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Emery shook her head slightly. "There's no substantive evidence, but all signs point to Fuller Corporation. Also, all the companies abroad are now unable to continue operating."

"Isn't Joe in charge of everything overseas?"

She looked at me in surprise before frowning. "Have you been living under a rock for too long? An infectious virus broke out in Western Europe a month ago and it's total chaos over there. Shopping malls were robbed and used for riots. It's already a blessing to be able to survive there, so making money is definitely out of the question."

I really had no idea about all this. I had been too busy with the Lavelian Village project recently and barely read any international news.

There was a knock on the door before Hunter poked his head in. He was carrying a briefcase and dressed in a grey suit with his hair combed neatly. After briefly greeting me, he glanced at Emery and said, "Honey, I have another class in the evening, so I'll be back slightly later. I've booked the flight to J City and packed your suitcase. Go have a look later and see if I missed anything out."

Smiling sweetly, Emery got up with Xavier in her arms. "I'm sure there won't be a problem. I've always taken pride in my hubby's capabilities. C'mon, I'll send you off."

The two of them acted lovey-dovey and went downstairs. When my bedroom was quiet once again, I sat in front of the vanity mirror and replayed Emery's words in my mind.

When I came downstairs, Ashton was already gone.

Catching me glancing around, Cameron smiled helplessly. "He's gone. He waited such a long time for you. He's busy too, you know?"

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I bowed my head, unsure of what to say. After some thought, I looked at Cameron and asked, "Mom, where's Dad?" I had unconsciously blurted out those words.

All I could think of was what Emery said earlier, so I didn't realize that I had just officially acknowledged them as my parents.

Suddenly, I noticed the surprise and joy on Cameron's face as she gazed at me with red-rimmed eyes. Because she was struggling to keep her tears at bay, a few prominent wrinkles had formed on the corners of her eyes. She parted her lips a few times to speak, but perhaps she was too emotional, she only ended up saying, "My dear, did you just..."

She trailed off, as if afraid to ask, and there was also a trace of disbelief sprawled on her face. In the end, she could no longer hold back her tears. She raised her hand and frantically wiped them away, but more tears poured down.

Tears welled in my eyes all of a sudden, and I couldn't help but recall Emery's advice. Indeed, I wasn't the only one suffering in silence.

Even though I was the victim, when a mother hurt her own child, yes, the child felt pain, but the mother's pain was one that ran deep into the soul.

I looked at her and repeated my question with a smile. "Mom, where's Dad?"

Cameron replicated my smile with a tear-streaked face and pointed somewhere behind me. "He's there." Then, she raised her voice slightly. "Zachary, did you hear what our daughter said just now? She's looking for you!"

With that, she bowed her head and wiped her tears, but she couldn't seem to keep the smile from her face.

I looked over my shoulder and was stunned to see Zachary holding the newspaper while looking at me with a small smile and reddened eyes. When he saw me looking at him, he asked in a slightly shaky voice, "What is it?"

I could somewhat relate to how they were feeling at the moment. The first time Summer called me mommy, I held her in my arms for a very long time, overwhelmed with indescribable happiness.

I replied, "I want to know about the situation at Ashton's company."

Zachary smiled and motioned for me to take a seat.

He took a moment to rein in his emotions while Cameron cheerfully poured us a glass of lemonade and glanced at me. "Letty, what would you like to eat later? I'll cook for you."

"I'm fine with anything." I smiled.

She was in good spirits as she walked into the kitchen with a subtle bounce to her steps.

Zachary watched her retreating figure and had a helpless look on his face. "She's probably jumping with joy on the inside after hearing you call her mom."

I chuckled softly and waited for him to continue.

"The situation at Fuller Corporation is slightly complicated. The public and the government are putting pressure on the company at the same time. For now, we have no way to intervene, especially Louis because if he does, the situation may only worsen. But luckily, Ashton is a capable person and I believe that he can handle it well. Don't worry too much about it. For a listed company like Fuller Corporation, it's basically impossible for its competitors to overthrow it. Besides, the Murphys are the only ones in K City who can go up against Fuller Corporation. They're not like the others who dabble in market competition, so what's happening now is only a small matter and won't cause too big of an effect."

After he broke down the situation for me, I instinctively breathed a sigh of relief. Fuller Corporation had grown stronger over the years, not to mention it had hit many snags along the way too. Based on Ashton's capabilities, he should be able to resolve it.

Seeing my expression, Zachary smiled faintly. "You're obviously worried about him, yet you pretended not to care. Why didn't you ask him yourself when he was here earlier? But it's Fuller Corporation after all. It's no surprise that it's constantly targeted. Even the strongest trees can fall. Although it doesn't seem to be a huge problem, one mistake on Ashton's part and all his efforts would go down the drain. He's been having a lot on his plate recently. As

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his wife, you should check in on him more at a time like this and be a pillar of support for him."

I nodded, bearing in mind the advice Emery gave me. I was no longer able to deny that I was indeed being a tad too stubborn all this while.

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Cameron had just finished preparing meals in the kitchen. I thought for a while and looked at her. "Mom, I'm going to Fuller Corporation later. I was thinking of bringing lunch over for Ashton as well. Do we have any containers at home?"

She nodded with a delightful smile. "Yes! Of course we do. We have plenty of it. I think we even have some insulated lunchboxes at home. Let me get them for you!"

Not long after, she brought out an exquisite and classy-looking lunchbox. It came with three separate compartments with a superior heat retention function.

Probably in a good mood, Cameron made a lot of dishes. After packing lunch for Ashton, Emery came downstairs with Xavier in her arms and asked, "Who is that for?"

"It's Letty. She's bringing lunch for Ashton."

Emery took a look at me and said, "Why don't you prepare one more set? There's a lot of lunchboxes at home. Wouldn't it be better for you to head over and have lunch together with him? Otherwise, he would be starving if he were to wait for you to finish your lunch at home first."

Worried that I would be hungry, Cameron disagreed with what Emery said. "It won't take too much time for her to have her lunch first anyway."

Thinking that Emery actually got a point there, I nodded and said, "Mom, please prepare one more set for me!"

I parked my car outside of Fuller Corporation and gave Joseph a call. In no time, he picked up my call. "Hello, Mrs. Fuller."

"Mr. Campbell, is Ashton busy? I'm in front of the company. I was wondering if he already had lunch? I actually brought him some food." I was a little nervous.

Joseph was silent for a while before he answered, "Mr. Fuller is in a meeting. I'll come down and get you in. Mrs. Fuller, please wait for a moment."

A few minutes later, Joseph came downstairs. He trotted toward me and took the lunchboxes from me. He smiled, "Mr. Fuller will definitely be happy to see you here!"

I put on a guilty smile because I felt like I should be apologizing for causing trouble.

In Ashton's office, Joseph told me to wait for a while as Ashton was still in a meeting. Sitting alone in the big office, I couldn't help but look around at my surroundings. It seemed that the office had been refurbished and upgraded in a brand new style. The interior was designed and decorated in a black and white theme. It was minimalistic yet elegant.

There was a bookshelf in the visitors' room, with some collectible books on it. Some of the books were probably being held quite often as they were worn and torn. Despite having some flaws, it didn't negatively affect its value.

Noticing how there weren't any plants in his office, I couldn't help but feel a little confused. Hence, I asked the secretary when she brought me tea, "Why aren't there any plants in Mr. Fuller's office?"

The secretary froze for a moment. Then, she lowered her head and answered, "Mr. Campbell said it was an order from Mr. Fuller. He said no plants are allowed in his office because you

don't like them. I heard that Ms. Ludwick, his former secretary had really pissed you off before. Therefore, Mr. Fuller has never put any plants in his office since then."

After finishing her words, the secretary stuck her tongue out mischievously and smiled as she left.

Kristina was Ashton's secretary back in J City. During that time, she decorated Ashton's office with a lot of plants. Having known her evil intentions, I lost my temper and threw a tantrum at Ashton. Huh... I didn't expect him to remember that. He even prohibited them from placing any plants up till now.

Several minutes later, when I was about to doze off, Ashton opened the door and walked in.

He was smiling and looking at me with fondness in his eyes. I started a conversation with a sense of guilt, "My mom said she didn't manage to ask you to stay for lunch since you left in a rush just now. So, she wanted me to bring you lunch."

He nodded and simply looked at me without saying another word. Then, he cast his gaze on the two lunchboxes.

I hesitated for a moment, "I..."

"Right... So, why are there two lunchboxes, then?" He raised his brows slightly as he looked at me. "Could it be that you're going to have lunch with me?"

We just had an argument earlier. Even though I knew that it was actually my fault, I was still too embarrassed to apologize and make up with him. "Nope. It's all for you!" I said since I wasn't hungry anyway.

He simply hummed in acknowledgment. After that, he sat next to me and started opening the lunchboxes. It was two portions of the same dishes. He took everything out and put the cutlery in front of me. "Let's eat!"

I pursed my lips. "I'm not hungry. You can have it!"

He gave me a sideways glance. "Are you trying to raise a pig or something?"

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Dumbstruck for a moment, I stared at him blankly before I came to a sudden realization that he was saying that he couldn't finish the food on his own and that I was treating him like a pig for giving him two helpings of food.

I blushed immediately. In the end, I lowered my head before picking up the fork and started eating.

After a moment of silence, I took the initiative to break it. In all seriousness, I said, "Ashton, I'm sorry!"

Ashton simply glanced briefly at me for my inexplicable sudden apology. Then, he nodded, "Alright, I got it."

What? That's all?

My lips twitched. How can he act in such a perfunctory manner? I struggled for a while and finally decided to apologize, but he's brushing me off like that? Is there nothing else he can say?

I couldn't help but sigh at the thought. I wasn't sure if I should be happy or upset.

After having a taste of every dish on the table, he stared at me with his dark eyes. "Are you coming home with me tonight?"

Even though it was a question, it somehow felt like an order to me. I was shocked for a moment but I did not reject him instantly. "I just got back to the Moore Residence and I want to try and get along with them. I've been thinking about this when I was in the morgue. That if I had the chance, I would love to be with them. I wanted to tell them that I actually love them very much and I really wanted to spend more time with them. Ashton, I know that I'm not the perfect daughter. However, I'm still an ordinary human after all. I need love and affection from parents as well, just like every other person."

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He fixed me with an intense gaze. He remained silent for quite a long while before he nodded. "Alright. But don't leave me suffering alone for too long."

Suffering? He just said it was suffering instead of waiting. I guess it must be tormenting to him to keep waiting for me.

I simply stared at him blankly. In the few days that I had not seen him, I could see his eyes were now filled with sorrow and loneliness. Moreover, he was acting like a misanthrope, looking haggard and lonesome.

My heart ached to see him like that. Instinctively, I reached out my hands and stroke the spot between his brows. I muttered, "Are you feeling tired recently?"

He held my hands, his gaze softening. "It's normal."

Just then, I realized that I had never truly cared for him before. I leaned into his arms and hugged him. I asked, "Ashton, do you think I'm failing as a wife?"

He brushed the hair off my forehead gently. Feeling a little surprised to hear my question, he said, "Why do you keep denying and doubting yourself? Scarlett, this is all just part of our growth. We're slowly helping each other grow."

I nodded and leaned against his chest. Listening to the sound of his heartbeat, I asked, "Do you want to stay in Moore Residence for the time being? The Lavelian Village project is not completed yet. So, I will still have to go back there after Independence Day. I knew there's a lot of things you need to deal with in Fuller Corporation. I can't help you much, but at least I can give you a massage when you get home at night. Besides, my mom can also cook delicious food for you. What do you think?"

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He held me up from his arms. He then cupped my face and smiled gently. "So, does that mean I am marrying into the Moore family?"

I smiled faintly and said, "Well, according to R Province culture, there is no such thing as a man marrying into the wife's family. As long as the couple gets married, they become a family."

He simply grinned in response. Perhaps he hadn't been sleeping well lately, but the moment we were done with lunch, he dragged me into the private restroom for a rest. Soon, he fell asleep. My heart couldn't help but hurt a little to see him sleeping soundly.

Suddenly, Joseph's voice came from the door. I stood up and walked out of the private restroom. Joseph was putting some documents on Ashton's desk. Upon seeing me, he said, "This is the quarterly report from HiTech. Please tell Mr. Fuller to take a look at the report after he wakes up."

I nodded and stared at him. "Joseph, can I ask you something?"

He gave me a nod. "Of course, Mrs. Fuller. Feel free to ask me anything you want to know."

"In regard to the base in Lavelian Village, have you looked into what Ashton told you to? Did you find out anything?" Although I was quite busy recently, I still kept that in mind.

Joseph was shocked, but he managed to recompose himself in a moment. He answered, "I've investigated on that matter. However, it is just an ordinary soundproofing system. Mrs. Fuller, please don't worry about it." He left after giving me the brief explanation.

If I was being honest, I didn't buy into his explanation. It was obvious that the base wasn't as ordinary as we saw. But seeing Joseph's reaction, I decided not to ask any further.

Not long after, Ashton came out from the private restroom. I raised my head to take a look at the time, and I realized he only slept for a few minutes. I couldn't help but ask, "Why don't you rest a while more? It's only been few minutes."

He hugged me tightly in his arms before answering me with his raspy voice, "I can't sleep well without you beside me."

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I noticed that Ashton was getting better at sweet-talking. I had never thought that I would be this happy to hear those words coming out of his mouth.

I let him hug me. He whispered in my ear, "Won't you have dinner with me tonight?"

Initially, I wanted to say yes. However, I recalled that I had already promised John in the morning. I couldn't help but feel sorry. "I'm meeting John tonight for dinner. He seemed to be in a bad mood. I think he got into a fight with Hannah."

Ashton immediately said, "So? What's that got to do with you? Are you a trash can? Is he looking for you just because he wants to dump his negativity on you?"

I froze and put my hands on his waist. I replied in a sulky manner, "What are you saying? Everyone has bad moments in life. Besides, it's been a while since I saw my brother. Shouldn't I be meeting him at least once since I just came back here?"

He rested his chin on my shoulder. His tall and slender body was hunched over, making him look like a mischievous kid who was throwing a tantrum. "You can have dinner with him, but only if you bring me along. I don't want to eat alone!"

I nodded and chuckled lightly. "Alright then."

Staying by Ashton's side and watching him work was a pleasure that I had never discovered before. As I observed him silently, I noticed how elegant the man looked with his every movement.

I couldn't help but feel blessed to be able to witness such a charming sight.

He put down the fountain pen in his hand and raised his eyes. Looking at me with his dark eyes, he parted his thin lips and uttered, "Come here."

As if hypnotized, I got up and walked toward him instantly. Ashton curled his lips and pulled me onto his lap. Then, he wrapped his arms around me and raised his brows. "Are you enjoying the view?"

I blushed and nodded my head. "Yes."

He seemed delighted by my answer. He broke into a gleeful grin. "Well, feel free to gaze at me all you want when we get home later at night. For now, you have to restrain yourself a little. I still need to work, and with you staring at me like that, I won't be able to focus on my work at all."

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I didn't understand what he meant until I felt something hard in between his legs. My face flushed crimson and I struggled to get up but he stopped me. He took a long deep breath and asked in a hoarse voice, "Where are you going?"

I lowered my head and bit my lips. "I don't want you to get distracted by me."

He cocked his eyebrows. "You already did."

I froze on the spot, feeling as if I was sitting on pins and needles. He put his arms around me and did nothing but let me lean against him. With that, he went back to his work. At that moment, I felt like a child who was sitting on her father's lap.

I dared not move at all in the beginning. But after a while, I gradually loosened up. I placed my head on his shoulder and focused on watching him while he focused on his work.

I had no idea when I fall asleep. When I came to, I was already on the bed in the private restroom. I could hear Ashton and Joseph having a conversation.

Joseph said, "The situation this time is different from before. It seems like someone is intentionally adding fuel to the fire. They are trying to defame Fuller Corporation. Thanks to those media platforms as well as social media public accounts, rumors about Fuller Corporation have been spreading like wildfire on the internet recently. They're even publicizing rumors about you and Mrs. Fuller."

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"Huh?" Ashton was surprised.

Joseph replied, "Rumor has it that you and Mrs. Fuller were in a marriage of convenience. That both of you married for material advantages, and not for love. Moreover, they even said both of you are cheating on each other. They're saying that you have your lover and your own family and that Mrs. Fuller is having an affair with a married man and is living a messy love life."

My brows knitted upon hearing that. In no time, I took out my phone to look at the local news which I had not been reading for ages. Indeed, as Joseph mentioned, the media had been slandering Ashton's and my reputation. It was such a mess.

Meanwhile, outside of the private restroom, Ashton fell silent for a few seconds before he responded. "I got it. Don't bother with this. For now, just continue to keep a close eye on Murphy Corporation. They have been turning round and round, trying to divert attention. They must be up to something."

"Understood," Joseph answered.

After that, all was quiet outside. I supposed Joseph had left. Hence, I got out of bed and walked out of the private restroom. Ashton was still flipping through his documents. He raised his eyes to look at me when he heard the sound of me coming into his office. "Are you hungry?"

I shook my head and walked over to him. "Is everything okay? Is it very difficult to deal with?"

He put down his pen and stood up. After taking his car keys and jacket, he grabbed my hand. "It's fine. Let's go eat."

I was stunned for a moment. However, seeing how calm he was, I had no choice but to stop saying anything further.

We got into the car. I almost forgot my dinner appointment with John. Hence, I said, "Ashton, let's head to La Morera."

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He hummed in response. I was a little confused to see him being so calm and relaxed. "Aren't you feeling anxious about what happened to the company? Not even a little?"

He glanced at me out of the corner of his eyes and held my hand in the palm of his. He smiled softly, "Why? Are you worried that Fuller Corporation would get shut down and you wouldn't be able to rely on me anymore?"

I pouted. "You know that's not what I meant."

"Don't worry. This is all a set-up. I know what I'm doing." His tone was indifferent, seemingly pretty confident.

There were always endless changes in the business world. It was unpredictable and one would never know what was coming next.

Hence, I decided to keep my mouth shut.

Before long, the car rolled to a stop in front of La Morera. After that, we got out of the car. The restaurant that John chose looked elegant. Initially, I thought he wanted to let off steam somewhere with the ambient glow of colorful neon lights and alcohol. That way, he could drink and vent his emotions at the same time. However, I did not expect the place turned out to be such a classic and vintage style restaurant.

After entering La Morera, the waitresses who were all dressed in classy silk dresses bowed politely in unison. "Welcome!"

I followed behind Ashton and grumbled, "What is John up to? It's just dinner! Why is he making such a big deal out of it?"

After saying John's name, a charming lady ushered us to a private dining room on the second floor. It was a window seat by the lake. We could enjoy the magnificent view of the lake's night scenery by looking out the window. The lights that glittered off the lake at night were scenic and picturesque and the reflection of the night sky and lights seemed to be engraved onto the crystal clear lake. Even though I simply glanced at it, I could tell that the sight was breathtaking.

John was slouching back lazily in the chair, munching on some food. He looked like a cynical and sloppy person. When he saw me and Ashton, he swept his gaze over Ashton

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from head to toe and clicked his tongue. "Wow, since when has Mr. Fuller become such a needy kid? Are you following your wife anywhere she goes?"

Ashton simply gave him an indifferent look and completely ignored him. Then, he sat gracefully by the window. I took a seat as well and looked at John. I couldn't stand seeing him behave so frivolously. Thus, I asked, "What's wrong with you? Why are you acting like this?"

He narrowed his eyes. "Looks like you've been doing well lately, Letty. Your face is getting rounder. it's time for you to shed some weight."

I was extremely annoyed with John. After not seeing him for so long, he just decided to take a dig at me the moment we meet? Hmph, I guess that must mean he's not living that well, huh. I pursed my lips as I stared at him. "What's with the mean words? Are you having a hard time recently? You just can't be kind to others, can you?"

He rolled his eyes at me and said coldly, "What do you want to eat? The food here tastes really good. You should give it a try."