

## Chapter 596

Ashton nodded. "Are you hungry?"

I suddenly felt as though he was the one taking care of me instead of the other way round.

I parroted his question back to him. "Are you hungry?"

Cameron stirred in her sleep and woke up. She stared at Ashton and I for a few seconds before looking at the time on her phone.

Seeing that it was already past noon, she got up and poured me a glass of water. "Here, drink something. Your father went home to make lunch. He should be back any minute."

I froze for a moment before taking the glass of water from her. I turned to Ashton and asked, "How are you feeling? Do you feel any better?"

He nodded. "It doesn't hurt as much anymore."

Cameron got up and headed to the toilet. When she came back out, she wiped her hands on a paper towel and asked, "What do the both of you fancy for lunch?"

Ashton shook his head, expressing his indifference. He turned to me and asked, "Do you have anything you want to eat?"

I thought for a while before shrugging. “Anything’s fine!”

Off the top of my head, I couldn’t think of anything I really wanted to eat.

Cameron picked up her bag and left the room. My phone, which I had neglected since coming into the hospital, rang loudly all of a sudden. Emery was calling me.

She sounded rather sharp over the phone. “How are you doing? Are you feeling alright? Which hospital did they send you to?”

Faced with her barrage of questions, I felt rather confused. After a short pause, I replied, “I’m fine. I’m at a hospital in W City right now. I’ll only make my way back to K City in a few days.”

Emery snorted loudly before saying, “I know you’re in W City. I was asking which hospital you’re in.”

“I’m in Medwin Hospital. Is there something wrong?”

“I’ll be coming to look for you in a short while. Have you eaten yet?”

I felt rather stunned. Shooting a glance out of the window, I stammered, “When did you arrive in W City?”

“I just got off the plane, as a matter of fact. Let’s talk more later. Send me the hospital address via text, won’t you? I’ll be there very soon.” She hung up the phone immediately.

Ashton looked at me and smiled. “Was that Emery?”

I nodded and put my phone away. “She’s heavily pregnant now. I don’t think we should let her run around the city in her condition—it won’t be safe for her.”

Agreeing with me, he nodded. “Go and pick her up, then. Be careful.”

I nodded and called the nurse over to change his bandages. With that, I turned and left the hospital.

Emery insisted that she would be taking a cab to the hospital and told me not to go and pick her up. However, I still felt a little worried for her. I called a cab for her and personally told the driver where to drop her off, before making arrangements for a room at our hotel.

Thankfully, the hospital wasn’t far from the airport. Emery arrived half an hour later and stowed her luggage away at the hotel first.

Although she was wearing maternity clothes that were loose and drab, it was quite obvious that her stomach had swollen alarmingly.

As she put her clothes away in the drawers, she turned to me and asked, “It’s going to be new year’s eve soon, and it has started to snow heavily in K City. Are the both of you going to celebrate the new year in W City?”

I sighed gently. “We haven’t actually decided yet. Ashton is heavily injured, so he might have to stay here and recuperate for some time.”

Emery finished putting her clothes away and shot me a side glance, looking rather solemn. “The Crest family has been throwing their weight around for years. It’s time somebody put them in their place.”

“The Crest family didn’t hire a man to do it—it was Jared Crest himself. He never really got over the incident with the Fullers’ youngest daughter, and Macy leaving him proved to be the last straw for him. He was very mentally unstable.”

Emery sat down on the sofa and sighed heavily. “Gosh, that guy is a mess. What else does he have to live for? Most grudges are best left in the past or resolved—otherwise, you start going crazy and harming everyone around you.”

I bowed my head and mulled over her words. Life was full of twists and turns. How could Emery be so sure in her judgment that Jared’s actions were wrong?

Seeing me remain silent, she asked, “What did the Crest family say about this matter?”

I shook my head despondently. “I’m not sure, actually. Ashton seems to have no intention of investigating the situation further. Instead, he passed on the case to the police—Jared will probably be rotting in prison for the next few years.”

Emery frowned and said rather sadly, “If I remember correctly, he should be about thirty-five or six now. He’ll be in his forties by the time he’s released from prison. Since he’s a member of the Crest family, there will be a great deal of talk about him.”

I pressed my lips together tightly, unsure of how to reply.

We chatted for a while longer. Since it was rather late at night, I thought Emery might want to rest in her hotel room first. However, she insisted on following me back to the hospital to take a look at Ashton.

Truthfully, I wasn't so sure about leaving her alone in the hotel. I agreed to her request immediately.

We arrived in the hospital, where Zachary and Cameron had already laid out dinner for us. It was still the same old soup, but they had made other dishes as well.

Seeing Emery and me, Zachary turned to Emery and scolded, "Why are you running around the city when you're so heavily pregnant? Are you trying to make all of us worried about you?"

In a rather mischievous tone, Emery replied, "I'm only a few months into my pregnancy! I can still walk around outside if I feel like it, you know. When my stomach gets too big, I'll make sure to sit quietly at home and mind my own business."

Zachary shot her a look and didn't say anything else.

Cameron laid out the plates and looked at me. "Come and sit down. Let's have dinner first—we can talk about other matters later."

Zachary pursed his lips. He turned to Emery again—instead of yelling at her, he told her to finish her food and return to the hotel immediately.

A few moments later, Hunter arrived, claiming that he was too worried to let her run wild around the city by herself.

The two of them seemed to be fighting. Like a couple who was having a lover's quarrel, they made snide remarks to each other throughout dinner and left quickly.

Cameron and Zachary refused to let me watch over Ashton by myself anymore and insisted on staying behind with me.

Left with no other choice, I agreed reluctantly. They could do whatever they pleased.

Thankfully, the hospital room was large enough, and there were even a few sofas in addition to the bed. However, with so many people around, I didn't feel as comfortable as I would be at home.

## Chapter 597

Since Zachary and Cameron were around, flipping Ashton around and bringing him to the toilet in the middle of the night proved much easier. If I happened to be asleep, one of them would rouse themselves and help him to the toilet silently.

I only found out about this when I woke up. I slept through the night, and when I woke up the next morning, Zachary and Cameron had already returned to the hotel.

I had slept very well that night, and it showed on my face. After the doctor cleaned off the rotting flesh, the skin on Ashton's back had nearly healed completely.

Emery dropped by early in the morning again, but Hunter felt too worried to let her come by herself. Besides, it was nearly new year's eve, and he didn't want to deal with the airport crowd that always swelled during this time of the year.

After cajoling her for a while, we all managed to get Emery to return to K City with Hunter.

For the next few days, Zachary and Cameron remained in W City. With them around, I was relieved of much of my caregiving duties and felt much more relaxed.

It was only a few days later that we heard about Old Mr. Crest's death. Apparently, an investigation into the Crest family's business activities in W City revealed all sorts of business malpractices they had been involved in. As a result, their factories had been forced to halt production.

The Crest family's business dealt with the production and distribution of daily items. Although it wasn't a high-end sort of enterprise, their products faced huge demand because everyone needed those products. The Crest family had established a monopoly in the industry in the past ten years, and almost all the daily items lining the shelves of supermarkets were produced in their factories.

Hence, the Crest family enjoyed a never-ending stream of demand for their goods. This was where most of their immense wealth came from.

However, because daily items proved so vital in people's lives, every small problem in the products attracted the attention of the Bureau of Industry and Commerce immediately. Once that happened, the entire supply chain collapsed in a domino effect, causing a barrage of problems to descend upon the company.

In addition, the Quest family from W City had been looking to break into supply production for the military. The moment the Crest family's business ran into problems, the Quest family swooped in like vultures and finished up what was left of the Crest family.

Because of this, Old Mr. Crest had died of rage.

Their son had just been sentenced to prison, and now their patriarch was dead. In a span of a few days, the Crest family was thrown into utter chaos.

"The Crest family has maintained its hold over W City for too long. It's time to change masters," Cameron mused. She walked over to me and handed me a glass of water.

I kept my phone away and sighed. I had to admit that Cameron had a pretty good eye for these things.

She walked over to me and asked with trepidation, "What plans do you and Ashton have for the future?"

I felt a little startled. Honestly, I was rather confused as well—weren't Ashton and I doing very well right now?

Seeing the look of confusion in my eyes, she continued, "Both of you are in your thirties, and you are no longer young. As much as you love Summer, she isn't your biological daughter. Haven't you considered having one of your own?"

I was zoning out a little. She had said something to this effect to me before.

She ignored my silence and plodded on. “I know you younger people have your own ideas, but everyone wants to live out their golden years in peace no matter how much they’ve struggled in the first part of their life. The older you get, the more you enjoy the company of others, and the more you want to be surrounded by children and grandchildren. Scarlett, Summer was raised by you, and there’s nothing wrong with lavishing your love on her. However, a woman needs to have a child of her own. This isn’t some silly old-fashioned idea I’m spouting—it’s just a life experience you should have.”

I mulled over her words and felt that she was right. “We can talk about this again when Ashton recovers from his injury.”

Cameron smiled, looking more cheerful. “Good! In the future, your father and I can look after the child for the both of you.”

My fingers tightened around the glass as I felt a rush of warmth in my heart. Honestly, this felt rather nice.

In the future, Ashton and I would raise Summer and our child together and lead out the rest of our lives peacefully. Lady Luck was finally starting to shine on me.

A cold gust of air blew down the corridor and into the room. Cameron got up and said, “You can return to the hospital room first. I’m going to ask the doctor if they can discharge Ashton earlier or transfer him to a hospital in K City. Since it’s the festive season soon, let’s try and get the whole family back in K City so we can celebrate it together.”

I nodded and watched as she left for the doctor’s office. I returned to the room, only to find Zachary and Ashton locked in a heated argument.

I wasn't planning to eavesdrop, but the door was ajar, and I could hear Ashton's voice clearly from outside the door. He sounded very serious. "There's no real need for you to kill off the entire Crest family, you know."

Evidently, this was directed at Zachary.

Zachary's voice was thick but indifferent. "You might have ties to the Crest family, but what's that to me? All I know is that they've caused much suffering to my daughter."

"It's unlikely that the Crest family will return to their previous glory after this." Ashton was probably speaking up on Jared's behalf.

Zachary laughed coldly. "I don't care about what happened between you and the Crest family. Back when you joined forces with Jared to take down the Moore family, the war had already begun."

I felt a little stunned. Had Ashton really tried to do something to the Moore family?

Ashton spoke again. "That's all in the past. If you're going to bring that up again, I have nothing more to say to you."

Zachary sounded cold and cruel in his reply. "When you swapped Scarlett's DNA back then, you were already planning on taking down the Moore family, weren't you? You got Jared to strike up a fake alliance with my wife, pretending that they would work together to defeat you. However, Jared betrayed my wife and stole the Moore family's information from her. You were so against Scarlett becoming a member of the Moore family then because you didn't want to implicate her when you took down our family, right? If that happened, the two of you could never be together."

## **Chapter 598**

**I froze on the spot and the memory of the messages Stacey showed me surface in my mind. Jared and Cameron had indeed been up to something privately for quite a long time previously.**

**However, during that time, the messages Stacey showed me were about Jared and Cameron teaming up to vent their anger for what happened to Naomi.**

**I couldn't help but take a step back as I stared at the men in the ward. They were both people from the business circle. There was no way I could guess any of their schemes.**

Ashton could finally sit up by now and he said indifferently, “The Moore family might be formidable in K City but it’s not enough to have the same influence in J City. Saying that I have no moves at all is just ridiculous.”

“Hmph!” Zachary scoffed. “Even though the Moore family have been in the mafia for so many years, we’ve always been just and righteous. The reason we want to get a hold of J City is just to find my daughter. We don’t mean to cause any trouble to you.”

“But Naomi’s dead and that’s the truth!” the former said, a hint of anger in his voice.

Zachary furrowed his brows. “That was an accident.”

“And we’re only settling the score for this accident today,” Ashton replied coldly.

“The matters between you young people are now hurting other insignificant people for no reason. Yet you still think you’re right. Ashton, if you want to continue living a great life with Scarlett, we better call it even and stop talking about things that happened in the past. Otherwise, both of us will be having a hard time.”

I pursed my lips and decided not to continue listening to their conversation. I went back into the hallway and sat down with a cup of water in my hands.

It seemed like Ashton’s purpose of switching the DNA reports four years ago wasn’t as simple as I once thought.

Jared was close to Cameron, but he left even though they hadn't done anything. I had never analysed the situation carefully previously.

And there was Naomi's death. I never imagined that I would get involved in this matter.

Cameron saw that I was still sitting in the hallway, daydreaming when she was back and she couldn't help but say, "What are you still doing here? It's too chilly here. Get back into the ward."

With that, she grabbed my hand and pulled me into the ward.

Meanwhile, Ashton and Zachary were already done with their conversation. At the sight of us, the latter instantly got up and pulled Cameron into his arms. "Where did you go?"

"I went to ask the hospital staff if we could transfer Ashton to a hospital outside of K City. That way, we can celebrate the festive season as a family this year," she replied joyfully.

She then said to Ashton, "You should be able to walk around now, right?"

"Yes," he nodded.

Cameron smiled and added, "The doctor said that if you can get off of the bed and move around without opening up the wound, you'll be allowed to transfer to another hospital. New year's eve is just around the corner. We're not even that familiar with W City or the people here so it isn't really convenient for us to celebrate here. How about I get you discharged from the hospital in a few days, and we'll return to K City?"

She was obviously asking for Ashton's opinion.

The man nodded and there weren't any changes in his expression when he said, "Sure."

Cameron was extremely happy and told Zachary that she wanted to explore W City. After all, it was a bustling city with lots of foreign luxury goods available.

The latter had no opposition to that, and they left together afterward.

Ashton and I were the only ones left but I wasn't talking much since I had a lot on my mind.

All I did was asked about his injury before spacing out on the couch.

He stared at me for a moment before saying in a low voice, "Come here, Scarlett."

I looked up at him and saw that he was patting the spot next to him as he said with a faint smile, "Come sit."

I got up and sat beside him as I returned a smile. I wanted to lie in his embrace but was afraid that it would hurt him, so I decided to just lean my head on his shoulder. I didn't put any force on it as all I wanted was to just be near him.

He then raised his hand and pushed my head onto his shoulder before saying, "Don't worry and just lean on me. It doesn't hurt."

I gave him a slight smile and felt my eyes burn. Forget it. I won't ask him anything for now. We still have the rest of our lives ahead of us. There's no point in bringing up irrelevant and insignificant matters.

The rain had become a normal thing in W City. It hadn't stopped since the moment we arrived.

Since he was going to be discharged soon, Ashton decided that he would visit Jared at the prison.

I didn't want to go at first. After all, I couldn't bring myself to react with virtue instead of retaliation. But I could only agree to it since he wanted to go.

Jared's Judgement of Criminal Responsibility was personally handled by Louis. No matter how capable the Crest family was, there was nothing they could do about it.

Sometimes, money was just too worthless when compared to power.

That was why Jared had been convicted of intentional assault and was sentenced to seven years in prison in the suburbs outside W City.

Both Cameron and Zachary didn't want to see him, so they had chosen to ask a driver to bring us over instead.

The car stopped in front of the prison entrance. I looked up at the iron gate before me and it was so tall that just the gate alone was enough to daunt people.

## Chapter 599

**“Summer will be twelve in seven years. These seven years will pass in the blink of an eye!” I said. I couldn’t help but feel mixed emotions about it.**

**Ashton smiled and reached out to take my hand. He patted the back of my hand and replied, “People have to pay for their mistakes.”**

**The driver then parked the car beside the road. The place was quite desolated so there were hardly any cars that passed by the place. We didn’t have to worry that there would be a lack of parking space too.**

**Ashton could basically walk on his own now and as long as there weren’t any large movements, there wouldn’t be any issues.**

**There was a rather small door at the side of the prison which was only allowed for the family members of the prisoners.**

**Since we had informed the people working there before we arrived, an officer was waiting for us by the door. At the sight of us, he stepped aside and greeted, “Mr. Fuller, Mrs. Fuller.”**

**Ashton nodded at him and held my hand as we followed the officer.**

We immediately saw a rather miserable-looking path after we went through the door. A training field similar to a military training field was on both sides of the path, followed by a building where a police officer who guarded the prisoners was stationed there.

Before we even got to the visiting hall, the officer leading us seemed to know about Ashton's injury as he started to slow down his pace.

After half an hour, we finally got to see Jared. He sat at the opposite of the thick glass partition. Both of his hands were cuffed, and he had a haggard look on his face.

However, his gaze was sharp and fierce as ever. He took his seat and stared at Ashton with pursed lips, but he didn't reach for the receiver.

Jared leaned against the back of his chair leisurely as he continued staring disdainfully at the latter.

Is he planning to cut ties with Ashton?

I suddenly pitied him as I looked at him.

Both men were once best friends who had gone through bumps and twists in life together, but their friendship ended up like this.

I couldn't help but sigh at that.

After a long time, Jared took the receiver and said while glaring at Ashton, “She’s really lucky.”

He was obviously talking about me.

I scowled at his words and couldn’t stop myself from clenching my fists. Pain shot up my arm since I accidentally exerted force on them.

I quickly took in a deep breath and continued listening to their conversation.

Ashton raised his brows and replied coldly, “You know that she’s innocent. She should never have gone through such a thing.”

Jared shifted his gaze to me and furrowed his brows slightly. “The scar on her face will always be there, and it can never go away.”

I subconsciously reached up to touch the scar on my face and felt an ache in my heart.

I was a normal human being after all. How could I not care about the scar on my face?

Ashton didn’t even care about his words. Instead, he said, “Have you ever considered that you’re the one who’s actually at fault, Jared?”

“That’s not possible!” the man suddenly shouted. His voice was heart-wrenching as he continued, “I can’t be wrong. You’re the ones who are wrong! Both of you!”

Instead of answering immediately, Ashton stared at him. But it was exactly this burning gaze on him that made his hand start to shake uncontrollably.

Jared started to become emotional, and he smashed the receiver in his hands. The former continued to keep silent as he stared at the prisoner.

A police officer walked over and immediately stopped Jared. He then gave Ashton a look that seemed to be asking him if he wanted to continue talking.

He shook his head and motioned for the officer to take Jared away. After that, he stared at them as they left with a grim look on his face.

About ten minutes later, the person in charge of the prison walked over to us and asked him, “Mr. Fuller, the prisoner has settled down. Is there anything you want me to do?”

Ashton handed him a letter he was holding and said, “Hand this over to him. Tell him that I will take good care of Summer.”

The person in charge nodded and took the letter anxiously.

Once we left the prison and got into the car, I glanced at him in confusion. “Was that a letter from you?”

He shook his head and took a cigarette out. He was about to light it up, but quickly kept it when he noticed that I was staring at him.

**“It’s from Naomi,” he said indifferently.**

**I shouldn’t have asked about anything related to Naomi but I couldn’t stop myself from doing so as I was curious.**

**“Can you tell me about Naomi, Ashton?”**

**He frowned and told the driver to drive before staring out the window.**

**A long while later, he finally looked at me and said, “Grandma always had a regret since she was young. She never got to return to her hometown and own a courtyard where she could plant all her favorite flowers and plants. She didn’t get to live a happy life with Grandpa with a dog and a cat.**

**My Grandpa was a northerner who had served in the army for three generations. He could have stayed in K City and continued to rely on his ancestors’ business to raise his family and descendants. But when Grandma’s wish hadn’t been fulfilled when she passed suddenly. So he brought his young children to J City and started a business for the sake of their future. That’s why Fuller Corporation exists now.”**

**I listened quietly as I rested my head on his shoulder. He seemed to have never told me about the history of the Fullers.**

**Ashton pulled me into his arms and continued, “After that, the Fuller Corporation’s business improved but Grandpa hoped that his children would have their own careers. So, he sent Aunt Sally back to K City. Then, he sent Naomi and me there as well. It’s all because he wanted us to have the chance to make a choice for ourselves.**

## Chapter 600

“And it was all because I came to K City that I got to know Jared and Joe. Naomi got to know them as well. She became interested in Jared and I didn’t expect it at all. She always had a weird personality since she was young but she was never a scheming person. Besides, Jared was interested in someone else back then, he wasn’t interested in her at all. Naomi shamelessly pursued him for two whole years, and for some reason, Jared finally agreed to date her. Nonetheless, she took the initiative and broke up with him not too long after that. She probably found out that Jared likes someone else, so...”

“Why did she commit suicide then?” Naomi was an optimistic person. Even if her heart was broken, it shouldn’t have been the reason she chose to end her life.”

Ashton kept silent but I noticed that there was something wrong with his hand. It was the first time I saw him so anxious and uneasy.

He was trembling!

I reached out to take his hand but he managed to hold mine first. He looked up at me and I noticed that his eyes were getting watery. His voice choked as if he couldn’t get his words out all of a sudden.

“You don’t have to say it, Ashton. It’s okay,” I said and didn’t try to pursue the matter anymore.

A moment later, he sucked in a deep breath and he grew noticeably calmer. “I was the one who lost her that night. She called me so many times but I didn’t pick up. I didn’t do it on purpose. I just thought that it was one of her usual tantrums

but I didn't expect her to go to a nightclub herself. K City ten years ago is so different from the K City now. Naomi was destroyed that night."

My heart skipped a beat when I recalled his conversation with Zachary at the hospital.

I stared at him and asked uncertainly, "Did Zachary's men do it?"

Ashton nodded. "By the time Jared and I found her, she had already been left in the alley beside the nightclub. Her body was covered in blood and was filthy all over."

He looked up and locked eyes with me. His eyes were icy cold as he said, "Those ten men ruined her face after they did such a disgusting thing to her. Naomi stayed in the hospital for a month but her injuries were too serious. Her reproductive system had been destroyed."

I felt goosebumps all over my skin as my body trembled. The fear I was feeling made it hard to breathe.

So the reason Naomi committed suicide was that she had been gang-raped and her face was ruined...

No wonder Jared wanted to use sulfuric acid to hurt me. He wouldn't stoop so low as to use the same way to hurt me, he just wanted to kill me.

"But there is no bad blood between you and those people. Why were they so ruthless?" Even if they had done it for revenge, just what kind of grudge did they hold that they had to do something this bad?

Ashton shook his head and sighed, “K City was in complete chaos back then. Many other women were innocent just like Naomi was. Zachary was a powerful person and he kicked out most of the shady characters who were under him because he wanted to clear his guilty conscience as soon as possible. These people wanted to taint the Moore family. And when they found out that Zachary’s daughter who had been missing for years was about twenty years old, they specifically sought out girls around that age and were extremely cruel with them.”

It was ridiculously unreasonable and I spat in anger, “How could they do that?”

“It’s all because of what happened back then that Zachary is so low-key when it comes to searching for his daughter now. He would inquire about her privately and wouldn’t do anything relating to finding her so openly anymore.”

I could somewhat understand the situation now. So Jared blames Ashton for not answering Naomi’s calls. Otherwise, both of them could’ve managed to save her in time.

Every woman who suffered through something like this, even if they were fortunate enough to survive, wouldn’t have had the courage to continue living anymore. Not to mention, her face was even ruined.

And it was because of this that she chose to commit suicide. To her, ending her life meant that she could be free.

However, to Ashton and Jared, it became a suffering that couldn’t be overcome in a lifetime.

Both of us kept quiet the whole way back to the hospital. Once we arrived, the doctor gave him a check-up and told us that there was no problem at all.

After that, Zachary booked air tickets to K City. Cameron was extremely happy and had made lots of delicious food for us, probably because we were about to head back to K City soon.

Both of them ate with us in the next few days.

In Cameron's words, "Food tastes better when people eat together."

It was probably true because I had been eating more than usual. I even felt as though I had fattened up a little.

While we were eating, Cameron said, "It's new year's eve the day after tomorrow. I had Mrs. Jenkins prepare everything and even bought all the stuff needed. I heard that those in the R Province like to eat egg rolls stuffed with meat and braised pork to celebrate the festive season. They're both Mrs. Jenkins's specialty."

Here, she stopped and looked towards Ashton. A smile was still on her face as she asked, "What do you people in J City normally eat, Ashton?"

He froze for a second. Perhaps it was because he had met Jared earlier in the day but his emotions weren't as stable and he was silent the whole time.

He seemed out of it and most likely hadn't listened to a single thing Cameron had said.

I nudged him with my elbow and he finally snapped back to his senses to look at me. He then asked dumbfoundedly, "What's wrong?"

