

Chapter 611

Seeing me, she came over and said, "Mr. Ashton called a few times, enquiring if you are back. He's probably worried. Please call him back."

I nodded. Just now we had been busy all the way and so I had neglected my mobile phone. Taking it out, I found that it was off.

I decided to charge it in my bedroom. After freshening up, I called Ashton. Immediately the call was picked up.

He seemed to have been waiting for my call and his voice was a little low, "Are you lying on bed?"

That was funny. I turned on the speakerphone and placed it on my dressing table. "I've just taken a shower. How about you?"

"Thinking about you!" Sometimes, this man is really...

I did not banter but laughed instead. "How was your day? Did it rain in K City?"

It rained often during this time of the year. The rain was heavy in J City. It was sowing season and sufficient rain was a good thing.

He hummed in reply and his voice was still low. "How was the auction?"

After some thought, I said, "I saw the box. It's identical with the one at home."

"Why didn't you get it?" He asked softly.

I was stunned and thought of asking how he knew I bid for the box but I realized that Joseph must have told him.

After a pause, I said, "The price was too high and I thought it was not worthwhile."

He said, "As long as you like it, then it's worth the price. Besides, it's meaningful, too."

Knowing his arrogance, I did not argue but just replied, "It was taken away by a man named Yuri Bates. Joseph left him a message. After All Souls' Day, I want to ask him to open the box."

He grunted and asked, "Yeah, what time will you leave tomorrow?"

"Possibly early. The cemetery is rather far away."

“Great. I’ll wait for you at home.”

I smiled as I always felt that he was like a child. After hanging up, I slept early.

The next day, we got up earlier than usual as we were going to the cemetery. Summer was still half asleep. In the car, she finally leaned on me and dozed off.

Joseph would be driving us. Perhaps, it was too early and he had not slept enough. There were dark circles under his eyes.

In the morning, Mrs. Eriksen had prepared breakfast. I looked at him and said, “Later, I’ll swap with you. Please take your breakfast first.”

He cast me a sidelong glance and shook his head. Smiling, he said, “There’s no need. I’ve already eaten.”

Today is All Souls’ Day so I said, “I can go on my own. You need to visit the cemetery with your family too. You can go with them.”

He smiled, shook his head, and said, “It doesn’t matter because my parents are around and they will go themselves. So long as the people we care about are all here. They go to the cemetery to see their ancestors. For us, younger folk, we only need to know the place.”

All those who are important are still around. These are probably the words that everyone wished to say on All Souls’ Day. In our life, if those who mean everything to us are around, then we don’t need to go through life and death and think about them on All Souls’ Day. Neither did we need to suffer the pain of separation.

This was the best blessing that anyone could ever ask for.

After driving for a short while, he spoke, "By the way, last night I checked out Mr. Bates. He's from K City and highly secretive. However, I managed to get some information. He seemed to have met old Mr. Murphy a few times.

I could not help frowning, "Then, he probably knows the Murphys."

After hesitating for a moment, I voiced my thoughts. "Could this Yuri be a member of the Murphy family? Did they buy the sandalwood jade box at the auction just to find the other one?"

Joseph was silent for a while as he kept his eye on the road. Then, he said plainly, "It's hard to tell."

It was noon when we arrived at the cemetery and the drizzle had stopped. The sun was out and a rainbow hung in the sky. The air was fresh.

Summer had a good memory. She had only been here once but she could find the tombstone all by herself even though there were new tombstones added in the cemetery.

In paying respects to the departed, we started with the most senior ancestors. It's been five years and Old Mr. Fuller's photo is slightly blurry and barely recognizable.

Summer asked, "Mommy, will all of us die?"

I nodded. When I was a child, I didn't understand what death was. When I grew up, I found that the people around me were gone one by one.

Sometimes people leave before we can say goodbye.

I said, "All will die but we don't really die per se."

Summer did not understand, neither did I. I gazed at old Mr. Fuller's photo, lost in thought. He must be rather disappointed because Ashton is not here.

When he left, Ashton held a lot of grudges against him and so Ashton did not come to send him off but now that the grievances had faded away, it seemed as if the thoughts he harboured toward the deceased was lesser too.

I don't know if it's a good or bad thing to have someone weeping in front of the new tombstone. It must be someone who has just passed on. The family had not come to terms with the loss and they were still grieving.

I don't like crying in front of a grave so I led Summer away to Grandma's tomb after saying goodbye to Old Mr. Fuller.

Summer tugged at my hand and asked, "Mom, why is that man in front of Grandma's tombstone?"

I looked in that direction and saw a tall, slim man, dressed in black, standing solemnly in front of Grandma's tombstone. His back was facing us so we could not see the expression on his face.

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I searched my memory but could not remember any such person. Who could he be? As far as I could remember, my Grandma did not have a friend like this.

Out of curiosity, I could not help stepping forward. "Hello!"

The man paused for a moment and turned around to look at me sharply.

His elegant handsome features seemed aloof as he cast me a glance. Without a word, he turned around, ready to leave.

Noticing the white chrysanthemums and offerings in front of the tombstone, I couldn't help looking in the man's direction, asking, "Mister, you are...?"

The man turned around and cast me a glance, saying, "Just a passer-by!"

After this short phrase, he said no more.

Watching him walk away, I could not help being curious. When did my Grandma make friends with someone like this?

Leading Summer to pay respects and bid goodbyes, I set aside those thoughts. Macy's grave was the newest. After five years, there were no weeds or damages. It looked brand new.

I could not understand Jared. Perhaps, he had never loved Naomi or Macy. To him, they were just passers-by and his feelings for them are just guilt.

Neither of them was around anymore nor so all that was left was a heart filled with remorse.

If both of them were still alive, I'm afraid he would still be cold and indifferent to them as if they were just strangers.

On the way back, we met the man with the aloof expression again. His car was parked in front of the cemetery, it was a black off-road vehicle, cool and domineering.

When I arrived with Summer, he cast us a nonchalant glance and put on his sunglasses. Then he entered his car.

In the car, Joseph told me, "Mrs. Fuller, Mr. Fuller instructed me to book the air ticket for tonight. Is that alright for you?"

I smiled. "Alright!" It was already booked. There was no point in cancelling it.

The car had barely started when there was suddenly a screeching sound of braking. It was so loud that my eardrums hurt.

Our car stopped abruptly and Summer fell into my arms. Joseph calmed himself and looked with narrowed eyes at the black car in front of us.

I came back to my senses as two men alighted the black car with wrenches in their hands, obviously coming at us.

Crack! The windscreen was smashed.

The windscreen on the driver's side crashed down even as Joseph cried, "Mrs. Fuller, call the police!"

His door was opened and two well-built men pulled him out, tying his hands and shoving him into their car.

My mind went blank. When I got out my phone to make the call, it was snatched away.

Before I could react, the back door was pulled open and two big and burly men stood there, expressionless, looking at me. "Ms. Stovall, please come with us!"

Holding Summer lest she be traumatized, I said calmly, "What do you want?"

"We only need half an hour of your time!" The two men said coldly.

I did not react for fear of putting Summer in harm's way, so holding her, I came down from the car and looked at the two men as calmly as I could. "Show the way, then!"

It was a good thing that they wasted no words but led the way, one in front of me, one behind.

"Where are we going?" A cool and clear voice was heard. It was almost devoid of emotion but the tone was loud and clear so that the listener could understand each and every word well.

The two men stopped in their tracks and I looked in the direction of the voice. It was the man we saw at the grave just now.

“Damn, who the hell are you? It’s none of your business.” The two men burst out in anger and spoke roughly.

The man smiled just as calmly and coldly as before. “This is broad daylight. Please be cautious of what you do.”

“What’s it to you?” The two men were unreasonable.

“If you are inviting a guest, you should show the necessary courtesy. Here you are behaving like abductors. Can I understand it as you’re up to no good?” The man pulled his coat leisurely and his expression was cold.

When the two men saw that he wanted to get involved, they said no more and just moved forward to beat him up.

Unexpectedly, this tall slim man was a skilful combatant. With just a few moves, the two burly men were beaten to a pulp. Humiliated, they looked at him and threatened, “It’s better you mind your own business.”

The man nodded, “Well, I rarely bother others but when I see something unjust, I have to barge in because I have an obsessive-compulsive disorder.”

“Damn!” They knew they were no match for him so they just threw the tied-up Joseph out of their car and drove away.

I busied myself untying Joseph. After Joseph was freed, I turned to thank the man but he was gone.

Without making a fuss, I looked at Joseph and said softly, "Are you good?"

He shook his head, got into the car, and drove straight to the airport.

All the while in K City, Ashton had arranged for bodyguards to be with me but this time, in J City, we had only planned a short stay and so he thought Joseph would do.

What happened today was unexpected but it had been a close shave. Joseph, being a vigilant person made sure I did not stay in J City longer than necessary.

Hence, the air tickets to K City were booked immediately.

By the time we reached K City, it was eleven at night. Summer had fallen asleep and Joseph carried her in his arms.

Chapter 613

As soon as I got out of the airport but before I realized what was going on, I was pulled close by a pair of strong arms and held in a tight embrace

After getting a whiff of his familiar scent, I realized that it was Ashton. Joseph must have told him about the incident at the cemetery.

Without saying anything, we got in the car. He asked Joseph to go home and rest well. Then we went back to the villa in the eastern suburbs.

Back at the villa, he put Summer in bed. In our bedroom, he hugged me tightly and gazed deep into my eyes.

He said, "I missed you so much." Adults express their love in ways that are different from children.

When little children say they miss someone, it is said directly. When adults say that they expressed it in a totally irrelevant way, such as, 'The moon is beautiful tonight.'

I looked up at him and laughed. "That's not romantic at all."

He smiled. "What should I say?"

I thought about it. 'The moon is beautiful tonight' would sound awkward coming out of his mouth. Maybe a straightforward sentence would be better.

Finally, I laughed, tugged at his hand, and said, "I miss you too."

In fact, I did not want romantic phrases. If we could look into each other's eyes and just said simply, 'I really miss you,' we could understand what we really felt.

After taking a shower and lying on the bed, I felt I had to talk about what happened in J City.

Resting my head on his arm, I confessed, "In front of my Grandma's grave, I met a man who was cold and distant. He saved us today, but I don't know his name."

I chose my words carefully to make light of the situation. Ashton turned his eyes on me. His worries were well-hidden. "Joseph is investigating now. This won't happen again in the future."

What he meant was this narrow escape from abduction.

I had learned to stay calm a long time ago after experiencing several disasters. Leaning on his arm, I smiled, "Grandma said that in everyone's life, there will always be some disasters and she called these incidents challenges."

He laughed softly, "You're great at consoling yourself."

I took that as a compliment. I had thought it over but I really could not understand, so I said, "Who would want to see me so badly?"

He pursed his lips and his gaze darkened as he changed the topic. "Aunt Sally wants us to go over and have dinner with her tomorrow. Shall we?"

I nodded. When All Souls' Day came around, we were expected to pay visits.

Perceiving his reaction, I felt a little tired. I looked at him with a pitiable expression on. "I'm so tired!"

He nodded slightly, still holding me, and said in a low voice. "Okay, go to sleep."

I felt scared because if it happened once, it was an isolated incident but if it happened a few times, it was not normal.

I don't want to see the blood on the bed every time I wake up. That means I may not be as healthy as I thought.

Perhaps I was too tired, or perhaps it was his warm embrace; I slept peacefully.

This time I fell into an unusually deep slumber.

The next day, it was Ashton who woke me. I had no idea what time he had gotten up. He was holding a mobile phone in his hand and looking rejuvenated.

Apparently he had just taken a shower. "Someone's calling you."

I was still groggy as I took my phone, accepted the call, and put it next to my ear.

"Are you back? Do you have time today? Let's go out for coffee." It was Emery.

I spoke but my voice was a little hoarse, "Oh, I am sorry! I have an appointment today so I can't make it."

She cursed. "The day after tomorrow, then. Don't make any other appointments.'

I agreed and hung up the phone. Then I noticed Ashton was staring at me and I blushed. Instinctively, I asked, "What's up?"

"Are you hungry?" As he asked, he placed some clothing on the side of the bed. Apparently, he had selected them for me.

I sat up and shook my head. Then, I got up and changed quickly as if I was in a hurry.

He caught my wrist and stopped me. "Slow down. We're not in a hurry. You've missed a button."

Not waiting for me to check, his attractive fingers were buttoning for me anew.

I bent my head to look at his actions which were neither hurried nor slow and my heart began to beat faster.

I was blushing. It's been said that when two people have been together long enough, the thrill would be gone. But I've been with Ashton for many years.

I did not eat much for breakfast and he was not pleased so he gestured to me to eat more. Unfortunately, I would vomit if I forced myself to eat.

I retorted, "Force feeding is bad for the stomach."

He pursed his lips and stopped forcing me.

On the way out, he looked at his phone and seemed to be looking for the address. We had been to Sally's place a number of times and he had such a good memory, so, how could he forget?

I was imagining things.

We did not go to Sally's, instead, he took me to a KFC outlet. Looking at the crowd passing through the doors, I suspected that he had the wrong address.

Tugging at his sleeve, I paused uncertainly and then asked, "Have you driven to the wrong place?"

"No!"

I was dumbfounded and rather puzzled. "Summer isn't here. Are we buying something for her?"

He raised his eyebrows and led me in by the hand. "We're getting something for you."

I whispered, "I'm not a kid."

He looked back at me with a smile in his eyes, "Aren't you just like a kid?"

I couldn't think of a reply, so I was silent and looked up at him, "Takeaway, or dine in?"

Chapter 614

After glancing around the place, Ashton apparently disliked it due to the bustle. Nonetheless, he said, "Get a table."

I listened to him and got a table near the window to stay far from the crowd. After taking a few bites of the burger, I supported my chin with an arm while glancing at the shoppers in the shopping mall from the window.

As I was at a loss, he fixed his gaze on me and asked, "What are you thinking about?"

I glanced at him and replied, "Why did you bring me here all of a sudden to have burgers?"

Raising his eyebrow, he said, "Because you like it!"

What? Is this a good reason?

Since it wasn't the weekend, most of the people in the shopping mall were couples who spent their free time window shopping.

Besides, the H&M store downstairs was lively as many young people came in and out of it. "Macy always said she will bring her future boyfriend to visit the CK store. She will then ask him to buy a few handbags for her. After that, she will go to the H&M store to try on some clothes."

Ashton looked at the store downstairs for a moment and asked blandly, "Are the items expensive?"

I shook my head and replied, "Not really. The items cost around several hundred. I could even buy some items below a hundred when there were discounts."

He was a little bewildered. "Well..."

Meanwhile, I felt that he couldn't really understand ordinary people's life.

After a while, I explained, "When we studied at the university, we only had eight hundred as our monthly living expenses. So, after deducting food expenses, we didn't have much savings left. As you know, most girls prefer looking beautiful, so we would always buy some nice clothes and cosmetics. Sometimes, we could even spend several months of our salaries on a set of cosmetics."

He nodded in response upon hearing it from me. Then, he glanced at the shop downstairs and said, "Do you still like the items in it now?"

Looking at him, I replied seriously, "Do you still like the Ultraman cards that you played when you were five years old?"

He pondered over it seriously for a while and answered, "I had never played with that kind of toys."

Okay! We probably had very different childhoods.

"Mr. Fuller, you're here too!" A woman asked shockingly behind me.

I turned around and saw Rachel with a cute seven or eight-year-old kid.

Meanwhile, Ashton slightly nodded in response as a greeting gesture.

The little boy glanced around the restaurant and eventually fixated his gaze upon the family bucket on our table, which we hadn't even touched.

I asked, "Do you want to join us?"

Rachel was startled and glanced at Ashton as if she was waiting for his permission.

He agreed to it silently.

After Rachel sat down, she reminded the boy to behave and left to take their food.

When I handed the family bucket over to the boy, he looked a little aloof but still thanked me gently.

Rachel came back and saw her kid eating. She knitted her brows and said, "Joshua, did you say thank you?"

Looking at Ashton and me, he thanked us before he continued eating.

On the other hand, Ashton, who was a man of few words, talked even less ever since they were here.

We talked about some trivial matters before they came. Now, he basically didn't want to start a conversation at all.

Since I stopped eating and began scrolling my phone, he asked, "Have you finished eating?"

I nodded and said, "Yup!"

"Let's go!" He stood up and grabbed my arm.

Rachel suddenly said, "Mr. Fuller, the AI program has some new updates. Can I discuss it with you for a while?"

Ashton said blandly, "We're not at work now."

In other words, he would only discuss with her when they were at work.

Unexpectedly, Rachel insisted on it. "Our intelligent housekeepers can be used in restaurants like this due to the suitable environment and other details. Since we are already here, I think this is a good opportunity for us to talk about it."

Displeased, Ashton furrowed his brows.

"I have something to buy. I'll walk around, and you guys can discuss it."

Rather than avoiding her purposely, I only felt that Ashton didn't have to insist on leaving.

Ashton took a sideways glance at me and asked in a deep voice, "Do you not want me to accompany you?"

I could feel some anger exuded from him. Nevertheless, I still nodded and asserted, "It's okay. I can go by myself."

What should I buy?

After exiting the fast-food restaurant, I wandered around the shopping mall and realized that I really had nothing to buy.

Normally, people who shop alone could have mood swings, and I was no exception. At this moment, I felt a little dejected. Why did I leave them and wander around here alone?

Even though I was aware that Rachel had feelings for Ashton, I was like an idiot for giving them the space to be together.

My mind went blank after wandering around for some time. Besides, I felt that something wasn't right about me when I looked at myself in the shop window.

My heart was filled with mixed feelings.

Yes, I felt inferior. The scar on my face wasn't deep and hardly visible if I didn't look at it closely. Nevertheless, a scar could never disappear completely.

Rachel was an outstanding, beautiful, graceful, intelligent, determined, and courageous lady. I was sure all men will be fond of women like her!

I wasn't sure since when I felt inferior. Did it happen when my face was hurt? Or did it happen earlier?

I believed it was earlier; nonetheless, the feeling wasn't that apparent compared to now.

I should cut my hair! A thought suddenly flashed through my mind.

Perhaps, I could hide my scar using my hair.

It wasn't difficult for me to find a barbershop in the city centre. Shortly afterward, I found a barbershop named Style on the ground floor in the shopping mall.

When I arrived, two young men were distributing brochures at the entrance. After reading the brochure, I realized that the barbershop was giving discounts to new members.

Chapter 615

Rather than being attracted by the low prices, I entered the barbershop solely because the hairstylists' hairstyle looked rather stylish.

I took a seat in front of the mirror after the barber wet my hair.

Shortly afterward, the hairstylist asked, "May I ask what kind of hairstyle you want?"

“Well, I would like to have that hairstyle!” I pointed at the picture of a model on the wall. Deep down, I felt that her short hair with bangs that covered half of her face was what I wanted.

After glancing at it, the hairstylist suggested seriously, “If you only wish to hide the scar on your face, you can try to have bangs. Since your hair is beautiful, there’s no need to cut your hair short.”

I was taken aback by his suggestion and thought to myself. It seems that the scar is more obvious than I’ve imagined.

“Okay, let’s do it!”

He nodded in response and began to swing his scissors. While the background music was playing, he began cutting my hair and said, “You’re indeed a beauty. I would suggest that you can try a more stylish haircut. A permanent wave is the latest trend now. You don’t have to have your hair dyed or permed. As such, it won’t damage your hair. Also, the hairstyle can last for half a year.”

I put on a faint smile and said perfunctorily, “It’s okay. Thanks anyway!”

I was used to my current hairstyle because I hadn’t changed it for a few years.

On the other hand, the hairstylist didn’t dwell on it as I was seemingly not interested in trying a different hairstyle.

Half an hour later, I looked at myself in the mirror and was shocked to see that I looked a few years younger.

“We often look younger with blunt bangs. Since you have fair skin and gorgeous facial features, this hairstyle makes you look even younger.”

I put on a slight smile and felt better after cutting my hair.

After exiting the barbershop, I walked down the street and occasionally looked at myself in the shop windows. Unknowingly, I felt that I would look better by wearing clothes that could make me look younger.

As such, I entered the H&M store and selected a few sets of clothes, including overalls, white shirts, and canvas shoes. After all, these were all fashion symbols of youth.

With these outfits and my blunt bangs, it appeared that I truly looked younger.

I crossed a few streets to continue window shopping with my new outfit. When I eventually felt tired, I looked at myself again in one of the shop windows.

Amused by my own look, I couldn't help but giggle.

As I was laughing alone like an idiot before the shop window, the passers-by glanced at me curiously. Perhaps they thought that I was crazy.

“Hi, would you like to visit our shop?”

After recollecting myself, I realized that I was standing right in front of the entrance and staring at the clothes.

Hence, the passers-by probably thought that I was laughing at the clothes.

While looking at the male mannequin, I thought to myself and felt relieved that the people didn't think I was a psychopath.

"Alright!" I wasn't sure what I could buy in a men's clothing store. Nevertheless, I entered the shop after the shop assistant welcomed me.

I initially thought that I would only window-shop here. A moment later, I was attracted and stopped before a set of casual wear.

It was matched naturally and perfectly by combining a British-style sweater, a grey leather jacket, and a pair of white trousers.

I couldn't help but touch it and thought about how Ashton would look in this set of clothes.

Well, since he probably never tried other colors of clothes, it was perhaps the right time for him to try something new.

"Are you planning to buy some clothes for your boyfriend? This casual wear is designed based on the latest trend in this year's fashion week. Also, the whole set costs only five thousand and eight hundred because we are offering a ten percent discount. You can buy a set for your boyfriend."

Five thousand and eight hundred?

It seemed considerably cheap compared with Ashton's tailor-made clothes.

“Would you like to use your card for payment?” The shop assistant continued asking.

I was startled for a few seconds. After recalling my account balance, I thought that a set of clothes wouldn't cost me too much.

As such, I took out my debit card from my handbag and handed it over to the shop assistant.

“I'm sorry. It appears that you don't have enough balance in your account,” the shop assistant said smilingly.

I was startled for a while but soon recalled that I hadn't worked for quite some time. When I was in R Province, I saved my money from my salaries with this card. The remaining balance was supposed to be enough since I wasn't a big spender.

Hence, I was used to using this card whenever I bought something. It was only now that I realized the balance wasn't as much as I thought.

Also, I realized now that my savings would deplete sooner or later since I hadn't worked for about a year.

“Do you still want it?” the shop assistant asked gently as I was at a loss.

I kept my debit card and nodded in response smilingly. “Yes, I want it!”

I rarely used the card that Ashton gave me. Apart from the fact that I wasn't a big spender, I still had John's card with me.

Since I'm buying it for him, I might as well use his card!

I was dazed the moment I took out two similar two black cards. I glanced at them for a while but still couldn't differentiate which one was given by Ashton.

Shortly afterward, I decided to randomly hand over one of the cards to the shop assistant. Shocked to see two black cards, he swiped the card professionally to make the payment.

Then, he handed the card back to me and asked politely, "Would you like anything else?"

I shook my head and replied, "It's okay!"

"Please visit our shop again!"

Even before I left the shop, the shop assistant said to his colleagues excitedly, "Wow, she has two black cards! I'm sure she's a billionaire! I think there are only a few billionaires in K City. My goodness, she even has two cards!"