

Chapter 10 Let Them Suffer

"My child, you're finally here!" When Cathy reached the studio, her supervisor who had been waiting by the door grabbed her hand and led her in excitedly.

"We have a big job today. Miss Xenos, the second female lead of Green City has called you in as her stunt double! Not to mention, the rate they're offering is three times the amount than your usual roles."

As she arrived on set, Cathy immediately strapped herself into a hanging wire while the rest of the crew made their own preparations. Once the safety precautions were ensured, the crew was set to start filming. Except... the director refused to.

After a long while, a male stunt double who was with Cathy finally spoke up. Out of frustration, he grumbled out, "What exactly are we waiting for?"

"For Miss Xenos. She said she needed to personally check if her stunt double was capable of conveying the feelings she wanted in her performance." The assistant director let out a sigh. "Miss Xenos is a true beauty. Professional, and highly dedicated to her art. None of you could ever compare to her in this lifetime."

Cathy almost snorted at that statement.

Dedicated? Throughout the five years Willow had been in this industry, Cathy was always the one supporting her roles behind the scenes; from thoroughly memorizing the script to providing pointers, all so the final product could look as polished as it did.

The script of Green City, Cathy had read through that as well. She knew full well that Willow's character would face many defeats in the later stage. In other words, Cathy would get her ass kicked. And the only reason Willow wanted to "check" if Cathy would make a good stunt double was so that she could be there to see it.

It was funny, to say the least. When Cathy caught Willow messing around with her boyfriend, her response towards them wasn't aggressive in any way. She merely ran away crying. On the contrary, Willow seemed to be going to great lengths to get her beaten like some sort of human punching bag.

Not long after, Willow arrived on set, her heels clacking pompously against the floor tiles as if announcing her arrival to everyone in the room. She sat in a chair with arms crossed and legs folded. "My expectations are very high, and I will not let my stand-in rest until I'm satisfied, no matter how many retakes it takes."

"Such dedication! Willow, you really are the finest performer there is!!" The assistant director was once again all over her, before turning to Cathy. "You, stunt double, did you hear that? Make sure to do your part well. It's not every day you'd get the privilege of standing in for Miss Xenos!"

But Cathy was too tired to pay them any mind.

And so, the shooting began.

Cathy and the male stunt double have been partners for many years. So naturally, their chemistry on set was irreplaceable. They did what they did best, executing their moves flawlessly without straying from the script. Their distinctive movements complemented one another, resulting in a smooth transition between every scene.

The assistant director sang their praises over and over, "Your stunt double is amazing! Miss Xenos, you really have a good eye for talent."

Willow's face turned cold. "I'm not satisfied, it looks too fake. Let them fight for real."

The assistant director was stunned. A real fight? That could be fatal.

"I'll pay for their medical bills," Willow said casually as if reading the assistant director's thoughts. She picked up a handheld fan and directed it to her face. "I'm also responsible for the shooting, after all."

Without another moment to waste, the assistant director quickly gave out orders to the crew. "Bring out the real guns!"

Everyone was stupefied. This was a scene where the second female lead gets crippled from a brawl, and they wanted to make that a reality?

Unease slithered into the male stunt double's heart. His brows furrowed into a scowl. "This isn't going to work. Can you talk them out of it?"

"There's no need for that." Cathy merely smiled. "We'll do as she says."

Willow was obviously out to get her. Even if she were to try to plead her way out of this, it would only give an opening for Willow to publicly humiliate her. Not to mention, her supervisor had already signed the contract, so there was no backing out even if she wanted to.

Willow knew about this of course, which was why she dared to pull such a stunt. Besides, what are a few scratches to a stunt double? That was part of their job.

Each time Cathy was knocked down, she got up again and again relentlessly. In the end, no amount of concealer could cover up the bruises on her body.

"Miss Xenos, this could really kill them." Despite being initially on board with it, the assistant director was now sweating profusely.

Due to Willow's unscrupulous request, the whole filming process began to slow down. The director ended up becoming so furious, he ended the shoot abruptly, and everyone was immediately dismissed, leaving Willow no choice but to stop her torture on Cathy for the day.

Cathy proceeded to change out of her work attire and walked out of the set calmly, her fresh bruises on full display. On the way out, she spotted Xavier standing by the entrance of the studio. He had shades and a cap on, which obscured his face almost entirely.

He's probably here to see Willow. Not that it was any of her business. She walked past him and headed towards the bus stop.

"Cathy," he called out to her in a low voice, but she didn't respond. Xavier quickly ran after her and grabbed her hand. "Cathy, why are you avoiding me?"

"How can I avoid something I can't see?" Not bothering to spare him a glance, she shook him off and continued walking.

"Cathy!" Xavier grabbed her shoulder and turned her to face him. With gritted teeth, he spoke, "We were together for so many years. Do you have to act like this? Willow and I are truly in love. Can't you just be happy for us?"

Hearing that, Cathy's hand balled into a fist. Be happy for them? How could he be so shameless to ask this of her?

"Even if I don't, what's stopping you?" she sneered. "You're a big-time actor who's about to have a breakthrough in your relationship and career. You wouldn't want to be involved with a mere stunt double like me, do you?"

She turned away, resolute to leave, but Xavier stopped her yet again. "Cathy, do you really have to do this?"

"Xay, I told you Cathy doesn't care about us." Willow's voice chimed behind them. She sighed, completely ridged of the snobbish demeanor earlier from the set. With a pleading look, she threw herself into Xavier's arms.

Willow radiated her condescending gaze on Cathy. "Cathy, I didn't expect this news to hit you so hard you would marry Master Adrian." She followed with a snide remark, "He's such an old and ugly geezer. Didn't he kill two of his fiancées?"

Cathy scoffed at her undeniably good acting skills, the skills which she had taught her.

"Cathy," Xavier's face was stiff with anxiety as he spoke. "The Academy Awards will be happening in a month. If all goes well, Willow and I will be awarded as this year's best actor and actress, and our net worth will substantially double. If you're willing to put this behind you and continue mentoring us in acting, I might consider saving you from that vile man."

Save me? Cathy snickered. "My husband is handsome. My sons are adorable and obedient, and my family is lovely. I don't need any saving from you."

Xavier's brows creased. "Don't lie to yourself. Everybody knows that Master Adrian's face had been disfigured in a fire five years ago. He's ugly."

Beside him, Willow let out a sigh. "As long as you continue to guide us, we'll even help to collect your corpse if you end up getting killed by Master Adrian."

The two of them went on and on, making baseless assumptions about Adrian, causing Cathy's stomach to churn. No matter what they said, Cathy knew her worth better than to be exploited as their servant.

She snorted coldly, suddenly feeling a little more defensive. "Who said my husband was ugly? He just likes keeping a low profile. That rumor was probably made by someone envious of his beauty, and you all just stupidly gobbled it up?"

As she said this, she turned to Xavier and firmly held his gaze, a trace of contempt flashed in her eyes. "You're nothing compared to my husband!"

"You—!"

Cathy continued, not giving him a chance to speak. "My husband is handsome, rich, and dotes on me. He only has eyes for me, and he's not the kind to sleep around casually." A smug smile played on her lips. "I advise you to keep your mouths shut if you don't want him destroying your pitiful lives."

With such bold words leaving her lips, Cathy couldn't help the slight blush that colored her cheeks. She silently thanked the heavens that Adrian wasn't here to hear this. Flashing the two-timing couple one last disdainful glare, she turned on her heels and walked away.

Willow watched her back with clenched fists and gritted teeth. "Xavier was right to choose me. Not only are you unworthy of him, but you're also a delusional bitch!"

Those sharp words had Cathy pausing in her steps for a moment. But in the end, she left without looking back.

In Xavier's arms, Willow whined like a spoiled brat. "Cathy was my stand-in today. She deliberately performed badly, which ended up slowing all of us down..."

Xavier tightened his arms around her and rubbed her back. "Good girl, don't let her get to you."

*

A luxurious Bentley was parked across the street from the couple.

"Sir, didn't the two Young Masters ask for you to take your wife home?" Assistant Dunn looked at Cathy's leaving figure from the driver's seat. "Madam has left, we..."

"Follow her." The man in the back seat ordered, flipping through the documents in his hand. "Also, investigate the two people who slandered me."

Evan Dunn nodded. "Are you planning to..."

Adrian gracefully picked up a pen and made an annotation on the document. "Didn't my wife say to destroy their lives?"