

## Chapter 776

Back in the Maybach, Armond noticed Ashton's presence and took it as his cue to leave. He drove off with Nora and Linda.

Then, Ashton got off his car and walked towards me. Against the headlights, it made his tall and lean built more prominent. This gave me butterflies in my stomach.

While wearing his signature smile, he pulled me into a deep embrace. "Scarlett, that was amazing. Your words just now must've really got through him."

I chuckled lightly while teasing, "It's not right to eavesdrop on conversations."

"Oh? Was that eavesdropping? Surely you must have noticed me."

I pouted childishly. "That's still eavesdropping!" While saying that, Ashton had draped his coat over my shoulders to shield me from the chilly September weather. Then, he led me to his car.

Seeing his familiar back lifted my spirits; I felt whole again.

Apparently in a good mood, he reminded chirpily, "Next time, inform me before you go anywhere. It's dangerous to be out alone."

I sat down in the passenger seat before replying, "I need my own space as well!"

"I only need you to inform me. I will not restrict your movement or anything."

**“It’s the same either way!” I shut my eyes without giving him a chance to reply.**

**Helpless, he blanketed his coat on me and pulled me into a tight embrace. He had clearly ignored Joseph’s presence.**

**While pretending to be mad, I pushed him away. “Don’t touch me.”**

**“Why? What’s wrong?”**

**“Can’t I have some privacy?”**

**Ashton remained patient. “Scarlett, I’m not trying to restrict you or anything. I’m just concern for your safety.”**

**“But it sounds like I have to report my every movement to you.”**

**Feeling powerless against my tantrum, he gave in. “All right. It won’t happen again. I’ll work on my tone.”**

**“Again?”**

**“My bad. No more next time. Whatever my dear wife says, goes. Just don’t ever leave me. Is this better?”**

**I decided to push his buttons further. “Is this better? Why are you making it seem like I’m forcing you?”**

**Ashton still remained his cool. “How would you like me to speak?” Meanwhile, Joseph had started the vehicle.**

**“Will you do anything I say?”**

**Ashton raised his brows. His hands playing with the back of my palms. “No. Not anything.”**

**“So those were just words to pacify me?”**

**He broke into a laugh. “As long as my dear wife’s happy, I don’t mind pacifying you all the way.”**

**I glared at him. “I don’t need your pacifying. I’m not a child.” Our bickering continued throughout the rest of the car ride.**

**By the time we arrived back at the villa, it was dark outside. I headed straight to the bath while Ashton sat on his chaise lounge reading his book.**

**Around half an hour later, I came out of the bath and found him still sitting in the same position. Finding his focused expression endearing, I found myself walking towards him. I took the seat beside him. “How many times have you read this book?”**

**He raised his head, smelling the scent of wine on me. “Next time, don’t drink so much.”**

**I leaned against him before retorting, “I didn’t! I was just accompanying Linda and Nora. They were the ones who got drunk. I’m sober as a judge.”**

**“Drinking is prohibited unless you’re with me.” He raised a brow.**

**“You’re being a tyranny!”**

**He smiled while placing his book aside. Then, he took the towel from me to dry my hair. “Since you have admitted to being my wife, it’s only right I take good care of you.”**

**His drying technique was so soothing that it left me feeling drowsy. I closed my eyes while enjoying his treatment.**

**After some moments, I was reminded of work. “Are you really giving up on the Lavelian Village project?”**

**All this while, Ashton had not updated me on any progress. I knew that dragging this on would do nothing good for Murphy Corporation.**

**He replied calmly, “No hurry.”**

**“How long more will this last?”**

**“You’ve got to ask Armond about this.”**

**Oh right. In order for this project to start, Armond has to get the relevant connections.**

**He held on to my shoulders from the reminder. “Have you decided when you’re returning to K City with me?”**

**I pursed my lips, half-drowsy. “Haven’t I already said? We have to complete this project first. We can’t just give up halfway.”**

**“Is being stubborn your way of getting me to stay on this project?”**

**Still in his embrace, I laughed hysterically. “Mr. Fuller, it’s not wrong to interpret it this way. Lavelian Village project was once under my lead, so I really wish to see this through the end.”**

## **Chapter 777**

He lowered his head and looked at me. I blinked a couple of times. I could clearly see his sexy Adam’s apple bobbing up and down.

He cupped my face in his hands and closed in for a kiss.

After these few days, I got used to his tendency of kissing me from time to time. I snaked my arms around the back of his neck. Involuntarily, I responded to his kiss.

I guess I somehow learned what I did next from him. I encircled his neck with one hand, and my other hand reached for his earlobe and pinched it lightly. This part of him seemed to be quite sensitive. After a few light rubs, it was all red.

I let go and teased him. "Ashton, your ears are so sensitive."

He didn't reply. Instead, he suddenly lowered his head and bit my lips as I spoke.

It hurt a little, but it was nothing too bad. I frowned at him and complained pitifully, "Ashton, are you a dog?"

He chuckled and spoke in a low voice. "Your lips were too tempting. I couldn't help myself."

I glared at him. "You..."

He lifted me bridal style and turned around. The next moment, I was pressed against him on the huge bed.

"Ashton, switch off the lights!" I ordered in a panic.

"Mm..." he moaned and reached for the remote control on the bedside table. With a light click, the whole room was shrouded in darkness.

In the dark, only the sounds of our amorous breathing remained.

After our intimate session, I lay in his arms. One of his slender legs pressed on me, and he made no move to shift it.

I rested my head on his arm and faced him as we lay in bed. Our bodies were intertwined so closely that it felt a little awkward.

His large hand repeatedly caressed my back as if he was putting me to sleep. Since it was late and this posture was very comfortable, my eyelids started to feel heavy.

I gave up trying to keep them open and let my weariness wash over me. Soon, I drifted into my deep sleep.

I slept really well that night. When I awoke the next morning, it was already eight o'clock. Ashton was lying right next to me.

Out of habit, I stretched out my arm to hug him and snuggled into him. He pulled me closer and asked, "You're awake?" His voice was raspy.

"Yes." I nodded.

He chuckled, and then...

Noticing that there was something not quite right, I woke with a start. I lifted my eyes to look at him.

He smiled seductively. "There, there. I'll take care of it myself."

I wanted to say something, but he was like this all of a sudden. I was not prepared at all.

One hour later.

Seated at the dining table, I was in good spirits after a fresh shower. Ashton was frying some bacon in the kitchen.

I didn't feel like moving. Hence, I rested my chin on my palms and waited to eat.

He came out of the kitchen with our breakfast on two plates. Noticing that I was ogling him, he raised a brow. "What are you thinking about?"

I quickly answered, "I was just thinking. How am I so lucky to have met a perfect man like you?"

He sat down at the dining table. His obsidian eyes locked with mine, and he remarked with a smile. "You seem to be very satisfied today!"

He seemed to be hinting at something else.

I pursed my lips, and proceeded to eat my breakfast.

Ashton was poised as always. He lifted a piece of bacon into his mouth, chewed slowly, and swallowed it. "What are your plans for today?"

"Work," I responded automatically.



After a while, I remembered that it was Saturday. Thus, there was no need to head to the office.

I paused for a bit, then said, "I guess I will just stay home and sleep."

He grinned ambiguously. "I see. That's quite suitable. The weather doesn't look too good for an outing. It's a good day for sleeping in."

I stared at him plainly. Once again, his words seemed to be insinuating something.

Not knowing how to continue, I switched the topic. "How about you? What do you plan to do today?"

"Sleep with you!" He was looking straight at me, his voice low and sultry.

I coughed and sputtered at his answer. This man, he is getting more and more...

Seeing my violent response, he asked innocently, "What's wrong?"

My face reddened. I put down my cutlery and stood up. "Nothing! Enjoy your breakfast!"

He frowned and ordered, "Finish yours!"

I froze for a moment. He then said, "You only took two bites out of your breakfast. What are you? A sparrow?"

I pouted at him and replied, "If you keep quiet, then I will finish the rest of it."

Now it was his turn to freeze. His brows furrowed, and he asked, "You want me to stop talking?"

I nodded, looking at him seriously.

He conceded and nodded, then motioned for me to finish my food.

After sitting down, I continued eating. However, after a few minutes, I wanted to get out of my chair.

It was because he kept staring at me. His intense gaze made me feel uncomfortable.

With much difficulty, I finished the last bite and looked up at him. "I am done!"

He put down his fork and knife. "Is my presence that distracting?" He asked in all seriousness.

"Ashton, stop teasing me!" I retorted with discomfit.

He burst out laughing and walked over to me. His gaze was full of adoration. "Was I teasing you?"

This man!

I refused to answer him. Conveniently, his phone started ringing.

“You should take the call,” I said and went upstairs.

Recently, Ashton had become unruly. He didn’t bother to control himself anymore.

I had intended to spend the weekend relaxing at home. This plan was axed due to Nora’s call.

Her usual energetic voice was heard over the phone. “Scarlett, let’s go visit my grandpa in Lavelian Village. We said we would go last time, but we didn’t manage to.”

## **Chapter 778**

I completely forgot about that. “Yeah, sure. Do we go now? Or do we go later?” I nodded while answering.

“Let’s go in the evening. Then we can stay there for the night. I am not really up yet. I will need some time to get prepared. I’ll come to get you when I’m done.”

I nodded and said, “Okay, just call me by that time.”

Last night’s events suddenly replayed in my mind. I asked, “Were you okay last night? Why are you up so early today?” She did drink quite a lot last night.

She sighed, “Don’t talk about it. I was almost beaten up. If it weren’t because I wanted to pry Linda for information, I wouldn’t drink that much alcohol. Seriously, my head is still hurting!”

“Armond is not around?”

“Yeah, he seems to have something on. He went out early in the morning. My grandpa’s call woke me up, and I called you right away since I’m awake. I plan to sleep for a while more. Let’s go over later.” Her words were slurring. She must be getting sleepy.

“Alright, you get some sleep. I’ll read at home in the meantime. Do you want to come over for lunch since Armond is not around?”

“No thank you,” she rejected. “I don’t think I will be awake by that time. Besides, isn’t that expressionless guy at home right now? I am kind of intimidated by him, so I’ll pass.”

I smiled and didn’t insist.

After I hung up, I went straight into the study. Perhaps because this house was recently set up, there weren’t many books in the study. There were mostly some documents and magazines.

While scanning the bookshelf, a book title caught my eye. *Three Makes a Family*. I reached for it and started flipping through the pages.

I didn’t expect that Ashton would have such a wholesome book on his bookshelf. Since the book was to my liking, I sat down and started reading.

Ashton noticed me reading and smiling to myself when he came in. He sat down beside me and asked, “What are you reading? You are smiling so blissfully.”

I instinctively raised a hand to touch my face. “Do I look blissful?”

It was a rhetorical question, but he seemed to have understood it differently. He grinned from ear to ear and announced, "You are blissful when you are with me!"

I was stunned. Maybe it was because of the book that I felt immense sweetness at what he said. "A good love story makes the readers feel blissful as well. The characters have such a lovely little family," I said.

He smiled and asked, "So when are you coming back to K City with me? We have a family of three too."

He was coaxing me to go back to K City again. I lowered my head a bit and thought about it. "We'll think about it after completing the Lavelian Village project."

As we spoke about it, I became lost in my own thoughts. People change like the seasons. A few days ago, I was planning to get divorced from him. A few days later, we were joined at the hip. Nobody saw this coming at all.

"What are you thinking?" He pulled me into his arms and sniffed my hair. "You smell so nice!"

I leaned into him and replied cheekily, "I am thinking of what to eat for lunch!"

He chuckled right next to my ear. "Glutton!" he commented. "I may need to go out for a while. I will ask Joseph to send over some food to you later."

I processed what he said and nodded. My mind flashed back to the number that I saw on his phone screen just now. That combination of numbers was familiar to me. Even after so many years, Rebecca did not intend to change her number.

Does this mean Rebecca is in A City now?

I did not ask Ashton about it. A few calls came in, and it seemed to be very urgent. I looked on nonchalantly and did not comment.

He grabbed his phone and said to me, "Remember to eat your lunch. Wait for me to come back in the evening. We will have dinner together."

I nodded and waved my hand, indicating for him to go ahead.

I certainly wasn't expecting to get a call from Rachel. She cut straight to the chase and asked, "Can we meet?"

I hesitated, and then asked, "You need to see me?"

"Yeah."

After looking at the time, I replied, "You only have two hours."

"Okay," she responded without missing a beat, "I will see you at Nanya."

A café?

The only reason she would want to see me would be to talk about Ashton.

I set out after tidying up a little. Nora was still hungover, she would need to sleep for some time. The time would be just right when I come back after this meet-up.

At Nanya Café.

Rachel was seated beside a window, and the view outside was quite picturesque.

Even when she noticed my arrival, she kept her head turned to the side. She knew I was there but did not bother to turn to look at me. She lifted her teacup, with her other hand holding on to the saucer below it. Her posture was faultlessly elegant.

“Ms. Zimmer, you didn’t just call me over to admire your elegance, did you?” I mocked while sitting down opposite her.

She only turned to face me when she heard me speak. Her eyes skimmed over my outfit judgmentally.

I frowned a little and explained with a smile, “I came out in a hurry, so I just wore what I was comfortable in. You’re really an exquisite woman, Ms. Zimmer. Every time I see you, you look different.”

She turned her gaze away and put down her cup. “Men always seem to hold on to their first love,” she said slowly.

## **Chapter 779**

I was stunned for a moment. “There is some resemblance between you and her. No wonder he’s still holding onto you. Well, I guess he can’t be bothered to pay attention to me because I’m the total opposite of you two,” Rachel continued.

Does she mean Rebecca?

I was not usually a fan of bitter flavor, including coffee. I wrapped my hand around the coffee mug that was served in front of me, stirred it slightly, and listened intently without lifting my head.

“Don’t you ever wonder why I asked you out all of a sudden?” she asked eagerly after she saw no response from me.

“Why?” I muttered and raised my head.

She let out a chuckle. “You seem pretty calm, huh?”

I remained silent and continued to stir my coffee.

“You know, I’ve always wondered about your marriage,” she remarked after a moment of silence. “I mean, who could have guessed that a nobody like you can stay beside Ashton for so many years? But after I saw the lost daughter of the Moore family, I totally get it. You are just a mere substitute! Rebecca Larson must be his first love, but it seems like things did not turn out as he wished.”

She continued after a pause, “In fact, I have no complaints if she were his wife. In terms of looks and figure, I definitely beat her. Yet, her parents were the best in the world, hands down. The fact that she came from a very prestigious family makes her the perfect match for Ashton. You, however, are questionable. I’m obviously better than you in every aspect. And worse, you have zero family background.”



I pursed my lips silently and started to mull over a matter of fact that I had simply overlooked. After all these years, the Moores knew the truth behind Rebecca's birth, but they never made that story public as there were too many risks to bear.

Perhaps they wanted to make it up to her even after she left the family.

I guessed Rachel must have dug up some information regarding the woman.

"Ms. Zimmer, you're making something out of nothing," I said calmly with no intention of defending myself. "Our marriage is blessed with love and joy, so you don't have to worry about us. Most importantly, outsiders have no right to meddle with our family affairs."

She sneered, "Oh, really?" Then she took the spoon out of her coffee, laid it aside, and leaned back in the chair with disdain on her face. "So you're implying that you and Ashton share mutual love? Are you sure?"

I furrowed my brows unwittingly and said, "I don't think I need to argue with you about this."

"Yeah, you're right. There's no need for argument. But tell me. Deep down inside, you are actually unsure of his feelings for you, aren't you? My, fake love is cruel." There was a hint of sarcasm in her voice.

I propped my chin up with my hand and looked at her. I've had enough of her childish behavior. "Ms. Zimmer, are you applying your AI research skills into reality? I believe it's none of your business if Ashton loves me. Why do you care?"

Her face turned grim. "Nothing, I just... pity you!"

I nodded, looked down at my phone, and prepared to leave before Nora got up from her sleep.

“Well, thank you for your concern, Ms. Zimmer.” I stood up and said, “You don’t really have to come all the way here to pick on me because the reality will only strike you back. You know very well that Ashton never pays attention to you, that’s why you asked me out to vent your anger and pass all the negative energy to me. I’m sorry to say, but you look pathetic.”

“Here’s a friendly reminder. I know Ashton and Rebecca more than you. You can’t provoke me with their relationship. He married me because I am worthy of him. And stop being so full of yourself. Yeah, you may be beautiful on the outside, but not on the inside.”

“You...”

Before she could utter any more words, I continued, “Bear in mind. There are far many more beautiful and amazing women in the world out there. You are not that outstanding. Why don’t you work on yourself more, huh? Conceited and proud people like you are not liked by any. Please focus on that, Ms. Zimmer.”

Just when I was about to leave, Rachel stopped me and splashed her coffee all over my dress without any hesitation. I was defenceless and momentarily stupefied.

“Scarlett! Who do you think you are? You are just a leech! How dare you show off in front of me! Listen. Sooner or later, your life will be miserable! Because the girl who he really cares for has returned. He doesn’t need you anymore!”

## Chapter 780

Rachel's face was distorted with rage. My mind was torn in two at that moment. Half of me wanted to leave, but the other half couldn't just let her have her way.

I grabbed the coffee on the table and poured it on top of her head. I stared at her long and hard while the coffee dripped from her long hair, all over to her white dress. She looked terrible. "Ms. Zimmer, stop doing something like this. You are embarrassing yourself.

She glared at me in a fit of vicious anger. "Scarlett! Do you have a death wish?" she roared and tried to push my body away with both hands. Before I could react, someone pushed her down to her chair.

The chaos attracted the attention of customers in that café. Marcus' unannounced presence clearly surprised me.

He gazed down into Rachel's eyes and said icily, "I advise you to look in the mirror before you boast about your looks." He couldn't care less about Rachel, who was trembling with anger. Instead, he took off his jacket and put it over my shoulders to cover my stained dress. "Let's go."

We walked out of the café, and I thanked him when we reached the parking lot. I tried to return his jacket, but he refused to take it. "You don't have to return it now. You need it more than I do," he said.

Confused, I shrugged and forced the jacket onto him. "I'm fine. The villa is just a couple of blocks away," I said. Rather than insisting, he merely stared at me helplessly. He was clearly disappointed.

At the villa, Nora was still asleep. So I sat in a daze in the living room.

I wonder why Rachel is here. Did she come all the way to A City just to find Ashton?

I knew her very well. She would never swallow her pride to do something like that, especially after how Ashton had turned her down.

What exactly brought her here?

My head was pounding from those mere thoughts. Just when I was about to get comfortable on the couch, the phone rang. That must be Nora.

“Have you eaten?” It was Ashton. I froze for a moment.

“I’m not hungry.”

“I’ll take that as a no, then.” His stern voice surprised me. Before I could respond, he continued, “I asked Joseph to bring you some food. He will be there in a minute. Be sure to eat them, or you’ll have to deal with me.”

My expression was one of annoyed disbelief. What am I? Five? I pursed my lips and muttered, “I will. You don’t have to be so rude.”

Right then, the doorbell rang. “There he is. Open the door and eat up.”

“Fine!” I pouted, got up, and answered the door. Joseph stood there with his hands full of boxes of food, fruits, and greens. “Ashton, I’m hanging up now. Bye.” I quickly reached out to help him carry all the stuff.

Joseph passed me the lunch boxes and said, “Mr. Fuller picked these up for you when he was having lunch at Sea View. He thought you might like them.” Then he went straight to the kitchen and stacked the fruits in the fridge.

I opened up the lunch box and found a large serving of meticulously crafted seafood meal. I couldn’t help but said, “They look delicious, but I don’t think I can finish them.”

Joseph smiled. “Mr. Fuller wants you to enjoy it with Ms. Oberick.” I nodded. Initially, I wanted to call Nora, but I figured she might still be asleep. So I decided to wait until she woke up.

I looked at him while he unpacked the grocery bags and put more fruits and vegetables into the fridge. “Why did you buy so many vegetables? We don’t usually cook dinner.”

“Mr. Fuller said you should fill up your kitchen because you will need them later,” he replied.

I nodded, then I instinctively asked, “Did you guys have a business meeting at Sea View?”

“That’s not it…” I could feel a hesitancy in his voice. “Ms. Larson and Mr. Quinn were there, too. They were having lunch together,” he explained while continued to store the vegetables.

I was a little surprised. “Rebecca was there too?”

He nodded. "The Lavelian Village project was stalled, and the headquarters is waiting to receive a confirmation from Mr. Fuller. To speed things up, Mr. Quinn had no choice but to hand the documents to him personally."

I mumbled a response and didn't pursue further.

"Mrs. Fuller, don't get the wrong idea. Mr. Quinn brought Ms. Larson along for his trip to A City because he was worried about her. He just wanted to keep her by his side. This has nothing to do with Mr. Fuller."