

Chapter 741

Now that no one was around to talk to me, the pin-drop silence in the pit intensified the crippling terror within me.

The boggy soil reminded me of the night I had the miscarriage. My body couldn't help trembling like a leaf.

I couldn't afford to let fear overtake me, or else I would probably kick the bucket here. There were so many things left undone. I had yet to raise Summer up and achieve my dreams.

"Scarlett, can you hear me? I found some branches. Be careful, I'm dropping them now." Laurel's voice came from the opening of the pit.

"Okay, do it," I replied.

In the next second, some branches fell from above, and she asked, "Scarlett, why did you ask for the branches?"

I felt for the branches on the ground. Holding it in my hand, I knocked against the ground and found that soil around me was pretty solid.

I took a few steps forward hesitantly. "I'm using them to check my surrounding, because I'm afraid that I might fall into another deeper pit."

"I see, you're really smart. Hold on, I'm going to find a vine now."

Then, I could no longer hear her voice. I continued to scan my surrounding with the branch in my hand. After a few steps, I noticed that something was wrong. The soil beneath my feet was too marshy. To my dismay, I found myself sinking gradually.

My heart grew heavy, and I broke out in a cold sweat. At once, I knew that I had stepped into a swamp in the pit.

I raised my head and shouted, "Laurel, are you there?"

Fortunately, she was nearby and rushed over when she heard me. "I'm here."

"I'm in trouble." Deep down, I felt a little despondent. "I think I accidentally stepped into a swamp."

"Ah!" she shrieked all of a sudden. "What should we do now?"

Feeling hopeless, my body sank gradually into the bottomless swamp.

"Don't sweat it, Laurel. Quickly look for a vine or seek help. I can still hang on for a little longer. Don't panic!" Trying my very best to keep calm, I racked my brain for a solution, recalling that before the ground I was standing at earlier was solid.

Grateful that I'm still holding the branch, I poked the ground around the swamp. Sure enough, the soil was much harder. Breathing a sigh of relief, I got on my hands and knees to reduce the weight on my feet.

As a result, I would sink at a slower speed.

Boom! Boom! A clap of deafening thunder roared, following by the sound of raindrops pitter-pattered on the ground.

I felt disheartened. Even if I got out of the swamp, I would never be able to climb out of here. Once the rain became heavier, water would accumulate in the pit, and I would get injured or even killed. To make the matter worse, a landslide might happen, and Laurel would be in trouble too.

“Scarlett, are you okay? It’s raining already. What should we do now? Why is Tessa taking so long?”

Outside the pit, Laurel paced up and down in distress. Yet, she had no idea what to do.

The rainwater fell and slowly flowed into the swamp, making it even soggy.

My heart sank. I could only take a gamble now. It would be just my luck if the ground in front of me was still swampy. If it wasn’t, I might pull through this.

Taking a deep breath, I clenched my fists. With all my might, I leaped out of the swamp.

Before I knew it, my feet landed on the area ahead of the swamp. Still, I felt like a cat on a hot tin roof. The moment I noticed I was no longer sinking, but standing on solid ground, my anxiety ceased.

The thunder was ear-splitting that I could barely hear Laurel’s voice. Listening to the sound of rainwater gushing in, I guess that the swamp formed over time due to the stagnant water in the pit.

The marshy ground was originally a flatland. The huge pit came about because the ground was hollow.

A City was in the southwest, where it was mainly covered by forests. After tens of thousands of years of plate motion, there were many coal mines in this area.

Over the past few years, there was no regulation, so the locals were free to do coal mining, leaving behind quite a number of underground mines. Even though the professionals came over for maintenance, the existence of these mines made the ground boggy and unstable.

The prevalence of landslides was caused by the cave-ins of the mines. Rainfall sped up the soil erosion. Hence, with this ten-meter-deep underground pit, the surrounding land could collapse anytime.

I would've seen it if I had come during the day, but that wasn't the case at night when I was as blind as a bat. Once I fell inside, I could only ask for help to get out of it.

"Scarlett, can you hear me? Are you still alright? Don't be afraid, someone's coming down to get you." Laurel's voice sounded from above.

I lifted my head and answered, "Okay, be careful!"

I was worried about that the person who was coming down might fall into the swamp, so I warned, "Bring a torch when you come down. There's a swamp down here. Be careful!"

Chapter 742

“Got it!” came the voice from above.

Soon, the dark pit was lit up by a beam of light. I remained still, not daring to move a muscle. I squinted against the brightness to see a figure looking down from above, seemingly belonging to a man.

Assuming that it was Armond, I called out in warning, “Armond, be careful. There’s a swamp here and the ground is soft. I’m worried that this area might sink at any moment. Please be careful!”

He didn’t respond, but tied a rope around his waist instead. With the flashlight in one hand, he used the light to find his footing while the other hand groped the soft walls of the pit as he walked in my direction.

The flashlight’s beam was aimed directly at me, so I couldn’t make out Armond’s features. Casting my gaze around, I spotted two slightly deeper pits a short distance away, probably left by my feet earlier.

There was also some muddied undergrowth all around the area, all of which were tea trees, which proved that my guess was right—the ground here had given way not too long ago.

The rain was getting heavier and my clothes were completely soaked by then. I wasn’t sure if the ground beneath my feet could hold my weight, but I had to try making my way forward. When Armond closed in on me, I called out again, “Be careful. Some of the areas are sinkholes!”

“Mm,” he responded just when he reached my side and I was taken aback to hear the familiar voice.

My head whipped up in surprise. “Ashton? What are you doing here?” For some reason, my nerves instantly loosened the moment I saw him and I breathed out an inaudible sigh of relief.

With his lips pressed into a straight line, he raised his brows in provocation. “What? Are you disappointed that it’s me?”

I froze for a split second, but ignored his sarcastic remark and urged, “Let’s get out of here now. This place could sink at any time!”

Needing no further explanation, he grabbed my hand and looked up at the entrance of the pit. “I’ve found her. Tie the rope to a tree and make a dead knot.”

Laurel answered from above, “Okay, got it. Be careful, guys!”

Then, Ashton tied the other end of the rope on his body around mine and instructed, “Follow me closely.”

I nodded and he reached out to hold my hand, but I instinctively drew away from him and protested, “It’s fine. I’ll follow behind you.”

He glanced back at me with unreadable eyes, then withdrew his gaze and reminded, “Be careful.”

I nodded and walked carefully behind him. The pit’s entrance was seven to eight meters above us and with the heavy downpour, climbing up would be challenging.

To prevent the entrance from collapsing, the people above had to stand a distance away from it and could only assist by holding the rope steady.

I wanted to pull myself up the rope, but my arms weren't strong enough. When I slipped down after a few tries, getting out of here started to feel impossible.

With my whole body covered with mud, I felt miserable. Ashton had a good physique, so he could have easily climbed up on his own, but it was much more difficult with my added weight, not to mention, I could very well drag him down with me.

His clothes were completely drenched with rainwater and a layer of mud coated his skin. Even his usually neat and proper hair was stained with mud and rain.

Feeling slightly discouraged, I slumped onto the muddy ground and said, "You go up first. If this goes on, neither of us is getting out of here. The rain's too heavy. This place may collapse at any second. It's just too dangerous!"

He frowned and pinned me a hard stare. "Would you give up so easily if it was Armond?"

I was stunned by his question. Realizing that he had misunderstood, I sighed softly. "It's not what you think it is. Our priority right now is to minimize the loss. We're both going to end up getting injured if we stay down here."

"That's fine by me!" he retorted. Disregarding my struggles, he pulled me up and continued climbing the rope.

As expected, it was no easy feat and I fell down once again.

“How are you guys doing? Can you climb up?” A voice came from the pit’s entrance.

“The earth is too soft here. Throw down some tree branches!” Ashton ordered before shifting his gaze to me. “Don’t worry. I won’t leave you here.”

While I was momentarily dazed by him, he had already broken all of the branches Laurel dropped down just now into shorter pieces.

I watched dumbly as he stuck the broken branches into the pit’s wall. Soon, more branches were dropped into the pit.

Rock climbing!

Right then, I understood what Ashton was trying to do, so I began snapping the branches with him. He found a rock on the ground and used it to knock the short branches into the wall, making sure they held firm.

This was a difficult and tiring job, but Ashton did not once complain as he scaled the wall and knocked in more stake-like branches as he went.

The distance between us increased to the point where I could no longer pass more stakes to him. Hence, I could only hand him whole branches and let him break them off piece by piece before knocking them into the wall.

The people at the pit’s entrance also caught onto Ashton’s idea. Hence, instead of throwing whole branches down, they broke them off and put them in a bag before lowering it down to Ashton on a rope.

With everyone working together, a large section of the pit's wall was impaled with stakes. Ashton looked down at me and called out, "Try to climb up now!"

I nodded, naturally feeling more secure with the stakes to support my weight. Even though I had never learned rock climbing, my survival instincts had kicked in and I wasted no time in scaling the wall.

Chapter 742

"Got it!" came the voice from above.

Soon, the dark pit was lit up by a beam of light. I remained still, not daring to move a muscle. I squinted against the brightness to see a figure looking down from above, seemingly belonging to a man.

Assuming that it was Armond, I called out in warning, "Armond, be careful. There's a swamp here and the ground is soft. I'm worried that this area might sink at any moment. Please be careful!"

He didn't respond, but tied a rope around his waist instead. With the flashlight in one hand, he used the light to find his footing while the other hand groped the soft walls of the pit as he walked in my direction.

The flashlight's beam was aimed directly at me, so I couldn't make out Armond's features. Casting my gaze around, I spotted two slightly deeper pits a short distance away, probably left by my feet earlier.

There was also some muddied undergrowth all around the area, all of which were tea trees, which proved that my guess was right—the ground here had given way not too long ago.

The rain was getting heavier and my clothes were completely soaked by then. I wasn't sure if the ground beneath my feet could hold my weight, but I had to try making my way forward. When Armond closed in on me, I called out again, "Be careful. Some of the areas are sinkholes!"

"Mm," he responded just when he reached my side and I was taken aback to hear the familiar voice.

My head whipped up in surprise. "Ashton? What are you doing here?" For some reason, my nerves instantly loosened the moment I saw him and I breathed out an inaudible sigh of relief.

With his lips pressed into a straight line, he raised his brows in provocation. "What? Are you disappointed that it's me?"

I froze for a split second, but ignored his sarcastic remark and urged, "Let's get out of here now. This place could sink at any time!"

Needing no further explanation, he grabbed my hand and looked up at the entrance of the pit. "I've found her. Tie the rope to a tree and make a dead knot."

Laurel answered from above, "Okay, got it. Be careful, guys!"

Then, Ashton tied the other end of the rope on his body around mine and instructed, "Follow me closely."

I nodded and he reached out to hold my hand, but I instinctively drew away from him and protested, "It's fine. I'll follow behind you."

He glanced back at me with unreadable eyes, then withdrew his gaze and reminded, "Be careful."

I nodded and walked carefully behind him. The pit's entrance was seven to eight meters above us and with the heavy downpour, climbing up would be challenging.

To prevent the entrance from collapsing, the people above had to stand a distance away from it and could only assist by holding the rope steady.

I wanted to pull myself up the rope, but my arms weren't strong enough. When I slipped down after a few tries, getting out of here started to feel impossible.

With my whole body covered with mud, I felt miserable. Ashton had a good physique, so he could have easily climbed up on his own, but it was much more difficult with my added weight, not to mention, I could very well drag him down with me.

His clothes were completely drenched with rainwater and a layer of mud coated his skin. Even his usually neat and proper hair was stained with mud and rain.

Feeling slightly discouraged, I slumped onto the muddy ground and said, "You go up first. If this goes on, neither of us is getting out of here. The rain's too heavy. This place may collapse at any second. It's just too dangerous!"

He frowned and pinned me a hard stare. "Would you give up so easily if it was Armond?"

I was stunned by his question. Realizing that he had misunderstood, I sighed softly. "It's not what you think it is. Our priority right now is to minimize the loss. We're both going to end up getting injured if we stay down here."

"That's fine by me!" he retorted. Disregarding my struggles, he pulled me up and continued climbing the rope.

As expected, it was no easy feat and I fell down once again.

"How are you guys doing? Can you climb up?" A voice came from the pit's entrance.

"The earth is too soft here. Throw down some tree branches!" Ashton ordered before shifting his gaze to me. "Don't worry. I won't leave you here."

While I was momentarily dazed by him, he had already broken all of the branches Laurel dropped down just now into shorter pieces.

I watched dumbly as he stuck the broken branches into the pit's wall. Soon, more branches were dropped into the pit.

Rock climbing!

Right then, I understood what Ashton was trying to do, so I began snapping the branches with him. He found a rock on the ground and used it to knock the short branches into the wall, making sure they held firm.

This was a difficult and tiring job, but Ashton did not once complain as he scaled the wall and knocked in more stake-like branches as he went.

The distance between us increased to the point where I could no longer pass more stakes to him. Hence, I could only hand him whole branches and let him break them off piece by piece before knocking them into the wall.

The people at the pit's entrance also caught onto Ashton's idea. Hence, instead of throwing whole branches down, they broke them off and put them in a bag before lowering it down to Ashton on a rope.

With everyone working together, a large section of the pit's wall was impaled with stakes. Ashton looked down at me and called out, "Try to climb up now!"

I nodded, naturally feeling more secure with the stakes to support my weight. Even though I had never learned rock climbing, my survival instincts had kicked in and I wasted no time in scaling the wall.

Chapter 743

The rain pelted down harshly on our bodies. Laurel, who was completely soaked through like everyone else, peered at me with worry lining her features. "We have to go now!"

“This place is prone to sinkholes, especially on rainy days. C’mon, let’s leave first!” Tabitha urged.

As though on cue, lightning streaked across the sky, followed by a deafening clap of thunder. Everyone couldn’t care less about anything else and immediately scurried toward the tents.

“I think that area just collapsed!” Tabitha’s boyfriend suddenly exclaimed.

Everyone glanced back as one and sure enough, a large area of the ground had sunken in.

“This place used to be a mine. Some spots were dug to a depth of approximately ten meters and no one has been managing this area in years. On rainy days, accidents are prone to happen,” Tabitha’s boyfriend explained.

Tabitha gasped in terror. “I saw many tea trees on the mountain. Isn’t it dangerous for the tea farmers there? They could lose their lives!”

Laurel spoke up right then, aiming her words at Ashton. “Mr. Fuller, where did you guys go off to? If we weren’t looking for you guys, Scarlett would never have been in danger and we wouldn’t have gotten caught in the downpour either.”

At that, everyone turned their attention to Ashton. He cast a fleeting gaze at them, but remained otherwise calm. In a polite and sophisticated manner, he expressed his regret. “What happened today was an oversight on my part. To show my sincere apology, I’ll treat everyone to a meal tomorrow.”

Laurel pursed her lips. "We're not blaming you. It's not exactly your fault, anyway."

While I was trapped in the pit, my entire body was pumping with adrenaline, but now that I escaped from that precarious situation, exhaustion hit me like a ton of bricks.

As I listened to their conversation, my knees suddenly gave out beneath me.

Ashton's quick reflexes kicked in and he caught me before I hit the ground, smoothly pulling me into his arms.

"Scarlett, what's wrong? Are you hurt? Let me take a look at you." Anxiously, Nora squatted beside me to inspect my body for injuries.

However, Ashton blocked her and contradicted in an authoritative voice, "She's not injured. She's just tired after the stress her body was put through. All she needs is a good rest."

I held Nora's hand and nodded reassuringly at her. Then, I tried to get to my feet, but Ashton hugged me close to his body and scooped me up. Both our clothes were wet, but thankfully, the weather wasn't too cold.

At such close proximity, I could feel his body temperature radiating and also the rhythm of his heartbeat.

Embarrassed, my face flushed a crimson red.

Finally, I was back in the tent after being subjected to the harrowing ordeal in the pit. Worried that I would catch a cold, Nora gave me the clothes she had brought that day and told me get changed inside the tent.

She squeezed into the tiny space because she was worried I wouldn't be able to change my clothes due to some unseen injuries.

Noticing how she was blatantly staring at me, I cleared my throat awkwardly. "You really don't need to watch me like that. I'm fine. Really. Perfectly intact!"

She nodded, but her eyes remained trained on me as she sighed. "Thank God Laurel's call for help was loud enough to travel through the forest. Otherwise, only God knows what would've happened to you if you were still trapped down there in this rain."

My hands paused their actions and I looked at her in perplexity. "Didn't you guys search for me because Tessa came looking for help?"

She shook her head with a frown. "Not long after we got separated, we trekked around the forest, but then returned to camp when we didn't find Ashton. He came back with Rachel later on. It turns out that she sprained her ankle and couldn't walk back. Ashton was supporting her when they returned. Seriously, that woman is nothing but trouble."

Flabbergasted, I blurted out, "Then, has Tessa come back?"

A small crease formed between her brows. "I would've forgotten all about her if you didn't mention her. We haven't seen her since you fell into the pit!"

"After Ashton and Rachel came back, we waited a long time for you guys. When it started to rain, we got worried, so we hiked toward the mountain. That's when we heard Laurel calling for help and found out that you fell into a pit."

I pursed my lips and fell silent.

After a brief moment, Nora's gasp broke the silence. "Did you guys tell Tessa to come back for help?"

I nodded solemnly. "Yeah."

Her lips pressed tightly together as her brows drew together. "Damn! That woman is seriously vile. She talks about virtue and kindness every chance she gets, but she's actually a cold-hearted b*tch!"

I kept mum and resumed changing my clothes. Suddenly, I felt all the energy drain from my body and only fatigue remained.

To play safe, we decided to rest in our tents for the night.

After experiencing a life-and-death situation, everyone was bone tired. Initially, Nora wanted to accompany me in my tent, but she was taken away by Armond after a while.

Too tired to inquire about the rest of them, I lay in my tent and fell asleep in a daze.

Chapter 744

The rain got heavier in the middle of the night, and I jolted awake when thunder cracked across the sky like a whip.

When I turned on my side, I realized with a start that there was someone lying down beside me.

Before I could release a scream, a hand shot out to grab mine and then came a man's soothing voice. "Calm down. It's me."

My chest heaved as I tried to recover from my shock. "Ashton, what are you..." I trailed off.

His unexpected presence had brought scared the daylights out of me, but gradually, I regained my bearings and furrowed my brows. Shouldn't he be with Rachel now? Why is he here?

I pursed my lips and uttered icily, "What are you doing here?"

His lips remained sealed, seemingly having no intention to answer me. Right then, another clap of thunder boomed overhead, and I flinched closer to him. However, he didn't seem to notice the subtle movement as he stuffed a pair of earplugs into my ears.

My surroundings instantly became quiet and for a while, I merely stared blankly at him in the dark.

Throughout it all, he didn't utter a single word. Instead, he hugged me and coaxed me to sleep by gently patting my back.

I was really sleepy, to begin with, I gradually dozed off in his arms and slept through the entire night.

The sky was already bright when I woke up the next day, and the morning air was slightly humid due to the heavy rain from the previous night.

Subconsciously looking to my side, I felt slightly incredulous when I found the space empty.

That man really comes and goes like the wind. I would've thought I hallucinated everything if not for the earplugs still stuck in my ears!

Putting aside those thoughts, I registered the headache pulsing behind my temples. Hence, even after waking up for a while, I remained in the same position. When Nora came into my tent and saw me lying down with my eyes open, she paused briefly and asked, "What's wrong? Are you feeling unwell?"

I shook my head and parted my lips to answer. "My head... hurts." My throat was so dry I could barely say more than two words.

Crap. I think I may be down with a fever.

Nora's brows knitted together upon hearing my scratchy voice. Upon touching my forehead with the back of her hand, she exclaimed, "You're burning up!"

Then, she rushed out in a haste and spoke to someone. "We should pack our things right now and go back to A City. Scarlett is down with a high fever!"

I wanted to say something, but my throat hurt too badly.

Ashton walked into the tent and scanned my face with his ominous eyes. Then, a frown appeared between his brows when he touched my forehead. "Jesus, you're burning!"

Nora trailed in after him and suggested, "Mr. Fuller, you should take her to the base to see a doctor first. There's a clinic over there."

Ashton nodded and picked me up. By then, my head was buzzing with a pounding headache. I knew that nothing I said would make a difference, so I simply went along with their decision.

Subsequently, Ashton brought me straight to the base while the others followed behind.

Due to my headache, I fell asleep again after getting into the car. My body felt light, as though I was floating in the air.

My body temperature fluctuated as I drifted in and out of consciousness, and I was plagued by an unending stream of nightmares, unable to break out of them.

In my semi-conscious state, I vaguely saw someone standing beside me. When Ashton's face came into view, I reached out to grab him, but my fingers just couldn't seem to touch him.

I was on the verge of breaking down after several failed attempts. As my emotions spiraled out of control, I began to cry.

Suddenly, I felt him hugging me. Then, the muffled sound of his voice reached my ears, but I couldn't figure out what he was saying.

The feeling of not being able to communicate with the outside world was horrible. After a few tries, I realized that I couldn't open my mouth, let alone speak. Hence, I chose to give up altogether.

Thereafter, I plunged deeper into my dreams. Some were horrifying, while others were beautiful, but most were indistinct. One thing they had in a common was that they felt like things I had personally experienced.

In fact, many of those scenarios and emotions felt so tangible that I couldn't differentiate between dream and reality anymore.

This torment lasted a long time. When I finally opened my eyes, it was to see everything white. I'm in a hospital ward.

My mind gradually registered the pain and dryness in my throat. I shifted slightly, trying to get up to drink some water.

But my whole body was extremely sore.

"She's awake. Scarlett's awake!" Nora's familiar voice rang from nearby.

She ran over to the bed and grabbed my hand emotionally. "Oh God, you're finally awake. You almost scared me to death these few days!"

I opened my mouth to speak, but try as I might, I couldn't make a single sound. Left without a choice, I pointed at the cup.

She immediately got the hint and queried, "You want some water?"

When I nodded, she reached out for the cup, but someone beat her to it. Both of us glanced over in unison to see that it was Ashton.

Nora gave me a knowing smile before getting up to step aside.

Ashton sat next to me and supported me up from the bed to lean against his shoulder before bringing the cup to my lips.

My thirst was unbearable, so although I could feel the buried emotions within me threatening to surface, I ignored it and drank a few sips of water from the cup.

Even after my throat felt better, Ashton still kept his arms around me as he asked, "Do you want more?"

I shook my head and replied with much difficulty, "Thank... you."

His mouth tightened visibly, but he didn't comment. Then, he placed the cup on the bedside table and glanced at Nora. "We need to call the doctor over to check on her."

Chapter 745

Nora nodded and subsequently broke into a small jog out of the ward.

I tried wriggling out of Ashton's embrace, but he held me in place and commanded in a rich voice, "Don't move."

My brows drew together and I pushed through the soreness of my throat. "Ashton, this position is uncomfortable for me."

His forehead creased, but fortunately, he didn't refute. Instead, he raised the bed and guided me to lean back against it.

Nora called over the doctor to examine me. After taking my temperature, the middle-aged doctor who was clad in a white coat reported, "Your fever has gone down, but you might feel lethargic for now. Drink more water and take your medicine on time. If nothing goes wrong, you can be discharged in a few days."

"That's great. Thank you, doctor!" Nora expressed her gratitude. After sending the doctor away, she arched her brow at me. "Scarlett, you really survived a disaster. You were burning at forty degrees. I'm surprised you didn't fry a circuit up there. It truly is a miracle!"

I smiled feebly in response, too weak to speak to her.

Ashton, being the perceptive person that he was, noticed this and bossily announced, "I'll take care of her. You can go about your day now."

I couldn't tell if Nora was doing it on purpose, but she met Ashton's gaze with a serious expression and countered, "I'm not busy at all. In fact, I have nothing to do at all!"

Then, a mischievous smile played on her lips before she continued, "I can't say the same for you though, Mr. Fuller. If I'm not mistaken, you should be quite busy recently, right?"

Ashton's face darkened. He had always been a man of few words, but right then, he looked like he was completely disinclined to speak.

Perhaps it was due to the medicine I just consumed, I started to feel tired again. Hence, I shut my eyes and gradually drifted back to sleep.

For the next two days, Ashton stayed at the hospital and took care of all my meals. He even accompanied me to the washroom each time.

Slightly exasperated, I peeked at him and argued, "Ashton, I'm all recovered now, so just go ahead with your work."

As though he couldn't hear me, he handed me a cup of water and ordered, "Drink some water."

I was rendered speechless and hesitated for a moment before speaking, "I'm getting discharged today. Thank you for taking care of me the past few days!"

He grunted in response, but disregarded the hint in my words and changed the subject. "Summer didn't go out at all during the summer break. She wants to come over and visit you."

I was taken aback because I never expected him to mention Summer. It was already August, which meant summer break was over. I previously promised to bring her to R Province, but then forgot about it because I was too busy.

“How has she been lately?” I asked in a small voice as guilt rose in me.

He pursed his lips and answered in a soft yet gripping voice, “She keeps insisting on visiting you. She’s a child, after all. It’s completely normal that she misses her mother after being apart for so long.”

I bowed my head in remorse and absent-mindedly twisted my fingers together. After a short pause, I asked, “When is she coming over?”

After doing some mental calculation, I realized that it was almost September, so school was about to reopen. Even if she visited, she could only stay for a few days before having to return to school.

With a sharp glint in his eyes, Ashton shot me a sidelong glance. “Aren’t you planning to return to K City to see her?”

My stomach lurched slightly before I timidly explained, “The Murphy Corporation project might take about a month to complete. I already caused a delay by being sick for a few days. I’m afraid it’d be quite some time before I can go back to K City.”

His gaze dimmed and he didn’t say anything.

Hence, this topic came to an abrupt halt and the atmosphere became slightly awkward.

Fortunately, my fever didn't cause any abnormal symptoms. After it went down completely, I rested at the hospital for a few more days before getting discharged.

I had initially planned to travel to Lavelian Village to resume work, but Armond told me to stay at the villa for a few days, explaining that he would get Linda to temporarily fill in for me.

But of course, that didn't mean I could slack off on my work.

Armond moved almost all of the documents to the villa for me to sort out.

The day Nora visited, I was huddled in the study with my head still buried in a pile of documents.

"Scarlett, open the door! Can you hear me?" she shouted from the yard.

Her voice resembled a loudspeaker. Those who didn't know might think that she was here to pick a fight with me instead.

I sprinted to the balcony and spotted her standing next to her black Cayenne with her hands resting on her hips. "Come down and open the door for me, woman!"

Amused, I rested my elbows on the balcony railing. "Are you here for a fight or something?"

She snorted and took out a suitcase from the trunk, then sent me a saccharine smile. "I'm here to shower you with love, honey!"

I was dumbfounded for a while before snapping back to my senses. “You’re going to stay here?”

She nodded. “Yeah. Both my man and my woman need my care right now. I can’t just sit back and watch.”

This woman is really blunt with her words, isn’t she?

Leaning against the balcony, I said, “There’s no key to the gates. It’s password and fingerprint based. Just enter the password one-two-three-four-five.”

The corners of her mouth twitched slightly. “Are you sure it’s one-two-three-four-five?”

I nodded and rubbed my nose. “It was something more complicated before, but I changed it because I can’t remember overly complicated numbers.”

She opened the door with ease, but paused at the threshold and nodded. “True. Based on that brain of yours, remembering a password is already worth applauding. Having a complicated one would just be making things difficult for you.”