

Chapter 116

AMELIA

It was two days later, after the Lucy pregnancy episode that I decided it was time for me to go to the bakery. The amusement park project had taken up a huge chunk of my time but the project engineer was handling some things at the site and it gave me a little breather for that day.

A few minutes of going through the bakery's record books made me doubly sure that Rose and the other of my employees were doing a really good job. I couldn't find a single thing to complain about. I was just putting away the record books and pulling closer the book detailing orders when there was a knock at the door of my office.

"What is it, Rose?" I asked when she came in.

She jerked her thumb in the direction of the corridor. "There is someone outside insisting she has to see you."

"Send her in," I said.

It was either Queenie coming to visit or perhaps a very important customer who was about to make a large order. Some of those kinds of customers often tended to want to see the owner of the place before placing their orders.

The fact that I hadn't told anybody that I was going to be here today made me think my visitor was going to be the latter.

To my utmost surprise, it wasn't Queenie or a customer. It was Lucy.

"What are you doing here?" I exclaimed in surprise.

Hanging her head, she shuffled into the room. She held a little wrapped bundle close to her chest. The bundle stirred. One tiny, dimpled fist shot out. It was a baby, her baby. After a few moments, I dragged my gaze from the baby, focused it on Lucy. She was shaking a bit and it looked like her strength would give out at any moment. She looked even more unkempt than the last time I had seen her.

I slowly got to my feet.

"I ask again. What are you doing here in my office?" I said.

"I'm sorry," Lucy replied in a tiny, squeaky voice. "This place... You were the only thing I could think of. I have nowhere else to go now."

I chuckled. "Seriously? You have nowhere else to go, but you're here? What now, Lucy? You suddenly decided to come back to the best friend you betrayed? It's a little too late in the day for all that, don't you think?"

Lucy's face crumpled and she began to cry weakly. I just stood there watching her until she was composed enough to say, "I'm sorry, Amelia. I- I have no one else, nowhere to turn to now. My mom is ill, seriously ill. I can't bother her with my baby right in her condition. My father won't take me in." She paused to wipe a stray tear. "He says he won't have anything to do with me unless I find the father of my child. How can I even do that when I just gave birth two days ago? I'm not even strong to move about yet. I told him all this but he didn't listen to me. I've been rejected by my own family."

I couldn't say I was surprised. Lucy's parents were sort of reputable and very conservative. They didn't stand for indecent behaviour and I mostly had a hard time reconciling the fact that Lucy, who had no moral code guiding her, was their daughter. In her case, the apple really did fall far from the tree. Very far.

I watched her and waited until she had cried herself out.

"I'm sorry," she said again looking very sorry indeed. "I know I'm taking your time but I need your help. I'm completely out of cash. I need some money to take care of myself and the baby for now until I get back on my feet. Please can you lend me some money? I promise to pay it back as soon as I get some money."

She had nerve. Lucy did, to come here asking for help after all she had done. I pretended to consider her request.

"How much do you need?" I asked her.

She gaped at me and then her face lighted up almost immediately. Then I realized that Lucy was here, not because she was sorry, but because she really didn't have anywhere else to go. If her plan to entrap Noah had worked out the way she had planned, she would never ever have felt remorseful.

"Really?" she said. "You'll help me?"

"How much do you need?" I repeated, letting a hint of impatience creep into my voice.

"Oh. Er- I need about five thousand dollars."

"Five thousand dollars!"

"Yes. I have a lot of bills to pay and I haven't got a dime. Please say you'll help me. Please-"

"Actually, I have a plan that can help you."

"You do?"

I nodded. "It's quite simple really. All you have to do is convince five thousand people to give you some money. If each of them gives you a dollar, you'll have five thousand dollars in no time."

It was fun to watch the dime finally drop, fun to watch her slowly realize I had no intention of helping her.

"Amelia, please-"

I held up my hand. "Save it, Lucy. What I would like to know is why you slept with Noah. What did I ever do to you that made you hate me enough to destroy me?"

"I... was jealous of you," she admitted in a tiny voice. "To me, you had everything, a husband, a wealthy one. I wasn't married-"

"But you had men flocking all over you. You could have chosen anyone of them."

"Now I know that, but I was still jealous of what you had. I thought getting married to Noah would make me happier."

"It obviously didn't, huh? Well one thing I'm grateful for is that it all worked out great for me in the end. I mean, look at this." I spread my arms wide, inviting her to look around my office. "As you can see, your betrayal helped give me all this. I doubt I would have advanced so much if I hadn't left Noah. Unknown to you, you took away a potential problem from my life. I'm really happy you did."

"I'm- I'm happy things turned out well for you."

I gave her a mocking smile. "Oh. Are you now? Just a couple of days ago when you came to the site, you were singing a completely different song, weren't you?"

Colour flooded her cheeks at the reminder. "That was in the past-"

"Yeah. Of course. I forgot how far in the past two days is," she said sarcastically.

She opened and closed her mouth, finally short of words to excuse her behaviour.

"Yes, Lucy. Don't think that I'll simply forget what you did just because I took you to the hospital that day! I did that only for the baby, not for you."

"And I'm grateful for it. If you'll just-"

I raised a finger, motioning her to silence. "Now listen and listen good. I don't want you to ever step your feet anywhere close to me. I don't want to see you. I don't want to hear from you and I don't want anything that will remind me of you. Got it?"

Fresh tears stood in Lucy's eyes as she stared at me. No doubt she still thought I going to be the same softhearted, foolish Amelia that would help her out after all she had done.

"But- but where will I go now?" she wailed.

I shrugged. "I don't know and I frankly don't care either. Oh. Here's an idea! Why don't you go back to your Noah since both of you are a match made in heaven. I remember you telling me almost those exact words more than a few times these last few months."

Lucy caught her bottom lip. She adjusted the beat-to-shit bag over her shoulder, held the baby closer to her.

"I can't go ever go back to Noah now," she said. "He got arrested." I raised a brow, inviting her to explain. "He came to the hospital while I was giving birth and he tried to take the baby away from me right there. Someone called security and the police then..."

It wasn't bad at all that Noah was also getting his deserts. It seemed that finally, everyone was getting what they deserved.

"I don't blame you for not forgiving me," Lucy continued. "I'd be angry if I were in your shoes too."

"Thanks for understanding. Now you may leave."

She nodded, turned towards the door and stopped again. I sighed in exasperation. Was I going to have to leave the office for her? Or have her thrown out?

"I just wanted to say from the bottom of my heart that I'm sorry for everything," she said, and then she quietly left the way she had come in.