

that Rebecca is a cultured person? She brazenly covets another woman's husband and has no qualms being a homewrecker. Just how were you brought up that made you have such different views about a good upbringing compared to me?"

"Scarlett!" His hand on my wrist tightened. The veins on his forehead bulged out as he forced his next words through gritted teeth. "You should feel lucky that I don't hit women."

I huffed out a laugh, enduring the bone-crushing pain on my wrist as I looked at him. "How kind of you, Mr. Fuller. But can you do me a favor and let go of me? Grabbing a woman's wrist so hard

is no different than hitting a woman.”

Ashton was so angry that he looked like he might pop a vein any second now. Fortunately, he flung my hand away. “Don’t act like you know Rebecca. You’re not worthy of judging her!” His voice was harsh.

He swiveled around, emanating an impossibly cold aura.

I’m not worthy? His words struck a nerve in me. All my pent-up anger and frustration poured out of me in raging torrents. I stormed toward him and yanked his arm, cracking a smile that didn’t reach my eyes. “Yes, you’re right. I’m not worthy. In terms of hypocrisy,

indeed, I can't compare to Rebecca. In fact, how could I ever compare to the bunch of you since playing on other people's feelings isn't my forte? As if that isn't revolting enough, you lot just can't help yourselves from spreading your filth to others."

Having said that, I ignored the anger radiating off him and went back into the restaurant. Rebecca and Joe were still sitting at the same table.

Upon seeing me return, Rebecca plastered a fake smile on her face and called out to me in a pretentious tone, "Scarlett..."

Slicing her a look that could kill, I

poured all the food and soup I had ordered onto her head, all trace of restraint in me already gone.

Without waiting for her to react, I said, "I don't know how you turned out to be such a vicious attention-seeker who loves bullying others while playing the victim, or how you became a b*tch who loves stealing things that clearly don't belong to you, but let me tell you something, hmm? Karma is a b*tch, and all your evil deeds will come back and bite you in the a** someday."

"Since you like second-hand goods so much, I'll grant your wish. To tell you the truth, yes, I have feelings for Ashton. But honestly speaking, when it

comes to his wandering eye, I feel sick just thinking about it. In fact, it's loathsome. So please, spend more time with him, or god forbid he starts sleeping around. Disgusting!"

"Scarlett!" An angry voice resounded from the restaurant's entrance.

I didn't spare him a glance. *So what if he's angry?* I was a saint compared to them and their backstabbing ways.

After saying my piece, I pivoted on my heels and walked out. As I brushed past Ashton's shoulder at the door, my elbow was grasped tightly by him. My temper got the best of me and I lowered my head to bite him hard.

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Initially, I thought that he would let go, but he scooped me up without warning and roughly threw me into the car before starting the engine.

He drove recklessly throughout the whole journey, causing nausea to wash over me once again due to the bumpy ride.

Luckily, the car stopped not too long afterward. Before I could whoop with joyful relief, I was hauled out of the car and carried into the villa.

Ashton was livid as he briskly brought me into the bedroom.

Bang! The sound of the door slamming reverberated throughout the entire

villa.

"Let me go! Ashton Fuller, you're such a sorry excuse of a man!" Trepidation swelled in me and I spoke in an unbridled manner.

He sneered and wrapped his hand around my throat to keep me quiet, glowering at me with a hint of violence in his eyes. "A sorry excuse of a man? My wandering eye? I'm disgusting?"

The strength of his grip increased and his pupils constricted while he growled menacingly, "You really surprised me, Scarlett."

His hand around my neck cut off my airway, causing me to suffocate. I kicked him hard several times, because even though I couldn't speak, I wasn't going to back down without a fight. Remaining stubborn to the end was better than surrendering myself to his torture.

We locked gazes, staring each other down.

After some time, I could barely breathe, causing my brain to be in an oxygen deficit. A wave of dizziness crashed into me. *He wants to strangle me to death!*

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Shortly after, he loosened his grip. As soon as I was free, he leaned over and sealed my lips with his, making it hard for me to draw in some much-needed air.

Unable to move an inch, I was so angry my chest heaved violently. After he pulled back, I snapped at him, "Bullying a woman. That's the only thing you're good at?"

He curled his lips just as his gaze turned ravenous.

Panic rose in me when I saw the brutal and hostile glint in his eyes. "You can't do this to me, Ashton!" My voice

trembled when I spoke.

He caged me in and kissed me wildly.

My brows scrunched together from his biting kiss and I grew flustered. "You will regret this, Ashton!"

He momentarily paused in his actions and uttered in a low and hoarse voice, "Be a good girl. I'll be gentler."

*B*stard!*

I broke down all of a sudden, all the accumulated grievances and heartache bursting out of me like water from a broken dam.

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Tears rolled down my cheeks, and my muffled sobs gradually turned into piercing wails of anguish. I couldn't care less about how Ashton felt at that moment.

He stopped in the end, softening his tone to soothe me. However, the more he comforted me, the louder I cried.

In the end, he stopped talking and just held me in his arms since neither gentle coaxing nor harsh threats worked on me.

Once the waterworks started, it was close to impossible to stop it. He was

left with no choice but to embrace me and let me cry it all out.

After a long while, I had finally cried myself hoarse. With my tears all dried up now, I started to quiet down.

"Are you done crying?" he asked in a low and hoarse voice.

I wasn't in the mood to talk to him now. My eyes were so swollen that I could barely open them.

"Four years ago, I brought Grandpa to the southwest border to meet his old comrade-in-arms. On the road, we ran into a group of outlaws." As he hugged me and spoke, I could hear the

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melancholy and sorrow in his voice, surprising me quite a bit.

I didn't know where he was going with this, so I remained silent and allowed him to hug me while I listened to him.

"The border was poor and supplies were scarce there. At that time, several border countries were at war with each other. Those outlaws sought asylum and broke into the home of Grandpa's comrade, trying to threaten us into taking them in. The situation was urgent then. Undocumented individuals were not allowed to sneak into the country. Grandpa was a veteran who guarded the country for decades and would never violate the laws, so he immediately declared that he wouldn't



comply. They were outlaws, so when Grandpa disagreed, they were going to kill him. Grandpa's comrade died to protect us."

When he suddenly stopped speaking, I looked up at him and asked curiously, "Then what happened?" My voice was severely hoarse from all the crying just now.

Seeing me take the initiative to ask him, the corners of his mouth rose slightly and he dropped a kiss on my forehead.

With that, he continued, "Then, Grandpa and I fled all the way back into the country. We were running for our

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lives, so we looked the worse for wear.

Halfway, we met a pair of siblings, a boy and a girl. They traveled from D City to abroad for business. Grandpa and I had basically lost all our money and identification documents while we were on the run, so we could only borrow money from the brother and sister for our return back home, but we never expected the outlaws to follow us all the way there, so we ended up dragging the pair of siblings into our mess..."

By then, I had already made a few guesses of my own.

I looked at him and asked, "The pair of siblings were Rebecca and her

brother?"

He nodded. "Parker sustained a heart injury, so I took him back here to recuperate. He could be cured, but something happened later on. Before he died, he entrusted me to take care of Rebecca."

"They rescued you, so why didn't Grandpa approve of you and Rebecca?" *If Grandpa approved of my marriage to Ashton, why not Rebecca?* After all, she showed up earlier than me, and she and her brother had even saved their lives.

When he saw me staring at him with big round eyes, his lips stretched into a

broad smile. "Feeling better now?"

This was the first time he was smiling at me. His smile was gentle, angelic even. There was no coldness or ferocity in sight, only joy.

My breath hitched and I felt shy all of a sudden, trying to squirm out of his arms. "You haven't answered my question!"

"Those aren't important anymore. It's getting late. We should sleep now!" He pulled me against his chest and pressed my hand to his crotch, rasping out in a deep voice, "Scarlett, you have to finish what you started."

My eyes widened as I stared at him with incredulity, and my cheeks flushed crimson red. *This man...*

"I'm not fully recovered yet!" I protested in a tiny voice.

His breathing grew heavy.

I...

This night was going to be a long one.

It finally ended in the middle of the night. He carried me into the bathroom and helped me wash up before cuddling me to sleep.

In the morning, sunlight seeped through the gaps in the floor-to-ceiling

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windows. The dappled beams of light on the ground looked like candle lights.

Ashton left for work early, while I lazed in bed for a long time, feeling tired from sleeping so late. When I finally got up, I swept my gaze around the messy bedroom. The air still had a sensual quality to it, hinting of the events that unfurled in here.

Scenes from last night flooded my mind, making me blush furiously.

I never knew that Ashton had such a side!

I was supposed to go to the company

today. By the time I got ready, it was already almost ten. Skipping breakfast, I drove directly to the company.

After I parked my car in the parking lot, I was unfortunate to run into Joe at the elevator. Both he and his secretary were holding a stack of papers. Upon seeing me, he released a cold sneer and mocked, "Ms. Stovall, you're not even the CEO yet, but here you are, acting like you're the president. Is Fuller Corporation going to be changed to Stovall Corporation?"

Fuller Corporation started as a real estate company, but in the past few years, it had also began to venture into other markets. Joe had previously

other markets
started his own company, but after
Fuller Corporation was listed and
needed capital flow support, Quinn
Corporation merged with Fuller
Corporation.

Joe was a shareholder and managed
the company as well. Even though I
was also a shareholder, I didn't own
many shares, and these shares were
left by Grandpa George for me. Hence,
even though the shares were under my
name, my right to use them was in
Ashton's hands.

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I wasn't given the position of director right from the start, but had worked my a** off these two years to earn it. But of course, to outsiders, I was someone who used my title as Mrs. Fuller to climb through the ranks.

That was especially the case for Joe, who assumed I relied on Ashton to gain the position of director. Hence, he greatly looked down on me.

I shot a fleeting glance at the documents in his hands, noting that it was a plan about electronic technology. It seemed like there was going to be a new product launch

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soon.

"Mr. Quinn, you're taking it a little too far with your jokes. How could Fuller Corporation ever become something else? I simply took two days off from work because I wasn't feeling well, so I'm very touched that you're so concerned about a mere director like me, Mr. Quinn. Though, it looks like you're quite busy with work, so it's better if you focus on getting it done. If you have too many things on your mind, you'd inevitably make mistakes, don't you agree?"

There were only three of us in the elevator, and I didn't intend to let him trample on me. However, his secretary was present after all, so I felt quite

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awkward getting into an argument with him here.

Just as he was about to respond, the elevator doors opened, causing him to bite back his retort. In the end, he only shot me a cold glare and stepped out.

Back in my own office, before I could even settle down, Stacey came in. "Ms. Stovall, Mr. Fuller wants to see you in his office."

My butt hasn't even warmed my seat.

How did Ashton know that I've arrived at the company?

Shaking off my bewilderment, I nodded and replied, "Alright. I'll head up in a

bit.”

In Ashton's office.

Without a single soul here, the large and spacious office area was quiet and empty. I pursed my lips, thinking that only Ashton could stand working in such an environment.

After scanning the area, I spotted Joseph in the secretary's office with his eyes fixated on his computer, busy with something. I walked over and knocked on his door.

He raised his head and looked over, slightly taken aback when he saw that it was me. “Ms. Stovall, Mr. Fuller is in

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Mr. Quinn's office. He'll be back soon."

I nodded. "Alright. Don't mind me."

Then, I went into Ashton's office and took a book from the shelf before sitting in the lounging area to read it. After the project with Dr. Ludwick was completed, a lot of things had cropped up, so the company hadn't yet arranged any more projects for me.

I assumed that Ashton called me here to assign me work for the days ahead.

When I thought about my plans for this period of time, I began to feel conflicted. It would have been so much easier if Ashton remained cold and

impassive to me like he always did. However, his attitude toward me had taken a drastic turn recently, causing me to have second thoughts.

If I leave now, would my child and I be missing out on something good?

"Ashton, when Parker died, you promised you'd take care of Rebecca. Don't you think you're breaking your promise to him by treating Rebecca like that? Have you ever considered Rebecca's feelings? Besides, that woman Scarlett isn't even compatible with you, no?" The voice that spoke was anxious and rushed. I could instantly tell that it belonged to Joe.

I wasn't eavesdropping, but they just

happened to walk in. Not to mention, Joe spoke so loudly, so it was inevitable.

Ashton and Joe entered the office just then. Upon seeing me, Ashton raised his brows. "When did you arrive?"

"Just now." I gave Joe a sidelong glance and spied the indifferent look on his face.

"Two companies under HiTech will be launching new products this month. Follow up with them and keep tabs on OrbitTech as well," Ashton said to me. He took a file from his table and handed it to me before continuing, "Also, the company's annual review is

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approaching. Our contract with AC Credit is ending, so go check with finance. If we need to continue the collaboration, follow up with them. If not, go to Harrison Credit and discuss it with their boss, Nick Harrison."

"Hasn't everything with AC Credit been going well? Why switch to another audit firm?" Joe interjected and asked in confusion, "Besides, Harrison Credit is only a recently established small company. Letting them handle Fuller Corporation's complicated financial structure is risky. If something goes wrong, things will get messy."

Without answering Joe, Ashton said to me, "Look over these documents. Find



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Joseph if you have any questions.”

I wordlessly took the documents from him, but I shared the same worries as Joe. Hesitating for a moment, I finally decided to voice it out. “Mr. Fuller, I was previously in charge of constructions. HiTech is an electronic technology company, and I’ve never once handled the company’s audit. Joseph has always been the one who handled these things, so I think it’s better if he continues doing it.”

Ashton’s eyes pierced through me as he frowned. “Ms. Stovall, are you clear about your responsibilities as a director?”

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Slightly stunned, I nodded at him. "I am, but..."

"No buts. Since you're a director as well as a shareholder of the company, you are entitled to familiarize yourself with any part of the company."

With that, he looked at Joe and began giving him his orders.

I held the documents, aware that there was no way for me to back out of this. I also realized that the workload this time was unusually heavy.

Back in my office, I called for Stacey and got her to make the arrangements for me to her best capabilities. During

and got her to make
for me to her best capabilities. During
this period of time, we had to observe
HiTech's market, so we would probably
be very busy for the upcoming days.

