mom, We need to have faith in Summer. She’ll recover for sure!”

We had no other option.

“Alright, I’ll leave it to you. Regardless, what’s important is for Summer to be healthy again.”

I nodded in agreement. “Mom, don’t worry. I won’t let anything bad happen to Summer.”

As she nodded, her gaze landed on my tummy. “Your tummy is growing by the day. Have you ever seen any pregnant ladies as haggard as you? You need to take better care of yourself.”

I consoled her worries for some time and took Amy out for food after.

I planned to buy some daily necessities along the way too.

After a whole day of tormenting, Amy fell asleep. When she woke up, she followed me around, so I asked, “Amy, do you have something you want to tell me?”

She looked at me with her bright and adorable eyes. “Ms. Stovall, could you help to find my sister? I’ve been waiting for her for a long time. She told me she would come and get me, but I had not seen her for several days already.”