

Chapter 124

AMELIA

"We'll see soon then, Mrs Donovan."

I blinked and once more, turned to focus on Engineer Sam who I had quite a lengthy meeting with. His team was hanging back a little, deeply engrossed in some conversation about the amusement park project.

"Yes of course," I replied, with a glance at my watch. "I have somewhere to be. Good bye."

I was barely focused during the meeting, my mind drifting to all the things in my schedule. There were several other things I needed to do.

As I left the project site, I waved absently at Sam who walked off with his team as I dug out my phone to call Rose.

"Ma'am," she said when she picked up. "Are you stopping over by the bakery today?"

"No. I'm afraid not. Do you have your notepad with you?"

"Always."

"Good. I got a call some hours ago from the office of the CEO of Sharecare. He's celebrating the 10th year anniversary of his company soon. He wants us to handle the cakes and the event in general. So what do you think?" Rose reeled out a couple of possible themes for the event, and gave suggestions on how we could spice things up. "Good. Note down all you said and implement them. I'll call you later to check up on this."

I had barely ended the call and taken two steps forward before I was surrounded on both sides by two of my bodyguards.

They always had the knack of seemingly materializing out of nowhere and of also being everywhere all at the same time. I felt more than a little irritated as they moved in sync with me. The taller one kept scanning the area like he was expecting a robber to leap out at me at any moment.

I snorted. Fat chance of that happening!

"Madam?" the shorter guard said, looking down at me with a question in his eyes.

"Nothing," I murmured. When I reached my car, with my hand on the door handle, I hesitated. "Actually there is something. I need to go to the mall to shop."

"And we'll be only too happy to escort you."

"Oh no. That is the point. I want to go alone." I paused to let that sink in, and watched them exchange a glance. "You are dismissed."

"Are you sure, ma'am?" the taller one asked. "It's our job to protect you and Mr Donovan will not be happy if he learns of this."

"Keith, right? You're dismissed for the day." I shifted from one foot to the other, already impatient. "I need some time alone. Besides, I'm not likely to get mugged on my solo trip to the mall, am I? I have to go now."

They nodded in unison, and stepped back like robots. I jumped into the car, and started the ignition before they could find something else to say.

The more distance the car put between the bodyguards and I, the better I felt. I wound down the window, and heaved a deep sigh of relief. Being followed around all the time had lately been feeling so... suffocating, though I had to admit that it wasn't my bodyguard's fault. They were really very professional.

It was irrational to have dismissed them even for a few hours without any form of backup. I knew that, but the only excuse I had was the pregnancy.

With my hormones all over the place, I found myself doing irrational stuff more and more often. I just hoped for all our sakes that I could get it together before Damian who was a pretty accurate observer, detected I was pregnant. I had to be the one to tell him first or he would be convinced I was merely going to leave with his baby.

About thirty minutes later, I pulled into a parking space at the mall. I got out, and started walking towards the entrance, my mind going over what I was supposed to buy.

I had barely taken ten steps toward the entrance when a voice called out to me.

"Amelia."

No shit! I knew that voice. That hated voice. He was the last person I wanted to see or talk to at this point.

"Amelia, please wait up."

I forced my legs to go faster. If only I could get into the mall, I could easily be lost in it's vastness. He would have a hard time locating me. And if he attempted anything, I would ask the security personnels to throw him out.

"Amelia, I'm talking to you." He continued. "Just give me a moment." He was gaining on me.

Almost there. Just a little more now...

Before I knew it, Noah caught up with me. He made a grab at my arm. With a snarl, I pushed him away.

"What do you think you're doing?" I said angrily.

"I was just trying to get-"

My eyes narrowed in suspicion. "Wait a minute! How are you even here? Are you stalking me now?"

Noah gave a gasp of surprise that was almost believable. Almost but not quite. "No I'm not stalking you."

"Ah. So you somehow manage to conveniently show up at the moment when I'm not with my bodyguards? How did you know that you would find me here at this particular time huh?"

He opened his mouth, hesitated and spilled the truth. "Fine. I followed you."

"I knew it!"

"But I did it out of desperation. That's why I'm here." He looked around, and took in the shoppers hurrying in and out of the mall. "Look, can we go somewhere private to talk?"

"Really?" I scoffed. "Noah, I would rather sweep the entire mall with a toothpick than go anywhere with you."

His lips turned down at the corners. Noah was sad, distraught and I knew why. The bottom had fallen out from under him now. He had no where else to run to, just me. Inwardly, I smiled. My plan has worked to perfection.

"Amelia, please I need your help," he said. "I really do."

"Oh you do? You didn't look like you needed it... what was it now?" I pretended to think. "Yes. a few days ago when you were ranting on TV. You seemed perfectly fine with throwing insults at me and my husband. You even threatened me, didn't you?"

"You know I had to do that."

"I know no such thing."

"I had to," he insisted. "With everything going against me, I had to find a way to put myself out there and paint the picture that I was fine, that things weren't as bad as they seemed. Come on, you're a businesswoman now. I assume you know how things work."

"Fine then. Let's assume you really had to do all that. But why did you have to involve my husband and I in... whatever it is you were saying? Couldn't you paint the perfect picture without me?"

He sighed. Obviously, he didn't have anything to say in his defence. All he had spewed at the interviews was fueled by hate and spite. Nothing else. And so he reverted back to pleading.

"You have to help me, Amelia. My company is on the brink of ruin. If you don't step in now, if you don't help me, I'll loose everything." He inched closer to me and I stepped back, careful to maintain a good distance between us. "You're the only person that can help me right now. I've invested everything I have to push myself up but it's not working out."

I shrugged. "Well I really don't care, Noah. Find someone who does."

I turned on my heels to leave but his hand closed on my arm. I turned back to face him and shoved him backwards with all my strength.

"For the last time get your paws off me!" I snapped.

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm just a desperate man. Consider my plea, I beg of you. See, I'm putting all my pride aside. I'm at your mercy."

"Noah, what do you want me to do? I can't help you."

"We were once married, remember? Help me." He shook his head.

"Don't try to guilt trip." It was comical. "You know what, tell me exactly what you want me to do. It's not my fault that your life is going downhill."

He swallowed. "If you can't help me talk to the investors, you could lend me some money so my business can pick up." I watched his eyes dart here and there as he racked his brain for a solution to his problems. "Or you can invest in my company. You could come in as a partner. I'll work hard, really hard and you'll get returns on your investment. I promise you that."

"I chuckled. What do I have to do with your investors?"

"I know they're moving to you. I know you spoke with them. I know they're investing in your project. You can be my partner instead."

I shook my head from side to side. Slowly. "That plan of yours won't work, Noah Allen. I mean, why should I lend you money? My kids are going to inherit all my wealth. Every dime I will work for is for them."

"Amelia," he groaned. "Please let's talk like two grown adults. We can help each other."

"No we can't. Noah, we are done. Now let's look at it this way. Why should I invest in your company when my husband has companies? He certainly wouldn't be a liability like you. As it is, you're practically a nobody at this point. You've lost your respect in this city. You have no money, no charm and no reputation to speak of. No one would want to be associated with you now and I am definitely not remotely interested in helping you get your name out of the gutter. I wouldn't want to taint myself by association, you see. The last thing I want to do is carry the Allen name."

"I see what you're doing," he said with a sigh.

"Oh? And what am I doing?"

"You're using my own words against me, the words I said to you the day I served you the divorce papers."

"I don't know what you're talking about," I lied.

"I'm sorry. I'm really sorry for what I did to you. I regret everything that happened, the way I behaved towards you. Please forgive me and help me." He lowered his head, an attempt to make me feel sorry for him. "Lucy was the devil who ruined our marriage. I will never forgive her for coming between us. I would have never betrayed you if she didn't deceive me. Amelia, I'm saying the truth. Please help me."

I pretended to think about his request for a some seconds. Bold of him to blame Lucy entirely for what happened to our marriage. He obviously thought I was gullible enough to believe him.

"Okay then," I said in a tone like I had made a decision. "If you want my help and money, go down on your knees and ask for it."

His face immediately tightened. "I can't do that."

"Okay then. Good bye."

I turned to leave once more but stopped when he called my name.

"I'll do it," he bit off. "If that's what it's going to take, I'll do it."

And right there in the parking lot, Noah reluctantly got down on his knees. I never thought I would see the day!

I drew out the moment for as long as I could while he looked up at me, his face burning with humiliation. Some passerby's were staring at us, shocked to see him on his knees in the middle of the parking lot.

"Will you help me now?" he asked.

I smiled coldly and leaned closer to him. "My answer is no! Get out of my life and stay out."

With a wide smile on my face, I turned on my heel and walked away.