## Chapter 117

I woke up in the dimness. There was a faint light coming from a lamp across the room. Looking around, I recognized Patrick's office. Through the window, I could see it was already dark outside, but I couldn't understand what had happened. The last thing I remembered was sitting at my work computer, feeling an almost uncontrollable drowsiness, but that was still in the morning.

I shifted and felt a warm hand on my ankle that made it tingle. I recognized that touch before seeing him. I realized my feet were resting on his leg. I rubbed my eyes, trying to adjust to the low lighting, and looked at him as he was gently running his hands over my feet.

"You're awake, my angel. How are you feeling?" Alexander asked in a husky voice.

"Kind of strange. What time is it? I don't remember coming to lie down here," I said, feeling quite confused.

"It's eleven at night. Margaret made you some tea to calm you down, and she went all out, said you needed rest." He gave a lazy smile. "I went into your office and found you asleep on your desk, so I brought you here to Patrick's couch. Figured you wouldn't want to wake up in my office."

"Definitely not." I took my feet off his lap, sat up, and tried to stand, but my body felt heavy.

"Easy now, you've been sleeping deeply all day, it takes a little while for your body to wake up," he said, running his hand in circular motions on my back, making me sigh.

"Those flowers..."

"I've taken care of it. But I want to talk to you, can we?"

"Alright. What do you want to talk about?" I sighed, giving in. I couldn't run forever, since I'd stayed working there, I'd have to face him at some point.

"First, I want you to eat," he said, picking up a Chinese takeout box from the table and handing it to me with chopsticks.

"I want to wash my face first."

"Sure, use Patrick's bathroom. Here's your purse."

I took my purse and headed to the bathroom inside the office. When I turned on the light, I needed time to adjust my eyes. I went in, closed the door, and looked at myself in the mirror. I looked horrible - wrinkled clothes, eyes puffy from crying, hair disheveled. I used the bathroom, washed my face, brushed my teeth, and fixed my hair and clothes.

When I returned to the office, the lights were on, and I saw him still sitting in the same place with his arms resting on his knees and his head in his hands. He looked devastated. I approached, put my purse on a nearby armchair, and sat down beside him.

Alexander raised his head and looked into my eyes. His appearance mirrored mine. Dark circles, red eyes from crying, messy hair. He had removed his jacket and tie, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and undone a few buttons. He slowly leaned back on the couch and gave a sad smile. Even like this, he was still the most handsome man I'd ever seen.

"Better?" I nodded. "Then let's eat and talk afterward."

He handed me the Chinese takeout box again. We ate in comfortable silence, and when we finished, he offered me a box of caramelized

bananas, which we shared. After the meal, he gathered all the containers and threw them away, returning to sit in the same spot but with one knee on the couch, facing me.

"My angel, I know Johnson and his daughter are tormenting you, harassing you. So I tried to make a deal with them through my lawyer. I offered everything, everything I have, including the companies, as long as they would never contact you again, but they refused. Their only condition for leaving you alone was for me to accept this damned marriage."

"And you accepted."

"I did, my angel, because I couldn't find any other way out, and believe me, it's killing me. I hate that woman, I can't understand how I slept with her, I try, but I don't remember anything from that night. They're horrible people, and I won't let them keep messing with you; that's why I accepted. I closed the deal with them yesterday. This morning I was going to tell you, but they were faster than me with those horrible flowers."

"They won't stop! They won't give me peace while I'm here."

"Yes, they will. I went to that hell of a house, took that horrible thing, and warned them that if they don't stop, there won't be a wedding. So if that's what they want, they'll stop."

"I don't know what to think. I don't know if I can stay here."

"Please, Cat, don't leave. If you say you'll stay with me, I'll send that whole family to hell."

"I can't! I love you so much! But you're going to have a child with that



crazy woman, you can't leave her alone with your child."

"I know." He spoke in a tired tone, running both hands over his face.

"I'm going home, and I think you should go rest too." I stood up and grabbed my purse.

"Can I take you?"

"Better not. Patrick arranged for a driver to be at my disposal, he should be waiting."

"He is. Can I at least walk you to the car?"

"Of course!"

We left the room in silence and walked silently to the car waiting for me in the building's garage. When the driver opened the door for me to get in, Alexander pulled me into his arms and kissed me. A long kiss full of longing, our tongues meeting with urgency, our hearts beating at the same rapid pace, his arms encircling my waist just as mine wrapped around his neck. Before pulling away, he gave a little bite to my lower lip, rested his forehead against mine, and sighed, closing his eyes for a moment as if reluctant to let me go. I left his embrace and got into the car, heading toward another sleepless night filled with tears.

