

Chapter 246

He was right. I wanted to explain but he turned his computer off and said, "You've not had your dinner yet. You must be hungry, right? Let's get you some food downstairs."

He did not wait for me to reply to him before he got up, took me with him, and went downstairs.

Miss Woods was not home, so after scouring the entire kitchen, he looked at me and said, "What do you feel like eating? I'll cook for you."

Despite not having eaten much, I did not have an appetite since I had been sleeping a lot. I replied without much consideration, "I'm fine with anything."

Theo entered the kitchen once again while I let my thoughts wander elsewhere. Grant Corporation had a strong defense system, and there were only a few local experts who could easily break into the system.

break into the system.

The first person who came to my mind was Tyler Schuman. This would be a piece of cake for him. However, since he had transformed into a successful businessman these past few years, his identity as a hacker should still be relatively hidden.

If it was really him, what was his purpose?

As I was lost in my thoughts, Theo's voice rang beside my ear. "What are you daydreaming about? Come, eat."

It was my favorite spaghetti bolognese, but since I was occupied with thoughts, I did not have much of an appetite. I held my cutlery for a long time without digging in.

"You don't feel like eating it?" Theo looked at me and asked.

"Ah...? No, it's just a little hot." I lowered my head and started eating.

"This is it just for tonight. I'll get Miss Woods to make more yummy food for you tomorrow, then we'll go to the graveyard."

graveyard.

● Oh, right, we had made plans to visit Grandmother tomorrow. I was instantly awake and my appetite increased. I finished the small plate of pasta.

Right after I was done, I regretted it since my stomach was extremely bloated now. It was too late to take a walk outside, so I could only pace around the room until Theo was done washing up. I was not in bed yet when he got out of the shower.

He looked at the time and it was almost one in the morning. He frowned and said, "Next time, don't nap too long during the day. Having inconsistent sleep and meal times isn't good for you."

"You're the one who made me eat," I replied bluntly while I made my way to the bed.

"Heartless girl, I was worried that you'd be hungry since you didn't eat anything all day," he replied exasperatedly.

"Oh yeah, your phone was ringing just now. It was probably Miss Reed. For her to call you at such an hour, it must be something urgent," I closed my eyes and stated nonchalantly.

He ignored me as he wiped himself dry. Then, he crouched by the bed and placed his head on my belly, trying to listen to the movements of the baby.

This was something that he had started doing every night. He would not leave until he heard the baby move.

I felt slightly uncomfortable. I pulled the blanket to cover myself. "It's getting late, let's sleep."

Theo lay down on his side beside me and pulled me into his arms. "This baby is most likely going to be born in Whaldorf, so let's do our next check-up there."

I nodded and said after a long while, "I think you should call Miss Reed back. What if it's something urgent?"

He looked at me intently and after a long pause, he said, "You're very contradicting."

I...

"It's up to you if you want to call her back or not. I'm going to sleep." I did not want to banter with him anymore, so I turned to the other side, ignoring him.

I had to admit that he was right. I was contradicting myself. If he called her back right away, I would feel uncomfortable about it. Now that he did not, I could not help but remind him.

Sigh, me and my busybody ways! 🙄

Theo did not answer me but hugged me tighter, and in a while, a consistent breathing sound can be heard beside me.

He had gotten up early today and was swamped with work during the day. It was not easy for him to be able to last till now.

I could not sleep, but I was afraid that I would disturb him if I moved, so I lay there without moving and allowed my thoughts to wander.

As I was thinking, I was reminded of my childhood when I was poor. Even so, I was happy.

My mother did not have money to buy me fruits, so she would plant fruit trees in all the land surrounding our house. She would also plant some corn, tomatoes, pumpkin, and many other seasonal vegetables for me to eat and fulfill my

pumpkin, and many other seasonal
● vegetables for me to eat and fulfill my
cravings.

My favorite thing to eat was roasted
sweet potatoes, and I would pester my
mother to make them for me every time
they were in season. She was patient and
would make the most tender, sweet-
smelling roasted sweet potatoes for me
every time.

They tasted so good I could still
remember the taste vividly.

After we moved to Salt City, I would roast
my own sweet potatoes too, but it was not
the same as the ones my mother roasted.

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The more I thought about it, the more excited I got. Since I was not sleepy anymore, I got out of bed and thought about going downstairs to look for some chestnuts that Miss Woods had roasted a few days ago. I wanted to curb my cravings since they had a similar flavor profile.

I sneaked out of bed so that I would not wake Theo. After the struggle, I was tired and sweaty. Alas, he was in such deep sleep that he did not stir in the slightest.

As I was just going downstairs, my phone vibrated. When I took a look at it, I saw that it was a message from Cecilia. [Wanda, I can't sleep. I'm suddenly craving the walnuts from our village.]

It was said that if two people had been living together for a long time, their thoughts would sync. I really believed it now since I did not expect us to have the same cravings at this hour. How astonishing.

Without even thinking twice, I called her.
"You've craving food from our village too? Man, I was just thinking about my mom's roasted sweet potatoes. I'm craving them!"

After hearing my voice, Cecilia was especially surprised. "Wow, you're still awake! I'm lying on my bed and I can't sleep. I suddenly thought of the walnuts we had when we were younger, so I texted you to tell you about it."

"Hehe, this is why we're besties! To think that even our cravings are in sync!" I laughed.

"I suddenly crave all the foods we used to eat in our village." Perhaps because Cecilia was pregnant, her cravings were strong as well.

"Me too, but too bad we can only dream about them. We won't be able to taste them ever again. I heard that part of the land has already been redeveloped. The fruit trees that my mother planted would all have been dug out by now." I felt a little sorrowful.

After chatting with Cecilia for a while

After chatting with Cecilia for a while more, I hung up and headed to the kitchen.

Then, my phone rang again.

I thought it would be Cecilia, but when I saw Tyler's name, a pang of irritation welled up within me. What did he want from me at this hour?

Initially, I did not want to answer it but the phone would not stop ringing. I answered it and snapped. "It's late. What do you want?"

"Are you craving the roasted sweet potatoes from our village?" His voice was cold but carried a trace of humor.

I was shocked. I instinctively took a few steps back as the hand that was holding my phone trembled. "You bugged my phone?! Are you crazy, Tyler Schuman?!"

"Don't make it sound so crude. I just want to know what you're up to and what you need," Tyler drawled casually.

"You're sick in the head." I was so angry I did not care if I made sense. If I could punch him through the phone, I would. How dare he still be self-righteous after

How dare he still be self-righteous after invading others' privacy?

"Wandy, don't be so flustered. What can I do since you usually ignore me? You left me with no choice. As your brother, I'm just worried about you. How am I in the wrong here?" he said matter-of-factly.

"This is called an invasion of privacy. I can sue you for this!" I refused to entertain him any longer and threw my phone into the fountain.

I did not know when he bugged my phone, but to think that he was lurking and stalking my every move like a demon made me so disgusted that I became nauseous.

No longer craving for anything, I lay on the sofa and simmered in my anger.

Who knew that I would fall asleep once I lay down?

When I opened my eyes again, there was a throw blanket on me. Theo was squatting on the floor right in front of me, staring intently at me.

I met his darkened expression and deep pools of eyes. I chirped, "Good morning!"

poor eyes. I chirped, "Good morning!

"When did you get down?" He looked pretty upset, and his voice was slightly husky.

"I couldn't sleep last night, and I didn't want to disturb you so I came down. I didn't expect to fall asleep," I replied with a smile.

"You mean you couldn't sleep when you were with me but you could sleep here when you were alone?" Theo cocked his eyebrows as he clenched his jaw, which accentuated his jawline.

"No." I shook my head, my mood ruined by his tone. I said coldly, "I couldn't sleep, that's all. And I didn't want to disturb you, so I came down..."

Theo saw that my expression was a little off, so he softened his own expression and sat on the sofa with me. He pulled me into his arms and said, "I'm only worried that you're going to catch a cold after sleeping here. If you can't sleep in the future, wake me up. I'll chat with you. You won't be disturbing me, okay?"

A warm sensation spread from the bottom of my heart. I felt a little

bottom of my heart. I felt a little remorseful for getting upset earlier. He was really accommodating toward me.

I did not speak anymore and snuggled closer into his arms while nodding my head slightly.

Miss Woods had prepared breakfast. After we were done eating, we drove to the graveyard. We left early so the weather was not as stuffy yet. The rain last night made the air seem fresher. The scenery along the way elevated my mood and spirits as well.

When we were hiking on the hill, Theo held all the things in one hand and held my hand in another. He was following my slow pace, and we took our time.

A 20-minute walk was prolonged to a 40-minute one. When we arrived, I stared at Grandmother's grave from afar.

However, the person standing in front of Grandmother's headstone made my expression fall.

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From afar, I saw Cindy in a black dress, standing tall before Grandmother's grave.

Theo saw her too and turned to look at me. "You invited her?" I asked him.

"Of course not?"

No matter how things were like, he would not have invited her if he was bringing me to visit Grandmother.

He stepped over and faced Cindy. His expression was cold, and his voice was low. "Why are you here?"

"Theowy, why are you here?" Cindy turned around, a look of shock etched on her face.

I scoffed in my heart. For her to wait here bright and early in the morning, it was a no-brainer that she had gotten news that Theo would be here.

Theo frowned.

"Theowy, do you really think that I came all the way here on purpose to bump into

you? I swear, I didn't know you were

the way here on purpose to bump into you? I swear, I didn't know you were coming today. I kept dreaming about Daddy and Mommy recently. Maybe it's because I've found my biological parents and they're a little unhappy about it, so I came over to visit them. Since it was on the way, I came to visit Grandmother as well. Who knew we would be fated to meet?"

Cindy's speech was well-rehearsed and even seemed genuine.

I did not know that her parents were buried here too. A pang of displeasure bloomed in my heart, so I did not pay any more attention to them. I took the things that we had brought from Theo and arranged them by Grandmother's headstone.

After arranging the flowers, I bowed as a sign of respect because my growing belly was getting in the way of me sitting down at the side of the headstone. I looked at Grandmother's warm smile in the photo on her headstone. As I reminisced about all the times she cared for me, my tears flowed down my cheeks.

lowed down my cheeks.

Theo walked over and pulled me into his embrace. He wiped my tears off my face and said in his deep voice, "She would want you to be happy, so don't cry."

I nodded faintly and turned toward the headstone. "Grandmother, how are you doing over there? Theo and I are here to visit you. Oh, right, we're expecting, Grandmother. It's your great-grandchild. The baby is healthy, and when they're born, we'll bring them to visit you once more.

"I know you were worried about us when you were still around, but Theo and I are very close now. He loves me and takes care of me. He especially loves this child a lot. He always talks to the baby before he sleeps, and I believe Theo will be a good father in the future. So don't worry about us anymore. I hope you're happy over there."

I admit I did it on purpose. I deliberately said all these for Cindy to hear.

Sure enough, the expression on her face changed. She stepped over and tugged on Theo's sleeves. "Theowy, will you accompany me to visit Daddy and

●ompany me to visit Daddy and Mommy? They must miss you a lot too."

I lowered my head. I felt like I had dug my own grave. Her trump card would forever be more powerful than mine. All I said were a few sentences and she immediately used her deceased parents to go on a guilt trip with Theo.

Theo could not reject the reasonable request that Cindy had made. He turned to me as if he was asking for my opinion.

I smiled. "I'll go with you. They saved your life, and as your wife, it's only fair that I pay them a visit as well."

After I was done, I began packing the things up. The look on Cindy's face was hideous, but she controlled herself and did not let herself snap.

Theo seemed pleased with my attitude. He smiled at me, took the basket from me, and held my hand as we led the way.

Cindy's parents were buried not too far ahead. It was a couple's grave, and their headstone looked majestic and grand. I reckoned that it was courtesy of Theo.

I looked at the photos on the headstone.

●ooked at the photos on the headstone. They were pretty good-looking, especially Cindy's mother. She was a beauty who kind of looked like Cindy, even though she was adopted.

Cindy strode toward the headstone, plopped down in front of it, and started bawling. "Daddy, Mommy, I miss you so much! Theowu is here to visit both of you today."

Even as she was speaking, her tears were flowing down her cheeks. It was a moving scene.

Theo squatted down and arranged the flowers. When he was done, he stood up and bowed as a sign of respect. His eyes were looking at the headstone, but they were unfocused. There was a pained expression on his face. Perhaps he was thinking about what had happened in the past.

I walked over and bowed as a sign of respect to the deceased.

Turning to look at Cindy, I could not tell if she was genuinely sorrowful or not. Her parents had passed away for some time now. For her to bawl like that, it seemed a

parents had passed away for some time
●w. For her to bawl like that, it seemed a
little exaggerated.

After a while, Theo said, "Let's go back."

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Cindy seemed to be still lost in her sorrow when she got up and held Theo's hand.

"Theowy, Daddy and Mommy loved me very much since I was young, but they left me too early. Thankfully, you were around to love and pamper me on behalf of them. However, all you do is ignore me now. I'm so afraid that I'll be all alone. Theowy, I beg of you, please don't abandon me, okay?"

Theo frowned as he spoke, "Stop messing around, Cindy. I'm not ignoring you. It's just that you've found your biological parents who love you, and I have my own family. It's time for me to end things."

"I don't want to! My biological parents may love me but I'm not close to them. I'm not happy at the Louises'!" Cindy wailed.

"Theowy, I don't wanna be with the Louises'. I just wanna be with you, Zedd, and Mason. You three are my family. I

Theo, I don't wanna be with the
guises'. I just wanna be with you, Zedd,
and Mason. You three are my family. I
don't want anything else. I just want us t
o be like how we used to be. I just wanna b
e your little sister and be with you every
day."

The ice on Theo's face cracked, and his
expression softened. The coldness in his
eyes had dissipated. I knew him. He may
look cold and aloof on the outside, but he
had a tender, gentle heart. After losing
his parents, he needed warmth. He was
willing to give others that warmth as well.

All this while, Cindy had been very
dependent on him. He could relate to
what she said, and it brought comfort to
his lonely heart. After spending so many
years together, it would be impossible for
him to leave her be.

Rather than saying that Cindy could not
live without Theo, he also needed her to
depend on him.

Sometimes, to be depended on was also a
way of love.

I stood at the side, watching all these
unfold before my eyes.

unfold before my eyes.

● Even though I was unhappy, I knew full well that this would happen sooner or later. He could never leave her side, and I had no leverage to fight her. Her trump card was one with unlimited use.

Theo gently lifted her off the ground and tenderly wiped her tears away.

I saw how gentle he was and the tenderness in his eyes. My heart sank. I thought I had gotten him to change recently, but it seemed like all my efforts were in vain.

I had lost, and it was a crushing defeat.

On the way back to the city, none of us spoke a word. I was in the passenger seat with my eyes fixed ahead. Cindy was sitting behind, occasionally weeping. Theo was focused on driving. The atmosphere was odd.

I could no longer ignore my inner turmoil so I turned to Theo and said, "Stop at the T-junction in front. I have something to do later so I'll head back myself afterward."

He turned to me, looking slightly displeased. "What are you going to do?"

displeased. "What are you going to do?"

I plastered a smile onto my face, but it did not reach my eyes. I replied gently, "There's a fruit shop further up. Cecilia is craving walnuts, so I'm gonna go get her some. I could use a walk too."

"I'll go with you." His voice was cold.

"It's okay, I want to walk by myself." My inner turmoil was unbearable, so I subconsciously raised my voice.

"It's really sunny out, and it's easy to get a heatstroke." He was relentless.

"I've said it's unnecessary. Can't you understand?!" I exploded. I later realized that something was not right with my emotions. I calmed down and spoke slowly, "I have an umbrella, and it's really near the hospital. You can send Miss Reed home, then come over and get me, okay?"

Theo looked at me, and after a long time, he agreed. "Go straight to the hospital. Don't buy any fruits as they're too heavy to carry. I'll get some later and send them over."

I nodded. I could not stand the atmosphere in the car. No matter what it

I nodded. I could not stand the atmosphere in the car. No matter what it was, I just wanted to be let out of the car straight away.

After I got down, I smiled and waved goodbye. I stood at the side of the road, where I watched them leave like a considerate and obedient wife.

I could not hold it any longer once the car disappeared from my line of sight. My energy was drained, and it seemed like there was a ball of fire burning in my chest. It was painful and made me miserable. I felt like I was going to explode. I had a strong urge to just run into the rush of traffic.

While shaking, I tried to look for my phone to call Jerome. I could not find it and only remembered a while later that I had thrown my phone away yesterday.

I staggered forward, trying very hard to stabilize my emotions so I did not lose control and rush into traffic.

It was a hot afternoon in June. The sun was scalding, scorching the land. The greenery beside me seemed to have been burnt to cinders. However, my body felt

was scalding, scorching the land. The greenery beside me seemed to have been burnt to crisps. However, my body felt like I was in the harshest of winters with ice covering me from my head to my toes. I was so cold I was shivering.

When I could not take another step, I squatted down on the pedestrian lane and covered my ears. I tried very hard to block out the sound of the cars. 1

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I knew in my heart that I could not continue like this, and it was not that big of a deal. I had gone through things that were ten times or even a hundred times worse than this. I should not take this small matter to heart. However, my brain refused to cooperate with me and dialed up my emotions to the extreme.

I was dizzy and in a daze when I vaguely saw two people running toward me. They seemed like Jerome and Xander, but they also looked like Theo and Mason. I could not take it any longer and closed my eyes shut.

“Wanda, are you okay?”

I think I heard someone calling out to me. I tried to open my eyes, only to see Jerome’s worried face above me. With much difficulty, I tried to tell him, “I feel unwell...”

“You were standing under the hot sun. Of course, you’d feel unwell. You don’t have to be so harsh on yourself even if you’re self-harming.”

self-harming.”

“Stop talking. Quick, carry her to the car.” It sounded like Xander’s voice.

I was soon carried into a car on the opposite side of the road. A wave of coolness washed over me, and my mind was slightly refreshed. I slowly opened my eyes and saw Jerome and Xander’s worried faces. I spoke slowly, “It’s the both of you?”

“If it weren’t for us, you would’ve been done for today. I thought you were okay yesterday? Why did it suddenly become so severe? Why were you self-harming like that?” Jerome touched my forehead incredulously.

“Women who harm themselves because of an argument are stupid women.” Xander glared at me.

I suddenly remembered that I was wearing a dress. For me to be lying in front of two men like this was a little distasteful. I struggled to sit up, and my voice was hoarse. “I wasn’t self-harming. It’s just that the sun was too strong and I suddenly couldn’t continue walking.”

walking."

The two of them exchanged a glance, looking as though they had understood something. They never brought it up again. Xander passed me a bottle of water from the driver's seat.

After a few mouthfuls, my throat felt more comfortable. I asked Jerome, "Are you two going to visit Cecilia as well?"

"Of course, and it was fortunate that we passed by this place at this time." Jerome patted his chest, looking like he had witnessed and survived something horrifying.

After the tormenting experience, it felt like I had survived once more. The burning sensation in my chest was gone as well. I said, "Can we go to the hospital a little later? Can you guys accompany me to get a new phone? I've lost mine."

It was a nuisance to be without a phone. If I ever went through such an episode again, I was not sure if I could be as fortunate as today and bump into the two of them.

Xander nodded, ignited the engine, and drove to a shop.

rove to a shop.

When we arrived, I wanted to get down from the car but Jerome stopped me. Since Xander was a celebrity and it was not convenient for him to show his face in public, I waited with him in the car while Jerome went down and bought me a new phone.

He quickly came back with a new phone. He passed it to me and said, "I bought a locally manufactured phone. Its protective measures are above average."

I looked at him in surprise but did not say anything more.

We did not speak another word until we reached the hospital. I went to Cecilia's ward first to chat with her, then I went over to visit Doctor Lynch. His injuries were more serious, so he looked frail and weak. It was not convenient for me to stay much longer, so I left.

I was afraid that Cecilia would be able to tell there was a heavy weight upon my heart and she would worry about me. Hence, I decided to head home right away.

Before I left, I went to say goodbye to Xander and Jerome, who were still on the underground floor.

Xander and Jerome, who were still on the underground floor.

From afar, I could see that both of them seemed to be arguing about something, and both appeared agitated. Jerome looked so emotional that he nearly attacked Xander.

Xander, on the other hand, was composed as he stared at Jerome coldly. There were a few instances when I thought that his expression was growing darker.

I walked up to them and said to Jerome, "You should go up and accompany Cecilia. I gotta go."

Xander said, "I'll go with you."

Jerome's already upset face looked even more awful as he glared at Xander. It was almost like he wanted to eat him alive.

I was confused. They were okay in the car just now, so how did they end up like this now? I looked at Xander and said, "I'm gonna call a cab, which isn't the best option for you. I think you should wait for Jerome and go back with him."

"She's right. Do you think you're an

Jerome and go back with him.

●
“She’s right. Do you think you’re an ordinary man who can just walk openly in public? If you don’t want to be the breaking news for tomorrow’s paper, you’d better be good and wait for me.”
When Jerome was done speaking, he lifted his handsome face smugly.

Xander frowned. Then, his lips curled into a smirk. “I don’t have all the time in the world to banter with you.”

“Who’s the one bantering? Are you really that shameless?” Jerome was seething in anger.