

message. After ending the call, I couldn't sleep and had nothing to do, so I went to his study out of boredom.

As I was constantly occupied by work previously, I rarely had time to look through the books here. Now that I had some time off, I deserved to laze around for a bit.

Ashton's study was very large and there were all kinds of books here. I flipped through some books with illustrations to pass the time, and it didn't take long for my back to feel sore.

I put down the book in my hand and wandered around the study. My gaze



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fell on a small cabinet tucked in the corner that looked slightly dated.

Out of curiosity, I searched through it and found some photos. They were quite old and worn, but I could tell that they were all photos of Ashton when he was young.

I've never met Ashton's parents, so an old and faded photo of a young couple holding a baby together with smiles on their faces caught my eye.

The man's eyes were quite similar to Ashton and Grandpa's, so I deduced that he must be Ashton's father. Hence, the woman, who looked gentle and elegant, was probably Ashton's mother.

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I flipped through the album and noticed that something didn't add up. The next few photos showed Ashton's parents carrying a baby girl. Confused, I turned back the pages and found that there were indeed several photos where there was a little girl, about two to three years old, standing beside Ashton's parents.

In the past, Grandpa told me that Ashton was his parents' only child. I don't recall there ever being a daughter. As for Uncle Charlie and his wife, I heard that they didn't want any kids, so this couldn't be their daughter either.

Just who is this little girl in the photo?

Silence stretched out between us before I spoke again. "Since I'm pregnant now, I'm afraid I'll have to trouble you for the time being. As for everything else, I have my own plans. Thank you, Dr. Crest."

He probably thought I didn't understand him as a crease formed between his brows, but he didn't say any more.

He sighed. "I have something to do later on. Remember to eat your medicine. I'll take off first."

After seeing him off, I didn't eat the bowl of ginger carrot soup Ashton cooked for me as my stomach felt

There was a boy who looked bubbly and enthusiastic. All of them were good-looking in their own way, but this boy had a paler complexion, seeming like he had some kind of health condition. Because I didn't recognize him, I didn't try to figure out who he was.

The girl standing among the four boys was none other than Rebecca. At that time, she still gave off an innocent and shy vibe.

It was obvious at first glance that she was the precious little princess everyone coddled. How lucky.

After looking through all the photos, I

felt like my heart was being squeezed by an invisible force. Ashton and Rebecca had a long history, while I had only known him for barely two years.

If it weren't for my grandma's illness and desperation which led her to bring me to meet Grandpa George, I would never have had the chance to marry Ashton.

If anything, I had only relied on Grandma and Grandpa George to marry Ashton. It was justifiable that he harbored no feelings toward me.

Come to think of it, even after such a long time, I never once stopped to think just how Grandma and Grandpa



Come to the

long time, I never once stopped to think just how Grandma and Grandpa George came to know each other.

Logically speaking, the Fullers were wealthy and influential, while Grandma was a rural old lady who lived in the countryside. Just how did they meet each other?



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Unwittingly, I had stayed in Ashton's study until the sky turned dark. I couldn't tell if it was because of my pregnancy, but I didn't feel hungry even after not having anything to eat for the whole day, but my stomach did feel uncomfortable.

I went downstairs and rummaged through the kitchen cabinets for something to eat. Fortunately, Stacey stocked up enough food previously. After some time, I spotted some cucumbers in the refrigerators. Since I was too lazy to cook, I simply washed some cucumbers and planned to eat that as my dinner.

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I didn't notice Ashton returning to the villa. It wasn't until I walked out with a slippery cucumber in hand that I saw him sitting in the living room.

When did he come back?

Sensing my presence, Ashton turned his head, his eyes instantly zooming in on the cucumber in my hand. A frown appeared on his face as he asked in a gruff voice, "What do you plan on doing with that?"

I was baffled, and answered in a matter-of-fact manner, "Eat it, of course!" *What else can I do with this besides eating it?*

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Ashton scoffed. "Did I fail to satisfy you? Is that why you've resorted to using that?"

What?

I couldn't quite grasp where he was going with this. *What does he mean by "using that"?*

He stood up and approached me with a brooding look on his face. I couldn't figure out what was up with him, so I raised the cucumber in my hand and asked, "Do you want one?" I just so happened to wash two cucumbers just now.

Ashton's gaze turned stormy as he growled, "No!" Before I knew it, he had snatched the cucumber in my hand and thrown it aside. His hand wrapped around my waist, while the other hand reached up to my lips, grazing them with his fingertips.

No matter how slow-witted I was, I still realized what he wanted to do right now. I instinctively tried to make a run for it, but his arm was holding me firmly in place. In a deep and husky voice, he said, "It's already been a few days. We should be in the clear now!"

I just couldn't hear the logic in his words.

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"Ash..." My words were cut off by his actions. I reached up to try and push him away. Unfortunately, he overpowered me as a man, and I was utterly powerless against him.

When I felt his arousal against my belly, my eyes widened. *He...*

"Ashton, don't..." I gasped halfway through my sentence.

"No, Ashton, we are so not in the clear! There's still a risk of infection!" Rebecca just recently had a miscarriage, so he couldn't touch her, and the same was true for me. Hence, I could understand why he was acting

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like a sex-deprived man now.

Seeing him ignore my warnings, I started to panic. "Ashton, the doctor said to abstain for a month. Please!"

I was on the verge of tears.

Perhaps he heard the plea in my voice, because he gradually stopped what he was doing. Without a word, he hugged me tightly in his arms, then gently traced my collarbone with his lips.

After a long time, he finally calmed his raging hormones and released me.

"Hungry?" he asked with hooded eyes.

I was slightly embarrassed because of

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how loud my stomach had growled.

With a slight nod, I cracked a smile that looked more like a grimace. "I didn't eat anything since I woke up."

Ashton was stunned, then his eyes fell on the cucumber from just now. He transferred his gaze back to me, a complicated expression on his face. "You were going to eat the cucumber just now?"

I nodded. "I don't feel like cooking because of the smoke and grease, so I washed two cucumbers."

He gazed at me as the corners of his mouth tugged upward slightly, as if he was smiling but exasperated at the

same time.

A moment passed before he went into the kitchen. After a while, he came out with a bowl of noodles. He even added two eggs to it.

When he saw the way I was gaping at him, he cocked a brow at me and said, "Come and eat!" Although it was an order, it didn't sound unpleasant.

What Jared said to me earlier today surfaced in my mind. *If I come clean with Ashton, will he really handle this matter?*

I got up and sat at the dining table. Noticing that Ashton had only cooked

one bowl of noodles, I blinked in surprise. "You've already eaten?"

He nodded and motioned for me to quickly eat. Then, he lowered his head and read through the messages on his phone.

The noodles looked and smelled delicious, but after only a few bites of it, my stomach started to churn.

I managed to endure the discomfort for a while, but could no longer suppress the nausea rising in my stomach and began to dry heave.

Without a second's delay, I ran to the bathroom and emptied my stomach of its contents.

"Does it taste bad?" A cold voice reached my ears and I froze. Looking over my shoulder, I saw Ashton standing by the door.

I hurriedly shook my head. "No. Maybe after going a whole day without food, my stomach couldn't handle it when I finally ate something."

He helped me up and tugged me upstairs, making me slightly confused.

"What's wrong?"

He took off his suit and changed into casual wear, then glanced at me to announce, "Change your clothes. I'll take you out to eat whatever you feel



like eating.”

I was taken aback and quickly objected. “I’m not hungry, so I won’t be able to eat even if we go out.”

However, my words seemed to fall on deaf ears because he pierced me with a gaze and said in a tone that left no room for discussion. “I’ll wait for you outside!”

To be honest, I really wasn’t hungry, but...

After mulling over it, I still changed my clothes and went out with him.

At this hour, J City was buzzing with

activity. While Ashton was driving, he glanced at me and asked, "What do you feel like eating?"

I turned over the question in my mind before answering, "Something light!"

It might be because morning sickness was starting to hit me, so I constantly felt nauseated by certain odors.

He nodded slightly in response. As I studied the gentle look on his

handsome face, I suddenly realized that this was the most peaceful day Ashton and I had shared since the day we got married.

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For a transient moment, I deluded myself into thinking that the two of us could stay like this forever, and that our family of three could live happily ever after.

The car stopped in front of a cozy-looking restaurant. I got down and went straight into the restaurant to find us a table.

It looked like not many people came here at night, so as soon as I sat down, the waiter handed me a menu. Since Ashton already had his dinner and I was having an upset stomach, I ordered some light bites and a bowl of

pumpkin soup.

To my surprise, after Ashton parked his car, he came in with Rebecca and Joe flanking him.

A coincidence? Or did they plan this beforehand?

Seeing that I was already seated, Ashton and the two of them came over to join me. When Rebecca saw me, there was a subtle shift in her expression, but she didn't make any remarks since this was a table meant for four.

Because I was already seated, Rebecca sat down next to me before

Ashton could. She peered at me and asked in a voice as sweet as nectar, "You don't mind me sitting beside you, right, Scarlett?"

Could I say that I minded it?

Of course not!

Hence, I remained silent.

"What did you order?" Ashton asked as he took the menu from the waiter.

"Some small bites and a bowl of soup," I replied.

He nodded and chose a few items from the menu. Just then, Joe pursed his lips and complained, "Don't order

anything for me, Ashton. I don't have an appetite."

Ashton nodded and gave the menu back to the waiter.

Thereafter, the three of them started to chat. I couldn't join in their conversation, so I simply stayed silent.

The waiter brought over a bowl of pumpkin soup after a while. The moment he placed it on the table, Ashton naturally pushed it toward Rebecca and said in a deep voice, "I ordered this for you. Drink some. It'll warm you up."

Rebecca beamed. "Pumpkin soup is

my absolute favorite! You really do know me best, Ashton!"

The chemistry between them was like a knife stabbing straight into my heart.

He remembered many things about her down to the tiniest details. His bone-deep affection toward her was

something I could never earn even if I were given a whole lifetime to pursue it.

"Scarlett, what soup did you order? Why don't we share? The pumpkin soup here is really good. Ash used to bring me here, so I know." Without waiting for me to reply, Rebecca pushed the bowl of soup in front of



me.

I shook my head and pushed the bowl back with a smile. "I ordered one too. It'll be here soon."

She shrugged and continued chatting with the two men, making me feel slightly left out.

Before long, the small bites and soup I ordered were served. Rebecca noticed that I had also ordered pumpkin soup and smiled innocently at me. "It looks like you like pumpkin soup too, Scarlett. Let me tell you a secret. Ashton makes the best soup!"

As she spoke, she leaned so close to

me that I could feel her breath on my neck. I didn't like it when others came too close to me, so I shifted slightly with a frown on my face.

"Ow!" Suddenly, my half-eaten bowl of pumpkin soup was spilled all over me, making a complete mess.

Because it was hot, my knee-jerk reaction was to stand up, but I accidentally bumped into Rebecca who was leaning close to me. Following that was her whimper of pain.

The blistering pain from getting scalded was so unbearable that I couldn't be bothered to apologize, frantically reaching out to grab a piece

of tissue to wipe the soup on my legs. Before coming out, I had only changed into a dress because Ashton was already waiting for me. The dress was thin, so my skin was already red.

After wiping most of the soup from my legs, I looked up to see that Ashton was crouched in front of Rebecca as he carefully wiped her bleeding nose.

I thought back and realized that I must have knocked her nose when I got up too abruptly just now, so...

Joe grabbed a tissue and handed it to Ashton, glaring at me as he spat, "Are you always such a klutz, Ms. Stovall?"

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I was momentarily at a loss for words.

Looking at Rebecca's swollen eyes and her bleeding nose, I forced an apology through the ache in my heart. "I'm sorry, Ms. Larson."

I was certain that I didn't touch the bowl of pumpkin soup just now. Other than Rebecca, who was the closest to me, I couldn't think of anyone who would be so lame as to intentionally spill a bowl of soup on me.

"It's fine, Scarlett. Just be more careful next time." After that, Rebecca turned her red-rimmed eyes to Ashton. "Ash, I've lost my appetite. Can you go for a stroll with me?"

Ashton frowned, looking at the untouched food on the table and said, "Eat a little bit first."

It seemed like amid this crisis, no one had noticed that I was scalded or even realized that the soup was spilled on me.

Standing by the side, I suddenly felt that my presence was redundant and laughable.

"I'm leaving," I announced, then turned and left to the restaurant. My heart felt like it had been stabbed with a blade made of pure ice, the agony almost making my legs give out beneath me.

God is so unfair. He gifted some women with happiness, while other women with suffering.

"Scarlett!" A low and furious voice came from behind me. I looked back and saw that Ashton had followed me out.

He looked at me with furrowed brows, seemingly controlling his anger when he asked, "What are you doing?"

What am I doing? Is it accusation I'm detecting in his tone? Is he accusing me of knocking into Rebecca?

"I don't have an appetite, so I'm going home." Feeling miserable, I didn't want



"I don't have an off-

home." Feeling miserable, I didn't want to say too much for fear of losing control of my emotions and ending up airing my grievances to him.



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He strode toward me with a displeased look on his face. "Scarlett, is this how you were brought up?"

I raised my head when he grabbed my wrist, my eyes colliding with his icy ones. As we stared at each other, a humorless smile abruptly stretched across my lips. "You're talking to me about upbringing? Ashton Fuller, what exactly is your version of a good upbringing? Taking care of another woman in front of your own wife and completely disregarding her feelings? Is that it?"

Ignoring the grim expression on his face, I sneered. "Do you mean to say