

The Secrets Of Meera by Flameillumination Chapter 11

Chapter 11 The Rumours

The interior of the car had a magnificent pull the beauty, comfort and artisanship were superlative. The stany roof was mesmerising. The woodwork and leather finish were impeccable. The car cabin was completely silent not even the engine sound was audible. Meera was still thinking about the phone call and how she needed to act fast. Today, she was going to decide if she should bring her Spriha team and let them hamper her real reason for coming to NY. Her every action had a pro and a con. Bringing her team meant she could stay longer and try to grill people to find out more about Alice. But the team would mean she had to spend most of her time helping GC with their CSR efforts and less on finding about the murder.

Over and over, she kept thinking about why someone would give a contract to kill a simple girl. Was it because of her future career or due to her future husband? No matter what the reason, one thing was clear. If someone was in contact with a contract killer or even knew how to contact one, that person was dangerous and was hiding in plain sight. She suddenly got worried about Neha. What if she gets caught in the crossfire? Has Alice's death really completed the plan of all personnel involved or was it just the beginning? She was drifting in her thoughts and her eyes showed every emotion she was feeling. Neha was relaxing in the lavish car, slowly melting in the comfy seat. She noticed that usually chatty girl, her senior, was completely silent, deeply engrossed in her thoughts. "Are you thinking about Arthur guild?" Interjected Neha. "What?" Meera drifted back to the land of the living. "No, everyone kept talking about him, so I was just checking. You don't have to worry, he is not interested in dating," she explained casually "And I am?" Meera raised her eyebrow at Neha. "No, I didn't say that. I meant... you are zoned out, absolutely quiet. Are you alright, di?"

“Yes and no.”

“Tell me what’s bothering you.”

“I was just wondering what kind of person Alice Colfer was. You said GC stopped with their humanitarian work after she died. Mr Westside said things along the same lines which means she was important for the CSR team. And yesterday after Oliver told me the story in detail, I have not been able to stop thinking about same. She died so brutally at such a young age.” Now it was Neha’s turn to be interrogated. Meera hoped she could provide new information about the murder which would help Meera and in tum, she would help Alice “And you are feeling bad about that.” “The person who can cause a whole department to collapse must mean something important. Why was she murdered?” “Oh no, he told you about his conspiracy theories. Did he not?” Neha instantly understood that Oliver filled Meera’s mind with stories and speculations. “He might have told me a few rumours.” “That’s what they are, just rumours.” “So, she was not in line to become the new CFO.” Meera started her questioning very carefully

“She was, but she was not the only one. The board of directors had to select one among five nominated people and she was one of the nominated names.” “That means it was not a guarantee that she would have ended as CFO. And was she not a member of the board of directors?” “She was not, but the position of CFO would have made her one. She was the front runner for CFO, but nothing was a guarantee. No one knows who would change their mind at the eleventh hour. A vote can swing at any side,” clarified Neha, thoroughly. “Also, he said something about prenups for their marriage,” Meera probed further. “Arthur Guild would never have asked Alice to sign a prenup. He loved her very much,” replied Neha with full confidence.

Poof! The white cloud of smoke filled the car cabin and Alice appeared in the middle of Neha and Meera, dressed in white. Her dress slit made sure her smooth and glossy skin was visible. She was shining under the sparkling light of the car. “Wow! This is nice,” said Alice while hovering and moving her hand over the leather seat and the cabin was filled with resonating sound of her voice. Meera immediately looked forward trying to avoid looking at Alice. “Tell her, he never loved me,” said Alice, which made Meera stare directly at her

“What?” She mouthed at Alice.

“Just tell her,” commanded Alice.

“Um... I heard another rumour in some news channel which claimed that he never loved her,” she said hesitantly.

“That’s bullshit. She was the only girl in whom he was ever interested. No one saw him talking to or even looking at some other girl. Many girls swoon over him but he paid them no heed.” “He never loved me. Trust me,” informed Alice. “Are you sure?” Meera asked Neha. “Why would he have asked her to marry him?” “I don’t know. Maybe he is gay and wanted to hide it from the world,” said Meera timidly but Alice hit her on her thighs, angrily. This was the first time Alice succeeded in touching her which sent a chill down her spine. She badly wanted to react but hid her feelings. “What? That’s absurd,” reacted Neha.

“Don’t talk rubbish. Say, family and media pressure.” Alice gave her an angry look and told her what to say to carry on with her grilling.

“Maybe... family and media pressure,” repeated Meera. “Come on di! Who marries for media and fans? True they were media darling, and everyone called them ‘conglomerate royalty’. But if there’s no love, marriage will end as soon it started.” “We were best friends, even if there was no love, we would have been happy in our relationship. We were

happy in our friendship,” explained Alice. “Is friendship not enough for a relationship?” Meera kept taking cues from Alice and framing her questions based on that. “Liv is your Lovepie, your best friend in the whole wide world. Will you ever marry him? Can you even think of marrying him?” Neha pointed out. “No, never. Not even if he is the last man on earth.” She gave a disgusted look to Alice as she was ready to marry someone who she didn’t love or even had an ounce of feeling for him. “You have no idea how the business world works.” With these words, Alice vanished providing food for her thoughts. “Business world?” She mumbled under her breath and immediately lightning struck her brain and she further inquired, “who was named the new CFO after her death?” “One of the other nominated big shots, Anthony Hunt.” “Do you think maybe he had something to do with the kill?” Asked Meera enquiringly. “Really! Don’t let Liv corrupt your mind with conspiracies and rumours.” She tried to ease Meera’s mind.

“But he had the most to gain after Alice’s death. He became freaking CFO and a member of the board.” Meera put forward her reasoning. “As I told you before, there is no guarantee with voting. It happened with Daniel.” “What happened with him?” “A position opened in the board of directors, and he was nominated but at the last minute, few members changed their vote and he lost.” “He is at such a high position in the company, yet he is not a member of the board of directors.” Meera couldn’t believe how much new information she was getting from Neha. “Yes.”

“So, what happened next with Alice’s murder case? What did the police find out?” She knew the answer but wanted to see if Neha could add more to that. “Nothing, not an iota of information except she was killed with a sniper bullet. It made everyone speculate that her murder was a contract kill. It’s been almost a year and police have not been able to find a single piece of evidence that it was an assassination let alone what was

the motive behind her killing,” recounted Neha. “Who do you think was the person that got the most out of her death?” She was utterly

wrapped up in the colloquy. She even turned her body completely towards Neha. “Why are you asking? Are you trying to solve her murder?” Joked Neha. “Who do you think I am? A police officer. No, I am just curious. So many conspiracies around a single crime usually mean something is wrong.” Meera answered in a flash. “What do you mean?” “Either someone in your company is a criminal or is involved with a criminal. I need to know before I get in bed with them. I don’t want to bring my team for a company which would later be proved to be a façade for criminal activities,” explained Meera. “Oh, Di! You know, nothing like that is ever going to happen,” assured Neha. “Come on humour me. Who gained most, tell me,” she probed again. “I try to refrain from rumours but to satiate your curiosity, I will tell you this. Arthur’s mother was not fond of Alice as she belonged to a lower-middle-class family. She wanted

Arthur to marry the daughter of Mr Browning of D&D Corporation.” “D&D! The shipping company?” “Yes, they too like Guild Corporation has their toes dipped in many industries. They have a shipping line, automobile industries, a textile industry, and many more. In short, if GC and D&D merge they will hold the monopoly on many businesses,” illustrated Neha. “And?” “Arthur rejected her idea and declared to the world that he is getting married to Alice no matter what anyone would say. Then the next person who gained from her death was the new CFO, Anthony Hunt.”

“Right!” “Another one who got something out of her murder is Daniel.” “What?” Said Meera shockingly. “He was not the Director of Corporate Responsibility. That position belonged to Alice.” “As far as I know, she worked in the finance department.” Meera was entirely confused.

Whatever she knew about Alice was just the tip of an iceberg. She was silently cursing herself under her breath for not talking to Neha earlier in this matter. “True, but as you said, she was vital to the CSR department. Her position included Manager of Finance and Director of CR. She would split her time between both departments,” said Neha. “That’s why Arthur shut the department down for a year.” Things were getting clearer little by little for Meera.

“Yes.”

“Right! Anyone else?” She was so glad that Neha was a mine of information, she just had to chip piece by piece carefully. “Again, I don’t want to spread rumours or office gossip, but a few people said Holly and

Arthur are secretly dating. She always wanted to date him. So, you should add the above mentioned names on the ‘who gained the most’ list,” hypothesized Neha which surprised

Meera.

“Holly?”

“The girl who was with us in Arthur’s cabin, she is his personal assistant,” described Neha.

“What about Arthur?”

“What about him?” “Shouldn’t he be on that list too?” “What do you mean?” “Well, he is the prime suspect.” “Who told you that?” Said Neha unexpectedly.

“News.”

“That’s false.” Neha tried to save her boss. “Really!” “Ok, but to be fair, police went on a wild goose chase and found nothing.” “Yet, he is still the prime suspect.” “Yes, they believe that he is secretly a playboy, and Alice was restricting him to continue his daily activity but that is completely false. Then there was the rumour that she might have taken over as CEO is also completely fabricated | justified Neha. “Does she have gotten half of his property?” “Yes, and that is because he stopped all the prenup nonsense. Why kill when this problem could have been solved by a mere piece of legal paper.” “True.”

The rest of the way to the ball Meera kept repeating Neha’s words in her brain. Her forehead was furrowed, and eyebrows knitted. She had so many suspects now, how she was supposed to find who the real culprit was. Was someone capable of killing for such trivial matters?

While she was preoccupied with thinking about the culprits in the captivity, the door opened again. “What is this? You have not eaten anything and... you destroyed your phone,” said Mike. “You call me angry, what would you call her?” Asked Benjamin. “A princess.” Both started laughing out loud. The entire room was filled with evil laughter. “What do you guys want?” Snapped Meera. “Nothing. We came to take this trolley back.” “Then take it and leave,” she sounded irritated.

“I thought we were becoming friends,” sulked Mike. “I am your prisoner, and you want friendship. Go ask your boss to be your friend.” She picked up her broken phone and threw it at them. They took out the trolley and left, hurriedly. She exhaled big puffs of air to calm herself down and then went to the bathroom to look for a way out or at least try to determine her location. Just like the room, the bathroom was all walls, not a single window was installed. Only a narrow rectangular slit on the crown of the wall was constructed. She stood on the toilet seat, but her height betrayed her. Now she was cursing herself for not using the food trolley to look out the wall slit. She went back to the room and was baffled because even

without windows and doors, the room was airy and comfortable. She couldn't find an opening for the AC duct. She tried moving the bed, but it was fixed to the floor. The only way in or out way the door and she had to think of a way to use it,koon.