

# MY SCYTHE-WIELDING HUSBAND

## Chapter 5 - Death by Chocolate

The next day, Solene took her little brother in the local supermarket for a quick shop of produce and fresh fruits. She parked her mother's SUV first near the entrance of the supermarket and hand-in-hand, they walked inside the building with an eco bag in hand.

Solene picked the biggest wheeled grocery basket so that her brother could ride inside it. They entered into the Candy and Chocolate's Section first by AC's insistence. Solene didn't mind as she also loved to buy her favorite chocolate-covered macadamia nuts.

It was past nine in the morning on a Friday so the local supermarket was filled with customers. Some were together with their families and some others were buying alone.

On their way into the C and C Section, Solene noticed a commotion some distance away. It was the manager of the supermarket arguing with the delivery men about the late deliveries. She just shrugged her shoulders, seeing it as a common occurrence whenever she visits the place.

"Nutella!" shouted AC as he pointed to the jar of delicious spread right when they entered their section.

Solene flashed a grin at him. "You want that one?" she asked whilst pushing the cart towards the shelf of Nutella jars.

AC bobbed his head up and down, feeling ecstatic.

With this, Solene reached for a jar—the biggest one in the shelf—and handed it to him. AC smiled the widest smile he could make and hugged the jar into his chest.

“Alright, I’m going to get me some macadamia chocolates too and then we go buy grandpa’s fruits okay?” she stated.

“Yes! Yes!” AC answered.

Solene pushed the cart towards the shelf of her favorite dessert. In this section of the market, it was only them and two other customers present.

One was a middle-aged woman busily comparing a box of Sneakers, her floral dress reminding Solene of her mother’s tablecloth in the dining room while the other, was a tall man around his late twenties wearing a dark blue coat with its wide collar covering his profile. He was neither holding a pack of goods or a grocery basket with him. He was just staring at the shelf of chocolate-covered nuts as if the objects were speaking to him telepathically.

Solene noticed the man just as she neared the shelf. She looked up at him, tried to make friendly eye contact but he didn’t bother to face her. The high collar of his coat hindered Solene from checking his features and it hindered her from knowing if he noticed their presence too.

‘What a weird man,’ she thought to herself as she continued to park the cart near the shelf.

Right when she reached for the box of macadamia nuts, the ground below her shook. Immediately, she thought it was an earthquake so she grabbed the cart in one hand and then AC on the other and pressed him closer to her.

The shaking continued and it grew stronger and stronger. The panicked cries of customers were heard throughout the building while the goods on the shelf fell fast on the ground.

“Hold on AC!” Solene cried as the ground beneath her roared. Seconds later, a crack on her floor appeared. Then, the nearest shelf of their section fell down. Solene, upon seeing the crack about to swallow them

whole, grabbed her crying brother in the hopes of running towards a safe area.

She was too late, unfortunately.

The chasm reached her and her footing immediately gave way. In her panic, she let out a high-pitched scream. Her heartbeat triple worked, her pupils dilated.

Just as she was falling down towards the opening together with her brother, she locked eyes with the man. She found him already watching her, the expression on his face showed no concern over the tremors on the ground or the current dire situation she and her brother was in.

But there was certainly one fact that Solene had realized in the midst of falling. It was that this man here was the same man in the library. Unfortunately and for obvious reasons, she couldn't ruminate on the fine distinctions of this man: the shapely brows he had, his chiseled jaw, that perfect nose, and those lips...it looked perpetually neutral, but she felt as if he was smirking at her. Those details all but tossed out of her mind while under the threat of dying.

“Help... He—lp!” she cried out, one arm stretched out towards him. She didn't really think he could help her at a time like this, but it was the first word that popped out of her head.

A loud booming sound echoed inside the supermarket then. Solene thought this was it. She and her brother were going to die and that nobody would be able to retrieve their bodies with how deep the chasm was.

She closed her eyes and tightened her grip on AC. “I'm sorry I couldn't protect you!” she cried to the boy with her heart filled with anguish. She could feel AC's trembling body. She could feel herself trembling. She saw how painful it would be once they hit the ground. She anticipated it very soon.

But as if by a miracle, their bodies did hit something, but not one ache was felt. Solene found it odd.

She peeled her eyes open and scanned the area and there she saw where they were.

“Are you both alright?!” the manager of the supermarket shouted as he neared them.

Solene looked lost for a moment. “Ye...yes, we’re--” She glanced at her brother and saw him still embracing her, his eyes firmly shut. Apart from looking clearly scared, he seemed to be okay. “Yes, we...we are fine.”

‘But how?’ that was the one question her mind screamed.

She was not crazy. She was sure as hell they were both falling down the chasm and were mere minutes from dying.

How come they were alive then? How come they were in this part of the cashier counter meters away from the Candy and Chocolate Section where the earthquake crack stood?

She blinked her eyes many times making sure she wasn’t hallucinating.

The manager and one of the female supermarket staff helped them both up.

“It’s good you weren’t in the chocolate section when that crack showed up,” the manager stated, pointing to the said area with his eyes.

Solene shook her head. ‘But they were there seconds ago! And they were falling!’ her mind stressed. She wanted to correct him but the words wouldn’t come out of her mouth.

“We need to get out of here. It’s not safe,” stated the female staff.

Solene nodded, agreeing with her that instant. She held her brother by the shoulders and walked hastily out of the building. By this time, the tremors had stopped. She watched as different products in packs, bottles, boxes, and jars were sprawled haphazardly on the floor.

Some customers were running out of the building too. Some were screaming. Some were holding their heads up.

It was a chaotic sight.

Finally, Solene and her brother were able to step out of the supermarket. They stopped at an area where a large crowd had gathered. It was the center of the parking lot where there were not many cars parked.

Solene was still visibly shaken by what happened, but she had to keep a brave face. AC was with her and she wouldn't want the boy to see her afraid.

"Hey, are you okay?" she knelt on the pavement and looked at her brother in the eye.

AC nodded and gave her a weak smile. He didn't seem to notice the unexplainable experience they had which was good. Solene didn't want the boy to be traumatized by it. Plus, she couldn't explain anything to him. She wasn't sure what freak miracle had just saved them from death.

She wiped the remaining tears on his eyes and gave him a soft smile. "We are safe now. We will be fine."

A familiar dark blue coat caught her attention then. The man who wore it was standing a few meters away from them. Around him were a group of athletes gazing up into the half-destroyed roof of the supermarket.

He wasn't accompanied by anyone it seems. Just him alone. He was also looking at the façade of the supermarket, but Solene felt like his eyes were on her earlier.

She remembered his reaction while the earthquake was happening. It was almost unnatural. He seemed unfazed by it. And she remembered the way he watched her as she was on her way to death. A little spark of concern was present behind those piercing eyes, yes. Or was it just her imagination?

“Come, we need to inform Mom that we’re okay,” Solene stood up and lifted the boy up. Luckily enough, her mother’s SUV was unscathed as well as the surrounding area of the parking lot. They’ll be able to return home without having to commute.

When they reached the house, Meridith was already standing on their driveway holding her cell phone.

“Thank God you two are safe!” she cried out as Solene and AC disembarked the car.

She embraced them and the two reciprocated it.

“We’re fine Ma, don’t worry,” Solene muttered whilst holding back a tear. She was grateful enough to have been able to hug her mother again.

“I heard the news! It seems that the earthquake was only localized in the area of the supermarket! I was so scared for the two of you!”

Meridith lifted her son and kissed him senseless.

Solene wanted to tell her what happened, especially that time when they really almost got killed, but still she didn’t know how to start or even how to explain that moment to her.

But then, her mother’s words caught her attention.

“You mean to say you guys didn’t feel the earth move?” Solene queried, feeling confused. “It was so strong! It must have a kilometer-wide coverage!”

Meridith shook her head. “No, we didn’t, Honey. We only heard about the incident when your grandpa watched the news.”

Solene’s brows knotted. “What did the news say?” For some reason, her spine chilled. A certain thought crossed her mind, but she squelched it.

No. It couldn’t be.

“The reports said the shaking was caused by the instability of the ground. We had heavy rains a few days ago and it might have caused the soil underneath the supermarket to loosen.”

“That’s impossible,” Solene cut in. “We’ve had heavier and longer rains many times before and this didn’t affect the stability of the supermarket. Those media need to dig deeper as to the cause, not just spew up half-baked theories.”

Her mother lifted a brow. “Wow, you’re suddenly stingy. Are you sure you’re alright, Honey?”

Solene was taken aback by herself too, but she knew fully well what caused her sudden mood swing. She hated how useless the reporters were. She wanted to hear a clear-cut explanation of why the localized earthquake happened. At least through this, she wouldn’t entertain the silly thoughts now seeping out of her subconscious. She didn’t want to admit it. She didn’t want to believe that her uncanny ability to attract accidents was back to bite her in the ass again.

She had little to no accident in a given month for eight years that she had forgotten she was highly susceptible to it. Accidents were attracted to her like crazy. It started when she was six-years-old, exactly after her father died. At first, it was just some minor incidents: falling from the stairs to hitting her head with glasses, until it became aggressive: nails falling from a construction site she just passed by to perfectly sturdy thick walls crumbling down on her. Many times, her mother and

grandparents had to bring her to the hospital for minor cuts, bruises, and concussions.

Like a moth to a flame, it didn't look like it was stopping. Or so they thought, until her grandmother, fresh from a trip to an undisclosed country, brought a female friend and some redeemable news for the family.

Fast forward to the now, Solene hesitantly nodded. "Yes, I'm fine, Ma. I should...head upstairs."

Without waiting for her mother's reply, Solene dashed past her and AC and went straight to her room on the second floor. In there, she immediately went to the bathroom and lifted her blouse up, right where her left flank could be seen.

"Damn it..." she cursed as the reflection of her tattoo stared back at her. It was drawn by the female companion of her grandmother, an old lady that kept mostly to herself while she stayed in their house when Solene was fourteen-years-old. The drawing was created using an ancient method. There was pain involved. Intense pain. Solene nearly lost consciousness three times while it was created, but the result was all worth it.

A tattoo of a black angel's wings spread wide had taken residence on her left flank. It was a beautiful piece of artwork, but Solene knew it wasn't for decorative purposes.

Pressing her lips tightly, she hastily bent down, pulled her jeans off of her, and stood before the bathroom mirror again.

"Shit," she muttered, her face turning into intense worry.

A second tattoo greeted her, perfectly drawn on her inner left thigh. It was created by the same woman after the first was done. It showed an Egyptian symbol of life, an ankh, in a shade of black and green.



Both tattoos would protect her from any harm as per the old woman's words. It would likely stop the accidents from befalling her.

Unfortunately, for Solene now, both tattoos had started turning transparent.

And it was exactly what had scared her. If this was fading, could it be that the accidents would return too? And if yes, was the earthquake earlier in the supermarket possibly connected to this?

Yet she couldn't make sense with the miracle earlier. She and her brother had lived. What unknown force had come to her rescue then if it wasn't the work of the tattoos?

Remembering the man from earlier, her eyes lit wide. He was there when they were falling. Undoubtedly, he was the only witness. There was a big possibility he had seen or heard something. He might be able to enlighten her. But thinking about it now, he didn't seem to look like he had when Solene saw him in the parking lot.

"There's only one way to know then," she told herself. "I got to talk to him. The problem is, where will I find this man?"