

BYWafADA 656

[Boss, Your Wife's Asking for A Divorce, Again](#)

Chapter 656 A Funny Sticker

Gifts? Toby was stunned at first, then broke into a light chuckle as he asked through a voice note, "Why, are you thinking about getting me a present?"

"Your birthday's just around the corner," Sonia replied with a voice note of her own, nodding on the other end of the phone.

It was only upon hearing her question that he remembered his birthday was fast approaching. It was no wonder then that she asked him so abruptly about what he would like for a gift. A warm smile graced his lips as he replied, "Anything you get for me will be fine."

He didn't expect her to remember his birthday, let alone offer to buy him a gift for the occasion of her own accord. The thought of this cheered him up to no end, and the smile on his face widened into a grin.

The other Fuller Group employees who hung around the parking lot couldn't help but be shocked at the sight of Toby's kilowatt smile.

Everyone thought of him as a walking iceberg, and there were even senior members of the staff who claimed to never have seen Toby smile. In fact, his impassive demeanor seemed so consistent and unwavering that the senior staff thought he had a terminal condition that made him unable to smile.

However, they were now bearing witness to the extremely rare moment where Toby was smiling—no, grinning—and it was safe to say that they were all shocked.

That being said, Toby's face certainly lit up handsomely when he smiled. At that moment, it was as if his features had shed their usual indifference and took on a warmer edge instead. He must be in love, the employees who watched him thought in unison. They had seen the news from a couple of days ago, and they would wager that their guess was correct.

Meanwhile, Sonia was oblivious to what was happening on Toby's end. She brought her glass to her lips and took a sip of water, then said into her phone through yet another voice note, "Well, that's not a good enough answer. You have to tell me what you really want, or I won't be able to get you a gift at all. And for the record, you're not allowed to tell me to forget about the gift because then I'll be very unhappy."

Ever since their relationship became official, Toby had always been the one to give, but she never got the chance to return such favors. Now that his birthday was rolling around, she thought it would be the perfect excuse to get him a present.

Presently, Toby blinked as he listened to her voice note. I have to tell her what I really want? In actuality, he had no idea what he really wanted, either, because he already had everything, and he really did not plan on letting her buy him a present.

But he certainly didn't expect her to have the foresight to warn him off, claiming that she would be very unhappy with him if he were to refuse her offer of a gift.

Guess I have no choice in the matter. At the thought of this, he shook his head with good-natured exasperation, then chuckled as he said, "Let me think about it, and I'll get back to you on this."

When Sonia heard his answer, she nodded and replied through text, 'Okay.' When her message got through, she stared at the chat bubble in thought. Standing on its own, her reply seemed a little cold and distant. She quickly followed up with, 'I shall await your reply with bated breath!' Then, she attached a sticker of a ginger cat making heart hands—or rather, heart paws.

She blushed furiously at the sight of the sticker. This was the first time she had ever sent him such a bold and outwardly-affectionate sticker. She couldn't help being a little embarrassed and anxious about it.

On the other end of the conversation, Toby's eyes widened when he saw the sticker, and he was clearly surprised by it.

He composed himself just as quickly and let out a small laugh, thereafter saving the sticker and made to reply with one of his own. However, when he clicked into his own sticker collection, he fell silent, for he had no emojis or stickers other than the preset ones that came with the application.

As such, he found himself having to search through and download new stickers if he wanted to send one to Sonia. Thankfully, he could select the category of stickers he wanted in the application, and it didn't take him too long to find a whole bunch of stickers that more than adequately conveyed his affections for Sonia.

He scrolled through the catalog and finally settled on the one he thought was most adorable. Saving it into his collection, he promptly sent it to Sonia.

Sonia, on the other hand, had assumed that there would be no reply on his end after several minutes of inactivity. As of now, she had already set her phone aside and was drinking water from her glass.

She had only just taken a sip when her phone vibrated, and after seeing the incoming message, she placed her glass down and grabbed her phone.

Upon taking a glance, she sputtered, causing water to spray all over her screen before she doubled over in laughter. My goodness, I can't believe he actually sent me a sticker like that! It's so adorable that it's entirely at odds with his usual demeanor!

She tried to picture Toby choosing and sending the sticker, and it amused her so much that she couldn't stop laughing. With his appearance and carriage, she would associate him with a user of the conventional array of emojis, like the ones that came with the application. The sticker he used is more popular among girls, given how cute it is, and I can't believe he actually sent it to me! While Sonia found this comical, she also thought it was an endearing gesture on his part.

Having laughed so much that her stomach cramped, Sonia drew in a deep breath to calm herself. She wiped the tears from the corners of her eyes, then pulled out a piece of tissue to wipe dry her phone screen.

She wiped off the droplets, but as soon as she did, the sticker he sent looked even clearer than it had earlier. This time, she sputtered and burst into uncontrollable laughter.

She was certain that he couldn't possibly be a collector of stickers, and aside from the default emojis, there was nothing else on his phone that could be as humorous as this sticker. As such, she came to the natural conclusion that he had, in his few minutes of inactivity, been searching for stickers and decided on this one.

Then, she thought about how serious he must have looked while hunting for stickers with which he could reply to her, and she felt a surge of warmth course through her, alongside renewed amusement.

After all, it was no easy feat for a man to be quite so serious about these things. Normally, they would go for the preset emojis in the application, which only made Toby's gesture all the more glorified.

"Must have been quite the challenge for you," Sonia mumbled affectionately, smiling as she shook her head and clicked on the sticker he sent, thereafter saving it.

Over at Fuller Group, Toby had only just stepped out of the elevator when he saw a couple of male assistants and secretaries huddling in the hallway.

The one standing in the center of the group was holding his scarf with a proud grin on his face, boasting, "I can't expect the lot of you pathetic single men to understand the meaning behind this! So what if the scarf is pink? It's a gorgeous shade that my wife picked out for me. I bet you're all just jealous!"

His gloating was met with rounds of scoffing and jesting as his peers rolled their eyes at him.

While this was happening, Toby stood in front of the elevator and narrowed his eyes inquisitively. His wife gave it to him? What could she have possibly given him to make him so happy? When he saw the small group of men getting rowdy, he pursed his lips and demanded icily, "What's going on here?"

When the secretaries and assistants heard his frigid voice, they broke apart immediately and fell in line, as though in a military encampment. They stared at Toby warily and greeted, "President Fuller."

Darn it, when did President Fuller show up? And what timing! He caught us while we're slacking off work. They all felt an impending sense of doom as they prepared themselves to either be fired or demoted.

Toby walked up to them with a somber expression, assessing them with his freezing gaze. The assistants and secretaries felt chills running up their spines, and they girded their loins as they waited for him to say something.

After a long, suffocating pause, Toby parted his lips and asked crisply, "You're all just going to stand around here gossiping while work is piling up in your offices? Last I checked, lunchtime is over."

"Sorry, President Fuller. We won't do this again," the men said shakily, bowing their heads apologetically.

Toby scoffed. "Your bonus will be docked this month. Now get back to work."

“Yes, right away,” they responded hastily, all heaving quiet sighs of relief. As far as they were concerned, it was a miracle at all that they were only going to have their bonuses docked instead of getting demoted or fired on the spot.

With that in mind, they quickly spun on their heels and darted back into their offices.

As for the man with the scarf who had been a target of friendly jesting earlier, he was just about to go into his own office when Toby said, “You. Stop right there.”

The secretary felt all the color drain from his face, and he grew extremely anxious. Oh, no. Oh, crap. Is he going to punish me? It was no surprise that he would feel this way, seeing as he was the reason why the other male secretaries and assistants had slacked off in the first place. He had a terrifying inkling that Toby might punish him and make an example out of this.

When the other secretaries and assistants saw their peer getting called on by Toby, they shared the same premonition. Alas, all they could do was pray for the poor man, but they had no intention of staying to save him from misfortune.

Chapter 657 Hand-Knitted Scarf

The secretaries and assistants were worried that if they slowed down their pace, Toby would turn his attention to them as well. And woe be to them if that were to come to pass! As such, they hurried down the hallway, leaving their fallen colleague to deal with Toby’s wrath.

Presently, the male secretary, Jacob, dared not meet Toby’s gaze. He kept his head down, and he was trembling slightly. It was clear to see that he was intimidated by Toby.

Toby, however, lowered his gaze on the man as he asked placidly, “Did you say that your wife gave you a gift?”

Jacob was a little taken aback by this. He looked up, but instead of answering the question, he asked Toby skeptically, “President Fuller, did you stop me just to ask me that?”

Upon hearing Toby hum in affirmation, Jacob felt as if a weight had been lifted off his chest. All the anxiousness drained out of him, and as he was visibly relaxed, his body stopped trembling as well. Straightening up, he let out a quiet breath of relief and answered calmly, “Yes, President Fuller. My wife has recently picked up knitting and crocheting, and she decided to make me this scarf.”

As he said this, his hand reached for the pink scarf around his neck, and a lovesick grin spread across his face. Then, he eyed Toby earnestly as he asked, “What do you think of it, President Fuller?”

Toby did not reply, but as he stared at the scarf, he thought it looked like a rather jarring shade of pink. This guy’s not actually bragging about this to me, is he? Ha! What makes him think this is bragging material? It’s just a scarf from his lover, and what’s with that ridiculous grin he has on his face? For some reason, he felt challenged, and he was suddenly seized with the confidence that he, too, could get his lover to knit him a scarf.

A little indignant, Toby pursed his lips, and the air around him grew colder as he lied, “It looks decent on you. Now get back to work.”

“Yes, sir,” Jacob replied respectfully with a firm nod, then happily let go of the scarf as he turned to go into the office.

Toby, on the other hand, walked in the opposite direction toward his own office as well. While doing so, he texted Sonia. ‘I think I know what I want.’

Sonia was busy going through paperwork when she heard her phone chime with a new message. She reached for it and glanced at Toby’s text. Raising a brow, she called him instead of replying to him.

At the sight of her incoming call, Toby swiped his screen to put her through, then pressed the phone to his ear.

Sonia’s firm and pleasant voice instantly filled the other line. “You said you know what you want, so come right out with it.”

He pulled out his chair and sat down behind his desk, his thoughts lingering on the scarf around Jacob’s neck and the smug grin on his face. “I want you to knit me a scarf,” Toby said. “Once she gives me a hand-knitted scarf, then I can put it on and brag around the office, too.”

“Huh?” On the other end of the phone, Sonia was completely stunned when she registered Toby’s answer. A scarf? A scarf hand-knitted by me? She clearly had not expected him to ask for something so specific and odd, to say the least.

She had thought of buying him an accessory piece even if he couldn’t come up with an idea of what he would want for a gift, like a razor or a leather belt or something. Alas, little did she know that what he truly wanted for a birthday present was a scarf.

When he heard no response from her, he immediately grew unsettled. Lowering his gaze slightly, he asked, “You’re not backing out of your offer now, are you?”

She shook her head. “No, of course not. It’s just that, well, I’m curious as to what prompted you to want a scarf and a hand-knitted one from me, no less.”

Frankly speaking, it was rare for most men to want a hand-knitted scarf from their girlfriends as a birthday present. This was especially true for men like Toby, who couldn’t possibly want something as plain and humble as a scarf after the collection of designer goods he had amassed over the years. As such, Sonia had a feeling that there was more to his surprising request than met the eye.

Sure enough, it didn’t take long for Toby to confess a little sheepishly. “Someone was bragging about it to my face.”

“Bragging?” she repeated, tipping her head to the side in confusion.

He hummed in response, then told her about the conversation he had had with Jacob out in the hallway earlier.

Having heard the full story, Sonia was bemused. “How is that considered bragging? He was probably just excited to regale everyone with anecdotes of his love life.”

Toby pressed his lips into a thin line. “Yeah, but seeing as I don’t have a scarf hand-knitted by my girlfriend, that would make me inferior and him the bragger.”

She sighed and rubbed her temple with mock exasperation. "Okay, fine, he was bragging to your face. So because your subordinate has something that you don't, and he was showing it off in front of you, you decided that you would like to have a scarf to balance out the resentment you feel, is that it?"

Toby lifted his chin petulantly. "I'm the boss. How am I going to face my subordinates if I don't even have a love life as enriching as theirs? I need everyone to know that I have what they have, if not more. So, circling back to the topic, will you please knit me a scarf, Sonia?"

With one hand pressed against her forehead like she was dealing with the onset of a migraine, she countered, "Of course I will, and I'm quite adept at knitting, too. But are you sure it's what you want? You have to know that the scarf isn't worth anything on the market."

"No," he argued with a firm shake of his head. "Any scarf knitted by you is priceless to me."

Her expression softened as she let out a small laugh. "In that case, it will be my honor to make you that scarf. What color would you like?"

Upon hearing her agreement to make him a scarf, Toby felt a rush of satisfaction course through him, and for a minute, he was on cloud nine. The fingers that twirled his pen quickened in light of his elation as he said, "I'm fine with any color. You decide."

"Then black it is," Sonia said with a decisive air after a moment of thought. "Black looks good on you."

"Hmm." He nodded, the smile on his face never once fading.

The rest of their conversation surrounded Sonia's ideas on the knitting pattern and the length, width, and thickness of the scarf. It was only after the details had been settled that they each hung up the phone.

When the call ended, Toby set his phone down on his desk and leaned back into his seat, the atmosphere around him growing warm and easy.

At that moment, Tom walked in with a stack of files in hand. Upon seeing Toby's insouciant stance, he adjusted his glasses and pointed out, "You look happy, President Fuller. Did something good happen?"

"Sonia's going to knit me a scarf," Toby answered as he glanced at Tom, and while he sounded blase, he was undeniably gloating.

Tom felt the corner of his lips twitch. He had the sudden urge to slap himself for being so nosy, and now Toby was rubbing his blooming relationship in his face. You asked for it, Tom chastised himself grimly.

As much as he wanted to wipe that smug grin off Toby's face, Tom maintained a courteous smile and feigned surprise as he said, "Oh, really? How wonderful! Congratulations, President Fuller."

Clearly enjoying this, Toby lifted his chin by just a fraction more as he drawled, "Oh, it's nothing. It's just a scarf."

A bitter chuckle threatened to escape Tom. Oh, just a scarf, you said? If you're going to pretend to care so little about this, then why don't you take back your damn bragging? Tom pursed his lips, then coughed as if to mask his own disgruntlement. He didn't want to continue on this topic with the obviously enamored Toby anymore, for it was getting more disheartening.

Changing the subject, Tom said, “Well, anyway, President Fuller, the departments have sent these over to be executed by you. I’ll just leave them here.” He pointed at Toby’s desk, waiting for approval.

Toby nodded. “Go on, then.”

“Alright.” Tom put the documents down, then stepped back before saying, “If there isn’t anything else you need my help with, I shall take my leave, President Fuller.” He was worried that if he didn’t leave the office now, he would only be in danger of hearing more of Toby and Sonia’s lovey-dovey tidbits.

“Wait,” Toby called out, stopping Tom in his tracks.

Tom winced, but he quickly recomposed himself and put on his standard salaryman smile. “Yes, President Fuller, is there anything I can help you with?”

Toby straightened up in his seat, suddenly serious. “Ask those men who have been dispatched to track down Declan to call off the search. There’s no longer the need for that.”

“Call off the search?” When Tom heard this, his face lit up with astonishment. “But why?”

“Sonia told me a few days ago that Carl has tortured Declan so badly that he no longer seemed human, and Carl doesn’t plan on stopping just yet. I’m afraid Declan will die sooner than we think if this goes on,” Toby answered gravely.

It was on the night before last, when Toby and Sonia returned to Bayside Residence after their movie date that she told him about Carl’s email.

If she hadn’t told him then, he would never have known that Carl had already taken care of Declan.

While Toby was a little unhappy that Carl beat him to torturing Declan, he had to admit that he agreed with Carl’s method of revenge. After all, Declan had nearly killed Sonia when he pushed her off the cliff, and he deserved the cruel punishment. If Toby were in Carl’s shoes, he didn’t think he would go easy on Declan, either.

Chapter 658 Scarf-Knitting

Truth be told, Toby might even prove to exact crueler vengeance upon Declan than Carl had.

Presently, Tom felt a chill run down his spine when he heard of what had happened to Declan. “I’ll have the men return right away,” he said, still a little stunned by this news. Looks like we severely underestimated how perverse Carl can be. He may look like a warm and affable young man, but his vengeance is bloody and ruthless.

Then again, Tom thought Declan deserved the punishment for having kidnapped Sonia and attempted to kill her in the first place. He knew how important Miss Reed was to Carl, but he went ahead and targeted her, anyway. Now he’s bearing the brunt of his own stupidity; his days are numbered, and rightfully so.

“By the way, how’s the investigation on Connor going?” Toby asked a little.

Tom adjusted his glasses. "He's doing what he usually does—fishing, playing chess, and if he isn't doing either of these, he won't venture out of the villa at all. No odd behavior on his part has been reported thus far."

Toby narrowed his eyes in thought, saying nothing. From how he looked at it, the oddest behavior of all was to have no odd behavior whatsoever.

Connor had been Toby's mother's first love, and they were rather devoted to one another back in their youth. Toby had even learned of Connor's first and last visit to the Fuller Residence, whereupon he got into a dispute with Homer. While Toby never did uncover the cause of the dispute, he wagered that, judging by the way Connor had stormed off in a fit of rage, the man bore some intense grudges against Homer after the incident.

As such, Connor was the most likely suspect behind Homer's murder.

More importantly, Connor was the head of the Salzburg Family and the chairman of Salzburg Group. However, he never once returned to the company to take charge of things and instead stayed home tending to his garden and going on fishing trips. Toby found this incredibly hard to believe.

At the thought of this, Toby lightly drummed his fingers against his desk, letting the rhythmic thumping fill the silent office. At last, he ordered somberly, "Continue keeping an eye on him. I refuse to believe that he will stay idle for long."

If Connor really was the one behind Homer's murder and the one who instigated Toby's car accident, then surely the clues of his misdeeds would surface at some point.

"Yes, sir!" Tom stood to attention as a show of obedience.

Meanwhile, over at Paradigm Co., Sonia called Daphne into her office after putting her phone away.

Coming to a stop in front of Sonia's desk, Daphne asked courteously, "Is there anything I can help you with, Chairman Reed?"

As of now, Daphne looked as if she had completely sorted through her feelings and returned to her usual self at work, which put some of Sonia's worries at ease. Smiling, Sonia asked genially, "Daphne, where did you get the yarn from the scarf you made Charles?"

Upon hearing this, Daphne blinked in surprise and asked, "Chairman Reed, are you perhaps planning on knitting a scarf as well?"

"Yes," Sonia answered with a nod. "Toby saw one of his subordinates wearing a scarf his wife made for him, and now he wants me to hand-knit one for him, too. He said something about wanting to have whatever his subordinates have."

Daphne couldn't help but sputter; amidst a small laugh, she pointed out, "How interesting of him to wish to compete with his subordinates, and on such strange matters as well."

Sonia shook her head in good-natured exasperation. "Yeah, I didn't think a man who's thirty-one could be so childish, either. But since I can't dissuade him, I agreed to make him a scarf."

“That’s nice,” Daphne mused, eyeing Sonia enviously. President Fuller actually wants her to make a scarf for him, whereas President Lane just throws away whatever I give him.

The sheer difference in these two men’s behavior was nearly insurmountable.

Upon catching the dejected look on Daphne’s face, Sonia immediately knew what the girl was thinking about. The smile on her face slipped, replaced by an apologetic expression as she said quietly, “I’m sorry, Daphne. I shouldn’t have brought this up.”

Charles had only just thrown away the scarf Daphne made for him recently, and here Sonia was being insensitive as she prattled on about knitting a scarf for Toby. I’m just adding salt to her wound at this point, Sonia thought in despair.

“It’s alright, Chairman Reed.” Daphne flapped her hand dismissively, then smiled as she added, “I didn’t really think much of it.” She knew plenty of couples who were present in her life, and if she were to get mad at everyone else’s happiness, then she would have been thrown into the asylum by now for severe anger management issues.

“Really?” Sonia pressed fretfully.

Daphne nodded in affirmation. “Really.”

Sonia eyed her for a moment longer, and she wasn’t convinced that Daphne was unaffected until she saw how serious the latter looked. With a small sigh of relief, she said, “Well, I’m glad to know that.”

“So, you wanted to know where I got the yarn for my knitting, right, Chairman Reed?” Daphne asked, changing the topic.

Sonia hummed in response. “Yes, that’s right. I can’t remember the last time I knitted something, so I don’t really know where to get supplies. I could get them online, but the turnaround for the delivery would take days at the very least, and I don’t want to wait that long.”

“Oh, I see.” Daphne adjusted her black-framed glasses. “I bought the yarn at a shop not too far away from our company building. I happen to have a delivery to make later, so I could get the yarn for you if you’d like, Chairman Reed.”

“That would be really helpful of you, Daphne. Thank you,” Sonia agreed with a bright smile.

“It’s nothing.” Daphne waved her hand, then asked, “By the way, Chairman Reed, have you decided on the color of the yarn you’d like to get?”

“Black,” Sonia replied.

“Got it. I’ll be leaving now, then, Chairman Reed.” Daphne gestured toward the door.

“Go ahead.” Sonia allowed her to leave after a small hum.

Daphne turned to leave, and before work ended that afternoon, Daphne returned with the ball of yarn for Sonia.

Sonia took out the yarn and examined it. It was pure sheep’s yarn, soft and delicate to the touch. It would make for a rather comfortable scarf material.

Pleased, Sonia made a bank transfer to pay Daphne back for the yarn, then slung her purse over her shoulder and made her way home.

It was 6.30P.M by the time she arrived at Bayside Residence. She sauntered over to the kitchen and got started on a light dinner, after which she sat down on the couch and began to sort out the yarn for knitting.

It had been years since she last got into knitting, which explained why she was a little rusty now. It was an agonizingly slow process just for her to wind pieces of yarn over the needles.

Thankfully, she started to gain momentum after a while of handling the needles, and only then did the knitting process speed up.

Knitting wasn't actually difficult, and it didn't take up much time, either. If Sonia were to go on knitting like this, she might actually be done with the scarf by dawn.

There were even some who made quick work out of knitting, and they could be done within five or six hours.

And indeed, Sonia did stay up the entire night to finish knitting the scarf, and when daylight broke hazily over the city, she was done with a rather well-made piece of men's scarf.

She opened up the scarf and inspected it carefully. When she was sure that it was as flawless as it could be, she put it into a paper bag to keep until Toby's birthday.

She was just storing the scarf away when the sky darkened, and a torrential downpour, accompanied by a relentless breeze, quickly followed. The chilling breeze snaked through the open French windows, and Sonia shuddered as the air in the room grew cold.

She hurried over to close the windows, then let out a small sigh of relief. Just then, her phone rang.

Walking up to the couch, she bent over to take her phone from the coffee table. However, her expression stiffened when she saw the caller ID, and she didn't waste time answering the call.

Rose was on the other line, and as soon as the call went through, she pressed urgently, "Sonia, is Toby with you at the moment?"

"No," Sonia answered dutifully, shaking her head.

Rose grew frantic as she urged, "Then do you have any idea where he might be right now? I asked Jean, and she told me he didn't return to the Fuller Residence last night. I can't get through to him or his assistant, so I was hoping you would know."

Sonia started to panic when she heard how anxious Rose sounded, but she took a deep breath and tried to remain calm, then answered reassuringly, "Don't worry, Grandma. I have a feeling I know where he is. He's likely at Skylark Tower."

Having heard this, Rose broke into a relieved smile, and her worries dissipated as she patted her chest, prompting, "Well, you're probably right. That's good to know. In that case, could you go over right now and check on him, Sonia? You have to save him if he's harmed himself, but if he hasn't yet, you must

stop him at all costs. He wouldn't let any one of us get close to him, but maybe he would let you. Please, Sonia, you're the only one I can trust right now."

Chapter 659 Looking for Toby

Sonia rose from the couch and hurried into her bedroom while speaking into her phone, "Don't worry, Grandma, I know what to do. I'd have rushed over now, even if you didn't call me."

"That's great. Well, then, you should get going, Sonia. Remember to keep this old woman updated as soon as something happens," Rose said.

Sonia nodded. "Fret not, Grandma. I promise I'll call you."

"Alright. In that case, I'll leave Toby to you, and maybe you could talk to him for me, see if you can't bring him out of grieving over his mother's passing."

"I'll do my best," Sonia promised solemnly.

Rose hung up the phone in relief, and Mary came over with a cup of tea. Upon seeing the distressed expression on the older woman's face, Mary put on a comforting smile. "Now, do stop worrying, Old Mrs. Fuller. I'm sure that the Young Mistress will handle this without a hitch; she'd be the cure to Young Master Toby's heartache, if not the beacon of light that guides him out of his grief."

"Well, here's to hoping," Rose said wistfully as she took a sip of tea. With a sigh, she added, "It's not so much that I don't believe in Sonia's capabilities that I am worried about Toby's deep-seated trauma following his mother's suicide. It's not just something that he could be coaxed out of within a day."

"But I firmly believe that if Young Master Toby were to open himself to the Young Mistress' gentle counseling, his condition would improve greatly," Mary prompted as she came up behind Rose and started to rub the latter's shoulders.

Rose nodded tiredly. "I suppose you're right. I just hope Sonia could get to Toby quickly enough to bring to fruition the results we hope for, otherwise..."

"Don't trouble yourself, Old Mrs. Fuller. You have to have faith in the Young Mistress. I'm sure she'll get to Young Master Toby just in time," Mary interrupted the old woman's worried chain of thought. "We all know how much he loves the Young Mistress, and by virtue of that alone, he will allow her to approach him."

"Hopefully," Rose muttered as she lowered her gaze, then blew on the tea in the cup before her.

Meanwhile, over at Bayside Residence, Sonia had put on a change of clothes and was grabbing an umbrella, ready to leave to find Toby.

She had only just opened the door when the icy air attacked her, biting at her skin and making her shudder. "The weather's freezing," she mumbled to herself, her face turning white in the cold as she rubbed the backs of her hands to keep warm.

As much as she wanted to slip back into the warmth of her apartment, she knew she didn't have a choice. She blew warm hair into her hands, then lifted her foot to step past the doorway.

However, she suddenly thought of something at the exact moment she put her foot out. Retracting her step, she spun on her heels and headed back into her bedroom, then came out again a minute later with a paper bag in hand. It was only then that she took the elevator down to the lobby, and while she walked, she called Toby's phone.

He had promised her that he wouldn't switch off his phone today, which meant she should be able to get through to him. Alas, an automated voice greeted her, informing her that the number she dialed was unavailable.

Anger and frustration coursed through her; she was angry that he had gone back on his word and frustrated that she had no idea of what was happening to him right now, given he wouldn't put her through.

Out of desperation, she could only call Tom. Fortunately, the call went through, and he greeted her politely. "Miss Reed."

"Mr. Brown, is Toby at Skylark Tower right now?" Sonia did not bother with pleasantries like she usually would. Instead, she went straight to the point, given that it was a matter of urgency. She was already worried about Toby, and her mind was far too preoccupied for her to remember her phone etiquette.

Upon hearing Sonia's question, Tom nodded frantically. "That's right. President Fuller has been at Skylark Tower since yesterday, and he never left. I'm waiting right below the tower, and I've already knocked several times, but he refused to open the door. I even tried calling Old Mrs. Fuller just now, but for some reason, I couldn't get through."

At that moment, Sonia realized why Rose had said she couldn't get through Tom's phone; it was likely that both their lines had been busy as they tried to call one another.

Presently, with Toby's location confirmed, Sonia felt her shoulders sag in relief. As long as he's at Skylark Tower and not somewhere remote that we don't know of. "Okay, got it. I'll be over right now."

"Alright, Miss Reed. I'll be waiting for you right here," Tom said, lighting up with surprise instantly when he heard that Sonia would be coming over. He and the rest of his team might not be able to see Toby, but that didn't mean Sonia couldn't. She has a special place in President Fuller's heart, after all.

"Okay, thanks. By the way, do you have the keys to his apartment?" Sonia asked.

Tom shook his head ruefully. "No. He rarely ever stays in Skylark Tower, so I don't have the keys to his apartment there."

"Right," she said with a soft hum. "In that case, I'm going to need you to find a locksmith."

"A locksmith?" he repeated in shock.

With a firm nod, she replied, "Yes, because neither of us has the key, and Toby refuses to open the door. So if we want to break in, we need a locksmith."

"But—"

“Don’t argue with me right now, Tom. As things are, saving Toby is our utmost priority, and I promise I’ll take responsibility if he gets mad at us breaking in,” Sonia promised with a hand to her chest, as if she was taking an oath.

When Tom heard this, all his hesitation dissipated, and he nodded in agreement. “Roger that. I’ll make the arrangements right away.”

He knew Sonia was right. Even if Toby were to get angry over the matter of breaking into his apartment, his safety overrode that concern. Moreover, Miss Reed promised that she would take responsibility if he were to throw a tantrum, and it’s highly unlikely that he’ll lash out at her. There’s nothing for me to worry about. As he hung up the phone, he felt reassured, and he wasted no time in hunting down a locksmith.

Sonia, on the other hand, entered the elevator, and she arrived at Skylark Tower within an hour’s time.

Tom was standing at the entrance of the building with a locksmith next to him, and at the sight of Sonia’s approaching figure, he put up an arm to wave at her. “Over here, Miss Reed!”

Sonia hurried over to join them at the entrance, whereupon Tom gestured toward the door courteously. “Please follow me, Miss Reed. I’ll bring you up to his apartment.”

“Thank you,” Sonia replied, nodding at him once as she tightened her hold on the paper bag in her hand.

Tom led the way, and she fell in step behind him while the locksmith traipsed after her.

A few minutes later, the three of them arrived at Toby’s apartment, which really was just the penthouse that occupied the entire top floor of the apartment building. As of now, Tom brought Sonia over to a large ornate door, then said, “We’re here.”

She nodded, then turned to look at the locksmith meaningfully. “We’ll let you get to work, sir.”

“Oh, you’re too formal, miss,” the locksmith said genially, waving off her courtesy. He had a toolbox slung over his shoulder, and having set it down on the floor next to him, he proceeded to take out his tools to break the lock. He made quick work of it, and the lock was opened in the blink of an eye.

At the sight of this, Sonia hastily pushed the door open, and as she did so, she saw something roll toward her, stopping just next to her foot.

She looked down to see that it was a now-empty bottle of red wine. Frowning, she bent over to pick up the bottle; there was not a single drop of wine left in the green glass bottle.

It was clear to see that Toby had spent the whole of last night downing an entire bottle of wine. The frown on her face deepened, and as she put the empty bottle on the shoe cabinet, she marched through the front door.

The moment she did, her senses were assaulted by the overpowering fumes of alcohol. What was more bewildering was the fact that there were a few more empty bottles of wine lying on the floor of the living room.

Which meant Toby had downed not only one but several bottles of red wine last night. And these might not be all of the wine he drank, Sonia thought gravely, her face twisting into an angry grimace. Was he actually planning on killing himself?

She surveyed the living room for a glimpse of Toby's silhouette, but after looking around once, she saw that he was nowhere in sight.

More to the point, the penthouse was expansive and covered close to eight hundred square meters. It would take up a lot of her time just to search through each of the many bedrooms housed within this space.

Left helpless, Sonia called Tom in and asked that he search through some of the rooms while she did the others. The both of them began scurrying in and out of rooms, and finally, Tom found Toby in the study.

"Miss Reed, he's over here!" Tom cried out to Sonia, who was in the other room down the hallway, while standing anxiously at the study's doorway.

Chapter 660 Passed Out Cold

Upon hearing Tom's voice from down the hallway, Sonia immediately walked out of the bedroom and headed in the direction of the study.

She came to a stop at the doorway, and Tom gestured into the study as he said grimly, "President Fuller is in there, Miss Reed."

Sonia muttered something in acknowledgment, then poked her head into the room, only to see Toby sitting slumped on the ground with his back against the desk. His head was lowered, hiding the expression on his face, and she couldn't tell if he was asleep or passed out.

She pursed her lips and walked over to him warily, then saw how he looked up close.

The shirt he wore was wrinkled, and his necktie hung loosely around the collar. There were even pinkish and yellowish stains on his white shirt that became evidence of his rough night of drinking. She noted gravely how even his hair was mussed, and at that moment, he looked as miserable and unkempt as a weathered vagabond.

Sonia felt her heart twist at the sight of him. In two long strides, she came to a stop next to him and was immediately assaulted by the pungent scent of alcohol that wafted off him; it pricked her nose and brought tears to her eyes in record time.

Frowning, she resisted the urge to turn away from the overpowering scent, then crouched down to help Toby onto his feet.

As of now, his eyes were tightly shut, and his brows furrowed. He looked to have fallen into an uneasy sleep and had detached himself from the rest of the world.

Sonia patted his face lightly, calling out frantically, "Toby? Hey, wake up!" However, there was no response from him, and if she hadn't put a finger under his nose to make sure he was breathing, she would have thought he had died in his sleep.

Behind her, Tom was assessing Toby's condition. Having seen the latter's lack of response, he pointed out, "President Fuller is most likely wasted."

Sonia hummed. "Probably. It's no surprise, given the amount of alcohol he consumed. I guess it's fortunate that the wine he took wasn't too strong. Otherwise, we might have lost him!"

She grew furious and unsettled as she thought about the bottles she had seen scattered around the living room. While she was worried about how his body was going to purge that much alcohol, she was also outraged by how he had taken all that wine without first considering his own health.

Tom sighed. "You know, President Fuller used to dabble in much stronger stuff like whiskey or Louis XIII. There was one year where he got acute alcohol poisoning and had to get his stomach pumped at the hospital to save his life. Old Mrs. Fuller confiscated his entire liquor collection after that, then forbade the cellar to deliver liquor to him ever again. President Fuller probably knew how much of a fright he gave Old Mrs. Fuller, so he never bought hard liquor again, settling instead for red wines with lower alcohol contents."

"Oh, I see," Sonia said quietly with a nod.

"But..."

Seeing how Tom suddenly grew reluctant to speak, she allowed Toby to rest his head on her shoulder, then addressed Tom, "But what?"

Tom pinched the space between his brows. "It's more likely than not that President Fuller decided to drink away his sorrows today, hoping that the alcohol would be enough to numb him. There was a time when hard liquor was all he needed to numb the pain, but toward the end, when the alcohol wasn't enough of an escape for him, he turned to self-harming to lessen his agony."

"So you're telling me that his self-harming tendencies weren't there at the beginning?" she asked, gazing down at the man in her arms.

Nodding, Tom explained, "Yes, that's right. The self-harming only started after Old Mrs. Fuller stopped him from drinking hard liquor."

"I understand now." Sonia chewed on her lip, then carefully laid Toby down on the floor. "Mr. Brown, could you please check and see if there are any wounds on him that we should tend to while I cook him some hangover soup?"

"Of course." Having replied, Tom immediately went over to inspect Toby.

Sonia tried to smooth out the tufts and spikes of Toby's mussed hair as much as she could, then straightened up. She walked out the door and headed into the kitchen, leaving Tom and Toby in the study.

Having ascertained that there were no wounds on Toby's body, Tom heaved him up from the floor and helped him over to the couch, then sighed as he looked at the unconscious man in resignation.

In truth, with Toby's high tolerance for alcohol, it would take more than a few bottles of wine to knock him out like this. And yet, here we are. I guess President Fuller just couldn't take the sadness and the

grief anymore, and the wine actually caused his body to go into overdrive. Under normal circumstances, he would have harmed himself instead of lying unconscious on the floor.

A little over ten minutes had passed when Sonia returned with a bowl of hangover soup. Her eyes fell upon Toby's unmoving figure on the couch, and as she set the tray down, she asked Tom anxiously, "Well, how is he? Did he hurt himself?"

"You can rest easy, Miss Reed. President Fuller did not hurt himself, and I think it's because he passed out before he could do anything impulsive," Tom replied with a somber shake of his head.

Sonia sighed in relief at this. "Okay, that's good news, isn't it? Here, help me hoist him up so I can feed him some soup."

"Okay," Tom said readily. He came over and helped propped Toby up.

Taking up the bowl of hangover soup, Sonia perched on the edge of the couch and brought a spoonful of soup to her lips, thereafter blowing on it to cool it off. Then, she passed the spoon to Toby's lips.

However, it was as if his lips had been sealed shut, for there was no way for her to prod them open with the spoon. At last, the soup spilled over the corner of his mouth, and the spoon was clean once more.

"That won't do, Miss Reed. I don't think you can feed him if this goes on," Tom pointed out with a frown when he saw this.

She pursed her lips and put the spoon back into the bowl. He's right, I can't feed Toby like this, but I must. Toby had consumed too much wine, and if she couldn't feed him the hangover soup to purge the alcohol from his stomach, then he would suffer more much later. At this point, there's only one way for me to do this, but...

Sonia glanced up at Tom as a conflicted look flickered in her eyes, but it disappeared just as quickly, replaced instead by a steely gleam.

Forget it. Desperate times call for desperate matters, and I can't be bothered with decency now that saving Toby is of utmost priority. With that in mind, she raised the bowl and tipped her head back, taking a mouthful of the soup.

Upon seeing this, Tom froze and muttered in shock, "Miss Reed, did you—"

She ignored him as she set the bowl down on the coffee table, then reached out to pull Toby toward her. Leaning forward, she dipped her head and pressed her lips to Toby's, prying them open with the tip of her tongue. Having done so, she began to feed the soup slowly into his mouth.

As Tom watched this, his jaw dropped wide open. Heavens, this might just work! He realized belatedly that Sonia had only taken the soup so she could feed Toby like this. While the process was astonishing at first, he had to admit that this remained the best option to get some hangover soup into Toby's system.

Under Tom's watchful gaze, Sonia successfully siphoned the soup through Toby's lips. She lifted her head afterward, her red lips parting from Toby's as she made to repeat the process.

At the sight of her reaching for the bowl, Tom hurriedly picked it up and handed it over to her. "Here you go, Miss Reed."

She was stunned for a moment. Then, seemingly flustered, she smiled and took the bowl of soup. "Thank you."

"Don't thank me; you're doing this for President Fuller," he answered with a dismissive wave of his hand, his gaze fixed on Toby.

Sonia managed a smile, then hummed firmly in response before she tipped her head back and took another mouthful of hangover soup, then promptly leaned down to feed Toby once more. She repeated the process several times until the bowl was clean.

Placing the bowl down, Sonia let out a long, weary sigh.

Tom, on the other hand, leaped to his feet and helped Toby over to the couch once more.

While smoothing out her hair, Sonia asked, "Is there a blanket you could drape over him? We need to keep him warm while he's still unconscious. It'll take a bit of time before the hangover soup works its magic."

"Yes, I'll go get the blanket right away," Tom said, nodding earnestly before leaving the study and making his way into Toby's walk-in wardrobe.

It didn't take long for him to return with the blanket, which he handed over to Sonia promptly.