

Chapter 646

Nora frowned slightly and asked the man, “Are you not a police officer?”

All of us tensed up at the question and the man scoffed. “We are indeed the police, but we are not the police who will send all of you home. Don’t you know that there are different types of police in Venria?”

Upon hearing his confession, Tabitha shrieked in fear, “Let us go!”

Meanwhile, Laurel was so terrified that she started to shake uncontrollably, and Tessa began mumbling philosophical quotes.

Nora turned pale as her hope of returning home vanished in an instant.

She was so upset that she could not even speak. Glaring at him with her blazing eyes, she looked as if she was going to murder the man.

I clasped my hands tightly and took a deep breath to compose myself. Then, I looked at the man with a steady gaze. “So, where are you guys bringing us?”

He turned towards me and smiled. “Oh, you must be Scarlett Stovall.”

I frowned. “Do you know me?”

He gave me a nonchalant shrug and replied, “Nope, I don’t know who you are, but I’ve heard of you. The police in Marsingfill are looking for you now. You seem to be worth a lot of money.”

The police wouldn’t be finding me without a reason. Perhaps Ashton has known that I’m in Venria, so he contacted the police there.

When he saw the baffled look on me, he continued, “Don’t worry, Ms. Stovall. I can’t guarantee the safety of the ladies here, but I can definitely guarantee yours. As long as you cooperate with us, you can go back to your country safe and sound after we receive the ransom.”

“You think you all can get the money?” I scoffed. “If the police are really searching for me, it’d be better if you send me to the police in Marsingfill and tell them that you’re the ones who rescue me. They might give you a large sum of money as a token of appreciation.”

His brows furrowed as he pondered the option. After a while, he narrowed his eyes and said, “I can consider bringing you there, but not them.”

“Why?” I raised my voice. “As long as you send us back, I can give you the money, as much as you want.”

He let out a scoff. “Ah, you’re indeed different, no wonder Mr. Murphy is interested in you. But he is only looking for you, Ms. Stovall. Him spending money on you doesn’t mean that he would fork out for the others. These women are too mediocre. I don’t think he would like any of them, so there’s no use in sending them to him.”

Offended by his words, the girls gritted their teeth and glared at him.

Nora, who had a pretty complexion with porcelain skin, got especially mad at him.

She shot him a disdainful look. “Did you not see yourself? You’re the ugliest one here. With your pig nose and small eyes, even plastic surgery can’t fix your looks.”

I laughed inwardly. This might be the best retaliation I’ve ever heard.

On the other hand, the man was so angry that he almost burst a blood vessel. He was about to slap Nora when the driver turned around and said something to him.

Then, the man dropped his hand.

Seeing his reaction, Nora rolled her eyes and continued to rebuke, “Stop acting like you’re some kind of big shot. You’re just a traitor who betrayed the country for money.”

“You...” The man had nothing to say to her accusation.

Glaring at Nora, he looked like he was going to tear her apart. But he eventually calmed down and sneered all of a sudden. “Look at you, you can be smug all you want. Don’t you know that all of you are going to meet your end soon? Once we reach Eastsummer, you would know what a living hell is.”

Nora wanted to talk back, but I stopped her and looked at the man. “Since you know who Mr. Murphy is, you should know that the Murphys had plenty of money to spare. Besides, if you send all of us back, not only the Murphys will give you money, even the Fullers, the Moores, and the Stovalls will give you a fortune. You

just need to bring us back safely to the police, and you can live an easy life in K City. It's very simple."

He gaped and asked disbelievingly, "What did you say? Even the Fullers, the Moores, and the Stovalls will give me money, too?"

I nodded. Realizing that the girls were staring at me as well, I hesitated for a while before saying, "Yes. If you don't believe me, give me your phone and let me call Ashton Fuller. I'll turn on the speaker."

He looked at me doubtfully. "How did you know him?"

I pursed my lips and told him the truth. "Not only do I know Ashton Fuller, but also John Stovall and Zachary Moore. I believe you know who they are."

He paled instantly. After a long while, he finally responded, "Who are you? Why are you human trafficked to Venria to be a mule?"

I was stunned. I did not expect that they abducted us for smuggling purposes.

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The others froze as well. After wandering around without a roof over our heads, we had known that we were human trafficked, but we never had the slightest idea on why we were brought here.

Now that we finally got the answer from him, we were shocked beyond words.

If we did not run away at that time, we would be mules by now. I could not help but feel relieved at the thought. I said to the man, "I can only tell you that I came here by accident. So, can you please let us go? I can give you whatever you want."

It was an earnest request from me.

He hesitated for a while and went to discuss with the driver.

The driver glanced at me with a flicker of doubt in his eyes. He then said something to the man and went back to driving.

After they finished discussing, the man looked over to me and said, "We will consider sending you to Marsingfill but not the others."

As soon as he spoke, the car came to a stop. Before we could say anything, several people tape our mouths shut and dragged us out of the car.

We were then brought into a beachfront villa. It was heavily guarded.

Initially, I thought that the five of us would be locked up together, but we were immediately separated after entering the villa.

I was brought into a clean room on the second floor.

Closing the door, the man motioned the driver just now to untie the rope on me. Then, he looked at me and said, "Ms. Stovall, rest for a few days here and we will ask people to come and send you to Marsingfill."

It took me a second to understand what had said. "How about my friends?"

He gave me a shrug and frowned. "Ms. Stovall, you should stop thinking about them. Save yourself first. Their fate is not in your hand."

At that, he turned and left.

For the next few days, I was locked in my room, and a middle-aged woman would come and bring me food every day. To my dismay, I did not get any information from her due to the language barrier.

My room had a balcony. Standing on the balcony, I could see the vast ocean nearby and the scenery outside the villa.

However, every night in the wee hours, I could hear ear-splitting screams rang out in the villa as the waves rolled and crashed against the rocks. I was not sure if it was just my illusion.

And whenever I woke up to check on those voices, they would vanish again.

One night, I was once again awakened by the screams, so I went to the balcony to find the source of those screams. Suddenly, I saw a few black luxury cars parked in front of the villa.

In the front yard stood a row of men in black. They seemed to be bodyguards. The man and the driver who brought us to the villa that day were now standing by the cars. The woman who brought me food daily said that the name of the driver was Danny while the man who spoke to us was Dante.

The people in Venria normally did not have last names. Besides, I was not fluent in their language, so I was not sure if those were their real names.

Then, a man with a comb-over hairstyle came out from one of the cars. He looked grim in his white suit.

Danny stepped forward and said something to the man in white. Then, the man in white looked at Dante.

Dante reported something to him and pointed towards the villa.

Only then did I realize that Dante was pointing at my room.

Before I could react, the man had turned his head over and looked towards me.

Although we were far apart, I could see that he had striking facial features. Currently, he was glancing at me coldly with his thin lips pressed together.

Our eyes met. I tensed up and stared at him, wide-eyed.

After a few seconds, he finally retracted his gaze and entered the villa. It was only then I could move my legs and went into my room.

Slumped onto the bed, I raised my hand and placed it against my beating heart. My heart almost stopped just now. What a scary man.

Just then, someone knocked on the door and a female voice came from the door. "Ms. Stovall, I'm coming in." It was the woman who delivered my meal every day.

From my observation these past few days, it seemed like she only knew how to speak this sentence.

The woman opened the door and bowed respectfully at me. "Ms. Stovall, please freshen up and go downstairs."

Finally, she said something different.

I pursed my lips and looked at her. "You want me to go downstairs?"

She nodded. "Mr. Abe is waiting for you. Please be quick."

I frowned. Abe? Is he the man in white suit?

The woman walked over and put a set of clothes and jewelry on the table at the side. Then, she went to the bathroom and filled the bathtub with hot water. It was obvious that she wanted me to prepare myself quickly.

When she saw that I was still dawdling, she turned sullen, clearly unhappy with my attitude.

“Ms. Stovall, can you please hurry up?” She walked to my side and looked desperately at me. I had a feeling that if I did not do what she said now, she would drag me into the bathroom and bathe me.

Sighing, I went into the bathroom reluctantly and took my own sweet time bathing.

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Why does Abe want to meet me? Judging from the attitude of Danny and Dante, he seems to be their boss.

Suddenly, the woman’s voice sounded outside the bathroom. “Ms. Stovall, are you done?”

Pursing my lips, I turned off the shower, put on the clothes, and opened the door.

The woman was getting agitated, but she quickly composed herself and said, “Ms. Stovall, Mr. Abe is waiting for you downstairs. Please go down now.”

I smiled faintly. “The etiquette in your country is rather strange. Why do I have to bathe and change clothes before meeting other people?”

However, she kept quiet and ushered me politely to go out.

Since the day I entered this villa, this is my first time stepping out of the room. The interior of the villa was decorated lavishly.

Stepping down the opulent spiral staircase, I gradually saw the man sitting in the living room.

Currently, he was making tea leisurely. The tea leaves rose and swirled inside the cup as he slowly poured a pot of hot water into it.

Meanwhile, Danny and Dante sat down gingerly in front of him.

When Abe passed them a cup of tea respectively, both of them immediately stood up and received the tea with two hands.

The woman went to Abe's side and lowered her head subserviently. "Mr. Abe, Ms. Stovall is here."

Abe did not respond. He continued to make tea and enjoy his tea as if he did not hear the woman.

Then, he glanced at Dante, "Is there any new gemstone in Wildefield?"

Dante promptly replied, "Not yet, but soon there will be many businessmen coming to gamble on stones. It won't be long before the new product comes out."

“Okay.” Abe took a sip of his tea and swept a glance at the woman from the corner of his eyes.

He spoke in a calm manner, “How long did you take?”

The woman stuttered, “H-half an hour, sir.”

Abe nodded. “We need people to deliver some goods now. You should go.”

Hearing his command, she paled instantly and collapsed on her knees. “Mr. Abe, please don’t send me. I won’t repeat my mistake next time. “

Danny and Dante looked at the woman with sympathy and wanted to say something for her.

But when they saw Abe furrowing his eyebrows, they quickly lowered their head and remained silent.

“Go! Don’t waste any more time.” Abe said, putting down his cup on the table.

With that, she shot me a resentful look and left.

I stood there and kept quiet while Abe ignored me and continued to have his discussion with Dante and Danny.

It was obvious he did not want to talk with me at all.

After standing for about an hour, my legs started to become numb.

Frowning in displeasure, I interrupted them, "You invited me just to stand here, Mr. Abe?"

The room went quiet all of a sudden as Danny and Dante stopped talking simultaneously and looked at me.

However, Abe did not even give me a glance and tapped on the table rhythmically with his slender fingers.

He seemed relaxed and at ease.

As no one replied to me, I continued, "Mr. Abe, I don't know who you are and what you do. But since you and your subordinates have promised to send me back, you must be somewhat wary of the people who are searching for me. If that's the case, please send me to Marsingfill as soon as possible."

Still, they did not say anything. Dante looked at me and frowned slightly. He seemed to feel sorry for me as if I had said something wrong just now.

This time, Abe finally responded, "Take Ms. Stovall for a stroll."

It sounded very simple, but I could not understand what he was trying to say.

Danny stood up first and said something to Dante.

Then, Dante stood up as well and pursed his lips. "Follow me, Ms. Stovall."

“Where are we going?” I asked, taking a glance at Abe.

I could not read any expression from his cold, impassive face.

“Ms. Stovall, talking too much is not a good thing.” Dante shot Danny a look.

In an instant, I was pushed by Danny towards the long corridor on the first floor of the villa.

When we first came into the villa, I remembered that Nora and the others went in this direction as well.

I frowned and followed them obediently.

When we reached the end of the long corridor, Danny used his irises to unlock the biometric door lock.

I was caught off guard for a second and realized that what these people had the most was probably money. Thus, they could afford such an expensive lock. After all, it's easy to earn dirty money.

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Once the door was opened, Dante walked in first and I followed him inside.

This place seemed like a setting in a horror movie. Mirrors were installed everywhere. People who were unfamiliar with this place would definitely get lost in here.

After walking for a distance, we entered a big room. It seemed to be an operating suite, but this was bigger than any I had ever seen.

The only difference was that there were innumerable individual operation rooms. At a rough guess, it seemed to have at least a hundred of them.

Glancing into each of the rooms, I found that almost all the surgical beds were occupied, and all of them seemed to be female.

I instinctively turned to Dante and looked at him quizzically.

However, he did not say anything and kept walking forward. The further we went, the darker it got.

I initially thought that operating rooms were for people who needed treatment, but never had I expected these were for every female who entered this secret place.

There were doctors who were doing operations inside these rooms. They would perform abdominal incisions just like what they would do for cesarean section, put the prepacked kyanine into the women's wombs, and sutured the incisions.

The surgery seemed simple but looking at it made me break out in a cold sweat.

Suddenly, sounds of footsteps came from behind us, and I was rudely pulled aside by Danny.

Then, a few doctors pushed a woman lying on the stretcher down the corridor. When they passed by us, I glanced at them out of curiosity. The moment I saw the woman's face, I was dumbstruck. It's her!

The woman lying on the stretcher was the lady who took care of me for the past few days. Why?

After watching her being pushed by, Dante turned to me and said in a cold tone, "Mr. Abe is a very punctual person. She was late for thirty minutes when she sent you down to the living room just now. That was the reason why Mr. Abe asked her to be a mule as a punishment."

A wave of guilt washed over me. I could not understand him for a moment. So, she was punished because she was late. Is that why she kept urging me to hurry up in the bedroom? Is that why her eyes were filled with resentment before she left?

I was the one who broke their rules, but she was the one who got the punishment.

I opened my mouth, but no words out of me.

"Will she die?" I asked after a moment of hesitation.

Dante shrugged. "It's hard to say if she's going to survive. Normally, they can survive if the kyanine is removed in time at the destination. But there are also women who passed

away during the transportation due to toxicity or bodily reactions to the foreign materials inside the womb.”

My ears started to ring, and I suddenly thought of Nora and the other girls.

“Will my friends go through the same thing, too?” My voice quivered.

He raised his eyebrow and said nothing.

I did not have the courage to continue asking.

I could not imagine that wombs that were originally used to conceive life, would be used by them as tools to transport kyanine. Giving birth itself is already a dangerous process that women have to go through. Besides, this is not childbirth at all. No one on earth is strong enough to go through two surgeries in such a short time.

I finally understood why Abe wanted me to witness this. No sane person could stomach the scene unfolding in front of my eyes.

Moreover, there were my friends among these women here. I knew what they would encounter, but I could not do anything to help them.

“My friends...” I wanted to ask something, but I choked up. Taking a deep breath, I willed myself to calm down. “Are my friends alright?”

I did not dare to ask directly if they had been put on the operating table, so I only asked if they were fine.

Dante disregarded my emotions. With his brow raised, he said, "You can check on them yourself."

This was definitely not special treatment. No one liked to see their friends suffering.

I shook my head and wanted to verbally refuse his offer, but he spoke first, "You don't need to shake your head in a hurry. Maybe this might be the last time you get to meet them. Needless to say, if the operation goes well, you can chat with them while you're on your way back home. Well, that would be the case if their operations go smoothly."

Looking at him, I asked uncertainly, "Do you mean that they are not operated yet?"

He arched an eyebrow. "Women from your country need to undergo a series of examinations and wait for the results before they are sent to the operating rooms. But I reckon it's about time for your friends to undergo the surgery."

"I want to see them," I exclaimed.

Dante shot a look at Danny, signaling him to bring me to them.

Passing through the operating rooms, I felt as if I was looking at the blood and the horror of this world.

The feeling of powerlessness overwhelmed me; it made me almost breathless.

After what seemed like an eternity, the agonizing moment finally came to end. Danny glanced at me impassively and led me to the right.

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As we went inside, I saw a hot spring pool. Beside the pool, there were many transparent glass-made cubicles with nude women being locked inside.

“What are they doing?” I felt uneasy at the sight.

“Getting cleaned,” Danny replied two words and spoke no more.

The women were fully conscious, so when they saw people coming, most of them would crouch in the corner.

Nonetheless, there were also some women who were bold enough to show their curvy figures to us and winked at Danny.

Their action was understandable. If they could get into his favor, at least they might have a chance to escape from here.

However, Danny was completely uninterested in them. He did not even give them a look and headed straight to the next hot spring pool at the other side.

“Scarlett!” Before I found any of my friends, I heard someone calling my name.

Turning towards the voice, it was them. I was shocked to see that their long hair had been cut off and they were now locked inside one of the cubicles.

The clothes were gone as well. They turned towards me in unison with their eyes brimming with tears. "Scarlett, please help us to get out of here."

Looking at them, I wanted to go near them to check if they were alright, but I was stopped by Danny.

So, I could only talk to them across the hot spring. "I'll find a way. Don't worry."

Nora stood behind the glass wall and looked at me with her red-rimmed eyes. "Scarlett, if I die, can you go to my hometown and find my mom there? Please don't tell her that I'm dead. If she asks, just tell her that I've gone somewhere far away, so I won't be back in a while."

Tears pricked my eyes and streamed down my cheeks.

Later, Tabitha and Laurel conveyed similar messages as well. On the other hand, Tessa seemed to be reciting philosophical quotes under her breath again.

I wanted to reassure them that they would be alright, but I could not bring myself to make false promises.

Hence, I said, "Take care of yourselves. I-I'll figure out a way to save all of you."

"Ms. Stovall, I'm afraid you're overconfident." All of a sudden, Dante's voice came from behind.

He was gone a while ago and now he reappeared with a few brawny men. Looking at me, he said, "You should take care of yourself first, Ms. Stovall. Even though Mr. Abe is wary of the Murphys, it doesn't mean that he is afraid of them. Therefore, if you don't behave yourself, Mr. Abe might send you into the cubicle as well."

Then, he turned to the men behind him and said something to them, pointing at Nora and the others. My eyes widened in shock and I shouted at him, "What are you doing?"

He glanced at me and scoffed. "Did you think Mr. Abe send you here for sightseeing?"

"What do you mean?" I asked, scowling at him.

He snickered. "Although I can't hurt you now, I guess I can still make you suffer by letting you watch your friends get hurt. After all, you care a lot about your friends here. Am I right?"

My face turned pale instantly when I saw those men walking towards the cubicle.

Holding onto Dante's sleeve, I pleaded, "Please don't hurt them, I beg you. They didn't do anything wrong. They..."

He sneered, "Donna took care of you for several days, but she still got punished because you were the one who was late. Don't you think that she is innocent, too?"

Just then, I realized the woman who was on the stretcher just now was Donna.

I was rendered speechless, but I began to panic when I saw the men getting nearer to my friends. "Mr. Dante, I'm sorry. It was my fault. Please don't hurt them. I..."

“You want to take their place?” he cut me off and smiled sinisterly.

I shook my head instinctively.

He cackled. “Ms. Stovall, you can only be a saint when you’re unharmed. But when it’s you who are targeted, you hesitate right away. This, Ms. Stovall, is human nature.”

Blood drained from my face, and I had no idea what to say because what he said was true.

But I did not want them to suffer.

I racked my brain for words to protect them. “Mr. Dante, only one of your friends was hurt. But you’re going to hurt four of my friends now. Isn’t that unfair?”

He thought for a while and arched his eyebrow. “So you’re saying that you want to choose one of them to receive the punishment?”

I could not reply to his suggestion and I certainly did not dare to look at Nora and the others.

When he saw my reaction, he laughed hysterically. “You know what, Ms. Stovall? That works, too. You are going to choose one of your friends, so it’s going to be fair.”

I remained silent.

Seeing that I refused to answer, he spoke, "It seems like you want all of your friends to be punished."

"No!" I exclaimed. My heart raced.

"Then, choose one!"

Nora and the others went quiet and looked at me incredulously. Their gaze tore my heart out.

I did not dare to look at them or face them.