

MY SCYTHE-WIELDING HUSBAND

Chapter 8 - Death by Books

“Okay, let’s pick up where we stopped,” Myrna stated once they settled onto their seats. This time, they chose the University library to finish their planning instead of anywhere outside the school.

After the incident they experienced that morning, Solene returned to the house to change clothes. She had coaxed her best friend not to visit the hospital. She didn’t need it when really nothing had happened to her. Myrna told her she had an insane amount of luck, but Solene just shrugged the statement off. Clearly, her best friend knew nothing of her growing fear.

“We were about to make the second draft of our thesis, Myr,” she reminded, getting comfy with her chosen wingback chair.

The latter puckered her lips and grinned.

“Oh, so you really were paying attention to me other than just checking that stranger in the cafe.”

Solene rolled her eyes upward. “Of course, I was paying attention, silly.”

“Anyway, for sure there’ll be no accidents here to stop us,” Myrna exclaimed.

Solene only gave a fleeting smile on her way in response, but at the back of her head, she hoped it would be the case.

“By the way, I texted Philly from the café and he said he had checked the footage of their CCTV camera,” Myrna informed. “Unfortunately, the video was cut before the crash happened. Said that their camera encountered an error on the recording.”

Solene inwardly hissed. It was exactly like the situation in the supermarket and because of this, she had harder evidence to back her claim that it was deliberately erased.

“Okay,” was her short answer, keeping all thoughts to herself.

Two hours later from making their thesis, Myrna groaned and threaded her hair in frustration.

“Oh gosh, I forgot to bring the Aldrich book here,” she mumbled.

Solene looked up from their mess of handwritten papers and saw Myrna about to stand up.

“Wait,” she called, stretching out her hand, “just you stay here. I’ll get it for you. I’ve been wanting to take a breather for quite some time anyway. What shelf was it again?”

Myrna beamed a smile. “Shelf twenty-two. The book is on the second to the last column.”

“Right.” Solene nodded and stretched her legs.

Her long, palm-printed skirt brushed the floor of the library as she sashayed into the shelves. She looked up and read the signs, looking for the shelf Myrna talked about until she reached the hardly-visited corner of the library.

“Whew, I think I understand Myrna’s frustration now,” she murmured to herself as she entered this section of the library. “Even I wouldn’t want to come to this area.”

The top shelf books looked dusty. Some actually even had spider webs on and they looked so clear against the natural light passing through the closed glass window. On her left side, there was a wall-mounted shelf that had large books and was supported by hinges and metal poles. It

looked sturdy enough for Solene despite the little rust collecting on the sides.

Sighing, she continued her search, stooping low to look for the Aldrich book; however, just as she was about to take it out of the shelf, the sound of hinges shaking and metals screeching caught her attention.

Then, the large books from above shifted. One thick book fell first and actually hit her left shoulder. She immediately groaned in pain. Looking up, her eyes bulged as eight more books bigger than the first came falling down. Her breath was caught in her throat. Her reflexes stilled as if she was paralyzed on the spot.

She waited for the books to hit her, but an unexpected thing happened. Solene saw a lightning-quick shadow enter from the window, then the next thing she knew, the books fell past her as if they had been pushed away by hand. They landed with a very loud thud on the floor inches out of her reach.

“Oh God,” her breath shook whilst looking at the books in awe, confusion, and fear.

Hasty footsteps heralded the arrival of a person—the librarian to be exact—and she immediately shot a worried eye on Solene.

“What happened?” Dally cried out whilst running to her side. “Are you alright?”

Solene pressed her lips together hoping to calm her nerves.

“Yes...yes, I’m good, Dally.” She opted not to inform her about the sore on her shoulder, keeping it to herself instead. “The books of that shelf fell suddenly. I just...narrowly escaped them.”

“Thank goodness. It’s a relief to hear that you’re okay.” Dally stood up and examined the shelf.

“This shelf looks to be fine by me, but just to be sure, I’ll have Management check it. I can’t have this accident again, the possibilities of a concussion or worse a skull fracture are high!” She turned to Solene again and asked, “Are you really sure you were not hit anywhere?”

Solene feigned her health. “Positively sure, Dally.” She just couldn’t be honest when the librarian’s job was at stake.

“Okay, good. Now, let’s get you out of this mess.”

Solene stood up, hid a wince during the process, and then glanced at the window not far from where she stood. To her surprise, Hein was visible on her line of view, just sitting on a bench, reading what looked like Reader’s Digest.

Her forehead wrinkled. ‘What was he doing there?’

“You go ahead, dear. I think Myrna is waiting for you,” Dally stated, successfully cutting Solene’s attention in two.

She nodded and made a quick parting glance at the mysterious Hein Masters before walking away.

As much as she could, Solene kept her sore shoulder to herself. She didn’t want Myrna to worry and she also wanted to finish their planning before she leaves the country. It was a huge struggle on her part, but she was willing to do it.

By the time she arrived in her house that night, her injury still hadn’t received any treatment. She kept on wincing when she entered the kitchen to get some ice and her mother noticed it instantly.

“What happened to you?” Meridith asked, scrutinizing her daughter’s weird actions.

Solene sighed, slowly pulled out her denim jacket, and showed her mother the beginning bruise on her left shoulder.

“Mom, I think it’s happening again,” she said solemnly.

Meridith furrowed her brows. “What do you mean? And why do you have that bruise on your shoulder?”

“Remember my so-called accidents?” Solene asked.

Meridith’s face darkened that instant. She paused from cooking and said with a strict voice, “That is no joking matter, Solene. Why are you bringing that up?” She knew exactly what her daughter meant. With a huff, she turned toward a cabinet, pulled a towel from it, and then ran cold water on a bowl.

“I had been experiencing it lately, Mom; yesterday, this morning and this afternoon. I got this bruise from a falling book on the library and I narrowly escaped the others falling down on me.”

She kept the memory of that odd event thereafter with the books on tight lock and key in her mind. She didn’t want to share that info for now...not like she knew exactly what had happened anyway.

“It’s impossible. Your tattoos were supposed to stop them for good. Your grandma’s friend assured it.” Meridith was adamant to reply.

With this, Solene scoffed. “It turns out they didn’t based on my recent experiences. Plus, my tattoos are fading, Mom. Whatever magic that old woman had conjured on it seems to have an expiry date.”

Meridith neared her daughter with the bowl and towel in hand. Solene took it and dutifully placed the towel on her injury. She hissed in pain briefly before succumbing to the comfort the cold towel brought.

“We will ask your grandma after dinner. We can’t have you attracting accidents especially now that your wedding is near!”

“The wedding is the least of my concerns, Mom. It is my welfare that’s most important.”

“Of course your welfare is important above anything else,” as if on cue, Solene’s grandmother stepped into the kitchen. She rounded the granite table and signaled Solene to turn to her side.

“Your voices were so loud it could be heard from the living room,” she gave the two women a chastising glare. “Now, lift your blouse Solene. Let me see the tattoo.”

Solene did so as instructed. Riza then cringed upon seeing that it was indeed lacking color than before.

“Lift your skirt,” she instructed again.

Solene placed the cold towel first on the table and reached for the hem of her skirt.

Her grandmother, if she felt any fear or distress, had completely hid it from her face. She just scrunched up her nose again and remained passively contemplative.

Both tattoos were indeed lacking luster. Its edges were still clear, but the colors were dull and lifeless and close to transparent.

“Just make it through to the wedding, my child, and everything will turn out fine,” Riza finally stated.

“Huh, easier said than done, grandma,” Solene crossed her arms to her chest.

Tomorrow, she was going to leave her whole life behind. She was going to another country, live in a house she knew nothing about, meet her elusive groom and undergo the wedding ceremony — all sounds pretty dreamy and simple really — that is, if she’ll survive the whole flight without any accidents.